

Health and urban resettlement among low income elderly people in Phitsanulok, Thailand

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“The role of the private health sector in poor urban neighborhoods in four cities in India, Indonesia, Thailand”

INTRODUCTION :

Thailand :

- is in a rapid phase of urbanization,
- higher proportion of elderly (UNFPA, 2006)
- Rapid urbanization may led to problems.

Phitsanulok : raft house community

- More than 100 years ago, rural people moved to live in a raft house
- Located near the market
- The last urban raft house community in Thailand

Situation :

- 1991, The World Bank articulated the urban development approach
- 1991, The provincial committee was set up to consider the resettlement of the raft – house community to a ground location to solve the environmental problem, prevent and eliminate decayed area.....
- 1992, The environmental law was enacted
- 1992, water pollution & diarrhea epidemic among the raft people
- 2001, The raft house people moved to land

Objective:

To explore the implications of urban resettlement among low income elderly people in Phitsanulok

Research Design:

- * A qualitative study
- * Using in-depth interview and observation to collect a data.



Sample:

- 12 elderly who had moved from raft-house to urban periphery area,
- 7 Key informants, Documents

Data collection:

From Dec. 2005 to Oct. 2006

Data analysis:

Content analysis method



RESULT : Implication of resettlement

Adjusted to a new community:

Shifting from the raft house,
They thought of the Nan River as
“an important source of life;
- source of food; fish, plant
- a place to relax”

They named their new community
... “ Chum Chon Chao Pare” ...

From river to ground location:

- live in a flat house 18 m²
- far from a market 2 km.
- depend on their children who were struggling to survive
- more expensive, hard.

.....It was easier to make a living in the raft house. It was close to the market and one did not need to walk far to get there, less than a kilometer. (73 year old man)

.....In the beginning, it was so hard to adjust to living here. We had to change our way of life and our way of doing business. I have to pay for a house and other things in installment. And there are also bills for water, electricity, and miscellaneous. Now, we are more restricted. We spend as little money as we can. We have to adjust.....

(village headman)

Economic hardship :

Lost their source of income.

....Making a living here is hard. If I have known before that life was going on like this, I couldn't have moved to this place. When I lived in a raft house, I didn't have to worry about anything. Earning money was easy. We could just bring things ashore to sell. Earning 200 bath was enough to buy food. Living here is not like that. I have to endure. I made a mistake and I can't do anything to fix it. I just have to endure until I die.
(73 years old man)

.....We earned a lot when we lived in a raft house. We sold fish. I can't sell fish here since I can't catch any because the river is too far away. When I live in a raft house, I could carry fish ashore easily and go to the markets by tricycle. The market are also far away here. We can't earn here. (I) become stressed because we don't have an income. I want to make a living....

(82- year- old woman)

Living arrangement :

- Extended family household to pool resource / face economic hardships
- Have taken care by the daughter or female relatives
- Some elderly woman took care of their grandchild or their older sister who got sick.

....I cook for my older sister...I do every thing for her. She can't do it by herself. She can take a bath and wash clothes by herself but she can't go to dry them on our clothes line because she can't stand up. She has been like this for 3 – 4 years. She pee a lot. I just can't change her aprons all the time. Sometimes she just defeats and pees wherever she feels it is convenient. She has a partial paralyze...(66 year old woman)

Domestic conflicts :

**Limited space & more intimacy &
Expectations raised aggression -->**

.....Since we moved here, my son in law yelled at all our ancestors. He gets drunk and he just bawls out. He said this house is bad (speaking angrily). He said whore were making love. Bastards! If he dies, I won't go to bury him. He look down at us. He is just a son of a bitch. (83 years old man)

Physical health

Changed their way of living

In the raft house:

- exercised by walking up and down a long the river bank.
- grew a vegetable without insecticides
- sold thing at shore.

In a flat house :

- No space for exercise & growing plant.
- no job.


Physical health problems:

- Cough, cold, & back pain
- accidents
- cataract
- hypertension
- partial paralyze
- heart disease
- hemorrhoids
- urinary tract etc.



*Female > male;
Low incomeincidence health problems*

How to manage their illness :

1. Known & not serious ----- > past experience ----- > - stay in bed
- buy medicine from grocery & drugstore
- using herb etc.
2. Unknown & serious ---- > relative & friend ---- > - PCU, Hospital
- Clinic etc
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“Interchangeably”

- Decision depend on
- cost of service, time
 - perceived seriousness
 - trust in drugstore & doctor.

..... “Ya Pharmacy” is near a food market... a big market. I don’t know any other store. In the past, I stayed in a floating-house. When I was ashore, I reached this drugstore. I passed another drugstore, because I wasn’t accustomed to buy medicine from there. “Ya Pharmacy” is a big store that was set up a long time ago. It has all the drugs that you needs... (73-year-old man)

Mental health problem :

insomnia, dizzy and stress etc.

Sources of stress

- economic hardships
- new living arrangements
- family problems & domestic conflict



Method of stress management

- * talking with neighbor
- * doing household chores,
- * exercise, walking
- * praying, etc.

....I just walk around . I relax when I walk. I just walk and talk with people...(82 year old woman)

Suggestion:

- The policy makers should adopt a more participation planning to minimize social costs
- Regular home visit & facilitate communication between elderly and health professional is required.

**Thanks for your
attention!**