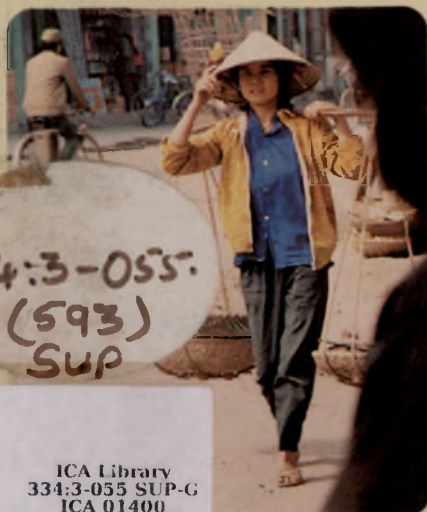


# GENDER INTEGRATION IN COOPERATIVES

THAILAND



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# Gender Integration in Co-operatives

## Report of the Country Survey

THAILAND

By  
Ms.Pailin Supakitvilekagarn



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**SURVEY REPORT ON GENDER INTEGRATION  
AND WOMEN IN CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT  
THAILAND**

**Ms.Pailin Supakitvilekagarn**

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## PREFACE

The ICA Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (earlier called South-East Asia) launched a special women's programme during the Women's Decade (1975-1985). This programme, headed by a women specialist, had been able to create an awareness and conditions for enhancing women's participation in co-operatives.

The programme in particular achieved success in the areas of influencing co-operative authorities to provide positive legal environment for women's participation in co-operative leadership and business. Many co-operative movements established women's committees at various levels and also incorporated representatives in their management committees. Many training activities were organised at the national and regional levels by the Women's Section of the ICA ROEC.

However, due to the financial constraints faced by the ICA during mid-eighties, the regional women's programme as well as many other programmes had to be curtailed. After completion of the restructuring process, we are now in a position to look back and start rethinking on the gender issues with a new outlook.

The concept of Women in Development (WID) has undergone substantial changes during the eighties. When the feminist movement was the subject of reassessment, many new WID approaches have emerged. Approach of gender planning has become popular at present with a broader concept of gender. This change is also due to the result of evaluation on the women's position in the society, after the UN Women's Decade. Many have felt that the approaches introduced during this period have also become obsolete or have not shown results as expected in the process of global socio-economic changes. Therefore, UN agencies as well as many international NGOs have revived their WID programmes, keeping gender issues in mind. As for the co-operative movement in the region, the same situation is visible. Many co-operative movements continue to adopt the WID strategies introduced in the seventies. Therefore, it has become vital to assess the current WID situation in co-operatives in terms of concepts, strategies and the cost benefits of the existing programmes. Any future planning of the WID programmes or gender planning mechanisms in co-operatives should be based on such an evaluation.

The Human Resource Development project, established in 1990 by the ICA, incorporated gender issues as a priority. With a view to launch an effective programme in the future, a study has been undertaken covering 14 countries in the Asia and the Pacific, which are representative of developed and developing economies. The studies have been carried out by specialists on gender issues on a common format and guidelines provided by the ICA

ROAP. These country studies would provide a macro-level situation in the representative countries.

The country studies will form an important basis for future planning for the ICA ROAP and for the respective countries. I am happy that we are able to share the findings of the country studies with those who are concerned with gender issues in co-operatives. The ultimate hope we have is that the gender integration in co-operatives would bring about more productivity and strength to them by utilizing them to the optimum.

I would like to thank the country researchers, co-operative movements and the staff of the HRD project at the ICA ROAP for undertaking the ground work for future gender programmes in co-operatives.

New Delhi  
August 18, 1992

G.K.Sharma  
Regional Director



## FOREWORD

This publication series of country studies on Gender Integration and Women in Co-operative Development covers 14 developed and developing countries in Asia and the Pacific. On the other hand, the studies are representative of open, mixed and centrally planned economies.

The country research had the following objectives:

- to assess as to what extent the gender integration has taken place in economic and social development and activities of the co-operatives of the given country,
- to assess the level of participation of women on political, social and economic decision making and productivity,
- to assess the level of participation of women in decision making and activities in co-operatives,
- to compare the level of socio-economic developments of a given country with gender situation,
- to identify the socio-cultural and economic factors hindering gender integration in development with special emphasis on co-operatives,
- to identify critical areas for future strategies for promoting gender awareness and gender participation, resulting in gender integration in co-operative development,
- to create awareness among the authorities and all concerned in gender issues on the level of development a given country has shown and the gap which exists in co-operatives.

The ICA ROAP engaged the services of competent and independent researchers through the national co-operative unions and some of them through other sources. A format was designed and used in order to ensure the conformity to the set of objectives laid down and to facilitate the data processing process. The methodology consisted of data from primary sources, authoritative documents and interviews by random samples.

We have tried to analyse the data collected through country reports and identify common features as well as special features in the region in the field of gender integration in co-operatives. We have also attempted to highlight the common and contradictory conclusions made by the researchers. A Regional Overview of gender integration has been published separately embodying these summaries.

Our sincere expectation from the publication of the country studies and the overview is to create an awareness of all co-operative movements and governmental and inter-governmental agencies to assess the present gender strategies in co-operatives and improve upon their planning mechanism for ensuring the equal participation of gender in co-operative development.

I would like to thank all country researchers who undertook the task within a short time and with limited resources and sources of information. National level co-operative organisations and the ILO Co-operative Project in Indonesia supported the project through consultation and their resources. We appreciate their common interest for the cause.

Mr.P.Nair, Desk Top Publisher and Secretary of the HRD Project, did the computer-based DTP work. Mr. S.S.Kukkal, a renowned artist in Delhi prepared the cover page. Document Press made the printing job very attractive. I would like to note our appreciation to them for their devoted work.

New Delhi  
August, 1992

**W U Herath**  
Advisor-Human Resource Development

# Survey on Gender Integration and Women in Co-operative Development

## I

### INTRODUCTION

The world has recently paid more attention to women's needs and concerns as a result of the United Nations Declaration that 1976-1985 would be the 'Decade for Women'. However although measures were taken to promote and improve women's status and quality of life, they were not entirely successful. This is partly due to the lack of understanding about women's issues and about the real causes of women's problems.

Women play an integral role in any country's social, cultural and economic development. They constitute nearly half of all human resources. Indeed, overlooking their productivity and potential can lead to undesirable results in the process of national development.

Historically, many development efforts have focused on improving women's participation in domestic activities and in community development. Not much consideration has been given to women's actual and potential roles in non-domestic productivity and in other important aspects of national development. Women's needs and concerns are often overlooked because policy makers and planners are not aware that certain development policies and programmes affect women and men in fundamentally different and unequal ways. Women are concentrated in the lower ranks of various target groups: often policies and programmes geared towards the mainstream of society and their resulting benefits just do not reach women.

Policy-makers and planners have been misguided by certain assumptions about the term 'head of household', household allocation of resources, the social roles of women and men and the concept of work. There is an urgent need to redefine policy directions, approaches, and assumptions through a better understanding of gender differences. Emphasis should be placed on the ways in which women and men interact, divide responsibilities, allocate risks and resources, share burdens, organise their labour and plan for the future.\*

Little is known about the determinants of current marital status, education, health, economic, wage, fertility status, decision making and activities of women members in co-operatives, the institutions which are organized by the people, both in urban and rural areas. Some questions of concern include:

---

\* *The Nation*, "Thai Women in National Development", Newspaper, 19 September, 1988

Does women participate in business activities of co-operatives? Are there basic differences between employment and wage structures of men and women? How can the government policies on co-operatives assist and encourage women's participation?, etc.

Therefore, the purpose of this survey is to assess the present situation of Gender Integration which has taken place for economic and social development in Thailand and the activities of women in co-operatives, in general.

### **1.1 Objectives of the Study**

The objectives of the study are:

- To assess as to what extent gender integration has taken place for economic and social development activities of the Co-operatives in Thailand,
- To assess the level of participation of women in political, social and economic decision making and productivity,
- To assess the level of participation of women in decision making and activities in co-operatives.

## **2. Methodology**

### *2.1 Sources of Data*

The sources of data are:

- National Statistical office
- Co-operatives Promotion Department (CPD), in the Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives (MOAC)
- The Technical Division, CPD
- Co-operative League of Thailand
- Co-operative Provincial offices and Co-operative district offices, which are concerned with data collection.
- Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation.
- Gender and Development Research Institute.

### *2.2 Methods used in Data collection*

- A study of existing reports, materials and data available.
- Discussion with concerned persons (two from the national co-operatives and one from the executive government officials)
- Collection of data from the key persons of 6 types of co-operatives, using questionnaires.

### *2.3 Sampling Procedure*

- The survey was carried out in six types of co-operatives for 100 samples.

**Table 1: Sample areas in Co-operatives**

<i>Type of Co-operatives</i>	<i>No. of co-ops</i>	<i>Sample size</i>
Agricultural C-operatives	1464	45
Fishery Co-operatives	26	2
Land-Settlement Co-operatives	54	3
Thrift & Credit Co-operatives	858	27
Consumer Co-operatives	419	13
Service Co-operatives	302	10
Total	3163	100

### **3. The structure of the Report**

This report is divided into 5 parts:

#### **3.1 Introduction**

- Purpose
- Objectives of the study
- Source of data
- Methods used in data collection
- Sampling procedure

#### **3.2 General features of the country**

- Economic policy and status
- Demography
- Health
- Literacy and education
- Employment
- Gender participation in politics
- Legal environment for gender issues
- Socio-cultural environment and gender issues
- Institutions dealing with gender issues.

#### **3.3 Co-operatives**

- Co-operative movement in Thailand with women participation.
- Policy for Women Development in Co-operatives
- Decision-making in co-operatives.

#### **3.4 Conclusion**

#### **3.5 Footnotes**

#### **3.6 Bibliography**

## II

### GENERAL FEATURES OF THE COUNTRY

#### 2.1 General

Thailand occupies a territory of about 513,115 square kilometers (Table 2) in the Indo-Chinese Peninsula of South East Asia. It lies between longitude 97°E and 106°E, while its northern and southern limits are the parallels of latitude 5°N and 21°N. The length from North to South is about 1,648 kilometers and its greatest width is about 780 kilometers. The coast lines retain roughly 1875 kilometers of the Gulf of Thailand and about 740 kilometers on the Indian Ocean. Listed clockwise, countries bordering on Thailand are Lao People's Democratic Republic and Cambodia on the north and the east, Malaysia on the south and the Union of Myanmar on the west and north.

Thailand is divided geographically into six regions, namely central, eastern, western, northern, north-eastern and southern. Bangkok is the capital and also the principal port of Thailand. Administratively, the Kingdom is divided into 73 provinces (Table 2). Each province is administered by a governor, representing the national government. Local administration is a mixed form elected officials functioning under the appointed provincial governor and in close liaison with municipalities.

Thailand is a tropical country with rather high temperatures and humidity. The climate of much of the country is dominated by the monsoons. In most regions, there are three seasons : Summer (February to May), Monsoon-rainy (May to October) and Winter -cold (October to February). Rainfall varies but is generally heaviest in some southern parts of the country. The average rainfall and average temperature by region are given in table 3.

The law enforcement in Thailand can be divided into three parts. The first phase covers activities of the investigation and arrest of persons suspected of committing crimes, by the police or administrative officials and also includes the prosecution duties exercised by the public prosecutors. The second phase concerns the proceedings of Courts of Justice. The Department of Corrections in the Ministry of Interior is responsible for the execution of imprisonment, confinement and relegation imposed by courts, which is considered as the third phase of law enforcement.

The court is divided into two types; Court of Justice and Court martial. Court of Justice is again divided into three categories, courts of first instance, court of appeal and Dika Court (Supreme Court).

The communication system is one of the very important factors in Thailand. There are six categories for the communication system:

*The express way* : A city transportation system that helps alleviate traffic congestion in Bangkok: it enables motorists to take only a few minutes from the city's northern suburb to its centre and vice versa.

*Highways and transport* : this project aims to have the national and provincial highways of all regions linked together as well as to provide direct links between the region.

*The railways* : in 1989, there were over 3735 kilometers of railways and 443 stations in service with the main station as its headquarters. All railway services are operated by the State Railway of Thailand, which is a government enterprise. This organisation has been co-operating with the Malayan Railway and also has enabled travellers to travel by train to Singapore, via Kuala Lumpur.

*Airways* : Thailand is served by one of the most important international airports in South East Asia. Don Muang Airport, in Bangkok, is used by more than 50 international and regional carriers over and above the domestic airlines.

*Seaports* : Thailand has a commercial deep-water port in Bangkok and also have projects for eastern sea-port at Chon Buri and Southern sea-port at Songkla.

*Post and telecommunications* : A state enterprise is responsible for postal and telecommunication services, both domestic and international through satellites. At present there are two satellite ground stations which provide a 24-hour service for tele-communications with all parts of the world.

Thailand is an agricultural country. Agriculture is the main subsistence occupation of the majority of Thai people. Therefore, the agricultural produce is the most important export goods. For this reason, the Thai government has planned a programme to improve all types of activities in order to increase and improve both the quality and quantity of agricultural produce for direct consumption, industrial purposes and exporting.

Major portion of the land area in Thailand, except the forests, are used for agriculture, pasture and fisheries. But another area of forestry, which is covered with heterogeneous types of tropical rain forests comprising an area of about 2,325,028 rai of the country. They are managed for production, amenity, conservation, protection and recreation. Besides the above, reforestation and afforestation projects are also being taken up to reclaim lands denuded by shifting cultivation, to restore watershed capacity on mountains and to stabilize the eco-system and environment.

The following data shows the extent of the land used and also the area of the forest:

The land area (in rai) (1 acre=2.529 rai)

- Cultivated	102,389,293
- Forest	2,325,028
- Pasture	945,277
- Buildings & others	3,489,906

(Source: 1988 Intercensal Survey of Agriculture, National Statistical office)

**Note: 1 acre = 2.529 rai**

**Table 2 : Area and Administrative Divisions of Thailand - June 1990**

<i>Region</i>	<i>Area in sq.kms.</i>	<i>Changwat (Provinces)</i>	<i>Amphos (Distts)</i>	<i>Tambon (Sb-Dists)</i>	<i>Village</i>
Whole Kingdom	513,115.0	73	699	6905	62151
Central Region*	20,306.8	9	102	866	6372
(Bangkok Metropolis	1562.2	1	36	150	727)
Eastern Region	37506.6	8	54	544	4685
Western Region	46087.8	8	55	610	4818
Northern Region	169644.3	17	149	1435	12777
North-Eastern Region	168854.3	17	223	2405	26130
Southern Region	70715.2	14	116	1045	7369

\* including Bangkok Metropolis

*Source: Royal Thai Survey Department, Ministry of Defence.*

**Table 3 : Climate**

<i>Climate (1990) Region</i>	<i>Rainfall (mm) mm</i>	<i>Temperature (°C)</i>	
		<i>Mean (Max.)</i>	<i>Mean (Min.)</i>
Central	1205.5	33.6	24.6
Eastern	1881.5	32.6	24.6
North Eastern	1635.2	32.3	22.2
Northern	1198.8	33.0	21.3
Southern (East Coast)	1279.8	32.5	23.9
Southern (West Coast)	2488.3	32.8	24.1

*Source: Meteorological Department, Ministry of Communication.*



## 2.2 Economic Policy and Status

Thailand's Sixth National Economic and Social Development Plan (1987-1991) comprises 10 sectoral development plans, including a rural development plan for the provision of basic needs to alleviate rural poverty in about 10,000 villages. By the end of the Fifth Plan, Thailand had solved many basic problems. However, urban and rural poverty has not been completely overcome. Unemployment and under-employment also has remained a major problem in some sectors, especially in agricultural sector during the dry season.

The sixth plan supported the creation and strengthening of farmer institutions such as co-operatives and farmers' groups. These would enable farmers to help each other or acquire government assistance in increasing production, improving and controlling the quality of their products and in solving marketing problems. Financial institutions are encouraged to extend loans at appropriate rates of interest to farmers' groups for production and marketing activities.\*

The statistics published by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board in the Office of the Prime Minister, showed that incomes in the agricultural sector had remained far below those in the non-agricultural sectors. The percentage change of crops, livestock, forestry, agricultural services and processing products has fallen except fisheries. The percentage change of gross domestic production (GDP) has also fallen from 17.85 in 1989 to 15.50 in 1990 (Table 5).

For aqua-culture, the statistics which were given by the Department of Fisheries, Ministry of Agriculture and Co-operatives are as follows:

### *Coastal aqua-culture fishery:*

Production	108.9 (1,000 tons)
Fish	1.4
Shrimps	56.1
Shellfish	51.4

### *Fresh water culture:*

Production	102.1 (1,000 tons)
Fish	91.2
Prawn	10.9

In 1990, the actual revenue, the budget expenditure and the domestic debt has increased while the direct government debt has decreased from 136.0 (in thousand millions of baht) in 1989 to 95.6 in 1990 (Table 6). The consumer price index for Thailand by commodity groups are shown in Table 7.

It is found that the analysis of the employment level in the municipal area of the whole kingdom, during 1984-88 the annual average economic growth rate is 10.2 percent (1990, Thailand Development Research Institute Foundation).

\* Puengpit Dulyapach, 'A Case Study on the Relationship between the Integration of Women in Rural Development and Women's Reproductive Behaviour in Thailand', 1990, pp.9-10

Over the past decade, there has been an increase in the number of firms producing construction materials, iron and steel, electrical goods, chemicals and chemical products, garments, canned food, engine assembly and mechanical equipment assembly. This is brought about largely by the Invest Promotion Act under which special privileges are granted to foreign investors including exemption from import duties, income taxes and business taxes on raw materials for five years; freedom to bring in foreign technicians and remit profit abroad; and the right to own land.

As for women, this plan did not explicitly mention women as a target group. Instead, it assumes that women's concerns are integrated in human resource development and rural development programmes. Because this plan lacks a clear policy statement regarding women, the sub-committee on co-ordination and implementation under the Commission of Women's Affairs prepared a Women's Development Plan proposed improving health, education, vocational training, social quality, promoting employment and wage qualities and encouraging men to participate in family planning.\*

**Table 4 : Total value of Trade\* : 1985-1989**

(in Million of baht)

<i>Item</i>	1985	1986	1987	1988	1989
<b>Exports (FOB)</b>	193,366	233,383	299,853	403,570	516,315
<i>Domestic Products:</i>					
Port of Bangkok	169,484	213,777	278,479	382,333	486,173
Provincial ports	22,128	18,318	20,611	19,987	29,021
<i>Re-exports</i>					
Port of Bangkok	1,588	881	715	1,141	988
Provincial Ports	166	407	48	109	133
<b>Imports (c.i.f.)</b>	251,169	241,358	334,209	513,114	662,679
Port of Bangkok	249,139	239,445	331,455	508,731	632,322
Provincial ports	2,030	1,913	2,754	4,383	10,357
<b>Trade balance</b>	-57,803	-7975	-34,356	-109,544	-146,364

\*Excluding military aids.

Source: The Customs Department, Ministry of Finance.

\* *Ibid* p.11

Table 5 : Gross National Product and National Income by Industrial Origin : 1989-90

	Current Market Prices				Constant 1972 Price			
	Millions of baht		% change		Millions of baht		% change	
	2532 (1989)	2533 (1990)	2532 (1989)	2533 (1990)	2532 (1989)	2533 (1990)	2532 (1989)	2533 (1990)
Agriculture	266,379	254,523	6.39	-4.45	92,386	90,711	6.65	-1.81
Crops	167,521	150,059	4.58	-10.42	58,680	56,070	8.42	-4.45
Livestock	28,582	32,006	16.08	11.98	13,326	14,330	8.89	7.53
Fisheries	21,252	22,519	-1.86	5.96	4,951	4,878	-6.51	-1.47
Forestry	7,482	5,540	-16.35	-25.96	1,417	982	-26.27	-30.70
Agricultural Services	9,221	9,441	5.64	2.39	2,610	2,564	-1.17	-1.76
Simple Agri. Proc. products	32,321	34,958	23.11	8.16	11,402	11,887	9.56	4.25
Mining and Quarrying	60,648	73,500	27.26	21.19	15,102	18,138	18.08	20.10
Manufacturing	453,258	535,396	21.41	18.12	137,260	156,043	14.90	13.68
Construction	112,283	146,817	32.42	30.76	26,926	33,032	21.26	22.68
Electricity & Water Supply	41,499	47,367	20.94	14.14	16,516	19,189	17.90	16.18
Transport & Communication	123,047	138,752	15.32	12.76	40,650	45,069	12.27	10.87
Wholesale and retail trade	272,748	312,738	13.61	14.66	100,984	11,436	14.95	10.35
Banking, insurance & real estate	87,845	124,527	35.19	41.76	25,163	33,656	28.29	33.75
Ownership of dwellings	58,430	64,355	10.88	10.14	21,427	22,693	6.05	5.91
Public admin& defence	64,326	74,603	14.06	15.98	23,891	24,063	-1.21	1.57
Services	235,515	278,630	20.37	18.31	74,090	77,580	6.59	4.71
Gross Domestic Product (GDP)	1,775,978	2,051,208	17.85	19.50	574,195	631,610	12.05	10.00

Source: Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board, Office of the Prime Minister

**Table 6 : Actual Revenue, Budget expenditure, Domestic debt and External Debt (1989-1990)**

	1989 Millions of baht (000's)	1990 Millions of baht (000's)
1) Actual revenue	309.5	393.5
2) Budget expenditure	335.0	387.5
i) Domestic debt:		
Direct government debt	302.9	307.7
State enterprise guaranteed by govt.	25.6	36.8
ii) External debt		
Director governm	136.0	95.6
State enterprise guaranteed by govt.	164.7	184.4

Source: i) *The Comptroller General's Department, Ministry of Finance*  
ii) *Bureau of the Budget, Office of the Prime Minister.*

**Table 7: Consumer Price Index for Thailand by Commodity Group: 1987-190**

2529(1986) = 100

Commodity group	Consumer Price Index				% change		
	1987	1988	1989	1990	1988	1989	1990
All items	102.5	106.4	112.1	118.8	3.8	5.4	6.0
Food and beverages	102.3	107.5	116.4	125.7	5.1	8.3	8.0
Clothing	102.5	105.4	111.0	118.6	2.8	5.3	6.8
Housing	103.5	106.3	109.9	113.7	2.7	3.4	3.5
Health and personal care	101.8	102.6	106.2	112.3	1.0	3.5	5.7
Transportation & communication	100.6	103.2	105.6	111.0	2.6	2.3	5.1
Recreation, reading & education	101.2	107.4	112.7	117.8	6.1	4.9	4.5
Tobacco and alcoholic beverages	106.1	110.1	111.4	118.4	3.8	1.2	6.3

Source: *Department of Business Economics, Ministry of Commerce.*

### 2.3 Demography

Population policy and targets have been included as a basic and integral part of the National Economic and Social Development Plan. It has long been recognized that rapid population growth is one of the major obstacles to economic growth. In previous population plans, emphasis was placed on setting targets to reduce the rate of population growth from about 3.0 per cent to 2.5 per cent a year by the end of the Third Plan, 2.1 per cent by the end of Fourth Plan and 1.5 per cent by the end of the Fifth Plan (1986). The aim is to further reduce the growth rate to 1.3 per cent by the end of the Sixth Plan (1991).

In the present plan, however, emphasis is given to policies and programmes aimed at providing the rural population with the full benefits of economic growth, and greater access to public services. The population policies and targets included in this plan are not limited to the goal of achieving further reductions in the population growth rate. They also encompass the improvement of quality of the population and consideration of migration, population distribution, and human resettlement so as to achieve a more balanced growth within the limits of available resources and other constraints.\*

Presently, women compose nearly half of the Thai population as well as nearly half of the economically active population 11 years of age and over. The number of the female was 28,575,000 while the number of the male was 28,521,000 in 1991. A population projections for Thailand by age groups and sex which was projected by the National Economic and Social Development Board shows that the number of population both female and male are increased every year, the number of female will be increasing (in thousands) from 29,001 in 1992; 29,421 in 1993; 29,834 in 1994; 30,241 in 1995; 30,645 in 1996 and 31,040 in 1997. While the number of male will be more increasing than female. In 1992 to 1997 the number of male will be 29,039;29453;29561;30265;30667 and 31062 in thousands respectively (table 9)

As for religion, most of the people in Thailand are Buddhists. The percentage of Buddhists is 95.4, moslems 4.5, Christians 0.5 and percentage of others 0.1 (table 11)

**Table 8 : Population**

*Population of Thailand from Registration Record by sex (1989)*

Male	29,001,343
Female	27,887,050
Total (whole Kingdom)	55,888,393

*Source: Registration Division, Local Administration Department, Ministry of Interior.*

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\*Ibid p.12

**Table 9 : Population Projections for Thailand by Age Group and Sex**

<i>Medium Fertility Assumptions</i>		<i>(in thousands)</i>							
<b>Age group</b>	<b>1989</b>	<b>1990</b>	<b>1991</b>	<b>1992</b>	<b>1993</b>	<b>1994</b>	<b>1995</b>	<b>1996</b>	<b>1997</b>
<b>Total</b>	95,449	56,340	57,196	98,040	58,874	59,695	60,506	61,312	62,102
<b>Female</b>									
<b>Total</b>	27,694	28,143	28,575	29,001	29,421	29,834	30,241	30,645	31,040
0-4	3,101	3,073	3,024	2,980	2,941	2,906	2,876	2,861	2,846
5-9	3,144	3,145	3,133	3,117	3,098	3,075	3,048	3,000	2,957
10-14	3,052	3,060	3,088	3,109	3,124	3,132	3,133	3,121	3,106
15-19	3,014	3,021	3,023	3,026	3,031	3,038	3,047	3,075	3,097
20-24	2,903	2,952	2,963	2,975	2,984	2,994	3,002	3,004	3,008
25-29	2,489	2,555	2,655	2,742	2,817	2,878	2,927	2,940	2,951
30-34	2,158	2,228	2,282	2,340	2,400	2,464	2,530	2,630	2,717
35-39	1,744	1,824	1,906	1,984	2,060	2,132	2,201	2,256	2,313
40-44	1,323	1,384	1,469	1,553	1,636	1,716	1,796	1,877	1,955
45-49	1,107	1,131	1,161	1,198	1,243	1,295	1,354	1,439	1,521
50-54	1,027	1,048	1,044	1,047	1,056	1,073	1,096	1,126	1,162
55-59	834	861	897	929	957	981	1,002	998	1,001
60-64	649	676	701	726	751	777	803	837	867
65-69	457	475	502	528	554	579	604	627	650
70-74	326	335	343	353	365	379	395	417	439
75 +	366	375	384	394	404	415	427	437	450
<b>Male</b>									
<b>Total</b>	27,754	28,197	28,621	29,039	29,453	29,861	30,265	30,667	31,062
0-4	3,194	3,167	3,120	3,076	3,038	3,005	2,977	2,965	2,952
5-9	3,213	3,212	3,202	3,189	3,172	3,151	3,126	3,081	3,041
10-14	3,144	3,147	3,166	3,181	3,190	3,194	3,193	3,184	3,172
15-19	3,131	3,135	3,128	3,124	3,122	3,123	3,125	3,146	3,161
20-24	3,004	3,056	3,070	3,081	3,090	3,097	3,103	3,097	3,094
25-29	2,539	2,614	2,724	2,818	2,899	2,966	3,019	3,033	3,045
30-34	2,151	2,225	2,292	2,361	2,432	2,505	2,580	2,689	2,783
35-39	1,734	1,810	1,888	1,965	2,041	2,116	2,190	2,257	2,326
40-44	1,332	1,391	1,468	1,544	1,620	1,696	1,772	1,850	1,926
45-49	1,086	1,115	1,151	1,192	1,239	1,291	1,350	1,425	1,500
50-54	957	981	986	998	1,015	1,037	1,066	1,101	1,141
55-59	761	784	814	842	868	893	915	921	933
60-64	588	609	626	644	664	684	705	733	759
65-69	402	418	439	460	480	500	519	534	550
70-74	265	272	280	290	301	313	326	343	360
75 +	253	261	267	274	282	290	299	308	319

Source: National Economic and Social Development Board.

**Table 10 : Number of Population in Municipality and non-Municipality by Region and Sex: 1988-1989**

Region	1988			1989		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
Whole Kingdom	54960917	27574256	27386661	55888393	28001343	27887050
Municipality	99493777	4998859	4950518	10202717	9116121	5086596
Non-Municipal	45011540	22575397	22436143	45685676	22885222	22800454

Source:Registration Division, Local Administration Department, Ministry of Interior.

**Table 11 : Population by Religion (1989)**

Religion	Population	Percentage
Buddhist	53019994	95.4
Moslem	2224525	4.0
Christian	297437	0.5
Others	3805	0.1
Total	55545761	100.0

#### 2.4 Health

It is clear that at present women are the major source of labour in subsistence agriculture. In addition, rural women are mainly responsible for the entire range of home management which includes health and sanitation.

In the Fifth National Development Plan, women were included as a special target group. The importance of this plan was that women's employment, educational, health/nutrition, social and political problems were recognized. One problem cited was women's malnutrition especially during pregnancy. The remedial measures suggested includes a free health service and nutritional knowledge. The Fifth Plan also set out to establish a national co-ordinating committee for women.\*

In addition to these national plans, a Long Term Women's Development Plan (1982-2001) was drawn. The Long term plan is more comprehensive than the five year plan as it deals with all groups of women. Specific targets for the next 20 years were set especially for health.

\*Ibid, p.13

Women are to be provided with increased basic health services and education to meet the following targets:

- Infant deaths before or at delivery            1:1000 cases
- Infant deaths after delivery                    15:1000 cases
- Mothers' deaths at delivery                    0.8:1000 cases

Life expectancy at birth projected for 1985-1990 is 67.50 for female and 61.75 for male (Public Health Statistics, 1984). The number of children born per 1000 married women is 3935 and the maternal death rate stands at 0.4 percent (Public Health Statistics, 1985-1986). As for the number of infant mortality, it decreased from 10,820 in 1984 to 8113 in 1988 (Table 15). Table 16 and Table 17 show the persons per hospital bed and persons per doctor respectively in 1988.

The situation of fertility control in Thailand is more widespread through the motivations of the national family planning programmes promoted by both government and non-government agencies. Moreover, it can be noted that family planning is generally assumed as the responsibility of women in Thailand. The percentage of married women aged 15-49 practicing contraception is 55.2 per cent and the type of contraceptives most used is oral pills. (Table 18 and chart 2).

It is commonly said that the nutritional status of a family or community is in the hands of the women. Roles of rural women in nutrition also include food preparation and feeding of family members. The nutritional status is a well-known indicator of socio-economic levels in the community. A case study on 'The Relationship between the Integration of Women in Rural Development and Women's Reproductive Behaviour in Thailand' by Puengpit Dulyapach shows the distribution and prevalence of malnutrition among pre-school children (0-5 years) by weight for height criteria in the past 20 years in the case study area. It can be seen that nutritional status has changed in a positive way as farmers received good health services from the government.

**Table 12 : Life Expectancy at Birth : 1980-2015**

Year	Life Expectancy at birth		Change per 5-year period	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
1980-1985	60.25	66.25	-	-
1985-1990	61.75	67.50	1.50	1.25
1990-1995	63.50	68.75	1.75	1.25
1995-2000	65.25	69.75	1.75	1.00
2000-2005	66.75	70.75	1.50	1.00
2005-2010	68.00	71.75	1.25	1.00
2010-2015	69.00	72.75	1.00	1.00

Source: National Economic and Social Development Board



**Table 13: Deaths reported for the whole Kingdom  
by Sex and Age groups 1988-1989**

Age group	1988			1989		
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female
All ages	231227	133721	97506	246570	143156	103414
0-4	13643	7739	5904	12599	7312	5287
5-9	3793	2181	1612	3469	1987	1482
10-14	3040	1726	1314	3040	1782	1258
15-19	6093	4058	2035	6842	4711	2131
20-24	7676	5514	2162	8711	6403	2308
25-29	7666	5605	2061	8633	6429	2204
30-34	7936	5625	2311	8526	6094	2432
35-39	8171	5490	2681	8989	6089	2900
40-44	8898	5811	3087	9708	6226	3482
45-49	10985	7017	3968	11577	7249	4328
50-54	14791	9020	5771	15378	9601	5777
55-59	16428	10005	6423	17753	10819	6934
60-64	18388	11077	7311	20154	12168	7986
65-69	19098	11140	7958	21081	12307	8774
70 +	79745	38725	41020	85337	41092	44245
Unknown	4876	2988	1888	4773	2887	1886

Source: Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health.

**Table 14 : Summary of Annual Returns for Live births, deaths,  
infant mortality and still births: 1984-1988**

Year	Live births			Deaths			Infant mortality	Still births
	Total	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female		
1984	956680	4889114	467566	225282	130849	94433	10820	809
1985	973624	498001	475623	225088	128977	96111	10533	640
1986	945304	482709	462595	218025	125086	92939	8990	749
1987	884043	452508	431535	232968	133179	99789	9358	550
1988	870512	445970	424542	231227	133721	97506	8113	509

## RATIO

Year	Live births		Deaths		Live births per 100 deaths	Infant mortality per 1000 l/births	Still births per 1000 live births
	Males per 100 fem.	Per 100 popu.	Males per 100 fem.	Per 1000 popu			
1984	105	18.9	139	4.5	425	11	0.8
1985	105	18.8	134	4.4	433	11	0.7
1986	104	17.9	135	4.1	434	9	0.8
1987	105	16.5	133	4.3	379	11	0.6
1988	105	16.0	137	4.2	376	9	0.6

*Note:* Based on Population Projects for Thailand

*Source:* Health Statistics Division, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health.

**Table 15 : Persons per Hospital bed (1988)**

<i>Number of hospital beds:</i>	
<b>General Services</b>	88,981
Government	74,959
Ministry of Public Health	62,235
Other	45,257
State Enterprise	2,187
Municipality	2,022
Private	8,515
<b>Specialized Services</b>	13,393
Government	12,833
Ministry of Public Health	12,613
Other	220
Private	560
<b>Total</b>	<u><u>323775</u></u>

Ratio of persons per hospital bed: 170:1

*Source:* Division of Health Services, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health.

**Table 16 : Persons per doctor (1988)**

Physicians	4843
Dentists	32656
Ratio of persons per Physician	11349:1
Ratio of persons per Dentist	1683:1

*Source: Health Statistic Division, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health.*

**Table 17: Number of New Family Planning by Region and Methods (1989)**

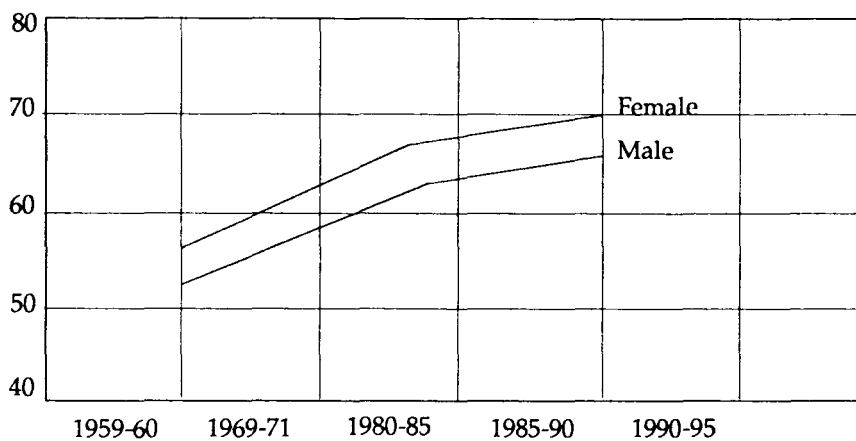
	Intra-uterine device	Oral pills	Tube-ctomy	Vase-ctomy	Depro-medroxy projes-terone acetate	Condom & others
Bangkok Metropolis	19710	70683	12440	3988	28321	35241
Central Region*	13185	142194	26238	2569	126696	21508
North-Eastern Region	86950	173901	59863	2708	172495	27024
Northern Region	19237	154856	27060	2412	133728	19783
Southern Region	16053	71636	11155	1350	61276	14646
Whole Kingdom	155135	613272	136764	13029	522516	118202

\* Excluding Bangkok Metropolis

*Source: Family Health Division, Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health.*

**Chart 1 : Life Expectancy at birth**

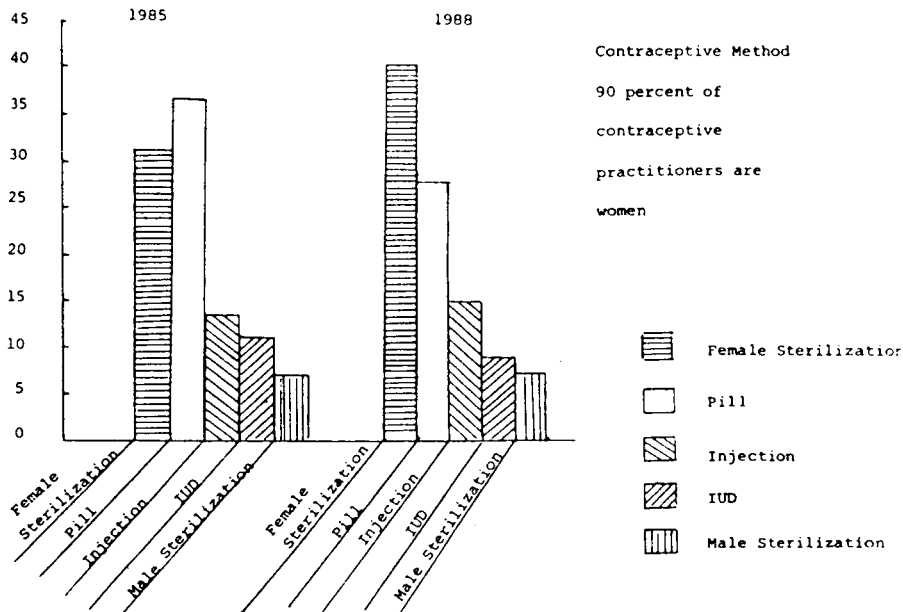
Life expectancy at birth projected for 1985-1990 is 67.50 for females and 61.75 for males.



Though there has been an increase in life expectancy for both sexes, women continue to live longer than men.

*Source: Gender and Development Research Institute.*

**Chart 2 : Contraceptive Method of Married Women - Age 15-44 in 1985 & 1986**



Source: Report of the Labour Force Survey (February, 1988), National Statistical office.

### 2.5 Literacy and Education

The first Primary Education Act was promulgated in 1921 during the reign of King Rama VI. Thereafter, the national education plan had been adapted through many phases according to the situation.

Presently, under the national Scheme of Education in 1977, the formal school system is organised into 4 levels:

1. Pre-elementary education is pre-compulsory education. It may be two or three years for kindergarten or one year of pre-primary education.
2. Elementary Education is compulsory education, aiming at providing the learner with basic knowledge and skills. It takes 6 years to complete this educational level.
3. Secondary education follows elementary education. It is divided into 2 parts: lower secondary education and upper secondary education, each lasting 3 years.
4. Higher education follows upper secondary education. It may be a college, a university or a special institute.

### *Adult Literacy Programme*

The non-formal school system is given in addition to formal schooling. It may simply be a certain activity for a certain occasion, or it may be part of other activities.

Functional literacy programme provides training for illiterates including increased knowledge of self and society, thinking, problem solving and decision making abilities. This programme is organized in two ways: class room type and mobile voluntary type.

Adult continuing education provides people having no chance to study in normal schools an opportunity to increase their knowledge, in the evenings. This type of education is normally provided in public schools or official premises, organizations, factories and associations.

Non-formal education through radio and correspondence is the distance learning, using mass-media through radio broadcasts and postal correspondence for people in the urban areas and the remote rural areas having no chance to study in the formal school system. This type of education provide them an opportunity to obtain knowledge and skills for better living and higher qualifications.

In 1965, the number of illiterates (over ten years of age) was 3,671,260 of which 1,146,760 were men and 2,524,500 were women (Table 19). In April 1988, the number of illiterates was reduced from 3,671,260 in 1985 to 673,497. This figures are including the illiterates in the metropolis. (Source: Department of non-formal education).

Presently, there are many literacy programmes specially for women, conducted by the Department of Non-formal Education. e.g., the activity for promoting quality of life in rural areas, adult education or vocational education and functional literacy programmes. These programmes stressed on women development and promoting of vocational activities for women.

Table 21 shows the number of students in institutions (1984-1988) in pre-primary level, elementary level, secondary level and higher education. In academic year 1988, the number of students were as follows:

1,248,290	students in pre-primary level
7,009,604	students in elementary level
2,083,237	students in secondary level
358,001	students in higher education level.

As for the government expenditure for administrative services and other activities, in 1989, the percentage of national budget for education was 16.6 while other sectors of services were less than that. (excluding debt services). The percentage for defence was 16.3, economic services 16.2, public health and public utilities 10.9, internal security 4.4, general administration 2.8 and others were 9.5 percent.\*

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\* Suteera Thomson and Others, "A Concept Paper: The Role of Thai Women in Development", Bangkok, April 22, 99 p.2-3 : \*\* Ibid p.5; \*\*\* Ibid

**Table 18 : Illiterate Population (10 years of age) in 1985**

Year	Population (10 Yrs .of age)			Illiteracy			%
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
1937	5055979	4944809	10000780	2668620	4210387	6879007	68.8
1947	6143460	6183926	12327386	2002372	3519232	5521604	46.3
1960	2004412	9021992	18026404	1750822	3519232	5270054	29.2
1970	11581756	11871557	23453313	1218880	2893454	4111334	18.2
1980	16568261	16978844	33547105	1137643	2343140	3480783	10.4
1985	18464040	18490390	36954430	1146760	2524500	3671260	9.9

*Source: National statistical office.*

**Table 19: Number of Adult learners enrolled in various non-formal education activities by activity and sex**

Category	Rooms/ grps/pers	Male	Female	Total
Functional literacy/education (cum.)	1570	21700	25614	47314
Adult education of General education stream (former curricula)	1636	18804	12612	31416
Functional education through Radio/Correspondence	-	6855	5945	12800
Adult education (New Curricula)	2552	44483	24198	68681
Distance Education	4580	65022	56060	121082
Self-instructional Type	-	34206	28915	63121
Vocational Education	-	93263	197866	292129
<b>Total</b>	-	<b>285333</b>	<b>351210</b>	<b>636543</b>

\* *Government of Thailand, NSO, "Statistical Yearbook", No.37, Bangkok, 1990, p.334*

**Table 20: Number of students in institution by level of education:  
Academic years 1984-88**

<i>Level of education</i>	<i>1984</i>	<i>1985</i>	<i>1986</i>	<i>1987</i>	<i>1988</i>
Total	10407041	10449747	10720780	10727608	10699132
Pre-primary	531941	672080	1009131	1158466	1248290
Elementary	7233541	7151054	7160494	7100226	7009604
Secondary	2248954	2243373	2184850	2110209	2083237
Higher education	392605	383240	366305	358707	358001

*Note: Excluding open universities.*

*(Source: Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education)*

## 2.6 Employment

The situation of Thai women has changed from the past to the present, where women were mere assets first belonging to their fathers, then to their husbands. Throughout history, Thai women have played an integral role in the country's social, cultural and economic development despite the many constraints they were faced with.

The Thai female labour force participation has always been exceptionally high due to the country's agricultural economy consisting of many family-owned farms, and due to certain historical factors. When men were forced away from their farms for extended periods of time to do various services for the ruling class. The women were thus left behind to manage the farm as well as handle trading activity.\*

The majority of women are employed in agriculture, followed by commerce, services and manufacturing. Of these, women participate in commerce and services sectors more than men do, meanwhile men participate in manufacturing more than women. The percentages of male and female in categories of industry are shown in table 21.

Due to urbanization, modernization and a changing economy, the percentage of women in the agricultural sector has dropped from 87.55 percent in 1960 to 61.27 per cent in 1987.\*\*

The percentage of those entering industries and services has increased. One of the result is some of them migrate to Bangkok Metropolis, numbering 51,125 (v.s.32,935 for males) have limited job opportunities due to lack of education, skills and experienc.\*\*\* Nearly 60 percent of the female migrants to Bangkok under the age of 25 work as domestic servants. Those remaining work as hawkers, petty traders and vendors in the informal sector and factory workers in the various manufacturing industries. The age of employed persons starts at 11 until 60 and over. (table 23)

\* Suteera Thomson and Others, 'A Concept Paper: The Role of Thai Women in Development', Bangkok, April 22-29, p.2-3, \*\* Ibid p.5; \*\*\* Ibid



Of the employed persons by occupation, area and sex, which are shown in table 24, we find that the majority of women are sales workers, food-process and beverage workers, crafts persons, production-process workers and labourers.

The percentage of women, both in municipal areas and non-municipal areas were generally lower than those of men in most activities. The majority of women are employed in the activity of current labour force at 40.9 percent in municipal areas and 52.6 percent in non-municipal areas. (table 25).

Education is one of the factors for women's advancement, especially in employment sector. Lack of education is a contributing factor to their low wages, poor opportunities for advancement and lack of skills. Females tend to be somewhat less educated than males with a literacy rate of 84.4 per cent (vs. 91 percent for males)\* In general, women have a lower education. Table 26 shows the employed persons by level of education, area and sex in 1988.

**Table 21 : Employed Population by Industry in 1988**

(in million, percentages)

Industry	Female	Male	Total
Agriculture, Forestry, Hunting & fishing	6.6 (25.0)	8.6 (33.0)	15.2 (58.0)
Commerce	1.6 (6.2)	1.5 (5.8)	3.2 (12.0)
Services	1.6 (6.2)	1.5 (5.8)	3.1 (12.0)
Manufacturing	1.3 (5.0)	1.5 (5.8)	2.8 (10.8)
Others	0.2 (0.8)	1.6 (6.2)	1.8 (7.0)
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.3 (43.2)</b>	<b>14.7 (56.6)</b>	<b>26.0 (99.8)</b>

Source: Report of the Labour Force Survey (February, 1988), National Statistical Office.

Note: Percentages may not add up to 100 per cent due to rounding off and exclusion of negligible figures.

**Table 22: Migration in 1988 (in '000)**

Type of migrant population	Municipal area		Non-municipal area		Whole Kingdom	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Total Migrant population	622.5	547.7	1743.5	2222.92	366.0	2770.5
Migrant Labour force	419.7	422.4	1221.1	2020.61	641.8	2443.0
Employed Migrants	398.8	399.9	1061.8	1851.2	1460.7	2251.1
Unemployed Migrants	20.6	22.5	111.0	132.4	131.5	154.9

Women migrate to municipal areas more than men.

\* Ibid

Source: Report of the labour Force Survey (Feb.88), NSO

**Table 23 : Employed persons by age group, area and sex: 1988**

(in 000's)

<i>Age group</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Municipal Area</i>		<i>Non-Municipal area</i>	
		<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>
Total	29463.82	2518.8	2098.5	13,200.0	11,646.5
11-12	190.4	3.1	2.5	91.2	93.6
13-14	988.8	16.7	22.2	490.0	459.9
15-19	4075.7	151.6	185.3	1917.8	1821.0
20-24	4728.7	353.0	334.8	2159.1	1881.8
25-29	4283.5	452.4	400.7	1864.2	1566.2
30-34	3754.1	436.6	347.3	1569.5	1400.7
35-39	3008.7	329.0	260.8	1280.1	1138.8
40-49	4299.9	426.1	322.1	1861.7	1690.0
50-59	2895.6	258.9	175.0	1279.6	1182.1
60 & over	1236.8	90.9	47.4	686.4	412.1

*Source: Report of the Labour Force Survey, Whole Kingdom (Round 3)  
August, 1988-NSO.*

Table 25 - Number and percentage of Civilian non-Institutional Population by Sex, Area and Activity, 1988

(in 000's)

Activity	Total		Municipal areas				Non-municipal area			
	Number	Percent	Male		Female		Male		Female	
			Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,599.3</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>4987.8</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>5125.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>22340.9</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>22144.5</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<i>Total Labour force</i>	30,512.2	55.9	2654.9	53.2	2207.3	43.0	13510.6	60.5	12139.2	54.8
1. Current Lab. force	30593.2	55.7	2654.2	53.2	2206.4	43.0	13483.9	60.4	12048.5	54.4
1.1 Employed	29464.0	54.0	2518.8	50.5	2098.6	40.9	13,200.0	59.1	11646.5	52.6
1.1.1 At work	28909.3	53.0	2485.9	49.8	2000.0	40.5	12875.0	57.6	11468.2	51.8
1.1.2 But not at work	554.7	1.0	32.8	0.7	18.5	0.4	325.0	1.5	178.2	0.8
1.2 Unemployed	929.2	1.7	135.4	2.7	107.8	2.1	283.9	1.3	402.0	1.8
1.2.1 Looking for work	245.8	0.4	84.3	1.7	53.1	1.0	64.4	0.3	43.8	0.2
1.2.2 Not looking for work	683.3	1.3	51.0	1.0	54.7	1.1	219.4	1.0	358.1	1.6
2. Seasonally inactive	118.9	0.2	0.7	0.0	0.8	0.0	26.6	0.1	90.7	0.4
<i>Not in Labour Force</i>										
<i>over 11 years of age</i>	10130.7	18.6	1097.0	22.0	1720.9	33.6	2997.4	13.4	4315.2	19.5
1. Household work	2013.4	3.7	14.3	0.3	669.2	13.1	59.7	0.3	1270.1	5.7
2. Studies	5241.3	9.6	775.4	15.5	700.0	13.7	2014.2	9.0	1751.4	7.9
3. Too young, too old or incapable of work	2324.4	4.3	213.6	4.3	262.4	5.1	773.7	3.4	1074.5	4.9
4. Others	551.4	1.0	93.6	1.9	89.1	1.7	149.6	0.7	219.0	1.0
<i>Persons under 11 yrs.</i>	13956.4	25.5	1235.7	24.8	1197.7	23.4	5832.9	26.1	5690.0	25.7

Source: Report of the Labour Force Survey, Whole Kingdom (Round 3) August, 1988, NSO.

Note: All absolute figures are independently rounded to the nearest thousand hence the group total may not always be equal to the sum of the individual figures.

**Table 26 : Employed by level of education, area and sex: 1988**

(in 000's)

Level of education	Total	Municipal area		Non-municipal area	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
Total	29463.9	2518.8	2098.6	13200.0	11646.5
None	1754.5	75.2	102.8	610.6	965.9
Less than Pratom 4	1042.8	555.8	48.8	450.1	488.1
Lower Elementary	15642.9	830.7	775.0	7333.1	6704.1
Upper Elementary	6251.6	322.7	296.0	3046.3	2585.8
Lower Secondary	1706.9	417.8	190.2	802.0	296.9
Upper Secondary	633.2	151.8	103.5	269.1	108.8
Vocational	737.2	220.3	185.6	221.0	110.3
Academic	554.7	220.8	187.7	87.6	58.6
Technical vocational	411.8	121.7	91.7	106.2	92.2
Teachers Training	572.2	64.3	101.7	203.0	203.2
Short course vocational	11.5	2.5	5.2	0.6	3.2
Others	33.2	7.6	0.5	25.0	0.1
Unknown	98.7	17.1	8.4	44.6	28.6

Source: Report of the Labour Force Survey, Whole Kingdom (Round 3)  
August, 1988, NSO.

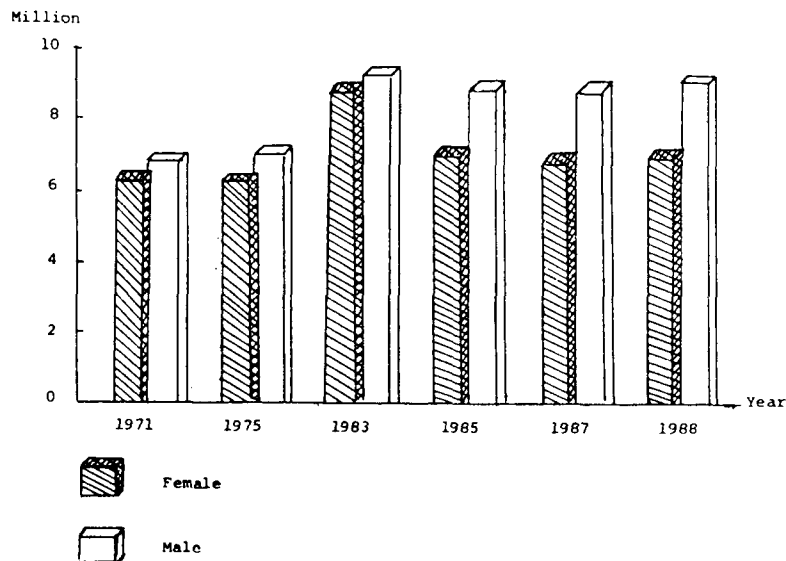
**Table 27 : Gender Participation in Services**

Civil Administration (1989)	
Total	844,953
Armed Forces	-
Police	-

Source: The Comptroller General's Department, Ministry of Finance.

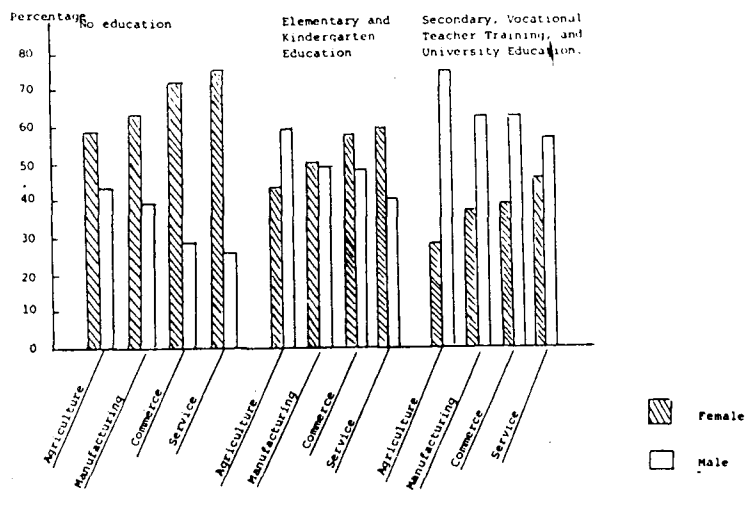
In the past four years, women and men (approximately 2 million) have participated in agriculture. Women are the major source of labour in subsistence agriculture. In addition, rural women are mainly responsible for the entire range of home management. This includes food preparation and preservation, household maintenance, health and sanitation.

**Chart 3 : Employed persons in Agriculture by Gender**



Source : Report of the Laour Force Survey (1971-1988), National Statistical Office

**Chart 4 : Educational attainment by industry in 1988**



Industry

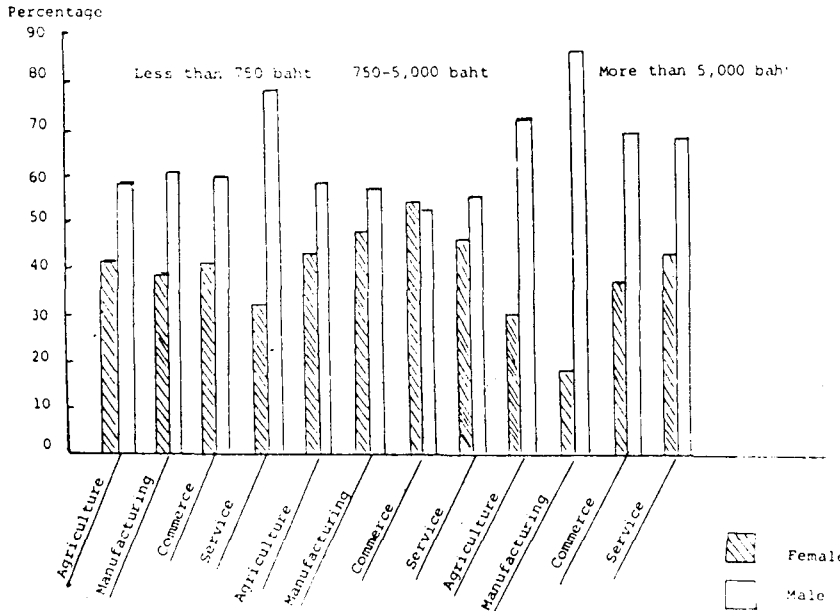
The above chart shows the educational attainment by industry. In the major industries, there is a higher percentage of women with no education, while there is a lower percentage of women with secondary and higher education.

Source: Report of the Labour Force Survey (February, 1988), National Statistical Office.

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**Chart 5 shows average monthly income levels of women and men in selected industries.**  
(Comparison of employed persons by average monthly wage)



**Industry**

*This chart does not include persons whose incomes are unknown. In manufacturing, commerce and service sectors, the majority of women is in the lowest income level, while the majority of men is in the highest income level.*

*Source: Report of the Labour Force Survey (February, 1988)  
National Statistical Office.*

**2.7 Gender Participation in Politics**

It was only in 1974, that the Thai Constitution stated that men and women have equal rights, but this statement was deleted in 1978. A revision stated that every one is equal before the law without explicitly naming 'men' and 'women'. While there are few laws which discriminate against women in Thailand today, attitudes and practices prevail to keep women out of many public areas.

Today, though highly qualified women are appointed to many high posts, there still is a deep-rooted sense of discrimination against women among the general public.

The political arena has traditionally been a male dominated field in Thailand. Women's political participation at the local and national levels has not been significant. The Thailand Development Research Institute (TDRI, 1989) reported that in 1988, only 0.4 per cent of the elected Kamnan (head of a district) and Phu-Yai Ban (head of a village) were women. At the

national level, ever since the first election were held in 1933, only 2.3 per cent of the members of the House of Representatives have been women. In 1989, the figure stands at 3.5 percent. Moreover, only 1.9 percent of appointed senators are women\*(table 28).

**Table 28 : Political Participation**

(Politics/Administration)

Politics and administration at the National and Local Level Central Government

National Government

<i>National Level</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Senator (1988)*	1.9	98.1
Member of Parliament (1990)	3.5	96.5
Member of Judiciary (1987)*	7.0	93.0
Cabinet Member (1990)	2.2	97.8
Civil Servant Executive (1989)	4.0	96.0

Urban Municipal government

Bangkok Metropolitan**	<i>Percentage</i>	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Governor	0.0	100.0
Member of City Council	3.8	96.2
Member of Provincial Council	4.6	95.4

Provincial Government

<i>Provincial Level (1990)</i>	<i>Percentage</i>	
	<i>Female</i>	<i>Male</i>
Provincial Governor	0.0	100.0
Deputy Provincial Governor	0.0	100.0
Chief of Provincial Governor	0.0	100.0
Chief of Provincial Clerk	0.0	100.0
Provincial Government Inspector	0.0	100.0

Sources: \* Parliament News, August 16, 1987

\*\* Bangkok Metropolitan Administration

\*\*\* Ministry of Interior

## **2.8 Legal Environment for Gender Issues**

In legal matters, women are not granted equality in the law and law enforcement. There are still laws barring women from some civil services and political positions, from entering military and police academies, and from divorcing their husbands on adultery grounds. The enforcement of the law on employment and prostitution is very lax; the most important law has been the Labour Protection Law of 1973. Some sections in this law state on the employment of women (Chapter 2) and concerns itself with women's working conditions (Clause 13-16), hours (clause 16), maternity leave (clause 18 and 19), weight women can haul, life and carry (clause 14) and wage discrimination (clause 26) (Labour Department, 1973).

## **2.9 Socio-cultural environment and gender issues**

Buddhism has long been the religion of the majority of the Thai people. Buddhism permeates the arts, literature, education and the Thai way of life, especially in areas where the majority of the residents embrace the Buddhist faith. About 4.02 percent of the population are Muslim, while 0.50 percent are Christians. According to the constitution and in practice, His Majesty the King is upholder and supporter of all religions, that is, all religions professed by the Thai people. Most of the Muslims are in the south. There are some 200 Muslim schools and 1,500 mosques scattered throughout the country.

Among the Buddhist adherents, there is a difference of close relationship to religion and the religious practice between the urban people and the rural people. Men and women, adults or children, in the rural areas are closer to the religion and the various preaching, including the regular religious practice in the temples, especially on important religious days. This is because of the customs and traditions, than religion is very close to self in birth, old age, sickness and death, whereas in the towns, because of the economic situation and the hasty environment of the working class, both men and women keep far from the temple some times, but the major portion still worship and are devoted to the religious instructions and as Buddhism exercises influence on the existence of the majority of the people. It is this that make the Thai people calm, reasonable and smiling.

In the past, the customs and traditions of the Thai society entrusted more responsibility to women more than on men. Mostly the women are responsible for household work, taking care of the family, feeding the children, while men worked outside. The pattern of the family is an 'extended family' with men as the head of them. At present, as the economic situation tightens, pushing women to labour market, rendering a heavy burden in two ways, viz. a salary earner to bring income for the maintenance of her life and family and a housewife taking care of the household tasks. The present Thai society lacks the creation of goodwill and idealistic view in promoting and leading men and women to co-operate in the household work and in taking care of the children equally. The family pattern has changed especially in the urban society, the tendency will be more single family and men recognize to help more in the domestic chores.

Anyway, the care of the children in the present days tends to go according to the tradition, i.e., the girls will be strictly taught to do the household work together with the study at the education institution. The boys will not be stressed on the domestic chores. They are left to play freely, but they are taught to be responsible for the common good, including the



protection and care of the family, taking example from the parents. Although the educational system of the present days has adjusted the principle of study and teaching to be equal for girls and boys. They are taught to practice knitting, embroidery and preparation of food, expression of being a leader to children of both sexes equally, but the outstanding point of the original goodwill still has more influence.

In rural areas the original idea was that women need not go to work outside, except the agricultural sector. Thus, they emphasized to train the daughters to know the household tasks more than to study upto any high level. But the situation has changed at present. Money has come to have a greater say and the modern life with various technologies, making the family need more income. Working in the field is restricted, women migrate to cities because they can work in factories without high education.

Women and men in rural areas marry at an early age. The statistics show that in rural area, men tend to marry at the average age of 18 and women at 16. In urban areas, men on the average marry at 24 and women at 21 (National Statistics, 1983). This is because in rural areas, there is no need of studying up to high levels but in urban areas, women need to study more because of the tendency to recruit people with higher education, both in government and private sector. Women are free to work, to marry or to stay unmarried.

There is no differences, both in rural and urban areas about the possession and ownership of land and property to which the law has given equal right for men and women.

In the rural settings, men have the right to be head of the family. So, it is the prerogative of men to make the decision on economic affairs of the family, by the approval of the housewife, while on expenditure for day-to-day household requirements, it is the housewife who decides. For major economic affairs of the family, both the husband and wife takes joint decisions.

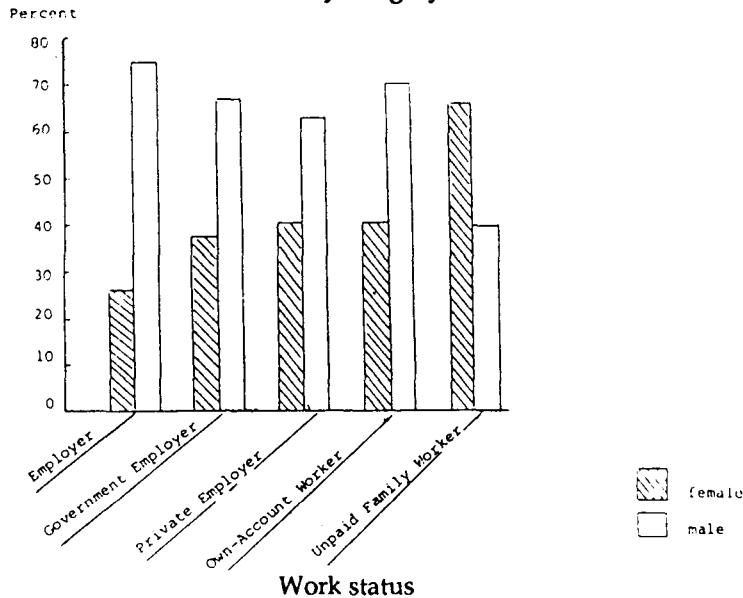
**Table 29 : Marital Status**  
(15 years and over in 1988)

Male	Percentage	Female	Percentage
Single	36.5	Single	28.8
Divorced	0.4	Divorced	1.1
Separated	0.5	Separated	1.8
Widowed	2.3	Widowed	8.8
Married	60.3	Married	59.5

*Note: The number of widowed, divorced and separated women are larger than men.*

*Source: Report of the Labour Force Survey (February, 1988),  
National Statistical Office.*

**Chart 6 : Work status by category of work in 1988**



**In respect of work status, it can be seen from the above chart that there are more women than men who work for their families without pay.**

*Source: Report of the Labour Force Survey (February, 1988), National Statistical Office.*

### **3.10 Institutions dealing with Gender Issues (with special reference to women)**

There are several government organisations involved in women's development. Some of the main ones and the activities they are engaged are:

1. *The National Commission of Women's Affairs* - established under the Prime Minister's Secretariat in 1979, by the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Board. At present, the commission is chaired by a Deputy Prime Minister and has the Director General of the Community Development Department as its Secretary. The commission has a mandate to act as the Central co-ordinating agency between the governmental and non-governmental sectors, as a promoter of women's development, and as an overseer of the national plans concerning women.

This organisation has made contributions to women's development by carrying out research, organizing worthwhile programmes and educating the general public about women's needs and issues.

2. *Department of Agricultural Extension* - Home economists have been working to improve farm family life with a special emphasis on women. Women have been strongly encouraged to form farm women's clubs to build a useful information network.

3. *Department of Community Development* - Their agenda consists of income generating, nutrition and child care projects. There are also vocational training projects for women's groups, leadership training for women leaders, and training programmes for officials responsible for women's development.
4. *Department of Non-formal Education*- This department provides various job training programmes, and education in subjects of interest.
5. *Department of Public Health* - This department promotes health and nutritional knowledge especially to pregnant women and children.\*
6. *Co-operative Promotion Department* - Their agenda consists of training programmes of team work by using co-operative methods, health and nutritional knowledge and also income generating activities for women in co-operatives.

For non-governmental sectors, there are many organizations involved in women's development. For instance:

1. *Gender and Development Research Institute (GDRI)* - GDRI was established on October 24, 1990. The United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM) provides financial support to the GDRI's first project. This organization carries out policy research on gender issues in national development, developing strategies and processes, policy dialogues involving women to participate in establishing priorities and development directions, developing information material for action research on policies and development planning, building consensus and raise awareness of policy makers and planners on the actual role of women in national development, developing strategies and processes to involve the media in the efforts to strengthen the roles of women in development and providing services on information materials concerning gender and development. (GDRI leaflet).
2. *The National Council of Women of Thailand (NCWT)* - Under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty, the Queen. NCWT acts as a focal point for co-ordinating, promoting and supporting the activities of women's organisations throughout Thailand, acquiring knowledge and exchange ideas among women's organisations domestically and internationally for the purpose of creating stability, security, good understanding and well-being for all people, especially women, finding ways and means to raise the status and quality of life for Thai women and co-operating with domestic and international agencies, both governmental and private in carrying out activities that are beneficial to women and society in general. (The National Council of Women of Thailand, under the Royal Patronage of Her Majesty the Queen 1989-1991- p.2).

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\* Suteera Thomson, *op.cit.*p.16

# III

## CO-OPERATIVE MOVEMENT AND GENDER ISSUES

### 3.1 General

Co-operatives in Thailand, like in most developing countries, have been initiated by the government with the objectives to use them as a means to improve the economic and social conditions of people of small means. Faced with the realities of poverty, economic imbalances, social disparities and strong economic competition, co-operatives are considered as the best socio-economic tool available to the community where the needs and demands of the people are not too sophisticated and great. The government established the first co-operative in Thailand by adopting the German Reifeisen's principle and it was registered on February 26, 1916, named "Watchan Co-operative Limited"\*. This co-operative was established under the special legislation called "The Civil Association (Amendment) Act, B.E.2459 (1916)", in the form of a small village credit society to help relieve farmers from severe indebtedness. The success of the first type of co-operative has brought about other types of co-operatives according to the needs of the people. The co-operative development has been integrated into the National Economic and Social Development Plan since 1962.

In 1928, the Co-operative Society Act, B.E. 2471 (1928) was promulgated to pave the way for further development of co-operatives of various types. The Bank for Co-operatives was organized to serve as a financing centre of the agricultural co-operatives. It was superseded in 1966 by the Bank for Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives (BAAC), which was established in order to widen the scope of operations including loans to individual farmers as well as agricultural co-operatives.

In 1968, the Co-operative Societies Act, B.E. 2511 (1968) was promulgated, repealing the Co-operative Societies Act, B.E. 2471 (1928) in order to facilitate the expansion and improvement of the co-operatives. This legislation embodied two new features, i.e. the amalgamation of co-operatives in order to create a viable co-operative at the local level and the establishment of the Co-operative League of Thailand, a nation-wide confederation of co-operative organization of all types.

At present, there are six main types of co-operatives in Thailand. They are Agricultural Co-operatives, Fishery Co-operatives, Land Settlement Co-operatives, Thrift and Credit Co-operatives, Consumer Co-operatives and Service Co-operatives.

Agricultural Co-operative is organized among farmers of various types such as rice, maize and other crop farming, dairy, swine raising as well as rubber, fruit trees, sugar cane and cut

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\* Co-operative Promotion Department, "Co-operative Promotion in Thailand", Bangkok, 1987, p.2

flower plantation. The main activities of agricultural co-operatives are provision of credit, farm input supply, marketing, processing and extension services.

The structure of agricultural co-operative in Thailand is three-tier with primary societies at local level, secondary societies at the provincial level and the apex society at the national level.

Fishery co-operatives deal with inland and marine fishing with the objectives of improving productivity and marketing of products of small fishermen, but most of them defaulted on their loans and failed. At present fishery co-operatives are organized as multi-purpose societies along the coastal and nearby areas where fish farming can be practiced.

The Land Settlement Co-operatives- the objectives of this type of co-operatives are to assist landless and tenant farmers to become land owners or to get security of tenancy by setting them in under-developed or forest land owned by the government. The activities are similar to those of agricultural co-operatives and also provide infrastructural facilities such as roads, water supply, schools, health centres and market centers, etc. for their members.

Thrift and Credit Co-operatives - organised with the purpose of promoting saving and to help members in clearing old debts and meeting necessary expenses in everyday life by giving loans at low rate of interest. This type of Thrift and Credit co-operatives are promoted for the benefits of wage or salary earners both in rural and urban areas.

Consumer Co-operatives - established to help the rural consumers in their daily purchase of commodities. The consumer co-operatives are promoted to be organized in rural and urban areas to solve the problems of shortage of consumer goods. The Consumer Co-operative Federation of Thailand was organized in 1975 to serve as a centre of supplying goods to the member co-operatives, export and import, education and promoting member relationship among member societies, international co-operative institutions and all organizations which have similar goals and purposes.

Service Co-operatives - this type of co-operatives are organized among rural and urban people to improve method of production, providing credit and marketing services and raising members' income through the principle of self-help and mutual-help. They are classified as 'Housing Co-operatives', 'Water Supply Co-operatives', 'Taxi Auto-tricycle and Microbus Co-operatives' and 'Handicrafts Co-operatives'.

The total number of co-operatives as at January 1,1991 in all types was 3163 co-operatives with a total membership of 3,309,075 households or individuals, including women membership (table 30). The statistics surveyed by Technical Division, Co-operative Promotion Department showed the women members in co-operatives (as at 31 March, 1991) as follows:

The number of women members in agricultural co-operative sectors (agricultural co-operatives, fishery co-operatives and land settlement co-operatives) was 230,768 or 22.9 percent while the number of men was 780,159 or 77.1 percent (table 31).

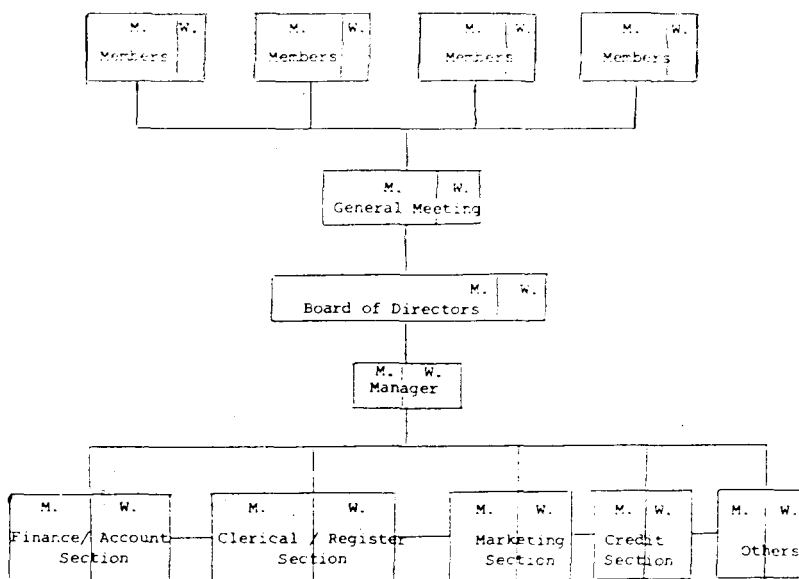
**Table 30 : Number and membership of co-operatives by type as at Jan., 1991**

Type	No. of Co-ops	Membership
Agricultural co-operatives	1464	1007637
Fishery co-operatives	26	6236
Land Settlement co-operatives	94	95604
Thrift and Credit co-operatives	858	1399449
Consumer co-operatives	419	713236
Service co-operatives	302	86913
<b>Total</b>	<b>3163</b>	<b>3309075</b>

Source: Technical Division, Co-operative Promotion Department.

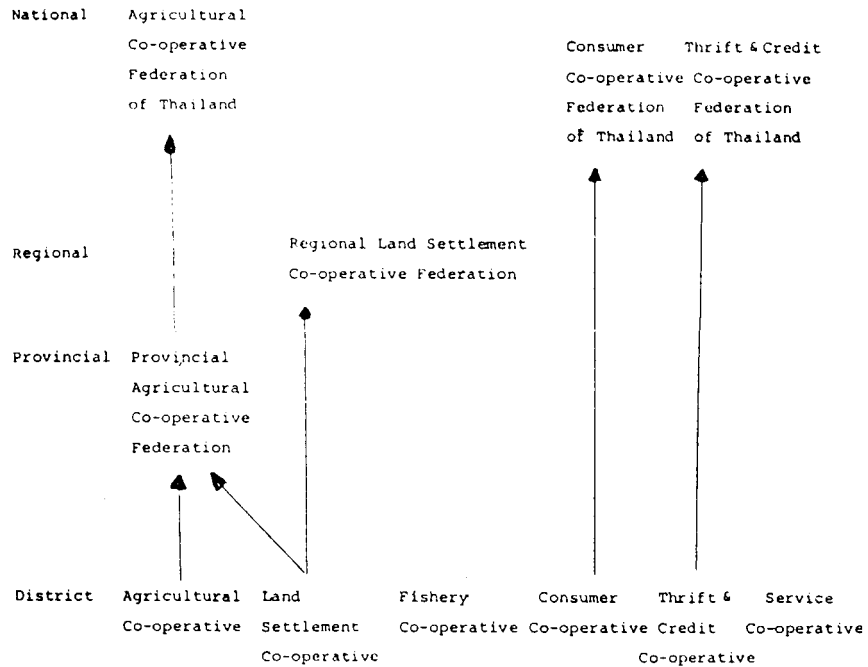
According to the structure of primary co-operative (Chart 7), it consists of individual members which comprises of men and women. In the case of agricultural co-operative, the average membership is 1000 households per society, and divided into groups at village level. According to the present Co-operatives Act, the general meeting of members elects the board of directors which formulate the policy of the co-operative and appoints a manager and staff to run the entire operation of the co-operative.

**Chart 7 : Structure of Co-operative**



Note: M = Men  
W = Women

**Chart 8 : Structure of Co-operative vertically federated**



Three or more primary co-operatives can together form a provincial federation which undertake joint activities on behalf of their primary affiliates such as processing of agricultural produce.

At national level, there is the Agricultural Co-operative Federation of Thailand (ACFT) which is the apex organization for agricultural co-operatives. Its main function is to "support its affiliates' business" which includes the export of agricultural produce and the import of farm supplies. At this level, there are also Sugarcane Growers Co-operative Federation of Thailand, Consumer Co-operative Federation of Thailand, and the Thrift and Credit Co-operative Federation of Thailand.\*

Another apex organisation of the co-operative movement is the Co-operative League of Thailand which functions as a promotional and educational co-operative body as well as representative of the co-operative movement in Thailand.

### 3.2 Policy for Women Development in Co-operatives

Realizing the important roles and influences of women in raising their families which are the elements of the communities. The policy of Co-operative Promotion Department for developing women in co-operative sector started in 1981, to promote the involvement and participation of women through group action, find co-operative solutions to their problems and become active partners in co-operatives and contributors to national development.

\* *Ibid* , pp.6-7

Many activities are drawn to meet the above policy, which are:

- i. To educate and train women with the objectives to create awareness among women of group action so as to increase their role in co-operatives,
- ii. To motivate and educate women for better living,
- iii. To promote the development of income generating projects for women through co-operative effort, so that the economic self-reliance of women is increased and that women can find co-operative solution to their problems such as those of production, processing, marketing, credit and supply, etc.,
- iv. To help women to develop as effective leaders to take more responsibilities of co-operative management and contribute effectively to co-operatives and community development as men's equal partners,
5. To co-operate with agencies concerned in the implementation of women development programmes or projects.\*

The Income Generating Activities Project in Yasothorn Province launched with the co-operation of the Co-operative Promotion Department and the Co-operative League of Thailand in 1981, with the objective to increase the co-operative member housewives' awareness in regard to co-operative activities and also in regard to general aspects of health, education and family welfare as also to improve their family income by supporting appropriate income generating activities, which the housewives are able to undertake either as a part-time activity or as a full-time activity. The project is titled "Co-operative Housewives Project" and has been financially assisted by the International Co-operative Alliance (ICA), the Swedish Co-operative Centre (SCC) and the Foundation of Friedreich Ebert Stiftung (FES).

After the project in Yasothorn Province was successfully completed, the policy to extend the development of women was continued to every agricultural co-operatives and land settlement co-operatives. The view point of Director General of Co-operative Promotion Department stress on the aim and area for women development in co-operatives.

"The overall objective of the Co-operative Promotion Department's policy for enhancing women's involvement in co-operatives would be to work towards increasing the awareness of women in both inside and outside the co-operative sector especially of the disadvantaged groups, both in urban and rural areas".\*\*

At present, there are 150 groups of women in agricultural co-operatives covering 34 provinces, 89 co-operatives with 5,790 members. (Technical Division, 1991).

Although the roles of women in co-operatives are developed, but the problems and obstacles which hinder their roles still exist.

A Concept Paper on The Role of Thai Women in Development, studied by Suteera Thomson, Orapin Sopchokchai, Daranee Charoen-Rajapark and Twatchai Yongkittikul (April 22, 1988) stated that:

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\*Technical Division, Co-operative Promotion Department, "Promotion of Women Involvement in Co-operatives in Thailand", Bangkok, 1985, p.2

\*\* Interview with Narong Marukatut, Director, Co-operative League of Thailand, 6th June, 1991.



**Table 31 : Number of co-operatives, membership, board of directors and employees by sex as at 31 March, 1991**

Type of Co-operative	No. of Co-ops	Membership		Total Mbrship	No. of Board of Directors		Total Cmte. Members	No. of employees		Total of Employees
		Men	Women		Men	Women		Men	Women	
Agricultural co-ops	1271	710159	203770	913929	13,448	418	13866	2199	2023	4222
Fishery Co-ops	24	4949	891	5820	196	16	212	13	22	35
Land settlement Co-ops	88	85687	26107	91794	1079	30	1109	204	183	367
Thrift & Credit co-ops	751	797840	485637	1283477	9589	1656	11245	1098	2475	3573
Consumer Co-ops	286	258890	285991	544881	2621	669	3290	433	1317	1750
Service Co-ops	221	56412	12269	68681	1960	165	2125	250	257	507
<b>Total</b>	<b>2641</b>	<b>1893917</b>	<b>1014665</b>	<b>1908582</b>	<b>28893</b>	<b>2954</b>	<b>31847</b>	<b>4197</b>	<b>6277</b>	<b>10474</b>

Source: Technical Division, Co-operative Promotion Department

Note: 537 Co-operatives did not report.

**Table 32: Percentage of membership, board of directors and employees by sex as at 31 March, 1991**

Type of co-operative Co-operatives	No. of Co-operatives	Percentage of Membership		Total	Percentage of Board of Directors		Total	Percentage of Employees		Total
		Men	Women		Men	Women		Men	Women	
Agricultural co-ops	1271	78	22	100	97	3	100	52	48	100
Fishery Co-ops	24	85	15	100	92	8	100	37	63	100
Land Settlement Co-op	88	72	28	100	97	3	100	53	47	100
Consumer Co-ops	286	47	53	100	80	20	100	25	75	100
Service Co-ops	221	82	18	100	92	8	100	49	51	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>2641</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Technical Division, Co-operative Promotion Department

Note: 537 Co-operatives did not report.

In the process of development, women's needs and concerns have often been neglected. Frequently, they are intentionally overlooked because policy makers and planners are not aware that certain development policies and programmes affect women and men in fundamentally different and unequal ways. Women are concentrated in the lower ranks of the various target groups; often policies and programmes, geared toward the main stream of society, and their resulting benefits just do not reach these women (pp.17-18).

It is the same reason, the role of women in co-operatives is still limited. There are many problems and obstacles that hinder women's role as active partner in the process of co-operative and national development. The bye-laws of agricultural co-operatives has restricted membership to only the head of the household although regardless of being a man or a woman, the fact is that the majority of agricultural co-operative membership are men. The figures from the Technical Division shows that the percentage of women membership of the co-operative is 35 (vs. 85 of men).

Of these figures, the percentage of women membership of the consumer co-operatives is higher than the women in other types of co-operatives, which is 53 per cent while women membership of agriculture co-operatives, fishery co-operatives, land settlement co-operatives, thrift and credit co-operatives, and service co-operatives are 22 percent, 15 percent, 28 percent, 38 percent and 18 percent respectively (table 32)

From the same table, it will be noticed that the percentage of women employees is 60 while the percentage of men is 40, and the highest percentage of women employees is in the consumer co-operatives (75 percent). A study of the employee situation was made, and it is satisfied that there is no difference between men and women in positions and wage structures in co-operatives.

Therefore, the percentage of women in rural co-operatives is very small. As a consequence, women lack influence on co-operative activities. Heavy workload in both the family and the field leaves little time for rural and urban women to participate actively in co-operatives. Lack of financial means and lack of education and training, resulted in lack of knowledge and skills, limiting the opportunities women have in participating fully in co-operative development at local, national and international levels.

Though there are many problems and obstacles, there is an attempt to improve the situation of women in co-operatives. The recommendations of the Director General of Co-operative Promotion Department on the policy of Co-operative Promotion Department, Director of Co-operative League of Thailand and Chairman of Consumer Co-operative Federation of Thailand have become more and paid more attention to the problems of women.

In regard to Co-operative League of Thailand, the view point of the Director stress on the equal right of women (vis-a-vis men) in education, political arena, legal matter, employment, work status and social attitudes. He mentioned that the ability of women in intellectual, learning and leadership are equal to men. Therefore, women should be promoted to participate in all the above activities.\*

The research on 'Women and Agricultural Co-operative Development' undertook in 1988 by Suwanna Thuvachote (Dept. of Co-operatives, Faculty of Economics and Business

\* Interview with Sa-ngiam Mamuenvai, Director General, Co-operative Promotion Dept., 19 June, 1991

Administration, Kasetsart University) shows the agreement of the above view. It stated that the co-operative women's group can improve the women's knowledge in co-operative principles, can encourage them to have more direct participation in co-operative activities, as well as develop a better attitude towards their co-operatives.

Presently, Co-operative League of Thailand organizes training programmes for women in co-operatives as follows:

- i. Training Course for Women Members and Women Employees of co-operatives on Co-operative Principles and Practices,
- ii. Training course for income generating by developing their occupations both in cottage industries and agriculture,
- iii. Training course on 'Leadership in Community',
- iv. Providing funds for encouraging women leaders for studying co-operative movement in foreign countries.

As for the views of the Chairman of Consumer Co-operative Federation of Thailand on women in co-operative movement, he stated: "The socio-economic roles of Thai women are known as equal to men, they are increasingly taking managerial or higher posts. Thai women played an important role in the process of the country's development and are now active in every field of social activities. Though the role of women in rural co-operatives has not been significant, in urban co-operatives women members are more meaningful. Especially the percentage of women members of consumer co-operatives is more than men (53 percent). Therefore, the stability of consumer co-operatives depend on women members. A special programme for bringing women members to participate in co-operatives should be organised in order to promote the relationship and loyalty of women members."

The views of the above three executives concerning co-operatives show the keen attempt to improve the situation of women members and also to maintain equality between men and women. The policy-makers should consider the potential role of women members in all development efforts to effectively meet women's needs.

### 3.3 Decision Making in Co-operatives

According to the structure of the co-operatives as stated earlier, there shall be an executive board of the co-operative society elected from members by the general meeting to carry on activities and represent the co-operative in matters concerning third persons. For this purpose, the board may entrust a director to act on its behalf. The decision making at the general meeting and the implementing policy by the Board of Directors are very significant. From table 32, the percentage of women members is 35 while men is 65. Of those percentages of woman members, only one man (Vs.40 men) is appointed to the board of Director. Moreover in Consumer Co-operative Federation of Thailand, there is no women on the board. The result of this situation is that the attitude towards female in general did not recognize the potentiality and capability of women for executive positions.

Although there is a small number of executive women in co-operatives, the study of women participation in co-operatives, the study of women participation in sampling co-operatives by May 1991 reveals that 79,31 percent of women who are on the board of directors always

play an important role in the committee meetings. 17.24 per cent participate some time and 3.45 percent absolutely do not participate at the meeting. In addition it is interesting to note that women members in co-operatives regularly participate at the general meeting. The programme planning made by those women are credit, marketing, purchasing, service, deposit and interest rate, guidance and so on.

In an attempt to develop women, initiation of special projects for women had been launched by co-operatives themselves. Presently there are 89 agricultural co-operatives (6.07 percent) with 5790 women members preparing the project of enhancing income generating activities. The activities in the projects are handicrafts, weaving, basketry, preservation of food, dress making, planting, animal husbandry and growing mulberry for feeding silk worm.

In regard to the special projects in agricultural co-operatives, the situation reveals that there is less interest in women members. Even in urban co-operatives, which compose of consumer co-operatives, thrift and credit co-operatives and service co-operatives, they did not provide any activities for women members. However, the policy on enhancing women in co-operatives of the Co-operative Promotion Department is now being implemented and the number of women groups in co-operatives is increasing every year. The situation will be changed very soon and we can see the significant improvements both in the status of women members and also the policy making bodies of co-operatives.

# IV

## CONCLUSIONS

Due to economic, political and social changes, it is clear that attempts should now be made to integrate women into the development process. Women deserve special attention because of their multi-faceted disadvantages and constraints, and also because development has a different impact on women than men.

The objectives of this survey are:

- To assess as to what extent gender integration has taken place for economic and social development and the activities of co-operatives of Thailand,
- To assess the level of participation of women in political, social and economic decision-making and productivity,
- To assess the level of participation of women in decision making and activities in co-operatives.

The results of the study are as follows:

1. Level of participation of women in political, economic and social decision-making and productivity are two different issues:
  - 1.1 In decision-making, women participation is high at home but low in public forums,
  - 1.2 In productivity, women are predominant in trade and very productive in agriculture, while in high-tech areas men are more productive.
2. Extent of gender integration in social and economic development of co-operatives in Thailand is still predominantly male dominated as far as decision-making and management are concerned. Only head of households can have full voting membership, so these are mainly men.
3. Identification of socio-cultural and economic factors hindering gender integration in development (with special emphasis on co-operatives) are as follows:
  - 3.1 Some legal barriers to women still apply, e.g. women cannot hold significant posts in civil services and also in co-operatives,
  - 3.2 In village level, some of the bye-laws of agricultural co-operatives prevent women who are not household heads in becoming full co-operative members,
  - 3.3 Social discrimination against the advancement of women is still widespread in Thailand. Gender issues are not yet taken seriously and women themselves are mostly not conscientized towards necessary action,

- 3.4 Number of women in co-operatives is still very small, especially at decision-making levels. Women almost never are on boards of management,
- 3.5 Socio-cultural environment reinforces women's domestic role and often negates their economic contributions,
- 3.6 Women in co-operatives especially in agricultural co-operatives lack finances, which resulted in lacking knowledge and skills and also lack of participation in co-operative development at local, national and international level,
- 3.7 There is no differences between men and women in positions and wage structures in co-operatives,
- 3.8 Economic policy encourages women's participation but in practice they are bypassed unless outstanding, competent,
- 3.9 In general, the economic contributions of women are not yet recognized, so women remain largely invisible to policy makers, planners and management.
4. Strategies for promoting gender awareness and gender participation both in general and in co-operatives are:
  - 4.1 Training gender awareness at gender orientation to issue on the part of co-operative membership and staff, especially at top policy making and planning levels,
  - 4.2 The research on women should be increasingly studied, which is hoped that results from this study will provide additional ground work and data for the integration of women for policy-formulation,
  - 4.3 Policy-makers and development planners should consider the potential role of women in all development efforts to effectively meet women's needs, enhance their productivity and ensure their access to resources and development benefits.

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