

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Statement and significance of problem

The school dropout phenomenon has been a significant academic problem globally. To identify the causes of dropping out is extremely difficult to do. It is influenced by an array of factors relating to both the individual students and their social environments. Many researchers illustrated this complicated school dropout phenomenon in a variety of ways according to their perspectives and hypotheses, (Russel W. Rumberger. “Why Students Drop Out of School and What Can be Done” M. Ed. Thesis, University of California, 2001).

The United Nations Education, Science and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) reported that approximately 104 million children around the world are not in school and most of them are women. Two thirds of the 860 million adults in the world are illiterate and the majority of these illiterate people are in developing countries and from rural areas. A large number of children who enroll in school also leave school prematurely, dropping out before completing the prescribed time

A recent UNESCO global education survey found that education in Thailand is lagging behind globally. Thailand performed poorly in a recent UNESCO education survey due to lack of qualified teachers and financial support. The Thai government spent only 5.1 % of GNP on education in 2001. Thus, the Thai government is facing a challenge to improve the education system (Gender and Education for All. UNESCO, 14 November, 2004 <http://www.efareport.unesco.org>).

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) also reported that school dropout and school repetitions are widely spreading in South Asian countries. Only 40-50% of students enrolled in school complete primary school or six grades in the expected time. (Asia Development Bank, Combating Primary School Dropout in South Asia. Manila Philippines, 1998).

The study from the Tribal Research Institute, Social Welfare Department (1999) on Tribal Education Statistics discovered that tribal education was lagging behind in Thai society. Only 0.08% of students were at the university level, 0.67% were at the college level, 9.94% were in high school and 89.31% were in kindergarten and primary school levels. These tribal education statistics revealed that there was a big gap in the number of dropouts between primary school level and high school level (79.37%) and between high school and university level (8.19%)

(สถาบันวิจัยชาวเขา กรมประชาสงเคราะห์ กระทรวงแรงงานและสวัสดิการ รายงานข้อมูลการศึกษาของนักเรียนชาวเขาปีการศึกษา 2542)

In April 2004, The Life Development Center (LDC), a non-government organization which has been working with the Lisu hill-tribe in the field of development for over a decade, did a baseline survey about Lisu education involving 708 teenagers in nine Lisu communities in April 2004. The survey discovered that 177 (25%) were school dropouts, 381 (53%) were studying in primary school, 137 (19.34%) were in high school, and only 2 (0.28%) were in university level

(ศูนย์พัฒนาคุณภาพชีวิต. ข้อมูลสำรวจสถิติการศึกษาของเยาวชนลีซูในแก้าหมู่บ้าน, เมษายน 2547)

The Development in Education Program for Daughters and Community Center reported that a large number of tribal schoolleavers are connected to many social problems, such as drug trafficking, drug addiction, commercial sex/prostitution, and youth gangs. Many of them eventually ended up as AIDS victims. These phenomena generated a wide range of social problems that the Thai government urgently needs to take action to resolve (Tribal Problems. Development in Education Program for Daughter, and Communities Center, 14 November 2004 <http://www.DEPC.org>)

The trend of school dropout phenomenon among the Lisu students is increasing and the underlying reasons for the problem have not been thoroughly explored. There is no previous study about factors influencing school dropout among Lisu students. As a result, it would be worthwhile to investigate the factors behind the school dropout problem so that solutions for such a problem could be properly addressed.

## 1.2 Purpose of study

The main purpose of this study was to investigate factors influencing school dropout among Lisu secondary students in five Lisu communities.

## 1.3 Education advantages

The results of this study will serve as useful guidelines for educational institutions, government organizations, and non-government organizations in planning development projects to prevent Lisu secondary school students from dropping out of school.

## 1.4 Definition of terms

**The Lisu people** refer to one of the smallest groups of the six main tribes in Thailand (พอลและอีเลน ลูวิส. หกเผ่าชาวดอย. เชียงใหม่ศูนย์หัตถกรรมชาวเขา, 2525).

**School dropouts** refer to premature school leaving or quitting before they graduate from the compulsory school level (Asia Development Bank, Combating Primary School Dropout in South Asia. Manila Philippines, 1998).