

THE MANAGEMENT OF SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY TO THE WAY OF LIFE FOR KELANTAN MALAYSIAN THAI-BUDDHISTS PEOPLE IN THREE SOUTHERN BODER PROVINCES OF THAILAND DURING THE CORONAVIRUS DISEASE 2019 CRISIS

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ABSTRACT

This paper presents the Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people's way of life under the context of pluralism culture in three southern border provinces of Thailand, and present how to apply sufficiency economy concepts to the ways of life of people during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this study, we used qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews, phone interviews, and focus groups. Then, we analyzed the data using content and descriptive analyses. In this study, we present the Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people's way of life in cultural, economic, and societal contexts. we found that the current violence is making the Buddhist community fearful and suspicious and that they are participating in other religions for safety reasons. In addition, a sufficiency economy can help people increase their income and decrease their expenses, thus supporting life in a sufficient way-i.e., living according to our own individuality and position life during the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, the Thai government uses the plurality culture concept as a tool for solving conflicts and violence problems. However, the Thai government should be more concerned with equal opportunities for all people without discrimination.

Keywords: Thai-Buddhist, Kelantan Malaysians, Plural Culture, Sufficiency Economy, Way of Life, Coronavirus disease 2019.

INTRODUCTION

Three provinces in southern Thailand are located at the border between Malaysia and Thailand. There has been unrest since 2004. Some areas became “red areas”— dangerous, unsafe, and with high risks to life. The criminal events that have occurred continuously are frequent among the plural cultures in these three southern Thailand provinces. Southern Thailand is a peninsula to which many people from different cultures have moved from other places. The

three provinces connect Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia's Sumatra Island. This area is home to Thai-Buddhist people, Thai-Chinese, and Thai-Melayu. Most of the people who live in this area are Melayu. They were peaceful until 2004, but since then, violent events have occurred frequently (Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn, 2017). The cultures are different in these three provinces. Most of the people are Muslims and live according to the Melayu culture. People are distinguished by their cultures, religions, human values, and education. For example, there are many religious schools for Muslim students, which are influenced by the Melayu people. Researchers have reported that there are more than 550 religious schools in these three provinces. The schools teach "correct" Islamic culture to the new generations of students, and thus the Muslim culture is strong and unique. The education of the Melayu people in the three provinces has followed the traditional Islamic system, which is separate from a secular system. Twenty years ago, "Islamization" became the new model for Muslim education. However, some Islamic religious schools teach "incorrectly." Thus, criminal problems arose in the provinces, and the plural cultures cannot resolve these problems. In 2007, the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand was used to unite the people in these provinces to create peace and freedom for all groups of people (Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn, 2019).

Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist is the ethnic group in Thailand's three southern border provinces, which have been impacted by violence and criminal situations. This ethnic group lived for a long period in the Malaysian state of Kelantan, remaining on the border between Thailand and Malaysia, but primarily Thailand. Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people moved out of Malaysia after the British government finally ceded full autonomy to the Federation of Malaya on August 31, 1957, and the country achieved independence. They moved from Malaysia to many areas of Thailand near the border, such as Waeng, Sukhirin, Tak Bai, Sungai Kolok, and Sungai Padi Districts in Narathiwat Province (Aryuwatthana, 1991). In addition, Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people and Siamese people (in Malaysia, Kelantan Buddhists and Thai traditions and culture are referred to as "Siamese") are related to Thai people in southern Thailand and some moved from the central region of Thailand a hundred years ago (Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn et al., 2020).

In 1957, the Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people moved to the three southern border provinces of Thailand. At that time, Malaysia faced several economic problems, and Thailand had more economic opportunities than Malaysia did. From 1957, they maintained peace through a pluralistic culture with the Muslim people. However, in 2004, the violence and criminal activity began (Aryuwatthana, 1991). Although the violence has continued since 2004, the relations between Buddhists and Muslims has continued to be good, and they have tried to collaborate on community protection from insurgent groups. However, many Buddhists moved to other regions of Thailand for safety reasons (Tanod, et al., 2018). Thus, the number of Buddhist people is decreasing, and the Buddhist population is approximately less than ten percent of the total population in the Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat Provinces (Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn & Chandaeng, 2014). In addition, the radical Muslim group taught the wrong Muslim way of life to young Muslim people and increased suspicion between the religions. The radicals invented the idea that Buddhists were an enemy that came to occupy the Muslim's land, Muslims were a minority ethnic group in Thailand to whom Thai's government never gave importance, and there were unequal opportunities between Buddhists and Muslims (Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn, 2019). As previously mentioned, pluralism is a concept that many academicians

and government use to solve conflicts and violent situations in the southern border provinces of Thailand (Chanarnupap & Tongkachok, 2017).

Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has had several impacts on Thailand's economy. The COVID-19 pandemic has shrunk the economy by at least 5 percent, exports have declined approximately 6.3 percent, household consumption is projected to decline by approximately 3.2 percent, and an estimated 8.3 million workers will lose employment or income due to the COVID-19 crisis (The World Bank, 2020). In addition, exports and the tourism sector are slowing down, and the incomes of local businesses, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), and their employees have declined (Bhaopichitr, 2020). In addition, an estimated 11.8 million workers, or 33.2 percent of formal workers, experienced a pay cut or lost their job in the year 2020, and 30.3 percent or 143,414 of total companies in Thailand will experience tight liquidity in 2021 (Krungsri Research, 2020). Moreover, 71 percent of the national workforce has seen their monthly income decline, with an average contraction of 47 percent, 31 percent of micro- and small businesses in the tourism and small-scale manufacturing industries are on the verge of closing permanently, and survey data found that nearly 31 percent of tourism and small-scale manufacturing businesses expect to shut down soon (Parks, 2020).

The unemployment caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has added to labor and social instability. Many people have lost their jobs, returned to hometowns in rural areas, and looked to work as agrarians—their family's original work. Many people can adjust by using the concept of sufficiency economy as a guideline for their way of life during the COVID-19 situation. Self-reliance is essential for staying alive, and Thais are adapting their lifestyles to suit the economic and social conditions by reducing unnecessary costs, economizing, and returning to a sufficiency economy approach, as advocated by His Majesty the late King Bhumibol Adulyadej (HM King Rama IX), as expressed in a speech in 1974: *“Economic development must be done step by step. It should begin with the strengthening of our economic foundation, by ensuring that the majority of our population has enough to live on ... Once reasonable progress has been achieved, we should then embark on the next steps, by pursuing more advanced levels of economic development”*. The sufficiency economy strategy may provide a lifeline for Thailand, offering another option for social and economic survival amid the COVID-19 pandemic (Chumtakhob, 2020).

Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people have many adaptations for surviving conflicts and during the COVID-19 pandemic, but the increasing suspicion between religions makes them feel insecure. As explained about violent situations and Buddhism in the three southern border provinces of Thailand, this paper presents the Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people's way of life under the context of a pluralism culture, which allows them to maintain a strong community in three southern border provinces of Thailand, and we discuss the COVID-19 pandemic and the sufficiency economy concept, and we present how to apply sufficiency economy concepts to the ways of life of people during the COVID-19 pandemic

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this paper, we used a literature review to summarize three points to gain a basic understanding of the topic: first, we explain the situation between the religions; second, we explain the pluralist culture in the three southern border provinces of Thailand; and third we explain the sufficiency economy concept;

In Thailand, Muslims are a minority ethnic group, but in three southern border provinces, Buddhists are a minority ethnic group. After the violent situation in 2004, many Buddhists tried to adapt to survive under the conflicts and criminal situations. The government provided more opportunities to Muslims, such as recruiting government officials, increasing education opportunities, raising money for Muslims who were affected by violence, and so forth. The increased opportunities and governmental proposals to Muslims have resulted in fewer opportunities for Buddhists in the three southernmost provinces of Thailand (Tanod, et al., 2018; Suwanabubpa, 2016). In addition, radical Muslims teach and disseminate information about Melayu nationalism that emphasizes hate for other religions. They also want to separate the land and make Thailand's three southern border provinces Muslim land. Talk of the Pattani Sultanate is used and passed from generation to generation to make radical Muslims fight against the Thai government and reject the administration of the Thai government, proposing the region should be under Muslim rule (Piyasiripant, 2018). As the conflicts and violence continue, the pluralist culture in the three provinces has decreased, as has inter-religious participation and the plural community (Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn & Tepsing, 2013; Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn, et al., 2013).

Several studies have been conducted about using pluralist culture for solving conflicts and violence situation in the three southern border provinces of Thailand. Pluralism is a concept used by the Thai government to formulate strategies for conflict management; however, the plural cultural concept of the Thai government has few working guidelines and lacks the flexibility for adjustment (Scupin, 2013). The pluralism culture concept used by the Thai government is just a negotiation tool for resolving conflicts, but it lacks real participation from people that have different cultures and religions. In addition, some community-supported government policies are not appropriate because officials do not understand the Islamic way of life, and most policy maker and/or local officials are Buddhists (Laeheem & Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn, 2020). Thus, to resolve violence and conflicts, the Thai government pay more attention to local culture, especially the Islamic way of life and culture, and be flexible in the use of pluralistic cultures for management (Sangchai, 2018). In addition, the Thai government should open public areas for discussions between Buddhists and Muslims and educate young Thai Muslims and Buddhists to coexist in a plural society (Tuansiri & Koma, 2019). Moreover, a plural culture gives equal opportunities to all stakeholders and allows for understanding each other's identities (Promsaka Na Sakolnakorn & Tepsing, 2013).

The purpose of sufficiency economy is people have to be vigorous, independent, conscientious, and willing to compromise by not being selfish. In society, a sufficiency economy can be helpful in making a community strong, raise up the community to be united, and share good knowledge. In addition, in terms of nature resources and the environment, people should to know how to use and handle these resources and be smart and careful to make the best profit. In terms of technology, this philosophy can bring people's know-how to use technology in useful ways and develop it in our own ways to be useful in the environment and in economy. A sufficiency economy can help people increase their income and decrease their expenses, thus supporting life in a sufficient way i.e., living according to our own individuality and position. Sufficiency means moderation and reasonableness, including the need to build a reasonable immune system against shocks from the outside. Intelligence, attentiveness, and extreme care should be used to ensure that all plans and every step of their implementation are based on knowledge. The concept of the sufficiency economy offers solutions to problems in large cities

and rural areas by linking the modern economic system with the previous cooperative system. When applied to public affairs, including development and administration, the sufficiency economic approach is better able to meet the challenges arising from globalization and realize sustainable growth, while balancing conservation and development. The philosophy of a sufficiency economy is a guides for the livelihood and behavior of people at all levels, from the family to the community and, more broadly, to the country, on matters concerning national development and administration. It calls for a “*middle way*” to be observed, especially in pursuing economic development, in keeping with globalization (Kroeksakul et al., 2011; Naipinit et al., 2014).

METHODS

We used a qualitative approach through in-depth interviews and small group discussion as follows:

Population

The participants were Kelantan Malaysian Thai Buddhists in Waeng, Sukhirin, Tak Bai, and Su-ngai Kolok Districts in Narathiwat Province.

Methods

We collected data from 2019 to 2020. We conducted eight in-depth interviews, twelve phone interviews, and a small group discussion with eight people. We selected participants through purposive sampling.

Data analysis

We analyzed content from the interviews and focus groups. We used investigator and methodological triangulation techniques to check and compare data. Then, we used content and descriptive analyses to analyze the full data set.

RESULTS

Under this conflict situation, we have discovered the high value of religious identity and way in which people become aware of their cultures, such as when Muslims highly value their identities. Similarly, the Buddhists assert their identities by holding festivals to preserve Buddhist culture and refusing to allow Muslims to dominate. When the Buddhist village received news about terrorists killing a monk, the Buddhist people took defensive measures to protect monks. We collected field data in Thai-Buddhist villages in a rural area of Narathiwat Province, which closely borders Thailand and Malaysia. The Thai-Buddhist villages are less than five percent of Narathiwat Province, and this village is one that remains in Muslim society. People in this village are migrants from the Malaysian state of Kelantan to Thailand, after Malaysia became independent from Great Britain in 1954. They moved to Thailand to live under the Buddhist state because the Malaysian government valued Bumiputera. In addition, Bumiputera is meant for Muslim who were born in Malaysia; if you were not a Muslim or Bumiputera, how could you survive? This is what people thought in the past.

After they came to Thailand and lived under the King of Thailand, they were very happy because the King and the Thai government valued all religions. In Thailand, they could live with

different cultures and religions. However, since 2004, we have had a terrorist situation in the Pattani, Yala, and Narathiwat Provinces in the lower south of Thailand. Consequently, the way of life for Thai-Buddhists is changing, and many Chinese and Buddhists have moved to other regions because the Thai government cannot bring back peace. Until now, this village was an ethnic minority that lived in a Muslim environment. From interviews with villagers from 2012 to 2020, they now think Malaysia is a good and peaceful country, that no Bumiputera policy is implemented currently, and Malaysia has established a new “*One Malaysia*” policy to reduce religion tensions. Furthermore, the Malaysian government recognizes all religions. Now, Buddhists who stay in Malaysia are happier than Buddhists are in the lower south of Thailand. Therefore, they want to move back to Malaysia, but they cannot. In addition, in their opinion, the Thai government values the Muslims in the lower south and neglects the Buddhists and the Thai-Buddhists who live in the “*Red Zone*.” Finally, in real life, the conflict is not between Buddhists and Muslims, as the Buddhists, Chinese, and Muslims still have good relations and social interactions. However, it is difficult to explain why a terrorist car bombing still happened and why people always die from shootings. In this study, we divided the Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people’s way of life into four dimensions: cultural, economic, societal, and applying a sufficiency economy to the way of life during the Coronavirus Disease 2019 crisis.

The way of life in a cultural context

We found that most Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people could speak the Thai and Melayu languages well. However, in Thai, the language accent is typical “*Tak Bai language and/or Je-He language*,” which is an ancient language related to the language of the Sukhothai era. Under the plural culture of coexisting with Muslim society, the Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhists also use the Melayu language mixed with the Tak Bai language. In addition, Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people also enjoy Melayu’s performing arts and culture. For example, a Thai-Buddhist elder explained, “*In the past, when Buddhists had some culture or tradition festival, they invited Muslims to make a show in the temple, such as a dance drama in front of the Buddha statue*” (personal interview, December 2019). The interview shows that Thai-Buddhists and Thai-Muslims in Narathiwat Province have a long and amicable relationship between the cultures, and they exchange culture through the performing arts. However, since the 2004 violence by Muslim radical groups, the relationship between the cultures has decreased, and they are scared to participate with other religions. Furthermore, the Thai government has a policy of giving more opportunities and priorities to Muslim people and has a larger financial budget for taking care of the Islamic religion than Buddhism.

Therefore, Thai-Buddhists in the three southern border provinces have sought to take care of their own culture and traditions. To preserve the Thai identity, people hold traditional and cultural festivals, such as worshipping the ancestors’ relics or the Songkran Festival in the heart of the Thai-Buddhist villages. In addition, the Songkran Festival is the Thai’s traditional New Year, which starts on April 13 every year and lasts for three days. The activities at the Songkran Festival begin in the morning as people go to the temple to offer food to monks and novices, observe the precepts (five or eight precepts), and listen to the Dhamma talk. In the afternoon, they perform a bathing ceremony for the Buddha images, monks, and novices who live in a temple. During this time, the younger people ask for blessings from the elders. This is known as the Water Splashing Feast. It might be said that the Songkran Festival is a respected festival for

the elders or a family day. The temple is now the center of Buddhism for the people in the “Red Zone.” The temple is the place for interaction, a place for prayer and blessings, and a place to transfer culture and tradition from generation to generation. However, this area is not safe. Since 2004, Thai-Buddhists have been under soldiers’ watch, and they need soldiers to go with them everywhere they go. An army camp was set up close to the temple. For now, the Buddhist culture and traditions can continue under the Thai Army’s protection against terrorists.

The way of life in an economic context

Most Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhists farm and work in agriculture, such as growing Para rubber, raising animals, fishing in the pond, and a few work as government officials, such as school teachers. In addition, Para rubber is the main economic activity for the Buddhist community, and government has many policies to support farmers growing Para rubber and for marketing channels. In addition, most Buddhist farmers employ Muslims for Para rubber tapping. Consequently, Thai-Buddhists have economic relations with Muslims as employers and employees. However, Thai-Buddhists have relations with the Chinese as customers and traders (most Chinese are businessmen and traders). Since the 2004 violence, the economic relations have changed because they do not trust each other as they did before 2004 and are suspicious of working with the other religions in the area.

The Buddhist way of life has changed; they cannot stay alone on farms or live on farms far from the Buddhist community because there is a risk of criminal activity and murder. An elderly Buddhist woman stated, *“I moved from my house that I stayed in with my husband more than 30 year to live with my daughter and son-in-law because my daughter’s house is in a Buddhist community and it is [safer] than staying at my house in the para rubber plantation”* (personal interview, December 2019). In addition, most Chinese traders moved out of the violence zone, and some Chinese moved back to stay and have new businesses in north Malaysia for safety reasons. Although the violence situation is better, many Buddhist gardeners and owners of Para rubber plantations choose to sell the land that was far away from Buddhist communities.

The way of life in a social context

The society of Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhists networks with other societies, such as the Siamese in Kelantan, Malaysia. They engage with Buddhist external societies, such as those from southern and central Thailand, to preserve traditions and cultures and to collaborate with other Buddhist communities for Buddhist festival and activities. They also work with government officials to perform security duties for the safety of the community. However, interactions in this area are complicated because the police and soldiers are in alliances and are friendly to both Buddhists and Muslims, yet many people do not trust the police and soldiers. For example, the police and soldiers are targets for shootings and terrorists. If they stay close to houses and convenient stores, this might become a dangerous zone at risk for killing. In addition, from our interviews, some families faced problems with many soldiers from the northeast of Thailand who had affairs with their daughters, but did not marry them, which this made the families angry and destroyed good conservative traditions. In addition to the social context between Buddhists and Muslims, they can actually exist in a plurality culture because the

southern region of Thailand is close to north Malaysia and has a similar culture. Thai-Buddhists and Muslims also have relatives in Malaysia and Thailand. The increased suspicion of participating with other religions comes from radical Muslims who use violence and fear to control other Muslims who are trying to be neutral.

Applying Sufficiency Economy for the Way of Life under the COVID-19 Pandemic

COVID-19 has led to economic decline. This means less wealth and less employment, and people are looking for their own new normal ways to earn livelihoods (Zayed et al., 2020 & 2021). During the COVID-19 pandemic, villagers in rural areas can apply the sufficiency economy to their ways of life, such as by raising animals, fish, and aquatic animals; growing a variety of vegetables and rice, not using insecticides or chemicals to grow vegetables, protecting natural resources, growing trees in national parks to help forests to recover and in areas near houses. Forests are areas of natural raw materials, which people can use to add value and sell products to raise more income. Thus, people should not destroy forests with illegal activities and should save money with cooperative organization societies; use household accounts and balance sheets; reduce their everyday expenses; increase their income by selling vegetables and animals, and working for community enterprises; share knowledge and transfer it to the next generation; not be extravagant; and live without drug addiction. The principles of a sufficiency economy can be applied to and used as people's way of life as follows Table 1;

Concept	Implementation
Moderation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under COVID-19 pandemic conditions, the Middle Path presents more benefits than disadvantages. For example, saving is important because money can be quite difficult to find. People must know how to adapt in order to earn income and support them. The sufficiency economy make a living economically involves decreasing the expenses. In line with this principle, villagers reduce their expenses by growing their own vegetables: "<i>Plant everything to eat and eat everything planted,</i>" which illustrates the moderation principle. If the villagers use resources for their community, then production and consumption should be balanced. In the case of "<i>considerate</i>" food production for consumption in a household, the villagers can have occupations two sectors: 1) the agriculture sector is an occupation related to agriculture and 2) the non-agriculture sectors are occupations providing a service, for example construction. So the principle of being sufficient means moderation and due consideration in all modes of conduct, as well as the need for sufficient protection from internal and external shocks.
Reasonableness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decisions one's self-sufficiency must consider the relevant factors as well as accounting for expected consequences as carefully as possible. The concept of reasonableness so that the villagers can consider the logic of their condition and other factors in their decision making. In the case of backyard gardening activities (saving money and generating income), but these activities also provide food security, so the villagers will believe in a production process that is free of chemical, good for their health, and beneficial to the environment, and villagers will be more confident about eating their own food instead of foods from the markets. Another idea is the happiness of producing in backyard gardening activities, in which is in line with the philosophy of sufficiency economic proposed by the King. The principle is to make networks of businesses and enlarge the abundance of

Table 1 THE PRINCIPLES OF A SUFFICIENCY ECONOMY CAN BE APPLIED TO AND USED AS PEOPLE’S WAY OF LIFE	
Concept	Implementation
	economic activity by collaboration and developing private and government sections for producing, distributing, and sharing information. This principle of a communal economy involves the combined activity of groups and their power to negotiate prices and production. In this way, the produce according to the needs of the community. In addition, during COVID-19, people are more concerned about using resources in a systematic, rational and cost-effective manner. They want to avoid the use of resources that cause pollution, destroying the balance of nature and the environment.
Self -Immunity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Self-immunity</i> means preventing or reducing the impact of internal and external changes—both controllable and uncontrollable ones—in four impact areas: material (goods and products), social, environmental and cultural. To consider a community self-immune, it must meet three criteria: 1) Find health and happiness in processing the products of backyard gardens that are free of chemicals and keep the concept of “Products for household consumption should be clean and safe.” As for happiness, the villagers are following the concept to “enjoy to products, enjoy to growing, and enjoy to beauty of the garden.”, 2) During COVID-19, residents in the community have been more concerned about social distancing, and also wear masks outside their homes, 3) Save money by having a community saving bank (cooperative saving group); for example, the villagers can save \$8 per month and have a second group to verify these savings, and 4) Conserve the culture as the villagers are Buddhists and should practice ceremonies such as going to temples for prayer.
The two conditions of knowledge and morality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrity and ethics can be classified into four issues. For integrity or ethics, the villagers spend their lives according to Buddhism, with honesty, respect for others, not lying, and spending time helping society. This way of life can help the community to reduce crime, encourage people to save more money, make social activity together with neighbors, etc. In addition, they can share their food production such as vegetables and meals with their neighbors. • The Kelantan Malaysian Thai Buddhist people use the two conditions of knowledge and morality to encourage this philosophy’s success. Knowledge can be classified into five issues: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The people are mentally strong. They practice good conscience, generosity, compromise, and thinking about the common good. 2) Socially, the Kelantan practice mutual assistance. Helping others strengthens families and communities, and their learning process comes from a solid community and cultural foundation. 3) Economically, they live in moderation, having just enough to eat. As befits their economic status and position, the Kelantan people practice perseverance and patience, and live simply. 4) The Kelantan people use appropriate technologies for the local ecology, and have also developed technologies based on local wisdom. These are used to benefit themselves and society. For example, they produce simple technology for use in agriculture. 5) Regarding land management, the Kelantan use the space around their houses to grow vegetables in flowerpots, landscape using herbs and vegetables, or raise frogs in backyard gardens.

Source: Data in this table based on a qualitative study. Adapted from Naipinit et al. (2014).

The sufficiency economy provides more for human development in two aspects. One aspect is that the sufficiency economy process has three principles (moderation, reasonableness,

and self-immunity) that can be used for analyzing situations, identifying objectives, setting plans, and making decisions. This process is applicable at any level of society. The other aspect is mental and spiritual development. This development, embraced in any type of development, yields mental and spiritual satisfaction at the individual level and provides an ethical culture at the organization level (Mongsawad, 2009). The sufficiency economy encourages self-development based on knowledge and information to gradually improve capacity and expand income and wellbeing. But everything must be done by ethical means. Such efforts will train a person to be patient, perseverant, knowledge-based, and information-seeking. That person will find joy in self-development. With an ethical mind, this higher capacity will allow greater opportunities to do more to strengthen others: community, networks, and society. Hence, happiness comes initially from self-improvement and then from opportunities to share and help others. Such work practices and attitudes are useful for happiness development. They help divert and reduce happiness from greed and materialism to happiness from self-development. The latter also yields life satisfaction and makes life worthwhile, without depending on material goods or consuming more goods and services. If self-development is performed without a desire for fame or even awards or appreciation, a person has a higher capability to develop true happiness that is sustainable and allows higher happiness at all other levels (Kroeksakul et al., 2011).

In an agriculture sufficiency economy, farmers can apply their wisdom and skills to support themselves in ways that are consistent with their environments. Royal initiatives stimulate and support collaboration and integration using community resources to develop strong social and business networks, while encouraging members to abide by morality and wisdom in their decisions and actions. Strong foundations should be created using self-reliance before building up more market reliance in the advanced stage. The Theory of Agriculture in a sufficiency economy has three phases. The first phase is to manage agricultural land and resources at the household level in a way that provides enough return for the villagers to live appropriately and with self-reliance, according to their conditions. The second phase is the formation of groups in the form of cooperatives to collaboratively produce goods, organize markets, and develop community welfare to increase social solidarity and prepare to keep pace with the outside world. The third phase is to build contacts and partnerships with outside institutions such as banks, businesses, and government and nongovernment organizations to obtain the financial knowledge and technical support necessary for further development.

CONCLUSION

According to the 2020 data, we found that the plurality culture in the three southern border regions of Thailand increases every year, and the Kelantan Malaysian Thai-Buddhist people feel better than a few year ago. However, the concept of pluralism adopted by the Thai government to tackle violence and conflicts should be more concerned about providing equal opportunities for people of all nationalities, religions, and languages. Moreover, understanding between religions and cultures increase pluralist societies. In addition, respect for each other is important for bringing back the multicultural society in the three southern border provinces of Thailand. The peace in these regions has steadily increased since a few year ago. However, criminal activity has occurred for more than 15 years in these three provinces because of the cultural gaps among the groups of people. A diverse culture consists of different races, religions, traditions, and languages. Therefore, governmental officials should support multiple cultures to

reduce the criminal activity and allow for sustainable development. The three provinces could be peaceful again for all people with some help from the Thai government. In addition, pluralist cultures are advantageous for Thailand's development. In particular, the Thai government wants to educate the people in the three provinces. The students who are Kelantan descendants should learn about the different cultures that lived together previously.

Between 2020 and 2021, many Kelantan Malaysian Thai Buddhist people migrated to three southern border provinces of Thailand due to COVID-19. Their lives since have become more difficult due to health care and economic issues. In terms of health issues, they are avoiding COVID-19 by protecting themselves and trying to maintain social distancing. However, staying strong and economically sustainable under these conditions is very difficult. The motivation to use sufficiency economy is to avoid poverty, and households used sufficiency economy to manage their livelihood. Their methods included planting vegetables for both personal use and sale, domesticating animals, saving money with a cooperative society, protecting their environment, and living their lives by moral principles and human ethics. The sufficiency economic philosophy concept comprises three components and two underlying conditions. First, sufficiency entails three components: moderation, reasonableness, and a requirement for a self-immunity system (i.e., the ability to cope with shocks from internal and external changes). Second, two underlying conditions are necessary to achieve sufficiency: knowledge and morality. A sufficiency economy requires breadth and thoroughness in planning, carefulness in applying knowledge, and the implementation of these plans. As for the moral/ethical condition, the sufficiency economy requires that people have honesty and integrity while conducting their lives with perseverance, Peacefulness, and generosity. Villagers are applying the philosophy and using local wisdom and knowledge to many activities in the agriculture or non-agriculture sectors in relation to their livelihood. In this way, the villagers understand the philosophy as a way of happiness because many activities such as planting and raising animals are relaxing and enjoyable.

In addition, sufficiency economics provides a mind-cultivating process that is essential for happiness development toward true happiness that is beyond the basic happiness. Villagers can apply the sufficiency economic philosophy for maintenance of their livelihood and food production, community organizations (all groups), and conservation of the environment and the ecology of the village. Sufficiency economics is the choice to implement a lifestyle with a philosophy that applies to everybody because the core of sufficiency economics is true, so the concept in this case study is evident when the philosophy is practiced in suitable lifestyles. By understanding "*modularity*" in livelihoods, such as moral ethics and happiness, the concept can benefit community networks and make them sustainable. In addition, sufficiency economy can be used by individuals to manage their livelihoods through such activities as planting vegetables for personal consumption or sale, domesticating animals, saving money with a cooperative society, protecting the environment, and following moral principles and human ethics. In addition, a sufficiency economy can be used to manage social and environmental sustainability in Thailand, which then provides the promise of sustainability for the future.

Finally, the purpose of sufficiency economy is people have to be vigorous, independent, conscientious, and willing to compromise by not being selfish. In society, a sufficiency economy can be helpful in making a community strong, raise up the community to be united, and share good knowledge. In addition, in terms of nature resources and the environment, people should to know how to use and handle these resources and be smart and careful to make the best profit. In

terms of technology, this philosophy can bring people's know-how to use technology in useful ways and develop it in our own ways to be useful in the environment and in economy. A sufficiency economy can help people increase their income and decrease their expenses, thus supporting life in a sufficient way i.e., living according to our own individuality and position. The sufficiency economy is the only way to solve the poverty problems in rural areas, this approach not only solves the poverty problem, it also helps reduce farmers' accumulated debts and promotes unity in communities. Moreover, to apply sufficiency economy should involve applying local technology to produce paper from the fibers of mulberry tree. This is "wisdom technology" that helps community enterprises reduce the cost of buying technology from overseas.

In addition, to promote peaceful coexistence and encourage communities to thrive under COVID-19 pandemic conditions, the Thai government should do the following:

1. Support the Melayu language through education involving the Thai, Chinese, and Melayu people because if diverse peoples live together and speak a common language, they can decrease the differences among the new generation in this area.
2. Provide a cultural education, in which the students should learn about the plural cultures as part of their basic education. The cultural aspects do not affect all religions, and the students can learn this.
3. Choose leaders from each of the plural cultures, for example, the leaders should be Thai, Chinese, and Melayu.
4. Ensure that government officers have knowledge of the plural cultures, and they should understand the various religions, cultures, and languages.
5. Apply the same laws in this area equally to all groups, and any punishments should be the same for all groups.
6. Demand that the government takes responsibility for the criminal activities in the area.
7. The Thai government and civic authorities could undertake an initiative in which ability earn their livelihoods under one umbrella. Life can become more meaningful and magnificent to various ethnic groups (Beg et al., 2020). In addition, policymakers should settle financial and monetary arrangements in the long term. Policymakers should likewise continue pursuing profitable exercises that will assist with expanding exports, especially agricultural and livestock exports to the neighboring countries of Malaysia, Singapore, and Indonesia.

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