

Abstract

The idea of developing infrastructure as a Government's tool for promoting economic development was first started in the reign of King Rama V. The process had been going on despite the political changes. The critical period of the matter was right after the radical change in politics in 1932, which leaded Thai politics into a new era as well as brought up the rural development issue into the surface. After World War II, Thai politics was so ambiguous and centralised that there were approval of some destructive infrastructure projects which spreaded out impacts towards culture and environment.

The modern public administration has recently played more roles to villages throughout the country through the infrastructure development projects. What happened in villages along the Ping River is a reflection of different use of environment before and after the infrastructure development. The changes in socio-culture in Ban Pak Klong Tai village emerged from both internal and external economic factors of the community. The village then needed to adapt themselves in order to fight for their lives among the new environment and the economic changes since before World War II up to 1964.

Ban Pak Klong Tai is the community located at the downstream of Bhumiphol Dam. The village has been suffering from the current control of the Ping River at Banna village, Tak province as the community earns its living by collecting forest products, buying and selling, and farming for family use. The adaptation of the community relates directly to the region's economic system i.e. the forest concession before 1932. Moreover, there was modification of economic base as to make use of the development of new infrastructure such as roads, water supply, bridges, and modern towns after the year 1932. Although Ban Pak Klong Tai is not seriously affected by the Bhumiphol Dam, some changes do occur especially the economic changes which forced the community to struggle for their livings outside the agricultural circle.