

# Participatory Engagement And Women's Empowerment In An Alternative Public Health Model: A Case Study of Buddhist Medicine Foundation Of Thailand



This thesis is a case study on Buddhist Medicine Foundation of Thailand (BMFT). It is a faith-based organisation that applies religious dimensions and cultural values to promote Buddhist Medicine Model as an alternative health care for Thai society.

The findings of the study has added to the corpus of knowledge about social movements in Thailand. Importantly, this study revealed new and interesting findings pertaining to faith-based organisations within the health sector in Thailand. The Buddhist Medicine model itself holds important research and policy implications in terms of asking whether women's empowerment can be further investigated given that feminist studies have largely overlooked the dimension of spiritual empowerment. The current study propounds that this is a new form of social movement rooted in Buddhism and embedded with the health domain. This extended framework pays more attention to the spiritual and cultural dimensions in the social space as well as focuses on individual change leading to social transformation.



Montawadee Krutmechai was born in Bangkok. She completed her Bachelor of Arts (BA.) degree at Silpakorn University in 1984, and her Master of Development Management (MM.DM.) degree at the College of Economic and Development Management (CEM), University of the Philippines at Los Banos (UP.LB), Philippines in 1994. She has over 10 years of working experience in the area of social development gained on the ground working with NGOs in Thailand and various national and international

development networks particularly in the field of rural development, sustainable agriculture, food sovereignty and sustainable development.

From 2010 to 2017, she joined the fellowship program of the Right Livelihood College in Penang for a doctoral study at the Centre for Research on Women and Gender (KANITA), Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM). This thesis is the fruit of a long journey in her pursuit of a PhD degree at Universiti Sains Malaysia, made possible by the support and assistance from the Right Livelihood Fellowship and the Institute of Postgraduate Studies of USM. Special mention must be made about the continuously inspiring, support and commitment she received from Dato' Anwar Fazal, (former Director of the Right Livelihood College, Penang, Malaysia), Professor Dato' Dr. Rashidah Shuib (PhD main supervisor), and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Magdalene Ang Chooi Hwa (PhD co-supervisor). During her academic studies from 1994 to 2017, she has written a number of articles, and research reports related to social development and issues on agriculture, health, communication, women and gender. Based on her learning and development orientation as well as useful training and experiences gained during her doctoral journey, she is firm in her wish to return to her country and fulfil her mission of achieving sustainable development goals for the people of Thailand.

She has over 10 years of working experience in the area of social development gained on the ground working with NGOs in Thailand and various national and international development networks particularly in the field of rural development, sustainable agriculture, food sovereignty and sustainable development. Working with people including women and men in rural communities has not only enabled her to be more aware of their daily struggles but has also inspired her to strengthen her capability in working for the people at micro and macro levels towards sustainable development.