

**The Role in Local Development of the Elderly Tai-Yuan Sikhio:  
Case Study of Ban-Nua Community, Sikhio District Nakhon  
Ratchasima, Thailand.**

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**ABSTRACT**

This research aimed to study general information relating socioeconomic condition household population and the role in local development of the elderly of Tai-Yuan ethnic group, Sikhio District in Ban-Nua Community, Sikhio sub district, Sikhio district, Nakhon Ratchasima province which there have been ancient community and they have been activities for local development, care of household chores, acting as their descendants' consultant. Research population were 100 elderly of Tai-Yuan ethnic group, Sikhio District form 240 households in Ban-Nua Community, Sikhio sub district, Sikhio district, Nakhon Ratchasima province. Research method was an interview base on a structured questionnaire.

The results of this study revealed that :

1. The majority of the elderly are females. Most of them have completed their primary education. Before they were 60, most of them made their living from agriculture, being employees, trade and being government employees. At present, 46 percent of the elderly have jobs, 52 percent were unemployed and 2 percent do not answer the question. Their monthly income ranges from 1,001 to 4,000 baht. Most of them have underlying disease, but still can do their daily routines like taking a bath, having meals by themselves, going shopping, doing exercise and driving vehicles.

2. The study of the role of the elderly in local development showed that they are in charge of household affairs, bringing up their descendants, taking care of household chores and acting as their descendants' consultant. Relating their participation in community's activities, it was found out that 38 percent of the elderly can conduct economic activities, make their living and be self sustainable. 51 percent are members in various groups in community like the elderly club, artificial flower craft group and so on, and 7 percent of them are group leaders or former group leaders. 63 percent have agricultural skills, 33 percent are capable of providing product and service, 12 percent keep transferring local wisdom, 94 percent maintain their local tradition (33 percent of whom by participating Tai-Yuan traditional activities and acting as the mentors for local activities like traditional Tai-Yuan fabric weaving, making wood flowers for Buddhist cremation, making sweetmeat as well as local dishes, making composed fertilizer, wicker weaving, making herbal juice and so on) Relating their participation in political activities, 92 percent always cast their votes during local election, 86 percent always cast their votes during national election, 96 percent are not members of any political party, 3 percent are local representatives, but no one is national representative.

Keywords: Tai-yuan sikhio elderly, local development, local tradition

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Results from the study of size and tendency of Thai elderly in 1960 showed the number of 60-year old citizen at 1.5 million, resulted in estimate 5.4 percent of the total population. The number of this elderly increased to 7.6 million in 2009, resulted in 11.5 per cent of the total population. This situation has led Thailand to be ageing society in 2009 and structure of senior citizen, aged more than 80 years is found with more dramatic increase in size and proportion than other age groups. Foundation of Thai Gerontology Research and Development Institute (2010).

Expansion size of Thai elderly tends to rise continually and this may lead to social problem in preparing the health care program for this group. On the other hand, elderly is found to be potential group that full of long term experience, and be skillful and beneficial in the professions for the next generation. The example is Brain Bank Project, organized by National Economics and Social Development Board and Knowledge Network for Elderly in the Community by Bureau of Empowerment for Older Persons. The Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing.(2010).

Planning for quality of life for elderly is the most urgent mission, particularly in the group of regional elderly that has a significant role in building family, community and nation. This role of elderly is also explained by Sikhio community leader, Nakhon Ratchasima, Somporn Pimubon, Mayor of Nongnamsai municipality that “ elderly has a significant role in taking care of all children in the family because their parents need to work outside and many also move to work in other areas”.

Role theory explains that age is a significant component that indicates the role for each person. Adapting to elderly depends on self-acceptance. In each lifetime, creating social role to substitute the lost one depends on social role and self-value. Additionally, activity theory refers that persons with a large number of activities are more adapting to change with more satisfaction in life and are happy to live. Ministry of Public Health: Department of Health (2014). This corresponds with Bose, A.B. (1992, 1993) that elderly can participate in many community activities if they adapt their role to both givers and takers.

Malinee Wongsith and others (1996) studies opinions of community leaders at Maerim District, Chiang Mai on problems of needs in community elderly. She found that the problems were health, economic, lack of accompany or they were left without caring which led to mental problems. The leader thought that elder needed major helps in healthcare, accompany to the hospital, supply for medicine and sports instruments, love, caring and job opportunity. The activities which organized by elderly were merit making, income finding activity and Songkran that empowers elderly. The family members prepared holy water to sprinkle on their elderly hands and asking for blessing.

Watana and Paranee (1995) refer to role of elderly in pre-industrial period in expanding family structure that elderly was highly respected as counselor in family activity. They were valuable persons who were skillful and experienced. They transferred the knowledge to the next generation. However, their role was decreased in industrial society from expanded to nucleus or modern family that the elderly did not have a role as the head of a family.

This research aims to study elderly in Tai-Yuan Sikhio, ethnic group with self identity and history, and they migrated from the north of Thailand to Nakhon Ratchasima in the reign of Rattanakosin period. Jaruwan Kampeth(1994). The objectives of this research are 1) to study general information on socioeconomic and population of Tai-Yuan Sikhio elderly at Ban-Nua community, Copyright © 2014 Society of Interdisciplinary Business Research ([www.sibresearch.org](http://www.sibresearch.org))

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Sikhio Sub-district, Sikhio District, Nakhon Ratchasima, and 2) to study role in local development of the elderly Tai-Yuan Sikhio, Sikhio District, Nakhon Ratchasima.

## **2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Population and sample**

The population is 100 elderly Tai-Yuan Sikhio at Ban-Nua community, Sikhio District, Nakhon Ratchasima from 240 families.

### **2.2 Data collection instrument**

The instrument for data collection is questionnaires that consist of two parts; part 1: General information about socioeconomic and population of elderly Tai-Yuan Sikhio; part 2: Role in local development of the elderly Tai-Yuan Sikhio.

### **2.3 Data collection procedure**

Data is collected by interview and note-taking from the questionnaires.

### **2.4 Data analysis**

Data from 100 questionnaires from elderly at Ban-Nua community, Sikhio District, Nakhon Ratchasima is analyzed by statistics, frequency, and percentage with SPSS program.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS**

### **3.1 Results of general information on socioeconomic and population of Tai-Yuan Sikhio elderly at Ban-Nua community, Sikhio Sub-district, Sikhio District, Nakhon Ratchasima**

3.1.1 It was found that majority of elderly was females at 65 percent, males at 35 per cent. Majority of them studied at school at 83 percent and studied at the temple at 16 percent. Their occupations before reaching the age of 60 were agriculture at 34 percent, workers at 29 percent, sellers at 16 percent, and government officers at 3 percent and others (housewife-husband, carpenters,

3.1.2 Majority of elderly were unemployed at 52 percent, worked at 46 percent, including sellers, housewife-husband, workers, agriculturists, carpenters, builders and others with no reply at 2 percent.

3.1.3 Their average incomes were between 1,001-4,000 baht/month at 45 percent, 600-1,000 baht/month at 27 percent, 4,100-10,000 baht/month at 16 percent, more than 10,000 baht/month at 7 percent, and no answers at 5 percent.

3.1.4 There was 32 percent of who did not have any personal health problem, 38 per cent had 1 personal health problem, 25 percent had more than one personal health problem. Majority of health problems were high blood pressure and diabetes, and no answers at 5 per cent

3.1.5 Majority of them were able to complete 4 routine activities (bathing, eating, shopping and exercising) at 55 percent, 43 of them were able to complete more than 4 routine activities with addition of driving, 1 per cent was not able to perform any routine activities and 1 percent did not reply.

### 3.2 Results of role in local development of the elderly

3.2.1 Activities in the household showed that 36 percent of elderly were able to perform 3 activities namely, teaching family members, taking care of the house and being counselors. 30 percent of them were able to perform 2 activities namely, teaching family members and taking care of the house, 27 percent of them were able to perform 1 activity namely, teaching family members 6 percent of them were not able to do any activity and 1 percent did not reply.

3.2.2 On the adequacy of income, it was found that 23 percent of the elderly were able to financially support themselves, 15 percent of the elderly were able to financially support themselves and family, 1 percent was not able to support themselves and 60 percent did not reply.

3.2.3 Membership of elderly group, it was found that 51 percent of elderly were members of different community group, whereas 49 did not join the group. Most of the elderly joined elderly group at 39 percent.

3.2.4 Group leaders were found at 7 percent.

3.2.5 In agriculture capability, elderly who were capable in rice farming were found at 44 percent and 13 percent of elderly was capable in rice farming and agronomy, 5 percent of them were capable in rice farming, agronomy and horticulture, and 1 percent did not indicate any preference.

3.2.6 Productivity and service, 33 percent was able to produce a number of local products and services namely local cloth, Tai-Yuan cloth, local foods, artificial flowers which were used during a funeral, Thai massage, herbal drinks and 12 percent of them was able to transfer local wisdom.

3.2.7 Tradition preservation, 94 percent of elderly preserved local traditions of Tai-Yuan and Tai-Korat, local ethnic group. The traditions were merit making, ordaining monk and novice, and Songkran. Tai-Yuan traditions also participated Hae Tan Kwan Kao parade in Songkran, and Kratong parade in Loy Kratong festival. 33 percent of elderly participated in Tai-Yuan tradition.

3.2.8 Local election, 92 percent of elderly voted every time in the local election, 3 percent missed 1 to 4 times for voting, 4 percent did not vote more than 4 times and 1 percent has never voted.

3.2.9 National election, 86 percent of elderly voted every time for the national election, 6 percent missed 1 to 4 times for voting, 6 percent has never voted and 2 percent did not reply.

3.2.10 Membership of political party, 96 percent of elderly were not the members of any party, 1 percent of them were the members and 3 percent did not reply.

3.2.11 Local and national representatives, it was elderly who were in the positions of president of Sikhio Cultural Center, president of Sikhio Elderly club, president of Ban-Nua community and no elderly acted as national representative.

#### 4. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Results from general information socioeconomic and population indicated that majority of elderly was females at 65 percent, males at 35 percent. They studied at school at 83 percent and studied at the temple at 16 percent. Their occupations before reaching the age of 60 were agriculture at 34 percent, workers at 29 percent, sellers at 16 percent, government officers at 3 percent, and others at 18 percent. Their average incomes were between 1,001-4,000 baht/month at 45 percent, 600-1,000 baht/month at 27 percent, 4,100-10,000 baht/month at 16 percent. However, 32 percent did not have any personal health problem, 63 percent had at least one personal health problem. They were able to complete 4 routine activities (bathing, eating, shopping and exercising) at 55 per cent, 43 percent was able to complete more than 4 routine activities with addition of driving and 1 percent was not able to perform any routine activities.

Results from role in local development of the elderly showed that 93 percent of them was able to perform at least 1 household activities namely teaching family members, taking care of the house and being counselors and 6 per cent of them was not able to perform any activities. Then 23 percent was able to financially support themselves, 15 percent was able to financially support themselves and family and 1 per cent was not able to support themselves. 51 percent showed the number of elderly who were members of different community groups, whereas 49 percent did not join in any groups. Most of the elderly joined elderly group at 39 percent, 7 percent was found as group leaders, 62 percent was capable in rice farming, agronomy and horticulture at least one type, 33 percent of elderly was able to produce a number of local products and services and 12 percent was able to transfer local wisdom. For the local traditions, 94 percent of them preserved local traditions of Tai-Yuan and Tai-Korat, local ethnic group and 33 percent of elderly participated in Tai-Yuan tradition. For the local election, 92 percent of elderly voted every time in the local election, 86 percent voted every time in the national election. For the membership, 96 percent of elderly were not the members of any parties. 3 percent of them were the local representatives, and no elderly acted as national representative.

##### **Recommendations**

(1) Preservation of traditions of Tai-Yuan should be supported or the unity of all Tai-Yuan ethnic group. Cooperation in the tradition can bring harmony and happiness to our community. The support and promotion of the unique tradition of Tai-Yuan publicly can be commoditized as the tourism product that brings both income and self-respect to Tai-Yuan group in the future.

(2) Elderly in Tai-Yuan Sikhio should be empowered to improve their quality of life and their careers by arranging activities and acknowledging them about health. All activities should be revealed for everyone in the community.

(3) Elderly should be mentally supported in different occasions, for example, giving certificate in activity participation.

(4) Activities for Tai-Yuan Sikhio adolescents should not be only arranged and supported to preserve tradition and culture, but creating sufficient development in human, community and nation in the future also.

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