

The Analysis of National Economic and Social Development Plan on Co-operative Development Strategy in Thailand : National Plan 1 – 10

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Presented at
International Conference of Social Sciences and Humanities (ICoSSH08)
18-20 June 2008
Science University of Malaysia, Penang, Malaysia

ABSTRACT

As a form of organization for several dimensions of community development, co-operative was selected to be one of the development mean by Thai state sector. Over eight decades of formal co-operatives in Thailand, it cannot be denied that most of Thai co-operative with distorted identities were inevitably influenced by the state hegemony. Along that influencing process of planned-development, the concepts which underpinned it is worth to investigate. Thus, this documentary research with content analysis is aimed at the co-operative development strategy analyzing from the national economic and social development plans of Thailand as well as synthesizing the evolution of co-operative development concepts in the national plans since the first plan till the tenth.

It is obvious that under the large scene of development discourse in the national plan which reflected out the unbalanced development of social and economic, quantity and quality, specific and several sectors. Thai co-operative development strategies were emphatically headed up toward the economic benefits. Although there has been some adaptation in the large frame of planning, especially at the philosophical based since the eighth national plan, the strategies themselves still unconsciously weaken the fruitful of cooperative potentials. Intensively economic-oriented with gradually widening into more target groups can be evidently observed in the evolution of co-operative development concepts from the national plans. Hence, provoking any concerned people around the plans to get more understanding about real practical co-operatives is very necessary while the paradigm shift on co-operative development is also the challenge.

Key Words : Co-operative, Development strategy, Thailand

Introduction

Co-operatives were known as important means against poverty and under-development with much wider and comprehensive concepts on moral and social uplift of the people. As a value-driven organization, co-operatives also contributed to the enrichment of community (Madane, 2006:14) and blended with sustainable human development. Differ from other organizations at least in the three cores which were member ownership, control and benefit (Birchall, 2005:58), co-operatives themselves were not over-looked to use as

significant means for social and community development in various countries around the world.

In developing countries, co-operatives were used as instruments in the delivery of state determined services (Birchall 2005:57) and Thailand was not the exception. In Thailand herself, it could not be denied that co-operatives revealed their roles and evolution for not less than 9 decades. The escalation of them could be clearly observed, even needless to mention about the diffusion of unregistered co-operatives. Only in the government sector, there were about 80 organizations directly concerned with the co-operatives.

Even though co-operatives themselves had such a long operating experience in Thailand, there were many evident proved that most of them were distort. Out of the many success co-operatives, there were some co-operatives still sunk in the moral hazard, profit-oriented, misleading on rural development, being local mode of production demolishing agents, neglecting to fulfill the fruitful of culture and education, less concerned to the communities and environments while some of them could not escape to be the efficient vulgar consumerism tool. (Bello, Cunningham & Li, 1998) These grand situations brought co-operatives in Thailand direct to other alien identities.

It was suspicious that while there were many ways to deliver, form and organize co-operatives in the society, what was the reason why those distort happened. After scanning co-operatives in Thailand, especially the registered ones, it was true that most of them were historically very closed up to the state as well as being top-down since the beginning. Gradually released from the state controlling, it was also known that state sector still tried to support and develop all of them intentionally. With state charge and delivery, more or less, the state hegemony took part to produce and reproduce Thai co-operative identities.

Under the state production process to produce and reproduce co-operatives, one of the prior importance milestone worth to attend was the concepts behind the scene of its plan. Like other developing countries once in modernization era, every 5 years national plan called National Economic and Social Development Plan were set to be grand plan in Thailand. Co-operatives have been mentioned either directly or indirectly in those each plans, since the first national plan implemented in 1962.

When back to the nature of development strategies related ultimately to the public evaluation of ends as well as assessment of economic and social mean (Sen, 2001), it could not be neglected that the apparent failure of strategies even after extensive planning was the missing of the concept of strategy and what is involved in thinking strategically (Jordan, 2006). Hereupon, under a long period of 1-10 national plans, the co-operative development strategy from the national economic and social development plans should be reexamined with the exploration of the leading concepts.

Objectives :

- 1) To analyze the co-operative development strategy from the national economic and social development plans of Thailand
- 2) To synthesize the evolution of co-operative development concepts within the national plans since the first plan till the tenth.

Method

As a documentary research with mainly studying from ten national economic and social development plans, content and discourse analysis were used.

Results

Thai National Plan Background

In the aftermath of World War II, our world was witnessing the normalization of development and modernization. Early development theory was never separated from an extension of conventional economic theory which equated development with growth and industrialization. Mainstream development could not avoid linking with economic and industry development filled with the colonial concepts. (Payne,1997)

The contexts of economic problems after World War II brought Thailand to concentrate with those problems in her own. Under World Bank suggestions, as the technologies of development power endorsed with their economic experts, Thai government organized an organization of national economic development planning which would be the main actor to set national plan. As a response to the world system as well as the government stability, it was enough to have national plan and gear the country along the directed one. Then, the first national plan with economic development scoped and prepared since the second half of 1950 decade, was implemented during 1961-1966. Only in 1957 some international reports appeared to demonstrate that there must be the need for a much closer integration of economic and social objectives than had yet been achieved in most societies. (Arndt, 1987 : p.88-89). Again as a response, some aspects of social development plan began to integrated with the economic in Thai state's national plan since Plan 2 (1967-1971).

Meaning of development had not been seriously suspected to misconceive, confuse or change till The Economic Crisis happened in 1997. This brought to realize the more importance of the deep concepts behind the national plans. Hereupon, long period of liberalization-based plans as well as economic-growth-oriented were switched to dual economic concepts. It was obvious that the new philosophy of sufficiency economy more seriously considered and clearly appeared in Plan 8 till the present one, Plan 10.

Co-operative Development Strategy within Ten National Plans

As co-operative development strategy appeared in Plan 1, under the economic development concept, co-operative conditions and problems were analyzed before setting the

policy and operational guideline directed to co-operatives' self-help and mutual-help base. Although co-operatives was the second most importance here, it might say that this plan was most closely concerned with co-operatives from their very really nature. Inevitably, the role of the chairperson in this most prior national plan preparing, who had deeply co-operatives' background, was one of the factors which took part in this existence.

Like a field of exteriority (Foucault, 1972), laying the foundation to mention about co-operatives since the first stone of the grand plan made various co-operatives' clues appeared in other next plans (Table 1), even sometime under different directions.

When shifting to Plan 2 which intrinsically directed along liberalism economics, co-operatives development strategy was still remained but integrated with agriculture scheme. Co-operative reduction clearly appeared in this plan, as a form of agricultural institution which emphasized on agricultural credits and marketing. However, land reforming role, multi-purpose co-operative and co-operative laws improvement were also concentrated.

Under the exploration of Plan 3, more integrated approach, co-operatives development strategy was dominated under agricultural and irrigational scheme. Urgently organized multi-purpose co-operatives in irrigation and land reformed areas were required. Still as an agricultural institution, more business capacities were also supported.

Plan 4, the first plan which realized the poverty and environment problems, co-operatives could not get more roles than state's agricultural development tool. In this angle, co-operative structure improvement, more closely supervised by government officers and large credit for co-operatives were suggested.

Along Plan 5, with exports and employment growth along the new inspiration of being semi-industrial country, people-oriented in rural development was mentioned. However, the co-operative roles here were farmer's bargaining increasing especially in demoded rural areas. Here, co-operatives were pushed as an institution in rural communities. Supervised credit for single- crop production, co-operative integration for production and marketing benefits were required.

Plan 6, increasing her competitive potentials in international market, linked to more efficient management of agricultural institutions and co-operatives which were referred as state-support-organized institutions. The important strategy was still around production and marketing circle.

Plan 7, concerning to sustainable development, the most of co-operatives strategy was under the direction of economic growth stability. To make sure that state provident went through in-hand of the targeted farmers, information development and management training for co-operative staff was necessary. Furthermore, even co-operatives not directly mentioned, it seemed that the state gave more importance roles of the farmers' group in irrigation planning and maintenance.

Table 1 *Co-operative Development Strategy beneath The Specific Plan in The National Plan*

Plan Direction	Specific Plan	Co-operative Development Strategy
<p><i>Plan 1</i></p> <p>Investment-orient and increasing Gross national Income and quantity of agricultural production</p>	<p>Co-operatives : The second special branch of development</p>	<p>Training co-operative officers. Primary education in the co-operatives located areas. To expand commodity market. Efficient production with more irrigation and fertilizer. To cooperate with the governors in local development</p>
<p><i>Plan 2</i></p> <p>Liberalism Economic with private-sector-oriented</p>	<p>Agriculture and Co-operatives : Farmer Institution</p>	<p>Top-down primary co-operative and federation organizing classified along land co-operatives, commerce and savings co-operatives with quantitative target determined. Supporting with external loan for potential co-operatives. Multi-purpose co-operative stores. Emphasizing on agricultural credit and marketing.</p>
<p><i>Plan 3</i></p> <p>Export subsidies and decreasing income gap</p>	<p>Agriculture and Irrigation : Strengthen Farmer Institution</p>	<p>To promote multi-purpose agricultural co-operatives. Co-operative merging for economy of scale. To expand land co-operatives limitation. To support The Co-operative League of Thailand (CLT.) especially in training.</p>
<p><i>Plan 4</i></p> <p>Economic growth and poverty reduction</p>	<p>Intensive Agricultural Development : Agricultural development in irrigation areas</p>	<p>Academic and financial supporting for co-operative system flexibility. Credit enlargement and raising co-operative management potentials to reduce middle-men's power on commodities.</p>

Table 1 (To be Continued)

National Plan Direction	Specific Plan	Co-operative Development Strategy
<p><i>Plan 5</i></p> <p>Semi-industrial country with financial economic stability</p>	<p>Grouping Extension in Rural Institution</p>	<p>More efficient credit management through controlled group and single-crop determined areas. Grouping many farmer institutions into agriculture co-operatives.</p>
<p><i>Plan 6</i></p> <p>Increasing competitive potentials for better income and quality of life</p>	<p>Rural Development : Increasing of management efficiency</p>	<p>To solve agricultural production and marketing problems for more potentials in bargaining power and exports. Requirement of subsidies, training and information especially in agricultural sector.</p>
<p><i>Plan 7</i></p> <p>Sustainable Development with stability of economic growth, income distribution, human resource, quality of life, environment and natural resources development</p>	<p>Keeping of Economic Growth Stability : Agricultural and co-operative management improvement</p>	<p>To emphasize on management training for agricultural co-operative's staff. More marketing information and technology for co-operatives.</p>
<p><i>Plan 8</i></p> <p>Human-orient integration</p>	<p>Strengthen Provincial and Rural Development Potentials for Quality of Life Improvement : Participation and community potential in development</p>	<p>Legally status requirement for the benefits of other organizations in private sector on tax decrement</p>

Table 1 (To be Continued)

National Plan Direction	Specific Plan	Co-operative Development Strategy
<p><i>Plan 9</i></p> <p>Strong and quality society with sufficiency economy philosophy</p>	<p>Social-base Strengthening Reinforcement : Community economic development</p>	<p>To encourage co-operative process in community production organizations. To provide co-operative concepts for communities by education mean and curriculum. Increasing entrepreneurship skills for farmers with co-operative principles application.</p>
<p><i>Plan 10</i></p> <p>Middle way for balanced development</p>	<p>Communities and Society Strengthening Based for The Country's Security : Community empowerment process and the stability of community economic</p> <p>Human Ethics Development : For-public-benefits practice</p>	<p>Community source of fund. Saving promotion for occupations and welfare. Production integration on community potentials and strengths. Sound mind establishment activity for youths.</p>

The beginning of new dimension of human-oriented was occurred in Plan 8, while emphasizing on equilibrium development, co-operatives strategic was spread into community economics strengthening strategy. However, with more supported to organize, their importance roles here were only just as a mean for private sector's tax-benefit.

Beneath Plan 9, clearly moving toward sufficiency economy philosophy, co-operatives concepts and principles was raised in the area of sustainable community development with the importance roles of occupations and raising income as well as source of fund for the poor.

Lastly in Plan 10, co-operatives were raised as source of fund in community and various production groups, as primary welfare and alternative savings for the grass-root. Also, more emphasizing on co-operative networks and system development were mentioned. It was interesting that in this plan, co-operative activities were identified as a public-mind mean in human development. Again under how to move the strategies to

implementation, it was specified that co-operatives' laws might be improved especially to make savings in people-sector more convenience.

All of the above showed that some strategic planning for co-operatives were obviously prepared under the national plans' umbrella except in the second half plans cooperatives themselves were just mentioned as a tool for specific direction with not much strategy in details. However, when grasping from the whole of them, the strengths of those development strategies were :

1. Clearly co-operative's strength promotion in economic dimension
2. Pushing co-operative's importance in agricultural economic
3. Importance of Laws as one of key improvement, especially, in co-operative business
4. Special guidelines to support co-operative business competencies
5. Realizing on co-ordination problems among concerned governmental officers
6. Emphasizing co-operative roles toward the poor
7. Raising co-operative's importance on public-mind sphere

There were still some weakness in those strategy which were :

1. Co-operatives' roles reduction
2. Alienate co-operatives from various dimensions of development
3. The more credit for co-operatives probably made the less self-help
4. Co-operative business survival was very necessary but co-operatives in the manner of competitive running might make them lose their primary objective
5. Neglecting about co-operative quality
6. Diminishing co-operative members' sense of belonging by top-down-experiences through the strategies
7. Lack of adding up more possible co-operative's frontier

Nevertheless, along ten national plans, it also revealed that under the complex strategic situations many new discourses around co-operatives' meaning were constructed and reconstructed (Table 2). It could not be denied that those discourses effected to and limited not only the labeled co-operatives but also the co-operatives themselves.

Table 2 *New Discourses around Co-operatives*

National Plan	New Discourses
<i>Plan 1</i>	Cooperate with the governors
<i>Plan 2</i>	Farmer Institution –Registered farmer groups
<i>Plan 3</i>	BAAC’s customer farmer group
<i>Plan 4</i>	Farmers grouping
<i>Plan 5</i>	Occupational group
<i>Plan 6</i>	Voluntary group of farmers
<i>Plan 7</i>	Slum Funding Group , Rural occupational group
<i>Plan 8</i>	Group operated along Co-operative Principles
<i>Plan 9</i>	Community Enterprise, Community Business Network
<i>Plan 10</i>	Grouping for empowerment

Evolution of Co-operative Development Concepts

Along ten national plans, the grand shift of key development concepts could be observed, modernization at the beginning and then holistic equilibrium in the last three plans. All of those mentioned above still consisted that liberal capitalism was the main direction. Even under sufficiency economy penetrated in Thailand dual stream economy, it appeared that co-operatives were viewed and kept along her competitive advantage for wealth.

Inevitably, those large frames dominated and figured co-operative development strategy in the plans. In this manner, when co-operative development concepts were explored under those plans, they were blocked in the most of economic arenas. Unfortunately, the first bud of its social role was cooperating with state governors which caused its image as one of government units. Nevertheless, on the evolution of its concepts, it could be shown that after putting the foundation for co-operative development themselves by concentrating at the key concepts of real co-operatives, the challenge of geographical area development toward public facilities for farmers with quantity-oriented gradually varied and pulled its concepts. Additionally, coping around agriculture production and marketing for more target groups in communities still went on. It might say that only in the last plan, when the human- centered and dynamic holistic development were stretched in, more observably expansion of co-

operative concept within social sector was revealed even only in a dimension of public-mind raising.

Discussion

When co-operatives were used under “Development” frame, being conducted in the specific spheres could limit co-operative potentials as well as blocked them to reveal out the more possible roles. The challenge of co-operative meaning was hidden and impeding many co-operative organizations from the state-meaning-co-operatives occurred. Thereby, provoking any concerned people around the plans to get more understanding about nature and roles of very really co-operatives are necessary. Intensive co-operative training, education and extension must be more concentrated.

However, although the power of the old fashioned “Development” in form and techniques become bate nowadays, the improvement as mentioned above may be not enough. Changing form and techniques with the old abstract set or paradigm could not stipulate different co-operative development strategy than before and vice versa. The deconstruction of them is needed. Thereby, besides more discourse analysis on “Development” itself must be reviewed in order to clearly realize its abstract sides such as its standpoint, concepts and thinking system, the root of remedy which deepened at the crystal of paradigm is also needed, especially at the point of the co-operative development strategy itself, in order to not let the old tea in the new bottle happen again.

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