Thai Government Policies on Poverty Reduction:

Measures and Evaluation during 2003-2008

Associate Professor Chalaiporn Amonvatana Ph.D

1. Background

One of the most important objectives of the 9th National Economic and Social Development Plan (2002-2006) of Thailand is to reduce the number of poor people living below the poverty line. In 2002 the Thai government established a special project to be monitored by "National Poverty Reduction Center" (NPRC) aiming to solve poverty problem by the year 2008. This special project is to be implemented side by side with the normal annual projects in the national plan. The Department of Local Administration (DOLA), Ministry of Interior was assigned to conduct the registration of Thai people who felt that they were facing social and poverty problems. The actual poverty registration was conducted from 6 December 2003 to 31 March 2004. There are approximately 8 million registered people, account for 12.9% of the total population, with 12.3 million problem cases.

People under poverty may be classified into different categories basing on the problems they are facing as follows:

1. Indebtedness problem: it covers indebtedness both formal and informal sectors and the amounts exceed the ability of the households to pay back.
2. Land accessibility problem: farmers are not accessible to enough land for agriculture.
3. Housing problem: people cannot afford to own houses or cannot afford to repair their old houses.
4. Unemployment problem: people cannot find appropriate careers or jobs.
5. Deceptiveness problem: various forms of deceived people.
6. Illegal profession problem: people give up various types of illegal profession and become poor.
7. Wanderer problem: people moving about without aim.
8. Other problems

Table 1 shows the statistics of poverty registration collected by the Ministry of Interior and serves as data base for investigation to be conducted by NPRC. The number of people registered under the first category of poverty namely "indebtedness problem" is the highest. The number of cases registered is 5,061,045 cases which is 41.10% of the total 12.3 million cases all over the country. There are 3,611,288 cases registered under "land accessibility problem" or 29.32% of the total cases. There are 1,988,755 cases registered under "housing problem" which is 16.15% of the total cases. The last problem to be investigated is "unemployment problem"; there are 384,564 cases which is 3.12% of the total cases. These four categories of poverty registration account for 89.7% of the total cases. Therefore, this research will focus only on the first four categories of poverty registration.

Table 1: Number of Cases Registered by 8 Million People under Poverty Registration

	Problems	Number of Cases	%
1	Indebtedness	5,061,045	41.10
2	Land Accessibility	3,611,288	29.32
3	Housing	1,988,755	16.15
4	Unemployment	384,564	3.12
5	Deceptiveness	85,602	0.70
6	Illegal Profession	6,381	0.05
7	Wanderers	5,483	0.04
8	Others	1,172,318	9.52
	TOTAL	12,315,436	100.00

Source: www.khonthai.com 31 March 2004

2. Objectives of the Study

2.1 To investigate and analyze various measures and strategies implemented by government offices for poverty reduction.

2.2 To identify the weak points and strong points of each measure adopted by government offices.

2.3 To identify factors contributing to the success of the project as well as problems and obstacles contributing to the failure of the project.

2.4 To evaluate the effectiveness of the measures implemented for poverty reduction.

2.5 To propose recommendations for future improvement of poverty reduction measures through the University Network for Development in Asia (UNDA)

3. Scope of the Study

3.1 Study and analyze the process and progress of social problem and poverty reduction measures basing on poverty registration data base.

3.2 Proportional sampling the poverty registration data base and follow up all the stakeholders such as government sector, private sectors and people participation.

3.3 Evaluate the overall result, impact and utility of poverty reduction measures with references to inputs, process and output.

3.4 Study the success and failure as compared to the objectives of the projects with references to income increase, expenditure reduction, opportunity improvement, life quality improvement, poverty immunization creation and self-independency.
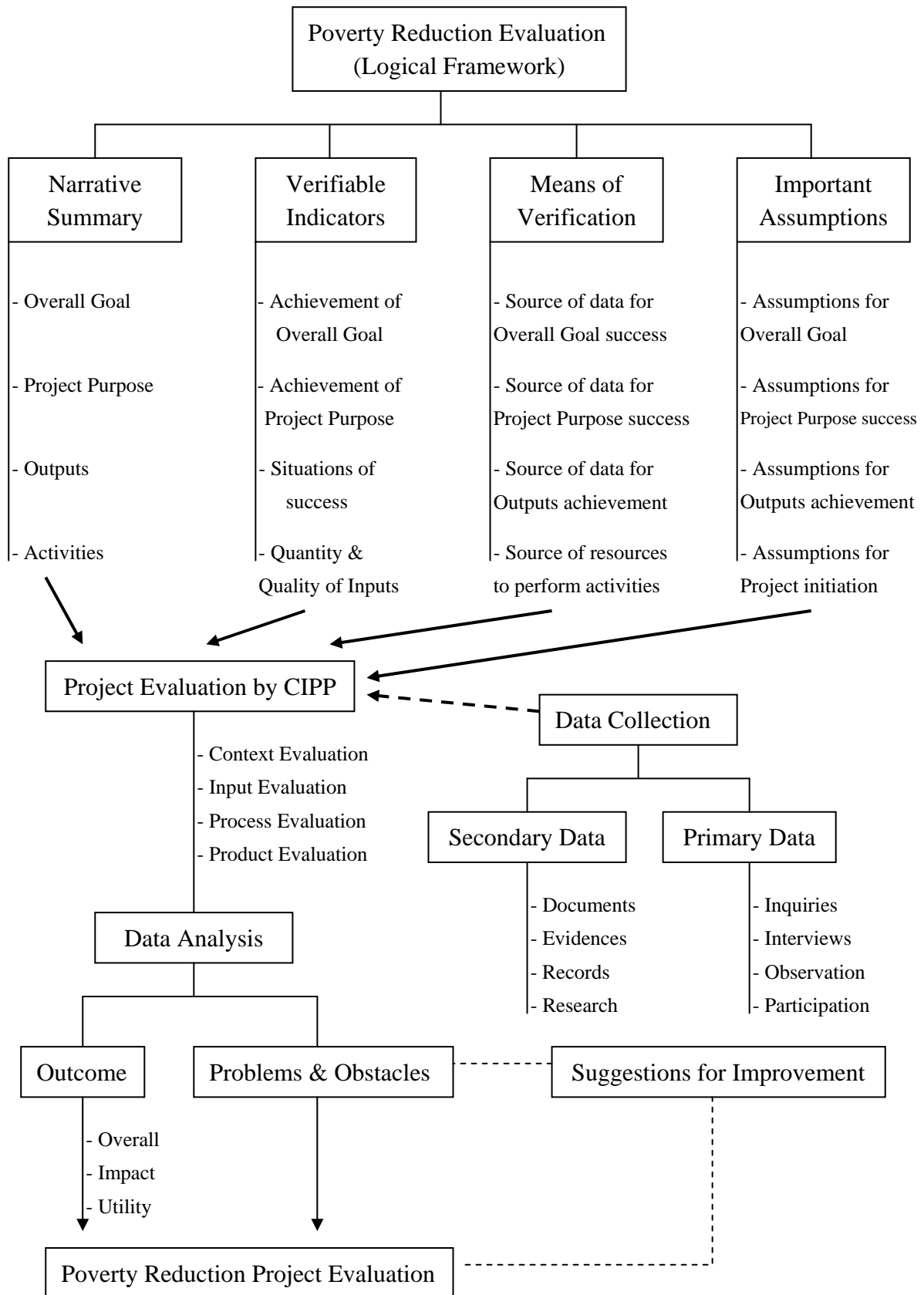
3.5 Study the factors contributing to the success of social problem solving and poverty reduction, supported by the participation of people, government agencies, private organizations, experts and academicians, the process can be extended and becomes a sustainable development project.

3.6 Prepare social problem solving and poverty reduction procedures and recommendations which will lead the community to better life quality and stronger economic foundation.

3.7 Organize focus groups of stakeholders in poverty concentration areas of Thailand to reconfirm the findings concluded from poverty registration data base and questionnaires.

3.8 Exchange experience and research findings with members of UNDA. Successful measures may be used as model in other member countries.

Figure 1: Conceptual Framework of Poverty Reduction Evaluation

```
┌─────────────────────────────────┐
│   Poverty Reduction Evaluation  │
│      (Logical Framework)        │
└─────────────────────────────────┘
```

Narrative Summary	Verifiable Indicators	Means of Verification	Important Assumptions
- Overall Goal	- Achievement of Overall Goal	- Source of data for Overall Goal success	- Assumptions for Overall Goal
- Project Purpose	- Achievement of Project Purpose	- Source of data for Project Purpose success	- Assumptions for Project Purpose success
- Outputs	- Situations of success	- Source of data for Outputs achievement	- Assumptions for Outputs achievement
- Activities	- Quantity & Quality of Inputs	- Source of resources to perform activities	- Assumptions for Project initiation

Project Evaluation by CIPP

- Context Evaluation
- Input Evaluation
- Process Evaluation
- Product Evaluation

Data Collection

Secondary Data

- Documents
- Evidences
- Records
- Research

Primary Data

- Inquiries
- Interviews
- Observation
- Participation

Data Analysis

Outcome

- Overall
- Impact
- Utility

Problems & Obstacles

Suggestions for Improvement

Poverty Reduction Project Evaluation

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Review poverty registration data base and project data collected by DOLA, NPRC and NPRC's subcommittees.

4.2 Analyze 67 poverty reduction projects implemented by 35 organizations under 11 ministries.

4.3 Review the progress reports of all 67 poverty reduction projects, follow up, visit, observe and inspect the project sites.

4.4 Apply Project Cycle Management (PCM) technique for project planning and evaluation.

4.5 Apply CIPP (Context Evaluation, Input Evaluation, Process Evaluation and Product Evaluation) evaluation technique to improve the evaluation process.

4.6 Apply field evaluation emphasizing participation of all stakeholders, using people in the poverty registration data base as the center, community area as the starting point, field data collection and evaluation will be based on proportional sampling of the concentration of poverty registration in the data base.

4.7 Both secondary and primary data collections will be conducted to monitor and evaluate the projects.

4.8 Quantitative and qualitative data analyses will be conducted.

4.9 Implementing agency focus groups' evaluations will be reconciled with the evaluations by poverty registered participants.

5. Expected Outcomes

5.1. Various poverty reduction measures and strategies of Thai government are investigated and analyzed.

5.2. Strength and weakness of each poverty reduction measure are identified.

5.3. Factors contributing to the success and failure of poverty reduction projects are identified.

5.4. The effectiveness of poverty reduction measures is evaluated.

5.5. Recommendations for future improvement of poverty reduction measures are proposed.

5.6. Poverty reduction processes in developing countries in Asia are supported and improved by the dissemination of research findings and experience of UNDA members.

6. Project Period and Plan of Operations

The project period is about 27 months and is expected to be completed by March 2011. The research starts with the review of poverty registration process and the data base. The next step is to determine the sample size and sampling technique. All 67 poverty reduction projects, implemented by 35 organizations under 11 ministries, must be carefully analyzed. Strength and weakness of each poverty reduction project must be identified. Focus groups of stakeholders will be conducted both in Bangkok and regional areas. Both primary and secondary data will be utilized for evaluation process. The details of operation plan will be as follows:

Table 2: Tentative Plan of Operations

Activities	Schedule (months)								
	2009				2010				2011
	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	1-3
1. Review Data Base	▬								
2. Sampling Frame		▬							
3.Review 67 projects		▬	▬						
4. Field data collection			▬	▬					
5. Data analysis				▬					
6. Prepare Progress Report				▬	▬				
7. Presentation in Cambodia					▬				
8. Conduct focus groups				▬	▬	▬			
9. Data analysis					▬	▬			
10.Propose Recommendations for public hearing.							▬		
11. Prepare Preliminary Report								▬	
12. Presentation in Japan									▬
13. Prepare Final Report									▬

6. Research Team

1. Chalaiporn Amonvatana Ph.D. Associate Professor   Project Director
   Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University.
   Bangkok 10330, THAILAND.
   Chalaiporn Amonvatana: cbme@chula.ac.th

2. Phaisal Lekuthai, Associate Professor   Researcher
   Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University.
   Bangkok 10330, THAILAND.
   Phaisal.L@chula.ac.th

3. Kieatviboon Chomkhair, Assistant Professor   Researcher
   Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University.
   Bangkok 10330, THAILAND.
   Kieatviboon.C@chula.ac.th

4. Chairat Aemkulwat Ph.D. Assistant Professor   Researcher
   Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University.
   Bangkok 10330, THAILAND.
   chairat.a@chula.ac.th

5. Ms. Napatwan Boonyoo :   pongnarin_tu@hotmail.com   Research Assistant
6. Mr. Surapun Liuwiwattana : surapun706@hotmail.com   Research Assistant
   Graduate Students
   Faculty of Economics, Chulalongkorn University.
   Bangkok 10330, THAILAND.