

# **Women in Development: Enhancing the Status of Rural Women in Northern Thailand**

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Northern Thailand***

Natural Resources and Environment Program

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# **Women in Development:**

## *Enhancing the Status of Rural Women in Northern Thailand*

### **I. Introduction**

As is well known, Thailand has experienced rapid economic growth since the mid-1980s. During the 1986-1993 period, per capita incomes in the Kingdom increased at an average rate of 11.6 percent and, by the year 2000, Thailand is expected to join the ranks of Newly Industrialized Economies (NIEs). Concomitant with this impressive growth are a number of significant structural changes that have shaped and fueled Thailand's transition into an urbanized, industrial economy from its agricultural and rural base. Firstly, over the past three decades, Thailand has shifted from being a land-abundant nation to being a labor-abundant nation. While Thailand's population has increased from 27 million in 1960 to 58 million in 1993, forested areas in the Kingdom shrank from 168 million rai (26.9 million hectares) to 85 million rai (13.6 million hectares) in the same period. Thus, agriculture is no longer an inexhaustible resource, both in terms of further expansion of land for agricultural production as well as in terms of absorbing labor. Secondly, development of mass media communication and improvements in infrastructure (i.e., rural electrification and road projects) have significantly increased access to information—and opportunity—throughout the Kingdom, particularly for the rural population. Thirdly and perhaps most importantly, in the past two decades, the Thai economy has shifted away from its traditional agricultural base as the manufacturing and service sectors have come to dominate as sources of GDP growth. Although nearly two-thirds of the labor force remains in the agricultural sector, employment opportunities in the manufacturing, construction, and service sectors have expanded significantly in recent years.

These changes have without doubt affected income and employment opportunities for individuals throughout the Kingdom and, in particular, for women, in a variety of ways. Structural changes in combination with government policies have enabled some women to overcome poverty, gain access to education, enter new labor markets, improve their own and their families' health, and participate at higher levels of decision-making in the public and private sectors. However, as many of these women can attest, these

opportunities also have related and hidden costs that affect individual socially, physically, and mentally. For other women, most notably low-income rural and urban women, the doors to opportunity remain difficult—if not impossible—to open.

This study evaluates changes in socio-economic roles, status, and opportunities for Thai women over the past two decades. Specifically, this study addresses women in rural, northern Thailand, a region where the economic and social benefits of development arguably have yet to reach women. Furthermore, this study recommends future avenues for enhancing the economic, social, and political status and opportunities for women in this region.

### **I.1 Objectives**

There are four main objectives of this study:

1. to provide an overview of the social and economic status, in recent decades and in the present, of rural women in Northern Thailand;
2. to discuss the issues, problems, and obstacles to women's participation in development in this region;
3. to examine government policies and priorities, both implicit and explicit, with respect to rural women's development in the region. This study also examines the historical roles and possible future contributions of NGOs in this respect;
4. to identify areas where JICA cooperation with Thai governmental agencies or existing NGOs may yield improvements in the opportunities for women's participation in development.

### **I.2 Scope of Study**

The socio-economic and political status of rural women in Northern Thailand is the focus of this study. The prevailing belief is that Thai women are disadvantaged relative to men. This view is held both by government officials and by NGOs. The two diverge in opinion as to whether women's status has improved over time. The technocrats tend to believe that economic development has or will gradually spread to all participants of the economy, including women. In contrast, the NGOs, including academics, feel that the situation, far from having improved, has actually worsened.

Both are probably correct. Urban and middle-class women have benefited substantially from economic growth although not to the same extent as men. Rural

women, however, have encountered many changes that have made their lives increasingly different from what they used to be. Many, especially those in the lower income segments of the rural society, have actually seen their lives become worse. This study will concentrate mainly on the changes that have impacted this particular class of women.

### **I.3 Data**

Data for this study were compiled from two large national surveys, the Labor Force Survey and the Socio-Economic Survey (SES) of the National Statistical Office (NSO). This report also benefits from two major studies: “Long-Term Policies and Major Programs for Women 1992-2011,” compiled by the National Commission on Women’s Affairs (1994), and a research report based on 1,035 interviewed samples in 25 rural villages of the North entitled “Income, Employment and Education of Rural Women in Northern Thailand: An Inquiry into a Transitional Economy” (Kaosa-ard, Roongruangsee and Pitackwong, 1992).

### **I.4 Organization of the Report**

This study begins with a look at the historical and cultural background of rural women in Northern Thailand, in order to provide some perspective on the changes that have occurred. The next section provides an overview of the major socio-economic changes that have taken place in Thailand in the recent past. Specifically, we emphasize two trends in Thailand’s recent development: the shift in the structure of the Thai economy away from agriculture toward industry, and the slowing of the population growth rate, both of which have direct bearing on women’s roles in the on-going process of Thailand’s development.

Thirdly, this study addresses the current status, roles, and opportunities for rural women and, in particular, rural northern women, in terms of **income and job opportunities, educational opportunities, legal equity, political participation, and public health.**

Fourthly, this study examines existing government policies and priorities, both implicit and explicit, with respect to women’s employment, education, and health in rural areas. The study then addresses the future possible contributions of non-governmental organizations with respect to women in development in the region.

Finally, we examine ways in which JICA might work in partnership with Thai governmental agencies, the private sector, or NGOs in order to be most effective in enhancing the opportunities for rural women in the North.

## **II. Historical and Cultural Background**

The North is traditionally a matrilineal society.<sup>1</sup> In this respect, Northern Thai women inherit the land from their parents, and do not outmigrate when they marry. Rather, it is the husbands who move into their young brides' households. By living among their clan, women remain well-protected, both economically and physically. Women also maintain responsibility for the culturally significant practice of ancestral worship. Despite the matrilineal system, however, the Northern rural society recognizes the kinship of both parents.

Central to the family institution is the mother and child relationship and the notion of gratitude or obligation. Children must pay back their parents somehow for the care provided to them when they were young. The role of daughters is largely economic, looking after household production, and bringing in labor both as husbands and children. The youngest daughter is normally expected to look after the parents in their old age, and thereby inherits the house. For a boy, being ordained after he has come of age is one of the most important contributions he can make, an act that earns merit for his mother.<sup>2</sup> Sons may also inherit land, but traditionally tended to sell or trade it for more movable assets, especially when land prices were very low.

Elder daughters and their husbands are also part of the extended family. After the son-in-law has contributed a few years of his labor to the household, the new couple may leave to set up a new household on property set aside by the wife's parents, or on a new piece of land that has been acquired. Apart from labor, men also provide security (Rabibhadana, 1990) and perform religious and political functions for the household. In the past, the religious functions performed by men also gave them greater access to education through the monkhood, the traditional source of education in Thai society.

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<sup>1</sup> For a concise review, see Varunee Purisinsit, 1995.

<sup>2</sup> The act of earning merit is a central religious function throughout the Theravada Buddhist tradition. By such acts as giving alms to monks or becoming a monk oneself, one earns merit for one's family, thereby ensuring a higher status after reincarnation.



In a traditional rural society where social and political activities are limited, Northern women seem to fare well relative to men (Purisinsit, 1995). As the economy of the household is largely related to women's assets, rural women play a central role in the economic decision making of the family. However, the matrilineal nature of the society does not mean that women consider themselves the leaders of their families. In an agrarian economy, responsibility for agricultural production is shared by both husband and wife (Shinawatra, Thongsiri and Pitackwong, 1987). Men typically specialize in more physically demanding tasks (e.g., logging and plowing). For other agricultural chores there is a high degree of flexibility between the genders. When men are absent, women can assume full responsibility and vice-versa.

Women are typically the treasurers of the household. In a Thai historical record "Chronicle on the Friendship between Siam and China," by Phra Jane-jeen-aksorn, it was said that, "...About spending, that depends on the women because women are more adept. Husbands ought to listen [to their wives]," (cited in Purisinsit, 1995). Major investments, such as the purchase of a house, are jointly made. But often women make independent investment decisions, as when they open small shops or other small businesses. Thus, the relatively high degree of economic sovereignty enjoyed by today's Thai women can be traced back to these long traditional roots.

### **III. The Change: Macro Analysis of Women in Thailand's Transitional Economy**

Until the late 1970s, Thailand was considered a relatively land-abundant country, with land-man ratios actually increasing in the Lower North and in irrigated areas. During this time, agricultural exports were the Kingdom's primary source of foreign exchange and the agricultural sector itself dominated as the largest source of employment for both men and women. Data from 1970 and 1980 censuses show that in all regions of Thailand, with the exception of the Central region (in which Bangkok is located), 70-80 percent of the total female workforce was employed in the agricultural sector at some time during the year. Furthermore, as shown in Table 1, non-farm employment, while not unusual for male and female agricultural workers (especially during the off-season, i.e. dry season), played a comparatively minor role in terms of total employment in the 1970s. Commerce, manufacturing, and services sectors were the dominant sources of off-season employment for women during this period while the services and manufacturing sectors were the largest sources of non-farm employment for men.

By 1980, however, it was apparent that Thailand had reached the limits of its agricultural expansion. As the supply of land for cultivation became increasingly scarce, women were the first group of surplus household laborers to leave the agricultural sector. Between 1983 and 1988, there was a net withdrawal of female workers from the agricultural sector, evident even during peak growing seasons. This movement of labor out of the primary sector has enabled the growth of Thailand's export market, which is based on labor-intensive manufacturing. Thus, released from the agricultural sector and readily employed in the manufacturing, services, and commerce sectors, rural Thai women made the shift from home-based (and often unpaid) employment to non-farm, wage-paying employment in the 1980s (Phananiramai and Hutaseranee, 1992).

Without doubt, the above sectoral and labor force changes have had dramatic implications for Thai women in terms of employment and income opportunities. While women's participation in the agricultural sector decreased in the 1980s, the rate of increase in women's participation in the workforce as a whole actually surpassed that of men. Although national surveys indicate that the agricultural sector remains the dominant source of employment for both men and women, statistics also show that the commerce and manufacturing sectors emerged as significant sources of new employment for female workers in the 1980s. As evident in Table 1, roughly 42 percent of all female entrants into the wet season workforce were employed in the commerce sector between 1983 and 1988. In the 1974-1979 period, this figure was merely 3.2 percent.

In the 1980s, the manufacturing sector emerged as an important source employment for the incremental female labor force. In fact, as the number of women employed as incremental laborers in the manufacturing sector exceeded the number of men in the 1983-1988 period, it can be cogently argued that women, rather than men, emerged as the "backbone" of Thai manufacturing industries in the 1980s.

The convergence of wet season and dry season employment levels in both the farm and non-farm sectors, indicates a trend away from seasonal labor towards year-round employment. These trends suggest that since the mid-1980s a significant proportion of rural women have become permanent members of the industrial and commercial workforces as paid workers, private employees, and self-employed workers. More recent statistics (1992) confirm that a higher proportion of women are employed in the manufacturing sector (Table 2).

Consistent with increases in women's workforce participation rates, women's income contribution to household cash income increased between 1976 and 1988 in all regions. Household Economic Surveys of 1976 and 1992 show that during this period, the average woman's contribution (percentage share) to household cash income increased from 24 percent in 1976 to 42 percent in 1992 for the whole Kingdom (Table 3). For the North, the shares are 22 percent and 43 percent in 1976 and 1992, respectively. The same survey revealed that the largest source of women's cash income shifted from profits to income from wages and salaries. As evident in Table 4, between 1976 and 1992, the proportion of women's incomes from profits fell from 47 percent to 34 percent while the proportion of wages/salaries rose from 39 percent to 64 percent. This trend is consistent with not only the outward flow of women from the primary sector between 1976 and 1988, but also the high rate of female participation in the manufacturing sector in the 1980s. However, the income of female headed households in the North improved only slightly between 1976 and 1991 (Table 5) and remains below national average.

Despite the opening up of income and employment opportunities, wage gaps between men and women are clearly discernible even after controlling for education and industry (Phananiramai and Hutaseranee, 1992).

The occupational shift from agriculture to manufacturing and services, and rapid urbanization have had a great impact on women's lives. Migrant female workers now work outside their clan where they used to be well protected. Modern laws have replaced local customs with varying degrees of effectiveness. Working in cities brings new plights, sexual harassment and exploitation, occupational hazards, environmental degradation and so on. This, however, is beyond the scope of this study.

Evidence from village case studies suggests that poor women in the rural North cannot afford to stay rural when agriculture is increasingly unviable (Pitackwong, forthcoming). Yet going to the cities does not provide an adequate livelihood. They move back and forth between cities and home villages. Measures must be found to make lives in the rural areas more livable. Rural industrialization is a policy designed in this direction.

#### **IV. Present Status of Women in Northern Thailand**

This section discusses the status and opportunities of Northern Thai women in five sectors: 1) income and employment opportunities, 2) access to education and information, 3) health, 4) legal status, and 5) political participation. As will be elaborated, rural

Northern women fare the best (of the five aspects) in income opportunities and the worst in political participation. Over time, government policies have been most successful in improving the health of women. Yet an important issue, particularly in the North, is the problem of women and prostitution.

#### **IV.1 Income and employment opportunities**

The North is second only to the Northeast as the poorest region in Thailand. Not only is the average farm size in the North the smallest in the Kingdom, but the majority of the region is not irrigated, thus severely limiting agricultural production in the region. Understandably, few farming families are able to rely solely upon income generated from agriculture and must actively seek non-farm employment.

Non-farm employment emerged as a significant factor in the economy of the rural North in the early 1980s. Since that time, agricultural employment has declined in step with the shrinkage in the size of landholdings, and now even middle-income farm families must seek non-farm employment. A 1982 study found that on average rural households in Thailand “sold” more than 250 man-days in non-farm employment and that roughly 35 percent of rural household income was derived from non-agricultural activities (Phongpaichit, 1982).

The economic role of the rural women in Northern Thailand has shifted substantially along with rapid economic and social change. While their economic contribution to the family remains high, the nature of the contribution has been altered. As the amount of land per head dwindles and commercial agriculture intensifies, Northern rural women are increasingly found to be involved in paid agricultural work. The proportion of females in paid agricultural work as classified by age group was very similar to men (Table 6). The majority of rural women also hold more than one job in addition to their household responsibilities (Table 7).

Wages in the rural sector are often piece rate, i.e. a fee per unit of output produced or per unit of area. When daily wages are offered, women are offered lower rates. It is claimed that women are generally given lighter jobs. However it is not clear to what extent the wage differential reflects the difference in job characteristics or to what extent the differential reflects true wage discrimination between the sexes.

Village-based employment in handicraft and simple manufacturing industries is an important alternative to employment in agriculture. In general, there are two types of village-based industries:

- 1) those dependent on the extraction and sale of local natural resources such as forest products, local minerals etc., which are traded with neighboring villages. This may consist of bamboo weaving, pottery making and preserved forest products.
- 2) those which acquire inputs, process them, and sell to more distant markets. When market niches can be successfully developed, this second type tends to be expanding relative to the first.

The second type is more dependent on labor and skill advantages, and often on the entrepreneurial ability of a specific individual. The growth of the latter type thus requires not only entrepreneurship but also information, a broadened prospective and more formal communication skills for input and credit acquisition and for sales of output. Whereas the first type is generally based on verbal communication, this second type often requires at least simple written agreements or letters; thus the entrepreneur must have basic literacy.

Providing village women with basic technical skills such as sewing or weaving is unlikely to sufficiently enhance women's entrepreneurship in the expanding sector. The type of background and skills needed to become a successful entrepreneur is rare among rural women, and NGOs are perhaps best suited to discover and cultivate potential leaders.

As the country has become more monetized, women's contribution to household cash income has increased. The share of women's income is particularly high in villages where income earning possibilities are low, i.e., in villages where rainfed agriculture is the only employment. In poor villages where girls have entered service and entertainment industries, the cash contribution of women is particularly high, accounting for more than half of total family income (Table 8).

Remittances from daughters per household is 1.7 times larger than remittances from sons, on average. Remittances from daughters per head are generally much higher (Table 9). Needless to say, daughters are no doubt important economic assets for poor families. In some provinces, stories of daughters sold into the sex industry are common. Young girls are bought right after primary school. If they are too small, hormones are administered. Parents and sometimes school teachers are found to be willing accomplices

of the flesh trade. This huge economic gain from trading daughters explains why any government policy which neglects adequate economic incentives is ineffective.

The present status of women in Northern Thailand is inextricably linked to one significant issue, prostitution. It is undeniably the most important and most talked about problem for women in the North. It pervades discussions of virtually all aspects of women's lives, including their income and employment opportunities, health, legal status, and education.

## **IV.2 Access to Education and Information**

### *Access to Education*

It may not be surprising to find that the level of education in Thailand is generally low, considering that Thailand has had a large agricultural sector. But what is disturbing is that Thailand has the lowest ratio of enrollment in secondary education in the ASEAN region (Sussangkarn, 1991). Women's access to education is believed to be lower than men as reflected by women's higher illiteracy rate (13.6% as against men's 6.2% in 1985), by earlier entry into the labor force, and by their lower average number of years in school. Labor force participation rate for the 13-15 age group is higher for girls (Phananiramai and Hutaserani, 1992).

The preference for educating boys was generally explained by the need for boys to be leaders of the family, to contact government officials and to perform social and political functions. Boys also have better access to education through being ordained as novices. Becoming a novice also reduces the cost of education for boys when they leave the village for higher education.

In the context of Northern agrarian culture, there is no economic explanation why parents should make greater investments in education for sons (Kaosa-ard, Roongruangsee and Pitackwong, 1992). As indicated earlier, boys marry out and end up working for the wife's family while it is women who take care of the ancestral spirits and family properties. A study of the private rate of return on education for women also suggests that Thai women reap greater return from education than men for all education levels (Schultz, 1990).

An important factor deterring parents from giving girls better opportunities for schooling is that secondary education schools are often very distant from the village. As

the formal education system spreads to remote regions, more rural women will have greater opportunities for entering higher education. Time series data confirm that for women the number of years in school has increased over time (Kaosa-ard and Pholdee, 1992).

A large scale survey in the Upper North revealed that gender is not an important obstacle to women's access to higher education (Kaosa-ard, Roongruangsee and Pitackwong, 1992). Improved transport and a smaller number of children per family have combined to increase the chance that girls will continue their education beyond the compulsory level (Tables 10 and 11). However, the opportunity costs of leaving a child in school is a decisive factor. The cost of education per child is high relative to rural income levels, and the opportunity cost of education for children increases if there are income earning opportunities. In villages where jobs opportunities are available, children, regardless of sex, have to leave school early to earn income. In a number of cases, young girls were found to work two shifts a day to maximize income.

In the areas where a network for the delivery of girls to prostitution exists, the opportunity cost of education for girls is exorbitantly high. For this special group, there is a need for special measures to alleviate household poverty as well as to provide scholarships to girls at the same time.

#### *Access to Information*

It is often claimed that women tend to have less access to agricultural information, as extension services and training activities are generally designed by and for men. Women get agricultural information from their neighbors and husbands rather than the government, which has "overlooked" women's important role in agriculture (Benchaphun, Benjavan, and Pitackwong 1990).

Empirical evidence from a large scale study in Northern Thailand confirms that women have lower access to agricultural information (Table 12). However, this lower access may be by choice rather than by official negligence. For information channels such as radio and television, where women can choose whether or not to receive information, women were reported to have less access. The statistics from the same study show that all the women in the survey have access to television and radio and only 13.8 percent reported to be non TV viewers. Interestingly, about half of the women interviewed reported to have direct access to extension officers.

### IV.3 Women and Health

Over the past several decades, Thailand has had remarkable success improving public health in the Kingdom as a whole. Among its achievements: a significant decline in population growth rate, infant and under-five mortality, and maternal mortality; near-universal access to health education, contraception, and health services, and; increased availability of water and sanitation facilities throughout the Kingdom (Yoddumnern-Attig 1995). These and other improvements have translated into dramatic decreases in morbidity and mortality of nutritional deficiencies and tropical infectious and parasitic diseases.

Like many other areas of Thai development, public health in Thailand is now in a state of transition. While epidemics of tropical disease and malnutrition are now in the past, here to stay are a number of chronic, degenerative diseases (i.e., heart disease, cancer, stroke) associated with industrialization. For women in Thailand in particular, public health concerns center around the spread of Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), reproductive health, occupational safety, and violence against women.

#### *Basic Indicators of Women's Health*

If crude death rate is taken as an indicator of overall health, women's health has improved relative to that of men over the past two decades. Between 1974/75 and 1985/86, the death rate per thousand women decreased from 7.9 to 5.8. For men, the death rate declined from 9.5 to 7.1 over the same period. Maternal deaths also decreased from 1.9 per 1000 live births in 1973 to 0.4 per 1000 in 1987. The maternal death rate in the North was in keeping with the national average in 1987 (0.3 per 1000). However, the suicide rate of women in the North is highest in the country, at 7.7 per 100,000 as compared to the national average of 4.5 (Long Term Master Plan 1974).

#### *Women and HIV*

The HIV/AIDS epidemic is perhaps the most urgent public health issue for women in Thailand, now and in the future. Statistically speaking, by the end of 1992 there were 1251 cases of full-blown AIDS and 1588 cases of AIDS-related complex (ARC) in Thailand. While these numbers may seem low, one need only look to statistics on HIV prevalence to understand the magnitude of the epidemic in Thailand. In 1990, at least 200,000 persons were reported to be HIV-positive and in 1992, that number rose to 500,000. If current trends continue, 2-4 million Thais will be infected by the year 2000.



Furthermore, if the epidemiology of HIV/AIDS in Thailand follows that of other countries, in the future, infected women will outnumber infected men due to 1) Thai men's continued high use of commercial sex workers and 2) Thai women's lack of negotiating power in the use of condoms.

In Thailand, more than 80 percent of all reported AIDS/ARC cases are the result of sexual contact with HIV-infected individuals, often through heterosexual transmission (i.e., the AIDS virus (HIV) travels from HIV-infected sex worker to client and then from client to wife or girlfriend). Thus, HIV rapidly spreads from high-risk groups (i.e., commercial sex workers and their clientele) to relatively low-risk groups (i.e., monogamous women and their children).

As emphasized above, either as either commercial sex workers themselves or as the partners of men who frequent commercial sex workers, sexually active women in Thailand are at risk. Rural women in the North are at particularly high risk of HIV infection given socialization, employment, and migration patterns of both men and women in the region.

While the relationship between women's socialization in the North (i.e., filial piety) and migration and/or prostitution is not fully understood, it suffices to say that migration and subsequent employment patterns are driven, at least nominally, by a desire to provide economic support for one's village-based kin and especially for one's parents. This is related to the high incidence of HIV/AIDS in the sense that these economic pressures (and subsequent migration/employment patterns) put women from the North at high risk for HIV infection.

Men who migrate for extended periods of time are more likely to frequent commercial sex workers than men who do not migrate. Ostensibly, they (and subsequently, their wives/girlfriends at home in the North) are at higher risk of HIV infection than couples where the partner has not migrated. Secondly, particularly in the North, migration to urban areas specifically for employment in the commercial sex industry not unusual. As Yoddumnern-Attig (1995) and others have observed:

It is not uncommon that Thai parents, particularly in Northern Thailand where most commercial sex workers originate, encourage their daughters to become prostitutes. Moreover, all evidence points to the fact that most commercial sex workers send money back home. This is highly praised, valued, and encouraged by family members, relatives, and friends.

Thus, familial and community economic values take precedence over a woman's health and quality of life.

As a cure or vaccination for HIV is unlikely in the foreseeable future, government and non-government programs have targetted the North, in particular, for HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns. Thus far, most AIDS education campaigns have been media-based. Studies in many areas have shown, however, that such programs are not effective in actually changing people's behaviors. Rather, media-centered programs are most useful when integrated into "community interpersonal action programs," which have been shown to be the most effective forums for educating people and for effecting changes in behavior. Other programs in the North target the development of "marketable skills", such as sewing or handicraft making, for young women in the North in an attempt to stem the flow of women into the sex industry and into the migratory workforce. While in theory such programs are quite useful, the fact remains that markets for such labor are still undeveloped in that region.

### *Women and Reproductive Health*

Family planning has been a central aspect of Thailand's development over the past two decades. Thailand's National Family Planning Program (NFPP) has had great success in increasing access to and acceptance of contraceptives among Thai couples. In conjunction with rapid structural and socio-economic changes, the NFPP has harnessed the population growth rate and in 1993, it stood at 1.2 percent, down from 3.22 percent in 1960 and 1.6 percent in 1988.

Women have traditionally borne the primary responsibility for family planning (i.e., fertility control) in Thailand and in 1987, it was estimated that 70.6 percent women identified themselves as the party responsible for contraception in sexual relations.

Abortion, specifically illegal abortions, remain a real threat to women's health in Thailand. A study by the Ministry of Health and Siriraj Hospital in 1983-84 revealed that of 3,700 cases of illegal abortion detected, some 40 percent were for rural (farming) women. Approximately 38 percent of the married women who underwent an illegal abortion reported that they practiced birth control at the time of conception. Contrary to general belief, which assumes that those having abortions are uncontrollable youths, women who seek an abortion are typically married women with less access to education.

### *Women and Occupational Safety*

According to the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, rural female farmers had the highest rate of injuries (81.2 per 1000), while women in the service sector had an injury rate of 41.0 per 1000. The injury rate for men in the same sectors are 85.4 and 54.6 per 1000, respectively. These facts suggest that rural women should be a target group for a health improvement policy.

Women constitute close to half (46 percent) of the workforce in the manufacturing sector. As such, they are exposed to a variety of occupational hazards associated with industrial processes. For instance, assemblers of small electronics often complain of eye-strain; weaving operators without proper ear protection are liable to deafness as a result of their work; dust, toxins, and industrial chemicals pose new and unknown health risks for all workers, particularly for women of childbearing age.

#### **IV.4 Women's Legal Status and Related Issues**

Legislative measures and policy initiatives are of primary importance in institutionalizing a society's public commitment to enhancing the economic, social, and political status of women. Within the context of rapid socio-economic change, law- and policy-makers have the task of drafting and implementing policy and laws that are acceptable and functional for women. This task is complicated by the fact that many such policy- and law-makers also see as their mandate the preservation of traditional cultural norms and roles, some of which are in conflict with women's needs in current society. Thus, while men and women are considered "equals" constitutionally, under subsidiary law and/or in actual practice, this is not the case.

##### *Status of Women Under Current Thai Law*

The recognition of women's rights under Thai law began with the 1932 Constitution, which recognized women's right to vote in general elections. Women's rights were further advanced in the 1974 and 1978 Constitutions, which broadly stated that "all people shall have equal rights and shall be equally protected by the law." The 1974 Constitution also specified that women were permitted to advance into higher levels of the judiciary and civil service. Thailand's current constitution, ratified on December 9, 1991, stated not only that "all people shall have equal rights" (Act 25) but also that "the Government shall protect, support, and promote equal rights regardless of gender" (Act

68) and that “the Government’s implementation of the Economic and Social Development Plan shall reflect the above intention on human rights” (Act 84).

The 1974 and 1978 Constitutions also provided specifically for the establishment of government institutions to deal directly with issues related to women in developing Thailand. Between 1978 and 1990, a number of government committees were created and by 1990, government’s efforts were consolidated into the National Commission on Women’s Affairs (NCWA). The Commission, which reports directly to the Office of the Prime Minister, continues today as the primary women’s policy institution in the Kingdom and is responsible for revising and coordinating the government’s long-term policies for women.

Currently, there are a number of subsidiary laws in Thailand which address women’s welfare and/or affect women specifically. Some laws, such as the Royal Decree on Social Security (1990), were designed to address social problems regardless of gender but nevertheless have significant bearing on women’s welfare. The Royal Decree on Social Security, for example, was designed for workers who sustain injuries or illness which are job-unrelated. For women in particular, the Royal Decree is particularly important as it specifies that women are entitled to 90 days of paid maternity leave and 45 days of unpaid maternity leave.

However, *de facto* or *de jure*, a number of subsidiary laws actually restrict women’s access to certain services and to fully exercising their rights to equal protection under the law as Thai citizens. Examples of such laws include: a) gender-based exclusion of women from several advanced government-run academic institutions, e.g. King Mongkut Medical College, the Irrigation Academy, and the Railways Academy, b) prohibition of women married to foreign men from owning land (either through purchase or inheritance), c) exclusion of marital rape under Thai criminal law codes, thus marital rape is not against the law in Thailand, d) police implementation of the Prostitution Suppression Act, which targets almost exclusively female sex workers rather than male clients, brokers, or brothel owners.

#### *Legal Issues for Rural Women*

Relative to middle-class and urban women, poor women in rural areas in Thailand are affected only indirectly from changes in Thai law and policy. The primary reason for this lies in inability to access accurate information regarding changes in law or policy. Many rural women in Northern Thailand, for example, are unaware of changes in

Thailand's laws, let alone how those changes affect their lives. For example, the current inheritance law specifies that all property of the deceased is to be divided among the deceased's heirs. While this sort of law is to be expected in modern, urban societies, to rural women in a traditionally matrilineal society, the law deprives them of their traditional birthrights. As mentioned in Section II, in matrilineal northern Thailand, often the youngest daughter is expected to stay on the farm and care for elderly parents. Upon their death, she would then receive the rights to the home and the land upon which the home is located. Under strict application of the Inheritance Act, of course, this changes; property is divided among the siblings, rather than automatically inherited by the daughter who cared for the parents. Unaware of this, many of these women are financially unprepared if and when the property is divided.

In addition to the above example, there are numerous cases where a woman's lack of legal knowledge severely constrains her ability to protect herself and exercise her rights as a Thai citizen. Small businesswomen in rural areas, for example, have been known to run into problems when contracting work as they themselves know little about contract law. In many such cases, the small businesswoman's ignorance is exploited by the business partner in the contract process. While improving women's knowledge of the law is primarily a question of education and human resource development, it is also a question of women's access to information, an area where government policy can and should play an active role.

#### **IV.5 Women's Political Participation**

A widespread criticism of the law- and policy-making process in Thailand is that women are grossly underrepresented at local, national, and regional levels of governance and policy-making. Whether due to traditional proscription of women's participation in politics or whether due to women's inability to access the economic resources necessary for a public career, during the past five decades of representative government just seven women have reached the ministerial level of national government. Furthermore, out of the 630 members of parliament (MPs) in 1992, just 22 are women (15 in the House of Representatives and 7 in the Senate) (Tables 13 and 14). As for the number of women representing Northern Thailand, just three of 68 total MPs from that region are women.

In the latest election in June 1995, 4 percent out of 391 elected parliamentarians are women. This figure is considerably lower than 6 percent in Malaysia, 9 percent in China, 19 percent in Indonesia, 20 percent in Vietnam and 21 percent in South Korea. The

average for the Asia Pacific however is only 4 percent compared with the world average of 9 percent.

As for representation in the policy-making bodies of Parliament (i.e., committees), women play relatively minor roles, confined to or confining their activities to the committees related to social welfare, women, and children, and the elderly. Twelve of the twenty-three standing committees of the House of Representatives have no female members.

In terms of women's participation in provincial government, as shown in Table 15, women are no better represented there than on the national level.

## **V. Government Policy for the Development of Women in Thailand**

The first Long-Term Plan for Women (1982-2001) used as its basis the Fifth (1982-1986) and the Sixth (1986-1991) National Economic and Social Development Plans. In 1989, the National Commission on Women's Affairs was established and was given the task of revising the Long-Term Plan. The following is the essence of the revised Long-Term Plan for Women (1992-2011).

### *Policies and Long-Term Programs (1992-2011) for Women*

In January 1995, the *ad hoc* Subcommittee for the Preparation of the Long-Term Plan for Women submitted the revised Long-Term Plan for Women to the Royal Thai Government. The Plan has the following policy objectives.

- to promote all-round development of women — physical, mental, intellectual, professional, social and ethical — so that they become a valuable and high quality human resource in the society and attain a high quality of life;
- to promote women's participation in decision-making process in the development of the Thai economy, society, politics, administration, environment, religion, culture, and mass media, as well as family;
- to eliminate any form of discrimination in any activities against women;
- to protect women from physical or mental torture, harassment or being taken advantage of; and
- to develop Thai society towards one that values and appreciates participation, capacities and the potential of women.

The Plan outlines the following eight strategies for the achievement of the above objectives:

1. To establish a central government organization responsible for the development of women and to carry out programs aimed specifically at upgrading the status of women in the society and quality of their life.
2. To integrate women's development into government and private sector plans and to ensure that women get the due share of benefits in all these plans.
3. To foster groups concerned with the protection of women's rights and to establish linkages between the government and NGO networks.
4. To integrate the Women's Development Plan into the National Economic and Social Development Plans.
5. To encourage government agencies to understand women's specific needs.
6. To implement more woman-specific development projects.
7. To organize awareness campaigns so that women's development issues are represented on every political party's agenda.
8. To coordinate with the international community in order to learn new policies and methods for women's development, as well as to project a good image of Thai women and stimulate change in the desired direction.

The Plan recommends the following programs:

- Potential and Quality of Life Development Plan
- Plan for the Promotion of Legal Equity, Welfare and Safety for Women
- Social Participation Development Plan
- *Plan to Address Problems of a Special Group of Women (i.e., those working in the sex industry)*
- Plan for Improving Mechanism for Women's Development
- Research and Information on Women's Issues Plan

The seven programs contain a vast number of sub-programs and projects covering all possible aspects of human resource development. However, these plans are not prioritized, and it is unlikely that all of the recommended projects could be implemented.

Moreover, no time frame for carrying out these plans or projects thereof has been specified.

Compared to previous Long-Term Plans, however, the latest one is significantly more detailed, with numerous tables and statistics throughout the document. Despite not giving specific targets or objectives, it is an excellent source of baseline data against which future developments can be compared.

As the NCWA has no implementation power, its role will be as a coordinating agency seeking to increase awareness of and monitor progress toward women's equitable participation in the development process. However, their Plan, if accepted, will provide a Cabinet-approved Women in Development framework for government agencies to refer to when they are establishing their budgets.

Specific budgets for the development of rural women are currently channeled through the Community Development Department under the Ministry of Interior. For the fiscal year 1995, the budget for women and children living in economically backward areas is Baht 390 million. (Between 1985-89, the average amount allocated specifically for women's development was only Baht 5.8 million.) For 1996, the budget will be beefed up to Baht 500 million. Even with this increase, the budget for the development of rural women and children will account for less than 0.07 percent of the total government budget.

## **VI. The Role of NGOs**

### **VI.1 NGO Priorities and Activities**

There are 26 NGOs in Northern Thailand that work on women's issues or provide services to women. Broadly, the objectives of these NGOs are to increase awareness and knowledge of problems facing Thai women, to establish a network of those concerned with women's issues and to enhance continued cooperation and studies on women's issues.

The areas of activities covered by these NGOs include:

- Health and family welfare
- Training and skills development
- Human rights protection



- Leadership enhancement and political participation.

Northern NGOs view prostitution and AIDS as the most pressing issues, followed by the need to upgrade the status of women in the society. Economic self-reliance through dignified employment is seen as a first step toward improving social status, and toward this end emphasis is laid on improving income-generating skills, such as handicrafts. Other issues that are viewed as important, though to a lesser degree, include production loss due to reduced efficiency, land and environmental degradation, inadequate information and education, and victimization of the rural population in the hands of consumerism and capitalism.

About half of the 26 NGOs are working on AIDS-related issues, while a large number of the remaining are involved in providing handicraft skills and in rural and natural resources management. The level of flexibility that NGOs have is one of their strengths in this regard. As compared to government-sponsored training programs that tend to be more general, NGOs tailor their training programs to suit the needs of the local community in which they work. The time-consuming nature of this site-specific and participatory approach is not suited for large centralized bureaucracies, but is very effective at reaching a target population.

As poverty forces many young, Northern Thai rural women into prostitution, which in turn helps spread diseases like AIDS, the issues of health and employment are closely linked. NGOs have targetted the area of employment accordingly. For example, there are a few NGO projects providing training and factory work in Chiang Rai and Phayao where prostitution is rampant. Other examples include training women in sustainable agricultural methods, which are less reliant on chemical inputs and encourage soil conservation and the use of a greater variety of species.

With regard to women's social status, Northern NGOs feel that more stress should be placed on activities related to increasing awareness and knowledge about women's issues and rights. Specifically, the activities NGOs think should be stressed include:

- Increasing awareness among men as well as women about women's rights,
- Increasing legal knowledge,
- Providing counseling services including services for stress management and hotline telephone services for those in distress,
- Improving professionalism and skills,

- Protection of rights, and support service to counter sexual harassment, violence, etc, and
- Increasing participation in decision-making, campaigning for more employment opportunities for women for high-level jobs in economic and political organizations.

The task before NGOs working on women's issues is complicated by several problems the NGOs themselves face. These include:

- lack of co-ordination among NGOs,
- lack of adequate information system,
- virtual absence of public support, and
- insufficient public relations efforts by NGOs to garner public support.

These problems, particularly the last two, are common to all locally-based NGOs in Thailand. For a long time, Thai NGOs have relied on foreign funding, which is now rapidly declining, as many of the funding sources focus their attention to other countries in the region (Indochina, for instance). Having depended on foreign funding, NGOs have not paid enough attention to enhancing their image with the local population. Thai NGOs in general now face a challenging task of raising money locally by appealing to people's conscience, which could turn out to be a difficult task given that the concept of charity in Thailand is related to religion (making merit for religious gains).

## **VI.2 Government - NGO Collaborative Activities**

The provision of education and training is one area where government and NGOs can work together. While the government's strength is its ability to reach a large number of people to provide general and basic skills, NGOs can meet needs, such as skills training for adults, not filled by the government programs, especially in more remote areas. Recently, there have been few examples of activities where the government and NGOs have been able to work together successfully. However, a new program in the North, organized through Chiang Mai University, is attempting to bring together the public, private and non-profit sectors to combat the problem of prostitution.

Called Thai Women of Tomorrow (TWT), the program takes a three-step approach of education, counselling, and skills training to keep young women in school. Step 1 is an intensive AIDS education program through the mass media. Step 2 is an

attempt to keep girls in school through counselling with parents and the provision of modest scholarships. Step 3 will provide skills training to young women (age 16 and up) once they have finished nine years of schooling. About 100 of the women will be provided internships at companies in the area which will hopefully lead to full employment in the future. This activity provides an interesting model for preventing girls from entering into the sex industry.

## **VII. Conclusions and Recommendations**

It is a commonly held view that rural women in Northern Thailand have enjoyed a high level of economic decision-making power in the family. The matrilineal tradition has also protected women economically and physically. Under the same system, while women's main contribution to the family has been largely economic, social, religious, and political functions are performed by men. These latter functions have provided men with better opportunities for education.

Over time, improved transportation infrastructure, expanded government services and mass media development have increased access to higher education, improved health and broadened income generating activities for women. The fruits of development and legal changes however, have been reaped more by the higher income class. At the same time, resource degradation, increased population, and mismanaged resource policies have pushed women away from their homes and traditional protection. In many unfortunate cases not yet fully explained by economic and cultural reasons, young women have been reduced to being traded as commodities, sold by their parents even before they reach maturity.

Combatting prostitution means reversing a trend in the underlying economic incentives. There must be viable alternatives to the sex industry available to poor rural families in the North. For example, the government offers a large number of scholarships to girls in high-risk areas in the realization that keeping girls in school provides them with alternatives to the sex industry. There are also NGOs at work in the region providing skills training or other income-generating activities. However, these activities, though well-intentioned, are haphazardly or intermittently effective. Right now the opportunity costs of education are perceived to be too high and this perceived cost must be lowered if girls are to be kept in school.

To lower the perceived costs of education, *alternative sources of income and employment* should be made available. JICA should support area-specific projects to be undertaken in partnership between the government, NGOs and the private sector. Such support can be channeled through a variety of means, such as training at universities or government institutes. The following are some examples of activities in which JICA can support and enhance local efforts.

1. *Employment to be offered by labor intensive industries* (e.g. textiles, assembly industries) to primary school graduates in high-risk areas. This is to be coupled with continued education after shifts. NGOs and public universities could participate in recruitment, initial training and production of educational video tapes. JICA could help design training programs, and coordinate the interactions between companies, NGOs, and the government officials involved. Figures 1 depicts a model projects whereby JICA works with various government institutions to support training efforts in the region. Appendix 1 provides the Terms of Reference (TOR) for project co-ordinators.
2. *Promotion of self-employed women and village industries:* At present, many NGOs and government extension services provide direct skills to village women. Assistance agencies, however, continue to look after orders, designs and market outlets, an unsustainable practice in the long run. Potential women entrepreneurs need information and training on basic business operations such as making loan requests or simple marketing techniques. Visits to other successful village industries, market outlets, sources of input and machinery could be introduced to women entrepreneurs.
3. *Training of NGO staff or government officials:* To carry out the support and training necessary, NGO and official staff must be trained in participatory methods of project selection, design and implementation. Staff may also have to be trained as teachers in the specific skills selected by rural women. Alternatively, support could be given to regional universities and local educational institutes to provide direct training to women entrepreneurs. More generally, JICA can support networking among NGOs, as well as greater communication between NGOs and the government. NGOs often have the best information and techniques regarding the situation of women in rural areas. However, this village-level view does not always reach higher levels of government. At the same time, NGOs can become tunnel-visioned in their approaches, and need outside contact to maintain their effectiveness.

There are other issues affecting the welfare of women that deserve attention as well. Hand-in-hand with the problem of prostitution is the alarming increase in AIDS cases in the North. Through AIDS awareness campaigns, the risks associated with sex despite the use of condoms should be made explicit. The virtual certainty of contracting AIDS through entrance into the sex industry, either as a customer or a supplier, should be made more apparent.

Despite longer-term goals, there is still a need for emergency relief and welfare efforts. These include AIDS widows projects and emergency shelters and legal counseling services for women subject to sexual harassment, family violence or unfair legal practices and sex discrimination.

There is also the need for more research into the causes of prostitution. While rural poverty is definitely one cause, it cannot explain why prostitution is more prevalent in some areas (like the North) which have higher income levels than others. Research is needed in other areas as well to strengthen and revitalize programs that attempt to enhance the status of women in rural Northern Thailand.

Table 1 Structural Changes in the Thai Labor Force, by Sector and by Sex, 1974-1987

	Wet Season Employment						Dry Season Employment					
	Level 1974		Increments 1974-79		Level 1979		Level 1974		Increments 1974-79		Level 1979	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Employment by Industry</b> (thousands of persons)												
Agriculture	6015.3	5210.9	1821.0	1971.5	7836.3	7182.4	4411.8	2643.8	1345.1	1282.0	5756.9	3925.8
Mining	41.6	8.0	-9.8	-1.2	31.8	6.8	34.0	15.4	30.3	6.2	64.3	21.6
Manufacturing	939.4	754.2	24.5	6.7	963.9	760.9	1157.1	968.3	104.2	-52.4	1261.3	915.9
Construction	243.6	33.2	109.6	23.4	353.2	56.6	291.8	33.5	204.1	49.4	495.9	82.9
Utilities	49.2	12.4	-2.4	-5.4	46.8	7.0	50.6	10.7	-6.3	-3.7	44.3	7.0
Commerce	748.2	880.4	43.2	69.8	791.4	950.2	780.4	898.0	81.4	117.5	861.8	1015.5
Transport	437.7	27.4	-43.2	3.4	394.5	30.8	493.2	31.8	-48.0	-0.4	445.2	31.4
Services	1016.5	740.2	-45.6	104.1	970.9	844.3	1032.2	791.0	-19.4	78.3	1012.8	869.3
Others	0.8	0.1	-0.8	-0.1	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	-0.1	-0.1	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>9492.3</b>	<b>7666.8</b>	<b>1896.5</b>	<b>2172.2</b>	<b>11388.8</b>	<b>9839.0</b>	<b>8251.2</b>	<b>5392.6</b>	<b>1691.3</b>	<b>1476.8</b>	<b>9942.5</b>	<b>6869.4</b>
<b>Employment by location</b>												
Rural	8249.2	6863.2	1493.1	1751.4	9742.3	8614.6	7037.1	4598.1	1286.2	1090.6	8323.3	5688.7
Urban	1243.1	803.7	403.4	420.7	1646.5	1224.4	1214.2	794.5	405.0	386.2	1619.2	1180.7
<b>Percentage of Total Employment</b>												
Agriculture	63.4	68.0	96.0	90.8	68.8	73.0	53.5	49.0	79.5	86.8	57.9	57.1
Mining	0.4	0.1	-0.5	-0.1	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.3	1.8	0.4	0.6	0.3
Manufacturing	9.9	9.8	1.3	0.6	8.5	7.7	14.0	18.0	6.2	-3.5	12.7	13.3
Construction	2.6	0.4	5.8	1.1	3.1	0.6	3.5	0.6	12.1	3.3	5.0	1.2
Utilities	0.5	0.2	-0.1	-0.2	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.2	0.4	-0.3	0.4	0.1
Commerce	7.9	11.5	2.3	3.2	6.9	9.7	9.5	16.7	4.8	8.0	8.7	14.8
Transport	4.6	0.4	-2.3	0.2	3.5	0.3	6.0	0.6	-238.0	0.0	4.5	0.5
Services	10.7	9.7	-2.4	4.8	8.5	8.6	12.5	14.7	-1.1	5.3	10.2	12.7
Others	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Rural</b>	<b>86.9</b>	<b>89.5</b>	<b>78.7</b>	<b>80.6</b>	<b>85.5</b>	<b>87.6</b>	<b>85.3</b>	<b>85.3</b>	<b>76.1</b>	<b>73.8</b>	<b>83.7</b>	<b>82.8</b>
<b>Urban</b>	<b>13.1</b>	<b>10.5</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>19.4</b>	<b>14.5</b>	<b>12.4</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>14.7</b>	<b>23.9</b>	<b>26.2</b>	<b>16.3</b>	<b>17.2</b>

continued

Table 1 (Continued)

	Wet Season Employment						Dry Season Employment					
	Level 1983		Increments 1983-87		Level 1987		Level 1983		Increments 1983-87		Level 1987	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
<b>Number (in thousands)</b>												
Agriculture	9055.4	8345.9	483.8	-96.0	9539.2	8249.9	6730.7	4797.8	1890.8	1762.5	8621.5	6560.3
Mining	44.4	6.2	-2.3	6.7	42.1	12.9	48.3	17.7	27.9	10.6	76.2	7.1
Manufacturing	1013.2	829.2	259.3	366.1	1272.5	1165.3	1402.7	1133.8	47.0	177.8	1449.7	1311.6
Construction	426.9	84.6	116.2	10.8	543.1	95.4	639.7	105.7	169.4	-0.2	809.1	105.5
Utilities	90.0	16.3	7.7	5.1	97.7	21.4	89.7	16.9	7.1	3.5	96.8	20.4
Commerce	990.1	1203.7	383.1	418.9	1373.2	1622.6	1109.6	1303.8	411.9	338.8	1521.5	1642.6
Transport	488.6	46.1	82.6	15.5	571.2	61.6	568.2	51.0	62.2	5.0	630.4	56.0
Services	1329.9	1206.5	115.3	294.9	1445.2	1501.4	1403.2	1214.0	47.7	405.9	1450.9	1619.9
Others	2.4	2.3	17.4	0.8	19.8	3.1	2.2	0.4	2.1	3.1	4.4	3.5
<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>13440.9</b>	<b>11740.8</b>	<b>1463.1</b>	<b>1022.8</b>	<b>14904.0</b>	<b>12733.6</b>	<b>11994.3</b>	<b>8641.1</b>	<b>2666.1</b>	<b>2707.0</b>	<b>14660.5</b>	<b>11326.9</b>
<b>Employment by location</b>												
Rural	11615.0	10324.7	870.6	399.2	12485.6	10723.9	10205.4	7267.3	1983.9	2009.9	12189.3	9277.2
Urban	1825.9	1416.1	592.5	593.6	2418.4	2009.7	1789.0	1373.8	682.2	675.9	2471.2	2049.7
<b>Percentage of Total Employment</b>												
Agriculture	67.4	71.1	33.1	-9.7	64.0	64.8	56.1	55.5	70.9	65.6	58.8	57.9
Mining	0.3	0.1	-0.2	0.7	0.3	0.1	0.4	0.2	1.0	-0.4	0.5	0.1
Manufacturing	7.5	7.1	17.7	33.9	8.5	9.2	11.7	13.1	1.8	6.6	9.9	11.6
Construction	3.2	0.7	7.9	1.1	3.6	0.7	5.3	1.2	6.4	0.0	5.5	0.9
Utilities	0.7	0.1	0.5	0.5	0.7	0.2	0.7	0.2	0.3	0.1	0.7	0.2
Commerce	7.4	10.3	26.2	42.2	9.2	12.7	9.3	15.1	15.4	12.6	10.4	14.5
Transport	3.6	0.4	5.6	1.6	3.8	0.5	4.7	0.6	2.3	0.2	4.3	0.5
Services	9.9	10.3	7.9	29.7	9.7	11.8	11.7	14.0	1.8	15.1	9.9	14.3
Others	0.0	0.0	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Rural</b>	<b>86.4</b>	<b>87.9</b>	<b>59.5</b>	<b>40.2</b>	<b>83.8</b>	<b>84.2</b>	<b>85.1</b>	<b>84.1</b>	<b>74.4</b>	<b>74.8</b>	<b>83.1</b>	<b>81.9</b>
<b>Urban</b>	<b>13.6</b>	<b>12.1</b>	<b>40.5</b>	<b>59.8</b>	<b>16.2</b>	<b>15.8</b>	<b>14.9</b>	<b>15.9</b>	<b>25.6</b>	<b>25.2</b>	<b>16.9</b>	<b>18.1</b>

Source: Siamwalla (1991)

**Table 2. Employment Structure of Thailand, 1992**

Item	Employment			
	Wet Season		Dry Season	
	Female	Male	Female	Male
<b>Employment by sector ('000 persons)</b>				
Agriculture	9243.5	10461.2	6364.1	8253.2
Manufacturing	1719.5	1880.7	2056.6	2202.7
Trade	1807.9	1591.3	1890.4	1684.4
Service	1744.1	1622.8	1777.8	1689.5
Mining & quarrying	11.8	50.6	8.2	61.3
Construction	231.3	1087.5	326.4	1584.6
Utilities	24.4	96.9	20.3	91.7
Transport	105.7	673.6	114.3	741.1
Other enterprises	9.3	22.5	11.5	8.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>14897.5</b>	<b>17487.1</b>	<b>12569.6</b>	<b>16316.5</b>
<b>Percentage of total employment</b>				
Agriculture	62.05	59.82	50.63	50.58
Manufacturing	11.54	10.75	16.36	13.50
Trade	12.14	9.10	15.04	10.32
Service	11.71	9.28	14.14	10.35
Mining & quarrying	0.08	0.29	0.07	0.38
Construction	1.55	6.22	2.60	9.71
Utilities	0.16	0.55	0.16	0.56
Transport	0.71	3.85	0.91	4.54
Other enterprises	0.06	0.13	0.09	0.05
<b>Total</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>	<b>100.00</b>

Source: Labor Force Survey



**Table 3 Income Status of Thai Women (1976-1992)**

Age group	% of women's cash income in total cash income	% women's income in kind	Average income of women (baht/month)	% Women in total household work force	No. of samples
<b>North</b>					
1976	22	37	479.1	52	2,334
1988	31	25	1,071.7	54	2,322
1992	42	36	1,697.8	52	2,720
<b>Northeast</b>					
1976	19	49	314.0	52	3,143
1988	29	24	900.6	54	2,518
1992	46	44	1,392.4	52	2,911
<b>Central</b>					
1976	27	26	505.9	54	2,150
1988	36	19	1,312.0	55	2,239
1992	46	27	2,567.8	53	2,535
<b>South</b>					
1979	23	27	420.8	53	1,410
1988	29	19	1,131.9	53	1,711
1992	53	26	2,796.2	52	2,142
<b>Greater Bangkok</b>					
1976	28	15	809.8	52	2,294
1988	38	15	2,671.7	54	2,231
1992	42	22	5,844.6	54	3,150
<b>Whole Kingdom</b>					
1976	24	32	498.1	53	11,331
1988	33	21	1,414.7	54	11,021
1992	47	33	2,731.8	52	13,458

Source: Computed from NSO's SES data

**Table 4 Average Income of Household Members, by Gender and by Source (1976-1992)**

(percent)

Source of income	1976		1988		1992	
	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male
Wages and salaries	38.5	32.4	60	51.5	64.3	48.5
Profits	47.2	61.1	38.3	47	33.7	49.4
Other	14.3	6.5	1.6	1.5	2.0	2.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Source : Computed from SES data

**Table 5 Average Monthly Income of Household, by Gender of Household Head and by Region (Selected Years)**

(baht/household)

Region	No. of households		Average income		
	Female	Male	Female (1)	Male (2)	Ratio (%) (1)/(2)
<b>North</b>					
- 1976	361	1,983	1,566.50	1,982.30	79
- 1988	464	1,860	3,644.30	4,065.70	90
- 1992	505	2,192	4,811.60	5,784.30	83
<b>Northeast</b>					
- 1976	496	2,649	1,592.60	1,771.60	90
- 1988	537	1,985	3,072.10	3,680.90	83
- 1992	604	2,311	3,619.20	4,474.60	81
<b>Central</b>					
- 1976	460	1,726	1,993.50	2,648.20	75
- 1988	537	1,717	3,888.60	4,907.20	79
- 1992	590	1,948	5,209.70	6,674.20	78
<b>South</b>					
- 1976	235	1,178	1,477.00	2,317.40	63
- 1988	327	1,384	3,708.40	4,697.10	79
-1992	372	1,709	4,799.30	5,953.50	81
<b>Greater Bangkok</b>					
- 1976	530	1,773	3,146.90	3,480.90	90
- 1988	601	1,633	7,411.90	8,936.50	83
- 1992	847	2,108	10,013.80	11,913.60	85
<b>Whole Kingdom</b>					
- 1976	2,052	9,309	2,060.20	2,373.60	87
- 1988	2,433	8,579	4,499.60	5,174.10	87
- 1992	2,918	10,268	6,350.20	7,099.20	90

Source: Computed from SES data, National Statistical Office

Table 6 Rural Northern Thailand : Employment by Sector and by Age

Age	Agricultural Sector				Non-Agricultural Sectors										All sectors
	Unpaid		Paid labor		Handicraft		Manufacturing		Commerce		Public service		Other		
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Below 15	1.4	1.7	2.9	2.2	1.7	0.9	-	0.8	-	3.7	-	-	1.0	2.0	19.0
15 - 20	8.3	5.6	13.1	8.3	11.2	10.5	22.7	39.5	5.8	3.7	1.1	4.1	12.0	26.3	11.5
21 - 25	8.5	9.2	8.9	9.6	14.7	9.1	36.4	28.2	5.8	8.9	8.4	9.6	22.8	24.1	11.4
26 - 30	13.9	15.4	12.8	16.6	23.3	20.9	9.1	12.9	14.6	14.2	24.7	31.5	16.3	19.8	13.1
31 - 35	15.5	17.5	15.0	20.4	12.1	20.9	9.1	8.1	15.5	17.1	23.2	30.1	16.5	11.9	12.1
36 - 40	15.4	16.8	19.5	20.1	6.0	19.5	10.6	5.6	17.5	17.1	15.8	15.1	13.3	9.3	9.8
41 -45	7.5	10.9	8.0	8.3	5.2	8.2	3.0	1.6	3.9	12.2	9.5	4.1	9.4	3.1	5.5
46 -50	6.7	5.6	6.1	4.8	5.2	2.7	-	1.6	12.6	6.9	7.4	4.1	2.8	1.1	3.5
51 - 55	7.8	8.1	7.0	5.4	6.0	3.6	3.0	-	8.7	8.1	5.3	-	2.4	1.1	4.2
56 -60	7.9	5.8	4.2	4.5	6.0	3.2	1.5	-	5.8	5.7	2.6	1.4	2.1	0.8	4.2
Over 60	7.2	3.5	2.6	-	8.6	0.5	4.5	1.6	9.7	2.4	2.1	-	1.3	0.3	5.7
Total (n)	100.0 (909)	100.0 (881)	100.0 (313)	100.0 (314)	100.0 (116)	100.0 (220)	100.0 (66)	100.0 (124)	100.0 (246)	100.0 (246)	100.0 (190)	100.0 (73)	100.0 (668)	100.0 (353)	100.0 (5574)

Notes : 1 No of household members = 5574

2 No of households = 1035

3 Survey conducted in 1991

Source: Kaosa-ard, Roongruangsee and Pitackwong, 1992

**Table 7 Percentage of Number of Jobs Held, by Sex and by Age Groups**

Age	Not working		1 Job		2 Jobs or more	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
Lowest - 14	36.5	32.2	1.3	2.2	1.0	0.0
15 - 20	11.7	9.0	10.6	15.6	10.7	12.5
21 - 25	6.6	7.7	17.6	16.0	11.7	6.9
26 - 30	8.0	9.8	17.2	19.4	14.6	8.3
31 - 35	7.8	8.7	16.4	15.9	15.5	26.4
36 - 40	5.5	6.5	13.2	13.9	23.3	22.2
41 - 45	3.0	4.8	7.7	6.1	10.7	12.5
46 - 50	2.8	2.8	5.1	3.6	3.9	2.8
51 - 55	3.6	4.7	4.8	3.6	2.9	4.2
56 - 60	5.3	5.0	3.2	3.0	2.9	2.8
61 and higher	9.1	8.9	3.0	0.7	2.9	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Notes: 1 No. of total household members = 5574

2 No. of sampled households = 1035

3 One person may hold more than one job

Source: same as for Table 6.

**Table 8 Income contribution of women in the total household cash income**

Income source	Mean annual income of women (baht)	No. of households	Share of female income in household income (%)
Total cash income	21,068	744	46
- Advanced agriculture	11,956	140	17
- Rain-fed agriculture	17,319	133	49
- Service/Rainfed agriculture	34,325	155	55
- Industry	24,391	181	52
- Handicraft	15,723	165	46

Source: Same as for Table 6

**Table 9 Remittances Made by Offspring to Their Families**

(baht/year)

	By sons		By daughters	
	Mean	Cases	Mean	Cases
Total samples	4,788.09	109	11,364.50	157
Advanced agriculture	2,364.40	24	4,098.22	54
Rain-fed agriculture	8,006.17	34	5,882.40	24
Industry	2,894.55	19	3,336.80	24
Handicraft	4,901.66	10	5,773.62	16
Service	4,042.42	22	27,642.04	44

Source: Same as for Table 6

**Table 10 Enrolment Ratio for Lower Secondary Education, Classified by Gender and Village Type**

(Percentage)

	Enrolment ratio		
	Male	Female	Total
<b>Village type</b>			
Advanced agriculture	53.1	65.6	59.4
Rain-fed agriculture	53.8	52.9	53.3
Industry-related	64.0	54.5	59.6
Handicraft	57.7	73.0	65.4
Service	62.5	60.0	61.0
Total samples	57.9	61.0	59.6
Total no. of children at school	(77)	(91)	(168)
Total no. of children	(133)	(149)	(282)

Source: Same as for Table 6

**Table 11 Enrolment Ratio for Upper Secondary Education, Classified by Gender and by Village Type (16-18 years)**

(Percentage)

	Enrolment ratio (16-18 years)		
	Male	Female	Total
<b>Village type</b>			
Advanced agriculture	40.0	48.0	44.0
Rain-fed agriculture	19.4	18.0	18.6
Industry-related	42.9	27.8	34.8
Handicraft	30.0	40.0	34.0
Service	42.9	32.6	36.0
Total sample	34.5	31.3	32.8
Total no. of children at school	(49)	(51)	(100)
Total no. of children	(142)	(163)	(305)

Source: Same as for Table 6

**Table 12 Comparison of Access to Agricultural Knowledge, Classified by Source and by Group**

(% of respondents)

Information source	Sex		Total sample
	Male	Female	
Local traders	48.5	42.6	46.8
Agrochemical companies	21.2	17.0	20.0
COFs	50.1	31.9	45.0
Banks	34.8	17.8	30.0
Television	68.4	58.1	65.6
Radio	37.1	27.8	34.5
Reading	24.7	18.3	22.9
Field trips/exhibitions	22.1	16.7	20.6
Groups	48.8	39.2	46.1
Extension officers	63.8	48.9	69.6
n =	746	289	1035

Source: Same as for Table 6

**Table 13 Women MPs in the House of Representatives, by Year**

Year	No. of MPs			Women MPs as % of total
	Male	Female	Total	
1973	283	16	299	5.35
1974	266	3	269	1.11
1975	266	3	269	1.11
1976	272	7	279	2.51
1979	292	9	301	2.99
1983	311	13	324	4.01
1986	335	12	347	3.46
1988	347	10	358	2.80
1992	348	12	360	3.33
1992	345	15	360	4.16

Source: Long Term Plan for Women (1992-2011)

**Table 14 Women MPs in the Senate, by Year**

Year	No. of MPs			Women MPs as % of total
	Male	Female	Total	
1975	91	9	100	9
1976	322	18	340	5.29
1977	350	10	360	2.77
1979	222	3	225	1.33
1981	222	3	225	1.33
1983	239	4	243	1.64
1985	238	5	243	2.05
1986	255	5	260	1.92
1987	255	5	260	1.92
1988	262	5	267	1.87
1989	261	6	267	2.24
1992	263	7	270	2.59

Source: Long Term Plan for Women (1992-2011)

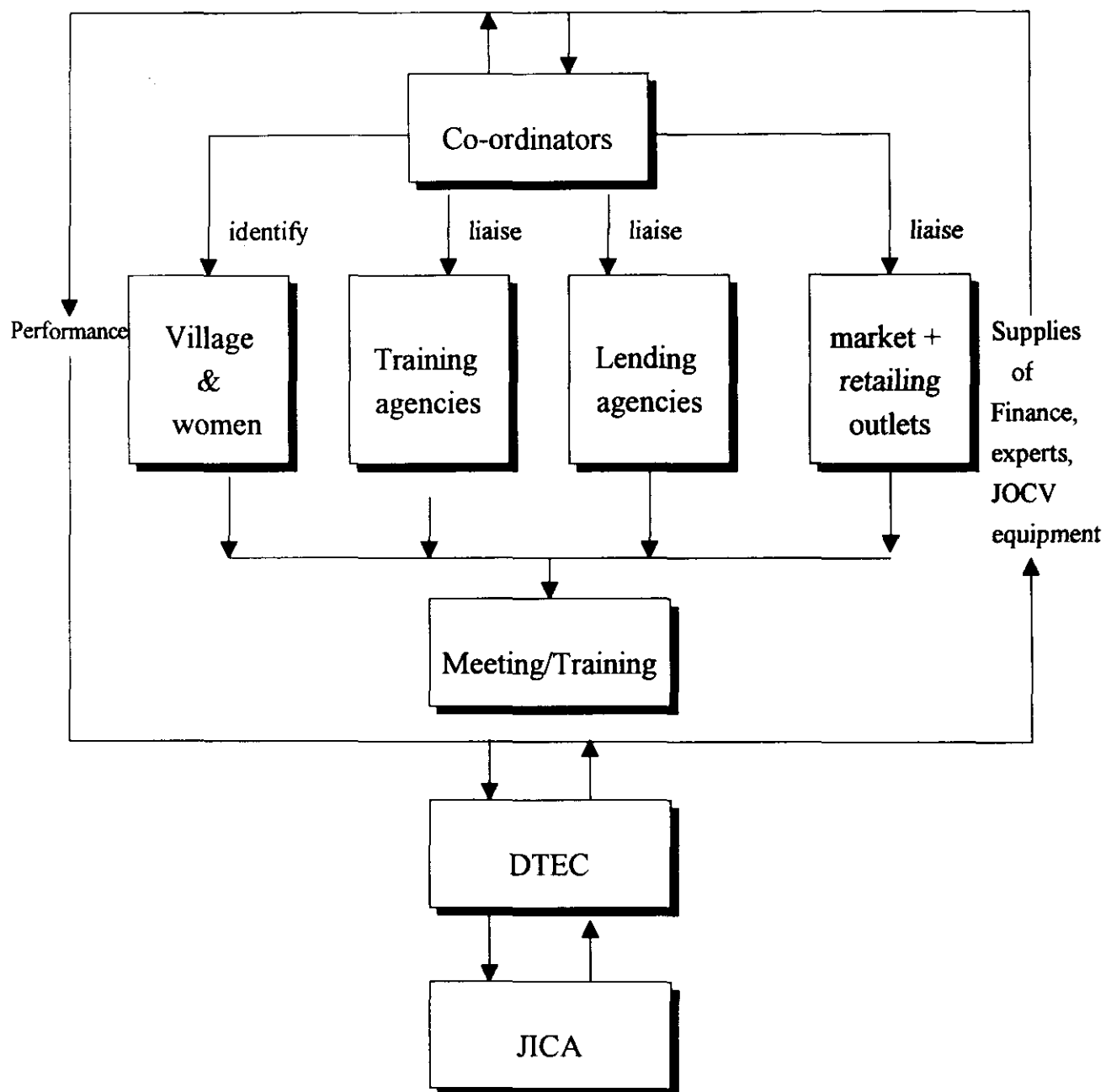


**Table 15 Women's Participation in Provincial Governance in 1989**

Position	% of positions held by women nationwide
Provincial Council Member	5.6
Municipal Council Member	4.8
Sub-District Head (Kamnan)	0.5
Village Head (Phu Yai Ban)	0.76
Sub-District Council Member	0.8
Village Council Member	4.0

Source: Long Term Plan for Women (1992-2011)

**Figure 1 A Model for Coordinating Women in Village-based Industries Program**



Note : JOCV = Japanese overseas Co-operation Volunteers

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### **A. Proposed Terms of Reference for Coordinators for Girls' Training in Factories in Japan**

The coordinator is expected to accomplish the following tasks.

1. The coordinator will be responsible for selecting villages and trainees from prostitution-risk areas in Northern Thailand.
2. Provide training to girls (for three months) in
  - Japanese language,
  - Mathematics,
  - Factory Safety Rules,
  - Orientation about Japan
3. Preparation of travel documents.

#### **Possible Coordinators**

1. Ministry of Labour and Welfare and Community Development Department
2. Universities or teachers' colleges

### **B. Proposed Terms of Reference for Coordinators for Training and Work in Japanese Factories**

1. Select villages and trainees from prostitution-risk areas
2. Provide scholarships for training in local training institutes
3. Liaise with factories in Thailand

## **C. Terms of Reference for Coordinators for Village-based Industries Program**

### **1. Select Villages and Trainees**

- 1.1 Identify potential villages
- 1.2 Take villagers to see successful village industries
- 1.3 Let the villagers discuss among themselves and decide about a skill to be requested
- 1.4 Select women trainees

2. Liaise with skill training organizations, e.g., the Ceramic Training Center in Lampang Province, Department of Industrial Promotion in Chiang Mai, and universities, or hire private experts for training.

### **3. Provide training to village women regarding**

- making loan requests,
- simple marketing techniques and information on market outlets.

### **4. Liaise with lending agencies.**

### **5. Liaise with government and private retail outlets.**

### **Possible Coordinators**

- 1. University Bureau: Chiang Mai University, Maejo Institute of Agricultural Technology, Naresuan University
- 2. Ministry of Education: Teachers' Training Colleges

Note: Coordinators must be trained in the use of participatory methods.