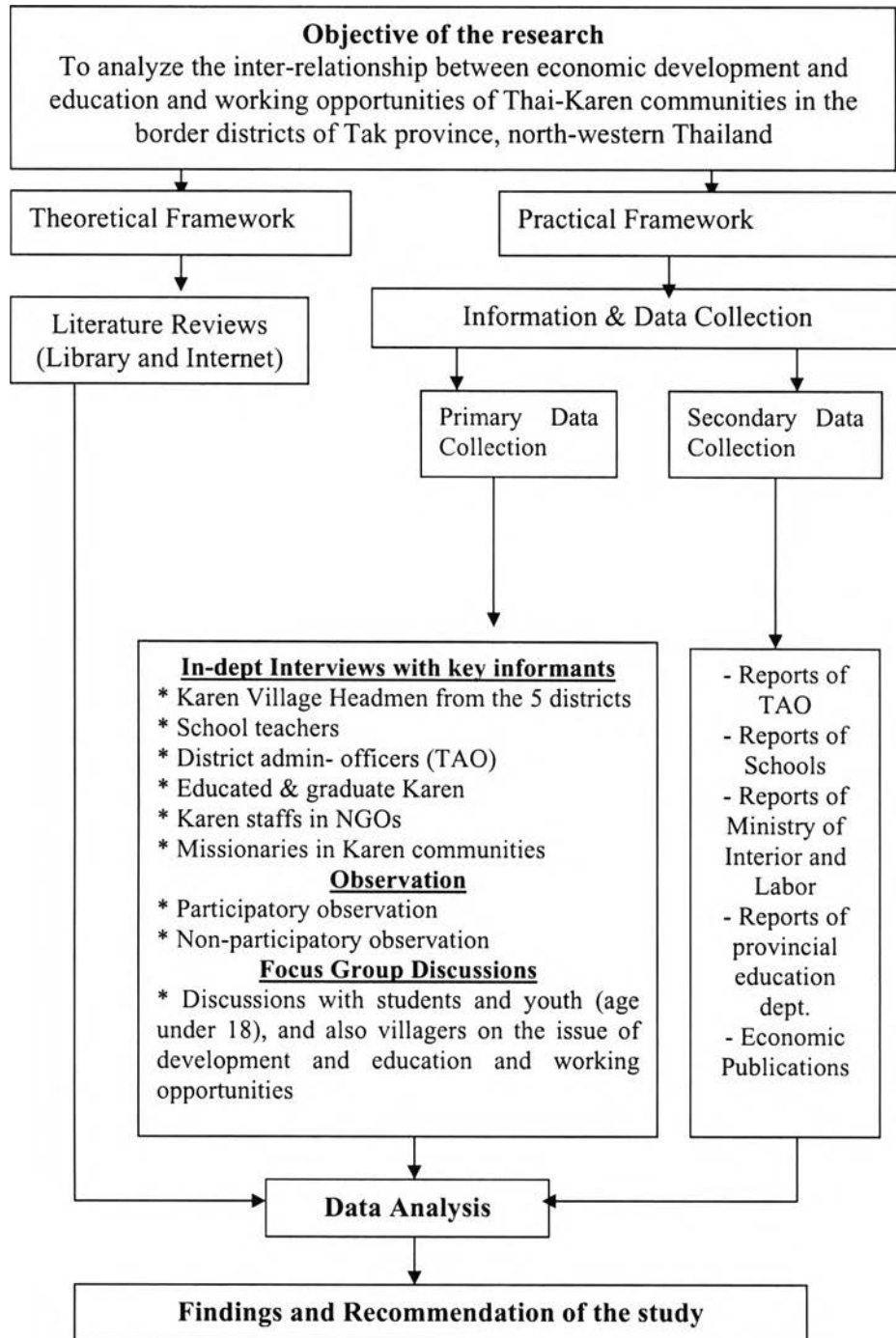


CHAPTER III

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design



3.2 Sources of Information and Data

Qualitative research was employed for this study. There are two types of framework for collecting information and data for this paper: theoretical and practical. With theoretical framework, documentary theoretical data are collected and field data were collected by practical framework

3.2.1 Documentary Theoretical Data

With theoretical framework, documentary theoretical data and information have been collected for literature reviews. From theoretical framework information collected and studied are literature on development theories, aspects of economic development and human development, development policies and projects at local, regional and global contexts. The sources of literature are books, journals, doctoral and thesis papers, documents of the United Nations and its agencies, research papers presented to seminars and conferences, and electronic data from the Internet.

3.2.2 Field Data and Information

Field information and data are collected with primary and secondary data sources. Primary data were collected from in-depth interview with key informants. Formal and informal interviews, focus group discussions, and interview and observation were conducted with Thai-Karen people from a range of professions, youths, students and missionaries working in Thai-Karen communities in the research areas. Primary data collection was conducted from July 2005 to January 2006. Secondary data were received from reports of governmental agencies and Non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

3.2.2.1 In-depth Interview

During research findings in the field, in-depth interviews were done with key informants, such as NGOs employees and village administration officers from Thai-Karen villages in the border districts. All of them are Thai-Karens, with different

professions which include, a Thai-Karen Kamnan (Sub-district Chief) from Tambon Maela, a chairperson of Tambon (Sub-district) Administration Organization (TAO) from Tambon Maela, a village Headman (Phu Yai Baan) from Phop Phra district, a village headman from Tha Song Yang district, a Thai-Karen community leader from Mae Ramat district, a staff of Taiwan Overseas Peace Service (TOPS –Maesot office), and a Thai-Karen deputy field director of COERR (Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees – Mae Sot office).

The seven key informants who gave in-depth interviews and their background and professions will be detailed as follows;

1. Acharn Tip, graduated in political science from Ram Kamphaeng University in Bangkok, is a Thai-Karen community leader and chairperson of KNCE (Karen Network for Culture and Environment – Tak province). He is also currently working with a French non-governmental organization called SMRU (Shoklo Malaria Research Unit) which is operating in refugee camps in Tak province. He is also advisor of Tak Border Child Assistance Foundation (TBCAF) which assists Thai-Karen children and students for their education and welfare.
2. Pha Tee¹ Sanan has got degree in Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and Theology from Saeng Tham College in Bangkok. When I interviewed him he was working as deputy field director of COERR – Mae Sot office (Catholic Office for Emergency Relief and Refugees).
3. Archarn Montri is the chairperson of Tambon (Sub-district) Administration Organization (TAO) of Tambon Maela, Amphoe Tha Song Yang district.
4. A Thai-Karen Kamnan Pha Tee Wan Nu is the Sub-district Chief of Tambon Maela, Amphoe Tha Song Yang district.
5. Pha Tee Pha Dhi is a Thai-Karen Phu Chauy Phu Yai Baan who has been working as the Village Assistant Headman for 21 years and he is from Amphoe Tha Song Yang district.

¹ Pah Tee (Karen Language) means uncle; which is also used or called before a person's name as a gesture of respect.

6. Pha Tee Phar Charn, a Thai-Karen who is the Village Assistant Headman from Phop Phra district, and
7. A Thai Karen staff Th Nu who is working with a Taiwanese non-governmental organization called Taiwan Overseas Peace Service (TOPS) which has projects in refugee camps and Thai-Karen villages in the border districts of Tak province.

3.2.2.2 Formal and Informal Interview

Semi-formal interviews were also done with Thai-Karen students who are studying at Vocational Training School and Racha Pat School in Maesot district, Village Assistant Headmen (Phu Chuay Phu Yai Baan), youths, and elderly people from Thai-Karen villages. Villages, farmers, and community and social workers were also interviewed for the overall situation of the villages, the village population and their main livelihoods, kinds of occupation available, different kinds of farming activities, the labor force in Karen communities, the relationship between the villagers and Thai authorities, and their collaboration for village development.

Informal and unstructured interviews were also done with two foreign missionaries who are working in Thai-Karen communities, a Thai-Karen working in a Government organization (Border Police Force), a Thai-Karen youth working with a French missionary in Phop Phra district, six Thai-Karen workers who are staffs of Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs), such as Taiwan Overseas Peace Service (TOPS), Catholic Office for Emergence Relief and Refugees (COERR), ZOA (a Dutch NGO), Consortium Thailand (CT) and Mae Sot regional office of UNHCR (United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees), that are operating projects for Thai-Karen villages, migrant workers and refugees in the border districts along Thai-Burma border.

Thai-Karen school teachers from government primary school (Mae Fa Luang) and Catholic Schools have explained about Thai-Karen children and young people who are studying at those schools, the numbers of students, kinds/levels of schools, the results of examination, the dropouts of students and reasons, the highest

education levels of students from Karen villages, the difficulties facing students and teachers, and the perceptions of students concerned with education and occupational opportunities. Thai and French Catholic priests, who are working in Thai-Karen communities and also involving in formal and informal education for Thai-Karen children and students, have expressed their experience working with Thai-Karen people, and points of views on the Thai-Karen students and youngsters.

Information from all those interviews are mainly on the formal and informal educations that are accessible by the Thai-Karen students and young people from the villages. Most collected information and data are the respondents' insights, perceptions, knowledge and experience on the opportunities and obstacles of Thai-Karen people's economic growth, and the opportunities for Thai-Karen students to get higher education, vocational education and trainings. Information on the overall social political and economic situations of ethnic Thai-Karen people in the research areas have also been discussed with these informants.

3.2.2.3 Focus Group Discussion

Two focus group discussions were conducted with Thai-Karen students from Pattara Wittaya School in Mae Sot district and Australian Mission dormitory in Tha Song Yang district. With these two groups information on how they have been given assistance for their education with the patronage of missionaries was discussed. The students also shared their personal experience and their daily lives.

The information from focus groups has also included the opportunities for their future, and their expectation upon occupations, levels of education, and their ideas on economic development of Thai-Karen people.

3.2.2.4 Interview and Observation

Observations were done in the Thai-Karen villages. Occasionally informal conversations with the villagers, students, youth, and social workers in the Thai-Karen villagers have provided a wider understanding of social, cultural and economic

situations of the Thai-Karen people. Observations on the daily economic and social activities of villagers, schooling and their daily time schedules of the young Thai-Karen people were also carried out.

3.2.2.5 Secondary Data Analysis and Interpretation

Secondary data and information were obtained from government development reports on education and employment opportunities of the Karen communities in the research area, and also from village schools and reports of Department of Provincial Administration (DOPA). Economic statistical data publications such as reports of the Household Socio-economic Survey, Reports of the Labor Force Survey, and government national reports on Health and Welfare have been studied and analyzed.