CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis presents an analysis of 200 families in the Chi-Mun areas in Northeast of Thailand so far as the aspect of Rural Development of the Chi-Mun areas of Thailand is concerned.

Initially, the study tries to understand in details 'Heads of Family' according to their sex, age, marital status, education, occupation and their income. Most of the heads of the families in the Chi-Mun villages are male, in old age (above 80 years), married, having rather a large number of children. Being agriculturists, they have an annual income below 500 bahts. They are poor, hardworking and always toiling hard to earn their bread. Land being not very fertile and Nature not being very cooperative, they have always to lead a life of uncertainty.

The size of family in this area is not small and consists of 6 to 10 members, with about four children or more. The number of sons and daughters is almost equal. It is not nuclear but extended in pattern. Families do not practise family planning as they do not realize the value of small families. They are ignorant as well as traditional so far as the use of contraceptives is concerned. As a result, in spite of poverty they maintain large families and remain poor, year after year.
colleges are very far from their villages. Their dreams of sending children to colleges will be fulfilled only when Thai government will make sincere efforts for the spread of educational institutions in rural areas.

For the present public health conditions of Thailand are improving. There are hospitals, public health stations, and public midwives stations for several areas of the country. One doctor for 17,886 persons on an average is provided with. Most of the Chi-Mun villagers have to see and consult the modern doctor at the public health centre or in their private dispensaries, when they are ill. The knowledge about health which the Chi-Mun villagers get is mostly through the radio programmes. So the radio has great influence on the usual life of the people in these areas. People have come out of the stage of depending on magician or magical practices and quackery to cure their diseases. Health services are reaching the villages through paramedical and nursing staff and as a result people are getting medicines in their neighbourhoods through mobile dispensaries. They purchase those medicines which are prescribed by the doctors.

The society of the Chi-Mun villagers is the agricultural society depending upon agricultural products to carry on living. The major kind of the crops which they prefer to cultivate is 'Rice'; because rice is their staple food and also the important economic crop. Most of the people
in the Mun-Chi areas sell the agricultural products at their farms or houses because they find it more convenient. Villages are still adjusted to the modern markets in cities. They sell to the local dealers who are merchants and middlemen having contacts with bigger agencies. In this system the poor farmers receive immediate cash payment though at low price. In a way they are exploited, but they prefer that. The domestic animals which are important and necessary for the Chi-Mun villagers are buffaloes because they use them to plough their farms and for transporting things from place to place. The occupation which most of the people in those areas have followed so far is agriculture and the system of their agriculture is out of date. This is one of the important reasons for which they want their children to change this occupation. The best profession which they want and select for their children is civil services, because they think that in civil service one receives fixed income, other facilities, safety, authority and respect in society. But at present they consider that for themselves agriculture is the only occupation which can get them the best income. Most of the families can get a monthly income of about 201 to 400 bahts from plants, less than 500 bahts from domestic animals and employment and 180 to 200 bahts from other sources. This is in addition to the income from rice. Thus the annual income of the Chi-Mun villagers can be said
to be about 2,800 bahts from their local farm and different markets. There is a large scope for the farmers to learn new ways of earning income by poultry, piggery and dairy. These subsidiary occupations require capital to invest and knowledge to practice. Since they lack in both these factors they are not still very much in these new occupations. With the help of government's welfare schemes these farmers should improve themselves and also help the development and progress of their country.

The monthly expenditure of the people in these areas is made for food, education, investment and other necessities. Most of them spend less than 500 bahts for food and other necessities and 100 to 200 bahts for education, every month. When we compare the monthly income and monthly expenditure we find that the monthly expenditure is higher than the monthly income. So they have to face economic problem and other problems. So the government has certain policy and programmes of 'Rural Development' to raise the economic standard by adopting different methods. Of these several methods, most people in the Chi-Mun areas expressed their desire for getting encouragement in agricultural production. Their major problem is 'the practice of Green rice advance and Loan interest'. The government has promulgated a law to protect the poor, to stop the practice of green rice advance and to limit the loan interests. The people are advised to borrow money from an Agricultural
Bank. Regarding the practice of Green rice advance and loan interest and borrowing money from the Agricultural Bank, most of the people in the Chi-Mun areas expressed 'bad reaction' because the poor are exploited by the officials and persons distributing loans or recovering interests and the people have to face the problems of poverty as before.

For agricultural tools, most of the Chi-Mun villagers use the animal force in production. So it affects the quality and quantity also of the agricultural products.

Social Problems

The important social problems which the people in the Chi-Mun areas have to face, are the result of Barrenland, Floods, Landless farmers, Economic conditions and Migration.

The barrenness of the Chi-Mun areas relates to the high Plateau and deforestation. So these areas experience lack of the water sources and the resulting problems of the barrenland. The people in these areas do not know the value of forests; so they destroy the forests in several ways. The important cause of deforestation in the Chi-Mun areas is the shifting cultivation and cutting down trees for firewood, etc. With the deforestation in these areas, the barrenness has been increasing. The huge problems which the Chi-Mun villagers have to face every year, are the agricultural problems because of the scarcity of water. The major method of improving the barrenness of the land adopted generally is the lift irrigation in the Chi-Mun rivers.
Besides the barrenness, the Chi-Mun villagers have to face the 'problem of the floods' during the rainy seasons. Their rice cultivation areas were damaged greatly, for example in 1980-81. Then, there were heavy rains; heavy monsoons had flooded the North-East region of Thailand. The Ubonrat Dam could not stop overflowing, the water-gates of the dam were opened. So most of the people thought that this was the important cause which brought about the floods on the Chi-Mun banks in 1980-81. When the flood waters greatly affects the villages, usually the district officers estimated the damages and provided the necessary material aid to people at that time. In spite of the constant danger of floods, people in this area do not leave this land because of poverty and their attachment to this area.

Because of uncertainty they cannot pay proper attention to the other essential faculties of education and are reluctant to accept and practise modern methods of agriculture and to take to small-scale industrialization. They remain ignorant and find it difficult to change themselves. They remain overpowered and submitted to the fanciful hazards of Nature.

The major problems of people in the Chi-Mun areas are concerning the landless agricultural labourers. These agricultural labourers work on the farms and fields of others to earn their living. The important problem regarding these landless workers is their poverty; because of
poverty they are always sunked deep into indebtedness. Besides this economic problem, they have to face social problems. They have very low status in the society. Year after year, they toil hard to earn their food; they have many times to migrate to bigger cities hunting for work. In cities they are put to hard work. They cannot properly look after their family and children.

The Chi-Mun villagers having agriculture as the occupation, depend upon Nature for their living. The Nature is always whimsical and changing all times. So their economic condition also remains uncertain. Because of this fact the people in the Chi-Mun areas remain indebted mostly. The important place for borrowing is the cooperative society in that locality. The major cause of indebtedness is 'poverty' and this poverty causes several other social problems. Marketing agricultural goods is also a problem, because most of those, who fix the price and buy their products are merchants and capitalists in those areas. An unexpected fall in the price of their agricultural products, poses a great problem. In order to solve this problem, most people in the Chi-Mun areas think that the best method is that only one cooperative society of their own should sell all their products. Nowadays, the Government has insured the price of the agricultural products and has encouraged the agriculturists to form agricultural groups and to form cooperative societies.
Regarding the migration of the people in the Chi-Mun areas: when drought or floods occur or after the harvest every year, most of the people are unemployed and they go to work to the other places for earning their bread. The places to which they migrate mostly is Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand. They have to do mostly the physical labour. The major cause of the migration is 'Dryness or Floods'. For solving the most important problems of these areas, the Government should undertake development plans and programmes. Most of the people in the Chi-Mun areas thought and answered that 'Rural Development means the facility in rural communication. Good roads are necessary for speedy communication and development. The other important need is the provision of some employment in the rural areas, especially after the floods. The condition after floods is the most important problem for the people in these areas; the damage done by floods causes several problems, such as poverty, migration, epidemics, etc. So the government should undertake some projects for the prevention of floods.

Villagers do not believe to have a patient cured by the magic process and think that the magic process is nonsense, untrue. They prefer to go to seek or consult the modern doctor when they are ill. Most people in those areas generally practise and believe the law of the Karma in accordance with the Buddhist doctrines because they
believe in the doctrine 'good comes from doing good'.

Most of the people in the Chi-Mun areas are members of village development volunteer core and village scout group because they want to raise their standard of living and to have the good and calm life. They realize the political hindrance and nuisance of refugees from Laos and Cambodia. So they are interested in the political news and become members of the political parties. The political party which they favour mostly is Modern Force Party because they think that this party will be able to respond to their dreams and demands. So most of them supported this party at the time of the last election (during 1978-81) which was the general election of Thailand.

Most of the Chi-Mun villagers depend upon the agricultural product for the living. The most important problem of those areas is the inadequate agricultural products. To increase the output of these products, the Government can undertake some programmes to encourage the agriculturists to use modern method of agriculture. This can be done by putting some incentives before the agriculturists like award of titles to those who succeed to get higher yield from the land by using fertilizers or modern method of agriculture. Similarly, the Government can declare exemption from taxes (for a specific period) on the new land brought under cultivation by the agriculturists. The Government can again advance loan at low interest rates
to the agriculturists for constructing new wells, for buying modern agricultural implements, for starting dairy farms or poultry farms. If the government itself cannot directly do so, it can encourage the establishment of cooperative credit societies of the agriculturists with the aims and objectives of promoting the all-round progress of the agriculturists.

Relieving the rural people of this area from the clutches of the greedy moneylenders, who grab the great share of the people's income, is the most important work. This can be done partly by the government and partly by the social workers, leaders of political parties. Government can pass laws to restrain or to stop the exploitation of the rural people by the moneylenders, but this by itself will not be enough. Social workers, leaders of political parties should whole-heartedly work for the implementation of the government laws. They should also take a lead in the establishment of local cooperative societies, which can provide the rural people some work in the area itself (a kind of relief work) when the villagers are generally forced to leave the area in search of a job elsewhere. This will certainly help to stop the undesirable flow of villagers to the urban areas.

The dull and drab life in the villages is also one of the evils of the rural life. It can be mitigated by establishing community centres at different places in this area. They will be the centres of social and cultural activities
to relieve the boredom of otherwise routine, dull life of the people. These centres can also conduct adult education classes during the off season.

All the government and social activities for the development of the people of this area, as elsewhere can be successful only if the people of this area themselves heartily cooperate with these agencies. The people must be made to realize the importance of the plans and projects which are for their upliftments. Media of mass communication have to be used for the purpose of this social education, to create among the people the social outlook.

One may say that Chi-Mun Area People are still a traditional agricultural rural society which is trying slowly, with the help of government's legal and administrative efforts, to know, accept and adopt new ways of life. This society is in transition but the rate of change seems to be very slow because of lack of education and industrial advancement. Unless and until the area is brought under irrigation tract and subsidiary industries are started, agriculture would not fetch satisfactory earnings for those who are ready to render their manpower for their own betterment. Since they are always under the spell of winning bread and butter and that too for semi-large families, it is futile to expect from them any kind of conscious efforts towards the development of their own health, family life, cultural advancement as well as political awareness. As
long as this part of Thailand remains dependent for food and protection from natural calamities, the Thai society would be facing the danger of social and economic imbalance. As long as people in this area have to migrate to cities for temporary employment there will be a gap between rural-urban continuum. They have to return to their land with the hope to have good crops and enough to eat. As a result they cannot integrate themselves in socio-economic life of Urban Society. Problems of crime, social unrest and economic insecurity emerge from this situation which further lead to social disorganization. From this point of view such developing pockets in Thai society will be a constant danger to social and economic change. Therefore it is very essential to develop these pockets, first in economic terms and simultaneously in terms of educational and social aspects. If the problem of barren land as well as famine is tackled by introducing irrigation facilities, the population will find a stable place to pursue other activities. Those who have to migrate to cities will find employment in rural areas. This will help to increase national production as well as income and will contribute to the general development of communication facilities, such as roads and railways. With the successful implementation of development schemes it is expected that people in the area will be encouraged to take advantage of the schemes. They will accept new ways of cultivating irrigated lands, raise produc-
tion, put in hard work and thus contribute to the development of the area. Change in the methods of agriculture are likely to bring change in the attitudes towards health, education of children, clothes and to accelerate their progress. This change is expected in 'CHI-MUN AREA' in coming future. At the present moment, they are in the process of adoption of new practices and involvement in new aspects of life. Change in people in the long run has made its way!
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