

Type of Farmer Moving from Their Homes to Farmland; A Case Study in Khon Kean Province, Thailand

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Abstract

This study aimed to explore the type of farmer living in the village and moved from their homes to live in farmland in Khon Kean Province. The study employed both qualitative and quantitative methods to explain the type of movement among villagers in community to their farmlands. Result of this study revealed that the farmers moved to farmland with two types following; i) lived on the farmland permanently (1.3% of all villagers), ii) lived in the farmland non-permanently. Especially, living in the farmland non-permanently due to them moved to the season such as season of growing, and moved to the farmland semi-permanent (1.9 % of all villagers).

Keywords: Type of Farmer, Farmer living in farmland

1. Introduction

Northeast Thailand (Isan) encompasses 170,218 Km², most of the area is rolling in term of topography and some area is a part of Mae Kong Basin (MKB). However, due to its socioeconomic conditions and hot, dry climate, its output lags behind that of other parts of the country. Isan is Thailand's poorest region [1]. In addition, rainfall in the northeast averages between 1200 and 1300 millimeters per year [2] and farmers grow agricultural products that they can produce in

the rainy season [3]. Agricultural production in the northeast has changed in 1961 when the government set up a policy to expand agriculture in that region. Afterward, farmers in the northeast started to grow cassava, sugarcane, and para rubber [4].

In Isan community is an agricultural community [5]. This community has relied solely on agriculture for a long time. Isan's farmers were mainly subsistence farmers, but if they had excess produce, they would sell on the market [6]. Unfortunately, Isan's geography is rolling and its soil type is sandy loam. Thus, its soil will not store much water during the rainy season, which later it causes droughts. This drought situation causes many farmers to migrate to a new area with enough fertility to support their agricultural needs [7]; [8]). Isan's farmers are also moving for many other reasons, such as overpopulation. There is currently not enough land per capita even for subsistence farming [9]. Other reasons are recent epidemics and the desire to live securely from robbers who seek agriculture products [10]; Dixon, [9]. The migrants move to new a land and form relative cluster; that is they will move to stay close to their relatives and their families. There are many reasons why farmers will settle in a group, and the settlement's culture depends on the geographical character of the settled area. In addition, Isan families believe in karma, which helps them to maintain kinship [10].

In the Preliminary surveys 2007 seem farmer have moving from their homes in the villages to live on their own farmland. Affected to a research question was “How many type farmer who move from their homes in the village to live on their own farmland”

2. Objective

The study type of farmer move from their homes in the village to live on their own farmland, so this research was case study in Khon Kaen province, Thailand.

3. Methodology

This research focused on the farmers who moved from the village to live on farmland designed for agricultural activities and focused on their activities when they move to work and stay on the farm. This study’s researchers used both qualitative and quantitative methods for collecting data by semi-structured interview [11], time line, farm mapping, transactions and questionnaires for a combined observation.

Study sites

This research will take place in the Khon Kaen province, Thailand. However, the study site was stretched across 11 villages in 5 districts, including Phon, Banpai, Wangnoi, Nongsonghong and Wangyai. (Figure 1)



Figure 1 Study site in Khon Kaen province, Thailand.

Sampling

This research collected data from 32 farmers who moved from the residential area of village to live on their farmland for made agriculture, and employed a key informant (KI) in 11 villages for understanding the context and activities of the community.

Scope of This Study

Farmer is homestead in farmland to have agriculture activity only don’t conclude to other activities.

Time to studies during May 2008 - July 2009

Content will be focus in reason farmer decision making to live on their own farmland.

4. Results

Land use of villages

Data from surveys and interviews with the key informant breaks down the land use in villages into 3 types: residential, public and agriculture. Residential areas in villages are cluster settlements and are located on roadsides. Farmers use the public land for livestock grazing, collecting natural food, and a believe zone (*Phae Phuta*). There are three types of agricultural are as depending on their geography: 1) in the low lands, almost all farming activity is paddy fields; 2) upland, almost all farmers will grow cash crops like cassava, sugar cane, eucalyptus, etc., and 3) rolling land allows farmers to grow paddy fields or cash crops.

Indicators of Farmer who live in own farmland

The indicators of farmer living on farmland were considered on construction of house building on farmland and activity of agriculture that was presented in Table 1.

Table 1 indicators of type of farmer who live on own farmland

Indicators	Farmers type		
	Permanence	Non-permanence	
		Seasonal	Semi-permanence
House	Big hut that size was similar to home	hut	Big hut that size was similar to home
Toilet	Have a toilet	Have not a toilet	Have or have not a toilet
Number of member live in farmland	Husband-wife, grandfather-grandmother or all families	1-2 person	1 person
Places of main food	In the farmland	market in the village	market in the village/in the farmland
Place of cooking	In the farmland	House in village	House in village
Time of residential	All day	Sometime to have activities in farmland	Sometime to have activities in farmland
Frequency to connect community in residential village	2-5 time/week	-	Every day
Activities in farmland	Whole day	Sometime to have activities in farmland	Free time activities in village
Main income	Cash crop	Employee	Cash crop and Employee
Regular income	Production in farm	Employee	Production in farm and employee
Characters of farmland	Upland	Paddy field	Upland

Classifying type of farmer who live on their own farmland

When getting characteristic information of the farmer who lived on their own farmland. These information were compared between living permanence and non-permanence that presented in **Table 2**.

Table 2 The comparison of characteristic of farmer in each from activities.

Farmers type		
Permanence	Non-permanence	
	Seasonal	Semi-permanence
Hut can be changed to be house	A small hut can live a short time	Possibility to develop for long stay in farmland
Hut or house is permanent to live	Will stay in farmland 2-3 time/year, so reason of live for made some activity for agriculture only.	Will be employee everyday in nearly area
Can develop being big hut or home, and effect having number house census and electricity		Raising fashion cow
Have agriculture activity in farmland whole year.		
Have regular income from production on farm		
Have cooking activity in farmland everyday		

Farmer type living in Farmland

Farmer who lived on farmland about 3.2% of villagers in the all studied household, Farmer's was homestead in farmland has 2 types;

1) Living permanence (1.3% of villages all) is farmer can maintain themselves in farmland and home in farmland and can support to their living activities.

2) Living non-permanence is has 2 styles (1.9% of villages all);

2.1 Seasonal is farmer stays in farmland during having farmland activity such as plowing paddy or harvesting.

2.2 Semi-permanence is farmer stays in farmland but has possibility to go back to their homes in the villages or improve to live permanently as well.

5. Conclusion

The study on type of farmer moving from their homes to village for living on their own farmland, that is a case study in Khon Kean Province, aimed to explore the type of farmer moving from their homes in the village to live on their own farmland. Result of this study revealed that indicators of farmer living in farmland were considered on construction of house building on farmland and various agricultural activities. Thus this study can classify that type of farmer movements consisted of 2 types following i) they moved to the season such as season of growing, and ii) moved to the farmland semi-permanent (1.9 % of all villagers).

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