

Thesis Title Effects of Roles and Divisions of Labor Between
Females and Males on Women Development

Author Mrs. Nattiyaporn Sarisubun

M.Ed. Nonformal Education

Examining Committee :	Assist.Prof.Dr. Dusit	Duangsa	Chairman
	Assist.Prof. Yonyudh	Plianpadung	Member
	Lecturer Visuth	Vanid	Member

Abstract

This thesis was set out to examine issues related to male/female (gender) roles in both past and contemporary contexts; household division of work between the two sexes in rural community; cultural and value system related to such roles and domestic work division; and the impact of such division upon rural women's development.

The study was of qualitative nature and started with reviews of available perspectives and theories. Field data were collected via observations, structured and non-structured interviews, focus group discussions and other field records. Collected data were then

categorized, analyzed, tabulated, interpreted and analytically described and presented. Research findings were as follows:

Originally, sex was a prime criterion for role differentiation and division of work between the two sexes. And the tradition had been passed on from generation to generation until it became a firmly established cultural practice within the community. Women were assigned a primary responsibility of caring for every family member. They shouldered every family burden to make certain family members were happy and well. On the contrary, the men were given a role of family breadwinners and leaders.

Despite the fact that contemporary communities have been drastically changed by social and economic forces, community attitudes, beliefs and culture as regards gender role division were still pretty much the same. Women continue to be confined within the home while men still stay out. Nevertheless, they, in practice, are mutually supportive of each other depending on time and occasions. Men will help the women's work or engage in household burdens only when they are unable to work outside or have no such work to do. Furthermore, women will refrain from doing housework if outside work is economically more important or more supportive to the family economy. In this case, men will have to shoulder some household responsibilities in order not to jeopardize the whole family well-being.

Both family and community beliefs, values and attitudes regarding gender roles have been transmitted via and buttressed by

community ways of life, household practices and direct family socialization. In turn, they all contribute to the continued existence of gender role differentiation.

Such long-held and practiced traditions account for the fact that the women themselves do not feel serious role conflicts. If they do, however, and as it occasionally occurs, they will try to adjust themselves by, for example, putting more efforts to housework. And they do this willingly without harboring the thought of changing significant others, especially their husbands. However, when this type of situation occurs, it is the men who feel uneasy, unhappy and even ashamed to have to do housework. Therefore, women have to shoulder more burdens and, as a consequence, have less time and opportunities to improve themselves and their families in the face of turbulent social currents. Most women, thus, lack opportunities to demonstrate their real competencies and worth to the community and society at large. They find it more difficult and less opportunities to participate in their own community's development affairs. Such opportunities, therefore, are preserved only for such women as community leaders' wives or cousins, those with better education or financial background or those with less or no household burdens. The only community development role of the majority of ordinary women in the countryside, therefore, is restricted to performing such certain trivial functions as, for instance, generally servicing others.