

## Demand for the People's Participation in the Administration of the Sub-district Administrative Organization in Payakapumpisai District, Mahasarakham Province

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### บทคัดย่อ

การวิจัยครั้งนี้เป็นการวิจัยแบบบูรณาการโดยวิธีเชิงปริมาณ และเชิงคุณภาพ มีความมุ่งหมายเพื่อ 1. ศึกษาความต้องการมีส่วนร่วมของประชาชนในการบริหารองค์การบริหารส่วนตำบลในเขตพื้นที่อำเภอพยัคฆภูมิพิสัย จังหวัดมหาสารคาม 2. ศึกษาข้อเสนอแนะของประชาชนเกี่ยวกับความต้องการมีส่วนร่วมในการบริหารองค์การบริหารส่วนตำบลในเขตพื้นที่อำเภอพยัคฆภูมิพิสัย จังหวัดมหาสารคาม แหล่งข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณ กลุ่มตัวอย่าง ได้แก่ ประชาชนในเขตพื้นที่อำเภอพยัคฆภูมิพิสัย จังหวัดมหาสารคาม จำนวน 399 คน ได้มาจากการสุ่มตามสัดส่วน แหล่งข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพ ได้แก่ กลุ่มผู้ให้ข้อมูลสำคัญ (Key Informants) คือ กลุ่ม OTOP กลุ่มสหกรณ์ออมทรัพย์ร้านค้าชุมชน กลุ่มกำนัน ผู้ใหญ่บ้าน และกลุ่มพระนักพัฒนา จำนวน 30 คน/รูป การเลือกกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเจาะจง เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บรวบรวมข้อมูล คือ แบบสอบถาม และแบบสัมภาษณ์ใช้การสนทนากลุ่ม (Focus Group) สถิติที่ใช้วิเคราะห์ข้อมูล ได้แก่ ร้อยละ ค่าเฉลี่ย ส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน และการพรรณนาความ

ผลการวิจัยปรากฏดังนี้ 1. ประชาชนมีความต้องการโดยรวมต่อการมีส่วนร่วมในการบริหารองค์การบริหารส่วนตำบลในเขตพื้นที่อำเภอพยัคฆภูมิพิสัย จังหวัดมหาสารคาม อยู่ในระดับมาก เมื่อพิจารณาเป็นรายด้านความต้องการมีส่วนร่วมของประชาชนอยู่ในระดับมากทุกด้าน โดยเรียงลำดับค่าเฉลี่ยจากมากไปหาน้อย ได้แก่ การมีส่วนร่วมในการวิเคราะห์ปัญหา การมีส่วนร่วมในการตัดสินใจ การมีส่วนร่วมในการดำเนินการแก้ไขปัญหา การมีส่วนร่วมในผลประโยชน์จากโครงการ และการมีส่วนร่วมในการติดตามและประเมินผล 2. ข้อเสนอแนะของประชาชนเกี่ยวกับความต้องการมีส่วนร่วมในการบริหารองค์การบริหารส่วนตำบลในเขตพื้นที่อำเภอพยัคฆภูมิพิสัย จังหวัดมหาสารคาม ได้แก่ การมีส่วนร่วมในการกำหนดเป้าหมายการทำงานโดยมีองค์ประกอบสำคัญคือ “จุดหมาย” และ “แนวทาง” โดยการตัดสินใจเพื่อการพัฒนาทางเลือกต่าง ๆ ในการกำหนดนโยบายและวางแผนพัฒนาการแก้ไขปัญหาโดยการเปิดโอกาสให้ประชาชนเข้ามามีส่วนร่วมในกระบวนการกำหนดนโยบาย การวางแผนงานโครงการ และวิธีการทำงานโดยยอมรับการเสนอแนะและการตัดสินใจร่วมกับภาคประชาชน รวมถึงการเข้าร่วมเป็นผู้นำกลุ่มผลประโยชน์ต่างๆ และการตรวจสอบพฤติกรรมการบริหารและการตรวจสอบความโปร่งใสในการบริหารองค์การบริหารส่วนตำบล

**คำสำคัญ :** การมีส่วนร่วมของประชาชน ; การบริหาร

### Abstract

This is an integrated study mixed with qualitative and quantitative research methods aiming to 1) explore the demand for the people's participation in the administration of the sub-district administrative organizations (SAO) in Payakapumpisai district, Maha Sarakham province; and 2) look for the useful suggestions from the local people regarding the demand of the people's participation in the target area. In this study, the quantitative data was obtained from a group of 399 local people living in Payakapumpisai district that were chosen by proportional random sampling and the qualitative data was collected from 30 key informants

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consisting of the OTOP staff, Community Cooperative staff, the sub-district heads, the village headmen, and the inventive Buddhist monks that were selected by purposive sampling. Two types of research tools i.e. the questionnaire and the focused-group interview form were used for the data collection to find the related statistical value including percentage mean score, and standard deviation, together with content analysis.

The outcome indicated that 1) the participants mutually had a high demand for their participation in all issues of the SAO's administration that could be ranged by their rating scores in descending order as follows: problem analysis, decision-making, problem-solving, sharing benefits from the project, and assessment and evaluation on project's achievement; 2) The participants suggested that the primary aim of the people's participation was "Destination" and "Direction"; the decision should be made on choices for the developmental policy and planning; the policy issuance as well as project planning and operation should engage the local people's decision; and the people should be one of the stakeholders that were allowed to investigate the administration and transparency of all missions under the SAOs.

**Keywords:** People's Participation, Administration

## Introduction

Democracy in Thailand has a long history over the past 80 years so up until now, the constitution had been severally announced, cancelled, and revised in order to suit the current situation of the country and the change of time before the a temporary constitution B.E.2557 was finally settled. During that period it also was the end of the Constitution of Kingdom of Thailand B.E.2550. Chapter 2: The King was an exception. Particularly according to the Constitution of Kingdom of Thailand B.E.2550, Chapter 14: Local Administrative Organization; Section 281 states that the government should grant a local administrative organization as an independent organization that properly manage their missions following the intention of local people and also promote the local organization as the main sector in charge of the public service and solving the problem. Correspondingly, Section 283 similarly states that a local organization has its general duty in providing public services for the advantage of local people and is self-independent in defining the public policy, human resource, finance and treasury, and carrying out any other missions that correspond to the national and provincial development plan (The Constitution of Kingdom of Thailand B.E.2550, 2007: p.112).

Nowadays, the regulation of the Thai government organization is subject to the National Government Organization Act B.E.2534 (8<sup>th</sup> revision) B.E.2553 comprising the central government organization, the centralization-based government organization, and the regional government organization which fundamentally are based on the concept of the power decentralization. On the contrary, the local government organization focuses on the power decentralization in which the central government power should be assigned to the local organization to independently manage their missions. Consequently, the power decentralization is a power transmission from the government power to the local people so that they can independently carry on their missions under the reinforcement of decentralization law. Thus, the SAOs lately become more powerful to push forward the high-performing administration system and also allow the local people to partake in and investigate all administrations under the SAOs (The National Government Organization Act B.E.2534 (8th revision) B.E.2553, 2010: p.51)

Indeed, the sub-district administrative organization (SAO) is a local organization purposively established by the Councils and Sub-district Administration Organization Act BE 2537 in order to strengthen the local government organization and to

correspond to the government power decentralization to the local communities. This SAO has been founded long before the power decentralization was clearly addressed. That is, the governance organization system was seriously reconstructed and becomes more explicit with an official reinforcement of the Government Power Decentralization Plan and Procedure B.E.2542 where Section 4 defines that a local administrative organization is referred to a provincial administrative organization (PAO), municipality, sub-district administrative organization (SAO), Bangkok, Pattaya, and any local organizations that were regally founded. For that reason, the SAOs is the most outstanding organization amongst other local organizations with ultimate goal to act as the symbol of the power decentralization to local community and to allow the people to join in the creation of good governance for a better state of the local community (The Councils and Sub-district Administration Organization Act BE 2537, 2009: p.8). The local people are allowed to participate more in designing the community development plan and budgeting. Practically, the public hearing was hold in the villages in which all people can share their ideas to help managing the budget to make sure that the money was spent for their actual demand. Therefore, all suggestions and comments are surely granted. Above all, the people can examine more of the financial movement under the SAO's administration (Research and Development Institute, Ramkhamhaeng University, 2004: pp.4-6).

The people's participation is likely the heart of the local community development that encourages the people to be more cooperative by sharing ideas, investigating, and solving the problem. In the same vein, a number of previous studies suggest that most of the local administrative organizations hardly get the people to cooperate with them which mean that the people's participation is still low. To be exact, this people's participation is one of the key factors to the concept of good governance that primarily aims to activate all forms of people's participation (Bowonsak

Uwanno, 2002: p.79) Accordingly, the goal or focus of the people's participation-based administration is an ability to encourage the local people to cooperate more because a carefully made decision will definitely create a better benefit for the people (Oarathai Kokphol, 2004: p.40).

Specifically, the SAOs in Payakapumpisai district, Maha Sarakham province is being managed under the laws and orders stipulated by the ministry, bureaus, departments that have no direct contact with the SAOs. Similarly, the annual evaluation report on the SAO's performance in a fiscal year of 2012 marked that the people's participation rate in the SAO's administration was lower than 40% which was quite low. This could be the consequence from the organization's character and ineffective policy to promote the people's participation, negative attitude toward their participation in the SAO's administration, as well as the fact that those people hardly acknowledge the ownership of their local community. Most of the people are living on the patronage system and only have trust for some iconic person so they are not confident enough to participate in any missions under the SAO (Maha Sarkham Provincial Office of Local Administration, 2012: p.15).

The problems previously mentioned encouraged the researcher to explore the people's participation in the administration of the SAOs in Payakapumpisai district, Maha Sarakham province in order to see how demanding the local people are toward their own participation in the SAO's missions and to seek the useful suggestions regarding this critical issue. Later, the findings would be reported to the responsible person to persuade the local people to be cooperative and responsible. If possible, the SAO's administration would be more strengthened and able to properly solve any problems following the actual demand of the local people.

### Objectives of Study

1) To explore the demand for the people's participation in the SAO's administration in Payaka-

pumpisai district, Maha Sarakham province.

2) To perceive the useful suggestions from the local people regarding the demand of the people's participation in the target area.

### Scope of Study

#### Population and Sample Group

##### 1. Quantitative Data Source

1.1 Population consisted of 86,225 local people from 14 sub-districts in Payakapumpisai district, Maha Sarkahm province (Payakapumpisai District General Registration Office, 2012: p.8)

1.2 Sample group was narrowed down to the people living around Payakapumpisai district and the sample size was defined using Taro & Yamane's formula (Taro & Yamane, 1973: 787) in which a group of 399 participants was finally chosen by proportion random sampling.

##### 2. Qualitative Data Source

1. 30 key informants from 4 parties consisting of 7 OTOP staffs, 7 Community Cooperative staffs, 10 sub-district heads and village headmen, and 6 inventive Buddhist monks

2. The variable in this study was the local people's demand for the people's participation in the SAO's administration in Payakapumpisai district that was classified into the following issues: problem analysis, decision-making, problem-solving, sharing the benefit from project, and the project's achievement assessment and evaluation.

3. The area of study was limited to 14 sub-districts including Kampoo SAO, Nasinuan SAO, Palarn SAO, Pan An SAO, Mekdam SAO, Muang Tao SAO, Muang Sau SAO, Rajcharoen SOA, Rajpattana SAO, Lansakae SAO, Wiangchai SAO, Wiang Sa-ad SAO, Nongbua SAO, and Nongbuakaew SAO.

4. The period of study was from October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2015 to April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

### Research Methodology

The research methodology was divided into 2 stages as follows.

Quantitative Research Methodology was planned as below.

1. The objectives of quantitative study were to explore the demand for the people's participation in the SAO's in Payakapumpisai district, Maha Sarakham province and to perceive the useful suggestions from the local people regarding the demand of the people's participation in the target area.

2. Population was 86,225 local people from 14 sub-districts in Payakapumpisai district, Maha Sarkahm province and later the size of the sample group was defined by Taro & Yamane's formula (Taro & Yamane, 1973: 787) in which a group of 399 participants was finally chosen by proportion random sampling.

3. For the data collection and analysis, the researcher provided the 5-level rating scale questionnaire to the key informants and collected them back. Later the data was analyzed to find frequency, percentage, mean, standard deviation, together with content analysis.

Qualitative Research Methodology was planned as follows.

1. The objective of qualitative study was to explore the demand for the people's participation in the SAO's in Payakapumpisai district, Maha Sarakham province.

2. The key informants consisted of 7 OTOP staff, 7 Community Cooperative staff, 10 sub-district heads and village headmen, and 6 inventive Buddhist monks. It was 30 people in total.

3. In term of the data collection and analysis, the data was obtained by organizing the focused-group interview together with the structured questionnaire. Finally, the data was analyzed with content analysis.

### Study Outcome

The study outcome was summarized according to the research objectives as below.

1. The majority of the participant was women between 26-35 years old and the rest was women aged 46 and upper. Most of them were an agriculturist and undergraduate students, so they mostly graduated with primary school certificate, bachelor degree, and other equivalent certificates. Most of them were married and some was single. Specifically, these women were a member of either the community housewife association or the community weaving group.

2. Most of the participants were similarly demanding for their participation in the SAO's administration so it was rated with high score. Surprisingly, all critical issues of the people's participation were rated with high score as well including problem analysis, decision-making, problem-solving, sharing benefits from the project, and the project's achievement assessment and evaluation. After all, these outcomes were concluded as follows.

2.1 Problem analysis: there were 4 issues of problem analysis was rated with high score in which the first 3 activities were ranged in descending order: sharing ideas for the developmental plan, making decision together with the SAO committees and leaders, and participating in the data collection and problem prioritization with the SAO. Still, the only one issue rated with immediate score was to participate in the SAO's goal setting.

2.2 Decision-making: five issues of the decision-making demand were rated with high score and the first 3 issues could be ranged in descending order: suggesting the technique or guideline for problem-solving that best matched with the local people's needs, participating a project administration and proposing a draft for the community development plan and missions before any project starts, and making decision with the SAO's officers on choices of solution to suit the problem within the community.

2.3 Problem-solving: five issues of the problem-solving demand were rated with high score and the first 3 issues could be ranged in descending

order: creating the developmental plan together with the SAO's board, participating in any project or developmental missions settled by the SAO, and participating in an election for the sub-district representative to attend the commission of local government organization development.

2.4 Sharing benefits from the project: five issues of the benefit sharing demand were rated with high score and the first 3 issues could be ranged in descending order: voting the SAO's leaders and member in every election period, being a leader of a stakeholder's group within the SAO, and attending the SAO's council meeting on the annual budgeting. There was surprisingly one issue rated with moderate score: supporting and promoting the SAO's leader or member on their election.

2.5 The participants suggested that five issues of the demand on the project's achievement inspection and evaluation were rated with high score in which the first 3 issues could be ranged in descending order: being a member of the SAO's project/mission inspecting commission, demanding for news and information from the SAO if suspicious movement was found, participating in an investigation on any misbehavior of the SAO's leaders and members.

3. The findings from the focused-group interview were discussed below.

3.1 Problem analysis demand: the participants mentioned that it is necessary that the government should build up a partnership with other sectors e.g. business owner, people, community, and other related organizations. These partners would help up by sharing ideas and making decision to solve the problem because a truly sustainable development under the democracy should be mutually developed by all stakeholders and all would get their benefits in return.

3.2 Decision-making demand: the participants agreed that a critical decision should be made right after sensing a sign of the problem and it is necessary to get some useful information to support a decision-making on a proper choice so the problem

can be correctly solved. Besides, they wished to be a part of the public policy making and planning.

3.3 Problem-solving demand: the participants suggested that the government organization needs to grant the suggestions and comments from the local people as the guide to the policy revision, decision-making, and using the project for the member's performance improvement, as well as allowing the local people, as "the community representative", to join in the making of the public policy, project planning, and the whole process of the administration.

3.4 Demand for sharing benefits from the project: this demand exist from the individual's needs so they wished to participate and support the projects or missions under the SAO to make sure that everything was transparent and their mutual benefit was confirmed.

3.5 Demand on the project's achievement inspection and evaluation: The participants suggested that there should be some process of inspection and evaluation to check if any project can be successful and achieve the goal. That is, a certain commission with the members from several sections needs to be assigned and the local people should be permitted to explore the related information for the advantage on the annual expense administration. Moreover, some useless project should be terminated and the useful ones need to be maintained. All policies and projects should be reasonably revised as well.

4. Suggestions found during the study were given below.

4.1 The SAOs should put the first priority on educating the local people about the citizen's right and responsibility in the SAO's administration. Namely, some space should be reserved for the people to know the useful information related to all projects and the people should have more right inspect and evaluate the success of all projects.

4.2 It is necessary for all local people to attend any meeting on the budgeting administration

and manage the operation plan as well as conducting a survey on the critical problem that obstruct the community development. Furthermore, a group of a specific activity should be founded and supported with the SAO's supply.

## Discussion

The significant findings in this study were discussed below.

The participant's demand for the people's participation was generally high and all demanding issues were rated with high score as well. These issues could be ranged in descending order as follows: problem analysis demand, decision-making, problem-solving demand, sharing benefits from the project, and the project's achievement inspection and evaluation. Thus, the finding was similar to Pitnithat Pansilp's study previously conducted on the people's participation (at the SAOs in Wapeepathum and the outcome) indicating that the majority of the participants (classified by their gender, age, educational background, income, and period of living in the target area) rated a high score for all of the 4 demanding issues including the sub-district development planning, the sub-district activities, project inspection, and problem proposal (Pitnitha Pansilp, 2009: p...1-2). In the same vein, it was also corresponding with the outcomes from Natruja Tannarat's study on the people's participation (at the Pochai SAO's administration, Muang district, Non Khai province) suggesting that the participants (classified by their gender, age, educational background, income, and period of living in the target area) rated a high score for all of demanding issues (Natruja Tannarat, 2009: p.1-2).

The participants notably claimed that the problem analysis demand should mean that the local people participate in defining the SAO's goal based on two key factors: "Destination" and "Direction". In particular, this was referred to the people's participation in defining the scope of the SAO's work and inspecting the achievement of their work. Also, the people's need should be granted for the determina-

tion of the vision, strategy, and other development guideline. In term of the decision-making demand, the people expected to share ideas to find a proper solution to the problem and they need to make a decision on choices of the public policy determination and planning.

For the problem-solving demand, the participant suggested that the local people needed to freely and systematically share their ideas toward the SAO's administration so the organizations were required to listen carefully to the people's comment and suggestion that should be applied into a revision and decision-making on public policy as well as the administration improvement plan. Namely, the organization should "give an opportunity the people" to partake in the determination of public policy, project plan, and working methods. Another approach could be "the people representative" as one of the community's commission.

For the demand of the benefit sharing, the people wanted to practically cooperate with and support the SAO's projects and missions in order to assured that everything would be transparently conducted for the community's mutual benefit. For that reason, the people should be one of the leaders amongst stakeholder's groups and participate in monitoring, inspecting, and evaluating to see if the project or mission definitely was successful as mentioned in the objective.

The project's achievement inspection and evaluation was likely a process in which the people wanted to see how successful each developmental project could be, to investigate how the SAO's leaders managed their projects, and to confirm transparency within the SAO. Indeed, monitoring, inspection, and evaluation could be performed by forming the community's commission with the members from different sections to be specifically responsible for inspecting and evaluating the SAO's project inspection and evaluation. To support the claim, Pitnitha Pansilp's study confirmed that the local people in Wapeepathum district, Maha Sarakham, did monitoring

and inspecting the missions under the members and leaders of the SAOs in the target area. Moreover, they demanded to be informed about the success of each department within the SAO, especially the supply section. They also wanted the organization to listen to be more aware of their feedback so that they could find a proper direction for the SAO's administration and the guide to the development of the community where they lived. Finally, the people requested to attend the community's meeting so that they could share the comments toward the development plan for their own community (Pitnitha Pansilp, 2009: p.1-2). Correspondingly, this finding was also similar to what Sudarat Asachai previously found in her study on the people's participation in the making of the Nongsoor Municipality's development plan in Kalasin province. That is, the municipality office should give an opportunity for the local people to share their ideas for the development of the community's economic restoration project and prioritize the steps of the development plan within each community by allowing the community member to vote for their need of immediate support (Sudarat Asachai, 2008: p.1).

Furthermore, this study was corresponding to another previous study of Sittisak Sara-aporn on the people's participation in the Khlongchaloem SAO development plan at Kongra, Phatthalung province in which the outcome was found that the SAO had to fully be aware of all problems and difficulties from the evaluation on the previous development plans so that the mistakes could be fulfilled for the optimal advantage of the community. In addition, the SAO was required to allow the community members to be engaged in the evaluation on the cost-effectiveness of projects under the municipality e.g. road construction, landscape renovation, etc (Sittisak Sara-aporn, 2007: p.1).

### Suggestions

1. Suggestions for further useful implementation

1.1 Local people should be encouraged to participate in defining the SAO's goal, vision, mission, strategy, and any other developmental guideline.

1.2 Local people should be allowed to share either comments or techniques on a basis of their actual need to help designing the administrative policy for practical implemented.

## 2. Suggestions for any further study

2.1 A further study should explore any of effective factors with strong impact that could be useful for promoting the people's participation in the SAO's administration in Payakapumpisai district.

2.2 A further study should look more deeply on possibility of any public policy guideline and practical implementation that could be supportive for the people's participation in the SAOs in Payakapumpisai district.

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