

Information and considerations on opium poppy cultivation

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ABSTRACT

The Drug Dependence Research Center (DDRC). Institute of health Research, Chulalongkorn University had launched research studies in the hill tribal community since 1976 and still carrying on at present. The principal goal is to study health problem and develop appropriate public health system to raise the health standard befitted with the local resources and the available outside input. The socio-economic status of the community are part of the assessment study because of their close link to health problem. It is also well known that opium has a definite role in the socio-economic status. Hence, the compiled data includes considerable information related to opium cultivation. The long-term nature of the data is rather unique and not to be found commonly in any earlier report. Furthermore, the long continued work on health development has created close rapport sufficient for the community to reveal many information otherwise not readily disclosed and allow for opportunities to verify many fact by actual participatory observation. The main objective of the following communication is to demonstrate the interwoven link of opium in the socio-economic life of the hill tribal community with the hope of eliciting a clear understanding on the fundamental factors given rise to opium poppy cultivation.

The data of the following communication are organized into 2 parts. The first part contains current information on the hill tribal population compiled by the Hill Tribe Research Division, Department of Public Welfare, Ministry of Interior and opium cultivation area and production reported by Office of the Narcotics Control Board (ONCB), office of the Prime Minister. The other part is the collation of research data of the DDRC. They are parts of 2 long term research project study in Tambon Ban Tub, Amphoe Mae Cham, Chiangmai Province and Tambon Mae Na Jarng, Amphoe Mae La Noi, Mae Hong Son Province. The 2 projects are supported by the United Nations Fund for Drug Abuse Control and the Canadian International Development Agency respectively.

The research data are collected by observation and interview. The field team constitutes of 1 researcher, 2 male nurses and 3 hill tribal village health volunteers who had been trained in 1978 and since then have been continuously providing primary health care service in their villages which locate in the study area. 2 of them are Karen and 1 is a H'mong. Interview information are wherever possible verified by observation and objective assessment. Opium poppy cultivation is validated by field survey of reported sites. Historical accounts are verified by interviewing multiple sources who

had participated in the event. The chronological order from various responses agree within 10% variation.

Key words: Information, Considerations, Opium poppy cultivation.

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