

CHAPTER IV

RESEARCH OBJECTS DESCRIPTION

According to research objects description of this research, there are six issues that will be described namely:

IV. 1. General Condition of Three Southern Border Provinces

General condition of three southern border provinces of Thailand including Yala, Patani, and Narathiwat located at the southernmost of the country (can see at picture 1 page 4) has a total area of 6.79 million hectares, or 10,936 square kilometers, population of about 1.78 million (Yongjaiyut, 2004). Such areas as special areas under the Notification of Government and there are special living characters of people in the areas including races, religions, languages, traditions and cultures. Most people in the areas are Thai Muslim, using Malay Language to make communication. The area is Muslim society using Islamic culture so the lifestyle is specific and looks difference with Buddhist society including daily life and carries on an occupation (Yongjaiyut, 2004).

IV. 2. Political History of Patani Kingdom

The area is called “three southern border provinces of Thailand” in the past is called “Pattani” or “Negeri Pattani” (Pattani Kingdom) currently, included Pattani Province, Yala Province, and Narathiwat Province (Uma, 2010). The Kingdom was generally believed to have been founded between the mid-14th and 15th Centuries.

Pattani Kingdom was linked with *Ayudhaya* (Second Siam King) through trade and its tributary status, because of this relationship (Wasinsuk, 2003).

The Patani Kingdom and Siam hardly had a peaceful co-existence during the early Bangkok or Ratanakosin era (Huttha, 2009: 5). The first time in the history of Patani, had the power to appoint the successor of the Patani Sultan (Patani Kingdom) but this move created strong resentment from the Patani ruler and led to another conflict between Patani and Bangkok. Thai direct rule of Patani had begun in earnest since the early years of the 20th century. In 1901 the provincial re-organization being undertaken in the whole Kingdom, the Patani States were grouped into a collective administration, is called *Boriwen Ched Huamuang* (Area of the Seven Provinces including Patani, Nongjik, Yaring, Yala, Raman, Ra'ngkek, and Saiburi) (Huttha, 2009: 5).

The Malay rulers of the Pattani States, who had agreed to compromise their traditional political rights were retained in their posts and were only replaced by the Thai-Buddhists after their death or retirement (UNDP, 2005). Their power and authority was drastically diminished. Yet, Islam continued to enjoy the patronage of the Thai rulers. In 1901 the Thai King decreed that special provisions, regarding the application of Muslim Law on matters pertaining to marriage and inheritance would be upheld for the benefit of his Malay subjects in the Patani States. In 1906 the Patani States were united into one provincial territory, is called *MonthonPattani* (Pattani Circle) demarcated into the provinces of Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat and Saiburi (from seven provinces into four provinces) (UNDP, 2005:5).

In 1932 the Monthon system was discontinued the Monthon Pattani was divided into the provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat until the present day. In 1909 after the signing of the Anglo-Siamese Treaty, (England – Siamese Treaty) Patani was no longer a Malay Kingdom, but merely a number of Malay provinces under the Thai subjugation. The history of Patani after 1909 may be regarded as the history of the Malay-Muslim minority in Thailand until today. The political history of Patani may be summed up as the history of struggle for political autonomy and sovereignty of the Malay-Muslims (UNDP, 2005).

IV. 3. The Socio-Culture Structure of Three Southern Border Provinces

The estimated five million Muslims in Thailand, approximately 3 million or so reside in the three provinces. The Muslim population in these three provinces is ethnically Malay and they identify themselves as *nayu*. The Malay-Muslim population constitutes approximately 80 percent of the total population in these three provinces (UNDP, 2005: 7-8). Currently there are a few hundred mosques in these three provinces, which indicate that the Muslims in the region are serious practitioners of Islam. Also have 1,343 *Tadikas*, (*Sekolah Tadika*) which stands for “Taman *didikkan kanak kanak*”, meaning an informal institution. There are 249 Islamic traditional Learning is called *Pondoks*, the “residential institution”. In addition, there are well over 800 schools, private and public, teaching Islamic studies (UNDP, 2005).

In addition, they are practicing Islamic and Malay traditions and customs in their birth, marriage and death ceremonies. Inter-marriage with the Thai Buddhist hardly happens. They dress in Malay fashion and almost always wear headscarves. Some younger female generations even cover their faces like those in the Arab world. Their strict practices of Islamic and Malay cultures and customs apparently distinguish them from the Thai Buddhist and other ethnic groups in the region (Ruttana'mani, 2007).

In the past, the Malay-Muslims and the Thai Buddhist at the village levels were reported to have a fairly close relationship because they shared some moral values that revolve around meritorious and sinful acts. The Malay-Muslims and the Thai Buddhist began to be suspicious, worry of each other when they were constantly politicized either by the Thai Governments, or by the Malay-Muslim separatist movements (Ruttana'mani, 2007).

IV. 4. The Economic Structure of the Three Southernmost Provinces

The economy in the region is mainly in the hands of the Thai-Chinese group (UNDP, 2005: 8). In the public sector, the majority is Thai Buddhist and Thai-Chinese. The Muslim-Malay is largely engaged in small fishing activities in the coastal areas and in small-holdings of rubber trees. Some are engaged in small local trading. However, in the recent past, an increasing number of the Muslim-Malays have entered the public sector, particularly in teaching and health services. Moreover, the Muslim-Malay is the poorest among the three groups. The statistics from the

Office of National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) in 2004 show that in 2002 the number of poor people in the three provinces was higher than in other southern provinces, approximately 60% of the total number of southern population and the GNP of the population in these provinces was TH Baht 2,600 per month. The GNP of the population in Narathiwat was the lowest in all southern provinces, approximately TH Baht 2,224 / about Rp.778.400 per month (UNDP, 2005:8).

The economic structure of this region is basically agricultural, there are a few factories related to seafood processing, natural rubber products and palm oil production (UNDP, 2005: 8). In some urban bordering towns, like Betong and Sungai Kolok Districts in Yala and Narathiwat, tourism is one of the main income generating activities due to the popularity of the places among a great number of Malaysians and Singaporeans. As the statistics from NESDB in 2001 show agriculture accounts for 47.1 %, Manufacturing 6.9 %, trade 14.6 %, services 10.3 %, banking 1.6 %, and others 19.5 % of the production structure (UNDP, 2005).

However, it is reported that there are various kinds of so-called ‘shadow’ economies, for example, the cross-border smuggling of goods from Malaysia, illegal petroleum trade, drug trade, gambling and prostitution. Therefore, there are different kinds of organized crime groups working in this region. It is also reported that the “influential people” in this region are directly or indirectly backed up by either the high-ranking officials, civil, police as well as military or by the politicians, local and national (UNDP, 2005).