

# SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY AND HEALTHY COMMUNITY

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## ABSTRACT

Thailand has experienced mixed results of development during the past four decades of modernization. While success measured in terms of economic progress has been achieved, improvements in social sector seem to lag far behind. Meanwhile, natural resources and environment have been deteriorated. Balancing the economic growth and environmental sustainability is Thailand's greatest challenge.

An impact of rapid modernization on natural resources and environment has two dimensions: macro and micro. At the macro level, globalization has induced growth-oriented development, which in turn induced deforestation, high rate of energy consumption, wider use of hazardous chemical products without proper treatment, for instance. At the micro or community or household level, economic progress is traded off with poorer environment and lower social quality.

To progress toward a more balanced development, there needs a shift of conceptual thinking or guiding principles on development and administration. The new concept of modernization must be in line with the forces of globalization, while protecting both the community and the nation from adverse impact arising from various types of changes. The philosophy of Sufficiency Economy (SEP), bestowed by HMK, is a holistic concept of moderation in consumption and production, while acknowledging interdependency among people and between human and nature. SEP calls for a balanced and sustainable development as its objectives of development.

This paper explores two case studies, which elaborate how to apply SEP in achieving sustainable community: a community that can meet its growing population and expanding market activities (growth), without sacrificing its natural or social capital. One case looks at Kao Hin Son Learning Center and surrounding community, which applies appropriate technology and learning process to revitalize and protect land and forest. Another case explores a community that applies SEP in their sustainable agriculture activities. These two cases are few among many in Thailand, which demonstrate that balanced and sustainable development can be achieved, if the concept of development is appropriate with social and natural conditions.

The paper draws lessons learned from development activities at the community level to apply at the national and the global levels. The lesson includes knowledge on managing community in a sustainable way—improve quality of life while adjusting to the changing world-- based on SEP....