

Abstract

Among the targets of the Plan to Develop Poor Rural Areas under the Fifth National Economic and Social Development Plan (B.E.2524-2529) is the increase in agricultural products at an average rate of about 2 per cent per year. The main objective is to raise the economic status of the poor up to the subsistence level and to assist them to become more self reliant. The strategies for screening and approving development projects include the following:

- a) select only projects that reduce expenditures of people;
- b) avoid risky activities which may bear losses;
- c) choose projects which can be carried out together by poor people in accordance with the self-reliant principle;
and
- d) develop capability and quality of people in order to alleviate their poverty.

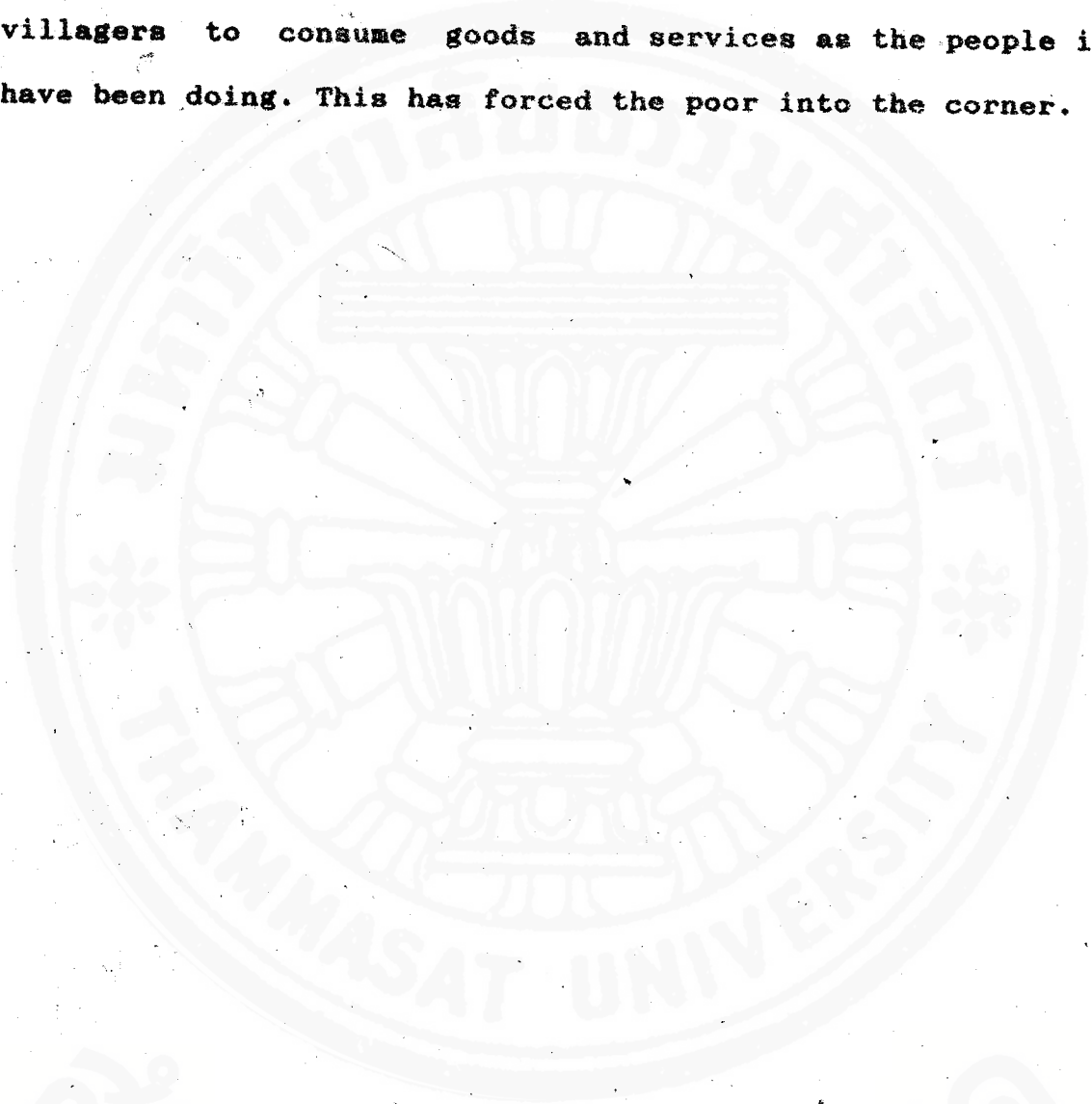
A study of a village which was conducted after the expiration of the Fifth National Development Plan revealed that at least 45 families, approximately 20 per cent of the total, were considered to be poor. Most of them were engaged in rice farming, each with less than 7 rais of land, and some were hired workers. Their poverty was because they had no land or owned inadequate amount of land, meanwhile, development projects, which were implemented in the village, tended to benefit the rich more than the poor. Some projects were not systematically fulfilled.

whereas others did not raise villagers' income but increased their expenditures as they encouraged rural people to consume similar products as urban people and westerners do. Several projects were completed without ultimate results. For instance irrigation dams were constructed but there was no water, hence, no increase in agricultural cultivation and finally no increase in income. Furthermore, some projects were not carried out continually.

In addition to the incompleteness of the project combination system, the deficiency and the discontinuity of the project implementation, and the neglectedness to result orientation of the related personnel both in planning and implementation processes, there have been many other problems and obstacles such as the lack of creativeness, innovation and technical knowledge of development values of the concerning officials, local leaders and villagers as well as the lack of leaders who commit themselves to work for the sake of the community, etc.

One significant impact of the development plan has been the differences between the targets, principles, strategies and expected outputs of the plan and some real apparent outputs in the village such as the poverty. This problem may increase if there is no proper and suitable development approach to be implemented in the future. Most villagers still call for factors of production and work such as land and water. Generally it can

be concluded that the development plan cannot really help the poor. Moreover, many changes in the village encourage the villagers to consume goods and services as the people in town have been doing. This has forced the poor into the corner.



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