

Ultra-Poor Revisited: A Case of Southern Thailand

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Abstract : This paper presents the results of a study of the ultra-poor in the south of Thailand, revisited after 10 years since the original study in 2000. The original study was conducted in four provinces. The first two namely Phatthalung and Nakorn were chosen to represent the Thai Buddhists and the others, Satun and Pattani were chosen to represent the Thai Muslims. For this study, only the results from the three provinces except Pattani are reported as it was difficult and dangerous to conduct fieldwork in Pattani due to the continued unrest in the area since 2005. The objectives of the study are to find out the changes of the poverty situation after 10 years and to see the impacts of the poverty reduction projects implemented by the government on the poor. The research methodology used both quantitative and qualitative methods. The same villages in the four provinces studied in 1999 were again chosen. In each village, five ultra-poor people and heads of the villages were interviewed. The results show that the poverty situation of the ultra-poor groups has not changed much since they lacked the basic key factor to get themselves out of poverty: The ownership of land. Their chronic poverty situation has been passed on from the last generation. In the province of Phatthalung, the ultra-poor have improved in terms of economic situation because of the big increase in the price of rubber. However, the same could not be said for other provinces. Even though the government's projects have not reduced the poverty directly, the projects have significantly contributed to the improvement of the quality of life of the poor and the people in the areas.

Keywords : poverty, Southern Thailand, ultra-poor, social sustainability

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