

The Communities of Lottery Sellers: Socio-economic and Cultural Changes in Isan, Thailand

Weerasak Phuksatewet¹, Songkoon Chantachon¹ & Sastra Laoakka¹

¹ Faculty of Cultural Science, Mahasarakham University, Thailand

Correspondence: Weerasak Phuksatewet, Faculty of Cultural Science Mahasarakham University, Muang District, Maha Sarakham 44000, Thailand. Tel: 66-43-742-27. E-mail: weestyle_@hotmail.co.th

Received: March 15, 2014 Accepted: April 10, 2014 Online Published: June 26, 2014

doi:10.5539/ach.v6n2p215

URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5539/ach.v6n2p215>

Abstract

The qualitative research was carried out in Amphoe Wang Saphung, Loei Province; Amphoe Kranuan, Khon Kaen Province; and Amphoe Kaedam, Maha Sarakham Province between October 2012-April 2013 using a survey, observation, interview, focus group discussion and workshop. The 110 sample were divided into groups of 30 key, 50 casual, and 30 general informants respectively. The analysis was based on the research objectives using a triangulation technique and done descriptively. Historically, the people who lived at Amphoe Wang Saphung began to sell lotteries in 1984. Twelve years later, such part-time job spread to Amphoe Kranuan, Khon Kaen Province and Amphoe Kaedam, Maha Sarakham Province. Currently, the lottery sellers at the three villages chose to sell lotteries in Bangkok, tourist areas, such as Rayong and Nakhon Ratchasima Provinces. Some decided to sell theirs in their own Province. Each month, they left their homes twice: the second and the fourth weeks. They often went in groups using pickup trucks, vans or buses. If they worked in their own Province, they often used motorcycles. The problems encountered included car accidents, cheats, arrests due to selling lotteries overprice, and school children skipping classes or drug-addicted.

For socio-economic and cultural changes, the lottery sellers had improved their lives materially due to their income earning from selling lotteries. They could afford what they needed, such as land, home appliances, and building jobs in their villages. They had new friends and established social network. Young people chose to marry with outsiders. The people set up lottery selling groups of volunteers. They took health care to political representatives, and village leadership.

Keywords: communities of lottery sellers, socio-economic changes, cultural changes

1. Introduction

Most Thai people, directly or indirectly, draw some income from their jobs. Government and non-government jobs need qualified employees having education and training background, such as teachers, doctors, nurses, traders, and lawyers. Private business owners had to invest and manage on their own marketing their products. Latterly, marketing competition was strong. The business owners had to run their business carefully.

Lotteries had been with Thai society for a very long time. The Thai people, regardless of status and income, liked to gamble by buying lotteries.

Lotteries were first introduced to Thai people during King Rama the Third and were called Khor kho or A.B. lotteries. The Chinese people who lived in Thailand during that time were authorized to set up a lottery house and collected taxes for the government. The lotteries were sold and drawn for winners twice daily morning and evening (The Office of the Government Lotteries, 2002).

Sua Pha Larna Baht Lotteries were authorized to be sold for fund collection supporting Sua Pha Asasamak (Wild Tigers Volunteers). One million lotteries were made for each simple drawing method for winners. The lottery committee decided the prices of the winning numbers. The lotteries were sold every three months; each ballot was sold for 1 baht. In 1934 the government issued the lotteries to be sold to support municipalities. For each season, 500,000 lottery ballots were sold, 1 baht each.

The government lotteries took an active role in Thailand in 1997 when the country faced a serious economic downturn; millions of people in agricultural sector experiencing the falling of crop price. The villagers, mostly farmers could merely make their end's meet and were suffering economically. Hundreds of them turned to

lottery selling from which they could accumulate extra income to support their families. Such amount of income could make a difference for them. They could improve their lives and their communities (Kitrenue, 1998). Many of them could make between 10,000-20,000 baht per month. In Amphoe Wang Saphung Loei Province alone, there were 9,481 persons engaging in the lottery selling. Their annual average income was 23,111 baht (The Statistics Office, Loei Province, 1999). The money circulated in Loei Province alone was about 30 million baht per month. The money helped was used for improvement of economy, infrastructure, education, housing, and other necessary facilities for daily living. Some villagers became lottery dealers themselves reducing the role of the middlemen completely.

Many lottery sellers in the rural areas where the research was carried out agreed that they changed from traditional farming to lottery selling. Many had their homes built using modern construction materials and equipped with electric appliance, such as television, washing machines, rice cookers, and more. Many owned cars (Thiamthan, 2000).

As rural lottery selling villages became urbanized, market economy there was strong. Many families rented their rice fields to other people. For them money, not rice, came first. As the market economy replaced folk tradition, the tradition of neighbors helping neighbors almost disappeared. Such was replaced by wage labor and profit making. As the lottery sellers were away from homes, the elderly people and children were left to live by themselves. The traditional way of life was not being kept properly and/or transmitted to young generations. People found that they had less time for public participation and cooperation. They had to adjust their time so that they could do more for their own community economically and culturally.

2. Objectives

- To study the historical background of the communities of the lottery sellers in Isan, Thailand.
- To study the current circumstances and socio-economic and cultural problems of the communities of lottery sellers in Isan, Thailand.
- To study the socio-economic and cultural change of the communities of lottery sellers in Isan, Thailand.

3. Approach

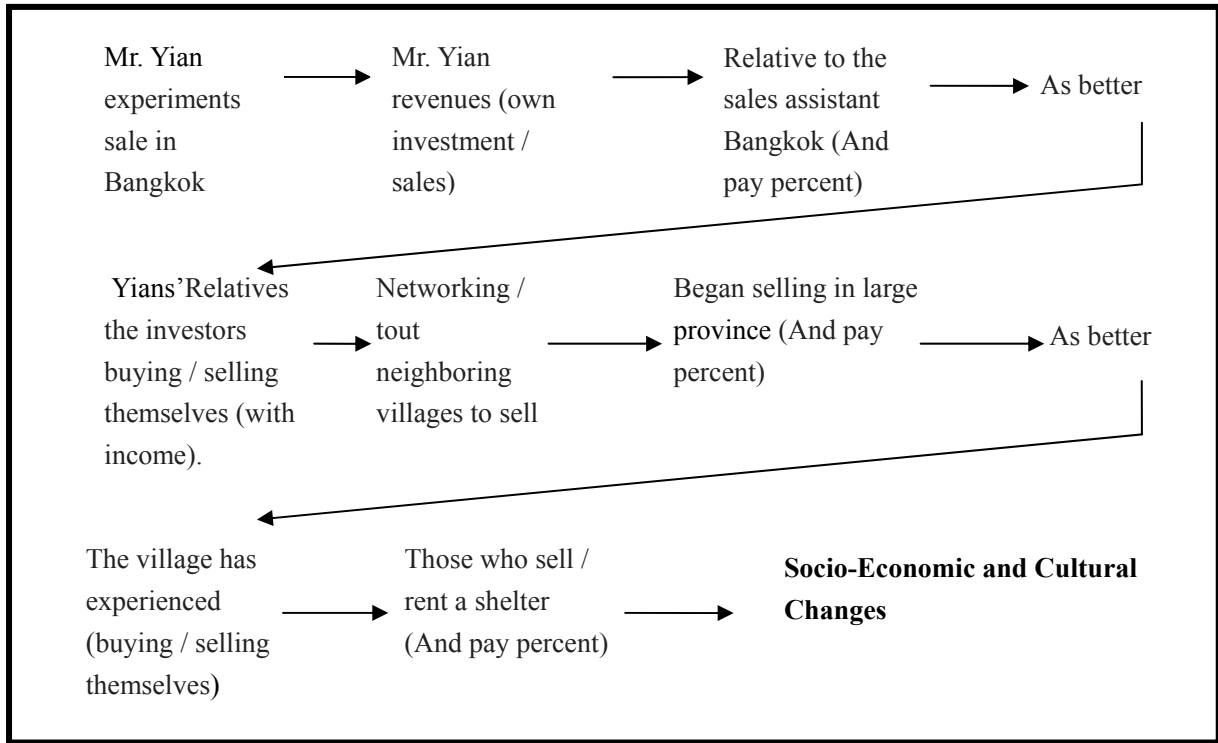
This qualitative cultural research was carried out in three Provinces in Isan, Thailand : Loei, Khon Kaen, and Maha Sarakham. The 110 informants included 30 key, 50 casual, and 30 general informants respectively. The field data were collected using a basic survey, participant observations, interviews, and focus group discussions. The data were rechecked for reliability using a triangulation technique. The analysis was based on the research objectives and presented descriptively.

4. Results

4.1 *Upon the Historical Background of Communities of Lottery Sellers in Isan region, Thailand*

The study found that members, of the villages chosen for the study had left their former villages to settle where they could live near or have fertile land for crop planting and they could stay away from floods.

The people living at Ban Phone Ngam, Amphoe Wang Saphung, Loei Province began to sell lotteries in 1984.[Figure1] A village named Yian received some advice about selling lotteries as a profession. He tried doing it himself and could make some income from it. He then told his relatives how to go about doing it and made a reasonable income. It wasn't long before they all agreed that selling lotteries was a decent job and their lives could be improved significantly. Other people from the same village and worked in Bangkok had returned home to begin selling lotteries. From then on the job of selling lotteries spread from village to village, Tambon (Sub-District) to Tambon, and to nearby Provinces. Motorcycles, pickup trucks or buses were used as appropriate transportation. The numbers of people who took up lottery selling job at the beginning in Loei, Khon Kaen, and Maha Sarakham Provinces were 143, 158, and 82 respectively. [Figure 2] Within each Province, some lottery sellers became lottery dealers themselves. Most lottery sellers sold lotteries in cash; some did it in installments.



—————> Show the link to the sale of lottery in Isan, Thailand

Figure 1. The networking lottery sellers in Isan of Thailand



Figure 2. People in Isan leaving for sell lottery by car ren

4.2 For Current Circumstances of the Lottery Selling Communities in Isan Region, Thailand

The study found that the lottery selling was based on daily basis carried out within their village, Tambon, and Amphoe. For selling theirs in faraway places, such as Bangkok and other tourist-based areas, they spent 2-week long periods monthly (the second and the fourth weeks) from home (Figure 3-4).



Figure 3. Lottery seller by motorcycle



Figure 4. Lottery seller bicycle

For social, economic, and cultural problems, these were what the study found. 1) About half of all lottery sellers spent about 2 weeks working from home monthly 2) Some of the lottery sellers gave up rice farming by renting their land to fellow villagers. Some hired wage-labors to doing their rice planting for them. 3) If both parents went selling lotteries together, they often left their children to care for themselves. Many school children did not do well in school and were not well disciplined. Many skipped classes and some used drugs. 4) Some of the lottery sellers who were married, broke up due to gambling, adulteries, quarrels over money spending, and family responsibility. 5) Debt and over-spending due borrowing money to buying lotteries for customers twice a month. Some could not pay back their loans with 1-2% interest rate. 6) The people living in the communities lacked social participation. In the past, they took part in community activities regularly, such as Bang Fai and Songkran festivals. The communities held their activities with limited funding. Currently, the lottery sellers had brought new ideas concerning how their communities could be integratedly improved. Many of them provided adequate funding to support community activities. 7) Due to the accumulation of wealth, directly or indirectly, people still were running after money making of lottery selling regardless of family structure, warm-hearted and well-disciplined family members. Due to leaving their village often, some lottery sellers could not play important role in their village despite their ability and experiences.

4.3 For the Socio-economic and Cultural Change of the Communities of Lottery Sellers in Isan, Thailand

The study found the followings:

For social change, it was observed that the people in the given villages did not help one another as much as they did in the past due to money making, money lending, and time spent outside their community. However, assistance among relatives was still in fact. On thing that was clear among the lottery sellers was a large donation for public and cultural events. As a result, the given communities had enough money for various social and cultural events, such as Khathin, New Year's Celebration, Songkran, and sports. They also set up Community Fund with a turnover of approximately 40 million baht. The Savings Bank provided assistance and guidance needed. The lottery sellers built social and economic network linking the small communities to the larger ones. (Figure 5-6)



Figure 5. Home built from the money



Figure 6. Church in the community was saving from the sale of lottery the sale of lottery

The economic change taken place in the communities of lottery sellers could be observed in several areas. The families involved in the lottery sellers in Maha Sarakham, Loei, and Khon Kaen were 82, 143, and 158 respectively. Each family earned a monthly income of about 5,000-20,000 baht. The families of the lottery sellers had enough money to spend in everyday life, such as paying debt, sending children to schools in towns, buying household electric appliances, cars, houses, pieces of land, and establishing new businesses. Some families invested in rubber and Eucalyptus plantations. One thing stood out clearly was that people knew how to make money from decent job and used such money wisely and profitably. They could make their own decision whether to use wage labor or own labor for growing rice or invest in other businesses, such as money lending and car rent. The selling lotteries were used as an economic development starting point. They also learned how to create new careers within their own social and cultural context.

On the cultural change of the communities, the study found that the lottery sellers had more voice in holding traditional and cultural events. As a group, they often offered a large sum of money for annual traditions held in their communities, such as, New Year's Day, Songkran, Makha Bucha and Vesak Days. They also supported schools, village temples. The group put a great emphasis on education and culture. They supported schools and temples in every way they could so that their children could be educated and they had a temple where they could pray and carry on their Buddhist traditions all year round.

5. Discussion

The discussion covered the historical background, current circumstances and problems, and socio-economic and cultural change of the communities as a result of lottery selling

5.1 Historical Background of the Communities of the Lottery Sellers in Isan, Thailand

Historically, the three communities under study were traditional farming villagers. The criteria used for village settlement were high ground surrounded by water resources and fertile plains suitable for rice cultivation. Besides rice, the farmers grew sugar cane and cassava. They also raised cows for extra income. As Buddhist communities, the villagers held Buddhist traditions and lived happily. They always tried to solve their problems and looked for ways to improve quality of life. They also moved along and adapted to outside influences continuously. Such was in agreement with Chusorn (1995) that society always changed due to internal and external influences.

5.2 The Current Circumstances and Socio-economic and Cultural Problems of the Communities of the Lottery Sellers in Isan, Thailand

The study found that family members, mostly women, actively took part in the lottery selling. Some did that as their regular jobs. With their group leaders, the lottery sellers often left their village twice a month: 9-11 and 23-25. Each period took about 7-8 days. For those villagers who stayed at home, they often found things to do

around their homes or in the fields planting crops, such as rice, beans, and vegetables. The income generated from lottery selling was higher than the amount they made at home and from the rice field.

The problems found in the communities selling lotteries were various, such as drug problems among youth, broken home due to marital separation and divorces, loan fraud, labor shortage for rice planting and home building construction, and being arrested for selling lotteries over set prices. Overall, the people tried to solve their problems. Such was in agreement with Chongkongkiat (1990) and Sapsaman (2003) that as communities encountered internal and external problems, they often looked for ways to solve them. A project called, "self-help" was put forward mainly to overcome economic problems or scarcity of natural resources. Directly or indirectly, the people wanted to achieve and maintain economic stability having a family car, household electric appliances, modern-styled home, and decent income.

5.3 *The Socio-economic and Cultural Changes of the Communities of Lottery Sellers in Isan, Thailand*

The lottery selling people chose their new job of selling lotteries rather than keeping their traditional rice planting. Although some villagers rented their land to other fellow villagers in order to take up a new job of selling lotteries, they all stayed and kept their own homes and earned decent incomes. Many could pay back their loans. Some families invested on rubber and sugar plantation. They could build jobs within their communities. Such was in agreement with Arizpe (1981) and Natsupa (1997) that as the people improved their social and economic value, belief, traditions, occupations, their communities were also strengthened, and finally become self-reliant. Such was in agreement with Chantachon (2000) that the economic structure, to some extent, was shaped by social structure and because of economic stability, people could acquire basic necessity and social and mental improvement.

Acknowledgments

In this the Philosophy of Doctoral studies in the Faculty of Cultural Science, Mahasarakham University. Received financial support from family members. Opportunity to get education and implementation of the co-author Songkoon Chantachon and Sastra Laoakka, who contributed the research article was refined to perfection. And thank those who are involved on a regular basis to monitor the research and the acceptance of the manuscript and providing feedback, peer review or editorial co-counsel, and the editorial board of the Journal to make the article appear to the public of the online world. And finally, thanks to everyone who was involved with assisting in the preparation of the manuscript is accepted, the journal finally get a chance to publish.

References

- Arizpe, L. (1981). The Rural Exodus in Mexican Migration to the United States. *International Migration Review*, 15, 132. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/2545516>
- Chantachon, S. (2000). *Theories of Culture and Society* (pp. 12-14). Maha Sarakham: The Institute of Northeastern Art and Culture.
- Chongkongkiat, T. (1990). *Factors Affecting the Decision to Be Trained by the Professional Women's Groups at the Village Level. Tambon Nai Muang, Ratchaburi* (pp. 11-15). Master's Thesis. Kasetsart University: Bangkok.
- Chusorn, J. (1995). *The Effects of Land use change and towards Economic and Social changes, The Case Study Ban Hin Taek Tambol Na-Gnam Amphoe Manchakiri Khon Kaen Province*. Master's Thesis. Khon Kaen University: Khon Kaen.
- Department of Employment. (2011). *Recruitment Process* (pp. 1-8). Bangkok: The Ministry of Labour and Social Services.
- Kitrenue, P. (1998). *A Report of Economic Self-Reliance of Rural Isan People: Case Study of Lottery Sellers Ban Phone Ngam, Mu 3, Tambon Sai Kao, Amphoe Wang Saphung, Loei Province* (pp. 1-30). Loei: The Office of Community Development.
- Kraiyasit, P. (2011). *Work Culture of Thai People* (Vol. 19, pp. 41-69). Bangkok: Technique.
- National Statistical. (1999). *The Population and Housing Census (Loei Province)* (pp. 15-16). Bangkok: Office of the Prime Minister.
- Natsupa, C. (1997). *Research: Theory of Village Community Economy* (pp. 30-35). Bangko: Creativity.
- Sapsaman, P. (2003). *Documentation of Learning and Development, Performance Management Structure. Institute of Higher Education* (pp. 45-55). Taksin University: Tame Printing.
- The Office of the Government Lottery. (2002) *History of Thai Lottery* (pp. 22-23). Bangkok.

Thiamthan, W. (2000). *Way of Life of the Lottery Sellers: A Case Study of Amphoe Wang Saphung, Loei Province* (pp. 108-130). Bangkok: Office of the National Culture Commission.

Copyrights

Copyright for this article is retained by the author(s), with first publication rights granted to the journal.

This is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/3.0/>).