

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation : Women's Leadership in Participation in Environmental Conservation in Northern Thailand

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Degree : Doctor of Philosophy (Population and Development)

Year : 2001

The dissertation has three major objectives, namely, (1) To investigate the knowledge and understanding of the environmental issues of woman leaders at the national, provincial, community and household levels, (2) To study women's leadership and their participation in the environmental conservation, and (3) To study factors affecting woman leaders , participation in environmental conservation.

At the macro level, an attempt was made to collect data and documents related to the roles of women in various economic, social, political administrative and environmental activities at the national, provincial, and community levels. At the micro level, the target population of the dissertation is women of 15 years of age and over in the urban and rural communities in Northern Thailand, namely, in Cheingmai, Lamphur, and Payao. In-depth interview was conducted to collect data from women who were leaders in the communities, and a general interview schedule consisting of 5 parts was used to collect data from ordinary women. The issues covered in the five parts of the interview schedule were (1) knowledge of environmental information and the role of women in environmental activities, (2) measurement of woman leadership at the household, among friends and community levels, (3) women's roles and concepts in environmental conservation, (4) knowledge and understanding of environmental problems and conservation, and (5) personal characteristics of the respondents.

A field survey was conducted to interview 320 women in 8 urban municipalities and 640 women in 32 rural communities. Altogether 960 urban and rural women were included in the study.

The literature review led to the conceptualization of the research as follows: women's age, education and marital status are significant factors affecting women's interest in their roles in environmental issues within the house-holds, among friends and neighbors, and in their communities. In addition, knowledge and awareness of women in environmental information, news and problems are also viewed as factors affecting women's participation in environmental activities at various levels.

Eight measurements were developed, field-tested, and subjected to reliability test. They are (1) measurement of women's community environmental conservation, (2) measurement of women's environmental conservation in the households, (3) measurement of women's engagement in the environmental activities useful to their neighbors, (4) measurement of woman leadership in the households, (5) measurement of woman leadership among friends, (6) measurement of woman leadership in the communities, (7) measurement of women's awareness of environmental problems in the communities, and (8) measurement of women's environmental training. The results of reliability tests revealed the alpha coefficients of reliability of the measurement ranged from moderate of .6291 to high .9081.

The major findings of the study were as follows on economic, social and demographic factors affected women's leadership. Women's leadership at the household, among friends, and at the community levels affected women's participation in environmental conservation. At the household level, age, education, and marital status affected woman leadership; among friends at work, only age was found to positively affect woman leadership. At the community level, woman leadership depended on age and education. It was also found that environmental information received by women, their environmental training and environmental problem awareness affected the leadership of women in the household, among friends, and in the communities.

Regarding participation in environmental conservation, it was found that factors related to women's household environment-related decision, namely, women's awareness of household environment problems and their behavior, all affected the

leadership role of women in the household, among friends and in the communities. Women's participation in environmental conservation depended on the role of women in the communities more than their role in the households. However, there was a stronger relationship between the role of women in the households and their leadership in the communities more than their leadership in the households and among friends. That is, women who had a strong household leadership tended to have a strong leadership in the communities. With a strong community leadership women had a more active role in environmental conservation.