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The Status of Thai Women in Two Rural Areas

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL OF WOMEN OF THAILAND
AND THE
FACULTY OF SOCIAL ADMINISTRATION

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The Status of Thai Women in Two Rural Areas

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INTRODUCTION

In September, 1976 The National Council of Women of Thailand (NCWT) signed a contract with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to do a survey of the "Status of Women in Rural Sectors of Thailand". The NCWT's interest stems from a desire to identify appropriate program areas for rural women since their organization is now focusing on improving the lives of Thai women in rural areas. USAID initiated this survey not only to obtain data which would be the basis for developing programs to meet rural Thai women's needs, but also to help clarify the impact all USAID programs in rural Thailand may have upon rural women.

The Thai Women

Thailand's labor force is 45% women and 55% men. This is the highest percentage of women in the labor force in the Asian region. The large majority of the women labor force are "unskilled" laborers, including such occupations as farming, raising animals, and doing various part-time jobs and/or factory work. Thai women, particularly in the rural areas, have never been exclusively housewives. They are not at all ashamed to be working and they are recognized as being indispensable to the family labor force.

Until 1920 very few women in Thailand had any formal education. The monks taught only boys at the temples. Recently, within the last decade, there seems to have been more opportunities for both girls and boys from rural areas to study to a higher level.

Now the numbers of men and women receiving graduate degrees in Thailand are almost equal, although, in the primary and secondary schools there are still significantly fewer girls attending school than boys.

Legally Thai women have equal status with Thai men since the Civil and Commercial Code Amendment Act (Number 8) of October 5, 1976. Thai women and men have had the right to vote and to run for elections since 1932 when Thailand acquired her first constitution. Although laws have changed and

according to the law, women are now equal, old attitudes remain among both men and women. For example, besides working in the fields, a Thai woman does the housework, cooks the meals, and is considered responsible for bringing up the children. Men still have more than one wife, even though the law prohibits it.

National surveys have indicated that Thai parents prefer to have a child of each sex rather than two of either sex.¹ The daughter works in the home and has the responsibility of taking care of the parents when they are sick and/or old. The son carries the family name and does the heavy work in the fields. These are some of the traditional roles of rural women and men in Thai families. Another tradition, still true in the majority of rural Thai families is that women keep the family's money. If the family has money left over after meeting the family's needs, the wife may have some power. More often, however, there is not enough money and this gives her the responsibility of making the money stretch to cover family expenses. Women are involved in family decision-making and have important responsibilities within the family, but outside the family Thai women have not been well-represented in the community, district, provincial, or national decision-making arenas.

A rural woman, however, has an extremely productive role in the village as an indispensable farmer, a responsible guardian of the family's income, a decision-maker, and the prime person responsible for the welfare of both her children and her parents. There is no need for identity crisis or lack of feeling useful. Her roles are, in some cases, different from those of men, but they are not necessarily inferior.

The vast majority of rural Thai farmers are not making the income they feel is necessary to provide for their children's food, clothing, and education or for their own security in retirement. For most rural women and men the main concern is to find the means to financially support their families. Therefore, a woman's problems and needs are directly related to the problems and needs of her family. One way to meet the felt needs of rural Thai women is to improve her income earning capacity so that she can contribute more to the family and her community. Another way is to improve the communities in which rural women are living and thereby raise the standard of living for both women and men. The optimum situation would be to have both of these developments happening at once.

¹World Fertility Survey, Report No. 1, The Survey of Fertility in Thailand, Country Report, Volume 1, Institute of Population Studies, Chulalongkorn University and Populations Survey Division, National Statistical Office, Bangkok, 1977, p. 2.

Selection of Sites

This survey was conducted in twenty villages, ten villages in Chachoengsao Province and ten villages in Lampang Province. The twenty villages, from ten districts, were selected for the following reasons:

1. The community had not been recently surveyed.
2. The community had more than fifty families, but less than three hundred families.
3. The villages are "safe" and accessible by road.

Preparation of the Questionnaires

The questionnaires were designed after consulting a number of different resources. These include the USAID questionnaire, former questionnaires which had been used by the team members and other individuals, and suggestions from the representatives of private and government agencies who attended the January meeting specifically to add their comments to the first draft of the questionnaires.

A pre-test was conducted with six families in each of four villages which had been chosen for the survey. Two of the villages were in Chachoengsao Province, two villages were in Lampang.

There are three questionnaires. The first questionnaire was answered by the head of the household, defined here as the person who has the major responsibility for earning money to support the family. The second questionnaire was designed for the wife of the household head and all women in the household between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine who were present on the day of the survey. The third questionnaire, focusing on the resources and services available in the village, was answered by the village headman.

Interviewers were trained and a field survey was conducted by the team members in order to explain the purpose of the survey to the village headman, his assistant, or the principal of the village school, and to ask for their cooperation. The survey was conducted during the dry season (April and May) when there is not as much work in the fields. This meant that the villagers were more available for interviewing than they might have been at other times of the year.

All the interviewers were from the province where the survey took place

and many of them lived in rural areas themselves, therefore they were comfortable talking with the villagers and friendly and considerate in their approach. The interviewers were asked to emphasize in each household that the survey data would be used in planning programs for provincial and/or national benefit.

Results

In both provinces the majority (61%) of the villagers are rice farmers. In Lampang most of the people who are rice farmers plant on their own land, in Chachoengsao 56% of these farmers rent fields are hired to work on others' fields. The remaining most popular primary occupations are growing crops other than rice, raising animals, and being hired by others to do jobs, such as building roads, carrying heavy loads, or driving a lorry.

In Lampang the majority (58%) of villagers earn between less than B 2,000 and B 7,499 (US\$375.00) annually and in Chachoengsao the majority (58%) earn between B 15,000 and over B 33,000 (US\$750.00 and over US\$1,650.00) annually. Lampang is ninety kilometers south of Chiangmai, the second largest city in Thailand, and 642 kilometers from Bangkok. Chachoengsao is sixty kilometers from Bangkok, the capital and by far the largest city in Thailand. The average population of the villages surveyed in Lampang is 983 people, in Chachoengsao, 429 people. There are many similarities, however, in the two provinces.

In Chachoengsao the villages tend to spread out, sometimes along a canal, with the rice fields behind the houses. In Lampang, the houses are built in clusters close together and the rice fields are around the clusters. Temples are located in the center of the village. In Lampang, 100% of the families are Thai Buddhists, in Chachoengsao 82% are Thai Buddhists and 18% are Chinese Buddhists. The households (68%) described themselves as nuclear families. However, the neighbors of most the families are in fact their parents or siblings. Therefore the influence of the family is still very strong. The average number of people living under one roof, of both provinces, is 5.3. The majority (57%) of the villages' inhabitants are under 25 years old. This figure includes only people living in the villages, not children who are living in Bangkok or Chiangmai attending school or working.

Table 1 shows clearly that the majority of villagers are working and contributing to the economic productivity of their families. There is little difference between women's and men's working status.

The illiteracy rate is highest among women. In the village schools before, only the men were taught at the village temples.

TABLE 1
Working/Studying Status of the Population over 11 Years Old

	Male %	Female %
1. Working	69	67
2. Not working	3	5
3. Studying	25	22
4. Retired/disabled	3	6
Total	100	100
	(N = 2,274)	(N = 2,302)

A Brief Description of the Women Interviewed

The women interviewed, number 1,272, range in age from fifteen to over seventy years old, with the majority of women between the ages of fifteen and forty-nine years old. Most (61%) of the interviewees are the wives of the household heads who were interviewed. 9% of the women are themselves household heads, meaning that they are responsible for financially supporting their families. Over 70% of the women interviewed are married and 88% of the married women were married between the ages of fifteen and twenty-four. The educational level of the interviewees is low, 63% have studied only one to four grades of school. Another 26% have never attended school 5% of the women interviewed are students, all between the ages of fifteen and nineteen.

The main occupation of 73% of the women is agricultural-related, either tending crops, raising animals, or growing rice with their husbands and families on their own land, on rented land or on fields where they have been hired to work. From observation it is obvious that besides working in the fields, these women also have the responsibility of cooking, fetching the water, taking care of the house and children, and raising animals. Almost all (92%) of the interviewees (not including students) earn an income and the majority (54%) of these women earn it together with their families (from farming or conducting business together). Only 6% responded that being a housewife is their main job. Many of these housewives also work in the fields.

The Economic Role of Women

In the United States, 24.6 percent of women over the age of 15 are economically active; in Malaya, the figure is 29.9 percent, and in the Philippines it is 27.6 percent. In Thailand, however, 81.4 percent of women over 15 are reported as economically active with participation reaching 87.4 percent in the group aged 40-49.¹

It is difficult to quantify accurately the economic contribution of rural Thai Women to their families and their communities, but it is certain that their contribution is necessary for the family's survival.

Of the women interviewed, only 8% (not including students) reported that they earn no income. The majority of women earn income together with their families. The women who receive separate incomes on their own contribute part or all of it to their families. Many of the respondents who receive their own income also said they work with their families in the field.

One of the only differences between the percentages of the individual provinces, is that more women in Lampang grow crops than in Chachoengsao. Similar to the men the majority of women consider their occupation growing rice. When asked how they acquired the skills to do the job they are presently doing, 82% of the women (including only those who felt that they had indeed acquired skills) responded that their parents or older relatives had taught them. With formal training, therefore, most of the women in the villages contribute to their families' economic status.

In addition to the measurable income and the fact that these women make up 50% of the village labour force, women make many other economic contributions.

The rural woman also decreases her family's expense by bargaining for cloth and food in the market and by making her childrens' clothing. Usually women tend small vegetable gardens near the family's house or field, throw leftover rice and scraps to the chickens, and mix the feed to carry out to the pigs.

¹ Kenneth Maurer, et al, *Marriage, Fertility, and Labor Force Participation of Thai Women, an Econometric Study*, Rand Corporation, Santa Monica, 1973, p. 6.

The Decision-Making Role of Women

According to the survey, the majority of family decisions are made together by the wife and husband.

A majority of the respondents (58%) answered that the husband and wife should together decide how far children should study, where children should work, etc.

Family planning includes, not only birth control but also planning for the future of the entire family. The majority (57%) of the women answered both the husband and wife should concern themselves with these issues. The wife alone, however, appears to take the responsibility in a large number (36%) of families.

In terms of making the decision to borrow money, it is the husband (79%) who usually signs the loan agreement papers.

TABLE 2

Who Decides What to do with the Products of the Family's Labor?

	Percent
1. Both the husband and wife	50
2. Wife	22
3. Husband	17
4. Other (mother, father and older relatives)	10
5. Don't know or don't answer	1
Total	100

(N = 867 women)

Table 2 is yet another example of family-related decisions made by the husband and wife together.

¹ P. Chatinanonda, "The Study of the Status and Role of Women in 21 Villages of Lampang Province, Thailand," Faculty of Social Administration, Thammasat University, May, 1977, pp. 27, 28.

Although husbands and wives agree that women are involved in many different aspects of family decision-making, women are not involved in formal village decision-making. This survey did not specifically ask whether women are members of the village development committee. However, several village headmen responded informally that there are no women on their village committees. A study (1975) done in Lampang that there is a "lack of involvement of village women in the decision-making process of the villages." In the twenty-one villages surveyed, "only one has a woman who holds a position in the village development committee."¹

Attitudes of Women and Men in Two Rural Areas

In order to know how women feel about their capacity to contribute and how men feel about women taking a more active role, this section on attitudes, role expectations, and hope among rural villagers is included. The last section of each survey questionnaire was designed to determine attitudes towards women, family size, the futures of their children, and family economics.

TABLE 3
Attitudes of Women Interviewed (percentages)

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Total (%)
1. Mothers have an influence on the lives and thoughts of their children	98	1	1	100
2. Men and women should select their own spouses	76	21	3	100
3. Husbands should make the decisions in the family by themselves	24	71	5	100
4. It is important to have a women's group in the village	87	5	8	100
5. Women are capable of being village leaders	78	17	5	100

6. Women are capable of holding high political positions	80	15	5	100
7. You feel capable of helping to solve your community's problems	80	14	6	100
8. Men and women should receive the same salary for the same work	85	14	1	100

TABLE 4

Attitudes of Male Household Head Interviewed (percentages)

	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	Total (%)
1. Mother have an influence on the lives and thoughts of their children	95	3	2	100
2. Husbands and wives should have equal responsibility in family affairs	94	5	9	100
3. Your wife should be involved in family decision-making	87	9	4	100
4. Your wife should contribute to this community's development	96	3	1	100
5. Your daughter should contribute to this community's development	98	1	1	100

Tables 3 and 4 suggest that both men and women feel that women are capable of and should be included in family and community decision-making. Most women (76%) feel that men and women should select their own spouse. Older women feel as strongly about this issue as younger women.

In Table 4 almost all men (96%) agree that their wives should contribute to the community's development, and an even higher percentage (98%) feel that their daughters should contribute to the community's development. In Table 3 women reflect confidence in the leadership ability of women in holding high political positions (80%) and being village leaders (78%). Again, age does not affect the attitude expressed.

Recent research examined the position of rural women through interviews with twenty-five family units in each of ten rural villages in Chiangmai province (adjacent to Lampang). This revealed that although men and women do make decisions together, women feel that they should not necessarily be treated equal in all respects. For example, women cannot make decisions as well as men, therefore some decisions should be left to men, and that men are naturally leaders while women are followers. Women accept their role as followers, but do not necessarily feel inferior or unconfident of their own skills. In fact the majority of these women feel that women are at least as smart as men, that they work harder than men, and that they have more responsibility than men.¹

TABLE 5

Do Women Interviewed Receive Equal Wages with Men for the Same Work?

	Percent
1. Equal wages	52
2. Man receives higher wages	47
3. Woman receives higher wages	(1)
4. Don't know or don't answer	1
Total	100
	(N = 1,177)

¹ T. Moy, U. Yong, "The Position of Women and Their Contribution to Rural Productive Efforts: A Comparison of Two Case Studies", Asian Institute of Technology, Bangkok, 1976, pp. 29-31.

TABLE 6

Do They Agree with the Statement "Women Should Receive Equal Wages for Equal Work"

Women should receive equal wages	Equal wages %	Wages received for equal work	
		Man receives higher wages %	Woman receives higher wages %
1. Agree	96	73	100
2. Disagree	4	27	0
3. No opinion	0	0	0
Totals	100 (N = 607)	100 (N = 550)	100 (N = 4)

Table 5 indicates that a slight majority (52%) of the interviewed women received the same wages as men for the same work. However, a large number (47%) receive less than men. It is interesting to note (Table 6) that a few (4%) women who receive equal wages disagree with the statement that women should receive equal wages. More significant is the fact that 73% of the women who have jobs in which men receive higher wages agree with the statement that women should receive equal pay. Some (27%) women who receive lower wages disagree with the statements that their wages should be equal. Age of the interviewee makes no difference in response to the statement that women should receive equal wages.

Attitudes towards Family Size

Although attitudes towards family size seems divorced from the status of women, not only economics but also the traditional family roles which men and women perform determine the parents attitudes towards family size throughout Thailand.

Families completely surveyed have an average of 4.08 children.

TABLE 7

The Age of Women Interviewed Compared with Their Attitude towards the Statement "A Family Should have More Than Two Children."

Family should have more than two children	15-24 years %	12-34 years %	35-44 years %	45-59 years %	60 years and over %
1. Agree	49	57	64	70	79
2. Disagree	47	40	34	26	14
3. No opinion	4	3	2	4	7
Total	100	100	100	100	100
	(N = 36)	(N = 250)	(N = 270)	(N = 281)	(N = 99)

The older the women, the higher the percentage who agreed with the statement that a family should have more than two children. The majority (60%) of the total agreed with this statement. Nearly half (49%) of the women aged 15 to 24 years old agreed that a family should have more than two children.

Children play a productive role in 87% of the families interviewed. Children in 48% of the 709 families contribute by physically working with the family in the fields and around the house; another 41% both work with the family and contribute their wages to the family's income.

Attitude Towards Family Economics

Almost all women (96%) agree that they should work to earn an income to add to the family's income. Ninety-nine percent (99%) worry a lot about their economic situation. The large majority (86%) agree that they should find a job in their own village, fewer (54%) but still majority feel that it would be permissible to work outside their village.

Most men (85%) feel that their wives should earn an income to assist the family. It then appears contradictory that 53% of the men feel that their wives should stay at home, do housework, and not work outside the house. Many men

¹ M.L. Boonlua Debyasuvarn, "The Traditional Role of Women in Thai Society", Seminar on Women Wage Earners in Thailand, April, 1975, Pattaya, page 1.

agreed with both of these seemingly contradictory statements for several reasons: 1. Men are on one hand very aware of the economic necessity of having wives work to earn an income to help meet the family needs, and on the other hand feel that wives should stay at home to tend the house and children. 2. These men feel that women can earn a living at home by raising animals, making handicrafts, sewing, or by some other means. Possibly the men who agree with the statement, "Your wife should stay at home, do housework, and not work outside the house." Fifty-three percent (53%) of the men understand that staying at home includes working in the family fields. Women working in the fields is acceptable and necessary. These men, however, in their role as the protectors of women and children, do not want their wives to take a job on her own, away from the family. The male protector role is occasionally referred to in Thailand, as in the following example:

... Thai society keeps very close to nature. I mean by this that in the course of its development there have been very few unnatural or 'non-natural' impositions. If we take a good look at a herd of animals, especially the ones with a fairly high intelligence such as elephants, the monkeys and the apes, we should find something very similar to Thai social life. . . . The herd consists of a leader, which is usually a strong and intelligent male, and in a few cases, such as in some elephant herds, a female.

The leader is normally assisted by a number of strong young males whose duty is to protect females with young, and to train younger males on the accepted rules of the herd. The leader and his, or her, assistants take their responsibility seriously. It has been observed that elephants and monkeys and apes will risk their lives to protect the safety of their herds.

Thai men have always taken the same responsibility, not because they believe that they are mentally superior, but because they are more naturally fitted for the task of protecting their people and especially women with young children.¹

In summary both men and women agree that women must have an economically productive role in the family. It is a necessity. Men and women, however, disagree as to whether that role should include only work close to home or also work outside the home.

PROBLEMS AND NEEDS OF WOMEN AND THEIR COMMUNITIES

The reality is that the most pervasive problem facing women in developing countries is not their status, nor the struggle for equal

pay nor the provision of child care facilities – it is malnutrition. Food, water, shelter, fuel, health, and clothing remain, despite modernization and despite growth in the Gross National Product or per capita income, the basic realities of life. And on the whole it is the women who bear the responsibility for ensuring that these needs are met, for ensuring day to day survival. It is the women who make do.

Elizabeth Reid

Although Thailand does not have as much malnutrition or as extreme destitution as many “developing countries”, the greatest concern of the villagers surveyed is still the ability to provide financially for the family. The family’s economic situation is the primary influence on details mentioned in the previous chapters: the number of children desired, the best age to get married, the hopes for their children, the need for supplementary work, the ability to send their children to school beyond seventh grade, and the ability to make one’s occupation as productive as possible. The problems and needs of both women and men in these rural areas are inextricably linked to their family’s needs. Few, if any, problems can be designated as only men’s or only women’s.

Women’s and Men’s Training Needs

Since Thai women worry a lot about their family’s economic situation, and that both women and men feel that women should earn an income to assist in meeting family needs, the interviewers asked them to agree or disagree with a series of statements. Finally, the women were asked to choose any area in which they would like training – not only areas mentioned in the statements but any area of particular interest. The following two tables summarize that section of the interview.

TABLE 8

Attitudes of Women Toward Receiving Training (percentage)

Statement	Opinion			Total (%)
	Agree	Disagree	No opinion	
1. You would like to know more about nutrition	91	9	0	100
2. You would like to know more about health care	91	7	2	100

3. You would like to know more about family planning	83	13	4	100
4. You would like training in planting and tending crops	88	10	4	100
5. You would like training in raising animals	85	14	1	100
6. You would like training in dressmaking and sewing	67	31	2	100
7. You would like training in weaving	46	52	2	100
8. You would like training in working with canes and reed to make baskets, etc.	55	43	2	100
9. You would like to study reading and writing	59	39	2	100

(N = 1,272 women in each statement)

TABLE 9
In What One Area Would Each Woman Like Training?

	Percent
1. Sewing	31
2. Planting	20
3. Raising animals	19
4. Studying, reading and writing	9
5. Making baskets	5
6. Nutrition and food use	4
7. Health care	2
8. Family planning (including but much more than birth control)	2
9. Weaving cloth	2
10. Other	6
Total	100
	(N = 1,158)

Most women are interested in knowing more about health and nutrition (91%) and in learning about raising animals (85%) and planting crops (88%). When asked to choose only one area for training, the largest number of women (31%) selected sewing. Sewing can be a means to earn money or to economize by sewing clothes for the family. The next two most popular areas of training were planting crops (20%) and raising animals (19%). These three major areas are practical, and provide skills which will make the woman economically more productive. Table 8 shows that women are interested in learning more about many (not just one) different subjects.

TABLE 10

Area in which Women Want Training Compared with the Age of the Women Respondents

Training Area	Age of the respondent			
	15-24 years %	25-34 years %	35-54 years %	55 years and over %
1. Sewing	47	40	18	4
2. Planting crops	9	13	27	20
3. Raising animals	7	17	25	15
4. Reading and writing	18	4	6	2
5. Making baskets	2	4	4	12
6. Nutrition and food use	5	4	3	2
7. Family Planning	2	2	1	0
8. Other (including health, weaving, and training in any area)	7	10	9	13
9. No training wanted	3	6	7	32
Totals	100	100	100	1000
	(N = 355)	(N = 248)	(N = 491)	(N = 162)

The two areas which received the lowest percentages are weaving and making handicrafts with canes and reeds. From observation in the villages it is apparent that making handicrafts used to be a very popular and functional skill.

Most of the floor mats, hats, the cloth, the pillows, and the baskets used in the home and in the fields are handmade. But the majority of people making these are older women. In Table 10, 12% of the oldest age group responded that they would like training in making baskets. Younger women do not seem interested in learning these skills. It is seen as a waste of time, primarily because there is no market for these homemade goods. It is now a national policy to promote cottage industries throughout Thailand. Along with skill training, this promotion program must develop markets for the products, both in Thailand and overseas, if it is to be successful.

It is interesting to note in Table 10 how age affects the type of training desired. Although 32% of the women 55 years and over want no training, women who do want training are most interested in planting crops (20%), raising animals (15%), and making baskets (12%). The women between 35 and 54 years prefer agricultural training, since this will increase their income. The two youngest groups chose sewing as their highest preference. The younger group has the highest percentage (12%) of women who would like to study reading and writing further. Younger women seem to be less interested in learning about agricultural subjects than older women: only 9% want to learn to plant crops, and only 7% to raise animals. Does this mean that younger women would rather not work in the fields, that they feel it is men's work and that women belong in the home or in dress shops?

Problems of the Families and the Communities

Unfortunately, all the problems cannot be solved by training. Training programs will only be effective if the resources are available to use the training properly.

The two areas studied have three seasons during the year: the hot season, the rainy season, and the dry season. During the dry season many wells, ponds, and natural and man-made reservoirs dry up. Thus it is difficult to find water for not only drinking and bathing, but also for planting crops and feeding the animals.

Forty percent of the women consider "water for agriculture" as the most important community need. This survey was conducted during the dry season. The survey team saw clearly that an improved water supply would allow villagers to grow crops on the hundreds of rai which lie dry and barren for at least six months of every year in both Chachoengsao and Lampang. However, within the village and from the homes to the fields where rice and vegetables are grown, the roads are for the most part much too narrow for transporting produce by

any other means than carrying on one's shoulders. Without more water and better roads, the benefits of training programs or other services will be limited.

Unfortunately, much development planning for low income groups in the last twenty years has taken place without reference to the needs of the people for whom the planning is being done. Perhaps planners assume that they "know better" what is good for the low income groups. Villagers, however, are very happy to discuss their family and community needs with outsiders, as they did during the survey. The needs and problems which villagers indicated to us are practical and very real, not daydreams or far-fetched hopes. If the needs could be met and the problems solved, it would indeed improve the standard of living for the women, the men, and their communities. By involving the villagers in this initial planning they will participate more fully in the implementation of programs developed to meet their needs.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

As mentioned in the Introduction, the first priority of the rural Thai women surveyed is the welfare of her family. This entails having enough money in the family budget for the family's expenses. Therefore, the recommendations that apply specifically to women focus on providing skills which will increase her income-earning capacity or will decrease the family's expenses. Other recommendations which do not refer directly to women focus on improving the communities in which women live, thereby raising the living standard for both women and men. The urgency of community problems and priority of training needs vary from one place to another. Although these recommendations arise from analysing this survey data only, the recommendations are possibly applicable to more than just the twenty villages surveyed.

The following are the recommendations:

- 1) Functional non-formal education programs should be set up to give training in areas which will enable women to increase their earning capacity or decrease their family expenses. Careful consideration should be given to:
 - a. the kind of training which women request,
 - b. the time most convenient for women to participate in this training,
 - c. the appropriateness of the type of training, including the availability of raw materials and marketing of produce involved, and
 - d. the number of qualified trainers who understand the life of rural

villagers and who can easily communicate with them.

In areas where the Agricultural Extension Services and Community Development already provide occasional training or assistance, women should be encouraged to attend these programs. Workers from Agricultural Extension Department and Community Development Department exist at the provincial and district levels throughout Thailand, and should be involved in all training programs in their field of expertise. Youth, women, or agricultural groups formed by these government agencies could serve as the nucleus for training programs. Villagers would then know whom to contact and where to go when they have problems related to these agencies' expertise.

- 2) Since orders and improvements are usually suggested from the top down, villagers must be better informed about available services and contracts at the sub-district, district, and provincial level, so that they can start to make suggestions and ask for help from the bottom up. Government civil servants at all levels should be encouraged to "serve" the villagers, to encourage rural people to express their needs and to use the expertise which civil servants offer.

A more concrete recommendation to help solve this problem is to train one respected person from each village to know all the services available at the sub-district, district, and provincial levels, to meet all the civil servants who are directly responsible for their particular villages in all capacities, and to develop an understanding for the way the government system and the way it can work to assist their villages. These trained villagers would be a resource person for their village whenever there is a problem which requires some particular expertise which the village does not have. This resource person would be a liaison between the villager and the government civil servants.

- 3) Since women hold the money in most families, it seems appropriate to train or advise women in money management, family budgeting, and the implications of borrowing money and high-interest credit. Villagers must realize that borrowed money is not "free". If the women are interested, further advise on cooperatives, credit unions, and investment could be introduced.
- 4) Women would like both sons and daughters to receive better formal education than they had. Most would like their daughters to have jobs which will provide a steady income and be less backbreaking than rice

planting. Younger women indicate that they prefer to learn to sew more than to raise animals and crops. A recent sample survey conducted by the Accelerated Rural Development Office of the Ministry of Interior in every district in Lampang province indicates that rural parents hope that their children are able to continue their education and have a "better" occupation than the parents now have. Parents want their children to be more financially secure and socially respected than they themselves are. If their dreams are fulfilled, who will be Thailand's future farmers?

One recommendation is to provide more financial support to small farmers, especially in years when the weather ruins the crops. The price of seed, fertilizer, and other farming necessities can be subsidized.

Small factories built in or near the village can provide steady employment for rural families. Providing employment for some members of the family would also insure that the family, traditionally strong in Thailand, need not break up to seek work elsewhere.

- 5) As recognized income-earners for their family, women who do the same job as men should receive equal pay. The law, which considers it illegal for a woman to receive lower wages than a man for doing the same job, needs to be enforced. Educating villagers about this law and punishing employers who disobey it would improve the situation. Women should be told whom they can appeal to if and when this law is disobeyed.