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Public participation in drug prevention and solution in Thailand

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Peer Review Information	Abstract
<p><i>Submission: 21 Jan 2025</i> <i>Revision: 20 Feb 2025</i> <i>Acceptance: 15 March 2025</i></p> <p>Keywords</p> <p><i>Participation</i> <i>Drug Prevention</i></p>	<p>This article aims to study the promotion of public participation in drug prevention and treatment. The study's results found that the promotion of public participation in drug prevention and treatment involves providing knowledge to the public by organizing workshops, and community meetings, and disseminating various information to help them gain knowledge, understand, and recognize the importance of participation to provide opportunities for the public to participate in promoting drug prevention approaches from the decision-making process on issues, needs, leading to various activities and mutual benefits after the activities have been carried out, as well as allowing the public to participate in the inspection, monitoring and evaluation of the development and promotion of public participation in drug prevention. Keywords: participation, drug prevention</p>

Introduction

Problems of poverty, unemployment, increasing problems of domestic violence, and drugs are like disasters that corrode and undermine society, causing humanity to decline. Countries that face drug problems know that drugs are a tool for seeking power and destroying humanity all over the world. The widespread and never-ending drug problem is now a major problem for every country in the world.

Thailand has always faced the problem of drug prevalence, whether it is drug production, drug trafficking, or the increase in drug users. Recently, amphetamine-type stimulant drugs, which make the body alert at all times and reduce appetite, affect the cardiovascular system, or what is known as methamphetamine, have spread violently from the northern region to various parts of the country,

becoming a national problem. In terms of the spread, it has been found to have spread to various groups, especially laborers. Thailand has always faced the problem of drug prevalence, whether it is drug production, drug trafficking, or the increase in drug users. Recently, amphetamine-type stimulant drugs, which make the body alert all the time and reduce appetite, affect the heart and blood vessels, or so-called methamphetamine, have spread violently from the northern region to other parts of the country until it has become a national problem. In terms of the spread, it was found that it spread to various groups, especially the labor force because this group believes that methamphetamine, when consumed, helps to make them more diligent in their work. However, the spread was not limited to the labor force alone. Children, youth, and the general public were also

affected by the drug prevalence, resulting in widespread damage to youth who will be an important force in developing the country. When youth use drugs, the negative consequences cause a loss of brain capabilities and learning efficiency, which is a pity.

The trend of the drug problem remains a major problem that has been with Thailand for a long time, which has resulted in many problems in Thai society, including social problems, economic problems, and problems of influential people in various areas. Many government agencies carry out the suppression of drugs in Thailand. In 1961, the government appointed the Narcotics Suppression Committee to set policies and coordinate to solve the drug problem. It is a specific agency established to solve the drug problem. Later, when the Narcotics Prevention and Suppression Act B.E. 2519 was enacted on November 16, 1976, and Section 11 stipulated that there should be an Office of the Narcotics Control Board, abbreviated as "ONCB". However, even though an agency specifically responsible for solving the drug problem has been established, the drug problem has not disappeared. The statistics of drug arrests of all charges by the Royal Thai Police between 1986-2022 (Narcotics Suppression Bureau, 2021: 3) are as follows:

- 2017: 213,096 cases, 229,322 suspects
- 2018: 243,585 cases, 255,065 suspects
- 2019: 200,012 cases, 207,826 suspects
- 2020: 165,524 cases, 171,312 suspects
- 2021: 130,543 cases, 132,675 suspects

From the above statistics, it can be seen that the drug problem still has a high number every year. Although some years the number has decreased, the statistics in 2018 found that the arrest statistics have increased again and the highest between 2017 and 2021. The statistics of the amount of drug evidence show that methamphetamine pills have the highest amount of arrests, followed by ecstasy, ice, kratom, dried cannabis, heroin, ketamine and cocaine, respectively (Narcotics Suppression Bureau, 2021: 3). The above situation has affected the problem of drug prevalence among youth and labor groups, etc.

From the above information, the author is interested in studying the public participation approach in preventing and solving drug problems to know how the public participates in preventing and solving drug problems to use it as a guideline for preventing and solving drug problems to meet the needs and create maximum benefits for the public in the future sustainably. The objective is to

promote the public participation approach in preventing and solving drug problems.

Concept Of Participation

Participation means that community members must participate in 4 dimensions: 1) Participation in decision-making about what to do and how to do it; 2) Participation in sacrificing development and implementing the decision; 3) Participation in sharing benefits from operations; 4) Participation in project evaluation (Cohen & Uphoff, 1981, cited in Sombat Namburi, 2019: 184).

Public participation means giving people an opportunity to participate in various activities or projects, making people accept the activities and projects to meet their needs (Trairat Koyai et al., 2020: 266). Public participation is divided into 4 steps as follows (Cohen & Uphoff, 1980: 213 cited in Atisorn Khatseesai, 2008: 8)

1) Participation in decision making is a participation that is an expression of ideas about organizing or defining the project system as an assessment of problems or options that are possible to be implemented for development by assessing the current situation and the causes of the problem. It is divided into 3 parts:

1.1) Participation in the initial stage (Initial Decision) is a search for real needs, which is a way to participate in the project.

1.2) Participation in the preparation stage (Ongoing Decision) is a search for opportunities or channels to solve problems, including the priority of the project to be implemented.

1.3) Participation in the operational decision-making stage is to recruit personnel to carry out the operation, such as volunteers, coordinators, or groups that have come together according to tradition, such as women's groups or youth groups, to participate in the activity by becoming members of the operation, selecting leaders, and building empowerment in the organization. Participation In general, participation in the decision-making stage does not mean that it is only a decision-making process. It also uses decision-making in conjunction with the operational stage, such as organizing the organization and determining development activities. Decision-making involves people in terms of benefits and evaluation of development activities (Cohen and Uphoff, 1980: 222 cited in Panya Chaliaoachat, 2017: 21).

Concepts On Drugs

Priyaphat Chaiyarat mentioned the reasons why youth and people of other ages turn to drugs as follows:

1. The reason for being persuaded: Most youths have an instinct to want to be together, to be respected, and to participate in group activities. Therefore, when friends persuade them to try, they cannot resist. This makes youths have to accept using drugs as their friends persuade them, which has clear supporting evidence. The results of government studies found that 77% of youths are addicted to drugs because they are persuaded by their friends. In addition, teenagers are at an age where they are curious and want to experiment, so it is easier to persuade them.

2. The cause comes from wanting to try, curiosity, wanting to try, wanting to know the taste, and wanting to feel, it is a human instinct without thinking that it is easy to get addicted. But when trying to use it, it is likely to get addicted because today's drugs such as heroin are very easy to get addicted. Just use it a few times and you will be addicted.

3. The role of the community must have the right knowledge, understanding, and attitude towards drug problems. Suppressing and controlling drugs to eliminate them or make them harder to find. Creating appropriate laws and providing effective legal consultations are important parts in solving social problems such as poverty, slums, unemployment, and others. It also helps reduce the problem of indirect drug addiction. Eliminating random places and vices that are a stepping stone for young people to use drugs is a necessary measure.

Problems and obstacles in public participation in solving drug problems

Problems and obstacles to participation in decision-making to propose solutions to the drug problem. The main problems come from people's fear and lack of confidence in expressing their opinions or participating because they fear the impact on themselves or their families. Sometimes there are also problems with time for participation and fatigue that prevents participation as desired. In addition, people's uncertainty and concerns about participation may take time to resolve. For example, creating an understanding among the public about the law and its possible impacts so that they feel confident and able to participate fully in solving the problem is important. Creating understanding and encouraging the public to recognize the importance of participating in solving the problem is important. Providing clear guidelines and creating an open environment for the exchange of ideas can help to better address this issue.

Suggestions for developing participation in decision-making provide guidelines for solving the drug problem.

Participation in decision-making is an important factor that clearly helps in solving the drug problem in the area of duty in Khiansa District. Organizing activities such as campaigns and public relations to enhance understanding of drugs and related operations are very important. In addition, there are suggestions on village meetings and giving opportunities for people to participate in decision-making and express opinions that can help solve problems effectively. It helps create motivation and confidence for people to participate in solving problems. It is an important understanding and friendship. In order to exchange opinions and understand each other more, learn fully about the work procedures and express honest opinions as effective tools in solving problems. Promoting and supporting activities such as playing sports, using free time constructively, setting up shifts, monitoring and creating spaces for learning and exchanging ideas can build confidence and encouragement for people to participate. It also helps create participation in preventing and solving drug problems that are beneficial to everyone in the community. This is a good approach to develop communities to understand and cooperate in solving problems that occur. It creates success and the possibility of further action by community groups that join together and work together to solve drug problems that occur in their areas appropriately and effectively.

Participation in operations

Problems, obstacles, participation in operations, sacrificing time, physical strength, and morale to prevent and solve drug problems

Problems and obstacles from the interviews were very similar. Key informants suggested increasing drug knowledge activities and understanding the steps to perform duties in preventing and solving such problems to help people realize the importance and participate in decision-making. Participation is an important element in helping to solve drug problems in that area. However, it was felt that the main problems were lack of knowledge, lack of time, and concern about the consequences that would happen to them if they participated, which made people not dare to participate in solving these problems. Prevention and solution of drug problems should make people understand the impact and importance of participating in solving this problem. Creating an understanding of the

process that must be done to reduce concerns that are obstacles and creating time for activities that create participation in the community, such as showing friendliness, building good relationships and supporting useful activities such as playing sports or learning how to use free time to benefit. Most opinions also want to link to authority and regulations to allow full participation without worrying about the consequences that will happen to them later. Giving opportunities and encouragement for people to be able to participate fully in solving the drug problem is also an important thing that should be considered. Talking about drugs in a friendly manner and creating understanding about the possible impacts on the community is a good way to build confidence and confidence in people to continue to participate in solving this problem. Creating awareness among relevant personnel is also important to help create an environment full of cooperation and participation in solving problems.

Suggestions for developing operational participation, devoting time, physical strength, and morale to preventing and solving drug problems

Participation in drug prevention and problem-solving is very important. We can create understanding and confidence in the community through activities to create awareness and understanding about the effects of drugs by preparing the community and creating groups that have the power to prevent this problem, such as workshops, organizing activities that focus on sharing information and creating an understanding of the steps to prevent drugs, and creating networks for people in the community to cooperate in preventing and solving this problem effectively. In addition, we can create various forms of public relations media to disseminate information about drugs, such as creating an understanding of related regulations and creating communications that can provide information accurately and widely. Promoting community members to have knowledge and understanding of drug prevention policies and study-related regulations can also create a surveillance mechanism to appropriately inspect and evaluate the in-depth results of drug prevention processes. Promoting community members' participation and confidence in this process will be an important factor that will help prevent and solve drug problems more effectively. Creating understanding and knowledge for community members will help increase morale and

motivation to cooperate in preventing this problem effectively.

Participation in the benefit-receiving aspect

Problems, obstacles, participation in receiving benefits, projects or activities organized, guidelines for prevention and solving drug problems, promoting cooperation, unity, and good coordination within the community.

Problems with promoting public cooperation in drug prevention and problem-solving are multidimensional. People do not dare to express their opinions or needs for participation, and the consistency of coordination between the government and the needs of the community is unstable, such as delays in project implementation. There are still shortcomings in promoting unity within the community regarding the acceptance and understanding of the need for participation by all parties in solving the drug problem in the area. Otherwise, strengthening understanding and linkages between the government and the people will be important in solving this problem. Creating a space to promote cooperation and true understanding to learn and promote public participation is necessary so that the needs and priorities of the community are properly supported in solving the drug problem in their area. Creating understanding and cooperation from both the government and the community is important to help solve these problems more effectively.

Suggestions for developing participation in receiving benefits, projects or activities organized, guidelines for prevention and solving drug problems, promoting cooperation, unity, and good coordination within the community.

In conclusion, it emphasizes the importance of promoting cooperation and public participation in solving drug problems in various communities, focusing on providing knowledge and connecting the government and the public to enhance understanding and cooperation in solving the problem. The recommendations are linked to be sympathetic, emphasizing the necessity of listening to and connecting with the opinions of all parties of the public to push for responsibility and true participation in solving drug problems in their own communities. Prioritizing projects and explaining the details of the implementation process demonstrates consideration and care in connecting with the public to create understanding and appropriate cooperation in preventing and solving drug problems in the community effectively.

Including cooperation and unity within the community play an important role in creating a better environment for drug prevention and problem-solving. In addition, it also emphasizes promoting understanding in performing duties in project implementation and sharing information in recognizing benefits and limitations to create effective cooperation and linkages in preventing and solving drug problems in the community effectively and sustainably to the fullest. Promoting and supporting the implementation process is important in solving drug problems in various areas sustainably and covering all levels of the community. Participation in the evaluation.

Problems, obstacles, participation in evaluation, participation in expressing opinions in support or opposition in the project implementation process or various activities.

In conclusion, from all interviews, we can see that there is a tendency to show consistent opinions among informants, with opinions on the importance of public relations and complete information provision to enable public participation and understanding in the process of monitoring, tracking and evaluating projects or activities related to drug prevention and problem-solving in the community. Many informants confirmed that there are limitations related to the lack of understanding of the process that prevents the public from participating adequately in monitoring, tracking and evaluating. This may result in the public not receiving sufficient information about the activities taking place and, consequently, not fully participating in solving the drug problem in their area. Developing processes that allow for public participation and providing clear information about relevant projects or activities is therefore an important consideration to enhance understanding and cooperation in solving drug problems in various communities comprehensively and comprehensively.

Suggestions for developing participation in evaluation, participation in expressing opinions in support or opposition at various stages of the project implementation process or activities.

In conclusion, the recommendations on participation in evaluation and expressing opinions in the process of implementing projects or activities obtained from the interviews with key informants indicated the importance of giving people the opportunity to participate and fully participate in the process of inspecting, monitoring,

and evaluating projects or activities related to drug prevention and problem-solving in the community. These recommendations emphasized that people should receive complete and sufficient information about activities and projects taking place in the community and allow them to participate in inspecting, monitoring, and evaluating to enhance their understanding and cooperation in solving drug problems in the community fully and linking it to the policies and operations that are appropriate for the community's objectives.

The author has synthesized the content and obtained a model for promoting public participation in drug prevention and problem-solving, which is the "DOAE MODEL", which consists of guidelines for promoting public participation in drug prevention and problem-solving. There are 4 guidelines for promotion: 1) Participation in decision-making (D=Decide), 2) Participation in practice (O=Operation), 3) Participation in receiving benefits (A=Accepting benefits), 4) Participation in evaluation (E=Evaluation), and all 4 guidelines must work together to be guidelines for promoting public participation in drug prevention and problem-solving.

From the "DOAE MODEL", the promotion of public participation in drug prevention and solution can be explained as follows:

1. Guidelines for promoting participation in decision-making (D=Decide)

1.1 Build confidence so that people feel safe and dare to be open-minded in expressing their opinions and cooperating in performing duties.

1.2 Give people the opportunity to participate in decision-making, propose problems or needs fully, and explain the steps in the work process so that people understand and are ready to accept cooperation in preventing and solving drug problems.

1.3 Create awareness so that people see the importance of participating in preventing and solving drug problems, including disseminating a variety of information for people to access more.

1.4 Build morale so that people are encouraged to cooperate and participate in prevention.

2. Guidelines for promoting participation in operations (O=Operation)

2.1 Create knowledge and understanding to educate people, to have knowledge and understanding and see the importance of preventing and solving drug problems in the community by preparing the village, campaigning for the community to be aware of the dangers of drugs, creating social power, community power,

and promoting the prevention and solving of drug problems.

2.2 Create motivation, should create morale or create motivation to encourage people to participate in preventing and solving drug problems, such as giving souvenirs to those who provide cooperation or help prevent drug problems in the area, as well as promoting people to see the importance of preventing drugs in the area.

2.3 Set up a shift, monitor and watch over the behavior of children and youth, prevent them from gathering to use drugs, and publicize and ask for cooperation from the public or guardians to participate in preventing drugs because it is a duty that everyone in the village or community must help take care of.

3. Guidelines for promoting participation in receiving benefits (A=Receiving benefits)

3.1 Allocating a tangible budget for organizing projects or activities should include an explanation of the steps and total expenses of the activities, including providing knowledge and understanding of the steps to perform duties in carrying out the activities.

3.2 Listen to opinions and promote practical actions. All citizens can help take care of each other. The power of unity within the community is the best defense against drugs.

3.3 Create unity in participating in drug prevention. Be open to listening to problems and suggestions together. Cooperate to promote prevention, which will reduce the problem of conflicting ideas among citizens.

4. Guidelines for promoting participation in evaluation (E=Evaluation)

4.1 Check transparency, allowing the public to participate in checking, following up, receiving news and information comprehensively, and evaluating the results of various activities organized by the community, such as checking transparency and fairness in operations and evaluating work results in various steps.

4.2 Follow up, evaluate, allow the public to participate in following up, receiving news and information and evaluating the results of various activities to participate in drug prevention in the area.

4.3 Encourage the public to participate in drug prevention, allow the public to listen to opinions, doubts, or objections, allow the public to participate in expressing their opinions freely, and make the public aware of participation in

prevention as a guideline for drug prevention in the area.

Problems, obstacles, and suggestions for developing public participation in preventing and solving drug problems

1. Problems, obstacles, and suggestions for developing public participation in drug prevention and resolution through participation in decision-making.

The public did not participate in presenting needs, making decisions, thinking, and planning, including participation in decision-making that did not lead to action, and the public had access to information. Local leaders should open opportunities for the public to participate in presenting needs, and opinions, making decisions, and participating in drug prevention planning in the form of meetings and disseminating various information for the public to access more, which is consistent with the study results of Orapan Nakamahachalasin (2007), who stated that providing information is considered the lowest level of public participation but the most important level because it is the first step for the government to open opportunities for the public to participate in various matters. The methods of providing information can be through various channels, such as printed documents, disseminating information through various media, organizing exhibitions, newsletters, organizing press conferences, posting announcements, and providing information via websites. In addition, listening to opinions is a process that allows the public to participate in providing information, facts, and opinions for the decision-making of government agencies in various ways, such as receiving opinions, surveying opinions, organizing public forums, expressing opinions via websites, etc. Therefore, the guidelines for developing participation in decision-making are listening to the needs, opinions, and various problems of the public, along with communicating information for the public to receive information through various channels and efficiently.

2. Problems, obstacles, and suggestions for developing public participation in preventing and solving drug problems, in terms of participation in operations

The public lacks knowledge and understanding of the participation process, which results in the public not seeing its importance and not cooperating, as well as lacking opportunities to participate in activities or projects organized by the government. Opportunities should be given to the

public to participate in activities or projects organized by the government, such as publicizing information, appointing representatives or committee members to participate in activities, and adjusting the format of operations to take into account the public's benefits as the main priority, which is consistent with the study results of Orapan Nakamahachalasin (2007), who stated that: Involvement is an opportunity for the public to participate in operations or to jointly suggest ways leading to decision-making in order to assure the public that their information, opinions and needs will be considered as alternatives in government administration, such as workshops to consider public policy issues, public hearings, the establishment of working groups to propose policy issues, and cooperation is an opportunity for groups of the public and public representatives to participate by being partners with the government in every step of decision-making and to continuously carry out joint activities, such as committees with the public as committee members. Therefore, the approach to promoting public participation in the prevention and solution of drug problems in Khiansa District, Surat Thani Province is to open opportunities for the public or public representatives to participate in activities or projects organized by the government.

3. Problems, obstacles, and suggestions for developing public participation in preventing and solving drug problems, in terms of participation in receiving benefits.

People do not receive benefits from government activities or projects as well as they should because the activities or projects organized do not meet people's needs. Benefits from some activities are not widespread and equal. In addition, the implementation of activities and projects is delayed and ineffective, resulting in people's participation not being developed as much as it should be. People should be given opportunities to participate in the implementation of activities or projects by asking about the needs of local people to solve problems accurately and efficiently. This allows people to receive benefits from the projects or activities organized equally, comprehensively, and efficiently, which is consistent with Abraham H. Maslow's (1970) personality theory. It is said that the motivation process is the heart of the personality theory. It is believed that humans are "animals with needs" and it is difficult for humans to reach the stage of complete satisfaction. In Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, when a person desires to be satisfied

and when a person is satisfied with one thing, he will continue to demand satisfaction from other things. Therefore, the development of participation in receiving benefits for the prevention and solution of drug problems in Khiansa District, Surat Thani Province, is important to listen to the opinions and needs of local people to meet the needs of the people directly and effectively. However, there should be a hearing or acknowledgment of the needs of the people before planning activities or projects in the action plan every time because the needs of the people may change according to different situations.

4. Problems, obstacles, and suggestions for developing public participation in preventing and solving drug problems in Khiansa District, Surat Thani Province, in terms of participation in evaluation.

Local leaders do not allow the public to participate in the inspection or evaluation of the projects or activities organized. As a result, the public is not able to participate because they do not receive information, news, and time constraints. The public should be allowed to participate in the evaluation of the projects or activities organized by campaigning or publicizing to allow the public to receive information and news and to allocate appropriate time to provide more opportunities for the public to participate. This is consistent with the study results of Orapan Nakamahachalasin (2007), who stated that empowering the public is the step that gives the public the highest level of role by allowing the public to make decisions, such as a referendum on public issues, or a village fund project that gives the public the power to make all decisions. Therefore, the development of participation in the evaluation of drug prevention and problem-solving can be carried out by providing opportunities for the public to participate and giving the public the power in the inspection and evaluation process of the projects or activities organized, taking into account the nature of the activities or projects, methods, or procedures as well as appropriate times and places to provide opportunities for

Suggestions

The operational recommendations for public participation in drug prevention and solution are divided into the following areas:

1) Participation in decision-making

- The public should be given the opportunity to participate in expressing their needs, opinions, decisions, and to

participate in planning to promote public participation.

- Projects, activities, or workshops should be organized to provide knowledge to the public, to help them understand and see the importance of participating in drug prevention.
- Stimulate and encourage people to participate in community meetings, as well as create awareness among people to see the value and benefits of participating in drug prevention in their area, as well as disseminate diverse information for people to access more.

2) Participation in operations

- The public should be given opportunities to participate in activities or projects organized by the community.
- The public should be educated to make them see the importance of participating in drug prevention in their area by creating a variety of public relations media and communicating to the public comprehensively.
- Representatives or committee members should be appointed to participate in various activities organized by the community, as well as adjusting the format of operations and schedules, such as setting meeting dates that affect the public's working hours the least.

3) Participation in receiving benefits

- The public should be allowed to participate in the activities by asking the needs of the local people in order to solve the problems directly and effectively.
- The activities should be carried out so that the public receives benefits from the projects or activities that are organized equally and effectively.
- The public should be allowed to consider and prioritize the problems and needs in organizing activities that promote participation in drug prevention to effectively respond to the needs of the public.
- The local leaders in the village should study and consider various regulations, rules, and laws to organize activities to promote participation in drug prevention that see the benefits that the public should receive as important.

4) Participation in evaluation

- The public should be encouraged to have knowledge and understanding in participating in the inspection, monitoring, and evaluation of projects or activities to encourage the public to feel like they are joint owners of the locality.
- The public should be given opportunities to participate in the evaluation of projects or activities organized.
- The public should be encouraged to participate in village community meetings to listen to problems, report on the results of projects or activities, or to provide opportunities for the public to express opinions, complain, grievance and express opinions on the results of projects and activities.
- Public relations, advertising to inform the public of various news and information, and allocating appropriate time to provide opportunities for the public to participate more.

Policy Recommendations

Policy recommendations for developing guidelines to promote public participation in drug prevention and resolution in Khiansa District, Surat Thani Province are as follows:

- 1) The government and government agencies should be aware of and give importance to the role of the public in participating in the development plan to promote drug prevention and solutions so that the community can develop in line with the needs of the public in a sustainable manner.
- 2) The province and district should set policies and visions that promote the process of participation in drug prevention and solution in Khiansa District, Surat Thani Province, so that there is tangible participation of the public in local development.
- 3) Local leaders should establish community committees or working committees to implement projects or activities by allowing the public to participate in decision-making, operations, receiving benefits, and evaluation so that the public feels ownership and can jointly develop and promote participation in drug prevention and solution in the area effectively and sustainably.

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