

Abstract

The social construction of female identities such as meticulousness, caution, contribution, modesty and tolerance made women as wire-pullers. In contrast, there is more equalization of gender roles that can be able to create positive roles for women. Therefore, women are human capital that contributes more efficiency in a progress of the communities' activities. This research is based on "Women's Role in Social Capital Building and Poverty Alleviation in Low Income Communities: Case studies of Chareonchainimitmai, Klong Lum Noon and Petch Klong Jun Communities; Bangkok". There are 3 objectives; (1) to study women's working classifications and roles in the communities' activities to produce social capital building and poverty alleviation in the communities, (2) to study problems and threats of women's roles in the communities' activities, (3) to propose approaches for the roles of women that are able to contribute their potential towards empowered activities to achieve higher efficiency. The research method comprises 2 types of data: qualitative data and quantitative data. The qualitative data was collected by interviewing the head of the communities, the head of the saving cooperatives, committees of the communities and the head of women welfare by interviewing both males and females a total of 3 persons in each community. The quantitative data was collected by distributing a questionnaire to 84 members who live in the case studies (females 68 persons and males 16 persons). The questionnaire consists of the opinions of women's contribution to activities, such as saving cooperative, women's welfare, festivals and traditions, environmental care, health care, disaster prevention and acceptance of gender roles in the communities.

The results of the research revealed that (1) women's working classifications affect the level of contribution to households and communities' activities; housewives have more active roles than working women, such as taking care of children, guiding children and participating in communities' activities because they can afford more time and chance to spend their daily life in the communities. These activities can help them to understand communities' livelihood conditions and to create social bridging capital,

(2) women play important roles in social capital building and poverty alleviation from the social bonding, desirable activities' contributions, and communities' participation. These factors will affect the roles of continue the communities' contribution. Even though the majority of women were not well educated, and was either housewives or employees with low income that hardly make both ends meet, they have positive perceptions towards providing good education to their children for bright future. In addition, these women are important contributors to the community's activities such as participation in saving cooperative, women's welfare, traditional and festivals, environmental care, health care, etc, (3) the factors affect the roles in the progress of the communities' activities, such as female identities, bonding social capital, male acceptance, and policy supporting women's roles: these are important factors that can support women's roles in social capital building and poverty alleviation in the communities.

The study of problems and threats in the communities' activities, revealed that (1) housewives lack awareness in self reliance, such as being outspoken and making decision for the communities' activities as wire-pullers, (2) working women are reluctant participators in the contribution of communities' activities, (3) social and cultural construction respect men who have more power in decision making and leadership because men's qualifications are better than women's and men's identities are more suitable to be leaders than women. Therefore, the research proposes approaches that would support women's roles to become more prominent, for example (1) support more awareness of housewives to show their brave and decision making, to have more strengths and getting men's acceptance, (2) to change working women's perception to have more participation in communities activities, such as meeting and working together during leisure, (3) to encourage better women's roles in households, such as changing an opinion to encourage women or wives to have more decision making power in households to the extend that women will play important roles to contribute to the communities' activities and make progress in communities' activities in terms of social capital building and poverty alleviation.