

Chapter 2

Literature review

2.1 Nuptiality data

The 1990 Population and Housing Census of Thailand revealed the trends and changes in marriage of Thai population by considering percentage of single, marital dissolution and singulate mean age at marriage in correlation with demographic, social and economic characteristics. It has also investigated the relationship between nuptiality and fertility by area and regions.

Moreover, the 1990 Population and Housing Census of Thailand showed that the percentage of single men was higher than women (33.1 percent and 26.8 percent for male and female, respectively). The singulate mean age at marriage (SMAM) which is one of the important indicators of change in the age at marriage was 25.9 years old for men and 23.5 years old for women. When comparing this average with the report made during 1970-1980, it was found that both men and women married at older age.

Several previous studies referred to the data from the nuptiality demography when analyzing and explaining the improvement in women's status, changing of family institution and age of marriage. Knodel, Dedavalya, Chayoan, Chamrathirong (1983) studied the change in the age of marriage in Thailand by reviewing the demographic evidence during 1960-1980 and concluded that the Nuptiality data had differed in many factors: community setting, religion and region of the country. Some of the finding are the age at first marriage of women in the urban area is higher than that in the rural area, the age at first marriage of Thai Muslim women is younger than Thai Buddhist women, and women in the Central region marry at a later age than those in other regions.

Some studies showed the dilemmatic attitude of women. In the study of Somswasdi and Nicholas (2000) on Thai women's attitude toward marriage, it was concluded that many women described marriage and family life as burden for them. With the burden of having to work two shifts, outside the house and doing all the housework, the marriage is of less value for them. They prefer to be single to spend most of time for work and higher education. On the other hand,

Rabibhadana (1984) stated that daughter in a Thai families try to get married to wealthy or powerful men who have resources which will be used to support their parents. This is one way that Thai girls can repay their parents.

2.2 Thai social structure

Embree (1950) described that Thai social structure and Thai society was characterized as a “loosely structured social system; Thai Family was tied loosely together because family members lacked a strong sense of duty and obligation in family relation” (p.9).

But, Moreman (1966) contrasted with Embree’s theory saying that “Social behavior is directed by numerous alternative principle, and an individual is expected to choose the one alternative which best advances the interests of his family” (p.10). Moreover, Punyadyana (1969) attempted to prove Moreman’s theory by analyzing the relationship and interactions between peasants and bureaucrats and found that the two parties were not loosely organized, but were controlled by structural principles which were social roles and rules.

Potter (1976) noted that the relationship within a Thai group was tightly organized in “eleven structural elements”

1. The extended stem family and compound
2. The bilateral kindred
3. Neighbors and neighborhood
4. Cooperative labor exchange groups
5. Class and status division
6. The junior- senior (hierarchical) relationship
7. The entourage
8. Political factions
9. The “natural” village community
10. The government’s administrative apparatus
11. The temple

All of these were well-organized and contained highly structured group.

2.3 Thai family

Somswasdi and Nicholas (2002) stated that families in Thailand become smaller. The married couples live outside parents' home. The grandparents live separately from their children, living either on their own or with their grandchildren. There are also more single parents from divorce and widowhood (Bangkok Post, Feb13, 1998). In the educated urban population, even more women are likely to remain single (Ekachai, May 28, 1995).

Women in Thai families still suffer from unfair law. For example, a husband is able to divorce his wife on the charge of adultery but a wife cannot use the same reason to spit up with hers except she can prove that her husband has maintained and honored the "other women" as his legal wife.

2.3.1 Role of women in Thai family

Embree (1950) as cited in Yoddumnern-Attig (1992) studied the duties and obligations within the Thai family and noted that "Thai transmission was female responsibility. It is the mother who transmits these teachings to their children, not the father. She transmits them as sage advice rather than as mandatory obligation". Besides, Potter (1977) described family life in northern Thailand by using the dramaturgical approach saying that the structure was matrilineal and centered on women (women-centered system), because women were a reflection of a delicate and complex ordered around four important roles as follow:

1. Formal authority belonging to men rather than women
2. Juniors deferring to senior
3. Seniors assuming responsibility for the welfare of juniors.
4. Family relationship being lineal

Yoddumnern (1985) as cited in Limanonda (1995) stated that Buddhism has a strong influence over social values and also determine the role of sex in the society. In Thai Buddhism, a child must demonstrate gratitude to parents for giving life.

2.3.2 Different roles of daughter and son

With the influence of religion within the context of Theravade Buddhism, the role of daughters and sons is required to repay debts of gratitude to parents in different ways. A son can perform this act by becoming a monk while a daughter has other ways for repaying debts of gratitude to parents. Those are:

1. To do the domestic chores
2. To care for younger siblings
3. To take care of her parents
4. To spend more time at home to take care of parents
5. To look over the family finance while engaging in paid employment outside the house
6. If she lives far away from home, she will have to support her parents

A dowry is also a way for a daughter to repay debts of gratitude to her parents and also to show the respect of the future husband to the bride's parents. Then the parents will accept the man to the union (Rabibhadana (1984), Yoddumnern (1985)).

Comparing the role of daughters and sons in Thai society, it seems that a daughter is expected to look after her parents and siblings. The studies of Yoddumnern (1985) stated that in the past, an unmarried son provided his family with labor and secure economic base. After he married, he would move out to live with his wife's parents. A daughter was expected to bring in a husband to help care for and support her parents and siblings. The relationship between brothers and sisters was not as strong as between sisters. When the brother married and moved out, he could not assist his siblings and his family because his new responsibility would be toward his wife and her family.

2.3.3 Role of wife and husband

The study of Rabibhadana (1984), it was stated that in the large family, a husband determines the family's action by holding the concept as a "breadwinner" and wife as a "homemaker". In the past, Thai women stayed home and were silent and passive partners of men, while men dealt with outsiders, such as official and upper class people. The relationship between husband and wife was a brother-sister or companion.

According to Xuto (1984), as cited in Yoddumnern (1995), stated that in the present situation in the rural area, Thai women play an important role in household management, especially concerning economic matter. Both men and women work to cope with economic demand in family and have equal decision making regarding various issues such as, family size, birth spacing and child care, etc.

2.3.4 Role of mother and father

The study of Yoddumnern (1992) stated that in the past, Thai married couples had three major responsibilities; to provide for and take care of children to adulthood, to encourage their daughters to marry, to offer help and support to their daughters in several ways.

In contemporary times, parental roles and duties have changed in response to the increasing importance of education as follow

1. To send children to school
2. To support children for longer time than in the past
3. The children have less time to help with fieldwork and house chores, because they must be responsible for getting higher education.
4. Parents hope to get assistance from children when they get older

2.3.5 Single parent family

Louisyapong (1991) defines the word “Single Parent Family” that it is a family which has only mother or father instead of having the two. Moreover, Limanonda, from Demography Institute of Chulalongkorn University, has predicted the woman’s roles since 1997 in the conference of Family 2000 that “Woman will be the leader of a single family more than man. In the future, woman will pay important roles in taking care of herself and her family” (www.Thaitway.com/education/rdata/r1db/question.asp?QID=15).

2.3.6 Gender’s Characteristics of women in Thai family

The study of Fongkeaw (1997) which stated that the gender’s characteristic of female and male was set by society. The labels female and male carry powerful notions of how an individual should behave in order to conform to normative expectations of one’s social environment. The

Thai feminine stereotype is characterized to be a good wife and mother by responsibility for taking care of the house and children.

2.4 Development of women's status in education

In the former times, boys were sent to “wats” (monasteries) for education while girls were kept at home for training on domestic skills.

Bavornsiri (1982), as cited in Limanonda (1995), stated that this pattern had been changed in 1921 when both boys and girls from the ages of 7-14 were obliged by the government to attend school. In 1932, Thai citizen, both boys and girls, had the right to get four years of public education. In 1937, 85 percent of women were illiterate compared to 57 percent of men. Even though both boys and girls were able to enroll in all levels of education since 1960, the rate of women who were illiterate was still higher than men. Since 1980, the numbers of Thai citizen (both men and women) who entered University has been almost equal.

By 1990, the illiteracy rates had dropped with only 9 percent of women and 5 percent of men recorded as illiterate. Nevertheless, the sex disparity still remained in Thai society.

The 2000 population and housing census of Chiang Mai showed that most percentage of women in rural area graduate on secondary education level. On the contrary, city women tried to get higher education as much as they can. Apart from this by comparing, the singulate mean age at first marriage of women in Mueang District and women in rural area in Chiang Mai found that women in rural area marry in younger than women in Mueang District

2.5 The relation of economic dependence and education

Thornton and Fricke (1987), as cited in Domingo and King (1992), stated that Economic development is usually accompanied and aided by change in gender role. From the development of society, women gain greater access to education and larger proportions work for wage outside the home. These changes have been linked to the greater choice for women in determining their marital status. Economic dependence and education have been related to a decline in parental influences on marriage and an increase in delay marriage.

2.6 Development of women in the work force

Limanonda's study (1995) showed the development of women in the work force as follow.

Since 1970, women joined the wage-labor force in greater numbers than before, especially in the jobs outside agricultural section, such as, marketing, selling family produce, etc.

The Census data (1980) indicated the expansion in the female labor force as 44.4 percent of the economically active persons were women (age 11 and over) and in 1990 this had increased to 68 percent with women aged 13 and over. After 1990 women increasingly found employment in male occupation and paid income directly for their family.

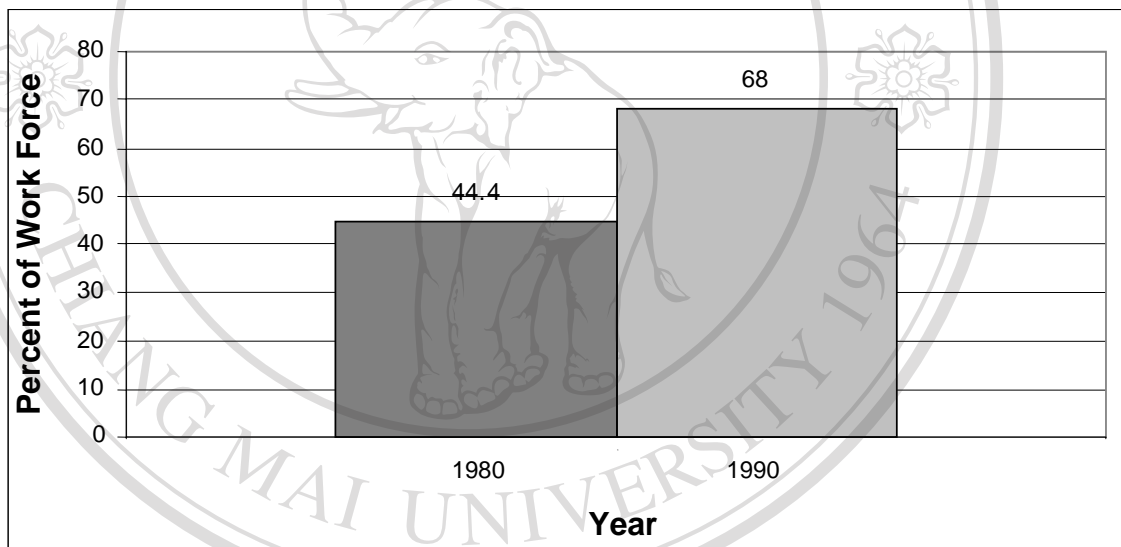


Figure 2.1 The expansion in the female labor force during 1980-1990.

Source: National Statistic Office, 1980 and 1990.

Table 2.1 The number of employed people classified by sex and occupation.

Occupation	Male	Female
Professional	3.1	4.1
Administrative	2.2	0.8
Clerical	2.5	3.6
Sales	7.9	14.6
Farmers	57.6	56.2
Transport, Storage and Communications	5.1	0.3
Craftsmen/ Labors	18.5	15.7
Services	3.2	4.8
Unknown	--	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0

Source: National Statistic Office, 1990.

Kerry Richter (1990) stated that nowadays, there are many jobs available for women compared with the past. "Many of the new jobs resulting from industrialization and the expansion of the service industry have been specifically designated as "women's jobs". Many of these jobs open to young unmarried women. Some married female worker must hide their married status to keep their job. Moreover, in the study of Attavawutichai (1992), it was stated that many factories choose to employ only single women because they can spend all of their time for work by without any concerned about husband, children and household work. Thong-uthai (1992), a researcher who studied about female workers in industrial field, stated that many factories tend to employ only single women because of flexibility in working schedule and they don't have to handle responsibilities in taking care of their children and husbands. Thus, they would devote themselves and concentrate to the work much more than those who have family.

Table 2.2 The percentage of labor force participation in Thailand.

Activity	Male	Female
Total Labor force	54.6	45.4
Current Labor Force (< 13 years of age)	55.9	44.1
Employed	56.3	43.7

Source: National Statistical Office. 1990

Resulting from a Thai labor force survey conducted by the National Statistical Office it was noted that the female employment rate is generally higher than that in other developing nations. This can show that nowadays, men and women in Thailand play nearly an equal role in economy.