Title: An Application of Sufficiency Economy in the Health Sector in Thailand

By

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Background

Past four decades
Thailand
Mainstream ‘modernization’ -
‘Development path’ - ‘Economic-based plans’ paradigms
Material comforts
Export-led growth
Agricultural and industrial products
Unbalanced national growth
Consequences

Economic progress
Social deterioration
Exploitation of natural resources and environment
Deforestation
High consumption of energy
Heavy, improper use of hazardous chemicals
Thailand at a cross-road

The Asian economic crisis in 1997

*Alternative* developmental paradigm
2002 Introduction of the “Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy” (SE) bestowed by His Majesty the King of Thailand into Thailand’s national development plans as a paradigm shift to achieve well-balanced and sustainable growth at household, community, and nation levels.
Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy

Figure 1 Interaction of Sufficiency Economy and Globalization

Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy

SE as a way of life incorporates:
- moderation (middle path)
- reasonableness (due consideration in all modes of conduct)
- self-immunity (the need for sufficient protection from internal and external shocks)
- an application of knowledge and ethics in the forms of accurate knowledge, care and giving, mutual assistance, and collaboration
SE recognizes balanced, step-by-step approach to development (starting from building a good basis for the people to enable them to have enough to live on and enough to eat) based on the principle of self-reliance.

Being in line with the forces of globalization SE protects local communities and the nation from the adverse impacts of changes.
Especially at the **national level:**
- holistic development process
- balance of social, economic, and resource capitals
- production should first meet the demands in the country before being considered for export
- low risk should be encouraged and over-investment and the possibility of debt avoided
His Excellency Senanarong, 2004, pp.3-6, stated: According to SE, the country should follow careful planning procedures, keep pace with changes in the world, and use natural resources in a responsible manner while conserving the environment. In addition, social capitals such as education systems and local wisdom should be developed to increase the country’s capability for innovation and technology appropriate to the country’s needs, as well as being economical and simple.
Application of SE in the Health Sector
(Nittayarumpong, 2006)

Moderation
Health care personnel as health care service providers should work with pride, honor and integrity
Patients and patient relatives have reasonable expectations of existing health care services but cannot expect medical technology to solve all problems
Application of SE in the Health Sector (cont’d)

The relationship between physician and patient should be a humane not a commercial one
Reasonableness

- overuse of drugs at the request of patients should be replaced by ‘rational drug use’ stated by the World Health Organization
- appropriate use of available resources of equipment and personnel
- does not reject technological progress but encourages the wise use of it to benefit the whole society
Self-immunity

- health promotion behaviors
- alternative medicine VS depending on importation of medical equipment and drugs
Knowledge

Evidence-based medicine / research-linked policy decisions to gain successful results and suitable use of resources
Ethics
- excellent service and treatment of patients with high standards of morality, patience, perseverance, diligence, wisdom, and prudence shown by health care service providers, patients, and patients’ relatives
- good governance, transparency, fairness, quality, and efficiency
Sathirathai and Piboolsravut (2004), p.1, stated:
The Philosophy of Sufficiency Economy (SE) - a holistic concept of moderation that acknowledges interdependency among people and with nature
- a balanced and sustainable development
- can be achieved, if the framework and the process of development are appropriate with social and natural conditions
The 2004 World Report on *Knowledge for Better Health* indicated that biomedical discoveries could improve people’s health only if they are applied specifically to diverse political and social contexts, health systems and population groups.
The present paper investigates the application of SE at Siriraj Hospital (a tertiary hospital), Bangkok, Thailand in a case study titled *Knowledge Management to Promote Evidence-Informed Health Care Policy and Practice in Thailand*
The gap between knowledge and practice (know–do) and the gap between practice and knowledge (do–know) are common in health-care systems in developing countries.
Out of the four case studies, knowledge generation for bridging the ‘do–know’ gap: *Urinary drainage bag change regimen* is considered more closely here
Thamlikitkul (2006) described that urinary tract infection (UTI) is a common complication among patients with an indwelling urethral catheter.

Each change of the urinary drainage bag predisposes the patient to developing UTI and increases time spent by personnel, expense, and plastic waste.
The frequency of urine bag changes for patients with short-term urinary catheters was a source of conflict among health personnel with no evidence-based support.

*Should it be changed every three days OR changed when clinically indicated?*
Eventually, Siriraj Hospital conducted a randomized controlled trial on the incidence of UTI among hospitalized patients with short-term indwelling urethral catheters that compared a three-day urinary drainage bag change to a no-change
The results found no significant difference in the incidence of UTI between the two groups.
These results were adopted as a policy endorsed by the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at Siriraj Hospital for the entire hospital from February 2002 and disseminated to infection control nurses during the national workshop on prevention and control of nosocomial infections in July 2002.
The decision yielded a policy implications and **saved costs, personnel time and plastic waste**
Thamlikitkul stated that knowledge generation is an important measure to bridge the gap between knowledge and action for health.
Epilogue

The ultimate aim of SE is to establish well-balanced and sustainable national growth that takes into account economic, social, and natural resources, and a middle-path approach to development. The integration of the three characteristics — moderation, reasonableness, and self-immunity — with the two conditions of knowledge and ethics — indicates that SE can be applied at the levels of household, community, and nation, and that its principles are influential on thinking and practice of the Thais in a range of sectors including health.
References: