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ROLE OF LOCAL ELITES AS BROKER IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: A CASE OF AN NGO'S RURAL DEVELOPMENT IN KONG PISIE, CAMBODIA

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Acronyms and Glossary

angkar padevat	Revolutionary Organization
CCC	Cooperation Committee for Cambodia
CDRI	Cambodia Development Resource Institute
CDC	Cambodia Development Council
CDWs	Community Development Workers
chuovay	Chief, boss
DK	Democratic Kampuchea
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FFP	Family Food production Programme
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
JICA	Japanese International Cooperation Agency
kamaphibal	Official
keong pray	Mobile collective labour group
keong thob	Army force
Khmer	Cambodian
kompong	City
krom sameki	Communal work team
kru Khmer	Cambodian Traditional healer
kuonchuo	Children, grand children
neak mean bonn	Person who has merits
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organizations
okya	High-ranking officials
OROC	Office Royal De Cooperation
PADEK	Partnership for Development in Kampuchea
sangha	Buddhist monastery
SHARE	Services for the Health in Asia and African Regions
srok	District
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNTAC	United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia
WFP	World Food Programme
yothea	Force

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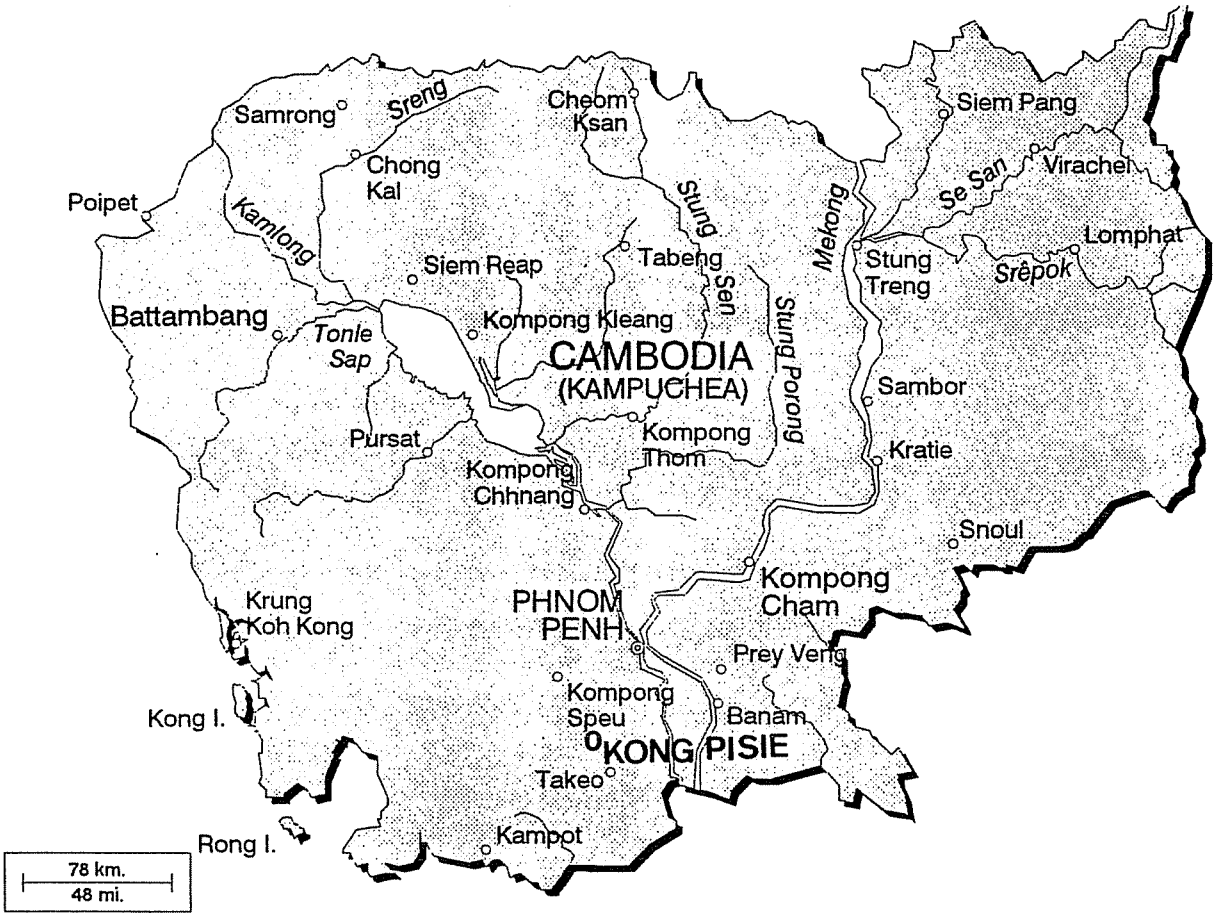

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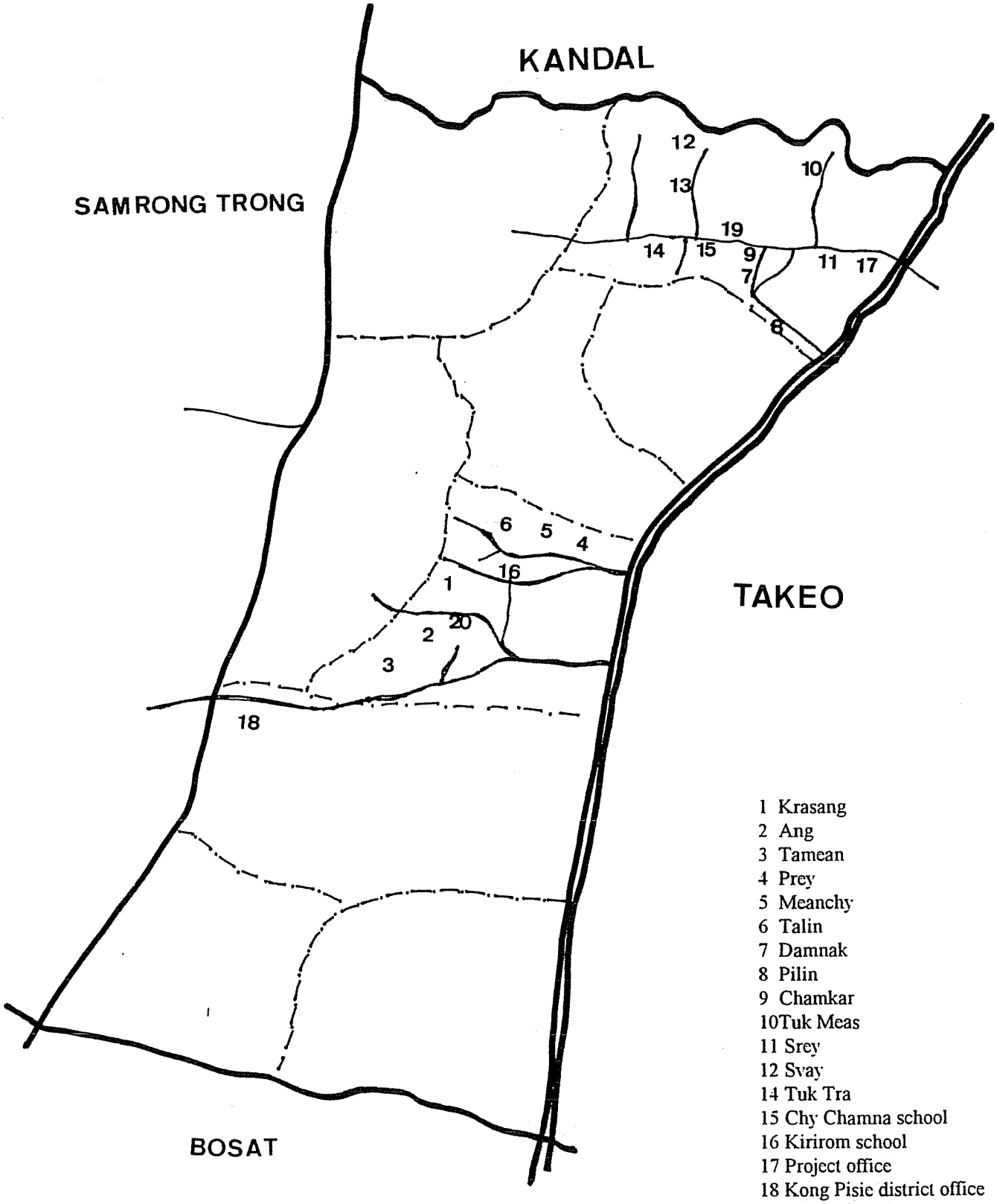

1 Krasang
2 Ang
3 Tamean
4 Prey
5 Meanchy
6 Talin
7 Damnak
8 Pilin
9 Chamkar
10Tuk Meas
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15 Chy Chamna school
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Conceptual Framework

1. Introduction

1.1 Problem Statement of Study

In the post-war situation of Cambodia, NGOs have a historic opportunity to contribute to the rehabilitation of Cambodia by continuing concrete programming and influencing the overall direction of development policy in the country (Mysliwiec,1993). This was made evident in a NGO workshop organised in 1992, under the Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC). In this workshop a policy paper of NGOs with regard to the "Rehabilitation and Reconstruction of Cambodia" was prepared for the Ministerial Planning Conference to be held in Tokyo, later that year (Ibid). From these meetings it was established that NGOs can not only influence development policy but directly assist at the community level as well.

In the last 12 years, NGOs in Cambodia have developed and shifted from relief activities to community-oriented development with the expectations that benefits and resources will reach the poor. However, from their evaluation reports it appears that the benefits of the rural development projects were only enjoyed by a small group at the community level and the poorest groups were excluded from the project activities.

Utting (1994) argues that the lack of Cambodian participation in the decision-making process of the country's development has led to the failure of these rural development projects in reaching the poor. Curtis (cited by Utting,1994) further argues that Cambodia may have lost its sovereignty and sense of self-direction. Crip and Mayne (cited by Utting,1994) adds that, at the local level, many communities were poorly organized, weakly administered and lacking a sense of solidarity.

Mysliwiec (1993) makes the point that, many NGOs did little to strengthen local institutions which could have played an important role in the development process. She observes that many NGOs operating in Cambodia were largely ignorant of traditional forms of social

organization and relations in Cambodian society. Moreover, the knowledge of local customs and social relations are crucial both for ensuring that projects respond to local needs and for securing the active and sustained participation of potential beneficiaries.

> Khmer society is organized around followers attaching themselves to persons of higher status. These patrons then take care of their followers. The groups which form around individual patrons are not united as groups, but linked by personal ties to the individual patron. These relationships are constantly in a state of flux. People can change from one patron to another, or may use different patron contacts to accomplish different specific tasks. Similarly patrons may rise or fall depending on services that their clients need (Ledgerwood, 1992:4).

As Ledgerrwood stated, it is very important for NGOs to understand the social actors and dynamics of social relationships at the local Cambodian community level. NGOs have to be aware that Cambodian society and culture are characterized by complex moral codes and hierarchical relationships. Recognition or neglect of these aspects may account for the success or failure of various projects (Mysliwiec 1993).

Thus, NGOs have to be aware and understand the socio-cultural dynamics of Cambodian communities. This will greatly help in rural development projects both of the government as well as NGOs. For instance, the patron-client relationships and how local elite play the role of patron and broker respectively. The local elites as broker take role as the intermediary in the patron-client relationships which link state, NGOs and the poor in development project area. The role of local elites and how NGOs affect it, are important factor in the process of participation in decision-making and resource distribution in rural development.

1.2 Objectives and Hypotheses of the Research:

The aim of this study is to examine and analyse the role of local elites as brokers in NGO's rural development project in Kong Pisie, Cambodia. The specific objectives are:

1. To examine the interaction between social differentiation and patronage within the context of NGO intervention in Kong Pisie.
2. To examine the role of local elites as broker in the process of participation in decision-making and resource distribution in an NGO's rural development project in Kong Pisie, Cambodia.

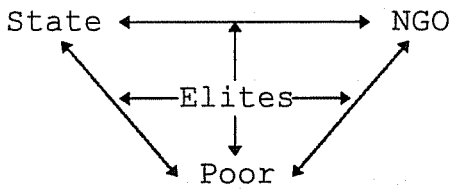
3. To examine to what extent and how the NGO's rural development project in Kong Pisie has affected the roles of the local elites as broker in rural development in the community level (1992 -1995).

To achieve the micro level study of the role of local elites as broker in rural development in the NGO's rural development project in Kong Pisie district of Cambodia, the working hypothesis will be used as follows:

- The roles of local elite as brokers have interfering effects on the process of people's participation in decision-making and resource distribution in rural development project.

1.3 Methodology and Data Collection

As a case study, I am taking the implementation of an international NGO's rural development project in 14 villages of Kong Pisie district, Kompong Speu province. The project concept is based on the process of people's participation with multi-sectoral approach by targeting disadvantaged groups such as children, widows and the poorest groups. The empirical data was based on the project implementation from 1992 to 1995. Furthermore, I will focus on to four actors: the state, the NGO, the poor and the elite for analysis. Meanwhile I also combine two approaches in answering the questions of the paper:



The Diagram of Actor Analysis in the Study

i) A mix of an exploratory and descriptive approach

- To develop a well-grounded picture of what is occurring in the community, the project implementation and rural development policy of NGO.

- To describe the process of people's participation in the project activities and relationships between and among the NGO, the broker and the poor.

ii) An explanatory approach

- To link and analyse the relevant issues that relate to the role of the local elites, the NGO and the poor in the process of participation in decision- making and resource distribution in rural development. To examine the dynamic and network of the relationships of local elites, NGO and the poor.

- To provide evidences to support the operational hypothesis.

The research is based on both primary and secondary data:

1. Primary data was collected by interviewing, discussion, small talk and observation during the researcher's involvement as the project manager in the rural development project 1992 -1995 in Kong Pisie of Cambodia.

2. Secondary data which was researched from ISS library, reading materials, Royal Tropical Institute (KIT), Department of Cultural Anthropology and Sociology of Development- University of Amsterdam, Royal Institute of Linguistics and Anthropology (KITLV) and The Library of the Kern Institute- Leiden University. Socio-economic profiles of rural Cambodia, governmental development reports and rural development project documentary from rural development project of Akphiwat[1], UNDP, UNNICEF, Cooperation Committee for Cambodia (CCC), NGO Forum on Cambodia and NGOs are also included.

1.4 Organization of the Research paper

This research paper is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction which consists of the background and problems of the study, objectives, hypotheses, methodology and limitations. It also provides a concept framework while a literature review is included as a basis for the conceptual framework. Some of the key concepts and theories relevant to the research are the actor-oriented approach, patron-client relationship, social network, social differentiation,

[1] In order to avoid the mention of the real names of the international NGOs, villages and villagers who were involved in the circumstance, all names in this research paper are fictitious.

participation and rural development. Chapter two describes the history of Cambodia and the Kong Pisie community which looks at the structure of social differentiation reflected in the socio-economical conditions, the administration and village politics and the access to resources. Chapter three demonstrates and analyses the social relationships within both the hierarchical system and the patron-client relationships. It also looks at the resource bases of the local elites as brokers and followers in Kong Pisie. Chapter four reviews the NGO rural development project in Kong Pisie and illustrates the effect of role of local elites as brokers, and the NGO's project on the role of local elites in rural development project in community level. It also illustrates the cases of the effects of local elites and the NGO on the process of the people's participation in decision-making and resource distribution in the NGO rural development project. The last chapter is conclusions of the study. Summary of the main points will be made in the last chapter and concluding remarks.

1.5 Limitations of the Study

There is a significant lack of relevant documentation with regard to especially the qualitative study at the micro level because of the war situation in Cambodia. Most of the primary data used in this research is dependent on my experience in the last four years of the field work (1990- 1995) and interviews with key informants.

2. Conceptual Framework

For the analysis in the research paper, I apply the actor-oriented approach, concepts of patron-client relationship, social network, rural differentiation, rural development and people's participation to examine the dynamics of the relations between local elites as broker and other actors in and outside of the community.

2.1 The Actor-Oriented Approach

According to Long (1992), the actor-oriented approach links the micro and macro factors in explaining the development of peasant societies. More specifically, Long (1992:38) states this approach entails "a detailed analysis of the life-worlds, struggles and exchanges within and between

specific social groups and networks of individuals..[...]...combining structural and situational perspectives, processes of intervention and heterogeneity within different social arenas.." (Ibid.).

Actor-oriented approach is a dynamic way of conceptualizing social change in that it "stresses the interplay and mutual determination of 'internal' and 'external' factors and relationships and recognizes the central role played by human action and consciousness" (Ibid.p20). It also emphasises that social actors are "knowledgeable" and "capable" (Giddens,1984:1-16, cited from Long,1992: 23). As social actors "they attempt to solve problems, learn how to intervene in the flow of social events around them and continuously monitor their own actions".

Mackintosh (1979, cited by Long:1992) further emphasizes that the analysis of peasant production can not be treated as homogenous because household labour relationships are in fact based on social value, kinship, neighbourhood, community ties and social status. And central to this pattern of household production is the production of both use and exchange values or commodities. Thus, an actor-oriented approach can demonstrate the dynamic character of peasant household behaviour as a series of survival strategies, based on economic and extra-economic resources of the peasant producer. There are also alternative sources for generating monetary and non-monetary income. James Scott points to the "peasant's existential dilemma - the need for crisis subsistence insurance" as one social construction of the peasant and the representative discourse surrounding peasant-actors (Scott, 1976:157).

Beyond that the approach "concentrated upon the innovative behaviour of entrepreneurs and economic brokers, on individual decision-making processes or on the ways in which individuals mobilized resources through the building of social networks"(Long,1992:21). Moreover, the approach identifies that the actors are the participants who could be individuals, capitalist enterprises, local elites, state agencies, political parties, religious organizations and so on.

Thus in the process of rural development as social change, it is important to recognise people as actors and also people's initiatives or in the otherwords, no actors are passive and exercise some kind of power even whom they are in highly subordinate position.

As analysing of this research, I focus to four groups of actors who take part in rural development: the state of Cambodia (represented by government officers in district and province), NGO itself and staffs, local elites and poor or mass at community level.

2.2 Social Networks

Social networks are defined as "matrices of social links" or as "social fields made up of relationships between people" (Adrian C. Mayer 1966, cited by Carl H. Lande':1977). Such networks include all individuals who are within a direct or indirect reach of each other and who are connected directly with at least other member of that networks. Lande'(1977:xxxiii), argues that networks are not limited to individuals connected directly with the focal member of a given primary star or those who participate in a specific co-ordinated action. Therefore social networks include all social relationships which influence the behaviour of individuals and groups in the society.

2.3 Patron-Client Relationships

The term 'patron' is derived from the Spanish Patron, meaning a person of power, status, authority and influence, and relevant in relation to a less powerful person or 'client' whom s/he can help or protect (Hall, 1977). The patron grant favours in return for goods, loyalty, political allegiance and other services from s/he dependent clients. Generally, "the relationships between individual patron and s/he client is biased against the latter who is, by definition, economically and politically far weaker" (Hall, 1977:510)

According to Scott (1977), the patron-client relationship based upon informally arranged personal exchange of resources between actors of unequal status. Furthermore, Grindle(1977) summarizes the characteristics of the patron-client linkage as (i) an informal or non-legally binding. (ii) personal or face-to-face relationship. (iii) an exchange of valued resources. (iv) it includes a relationship between actors of unequal status which (v) persists through time. In addition, the exchange in the patron-client relationships involves many aspects of the lives of actors. It is a multi-functional relationship in which the actors call upon each other for a wide variety of favours affecting all aspects of their lives (Ibid.). Therefore the patron client relationship is an instrumental relation between parties unequal in control of economic and political resources, services, contracts and so on (Lecture note by Wicky Meynen).

Moreover Scott (1977) states that in Southeast Asia, three conditions which patron -client relationship continues its vitality practicability; first, the persistence of marked inequalities in the control of wealth, status and power. Second, the relative absence of firm, impersonal guarantees of

physical security, status, position and wealth. Third, the inability of the kinship to serve an effective vehicle for personal security. Furthermore, Wolf (1977) adds that patron-client relationship is gain in situations where public law cannot guarantee adequate protection.

As Wolf (1965:97) argues, ***brokers*** are as "stand guard over the crucial junctures of relationships which connect the local system to the larger whole". Similar by Scott (1977) points that the Group of local elites who are in the middle of a patron-client pyramid-being a client to someone higher up and a patron to those below, is called ***broker*** (Scott,1977) or ***buffer*** as referred to by Wolf (1971). Moreover, he states that function of broker is to relate individuals who want to stabilize or improve their life chances but who lack economic security and political connections, with individual who operate and has security in economic and political connections and also has higher social position. Its broker implies hence the existence of patron-client relationships. A broker does not directly command the resources that are relevant to an exchange but instead maintains a personal relationship both with an actor who control the goods and services and with one who wants to acquire them.

2.4 Rural Differentiation

The differentiation of the peasantry as a result of agrarian change was distinguished by Lenin. He emphasized that the logic of capitalism polarizes the rural population into landowning and labouring classes. This process created new types of rural people who was referred to as 'depeasantizing' in peasant discourse. The new classes are agrarian bourgeoisie and rural proletariat which was contrasted with middle peasants who still work their own land using family labour (Harriss,1982 in Hirsch,1990). During the same period, the populist Chayanov interprets the differentiation of the peasantry by focusing on the cyclical nature of peasant livelihoods. He suggests that peasant households are subject to varying labourer-dependent and land within a basically homogeneous community rather than working within a capitalist and monetary-oriented framework. In wider economy, the peasants remain the basic unit of production, distribution and exchange. It implies that peasants continually change in factors of production by reliance on domestic resources, sometimes in a 'self-exploitative' way (Chayanov, 1926 in Harrison,1982, cited by Hirch,1990).

White (1989), argues that there is no universal form of agrarian change and 'agrarian differentiation'in peasant societies. However, it is to be explored rather than assumed and he points out both of Chaynovian and Leninist models are not entirely incompatible. White states "Differentiation....involves a cumulative and permanent (ie non-cyclical, which is not to say that it is never reversible) process of change in the ways in which different groups in rural society -and some outside it -gain access to the products of their own or others' labour, based on their differential control over the means of production and often, but not always, on increasing inequalities in access to land" (White,1989:20). Beyond the transfer or extraction or "pumped out" of surplus in production is a key common characteristic, concrete forms of differentiation are varied and complex.

Moreover, another aspect of analysis of differentiation has been to consider the political, ideological besides the economic. Hart (1989) emphasizes the state's role in rural differentiation, in particular the relationship between state, rural elites and poor villagers. Hart focuses to state patronage by comparison Thailand with Indonesia. She shows that in Indonesia, local elites invest in socializing with government officials in order to gain power and benefit at a local level. In Thailand, because of less powerful of centralized state, local powers have more independent authority not only among officials, representatives of capital and also among village people. She also argues that this process of change is as a dialectical rather than a linear process, it is fundamental to focus on the specific contexts and reality. Turton (1989) emphasizes on the local powers which are found among village elites, district officials and traders. He explains that these local elites enhanced their positions by their "linkage" which enable them to accumulate village surplus through wages, rent, commodity dealing, prices and interest. He states local elites use their new position in social and religious patronage to "benefit from association with more traditional and village forms of relationship also and legitimacy". However, the new relationships involve in rural differentiation itself. I use argument of White (1989) to examine the social differentiation in Kong Pisie, which focuses on differential control over the means of production and the transferring of surplus in production in rural society. Furthermore, I also examine the relationship between the state and the villagers which based on the idea of Hart (1989) and look carefully on the local power in rural development (turton,1989).

2.5 Elites defined

This research will use concept of elites in investigation and explanation of phenomenon in Kong Pisie community. The term "*elite* derives from the Latin word *eligere*, meaning *to choose*. It refers to *the choice part* or to *the flower* of a nation, culture, age group, and also to persons occupying high social positions" (Keller,1963:25).

There is a wide variety of definitions and points of view in the study of elites. Amitai Etzioni (1961:89) defines elites as "group of actors who have power". Seymour M. Lipset and Aldo Solari (1967:vii) clarify elites positions in society which "are at the summits of key social structures, i.e. the higher positions in economy, government, military, politics, religion, mass organizations, education and the professions". More specific definition, Carl Beck and James Malloy (1971:21) define elites:

> Elites are those who exercise some direct scope and intensity of control over the decision making process. They do so because they have an independent basis of power potential. the elite groups differ among each other both in terms of basis of power and varying actualization of scope, and intensity of control.

Moreover, Saint-Simon stated that "elites will be linked to specific social functions and will therefore be independent of the rich and poor" (Cited by Keller,1963:10). He suggest that class divisions are not intrinsically connected with the presence or absence of elites.

In this research, local elites are see as actors who have power, control over scarce resources (wealth, positions, honours, etc.), control over the decision- making process and power to withhold information. Moreover, local elites emerge within a structured system on the basis of expert knowledge or through religion, cultural and political sector, and they arise at community level to the periphery of the Cambodia national society. In Kong Pisie community, local elites take role as patron in village level and as broker link poor or mass and NGOs/state or external actors.

2.6 Rural Development

> Development is a process with many economic and social dimensions, but require a minimum, rising per capita incomes, eradication of absolute poverty and reduction in inequality over the long term. The process is a dynamic one, including not only changes in the structure and level of economic activity but also increased opportunities for individual choice and for improved self-esteem. (Mc Graw- Hill:1993, cited by Norton and Alwang:1993)

Beyond this above-mentioned definition of development, development goals include the improvement of income growth, equity (resource and service distribution) and security (political and economic stability). Rural development may be defined, therefore, by the application of these equities to the rural sector population and economy. This research focuses particularly on poverty and inequality thus, combining the developments of social-political factors with the developments of economic processes. Rural development may also be used to refer to the processes of change in rural societies including both agrarian and non-farm producers.

2.7 Non-Government Development Organization (NGDOs)

Since this decades, NGDOs have more important role in rural development especially in Southeast Asia countries. There are three common definitions of the term NGDO. First, according to Fernandez, NGDOs are formal, non-profit organization trying to amass financial, technical and scientific resources to meet society's identified needs (Fernandez,1987:27). Second is Padron's explanation (1987:71) that NGDOs are formed by individuals who receive payment for their duties and they are private non- profit organizations operating within a legal framework. They work through development projects or programmes to benefit other than their own members and their financing comes from sources outside the NGDOs. He also views NGDOs as playing an important role in the preparation, design and application of development strategies in addition to alternative efforts of the government or international institutions. Third, Wils (1992a:1) states that NGDOs are private agencies in the third world which specialise in the design and implementation of development projects and programmes for marginal poor sectors of the population. These NGDOs and their activities are practically always financed by foreign agencies. All these definition highlight the development activities of the Non- Government Organization (NGO). Thus I define Akphiwat organization is a international NGDO in this research paper. However, to be simply in the discussion, I address Akphiwat-Cambodia as a NGO in this reseach paper.

2.8 People's Participation

The UNRISD (1978:2) stated that participation is seen as "(A)ctive and meaningful involvement of the masses of people at different levels: (a) in the decision of resources to achieve them and (b) in the execution of resulting programmes and projects." Hirsch (1990) mentions that the distinction of the UNRISD approach was thus made between active and passive participation. Furthermore, Pearse and Stiefel (1979:5) cited that UNRISD approach is that participation is a basic element in reversing the trend toward dependence and marginalization of the masses and so 'the central issue of popular participation has to do with power'. Besides, they stress:

> The study of poverty and the political economy of the production of wealth during the last few decades has shown convincingly that the generation of poverty is a function of concentration of power and the monopolization of resources, which puts the cheap and obedient labour of the poor at the disposal of the monopolizers, thereby increasing their power. It must be accepted therefore, that the struggle for people's participation implies an attempted redistribution of both control of resources and power in favour of those who live by their own productive labour. (Pearse and Stiefe,1979:5)

Moreover, Turton (1987) focuses that in the process people's participation in rural development particularly in Southeast Asia like as Thailand, local power structure which includes local elites who are powerful and minority in community as an obstacle to development. Furthermore, the local power structure which consists of patron-client relationship also accelerate increasing of socio-economic differentiation in rural areas.

Practically, most NGDOs aim to empower villagers' organization by working through people's participation strategy. Oakley (1991) explains that in rural development, participation as a means implies the use of participation to achieve some predetermined goal or objective. Participation includes people's involvement in decision-making processes, in implementing, sharing in the benefits of development programmes and their involvement in efforts to evaluate such programmes.

CHAPTER 2

History of Cambodia and Kong Pisie Background

Chapter 2, provides the historical background and general situation of Cambodian peasant society and Kong Pisie in particular. It includes relationship between the state and village since post Angkor regime until privatization policy in 1989. It also includes evolution of NGOs in Cambodia, the socio-economic and political conditions, village administration and social hierarchical system in Kong Pisie.

1. Cambodia Historical Background

In order to understand the social relationships in Kong Pisie, this section serve to ground Cambodian peasant society as a whole by looking back to Cambodian history since post Angkor regime to the present day situation.

1.1 State and Village (Post-Angkor to 1860s)

Since the ancient Cambodia Angkor period, traditional Khmer[1] society was divided into three strata. These groups were strictly hierarchically ordered and based on caste system reflecting the being "Indianized" or "Hinduized" (Chandler,1992:11-13), included; royalty, officials and peasantry. The role of the royalty (the king) was as a quasi-religious and ritual head of the state, embodying the well-being of the society, the wealth and fertility of the land (Thion,1993). Cambodian ideas about the king and the Buddhist *sangha*[2] took different forms and were expressed in a different languages. His power and spiritual authority extended down through the officials to the people (Ibid.).

In early nineteenth century the king had a group of high-ranking officials or *okya*[3].

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[1] Cambodians call themselves as "khmer" and their language as well.

[2] Sangha is the highest rang of Buddhist monastery in Cambodia and Thailand, it's Bali-Santakrit language.

[3] Chandler(1993) explains that *Okya* became part of the *Komlang* (strength and entourage of the king by drinking of the "water of allegiance" at the royal temple. The survival of an *okya* depended on the king (Rabibhadana, 1975). In practice *okya* were authorized to mobilize manpower for warfare or public works and maintained small private armies who had acted as bodyguards for him. The king provided a large plot of land to *okya*. This landholding in certain regions persisted from one generation to the next.

Okya who were placed in *kompong* (city) and *srok* (district) and the capital. *Okya* were representative of the king, he controlled the balance of power in the kingdom. *Okya* had responsibility for levying taxes and corvee labour from the peasantry and channelling the surplus to the royalty and the religious establishment for the construction of temples and palaces (Bit,1991 and Chandler,1993). *Okya* was the person who act as the go- between of the king (Chandler,1993).

It was virtually unthinkable of peasants to climb up the social ladder because of heavy taxation and hardly any means of accumulating wealth (Thion,1993:96f). By theory, the land belonged to the king, but in practice the officials controlled the disposal of peasants[4] (Chandler,1993 and Thion,1993).

Cambodian always identified themselves in term of their status relative to the person being addressed and this dyadic relationships extended downward from the king and the *sangha* through the graded bureaucracy of *kompong* to villages and past them to the landless (Chandler,1993:104).

In Cambodian society, having a patron and clients was connected with one's chances of survival (Ledgerwood,1992; Thion,1993; Chandler; Martin,1994). People with access to power accepted as many followers or slaves as they could. These people had contracted debts to their patrons, some of them spent their lifetimes working off the debts. Other clients entered their "lopsided friendships", many people enslaved themselves to a patron, to protect themselves against the rapacity of others (Chandler,1993).

The rectitude and permanence of these relationships had been drummed into everyone from birth (Kiernan & Boua,1982;Thion,1993; Chandler,1993). It might be an explanation why Cambodians had to accept these demeaning arrangement. The other reason was "force majeure"(Chandler,1993:106). It was impossible for individual flight or organized resistance against the state power. Moreover, these "lopsided friendships" could be re-negotiated in times of stress and its attractiveness in the eyes of villagers. Because, srok official could get material, wealth or other, he shared in his client's food, their protection and he was more responsive to local issues than authorities in the capital (Chandler,1993).

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[4] It was similar to Thai feudalism "*Sakdina*" which is explained by Akin rabibhadana, The Organization of Thai Society in the Early Bangkok Period 1782-1873, Cornell University, 1969.

1.2 Modernization (1863 -1974)

Modernization started to take place in the late 1950s. The colonial system which was in many ways detrimental to traditional Khmer society was grounded in the introduction of the French education system. In this period, various official posts were occupied by the rich. Authority was concentrated in the capital and based on French administrative practice. Western role models replaced traditional ones, thereby widening the gap between the peasantry from 'educated' people (Ponchaud,1989 :155-56, by Ovesen,1995:7).

Table 2.1 shows that not only education affected to peasant society but privatization of land also affected to peasants as well. It means that the private ownership of land forcefully introduced by the French, brought about a major change to the Cambodian peasants and land ownership. According to Hu Nim, between 1930 to 1962 the percentage of farmers holding 5-10 hectares of plot of land had increased 100% and the percentage holding more than 10 hectares had increased four times. the percentage of small farmers holding less than 5 hectares had decreased only 8% in 30 years (See table 3.1; Hu Nim,1982:74).

Table 2.1: Evolution of the Cambodian Agrarian Structure, 1930 -1962.

Size of plot	1930 %	1956 %	1962 %
Less than 5 hectares	93.70	92.00	85.60
5 -10 hectares	5.12	7.00	10.40
More than 10 hectares	1.18	1.00	4.00

Source: Land Tenure and Social Structure in Cambodia by Hu Nim, Peasant and Political in Kampuchea 1942 -1981, Ben Kierna and Chanthou Boua, 1982

Table 2.2, the land distribution shows that more than 30% of agricultural households own less than one hectare each and also 30% own half a hectare each. It was trended of inbalance landholding in 10 years. It was difficult to improve the lives of this category of peasants. Delvert (1956, cited by Oversen, 1995) finds in various parts of the country that 30 -75% of the peasants were in significant debt (Kiernan and Boua,1982:7f). The picture of a peasantry in constant, or renewed debt and the moneylenders were usually Chinese shopkeepers or traders (Ibid.).

Table 2.2 The Cambodian Agrarian Structure in 1956- 1962

The Size of Plot	1956		1962	
	No. of family	(%)	No.of family	(%)
Less than 1 hectare	402,000	54.8	256,000	30.7
1-2 hectares	183,000	24.9	186,410	22.3
2-5 hectares	90,000	12.3	272,500	32.6
5-10 hectares	48,000	6.5	86,930	10.4
10-20 hectares	9,300	1.3	28,420	3.4
More than 20 hectares	1,191	0.2	5,020	0.6
Total	733,491	100	835,540	100

Source: Land Tenure and Social Structure in Cambodia by Hu Nim, Peasant and Political in Kampuchea 1942 -1981, Ben Kiernan and Chanthou Boua,1982

It is shown that deterioration of socio-economic conditions began in the conditions for small peasants. At the same time, the process of social differentiation accelerated, particularly as some people accumulated herds of oxen (Hu Nim; Kiernan & Boua,1982). They could make more profitable use of larger land, employ seasonal workers and lend draft-animals to peasants (Grunewald, 1990 cited by Ovesen,1995).

Along with this deterioration, the symbolic and cosmological significance of the king had been undermined when king *Sihanouk* decided to become a politician instead of trying to remain a king in the traditional sense (Chandler,1993; Martin,1994). The socio-economic differences among peasants continued to increase under Lon Nol, followed by growing social tensions.

1.3 Communist Regime: Angkar Padevat (1975 -1979)

The Communist regime that controlled Cambodia between 1975 to 1979 was known as Democratic Kampuchea (DK). The leaders of DK called themselves the *angkar padevat* "revolutionary organization". According to *angkar padevat*, Cambodia's poor had always been exploited and enslaved. The revolution and empowered by military victory, they would now become the masters of their lives and collective masters of their country (Chandler,1993; Martin,1994).

In the communist regime people mentioned that "Life was hard everywhere", it is estimated that between April 1975 to January 1979, over one million people died (or one person in seven) as a direct result of DK policies and action[5]. People became sick, overworked and lacked food. Those who were identified as enemies of *angkar padevat* were killed. *Angkar* had been supported and guarded by *kamaphibal* (official) and *yothea* (force) who consisted of young people particularly from rural areas. In each village, *kamaphibal* and *yothea* had the full authority to control and punish their people. Most *kamaphibal* and *yothea* were illiterate.

In the rural village, most children worked in the labour mobile group. Adults remained in their native village. The villagers had enough to eat, lived in the same houses, and continued rice plantation according to schedules that were fixed and longer than previous.

All over the country, in the beginning of 1975 of the monks were defrocked and put to work in the rice fields. If they protested, they were killed as was any lay person[6]. The new constitution, introduced in 1976, did not mention Buddhism and monastery (Martin,1994; Chandler,1993; Thion,1993). Concrete monasteries often served as prisons and wood from the temples was used in the construction of storehouses and workshops. The temple no longer played its traditional religious role of knowledge dispersing, traditional healing and psychological supporting.

All privatized properties were replaced by the collectivization spread to the entire country (1976 Constitution cited by Martin 1995). Angkar passed on its power into the hands of the young who were inexperienced and know-nothing. A single god was to be honoured: angkar, "An infraction could bring death"[7].

1.4 Collectivization to Privatization (1979 - present).

Civil war started again when Phnom Penh was captured by the Vietnamese in January 1979. The Vietnamese and their Khmer allies quickly set up a new government, the People's Republic of Kampuchea. Fighting between the Khmer Rouge forces and the invading

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[5] This part of Khmer Rouge regime, most data and information searched from nterviewal of Khmer refugee in Thai border camp and interviewed Mr. Ouk Kim Onn, Vice Minister of Foreign Affairs of Cambodia, some families of project staffs, some Phnom Penh people and group discussion with villagers in Kong Pisie, included diary during 1991-1994 .

[6] Interviewed the abbot of Prey Thou thoeng, Kong Pisie and others.

[7] Interviewed Mrs Payam, Vice master of Secondary School in Phnom Penh who was in the prison during Pol Pot regime.

Vietnamese, the migration of Khmer throughout the country, disruption of the agricultural cycle, and a lack of draft animals and seeds created famine conditions that were relieved only through international assistance.

Throughout the 1980s, Cambodia slowly began a recovery that continues till today. Villages were rebuilt, families were reunited, and Buddhism was revived. The village temple was again the center of village life. Government and economic institutions were re-established and the infrastructure was slowly reconstructed (Chandler,1993)). This government also initially tried collectivized agriculture, but the *krom samaki*[8] (communal work team) system proved unproductive and was slowly abandoned during the 1980s.

In 1989 the policy of ownership of private property and freedom of religion were declared. Reconstruction efforts by the government and relief assistance by UN agencies and NGOs were carried out within the country. In October 1991 the four warring factions signed a peace agreement in Paris.

The United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia (UNTAC)[9] supervised the national election process which held in May 1993. The new government declared itself a monarchy, and *Norodom Sihanouk* was crowned again as king (Ledgerwood, 1994). The government opened the door both for business investment and for Cambodia's participation in international development programs and begun bilateral assistance programs. The government appointed the Cambodia Development Council (CDC) in 1994 in order to guide the national development of Cambodia.

2. Rural Development and NGOs in Cambodia

Rural development in post independence period until the civil war in 1970 was largely a top-down process, flowing down from Prince *Sihanouk*, the God-king-turned-politician, to his people (Charny,1992 cited by Mysliwiec,1994). Most of the projects failed, for example the Office Royal De Cooperation (OROC) which focused on people's co-operative (Thion,1993). This government service, noted for its weakness in planning, neglected in being involved with the poor in their own development (Muscat,1989 cited by Mysliwiec,1994).

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[8] *Krom Sameki* means communal work team. It is a collective labour group which was initiated in 1979 in order to promote "socialist" in term maximizing of agricultural production. Its annuled in 1987-1989. Krom Sameki was a group of 5-10 households who share labour, tools, material, etc live in village.

During the Pol Pot regime from 1975-1979, the rural-oriented policy was stamped by Khmer Rouge strategy. This is realised in the control of the water regime, communal co-operation on village level, massive infrastructure construction and redistribution of assets from rich to poor people. These experiences, compounded by an extreme shortage of human resources, significantly impacted Cambodian's notion of development (Ovesen, Trankell, Ojendal,1995).

War and security concerns since 1979 have made community mobilization for development activities quite problematic. In spite of this, however, many of the village's schools, temples and small village level irrigation schemes have been restored through self-help projects and contribution of cash and labour from the communities themselves. Such self-help approaches to rebuilding communities may be at risk with the arrival of large flows of international assistance (Mysliwiec,1994).

During the situation of "half peace, half war"(Ibid.) in 1982-1987, some NGOs including UNICEF, WFP, ICRC and UNHCR entered and worked under the control of the government. Government policy towards the NGOs was restrictive. Thus NGOs had no alternative but to channel assistance to rural people through the central government. Thus the implementing of NGOs rural development projects, worked through mass organizations such as the National Women's Association and the Youth Associations under the government bureaucratic system and Cambodia Red Cross.

In 1992, NGOs staffs moved to the provinces where they, were directly involved in the training of Cambodian counterparts but still under control by the government. Later on, NGOs were also able to employ Cambodian staff and for the first time, local NGOs were initiated and organized. Integrated community development and credit project figure prominently in many of their projects. Which included, Women's issues, environmental concerns, food security and training of local counterparts and local leaders.

In 1995, more than 100 organizations including bilateral donors, the World Bank, UN agencies, international non-government organizations (NGOs) and local NGOs are providing most of the aid to the development process of the nation of Cambodia.

3. Kong Pisie: Local Context of Study

Kong Pisie is an old district, about 55 Kms Southwest from Phnom Penh capital city. It's one of poorest districts of the Kompong Speu province. All families are small landholders. The

community passed a critical situation as a result of war, insecurity, poor soil, poor water and lack of governmental services. Paddy rice is the main production there. Most of the villagers have not enough rice for family consumption through the year. Some of them have extra income from other sources such as palm sugar production, wage-labour and government staff i.e. school teachers and district officers.

Table 2.3, gives the demographic data for each of the villages considered in this research[10]. According to the ongoing civil war took lives of many men and many skilled people. The table shows that in 1992, there 52% were females and 47% of the population were under 16 old. The average household size was 5 and 32% of the total household are female-headed, the percentage of female-headed households remains high as are the percentage of women compared to men in the labour force.

3.1 Socio -economic Conditions in Kong Pisie

As mentioned earlier all small rice farmers are subsistent producers and have not enough paddy rice for family consumption through out the year and therefore can barely produce for exchange value. Under the free market, villagers need money to exchange with other kinds of basic needs such as cloth, medicine, social merit, etc.(baseline survey,1992)[11]

Some families have to sell their paddy rice production for cash even though they do not have enough paddy to consume in the year. Consequently, they borrow money or paddy rice from the local elites who buy their production in the village or neighbouring villages. The villagers sell their rice to traders thus introducing cash into the villages. The debt cycle is usually started by a group of poor farmers during the dry season and during the rice plantation period (in August -December).

Since the collective production was annulled in 1988, which meant that no rice ration was given by the state, migration became nearly as important as rice cultivation as a source of income. Palm sugar production as well as vegetables also generated income. As a result,

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[10] In this research, Kong Pisie includes 14 villages located in two sub-districts of Kong Pisie where Akphiwat implement the rural development project. The data is based on three and half years experience of researcher and base-line survey which was conducted by Kong pisie rural development project of Akphiwat in 1992, observation and participatory approach were the method of data collection.

[11] Its shown that the villagers'expenditure is more than their income and most of their expenditure go into the basic need of subsistence.

access to the cash economy became increasingly important. It implies that rice cultivation does not provide sufficient income to sustain the household.

Table 2.3 : Name of village, population, numbers of household and numbers of female- headed household in villages of study.

Village	no. of HHs	no. of female-headed HHs	Population		
			Total	Male	Female
Krasang	24	9	127	66	61
Ang	43	9	217	104	113
Prey	54	24	273	126	147
Talim	28	4	167	87	80
Tamean	44	13	229	111	118
Meanchy	29	9	146	66	80
Damnak	30	17	160	85	75
Chamkar	32	6	159	68	91
Tabak	52	18	299	153	146
Pilin	56	17	253	122	131
Tuk Tra	84	21	459	229	230
Svay	28	6	142	65	77
Tuk Meas	107	35	491	221	270
Srey	77	35	345	169	176
Total	688	223(32%)	3467	1672(48%)	1795(52%)

Source: Document ofCommunity Study of Kong pisie Community Development Project, Akphiwat, 1992
Note: HHs = Households

In the villages, wealthy households were able to take advantage of this development by investing in assets such as gold or rice stocking[12]. Family connections in Phnom Penh or abroad and government salaries contributed to the possibilities these households have. Since the means of production (including land, labour, cash, draft-animals, palm trees, etc.) were privatized, asset accumulated differentiation has accelerated. The access to the resources viz. land, labour and draft-animals and especially their interaction define the boundaries of social differentiation and also can lead households into debt relations.

Expenditure on sickness and handicaps are among the most common expenditure for villagers. The cost of medicines are extremely high. Thus there is a lack of government health services and private clinics have excessively high rates. Villagers have to depend on traditional healers who live in the villages and pay less money for their services. Many villagers become poorer due to increasing expenditure as a result of sickness or handicaps in the family.

[12] During post war, Cambodian money currency was not stable, people used gold and other productions for value exchange in the marketing.

3.2 The Political Administrative Structure of the Villages.

All the villages have male village heads appointed by the district officials. Some of them have been the village heads from 1979 until today. Most of them were sent to the army force during the anti-Pol Pot campaign and were trusted by district official. Only one headman (Srey) came from a rich household before the Pol Pot regime and he still has more assets than the other village heads (Interviewed and observation, 1992-1994).

The village head acts as the link between the village and the sub-district and district. Normally, the village head invites heads of households for formal meetings in order to inform them of policies or government information[13]. Within the strongly hierarchical system, village heads are the representatives of the local government and thus hold positions of power, especially the village heads who have good rapport with the district official. Development projects in each village is usually organised through the village headman and committee. According to their position and the official linkage system, some of the village heads were able to benefit during the land redistribution policy and several divided common property amongst friends, relatives and supporters. Generally speaking, in all the villages, the village heads are literate and was fairly popular. The villagers rely on him in terms of contact with the district and the villagers do not want refuse any village regulation in return.

According to UNTAC and the international community, the government adjusted the village structure for national election in 1993, by withdrawing of the village secretary of the People's republic of Kampuchea Party. In fact, there was not much change in Kong Pisie. All 14 village heads except one headman (retired) still continue their position.

Most village headmen have good relationship with temples and schools, only one village head (Tuk Meas) in the research area does not get along well with the temple committee and school teachers. Because of the conflict on the issue of reclaiming the water pond. A member of the temple committee who was the former village headman before 1975 and his son is a school teacher, reclaimed one of water ponds in the village but the present village head refused.

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[13] the experience of participation in the village meetings during work in Kong Pisie, 1992-1994.

Generally, the village headmen depend on the abbot and the holy-man in terms of ritual management and donation collection for the village budget. In return, the temple depends on the village head through his connection with the district official for security and materials for construction.

3.3 Temple and School: Center of Villages

In the villages of the study the entire population is Buddhist. The temple or Wat is an important institution in the village. Since 1979, every temple was rebuilt and funds for the rebuilding was requested from the villagers. Many villagers are involved in the merit ceremonies and villagers would save some money for the temple merit, even though they do not have enough money from the rice plantation or palm sugar production.

The temple abbot is the highest position in the temple. He has the authority to make decisions and has access to the control of the finance with the support of temple committee. Villagers communicate with him in "higher" language which is different from local language. Clearly, the abbot is not only the Buddhist leader and ritual leader but he also takes the role of traditional healer both in terms of the physical and psychological. Villagers always come to see him when they have problems or unhappiness.

The temple committee is appointed by the abbot and the elderly, and they are responsible for keeping the financial accounts and running the daily activities related to the temple. The monks and the temple committee can be instrumental in organizing community activities such as gathering money to construct temple, roads and schools. Normally, abbot is chair temple committee and the committee members are elderly, literate and they are wealthier than the other villagers. Villagers invite them to lead the religious rituals. The organizational strength of the monks and the committee vary between villages.

Generally all temples in Kong Pisie are allocated the largest price of land in the villages and most schools in villages of study are located in temple land (only one school is located outside the temple land). In the present, the district and sub-district authorities and NGOs regularly approach the monks and committee to organize the village for government activities, for example the construction of school. The school committee overlaps with the temple committee. School teachers always work closely with the temple committee and monks. Most teachers are relatives of the temple committee and some are children of the temple committee

members. The temple and school committee will be distinguished clearly in their new role in rural development in the chapter 4.

Some poor people help out in the temple complex by cooking, cleaning or working in the fields and in return are given meals or rice. Some poor families can send their sons to work and study at the temple. The elderly go to the temple to pray or socialize. Villagers contribute paddy rice to the temple in the name of merit after harvesting.

4. The Resources and Access in Kong Pisie

In this section, resources are means of agricultural production which are involved of peasants in Kong Pisie. It deals with landownership, labour, capital and education. In addition, it will explain the process of access to resource by focusing on who controls and commands these resources, and how.

4.1 Land Ownership

In 1979 - 1988, land belonged to the state and collective production was state policy. The official land privatization and land redistribution took place in 1989. The central government authorized land to district official village heads and sub-district chairmen for distribution. These officials redistributed land by allocating a certain area of village land on the basis of the number of household members. Big households would own larger land than small households and female headed households received similar allocations as small households.

In Kong Pisie, land distribution average about 0.1 to 0.2 hectare per person or about 0.5 hectare per household (baseline survey, 1992). This method was also applied to the ownership of sugar palm trees. In Kong Pisie, the size of land holding did not differ much but thus in no way suggest stability in their landownership.

In 1992 among the 688 households in Kong Pisie, only one household owned the largest plot of land (3 hectares) and while 3% remain landless (See table 2.4). Averagely, household owns farming plots less than one hectare. The landless consists of new families who moved into the villages after the implementation of land redistribution and new household just separated from their parents (Ibid.).

Table 2.4 Name of villages, numbers of household have on oxen, numbers of household had not rice through year, landholding in each village in Kong Pisie.

Village	no. of HHs	% of HHs have not rice through year	no. of HHs had no oxen	Land holding (hectare)		
				Largest	Smallest	Landless
krasang	24	87	7	3	1.1	-
Ang	43	79	26	1.9	0.30	1
Prey	54	87	34	2.2	0.8	3
Talim	28	89	15	2.1	0.5	1
Tamean	44	79	19	2.9	0.7	0
Meanchy	29	93	19	2.5	0.8	1
Damnak	30	91	24	2.2	0.52	0
Chamkar	32	87	19	2.0	0.5	2
Tabak	52	86	12	1.5	0.4	-
Pilin	56	89	44	2.9	0.7	5
Tuk Tra	84	89	46	1.8	0.4	-
Svay	28	91	20	1.5	0.45	0
Tuk Meas	107	55	65	1.6	0.4	3
Srey	77	85	47	2.5	0.5	1
Total	688	85%	395(57%)	-	-	17

Source: Document of Community Study of Kong pisie Rural Development Project, Akphiwat, 1992.
Note: HH = Household

Before the land redistribution, every village was allocated public land which belonged to the village. This land was used for community rice farm where villagers shared their work. The benefit from this land belonged to the village. However at present, the size of the public land has become smaller because it is being reclaimed by the village heads or some persons who have links with the district official and it is sold by village committee.

Landownership can change through buying and selling, death, divorce and claims as a result of debts. A villager will not sell their land as it is perceived as their most important resource as reflected in the saying "no land, no future". If a family does sell their land, it is their last resort but they still try to keep a small plot of land or at least the house land. The number of families who sold their land is increasing. Families who sold land either due to illness in the family, insufficient labour power or debts to money lenders who after a long period of debt claim their land. Those families who are the "local elites" in and outside the village who have relatives in the village, accessed more land by buying from the poor in the villages.

A few villagers such as the village headman, teachers, government officials and large landowners, have received the official permanent title. The concept of land title is not

important in the view of villagers. They are only concerned about having a plot of land which they can cultivate.

4.2 Labour

The organization of labour is based on the availability of labour in the household for exchanged labour and hired labour. In general, parents have access to their children's labour and female-headed households have themselves and their children's labour. The rich also have access hired labour.

There are several different systems of labour exchange. For instance, if a man transplants rice one day, a woman in return offers one day of rice transplanting. The task of man who perform the task does ploughing for half a day is returned by one day of rice transplanting by the woman because in ploughing one needs to take not only the man labour but the labour of the ox into account. Normally, women do not plough because it is hard work, but in female-headed household women do the ploughing assisted by her children. Labour can be exchanged between families, neighbours, friends or between the previous *Krom Sameki*[14](Communal work team) members. Exchange labour is practised in transplanting, harvesting and threshing. More women are involved in exchange labour than men. In villages, rich or middle families hire labour from poor and the landless while the poorer families practise the exchange of labour. In general, the most common wage rate[15]is 1,500 -2,000 r/ day ($0.6 - $0.8) including food. Higher wages are paid for ploughing and threshing which amounts to 2,500 -3,500 r/day ($1-1.4). Both ploughing and threshing are male designated tasks. The "labour" of draft-animals are also paid for.

After harvesting, most poor households and landless households have at least one man in each household who would migrate to Phmon Penh as labourers or cyclo (tricycle) riders. In some villages, the whole families migrated, men work as labourers while women and children become beggars. Due to large migrations in dry season, there are very few men in Kong Pisie. A very different but common means to gain access to labour is through dependency relations. Debt relations are common sources of labour supply. Rich households or local elites may lend

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[14] Krom Sameki is group of collective labour which organized in group of 10-15 households to work in the field. It worked well since 1979 and subsided in 1988. It was annulled in 1988 before declaring of privatization policy.

[15] The wage rate based on the wage rate of 14 villages in Kong Pisie. The data collected by village discussion and Kong Pisie Rural Development report, 1994.

money in order to expect the borrower to feel bounded and supply labour on demand. The reverse also occurs; poorer households donate their labour to rich households and in return feel they can approach them in times of need for rice or cash.

4.3 Capital

This research defines and categorises capital as a means of production which includes rice, cash, credit, equipment, tools of agricultural production and palm sugar.

i) Rice

All the villages experience inefficiency in rice production due to poor soils, lack of water, poor technology and lack of labour power. The villagers produce only 900-1,100 Kgs of paddy rice per hectare in a year (national rice production by averaged 1,300-1,400 Kgs/hectare). About 85% of the total households have a shortage of rice for 5-6 months during the rice cultivation season and some of them have a shortage of rice almost through the year (See table 2.4).

Villagers consume their own rice produce. By various options of rice shortage, most households buy or borrow rice before they have to eat their rice yield which supposed for the season. Most households get involved in selling some of their rice to get cash and they use the cash again to buy rice during rice shortage in the months of August to December. Rice dealers are to be found among the rich households and small rice-mill owners. Rice-mill owners are also teachers. One of them a village headman and two are district officials. The same is true for the rice dealers who are also government employers or someone related to families who work with the government, who have motorcycles. Generally, rice borrowing is practised in the manner where the borrower pays back twice the amount of rice borrowed. Some pay more or less depending on the relationship between the borrower and the rice lender. Rice borrowing is a widespread practice and for poorer families it often leads to permanent debt. The poorer households have lesser opportunity to borrow because the rice lenders know that the poor are unable to repay with interest. Thus the poor have to buy rice in cash or borrow from their relative or temple[16]or practise exchange labour.

[16] Normally, the temple got distributed rice in term of merit after harvesting in January. Most temples have more enough rice for monks. Some poor people always receive rice from temple by return s/he will work in the temple when the abbot needs.

ii) Cash

Cash becomes increasingly important with the free-market policies. In these villages, villagers earn cash by having extra agricultural production for example palm sugar produce, basket weaving, watermelon growing, vegetable growing, etc. In these kinds of extra income generating, the villagers get advance cash or materials from the dealers and repay by selling their production to the dealers. Thus the villagers sell their produce for prices which are monopolized by the dealers. The villagers are also charged high interest payment for the cash borrowed. Besides, agricultural production, migrant labour and government salary which include money from abroad are an important cash income source. In all the villages of study the local elites or rich households have access to cash more than others, are far less engaged in petty trade or in receiving cash from relatives in Phnom Penh and abroad.

The difference in socio-economic status between the households is determined by one's access to cash and income resources. Local elites have cash which lead to access to more land, rice surplus and labour surplus through credit and the borrowing system.

iii) Credit

Individual credit relations between villagers or especially relatives are common. Interests range from 20% to 200% and are negotiated. Every villager knows the money lenders who consist of local elites from the village or neighbouring villages. Informal cash loans are often paid back in kind such as rice and palm sugar. Lenders and debtors negotiate the amount of rice and palm sugar and the time of repayment at time of lending. For instance, if a debtor borrows 100 Kgs of rice in September, s/he has to pay back 400 Kgs of paddy rice or 280 Kgs of rice in January. In general villagers know that the interest rate of 30% per month is normal for cash borrowing. (Akphiwat project report,1994 and project plan, 1994,1995).

All palm sugar producers borrow from palm sugar dealers before the start of the palm sugar season. In general they have to sell palm sugar to the dealer for a price fixed the sugar dealer. For example, the palm sugar producer who got an advance of 100,000r(US$ 40) from the dealer in September, he will return 250 Kgs of sugar in March-April. In fact, the price of sugar at that time about 800-900r per Kg, it means that he paid about 14 -18% interest per month. Some villagers borrow from friends and relative when they experience emergency

situations such as illness or death in the families. This loan however is based on little or no interest (Project baseline survey,1992).

In Kong Pisie, there are seven money lenders who are also rice/sugar dealers and all of them work with the local government (as teachers, district officials, health worker, village headman). Each of them has a motorcycle which received from district.

vi) Tools and Equipment

In agricultural production, villagers use traditional tools such as hoe, pedal water-mill (Rohat), plough handle, etc. Some tools and equipment are powerful assets in agriculture such as the water pump, generator, draft-animals and motorcycles.

With the privatization of the means of production, some villagers could reclaim the draft-animals they owned before 1975 and were supported or guaranteed by the village headman or district officials. Only a few villagers own these kinds of equipment. Some of the water pumps, generators, motorcycles belong to the district office but village headman and village committees are the ones who control these means of production. Table 2.4 shows that about 57% of total households do not own oxen in Kong Pisie. Thus this group of villagers pay more cost for their rice production or they have to exchange their labour surplus with others. Some of local elites are able to own these kinds of equipment because they own assets from their relatives who live in Phnom Penh or abroad.

These assets are means by which local elites earn money and labour by renting them to poor villagers. These equipment indicate socio-economic differentiation between local elites and poor.

4.4 Knowledge and Education

As mentioned earlier, most local elites used their own knowledge and education to access cash income or salary , like the teachers, district officials, traditional healers as well.

The village heads are a source of information on government policies as well as a security in the area. The radio is another powerful source of world-wide information. Most women would not travel to Kompong Speu or Phnom Penh but men are more used to travelling to districts, provincial centers or Phnom Penh for migration labour.

As mentioned earlier during the Pol Pot regime and civil war, many skilled and educated people were killed. As a result in Kong Pisie, there are only 25 persons in 3,467

people (0.73%) who are educated and work with the government. These include teachers, district officials, soldiers, policemen and health workers (baseline survey,1992). In this group, some of them finished secondary school and got special training. Some of the older villagers inherited their skills from monks in the temples or the traditional healer *Kru Khmer* and holy-man. Both groups of people used to travel and gained more experience from their travels.

In Kong Pisie, about 35% of the adults are literate and less than 20% women are literate (base line survey,1992). Most of the men used to learn how to read and write at the temples. Boys enjoyed about 4-5 years of education while girls only 3 years (Ahlers, Vlaar,1995). Some villagers received high education in the province but all of them moved to Phnom Penh. Many of these higher educated villagers died during the Pol Pot regime and civil war (Interviewed and discussion in the villages). In the present, only a few cases fall into those who received 8-10 years of education in school and this group of people work as government staff such as teachers, district officials. Most teachers completed secondary school (some did not) or continued one-two years in provincial teacher college but the latter are only few teachers.

There were two secondary schools and five primary schools in the research area in 1992. About 80% of the school year children went to school and 30% of the children dropped out during the primary education period. Only 20 % of the children were able to continue their secondary schooling. More than 50% of these children dropped out during the secondary school period. Some of poor households sent their children to school but most of them dropped out during the school year and did not attend school at all there after. Girls dropped out more than boys and fewer girls continue until the secondary level. In 1994, only three children in the two secondary schools, passed the national education examination.

Conclusion

The Cambodian historical background shows that the hierarchy that had emerged in Khmer social relationships since the ancient Angkor still persists and is exercised in every dyadic relationship from the king to the state, state to the officials to the peasants as illustrated in the case of Kong Pisie. The differences in access to resources in Kong Pisie, from non-economic to economic resources after the privatization policy declared in 1989, accelerated the social-economic differentiation. In the period of the post war, this social-economic differentiation has been reflected in class stratification and class differentiation. However, it is not enough to

understand only the phenomenon of evolution of the social-economic differentiation in Kong Pisie, because social relationships also were applied to use in the process of social-economic differentiation. The social-economic differentiation will be discussed in the chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

The Role of Local Elites as Brokers and Patron-Clients Relationship in Kong Pisie

This chapter uses theoretical insights from the first chapter to identify the local elites, to clarify the types and resource bases of local elites and followers and also to analyse the social hierarchical system and the characteristics and dynamics of the patron-client relationship in Kong Pisie.

1. Rural Local Elites as Patrons and Brokers in Kong Pisie

The local elites can be defined as a small group of people who are interdependent, sharply differentiated from the peasant, and very obviously in control (Havet,1985:67). Wolf(1971) describes the function of the broker as one who relates two groups of unequal social position. The Kong Pisie village elites consists of a few households which have a certain degree of wealth, control over resources (land, labour, cash, credit and knowledge), and prestige and power which differentiates them from the majority. These persons may include monks, village headmen, holy men, commodity dealers, shopkeepers, rice millers, teachers, health workers, palm sugar dealer, moneylenders, traditional healers *Kru Khmer* and district/commune officials who benefit from their external connections and alliances. Most of them accumulate village surplus through rent, wages, interest, commission, bribe, etc. At the same time they may also hold significant positions such as members of village committees, temples and school committees, and development activity committees. Villagers depend on them in several ways and the forms of dependence are characteristics of the patron-client relationships in the villages. Moreover, the patron-client relationship in villages are related to kinship as will be mention on the social hierarchies in Kong Pisie later on. They involve various forms of reciprocal and redistributive exchanges. They take the role of "linking" the villagers with the state, the market structures, the political factions and the NGOs.

In Kong Pisie, all local elites are educated or at least can read and write, have special charisma and skills. Their access to resources is more than the village masses. Among the elites, there are differences in terms of status, position, age, competence, education, political power and

access to resources. This group of local elites in Kong Pisie, is not permanent group. They are dynamic, it means that they can be in alliance when they make a bargain with their patrons while they are also competitive among themselves when they want the access of limited resources. For instance, all 14 village headmen were in alliance when they proposed to get amount of rice from WFP through the district. After that some of them could not agree when they got less than other villages. This circumstance is common and emerged more and more since the other external patrons get in the villages such as NGOs, UNICEF, etc.

In the period of the study, the socio-economic differentiation trends changed from socio-cultural or "non-economical" to "economical" differentiation in Kong Pisie. This is because of the effect of the introduction and acceleration of privatization and marketing as a whole in Cambodia. Thus, in circumstances of scarcity of resources, the local elites utilize their power, status, position, skill, knowledge, charisma and their network to access and control greater power and means of production. Their resources in turn strengthen their charisma and power. This cycle of individual resource utilization of the local elites exclude villagers from access of resource of production.

In Kong Pisie, local elites play multiple roles. For example, a village headman may be a member of the temple committee and at the same time a owner of small rice mill and may have the largest land holding in the village. Based on resource control and utilization, a few of local elites take only the role of *patron* but most local elites are *brokers* and *patrons* depending on the circumstances. Clearly, local elites as brokers do not utilize their own resources to give their clients but use those of their patron. Through this, they gain social and economic benefit from the clients. For instance, the village headman in Srey used his authority to allow his clients to use the water pump of the district office without payment but other villagers have to pay for the use of the same pump. His clients recognized his "kindness" and returned it by working in the field for the village headman.

The post war situation of Cambodia is, marked as period of unstable political system, scarce resources (human and assets), insecurity and intervention of government and NGOs. In such a situation spaces were created for a new group of local elites to claim the role of the patron through the role of the intermediary or brokers by building up networks or linkages with the external patron. The field work reveals that most local elites in Kong Pisie are brokers who act as buffers between the village masses, the state, the political party and the NGOs within the unequal exchange relationship and interdependence among external patrons, internal clients and local elites as brokers in community.

2. Local Elites and Followers: Control of Resources in Kong Pisie

Scott (1977:130) states that the resource that patron has, it is basis use for distinguishing themselves and "The client is called upon to provide assistance and services when the patron requires them". It applies to exchange relationship of local elites and followers or clientage in Kong Pisie

2.1 Local Elites and Resource Base

In Kong Pisie, the local elites access and control different resources which can be distinguished as follows:

i) Knowledge and skills, some local elites have special knowledge and skills which villagers do not have, or deal with religion and have the control over religious rituals. They also determine the good or the bad in terms of religious beliefs. These elites include the temple abbot and the holy man. They have special knowledge and status in the community. They control psychological access such as respect, trust and loyalty from the villagers. Moreover, they control the access to temple land and other properties including finance and agricultural production like rice. Other local elites who have skills and special knowledge, include traditional healers *Kru Khmer*, health worker, teachers and foreign language speakers, house constructors. Individuals with such skills control scarce resources which enhance their social status, position and material well being. In situations of scarcing of resources i.e. human resources, services, medicine, foods and security , knowledge and skills are very important resource base for the local elites as brokers. For instance, most villages in Kong Pisie do not have health workers who provide health services. Therefore, the villagers have to depend on *Kru Khmer* who live in the village and can provide traditional herbs and healing. *Kru Khmer* receives in return the respect and material gains from his clients. These resource bases tend to importance more and more in the context of rural development which will be explained in the chapter 4.

ii) Direct control of mean of production, Some of local elites command direct control over personal property such as means of agricultural production (land, cash, credit, labour power, draft animal, etc.). There are only a few persons like this because of the scarcity of economic resources in the villages. These are shopkeepers, rice millers, moneylenders, palm sugar dealers,

etc. The economic elites have connection and network with external elites through whom they siphon off resources for themselves and their clients. Some of them have relatives in Phnom Penh or abroad where they receive cash or gold to buy land, rice mill, draft animals, water pump, etc. These resources is a common means of building a clientele which also enhances their social status and material well being. These resources, in general, are more perishable than personal skills but it is more important in the period of marketing. The skilled local elites tend to gain their property through their skills.

iii) Indirect control of mean of production, Most of local elites have access to indirect control of mean of production or the property/ authority of others. They access community resources or governmental resources through their position and authority. These are district officials, village headman, village police, commune chairman, teacher, health worker, Women and Youth Association. Most local elites in Kong Pisie survive on this kind of resource. Before 1989, all means of agricultural production was controlled and commanded by the state through the village headmen and the district official. The governmental staff elites had the authority to command and control the water pump, generator, motorcycle, building, land, etc. As Scott (1977) cited that "who build a clientele on the strength of their freedom to dispense rewards placed in their trust by some third party".

Most village elites indirectly control the property/ authority of others such as a village headman who uses his authority over the distribution of communal land to the poor or the distribution of rice or renting of water pump/ generator in order to extend his personal clientele. This would be a typical example of the tradition of office-based patronage. The same as some village elites who are specialist or knowledgeable also use temple property to gain more personal property. This phenomenon refers to local elites as brokers who utilize the property and authority of the government and the temple or other patrons to gain access to resources through the patron-client relationship to increase their direct control of personal property and power in Kong Pisie.

2.2 Followers/Clients and Resource Base

The variation in the nature of assistance and service are the means of differentiating the village masses and their role in developing the network of patron-client relationship between the local

elites and the villagers. In Kong Pisie, the resources of the clients which are returned to local elites include:

i) Labour services and other economic services, Most of the clients provide access to their own labour or the labour of their household members such as wife and children. According to the fieldwork data, the villagers have less means of production than the local elites. Only labour can be provided to their patron who in turn provide some services for the villagers. Thus, their labour substitutes the debt, interest, treatment, merit, commission and bribe. These kinds of support and service are obviously manifested in the villages of the study as well as in other rural areas in Cambodia (Ebihara,1968; Ahlers & Vlaar,1995). For instance, in case of the poor villager who may be loaned cash or rice and is unable to repay in cash or kind, s/he can work for the local elites instead of repay in cash repays in terms of labour. The holy man arranges the rituals when somebody dies and the poor return his "kindness" by gift offerings or working for him whenever he calls upon them. They do not have cash to donate to temple. However they work in the temple with expectations that they would receive merit in return.

ii) Military or fighting duties, all of young men except university students have a duty to participate in the army under the national law. All young men, particularly those from the poor families in the villages are forcefully sent or voluntarily go to serve in the arm forces. During the civil war (1979 -1990), Kong Pisie was a remote area and battlefield for the Khmer Rouge. The villagers had to evacuate from Kong Pisie to go to other villages. In Kong Pisie, all the young men were involved in the arm force except for handicapped. Young women were also involved as soldier and the collective work group to support the national arm force.

iii) Political services, The client has one political vote which is important during the election. In 1993 during the national election, the followers or clients in Kong Pisie who had patron- politician, would support their patron by following, guarding and voting for him. This kind of service, the clients receive something in return for their services. Some clients received materials or cash from the different political factions.

3. Social Relationship in Kong Pisie

In this research paper focuses only two kinds of social relationship, the social hierarchy and patron-client relationship. These social relationships affect to the social structure in Kong Pisie.

3.1 Social Hierarchies and Status in Kong Pisie

As in many Asian countries, respect for the elders and the hierarchy remains very important. In Cambodian rural society, the *baong*, or "elder", is automatically right. "Elder" means not only older persons but persons have knowledge, power, wealth, or influence with "people in high places" (Martin, 1994:11). The hierarchy is primaryly expressed in terms of "age" and "kin". People usually refer to one another by kinship terminology which reflects "the age" of the person who is referred[1]. Such status is determined by the conflation of the different social categories: age, gender, wealth, knowledge, political position, reputation of the family, employment, the character of the individual, and religious piety (Ledgerwood,1992:4 and Martin,1994:11). Thus, where a person falls within the society hierarchy depends on the combination of all of these different elements.

The hierarchy is present in all social relationships in Kong Pisie. The state controls the villagers through the administration, religious and education structures in the villages, which are hierarchically ordered. The state has control at the different levels from the central government to the province, district, sub-district, village by placing officers at all these levels. In the village, the village headman controls and keeps the rules. The hierarchy in the village is not the only structure of control but other relationships are similarly ordered. For example, the social relations in the religious set up. The temple abbot controls their monks by religious rules and control the villagers with the concept of *karma* which explains that individual life is a function of her/his *karma*. The village temple is hierarchied by the Buddhist monastery *Sangha* which is also controlled by the state. Similarly the education system serves as a hierarchy which keep children in order not only through knowledge but the control of both moral and social values.

The notions of status hierarchy and social order are particularly manifested in the sphere of gender relations. In general, men are superior to women. "...wife calls her husband *baong* even if he is younger than she is" (Martin,1994:11).

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[1] King Sihanouk called himself "*ol pook*" (grand father) and called the people as *Kuon Chuo* (grand sons and grand daughters).

While the state practises their hierarchy orders, the villagers were taught to follow and maintain social rules and orders through socialization and education. In Kong Pisie, the elderly always say' "Don't hit a stone with an egg", or "In the traditions of Khmer moral training, to protest against a parent's decision, to criticise one's boss or spiritual master, to rebel against a husband is inadmissible" (Martin, 1994:11). Most of these kinds of training are in Khmer (Cambodian) proverbs which can be found in the primary school lessons. The rule for proper female behaviour is to follow the *chbap srey* (Code for ladies) and *chbap* (Code of the people) for the others. Both of these are taught in part or whole in schools (Ovesen, Trankell and Ojendal, 1995).

The fieldwork reveals that all social relations are hierarchically ordered along the elder-younger dimension. The kinship terminology is extensively applied to all relations in Kong Pisie, as a way to conceptualize and order social relations Furthermore, the social hierarchy which tie villagers to the state, villagers to the temple committee (ritual control) or others in higher position such as teachers (education control), moneylenders (economic control) activity committee (other benefit control), etc. is clearly illustrated through the patron-client relationship. The village phenomenon shows that Cambodian rural society has a firm structure of social relationship and control, at least in Kong Pisie.

3.2 Patronage system within the State -Village Relationship in Kong Pisie

All village headmen were appointed and commanded by the state. They are under the command of district officials. Because of the instability of the political and economic situation, their conditions of life were not different from other villagers. However, some of them who had good linkage with district officials, gain access and control over more villagers. They had other assets such as land, motorcycles, water pumps that belonged to the district. They do not have authority in decision-making in terms of development policy and they are under the control of district officers. By position, they have the power and authority to reinforce and punish their village members. At the same time, villagers receive support and services from the district office through village headman. Such services include having their name on the list of rice distribution or submission of their application of land title and so on. From the villagers'point of view, the village headman is the district representative who has power and the ability to command and control villagers.

Beyond the village headmen, other local elites who act as brokers include; the abbot, sub-district officials, holy men, rice dealers, shopkeepers, teachers and mass organizations (Women Association, Youth Association), temple committee and village committee. In general, the district

officials are the local representative of the state, who command and control the villagers through the authority of the village headman, teacher and temple committee.

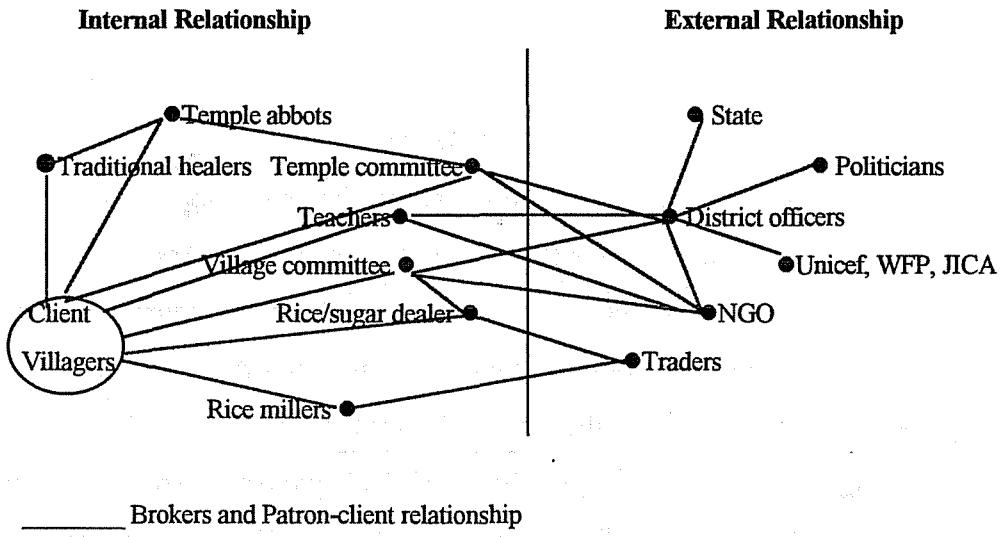
The state supports and controls the village headmen and teachers by providing them with authority, services, salaries and materials, and providing psychological support to temple committee such as recognition, respect, etc. In return, this group of local elites in turn pay back in terms of respect, loyalty, reporting, labour, gift offering to district official. The patron-client relationship is used as the means to tie the local elites to the district official the state representative, beyond the formal hierarchical system. While the state commands villagers through the village headman, teacher and temple committee, the state provides security, services, material things to villagers. Villagers in return offer young men and money to the army, service fee and collective labour to the state. The exchange relationship of the state and the villagers is done through the village elites who act as the brokers.

Since 1992 the external actors as the NGO, World Food Program (WFP), UNICEF and Rural Development Programme of Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA), have set up their operation in Kong Pisie. The relations between the external actors and the villagers are similar to the relationship with the state. They are non-Cambodian experts who cannot speak the local language but because they control abundant resources they build up patron-client relationship with the villagers. They approach the community through the village headmen, teachers and temple committees as contact persons in community because of their limitation in terms of manpower, language and the concept of work. The external NGO patrons such as the NGOs, UNICEF and JICA provide services and benefit to their clients through the brokers in different ways in the development activities (credit, training, education, material supply, etc.). In return, they expect that the villagers to maintain and continue the activities, pay interest, respect the activity regulations, etc. In the patron-client relationship, the village broker has obviously siphoned resources from both the state/NGOs and villagers.

Figure 3.1 shows the general structure of the relationship in Kong Pisie, referring to the extra and intra -social relationships in Kong Pisie. The figure defines the local elites as patrons and brokers who have a direct power upon the villagers. All the other patrons such as the state and NGOs are people "from outside". Both of them have efficient control only through or with some sort of collaboration and patronage to brokers or local elites in the villages. Particularly, the state gains the support of or at least to neutralize the local elites is a necessary condition for the

sustenance of functional means of domination of villagers. Furthermore, brokers have direct domination to villagers and also "pump out" benefit from villagers.

Figure 3.1 The Patron-Client Relationship in Kong Pisie



4. Role of Local Elites as Brokers and Rural Development in Kong Pisie Before 1992

As mentioned in the evolution of rural development in Cambodia, villagers have long experienced development established by the government. The top-down and hierarchical system forced villagers to marginal and subordinate positions in the process of people's participation in rural development.

This section illustrates the role of Women Association in rural development projects before the NGO's rural development project entered the villages. With regard to the concept of rural development and people's participation (Peter,1991), the events in the Cambodian rural development show that villagers were not involved in the process of people's participation. But local elites have taken on an important role in rural development, especially in their influence to the process of people's participation in rural development.

4.1 Women Associations: Governmental Broker and Army Supporter.

Before 1992, Women Associations were a the popular mass organization organized and commanded by the government. The government claimed that it was people's organization through

which people could be involved and participate in the country's development as a whole. The rural development concept introduced by the state prioritized infrastructure development in rural area, such as road construction, irrigation and so on.

The leaders of the association in the villages of study, were appointed by the government through the hierarchy system. Most leaders had a strong socialist ideology, discipline and charisma[2]. Most of them were literate at least they were able to work on the name list of members and report on food production or labour collective in community which the rest of the villagers could not do. The leaders of Women Association took the role as brokers of the government to motivate young men or their mothers to send young men to the front.

Because of the civil war and insecurity situation, women became involved in collective labour group and food production to support the state. The members of Women Association had to pay their extra production and send their young men to the army to protect the country. In return, women received tools, seeds and materials of agriculture production and rice distribution (from WFP) from the central government through the Central Women Association to the province, district, commune and village level. In some villages where UNICEF's projects[3] were implemented, "good member" and "poor people" would be allowed to participate in the Family Food Production program (FFP). The leader had the authority to give these kinds of reinforcement to her members. While she also had the authority to punish "bad members" who resisted her by report to higher level and stop providing rice or other material to them.

Obviously, when the staff of Central Women Association visited the villages with new activities or new policy or visitor, most of members attended the meeting and would confirm what the leaders proposed to the staff or visitors. Normally, on the way back to the capital town she would go with some banana, coconut, rice, etc. in back of her vehicle[4]. In some cases, she brought labour surplus with her, for instance, a mother allowed her young girl to work as a servant in the family she trusted with the guarantee of the village Women Association leader. Some women

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[2] The data was collected by observation, interview and discussion by the researcher, with leaders of Women Association and Youth Association both at national level and village level in 1991 -92.

[3] In this research, UNICEF's project is referred to Family Food Production Programm (FFP). FFP is implementing in every province in Cambodia which work through Women Association, Agricultural Ministry, Education and Health Ministry.

[4] The researcher's experience by travelling and living with high ranking staff of Central Women Association in 1991.

would request her to bring some local production such as baskets, palm sugar, etc. to sell in the town.

All leaders received payment (both in cash and in kind) and recognition from the state where the leaders were invited to participate in the national Independent Day or diary from the central government (especially for government staff). During the implementation of the project, the leaders would get extra project materials, tools as well as bribes[5], respect from the members who got free material, tools or etc. from Family Food Production (FFP.). The leaders of the Women Association played the role of army supporters and benefited from both the state and UNICEF, and the villagers. Some of them still take some positions in the villages.

4.2 Village committee: Village Controller.

The village committees which were appointed by district official were comprised of the village headman, his assistant and policeman. As mentioned in chapter 2, they were the representative of district official. Within the village committee, status and authority were differentiated for instance the headman was the committee chairman, the policeman and the other person were assistant. All government development policies and activities were implemented through them which were accepted by the village headman, the representative of the village committee.

Generally, UN agencies (such as WFP, UNHCR and FAO) worked through this committee with the control of the central government. Every year, the village committee benefit from the rice distribution of WFP during drought or flooding period. In this case it is clear that the rice distribution was differentiation of benefit in the villages. By the village evidence, the benefits were distributed in four different groups. The first was the village headman got extra rice directly from WFP and some from the process of distribution in the villages. The second group was the village committee members and district officials. The third group who got rice distribution more than the poor were entourage of village committee. The poor or the village masses got least rice because they were not involved in the process of distribution and had no patrons or were not members of entourage.

The definition and resource base of local elites as already explained, can apply to the village committee and Women Association are the local elites who played the role of the brokers in the

[5] In the case where person did not want to be involves in the *Kuong Tob* or *Kuong Prey*, s/he would pay amount of cash or gold or rice, to the leader. He could then work in the village.(from interviewal)

village forming and maintaining the patron-client relationship. The central government and UN agencies took on the role of external patron who had resources which were provided to the villagers with the expectation of to receiving loyalty, army support, food supply from villagers, in return. The poor or the village masses formed the clientage who received materials and repaid their patrons both in terms of the physical and psychological, For instance, their labour, their respect, trust and loyalty. The fieldwork reveals that the top-down strategy and the political condition prevented the UN agency projects from working directly with villagers. These situation and conditions facilitated the significance of the roles of the village brokers and clients or followers. The Village brokers channelled themselves to siphon benefit in the process of rural development. While, the village clients/ followers involved in the process of resource distribution by passing through the patron-client relationship. This evidence implies that the poor made their own 'rationale' decisions to tie themselves with the patron-client relationship for their own survival or the "right of subsistance" (Scott,1976) in the insecurity situation.

In the process of people's participation which begins from the decision-making process, there was no evidence to show that villagers were involved in this stage. For instance, all rural development projects were designed and planned by the central government and UN agencies. The villagers who implemented these projects were under the command and control of district officials who worked through the village committees and Women Association. In the implementation stage, it is obvious that the villagers were involved both voluntarily and by force. The members return their labour, their time, their money, material, etc. more than what they received from their patron. The villagers participated in the benefit distribution but unequally. On the other hand, they were placed on the last and less benefit distribution.

In conclusion the village committee and Women Association formed the local elite groups who played the role of army supporter, government's controller, and especially as village broker of the state/ UN agencies and the villagers. While the poor took their role of followers and clients in the rural development programmes during the civil war, scarcity, insecurity and instability of socio-economic and political period in Kong Pisie before 1992.

Conclusion

Looking back to the Cambodia history in chapter 2, this evident always appeared since ancient Angkor regime and still persists until the present. Clearly, in the relationship between the king and the people, the state and the village or *Angka* and the villagers, the brokerage in these kinds of

patron-client relationship obviously has appeared at the village or micro level in Cambodia and it has links with the state or macro level in the country. In other words, the brokerage in patron-client relationship, might take different forms but the same substance exist in Kong Pisie or Cambodia as a whole. However, it is not a static relationship but is dynamism and inter-effect. This is not only because of the lack of civic spirit and the dependency conceptual of clientele to their patrons (Matin,1995) but also prevalence of the hierarchical system combined with the social differentiation and with religious beliefs which influence the people through socialization and education systems. This circumstance, the poor did not have alternative. Under the 'survival' in the post war within the insecurity situation forced the poor to practise their roles as the followers and clients in the margin of the process of decision-making and resource distribution in rural development.

CHAPTER 4

The Influence of Local Elites On People's Participation in An NGO Rural Development Project

This chapter analyses and illustrates the effects of village elites acting as the brokers in decision-making and resource distribution in the process of people's participation in an NGO rural development project. It also analyses how the NGO has affected the roles of the village elites in rural development at the community level. The analysis is related to some cases of activities implemented as an NGO rural development like credit scheme, rice bank and village development committee.

1. Background to the Project

The NGO Rural Development is a five year project of Akphiwat[1] and has been implemented since January 1992 in Kong Pisie district. The project area covers 14 villages selected both by the Kompong Speu Office of Agriculture and Akphiwat. There are about 688 families and 3,467 people in the target villages (see table 2.3). The project staff include 9 Cambodian community development workers (CDWs) and one expatriate project manager. The CDWs were government counterparts from the provincial office and district office.

According to the situation of Kong Pisie area, the project aimed at encouraging villager's initiatives and strengthening villagers' organizations in solving and improving their social, political and living conditions, and enhancing the material and spiritual development opportunities for poor

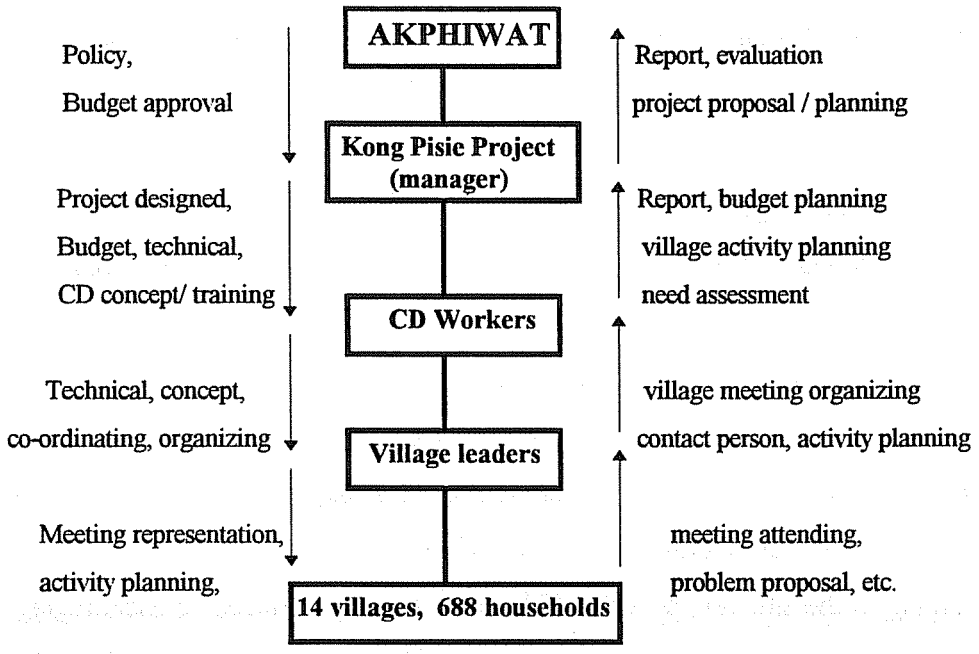
1 Akphiwat is a fictitious name. Apasara is an international NGO. In 1979-80 it channelled emergency relief assistance to Cambodia. From 1980 to 1988 Akphiwat provided material assistance for rehabilitation of health, food production and education, in cooperation with Cambodian authorities and through other NGOs. The program Office opened in Cambodia in 1988, it was one of the first aid agencies in the "new" Cambodia after the withdrawal of Vietnamese troops.

Now that Akphiwat has altered its approach to target community development as it relates to children, there will be more emphasis on integrating health, nutrition, education and community responsibility. Akphiwat focuses to community development in rural area where staffs can implement project activities. To get communities to sustain the assistance, Akphiwat initiated community responsibility through village development committees (VDC).

rural children through their families and communities. It was also believed that the villager's problems can be solved by the villagers themselves.

The conceptual basis of the project was "the belief that the people in the project area have the ability to improve their living conditions, given the opportunity to develop their potentials. In this context "participation" is presented as the "active involvement" of the villagers in the process of decision making, planning, implementation, and control of the project activities."(the proposal of Kong Pisie Rural Development project, 1991)

Figure 4.1 Diagram of the NGO Rural Development Project Organization



The diagram of the NGO project organization presents the flow of communication, relationship and hierarchical order of the NGO. At the practical level, the project manager conducted a social-economic survey and proposed a five- year project to the country representative of Akphiwat which included the project design, draft activities and flexible budget for the first year of the project. She was involved in preparing a community study which was executed by the CDWs, identifying community needs and problems through community discussions, prioritizing problems and needs, preparing plan of action, implementing project activities. Moreover, she played roles as project representative in the provincial level, had full authority at the project level and provided

supervision and training to CDWs and village leaders. She had monthly meeting with the provincial officials, with the project committee and Country Representative of Akphiwat.

The CDWs played organizing, facilitating, and co-ordinating roles in the target communities. Normally, each CDW had his/her own motorcycle which was provided by Akphiwat and worked with 2-3 villages. They spent most of time in the villages and met only once a week in meetings at the project office.

At the initial period of working in 1992, community studies were carried out as a process among the project manager, the CDWs and village leaders. The village leaders were involved in preparing village baseline data. In the first six months, the project manager provided some training to the CDWs in terms of the concept of rural development, methodology of survey, etc. Most of the CDWs were able to build rapport with the village leaders and villagers and identify common problems and key persons in various fields (i.e., political leaders, religious leaders, traditional healers, agricultural technological experts, etc.), the villager's traditional knowledge, skill, and techniques were utilized to solve the villager's problems. The CDWs participated in the discussions and provided villagers with relevant information, training, and demonstrations required to develop their analysis and skills. Training courses were usually carried out in collaboration with the local government and non-governmental organizations. The project has implemented several activities which were based on community assessments. In the first year of implementation, the project enabled the CDWs and motivated community leaders to be involved in project activities through workshops and training. At the same time, the activities also targeted to solve community problems such as lack of water, malnutrition and child health care.

In 1993 during the second year of the project, food security, credit scheme and management training were the focus of the project. Such programs included the rice bank, cow bank, credit and income generating activities. These kinds of activities were complicated and took more time in the process of its establishment and implementation. In the third and the fourth year, the activity members appointed village activity committees[2]. The NGO strengthened the village activity committees by providing training and authority to the activity committee and the project committee in order to continue and maintain the village activities. Thus, many trainings were provided to the CDWs, the project committee and the village leaders as well. Through the process

[2] The activity committee refers to the village activity leaders who were selected by activity members. The project committee includes representatives from provincial agricultural office, district office, subdistrict office and project manager and two CDWs as the project representatives.

of implementation, the project committee had more authority to decide and approve village activities by consulting with the project manager.

Some activities will be discussed in the sections below. Other activities are indicated in the appendix 1 and 2.

2. The NGO : External Patron

After obtaining the permission of the Kompong Speu Agricultural official, Akphiwat started implementing the rural development project in Kong Pisie, in January 1992. The project staff introduced themselves accompanied by the provincial agricultural director in a public meeting at the Kirirom temple and Chy Chamna school[3]. There were many villagers who came because most of them thought that the NGO would distribute food supplies or materials.

According to the concept of "work with people, learn from people and live with people", the project office construction was an issue in the discussion between the project manager and village headmen, sub-district chairmen and district officials during the community study period. The final conclusion was that the project pay for the material for construction and the project office would be located on the temple land instead of the land of the sub-district office which was offered by the district officials. The second discussion on access to the office building took place at the temple with the abbot, district official and temple committee. The project agreed that the temple would inherit the office building after the project's withdrawal. Also the project ought to develop temple land by themselves such as pond digging, farming, etc. In fact the provincial agricultural officer wanted to inherit the office building. The provincial officer informed the project manager that the building should be transferred to the government so that they could use it as the provincial agricultural training center after the project's withdrawal. But the projectmanager disagreed. Thus the contract was not written as an official document. However, the agreement between the temple and the project was written in the minutes of the meeting.

Meetings and training were always conducted in the temple buildings in the villages. The project manager and CDWs were therefore working closely with the temple committee and abbot in terms of exchange. For instance, the NGO used the creditability of abbots and the temple building which affected the NGO in gaining more trust from the villagers. Meanwhile, the temple

[3] Kirirom temple is located in the project area where the project provided teaching materials and constructed a school in 1993. The Chy Chamna school, located close to Tuk Tra, Tabak and Svay village, catered for most of the children in these area.

also received some support in terms of materials and credit from the province officials. During the first year of the project implementation, the temple committees requested from the project some donations and support for the temple. In this connection discussions on project strategies and criteria for activities support took place with the temple committees. It was clear that the project would not support any temple activities without the involvement of the villagers. Thus the temple committees learnt what and how they could or could not get from the project. Thus, they shifted their request of temple support to school support and thus the school construction activity was initiated.

The project office was built under the supervision of the provincial agricultural officer. The construction expenditure was 30% more than the budget. Most villagers understood the project office as the provincial office where they could get some services and material. The villagers called officers of NGOs *Lok Thom* (sir) or *Angkar Manusthor* (humanitarian organization), with the expectations of receiving something from them as they did from WFP. They always came to visit or request for support from the NGO. Only a year passed by and more than twenty families resettled around the project office and some of them settled on the temple land. The number of households increased in that area. The villagers mentioned that they did not mind living in their small land or small houses but they needed to live in the community with many people. They considered the importance of their security and thus felt more secure living close to the NGO *Angkar Manusthor* (humanitarian organization). Most villagers called the CDWs and the project manager *Chuo vay*[4] and they called themselves as *Kuon chuo*[5]

The phenomena in the beginning of the project revealed that the NGO was the external patron in Kong Pisie. The NGO had alliance relation with the provincial official even though they disagreed on the issues of the project office. Meanwhile, the poor expected to receive material and social support from both the government officers and the NGO by settling close to the project office. It implies that they initiated the clientage link with the external patrons by receiving services, materials and security from the patron, and in return were present at the meetings. The NGO used the temple and temple committee to gain trust and respect from the villagers and developed the

[4] Chuo vay (in Khmer) means the chief or the person who has high status, authority, force and power. Khmer used to called the government or boss before but it was abolished during the Khmer Rouge regime. This word is popular again after the national election.

[5] Kuon chuo (in Khmer, Kuon -children and Chuo = grandchildren), means younger person who is lower or under the command of chuovay or children under the control of the family.

temple land and in return the temple would inherit the project office. Moreover, the temple committee learnt how to get more support from the NGO and they shifted their own demand (only the temple need) to the villagers benefit in that the temple committee got more involvement in the school construction activity. In other words, vis a vis the NGO, the temple committee shifted from the role of client to the role of broker to serve the children in the villages. Clearly, each group of people exercised and played different roles within the patron-client relationship with the implementation of the NGO rural development project in Kong Pisie.

3. The Effect of the NGO on The Role of Local Elites in Kong Pisie.

Since the period of direct NGO work in Cambodian rural areas is short, it is difficult to measure and evaluate the effect of NGO on the role of the local elites in the rural development in Kong Pisie. However, this section attempts to examine the dynamics of the NGO in forming and maintaining a new group of local elites as well as new role of the local elites in the rural development project in Kong Pisie.

During the more politically and economiclly stable period where there was also less restriction from the Cambodian government, the NGO had a significant impact on the role of the local elites in rural community development. The village politics was less monopolized by the People's Republic of Kampuchea party or the central government[6]. Villagers had more freedom and more alternatives to survive. It was during that same time, the NGO introduced the concept of rural development and together with that provided resources which villagers had never received before. This brought about the construction of new local elites due to both external and internal factors. Besides external factors include the state administration, and privatization policy, while important internal factors include characteristics of social relationship and means of production, and the initiative of the NGO.

Let us look back at the Buddhist concept of "karma" which explains the charism of *neak mean bonn* (he who has merits). According to this concept, a person who is close to the spirit or performs ritual forms the minority and differs from the majority. This group of people obtain power because of their many merits. According to this concept, *Neak mean bonn* encourages the practice and legitimization of the differentiation of socioeconomic status and benefit. Thus the intellectual

[6] In 1992 according to international community, the government adjusted the village structure for national election in 1993, by withdrawing the village secretary of Prople's Republic of Kampuchea Party.

elites who are *Neak mean bonn* can gain power supported both by the external patron and the villagers.

According to the actor-oriented approach, peasants are not just passive elements of a structurally determined social and cultural order, but play a more or less consciously active role in the shaping and changing of their present and future social and cultural conditions, which included the "right to subsistence" and "peasant's existential dilemma" (Scott,1976)[7]. This is reflected in the dynamics of the patron-client relationship in Kong Pisie. Three factors were influenctial: First the villagers were traumatized by the civil war. Secondly, they were disappointed by the authoritarian government which was represented by the village committee and third, their concept of "Karma" and "*Neak Mean Bonn*". The villagers resisted the state power by shifting their trust, respect and loyalty from the village committee to the temple committee and school committee whom they trusted, respected and depended on. The circumstances and the three factors opened the platform for them to strengthen the role of the temple committee and the school committee as religionist, culturalist and developer patrons in Kong Pisie.

The NGO had the opportunity to choose their strategies and counterparts in the rural development project. Due to rampant corruption of some village headmen, village committees and district officials, resources did not reach the majority of the villagers. The NGO looked for other leaders in the stratum of the local elites who were respected by the villagers to implement their project of resource distribution. The temple and school committee were identified as the target groups for the NGO to pass their resources and authority to the villagers, instead of the village committee.

In accordance to the goal of the project which bases itself on the "ability" and "capacity" of the villagers to solve community problems, village leaders[8] were strengthened and targeted in the project training activity. The project aimed to transfer the technical know-how to the communities through the village leaders. The project provided training for village leaders through discussion, sharing of experience, field visits and study trip. Besides training, the project would facilitate and motivate community leaders and villagers to understand and be involved in community development and community-based child development.

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[7] For more detail, see in The Moral Economy of Peasant, Scott, 1976, p.69

[8] Village leaders mean village elites who were accepted by CDWs which included village headman, some village committees, health workers, teachers, temple committee. In 1994, the village development committee and activity committee were included in this category.

The New Role of the Temple and School Committee in the Context of Rural Development

In 1993 the second year of the project, two external factors affected the project implementation; firstly, national election which brought about two big factions in Kong Pisie. Secondly, the government allowed Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA) a bilateral aid agency to locate and operate in Kong Pisie. It was made up of a big group of Asian experts. The result was the village committees could not manage the NGO village activities because they had more duties and their own business. They were responsible to JICA and to political duties which also attracted them with some benefits. At the same time, the project carried out more activities which demanded more time from the villagers in the process of their implementation. Not only the village headmen was busy but the villagers were also busy and confused in such a situation.

In 1993, the NGO agreed to build a school building at Kirirom primary school in the project area near Prey village. District officers, villagers and CDW appointed the school construction committee. The committee members consisted of the abbot, the holy man, teachers, the village headman and three village representatives. Most of the school committee members were also the temple committee members. During the implementation of the project, the committee members always brought gifts such as fruits, sugar, etc. to the project manager through the CDWs. Moreover, the committee members also had connection with JICA and a politician who was the Military General under the Prime Minister *Som Dech Ranariddh* (the first prime minister). The District Officer and the committee gained more credibility and respect from the villagers because of the committee's ability to get funds from outsiders. During that period, JICA provided English class for school teachers and chemical fertilizer to the school. JICA occupied a room used for English classes and as the English library for teachers. The General asked the committee to change the name of the school name to a new name, "Som Dech Ranariddh school". The justification by the committee was that "the general has force, power, money, and he is *Neak maem bonn* and "*Chuovay*" so they have to respect, being loyal and obey him..."(committee explanation).

The case of Kirirom school, as discussed here, is similar to what happened in the case of other schools in the project area. Clearly, the NGO and the General acted as the external *patron*, the committee as the *broker* in between the patron and the villagers who were as the *clients*. The committee knew well that the project would be completed in five years and they realized that the General had the power and influence of the prime minister and would be promoted soon. Their perspective was clear. They compared the balance of influence between the General and the power

of the NGO. There was not so much individual benefit from the NGO compared to JICA and the General, as the NGO would leave soon. They might be provided with more economic opportunities and political power from another patron like the General. The committee had the "rationale" to analyse the situation and knew how to maintain and strengthen the patron-client relationships with both the General and the NGO. Under the supervision of the district officer, the committee also kept contact with other international aid agencies and WFP. During the drought period, they managed to propose a rice request to WFP to get supplementary supply of rice from WFP through the NGO. The committee received credit and trust from WFP and the government. The committee members themselves also gained benefits from the WFP. They were invited to participate in training workshops, study trips from WFP and the government. Furthermore they received extra rice from WFP. They also received bribes from the villagers and the district officers. Some villagers, who accept the patron-client relationship by maintaining good lonks with the committee also gained opportunities to receive more rice than the village masses who did not. The majority of the villagers who did not involve themselves in the patron-client relationship got less but they did not protest because they think that getting something is better than getting nothing (villager interview). Later on, when WFP stopped providing the villagers with rice, the villagers requested it from the NGO. The high expectation by the villagers of the NGO due to its earlier activities with WFP had an adverse impact on development activities in the community. For example, some of them did not repay the loans given by the NGO and did not maintain the regulations because they expected that the loans were grants as in the case of WFP.

In conclusion, the temple and school committee became involved in rural development efforts by the initiative of the NGO supporting the villagers. They extended their activity involvement not only in the reconstruction of the temple but were more involved in the village activities which were introduced by the NGO. Because there was a limited number of NGO staff but a lot of resources, the temple and school committee managed to accumulate their power to bargain with the NGO and the other external patrons. Also these factors facilitated the temple committee and the school committee to take the role of the development broker of the NGO and also acted as the patrons of the villagers. The dynamics of the patron-client relationship of the local elites, the NGO and the poor serve as a paradigm for looking at the changing roles of the local elites from religionist and specialist patrons at the village level to the development brokers in the NGO rural development project in Kong Pisie.

4. Credit Scheme Outcome: The Significance of Rural Differentiation and Patronage

The credit scheme was initiated at the end of 1992 by the project, for the following reasons;

> "lack of capital and indebtedness are endemic in the project area. The money people borrow for daily survival, medical care and food production must be repaid at high interest rates. The resulting debt has negative consequences for children, who suffer from the lack of savings to spend on education and health care. The project will promote an appropriate credit scheme, seed banks, pig raising, palm sugar production and handicraft production to address these problems." (1992 project plan of Kong Pisie Rural Development project, Akphiwat)

Thus, "to increase family and community funds" was the objective of the project (see appendix 3). Three project CDWs were trained in Malaysia on credit scheme management. They applied the concept of *Grameen Bank* to the project credit scheme. It was implemented in three villages namely Pilin, Damnak and Prey in 1993. The CDWs organized the villagers who wanted to grow water melon and raise pig. In fact, the project manager aimed to reach the poor by providing direct benefit to the poor. Thus the CDWs contacted the group members directly to discuss the rules and control of the credit scheme. They agreed to borrow in kind water melon seeds and piglets with the repayment period of 3- 5 months. 20 villagers were involved in the water-melon group. They had some capital but still lacked seeds. So they borrowed only 20 US$/ household. After the first loan, all these members repaid the loan with interest (10% per season, three months). There were 51 members in the pig raising group consisting of female-headed households and poor household (see table 4.1). They borrowed US$ 15 (a piglet) per household to be repaid in three-four months. Only 60% members repaid because of the death of pigs (Akphiwat report, 1993). The project could not do anything because all the unrepaid households were poor. They mentioned that "...It depends on *Angkar Manusthor*, you are rich, why do you want the repayment. Normally, you should give it free to us, just contribute to us. We are poor...".

Table 4.1 Credit Scheme Members in Credit Group 1992 -1994, the NGO's Rural Development Project, Kong Pisie.

Year	Total population	Credit				
		Water Melon	Pig Raising	Palm sugar	Small business	Total
1992	688	20	51	-	5	76
1993	-	58	109	44	7	218
1994	734	88	-	215	30	333(45%)

Source: Kong Pisie Rural Development Project Report 1993-94, Akphiwat- Cambodia, 1994.

Because of the low repayment rate and the Akphiwat policy, in 1994 the NGO, the project committee and village leaders reviewed the credit scheme by focusing on the community fund and targeting villagers who were able to produce and observe efficient repayment. Thus the strategy and process of borrowing became restricted. US$ 40 was the maximum loan and the borrower could repay with 5% interest per month in a year. Anyone who wanted to borrow money, had to form groups of five and their group guaranteed themselves in the repayment. If one in the group was unable to repay the group would have to repay on his behalf. In 1994, 333 households or 45% of total households became members of the credit scheme (see Table 4.1). The activity was expanded to 14 villages in a short period of time. There were several credit groups such as the palm sugar group, the water melon group, the vegetable group and the small business group.

There was differentiation among the credit groups in the villages. Generally, each village had at least two different credit groups for example the palm sugar group and the small business group, or the small business group and the water melon group or the vegetable group. From observation, members of the small business group, water melon group and vegetable group were better off in terms of economic status compared to the palm sugar group.

Most members of the water-melon group and the vegetable group, at least had some means of production such as land, fertilizers, etc. Also they had more income if they were successful. The water-melon season starts after rice harvesting. Some of them repaid with interest and started to borrow new loan for vegetable growing or to start small businesses. From the observation, most members of water-melon were successful but still borrowed new loan for the next season. Most of the group members were relatives or neighbours. All of the small business group members were women differing from the pig raising group and most of them were related to the local elites and "village leaders" and some were members of the local elites families while others were wives of these elites. By estimation, more than 20 families of the local elites (about 25 families) were members of the credit scheme. For instance, in a vegetable group in Trapiang Sla, two of them were teachers, two were members of village committee, beyond that they had relationship with others in the group such as neighbour, relative or friend.

The palm sugar group consisted mainly of poor members who used their own surplus family labour. Some of them rented sugar palm trees from others because they had only a few palm trees. Before they got credit from the project, most of them were borrowing money from palm sugar dealers with high interest rates. Some of them still borrowed both from the project and the palm sugar dealers. These groups worked hard in order to repay both dealers and the project.

The group which consisted of female-headed households and poor households who did not repay (group of pig raising), could not borrow the second credit because of their nonrepayment. This group lost their opportunity to obtain credit from the project. Meanwhile, nobody guaranteed for them. Finally, they turned back to the money lenders or their patrons again.

In order to examine the effect of local elites on the credit scheme activity, this following section analyses the dynamic of relationships among members of the credit scheme in Tuk Tra village.

Credit Scheme in Tuk Tra

Thean[9] was a teacher in Chy chamna school and had a motorcycle which he received from the district office. He was always involved in the training activity and had good relationship with the CDWs in the project. *Thean* was a friend of the village headman. *Mon*, his daughter was a child-minder at the day care center. She received a small allowance and materials from the NGO, which include training in the project and in Phnom Penh. Her younger sister was one of the primary health volunteer. The day care center was built on the land of *Thean* and he was also a member of the day care center committee. *Pad*, his wife was a leader of a group of small business credit borrowers in Tuk Tra village. She was a palm sugar dealer. She borrowed US$ 40 to open a small store in front of her house. *Thean* had palm trees on his land but he did not produce sugar. He allowed *Oum*, the leader of the palm sugar credit group, to take palm juice from his land without paying but *Oum* would give palm sugar to his family in return.

Oum a lower middle class farmer had six children who were taken care of by his wife. He had about 12 palm trees[10] in his land and was allowed to get palm juice from *Thean*'s land. He usually woke up at about 3:00 a.m. to work on the palm trees and returned back home at about 8 - 9:00 a.m. *Nang* his wife prepared the clay stove and began the process of palm sugar production. At the same time, she prepared food for her children. She has to stand in front the stove until 11 to 12:00 am. She was always busy in the palm sugar season (February to may). *Wan* was twelve years old, the eldest daughter of *Oum* and *Nang*. She dropped out from primary school since she was in grade four. She helped *Nang* to raise pigs and took care of her siblings. In the afternoon, she

[9] In order to avoid the mention of real names of the villagers who were involved in the circumstance, all names in this research paper are fictitious.

[10] The villager can produce about 5-6 kgs/day of palm sugar from 10 sugar palm trees in during the peak season (April- May).

brought two cows which belonged to *Thean* to graze in the field. When *Oum* needed some money he could borrow from *Thean*'s wife and returned it in the form of sugar. When his children got sick, he would request the daughter of *Thean* to provide some medicine which is obtained from the NGO. He was also the member of the rice bank.

In 1994, *Oum* wanted to start growing vegetable but he could not borrow money from the NGO because he did not belong to a small business credit group and also he did not repay the sugar loan with interest at that time. The solution was he borrowed more from *Thean*'s wife. But he could not prepare his land in time although he spent all the money. He did not return the money back to *Thean*'s wife. Thus, he sold palm sugar belonging to the sugar group to *Thean*'s wife with low price and repayment of the loan with high interest.

In principle, the palm sugar group would buy sugar from its members with a higher price than the sugar dealers. Then the group would sell it directly to the market by avoiding the sugar dealers in the villages and obtain the profit surplus in the village. However, the group kept the sugar which it could not sell it with higher prices. Thus the group had to sell it to the sugar dealer who was contacted by the village leaders and CDWs. The group had to pay for food allowance of the village leaders when they travelled to contact the market or the palm sugar dealer. At the same time the sugar dealer paid a commission to the village leaders.

Everyone played their dynamic roles in Tuk Tra. *Oum* actively participated in village activities because he aimed to develop his family. *Oum* formed himself as the clientage of the NGO and of *Thean* in order to gain resources with exchanged palm sugar gifts and his daughter's labour in return. He knew how to deal with the NGO and with Thean's wife. *Thean*'s family took the role of patron and broker at the same time. They received more benefit than the villagers from the NGO while they also shared some part of the benefit which were given to the villagers who had close ties with them. At same time the NGO provided credit to the villagers and also restricted the credit scheme, in return the scheme members have practised for increasing the rate of repayment.

The credit scheme in Kong Pisie revealed clearly that while the social differentiation already existed, the villager leaders within the credit scheme strengthened their position in Kong Pisie. The local elites like *Thean*'s family gained more benefit than *Oum*'s family from the process of rural development. The event also revealed that the upper middle class and high class were not member of the credit scheme because of the small amount of loan provided. The NGO's aim to reach the poorest did not work. however, given the policy of credit repayment and calculating of project outcome of the organization, the NGO had shifted their focus from the poorest to the lower middle

class liked *Oum* and the middle class liked *Thean*. The implementation of the credit scheme policy while benefiting both *Thean* and *Oum* in terms of benefit distribution, maintained and even strengthened the existing structure of differentiation. At the same time, the credit scheme pushed the poorest in particular the female- headed households to the margins of the benefit distribution process. As mentioned earlier, the dependency, hierarchy, patron-client relationship within the belief of "karma" are still strengthening the attitude of the villagers. Also the poor was push to subordinate position without the developer broker supporting them. Furthermore, the CDWs pratised the "top down" approach and still lacked experience in NGO work. These factors constrained the process of rural development. Although the project tried to follow the *Grameen Bank* principles of channelling credit directly and only to the poor, this was not possible in practice.

5. Rice Bank: The Poor's Participation

According to the objectives and strategies of the project, the rice bank concept was an initiative aimed at solving the community problems by the villagers themselves. First two rice banks were set up at the end of 1992 and was expanded to all project villages by 1994. As the project plan presented, the rice bank aimed to create a community fund and reduce the need to borrow rice at high interest rates. Furthermore, community sharing was the concept behind the rice bank, with wealthier people helping poor people, and poor people helping poorer people (Akphiwat, project plan 1994, see appendix 3).

According to the agreement between the project and the villages, each rice bank had to repay paddy rice back to the project within three years without any interest. Any surplus of paddy rice in the rice banks belonged to the communities. The villagers used their rice bank as the center of community fund, paddy rice repayment from Day Care centers and cow banks were also stored in their rice banks. It was expected that rice banks would serve community activities in the future.

The project provided 56 tons of paddy rice to the 14 rice banks during 1992 to 1994 (Akphiwat report 1993,1994). In 1994, 472 households or 64% of total households have borrowed paddy rice from the rice banks. 20% of the rice bank members did not repay in 1993 and 22% could not repay in 1994 (See Table 4.2). Table 2.4 in chapter 2 and table 4.2, show that in 1994, 21% in 85% of households did not have rice through the year and were not members of the rice banks (85% of households did not have enough rice and 64% of households were members of rice bank). It implies that 21% of the households who did not have rice through the year, did not receive benefits from the project. Who are they - the rich or the poor? If they were rich, it may be

assumed that the project was efficient in benefit distribution to the poor. But if they were poor, the next question is, why did the poor not receive the benefit of the distribution? It is the same as the question who are those who made up in 1994 the 22% who could not repay and why ?

Table 4.2: Rice Bank and Cow Bank Members in 1992-94, the Kong Pisie Rural Development Project, Kong Pisie.

Year	Total households	Rice Bank		Cow bank
		no. of members	% of repayment	no. of members
1992	688	51	43 (84%)	-
1993	-	284	228(80%)	14
1994	734	472 (64%)	379(78%)	35

Source: Kong Pisie Rural Development Project Report 1992 -1994, Akphiwat- Cambodia, 1994

The group members who could not repay were poor households, who lacked labour, not ably female-headed households, and those who had small plot of land. Some of them tried to repay later on because of the condition which stated that if repayment is not made they would not be allowed to borrow paddy rice from the rice banks the year after. Thus, some of them turned to their relatives or rice dealers to borrow from them again and were again caught in repaying high interest rates. Similarly, the group who made up in 1994 the 21% non- members of the rice banks. Most of them were the poorest in the villages and could not repay their last borrowing. They could not participate in the rice banks the following year. However, some of them were successful in their rice production that year. Thus, they did not borrow rice from the rice banks. New households did not participate or receive benefits from the rice banks because they were new village members and did not have any relatives in the villages who could act as guarantors for them. For instance, *San* and his family who resettled in Tamean by the repatriation programme of UNHCR[11]. He owned a small plot of land but the soil was not fertile. He did not have any relative in the village. After running out of rice which was distributed by UNHCR, he exchanged his labour and his potatoes production with rice or cash. He could not become a member of the rice bank because "...who knows, may be he will move again. He could escape to Thailand...he can run away anytime..." explanation of the Tamean's rice bank committee.

[11] UNHCR sent 25 returner households from Thai -Cambodia border to resettle in the NGO rural development area in 1993. Most of them could not survive because of poor soil and they had no relatives in the villages, thus they moved to other area.

In the process of the rice bank operation, CDWs would discuss with the village leaders and villagers in order to make clear the concept, method and management of the rice bank. The poor villagers had two reactions. Most of them completely accepted and wanted to get benefit from the rice bank. The rest did not respond because they thought that they could not return the loan and that it would be easier to buy or borrow rice day by day or exchange their labour for rice. This group of villagers were poor and had small plots of land, no labour surplus but they had some relatives. Meanwhile, some village leaders were actively proposing the establishment of the rice bank in their villages. Others among them were not supportive of the idea because they had enough rice and they did not believe that the poor will repay. In this situation, the village leaders were divided into two groups. One group was fully involved in the rice banks while the rest were not, which include a group of village leaders who were also rice dealers.

At the initial stage of the rice banks, CDWs and village leaders assessed and made a name list of villagers who wanted to borrow with signatures which was later accepted by the village headman. The NGO provided the paddy rice to the rice bank by buying from the rice millers in the project area. This means that some of local elites managed to get contracts for selling paddy rice. Some CDWs were contacted by the local elites to sell their paddy rice without informing the project manager. Two rice mills and some rice dealers sold paddy rice to the NGO. It was found out later that some CDWs were bribed by the rice millers. In the second year, each village built its own rice barn to store their paddy rice repaid from the members. At this stage the project provided construction material and rice bank members shared their labour and some money for the construction. As it was the concept of the NGO to localize and emancipate people organization, the NGO authorized CDWs and the rice bank committees to manage the budget and construct the rice barn themselves. The rice bank members had to take turn to share their labour in the construction under the supervision of the rice bank committee and CDWs.

Srey's Rice Bank

The case of Srey rice bank illustrates the effect and dynamic relationship among the local elites and the villagers in Kong Pisie. The rice bank in Srey started in 1993. There were three members in the rice bank committee. *Kru Thon* was the rice bank chairman, he was a teacher at Tuk Meas school (close to Srey village). He agreed to build the rice barn on his land because the public land was sold to an outsider. *Seng*, the holy man and *Youn*, the former Youth Association leader, were members of the Srey rice bank committee. The village headman, *Kham* was not a member of the rice bank.

He lived in the same place as before the Pol Pot regime but his house was destroyed. He built a new painted wooden house[12] with a water pond and it was located close to the road. He was a rice dealer and had an old truck which was used to transport rice to Phnom Penh once a day.

Members had the right to borrow about 100 kgs of milled rice per household but had to return 220 kgs of paddy rice including interest[13]. In the first year, more than 50% of the total households borrowed paddy rice from the rice bank. *Vok*, an old man borrowed 200 kgs instead of 100 Kgs of rice. He used his name and his son's name to borrow paddy. The evidence emerged that *Vok* was the father in-law of *Youn*. Thus he used his son in-law's authority to borrow more paddy rice than the others.

When the project was designed the committee and CDW had the authority to manage the budget by themselves, *Youn* proposed to buy rice from *Kham* because he was the village headman and *Youn* used to borrow money from *Kham*. *Seng* proposed to buy from the rice miller which was located near Srey and the rice miller was the son of one of the temple committee members who was a friend of *Seng*. The reason for that was that the rice bank had to buy from both rice millers because *Kham*'s rice mill did not have enough paddy rice. *Thon* did not want to buy from *Kham* because he sold the public land without consultation with the villagers. But *Thon* still wanted to maintain a good relationship with *Kham*. The decision of the rice bank committee was the compromise the committee made but *Kham* was not happy because he wanted the committee to buy all the rice from him. He was angry with *Seng* and *Thon* because they did not support him. But he could not do anything because *Thon* was the teacher and *Seng* was the holy -man. Some of the rice bank members said that the committee got commission from both *Kham* and the other rice miller but nobody knew how much they received. However, they accepted that it was a normal practice in Cambodia as "...corruption and commission are usual in everywhere in Cambodia, if you do not accept, you are not normal..."(villagers in Srey)

When the rice barn was being constructed, most of the members provided their labour collectively but did not want to donate money to buy the materials. They mentioned ".....why do we have to pay because the paddy belongs to *Angkar Manusthor*. They have to build it with by their own money..". It took a long time for the rice barn to be completed. After that the project manager

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[12] The high wooden house with painting and water pond are indicators of economic status in rural Cambodia.

[13] By estimation, 1 kg of rice = 1.6 or 1.7 kgs of paddy rice. Thus the interest of rice bank is about 30 % / 4 - 5 months.

found out that the rice barn was smaller than that the committee had proposed to the project. The project manager could not do anything because none of the members mentioned about that. Similarly, nobody complained about the committee authorizing *Vok* the 200 kgs of rice. Some of them said that "..saying nothing is better than stating the fact...getting less is better than getting nothing. We still need to borrow paddy the next year..." (villagers in Srey).

As mentioned earlier, most villagers made the decision to be involved in the implementation process of the rice bank before it began. The poor villagers also participated in the benefit distribution. In the first year of the rice bank implementation, it provided basically equal resource distribution among the villagers.

The local elites like *Thon, Youn, Seng* and the poor villagers had their right to get their equal share in borrowing. But the local elites still received more resources than others in the process of benefit distribution. They used factors like their position and social relationship particularly the patron-client relationship and their role as brokers to gain access to the social network in order to gain more benefit from the NGO than the others. For instance, *Thon, Seng and Youn* and even CDW received commissions and bribes from the construction material shop and also from the rice millers.

In the case of the rice bank, it was clear that the CDW who were representative of the NGO project and the state counterparts in the village level, took the role of the broker and utilised the NGO resources to gain benefit from the trade dealers in the implementation of rural development. The CDW had alliance relationship with other local elites when he had a chance to gain benefit. Meanwhile he also used his position in the project and the government office to strengthen the patron-client relationship and to gain some benefit from the rural development project.

The same goes for *Kham* who gained from using his patron-client relationship to obtain the contract from the rice bank committee, and used his social network to contact the outside rice miller. Similar to *Seng* who continued good relationship with the temple committee by buying rice from the outside rice miller. It was clear that *Youn* offered the opportunity to his patron *Kham* to sell paddy in exchange for *Kham*'s help when he needed to borrow money from *Kham*.

Kru Thon, Seng and Youn took the role of developer brokers and proposed the rice bank activity within the rice. They also negotiated with the NGO to obtain material for the rice barn construction for their villagers. While *Kru Thon* tried to protect the communal resource in the case of public land, he did not succeed. Similarly, he also bargained with the NGO by offering his land

for the rice bank barn. This group of broker played active roles in the rural development context. Moreover, they worked out their decisions to deal with other brokers such as *Kham*, the rice miller and the NGO. At the same time, they received private benefits from external actors such as the NGO and from other local elites like the rice miller under the "legitimization" of the villagers' view.

Looking back to the poor villagers, in 1994, 64% of the total households made 'rationale' choices to practise their role of clientage of the NGO in the rice bank activity for their survival. It was a strategy of subsistence of the poor in the insecurity and social transition situation in Kong Pisie. They were aware that if they did not ally themselves with the NGO or the rice bank committee, they would not receive rice from the NGO. So they did not confront the committee in the case of the commissions and bribes. Similarly, they bargained with the NGO by co-operating with the rice bank committee to build the rice bank barn instead of getting money. The practise of the poor in Kong Pisie acquiesced the 'right of subsistence' as argued by Scott in the Moral Economy of the Peasant (1976).

The case study of Srey rice bank cannot be concluded yet because of limited data, particularly in the repayment during the last two years of 1995 and 1996. Some evidence shows that in the other villages, some poor villagers who could not repay, could not borrow in the following year. It depends on the members of the rice bank committee. It was only in three rice banks (Prey, Damnak and Ang), that the rice bank committee allowed the poor to borrow even when they did not repay first borrowing. However, in these cases the poor had to pay at least the interest of the first borrowing. In the Srey case, it showed that even when the poor were actively participating in the process of decision-making, it did not imply that the scheme continued to serve the poor if the members could not repay to ensure them the next borrowing. Thus, it is not possible to generalize that the process of the rice bank activity itself provides the equality of participation in benefit distribution. Certainly, the process of benefit distribution of the rice bank, is not autonomous. It is under the dynamics of the internal and external factors which construct the local elites as intermediator or broker. Thus, the local elites play an important role in the process of participation of resource distribution in rural development.

6. Village Development Committee: The NGO Dilemma in Rural Development in Kong Pisie.

The village development committee (VDC), a people's organization was initiated by the NGO, with the objective of sustaining the village development activities in each village. Moreover, the VDC

was an indicator of achievement of the NGO rural development project. It implied that the project would withdraw from the villages when the VDC became autonomous.

From 1992 to 1995, three village development committees were established: Prey, Damnak and Ang. These villages were poorer than the rest and all three village heads were different from the others. By comparison, the village heads were poorer and not considered"strong men" as the others. They always showed up in every planning workshops and training. In these villages there were several activities and all the activities were going well.

The three VDCs were initiated by the NGO in 1994. In the process of activity implementation, villagers and the NGO had the opportunities to screen the village leaders who had the ability and capacity and willingness to develop their communities. As mentioned above, local elites were the majority among village leaders. In other words, the VDCs formed the rest of village leaders or they were the lower elite class in Kong Pisie. They were elected by their villagers and all of them were involved in the village activities. Nor of the VDC chairmen were village heads. Two VDC chairmen were rice bank chairmen, one was a member of the village committee and two women were elected as members of the VDCs. They were poorer than the other local elites but they had morality and charisma. Three out of nine were illiterate including the two women members. Only one VDC chairman was less than forty five.

It is difficult to synthesize or categorize the three VDCs in Kong Pisie. Therefore, this section illustrates the characters and background of the VDC in Prey village as a case of the VDCs as a new group of local elites in Kong Pisie.

The Village Development Committee in Prey Village[14]

Oum Mean was 59 years old, he was the rice bank chairman and member of other village activity committee such as communal pond digging and day care center. He was a carpenter but illiterate. His family had access to 1.2 hectares of land. He and his wife *Heng* were Buddhist laymen. He had a daughter *Chan* who was not married. He built his small wooden house near the communal pond. Most villagers knew him as one who liked gardening and farming. He was successful in his earnings in the water melon plantation and home gardening. His wife was a member of a small business

[14] The data was researched by participatory approach. The researcher participated, observed and interviewed during work in Prey village. All the names are given names.

credit scheme. They did not have any debts even though they did not have enough rice because his daughter could earn money from selling noodles.

Oum Mean always participated in meetings but was relatively silent. The village always requested him to be involved in the activities such as day care center. Moreover, he was the leader of the day care center construction. When he was voted as the VDC chairman, he did not accept the position, he mentioned that ".....I do not have the ability, I can help and work but I can not read....". The NGO requested the village headman to be the advisory committee of the VDC. The head accepted because he had to be involved in the district activities such as rice distribution of WFP or road construction of JICA.

Bo and *Ming* were members of the VDC who were also appointed by the villagers. *Bo* was a member of the village committee. *Bo* was the youngest and worked well with the head and others. He respected and reported to the head. He was the only one in the VDC who was literate and took notes at the meeting. *Ming* was a widow, and had the smallest land (0.8 hectare) in Prey. She allowed her son to farm in her land and she herself borrowed money from the credit scheme to sell sweets and noodles in the village. She was a committee member of the day care center and rice bank, and allowed the rice bank and day care center to be built on her land. She was illiterate but the group of women in the village respected her kindness. She always participated in the village activities and also attended some training such as women in development and the yearly planning in 1994. They always had village monthly meetings at the rice bank barn. The villagers discussed with them and proposed the VDC to solve the problem of the rice repayment of rice bank members. Thus, the VDC bargained with the NGO on the rice repayment process, so that the poor could borrow rice in the second year even if they could not repay in the first year.

As described above, the VDC of Prey differed from the group of village leaders in general. Both *Oum Mean* and *Ming* were more independent from the head and the village trusted them because they worked hard and had some success in their life even when they were poor. Moreover, they used their own labour surplus to accumulate their wealth. *Bo* himself was the client of the head and the link between the VDC and the head. The VDC knew how to deal and bargain with the NGO. At the same time, the poor also demanded services from them. For example, the villagers asked for medicine from the VDC because they thought that the VDC had medicine and other resources which they received from the NGO.

The Prey VDC had more opportunities than the villagers to participate in training and visits to other projects in other provinces. Meanwhile they established their networks with other villages,

members of the project committee in the project area including district officers and some provincial officers. At the same time, the NGO brought more and more visitors to their village and they managed to exchange experiences and knowledge with each other. The VDC managed to develop the village activities and exchange and present their activities with others, which indicated a level of success of the development activities of Prey village in the view of the NGO. However, the Prey VDC were busy with the NGO and visitors, which tended to pull them from their villagers.

Prey village was opened to outsiders in the rural development sphere. The villagers themselves were also influenced by the visitors and the NGOs who brought new concepts of development. The same time they accepted and participated more than other villages in the village activities at different levels. But some of the poor were less involved at the stage of benefit distribution compared to the stage of implementation. For instance, in the case of the high cost activity like the cow bank. It was clear that most members who first received cows were the village leaders. The poor would receive the cows only after that.

Altogether, it is not easy to conclude that the VDC of Prey is a sign of the success of the NGO rural development project in Kong Pisie. The VDC managed to influence the villagers to participate in the process of decision-making through the villagers' meetings. They were also involved in the process of implementation and benefit distribution. However, in the process of participation the level and degree of involvement still differed because of both internal and external factors such as the NGO and the social relationship in particular, the patron-client relationship. As mentioned above, the VDC became the new local elites who were enabled to contact external patrons like the NGO, government agencies and others while they became the representative of the villagers to bargain with the NGO and other external actors. As long as the VDC still siphoned resources from external actors for the villagers and kept small differentiation of the resource distribution, it seems the rural development project tends to achieve the project goal. The VDC served as an alternative and a rural development strategy to reduce the inequality of resource distribution in rural development. On the other hand, the VDC tends to be a different and separate group from the villagers in terms of spending more time in workshops and training which included the visiting of outsiders. This circumstance was the effects of insufficient consideration or attention by the NGO itself. It was an added difficulty because NGOs in Cambodia lacked the relevant experiences of the rural development. The question remains: how do we assure that the VDC will continue the activities which served the villagers and shared the benefits with them in particular the poor and the female -headed households?

Similar trends and problems apply to the VDC of Damnak and Ang village. According to the data from 1992 to 1995, the VDCs became the new village elites initiated by the NGO project activities, the external actor. But the VDCs acted as the developer brokers within the new position and also associated with the villagers included the poor. They were different from the other local elites in Kong Pisie. This circumstance might or might not maintain and develop itself in the near future because the VDCs were not independent of both the internal and the external factors. Meanwhile the VDCs tied themselves with the NGO and other actors such as the district officer and provincial officers, etc. It is clear that the role of the VDCs symbolised a dilemma in the NGO rural development project in Kong Pisie.

Conclusion

The above cases illustrate the significance of the local elites in the process of people's participation in decision-making and resource distribution in the NGO rural development project in Kong Pisie. Both the external actors i.e. the NGO and the provincial agricultural officer and district officer as the representatives of state, and the internal actor i.e. the villagers, within the patron-client relationship, affected the process of rural development. All of them played different roles in the rural development project but their roles were interdependent when it involved resource distribution. However, the local elites as brokers within the patron-client relationship played significant roles in the differentiation of levels of participation, both in decision-making and resource distribution in rural development.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion

The objective of this study has been to identify and examine the significance of the role of the local elites and their influence in the process of people's participation in rural development especially with regard to the implementation of the NGO project. Briefly, both the local elites and the NGO play important roles in influencing the process of people's participation in rural development particularly the process of decision-making and the resource distribution of rural development in Cambodia or specifically in the areas of Kong Pisie. This chapter synthesises the main points of the study and makes some broad suggestions for formulating the rural development strategies of NGOs.

Despite the passing of almost one thousand years, the hierarchical structure within the patron-client relationship or the "lopsided friendship" as mentioned by Chandler (1993) still persists and is actively practised in every dyadic relationship in Cambodian rural society. These same hierarchical structures maintained within patron-client relationships are further developed as a means to appropriate the control of resources and power for the elite minority in the rural society of Kong Pisie. Clearly, social differentiation emerged in different forms in different circumstances.

In the transitional period from collectivization to privatization, during the post war period in Cambodia as a whole, the local elites managed to secure more access to the means of production than the villager masses. They played multiple roles in the rural society of Kong Pisie as such. They include the district officials, abbots, holy-man, village headmen, teachers, health workers, traditional healers, rice millers, sugar dealers, Women Association leaders and money lenders. Most of them occupied some positions in local organizations such as the temple committee, school committee, village committee, etc. These local elites accumulated power and means of production through the "pumping out" of surplus of labour and surplus of production. This evidence supports the argument of White (1989) on the differentiated accumulation of different groups in rural society. This process of cumulative resource differentiation strengthened the position and status of the local elites and maintained their privileged position in the social strata of rural society.

With the change in the relations of production from collectivization to privatization and in turn, the acceleration of the market as a whole of Cambodia, social differentiation tended to shift from socio-cultural or "non-economical" to "economical" resource bases in Kong Pisie.

It was apparent that the local elites were a minority who were socially differentiated from the village masses. They controlled three different kind of resources i.e. knowledge and skill, direct and indirect control of the means of production and authority. While the clients have access to the resource of labour, military duties and political services which in turn served the elites in both the community and national level. As discussed in chapters 2 and 3, most of the local elites' access to resources was based on the indirect control of the means of production and skills during the post war situation. However, they utilized their indirect control of resources and their skills to accumulate direct control of resources. This resulted in the shift in their resource base from socio-cultural to economical with the advent of privatization policies.

The local elites were not a homogeneous group. They were differentiated in terms of position, status, control of resources. They played the role of patrons or clients and brokers within the patron-client relationship during different times in different places. They played the role of patrons, providing protection, psychological, and material resources to their clients at the community level while they played the role of clients of external patrons such as the state, NGOs and commodity dealers in order to gain maximized resources from their patrons.

During the period of socio-economic and political insecurity and instability within the post war period, most of the local elites played the role of ***brokers*** who depended on the local organizations vis. the state and NGOs as patrons. The position of the broker within the patron-client relationship was strengthened not only during the post war period but also during the time when the kinship system was breaking down and the increasing significance of the market economy. This is evidenced in the argument of Scott (1977) and Wolf (1977) on the moral and function of the patron-client and brokers.

Poor peasants were pushed into highly subordinate position and remained at the margins of resource control. They were bound to the patron-client relationship as a means for them to maximize their access to resources. Due to the limited access they have of power and the means of production, the poor became the clientele of the local elites who acted as patrons and brokers in order to take part in resource distribution. The poor also influenced the local elites who acted as brokers to siphon external material resources and provide them some part of it. In return, they served as "good followers" or "good clients" as requested by their patrons. At the same time, the

brokers used the name of the "poor" to bargain and request for resources from the state/NGO. This confirms the concepts of "capacity", "ability" and "rationale" of social actors based on the actor-oriented perspective (Giddens,1984 in Long,1992). Thus, under the different resource bases and positions, both the local elites and the poor played different active roles to mobilize resources through the building of social networks (Long,1992) in the process of "survival" within "peasant's existential dilemma" and the "right to subsistance" (Scott, 1976) in the post war situation.

The ideology of peasants - lack of civic spirit and the dependency concept of clientele to their patrons, and the religious beliefs which influence the people through education systems and socialization - enforced poor people to accept the hierarchical system and patron-client relationships which in turn maintained social differentiation. Yet, these practices provided them the space to participate both at the micro and macro level, creating links within the agrarian society of Kong Pisie and Cambodia as a whole.

As discussed in Chapter 3, before 1992 local elites, particularly the village committee, village heads and the leaders of the Women's Association, played the role of state representatives to control and command the villagers to take part in the "top down" rural development projects of the state. The local elites took on the role of state brokers to siphon and extract labour and surplus production from the villagers to support the state. During the war and the period of rehabilitation within the socialist regime, the state enforced the villagers to participate in national development projects. They did not have the opportunity to participate in the process of decision-making. But they were forced to be involved at the implementing stage in the name of *krom Samaki* and "good people" as collective labour. In return, they received less in the process of benefit distribution than the minority or the village elites.

During the period of socio-economic and political instability, the daily hardships and trauma compelled the villagers to remain passive and dependent on the hierarchical order and their patrons. Thus, the "force" and/or "top down" strategy of development was not succeful in channelling the villagers to participate in the process of decision-making and resource distribution. The war situation which marked the period of socialist collectivization imposed the same "top down" strategy of rural development, creating local elites who acted as brokers who obstructed the village masses from benefitting in the rural development projects in Kong Pisie.

The "active involvement" and community-based approach practised by the NGO aimed at enabling the village leaders and localizing the village activities to the communities. Most of the village activities were led by village leaders. From 1992 to 1995, the village elites took importance

roles in rural development. They played the role of developer brokers, linking the external and internal actors such as the state/NGO and the villagers. To implement their projects the NGO/the state needed to work through a group or persons who acted as brokers and have links to the masses. The former could not reach the poor by themselves, particularly international NGOs which had limited access to local human resource. At the same time, the poor also could not directly contact the NGO without the brokers. Thus, the three main actors - the external patrons, the internal clients and brokers - played important and interdependent roles in the dynamics of the NGO rural development project. This phenomenon strengthens the function of the broker (Wolf 1971).

In the case of credit schemes, the benefits of these schemes could not reach the poorest in the villages. The poor had limited access to these schemes because they could not obtain guarantors for their loans due to their already impoverished situations. This reflects the limitation of the project itself which did not take into consideration the importance of the role of the developer brokers to bargain with the NGO. Therefore, most of them who benefitted from the credit schemes were the upper and lower middle class groups in the village. The rich were not involved due to the small amount of loan provided by these schemes. The credit scheme in Kong Pisie served the village leaders or some of village elites, strengthening their position and in turn maintained the structure of the social-economic differentiation in the village. The village elites took the role of clients of the NGO to accumulate their benefit and left the poor out of the boundaries of distribution in the credit schemes. Briefly, the credit scheme revealed four different classes viz. the rich who were not involved in the schemes, the upper middle class who gained more benefit than the rest, the lower middle class who gained marginal benefits and the poorest who were pushed out from the credit scheme. Meanwhile, the village elites accumulated resources which strengthened their role both as brokers and patrons.

The rice bank was an activity implemented based on the traditional practice in "sharing" the basic need. Most villagers participated in the initiative stage. The rice bank implementation process opened up spaces for the village elites who played the role of developer brokers to the villagers. As the NGO accepted the autonomy of the people's organization, the rice bank was not their direct concern. The rice bank project reflected the dynamics of internal and external factors.

The credit scheme and rice bank projects were the main activities of the NGO rural development which aimed to improve the income of the villagers, equity of resource distribution and security of economic stability. Despite the efforts of the NGO to build the development

consciousness of the villagers in the rice bank and credit scheme through workshops, training and discussion, the poor remained at the margins of resource distribution, while the minority of the village elites obtained more benefit from the project than the poor by using their role of broker within the patron-client relationship.

The temple committee was reformed and the three village development committees (VDC) were formed by the villagers with the initiative of the NGO. The role of the temple committee was to provide knowledge to people, organising and involving them in public work but these roles subsided during the period of French colonial rule. Even during the post war period, the temple committee was used for reinstating religion which saw the building of temples. The temple committee was also used as a tool for political control every where in Cambodia. Since the implementation of the NGO project in Kong Pisie which targeted informal leaders, the temple and school committees regained their position and role in rural development. In the community-based approach, the informal leaders such as the temple and school committee and the VDCs took the role as developer brokers to bargain and protect the community resources and to siphon resource from the external patrons to the community. Their role now differs from that of the past where they served and supported the state as government brokers to extract the surplus of labour and production of the villagers for the state.

It is clear that the NGO recognized and applied the local resources which include human resources, culture and local potential to reap benefits for the villagers. In the process of implementing the projects, the NGO adjusted their strategy to reach the poor recognising that the poor did not have equal access to the benefits of the projects as the village elites. The NGO tried to minimize the differentiation of the resource distribution between the minority group and the poor by initiating a new group of village elites who represented the poor. Thus, the VDCs concept was formulated and practised in the third year of the project. Some of the temple committee members were also VDC members. Most VDC members were poorer than the other village elites. VDC members were also older, more trustable and skilled. The VDCs played the role of developer brokers. They were actively involved in the village development activities while the NGO assisted by providing cultural and development consciousness through trainings, workshops and discussions.

The VDC served as an alternative in rural development strategy of the NGO to minimize the inequality of resource distribution and to maximize the "active involvement" in the process of decision-making in rural development. However, the VDCs were more involved in training and

discussion while the village activities were centred on economic concerns and issues. Moreover, given the strong influence of the hierarchical system and patron-client relationship, corruption was widely practised in Kong Pisie and Cambodia as a whole. These factors and conditions affect and influence the three main actors viz. the NGO, the poor and the VDCs. Given the circumstances, the VDCs might or might not continue to play the role of developer brokers to serve and share the benefit to the poor. Evidence points to the fact that the role of the VDC as developer brokers is necessary and important during the post war period of economic and political instability in Kong Pisie and Cambodia as a whole.

Given the dilemma of rural development in Kong Pisie, some questions should be considered: How do the VDCs resist these factors and maintain their role as developer brokers to serve the poor? How can the NGO strengthen and support the VDCs to resist the oppressive and hierarchical structures of the village while maintaining their own autonomy? How can the poor enable themselves and participate in ensuring their access to the resource distribution projects in the village?

I wish to make some broad suggestions for consideration in the work of NGO rural development in order to support and strengthen the VDC as developer brokers and people's organization to serve and share the benefits of rural development with the villagers, particularly the poor and the female-headed households. These suggestions are based on my five years experience in working in a NGO rural development project in Cambodia.

NGO organizations should serve as intervenors in rural development. It is vital that policy makers understand the dynamics and structures of social relationships in rural society in order to formulate workable approaches and strategies for rural development. For a "bottom up" approach to work, the role of the NGO as intervenors is significant in facilitating the working together of the VDCs and the CDWs. The project planner, manager and CDWs ought to understand the social dynamics and relationships within the village set up viz. the hierarchical system, patron-client relationships, local power and so on. The VDC should be not initiated at the first stage without examining the development and background of the local elites. Adopting the actor-oriented approach, the villagers have the "ability", "capacity" and "rationale" in survival situations, and thus, the CDWs have to wait for the village leaders to involve themselves in the village activities. Some organizations have accepted the VDC strategy without considering how and when the VDC formed. Thus, in some of villages, the elites benefit more from rural development projects than the poor. The sharing and/or transfer of the technical know-how is important in strengthening and

building development consciousness. The practice of learning by doing provides opportunities for the VDCs to acquire and enhance their own knowledge in community organising. Technical and management training are not enough. The CDWs should reflect on the cultural and civil consciousness as well. Also, the CDWs need to understand the limitation of the VDCs in respect of communication skills, formal education and so no. The CDWs can not use their own standards to measure the capacity and ability of the VDCs.

Empowerment and the autonomy of the VDCs are vital but it is equally important that the CDWs provide the knowledge and skills to build development consciousness to empower the villagers particularly the poor and female-headed households. This will enable the villagers to acknowledge their own potential in order to negotiate and bargain with their brokers. This in turn enables the villagers to gain better access to resources. .

The VDC serve as an alternative strategy in rural development. The intersection of the social, economic and political relations as well as the relative autonomy of the different actors in different situations at different times determines the different conditions in which the VDCs are able to achieve their goal of rural development reaching the poorest in the villages. The role of local elites as the developer brokers remains significant and is necessary in rural development in the transition circumstance like Kong Pisie and Cambodia as a whole. Their role as brokers is not static but affect the process of people's participation, decision making and resource distribution in rural development both positively and negatively. This is evidenced by the role of the local elites as VDCs acting as developer brokers posing a significant dilemma in the rural development in Kong Pisie.

This study serves as a reflection on the dynamics of the social relations at the micro level of Cambodian rural society. It is also an attempt at examining the gaps within rural development as proposed by the state/NGOs to highlight the importance of looking at the micro-sites of everyday rural struggles and relations. Thus, enabling the improvement of rural development strategies and goals.

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Appendix 1

Project Planning for 1994, Kong Pisie Rural Development Project, Cambodia.

Kong Pisie Rural Development Project, has been implemented since January 1992 in Kong Pisei district of Kompong Speu province. The project area covers 14 villages, selected by the Kompong Speu Office of Agriculture and Apsara because of their status as a poorest district in the province. There are about 800 families and 3,700 people and included 834 children under six years old in the target villages. The project staff includes CD workers, a financial control, a health worker helper and a guard. These staff live in the communities in order to understand and build a good relationship with villagers.

Living conditions and natural resources in the project area are poor. Food production is low, many children are malnourished, and illness, particularly in the dry season, and hygiene is poor. Lack of water is a major problem, and affects both agriculture and health. Children lack opportunities for both formal and informal education because of inadequate services, poor economic conditions, lack of parental support and the insecurity of war..

1.2 DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

To improve living conditions and enhance material and spiritual development opportunities for poor rural children through their families and communities

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

1. Children's problems in their communities are identified and solved.
2. Communities are able to identify and analyse children's needs and problems in order to find ways to solve them themselves.
3. Basic needs (health and hygiene, child care, education and socio- economic welfare) are improved by the communities.
4. Community organisations implement activities to solve their problems and encourage internal networks for sustainable development.

2. PLAN FOR 1994

2.1 ACTIVITIES IN 1994

2.1.1 Training for Community Development Workers and community leaders

To increase understanding, technical knowledge and skills in conceptualising, strategies, approaches and methodologies in community development and community-based child development

The project will provide training for CDWs and community leaders. Training methods will include group discussion, sharing of experience, field visits and study trips in Cambodia and neighbouring countries. Beside training, the project will facilitaye and motivate CDWs and community leaders and villagers to understand and involve in community development and community -based child development.

2.1.2 Community-based nutrition

To decrease child malnutrition as a contribution to improved child development

The project will work both directly with children and indirectly to decrease malnutrition in children and convince mothers of the value of good nutrition and the danger of malnutrition. CDW and sub-district health workers will continue to provide nutrition education to mothers and communities, treat malnourished children and provided supplementary food with contributions from mothers. Mobile malnutrition clinics will be used for the above activities. Child-to-child activities will be adapted to local conditions for nutrition education and food production.

2.1.3 Family food security

To motivate mothers and communities to recognise the value of adequate nutrition and to increase food production for child consumption

Small land holdings, poor soil, lack of water and lack of capital constrain family food production, and nutritional problems are impossible to solve in isolation from these. To motivate mothers and communities to increase and improve the food given to their children, production of food for family survival will be emphasised. Home gardening, fruit tree planting, fish and animal raising and other food production will be promoted. The project will attempt to identify and analyse common problems with the communities and design activities to solve them, and promote the concepts of integrated farming and sustainable agriculture.

2.1.4 Income generation and credit scheme

To increase family income and community funds

Lack of capital and indebtedness are endemic in the project area. The money people borrow for daily survival, medical care and food production must be repaid at high interest rates. The resulting debt has negative consequences for children, who suffer from the lack of savings to spend on education and health care. The project will promote an appropriate credit scheme, seed banks, cow banks, pig raising, palm sugar production and handicraft production to address these problems.

2.1.5 Community -based Day care centres

To improve the physical and mental development of children through community participation

To serve families who do not have anyone to take care of their children during working hours

In a changing economic situation, each family must help itself for food production. Families without members to do the labour for them must either take their children to the fields or leave them with people often older siblings, who are unable to provide proper care or stimulation. For such families, the project will assist in the development of community day care centres where this need is identified by the villagers.

2.1.6 Community -based Education development

To support activities in schools to benefit children

Lack of adequate primary education opportunities is a main problem in the project area. The project will support the following in primary schools: school gardens, hygiene education, supply of teaching/learning materials and in-service teacher education. Teachers will be involved in community discussions and activities. The project will also investigate ways to make primary education more relevant to the lives of the children. School construction and rehabilitation will continue and support to the school where identify and villagers able to involve the activity. In the same time the school where the project involved, other activities such as school agriculture and child-to-child will be address in their schools.

2.1.7 Child-to-child

To motivate children to be actively involved in the positive development of their families and communities

Child-to-child is a method of teaching older children the importance of good health, hygiene and nutrition so that they can care for and pass this knowledge on to their younger siblings, parents and peers. Such activities were adapted to local conditions through primary schools once a strong relationship with these schools has been established by the project. Primary school teachers were trained in the concept and methods, and supported with necessary materials to conduct these activities.

Child-to-child activity has conducted in 11 villages of 14 villages in the project area and will be expand to other villages and two primary schools in the project area. In the meantime CDWs and child-to-child committee will continue the workshop to produce more lessons for the activity.

2.1.8 Primary health care

To motivate mothers and communities to improve family hygiene and the health of children and women

In 1993, the project has supported health workers in the project area to provide services, and training for health workers and health worker volunteers in communities. The CDWs and health workers and volunteers shall encourage such activities as vaccination campaigns and education in hygiene, primary health care and mother and child care. In 1994, the project will focus to children 0-6 years old so immunisation have to provide to all of the target. Child-to-child activity also able to support the primary health care to reach the project objective.

2.1.9 Rice banks/ social security

To decrease indebtedness from borrowing money for rice
To establish community funds to provide needed rice and capital
To build social awareness for people to share with and help each other

Community sharing is the concept behind the rice bank, with wealthier people helping poor people, and poor people helping poorer people. Community members contribute to a stock of rice according to their abilities, so that during the season of scarcity, they can draw on these resources. The project will promote rice banks in target villages.

The end of 1992, the project supported two rice banks in two villages and expand to two villages in 1993. From the experience of rice bank, villagers aware that their community can support them when they lack of rice during rice plantation period. In 1994, CDWs will expand rice bank to villages in their responsible.

2.1.10 Water and sanitation

To motivate communities to improve water and sanitation
To reduce child morbidity from water-borne disease

If communities have adequate water for drinking nearby, they will not be forced to go far away to fetch water or go without it for hygiene purposes. This will save labour for women and give mothers more time to look after their children. Adequate water can also improve family and personal hygiene. The digging of ponds and shallow wells supported by the project in 1992 will continue through 1993, and training will be arranged in the construction of giant water jars. The giant water jars activity will continue and provide to schools, pagodas and health center. In the same time, CDWs will organise villagers who need giant water jar to involve the activity by sharing their labour and their money.

In 1994, drinking water and the hyhigiene latrine will be promoted and campaign in the project area. The project will start from schools, pagodas and families of member of child-to-child activity.

2.2 APPROACH AND METHODS

The project aims to reach its objectives through a child-oriented approach. As children are part of families and communities, the welfare of the communities will contribute to the welfare of children. In turn, children can help to develop their communities in a positive direction in the future. The project works directly and indirectly in all sectors to benefit children.

Project CDWs are trained and motivated to carry on the project after the withdrawal of Apsara. They work closely with communities to identify problems and solutions, living in the project area. Activities are used as a means to effect improvements in water, sanitation, nutrition, income generation, social security ,etc., and also to create awareness of the benefits of people's participation in their own development. Community members should participate in each step of each activity, and discussion and education are important steps in this process.

Rource: 1994 plan of Kong Pisie rural Development Project, Akphiwat 1993

Appendix 2

Summary of Project Implementation and Output During 1992 -94, Kong Pisie Rural Development Projec.

Activites	Output	Cham kar Sbow	Dong Tok	Damnak Meanchy	Kan Chrop	Phean Sa	Sayao	Thalok Preal	Trapiang Sla	Ang Kra sang	Prey Ta mean	Ch ray	Ang Taley	Th lok	Prey Thalim
Community - based Nutrition	-Reduced no. of malnourished children from 93 cases to 2 cases. - 98 % of children 0-1 were vaccine BCG & DPT. - 174 women used the pill.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Community Day Care Center	- 174 children atteded in 5 Day Care Centers - One new Day Care Center was built. - 9 Child -minders were trained.		X	X					X			X	X		
Primary Health Care& health volunteer group	- 19 health volunteers were trained - Hygiene, child health education - One Community health center built.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Child-to-Child	- 967 members in schools and villges - Home gardening, animal raising, saving gourp exist in Child -to -Child group	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Primary Ed. development	- 20 class rooms built with furniture support. - 2 schools initiated agriculture activity. - About 1,300 children attended school.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Rice bank	- 4 new rice banks with 22 tons of paddy provided in members. - 472 members and 9 new storages. - 87 % of members repiad.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Credit scheme	-333 members were provided credit - 97 % of members repaid. - Saving group initiated.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Cow bank	- 35 cows provided to members - 6 new born calves.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Family food security	- 51 home gardening families - 142 families had supplementary food cultivation. - 336 small fruit trees provided to villgers.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Water resource development.	- 19 shallow wells were dug. - 2 communal ponds are continuing. - 26 gaint water jars								X	X					
Fish pond	- 7 fish ponds cultivated fishes. - 15 families dug fish ponds.			X		X	X								
Small scale infrastructure	- 1 bridge was construced in village. - Village road repaired in 6 villages by villagers.		X					X	X		X	X	X		X
Village Develop. Committee.	- 3 villages had village development committee.			X								X	X		

Source: 1994 Annual Report of Kong Pisie Rural development Project

Appendex 3

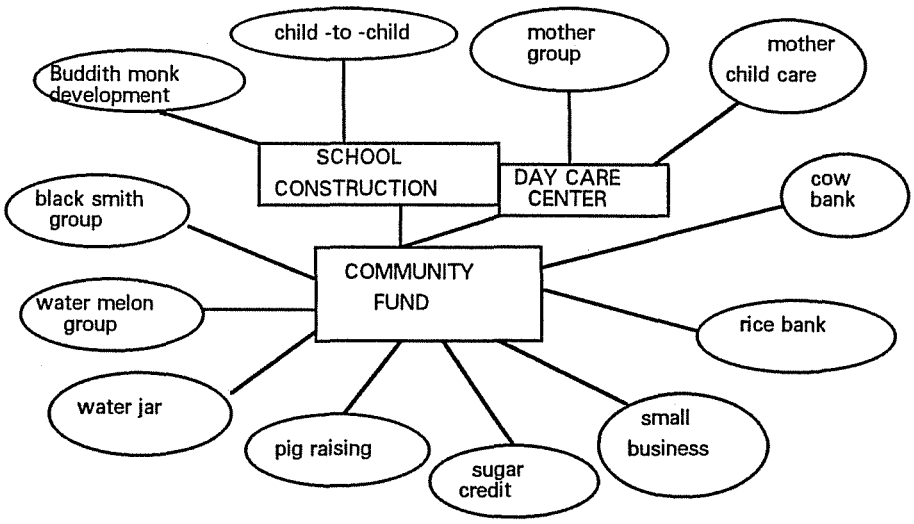
CONCEPT OF COMMUNITY FUND

Community Fund is a output of sustainable community development process in the Kong Pisie Rural Development project. The project conducted several activities in order to assist communities to solve their problems by themselves. According to polical and economic condition, the living condition of villagers is lower the living standdrad and lack of capital to increase their family income and community security.

The project believe if community have more security both of social security and food security, villagers would have confidence to settle down and continue their development both of their families included children and communities.

The project started implement credit scheme and revolving fund since the project started community activities in the year of 1993 and 1994. Most of activities in communities are related to community fund and child development. Villagers and the project discussed to use community fund for community children development. Some villages are able to increase their community fund in the meanwhile some villages just aware and started to create their community fund.

THE RELATION OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND COMMUNITY FUND



Source: Kong Pisie Rural Development Project, Akphiwat- Cambodia, 1994