# COMMUNITY COMMUNICATION IN ECO-TOWN DEVELOPMENT

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**Abstract** - Community communication remains a key factor of raising public participation in environment, development and sustainability. An eco-town development deals with the environmentally-friendly actions in respect to resource efficiency and impact reduction was considered potential for Chombueng-Bankha-Suanpueng communities, where become the emerging weekend-tourism destination for Thai people. Questions are as to what benefits of eco-town development, why are necessary, and how the vulnerable communities share their roles and such processes. Besides exploring a linkage between community communication and eco-town development, this area-based study also examines the role of media in addressing this environmental co-existence. An approach of social action research was used to inquire on the environmental management, the eco-town principle and implementation, and the communication practice. The perception and understanding of eco-town concept gathered from community leaders and target informants are measured with the site survey and a set of rating-scale questions. The findings are that the levels of perception and understanding of eco-town value are quite low to lowest, most local people have neither interest in shifting their habitat to eco-town, nor participation in such development, and that the communities are likely to communicate via social media. Rather, the way of community communication is behind their environmental co-existence.

**Keywords** - Community Communication, Eco-Town Development, Environmental Co-Existence.

## I. INTRODUCTION

A significance of eco-town is addressed as the possibility for achieving sustainability in environment and development. As threatened by the extreme destruction of natural environment caused by unsustainable consumption and production behavior along with the achieving in being an emerging tourism destination during weekend among Thais, the communities of Chombueng-Bankha-Suanpueng are in need of sustainable environmental development. Sustainable development and ecological system of natural resources and environment are still important strategies wherever possible. These bring many challenges for individuals and institutions in tackling climate agenda as an environmental-coexistence basis. Eco-town development actually requires the collective actions those internally driven, not externally imposed, from all concerns. Moreover, communication becomes a conditioning factor for making the eco-town development successful. Community participation is possible greater if establishing a two-way communication for all stakeholders, either as a cause or an effect unit of the change [1]. Community communication can help integrating their needs, attitude and traditional knowledge with the awareness, participation and capabilities towards the development [2]. Finally, the study integrates the questions of what and how much of which community communication approach influence the communities' environmental co-existence, and what will be the main challenges along the way and how the communities as well as society benefit from the eco-town mission.

### 1.1. Community Communication

Communication is a strategic device for local development programs. If community leader provides a location for the journalist to observe or listen to community issue, this location must be reasonably accessible to members of the community who could be expected to have an interest in attending the forum. Community communication refers to media and techniques used to advise local people about new ideas and methods, to encourage adoption of those ideas and methods, to gain institutional and individual support, and to improve coordination and teamwork to manage the development [3]. The understanding of eco-town value is potentially covered by media and communication technology through the conventional practice in community life. Two-way communication delivers an understanding of the local context, which includes local actors, local capabilities and local ways of doing things, as well as political, economic, social and community dynamics [4]. Included are as to what news and in which information the communities are interested, what media they currently use and trust, how they use them and how information flows. How do they follow the internet news and new media technology? Do the local media take a significant part of communities in the preparedness, relief and recovery of any adverse impact from development?

In the past, many people believe that the public has no control over the media and what it produces. The mainstream media like newspaper, magazine, radio and TV can have an unconscious influence over our lives and how we view the world. However, the Internet and the 4G technology have already made the change. Currently, media consumers have a free will to decide how they use the media and how it affects them. The Internet and social media enable us to have much more freedom and control over what we consume in relation to social movement [5]. Online media is redefining the way the media operates and