EMPOWERING WOMEN IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT:
A COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT
IN NORTHERN THAILAND

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PLEASE NOTE

The greatest amount of care has been taken while scanning this thesis,

and the best possible result has been obtained.
DECLARATION

Except where the contributions of others are acknowledged, this thesis is the result of my original research.

December 1996

Avorn Sansak
ABSTRACT

The development policy and plans of the government of Thailand have emphasized economic growth aimed at ‘modernizing’ the country. This attempt at development has been enacted through agricultural modernization and industrialization under the name ‘rural development’. Women In Development (WID) approaches based on the modernization model have been added to ‘development’ plans more recently. Examination of the effects of these WID programmes upon rural women demonstrates that poor women are disempowered by the ‘top-down’ rural development programmes.

This study is an attempt to test collaborative action research (CAR) as a methodology to empower rural women to become the decision makers in the rural development process. An empowerment approach is considered as an alternative path to development where rural women can increase their capacity to bring about desired changes and increase their self-reliance.

Collaborative action research was carried out in Sandee Village, northern Thailand. This suggests that rural women can be empowered through continuous cycles of the collaborative learning process of planning, acting, observing and critical reflection with the researcher acting as a facilitator, who creates an atmosphere that allows rural women to become active decision makers. Through this learning process, rural women have increased their capacity to make choices, to deal with existing constraints and to create changes that serve their needs. In this respect, ‘development’, as defined by villagers themselves, can be initiated from within.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In undertaking this collaborative action research and writing this thesis, I have been encouraged and assisted by many people.

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GLOSSARY

Amphoe: official for district

Anamai: public health centre

Anamai tambon: public health centre at the sub-district level

Ao mue: reciprocal help in terms of either labour or resource in family affairs such as wedding or funeral ceremony

Ao wun: traditional reciprocal help in terms of labour primarily in rice transplanting and harvesting

Baab: sin or demerit

Baan: rural village or community

Baan hau: discourse expressing to some extent a sense of community

Bahi: Thai currency

Bia khayun: wage paid to Northern Industrial Estate factory worker who works without taking leave during a particular period of time such as three, six or twelve months

Bo badaan: an artesian well

Bun: merit

Bunkhun, Phakhun: moral goodness

Chang tau lang: rear legs of elephant referred to as the follower

Chang tau naa: front legs of elephant referred to as the leader

Chang wat: province

Chao na thai: Thai farmer

Chao nai: discourse usually referring to high rank official

Dacha: power

Dumhua: traditional culture of showing respect
Faai
weir built in order to raise the water level, found in upper northern Thailand

Faai Mae Saan
weir named Mae Saan that provides water for farmers in Sandee Village and three other village

Ho than
building for storing of Buddha’s words

Huanaa
leader

Hua naa khrobkhrua
head of household

Huean
house

Jao muang
King or prince who govern the major muang

Jor por tor
a government project aimed to eradicate poverty by supporting the rural poor to meet the basic minimum needs.

Kaan mii suan ruam
participation, a discourse used by the government in promoting the involvement of rural people in implementing government rural development project

Kaan pathana mooban
village development

Kae faai
the president of the people’s irrigation group

Kammakaan phathana
women’s development committee at the sub-district level which is formed by the community development worker aimed to promote women’s participation in government WID project

Kamnan
head of sub-district

Karma (Kod hang kam)
law of karma

Kasettrakorn
farmer

Kaset tambon
agricultural extension agent

Katanyoo
gratitude

Kha hua
a nominal payment that children pay to their parents for rice land transferred to them

Kham Muang
Muang language

Khana
faction, clique or group
*Khana Raat*  the nobles as a people party who overthrew in a coup the absolute monarchy in June 1932

*Khao phansa*  a three months period when monks are supposed to stay in the temple

*Khaaraachakaan*  royal servant

*Khaet*  sector at the village level

*Khayom*  boys who stay in the temple in order to study Buddha 's words before ordination

*Khon chon*  poor people

*Khon nai muang, Khon nai wieng*  city people

*Khon rouy*  wealthy people

*Kho pai juay*  asking for help in family affairs

*Khor jor kor*  a government Land Resettlement Project aiming to remove landless poor living in degraded forest that has led to conflict between officials and poor villagers

*Khuam chareon*  prosperity

*Khuam thansamai*  modernization

*Khun, Khuna*  goodness

*Khunnang*  state official with commoner origin

*Khun-ngam -khuamdii*  moral goodness

*Klum*  group or organization

*Klum chaapanakit*  a group of villagers who share responsibility for the funeral ceremony by giving the same amount of money in turn

*Klum maeban*  women’s group

*Klum maeban kasetrakorn*  housewife group at the village level usually formed and supported by the government through an agricultural extension worker

*Klum muang faai*  people’s irrigation group found in northern Thailand
Klum satri maeban  women's group at the village level usually founded by the sub-district community development worker
Klum yaowachon  youth group at the sub-district level usually founded by the sub-district community development worker
Klum yuwa kasetrakorn  young farmers' group at the village level usually founded by an agricultural extension worker
Kreang, kreangklua  fear of doing something against
Kreangjai  fear of disturbing someone who has moral goodness towards him or herself
Krong kaan saang ngaan nai chonnabot  Rural Employment Project launched during 1975-1977
Kru  teacher
Kruea taan  money tree usually prepared for pha pa ceremony
Laanna  an area cover eight upper provinces in the upper northern region
Lam yai  longan, a tropical fruit
Likae  traditional song and dance drama
Luknong  client
Lukphii luknong  siblings
Mae chii  nun
Mae jang  female traditional midwife
Mae Krua  head of female village cooks
Mae nam  river
Mii luk maak ja yaak chon  slogan for promoting birth control means 'the more children, the more poverty'
Moo ban  official term for village
Moo diew kan  discourse illustrating a sense of belonging to the same group, or community
Muang  (lower tone) refers to city or town, (higher tone) refers
to canal that bring water to rice field

Muang faai
northern traditional people’s irrigation
discourse illustrating to some extent a sense of
belonging to the same group or community

Nai
short for chao nai refers to the government officials

Nai amphoe
the head of district office

Nakphattana
development workers

Nerakhun
ingratitude and failing to acknowledge the moral
goodness

Ninta
gossip

Num jai
generosity and kindness

Num Mae Saan
canal named Mae Saan located in Sandee Village

Palad amphoe
Deputy District Officer

Po muang
the princes and petty chiefs who ruled the lesser city

Penkan-ang
an atmosphere that is friendly and informal

Phakphuak
clique

Pha pa
traditional religious ceremony originally for charity

Phattana
develop

Phattanakorn
community development worker at the sub-district
level

Phiip nong krai, phiip nong man
expression which refers to the reciprocal relations
among kin groups

Phrai luang
people who registered under the king in sakdina
system

Phrai som
people who registered under a particular nai

Phrai sui
people who were obliged but were exempted from
performing services

Phuu-upatham
patron
<table>
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<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>Phuyai</td>
<td>the elders who are expected to be respected by the younger</td>
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<td>Phu yai baan</td>
<td>official for village head</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phuyai -phunoi</td>
<td>senior-junior</td>
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<tr>
<td>Po lieng</td>
<td>male traditional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Po luang baan</td>
<td>Yong language for village head</td>
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<td>Prom</td>
<td>a group’s situation viewed by local government officials that a group is ready to implement a ready-made rural development projects</td>
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<td>Raachakaan</td>
<td>the State affair</td>
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<td>Raankha</td>
<td>village store, a project promoted by the community development worker aimed to increase income of rural people</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rod than</td>
<td>pick up truck</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suannruam</td>
<td>a community</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sahapan chao rai chao na haeng phrahet thai</td>
<td>Farmer Federation of Thailand found during 1973-1976</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sakdina</td>
<td>a system where people were ranked and assigned tasks, according to a scale and mode which labour is exploited and controlled</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saksit</td>
<td>moral power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sala</td>
<td>hall or building used for organizing village activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Samakom satri Thai</td>
<td>Thai Women’s Association of Thailand (TWAT)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sapha changwat</td>
<td>provincial council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sapha tambon</td>
<td>sub-district council</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satree thas</td>
<td>Women’s View, name of the women magazine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sei naa</td>
<td>lose face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siang tam sai</td>
<td>village loudspeaker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sing saksit</td>
<td>holy object such as Buddha image</td>
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</table>
Soon sarapii  centre for organizing sub-district meeting
Suanruan   a community compared to individual
Tak bath   providing food to monks
Tambon     sub-district
Tham bun   merit making
Thaan      charcoal
Thaat      slave
Thang khon thang yoo the circumstance of individualization
Thansamai  the spirit and the gods
Theewadaa  a spirit and the gods
Thiiphung  a supporter
Thod pha pa a ceremony where villagers donate cash and labour for
            the temple affairs or to serve villagers needs
Wun seen   the Buddhist sabbath day
Wat        temple
Weing      town or city
Wiharn     main hall in the monastery area where religious
           activity is operated
Yaowachon  youth
Ying Kao Klaï  Women’s Stride: a magazine for rural women which
                aims to provide information to promote women’s
                participation in the development process
Yong       name of language spoken by Yong people

The members of the core team

Arunya, aged 39, single, female middle income tobacco factory worker, pig keeper,
was elected to be the president of the women group;
Lalita, aged 33, female middle income dress-maker, was elected to be a committee member of women group;
Darin, aged 34, female middle income farmer and pig-keeper, was elected to be a member of the working group for pig keeping activity;
Saith, aged 34, male middle income shopkeeper and farmer, grade 7 of formal education, the secretary of village development committee, subsequently elected to be the new Po luang baan;
Woraphong, aged 36, male middle income high school teacher, former abbot, village adviser;
Damrong, aged 35, male poor farmer and carpenter, was elected to be the chairman of the child care committee.

List of Participants

For the sake of ethics, the following lists pseudonyms of participants who I often mention in this study.

Somchai, aged 40, the po luang and rich farmer
Wipada, aged 38, the po luang's wife
Wiwa, aged 27, the po luang's daughter, diploma of education, married to Heng who owns the construction business which employed about 50 male villagers
Heng, aged 39, Wiwa's husband, having close connection with the officials worked for the provincial and district departments the responsible for the construction of an artesian well
Kingkaew, aged 32, the child care worker
Wongjun, aged 25, single, the child care worker
Narong, aged 23, the president of klum noom sao
Rinthong, aged 25, the female vice president of klum noom sao
Kitti, aged 43, middle income pig keeper, the head of the working group of pig keeping activity
Samon, aged 45, middle income tobacco factory worker, the head of the working group of bamboo weaving activity
Monthon, aged 35, middle income rice mill owner, the chairman of water’s committee
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This study is about the application of collaborative action research (CAR) as a methodology for empowering Thai women in the rural development process at the village level. An empowerment approach is considered as an alternative path to development by which rural women can increase their capacity to bring about desired changes and increase their self-reliance. In this study I have attempted to facilitate a collaborative learning process, involving myself (as facilitator) and rural women in Sandee Village (pseudonym), northern Thailand.

This thesis also examines the dominant development theories, particularly those utilized in the so-called Third World countries. I argue that the mainstream modernization theory which is the model for the national development policy and plans employed by the Thai government, has contributed to the appearance of many crises such as poverty, indebtedness, landlessness, unemployment, prostitution and an increase of the dependency of the rural poor on the wider society accompanied by decreasing self-reliance. These crises were the outcome of the over-emphasis on industrialization and agricultural modernization under the centralized and top-down nature of government administration. These transformations have had negative effects upon rural Thai women who have lost control over farm work partly as a result of the adoption of 'modern' agricultural technology. A large number of rural women find themselves working long hours on low wages in poor conditions in factories. Under the modernization model, women's development has long been effectively excluded from the national development policy and plans.

It was in the early 1970s that 'women in development' (WID) approaches were included in the national development plan. These included approaches focusing on welfare, equity, anti-poverty, and efficiency. However, the welfare-oriented projects emphasized domestic-centred activities which did not benefit rural women as co-producers, but rather reinforced women's role as household servers. The equity
approach failed to assist women to equally access education, employment and other social and economic institutions. Under the anti-poverty strategy, the income-generating activities failed to obtain support from the current marketing system. Additionally, the home-based activities assisted the exploitation of rural women as cheap labour. While the business owners could avoid tax through employing women at home, women workers found it difficult to build their bargaining power as a group. An attempt to bring women into a production orientation appeared under the efficiency strategy promoted since the early 1980s. Although rural women benefited in terms of increased income and became more independent of their husbands, women encountered greater burdens. Participation was another strategy promoted by the government to encourage rural women to be involved in the development process. However, it was superficial because rural women tended to be forced to implement the ready-made projects sponsored by the government and 'coached' by local government officials. All of these WID approaches operated under a top-down administration and rural women became passive participants who barely benefited from these activities.

I argue that these government interventions have disempowered rural women rather than empowered them to gain more choices in life. To make women become the beneficiaries of development, a collaborative approach to development is needed. In this study, I applied an empowerment approach to increase Sandee women's capacity for control over their lives. The primary objectives of this study were:

(i) to examine the process of shifting power relations among and between women and men, to observe changes implied by these shifting relations and to observe the adjustment of villagers to these changes under the existing socio-economic conditions;
(ii) to apply collaborative action research as a methodology to empower Sandee women; and
(iii) to reflect (based on women' perspectives) on the potential of an empowerment approach as an alternative to rural development in a village context.
PERSONAL STRUGGLE

This present study is different from many others in that the researcher comes from the village studied. I consider myself as a poor woman among millions who have struggled in trying to escape from poverty, indebtedness and unemployment resulting in part from the State's attempt to modernize the country and capitalist penetration at the village level. Considering myself as a productive female citizen, it is my commitment to facilitate my sisterhood in bringing about their desired changes. Before proceeding with the discussions, I would like to take this opportunity to reflect on my own experience in struggling with economic oppression.

In Thai society, education has been used as a tool to select a minority for government services and the industrial and business sectors, while the majority of the population are left behind. Millions of parents struggle through social and economic hardship and mental conflict in order to help their children to be selected. However, most of them are disappointed due to shortage of jobs in those sectors. It is difficult for poor villagers in rural areas to afford even secondary school.

My sister, brothers and I had the opportunity to access higher education because, as a soldier, my father was eligible for reduced fees for his children. However, this was not enough. My father became a fair organizer who organized mobile cinema, likae (traditional song and dance drama), and Thai boxing for extra income. My mother worked extremely hard in rice production and in the household to obtain and save extra income for the family and our education. Besides being a farmer, housewife and dress-maker, she became a trader selling vegetables and rice, a gardener growing vegetables for sale, food preserver, a blanket maker, a poultry and pig keeper and a bamboo weaver. She also served the village as a mae krua (village cook). When my father died in 1976, our family's economic status deteriorated. Rice became the main source of income. The circumstances were rather unfavourable because of its low price and low production.
Our family was able to escape from poverty and bankruptcy by operating mobile movies, buying necessary things on credit, planting vegetables, keeping poultry, and searching for wild food from the village forest. I was able to achieve secondary and high school education because I could get 50% and later 30% fee reduction because my father worked for the government. However, this reduction did not apply at the university level. In order to afford my undergraduate study, my mother became a debtor borrowing from the local agricultural and co-operative group at lower interest, from village rich farmers (interest 10% per month), and from our relatives with and without interest. My sister and I temporarily worked for the tobacco factory during school and university holidays to gain more income for our family. On one occasion when there was no choice for her, my mother decided to sell a piece of land to obtain finance for my university study. For me, the situation was difficult. It would be impossible for poor farmers earning income only from rice production to afford higher education for their children. I realized the limited opportunities for young people from poor families to obtain higher formal education in order to improve their situation. The economic situation of my family was getting better when I was graduated in 1982, and worked as an extension agent for a tobacco factory which also employed a number of Sandee women as workers.

I found that the purpose of education at the university level is similar to other lower levels. Students are taught to be 'the best' and 'the expert' in a particular field of study. We were taught about the problems encountered by the poor farmers, but we were never encouraged to sincerely help them. The university valued alumna who made a lot money as the best former students and as a model for the present students. Alumna who went back to work in their own society were never honoured. At the university level, traditional ways of life concerned with justice, morality and co-operation were barely acknowledged. In fact, I had learned about the ways poor farmers were exploited by the rice traders and 'middlemen' from the 'rural development club' and other clubs which worked hard to reveal the real situation of poor peasants in rural areas and criticised the role of the government. Yet nothing much could be done with the latter because we could have been easily labelled communists.
The government had failed to equally distribute formal education to the urban and rural areas. Beside poverty, the high level of competition in the selection system for the university level was another constraint for poor students. The local university, Chiang Mai university was established in 1964, but it was not until 1978 that two students from my tambon were admitted to this university. Beside lacking equality of access, the formal education system has aimed to produce manpower only for the modern industrial and business sectors, while agriculture and other concerns of rural areas were neglected. In Thailand, education functioned as a tool for selecting the best, rather than for increasing the capacity of the overall population, or for creating a diverse economy suitable for either urban or rural areas.

The picture of rural villages presented by most teachers and lecturers was one of backwardness, ineffectiveness and poverty. These features were thought of as 'underdeveloped' and requiring input by development agents in order to be developed. This picture illustrated only one aspect of rural village life. It failed to explain why village society was still in a critical situation even though development agents have worked in rural communities for more than two decades. Most academics and experts ignored the possibility that it was the external factors (State intervention and the penetration of capitalism) that stimulated underdevelopment in rural areas. My belief was that village societies have potential and wisdom which should be taken into account to sustainably develop rural society.

After finishing the undergraduate course on agricultural extension, I worked for the tobacco factory in Lamphun where more than 600 rural women were employed. Here I learned about exploitation of tobacco growers by the curers and the factory. Most growers were initially provided capital, fertilizer, and pesticide by the curers who charged for this finance when they bought tobacco. The price of tobacco was set by the curers and the factory. The growers were trapped in an exploitative cycle of production and marketing. In the factory, as employment at the time was highly competitive, women were forced to work in a dusty, smelly atmosphere with the minimum wage set by the labour law. Many young girls were sexually abused by
the male foreman and manager. Some of them were sacked because they refused to go out with the manager. As employees, we were in the position to do nothing about this situation. Personally, I had a choice to leave the factory to further my study, but many women could not afford to quit their jobs.

I took a masters course on the same subject, agricultural extension, at a university in Bangkok. It was not easy at all for a rural girl to be in a big city totally different from my village, and even from Chiang Mai city. I managed to survive by getting a part time job and studying at the same time. The major theme of this course was not much different from the undergraduate one in that both aimed to produce agricultural extension agents. However, there was only myself who came from a poor farm family while most of my middle class and rich friends could not imagine life in a poor rural village. Some had no idea about rice growing. After finishing this course, I still could not see any way to help poor farmers in my village. The only thing I could do was ask my mother to stop growing rice and to let my uncle, who did not own rice land do it for her.

I then became a lecturer working in a university in Bangkok, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang (KMITL). I got involved in the process of preparing the curriculum for the degree of Bachelor of Agricultural Development. However, the curriculum was at best similar to those offered by agriculture faculties in other universities. All the courses were designed to produce 'experts'.

Later, I had another opportunity to further my study, this time at the PhD level which even fewer rural women could access. Ironically, this led to my opportunity to work in my village which I had never had a chance to do when I was teaching. Although the collaboration between villagers and myself was part of my research aiming to fulfil my study, I believe that I had a commitment to try to improve the village situation and to increase women's capacity to bring about their desired changes. It is this commitment that rural people who could escape from poverty tend to lose through the nature of the 'modern' education system in Thailand. As a researcher, I hope this study will become a channel by which the voices of rural Thai women could be heard by academicians and development policy makers. Their voices
confirmed that if the status of rural women is to be improved rural women must be seen as co-decision makers in the existing power structure and institutions.

Our collaborative action research at Sandee Village was a great opportunity to

(i) systematically examine changes and transformation in Lamphun province and the village studied,
(ii) facilitate a small group of women aiming to increase their capacity and consciousness to manage village development activities in such a way that they become the decision makers, and
(iii) reflect on our experience in collaboration as well as review our thoughts, consciousness and values.

Through this collaborative learning process villagers, particularly women, could hope to empower themselves to deal with existing constraints. It was my commitment to facilitate this empowerment process. At the same time, as a researcher and lecturer, I hoped to empower myself to see things differently and to deal effectively with the existing situation of my work place and further research.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

There are various interpretations of development based on substantive literature. These can be roughly placed into three main groups. Firstly, as suggested by Hirsch (1990), development is discussed in terms of process (from backwardness to modernization), structure (core and periphery) and inter-relationships (international system). This perspective is an attempt to explain the social, economic and political changes in the Third World. The mainstream concepts of development are modernization, dependency and world system. These views are all production-centred. Production-centred approaches fail to consider human (personal) development.

Secondly, development is viewed in terms of a range of types of interventions, policy options and programmes. In this respect, methodologies or techniques of development are emphasized. This view considers decentralization versus centralization, localization versus urbanization, from within versus from outside, and
bottom-up versus top-down. The view includes the human agenda but interventions, policies and programmes always operate within a centralized system whereby villagers are seen as objects who are simply urged to participate in implementing programmes no matter whether they fit with their needs or not.

Finally, as mainstream development has excluded women's development, WID approaches were promoted as an attempt to bring women into the development process. However, WID approaches appear to have had negative effects on rural women. Although the WID approaches were formulated to deal directly with women's status in society, they were largely based on the modernization model. Poverty is believed to be eradicated by increasing women's income through the promotion of income-generating activities and women's production. The prevailing social and power structures that contribute to the subordination of women are hardly questioned.

I argue that these three broad perspectives of development are insufficient to serve rural women's practical and strategic needs and interests because women are seen as passive objects. I believe that women cannot become beneficiaries of the development process unless they are active decision makers. This study has attempted to address the shortcomings in the three groups of development perspectives. It employed a holistic strategy by bringing together people-centred development, in which human development is emphasized, and an empowerment approach whereby collaborative development becomes central. Development initiatives come from within, that is from the powerless, who are usually seen as the subject of development activities.

The empowerment approach provides rural women with an opportunity to be active decision makers who identify their current problems, the root causes of these problems and develop their own solution. Through a collaborative process, rural women enhance their capacity to create more choices in life and to control the direction of social processes.
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Collaborative action research (CAR) was employed as a methodology to empower rural women because it has several useful characteristics. It uses a 'holistic perspective' in dealing with development where many diverse issues need to be taken into account. It allows true 'collaboration' among the researcher and co-researchers in which the collaborators' perspectives are considered during continued cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. In CAR, the role of the researcher is as 'facilitator' rather than expert or 'coach'. The facilitator enables the collaborative process, aiming to create an atmosphere that allows the full participation of the collaborators in the decision making process. The most significant characteristic of CAR is it allows the collaborators to become active decision makers in the collaborative process. CAR allows the development of reciprocal relationships between the researcher and the villagers needed for the empowerment process.

In this study, the applied cycle of CAR is comprised of the social reconnaissance, an initial idea and the continuous cycles (planning, acting, observing and reflecting). In collaboration with Sandee women, I became both a researcher and facilitator who not only researched but also actively collaborated with groups of villagers. A small initial group of men and women, called the core team, was formed voluntarily to deal with an initial problem, notably a water supply problem. The collaboration was later expanded from the core team to other organizations, including the klum maebaan (women's group), the village development committee (VDC), the child care committee, working groups for bamboo weaving and pig keeping activities and the klum noom sao (youth group). Through group discussions, meetings, workshops, and fund-raising activities, these groups of villagers were helped to develop action plans, to act to implement the action plans, to observe the action and to reflect on the consequences of action. Empowerment took place when the collaborators actively made decisions.

This research was conducted from January 1992 to May 1993 in Sandee Village, a two hundred year old village located in the east of Amphoe Muang (Muang District), about nine kilometres from the city of Lamphun. I began the research with a
social reconnaissance, employing participant observation to obtain information needed for discussions with the core team regarding needs. Small group discussions, interviews, strategic questioning and dialogue were utilized during this community study. As I grew up and had been socialized in the village and speak the same language as the villagers, I was able to develop friendship and trust within a short period of time.

The data gathered includes basic social and economic data on education, occupations, income, rice land holdings, access to outside networks, power structure and production relations. Information on women's concerns was specifically gathered. Beside this data, essential information concerning every cycle of every collaborative activities undertaken by villagers was also carefully recorded. Furthermore, the group of co-researchers was closely observed and intensively interviewed for their reflections.

**THESIS STRUCTURE**

The thesis is divided into 9 chapters. Chapter 2 begins with the examination of mainstream development theory, particularly modernization theory and its limitations. Collaborative development and empowerment approaches are discussed as alternative approaches to development. Chapter 3 looks at various approaches to the role of women in development and proposes an empowerment approach to Women. Chapter 4 discusses the application of the modernization model of development in the Thai context through agricultural modernization and industrialization. The crises which resulted partly from these transformations are outlined. Chapter 4 also outlines some aspects of women's subordination and development in Thailand. Chapter 5 discusses collaborative action research as a specific methodology for empowering rural women. Chapter 6 explores the situation of Sandee Village in northern Thailand. The effects of State interventions on villagers, the change in power relations within the village and between the village and wider society are also analyzed. The collaboration between myself, women and other villagers in empowering themselves is the subject of Chapters 7 and 8. In these chapters The attempts to create change through collective action research and the achievement and the constraints are explored. Chapter 9
evaluates the application of collaborative action research as a means for empowering rural women.
CHAPTER 2

RETHINKING DEVELOPMENT

The slogan at the beginning of the 20th century was progress. The cry at the end of 20th is survival. The call for the next century is hope.
(TDSC: 1992:49)

This chapter discusses empowerment as an alternative approach to WID and explores collaborative development as a means to empower rural women. Modernization theory is discussed, but I argue that it is an inadequate development theory for Third World countries because it has contributed to the disempowerment of the rural poor, women in particular. Some WID approaches based on modernization theory have failed to facilitate the enhancement of rural women’s consciousness and capacity to control their own lives.

COLLABORATIVE DEVELOPMENT AS AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH

Although the notion of development has been subjected to different interpretations, these can be categorized into three main approaches. First, according to Hirsch (1990), development is often equated to economic growth. Economic growth results in a declining share of agriculture in total output, progress in technology and increase in industrialization with the consequent shift of population to urban areas. Economic growth is often associated with structural changes, and the emphasis of development has shifted from quality of life and human dimensions. In the second approach development is thought of as growth with equity with a focus on such indices as poverty, income distribution, literacy, education, and access to employment. Although there is greater concern with ‘human reality’, the focus continues to be on economic and social indicators and individuals and groups tend to be passively supplied with goods, services and materials.

This present study focuses on the third interpretation of development which emphasizes human potential and capabilities in relation to other social groups. This notion of development focuses on the individual’s or group's capacity to achieve
greater control of their own lives, dignity, self-reliance and self-respect. It involves the processes that provide greater understanding of social, economic and political transformation in order to enhance competence to analyze and solve problems of day-to-day living. Here, development does not neglect material deprivation and poverty, but the emphasis has shifted to realization of human and social empowerment aiming at restoration of human dignity and self-respect and interaction with other social groups on a basis of mutual respect and equality. It is this interpretation of development that motivates this study.

I now turn to the discussion of modernization theory and some approaches to rural development that derived from the modernization model of development.

MODERNIZATION THEORY AND ITS LIMITATIONS

Since World War II, development has been a major world concern (Arndt, 1987). Modernization theory was developed during the late 1950s. It identifies stages in which western societies are viewed as models which the Third World states were expected to follow as the natural course in their transition from 'traditional' to 'modern' societies. Despite the common objective of transforming Third World societies into 'modern' societies, the modernization theorists differ in the ways they approach and theorize this transformation.

It has been believed by many evolutionists that a unilinear path of development consists of stages of development which move from backwardness through transition to development. These stages are the traditional society, the pre-take off society, taking-off, the road to maturity, and the mass consumption society (Rostow, 1960). The bottom line for the evolutionists is the assumption that all societies go through similar stages; they are expected to take-off at the same point, maintain the similar path of development, and reach the same goal that is the increase of the economic growth rate. As the evolutionary theory could help to explain the transition from traditional to modern society in Western Europe in the nineteenth century, many evolutionists thought that it would shed some light on the modernization of Third World countries (So, 1990).
Similarly, based on the modernization model, the cultural-psychological theorists of development argue that there are certain patterns of secular values and orientations shared by people in developed society that are supportive of their development. In Third World countries, such values and orientations, usually in the forms of traditions and social and cultural practices, are believed by the cultural-psychological theorists to act as hindrances to development. To be 'developed' Third World societies therefore need to modify their values and orientations to something similar to those of developed ones. Almond (1987), for example, argues that if the Third world countries want to be 'developed' and have British or American-style of democracy, they must implant what Almond and Verba called 'civic culture' in their own societies. Similarly, McClelland (1962, 1964) sees modernization in terms of the transformation of the individuals' attitudes through their assimilation with modern (Western) values and motives. He suggests what he termed the 'achievement motive' as the psychological factor responsible for economic growth. This motive refers to a desire to do well, not so much for the sake of social recognition or prestige, but to attain an inner feeling of personal accomplishment.

According to these writings, in the modernization model development is viewed as economic growth which is seen as a process which could be continued as long as the inputs are correctly and timely applied. This process requires the gross levels of savings and investment of both private and state sectors to be increased until the economy reaches a take-off point and moves into self-sustaining development (Chairat, 1985). The size and the rate of growth of the gross domestic product, output ratio, capital and the rate of population growth were commonly used as indicators of economic growth. It was expected that a combination of domestic saving, international investment and international aid would accelerate the process through the stages of growth which would bring the benefits of development to the entire population (So, 1990).

During the early 1970s the modernization theory was subjected to strong criticism from social scientists in the Third World, particularly in Latin America. The dualistic nature of underdevelopment, that is the coexistence of a relatively advanced or modern sector with a backward or traditional sector became apparent. Stavenhagen
(Hettne, 1990) argues that Latin America was a dualistic society, consisting of one traditional, agrarian and one modern, urbanized society. The former was associated with feudalism and the latter with capitalism. According to modernization theory, feudalism was an obstacle to development that had to be replaced by a progressive capitalism. However, according to Stavenhagen both societies were the result of the same process.

The disappointing features were found in Chile. Hettne (1990) refers to Sunkel (1973) who claimed that the prevailing analysis of development was based on conventional theories which saw a mature capitalist economy as the goal of all development efforts. The underdeveloped countries were seen in terms of previous and imperfect stages on the way to this goal. Sunkel argues that the characteristics of underdevelopment would continue for as long as development policies attacked the symptoms of underdevelopment rather than the basic structural elements such as the power and administrative structures that had contributed to underdevelopment. In conventional modernization theory, development would take place when the population growth rate is reduced, health is improved, and new technologies are adopted. Other incidents, notably the food and poverty crisis in Africa, the debt crisis in Latin America, landlessness, bankruptcy, and unemployment are indicators of growth without development.

There are various approaches to rural development that to some extent are derived from modernization theory. I now discuss these approaches and their limitations.

**Basic Needs Approach**

According to Burkey (1993), throughout 1970s and the 1980s, massive amounts of development aid and loans have been transferred to selected Third World countries through bilateral and international lending institutions and Western commercial banks. However, it appeared that this transfer has developed into the world debt crisis rather than leading to balanced economic development.
In the early 1970s, there were increasingly questions among observers on development about how it actually takes place and how it should take place. The latter focuses on the content of development rather than the form, and is concerned with the purpose and meaning of development. According to Burkey, the Cocoyoc Declaration adopted at a symposium in Cocoyoc, Mexico in 1974 is an effort to identify how development should take place. The declaration emphasized the process of growth that failed to fulfil the people’s basic needs.

The emergence of 'another development' was consistent with evidence that economic growth did not necessary eliminate poverty. Consequently, in the early 1970s, the basic needs approach emerged. This was adopted by several international agencies such as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD) (Sandbrook, 1982). Conventional strategies implicitly assume (or accept) inequality, social or regional, as a necessary price for growth. According to Burkey, "...egalitarian strategies, in contrast, give a higher priority to redistribution than to growth. The basic needs approach is one type of egalitarian strategy". The basic needs, as positively defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) include certain "...minimum requirements for family for private consumption, for instances, adequate food, shelter, clothing, and household equipment" (Burkey, 1993:31). Essential services such as safe drinking water, sanitation, public transportation, health and educational facilities were also needed for the community.

The participants on the 1976 conference on World Employment adopted the following statement:

It is important to recognize that the concept of Basic Needs is a country-specific and dynamic concept. ... In no circumstances should it be taken to mean the minimum necessary for subsistence; it should be placed within a context of national independence, the dignity of individuals and peoples and their freedom to chart their destiny without hindrance.

(Hettne, 1990:169)

The debates about meeting the basic needs have been helpful in creating awareness of the fact the growth does not necessarily benefit the poor, however the question about how these needs can be met still has not been resolved. Streeten
explains the connection between New Internation Economic Order (NIEO) and Basic Needs approaches as:

A Basic Needs programme that does not build on the self-reliance and self-help of government and countries is in danger of degenerating into a global charity programme. A new international economic order (NIEO) that is not committed to meeting basic needs is liable to transfer resources from the poor in rich countries to the rich in poor countries.

(Streeten, 1979:101)

According to Myrdal (1970) by the mid-1970s the failure of modernization programmes to bring about trickle-down of benefits was increasingly obvious. This contributed to the need to reassess the nature of capitalist development concepts. Drakakis-Smith (1990) pointed to the more liberal of the linear strategists who began to support a restructuring of short-term development goals along more egalitarian principles to meet targets related to the alleviation of the basic needs of the poor. However, criticisms of the basic needs approach have appeared. With relation to the regional development policies which appear to be using basic needs investment to counter disparity and poverty, in reality there are inequalities between the regions favouring those currently in control of the distribution systems (that is the better-off). In Thailand, for example, such consequences have clearly taken place in programmes designed to encourage development in the Northeast region. Evidence reveals that in dry areas, unproductive irrigation systems and associated tenure reforms have consistently favoured the larger farmers, who are put in control of the reorganization and take the best irrigated land for themselves (Lightfoot and Fuller, 1983). Despite the public promises, many small farmers find themselves little better, or even worse off, than before.

I have examined the limitations of modernization theory and approaches to development based on this model in their application in the Third World. The purpose of this examination is to support my argument that development needs to take account of human development, instead of being solely production-centred. It was recognized that modernization theory, with its accelerated growth strategies based on maximizing GNP, had failed to either redistribute income or solve the problems of Third World poverty and unemployment. The emphasis has shifted from a preoccupation with economic growth to a broader concern with the eradication of absolute poverty and
the promotion of 'redistribution with growth'. The 'basic needs' strategy was promoted with its primary purpose to meet basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, and fuel; as well as social needs such as education, human rights and 'participation' in social life through employment and political involvement. Low income women then became one particular target group to be assisted in escaping absolute deprivation resulting from the failure of the trickle down effect. The evidence was contrary to the predictions about the positive welfare effects of rapid economic growth, that is, financial benefits had not 'trickled down' to the poor. Nevertheless, modernization still remains a powerful component of development ideology. I now further discuss the dependency and the world-system school of development theory in order to show to what extent the modernization theory has been criticized.

DEPENDENCY THEORY AND WORLD-SYSTEM THEORY

Attempts were made by neo-Marxist theorists in the late 1960s to explain underdevelopment in Third World countries (So, 1990). According to Wallerstein (1979), the neo-Marxist approaches primarily provided explanations of the crises of Third World underdevelopment rather than proposed a development model. Fundamentally, they outlined the relationships between the core nations and the development or underdevelopment of the peripheries in a variety of ways, ranging from imperialism to dependency, world system, the articulation of modes of production, collective classes, and the peripheral capitalist state. In two famous studies The Development of Underdevelopment (1966) and later Latin America: Underdevelopment or Revolution (1969), Frank proposed dependency theory for explaining underdevelopment in the Third World. Frank claims that the modernization perspective was practically incapable of stimulating a process of development in the Third World. He argues the Rostow's growth stages are difficult to translate into practice. Frank argues that, in reality, underdevelopment is not an original stage, but rather a created condition. The root of Third World underdevelopment lies in the process of transferring economic surplus from the underdeveloped (satellite) to developed (metropolis) countries through both the activities of the state market. Underdevelopment in such underdevelopment regions is the result of development elsewhere.
Singer (1986) and later Hettne (1990) notes that the dependency theory questioned the assumed mutual benefits of international trade and development asserted by modernization and growth theories. This theory also argues that the association of the Third World states (sometimes referred to as peripheries or satellites) with the advanced industrialized states (referred to as core or metropolis) led to the underdevelopment of the former because the core was developed at the expense of the rural peripheries. This means that the core was the centre of trade, economic as well as political power, finance and technology. Dependency theory suggests that the situation could reverse by industrialization through import substitution, planning and state intervention in general, and subsequently regional integration. For example, in order to deal with underdevelopment in Agentina, Raúl Prebish (1980) suggests the idea of concentrating industrialization through the strategy of import-substitution and export promotion and criticizes the outward-oriented development.

The popularity of dependency theories have declined to some extent. From the theoretical point of view, according to Leys (1977), the meaning of development in dependency theory was obscure. It was unclear whether it is the underdeveloped countries or the masses in these countries that suffer from exploitation. Leys further argues that concepts like centre and periphery are nothing but polemical inversions of the simplistic parings of conventional development theory, for instance, tradition-modern. Planning and state intervention created paralysing inefficiencies. Regional integration has been slow or even non-existent.

Although dependency theory did not provide alternative approaches to development in Third World countries, it had substantial impact on mainstream development theory. It led to a critical examination of modernization and the somewhat automatic and linear progress of growth associated with it. It led to dependency analysis in other areas of the Third World. It also has influenced the discussion on development strategies both on a national level and on an international one, for example, the discussion of collective self-reliance in the context of a New International Economic Order (NIEO).
The attempt to explain underdevelopment in the Third World went beyond a dependency perspective. In the late 1970s, the World-System 'school' offered an alternative perspective to examine the issue of underdevelopment. According to Wallerstein (1974), the capitalist world economy, with a complex system of functional relations, had emerged from somewhat isolated and self-sufficient societies. The process of expansion had two dimensions, i.e. geographical broadening and socio-economic deepening. Accordingly, a small number of core states transformed a huge external arena into peripheral societies. Wallerstein suggests that the process of underdevelopment started with the incorporation of a particular external area into the world system. The core-periphery polarization has contributed to a world division of labour in which the core countries took the role as industrial producers, whereas the peripheral areas were given the role as agricultural producers. Hetnne (1990) points out that as the world system expanded, first Eastern Europe, then Latin America, Asia and Africa, were peripheralized.

For more than three decades many development ideologies had been articulated by a number of theorists aiming to solve the problems in Third World countries. The first Development Decade declared by the United Nations (UN) began in 1960 after the establishment of development assistance agencies and programmes during the 1950s. This was followed by the second decade of development in the 1970s and the UN Decade for Women (1976-1985). The problems of development in the Third World countries attracted the attention of a number of economists, political scientists, and other social science theorists with the maturation of development theories and expressions like modernization, dependency theory, world-system, rural development, trickle-down, bottom-up, participation and self-reliance being distributed through development institutions and enormous numbers of books and articles on development. However, despite all of these activities, we cannot deny the existence of poverty, debt crisis, unemployment, landlessness, bankruptcy, exploitation, and the inequality between men and women throughout the world. These crises must be taken into consideration as products in part of conventional development ideologies. Development needs to be re-defined as the process by which
rural poor can increase their capacity to make choices to improve their quality of life in a manner that is meaningful and purposeful to themselves.

At the same time that there was a growing consensus among Third World countries about the need for a radical reform of the international economic order, the idea that radical domestic reforms in the poor world were called for was equally fast gaining strength among development agencies in the industrial countries. Hettnne (1990) suggests that development theory needs to define in a precise way for "...the actual relationship between different national situations and a continuous change in international context", and has to take into account external and internal constraints. Hettnne also argues that "development theory must be flexible and responsive to the concrete development strategies applied to constantly changing situations" (1990:151). The wisdom on which the strategist can draw need to be taken into account in a critical and selective way.

**ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT: PEOPLE-CENTRED DEVELOPMENT**

Korten and Klauss (1984) point out that the conventional development models, both socialist and capitalist, were largely criticized as the production-centered model of development that failed to consider the needs of people. Recently, the recognition of the "...dehumanizing, inequitable, and environmentally unsustainable consequences of conventional development models" had stimulated a serious search of alternatives. Burkey (1993) calls for equity and equality in the distribution of benefits of development which become key elements in the ongoing debate on development theories and practices.

The emphasis of alternative development models has been placed on human development in general and the rural poor particular. In *Rural Development: Putting the Last First*, Chambers (1983) suggests that rural people (women, men and their children) should be the major group of development beneficiaries. *Putting the People First: Sociological Variables in Rural Development* (Cerneea, 1985) placed similar emphasis of development on people. Mayfield (1985) emphasizes Dr. James C. Yen's principle of working with people and learning from people. Burkey (1993:50)
suggests that "one cannot make people self-reliant; people become self-reliant". He further suggests that:

The development of self-reliance begins with individuals through the process of human development or conscientization; outside attempts to promote self-reliance which ignore these processes will ultimately fail.

(Burkey, 1993: 50)

Korten and Klauss (1984) place substantial value on local initiative and diversity. This approach thus favours self-organizing systems development around human-scale organizational units and self-reliant communities. It is obvious that the development insights contributed by these theorists emphasize people-centered development where empowerment of people became a central theme of development of rural people.

These alternative development perspectives share a common ultimate goal of development - that is human (personal) development. An increased emphasis is placed on humanistic and spiritual values, quality of life, community, and person-centered society. According to Harman (1984:10), the emergent paradigm appears to have two main characteristics, that is concerns with the goal of life and the goal of society. The former includes awareness of participation in individual growth and the evolutionary process, individual fulfilment through community and integration of work, play, learning and growth. The latter refers to fostering the development of the emergent potentialities of individuals. Economic growth, technological development, design of work roles and environments, authority structures, and social institutions are all to be used in the service of this primary goal.

SELF-RELIANT DEVELOPMENT

According to Hettne, self-reliance is another concept in the normative debate about people-centred development during the 1970s. It means different things to different people in different contexts. Self-reliance may be "a situation enforced upon a community when the resources it depends upon for external exchange become exhausted, or a development strategy deliberately undertaken to promote a special kind of development involving the delinking to the larger system of division of labour in order to avoid imposed self-reliance" (Hettne, 1990:172). Self-reliance provided a
vision of international withdrawal instead of international co-operation as provided by NIEO. According to Burkey (1993), the Cocoyoc Declaration of 1974 declared a more cautious attitude to self-reliance as one basic strategy of development. In this respect, self-reliance implies mutual benefits from a fairer redistribution of resources satisfying the basic needs. It emphasizes self-confidence, reliance primarily on one's own resources, human and natural, and the capacity of autonomous goal-setting and decision-making.

Galtung et al (1980) see self-reliant development as a strategy for fields of action at different levels of society. Considering the methodological point of view, Burkey strongly argues that self-reliance "...requires a wide variety of knowledge and skills to do things for one's self, maintaining one's own self-confidence, equally making decisions either as an individual or among a collective group, managing their own organizations, learning how to use their organizations to gain access to resources as well as services, preventing exploitation" (Burkey, 1993:50-51).

PARTICIPATORY DEVELOPMENT

Participatory development became one of many approaches that recognize growth with equity since its emergence in the early 1980s. Conceptualization of participation has changed along with other strands of thought in the wider development debate. According to Hirsch (1990), factors affecting participation ranged from urban bias, imperfect factor markets, superficiality of understanding by national planners, to world system models of dependency, modes of production, and unequal exchange. In the UNESCO document, the emphasis in participation is placed on a collective activity for more equitable distribution of the benefits of development (UNESCO, 1979). Cohen and Uphoff (1979, 1980) stress the people's involvement in decision-making processes as a crucial feature of participation.

According to Wignaraja (1990), Asian scholars in the UNU Programme have defined participation as access to necessary resources and the development of countervailing power which leads to a healthier democracy. Similarly, Pearse and Stiefel (1980) argue that participation is concerned with organised efforts to increase
control over resources and regulative institutions in given social situations on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control. This perspective is not strongly tied to the notion of immediate economic benefit. Cressey (1990) argues that participation associates the notion of power, authority, legitimacy and control.

From this discussion, the participatory approach emerged due to the recognition that the poor have not shared the benefit of development efforts. It could be concluded that there are two major perspectives towards participation. On the one hand, participation is viewed as the key to the inclusion of human resources in development efforts due to the belief that if one could incorporate people in development activities, then there would be a stronger chance that these activities would be successful. There tends to be considerable discussion of people’s participation in the implementation of basic needs strategies. The focus is usually on how to get people to participate as co-producers in implementing service delivery projects initiated and controlled by government. This form of participation is more accurately described as mobilization than as empowerment. On the other hand, alternative interpretation equates participation with access to full decision making processes that could lead to the exercising of power to access and control the resources. In this perspective, participation is seen as the process whereby people seek to have some influence and to gain access to the resources which would help them sustain and improve their quality of life.

Criticism of Participation

Despite the fact that the concept of participation has contributed to the development debates and a positive distribution of development benefits, there have been many criticisms of its limitations. Operationally, Uphoff (1993) refers to a state of 'pseudo participation' and rightly argues that in many projects the participation is more illusory than real. There has been a tendency for some writers, as observed by Oakley (1991), to be dismissive of many arguments for participation as being merely 'lofty sentiments' or 'popular faddishness'.
Another constraint of participation concerns the conflicts arising from inequalities of power and control. It includes concerns with inadequate representativeness of target groups, dominance of articulate groups consisting of the well educated, well-off and powerful local elites who generally pursue their vested interests, and people's preference for immediately problem-solving. According to Meow (1978), it is the dominance of articulate groups consisting of the well educated, well-off and powerful local elites who generally pursue their vested interests.

It is this constraint to participation that links to the empowerment approach which motivates this present study. An examination of rural development in Thailand would be insufficient if it failed to consider the aspects of power relations and control. Participation must be full participation rather than 'pseudo' as Uphoff (1986) describes it, if it is to be empowering. After all, rural people should be empowered to control their own lives.

In this study the constraints and the limitations of the participatory approaches are taken as an opportunity for a starting point in applying an empowerment approach in which rural people empower themselves through full participation in decision-making in a collaborative development process which aims to increase their capacity to bring about the change they desire. It would be incorrect to conclude that participatory approaches are not meaningful. On the contrary, I recognize the main theme: the involvement of people or the mobilization of people to undertake social and economic development projects and the decentralization of government machinery so that resources and decision-making powers may be transferred to lower levels. Participation is a foundation of the concept of an empowerment approach. Empowerment emerges based on the recognition of differences in political and economic power among different social groups and classes. The empowerment process implies a strengthening of a small group's capacity to exercise power.

In rural Thai society (as will be discussed in Chapter 6), there has been an increased demand for recognition, full participation or collaboration by individuals and organizations particularly among the rural poor. There is a need for a new way to
look at Thai society as the framework for facilitating human capacities rather than for over-emphasizing the promotion of economic growth. In this study, I apply the *empowerment approach* as an alternative model for facilitating collaborative development. Collaboration of people in their own empowerment is a major theme in this study.

**EMPOWERMENT IN DEVELOPMENT**

Before proceeding to a discussion of empowerment as an approach to increase women's capacity and consciousness, I now wish to discuss the concept of power in general and power in the Thai context in particular. This section outlines the effect of modernization upon the change of power relations between rural men and women.

**The Concept of Power**

Generally speaking, power is a relative concept which describes a relationship between people. Power is an ever-present phenomenon in social life. In all human groups, some individuals have more authority or influence than others. Power and inequality tend to be closely linked. The powerful are able to accumulate valued resources, such as property or wealth; and possession of such resources is in turn a means of generating power. I view power as a capacity for control over own's life and to influence the outcome of social processes. In other words, power is seen as capacity to bring about desired change.

There are many interpretations on the concept of power. Wrong (1980) views power as the capacity of some persons to produce intended and foreseen effects on others. Russell (1986) defines power as 'the production of intended effects'. It seems to me that both Wrong and Russell assign power to individuals rather than to institutions or entire societies. Weber (1986) defined power as the probability that an actor in a social relationship will be in position to carry out his own will despite resistance, regardless of the basis on which this probability rests, and the chance for a person or a number of person to realize their own will even against the resistance of others who are participating in the action. The concept of power defined by Weber is like those of Wrong and Russell in stressing the element of *intention* or *will*. 
However, unlike Wrong and Russell, Weber stresses the capacity to realize one's own will and suggests that resistance, actual or potential, is relevant to attributions of power.

A different approach is suggested by Robert Dahl (1961) who considers power as the control of behaviour. The explanation of his idea is that A has power over B to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do. But again with this 'intuitive idea of power', some questions might need to be answered because it is hard to see how the 'extent' in question can be uncontroversially measured, and not every such change looks like an effect of power. It could be concluded that the views of power of Wrong, Russell, Dahl, as well as Weber focus on the idea of 'power over' rather than 'power to'.

Arendt (1986) argues that power is not the property of an individual: it corresponds to the human ability not just to act but to act in concert. Talcott Parsons (1986) rejects the Weberian view of power as 'highly selective' and serving to elevate a secondary and derived aspect of a total phenomenon into the central place. He views power as a system resource, a generalized facility or resource in the society which enables the achievement of collective goals through the agreement of members of a society to legitimate leadership positions whose incumbents further the goals of the system, if necessary by the use of negative sanctions. Parsons also claims that his account presents power as a phenomenon both of coercion and of consensus because it is a phenomenon which integrates a plurality of factors and outputs of political effectiveness and is not to be identified with any one of them.

I have considered the definitions of power viewed by some social scientists. For me, power is the capacity or ability to bring about changes. In this respect, it would be useful to consider how the concept of power could explain the circumstances in society with relation to, for example, power relations, production, formation of classes, ideological differentiation, exploitation or discrimination, and the notion of control and influence. I will focus discussion on four schools of thought: the Marxist, the Weberian, the Parsonian and the feminist perspective on power.
The Marxist school conceives of power in the context of specific ways that societies are organised for production focusing on the central importance of the mode of production. They basically argue that dominant classes have power, while subordinate classes do not have power. If Marxists make the connection between class, gender and ethnicity they will still argue that in the final analysis how a society is organised for production will determine the fundamental power relationships. Consequently, those classes with capital will have more power than classes without either material or cultural capital. In this respect, capital needs not be material capital in the way of land but could also be cultural capital.

According to the Marxist conception of class, power is linked to 'class interests' and 'class organization'. As pointed out by Poulantzas (1973), a class can exist in a social formation as a distinct class, even in the case when it is under-determined, that is, even when it does not possess its own specific political and ideological practices. This presence of a class as a social force, in fact presupposes a certain organizational threshold. For example, in the case of the smallholding peasants Marx refuses to assign to them in general the character of a distinct class because of their isolation, which excludes any possibilities of organization. In other words, a class is a group of people who stand in a common relationship to the means of production - the means by which they gain a livelihood. The two main classes, according to Marx, are those who own the means of production (industrialists or capitalists), and those who earn their living by selling their labour to them (the working class or proletariat). The relationship between classes, according to Marx, is an exploitative one, for instance, in feudal societies, exploitation often took the form of the direct transfer of produce from the peasantry to the aristocracy, or, in the course of working days, workers produced more than was actually needed by employers to repay the cost of hiring them.

With relation to gender equity, in the Marxist theories, gender differences in power and status between men and women mainly reflect class divisions. In the earliest forms of human society, according to Marx, neither gender nor class divisions are present. The power of men over women only comes about as class divisions
appear. Women come to be form of 'private property' through the institution of marriage. Women will be freed from their situation of bondage when class divisions are overcome.

The Weberian sociology of power is far more complicated than the Marxist sociology of power. For example, in the class context, although Weber accepts Marx's view that class is founded on objectively given economic conditions, Weber sees a greater variety of economic factors as important in class formation than are recognized by Marx. For Weber, class divisions may derive from control differences, which have nothing directly to do with property. Such resources include especially the skills and credentials or qualifications which effect the type of job people are able to obtain.

Weber also distinguishes two other basic aspects of stratification beside class. One he calls status and the other party. According to the Weberians, power can be distributed between classes, status groups and parties. Class is not simply a division between those with capital and those with labour. In the 'market', those with capital will have more power than those with simply their labour to sell. In this respect the Weberian conception is little different to the Marxist concept. However, the groups with 'class' power in the Weberian concept might have less power from their status background. For example the village abbot should have more status than the leading landholders, or the district government officials should have more status than the district merchant.

At the level of parties, the Weberians talk about those groups capable of influencing the state, groups that are rationally organized as having power. I will later discuss this aspect of powerful local MP, powerful non-government organizations and also the klum maebaan (women’s group) of Sandee village as an empowered organization. Marxists are ambivalent as to whether subordinate classes can achieve real power in a structure dominated by dominant classes, whereas Weberians can talk of different bases for power.
There are more 'functionalist' accounts of power, for example, that posited by the Parsonian who talk of power being inflationary. I have earlier considered Parson's definition of power. Now I would like to further consider the Parsonian concept of power in comparison to the Marxist and Weberian concept. For Parsons, power refers to the general capacity of a social system to get things done in the interest of collective goals. The mobilization of consent produces the power which is transformed into binding decisions through the exploitation of social resources. It seems to me that Parsons's view of power is concerned with more the nature of power than its effects. As Barnes (1988) points out, Parsons seems to treat power as a specific mechanism operating to bring about change in the action of other units, individual or collective, in the processes of social action. He assumes that this 'specific mechanism' operates, in modern societies, predominantly in the 'political sub-system': it is the mechanism that sustains political power, and generates those phenomena conventionally associated with political power.

Finally, although the concepts of power discussed above are very male, there are some interesting perspectives that see power, not in a negative or coercive sense, but rather in the context of being shared or empowering people. The latter interpretation of power is generally seen as the feminist conceptualization of power. Foucault (1980b) argues that one is never 'outside' power. However, for Foucault, this does not mean that it is necessary to admit an unavoidable form of domination or an absolute privilege of the law, or one is in every way trapped. Foucault believes that power is not constructed on the basis of 'wills' (individual or collective), any more than it is derived from interests. Power constructs itself and functions on the basis of powers, of multitudes of questions and effects of power. For Foucault power is independent, in that it could be deciphered outside of the economic process and the relations of production.

Power, according to Foucault, is not conceived in any monolithic or centralized way and is not simply a matter of 'us and them' or 'of the state versus us' or even 'of men versus women'. I agree with Foucault who has argued that 'power is experienced, and ... only exists in action'.
Power must be analysed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. Power is employed and exercised through a net-like organization. And not only do individuals circulate between its threads; they are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising this power. They are not only its inert or consenting target. They are always also the elements of its articulation. In other words, individuals are the vehicles of power, not its points of application.

(Foucault, 1980a:98)

For Foucault, power is reproduced in discursive networks at every point where someone who 'knows' is instructing someone who does not know. It gives an added dimension to the notion that the 'personal is political' because it seems that power relations are sustained at every level and not only in the public domain.

Hartsock (1981) does not view power as a property possessed by those who dominate, rather it is seen as process in which people transform themselves personally and collectively. Power, derived from energy and strength in people, requires an openness and vulnerability. It involves linking the personal domain with the public domain to redefine the self as a whole and as vitally connected to others. Thus when feminists speak of power, it is more often about power-with, rather than power-over. This synergistic framework recognizes the interdependency of the private and the public domains of reality.

Zero-Sum Game or Win-Win Game

According to the discussion on power and empowerment, it could be summarized that, on the one hand, power relations among people could be understood as a zero-sum phenomenon. The Marxist notion of power is more likely to be consistent with this view. In this respect, it could be argued that in any system when one person gains power, another will lose power. For example, if poorer farmers in Northern Thailand are going to have more power to influence the conditions under which they produce agricultural commodities or engage in other forms of community development, then the Bank of Agricultural and Agricultural Co-operative (BAAC) which provides credit, regional and national wholesalers, retailers of agricultural commodities and suppliers (such as the giant Charern Phokaphand Group) state officials, and even international market forces, will lose power to the poor farmers.
Parsons (1986) points out that the dominant tendency in the literature, particularly that of Mills, is to maintain explicitly or implicitly that power is a zero-sum phenomenon, which is to say that there is a fixed 'quantity of power' in any relational system. Although there are restricted contexts in which this condition holds, Parsons argues that it does not hold for total systems of a sufficient level of complexity. If one side gains political power, the other side need not lose any. A zero-sum game results only when different parties struggle for available power positions from the point of view of the rise and fall of the power of political institutions.

Recently, Vogt and Murrell (1990) give another perspective toward power. They argue that empowering is an act of building, developing, and increasing power through cooperation, sharing, and working together. For them, empowerment means a growth, not a distribution, of power. This growth of power is a dynamic, liberating force that frees energy to use or to generate more power. Empowerment is facilitative in its nature and its implementation: it enables, allows, and permits. They further argue that empowerment is an interactive process based on a synergistic process, not a zero-sum phenomenon. The synergistic assumption of power is that the process of empowerment enlarges the power in the situation as opposed to merely redistributing it. In this respect, A's influence over B is replaced by thinking in terms of empowerment as power enhanced or increased through cooperation and sharing. The result which Vogt and Murrell call 'win-win', represents increases in social goods or net positive social gain. They argue that although the notions of social goods or net positive social gain are relative, the indicator of empowerment is that recipients view the result as beneficial. Any organizational action can illustrate successful empowerment if the social system is able to accomplish more than it did prior to the empowerment and if its members value this action and its consequences.

An attempt to empower rural women at the village level will certainly affect villagers in different ways. In Sandee Village, empowering the klum maebaan (women's group) has meant, to some extent, disempowering a number of men who were members of the village development committee (VDC) particularly the powerful po luang baan (village head). Women empowered themselves through collaboration in the decision making process of the village management which was generally
controlled by the po luang. On the other hand, the po lunag was disempowered because he, to a large extent, lost his control of the decision making process.

Interpretation of Empowerment

In recent years, there has been an increased interest in the importance of empowerment in development. This interest appears to be shared by individuals and institutions with widely divergent ideologies and backgrounds and is manifested at the local, national and international level. I suggest that the apparent consensus owes much to certain ambiguities in the concept of empowerment. Different organizations and authors give different interpretations of this concept. Often, different interpretations reflect different concepts of development itself. The following section discusses varying interpretations of empowerment and the implications of empowerment for collaborative development.

Since the late 1970s, the notion of empowerment has appeared with increasing frequency in discussions of strategies for community intervention (Berger and Neuhaus, 1977; Rappaport, 1984). According to Kanter (1983), empowerment is seen as giving influence and access to resources, increasing the ability to get things done both by the person who 'gives' empowerment and by the one who receives it. She argues that management should involve supporting rather than 'controlling'. Empowerment is also viewed as a process. Rappaport (1984:3) defines empowerment as the 'mechanism [by]which people, organizations, and communities gain mastery over their lives'. The mechanism of empowerment may contribute to varying degrees of control, from a sense of control to actual control, i.e. the practical power to effect their own lives.

Others see empowering as increasing abilities to manage better, to have a say in, or to negotiate with existing development delivery systems. Barnett (1981) investigated the process of female empowerment, that is the development of those skills and attitudes which enhance a woman's ability to exercise maximum control over her life. Barnett's study provided insight into both the experience of power and the development of personal power. The experience of power included: faith in one's
ability to determine the course of one's own life; awareness of one's capabilities and talents; economic self-sufficiency; self-respect and expectation of respect from others; lessened dependence on external affirmation; and emotional reliance.

According to Turton (1987), a 'popular participation' research project which was part of the 'Popular Participation Programmes' of the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD), was conducted in Thailand. It was noted that the "...central issue of popular participation has to do with power, exercised by some people and by some classes over other classes" (1987:3). The 'popular participation' was defined as:

The organised efforts to increase control over resources and the regulating institutions in given social situations, on the part of groups and movements of those hitherto excluded from such control.

(Turton, 1987:3)

This perspective implies the rural poor's efforts to empower themselves are intended to "...enhance their livelihood and social power" (1987:4).

In one view, empowerment was considered as involving popular participation in the notion of participatory development (Development Assistance Committee, 1991). In a similar vein, due to the failure of the mainstream models of economic development to address the massive problems of world poverty and environmental sustainability, Friedmann (1992) proposes the emerging practice of empowerment at the individual and household level as an alternative development strategy which "...to seek a change in the existing national strategies through a politics of inclusive of democracy, appropriate economic growth, gender equality, and sustainability or inter-generational equity" (1992:34). The major theme lying at the heart of the practice of an alternative development is 'people's empowerment' that is their collective self-empowerment which "...places the emphasis on autonomy in the decision-making of territorially organized communities, local self-reliance (but not anarchy), direct participatory democracy, and experiential social learning." (1992:vii). For Friedmann, alternative development is "...a process that seeks the empowerment of households and their individual members through their involvement in socially and politically relevant actions" (1992:33).
With relation to rural development, according to Gran (1983) and Oakley (1987), there is an effort to empower the deprived and the excluded rural poor through a participatory process. This effort is based on the recognition of differences in political and economic power among different social groups and classes. To strengthen the power of the deprived masses, Stiefel and Mathias (1983) suggest the main elements of empowerment included sharing of power and scarce resources, deliberating efforts by social groups to control their own predetermination and improve their living conditions and opening up of opportunities from below.

Recently, rural development training programmes based on empowerment ideology have emerged in response to the need to promote people's self-determination through increased participation at community level (Campos, 1990). Staples (1990) suggests that to empower relatively weak groups, the collective ability needs to be developed at a sufficient leverage to transform institutional power relationships to meet their own needs and interests. Gadacz (1990) suggests that both collective as well as individual ability crucial to empowerment, a developmental and transforming process which independent and integrated community living are both means and outcome. Similarly, Dodd and Gutierrez (1990) applied empowerment as a practical strategy to organize community and as a desired outcome. Empowerment could be accomplished through interventions that target both individuals and the social environment, and can be focused at several levels-personal, interpersonal and political. The desired outcome thus is the development of the individual's and group's ability to change negative situations and prevent their recurrence. It is quite clear that empowerment implies the process which the rural people or the powerless can decide upon and take the options they believe are essential to their development.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter I have examined the development theories that have affected the development of Third World countries. I have argued that the mainstream development ideologies that over-emphasize economic growth and production-oriented industrialization have failed to raise the quality of life of the rural poor because the human development and social cost have been neglected. This has
resulted in the existence of a dual society where only a minority is getting rich, while the majority is in a much worse situation in terms of poverty, unemployment, indebtedness, and bankruptcy. This is particularly true in the case of peasant women. The women's development policies which accord with the mainstream development ideologies, also failed to assist the position of peasant women in Third World countries. On the contrary, these policies reinforced the subordination of poor women. I have argued that development has to be redefined. Development should be seen as either means or processes that assist the powerless to make choices that serve their real needs. Poor peasants have to be treated as producers who can decide their options. I see empowerment as an approach to collaborative development whereby the powerless, particularly poor women are facilitated as equal participants in a process which develops their capacity and consciousness so that their decisions are equally counted and their desired change can be achieved.
CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL APPROACHES TO WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

This section discusses various perspectives towards women's oppression, the subordination of women, and will examine the WID strategies which have been formulated based on the modernization model. I begin with the discussion of cultural-dualism which assumes a universal split between the private and public spheres whereby women are associated with the private while men affiliate with the public (Ortner, 1974). The cultural-dualists argue that women's association with the domestic sphere is derived from their natural roles as child-bearer and child-rearer. This is followed by a discussion of traditional Marxist feminism which emerged from historical materialism and generally posits the origin of women's oppression in the emergence of social stratification (Engels, 1978). Radical feminism claims that sexism, not classism, constitutes the fundamental inequality and that it would not be resolved by the abolition of class in society. As long as the social structure is still patriarchal, it is less likely that women's status could be changed (Firestone, 1970). Socialist feminism recognizes the interdependence of gender and class as well as the need to struggle against sexism and classism, and argues that all women are oppressed in the same way (Rubin, 1975). Liberal feminism calls for equality and the opportunity for women to be equal to men while does not question the patriarchal structure, as well as arguing that women occupy an inferior position in society because they lack the civil rights and educational opportunities available to men. The 'women in development' (WID) school of thought arising from the liberal approach (Buvinic, 1983 and Moser, 1993), has influenced policies to improve the situation of women in Thailand. These policies affected the livelihood and work of poor women in rural areas, particularly at the village level.

It is only through these frameworks of feminist thoughts, that the subordination of Thai woman, particularly poor rural women, can be understood. I argue that although these feminist schools of thought promote different concepts and have differing emphases, yet they all share a similar goal that is to bring bout change
in such a way that women would have better lives. They all realize that the women's inferiority to men is socially constructed within patriarchal society. I believe that unless women become consciously aware of these debates and their situations, the possibility to identify their problem is limited. I see the empowerment approach as an approach to raise women's consciousness and enhance women's capacity to bring about their desired changes and as an approach to empowering women in rural development in Thailand.

TRANSFORMING WOMEN'S DEVELOPMENT

Since the International Year of Women and the meeting in Mexico City in 1975, there has been increasing concern about the position of women in society and the relations between men and women and among women from different social groups. The two major aspects of subordination and emancipation of women, particularly those among the poor peasantry, have been the focus of debates.

Over the years, issues of concern for women have taken on new forms and received varying treatment by the United Nations system and its specialised agencies. The principle of the equality of men and women was recognized in 1945 when the UN was formed and again in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. According to Pietilä and Vickers (1990:vi), in the 1950s and 1960s "...women's issues, seen mainly within the context of human rights, were discussed only in the Commission on the Status of Women and the Third Committee of the UN General Assembly, which deals with social and humanitarian matters."

During the 1970s, the perspective changed decisively, and the key role of women, especially in connection with efforts to relieve or solve problems in the fields of population and food issues, became more generally recognized. The United Nations Women's Decade (1976-85) played a significant role in stressing the important role of women in the social and economic development of the Third World countries. This lead to the increased recognition of the productive role of women as agricultural producers, waged workers or in self-employed activities, rather than just the reproductive role and domestic chores. As a result of this recognition, planners and policy-makers slightly changed their emphasis from the family-centred or welfare-
focused approaches that highlighted the role of women as mother as the most important role for women in the development process, to "a diversity of approaches emphasising the productive role of women" (Moser, 1993:2). However, almost a decade after the UN's Women's Decade finished, the policies and plans of action for women have often failed to turn into practice. As a recognition of this unbalanced development, the UN Women's International Meeting in Nairobi in 1985, clarifying the end of the Women's Decade, emphasized total development. 'Total development' involves political, social, cultural and other dimensions of human life and was defined in the consensus document *Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women Towards the Year 2000*. These strategies specifically recognize "women as intellectuals, policy-makers, planners and contributors, and beneficiaries of development" (Pietilä and Vickers, 1990:viii).

In the early seventies, several calls were heard for a general theory of women's oppression (Dube and Palriwala, 1990). While differing in their political and strategic perspectives, the theories which developed within the feminist movement were theoretically based on Marxism as a source of inspiration. According to Stanley and Wise, the category woman is necessary and valid as it shares a set of common experiences which "...derive, not causally from supposed 'biological facts' but women's common experience of oppression. Women is a socially and politically constructed category, the ontological basis of which lies in a set of experiences rooted in the material world" (1990:20). To say women share the experiences of oppression is not to say that they share the same experiences because "The experience of women is ontologically fractured and complex because women do not all share one single and unseamed material reality" (1990:22). Stanley and Wise argue that "...the category woman used in academic feminist writing then (and, to an extent, now) actually reflected the experiences and analysis of white, middle-class, heterosexual, First World women only, yet treated these as universals" (1990:22). Instead of seeing women's oppression as single, determined, and a state in which women almost by definition have no power, Stanley and Wise suggest that "...women's oppression should be seen as an extraordinarily complex process in which women are only rarely
and in extremes totally powerless and in which, ordinarily, women utilise a range of resources in order to fight back" (1990:22).

In many societies the idea that women are ‘naturally’ inferior to men is widely dominant and influences the women’s development arena. Therefore women’s struggle for rights and equity is still needed in order to demonstrate that this dominant idea has developed from the bias of the patriarchal society.

**Cultural-Dualism**

Recently, the limitation of the WID approach focusing on women in isolation has been recognized as will be discussed later in this chapter. Attention has been drawn to 'gender and development' (GAD) as an alternative (Oakley, 1972; Rubin, 1975). Oakley defines sex and gender as follows:

'Sex' is a biological term, 'gender' is a psychological and cultural one. Common sense suggests that they are merely two ways of looking at the same division and that someone who belongs to, say, the female sex will automatically belong to the corresponding (feminine) gender, In reality this is not so. To be a man or a woman, a boy or a girl, is as much a function of dress, gesture, occupation, social network and personality as it is of possessing a particular sets of genitals.

(Oakley, 1972:158)

In short, gender and consequent relationships are socially constructed. The social subordinated of women takes many forms including violence by males against females. Based on biological theories, sexual asymmetry exists due to biological difference between men and women. However, this belief was challenged by feminists who argue that biological differences, even though, they do exist between sexes, do not explain the existence of sexual asymmetry. Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974:22) attacked the biological determinists by arguing that biological research cannot explain the interpretation of human inclinations and possibilities in a cultural order, and cannot explain “the fact that cultures everywhere have given Man, as category opposed to Women, social value and moral worth”.

Simone de Beauvoir pointed out that "it is woman's enslavement to the species, through her reproductive role, which excludes her from projects that generate
and define culture, while men then have to assume the responsibility for creating culture" (de Beauvoir, 1953:64). Since culture is nature transformed and transcended, humankind values culture over nature. De Beauvoir argues that "Woman's sexuality and reproductive role lead her to be closely associated with nature and hence to be denigrated universally. Woman's body and its functions force women to limit themselves to domestic work, particularly child-caring and child-bearing" (1953:64). These tasks only serve to reinforce women's close association with nature and place them in an inferior position. De Beauvoir rejects the idea that women are inferior to men. She strongly suggests that women's inferiority is not naturally constructed but rather socially constructed (1953:64).

Accordingly, the argument about the universality of male domination gave rise to new ethnographic studies of women's lives and their perceptions of their lives (Rosaldo and Lamphere, 1974; Reiter, 1975). Explanations for the universality of male domination were sought through the investigation of a number of analytical dichotomies which were said to characterize gender relations in all societies (Moore, 1993). In her paper, "Is male to female as nature is to culture?", Sherry Ortner (1974) argues that the universal secondary status of women is fact. She used the nature/culture dichotomy to explain this fact (1974:67-70). Ortner explains the different role of the sexes by distinguishing between nature and culture, and suggest that woman's closer link with nature is ultimately responsible for her inferior position and exclusion from participation in those spheres that society regards as superior. Ortner suggests that both men and women create culture, but it is primarily the cultural concepts of men that establish the dichotomy. She argues that "culture recognises that women are active participants in its social processes, but at the same time sees them as being more rooted in, or having more direct affinity with, nature" (Ortner, 1974:73).

One phenomenon that can establish the universal secondary status of women, as Ortner suggests, is the "social structural arrangements that exclude women from participation in or contact with some realm on which the highest powers of the society are to reside" (1974:69). In this respect Ortner is correct. Her argument can explain
why women's development programmes did not meet the rural women's needs and interests. The most tentative reason is because the prevailing power structures, at every level, do not encourage women to participate in the decision making process. It is men who are in the positions of authority and power. Those women who can access these positions appear to be elite women whose needs and interests are different from poor women.

Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974) also distinguish between the private or domestic and public spheres that induce gender roles. They argue that women's status will be lowest in those societies where there is a firm differentiation between domestic and public spheres of activity and where women are isolated from one another and placed under a single man's authority in the home (p.36). To end sexual asymmetry, as Rosaldo and Lamphere suggest, would be to "...bring women into the public sphere or to move men into the domestic sphere". However, as few women have been truly successful in traditional male roles, Rosaldo and Lamphere recommend, instead, that "women develop extra-domestic ties with other women and establish their own public sphere, from which they can exclude men" (1974:36).

According to these writings, these analytical dichotomies are hierarchically or inclusively organized. That is culture is superior to nature, and the public world of men surrounds the private world of women. According to cultural-dualists, besides a close association with nature, women's subordinate role is largely determined by the extent to which they are confined to the domestic domain, isolated from other women in a similar plight and excluded from the public domain of men.

According to Moser (1985), feminist research had demonstrated that what were called sexual roles varied widely cross-culturally which could not be simply reduced into the certain natural and universal fact of sex difference. The universalist assumptions of the subordination of the domestic sphere to the public sphere, and consequently, of women to men are not necessary the case in Thai society. Thai women were not active only in the private sphere. Studies by Hanks and Hanks (1963), Potter (1977), Pasuk (1980) and Van Esterik (1982), to name but a few,
suggested that rural Thai women have played a significant role in family and community life. They have been involved in agriculture and trade through which they have been given considerable power and importance in the family, as well as freedom of mobility in the community. According to Kanikar (1989), the population statistics of Thailand in 1989 showed that rural females comprise about 90% of Thai female workers. In urban areas, Tantiwiramanond and Pandy (1991) state that “it is a common sight in Bangkok to see women working - as food and vegetable vendors, factory and construction workers, shopkeepers, sales assistants or bus conductresses” (p.13). Thai women have played an active role in the public sphere such as in government ministries, the Parliament, the banking sector, retail, insurance and as formal leader in local administration even though such involvement is quite low in percentage term compared to their male counterparts.

Similar situations occur in many societies, however, they have been poorly reported. Momsen (1991) states that statistical evidence on gender roles in agriculture is very unreliable. In many societies it is culturally unacceptable for a woman to say that she works in agriculture and for the census taker to consider that she might have an economic role. Detailed fieldwork has often indicated a much higher level of female participation in agriculture than is generally recorded in the national census. Similarly, Pietilä and Vickers (1990) argue that in the field of agriculture the ordinary statistics on women's work have been most misleading, giving a totally false picture of the situation. For example, "in Egypt, where 1970 national statistics showed that women represented only 3.6% of the agricultural labour force" (p.14). Research methodology such as collaborative action research is necessary for gender and development research because it emphasizes the learning process in which women would be facilitated to fully participate in activities as the decision makers. This would contribute fieldwork report by which women, in stead of the outsiders, are creators of community improvement.

A similar problem was also addressed by Marilyn Waring (1988) in Counting for Nothing: What Men Value and What Women Are Worth. She calls for "attributing monetary valuation to unpaid work, productive and reproductive" (p.5), because
women's household production is not the only work that is excluded. "Census data are often not collected for small enterprises, or for the self employed in the informal sector, or for the informal sector trading that we see in markets elsewhere" (1988:7). Waring suggests that the 'value of human life' should be taken into account in economic cost-benefit analysis, and the issue of 'reproduction' has to be addressed. Waring's observations emphasize the important role of women in unpaid, domestic work.

Pietilä and Vickers point out that the main shortcoming of all global economic statistics from women's point of view is the invisibility of the unpaid work in households and the informal and agricultural sectors, the major part of which, in all countries, is performed by women. The transformation from agriculture to industry has had:

...an important and irreversible impact on the rapid expansion of wage employment of women in general, and on industrial employment in particular. Between 1960 and 1980 the total number of women in the labour force worldwide increased 39% but the percentage of women in industry rose by 104%.

(Pietilä and Vickers, 1990:11)

**Orthodox Marxist Feminism**

Orthodox Marxist Feminism emerged from the historical materialist school of thought which is based on the theoretical formulations of traditional Marxism. Historical materialism tried to situate gender divisions within a theory of class. Friedrich Engels (1978) defines historical materialism as the view of history which seeks:

The final causes of all social changes and political revolutions ... [lie] not in men's brains, not in men's better insights into eternal truth and justice, but in changes in the modes of production and exchange. They are to be sought not in the philosophy, but in the economics of each particular epoch.

(1978:701)

Historical materialists explain women's social status across societies by the analysis of the material base of society with an emphasis on historical change, class and the prevailing mode of production. Unlike cultural-dualists, historical materialists see sex status as the outcome of economic factors rather than cultural values. They
suggest that ideology arises in order to justify existing material conditions and sex status in a society. According to historical materialists, sexual asymmetry is explained by the different relationships of men and women to the means of production.

Engels (1978) argues that the oppression of women is linked to the emergence of private property. Men formed private families because they want to bequeath their possessions to their children, thereby replacing mother-right with patrilineality. The 'world historical defeat of the female sex' was marked by the evolution of monogamy and the sexual repression of women in order to guarantee the legitimacy of heirs. Women became dependents as their production was relegated to the private sphere, that is, within the family unit. Engels (1972) speculates that, "in the old communistic household which comprised many couples and their children, women's task (managing the household) was seen as much a public, a socially necessary industry, as the acquiring of food by men" (p.137). According to Engels (1972), the "only way to end sexual asymmetry is by bringing women back into the sphere of social production" (p. 137). Women would gain in status through their participation in appreciated work and could join the proletarian struggle to eradicate class distinction. Being engaged in public industry is suggested as the first condition for the liberation of the wife. To enable this, the characteristic of the monogamous family as the economic unit of society would need to be abolished.

This direct link between the subordination of women and class society was challenged by Karen Sacks (1974). She refers to non-class societies where men are considered superior to women, and to both class and non-class societies where women do own and inherit property. Sacks argues that gender hierarchy stems from state formation rather than property ownership. Sacks hesitates to agree with Engels' assertion of a direct correlation between male property ownership and male domination. Engels's analysis assumes that all men and only men own property. Nevertheless, in both class and non-class societies, women may very well own property and consequently, exercise power in the household.

Barrett (1980) points to the same point that the capitalist state is the root of women's oppression. The evidence that women commonly form the cheapest, most
vulnerable part of the labour force is in the interest of capitalism. Moreover, the
evidence that women, through their domestic labour, provide services which would
otherwise have to be paid for, is also in the interest of the state because it would
otherwise have to pay to provide the services necessary to ensure the reproduction of
the labour force for capitalism.

The subordination of the domestic sphere to the public domain means that
power in the domestic sphere cannot always be carried over into the public sphere.
Sacks argues that women can achieve adult status in society only through participation
in social production but this does not relieve them of their domestic obligations. Sacks
suggests that:

For full social equality, men's and women's work must be of the same kind: the
production of social use values. For this to happen, family and society cannot
remain separate economic spheres of life. Production, consumption, child-
rearing, and economic decision making all need to take place in a single social
sphere. That is ... private family work must become public work in order for
women to become full social adults.

(Sacks, 1974:222)

Experiences of the women's movement had pointed to the need to differentiate
within the category 'women'. According to Komter (1991), the analysis took the sex-
class system or capitalist patriarchy as their main theoretical focus. This proved too
monolithic and failed to account for the ways in which women are differentiated by
political, cultural and sexual loyalties and by racial, class and ethnic identities
(1991:44). Additionally, where a theoretical understanding of issues like sexuality or
motherhood is concerned, the Marxist approach with its economic overtones is not
very helpful because it does not explain the origin of inequality between men and
women in the production sector.

Socialist Feminism

It is said that the socialist feminists recognized the pervasiveness and
persistence of patriarchy within and across societies and classes even in socialist
countries (Maguire, 1984; Sargent, 1981). In contrast to radical feminists, socialist
feminists, while also critical of traditional Marxist feminism, call for less extreme
upheavals than radical feminists. They do not wish to underestimate the centrality of
economic and social forces, but neither do they dismiss sexist oppression as secondary. According to Eisenstein (1979), the focus of socialist feminists is on the (inter) relationships of reproduction and production or 'capitalist patriarchy'.

Gayle Rubin argues that as a theory of social life, Marxism is relatively unconcerned with sex. In Marx's concept of social world, human beings are workers, peasants, or capitalists who are also men, while woman is not seen as very significant (Rubin, 1975:160). Furthermore, Rubin situates the origins of women's oppression in the institution of kinship, rather than in capitalism. She argues that the practice of exogamy and the exchange of women in order to build up interfamilial bonds oppresses women because they seldom benefit from the bonds thus formed. According to Rubin, "while women are the gifts, men are partners who exchange women, control reciprocal exchange which confers the quasi-mystical power of social linkage, and become the beneficiaries of the product of such exchanges, notably social organization" (p.174). Rubin argues that the traditional Marxist feminist failed to take into account the double burdens of working-women in capitalist and socialist countries (1975).

Arguing along the same line as Jacqueline Jones (1986), another socialist feminist makes the same point in the Labour of Love, Labour of Sorrow. Bell Hooks rejects the traditional Marxist view of household work. She notes that:

Historically, black women have identified work in the context of family as humanizing labour, work that affirms their identity as women, as human beings showing love and care, the very gestures of humanity that white supremacist ideology claimed blacks were incapable of expressing. In contrast to labour done in a caring environment inside the home, labour outside the home was most often seen as stressful, degrading, and dehumanizing.

(Hooks, 1981:143)

A growing need to account for the ideological, and psychological dimension of gender inequality was felt, especially with respect to the issues of reproduction and sexuality. Psychoanalysis was expected to offer a theory regarding the genesis of masculine and feminine subjectivity. By incorporating the ideas of Lévi-Strauss and Freud in the feminist theory, Rubin (1975) produces the concept of a sex/gender class. She argues that 'the exchange of women' is a convincing explanation for the
oppression of women because it situates the oppression "...within the traffic in women, rather than within the traffic in merchandise" (p.175). While acknowledging that this concept is problematic because the exchange of women is not explicit in all societies, Rubin argues that:

If the concept is extended to include broader kinship structures such as lineage, sexual access, and ancestors, one still finds that men have greater rights over their female relatives than women have in themselves or over their male relatives.

(1975:177)

She believes that this system of exchange leads to sexual repression in boys and girls, the internalization of the norms of heterosexuality and female passivity. By using anthropology and psycho-analysis, Rubin could explain sex oppression within the framework of marriage and sexuality rather than the more remote "mode of production" (p.203). For Rubin (1975), the liberation of women can come about only in a society that is genderless as well as classless. Expressing a similar point, Hartmann (1981) argues that the "the categories of Marxism are sex-blind even though its analysis provides essential insight into the laws of historical development, and those of capital in particular" (p.2).

Socialist feminism emerged partly as an attempt to address the problems of this 'unhappy marriage' between feminism and psychoanalysis (Sargent, 1981). While socialist feminists disagree over the roots of women's oppression, they all recognize the interdependence of gender and class, and the need to struggle simultaneously against sexism and classism. Traditional Marxism's disregard for domestic work is apparent from its conviction that women's liberation is not possible until women and housework are brought out of the home and into the public sector. Contrary to this belief, socialist feminists do not dismiss housework as unproductive work. They argue that services like child-rearing and cooking are productive in the Marxist sense of the term because they contribute to the economy by ensuring the present and future availability of labour power.
Radical Feminism

The traditional Marxist feminism has also been criticised for presenting women and households as unchanging and passive victims of class society; the women’s very nature serves to continue the system that exploits them. Radical feminists claim that sexism, not classism, constitutes the fundamental inequality and that it would not be resolved by the abolition of class society. In the Dialectic of Sex, Shulamith Firestone argues that because the root of women's oppression is biological, the liberation of women can come about only through a biological-technological revolution. Firestone future argues that:

Just as the end goal of socialist revolution was not only the elimination of the economic class privilege but of the economic class distinction itself, so the end goal of feminist movement, is not just the elimination of male privilege but of the sex distinction itself: genital differences between human beings would no longer matter culturally.

(1970:11-12)

According to Firestone, although gender inequality might be biologically determined, biological differences between the sexes are by no means unchangeable. She suggests that a real transformation of society requires, first of all, the “...freeing of women from the tyranny of their productive biology by every means available, and the diffusion of the child-bearing and child-rearing role to the society as a whole, men as well as women” (1970:206).

Considering women’s liberation, women do not share a common vision of what equality means because implicit in this simplistic definition of women's liberation is a liberation of race and class which are factors that, in conjunction with sexism, determine the extent to which an individual will be discriminated against, exploited, or oppressed. Women in lower class and poor groups would not have defined women's liberation as women gaining social equality with men because they are continually reminded in their everyday lives that all women do not share a common social status. Additionally, they know that many males in their social groups are exploited and oppressed. Although women may view liberation differently, they share the common ultimate goal. As Ware (1970) writes:
Radical feminism is working for the eradication of domination and elitism in all human relationships. This would make self-determination the ultimate good and require the downfall of society as we know it today. (Ware, 1970:3)

Radical feminism could be useful in explaining the relation between the state and women because it emphasizes the importance of patriarchy in reinforcing women's subordination. Patriarchy is defined by Moser (1993:42) as the system of sexual hierarchy in which men possess superior power and economic privilege. Within this system, patriarchy is maintained through male control over such arenas of power as politics, industry, religion and the military, both within and outside the state.

**Liberal Feminism: Women in Development**

Liberal feminists recognize the need for equality of opportunity. According to Jaggar and Struhl (1978), liberal feminists argue that women had an inferior position in society because they lack the civil rights and educational opportunities available to men (p.82). Sexism is limited to the formal structure such as legal structure; once that is changed, women will have the opportunity to compete with men as equals (Shehabuddin, 1992:23).

**WID: DEVELOPMENT FOR WOMEN**

Liberal feminism formed the basis of the 'Women In Development' (WID) approach which has influenced policies to improve the situation of women in developing countries. According to Moser (1993), the term WID was coined in the early 1970s and consequently adopted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in their so-called Women in Development (WID) approach (p. 2).

Theoretically, the underlying assumption was based on the fact that "women are key actors in the economic system, yet their neglect in development plans has left untapped a potentially large contribution" (Overholt et al., 1984:3). WID recognizes that women are critically important in the development process and can have a positive impact on development in their society. The WID approach assumes that
women's position in society is determined by their access to the formal structures governing society. As the WID approach has a modernization leaning (Taplin, 1989:2), it is assumed that the 'backwardness' of developing countries can connected to women's limited access to resources, education, and modern technology, and to women's negligible contribution to the economic progress of the community. Women's participation in formal institutions is seen as strategy to improve women's position in a society and the economic state of the country. This aspect has been promoted by the most specialized agencies of the United Nations, the World Bank, and many bilateral development agencies, such as AIDAB, CIDA, and ODA.

Practically, this promotion has influenced state policy and approaches to women in development in Third World countries. Furthermore, the shift in policy approaches towards women, from welfare to equity and anti-poverty, as categorized by Buvinic (1983), and to efficiency and empowerment, as categorized by Moser (1993) "...has mirrored general trends in Third World development policies, from modernization policies of accelerated growth, through basic needs strategies associated with redistribution, to more recent compensatory measures associated with structural adjustment policies" (p.55).

According to Kabeer (1992), "a WID agenda emerged as a result of the participation of women in very gender-specific ways, rather than the ignorance of women by policy-makers in the early year of development" (p.102). In other words, while men have been seen by policy-makers primarily as the heads of the household and breadwinners, women in contrast were viewed primarily as mothers, wives and dependents. Accordingly, development efforts were targeted mainly at the male population, while women were relegated to the 'welfare' sector (Buvinic, 1983).

There are several different different approaches which can be linked to the overall WID framework.

**Welfare Approach**

The welfare approach is the earliest policy approach which could be identified as pre-WID. Its underlying rationale towards women reflects its origins which are
linked to the residual model of social welfare, first introduced by colonial authorities in many Third World countries prior to independence. Because of the welfare policy's compatibility with the prevailing development paradigms of modernization, it was continued by many post-independence governments (MacPherson and Midgley, 1987).

In fact it was First World welfare programmes, widely initiated in Europe after the end of World War II, specifically targeted at 'vulnerable groups' which were among the first to identify women as the main beneficiaries (Moser, 1993). According to Buvinic (1986), there are the emergency relief programmes accompanying the economic assistance measures intended to ensure reconstruction. Relief aid was provided directly to low-income women, who in their gendered roles as wives and mothers, were seen as those primarily concerned with their family's welfare.

With relation to the development policy, Moser (1993) notes that the creation of two parallel approaches to development assistance (on the one hand, financial aid for economic growth; on the other hand, relief aid for socially deprived groups) was then replicated in development policy towards Third World countries (p.59). As a result, this strategy had critical implications for Third World women. The international economic aid prioritized government support for capital-intensive, industrial and agricultural production in the formal sector, because the acceleration of growth focused on increasing the productive capacity of the male labour force. Welfare provision for the family was targeted at women. Besides state social welfare programmes, assistance was also provided by NGOs such as mother's clubs, and by bilateral aid agencies with specific mandates for women children, such as the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

These welfare programmes reinforced women's roles as passive recipients of development rather than active participants in the development process. They reflected the aid agencies' assumption that motherhood is the most important role for women in society, and that child-rearing is the most effective role for women in all aspects of economic development. In this respect, welfare is 'family-centred' in orientation in which identifies the mother-child dyad as the unit of concern, focusing
that there has been tendency not only to confuse them, but indeed to categorize them
together as the 'women in development' (WID) approach.

**Equity Approach**

The equity approach is the original WID approach, introduced within the
1976-85 UN Women's Decade, aiming to gain equity for women in the development
process. Recognizing the adverse effects of development on women, Boserup (1970)
made a strong case for women's productive roles, in direct challenge to previous
orthodoxies equating women and domesticity. Her argument was that colonial and
post-colonial governments had systematically bypassed women in the diffusion of
new technologies and skills because of their preconceptions about women's roles.
Boserup pointed to a number of countries where, despite women's critical roles in
farming systems, planners had continually operated with stereotyped assumptions
about female dependency. Similarly, while women were often the predominant
contributors to the basic productivity of their communities, particularly in agriculture,
their economic contribution was referred to neither in international or national
statistics, nor in the planning and implementation of development projects. Waring
(1988) strongly criticizes the injustice of the international system of economic
measurement in failing to take into account women's substantial contributions to so-
called 'non-productive work' such as housework, farm work or child care which in fact
contribute to the financial value of households that leads to the total economies of
every country in the world. As Waring puts it:

> If unpaid productive and reproductive labour remain invisible, then women
remain invisible. ... [Women] are not recognized as a development problem,
because it is assumed that they would be cared for by the male heads of
household, and that their marginalisation from economic activities is both
inevitable and appropriate. Foreign assistance programmes may be directed
toward women but only as mothers ... or potential mothers. Women are seen
(narrowly) as reproducers not producers, welfare cases not workers.

(1988:10-11)

Moreover, the impact of technological change under new modernization
projects, with innovative agricultural methods and sophisticated technologies, were
negatively affecting women. They were displaced from their traditional productive
functions, and income, status and power they had in traditional relations were
diminishing (Moser, 1993). This resulted in class differentiation. As Waring has noted:

Whereas women in the middle and landlord class can benefit from time saved, technological change in the processing of food and crops can eliminate supplementary sources of employment on which poor women have to depend. (1988:10)

Development has been viewed as relief for the economic dissatisfaction of all less developed countries through creating modern infrastructure so that the economy will take off, providing a better life for everyone. However, Tinker (1976) argues that development has facilitated the "...widening [of] the gap between [the] incomes of men and women" (p.22) and it has not only failed to improve women's lives but also had adverse effects on them. The effects reflected the planners' errors which include: errors of omission or failure to acknowledge and utilize women's productive role; errors that reinforced values which restrict women to the household engaged in childbearing and child-rearing activities; and errors of inappropriate application of Western values regarding women's work. This was a result of the inability of the planners, who are generally men, to deal with the fact that women must perform at least two roles in society, whereas most men perform only one (Tinker, 1976). The implication is that the development planners must begin to recognize women's dual role and stop using mythical stereotypes as a basis for their development plans.

These arguments had challenged the predominant assumption that modernization was equated with increasing gender equality, asserting that capitalist development models imposed on most of and accepted by the Third World had exacerbated inequalities between men and women. In response to this challenge, it was recognized, even by the World Bank, that "women's lack of education has contributed to low productivity, nutrition and health of their families, and adverse effects on the economy" (World Bank, 1979:2). Therefore, it is clear that "women should be integrated into development in order to increase both their potential and actual contribution to society" (Maguire, 1984:23).

Starting with the basic recognition that economic growth strategies have frequently had a negative impact on women, the equity approach recognizes that
women are active participants in the development process, and that women substantially contribute to economic growth through both their reproductive and productive roles. It argues that women must be brought into the development process through access to employment and the market place. According to Buvinic (1986), it is also concerned with the fundamental issues of inequality between men and women, in both public and private spheres of life and across socio-economic groups. It recognizes the origins of women's subordination not only in the context of the family, but also in relations between men and women in the market place. However, the equity approach emphasises 'top-down' legislative and other measures as a means to ensure equity, even though gendered consultative and participatory planning procedures were implicitly assumed. Legislation may effect changes in the legal structure, but local ideology may obstruct the realization of these changes. The equity approach cannot resolve gender differences or destroy oppressive institutions because it tries to improve the situation of women only within the confines of an inequitable power structure.

According to Sen and Grown (1987:15), although most development projects in recent years have sought to include women “...in an otherwise benevolent process of growth and development”, these projects have failed to address the reasons behind the economic plight of women. Maguire (1984:24) argues that the current WID approach has purposefully distanced itself from acknowledging let alone addressing sexism, discrimination and gender inequities. The problem is never called oppression. To talk of women's oppression is seen as diversionary and threatening particularly to male decision makers and planners who are needed to support WID objectives within the development debates:

By denying and masking the problem of women's oppression, WID advocates seek male support for solutions which do not address any of the root problems women face.

(Maguire, 1984:24)

In addition, although this approach was adopted by development agencies, it was not immediately translated into measures giving women equal access to the benefits of development (Kabeer, 1992:103). According to Kabeer, this is because of the irrelevance of its redistributive implications to the development agencies, the
resistance from the predominantly male staff of most development agencies and the high political and economic costs of programme implementation. According to Bunch (1981), the equity approach is also criticized by Third World women as irrelevant Western-exported feminism. To take "feminism to a woman who has no water, no food and no home is to talk nonsense" (p.27).

**Anti-Poverty Approach**

The anti-poverty approach is the second WID approach aimed to ensure that poor women increase their productivity. Women's poverty is seen as a problem of underdevelopment, not of subordination. It assumes that the economic inequality between women and men is linked not to subordination but to poverty. Thus it primarily aims to reduce income inequality rather than inequality between men and women. Women's issues are considered to be separate from equity issues. The argument made by Buvinic (1983) was that the anti-poverty approach is a toned-down version of the equity approach, arising out of the reluctance of development agencies to interfere with the manner in which relations between men and women are constructed in a given society.

The underlying assumption of the anti-poverty approach is that the origins of women's poverty and inequality with men is attributable to their lack of access to private ownership of land and capital, and to sexual discrimination in the labour market. It also aims to increase the employment and income-generation of low-income women through better access to productive resources. It is predicted that the employment programmes would lead to increase women's potential to modify the gender division of labour within the household. Then they may also imply changes in the balance of power between men and women within the family.

However, the evidence reflected the opposite process. According to Moser (1993:68), under the anti-poverty programmes the redistribution of power is said to be reduced. The reasons include the specific focus on low-income women, the tendency to encourage projects in sex-specific occupations in which women are concentrated, and to target only women who head households. Additionally, the fact that
programmes allocated to low-income groups in general reflect the reluctance of Third World governments to allocate resources from national budgets to women. More often the preference is to allocate resources at the family or household level, despite the fact that they generally remain in the hands of the male head of household. The anti-poverty approach mainly focuses on the productive role of women based on the basic assumption that poverty alleviation and the promotion of balanced economic growth requires the increased productivity of women in low-income households. However, this approach maintained the continuity with the welfare approach and reflected women's responsibilities for family and child welfare.

Theoretically, the 'basic needs' strategy assumes a participatory approach. However, according to Moser (1993:69), in practice women were excluded from the participatory planning procedures of anti-poverty projects. In addition, mechanisms necessary to ensure that women and gender aware organizations be included, remained undeveloped. The fundamental conditions to ensure viability, including access to easily available raw materials, guaranteed markets and small-scale production capacity, are often ignored. Moreover, the predominant focus is on the productive role of women while their reproductive role is often ignored. The income-generating projects which assume that women have 'free time' often increase their multi-burden, notably child rearing, unpaid housework, farm work, and, often, including community service. It should be clear that women will not be the beneficiaries unless an income-generating project also alleviates the burden of women' domestic labour and child care.

**Efficiency Approach**

According to Moser (1993), the efficiency approach is the third and now predominant WID approach, aiming that development is more efficient and effective through women's economic contribution. In this approach, the emphasis has shifted, away from women's subordination, towards economic development, based on the assumption that increased economic participation for Third World women is automatically linked with increased equity. Women are seen as productive economic agents whose potential had been under-utilized under the welfare-oriented approach.
economic development process. Additionally, in dealing with burdens more efficiently and effectively, women are forced to work harder and longer to increase their labour both within the workforce and household.

The increased burdens contribute to more difficulty because, as Jolly (1987) argues, women's labour is infinitely elastic. This results in the necessary for women to balance their time. Women were forced to change the balance of their time between activities undertaken in each roles. Moser (1993) found that paid work and unpaid work are competing for women's time. This has important impacts on children, on women themselves and on the disintegration of the household. In rural area, as Feldman (1989) suggests, the introduction of export-orientated crops has contributed to the increase of agricultural work for women with less time for the production of subsistence family crops, resulting in both increased intra-household conflict and in worrying consequences for children's nutrition level.

In summarizing the impact of agricultural modernization on women, Momsen (1991: 52-54) notes that as a result of the capitalist penetration of traditional rural economy, there are increases in young unmarried women in agro-industries, urban domestic employment and multinational industries with the decline in job security. Rural women increasingly depend on remittances from migrants and employed children. The overall working hours according to triple roles of women as farmers, homeworkers and wage labourers, was also increased. Under the modern pattern of agricultural production, the traditional labour inputs of women may not be needed. Women sometimes excluded themselves from using mechanical equipment, and chemicals because of the threat to their reproductive role.

Additionally, an increase in family income may allow women to concentrate on reproductive activities. This facilitate the increase of status of male heads of household. The recognition of women's productive potential is achieved at the expense of recognition for their unpaid reproductive work within the household and their community work. This evidence suggests that the efficiency approach relies heavily on
the elasticity and balance of women's labour in both their reproductive and community managing roles.

As observed by Momsen (1991:1-4), economic development has been shown to have a differential impact on men and women and the impact on women has, with few exceptions, often been negative. The modernization of agriculture has altered the division of labour between the sexes, increasing women's dependent status as well as their workload. Women often lose control over resources such as land and are generally excluded from access to new technology. Male mobility is higher than female, both between places and between jobs, and more women are being left alone to support children. Women in the Third World countries now carry quadruple burdens of work as they cope with housework, child care, and subsistence food production, in addition to an expanding involvement in paid employment. Everywhere women work longer hours than men.

Considering this systemic erosion of women's role in economic life, Momsen also speculates that there is a pervasive marginalization of female employment in the development process, in four dimensions. These are: the prevention of women from entering certain types of employment; the concentration on the periphery of the labour market where women's employment is predominantly in the informal sector and the lowest-paid, most insecure jobs; in particular jobs become feminised and so of low status; and the marginalization as economic inequality (Momsen, 1991:68).

According to Boserup (1970), more men were involved in cash crop production while women were narrowly restricted to the production of subsistence crops for feeding the family. The monetised activities reinforced the role of men as breadwinners whereas those non-monetised and domestic activities were left for the responsibilities of women. Similarly, the situation of women in industry is not necessary better than before. While wages and working conditions have improved, men have taken higher positions than women. The effects of 'modernisation' and 'progress' upon rural Thai women will be discussed in Chapter 4 and 6.
Another limitation of the efficiency approach is that it assumes that the situation of women is necessarily better in 'modern' (that is Western) societies. This implies a general disregard for other traditions and values as well as an ignorance of structural flaws in one's own social system. The notion that development projects lead 'backward' countries towards a modern, Western ideal, through the process of making women more 'productive', ignores the fact that even in the industrial world, women have fewer job opportunities and earn less than men doing similar work when they find a job. Maguire found that "female college graduates in the United States earn less than male school-dropouts" (Maguire, 1984:24). Nader (1986) also claims that a comparative critique would demonstrate that the predominant ideology of all nations is male-centred and male-dominated (p.380). Buvinic (1983) comments that:

Productivity programmes for women usually require some restructuring of the cultural fabric of society, and development agencies do not like to tamper with unknown and unfamiliar social variables. As a rule of thumb they tend to believe in upholding social traditions and thus are reluctant to implement these programmes.

(1983:26)

The WID approach shares many of the limitations of liberal feminist thinking (Jaggar, 1983). The WID analysis identified irrationality and prejudice on the part of planners as being responsible for women's marginalization in development. The limitations of such analysis became apparent in the course of evaluations of various agencies involved in WID policy (Maguire, 1984). These studies uncovered an important dimension which has hitherto been missing from the WID analysis. According to Kabeer (1992), in place of the WID theory of irrationality, "they suggested need for a theory of power which could explain deep seated resistance within institutions to attempts at redistributive gender equity" (p.105). With relation to the notion of power, another limitation of the WID approach particularly the efficiency approach, is that it argues that women contribute little to the economic fortune of their country so they should be brought into the economic sector through development efforts. This assumption ignores women's triple roles, as farmers, homeworkers and wage-labourers, and the fact that women work longer hours. It does not seek to discover or explain why women earn less than men. In this respect, it fails to acknowledge that it is the social devaluation of women that is responsible for their
fortune of their country so they should be brought into the economic sector through development efforts. This assumption ignores women's triple roles, as farmers, homeworkers and wage-labourers, and the fact that women work longer hours. It does not seek to discover or explain why women earn less than men. In this respect, it fails to acknowledge that it is the social devaluation of women that is responsible for their marginalization in the economic sphere. Maguire (1984) points out that "...the greatest flaw of WID is that it has ignored the dynamics of differential power and privilege between men and women" (p.25). While exploitative economic relations go unaddressed, the patriarchal oppression of women goes unnamed.

**GENDER AND DEVELOPMENT: How the 'Other' Perceives Development**

While the category 'women', women's integration, and promotion measures such as credit and employment, were focused by the WID approach, the Gender and Development (GAD) has emerged and further considers 'women' in relation to men, and the way in which relations between men and women are socially constructed. Men and women play different roles in society, with their gender differences shaped by ideological, historical, religious, ethnic, economic and cultural determinants. In order to empower rural women in rural development these differences need to be taken into consideration. The GAD approach argues that to focus on women in isolation is to ignore the problem of women's subordinate status to men. Instead, it emphasizes a focus on gender relations when designing measures to help women in the development process.

As development with gender equity entails recognition that men and women have different needs arising from their different situations in society, there is a tension between meeting needs in ways which preserve these differences and meeting them in ways which attempt to transform the underlying structures of inequalities which created them (Kabeer, 1992). Molyneux (1985) argues that the concept of 'women's interest' assumes compatibility of interests based on biological similarities. Women's general interests should be referred to as 'gender interest' in order to differentiate them from the false homogeneity imposed by the notion of 'women's interests'. Molyneux defines 'gender interests' as "...those interests that women (or men for the matter) may
develop by virtue of social positioning through gender attributes" (p.232). For Molyneux, gender interests can be either strategic or practical, each being derived in a different way and each involving differing implications for women's subjectivity (p. 232). From a planning perspective, as Moser (1993) suggests, "a separation of women's interests and gender interests is essential because of its focus on the planning process whereby an interest, defined here as a 'prioritized concern', translates into a need" (p.37).

Molyneux (1985:232) argues that there are no such things as women's needs since this assumes an unproblematic unity among all women, based on their common biology. Different groups of women have different needs and interest depending on their positioning within the social structures of their societies. Women's practical gender needs are those which emerge out their location in concrete and pre-exciting social relations. Thus women's role as family carers in specific contexts give them a practical need for flexible health services or for child care centres. In contrast, the strategic gender interests, as pointed out by Kabeer (1992:110), stem from an analysis of the mechanisms of women's subordination and a vision of an alternative, less oppressive society. It shifts the focus from what is to what could be, from planning for practical gender needs to strategic gender needs of empowerment. According to Molyneux, strategic gender needs refer to:

The abolition of the sexual division of labour; the alleviation of the burden of domestic labour and child care; the removal of institutionalized forms of discrimination such as rights to own land or property, or access to credit; the establishment of political equality; freedom of choice over childbearing; and the adopting of adequate measures against male violence and control over women.

(1985:233)

These strategic gender needs are often at the level of consciousness required to struggle effectively for them. Top-down state intervention alone has not resolved any of the persistent causes of gender inequality within society. According to DAWN (1985), the capacity to confront the nature of gender inequality and women's subordination can be fulfilled when it has incorporated the bottom-up struggle of women's organizations. The recognition of the limitations of top-down government legislation actually, rather than potentially, to meet strategic gender needs can lead
adherents of the empowerment approach to acknowledge that their strategies will not be implemented without the sustained and systemic efforts of women's organizations and like-minded groups. The mechanisms to ensure that women and gender-aware organizations are included in the planning process including explicit involvement of gendered consultative and participatory planning procedures, political mobilization, consciousness-raising and popular education as entry points (p.74-5).

There are other Third World women's organizations which have provided important examples for the other groups of the ways in which practical gender needs can be utilized as a means of reaching strategic gender needs. In Bangladesh, the Grameen Bank project is a successful example of an action research programme of banking for the rural poor, initiated by Professor Muhamad Yunus in 1976. By the end of June, 1986, the Grameen Bank had 241 branches serving landless borrowers of whom seventy percent were women (Grameen Bank, 1986). It was reported that the Grameen Bank had disbursed about Tk. 119.0 crore (US $38.7) and its recovery rate is close to 98 per cent. Group members saved more than TK. 13 crore (US $4.23) up to June 1986. The Bank operation has reached 4,333 villages in 14 district and has earned a profit of Tk. 4.9 million in 1984 and Tk. 0.5 million in 1985. It hopes to set up of 500 branches by the end of 1988 (Grameen Bank, 1986).

Another example from South Asia is the Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) starting in 1972 by a group of self-employed women labours in India. It initially struggled for higher wages and for the defence of members against police harassment. According to Burkey (1993:150) it was reported by Maitrayee Mukhopadhyay that over the past decade SEWA has become an effective trade union involving women in the unorganized sector: vendors, collectors, dealers and garment workers. SEWA bargains for and represents its members in matters relating to trades and occupations. It has established a women' bank to provide credit and savings facilities, lack of capital being the primary constraint with all women's trade groups. The women's bank also helps with procurement of materials, tools and equipment, and provides training and technical assistance on problems of production, marketing and management.
In Thailand, *Klum Phuan Ying* (Friends of Women) was started in 1980 in Bangkok by young, educated urban women. Its approach is different from other women's association which emphasize women's traditional roles and a welfare-oriented approach. Its major activities involve providing legal aid and information as well as training through such activities as consultation, its own magazine, seminars and exhibitions for disadvantaged women who have encountered domestic violence, rape, low wages, poor working conditions, lack of security (Tantiwiramanond and Pandy, 1991). In the Philippines, GABRIELA (an alliance of local and national women's organizations) ran a project which combined women's traditional task of sewing tapestry with a non-traditional activity - the discussion of women's legal rights and the discussion of rights and the constitution (Gomez, 1986). In India, the 'Forum against the Oppression of Women' first started campaigning in 1979 on such issues as rape and bride-burning and, later, housing. In seeking to broaden the housing problem from a 'women's concern' and to raise men's awareness, the Forum has become part of a nation-wide alliance of NGOs, lobbying national government for a National Housing Charter.

These organizations share a significant common characteristic in that they provide women opportunities to actively participate in the decision making process. I believe this has contributed to the empowerment of women. While there are no blueprints for an empowerment approach, the victories, defeats, mistakes and struggle of women around the world become the raw material from which new strategies constantly evolve. In this respect, the "empowerment of women is the process by which they develop the tools with which to identify and analyze the structures of their oppression and construct alternative ways of being, living, and relating to men" (Kabeer, 1992:110). What is most striking and specific about the power dimension of gender is the extent to which ideologies about gender difference and gender inequalities are internalized as a natural state of affairs by women as much as by men. It is the individual that the process of change begins. Sen (1990) acknowledges the perceptions of the individual interests of women that tends to emerged with the notion of family well-being. The 'political agency' of women may be sharpened by their greater involvement with the outside world.
AN EMPOWERMENT APPROACH TO DEVELOPMENT BY WOMEN

Moser (1993) notes that the empowerment approach is the most recent approach to women's development articulated by Third World women. This approach has been differently interpreted by different groups of women. Although the empowerment approach may appear synonymous with the equity approach, empowerment is different not only due to its origins but also in terms of the causes, dynamics and structures of women's oppression which it identifies, as well as the strategies it proposes for changing the position of Third World women. As one approach to women's development, the empowerment approach is derived largely from the emergent feminist writing and the grassroots organization experience of Third World women. The emergence of empowerment as an issue in women's development shows that feminism is not simply a recent western urban middle-class import. As Jayawardena (1986) argues, the women's movement was not imposed on women by the UN or Western feminists, but has an independent history.

In the report of the United Nations Asian and Pacific Centre for Women and Development (UNAPCWD) derived from a workshop held in Bangkok in 1979, the empowerment approach recognizes the fact that development does not necessarily help all people, that not all women want to be 'integrated' into mainstream modernization and that they hardly have choice in defining the kind of society they want. It acknowledges the importance for women to increase their power by seeking to identify power in terms of the capacity of women to increase their own self-reliance and internal strength, and to a lesser extent in terms of domination over others with its implicit assumption that a gain for women implies a loss for men. This capacity is identified as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change through their access to crucial material and non-material resources. Women empower themselves through the redistribution of power within, as well as between, societies (UNAPCWD, 1988).

According to Moser (1993), the empowerment approach acknowledges inequalities between men and women and the origins of women's subordination in the family. It emphasizes the fact that women experience oppression differently according
to their race, class, colonial history and current position in the international economic order. Women thus have to challenge oppressive structures and situations simultaneously at different levels.

The Development Alternatives with Women for a New Era (DAWN) is a confederation of women's group set up prior to the 1985 World Conference of Women in Nairobi. They articulate the empowerment approach and identify an alternative future society:

We want a world where inequality based on class, gender and race is absent from every country and from the relationships among countries. We want a world where basic needs become basic rights and where poverty and all forms of violence are eliminated. Each person will have the opportunity to develop her or his full potential and creativity, and women's values of nurturing and solidarity will characterize human relationships. In such a world women's reproductive role will be redefined: child care will be shared by men, women and society as a whole. ... Only by sharpening the links between equality, development and peace, can we show that the 'basic rights' of the poor and the transformations of the institutions that subordinate women are inextricably linked. They can be achieved together through the self-empowerment of women.

(DAWN, 1985: 73-5)

The self-empowerment of women is defined as the right to determine choices in life and to influence the direction of change through access to scarce material and non-material resources. As Gore points out, the perpetuation of a dichotomy between empowerment and oppression stems from a shift in conceptions of 'power as repression' to 'power as productive', such that empowerment is linked with a productive conception of power, and oppression is linked with a repressive conception (Gore, 1992:59). In this respect, "...by focusing on empowerment, feminist pedagogy embodies a concept of power as energy, capacity and potential rather than as dominance" (Shrewsbury, 1987:8).

Empowering women in rural development is important for several reasons. According to Van Esterik (1989), empowerment is essential to women's role in rural development because it encourages women's self-reliance, confirms women's power to control their own body, challenges models of women as consumers and sex objects,
requires a new interpretation of women's work, and encourages solidarity among women.

These perspectives on empowerment suggest the need to transform the power relations in a manner by which women could increase control over their lives. To do this, various factors and dimensions need to be taken account because the transformation would certainly concern manifold groups, issues, agendas and philosophies. In this study, the empowerment approach is seen as a learning process in which rural women can increase their capacity and raise their consciousness in a way that would contribute to their ability to control their own lives. It is viewed as an alternative approach to collaborative development which emphasizes human potential and capabilities, aiming to increase the dignity and self-respect while also recognizing material deprivation and poverty. It is this aspect of development that the modernization theory has failed to promote. For this reason, the empowerment approach can be the issue for exploring the relation between theory and action.
CHAPTER 4

MODERNIZATION IN THAILAND: WHOSE BENEFIT?

The more thansamai (modernized) the more I have to buy. Villagers can only be thansamai by having money to buy things. Having no money, you are nobody.

- Sutat, male store keeper in Sandee Village

Today villagers are more thang khon thang yoo (individual). I would like to see us help each other and have more solidarity as in the past.

- Jinda, female factory worker in Sandee Village

This chapter discusses modernization in the Thai context. It outlines changes at the village level that have been directed by the development strategies pursued by successive Thai governments for the purpose of modernizing the country. In this study special attention is placed on poor rural women because rural women are a part of the poor rural population which constitutes the majority of the country and empowerment of the poor rural women is therefore important to rural development in Thailand. The analytical issues relate not only to the gender roles and needs, but also to the Thai State's development policy and plans and their impacts on women's role and status. Another issue is the change of women's status due to State interventions. This chapter discusses why the role of women in rural development in Thailand must be redefined and reinterpreted. The roles of rural women at the household, village and supravillage level will be discussed. The chapter outlines how, as I would argue, rural people in general and poor women in particular have been disempowered by the State-led rural development programmes implemented at the village level. It is only by considering this aspect that the role of Thai women in rural development can be understood.

In answering to the question "what are the effects of 'modernization' on rural people in general and rural women in particular?", Nithi (Sanitsuda, 1991/2:28) suggests that we can use "self-reliance, the criterion on which to base a judgement of a certain society has changed for the better or for the worse" as an indicator for development. It is quite clear that modernization has to some extent weakened rural
women's self-reliance. This is why rural women need to be empowered. To answer the question why and how to do this, it is essential to understand how women's development has been excluded from the mainstream national development policy, the concept of development itself, the nature of rural development programmes and the strategies put forth at different levels to enhance women's capacity in choosing choices for their lives.

CHANGE PRIOR TO THE DEVELOPMENT PLAN ERA

Sakdina System

Thailand had been under an absolute monarchy for about seven centuries prior to the revolution in 1932 (Thinapan and Likhit, 1989:167-8). The early Thai Kingdom of Sukhothai (1250-1350) was characterized by a patriarchal rule in which the ruler was taken as the patriarch or father of the people. Those who were in power were obliged to render the people assistance but would not allow them to practice self-government or to exert control over those who were in the power pyramid. The Thai sakdina system, first established in this period, is a system which was primarily created for the purpose of labour exploitation and control (Jit, 1979; Chairat, 1985). Under the sakdina system, people were ranked and assigned certain tasks, notably corvee, according to a scale, called sakdina, which was measured in terms of ownership of rice fields (San, 1961). There were two principal classes within the sakdina society: nai or sakdina class (the class of master) and phrai (the class of subjects). The sakdina or nai class was composed of the king, members of the royal family, and the nobility (khunnaang i.e., state officials with commoner origins). The class of phrai consisted of commoners or peasants (phrai) and slaves (thaai). The essence of class relations under this system was the exploitation of the phrai by nai through a corvee system. The power relations between these two classes was an absolute dictatorship. Under the sakdina society there was no equity between the powerful nai and the powerless phrai. With the exception of royalty, nobility and monks, all Thai males were required to register under the nai and were required to perform a periodic corvee service, given the sobriquet of royal or State service (raachakaan). (Another group, the phrai sui, were obliged to register, but were
exempt from corvee.) Those who registered under the king were called *phrai luang*, and those who registered under a particular *nai* were called *phrai som*. In any case, the *phrai* could pay money in lieu of their corvee (Chai, 1974; Piyachat, 1983).

The *phrai sui* were exempt from royal corvee service due mainly to their remote residence from the palace. However, *phrai sui* were obliged to supply the king annually with local products such as tin, pepper, bird nests, bat waste and forest products. In addition to the labour exploitation that existed in the form of *phrai luang* and *phrai som*, the *sakdina* class was, thus, provided by the *phrai sui* with another means for surplus extraction from the rural areas, and this constituted the basis for royal accumulation. Slaves remained the only source of labour power outside the formal corvee labour system and being a slave carried no connotation of social disgrace. Having slaves and *phrai* was regarded as both a sign of prestige and a major source of wealth and power.

The *sakdina* corvee system largely consumed the male labour forces at the village level. In the absence of the husband, according to Churairat (1986), peasant women became totally responsible for the family. This circumstance had set a tradition of female dominance in household work and farm production. In spite of the suffering from slavery and poverty, society was opened for Thai women particularly those in rural areas. Hanks and Hanks (1963) have noted that Thai women in rural areas have been involved in agriculture and trade. The bilateral kinship system has given them considerable power and importance in the family, and freedom of mobility in the community. Under the kinship system, "women had freedom and authority, for example, to control the family purse strings and share in the decision making in the household" (Tantiwiramanond {Tan} and Pandey, 1991:16). Potter (1977) studied the ‘Chiangmai village’ in northern Thailand and found that matrilocal residence and the bilateral kinship system supported women's independence. Similarly, Van Esterik (1982:63,68) found that Thai women perform a significant economic role and have notable controlled over resources. Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974) argued that "women's activities are structurally and ideologically significant, even central to survival and social norms, however they are so often devalued" (p.31). This is
particular true in the case of Thai rural women. In spite of women's structural and economic significance they are less involved in the public sphere, where, to a large extent, authority and power are exercised, and social change proceeds.

During the era of absolute monarchy, Thai women were expected by society to play two roles: mother and wife. Under this expectation, women's duties were serving men and producing labourers for the family and the State. Both sakdina and commoner women were expected to play similar roles. Sakdina women were also used as a means to build the social and political relationships between muang (independent states) through marriage. This provided the condition for polygamy in sakdina families in Thai society (Suwadee, 1991:1-3). Suwadee (1991) argues that under these expectations, Thai women gradually accepted men's superiority in terms of physical, mental, and social capacity. The acceptance by Thai women of these expectations was made possible by the law that women are governed by men and by socialization through religion, literature, and language. Historically, the sakdina system directly affected Thai women's roles. Tan and Pandey argue that:

Until recently the interplay of three politico-cultural factors, notably the monarchy--Buddhism and matrilocality--played an effective role in separating women into two distinct strata: the royal and aristocratic women and the common peasant women.

(1991:14-15)

Women who were phrai would have to manage the household, farm and trading while male family members were away to render service for their nai and khunnang (state officials with commoner origins) for at least six months each year. Even today every year a particular number of male citizens aged 21 years old is called to serve the military for at least one and a half years. It is female members who carry out domestic and farm work. However, compared to Chinese and Indian women, Thai women were in a better position in terms of exploitation. While the upward mobilization of sakdina women could be made possible through education, the commoner women played a crucial role in the family economy and the traditional residence pattern after marriage, whereby the husband stayed with the wife's family, allowed women to exercise power to some extent.
Chakkri Reformation

According to Chairat (1985), the heart of the Chakkri Reformation rested in the transformation of the traditional decentralized *sakdina* state into a highly centralized and unified state under the absolute power of the king that is, into an absolute State. There were two critical consequences of the struggle within the class of *nai* upon the development of modern Thai society. These consequences, which primarily started with royal attempts to curb the rising power of the nobility, were: (i) the rise of the ethnic Chinese, first as agents for royal capital accumulation and later as the capitalist class which dominated the early capitalist class formation in Thai society, and (ii) the emergence of a class of civil-military bureaucrats.

King Mongkut (1850-1868) played an important role in maintaining the independence of the country from the penetration of Western imperialism, by bending rather than breaking under such external pressures, by signing the Bowring Treaty with the British in 1855 (Ingram, 1971). San (1961) suggests that following the Bowring treaty the *sakdina* system began to decline and a new form of class exploitation emerged in Thai society, namely the 'semicolonial' or 'semisakdina' system. The influence of the traditional *sakdina* and *semisakdina* systems, having been inherited more or less by the people up until the present day, naturally obstructs the development of popular participation. Women in the royal and noble class were encouraged to become 'modernized' and became socially active. According to Tan and Pandey (1991), there were some changes related to women's status in Thai society. These changes included some legal changes in polygamy during this reign.

King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) made a great change by the abolition of the *phrai* which was completed in 1899, and the *thaat*, abolished in 1905. The former *phrai* and *thaat* constituted a peasantry. The changes in period 1899-1905 functioned to free up peasant labour. Peasant labourers were slowly mobilized and commercialized (very rapidly since the 1970s), while the former nobles became a ruling class which occupied bureaucratic positions. Although labour service to the state was abolished, Thai commoners were still required to pay a capitation tax until 1932. Since the tax was paid in cash, it forced the Thai peasants to produce for the
market in order to earn money to pay their tax. According to Johnston (1975), the capitation tax, therefore, served more or less as another mechanism to facilitate the expansion of the market economy into the rural subsistence economy. Additionally, during this reign, the sakdina system was replaced by 'modern' (Western) administration through the formation of ten Western-style centralized administration ministries. The crucial role of the State was to provide infrastructure development. Measures were taken to link peripheral areas more firmly with the core (Chairat, 1985). Women's education was promoted (Tan and Pandey, 1991).

This absolutist State was further turned into a modern nation-State during King Vajiravudh's (1910-1924) energetic campaign for nationalism (Jit, 1976). To support the reform, a functionally specialized system of twelve highly centralized administrative ministries and provincial offices, including the Ministry of the Interior, was established, and this facilitated the increasing bureaucratization in Thai society. There was increased advocacy of a public role for women. The college and secondary school systems were established. This contributed to more opportunities for women in education.

The Revolution of 1932

In 24 June 1932, the absolute monarchy was overthrown in a coup by nobles called the khana raat (people party). The traditional sakdina governmental and administrative systems, which had served as the basic government and administrative structure for Thai society, were replaced by a democratic form of government. This change opened up the "... acceptance of women into the expanding bureaucracy at the beginning of constitutional monarchy in 1932" (Tan and Pandey, 1991:17). This resulted in an upsurge of "...early feminism' and women-oriented writing published in women's magazines and other publications. A group of women activists formed themselves into the first registered private voluntary women's organization, called the samakom satri Thai" (Thai Women's Association of Thailand, TWAT) (Sripom, 1983).
However, Thinapan and Likhit (1989) argue that the influence of the traditional government and administrative patterns is still pervasive. This is due to the fact that:

The introduced change was confined only to a formal institutional change and a change in the small ruling elite at the top, with no major change in the basic social and political philosophy and pattern of behaviour. As a result, the introduction of a constitution and a parliament along Western lines happened only in form.

(p.168-9)

Instead, a 'Thai-style' pattern was set up whereby government officials would mostly seek their interests by serving their superordinate officials rather than by taking the responsibility of rendering services to the people.

Meanwhile, the expansion of public education, and the emergence of the bureaucracy as a national institution provided commoners with an avenue for social mobility. As a result, according to Chairat (1985), the formation of a new social class in Thai society occurred, that is, the class of professional, Western-educated bureaucrats, whose power derives from their control over State apparatus. Thus, one of the legacies of the Chakkrí Reformation was the creation of the civil-military bureaucracy, whose existence not only uprooted the power of the nobility but also contributed to the overthrow of the absolute monarchy in 1932. The bureaucracy became the new power centre in Thai society. Accordingly, the expansion of the central authority under the Chakkrí Reformation, by politically and culturally bringing the peripheral provinces and the tributary state under Bangkok domination, can be interpreted as a kind of internal colonization in response to external colonialism. This model of 'internal colonialism' (core-periphery relations) has been rejuvenated since the Second National Plan, as will be discussed, under the name of 'national security and development'.

Patron-Client Relationships

According to Chatthip and Montri (1981), the end product of the struggle between the nai and phrai was the formation of a patron-client network as well as the rise of a group of powerful nai who could challenge the king's power. Although the
Thai *sakdina* system came to an end, its *nai-phrai* (patron-client) relations have become institutionalized as one of the contending ideologies in contemporary Thai society. In the patron-client system, it is common for Thais to seek to belong to a certain group or groups of which the leader or the patron is an individual in a higher position than his or her followers in either power or wealth. The patron is normally rendered the support, loyalty or services of followers whilst the clients in turn are given some benefits such as material resources, protection or privileges. This is why a large number of government officials usually take keen interest in serving their superiors rather than serving the majority of rural poor.

According to Hirsch (1990),

The two-class structure of traditional Thai society is still evident in terms of village discourse. For most rural dwellers there are two classes of Thais: villagers (*chaobaan*) and officials (*khaaraachakaan*: literally, 'royal servant') ... Officials and others of higher status are often addressed as nai, reflecting the persistence of traditional categories in social discourse.

(p.19)

As Hirsch points out, "the simplicity of the traditional two-class structure is based on a relative homogeneity of the rural population in the absence of caste and the historically limited differentiation of economic status in production" (1990:20). Hirsch argues that "the increased influence of capitalist relations of production in rural areas, and the divisions which multiply within rural groups as specialization increases not only at the regional level but also within villages" (p.20) contributed to the breakdown of this simplicity. Village elites, commonly increased, become the new power holders, then new patrons in their villages, and at the same time, there is a tendency to become the clients of local officials. Due to the highly centralized administration, local officials as state apparatchiks, in turn, became the new patrons of rural poor.

The government of Plaek Phibun Songkhram (1947-1957) was largely supported by the military which rapidly facilitated the distribution of 'development' to the people. The concept of social and economic development was heavily based on the nationalism which was firstly initiated during the reign of King Chulalongkorn. According to Hewison (1989b), the Phibun era could be described as the era of haphazard, state-led development where the capitalism, which was mostly developed
by the State, resulted in an uncertain investment climate (p.37). Of relevance to rural development, in 1942, the 'burana chonnabor' (rural development) programme was set up by the Ministry of the Interior. It aimed to encourage the rural people to be 'good citizens' under the nationalist ideology, and to increase people's income. Under this programme, village committees and deputy tambon officers were introduced. Yet, after two years the programme had failed to come off, due partly to the people being forced to participate without sufficient financial and material support from the government (Kanjana, undated:81). Nationalism, which was promoted as a national development policy, influenced the activities of women's associations. The women's Bureau, in the Office of Cultural Affairs was chaired by La-iat, wife of Prime Minister Phibun. The Women's Cultural Club was founded by La-iat as a meeting place for women inside and outside the bureaucracy. The activities of these clubs emphasized home economics and social welfare (Tan and Pandey, 1991).

During the government of Pridi Phanomyong, the theme of self-reliance was emphasized and was based primarily on solidarity. In economic development, while adopting the Western idea of the economic plan, Pridi also recognized the harmonious system based on Buddhism. With relation to rural development, the idea of a co-operative 'people's organization' was promoted by the government with its support in terms of land and budget while the members was needed to provide labour (Kanjana, undated:80).

With relation to rural development, during 1947-1953 the co-operative was widely established since it was seen as a means of developing the nation. Yet the co-operatives in rural areas were established so as to meet the policy of the government rather than the interests of rural people. During 1951-52, this programme was revised with the provision that the burana chonnabor committee should be chosen by the rural people, and this committee was expected to write community development project plans. Unfortunately, the government could not provide the funds to implement this programme.
In 1956, the sapha tambon (lit. sub-district council), was established. Later in 1983 the village development committee (VCD) was developed. These continue to operate. Sapha tambon is the people's organization only in name because the sapha tambon became the representative of the State in the management of the local community. Instead of being the representatives of villagers as its rhetoric suggests, the sapha tambon is the State instrument in the local level.

After 1932, women's organizations came into existence. These include the Siamese Association of University Women (1948), the Women Lawyers Association (1950), the Home Economics Association (1956) and the Girl Guide Association (1958). However, these professionally-oriented organizations organized their activities in the city and served upper and middle class women's interests. According to Tan and Pandey (1992) the National Council of Women of Thailand, NCWT (Sapha Satri Hang Chaat) was formed in 1956 in response to change at the national level with relation to women's rights. In contrast to elite women who enjoyed serving their interest through these city-based organizations, an increased number of young rural women have no choice except migrating to big cities.

It is interesting to note that until the end of the 1950s, women's organizations were formed and involved the elite women. The activities of these organizations were welfare-oriented. The activities of rural women as a group were hardly documented. Yet this does not mean that rural women had not been working together in groups. Traditional reciprocal labour (called ao wun in the North), in agricultural production and other family as well as village affairs, has proved that rural women did seek to serve their interests through collaboration. This collaboration, however, took place at particular times based on their immediate needs. The participants would be all villagers including both women and men who had different roles. The form and pattern of groups were much more flexible than groups sponsored under State policy.

I have tried to show how the nai and later the 'ruling' groups in Thailand had sought to 'modernize' the country before 1961. However, their models of 'modernity' were not the exact replicas of what Western theorists (at the time) would conceive as '
modernity'. Changes of women's activities and status were also initiated. The following section discusses the Thai government's attempt to more fully 'commercialize' agriculture, promote greater levels of industrialization (ultimately to mean export oriented strategies) and develop the services sector. This was all to be achieved by infrastructural development, particularly roads, and a greater intervention by the State.

DEVELOPMENT PLANS AND WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT (WID)

The modernization era in Thailand began during the government of Marshal Sarit Thanarat which started on 20 October 1958. The government employed the modernization ideology in which economic growth was substantially emphasized with new investment promotion and infrastructural development policies. Sarit's policies gave the domestic and foreign capitalists the guarantees they felt they needed. Hewison (1989b) notes that "Sarit made it clear that economic development was to be emphasized in his crusade to modernize Thailand" (p.39). Thailand was brought into the world capitalism system during Sarit's era. This involvement was partially inspired by the demonstration effects of the rapid post-war economic recovery of Japan and the successful economic reconstruction of Western Europe through US aid under the Marshal Plan (Chairat, 1985).

The First Three National Economic and Social Development Plans (NESDP)

The establishment of the National Economic Development Board (NEDB) in 1959 aimed to provide a five-year National Economic Development Plan (NEDP). According to the first plan, which was introduced in 1961, it was believed that 'development' could be accomplished only by the promotion of economic growth through the transformation of the economy and the extended role of the State. This assumption followed the development programmes proposed by the World Bank in its report A Public Development Programme for Thailand in 1959. The government began to modernize the country by viewing Thailand as such a 'backward', 'poor', 'ineffective' country that it required modernization. Instead of searching for capital accumulation from within the state, the government has chose to accept external aid from various development agencies. The increasing acceptance of modernization was
accelerated by the major contribution of one leading core state, the USA, and associate international development agencies, notably the World Bank, officially known as the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). The dependency of the government on outside help led to foreign aid of 641 million baht (US $ 24.56 million) at the 1956 rate of exchange (IBRD, 1959). In order to earn the needed foreign currency, Thailand had to rely upon primary commodity exports, for instance, rice, cassava, sugar, and rubber which were subject to fluctuations in the international market. The lack of foreign currency, in turn, led to a substantial foreign debt, with continued dependence on foreign sources as the end result.

The 'second' national development plan (1967-71) also emphasized the need to increase the national income and modernize the country. Despite the substantial economic contribution of women to domestic and farm work, the first and second national development plans did not specifically mention women's development. It only assumed that women would benefit from development through trickle-down effects the same as any other groups in the population. Most programmes provided for rural women were domestic-oriented activities, such as nutrition, home improvement, child care, handicrafts, dress-making and hair-dressing. Women's organizations were promoted for undertaking these activities with the purpose of improving maternal and child care with the expectation that women should be good mothers and good wives.

According to the government's primary concern with the high rate of population increase, family planning became an urgent social policy. Women's development thus became a concern for the first time in the third national development plan (1972-76) which aimed at increasing national income sharply. Women's development was added to mainstream economic development with an emphasis on women's participation in family planning, education and public health.

The first three national development plans emphasized "road construction, extension of credit, improved marketing, and other measures designed to increase the cash income of the rural poor" (Hirsch, 1990:189). Although these contributed to an economic development at the village level, roads sometimes have an adverse effects
upon rural villagers. Chamlong Rueng-rit (Chamlong, 1987:25), a villager from Udom Phattana village, Nakhon Sawan province, wrote "Oh! Our village road" which reflects changes at the village level:

When the asphalt road came to our village,
it brought many things: traders and expensive fertilizers,
trucks and rice-milling machines,
Strangers and calculators, politicians and rash promises.
It also left us with lots of unanswerable questions.
At the same time, this very good road took away many things from our village:
Lost daughters, migrating sons to urban labour force, farmlands lost to strangers.
Gone with the trucks was paddy,
barns took over by rice mills and warehouses.
And most importantly, those politicians' promises absolutely turned into thin air.
Left behind were too old people,
and too young children,
who could feel nothing but loneliness and confusion.
Was it really a good road?
Was it really?

(1987:25)

According to Hewison (1989b), although these plans placed emphasis on increasing agricultural production, the policy for industry was unequivocally import-substitution industrialization (ISI) which was employed to break out of the dependence on primary commodity exports and to protect domestic industries from external competition and, therefore, to allow the development of infant industries. To this end, like most Third World countries, Thailand employed a battery of industry incentives and trade restrictions. "The majority of capital invested with promotional privilege went into import-substitution industries" (p.41). The country's economic hardships after World War II and the encouragement of the World Bank through its report A Public Development Programme for Thailand in 1959 also contributed to the application of ISI.

Although the State's investment promotion and ISI helped to advance the process of industrialization from petty commodity and enclave commodity production to a higher level ISI, the limitations which arose include the stagnation of the smaller, less powerful capitalist sector and the loss of a certain amount of capital as profits to foreign investors (Hewison, 1989a).
The logic of imperialism prevented the strategy of ISI from succeeding because of a lack of a consumer-goods market, a lack of capital or technology to start domestic industrialization resulted on the incurrence of foreign debts and dependent industrialization under the dominance of foreign capital and the import of foreign capital and technology resulted a massive outflow of profits back to the home countries of the transnational corporations (TNCs). Hewison (1989b:31) argues, along the same lines, that transnational corporations have become increasingly interested in taking advantage of such benefits as cheap labour, generous tax concessions, bans on organized labour and growing domestic markets in Third World countries when considering the relocation of industrial investments which are becoming less profitable in the advanced industrial countries.

As a result, the balance of payments deficit in Thailand continued to grow under the ISI programme. It appeared that the results of ISI were anything but positive: growing income inequalities, limited industrialization, foreign domination and large deficits and debts. According to Chi (1986) and Singh (1986), import-substitution policies undoubtedly achieved some success. Domestic production of consumer goods, such as processed food, textiles, leather goods, pharmaceuticals and chemicals, grew substantially in most of the South East Asian economics. However, although dependence on imported consumer goods certainly declined, dependence on the import of intermediate and capital goods - and, therefore, on foreign technology and capital - increased. Accordingly, the gradual opening up of the economy to the influences of international trade had negative consequences. In Thailand, the import of Western, and later Japanese manufactured goods especially textiles had a depressive effect on indigenous handicrafts throughout the rural areas. Cotton and silk weaving, for example, declined in the face of competition from cheap imported European cottons.

According to Hewison (1989b:57), by the end of the sixties the expansion of manufacturing concerned with consumer goods, was bursting the dreams of the ISI strategy, having outgrown the relatively small domestic market in crucial sectors such as textiles and motor vehicles. At the same time, growing trade deficits forced the government to examine export oriented industrialization strategies (EOI). EOI
employed in the third national development plan (1972-76), was to be based on a nation's 'comparative advantage' in producing commodities for a world market, bringing in valuable foreign exchange and achieving a trade balance by 'doing what comes naturally'.

**Democracy Period 1973-1976**

The economic boom during the 1960s and 1970s created a rapid expansion of job opportunities in the modern sectors, notably business and services. However, after a decade of development plans, there was in increased unequal distribution of income between regions (Bangkok versus the rest of the country, the central plains versus the other parts) and between sectors (urban manufacturers versus rural agriculture) (Kanitta, 1980:8-12).

Due to the influence of both national and international economic strategies, local communities have experienced rapid transformation in their technical and social organization. The increase of poverty, indebtedness, and the lop-sided development policy which appeared to benefit the rich more than the poor, had contributed to the people's uprising on 14 October 1973. Rural people including women with the support of Thai students and academics, organized themselves nation-wide and demanded civil rights and justice in Thai society. According to Tan and Pandey (1991), "The militancy and vitality of students' groups slowly grew into a force to be reckoned with, and eventually succeeded in ousting the military dictatorship on 14 October 1973" (p. 29). Students' groups emphasized such issues as organizing poor farmers and politicizing rural people. As noted by Jiranan (1975), women's groups in universities also shifted their focus from campaigning for justice for all, to voicing women's problems such as those of women workers and prostitutes.

It was very unfortunate that the 'democracy period' (1973-1976) was so short. The government was threatened by the victory of Vietnam over Laos and Cambodia in 1975 which resulted in the State's emphasis being placed on national security rather than the problems of social injustice and inequality. After their movement was
severely crushed on 9 October 1976, a large number of students and academics fled to the jungle.

During the 'democracy period', women activists and social workers began to point to the need for just distribution of development's benefits, and voiced their demand for more consideration of women's issues in development policy and plans. The Association of Thai Women Farmers was founded in 1976. As suggested by Krannich and Krannich (1980), the educated women for the first time were recruited into the public sphere in the 1930s, although most of the jobs that were available were clerical positions. However, only upper class women had access to modern higher education both in the country and overseas. It was these privileged women who took advantage of the ever-expanding job opportunities in the modern sector. Left behind was a large number of rural women who were illiterate due mainly to the monastic education system and their lack of access to higher education.

Although women's development was not totally excluded from the development plans during the 1960s and 1970s, the women's development programmes appeared to be welfare-oriented and household-oriented. This has reinforced women's roles in the domestic sphere. Although rural women had received some forms of support from rural development organizations, their successes highlight the potential of women in reproductive roles as mothers and housewives who were seen as 'receivers' of social welfare. As a result, their skills necessary for the modern pattern of agricultural production was not improved.

The Fourth NESD Plan (1977-81)

The fourth plan focused chiefly on national security, increase of incomes, distribution of social services and promotion of people's organizations to strengthen the country's security. EOI continued to be emphasized in this plan. It was seen by a number of political leaders as the magic formula for development. This resulted in the State attempting to reduce trade and balance of payments deficits by expanding exports and to emulate, at least in part, the NIC model of industrial development. This led to the growth of consumption of commercial energy, much of which is concentrated in the urban sector (Soussan, 1990). As observed by Rachain (1989)
export promotion is said to provide advantages over ISI by contributing to resource allocation according to comparative advantage, promoting international specialization, greater capacity utilization, exploitation of scale economics and improvements in technology stimulated by worldwide competition. Yet during the 1970s, due primarily to the recession in the West, an export-oriented strategy did not seem to result in any dramatic upsurge in direct foreign investment in Thailand (p.126).

Women in development (WID) was increasingly recognized by the policy makers and planners due to the influence of the United Nations. Women's development activities appeared as a result of Thailand's participation in the United Nations International Women's Year 1975, and Women's Decade 1976-1985. The inequality between men and women was recognized. It was noted in the fourth plan that boys have greater educational opportunities than girls, and that the illiteracy rate among women was 25.5% which was higher than 11.1% among men. Despite the law of equal rights and equal pay, women were discriminated against in employment, promotion and wages (TDSC, 1991a:12).

Education and employment were seen as a means for income generation. There is no doubt that education could be a key factor to enable women to participate in the development process. However, the education system in Thailand was influenced by the monetized economies where higher education appeared to be highly competitive. Upper and middle class women tended to be able to become upwardly mobile more than poor women. Additionally, as argued by Anan (1983), "If education is to have any value for women, it must be a means to raise their consciousness about the oppressive structures that keep them in positions of powerlessness" (p.7). The Thai education system hardly provides an atmosphere for people to develop such thinking and consciousness. Literacy alone does not help rural women to identify their problems, the root causes of the problems and how those problem could be solved.

The income generating activities seem to serve the main purpose of the development policy in increasing income and eliminating the poverty. However, these activities appeared to be welfare-oriented and concentrated on food preservation,
women's organization, and household-based activities such as handicrafts which often face marketing constraint. Additionally, it was not always the case that these activities had contributed to women's control over the decision making process on farm management, despite the fact that women also needed to learn about farm technology, credit, and marketing. Phoolthai (1991) suggests that women may not be so good at first at technological applications but they are enthusiastic and willing to learn. Although the fourth plan focused on improving women's status and reducing inequalities between men and women, such State interventions as training programmes implemented in rural areas had aimed at strengthening women's contribution to the economy in domestic and productive sphere, while there was no strategy for facilitating changes in culture, beliefs and social structure so as to support the integration of women in the development process.

The Fifth NESD Plan (1982-86)

In 1985, the Thai economy encountered the major crisis of a mounting debt problem. According to Hewison (1989a), EOI had not proven to be the Messiah of development predicted by the prophets of the 'free market', in spite of the example of the East Asian NICs during the 1960s and 1970s. The phase of EOI that began in the 1960's was marked by the entry of women in large numbers into the manufacturing labour force throughout East and Southeast Asia. The underlying reason for this was that for both foreign investors and local sub-contractors, women could be hired at wages lower than those for men. Although there was an influx of women into manufacturing industries, yet it was mostly men who were in the managerial positions. Thus apart receiving higher wages, male workers held more job stability and engaged less in labour-intensive operations. Additionally, in the context of deepening economic stagnation in the core capitalist economies, such an externally based development strategy was likely to produce increased poverty and suffering for workers and peasants in rural areas.

As a result of the criticism that economic development, particularly the agricultural modernization programmes, had adversely affected rural women, women were included in the fifth plan as a special target group for the first time, as were
children, youth and minority hill people. The plan highlighted four main problems relating to the status of women: female labour and employment; education; health and nutrition; and

"... political and administrative matters [which] include the promotion of women's participation at all levels of administration, the creation of leadership among women, the revision of discrimination laws, and the establishment of a secretariat to assist in formulation of data on women and women's development policies.

(Kanikar, 1989:208)

The international movement in 1975 somewhat influenced the Thai government in trying to push forward legislation and policy to give special attention to women as an identified group by integrating women into the development process. The 'women in development' (WID) approach was employed as a result the recognition by the policy makers, for the first time, that women actively participated in production. This conformed with the World Bank's recommendation of a participative strategy mentioned in its report *Thailand: Toward a Development Strategy of Full Participation* in 1978.

The policy of 'integrating women into development' emerged due mainly to the fact that 'development' had actually harmed women because rural women were worse off than before. However, this concept basically accorded with mainstream modernization ideology. The (male)stream development was never questioned. It is important to note that the women's development plan was drawn up by the staff of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) (Tan and Pandey, 1991). An 'anti-poverty' approach through the 'basic minimum needs' strategy was employed by the government in the 'dense poverty area' in 12,562 villages in 38 provinces (Judd, 1988). The focus was on the promotion of "education and health services by providing vocational training for 5.6 million women in the range of 12-44 years to help raise their annual per capita income to at least 5,000 baht" (Tan and Pandey, 1991:35). The 'equity approach' through the 'participation strategy' was utilized in other rural areas with attempts to implement the women in development process. Such government programmes as the promotion of basic, formal and non-
formal education, vocational training, free health services, women's organizations, and income generation, were provided as the first priority.

It could be argued that, throughout the implementation of the first four development plans, rural development was promoted under the 'building up the best' strategy where a potential village was promoted to be the 'best' and a model for the others. According to Lee (1980), during the fifth plan, under the 'new' strategy of rural development, emphasis was given to the 'target' areas of poverty. The goal of rural development shifted from increased production to poverty alleviation with special reference to self-reliance and basic needs. This can be seen as a 'building up from the worst' strategy. It is important to note that these development plans were implemented under the government's 'top-down' administration (p.99-114).

It is said that the new rural development strategy reiterates the old strategy of area concentration (Lee, 1980:99-114). This strategy reflected the image of Thai villages, held by policy makers, that all villagers in the 'dense poverty' areas are equally poor, men and women have the same problems and all the villages in these areas are the same: homogeneous and without conflict. The new rural development strategy reflected the perspective of the policy makers towards rural society as a static community where changes can only originate from above and outside, that is from the State. They ignored the possibility that a rural village is a dynamic community where changes can take place from within through the initiation of villagers. Additionally, the recommended projects and training courses imposed by outsiders on the rural farmers called for more education and technical knowledge, but do not take into account the inherent intelligence, wisdom, and values of the rural poor. Thai society is immensely dynamic, interrelated and complicated. To assume that a social problem stems solely from a single cause (poverty) does not take into consideration gender, power relations and class. Programmes based on such assumption would not get to root causes of problems and lead us to any practical solution to the problems encountered by rural women.

Lee (1980) commented that as long as the focus of rural development is on the area rather than on the villagers and their social relations (more specifically on a
power relations between men and women) and as long as rural development is not regarded as a process which requires an intellectual knowledge of the interaction between the village community and the wider society of which the former constitutes an integral part, it is likely that the objective of understanding rural development is still a long way off.

The discourse of 'women's participation' was widely used. However, the meaning and the process of 'participation' have not emerged clearly in development plans. How can rural women actively participate in deciding the future of their societies? Beside its meaning, the process and a means to promote women's participation have also been doubted. The government's attempt was inadequate because it did not question the underlying assumptions of current development policy and the prevailing social and power structures of male domination. Women were trained to be effective labour through vocational skill training, but at the same time, they were expected to be good mothers and wives, thus reinforcing existing patterns.

According to Turton (1984), under the United Nations Research Institute for Social Development (UNRISD) project, a group of Thai academics, development workers, and rural poor have made an attempt to

... document and contribute to a popular history of organized and everyday efforts made in the past few years by (and on behalf of) the rural poor to enhance their livelihood and social power (and to) assess the potentialities, obstacles, and limitations of such efforts.

(1984a:2)

In this particular view, participation contains three main elements: (i) the sharing of power and of scarce resources; (ii) deliberate efforts by social groups to control their own destinies and improve their living conditions; (iii) opening up opportunities 'from below'. However, according to Turton, the studies conducted by the UNRISD suggested government policies and agencies appeared to fragment, demobilize, and prevent rather than facilitate autonomous forms of solidarity among and between various strata and sectors of the people. The UNRISD studies identify power as a key element in participation struggles of the rural poor.
Another constraint to popular participation in Thailand is its highly centralized administration. Most, if not all, rural development projects and activities undertaken in rural areas were planned by high ranking State authorities at the centre and the top. Rural development has long been seen as a process of modernization consistent with a clear, identifiable national policy: that is, to modernize the country through the process of agricultural modernization and industrialization.

Although no particular individual government officials, groups, or programmes were themselves empowering or limiting in any absolute sense, "It was found that, for the most part, official groups stifle initiative, work to rigid bureaucratic standards, and provide unrepresentative leadership" (Hirsch, 1990:189). Participation was seen as the process promoted by the government for, not with, people to take part. It is a process initiated and sponsored by the government to fulfil its development plans and policy. According to Thawithong (1984:2-3):

The (official) meaning of participation tends to be used as a means to get people to co-operate in activities or projects that the State or its officials have stipulated... Most State officials think that participation is a new instrument or technique for getting villagers to accept the activities already laid out by those officials.

Under this situation, it is less likely that villagers will show interest in official projects. Villagers had been, to a large extent, forced into numerous activities that increase not only their burden but also their dependence on outsiders. I believe that the process of collaboration by women in development should lead to changes in the prevailing power structure that in turn contribute to the empowerment of women.

According to Siriporn (1985), critics argue that the government was confused and lacked sincerity on issues concerning WID and failed to tackle the more fundamental problems. Furthermore, as noted by Churairat (1986), the government-sponsored training programmes employed 'top-down' implementation and resulted in women's training programmes which increased women's work-loads without increasing income to levels commensurate with expenditure.
Long-Term Women Development Plan (1982-2001)

Alongside the fifth plan, a detailed and comprehensive 20 years Long-Term Women Development Plan was drawn up. This singled out problems and needs of six groups of women in (i) agriculture, (ii) non-agricultural rural employment, (iii) government bureaucracy and State enterprises, (iv) religion, notably mae chii (Buddhist nun), (v) services and (vi) prison (Working Group on Women in Development Planning, 1981). It is important to note that this plan drawn by a team of fourteen women and four men. These were bureaucrats and academics, none of whom was representative of the grass-roots level. It gave a practical idea for WID, and laid down policies, objectives and key methods to be sustained over a long period of time. However, Siriporn (1985) argues that the actual implementation of the plan was criticized as it was not integrated with the five-year national plans and because no measures were designed to implement or evaluate the plan which still lacks effective national mechanisms, political will and funds. Additional, critiques were that this plan aims solely at women's development rather than at improving social structures to make them more favourable towards changes in women's position and status. Tan and Pandey (1991:35) argue that, although this plan provided series of guidelines for future policy formulation, as well as some measurements to the advancement of women's status and roles in areas ranging from education to religion and culture, the responsible organization (the National Commission on Women's development) was vague, dependent and impaired by its awkward structure of five subdivision without full-time core personnel to co-ordinate the work. These factors resulted in its ineffectiveness.

The training programmes provided for rural women tended to be superficial in the way they reinforced women's role as household server. The home-based income generating programmes tended to increase the possibility of exploiting women as isolated and unorganized cheap labour. The entrepreneurs in industries such as embroidery have used women for home-based activities in order to avoid the regulations of factory legislation and corporate taxation. These income-generating activities, to some extent, limited the development of organized and collective activity among rural women that would otherwise lead to collective strength. I believe that
income alone does not necessarily raise rural women's consciousness capacity needed for bringing about self-reliance and dignity.

**The Sixth NESD Plan (1987-91)**

The sixth national plan was divided into ten broad working programmes, none of which made specific reference to women. Only a supplementary women's development plan has sought to promote good health, education, vocational training, social equality, working and wage equality, and to encourage men to participate in family planning. It was only in 1989 that the latest National Commission on the Promotion and Co-ordination of Women's Affairs was officially set up as a permanent body responsible for women's development affairs. This Commission was empowered to plan, evaluate and monitor women's programmes carried out by various agencies of the government. Quantitatively, the goals of this plan were, among others, to reduce the maternal mortality rate from 60 to 48 per 100,000 persons, to ensure that women gave birth to babies not less than 3,000 grammes in weight (Kanikar, 1989:210-1). These goals emphasized the women's reproduction role.

This plan came under criticism, for example, from the Coordinating Committee of Women's Organizations from the north of Thailand in June 1990 (TDSC, 1991a:13) as follows:

The sixth plan gives no direction for women's development, does not state what problems women face nor does it identify many target groups. It states simply that the government will support women's participation in the decision-making process and family, community and national levels and that it will protect women and child workers.

This could be interpreted in two ways: firstly, that the government integrates women's development programmes with other broad working programmes; or secondly, that it does not attach much significance to women development. According to this Committee, the second interpretation seems more likely. The plan was also critiqued for its lack of clarity in terms of strategy to be employed by the seven major government ministries: Agriculture, Education, Interior (which concerns local administration), Public Health, Industry, Commerce and the powerful Defence Ministry. "These ministries employed a top-down strategy rather than one which
encourages women to participate in the development process at the household and organizational levels" (TDSC, 1990:14).

Thongdee Phothiyong, one of the women agricultural leaders in Chiang Mai province, Northern Thailand commented that:

The way the government works can be compared to a waterfall, flowing from the top. But the way I work is like a fountain. I start from the roots of the problem and the needs of the people, working as a team to develop our own community.

(TDSC, 1991c:39)

She pointed to her experience to show that it takes a lot of strength and perseverance to be a women's leader: "Not everyone understands what you want to do, so you have to understand them first and work hard until they accept you". Her recommendation was that the government development workers train villagers to be resource persons instead of using civil servants as they usually did. Her strong point was: "Who can talk to villagers better than villagers themselves? They speak the same language, share the same feelings and know the problems" (TDN, 1991c:39).

Although there were expectations to increase the proportion of women in agriculture training from 20% to 40%, and the proportion of women in village development committees from 6.5% to 10% (Kanikar, 1989:209-210), the number of women in these activities does not necessarily mean that women will increase their capacity in making decisions to serve their interests. Additionally, the indicators widely known in Thai as jor por tor (short for khumjumpen phuonthaan, roughly meaning basic minimum needs) were designed to help realize various quantitative goals attached to WID. For example, sufficient nutrition for pregnant women was indicated by the fact that a new born baby should not weigh less than 3,000 grammes (Kanikar, 1989:210). Again, emphasis was placed on the women's reproductive role.

The Seventh NESD Plan (1992-96)

The seventh plan still focuses its main target on sustaining economic expansion with stability. A surge in economic growth in Thailand has been caused by the transfer of labour intensive industries to Thailand from Japan and the four"
dragons" or "tigers" of Asia - South Korea, Hong Kong, Singapore and Taiwan. This is a result of the strong yen and rising labour costs in these countries. Thailand was considered an attractive country for relocation and favourable government incentive" (TDSC, 1991a). The plan does not mention WID among its laudable major objectives: maintenance and stability of economic growth, improvements in the quality of life and conservation of natural resources, and fairer income distribution between rich and poor, especially in rural areas. It is assumed that women like the entire population, will become the beneficiaries of these goals. However, according to Saneh (1990), income disparity will be widened in the next five years as the development plans focus solely on economic growth rather than income distribution. The seventh Plan will continue to serve the vested interests of businessmen-cum-politicians rather than the poor. It is the emphasis on industrialization and economic growth which is widening the income gap.

Throughout the past three decades of the development era, emphasis was placed on the 'growth rate' measured in terms of Gross National Product (GNP) or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) as ways to meet the aim of modernizing the country. Thailand appeared to have had a considerable measure of success in terms of the capacity to raise gross domestic product by 8.6 per cent during 1959-1969 (Ingram, 1971:223), 7.5 per cent during the 1970s (NESDB, 1981), around 12 per cent during 1989-1991 and 8.6 per cent in 1994 as expected by the Thailand Development and Research Institution, TDRI (TDSC, 1991/2). Although economic growth has continued at a high rate, according to TDSC, 1991/2, this growth has been accompanied by an appalling concentration of income:

The top 20 per cent of the population increased its share of the national income from 49.8 per cent in 1962 to 55.6 per cent in 1986. At the same time, the bottom 20 per cent saw its share decline from 8.0 per cent to 4.6 per cent. (TDSC, 1991/2:9)

The increase in rural poverty is obvious with 85 per cent of villagers now facing bankruptcy, and some 800,000 women, most of them from impoverished rural areas, earning a living as prostitutes. "The country's economic wonders and its double-digit growth rest on the shoulders of Thai women workers" (TDSC, 1991b).
It is obvious that economic growth did not "trickle-down" to the rural poor in rural communities. On the contrary, there are greater and increasing gaps between the rich and the poor in all sectors. At the same time, the industrial, sectoral, and urban based programmes led to expanding bureaucracies. The projects aimed at the poor reached small target populations and more often created vulnerable dependency relationships with local elite, metropolitan, or urban centres.

After the introduction of 'modernization', particularly in terms of Western education, a white-collar class has emerged. Although a new middle class has also emerged as a result of economic growth, even in 1986 only 6.71% of women could access "modern" professional, clerical, administrative, executive and managerial roles and careers. A large number of women (67.11%) remained in an uncertain agricultural sector (National Statistical Survey, 1986). Entry into the bureaucracies is based on educational titles, traditional titles, connections, wealth - resources the poor rural women do not have.

It is very unfortunate that there is no powerful government organization directly responsible for women's development issues. WID activities have been only an 'added' activity of the nine major departments at the national level and local level. Rural women in Thailand have been offered undesired choices by men under (male) stream development for over three decades.

I have attempted to demonstrate that WID has been only added on to the national development plans during the past thirty years. The following section discusses how rural women were excluded from decision making in the development process, and were disempowered by State-led rural development, notably agricultural modernization and industrialization.

MODERNIZATION AND ITS EFFECT ON RURAL WOMEN

Thailand’s economic, political and cultural structure have gradually changeg as a result of the attempt to modernize the country which began in the early 1960s. The major processes of social change include agricultural modernization,
urbanization, bureaucratization and industrialization. The questions we have to ask are: What are the effects of these processes on rural women? Do these changes empower rural women? To answer these questions, we need to examine the dynamics of rural transformation so that the processes that have shaped and continue to shape the social positions of rural women and men can be understood.

**Local Administrative and Rural Development Structure**

I now turn to discuss State-led rural development at the local level, focusing on the tambon (sub-district) and moobaan (village) level. This section outlines the government organization and officials that are involved in women’s development at the local level. It is the development workers from these organization that have directed the government’s WID plans for rural women.

In Thailand, ‘rural development’ is usually used to refer to the broad range of activities carried out by the Thai state bureaucracy at the local level. The local administrative arm of the State is the ‘district’ administration, in the form of dependents of the four principal Ministries with authorized functions at the district level (Agriculture, Education, Public Health and Interior). At the tambon and moobaan levels, tambon council and village development committee are now integrated into the rural development framework and play a part in the administration of rural development programmes. It is this channel by which the State uses its power to control rural communities. The structure reflects the centralized administration of rural development. It is quite clear that the government’s means to maintain central control is close supervision of local administrations by permanent officials so that they can dictate agenda, budgets and personnel policies. Local officials must seek ‘prior permission’ from central authorities, not merely ‘inform’ them. Central control is also exerted in allocating a small budget for local governments. A loophole in the law allows the central government to absorb a large portion of local revenue and strictly control the local governments' ability to generate revenue or to incur expenses. Local governments cannot implement new tax measures not specified by law which also allows the Interior Minister to issue regulations concerning local governments and to refuse to consider any regulations proposed locally.
Implicitly, another way to retain control is to deny local people information on the role and function of local government. Citizens are rarely exposed to news about the importance of local administration. Very limited mass media are available to encourage local interest in improving local government. Instead of encouraging local people to pitch in to help solve these problems through local government, central government has done the opposite. It has increased the number of deputy district chiefs and deputy governors, and expanded the number of provinces, *districts*, *tambon* (sub-district) and *moobaan* (village). Recently there is even a plan to appoint over 4,000 *deputy kamnan* (head of sub-district) throughout the country. Additionally, in response to the criticism of discrimination against women in local administration, the latest step adopted by the present government (in 1994) was the appointment of the first female governor and allowing women to become deputy district chiefs.

**Political Will Versus Centralization**

It is impossible to separate women's issues from political issues because women compose half of the citizens of the society. The issue of transformation of society is, thus, of concern to women. According to Mallica (1981), discussion of women's issues should not be limited only to the issue of discrimination - national and international politics should also be included. Mallica is right in raising this point. I would also agree with the feminist assertion that 'personal is political' and personal change is a prerequisite to societal change.

The root cause of the inability of the government to meet rural demands appears to be its centralized system, along with the traditional social structure (Chakrit, 1979:148). Consistent with Thailand's hierarchical and centralized administrative structure, early rural development activities evolved within the confines of the well-established ministries. Politically, the central government perpetuated its control over the village communities through the elected *po luang baan* (village head) and through the development of infrastructure, particularly road construction. This resulted in the decline of local community autonomy which had endured for centuries. According to Seri (1988):
Local autonomy in most respects used to characterize the traditional Thai village. Self-government with guidance from the elders was the rule. People grew as much food as was needed for consumption. The rest was shared throughout the community. There was no debt. Education was everyone's business. Children learned from their elders. Tradition and values were passed from one generation to the next.... It is not a question of resources - rural areas do have ample human and material resources; the issue is empowerment of the people.

(Seri, 1988:2)

The opportunities for women to participate in politics improved in 1932 when Thailand changed from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy with parliamentary democracy. In 1933, women (and men) were given rights to vote and to be an MP. Thailand was "... the first country in Asia to give such rights to women" (TDSC, 1991c: 35). Yet it was only in 1949 that "... the first woman, the wife of the well-known MP, was elected to be an MP in the lower House of Representatives" (p. 35). At the local level, only from 1982 were women allowed to hold positions in local administration. After nearly a decade the number of women's positions in local administration is still much lower than men's (Table 4.1).

**Table 4.1 Women's Participation in Local Administration**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>1985 (%)</th>
<th>1991 (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><em>Kamnan</em> (sub-district)</td>
<td>8 (0.1)</td>
<td>33 (0.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy <em>Kamnan</em></td>
<td>68 (0.5)</td>
<td>144 (0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Po luang baan</em> (village head)</td>
<td>163 (0.3)</td>
<td>418 (0.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Assistan po luang baan</em></td>
<td>340 (0.3)</td>
<td>1,287 (0.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: 1 Tantiwiramanond and Pandey (1991a:36)

2 Thai Development Support Committee (1991a:36)

It is important to note that there have been a very small number of women who have collaborated in making WID policy and plans. In 1990, in the national government, women were only 1.9 per cent of Senators, only 2.8 per cent of member of Parliament, 2.2 per cent of Cabinet Member, 4.0 per cent of civil service executives (Suteera, 1990:31). In 1993, there were 16 female MPs while 344 MPs were male. The Cabinet of Chuan Leekpai, the current Prime Minister's administration (March
1995) consists of 49 members all of whom are male (Sukanya, 1992:23-24). It is unlikely for these women to negotiate to create sound women's development plans that are not dominated by the mainstream (male-stream) development policy. The tendency is similar at the local level. Lack of collaboration in decision making processes at all levels has somewhat contributed to rural women's lack of opportunity to develop the capacities necessary for both individual and collection action for change. Rural Development in Thailand, as managed by the State, is highly centralized in nature, with the creation of bureaucracies both at the national and local levels. Under this bureaucratization process, the limitation on rural women in the private and micro-level spheres of life is intensified.

The presence of government officials at the tambon level, improved infrastructure, and communications have facilitated the encroachment of central authority on rural autonomy. Although the current government has begun to decentralize administrative power, it focuses on the question of only election or non-election of the local administrations such as the provincial governors' election. This considers only political and legalistic aspects. Decentralization should incorporate two other crucial elements - the economic and social dimensions of rural communities. Villagers will not become the beneficiaries of rural development and WID programmes unless they are decision makers.

Prawase Wasi, the Magsaysay Award winning medical doctor and NGO leader, pointed to the major conflicts over the use of natural resources which resulted from the intervention of the State in the case of dam construction and the land resettlement scheme locally known as Khor Jor Kor and criticized the State agencies for using power and laws to control the natural resources. Prawase suggested that the rural poor must be empowered, and there must be decentralization (TDSC, 1993:9). Seri (1988) pointed to the situation where villagers encounter difficulties and new constraints imposed by the authorities that effect their own traditional practices.

Vibul Khemcharerm, a self-reliant villager pointed to the some members of the National Economic and Social Development Board (NESDB) (Seri, 1986:15): "You
are the ones who plan things for us, but you never take any responsibility when the plans fail. We farmers have to find our way out by ourselves." Rural villagers have to rely on their politicians to deliver, for example, a price for the surplus harvested, an artesian well or funds for road improvement. Dependency then again is unavoidable. These politicians normally gain villagers' votes in return for providing service.

**Department of Agricultural Extension**

In the subsistence agricultural system, women play crucial roles as decision makers for the survival of the family and in various activities of the village community. Women are the key members of the community co-operatives in the provision of labour and food production. Peasant women may not have directly participated in village management, but their influence through their husbands reaches the community level.

Considering agricultural production, there have been various changes in the rural economy. These changes and their impact involved women's socio-economic condition with regard to property ownership, employment, decision making, status, level of living, nutrition and education. None of these changes are unequivocally positive; several are unequivocally negative, with the exception of possibly increased education opportunities.

A home economics programme was launched in 1976 aimed to organize groups of young women farmers and women farmers.

In 1976 the Department of Agricultural Extension had realised the important of farm women's roles. Seven hundred home economists were recruited in the years following to work at the district level to improve farm family life, especially that of farm women and youths.

(Pounghpit, 1985:2-3)

Farm women were encouraged by extension workers to form *klum maebaan kasetrakorn* (women farmer group) as a means of obtaining agricultural technological know-how and home economics information. It was also claimed that:
[It] was a successful move which is shown by a dramatic increase in number of farm women clubs and their memberships. In 1976, there were 276 klum maebaan with 7,570 members.

(Poungpit, 1985:3)

However, an increased number of home economists, and klum maebaan kraseetrakorn do not necessarily mean that the women's capacity will improve. It is necessary to investigate closely the benefit of farm women's activities because the number of failed klum also increased. As Bamrung Boonpanya, a NGO worker in Northeast Thailand, commented: "Most farmers' organizations in Thailand are dominated by the government, and thus become the machinery of the government" (TDSC, 1990:54-55). He argues that villagers need a new generation of community organizations that are their own autonomous organizations.

These programmes offer training courses in model home making, farm produce processing, kitchen gardening, nutritional food production and education, health care, and "other income generation activities" (Kanikar, 1989:211, emphasis added). It was claimed that these activities would strengthen women's roles in agricultural occupations. However, according to FAO (1991), training in agriculture and marketing is still limited for women farmers compared to male farmers. In term of credit, women farmers have less access to formal credit than men due mainly to the fact that agricultural credit is more often operated through male-dominated cooperatives and because of women's lack of collateral. Additionally, men are defined as head of household and are, therefore, usually the direct recipients of training and agricultural credit mostly via the Bank of Agriculture and Agricultural Co-operatives (BAAC). The intention that husbands who receive training should share their knowledge of farm technology with their wives has simply failed. Men's access to technical training and modern technology such as two-wheel tractors and their operating and maintenance, has contributed to an increase in their role as decision makers in farm management. Women are seen as the assistants of men as core producers. This change in the production patterns which favour men as decision makers is considered a major change in rice farming in Thai rural areas. Indeed, these programmes reinforce women's roles in households rather than increase their capacity to control their own lives. Lily and Worawan (1986) evaluated the income-generating
activities of rural women organized by the Community Development Department. They concluded that the programmes were too centralized and did not meet poor women's needs or the community's needs. In order to obtain speedy results, the government officials often emphasized quantity rather than the programmes' quality that is improving rural women's situation based on women's interest.

In her study Division of Work Between Sexes and Rural Women's Development: A Case Study in the Northeast of Thailand, Wanee (1989) points to some dilemmas which included few or no women participants compared to men and male-dominated agricultural agents. Additionally, with the spread of these bureaucracies, civil servants and other urban interests began to extend their influence into the rural areas, often buying rural land as investment, introducing the search for quick profits, the creation of external sources of power for rural elites, and the devaluation of traditional rural relationships and organization structures. All of these have negative consequences for rural women.

As Ariyaratne (1992) observed, the benefit of development in term of income or resources required for their everyday living has not gone to the poor. The increased price of rice and other cash crops did not provide the poor with more money to purchase necessary supplies. Instead this surplus goes to the rich through the marketing mechanism.

I believe that it is urgent to closely examine why these klum failed and to what extent poor women really obtained benefits from these klum's activities. Women-oriented activity should facilitate the increase in women's capacity to be active decision makers at both household and village levels. The traditional collaboration between men and women needs to be taken into account. The role of women whether as productive human resources or as beneficiaries of development, should be viewed an integral part of particular problems or issues.

Department of Community Development

There were several programmes launched by this Department including family development, nutrition and child care, income generating, women's organization and
leadership training. Rural women are encouraged to work in groups. However, most women's organizations were formed by the local development officials (*phattanakorn*) who brought in the programmes and activities designed by the planners at the national level. Most often these activities did not suit rural women's needs and interests.

Difficulties were encountered by rural women in Baan Thungyao, Muang District, Lamphun province, northern Thailand. According to Phakee Wansak, the president of Thungyao Women's group, women were irritated by imposed activities such as Chinese cooking in the village where nobody eats Chinese food. A 'one week training' programme in dress-making and artificial-flower making was organized for women to develop their skills. Yet one week was inadequate. They also found difficulty in finding the market for the artificial-flowers. Many of the women refused to join the parades in the city and wear the uniforms (*Bangkok Post*, 20 June 1988). From the discussion among some women of Thungyao and Sandee villages in 1992, Phakee also pointed out that:

> The support from the State for rural people is a good effort but not all the government's programmes are suitable for us. We cannot afford to do all activities that the phattanakorn wants us to do. We rural women have to choose only the one that will benefit us and suit us most.

(Mae Phakee, the president of Thungyao Women's group, 1992).

**Department of Non-Formal Education**

The Department provides various job training programmes depending on the needs of at least 15 women who form the so-called 'interest group'. Mobile vocation schools offer training courses for rural women and men ranging from industry to agriculture. Although women could choose what skills they want to learn, it appeared that the courses the Department could provide for women were still limited in term of areas compared to other Departments due mainly to its limited budget and facilities. Furthermore, women found it difficult to translate knowledge obtained from training into practice.

**Department of Public Health**

Under the 'primary health care' concept locally known as *Jor Por Thor*, the Department emphasizes the promotion of health care for pregnant women and
children. The indicators and criteria are designed for measuring the health of target
groups. The *Jor Por Thor* concept is aimed to be a means for rural people's
participation in development planning because they are encouraged to voice their
perspectives through questionnaires. Yet the complexity of the questionnaire itself
becomes a constraint in getting people's opinion.

These government organizations have their own authorities at the local level,
notably at the *tambon* level, working for villagers. This helped to quickly bring their
programmes to rural areas, however, "Their efficiency is impaired by their
overlapping functions and bureaucratic attitude" (Tan and Pandey, 1991:37). Their
attitude was to impose change that served their needs which to a large extent were
shaped by the national policy makers and planners, rather than rural women's needs.
Rural women were not seen as equal participants in working with these authorities.

The strongly conservative ideology that places women very firmly in the
household sphere has largely contributed to prevailing women's role and status. This
ideology is supported by the patriarchal structures of bureaucracy. Rural women are
still largely seen, by the policy makers and planners, as mothers or wives. The rural
development projects and programmes implemented at the village level reflect this
perspective. It is quite clear that the State-led WID programmes implemented at the
village level have supported the traditional norms which largely contribute to the
disempowerment of rural women.

**Women and Household Management**

In order to understand the impact of 'modernization' upon rural women, the
extent to which women can exercise power within the household and suprachannel
context needs to be examined because women play a crucial role in household
production.

Like other Southeast Asian countries, in Thailand the basic unit of the rural
community is the household. It is the immediate context within which the woman
operates. Traditionally, the rural household is the focus of production, consumption
and investment activities. Women play significant roles in all these activities. Amara et al. (1985:7) refers to Jaisaard's study about the allocation of mothers' time for household and economic activities and its effects on fertility, found that women worked an average of 15.4 hours a day compared to 12.3 hours for men, leaving only 8.6 hours for resting and sleeping. Poungpit (1985:3) estimates that women spend a total of 3,894 hours per year working. Of this, 2,250 hours (about 46.87 hours per week) is spent in housework. Similarly, according to Benchaphan et al. (1990:71), women spend longer hours in domestic work (35 hours) than men (11 hours). Health services are the women's domain. They nurse the sick and take responsibility for family planning.

Benchaphan et al (1990:71-72) found that 54 per cent of women keep their own earnings received from wage work, while only 10 per cent jointly keep earning with their spouse. For agriculture income, 65 per cent of women keep their own earnings, while 10 per cent keep jointly with their spouse. This finding confirms that women are joint keepers of household income. However, this does not necessary imply that women can entirely make decisions on household expenditure on their own. Women have more control than men in household expenditure, charity and social events, clothing, determining households tasks for household members, and the number of children. Men have more say in farming activities, deciding expenditure on durable goods, house repair, children's education and marriage. Women and men decide independently on wage-earning, buying lotteries, joining the 'shared loans' groups which are a popular way of lending and borrowing among themselves. In Thai rural society, women actively engage in rice farming, cattle raising, fish breeding, rubber planting and their expertise in farm production attests to their ability to diversify and to adapt to economic change and market demands (TDRI, 1988).

It was also suggested by Benchaphan et al (1990:51) that women and men work side by side in nearly all agricultural activities with the exception of some particularly laborious work such as land preparation. The actual hours women put into crop activities are about 64 per cent the level contributed by men. Women rather than men are involved in the routine of raising hens and pigs. Women face a double burden
in being responsible for house and farm work. Thus they work harder and longer hours than men.

Women also engage in farm wage employment. Amara et al (1985:18) note that women usually had a longer work day with their productive role being compatible with their reproductive role. In a nuclear family, women would engage in all sorts of work if the family income was mainly earned from agricultural production, except for those women who spent their time much less productively (in terms of agriculture) during their motherhood stage. Wanee (1989) also found, that apart from being small scale traders, women also engaged in waged work in the community and in towns.

These studies confirm that, due to economic oppression, which has resulted from socio-economic transformation, rural women are forced to engage in waged-work at the same time as they work actively in household and farm work. They spend longer hours doing house work than men. The government's WID programmes must take into account this limitation and hardship.

Women also play an important role in community affairs. Wanee (1989) confirms that women participated in traditional and religious activities, and local school affairs. Working with villagers in Roi Et province, northeast of Thailand, Phoolthai (1991:18) notes that women have provided services for the community such as giving alms to the monks everyday, welcoming visitors, preparing food for ceremonies, donating money and materials in traditional ceremonies. They form groups to tackle child malnutrition by learning how to prepare nutritious food for children. However, tasks in the public sphere performed by women were still closely related to those of domestic work. In the modern power structure they barely get involved in village management as decision makers. I believe that as active members of community, rural women should be empowered to participate in community management as active decision makers so that they could control the direction of community development.
Loss of Knowledge and Control Over Local Resources

Traditional women's work such as handicrafts and weaving cloth used to be exchanged either for cash, labour or food. This is based on skill that rural women have where no costly machines and training are necessary. Women can work at home in the moments that they free from other work. Women's traditional work varies from community to community based primarily on culture and the social structure of the particular community. These traditional crafts have increasingly been replaced by 'modern' production as a result of the penetration of capitalism into rural communities. Ironically, it is quite clear that modernization did not guarantee rural women's survival in the way traditional crafts did. Instead, rural women became more dependent on 'modern' technology and resources which are not available in the community.

Transformation in production, the adoption of technology, new varieties of commercial crops, the commercialization of cash crops and the spread of agricultural organizations and loan systems, have brought forth strong pressures for a closer interrelationship between rural and urban sectors, and for changes in rural social organization and rural institutions, especially those controlling the utilization of land and labour. Through bureaucracies, pressures for centralization and greater control by the State were also created by changes in the means of production because more control of inputs, (fertilizer, water supply and pesticides) is necessary to increase land productivity with the introduction of modern technology. Transformation in production has not only induced changes in patterns of production and income distribution, but has also resulted in changes in traditional power structures, changes in the utilization of insufficient resources and changes in the exchange domain. The rural transformation has affected the role and position of rural women in both domestic and public spheres.

Women's historic rights to own or inherit land are one of the most important indicators in assessing the extent to which women are losing or gaining from development, especially as these rights include ordinary rural women as well as middle and upper class women. Rural women, especially the youngest daughters, traditionally inherited a piece of land and the parents' house in the matrilocall and
matrilineal systems. However, according to a 1987 report on agricultural change and its effect on rural women (TDSC, 1991b), rural women's increased weakness became apparent due to land becoming a scarce resource, commercialized and brought under a formal tenure system, in addition to the government schemes and resettlements whereby land was given to the head of the household (assumed to be a man). Women's rights based on historic inheritance patterns are being menaced by modernization. In the North of Thailand, even though women have access to land through inheritance, the right to land ownership hardly provides the basis for an autonomous area of female agricultural activity. Having the right to land ownership does not necessarily assist women's control over decision-making processes or control over farm production.

**Fight for Land and Water Resources**

The promotion of tourism and regional industrialization by the government has contributed to the landlessness after the land boom. In the North, about 15% of the population are landless and 16% are nearly landless ((Royal Forestry Department, 1993). According to the Royal Forestry Department, Thailand's forest areas decreased from 171 million rai (68 million acres) respectively 13% of the total land area in 1961 to 89.8 million rai (35 million acres) respectively 28% in 1988, and less than 23% in 1992 (Royal Forestry Department, 1993). Ironically, seven to eight million rural poor who encroach on the forest are usually blamed as the major culprits. According to Decha (1987), to blame the rural poor as the major culprits, neglects the fact that it is landlessness which has forced the rural poor to encroach upon reserve forest areas. In any case vast forest areas have been cut down throughout the country to make way for over ten hydroelectric dams in the past 26 years. Additionally, logging concessions have been given to foreign and local companies since 1882. All of this has played a sinister role in destroying abundant forest and is hardly the fault of the landless poor.

After sweeping through the surrounding villages, it hit ours about a year ago. Strangers would come knocking at our doors practically every day to buy, buy and buy.

Huay Pan Joy Villager (Sanitsuda, 1990:134)
I'm so angry.... The village head and local government officials are also making money as brokers. Instead of encouraging us to keep the common land, they told us to sell our lands, saying that our barren land would be developed and so bring jobs for us.

Sriyoon Suyapan (Sanitsuda, 1990:135)

Criticisms and complaints like these are the charges of villagers from rural villages of Lamphun province, which may be heard but have been ignored by the government. Like many other villagers in other parts of Thailand, villagers in Lamphun are facing and fighting various forms of invasion.

The disputes between villagers and local capitalists over the right to use natural resources are becoming more heated. In some cases, they have resulted in violence, such as the confrontations in Lamphun province between Nong Hieng villagers and the powerful élite. Nong Hieng villagers strongly claim that the local capitalists and local corrupt government officers illegally claimed more than 1,000 rai of common areas of forest near the village (Anon, 1990). In 1989 in Chiang Mai province, there was conflict between Huay Kaew villagers and the wife of an MP who villagers accused of encroaching upon more of the forest area than she had a concession for. This encroachment had resulted in the silting up of rivers and waterways which villagers depend on for their farming. The struggle lasted for a year and was widely reported in media and academics, student and NGO groups. Eventually, the government accepted the demand of the villagers and the forest was declared the country's first legally-recognized community forest (TDSC, 1994:74).

The controversial army Land Resettlement project for landless poor living in forest Degraded Forest, widely known in Thai as Khor Jor Kor project is another example of the attempt of State authorities in control scarce land resource. This project aimed to resettle over 1.2 million farmers (Handley, 1991). It reflects the using of power and laws by the state agencies to get hold of the national resources that rural people have always had access to, resulting in conflicts between the state and local people. As Bamrung Boonpanya, NGO leader in northeast Thailand (TDSC, 1993) points out that "This is the land we want to return to, the motherland which nurtures our inner life with a sense of belonging, pride and identity" (p.38).
Recently, Pasuk (1994:33) comments on this project:

The outcome of the power struggle over land resources between state and capital on the one hand and peasants on the other, has tended to end up in favour of capital at the expense of peasants.

The results include the increase problems of displacement, rural poverty, and worsening income distribution between city and the countryside. Pasuk suggests that:

The khor jor kor experience should be a lesson to all the authorities concerned that a top-down approach to program which affects negatively the means of livelihood and the ways of living of a large number of people often ends in conflict and failures.... It is only by proceeding from the position of respect of basic rights and participatory decision-making that authorities can avoid policies which end up in alienating people.

(Pasuk, 1994:39)

Additionally, to solve the country's water shortage problem, the government has proposed the draft Water Management Bill. This again reflects the attempt of the government to centralize the management of water resources. Golf courses are also a crucial case of water conflict between farmers and the owners. Ironically, rice farmers have even been discouraged from growing the second crop during the dry season to help save water whereas the increase of golf courses and their water consumption from irrigation water and natural stream are ignored by the government, since they serve the tourist industry. Apparently, such conflicts and strains felt by rural poor have been intensified so that there is now confrontation between the state and local communities.

Apart from these conflicts, the government has also proposed a National Agricultural Council Bill. This attempts primarily to centrally control farmers and limit their choices of crops. This will serve not only the industrial-oriented policy, but also will strengthen the central government's control over the rural poor. Moreover, to disempower the rural poor, the government keeps ignoring the public's right of access to information especially concerning massive government projects that will affect the rural people's life, such as the construction of hydro-electric and irrigation dams (Nattaree, 1993).
It can be concluded that, besides ignoring the rights of the rural people in development, the State has failed to enhance the opportunity of the rural poor to share resources for their survival. On the contrary, the State has enabled the more powerful groups to extract resources from the public purse.

**Unemployment and Migration**

The need to pay debts contributes to labour migration. In all Thailand, a large number of migrants become unemployed. According to the National Economic and Social Development, Human Resources Planning Division (1987) unemployed persons have increased from 35,280 in 1971 to 154,630 in 1976, to 263,500 in 1981 and to 2,152,000 in 1986. It is likely that the actual of numbers may be higher than these figures, because, in the agricultural sector there is underemployment, seasonal unemployment when workers switch jobs between on-farm and off-farm and non-paid women as family workers, which obscure the employment picture. Rural people, especially women, keep migrating to Bangkok and other big cities in the hope of finding better-paying jobs instead of unproductive farming. Leaving their community without job guarantees, rural women increasingly depend on wider society. This in turn limits the independence, autonomy and self-determination capacity that rural women previously obtained through the family, community and kinship system. In this respect, the State's emphasis on modernization has diminished rural women's life security and their capacity to exercise power to control their own lives.

In Thailand, changes in the pattern of migration are striking. Traditionally, mostly the men would migrate for periods of short duration while their wives took care of the rural households. At present, however, more young women than men leave their rural community. Why are more women migrating? This question involves the way conditions of production and accumulation are being organized and the way the utilization of labour is regulated. According to Heyzer (1986), in these processes, dominant ideologies regarding gender roles and women's position interact with economic factors to bring about the structuring of very specific social spaces for women. These economic factors include: the restructuring of certain sectors of production and resulting effects on the economic activities and social position of
women; the selective labour utilization in different branches of production; the ideological assumptions about the nature of women' work and value placed on female labour power; the close inter-relationship between the domestic role of women within the household and their position as specific kinds of income-generating workers (p. 36).

A study of rural women by Pasuk (1980) showed that substantial numbers of young rural girls were migrating from the poor areas of the North and Northeast to work as masseuses in Bangkok. Seventy-five per cent of the girls who were interviewed in Bangkok came from these regions and 70 per cent of them came from farming families. In the study Migration and Development in Modern Thailand, Fuller (1983) showed that rural-urban migration is a highly selective process. They found that the highest rates of movement occurred among single persons in the age group 25-29. Thirty-seven per cent of rural-urban migrants are under the age of 20 and 67 per cent are below the age of 25. There is a higher rate of movement for young women than for young men up to the age of 20. These young rural women are more likely than their male counterparts to move to Bangkok where there is greater demand for certain kinds of young female services, for instances, domestic services, masseuses, sexual services and entertainment of various sorts in the night spots and restaurants in Bangkok. The migration of rural women are closely linked with the types of women's work in wider society both national and international levels. The increased problem of unemployed women reflects that the labour force can absorb only some of the available labour. Heyzer notes that "labour that is not absorbed survives through various forms of subsistence employment" (1986:38).

In rural areas, the increased employment was stimulated by change in pattern of agricultural production, loss of land of rural people, the nature of land tenure and land ownership, and the regional industrialization. The demand for specific female labour in new urbanized areas due to the growth of factories also accelerates the migration of young women. Beside the factors of production, the gender relations also lead to female migration. Thorbek (1987) found that many older women who migrate are divorced, separated or have husbands who have minor wives.
Women: Victims of the Trade in Sexuality and AIDS

According to Siriporn (1986), most people do not distinguish between prostitutes as individual human beings and prostitution as an institution. Based on this lack of distinction, the suppression of the institution 'prostitution' is, therefore, synonymous with arresting and penalizing women who are prostitutes. Such an approach neglects other elements and factors in prostitution, for instance, the syndicates involved in the traffic of women as well as the socio-economic and political transformation in more recent times which are often strongly influenced by multinational companies and agencies.

The socio-economic and political transformations have largely contributed to the increased number of prostitutes. Impoverishment and the desire to be thansamai have contributed to the migration of rural young women into big cities to find jobs. However, employment opportunities are very limited and based on "feminine" characteristics. Women are mostly required in the service sector, for instance, as domestic servants, maids, or waitresses in Chinese tea bars, and restaurants, from where it is not far to prostitution. Those women, who find employment in factories, receive lower wages and encounter hierarchical relations with male workers due to their lack of skill. Since women are considered as workers of secondary status in the market-oriented production, they are in the position of 'last to hire, first to fire'. Their wages are only considered as supplementary to men's. For women who are the main or only breadwinner of their family, supplementary income becomes, therefore, essential. In many cases women take prostitution as an additional part time job.

It was reported in Thai Development Newsletter (TDSC, 1991/2:17) that estimates of the number of prostitutes in Thailand range from between 200,000 (official) and 800,000 (NGOs). A number of them are young Thai girls sold by their parents into bondage. According to Kritiya (1991/2), in Thailand the number of child prostitutes rose from 300 in 1982 (five per cent were under age of fifteen) to 13,486 in 1984. It was estimated by the Police Department that there would be 25,000 prostitutes under age 15 in Thailand. These women and girls are the most at risk group to become the victims of AIDS. Furthermore, AIDS is stalking the bars, massage
parlours and brothels where people work, and experts predict that it will claim
between three million and six million Thai victims by the end of the century. In 1992
the estimate number of HIV carriers ranged from 200,000 to 400,000; 364 cases were
known to have full-blown AIDS; and about 700 people become HIV positive each day

The exploitation in sex service is very clear. A report presented in a national
seminar on protection of working and abandoned children in December 1987 revealed
that child prostitutes worked hard and long hours with little sleep and for very low
payment. They received only 40 per cent of what they charged because a larger
proportion of their earnings went to the brothel owners and others (Kritiya, 1991/2:43-
44).

At the same time, according to Naiyana Supapuang (TDSC, 1991d:47-8), the
violent and coercive culture which surrounds the prostitution business makes it
difficult for young women to leave the trade once they are coerced into it. The control
by, and the punishment, of women by brothel owners, pimps or gangsters, deters
women from leaving. The brothel owners usually use violence to intimidate and
control the children. They were beaten when they refused to work. Some of them
became permanently handicapped or were even killed. To keep children working,
brothel owners often drugged them with either stimulants or addictive drugs. In one
case, five girls were burned to death in a brothel in Phuket island, South Thailand on
30 January 1984. They could not escape because they were chained and locked up in
the brothel. As the solicitor of this case, Naiyana points to the difficulty for persuading
prostitutes to testify in court because of the difficulty in establishing contact with legal
system (TDSC, 1991d:48).

**Industrialization and Women Workers**

a:15) stated that:

Although modernization and capitalist development were slow to penetrate
Thai society and the agrarian economy, they not only intensified class
inequality but also gradually marginalized women relative to men and
subordinated women's labour to industrialization and international pursuits.
In Thailand, because of changes in the pattern of agricultural production from subsistence to sale-oriented farming, women have found themselves as a surplus labour supply for rural factories. The nature and pace of industrialization in Thailand has had special effects on women, particularly young women. With rather rapid setting up of foreign labour-intensive industries, the concentration on export of textile goods and the assembly of electronic equipment, more young women than men have been mobilized into the industrial sector. Thailand is attractive to many industrialized countries due mainly to her cheap labour, of which women constitute the major part. Indeed, both local and international industries, for instance, textiles, electronics and agribusiness, preferentially hire women. Rural women find themselves working as low-waged labourers for long hours (at least ten hours) in hazardous and unhealthy factories with no guarantee of working period and insufficient protection for wages. It becomes clear that women are exploited in the formal labour force. This is made possible mainly due to the government's policy on export-oriented industry. Under this hardship, a large number of rural women chose prostitution as an alternative.

According to Naiyana (1991/2:40-42), working in the factory, women workers get lower pay and less chance to increase wages or to be promoted than their male counterparts even though they do the same work. Discrimination against women has prevented them from accessing jobs with more security. Women are also predominantly found in the lower ranks of the factory hierarchy. Benja (1992:68-71) studied 'Women's labour in industry: a case study of Chiang Mai Province'. She found that in industries under study, notably electronic, textile and garment industries, most women workers are married women aged between 13-58 years old, and most come from poor families. Most women workers obtain less than the minimum wage rate, and less than their male counterparts. These women also lack skills needed for modern machinery.

Many women workers in industry suffer from health problems: those related to the use of chemicals in the production process; eye and muscular defects due to constant bending over microscopes which are inappropriate for untrained or unskilled rural workers; hearing and dust problems resulting from the noise level and the dust
level in textile factories. Dizziness and headaches are also common (Heyzer, 1986:117). Moreover, in addition to low wages and work-related hazards, women are subjected to close supervision by male supervisors thus resulting in limited mobility to these ranks. Low status and positions provide them with few opportunities to develop roles that allow serious decision-making in their work environment. At the same time, a conflict relationship exists between socio-economic development and child care due to the compatibility of motherhood and occupational roles. Laddawal (1980) and Bencha (1990) both point to the participation of mothers in the labour force that led to the increased use of child care providers and a fostering pattern that allows women greater flexibility for work. The need to work longer hours in factories led to a decline of breast-feeding, increased use of breast milk substitutes, early weaning and increased child malnutrition. They also found that children of non-working mothers tend to show better physical, emotional and social development.

Modernization has brought women to the public sphere such as work in the factory. Because this helps to increase women's income this is claimed to provide women more independence from their husbands. However, in public places women encounter sexual harassment and sexual exploitation.

There are some advantages in being a factory worker. By getting involved in the workforce, there is considerable opportunity for rural women to gain access to material resources and possibilities of mobility. The women's independent income often makes change possible in terms of their relationship with the families and communities. Women are released from many constraints that traditional communities put on their movements and activities. New relationships and contacts are also formed because of their new environment.

I have tried to outline changes in local communities accelerated by State-led rural development under the modernization process. These changes, notably in agricultural modernization and industrialization, have contributed to considerable improvement for rural communities. However, they have also contributed to the disempowerment of rural women. This is not to say that women were always passive.
The following section discusses the attempts of grassroots women to voice their hardship and call for alternative development in which they are equal decision makers.

ALTERNATIVE DEVELOPMENT FOR RURAL POOR WOMEN

Generally, the Thai dilemma at the national level is similar to that of other Southeast Asian countries, As pointed out by Sulak (1990) that is

... how to bridge the gap between the rich and the poor on the one hand and to adapt the nation to fit in significantly with the region on the other. The Thai government, it appears, has chosen the latter ie. to play a leading role within ASEAN ... for economic motives.

(1990: 298)

For Sulak, "a country which changes at a national level must first of all look to its own cultural roots, with humility and self criticism; otherwise it could breed a kind of ultra nationalism" (p.298) Sulak suggests that "We should take the poor much more seriously and confront the problem of suffering mindfully. We must take time to examine ourselves" (p.299). To do so, "Power, wealth and technology may then become less significant than morality and spiritual commitment to eliminate hatred, greed and delusion" (p.299).

There is still hope of alternatives for poor women. In spite of the rapid advance of the market system throughout Thailand, it is evident that rural villagers have developed their capacity to deal with the penetration of capitalism. Pornpilai (1991) who took an anthropological approach for her in-depth study of four villagers in rural Thailand. She focused on villagers which have preserved a rural lifestyle in spite of outside forces and repression. In examining how a rural community can survive, Pornpilai found that all four villagers share four major characteristics. These include:

An appreciation of their potentiality and their limitations; an appreciation of their relative independence from the State and the market economy; a deep knowledge of their own community; and a desire to retain a simple lifestyle and a sense of the village as community.

(Pornpilai, 1991:119)

According to Pornpilai, farmers realize that they are exploited by the market system due to the lack of bargaining power. With this insecurity farmers deal with the
market and monetized system in a 'limited' and 'flexible' manner. They maintain their life security by production for their own consumption and only the surplus will be sold. Pornpilai found that farmers, particularly in the North and Northeast employed this strategy. (This is also the case in Sandee Village). In 1992, rice production was rather low due primarily to the drought. Only the large farmers (10.18 %) had surplus rice for sale. Pornpilai (1991:101-2), fifty-eight villages in Wangnoi district, Khonkaen province, northeastern Thailand, villagers decreased growing and gradually stopped growing jute and cassava due primarily to low price and high investment. Their land was then changed to be rice fields, fish ponds, and gardens while their income was not in the form of cash, with rice, fish, and variety of vegetables their debt was decreased with much less investment compared to growing jute and cassava.

**Voices of Grassroots Women**

In 1980, the government employed a different approach for its anti-communism policy. Tan and Pandey (1991:31) note that "An amnesty decree through Prime Minister Order 66/2523 was designed to attract student and academics defectors who had fled to join the Communist groups in the jungle after the 1976 clamp-down on them by the military." This Order allowed 'returning' and 'new' activists and intellectuals to organize community-based groups and activities at the village level. As a result, a 'rural development' strategy was increasingly used by both the government and NGOs. People's participation was promoted but in a 'top-down' manner. There were a large number of NGOs working in women-oriented and related issues. The following activities reflect NGOs' attempts to make the hardship and struggle of rural people, particularly poor women, more visible.

During the middle of October 1991, the World Bank Meeting was one of two meetings held in Bangkok. The focus of the World Bank meeting was essentially international investment and global economic growth. At the same time, the People's Forum (*wee chaobaan*) was held at which the wretched and the powerless tried to tell the stories of their hardship. Their message was full of appeals for political participation and moderation in the exploitation of natural resources. Ironically, their
attempt was not recognized by the World Bank's delegates who claim to help the rural poor. Surin Pitsuwan, Deputy Ministry of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, comments that:

It would be unfortunate if our honourable guests fail to see many contradictions between the current situation in Thai society and those in many of the membership states of the World Bank and IMF.... Participants [over at the Peoples Forum] may not be the proponents of change and development .... Their words may not be as sweet and diplomatic.... But they are the voices of the real victims of some of the overaggressive pursuits of economic growth which have been characteristic of projects supported by the two influential world bodies. They too deserve our sympathetic ears.

(Surin, 1992:15-16)

In the words of Saneh Chamarik, a keynote speaker of the International People's Forum (Sunday 13 October 1991).

You could describe the mainstream development of our government as dragging us into as 'development' of the private sector and for the private sector. In this scheme of things, human beings and nature count for nothing more than commodities to be put for sale.

(Usher, 1992:14)

Saneh said neither the NGOs nor the people intend to make demands or to resist problems childishly "but to present issues and problems on reasonable and factual bases" (1992:14).

The 1991 People's Forum was a contribution to the struggle of people everywhere for the right to their own development. Among various case studies, Roy Srihaphong, a poor rural woman who abandoned her hopeless life in Ubon Ratchathani, at 28 years old, went in search of a new life in Bangkok, only to end up even poorer as a slum dweller. Her only dream is for permanent shelter without fear of eviction. Vitoon (1992:30) notes that "participants in the 1991 People's Forum reached a concerted conclusion that the consolidated organization of local groups is a necessary pre-condition to sustainable development".

More than 500 women from over 50 countries participated in this conference. It was the first time I saw village women from rural areas in Thailand sharing their struggle and experience in an international event. Having participating in this conference, I was very impressed by their strength either as individuals or groups in dealing with the prevailing State authority and power. I found it useful in term of information distribution. This conference reflected power which does not rely on the powerful, but on people's capacity to do things despite the existing oppressive structures. International gatherings like this empower rural women in terms of building up wide networks, notably at provincial, national and international levels, and strengthening mutual support networks for rural women and those who fall victims to the international flesh trade. Although the village women could initiate their struggle, they also needed support from other women and organizations because the existing State power structure is so powerful. As violence against and disempowerment of women is increased due to the misuse of power, the village women need even more collaboration among women's organizations at every level. Through this conference, the organizers made their attempt to facilitate networks and linkages for women's activities. This results, I believe, in strengthening the women's leadership and autonomy. Through the village women's experiences, the local knowledge systems and culture were understood more widely as being legitimate.

As a move towards the United Nation's Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing in 1995, more than 400 women from 80 countries participated in the international media-focused conference titled "Women Empowering Communication" held in Thailand from 14-17 February, 1994. It was suggested that Thai women still lag behind in decision-making positions with the result that the image of Thai women in the media are much distorted (Anchalee, 1994:62). In Thailand, alternative media for women are in the beginning stages and can be found mostly in printed media such as non-government publications like Satree Thas (Women's View). The Gender Press which has produced a variety of pocketbooks ranging from feminist theoretical work, literature and non-sexist tales, is a significant breakthrough. For Thai rural and urban factory women, Ying Kao Klai (Women's Stride), a bi-monthly newspaper, appears to be a means for the powerless women to obtain needed information about agriculture,
social problem, politics, and law. I myself see *Ying Kao Klai* as a tool in providing an opportunity for rural women to share their experiences.

**LOCAL INITIATIVE AS AN ALTERNATIVE**

I have tried to demonstrate the effects of 'modernization' and WID policy and implications upon Thai rural women. It is clear that while economic growth resulting from the processes of agricultural modernization and industrialization contributes to the improvement of rural community in terms of infrastructure and to a less extent employment, these transformations have had a negative impact on the economic status of rural women because women's productive roles and their contribution to production had been ignored resulting in multiple burdens. Time allocation surveys indicated that in poverty groups women tend to work longer hours and have less rest than men (Benchaphan *et al.*, 1990). Women are in a more disadvantaged position than men in gaining access to agricultural and technological programmes, technical information, training, loans and credit and markets. Additionally, women's traditional jobs are often low-paying and of low status, with a little for opportunity for advancement. Under these conditions, while the old types of gender inequality have not been overcome but rather intensified, new inequalities emerged.

In Thailand, there have been some investigations on the consequences of rapid growth and change on women and on gender relationships, and on power relations between men and women and among women in different strata, on the reaction of women to these changes and on the stresses, conflict and contradictions that occur at the macro-and micro-levels. Nevertheless, there is a lack of study on women's strategies and organization to improve the condition and quality of their lives.

As a matter of fact, women are social beings who work in socially structured ways to achieve their aims. Women also have strategies and the organizational capacity to improve their structurally work sphere of influence and power. In situations where, structurally, power, status and authority are with men, women have often worked through subtle inter-personal skills to influence them. There is a consensus that the involvement of the local community in its own development could be a potential means to development that involves more participation and is less
dependent than previous efforts (Osteria and Okamura, 1986). What is increasingly happening in many rural communities is the creation of such new local initiatives, that is, the indigenous initiatives which can flourish and become viable bases for alternative development. Key actors in this shift are the people themselves. There are a number of examples of rural poor women and their organizations which have been successful in creating self-reliance. In Thailand, the increased crises that have afflicted the country for three decades have made more and more rural villagers aware that development must come from within, that is, it must build on local initiatives. The following chapter suggests a methodology by which women could collectively initiate changes through the learning process of collaborative action research.
CHAPTER 5

COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH FOR EMPOWERMENT

The aim of this chapter is to outline and justify the methodology for this study. Previous research has not made a useful contribution to women in development in Thailand. For this study I utilize an approach to empowerment through collaborative action research which is discussed as a methodology for empowering rural women. Its cycle of planning, action, observation, and reflection is discussed. Based on this, an applied model for empowerment with six elements is proposed.

DOING RESEARCH IN THE THAI CONTEXT

Until the early 1980s, it was very difficult to undertake meaningful research at a village level in Thailand, particularly in remote villages which used to be declared as crisis areas due to the threat of the so-called communists in the eyes of the government. There are several reasons why these difficulties have existed. One relates to the research orientation of Thai researchers. There were no perceived material benefit for Thai researchers to undertake research in remote rural areas. Therefore, the research focus was directed primarily to the affairs of the State in Bangkok. But a more important reason was that it was 'difficult' to undertake research in rural areas. Those who wanted to undertake research could easily be labelled as communists or trouble-makers by the government, especially government officials at the provincial or district level. In this research climate it was quite understandable that little or no meaningful research was undertaken in rural areas by Thai researchers during the 1970s.

The research conducted at the village level is generally associated with the activities of foreign researchers in Thailand, particularly by Western anthropologists. Notable examples are Hanks and Hanks (1963), Keyes (1975, 1977), Potter (1976) and Turton (1978, 1984). For the most part their research was non-controversial and
the government reasoned that they could not get up to much trouble. These anthropologists did some interesting work and could see things that superficial Thai researchers could not see because they were not interested in forms of research associated with social anthropology, particularly participant observation.

The reluctance of Thai researchers to access the rural areas changed in the late 1970s. With the overthrow of the military in 1973, students demanded that their lecturers experience reality in distant rural areas. Sensitive Thai academics familiar with research culture responded very quickly and could be found spending time in rural areas. Alternatively, travelling abroad to study at universities that stressed research in the rural areas was not only an inherently useful experience, but could be intellectually stimulating.

Government officials, particularly those close to the security forces, did not like what they saw. Armed government officials would call villagers to meetings and warn them that researchers were anti-government and could possibly be members of the Communist Party of Thailand, a political party that has been illegal for more than forty years. During 1963-1967, the political situation particularly was very poor in the rural areas and many researchers were arrested, quite a few were tortured and some were murdered. Researchers became very frightened and either stopped working in the rural areas, or after the violent military counter-coup of October 1976, joined the communists in the jungle.

Those researchers who chose to do some research in the rural areas after 1976 often did extremely superficial research. As a research assistant and interviewer hired by the Department of Agriculture under the National Agriculture Consensus sponsored by the World Bank during 1979-1980, I was among the research teams of twenty-eight, that went into several villages in the northern and central regions and interviewed the head of the households who were assumed to be men. Each day the number of villagers to be interviewed was set. Under these conditions, we could spend only a maximum of three hours in each village. Similar base-line survey research has been conducted by a number of other researchers who then presented
their findings to the appropriate government agency and published fragments of their research in local academic journals. This research was not only conducted by sociologists or political scientists, researchers from agricultural faculties in Thailand did much the same thing without the benefit of appropriate training on theoretical frameworks. This was particularly true of survey research in which I was involved for undergraduate and masters courses. This research was mostly useless and inadequately told us about social or economic reality at the village level, and how rural women were disempowered by the 'modernization' processes under the term 'development'.

When political conditions became more liberal in the 1980s, Thai researchers, particularly social anthropologists, moved back into the villages and took up where the earlier Western social anthropologists left off. Even political scientists and, to a lesser extent, a few agriculture researchers, realised that to understand rural Thailand one would have to spend more time living in the villages. It was simply not enough to drive up in an air-conditioned utility mini-bus, ask a few questions, drink bottled water and food prepared in the town market, and then retreat to the air-conditioned coffee shop for the evening. Yet there remained a lingering suspicion that researchers were trouble-makers, that they were alien to the village environment. The 1980s made it easier to access the villages, but the research did not become any easier, especially as Thai researchers realized that they would have to add qualitative depth to their research. Some of this research has proved to be of good value. In Northern Thailand three social anthropologists at Chiang Mai University, Chayan Vaddhanaphuti (1984), Nithi Iawsriiwong (1994) and Anan Ganjanapan (1988), have done extremely good developmental research, although little of it has focused specifically on the plight of northern Thai women.

Very little research has been of a collaborative nature because the rural people are still deemed to be the passive objects of research, even by well-meaning researchers. For this reason, an empowerment approach to women in development is needed, as its collaborative nature would allow rural women to be the active subjects of research. In a collaborative process, women can fully participate in the process as
decision makers; the role of researcher is as facilitator helping to create a collaborative atmosphere so that rural women can empower themselves through the collaborative learning process.

**EMPOWERMENT: ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT**

The literature on the notion of power and empowerment, discussed in Chapter 2, revealed that empowerment is used in different situations either by individuals or organization, in the private or public sphere. The process could be either self-empowerment or empowerment through facilitation in a collaborative process. I perceive empowerment as the collaborative process whereby women can enhance their capacity and increase their consciousness. Empowerment is viewed as a mean for human betterment and to expand the range of possible social identities by which people may become and making one's self present as part of a moral and political project that links production of meaning to the possibility for human agency, democratic community, and transformative social action. Now the question may be 'how could one be empowered?' Korten (1990) argues that one can never empower another, however people can collaborate in a process of mutual empowerment. According to Powell (1988), collaboration implies an actual working relationship, an active partnership in which two or more groups are doing something together. These authors acknowledge the additional complexity of decision-making, but felt without exception that collaborative decision-making had much more impact than if it had been organized by a single group. Both Korten and Powell recognize collaborative processes as means for empowerment. Powell (1988) also points to the advantage of collaboration in that each organization has relatively different resources to offer such as planning skills, facilitation skills, wider networking, transportation, documentation capabilities and financial resources.

Rappaport et al (1984) stresses that it is essential for research design to build on active collaboration and the encouragement of participants' self-interests. His experience in community practice reinforced the importance of adopting this approach
in every facet of research, from problem definition and research design to analysis and interpretation of data.

Freire (1972) contributed a classical approach to empowerment in his concepts of conscientization or education for critical consciousness. He suggested the dialogue method which stresses the imperative nature of the total participation of the people themselves in a process based upon dialoguing between equals. According to Freire (1972), the dialogue method encourages oppressed groups of individuals to reflect on aspects of their reality. They are encouraged to find out the root causes of their immediate problems, to investigate the implications and consequences of these problems and then to develop a plan of action in order to deal with the problems collectively identified.

Rappaport (1984) suggested dialogue retrospection, open-ended, reflective and critical dialogue, as the central facet of the collaborative strategy. Similarly, Powell (1988) argued that new levels of dialogue among the members of the development community are having great impact on the perspective and processes of development. In her study, dialogue is designed to enhance the effectiveness of development efforts and is taking place across sectors, across organizations levels, and across nations.

Freire (1972), Rappaport (1984) and Powell (1988) recognize dialogue as a useful means for conscientization, collaboration and for the effectiveness of development, respectively. Powell (1988) suggests that to sustain the dialogue, it needs deeply individualized commitment and willingness because people may lack readiness for or give low priority to exploring new modes of collaboration.

To create the atmosphere for empowerment, a facilitator is needed to establish a facilitative environment where each individual is encouraged and allowed to share perspectives. Kasting (1991) argues that important elements of the empowerment process are a non-threatening context emphasizing respect and shared decision-making.
The above literature suggests that 'empowerment' is used broadly in two ways. Firstly, empowerment refers to the increased capacity or ability of individuals or organizations to influence access to and control over resources, to gain control over their lives, to create opportunities from 'bottom-up' or from within, to strengthen the power of the excluded, to make decisions, to take options, to determine choices, to get things done, to manage and negotiate better, or to change from negative situations to desired outcomes. These capacities are made possible in an empowerment process through collaboration, participation or co-operation. Secondly, empowerment refers to the enhancement of consciousness, self-sufficiency, self-confidence, self-respect, self-empowerment, self-determination, internal strength, autonomy and self-reliance.

Both are valid usages. However, the nature of the process is different. On the one hand, the process of conscientization (raising of levels of consciousness) is a process in which people themselves become more aware of their own situation; of the socio-economic reality they are in, of their real problems, the root causes of these problems and what measures they can take to change their situation (Freire, 1972). This process constitutes a process of self-transformation. As a means for empowerment, consciousness raising is about inner feeling and experiences which are shared collectively. As an empowerment strategy, consciousness-raising can be both a method for achieving the truth and a means for action and organizing (Sarachild, 1975). On the other hand, empowerment to increase people's capacity, ability or skills to organize collective action in order to bring about change can also occur without raising the levels of consciousness. In any case, empowerment to enhance consciousness or to increase capacity are interrelated. These interrelationships at the theoretical level will be discussed in the section of the 'model of empowerment'. Additionally, this interrelationships at the practical level will be discussed in the Chapter 7 and 8.

The work of Korten (1990), Vogt and Murrell (1990) Powell (1988), and Rappaport et al (1984) illustrates the common process in empowerment, that is collaboration. For these authors, collaboration is seen as the process that leads to the participation by participants in the decision making process which is in turn the important element of empowerment. The need to participate in decision making in the
empowerment process is also supported by the work of Barnett (1981), Vogt and Murrell (1990) and Kasting (1991). Powell (1988) suggests the requirement of facilitation skill and dialogue with some warnings. Another element of the empowerment process suggested by Vogt and Murrell (1990), and Kasting (1991), is the importance of reciprocal relationships which means the exchange of advantages between collaborators.

**MODEL OF EMPOWERMENT**

In the present study, I have applied an alternative model of empowerment based on concepts of Friere (1972), Kasting (1991), Powell (1998) and Vogt and Murrell (1990). I view *empowerment as the collaborative process whereby powerless rural women can be helped to exercise power in order to enhance their collective capacity and increase their consciousness in order to bring about desired change and influence the outcomes of social process in a way that could improve their situation.* I focus on organized and collaborative efforts rather than individual effort. With emphasis on the power relations between men and women at the village level of northern Thailand, this study focuses on how rural women could increase their capacity and their consciousness through collaborative learning process in order to meet their interests and needs and to influence the direction of village management. This study also focuses on how women's collective capacity can induce a creative village capacity. This empowerment approach was expected to suggest strategies recognizing the potentiality for changing existing unequal relationships between men and women and developing means to counteract unequal power arrangements.

In this applied model, the empowerment approach consists of six elements: (i) a holistic approach, (ii) collaboration of villagers and researcher, (iii) full participation in decision-making process, (iv) consciousness raising, (v) facilitation and (vi) reciprocal relationships. All elements are interrelated and interdependent. Each of the six elements is strengthened by the others, thus changes through the empowerment process can be made possible via the interrelation of all elements.
The **first element** of this model is that empowerment is viewed as an *holistic* approach. Holism, as described by Smuts (Archer *et al.*, 1984:5-6), refers to a “synthesizing process which leads to the evolution of a progressive series of greater wholes.” Thus holism and the interconnectedness of living systems suggest that the wholeness of a system must be defined as a synthesis rather than as a summation of its parts and that the process is synergistic rather than additive. Osteria and Okamura (1986) points to the growing realization in development research that social systems are dynamic and interactive. While perceiving conventional development research as rigid and mainly prescriptive, Osteria and Okamura (1986) suggests the holistic approach precludes control of the methodology and the outcomes by researchers. Fisher (1988) stresses that ‘many-sided’ aspect of holistic approaches:

A holistic approach takes into account the physical environment, resources, resource uses, social organisation, politics and anything else which is relevant. It does not assume causal primacy of one factor over others.  

(1988:15)

In the present study, the village community and wider society are viewed as a holistic system characterized by "constantly exchanging information and resources internally among its sub-systems and externally with other systems in its environment" (Archer *et al.* 1984:2-3). As economic growth alone, notably through industrialization, cannot provide choices in life for rural women who are among those effected by rapid changes at the village level and wider society, the empowerment approach became an appropriate approach in studying social change because it takes into account the interconnectedness of aspects such as culture, social organization, politics and religion in the village community and wider society. It is important to recognize that a village system has its own economic, political, cultural and historical dimensions which together, constitute social reality. Based on the holistic approach, WID requires researchers to reorient thinking about how they conceptualize rural women in village community and how they interact and collaborate with them. In this present study, I was totally aware that empowerment has research components and that I, as a researcher had an impact on the participants and the settings of my study. The conceptualization of both empowerment and research processes as simultaneous has important implications for social change efforts.
The second element of this model of empowerment is its commitment to participants as local initiators in the collaborative process which is seen as bottom-up initiation of change. It is suggested that the premises and procedures of the 'top-down approach' dominate most rural development programmes (Korten, 1980). However, as discussed in Chapter 3, the top-down rural development programmes did not often meet rural women's needs. More often these programmes created adverse effects upon rural women because they were excluded from the decision making process.

The empowerment approach, on the other hand, allows rural women to be active decision makers in a collaborative process. In developing what Chin (1976) called a collaborative system, or 'collaborative intersystem', researcher and villagers become neither insiders nor outsiders but are all participants in all activities in a collaborative system. In this system, researcher and villagers contribute their attitudes, resources (financial, material or manpower), and share decision making. The empowerment approach is about change initiated by rural women themselves and outsiders through their collaboration. It is similar to what Archer et al. (1984) proposed as a 'model of collaboration in change'. They suggest that

... the desired change is not planned by outsiders alone ... nor by insiders alone ... but rather in a collaborative intersystem ... where consultants and community participants jointly assume the change-agent role and participate equally in the creation of change ... that is mutual and dynamic.

(1984: 15-18)

The third element of this empowerment model is full participation in the decision making process. I have taken the concept of full participation suggested by Pateman (1970) which refers to a process where each individual member of a decision-making body has equal power to determine the outcome of decisions. It is different to what Uphoff (1986) called 'pseudo participation' which is restricted to such processes as informing and endorsement and which offers a feeling of participation without its substance, and to partial participation which gives the participants some opportunities for exercising influence, but reserves the final power to make decisions with an authority-holder (Pateman, 1970). This conceptualization of full participation is similar to what Arnstein (1971) defines as 'citizen control' which refers to 'true' participation involving some real transfer of power. Citizen
control is the form of the least manipulation in Arnstein’s ‘ladder’ of citizen participation which consists of eight ‘rungs’, ascending from manipulation through therapy, informing, consultation, placation, partnership and delegated power to citizen control. Arnstein argues that without redistribution of power, participation is an empty and frustrating process for the powerless resulting in the continuance of the status quo. I agree with Munro-Clark (1992) on the point that these qualitative distinctions between different types of participation are based on assessments of the power being exercised by participants. Both Pateman (1970) and Arnstein (1971) stress the equal exercise of power and the transfer of power by participants in genuine participation.

It should be clear that in the analysis and evaluation of participation, the question of power is often dominant because the main purpose of participation is usually to seek power over outcomes. In this study I define participation in decision-making as full participation.

The fourth element of this empowerment model is consciousness raising. Freire proposed the concept of conscientization or critical consciousness in his classical work Pedagogy of the Oppressed (1972). Conscientization refers to the stimulation of self-reflective critical awareness in people of their social reality and of their ability to transform that reality by their conscious collective action. Freire suggests that change can be made possible by conscious collective action. Serrano-García (1984) used the ideological analysis based on the Freire method (1972), to examine the consciousness of the individual and group in the level of intervention and the developmental phase of empowerment in community development in Puerto Rico. She suggests that real consciousness refers to an individual’s or group’s current understanding of reality that can be achieved at a given point of time. Consciousness raising includes critical judgement of situations, and an active role in the transformation of society (1984:177,179). Sarachild (1975) views consciousness raising as a ‘radical weapon’ which she claims arose spontaneously among small groups of women. It is seen as both a method for arriving at the truth and a means for action and organizing. According to these writers, consciousness raising meets the
needs of empowerment as it engenders collective action that is effective enough to transform society.

According to Sarason (1974), consciousness raising can be seen as a vehicle for empowerment because it may induce a sense of community. The purpose of empowerment is to bring about equality not only in economic, political, and social dimensions but also in ideology, that is by developing an ideology of equality. At the community level, lack of power is related to the absence of a psychological sense of community.

How can consciousness be raised? Recently, Weiler (1991) notes that early consciousness raising groups based on friendship and common political commitments, focused on the discussion of shared experiences of sexuality, work, family and participation in the male-dominated left political movement. Weiler also suggests that both experience and feeling were central to consciousness raising. Sharing common experience and feeling in a collective, leaderless group helps raising consciousness. Burkey (1993:73) suggests that "once people are aware of their situation and the root causes of their problems, they may want to act."

The fifth component of this empowerment model is facilitation and the role of facilitator. Korten (1983) discovered several powerful obstacles to participation by the poor. Among these obstacles is the top-down or centralized administration of the government that requires participants to be only passive recipients of the government programmes directed by the government officials as experts. A similar situation was described by Chairat (1985) who argues that in Thailand such programmes as contests between village or day care centre under rural development plans reflect the government's focus on 'building on the best'. Instead of encouraging local initiatives, the entire programme of village contests has turned out to be, as Chairat (1985:304) noted, "a good show whose directors are local, provincial, and central State authorities and whose actors are villagers".

As I have argued, participants can be helped to exercise power only when they fully participate in decision making process. Only if participants become decision
makers, on the desired change can be created. The empowerment approach recognizes full participation. The involvement of participants should increase from current level to full participation. Therefore, it is necessary to redefine the role for the development agents and researchers. Warwick and Kelman (1976) suggests facilitation as an alternative to the role of outsider. They define facilitation as "making it easier for an individual or group to implement his own choice or satisfy his own desires" (1976:491). For Warwick and Kelman (1976), facilitation efforts are consistent with the value of freedom in so far as they provide external circumstances that allow individuals and groups to act on their decisions.

In the facilitation process, the outsiders, be they researcher or development agents, become 'facilitators' who enable the empowerment process. Burkey (1993:74) suggests that when people are consciously willing to act, "Agency staff can then act as enablers or facilitators, helping to make it possible for them to do something they have decided to do on their own." According to these writers, facilitators and the facilitative process can meet the needs of empowerment. This differs from the traditional approaches because participants are not being directed or coached, but instead are encouraged to share perspectives and ask questions that will contribute to the decisions. By asking question of a group, for example, a facilitator will help the members see the world not as static reality, but as a limiting situation which challenges them to transform it.

To create the atmosphere for the empowerment process, the facilitator may need to develop political skills (Franklin, 1992), skills in administrative and community mobilization (Chambers, 1985; Whyte, 1991), organizational skills (Hage and Rindterbusch, 1987; Vogt and Murrell, 1990) and, most importantly, facilitating skills.

The sixth element of this empowerment model concerns the reciprocal relationship among participants. Reciprocity is a social phenomenon referring to the exchange of services or objects between two groups or individuals. Mauss (1954) formulated exchange theory which suggested that the spirit of a gift is alive and demands restitution. Baal (1975: 5) views reciprocity as the golden rule for human
Figure 5.1 Model of Empowerment illustrating elements identified by Freire (1972); Kasting (1991); Powell (1988); and Vogt and Murrell (1990)
behaviour in all interpersonal relations. Reciprocal relationships may involve an exchange in which the return has connotations of approximate equivalence and equality. Nevertheless, as argued by Baal (1975:5), reciprocity is not always strictly balanced. The patron-client relationship is one example of an unbalanced reciprocal relationship. An example is the relationship between a money lender and poor woman in which the poor woman is often exploited by the money lender.

The reciprocal relationship that meets the requirement for empowerment is a non-exploitative one. Working with women in rural society, a researcher needs to develop a non-exploitative reciprocal relationship with them. This is central to the empowerment process. The crucial role of the researcher is to facilitate the process where rural women can increase their capacity and raise their consciousness aimed to break the exploitative tie between the powerless and powerful ones. The traditional reciprocal help called *au wun* (which will be discussed in Chapter 6), for example, contributes to the collaboration among them. The development of reciprocal help between rural women and researcher is crucial because it will facilitate a collective action. In any case, it is clear that the individuals cannot just take without giving anything.

**Collaborative Action Research**

It has been stated that "different problems and different situation call for different strategies" (Whyte, 1991:8). Empowering peasant women in rural development is about raising the level of their consciousness and enhancing their capacity in order to bring about change. Empowerment serves peasant women's needs through their collective action. However, I would argue that in rural Thai society it is not easy to utilize the empowerment approach. Thailand has a long history of the top-down approach to women in development with traditional legal roles assigned to civil servants. This is consistent with the cultural expectation that restricts women to household service even though women actively participate in the workforce. Although the participation of rural women in village management is not new, the number of rural women who are formal village leaders, notably village heads or assistants to village heads is very small. An attempt to boost change will certainly be faced with
difficulties and limitations. Therefore, specific methodology and strategies are needed.

In this study, collaborative action research is seen as a potential methodology for rural women to effectively collaborate in village management aimed at bringing about change. An important theoretical concept employed in this study, as I have argued, is that if rural women collaborate in decision making process they can bring change.

What is Collaborative Action Research?

Elliott (1981) has defined action research as the study of a social situation with a view to improving the quality of action within it. In this respect, action research is carried out by practitioners seeking to improve their understanding of events, situations and problems so as to increase the effectiveness of their practice. The underlying premise of action research is involvement and improvement and its operations demand changes. Drawing from Lewin's (1964) concept of action research, McNiff (1988) notes that in action research the involvement process is seen as much more effective in solving the problems of human interrelationships than an imposed, structured process, into which people were expected to fit. Two of the ideas which were crucial in Lewin's work were those of 'group decision' and 'commitment to improvement'. In this respect, the 'action' in action research implies changes in people's lives, and therefore in the system in which they live. In the words of Kurt Lewin (McKernan, 1991:3), "research that produces nothing but books will not suffice."

Reinharz (1992:182) refers to Francesca Cancian who defines participatory research as:

...an approach to producing knowledge through democratic, interactive relationships. Researchers work with community members to resolve problems identified by the community, and the process of research is intended to empower participants...[T]he three core features of participatory research are: (1) political action and individual consciousness-raising... (2) relationships are democratic and participants share in making decisions and acquiring skills. (3) the everyday life experience and feelings of participants are a major sources of knowledge.
It is these characteristics that allow collaborative action research to meet the needs of empowerment. Collaborative action research is, thus, an open-ended style of research where change can be initiated by the collective action of participants. To do this, I emphasize that participants make decisions rather than act as passive objects. This is made possible, as suggested by Kleiber and Light (1978), by breaking down power differences between 'researched' and 'researcher'.

According to Carr and Kemmis (1986), action research offers a theory of how the constraints of ideology can be overcome. This can be made clear by considering the participatory and collaborative character of action research, by which action researchers are engaged, as individuals, in the process of enlightenment, and democratically involved, as members of the collaborative groups, in the process of organizing action (1986:198).

Whyte (1991:20) suggests that:

In participatory action research (PAR), some of the people in the organization or community under study participate actively with the professional researcher throughout the research process from the initial design to final presentation of results and discussion of their action implications.

In this respect, as argued by Whyte (1991:5), PAR thus contrasts sharply with the conventional model of pure research, in which members of organizations and communities are treated as passive subjects.

Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) have postulated a model of critical educational action research. This model rejects the positivist belief in the instrumental role of knowledge in problem-solving, arguing that critical inquiry enables practitioners not only to search out the interpretive meanings that educational actions have for them but to organize to overcome constraints. This model known as the 'Deakin action research model' conceives of the process as a series of reflective spirals in which a general plan, action, observation of action, and reflection on action is developed and then moved to a new and revised plan with action, observation and further reflection (p. 5,10,21). To do action research Kemmis and McTaggart suggest that:

A group and its members undertake to develop plan of critically informed action to improve what is already happening; to act to implement the plan; to observe the effects of the critically informed action in the context in which it
occurs; and to reflect on these effects as a basis for further planning, subsequent critically informed action and so on, through a succession of cycles.

(1988:10)

To do this, they suggest that "the action researcher will carry out the four activities collaboratively, involving others affected by the action in the action research process" (1988:10).

An example of the use of action research can be drawn from the work on the 'popular Participation Programmes' of the UNRISD in Thailand between 1981-1984 (Turton, 1987:3). According to Turton, the project was committed to a 'participatory action research' style and methodology due to its contribution to the participatory activities of the rural poor. Turton argues that this research collaboration and dialogue seemed important in the case of Thailand because there had been little previous organized collaboration between social scientists and movements and organizations. "There were no independent social science research institutes in Thailand outside the state universities" (p.4).

According to Turton (1987), the research was a triple collaboration of members and leaders of organized groups of the rural poor, village-level development workers and academic social scientists. Each member was regarded as an equal researcher involved in the formulation of issues and questions, in the collection and presentation of information, and the discussion and analysis of the material presented. The research programmes consisted of three main parts: field studies, workshop meetings and the preparation of papers on selected topics. In the meetings, the priority and time were accorded to the contributions of the poor farmers' representatives and village level development workers. It was found that as the project progressed, the meetings took on increasing importance as research workshops, eliciting new substantive materials as well as further reflection and analysis (1987:5-9). Turton point out that:

The collaboration of a large number and diversity of people was not easy, nor one guaranteed to succeed in spite of a stated trust, respect, and commitment to the objectives of the research project... We have seen how demands and criticism based on immediate practical needs can give rise to an awareness of
the need for solutions at a more profound level and a wider social scale, thus calling into question the very distribution of social power. While day-to-day activity was overwhelmingly concerned with survival, there developed, at the same time, a greater ability to assess situations, and a readiness to take advantage of new opportunities for action.

(1987:9, 123)

Another example is the work of William Foote Whyte (1991) with his colleagues, Davydd J. Greenwood and Peter Lazes who explored the scientific and practical value of participatory action research (PAR) in industrial situations, including the Xerox Corporation, the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) in New York State and the Mondragon cooperative complex in the Basque area of Spain (Whyte, 1991:13, 20). For them, PAR was seen as the process where:

...some of the people in the organization or community under study participate actively with the professional researcher throughout the research process from the initial design to the final presentation of results and discussion of their action implications.

(Whyte et al., 1991:20)

According to Whyte et al., in the Xerox case, PAR was focused on cost-reduction and job preservation. They found that a particular form of worker participation yielded cost reductions and improvements in what they called 'total factor productivity' of from 25% to 40%. From this result, they concluded that both variables (participation and production) open up a new and promising line of research and theory. On the other hand, for Mondragon, PAR was used to explore a range of problems, to rethink those problems, and to devise new organizational strategies. They found that despite the quantitative measurement, the results led to fruitful shifts in conceptualization of organizational processes of participation and decision making (1991:20).

In this present study, I see 'collaborative action research' as an ideal approach to provoke the debate on superficial 'participation' in rural development in general and in WID in particular. The way in which action research seeks to unite its two central concerns, improvement in practice, and increased knowledge and understanding, is by linking them into an integrated cycle of activities in which each phase learns from the previous one and shapes the next (Winter, 1989). I have drawn the ideas of the collaborative action research cycle from the following: Elliott's model of action
research process (Elliott, 1988), and the Deakin action research model (Kemmis and McTaggart, 1988). This collaborative action research cycle is composed of (i) an initial idea, (ii) social reconnaissance, i.e. fact-finding and analysis, (iii) the continuous cycles of planning to improve current practice, (iv) action, i.e. implementation of the action plan, (v) observation of action, and (vi) reflection on the consequence as a prelude to further planning. In this model, the action research process is conceived as a spiralling relationship between the analysis of practice which leads to proposed changes, and the implementation of changed practices which leads to increased understanding. This model of action research process is shown in Figure 5.2.

In this adapted model, the initial idea comes from the people's perspective through the process of social reconnaissance or what Green and Kreuter (1991) called social diagnosis. The social reconnaissance is defined in this study as the process of determining people's perceptions of their own needs or quality of life, and their aspirations for the common good. This process is begun with observing, dialoguing, discussing and interviewing villagers in order to gain greater information about their current lives, particularly their problems. This includes their problems, needs, aspirations, resources and constraints. The next step is documenting this information and discussing with villagers in order to find out what their first priority would be. The plan refers to the constructed action which is flexible enough to be adapted to unforeseen effects and previously unrecognized constraints. At the same time, the plan functions in helping to go beyond present constraints and to empower them to act more appropriately and more effectively in the situation. Action refers to a critically informed action that recognizes practice as ideas-in-action and is a careful and thoughtful variation of practice. The implementation of action plans will assume the character of a material, social and political 'struggle' towards improvement.

Observation has the function of documentating the effects of critically informed action. Observation must be planned, flexible and open to record the unexpected, responsive, open-eyed and open-minded. Additionally, observation will always be guided by the intent to provide a sound basis for critical self-reflection. Reflection in turn recalls action as it has been recorded in observation, but it is also
Figure 5.2 A Collaborative Action Research Cycle adapted from Kemmis and McTaggart (1988) and Winter (1989)
active. It seeks to make sense of processes, problems, issues and constraints made manifest in strategic action. It has an evaluative aspect which is usually aided by discussion among participants. Reflection allows reconnaissance, building a more vivid picture of life and work in the situation, constraints on action and more importantly for the group, and for its individual members as actors committed to group goals.

In this model, critical collaborative action research is seen as a politically empowering process for participants; the struggle is for a more rational, just and democratic form of development. Therefore, the creation of desired change is the business of all participants in this model, not the experts who research development from the outside. This model invites all participants to consider the totality of relationships with the social system and structure of the society in which they live and work. Collaborative action research is employed to share full participation in the research process. In the work of a collaboratively self-directed action research group, monitoring and reflection should become shared responsibilities, rather than being undertaken entirely by one or another individual on behalf of the group.

Bawden (1990) notes that the outcomes of action researching which are places in the context of , and are subjected to the critique from, public knowledge. These include:

(i) the practice of the practitioner/researcher is improved, (ii) the understanding of the practice by the practitioner is improved, (iii) the situation in which the practice is practiced, is improved, and (iv) the understanding, by the practitioner, of situation in which the practice was practiced is improved. (1990:41)

In sum, the methodology I applied in this study was collaborative action research. My aim was to facilitate a small core team of villagers, especially, to explore by critical reflection their situation in order to create desired changes.
CHAPTER 6

LAMPHUN AND SANDEE VILLAGE: THE CHANGING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CONTEXT

It is clear that economic growth has been the primary objective of Thailand's national development plans during the past thirty years. The government's attempt to modernize the country has been made by the facilitation of the growth of private industries and private enterprises through public expenditure including international 'development' aid and loans (Chairat, 1985). This has occurred in the form of infrastructure provision in such areas as irrigation, electric power, transportation and communication. The idea is to transform Thailand's 'traditional' agrarian society into a 'modern' industrialized society, modelled on the advanced capitalist societies of the West. The process of facilitating private capital accumulation has been realized first by the strategy of import-substitution industrialization (ISI) and, since the early 1970s, by the strategy of exported-oriented industrialization (EOI), as discussed in Chapter 4. The following section discusses changes in the economic, social and political context in Lamphun and Sandee in different periods of time, due to the State interventions and the penetration of capitalism.

Sande is the village in which I focused my fieldwork and collaborative action research. It is my home village. For the reason of confidentiality (and to avoid possible reprisals against people who confronted the power structure of the village), the name of the village, sub-district (here called Tambon Sukjai) and other villages within the same tambon (sub-district) are pseudonyms.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS

Lamphun is the smallest of eight upper northern provinces covering an area of 4,509 square kilometres. These provinces constitute the upper northern region of Thailand, known as Laanna Thai (Map 1). The area is approximately 690 kilometres from Bangkok. The topography of northern Thailand consist of a series of north-south oriented mountain ranges, alternating with populated valleys which are covered in
thick forest. This topography influences the way the Laanna people view their relationship to the natural environment and to political structures (Davis, 1984). Now owing to the geographical and climatic contrasts throughout the region, a wide variety of small-scale agricultural production system can be found in most areas.

Lamphun is an area of lowland plains which have been used to cultivate an annual crop of rain-dependent rice and fruit such as longan as well as mango. Higher but relatively flat lands near by the hills and mountains have been used for growing fruit trees such as longan, mango and lychee. There are slopes on the hills and mountains, which are reserved forest areas, have been used for small-scale cultivation of chilli, maize, ground nuts, soybeans, beans, garlic, and other vegetables. An agricultural land area of 563,235 rai (90,117.6 hectare; 1 rai = 0.16 hectare) consumes water from four major rivers. However, only 21.1 per cent of the agricultural land is irrigated. Like people in other provinces in the upper north and northeast, people in Lamphun normally eat sticky rice. The important commercial crops in Lamphun are rice, garlic, shallot, peanut, mung bean and longan. According to the Office of Trade Lamphun Province (1990), in 1989 farmers produced 115,963 tonnes of normal rice, 86,544 tonnes of garlic, 69,098 tonnes of shallot, 3,145 tonnes of peanut, 1,671 tonnes of mung bean. Lamphun is widely known as the province with the best quality of lamyai (longan). The production of longan was 25,291.6 tonnes in 1989 and only 4,684 tonnes in 1990. The decline in 1990 was due to the long period of drought and late rain (Office of Trade Lamphun Province, 1990:1). Rural people raise water buffalo, cows and pigs, mostly for sale, as well as poultry for their own consumption and sometimes for sale.

Lamphun consists of five amphoe (district) and one branch district (Map 2). The population increased from 241,121 in 1960 to 303,746 in 1970, to 345,936 in 1980 (Office of National Statistics, 1960, 1980) to 407,811 in 1989, and to 417,980 in 1992 (Office of Provincial Statistics Lamphun Province, personal interview). The population growth rate decreased from 1.49 % (1960) to 0.09 % (1980) and to 0.10 % in 1992 due mainly to the 'two child' policy. In 1992, approximately 81 % of population of Lamphun were farmers, and 19 % were employed in the agricultural,
mining, and factory sectors. The average income was 12,165 baht per person per year (Office of Trade Lamphun Province, 1990).

Due to the long distance from the sea the seasonal temperatures are highly variable. During the rainy season, which lasts from May until September or sometimes the beginning of October, the average temperature ranges from 19.73°-33.34° C. The cold season lasts from the middle of October until the middle of February. The average winter temperature ranges from 18.5°-22.8° C. The dry season begins around the middle of February and lasts until the middle of May. The weather is normally very hot in April, around 35.2°-38.3° C. The average dry season temperature ranges from 30.6°-33.5° C (Office of Northern Agriculture and Co-operative, 1992). In 1990 the average rainfall was 1006.4 mm. (Office of Provincial Agriculture. 1990). Although Lamphun is located 1,800 feet above sea level, the city is often flooded. In 1975, for instance, there were three floods. Nevertheless, in 1991 and 1992, it appears that the period of drought in Lamphun is long with the late start of the rainy season. It was not until late July that it started to rain. The unpredictably of the arrival of the rains during the past ten years has affected the cultivation and the temporary migration of farmers in Lamphun.

HISTORY

Lamphun is the oldest muang (equivalent to a modern province) and is the centre of religion for the Laanna Thai. It is said that Buddhism was first established here by Phra Nang (Queen) Jamadhevi in 661 (Chakrit and Thawee, 1977: 27). The earliest stirrings of statehood in northern Thailand are shrouded in legend and mystery. None of the local chronicles, some of which claim to record events as far back as pre-Buddhist times, can be relied upon prior to the latter half of the thirteenth century (Davis, 1984: 28). Historically, the Laanna Thai Kingdom was divided into a number of territories called muang. The major muang normally included a number of lesser muang. The king or prince who governed the major muang was called jao muang (lord of the Muang) whereas pau muang (the father of the muang) referred to the princes and petty chiefs who ruled the lesser muang. The major muang, such as Muang Lamphun roughly correspond to the modern changwat (province). The larger
of the lesser *muang* correspond roughly to the modern *amphoe* (district), whereas the smaller *muang* were composed of clusters of modern *moobaan* (villages) ruled by the local chief. The hierarchy of *muang*, with each muang centred in a fortified town or village called *wiang* and each comprising a number of villages, is "the archaic Tai pattern of political organization still found today among the Tai of Vietnam" (Davis, 1984: 38).

The Laanna Thai is one of a great constellation of Tai ethnic groups which together form the largest cultural and linguistic family in mainland Southeast Asia. It would be incorrect to conclude that all the Northern Thai speak the same language or have absolutely the same way of life. Although the majority of people in Laanna Thai speak *Kham Muang* (Muang language), approximately 60% of the population in Lamphun province, who have descended from the Tai Yong, still speak Yong. Unlike the majority of Laanna Thai who call themselves *Khon Muang*, the people resident in most area of Lamphun province call themselves 'Khon Yong'. *Khon* means 'people' and 'Yong' refers to the name of their language. Nevertheless, the Laanna Thai all share a distinctive culture and environment which sets them apart from the Siamese (Davis, 1984:23). The term Siamese refers to the largest Thai groups in the southern peninsula and the central plains who speak Thai (the official language) and dominate the political and cultural affairs of the kingdom and act as a model of modernity and progressiveness to the other Thai people (Davis, 1984).

**Centralization**

Until 1814, Lamphun was to some extent independent from the Thai Kingdom even though the *chao muang* had to render tribute, for example, 200 teak logs each year were sent to the central government in Bangkok. However, Lamphun's economic, political, religious and social development had not been much interfered with (Calavan, 1975). The local *jao muang* could freely govern *muang* Lamphun. The first intervention by the central government began around 1874. According to Calavan (1975), the administration of northern Thailand was entirely in the hands of bureaucratic officials. Initially, officers at that district level were local aristocrats appointed by a Thai government hard-pressed to provide administrative labour.
Nevertheless, according to Davis (1984), later they were replaced by regular officials of the Ministry of Interior, mostly Siamese. In the 19th century the component principalities of Lanna Thai (Chiang Mai, Lamphun and Lampang) were semi-autonomous vassals of Siam until incorporation into the Siamese/Thai state. The process of incorporation was a gradual one, beginning with the Chiang Mai Treaty of 1874, but was a fairly completed by 1900 when the North (including Lamphun) became part of the Siamese provincial (monthon) administration. By 1933 all changwat in northern Thailand were administered by provincial governors responsible directly to Bangkok. As a result, the administration, particularly with relevance to natural resource utilization, which had been in the hands of local rulers, was highly weakened by this centralization.

Changes in Infrastructure

One major State-led rural development project in Lamphun was the construction of a railway between Chiang Mai and Bangkok in 1922. This railway had facilitated the logging operation by the Bombay-Burma Company in a concession which was provided by the jao muang Lamphun after the Chiang Mai Treaty which the Thai government has signed with Britain in 1883. When the Royal Forest Department was established in 1896, the logging concession had to be requested from the state government in such a way that the jao muang was still provided a portion of tax which later was changed to annual income. The transportation of timber, initially by river, was increasingly undertaken by this Chiang Mai-Bangkok railway. Accordingly, the forest along this railway was also increasingly illegally cut. The forest area decreased from 76.25 million rai, or 72 per cent of the northern region in 1967, to 56 per cent in 1975 (Office of Agriculture and Co-operatives Northern Region, 1982). In 1979 alone, 155,781 rai (24,924.96 hectare) of reserved forest in Lamphun was destroyed (Office of Agriculture Economics, 1979). I refer to deforestation not to suggest that the construction of this railway alone contributed the deterioration of forest area in Lamphun. However, to some extent it stimulated illegal logging.
It is critical to note that it was evident that the villagers have not totally played a passive role when encountered changes in terms of infrastructure brought into the community by the State. According to Hewison (1989), there have been a number of rebellions in which peasants have risen up against the State. These revolts have usually taken the form of millenarian uprisings led by phuu mii bun (holy men) who promise poor peasants a bountiful future. Holm (1911, quoted by Hewison, 1989:24-5)) argues that the decision to extend the railway network into the northern region was hastened by these rebellions.

Beside improving the transportation between the upper northern region and Bangkok, the railway construction stimulated the trade of agricultural produce, particularly rice, to meet the growing needs of the local and the world market at the time. According to Elliot (1978:25):

While the colonies in South East Asia were forced by the colonizing countries to produce crops for export like sugar, coffee, and so forth, the production of rice for their own subsistence was reduced.... Pressures were placed upon the Thai rice producers to increase production for export.

These pressures were interrelated and appeared in many forms connected with the emergence of a money economy and with the emergence of the 'middlemen'. Other changes included increased taxation, money lending, availability of cheap imports such as cotton and other items traditionally produced in the village, and the beginning of landlordism.

Another State intervention aimed at improvement of transportation was the construction, in 1954, of a major Chiang Mai-Bangkok road, which passes through two districts in the south of Lamphun province. In Lamphun itself, the State provided the public funds for the basic infrastructure construction. Asphalt Roads were built between the city of Lamphun and the remote districts while gravel roads between sub-districts were upgraded. During 1966-1969, Highway No. 11 was constructed between Chiang Mai and Lampang province, passing Amphoe Maetha and Amphoe Muang of Lamphun province. This road was provided to maximize communication and transportation between the northern and the central regions. However, a large area of teak forest was destroyed at the same time. Illegal forest-logging increased. In 1988, a
new road connecting Amphoe Muang and Amphoe Pasang, and passing through five villages in Tambon Sukjai, was constructed. This has facilitated further changes in this area. A large area of rice land became a big garment factory and residential areas. The former rural villages were rapidly urbanized by the appearance of motels, restaurants, dormitories for factory workers and including brothels.

In the early 1960s the agricultural land area, especially for rice production was increasingly expanded in order to produce rice for export. The process was then easier and faster because the big trees were already cut either legally by logging operations or illegally by local villagers. The latter was stimulated by the demand for the furniture factories in Chiang Mai and Lampang provinces. This means land use began to change. Land requiring greater labour to produce a given quantity of rice was brought into cultivation, while land formerly devoted to garden crops was utilized for rice production. It could be said that the expansion of trade after the construction of this railway and roads directly and indirectly stimulated the utilization of natural resources, forests in particular. Although it was also found that before this intervention of the State, there was a process of generating additional surplus by capitalization of agriculture in cultivated areas. This process was even more stimulated by the penetration of State and capital into the rural villages. The process of generating agricultural production and surplus in the upper northern region was similar to Hirsch's (1989:37) observation that expanding "agricultural production and surplus has been a process of expanding agricultural land area, and this has been at the expense of forested areas."

The transformation from subsistence agriculture to commercial agriculture in Lamphun was stimulated by the construction of the major Chiang Mai-Bangkok road. This road provided faster and more convenient transportation from the upper northern provinces to the capital city. It contributed to more opportunities in undertaking commercial agriculture by farmers in Lamphun especially in Amphoe Baan Hong and Amphoe Pasang where garlic, shallots, chilli and other vegetables were effectively produced, and in other amphoe such as Muang and Maetha where rice was produced. It is fairly clear that the production and trade of rice in Lamphun was stimulated by the
demand of the market and by the development of transportation. The increased demand for agricultural produce, particularly rice, contributed to stimulate the generation of additional agricultural surplus, and to changing the purpose of rice production by farmers from being primarily for their own consumption to being primarily for sale.

**Agricultural Modernization**

Agricultural development has been seen as an essential element to increase Thailand's economic growth, as discussed in Chapter 4. According to Chairat (1985), agriculture has been intensively used as the supportive base of industrialization during the process of capital accumulation. This has been accomplished with remarkable success by integrating the rural-subsistence economy into the national-capitalist economy under the names of 'agricultural development' and 'rural development' (p. 202-3). Accordingly, the State development policies since the early 1960s have been oriented towards upgrading agricultural products and increasing productivity through the diversification, commercialization, and 'modernization' of agriculture. Increased rice production in the 1950s was made possible partially by the opening up of forest area. This was consistent with the infrastructure development policy and the utilization of modern technology and innovation.

Under the process of agricultural modernization, the modern irrigation system had been constructed by the government to replace the traditional *muang faai* (people's irrigation system). In order to improve agricultural production, advanced agricultural technologies, improved seed varieties chemical fertilizers, pesticides, and farm equipment such as the modern two-wheel tractor were introduced. Moreover, to increase productivity, farmer groups and agricultural and cooperative groups were largely established aiming to provide agricultural financial support and other mechanized technologies. Agricultural extension workers were recruited by the Department of Agricultural Extension and sent out to transfer the knowledge of 'modern' agriculture that was received as a package through international technical cooperation. However, it is more men than women who could access to these resources. Rural women were provided the household-oriented training programmes
despite being producers. Having insufficient bargaining power, poor farmers were left to deal with the exploitation by the better-off farmers, the rice traders and the 'middlemen'. The premium on rice exports which was imposed in 1955 (Silcock, 1967) did not benefit poor farmers. Instead, it functioned to keep down the prices to consumers by restricting exports and to derive government revenue from the exporters.

**Rural Development in Lamphun**

Another response of the government was counter-insurgency (COIN) and 'rural development' strategies. COIN was a "concept which combined military and economic goals into a single package aimed at countering revolt through social improvement and the weeding out of subversive elements" (Bell, 1978:63). Accelerated Rural Development (ARD) was implemented in the crisis provinces, including Lamphun (in 1975), aiming to train people to defend themselves through Village Security Teams. Additionally, in 1975-6, the government launched two projects for decentralizing control of rural development funds and providing off-season employment in rural areas under the banner 'tambon' as 'local development' schemes. The 'participation' scheme then was promoted through the tambon scheme.

According to Bell (1978), there were events of class struggle that resisted this tendency. In the early 1960s organized rural peasants (along with urban workers, the waged as in factories and the unwaged or marginalized groups in slums, unemployed students, women) emerged to generate their own demands. Thaxton (1974) notes that in 1962 the Voice of People of Thailand began to broadcast and in 1965 the Thai Patriotic Front declared a merger of all existing guerilla groups and a 'six point programme' which covered peace, neutrality, land to the tillers, education for all, opposition to US imperialist culture and the overthrow of the existing regime.

In 1974, hundreds of farmers from the Central provinces protested to the government over dispossession of their land and its appropriation by capitalist moneylenders. In November the same year "... 1,200 farmers from the North and the North East as well as Centre, met in Sanam Luang [Bangkok] accompanied by students, workers, some Buddhist monks and novices" (Turton, 1978:122). Then on
19 November 1974, the Peasants Federation of Thailand, PFT, (*sahapahan chao rai chao na haeng phrathet Thai*) was formed. Intha Sribunruang, a farmer from Chiang Mai Province, was elected as Vice-President and Chairman of the northern branch. Accordingly, the government hastily passed the Land Rent Control Act on 18 December 1974 (Withayakorn, 1976) as a result of the Federation's activities. The Act basically required a contract, whether written or oral, for all tenancies; in effect it converted existing tenancy agreements into contracts, to last for six years from the date of the Act. It also stipulated that normally the product of the main crop should be divided into three parts: a minimum of one-third for production costs, the remainder to be divided equally between landlord and tenants. The basic provisions, according to Withayakorn (1976), would provide the tenant with security of possession and a number of other safeguards. It appeared that a number of landlords refused to cooperate and used all possible means to resist the implementation of the Act.

The movement continued growing rapidly, especially in Chiang Mai and Lamphun. Activities included recruiting and politicizing the villagers, holding meetings to inform villagers of their legal rights particularly under the Land Rent Act, denouncing corrupt officials for misappropriating development funds, and distributing publications, including a newspaper 'The Thai Farmer' (*chao na Thai*) edited by Intha Sribunruang (Turton, 1978).

As the movement continued, villagers were threatened by the police with arrest as communists if they voted for candidates who supported the Federation's programme. The government controlled press and radio accused the Federation of 'mobilizing the masses' which was made synonymous with subversion and treason. Meetings were harassed and attacked by police and military, and the members of various right-wing groups were manipulated by senior politicians, district officials, and the military. At the same time, there were the 'village scouts', the 'red guards' and 'nawaphol' who were frequently armed and attacked the Federation's activities. The assassination of left-wing and progressive leaders became a regular occurrence in 1974. In 1975, 18 Peasant Federation leaders were assassinated. Most of the killings were in the North, including Intha Sribunruang who was assassinated on 31 July (Turton, 1978). Although a new chairman of the North branch was elected to replaced
Intha, the Federation's activities reduced because of difficulties due to the State's strategies of violence.

In 1975 the Agriculture Land Reform Act was passed (Withayakorn, 1976). It met even less enthusiasm from landowners and their allies. According to Turton, 1978:120), the Act conceived maximum holdings of 50 rai of crop land (a size which, by most standards, would indicate a rich peasant household), 20 rai of utilized land, and 100 rai of pasture. However, a landowner who held up to 1,000 rai one year before the law could retain all land provided it could be shown that the land was fully used without renting it out. The Act was clearly designed to permit and encourage the development of a rich peasant class and large scale capitalist agri-business.

The changes at the village level due to State policies of infrastructure development, the control of rice prices, government sponsored farmers' groups, rural development schemes, and the attempted land reform and land rent reform, were not of equal benefit to poor farmers in rural areas including Lamphun province. Additionally, within this broad range of rural development programmes, none dealt with the structure and inequality in Thai society. If viewed together, as suggested by Chairat (1985), the whole package of Thailand's rural development policies and programmes has been primarily geared to accelerating and legitimizing the process of the State's capital accumulation. It is quite clear that the process favoured the better-off farmers while the poor farmers were exploited within the marketing system. I would add that these policies and programmes have intensified the structure of inequality in Thai rural society and enhanced the disempowerment of poor rural women. In other words, the effect of the rural development mechanism was for State intervention to integrate the rural-subsistence economy into the national-capitalist economy and to demilitarize rural peasants under central authority rather than to improve the quality of life of the rural peasants as the rhetoric has claimed. For political and economic reasons, the government has attempted to support the emergence of classes of big capitalist farmers and rich peasants. In the Thai context, particularly in the nothern region, Anan notes that "the capitalist farmers hold an average 23.75 rai (3.8 hectares) compared with an average 12.5 rai (2 hectares) for"
rich peasants" (Anan, 1988:123). At the same time, a peasant class of poor, landless and indebted tenants has emerged.

It is worth noting that the Farmers Federation of Thailand (FFT) is another indicator illustrating that rural villagers have not been played a passive role. However, "during 1975 some dozens of the FFT leaders were murdered and the Federation virtually disappeared" with no arrests being made for any of the murder cases (van der Meer, 1981:99).

**Basic Needs and Participation**

It was during the fifth national plan (1982-6) that the failures in development strategy were recognized. Lamphun was included as one of 38 provinces in 'dense poverty areas' where the 'basic needs' approach was employed. Representatives from the 'basic principal ministries' (Agriculture, Education, Interior, and Public Health) were determined that their efforts should be coordinated at all levels - national, regional, provincial, and district. A tambon centre locally known as Soon Sarapii, was set up at tambon level aimed at the promotion of coordination among the representatives of these basic ministries. These government development agents included patthanakorn (community development worker), kaset tambon (agricultural extension agent), kru (primary school teacher), and anamai tambon (public health worker). The assumption underlying this coordination was the hope that the participation of rural people would be facilitated by these development workers aiming to find out people's basic needs and improve projects submitted from tambon level. A women's development plan, including nutrition, family planning, health, home economics and handicraft training, was included.

**Industrialization and Urbanization**

In 1975, the law that limited land ownership to 50 rai was eliminated so as to make it possible for both local and foreign capital to acquire large amounts of land for business and industrial purposes associated with the development of basic infrastructure. As a result, real estate boomed in the Lamphun. Land became a commodity for speculation. This again affected farmers in rural areas. A long period
of drought and the increased price of land have in part stimulated farmers to sell their land. During the process of urbanization and industrialization, it was land speculators who began to accumulate land by buying cheaply from farmers who had little knowledge about this sort of economic activity which requires "legal skills, information and access to cheap bank loans" which are seldom available to the farmers. It is quite clear that only the urban and rural elites have been the beneficiaries of this State policy. The results are an increasing land concentration, an increased number of tenant and landless farmers (Turton, 1978:111-13) and an increasing number of rural women who have become low-waged labourers in the factories that used to be their rice lands.

In Muang district, Lamphun Province, the number of factories has rapidly increased. Vast areas of previous agricultural land were replaced by factories and industries. In 1955 the first tobacco factory was established in Muang district, approximately ten kilometres from the city of Lamphun. This factory provided jobs for people in nearby tambon including women in Sandee Village. This was the first time in Lamphun that agricultural labour transferred to the industrial sector. Many men and women became workers in this factory during the off-rice season However, at that time, rice production was the main source of income of farmers due to its high price. Another three tobacco factories were established. The large number of women and men who became workers in these factories reflected the greater transformation of agricultural labour to the industrial sector.

Another major State-led initiative in urbanization and industrialization in Lamphun was the establishment of the North Industrial Estate in Muang district in 1982. The Northern Industrial Estate was first established in an area of 1,760 rai which used to be a rice field. This Estate is located approximately five kilometres from Sandee Village. It is the first industrial estate in northern Thailand which has provided employment for local people in Lamphun province and people from nearby provinces. In 1993, there were 85 factories of light industry that employed 14,321 workers (Provincial Office of Labour, 1993). Among these, there were 34 women and three men from Sandee Village. However, none of these factories was an agricultural
factory. Most of them were electronics and garment factories from which the production will be exported. In Tambon Sukjai, a big garment factory was established in 1988 and first operated in 1993. This factory provided more than 1,500 people with employment. Nevertheless, no villager from Sandee Village worked in this factory because those villagers whose qualifications met the factory's requirement (i.e. finishing grade 9), were employed by other factories in Northern Industrial Eastate.

It is no doubt that these factories have contributed a considerable boost to the economy of Lamphun province and northern Thailand as a whole. However, according to the observation of the collaborative action research team during 1992-93, there is evidence of water pollution which has damaged Maenum Mae Kuang (Mae Kuang river) and other effects such as the bad smell of water pollution, poor workers' health, poor working conditions and other social problems such as the tendency of the breakdown of relations between the workers and their own community. It is clear that a large number of rural women benefited from these factories in term of increased income. However, it is not necessarily the case that an increased income would contribute to the enhancement of their capacity to change the negative effects of 'industrialization' upon their lives.

Lamphun has changed in many ways. I have discussed changes brought about by the State interventions in infrastructure development, agricultural modernization, urbanization, and industrialization in Lamphun that have had various positive and negative impacts on farmers in general and women in particular. I would argue that these rural development projects were imposed on rural villagers. These projects have empowered the local better-off people including capitalists, local traders, 'middlemen', government officers, government-sponsored leaders and rich farmers. On the other hand, rural women at the village level were forced to be more dependent on outside resources than in the past. Their control over their lives and their choices in life declined. Only if poor women actively collaborate in the decision making in these projects will there be an opportunity to create changes in a way that enhances their access to choices that suit their lives best.
CHANGES AND TRANSFORMATIONS IN VILLAGE LIFE

Our village has changed a lot,
no rain, rice all died,
We have muang fai but no water,
where water has gone.
Everybody has gone to work,
women work in a noisy-smelly-dusty tobacco factory,
men work outdoor as labourers,
boys and girls no longer go to school.
they are low-waged workers in ta kua (lead) factory.
They always have a headache and are sick.
I am too old, can no longer work.
I just weave bamboo and look after my grandchild everyday.
Our village changes everyday.

Old woman in Sandee Village

The rest of this Chapter discusses changes in Sandee Village, one peasant village in northern Thailand, during the past thirty years. It focuses on the effects of changes upon women.

Village Setting and History

The village studied, Sandee Village is located in Tambon Sukjai (pseudonyms), Amphoe Muang, approximately nine kilometres from the city of Lamphun (Map 3). Sandee Village consists of 1,503 rai (240.48 hectares) including 1,303 rai (208.48 hectares) of agricultural land area and 200 rai (32 hectares) of residential area. The village is close to num Mae Saan (Mae Saan canal) and surrounded by the forest that later became part of a rice field. In de Young's (1955) terminology, the village is nucleated: the resident houses are located in the centre and surrounded by areas of rice fields, partly by the village forest and part of the river. The residential area is clearly demarcated from surrounding villages. It is served by a single wat (temple) and a child care centre. A bamboo-concrete road connects the village area with Amphoe Muang (Map 4).

According to Tha, 92 years old, the eldest villager in the village, Baan Sandee was established more than 200 years ago by a group of local villagers descended from the Tai Yong. In the past, Sandee Village was a subsistence peasant village. It could
be described as a 'peasant society' as defined by Wolf (1966). In Sandee Village, villagers was rural cultivators. The household was a basic unit and essentially a subsistence enterprise. Villagers cultivated their land using household labour. The common pattern of production was that they produced enough for their own needs by the household's labours, with extra production to cover other living costs. If necessary, extra-household labour normally came from mutual reciprocity. The exchange of surplus, particularly rice and food from the forest, was primarily among villagers. However, the surplus was also exchanged for specific goods such as salt and kerosene, and services such as curative services. In the past, surpluses were in form of, for example, labour, tax, teak and forest products, while surpluses today are in the from of commercial crops and natural resources. Surpluses in the past were transferred to a dominant group of rulers (Wolf, 1966:3-4). For deeper understanding of the northern Thai village context, see Andrew Turton (1976a, 1976b). It is quite clear that in the past Thai peasant villages to a large extent maintained their self-reliance even at the cost of providing surplus to the rulers.

Before rural northern communities were affected by rapid changes brought about by government intervention in the 'development' era since early 1960s, villagers depended upon one another. The community's negotiated rules such as muang faai were effectively used to ensure that natural resources, water in particular, were available for all. At the present the village communities have been changed in many aspects. Sandee Village, for example, is now strongly linked to wider society. The Amphoe Muang and Lamphun provincial offices nine kilometres away, are the locations for the State representatives: the development agencies, the police, the tax office, and the headquarters of the local administration.

Withayakorn, (1984) suggests that in examing rural development in Thailand, one needs to take into account the development of Thai society in the past up until the present. By doing this, one would find that Thai rural society has not been 'undeveloped' since the early days, but that the 'underdevelopment' of rural areas has just recently emerged (p.28). I would argue that the present 'underdevelopment' is a
reproduction of the feudal situation in another form. The following section illustrates changes in Sandee Village as a result of rapid change in wider society.

**Demographic Characteristics**

In 1993 the total population in Sandee Village was 821 person among 216 households. In 1992-1993 three new households were established. From the survey organized by the Amphoe Muang in 1967 and from my survey in 1993, the number of households increased from 142 to 216 while the population increased from 571 to 821 (Table 6.2). The average of the population per household decreased from 4.02 to 3.80. This change was consistent with the growth of nuclear families. As a result of the increasing of economic repression, villagers could not afford to have four or five children any longer. This tendency was partially due to the rapid increase in contraceptive use in Thailand since the government began to support family planning in 1975. Another factor was the extensive campaign of the government urging people to have only two children. Such slogans as *mit luk maak ja yaak jon* (the more children, the more poverty) were widely promoted through all mass media. These State-led activities played an important role in family planning at the village level.

I have already mentioned the effect of the government family planning program on demography. In Sandee Village, contraceptives have been widely used by village women since 1975 because the contraceptives were supplied to the women at low cost through village storekeepers who sold those contraceptives for a modest profit. At the same time, the shops also provide information about family planning methods. This programme has been greatly successful because the contraceptives were available near the villagers and in a setting that was familiar as well as pleasant. Contraceptives have also been available continuously with no interruptions of supply as was common in government offices. The success of this program reflected the role of a dynamic leader, the PCDA's (Population and Community Development Association) founder, Dr Mechai and his genius regarding his choice and development of local institutional channels.
Education

When there was no formal school, only boys and men had the opportunity to study by being khayom (a boy who stays in the temple in order to prepare to be ordained), novices or monks. Rural girls and women had no chance to study in this way because they are not permitted to become monks. This was consistent with the belief and attitude that a woman is going to be a wife who is supposed to work in the house and rely on her husband. The old Thai adage that men are "chang tau naat" (man is like the front leg of the elephant) and women are "chang tau lang" (woman is like the rear leg) clearly illustrates the respective roles and the higher status of Thai men over Thai women. According to Brady (1984), men are seen as forging forward doing a greater share of the work, leading the beast whereas women are expected to follow closely behind and support men, yet are never in control (p.1). From this old adage, we can see the metaphor of interdependence between men and women. Although this is not necessarily true today, the attitudes towards women as followers are still present in many aspects in Thai society.

In Sandee Village, the opportunity for women to study started in 1932 when the primary school was established in Sukjai village, one kilometre from Sandee Village, by the Ministry of Education. Most villagers now aged under sixty were supposed to finish grade 4 and to become literate. In 1961 this school expanded up to grade 6. Sandee Village shared the primary school with three other villages. The wat (village temple) acts as a focus for village pride and solidarity; so did this school, to a lesser extent. Boys and girls from the middle-class and rich families who want to continue their study have to go for secondary school to government or private schools in the cities of Lamphun or Chiang Mai, while students from the poor families go to the government secondary school in tambon Sukjai where facilities and education quality are inadequate. The education of the population is shown in Table 6.1.

There were more male students than female students in grades 9, 12, and higher levels even though it was conversely at grade 6 where there were more girls than boys. This is not statistically significant. Now the compulsory education is up to grade 9. This is consistent with the requirement of the factories in North Industrial
Estate where grade 9 is the minimum required. In Thailand, education is claimed by the government ministries and departments to be an effective tool for rural development. However, I would argue that, as education is not for all, only the 'best' people will be selected. Due to poverty, poor villagers cannot afford to be among the 'best'. It appeared that the better-off can utilize an available education system as a tool for upward mobilization while the rural poor cannot afford to do so. In Thailand, the education system functioned as a means to select the 'best' rural people to be productive citizens for urban society rather than for rural communities. The curricula of elementary education as well as higher education hardly related to rural society. It mostly concerns modernization ideology and is about the civilization of people in Bangkok and urban area. Rural farmers were at best advocated as 'the backbone of the country', but a decayed backbone. Students were never taught to aware of their own situation. This education system does not assist them to become aware why their parents are poor, how they are exploited, how they can improve the situation.

Table 6.1 Villagers' Education
(Based on data collected during fieldwork 1992-1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Gender</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uneducated (in formal system)</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age under four</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-school</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 1</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>168</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 6</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 7</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grade 8</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 9</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 10</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor degree and higher</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>(821)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
At the local school, teachers are State representatives who become the change agents for State education policy. Most teachers working in primary schools at the village level are from middle class families in the city who became a 'modern' model of urban people in the eyes of rural students. There were some teachers in Sukjai primary school with a rural farming background who organized the activities that encouraged students to be aware of the situation of their own community. However, there was not much room for them to exercise their autonomy because the strict curriculum has already been decided by the education experts at the central level.

The educational system which is strongly influenced by Western values, has distanced the young from their ancestors' cultural values and resources. It has contributed to increased dependence and social disruption. After prolonged oppression, the villagers themselves have lost self-determination and awareness of their own potentials. To facilitate them to realize their own potential is not just a matter of turning on a switch. It needs them to raise their consciousness in order to holistically identify their current problems, the root causes, and how to improve their situation. Here, the empowerment approach is needed.

**Health and Family Planning**

Traditionally, villagers largely relied on indigenous ways of curing by using herbs and other medicinal material available in the village and the neighbouring villages. In the past, it was common that both men and women became 'mae jang' (female traditional doctor) and 'po lieng' (male traditional doctor). By the time this present study was undertaken, there were several mae jang and po lieng who villagers sought for their treatment of problems such as broken bone, blind, traditional massage, any other problems for which the modern doctors refused to provide treatment. Fees required by the mae jang or po lieng were much less than those required by modern doctors.

Today, health service is a complex mixture of public and private providers. In urban areas, modern public and private health services and facilities are available for those who can afford expensive treatment. However, for rural villagers the major source of service is the Ministry of Public Health, operating through an extensive
network of outlets including regional health centres, provincial and district hospital, and tambon health centres. In Tambon Sukjai, the tambon 'doctor' (sub-district doctor) who can provide a very basic treatment for villagers within the tambon, lives in Sandee Village. He was trained to do basic treatment when he joined military service, then he was appointed to work as tambon doctor. Poor villagers would ask for his service. There was one clinic in Sukjai village which provided service by a Western-trained physician during weekend. The nearest health centre was located at baan Nonglom five kilometres from Sandee Village. Here, the tambon health officers who were appointed by the Ministry of Public Health were supposed to provide basic services for the villagers in the tambon, in some cases without charge. A large number of villagers go to this centre. Generally, only the middle income strata and rich villagers go the city hospital in Chiang Mai for serious and better quality treatment. For basic treatment, they go to clinics in the city of Lamphun.

Village health volunteer and village health communicator

In the early 1980s the 'Primary Health Care' programme was initially promoted by the Ministry of Public health. Traditionally, the medical services are institute and professional oriented, not people oriented. Today the cost of treatment is rapidly increasing to the point that poor villagers will no longer be able to bear it. The primary health care scheme is seen by public health officers as a means for people's participation. In 1982, seven men and three women were trained in basic health care. These villagers then became 'village health volunteers' who sell basic tablets and medicine provided by the Ministry at a cheaper price than those charged by the village stores. Ten other 'village health communicators' were later selected by the po luang. At the same time, the 'drug co-operative' was also established by the tambon health officer and initially operated by these village health volunteers and village health communicators acting as a committee. About 50 per cent of villagers became members. Each member paid 5 baht per share. This money was used to buy more drugs for sale at a cheaper price to villagers.

At the time of my research, the drug co-operative collapsed due mainly to poor management and a small number of buyers. There were only one village health
volunteer and two village health communicators left. Their main activities were weighing the children, and attending the training course organized by the Public Health Office. Drugs were still sold but some villagers complained that drugs had expired. I think the main reason is that there was no sense of genuine participation. All activities were planned by the government officers. The mae jang's and po lieng's experiences were not counted and they were not encouraged to collaborate as either village health volunteers or communicators.

State-led Infrastructure Development in Sandee Village

Water resources

Beside heavy reliance on rain, another main water source for rice cultivation in Sandee Village is the num Mae Saan (Mae Saan canal) which links to the Faai Mae Saan (Mae Saan weir) whereby water had been shared by three villages covering approximately 2,000 rai. The indigenous water management system locally known as muang faai (people's irrigation system) or klum muang faai (people’s irrigation group) will be discussed in the section on indigenous organization. Local farmers originally constructed a bamboo weir. In 1975-76 a semi-permanent weir (of a stone filled type) was constructed to replace the bamboo weir with financial support from the sapha changwat (provincial council). Then in 1979 a permanent concrete weir was constructed to replace the stone weir with the financial support of the government through the Sukjai's sapha tambon (sub-district council). This faai could provide water only in rainy season. Due to the long period of drought during the last five years the level of water was lower than the normal lowest level of the weir even during the rainy season. Farmers had to wait and depend on late rain for rice cultivation. In 1988, and again during 1991-92, a large number of farmers could not grow rice because of inadequate water.

In response to the water crisis in rural areas, the government provided funds for such small irrigation systems. Small dams were constructed in natural gullies and canals and reservoirs were dug to conserve water. In Sandee Village one small concrete weir was constructed across the num Mae Saan with the government's
financial support and the villagers as labourers. In 1985 one government-sponsored pond was dug in the rice field of one volunteer farmer aimed at providing water for villagers' cattle in the dry season. This pond held reserved water as expected, however cattle could not directly drink water from the pond because the water level was too far below the surroundings. It became difficult for the cattle owners to fetch water for their cattle because the landowner built up the bamboo fence around the pond. On the basis of my personal observation in 1992-1993, I believe the village head supported the landowners because they were close relatives. The underlying assumption of the government policy in providing the financial support for pond digging seemed to be consistent with the needs of rural communities. However, because government authorities failed to collaborate with villagers in the process of planning and decision making, the dispute occurred.

Another example of a similar failure of the government authorities to involve villagers in the decision making process is the construction of a huge reservoir in a nearby tambon. This reservoir was constructed in the forest area with a concrete base. Under this project, trees in a large forest area were legally cut. It is believed by the committee of the klum muang faai Mae Saan and several villagers that the concrete base has blocked the underground stream that goes to faai Mae Saan. This comment was based on the noticeably decreased level of water in faai Mae Saan.

Villagers previously obtained drinking watering from some shallow wells in the village. In 1966 it was so dry during the dry season that villagers had to dig a temporary well in the Mae Saan canal. As villagers experienced the heavy drought in the dry season almost every five years, some wealthy villagers dug shallow wells for their own use and shared these with their neighbours. The drought affected most women and girls because they were responsible for searching for water for the household. During the heavy drought period, they had to walk more than two kilometres to carry forty litres of water back home. In 1979, it was reported by the Office of Accelerated Rural Development (1979:44-45), that there were ten concrete eight metre-deep wells in which the dry season water level was only around 75 cm. and seven brick eight metre-deep wells with no water. In this report the suggestion for
the Office of Accelerated Rural Development was that in Sandee Village an artesian water well should be constructed aimed at providing drinking water and a big pond should be dug aimed at providing water for buffaloes and cows as well as for rice cultivation.

Several wealthy and middle class villagers solved their problem of lack of drinking water by building 8,000 litre tanks for storing rain water. This type of tank costs about 5,000 baht. Additionally, some villagers dug their own concrete wells. An eight metre-deep well cost approximately 6,500 baht. In 1992, there were 45 shallow wells in total. It is quite clear, on the basis of personal observation, that village women from very rich and rich households experienced less suffering from lack of water than poor women.

In 1986 a bo badaan (artesian well) was dug by the Department of Public Works with a budget of 150,000 baht approved through the sapha tambon. Two 2,000 litres tanks were set up at a twenty metre height for storing water from this well aimed at increasing supply to the villagers' households. However, there was no budget left for the rest of the work. The village water committees who were elected to be responsible for the water problem could not progress the work. In 1990, this committee requested help through the local MP. They were offered water meters for the whole village while villagers were asked to pay for the water tubes and the setting. The committee further organized the meeting to discussed this issues. Most villagers agreed to accept meters, excepting some 15 households who could manage to bring water from num Mae Saan by themselves, and several wealthy villagers decide to buy the meters on their own.

Most villagers who accepted meters from this MP were criticized by other villagers for 'selling' their votes so cheaply. Most Sandee women told me that it was not the case that they sold their votes because they may not vote for this MP. They claimed that what they have got was what they pay tax for. In any case, by the time this study was undertaken there was no water from this artesian well due to the drought.
Road Improvement

Up until the 1920s, villagers in Sandee travelled to the wider society such as the city of Lamphun only on foot. After the construction of the Bangkok-Chiang Mai railway in 1921, villagers used this railway for travelling to Chiang Mai and other nearby provinces, even to Bangkok. This railway passes to the east of Sandee Village. There was a station about one kilometre from the village. This station was closed in 1975 due to the small number of passengers since the road was more convenient. In 1971 The Sukjai-Sandee dirt road was improved by grading with the gravel under the Accelerated Rural Development programme. Eventually, in 1972 there was the first rod thaan (charcoal truck, a closed pick-up truck which has a seat for passengers) which initially carried thaan (charcoal) and other produce from the village to Lamphun and Chiang Mai. This road was repaired several times especially after the rainy season both by to projects approved through the sapha tambon and by mutual co-operation among villagers in six villages. Then in 1990 an asphalt road was built to replace the gravel road.

The tambon development scheme promoted by the Kukrit Pramote government (October 1974-April 1976) aimed at decentralizing control of rural development funds and off-season employment projects. Tambon Sukjai was one of 5,023 tambon which were given sums of money to be spent according to the needs and priorities of the people as decided by tambon committees. Members were also paid out of funds. To the best of my knowledge, there is no record about how much money was provided for Sandee Village. The budget provided to Sandee Village was primarily used to repair the dirt road in the village. The village head of Sandee Village commented that this project was useful in improving the road and digging ponds, and because in the past the village hardly obtained financial help from the government. However, some other villagers made different comments. Suchit, 53 years old, a poor farmer at the time and now a landless farmer, claimed that:

Speaking of the government giving budget to our village is good. But the management is like bringing a leaking jar of water from the provincial office to our village. By the time it reaches the village, Po luang baan (the village head) will have it first, there will be nothing much left for poor villagers. Po luang baan decides every thing, we know nothing. The committee is corrupted. We were cheated. The money comes so late.
Onjan, 51 year old, bamboo weaver, was not satisfied with the project because:

I do not remember much about the project. But I knew that if I went to work, I would get pay less than men even if we did the same work, so I let my husband and my son go instead. The project was not long enough, my household could go only four days. But some households got six days. I think because they were po luang's cousins. I know it's not fair but we can do nothing.

These comments reminded me about the tambon scheme known as Krong kaan saang ngaan nai chonnabot (off-season employment project). I was about fifteen years old at the time. I remembered that it was the first time I heard villagers talking about ‘corruption’ in our village even though people (in the city of Lamphun) talked a lot about democracy and corruption. My friends at high school also discussed these issues but only among close friends because we were scared of being caught by the police. However, at the time I did not really understand: if democracy is good and the government claimed to be a democratic government, why were we not allowed to talk about corruption and why was it so easily be labelled as communists?

I see the off-season employment project as a project that provided the opportunity for those in authority (such as the village head) to take advantage of villagers and from women by paying less wages than for men. There was no sense of genuine participation or collaboration of villagers despite the project's purpose. The share or quota each household obtained as well as the wage per day were decided by the po luang although possibly some committee members were also consulted. (The change and improvement of infrastructure during the period of study, January 1992-May 1993, will be discussed in the following chapters). Another point is that, as it was a cash-oriented project there is controversy about whether the tambon 1975 project, has destroyed the traditional co-operative spirit. Kroekkriert (1975) argues that this ‘injection of cash’ project destroyed the co-operative spirit. While Pornsak and Preecha (1982) argue that it was the overall change in social and economic structure in rural areas, rather than the structure of the off-season employment project, that lead to the decline of traditional co-operation among rural people.

In the Sandee case, the traditional mutual co-operation among villagers still occurs without wage on many occasions whereas in some activities such as in rice
production, this co-operation has increasingly been replaced by wage labour. I think that this adoption of wage labour by villagers was not caused by the nature of the off-season employment project. Rather this change was assisted by the change in the rice production pattern where new technology, such as the two-wheeled tractor, was used instead of buffaloes and cows. The fast ploughing by tractor contributed to the high demand of labour for rice transplantation. Although the off-season employment project did not destroy the co-operative spirit, it did contribute to the Sandee villagers' expectation to be paid to participate in the government's project.

It is quite clear that the off-season employment project created conflict between those who obtained more and less benefits, for instance, in the cases of the village head and Suchit and Onjan. This conflict may have affected the co-operation of villagers in other village activities called for by the po luang baan. It is could be concluded that the tambon scheme, as one of the State interventions aimed at decentralizing control of rural development funds, strengthened the influence of the better-off villagers especially the po luang baan and those who had close relationships with the po luang baan. The major disadvantage of this project was the lack of collaboration of villagers in the decision making process, for instance, in deciding on equal shares for each household and equal wages for women.

In 1991 the village was provided with funds for bamboo-concrete road construction within the village, yet this road was not completed due to inadequate funds. The budget was organized through the local MP, who asked all village heads in Tambon Sukjai to submit proposal for road projects. I was told by Pitsanu, Sukjai's former village head, that he was the one who prepared proposal for Sandee village as requested by Somchai, the po luang baan. Pitsanu failed to estimate the precise length of road in Sandee Village. However, Somchai told me that because the MP had got less votes from Sandee villagers than those from Sukjai, the MP reduced the budget for Sandee Village. (The personal names used above are pseudonyms.)

I do not really know the truth. I think the issue is about information. The Sandee village head failed to negotiate for an adequate budget by providing
information about the proposal. This event should be seen as a useful lesson for the
village head to learn to accurately identify the problems.

Following the improvement of roads came various types of vehicles, motorcycles, pick-up trucks, and cars. These vehicles are the symbols of *khuam thansamai* (modernity).

*Electricity Supply*

Electricity supply to the village was first installed in 1975. Villagers had to pay 500 baht each household apart from other essential materials at the installing stage. Following the electric power came electric consumer goods such as electric fans, refrigerators, colour television, radio, tape recorders and stereo. Recently washing machines began to be used despite the long period of lack of water in the village. These consumer goods contribute to women's 'convenience.' They also became the symbol of *thansamai* (modernity) and demonstrated the villagers' wealth and economic status. Radio, television and colour television became common in the households. During my fieldwork, there was only one household that did not own television. VCRs became increasingly common. The villagers' attitude towards these facilities as 'thansamai' contributed the pressure on poor women to try to own them.

**OVERALL ASSESSMENT OF DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS IN SANDEE**

There is no doubt that the State's attempt at infrastructure development contributed to the necessary process of building the basis of economic development in many ways. However, it also clear that this infrastructure development has affected rich and poor villagers, and men and women, differently. Beside favouring the power holders and wealthier villagers, the income-generating project contributed to the penetration of capitalist ideology, the development capitalist relations in the village, and the increased dependence of villagers on wider society rather than increasing the community's and villagers' self-reliance. According to Nithi, (Sanitsuda, 1991/2) as a criterion for judging development,

Self-reliance does not mean independent isolation. It means having choices in life. It means having freedom to choose what we think suits us best at the point in time. And when the situation changes, we still have the strength to bounce
back and choose other ways to retain our self-reliance....This flexibility does not come only from accumulated experiences that add up into local wisdom and technology. It also comes from the power of self-respect.  
(Sanitsuda, 1991/2:28)

Thus, I suggest, it is necessary to question whether infrastructure development destroys or adds to local people's self-respect.

Additionally, infrastructure development in part has expanded the State's control to the village level. This has accelerated the process of capital accumulation as part of the modernization process. Thaxton (1974) points to the preference of American and Thai planners for road building:

Road building is the key to modernization and progress. It facilitates farming and marketing, increases the value of peasant land, and benefits distant, culturally insulated villages by integrating them into larger society.
(1974:262-63)

According to these planners, providing infrastructure is not only a necessary precondition for rapid economic development but also an initial step toward the integration of the rural economy into the national-capitalist economy (Chairat, 1985).

I have explored the changes in Lamphun province and Sandee Village set up by the process of infrastructure development supported by the government. While these changes have contributed to betterment of the power holders and the better-off more than poor villagers, particularly women, they have contributed to some extent to the disempowerment of women. Now I will turn to discuss about changes in social dimension in Sandee Village.

**CHANGES IN THE SOCIAL DIMENSION**

**The Wat (Temple) and Buddhism**

As in all of Thai society, Buddhist values and practices are very important in Sandee Village as they penetrate every aspect of social life. Buddhist values and practices influence villagers' beliefs and culture. Most villagers believe the fundamental Buddhist teachings which explain the place of humans in the cosmos and
the social world and provide an explanation for the operation of that world. Buddhism provides the rituals which mark points in the yearly calendrical cycle and in the life cycle of each person.

Villagers believe in the law of karma (kod hang kam). This law holds that transgressions of the natural order bring their own retribution on the individual. According to Fordham (1993), for Buddhists,

The cosmos is an arena which is ethically ordered according to the law of karma, which classifies all acts and all humans according to their position on a hierarchy of bun. Good acts are meritorious and cause people’s relative position in the hierarchy to rise, while baab (bad acts) cause people to fall in the hierarchy.

(1993:35-36)

Villagers believe in bun (merit) and tham bun (merit making). Generally, to obtain merit is to provide gifts to monks, or to perform good acts towards others. The amount of merit one possesses leads both to happiness and success in this life and to a good rebirth in future lives. The opposite of merit is baab (demerit), which consists of bad acts, for example doing harm to the others (either physically, verbally, or mentally). These teachings are believed by most villagers. It is important to note that the practice of tham bun was applied in this present study as one of tools for fund-raising. The details will be explored in the following Chapters.

The unity of Sandee village was enhanced by a wat (village temple) which is believed to have been built when the village was first settled two hundred year ago. The wat is the focus of the village. It has initially served the community as the centre of religious activities including culture, as well as occasional educational, economic and political activities. All villagers are members of the sutta (congregation) of the temple. This includes villagers from Thamai village who have shared the wat with Sandee villagers for a long time, and who built their own wat only in 1994. Traditionally, the religious leader, notably the abbot, is a natural leader who always played important roles in the everyday life of villagers from birth to death. The abbot was expected to be the centre of trust, power, and solidarity of the whole village. The relationships between wat (temple) and baan (village) thus very much relates to the religious leader's behaviour. Beside the religious activities, the wat has also been the
place for village meetings, and often information was distributed to those who attend the *takbath* (a ceremony providing rice and food) every *wan seen* (the Buddhist Sabbath day).

There were two former abbots for whom villagers had enormous respect and admiration due to their appropriate behaviour as monks and their creative activities which resulted in the improvement of the village's solidarity and infrastructure. They initiated village road repair, established the rice bank, encouraged parents to pay for further study of their children, and persuaded and helped villagers to build up solidarity and to sacrifice for the village improvement. Often, they were asked to reconcile disputes among villagers. It is important to note that there were several middle-aged villagers, both men and women including myself, who had been socialized during the period of these two former abbots (1961-1974, 1975-1982) and then became active participants in this collaborative study.

Being the abbot today one could easily become a wealthy person. This is because of the increased tendency to obtain merit by donating cash rather than labour or providing other material as in the past. On the basis of my personal observation during 1992-1993, on one occasion of *poy luang* (celebration after the construction of either building or other things in *wat*), the abbot of Sandee Village, who has now left the monkhood, gained 30,000 *baht* (US$ 1,200). He saw the construction of building and other materials in the *wat* as *khuam chareon* (prosperity) rather than the improvement of the villagers quality of life. It is interesting to note that there were a number of women who acted against this abbot by gossip about his improper behaviour such as playing lottery or owning a VCR. However, as most villagers were afraid of not having an abbot in the *wat*, there was no action against his misbehaviour.

In Sandee Village, women play important roles in supporting the monastery. Women from every *khaet* provided food every morning in turn. However, this supportive role does not contribute to the empowerment of women. They take subordinate roles. It is men who take dominant role as *kammakaan wat* (temple’s committee members). This committee dominates in making decisions on *wat* affairs,
particular those related to construction in the *wat*. As Wijeyewadene (1984) has noted “In the spiritual sphere, though *women* are expected to be active and supportive, they almost never take positions of leadership” (1984:4). As a matter of fact, as in ritual, without women society would not function, however, “it is men who seem to determine the conduct of social and religious life” (1984:4). This applies in the public sphere. In a domestic sphere, women may take much a more significant role.

**Cultural Activity in Relation to This Study**

*Pha pa ceremony*

There are several ceremonial occasions, both public and private, where people make donations to a temple. *Thod pha pa* is one universal and highly popular ceremony. The *pha pa* can take place at any time of the year before *Khao Phansa*, a three month period when monks are supposed to stay in the *wat*. Traditionally, *Thod pha pa* ceremony aimed to offer a monk clothes. Nowadays the *Thod pha pa* ceremony has evolved still further. It has now become a means of fund-raising for the *wat*. The *wat* chosen are always needy ones, and the money is mostly used for construction or repairwork. In Sandee Village, *pha pa* has been used as a tool for collective action of villagers in various purposes, for example, fund-raising, rice collecting or book collecting. In this present study, the *pha pa* ceremony was utilized by *klum maebaan* and *klum noom sao* as a tool for fund-raising.

**Kinship Relations**

Although social relations in Sandee Village have been changed in many ways, kinship relations remain very important. To understand the power relations among women and men which prevail within families, between families, both in the village and in wider society, it is important to discuss kinship. My intention is to consider the notions of kinship and reciprocal relationships and how these relationships are either reinforced or jeopardized due to changes resulting from the State-led rural development programmes and the penetration of capitalism.
Conducting research in the village of Hua Kok in Central Thailand, Kemp (1984:112) noted that in this village, kinship is an ideological charter - a set of ideas for action - for economic, family and other social processes. According to Rapp et al (1979) kinship provides the organising principles that govern recruitment to, and placement of, individuals in social groups, particularly, family and household, and obligations and responsibilities in the business of living of individual members of the group. In kinship, one thus has a field of social obligation where the individual actor is supposed to perform according to formative expectations of right and wrong irrespective of whether he or she actually likes the persons concerned, or whether fulfilment of these obligations serves perceptions of self-interest.

In Thai society relations with people classified as kin are of fundamental importance. Thai kinship is similar to that of many other indigenous Southeast Asian countries in being cognatic or bilateral. This means that it recognizes links through both male and female (Seymour Smith, 1986:24).

Kinship is significant in Sandee, it contributes to social and collective action. Among kinship groups, assistance, whether physical, economical or political, is provided. In Sandee, kinship is not an abstract theoretical concept. It is significant in most areas of life including inheritance, the organization of domestic power and authority, marriage and residence. The plan of the village illustrates the importance of kinship. In one khaet (sector) there were compounds of two to four households of villagers of the same kin. Each multi-house compound contains a stem (or parental) house and houses belonging to married children.

In Sandee, the most important category of relatives is the kindred, a network of people related by descent through either male or female kin. Outside the immediate household, the kindred are those with whom villagers have the closest relations. They are the category of persons who villagers depend upon most for support and feel they are most able to trust. It is common that the members of one's kindred are people to whom one owes the greatest respect, affection, mutual support and co-operation. It is also common that one's kindred come to help in such activities as ordination, marriage, building the house and funerals. On the occasion of celebrations, or illness,
even scandal, lost property, or other dreadful circumstance, one's elder cousins and younger relatives all come to visit and offer support.

*Patron-client relationships*

In addition to kinship, other form of social relationships, such as patron-client relationships, are important. Anan (1988), in his study on sharecropping and tenancy in northern Thailand, notes the relationships between the landlords and the tenants. He found that through patron-client relationships, the tenants can guarantee their earnings from the landlords as patrons, whereas the landlords can secure "their tenants' labour supply" under an uncertain labour situation, and can assure "a well-disciplined workforce that does not require direct supervision" which in turn allows their "extensive involvement in other activities" (1988:129-130).

In Sandee Village, one notable example of patron-client relationships is the relationship between Wiwa, the village head's daughter, and her husband, Heng, and their labourers for construction business. Wiwa ensures her labourers have jobs and income. The 34 labourers, who are her relatives and non-relative, can provide her with their skill and experience on construction works. To keep these skilful labourers for her business in a situation of high demand for construction labourers within Lamphun and the provinces nearby, Wiwa provided the labours their wage in advance. When Wiwa nominated herself as candidate of the village head in 1993, most labourers, if not all, voted for her. If they were not her employee and her relatives, they could have voted for other candidates.

The patron-client relationships have also served in part to interrupt the development of opposing social groups. What I emphasize here is the important of both kinship and patron-client ties to economic interdependence both in the village and the wider society. In Sandee Village, there are notions that set khon thook (the poor) against khon rouy (the rich). Similarly, there are also notions that set the chao baan (villager) against the khon nai wieng or muang (non-villager). Kinship and patron-client ties link people across these opposing groups and work against them becoming fundamental divisions.
Modernization and Kinship

Changes at the village level accelerated by the modernization process have contributed to the decline of kinship relationships. One example is evident in Anan's studies on the development of commercialized agriculture in northern Thailand from 1900-81. Due to increased land prices, as a result of the higher returns of triple cropping and increasing demand for land by wealthier farmers,

Small landowners have redoubled their efforts to hang on to their holdings; but the reduced incidence of land transfers in domestic groups suggests that kin ties are playing a diminishing role in resisting the process of land concentration.

(Anan:1988:25)

In Sandee, the traditional reciprocal mutual help among kin groups in rice production locally known as ao wun has declined due to the increased demand of waged-labour as a result of the adoption of the 'modern' pattern of rice production. More details will be discussed.

Women and Kinship

Peasant women play an important role in the household which is rooted in kinship, marriage and familial organization and in family ideology. While the household forms the grid for a major part of women's activities and interpersonal relations, various other facets of kinship provide necessary cultural and social structural contexts (Palriwala, 1990:17). To examine the power relations between men and women in the household and community, it is necessary to understand the kinship system. Here I focus on the kinship system found in Sandee Village in terms of marriage, inheritance and residence which relate to the status and role of women.

Family and Marriage

There is an expectation for all villagers, both men and women, young and old, to marry when they reach adulthood even those men who had been in monkhood for a long time. Of Sandee villagers aged over 35 still unmarried there were four men and five women. Some of them are disabled. Among these villagers, men over 35 years old tend to have more chance to marry than women aged 30 years old, as women are
often expected to marry older men. The common practice was that young men would join the wat, then leave either as novice or as monk, following by getting married. Girls, after finishing school then get married.

**Women and Residence after Marriage**

It has been reported elsewhere (Kemp, 1970; Potter, 1976:152-158; Wijeyewardene, 1967: 69; Davis, 1984:52-53) that throughout rural Thailand there was a statistical tendency towards uxorilocal residence (that is, newly married couples spend an initial period of residence in the parental home of the wife). Unlike among the Siamese which this pattern was described as an ideal (Kaufman, 1960:29 and Burr, 1972:187) among the Northern Thai, initial uxorilocality is a rule as well as norm.

In Sandee, a married woman who has unmarried sisters will move with her husband and children into a separate house when the next sister marries. If a wife has no unmarried sisters, she and her husband will in all likelihood remain in her parental home. In 1992-1993 there were 32 households in which the youngest daughter and her husband live in her parental house against only 17 households that the last son and his family live in his parental house. The initial period of uxorilocal residence appeared to be quite mandatory whether for a short (three days) or the long (some years) period. The shorter period of uxorilocal residence may be exceptional.

For example, Kate, a 32 years old widowed woman moved out of her parent's house and lived with her mother-in-law after marrying and spending the first three days in her parents house, because her mother-in-law had only one child. Another reason was that her own parental huean (house) could not afford to be an extended family because at that time there two other daughters and three sons lived with her parents. This reflects the decline of the large household. Commonly in the past, several married daughters could live with their parents.

Another case, Maleewun, 39 years old, moved out to her husband's house in another village after spending three days in uxorilocal residence. There was also the case of Ruamporn, 24 year old, who had been worked in garment factory in Bangkok
for six years. After marrying and staying with her parents for four days, she left to start a nuclear family in Bangkok. These exceptions suggested that the norm of uxorilocal residence which often contributes to the bride's advantage may be waived depending on the circumstances. The exceptional circumstances that women moving out from their parental home, the disappearance of large households and the increasing numbers of nuclear families could indicate that the norm may be gradually changing. These cases suggest that the major cause was the change in the economic system.

Traditionally, in Sandee, marriages were endogamous both within kindred and within the village. This practice has, to a great extent, declined in part as a result of socio-economic changes in wider society and within the village. As a result of industrialization, for example, villagers' access to employment beyond the village level has contributed to the general trend towards the free choice of spouse. This resulted in increased village exogamy. From February 1992 until April 1993, there were eleven marriages in Sandee. There was only one couple in which before husband and wife were Sandee villagers, yet, even then, they were from different kin groups. Another man married with a wife who came from another province. Among the nine girls married to outsiders who were not from the same kin group, six men were from the other tambon but the same district, one man was from another district, and two men were from other provinces. Among these eleven married couples, nine couples work at the same place by the time of courtship. It would be safe to state that the decline of village endogamy and the increase of village exogamy, is encouraged by access to employment in wider societies.

According to my experiences since my childhood, in the past there were more extended families than nuclear families. In April 1992, it was found that there were 154 nuclear families and 62 extended families. The extent of uxorilocal residence in Sandee suggests the majority of women continue to reside alongside other members of their familial kinship group. With this situation, the newly married man is a stranger even though related by kin ties, whereas a woman is in familiar surroundings, in an environment in which she has been brought up. In this respect, the woman's advantage
and power could be exercised more effectively because she knows the personality or character of other household members. Tarr (1985:313) notes that "What knowledge a young woman has acquired over time about other members of her household and kinship members can be used to her advantage."

Uxorilocal residence appeared to benefit women when there was conflict and dispute between spouses. An example is a dispute between Lalita and her husband after the pha pa activity. When Lalita was publicly beaten by her husband, it was her parents her kin around her house who reconciled and supported her. Her husband was blamed and threatened by her father with punishment if he acted violently towards Lalita. As Lalita confidently said:

I am so lucky that I stay with my parents and alongside relatives. If I still lived in my husband's homeplace, I would have nobody to protect me. I feel much more safe here. I do not think my husband would dare to beat me again.

In a system like Lalita's family, the wife is in an important position because her husband's status in the family is conferred by her. The wife has the task of mediating between her husband and her father. As noted by Potter (1977:101) "the effect of this is to give a woman an important voice in the management of family life, a position of power which comes from her place in the structure of the family." In this aspect, the specific kind of structure has the effect of increasing the importance of women, even though formal authority is vested in men.

This is different from the case of Nipa who moved from Phrae province, five hours by bus from Lamphun, fifteen years ago. In 1992 she found out that her husband had an affair with a woman in nearby village. They had a serious quarrel and she was beaten. Instead of obtaining support from her mother and sister in law, Nipa was blamed for provoking the dispute, so for them she deserved the beating. I believe that if she stayed with her parents or close to her relatives, the comments of her husband's kin would have been different. This is not simply a reflection of the typical relationship between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law. It suggests the disadvantage of woman due to patrilocality. As Nipa claims:
It is very unfortunate and difficult to live far from my parents. There is no guarantee that my husband will not beat me again. I have no protector. Every time we have dispute, it is me who is blamed even though it was his fault.

*Women and Inheritance*

Although a basic principle of the inheritance system in northern Thailand is that all children have equal inheritance rights, this principle may be overridden by the principle which accords preferential treatment to children who have been especially dutiful and helpful. Preferential treatment usually takes the form of the inheritance of the parental house by the particular child who resides continuously with and cares for the parents in their old age (Cohen, 1984:296). There is much evidence which suggests that inheritance laws, now and at least traditionally, have favoured women (Hale, 1984:332). In Thailand, particularly the North, there is a long standing pattern that women are given preferential treatment in the inheritance of rice land (Hale, 1984; Keyes, 1975). Keyes maintains of Theravada Buddhists in Southeast Asia, "women in most rural communities provides the continuity of the domestic group and control the transmission of land" (1977:161).

Normally, brothers would sell their share of the residential land to a sister or sisters. The first son and his wife are expected to help their parents with cultivation until his younger sister or brother marry, then he and his family will move into another house which may be built within the parental compound. Gradually, the young couples would move out, leaving the parental house and compound in the hands of the daughter or the son (if the parent has no daughter). Having access to inheritance means women had advantages over men in the control of property which led to domestic power and economic power. The dominance of northern women in domestic financial decision making, especially in comparison with the more subservient position of women in the central region of Thailand, is also consistently reported (Davis, 1984).

Anan (1988) investigated sharecropping, tenancy, and kinship in Ban San Pong, Chiang Mai in 1984. He found that several large landowners "transferred
ownership of their rice-land to their offspring by registering the land in the names of the latter". The children in turn make a "nominal payment (kha hua)" to their parents. According to Anan, the kha hua for the main crops ranges from a token amount to as much as half the main season crop. "This transmission when both parents are alive are directly contrary to past practice, in which all children can inherit land (usually equally) only after the death of both parents" (1988:124). Anan argues that:

This development also indicates an attempt by parents to alleviate dissension among their children, a phenomenon which has increased considerably as a result of the growing profits from intensive commercial production.

(1988:124)

Anan also found that children who are still living within the parental household separate financially in the cultivation of cash crops. The "intensive commercial production of cash crops allows children to prepare for separation from the parental household earlier than in the past, and may lead to increasingly commercial relationships between parents and offspring" (1988:128).

In Sandee, as in other northern Thai communities, female dominance in domestic affairs has been jeopardized by State intervention in term of introduction of "Siamese law which gives husbands legal authority over their wives" (Davis, 1984:54), and by the gradual decline of matrilineal ties which are supported by the traditional residence pattern and the spirit cult. Traditionally, according to Cohen (1984), the transmission of residential property through women is closely connected with the cult of domestic spirits. For ritual purposes, people are organized into descent groups which are matrilineal (a person is a member of his or her mother’s group), but not necessary of his or her father's group. In Sandee, the rites for matrilineal cults have declined, during 1992-93 there was only one occasion of ritual activity of matrilineal cults. One reason for the decline of the important of matriliny in northern Thailand, as argued by Davis (1984:55), is the "introduction of patronymic surnames" by the government in 1913 ("every Thai citizen must have a surname, and surnames are inherited from the father"). This was also applied in Sandee Village. Accordingly, matrilineality was reinforced only by occasional ritual performances which were not
integrated in modern economics, for rice production and employment or in modern politics and other domains of social activity.

**INDIGENOUS PRACTICES AND GROUPS IN SANDEE VILLAGE**

I now turn to the discussion of indigenous practices and groups in Sandee. This section focuses on why these practices have declined and how.

**Traditional Co-operation and Reciprocity**

Traditionally, the northern rural communities have been fairly cohesive entities with strong cultural roots, independent community organisation and respected natural leaders. Reciprocity in Sandee Village is linked closely to kinship relationships. The morality of kinship placed emphasis on balanced reciprocity in the past, particularly in rice production, and emphasizes generalized reciprocity in the present day. The notion of generalized reciprocity is incorporated into *khor pai juay*, which literally means 'asking for help' such as to assist with pulling down house, or cooking food and washing dishes in such activities as ordinations, marriages, or funerals. The notion of balanced reciprocity is incorporated into *ao wun* which means 'the exchange of labour'. In this particular sense, this exchange of labour has initially been utilized during the cycle of rice production whether transplanting or harvesting. However, as the *ao wun* was substantially replaced by waged-labour, the *ao wun* now refers to the exchange of labour in family's affairs. Unlike the *ao wun* in rice transplanting and harvesting, where the exact amount of assistance is counted by a number of working days, *ao wun* in family affairs is counted roughly by a number of occasions. More often, women were keen to recognize who fails to provide assistance.

The assistance may come from kindred, neighbours or friends within or outside the village. One would reasonably expect to give exactly the same amount of assistance in turn otherwise the relations may lead to informal sanctions such as gossip or ceasing to provide assistance. Both notions of the reciprocal relations are important among villagers in Sandee. It is customary that the villagers who assist to work in *khor pai juay* or *ao wun* will be provided food, drink and material needs by the host. In turn, the assisting villagers would be sensitive to the socio-economic
circumstances of the host. It became common that the host would give 'cash' to assisting villagers but the amount of money would normally be less than the current wage.

During 1992-1993, only a few ao wun took place in rice harvesting, and none in transplanting due to the need to quickly finish this task according to late rain. The wage labourers were in high demand in transplanting as the stage of ploughing could be finished in one to two days according to the effective work by the tractor. Obviously, the balanced reciprocity (ao wun) in rice production has been threatened by the monetarised economy through the growth of wage labour. This change was encouraged by the modern pattern of rice production and in the name of a new form of rationality, increased productivity. Nowadays, the decline of the institutional form of ao wun in family and village affairs is also threatened by the increased demands for men to work as construction workers and in other forms of labour, as well as for women to work as factory workers.

As the ao wun in the rice cycle has rapidly declined. The idiom ao mue then became widely used and was used interchangeably with the idiom khor pai juay in tasks other than rice cultivation. Accordingly these idioms were used in the notion of generalized reciprocity which is not necessarily kinship based, and which does not require that the host should reciprocate at some time soon. The hosts are expected to help the assisting villagers whenever they organize activities under their names as host. It is this notion of reciprocity that is widely used in Sandee.

**Indigenous Klum**

In Sandee Village, the concept of klum (group) refers to group involved in collective reciprocal help, rather than the alien government-sponsored groups. Indigenous groups such as klum suttha or klum noom sao include women and men, or girls and boys as members. In the village members of these groups collaborate in activities. Reciprocal help is the norm. These groups thus serve the needs and interests of the group's members, rather than serving outsiders. This is sharp contrast with those groups established by government officials. The protest by the majority of villagers
made against the village head in 1990 is an example of collective bargaining with the State authorities. Another example was the decision made by the women's group in refusing cash or material resources offered by the local MP, as has suggested by the village head who had close connection with that MP. The indigenous *klum* developed based on the notion of generalized reciprocity and include the following traditional community groups.

*Klum muang faai* (people's irrigation group)

*Klum muang faai* in northern Thailand refers to a people's irrigation group. *Klum muang faai* is typically developed communally by groups of farmers. The fundamental aim is to allocate water for participating members, through small-scale weirs. This is in contrast to the national irrigation which is managed by the government and its officials and involves construction of permanent weirs and irrigational canals. In the northern region alone, there are approximately 4,000 *muang faai* providing irrigation for over five million *rai* (800,000 hectares) (Phornthip et al, 1994:40). Considering the people's participation, an important point I would like to emphasize here is a sharp distinction in water management by the State and local communities. Unlike the State-sponsored concrete weirs for which most construction and management work (if not all) is done by responsible State agencies the *muang faai* system exists due primarily to the community needs. According to Phornthip et al, the *muang faai* system has existed for more than 700 years. As the system results from the efforts of local communities to construct and adjust, the *muang faai* system, even though it is threatened by the State-sponsored weirs, "remains optimally effective and suited to changing local social needs and the local ecosystem" (Chatchawan and Lohmann, 1994:42).

The *muang faai* (weir) were constructed from local materials and technology which harmonizes with the local environment. The management of *muang faai* was developed based on long observation of the natural flow of the river and local environmental conditions over long periods. Thus it is highly efficient in terms of contributing water to all farm lands (excepting the hilly areas). As it is a water-flow weir, *muang faai* does not create any of the environmental problems such as flooded
forest areas and salination normally caused by large-scale reservoirs and large dam construction.

The farmers in Sandee Village were members of Klum Muang Faai Mae Saan which includes farmers from four other villages. However, in 1993, farmers from one village in which a large area of rice land was sold to the garment factory and resort owners, were no longer members. The farmers' contribution to klum muang faai involved digging canals, being in charge of water distribution, repair and improvement of weir structures, dredging and cleaning canals as well as other related works. Co-operation has been found within certain benefit groups. The labour required from each household (for construction and maintenance) is in proportion to each household's population and the size of land holding. Each group has a kae faai or kae muang who is elected by the group members to be the leader of the group and the head of the irrigation committees or weir committees. Most importantly, the muang faai organization is socially just. Each member of its system is expected to comply with the rules set up to ensure that all members will have relative equal rights to and responsibility for the water. Agreements on rights, rule, regulations or resolutions are made through meetings and consultation of concerned parties. Meeting and voting played a natural part in these farmers' way of dealing with problems or the needs for adjustments to the rules. In the case of klum muang faai Mae Saan, villagers were aware that it was their duty to get together and share experiences and skills in collaboratively searching for alternatives for their communities. Although conflicts took place from time to time, with the participation in decision making of the appointed village head, Kae faai, Kae muang and otheri members the conflicts were resolved. As suggested by Vitoon (1992:28), "the key to success of muang faai system is its socially-binding rules whereby stiff legal enforcement is not needed for violators of the rules." The most striking characteristic of klum muang faai is the genuine participation, which I will refer to as 'collaboration,' of the members in the whole process of group management. Each member has an equal opportunity to vote whenever the group needs. In fact, "it is a grassroots democratic principle neatly put into practice" (Uraiwan, 1993:5).
With relation to the crisis of natural resources, Nithi (1994:29) suggests that there are criteria instrumental in good indigenous management of natural resources: efficiency, maximum benefit, sustainability, and majority's access to natural resources. *Muang faai* is a good example of an indigenous water system which "is not just a technical method of blocking or raising water levels and releasing it through various villagers and ending up in paddy fields." But analytically, the system is based on the concept of naturally supplying water to users in as wide as possible.

*Klum chaapanakit* (funeral group)

The *Klum chaapanakit* have developed to be responsible for organising funeral ceremonies. Funerals are community affairs, with the whole community sharing the costs. This type of group was initially operated among kin groups within each village. Later the members included all villagers in the whole village. Now the *klum chaapanakit* has 3,448 members in four villages. If one member died, the members need to pay 7 baht towards the costs. The money collectors who have the status as member are except from this charge. The amount of 24,136 baht (in 1992) was ready to pay to the host of a funeral on the second day after the death. All members of the group are provided financial guarantee for the funeral ceremony.

*Klum sutthaa* (congregation group)

The *Klum sutthaa* was originally organised for the *wat*’s affairs. Villagers who share the same *wat* for organizing religious activities are members of the same congregation. *Klum sutthaa* of *Wat* Sandee are expected to be the representative of the *wat* to join the religious activities in other *wat* in the same network. The participation, either in terms of labour or cash provided by villagers, would be the responsibility of by villagers in each *khaet* (sector) in turn.

It is important to note that the term 'sutthaa' does not imply gender. Whenever the meeting is called for either by the village head or the abbot, and the term is used, both men and women participate. Recently, the term ‘*muanaa* krobkrud’ has been more frequently used by the government officers at tambon level and then the village head. It refers to only ‘men’, and the minority female heads of household. This
contributes to a decrease in women's opportunities to participate in village management. The female heads of household were reluctant to join meetings because they felt uncomfortable among male participants.

*Kammakaan wat* (temple’s committee)

*Kammakaan wat* is a group composed of the abbot, as the chairman, and another five villagers as vice chairman and committee members. In Sandee Village, no woman was ever included in the committee. It is the duty of the *wat* to maintain the local monastery, with its temple building, monks' quarters and meeting halls, in good condition. The committee's responsibilities for the *wat* cover raising funds and administering budgets for temple development in consultation with monks in residence. The *Kammakaan wat* is an example of collective involvement in ideological activities "for administration of what is the villagers' principal ideological institution" (Hirsch, 1990:163).

*Klum noom sao* (indigenous youth group)

The *Klum noom sao* is normally a group of boys and girls aged about fifteen and others, including those who are not married, who informally form into a group for the purpose of dealing with problems. *Klum noom sao* normally have both male and female leaders. All teenage boys and girls are automatically members of the *klum*. After marriage, girls automatically became the members of *klum mae baan*. The *Klum noom sao* in Sandee Village has played an active role in village and *wat* activities. In the past, the activities of *klum noom sao* were to a large extent linked to the *wat*’s activities. Thus the members' ideas and their activities were often influenced by the abbot. For example, the child care centre was established as a result of collaboration between the previous abbot and the *klum noom sao* with the support of university students in 1982. I was in Sandee Village and experienced working with *klum noom sao*, in the period 1976-83. I noticed that the leadership of both male and female leaders and the abbot largely contributed to the success of the *klum*. Another point is that almost all activities were based on the common needs of members at the point in time. Informal discussion occurred where all members were encouraged by the
implicit leader (the abbot) to voice their opinions. There was sense of full participation among members.

All these indigenous groups had democratically chosen leaders. Most members actively and fully participated in groups and organizations they joined because, being members, they gained benefits that suited their way of life. It is important to note that the villagers now are to some extent losing their value of reciprocity. I would argue that the major factor leading to this change is that these indigenous groups were replaced by modern government sponsored groups and organizations during the process of State legitimization, since early 1970s.

The existence of these indigenous groups in the past and the present proves that villagers have their own culture and traditional ways of doing things that benefit them most. They developed their own way of making decisions, working in groups, changing the situation for the better. These indigenous groups at the village level have been undermined by the State interventions under the name of 'modernization and development', although participation is seen as a tool to get villagers involved in the government-sponsored programmes. However, within the latter, there is no sense of genuine participation of villagers because villagers are not decision makers of the development process.

These indigenous groups could be considered as the embodiment of local wisdom which has been practised for centuries in northern Thailand. As Nithi points out, the villagers' knowledge and knowledge system are different from the city people. Unlike the creativity of the city people which could "emerge out of the blue", these practices "are not something that flashed through people's mind overnight". For villagers, things are interrelated. Their knowledge "enables them to do things in a well-rounded manner" (1994:29).

**Government-Sponsored Groups**

I now turn to the discussion of the government-sponsored groups present in Sandee Village as result of government intervention. Before discussion about groups
and organizations at the village level, it will be useful to discuss the role of *sapha tambon* (sub-district council) because in modern rural development framework the village community has been integrated into the local administrative system through *sapha tambon*.

*Sapha tambon (tambon council)*

Historically, in Thailand the *sapha tambon* became a local-level institution in 1956 promoted by Marshal Phiboonsongkram's government. It superficially aimed to enhance local participation in decision-making that affected community affairs. The *sapha tambon* consists of (i) the *tambon* executive committee, and (ii) a legislative body which consists of two members from each village elected by the villagers or appointed by the district officer. In Tambon Sukjai the *sapha tambon* committee was first established in 1972, composed of the *kamnun* (*tambon* head) as chairman, all village heads, the tambon doctor, and one elected representative from each village. A Deputy Officer or a local *phattanakorn* (community development worker) serves as advisor to the *sapha tambon* committee, with primary responsibility over financial matters. A local school teacher serves as the *sapha tambon*'s permanent secretary. In practice, the advisor and secretary were formally selected by the district officer and appointed by the provincial governor. The assumption underlying the personnel and organizational changes in 1972 was directed at making the *tambon* more independent and capable of implementing a rural development programme. Duties of the committee include administering *tambon* affairs, considering projects, providing cooperation and co-ordinating projects, publicizing government activities, performing duties due to the Local Administration Act 1914, and other functions assigned by the government. However, the *tambon* budget under the Rural Development Structure has to be formally approved by the district development committee (DDC), then the provincial development committee PDC) (Figure 6.1 and 6.2). This obviously limits the operational authority and flexibility of *tambon* government.

Chaichana (1990, 1993) argues that instead of becoming a means to bring about grassroots democracy, the *sapha tambon* structurally becomes the government's instrument in penetrating and controlling the local level since the political rights,
CSC = Civil Service Commission  
BOB = Bureau of Budget  
NESDB = National Economic and Social Development Board  
NRDC = National Rural Development Committee  
NRDCC = National Rural Development Coordination Center

Figure 6.1 Local Administration Structure in Thailand  
Source: National Economic and Social Development Board Document (1985)
Note: NRDC = National Rural Development Committee
NESDB = National Economic and Social Development Board
PDC = Provincial Development Committee
PDS = Provincial Development Scheme
DDC = District Development Committee
ST = Sapha Tambon
VDC = Village Development Committee
CCDSV = Central Committee of the Development and Self-defence Village
RDOS = Rural Development Operational Support

Figure 6.2 Local Administration and Rural Development Structures in Thailand
Source: National Economic and Social Development Board Document (1985)
obligations, and duties of the formal local leaders, notably the kamnan (sub-district head) and the po luang baan (village head) were strongly tied to the central bureaucracy (1993:33-4). According to Chaichana, "[The] patterns of decision-making are, in fact, embedded in structures which conduct towards a 'top-down' approach to local community organization in which civil servants play an important role" (1990:139). The close involvement of the government officials in the sapha tambon can be considered as a constraint to its 'autonomy'. Another constraint to the sapha tambon's independence is the influence of the local elites. In tambon Sukjai, the local leaders, whether the kamnan or the po luang baan have high influence over most (if not all) decisions made at the sapha tambon because they are either elites themselves or have close connection with the powerful local elites and the bureaucratic elites. During my fieldwork in Sandee Village (January 1992-May 1993), the wealthiest po luang baan who owns a real estate company, won a bid for road construction programmes. The son in law of one village head also won a bid for artesian well and water tower construction.

The most important point, for me, is that in tambon Sukjai, no rural women have become members of the sapha tambon committee. The government's women-oriented activities were normally imposed by the kaset tambon and the phattanakorn through the sapha tambon. Through the sapha tambon channel, women's needs and interests were less likely to be achieved because the decision making process was dominated by men. Collaboration with the klum maebaan (women's group) in Sandee suggested that women could enhance their capacity necessary for the effective village management through collective action in deciding whether they will reject or accept the imposed programmes.

State Concepts of Klum

During the late 1970s, the State began to extend its control and legitimacy through State-led rural development projects administered by the officers of the principal ministries at local levels. This was done through the sapha tambon which had always been claimed by the State to be an institution of grass-roots democracy. The government development workers concentrate on the formal establishment of
groups at the village level. The common stated objective of the government-sponsored groups is to encourage self-help, using the number of groups formed and their activities as indicators of programme success. It appears that each department at the tambon level established its own groups at the village level in order to meet budgetary targets and for reasons of promotion. It could be concluded that the function of the government-sponsored groups is to give what Hirsch (1990:162) called a 'forum' for access to the village population. The State-sponsored groups and organizations established in Sandee village include Klum maebaan kasettrakorn (women farmer's group) and klum satri (women's group)

Klum maebaan kasettrakorn was the form of co-operation that was supposed to increase rural women's income. In Sandee Village, Klum maebaan kasettrakorn was established by a district agricultural officer in 1979 under the Department of Agricultural Extension. This klum provided women a forum for training programmes in domestic skills and hygiene and in handicrafts such as flower making.

Then klum satri initiated by the phattanakorn (community development worker) under the Community Development Department (CDD) is another form of co-operation that is supposed to increase women's control over resources. It aimed to promote women's role and activities in social and economic development at the village level. The saving scheme and raankha (grocery shop) were established by the CDD as a strategy for getting people to participate in the programmes designed by CDD. It was the klum satri which was supposed to establish saving groups and raankha. The amount of 2,000 baht was provided for the first investment. The committee members of the saving group were elected by the phattanakorn and the members. The member were asked to pay 30 baht per share every month. The group operated for only three months because the committee members provided loans for those villagers whom they thought could repay on time. There were some members who did not pay for their share in time. Then the group collapsed. The grocery shop also stopped because both groups had the same members. According to Phitak, the district community development officer (in 1993), the purpose of the saving group was to get people working voluntarily together, encouraging them to work for the suanruam (i.e., for the village as a whole). The money, thus, is not as significant as
the harmony of the *klum*. Yet when it came to practice, the saving group became another event that the State authority organized at the village level through the forum of *klum satri*.

The 'building up the best' idea under the 'village contest' scheme, which is supposed to enhance villagers' participation, was enforced through the *klum satri* and the village development committee (abbreviation: VDC). Women in particular and villagers in general were told to *phattana* (develop) themselves and the village by cleaning the houses, building toilets, making fences, naming *khaet* (sectors); roads and branch-roads and fixing name plaques. In order to eradicate the poverty, women were urged to become members of formal groups promoted by the government so they would be provided skills in food and flower making. However, as women had to pay for materials sometimes, the number of women who attended the activities declined. On many occasions when government development workers came in the village, women were expected to provide food and do cleaning. Occasionally, women were asked by the *phattanakorn* via the president of the groups to wear uniforms and join the parade in the city of Lamphun.

Although these government-sponsored *klum* provided women with more access to the local government officials than in the past, this access did not necessary empower women. The underlying idea was to keep women as providers of domestic services, instead of producers or farmers. The establishment of women's groups, either as *klum maebaan kasettrakorn* or *klum satri*, reflects the mainstream top-down approach which is dominated by government development workers and better-off members and lacks collaboration. In fact these *klum* were used by the State authorities to organize events at the village level, and as a tool to promote a penetration of capitalist ideology (saving cash activity under the name ' *klum*'). There was no sense of genuine participation. The development officials were more concerned with the 'outputs', for instance, how many women participated in the programmes, and how many activities were implemented, rather than the outcome or impact of the programmes. Theoretically, the rhetoric of women-oriented activities under 'rural development' is to enhance the control by women over resources within the village
and wider society. Practically, women themselves are controlled by outsiders, notably the State officials. As their indigenous groups and ways of working in groups are replaced by the 'modern' development forms and structures, women lose control over the community.

It is important to note that the failure of klum maebaan kasettrakorn and klum satri was due, in part, to the fact that benefits served only a small number of dominant women such as the president, the treasurer, and those who were in position to control the decision making process. Like the village head, who has dominated the village development committee, these dominant women became a tool of the local officials in enforcing the idea of participation as defined by them. These groups were also used as tools for the State officials to open up the village community. These process of opening up the village was made possible through formal leaders, notably the village head, the presidents of klum maebaan kasettrakorn as well as klum satri, and other powerful committee members. This process involved the control of women in particular, and villagers in general, by the State officials through these 'leaders'. Thus these leaders became the instrument of the State officials in expanding the State's control over the village level. The internal village power relations changed in such a way that the better-off men and women were placed in a position where they controlled resources due to their better access to these resources. Through this process, the whole community, however, did not develop self-reliance. Instead the community increasingly depended on outsiders and external forces. The crucial point is that ignorance of women in Sandee Village about the government-sponsored programmes reflected their resistance to hegemonic programmes imposed by State officials.

Village Development Committee (VDC)

The Village Development Committee (VDC) was formed by the village head for administrative and development purposes under the supervision of the phattanakorn (Figure 6.1). Theoretically, the main function is planning and implementing development activities related to the problems of the village. Originally, there was no formal women committee members in this committee. Only in May
Figure 6.3 “Top-down” Village Administration
1993, were women members who were supposed to be responsible for women's activities included in this committee. The establishment of women committee members in the VDC of Sandee Village will be discussed in Chapter 7. Village development projects are needed to submit to the sapha tambon for the approval by the sapha tambon Committee. Then the selected projects will be submitted to the amphoe (district) development Committee, then to the changwat (province) development Committee for the final approval at the provincial level. As there was no women on the committee, women's problems were hardly taken into account. Throughout the past twenty years, in Sandee, the VDC were supervised by the phattanakorn to develop the village by improving roads and bringing in electricity and water supply.

*Klum Yaowachon (formal youth group) and
Klum Yuwakasettrakorn (young farmer group)*

The Klum yaowachon of tampbon Sukjai was first formed by the phattanakorn in 1980. Girls were encouraged to join the training courses like dress making, hair dressing, cooking, and flower making while the boys were taught about leadership and group management. The klum yuwa kasettrakorn was also promoted by the kaset tambon. The same group of boys and girls in Sandee Village were urged to get together as a group in order to implement the agriculture-oriented programmes provided by the kaset tambon. As there were two klum in the village, several young people became the members of both groups. Unlike, the klum room sao's way of working which was based on facing problems, in these groups the members were told what to do and when they have to do it by outsiders. Similarly to other government-sponsored groups, there was no sense of full participation. Later the young refused to join the group's activities.

*Klum Kasettrakorn (farmer group)*

The Tambon Sukjai Rice Farmer Group was established in 1970 under the supervision of the kaset tambon. Short training courses were organized for the members. In these courses, modern agricultural technologies such as high yield
varieties of rice, fertilizers, pesticides, and two-wheel tractor were promoted in order to improve rice production. This group became members of the Amphoe Muang Agricultural Co-operatives. To do so, the members were provided agricultural loans with low interest compared to those of private Banks. In Sandee Village, among 36 male members, 15 villagers were still indebted to this co-operative in 1992. Three of them sold a piece of their rice land partly in order to pay for the debt. Through this group, farmers were supported to improve the production process, however, they did not enhance their capacity in marketing. They could never escape from the exploitation relationships with the middlemen.

This is no doubt that these government-sponsored groups provided villagers knowledge and innovations based on the objectives of each group. However, they experienced the similar thing, that is they were asked to joined the activities and told what to do by the government officers who established the groups and organized group activities. The projects and the activities were designed without the collaboration of villagers. The promotion of agricultural groups by separating men, women, and youth did not suit the way of working of rural villagers. These programmes share the same character, i.e. the lack of the sense of full participation of rural women.

The appearance of the women’s group contributed to the disadvantage of women in Sandee Village because only men had access to the monetarized sector through the farmer group while women were encouraged to concentrate on the non-monetarized activities. The lack of access to outside resources necessary to change the pattern of production has disempowered women.

What is 'Development'? - Villagers' Perspectives

In the eyes of villagers, roads, electricity, water supply and concrete weirs are what they view as 'development'. As discussed earlier, there was an indigenous way of collaboration among villagers within the village and within the tambon in attempts to make the village better. Villagers would collaborate to improve the situation at a particular point in time. Later when the State intervention reached the village, with the top-down approach where villagers are 'coached' by the State authorities, the
indigenous way of collaboration gradually declined. Nevertheless, it is clear that none of the government-sponsored programmes, notably road, electricity, water supply, were accomplished without local help either in cash or labour.

When 'progress' came under the name of 'development' villagers to a large extent lost their control over local natural resources through the monetized economy and the State's accumulation process. With depletion of resources, Nithi (Bangkok Post, 11 December 1991), argues that the increased capital-intensive farming has contributed to accelerate and force farmers out of their farms. The small farmers cannot adjust themselves to those trends, which have resulted in influx of farm labourers, and more inequality in rural areas. Comparing the relative autonomy of villagers forty years ago with their situation now, villagers now depend heavily on wider society. This circumstance could be explained by the dependency theory developed by Andre Gunder Frank (1969) who suggested that in most kinds of social change rural people tend to increase their dependency on outside institutions and forces. In other words, the impoverished and powerless rural poor in rural areas are exploited for the benefit of the urban capitalists.

The point I have tried to make here is the distinction between the nature of indigenous and government-sponsored groups and institutions by using the case of Sandee Village. Under the WID approach, the Thai government appeared to promote income-generating activities in order to raise rural women's status. The policy largely failed, due mainly to the 'top-down' nature of the government administration which substantially contributes to the absence of women's collaboration in the decision making process. This approach is greatly different from those of indigenous groups where, even though subordinate to men, women are active decision makers through traditional practices of kinship relationships, residence after marriage, reciprocity and so on. The imposition of the State-led WID programmes facilitated the disempowerment of rural women.

**CHANGES IN THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION**

I now turn to the discussion of economic changes during the past thirty years that affected poor women in Sandee Village.
Change in Rice Production

In the past, every household in Sandee Village had grown rice for its own consumption. Rice production was a very sustainable activity both in term of production and socially. Buffaloes and cows were raised for farm work, a source of dung as fertilizer, and as a means of capital accumulation in the household. Poultry and pigs were kept for household food and exchange for other necessary things while various types of vegetables were planted for food. Other sorts of food and trees for making firewood and charcoal, garden fences and house construction could be gained from the village forest.

Villagers were governed and protected by their own institutions, notably family and the kinship system. Agricultural production was effectively conducted by the means of ao mue or ao wun (reciprocal labour help) aimed for their own consumption. Villagers were less likely to think about competition. This, therefore, maintained unity and did less harm to the environment. This is not saying that in the past the rural village was free from suffering and exploitation. Indeed there was a cultural repression of women, and villagers were controlled by the state power structures. Yet, as noted by Suluk (1990:167, italics mine), "the relationship between the State and the peasantry in the past was of a special nature in that the state dealt with village communities as a whole rather than with individuals or families such as the village head or the head of the household like what happened in the present". Village communities maintained their own independence in carrying out their production and in dealing with their own problems.

In rice production, men and women worked alongside each other even though men tended to plough, harrow and thresh while women focused on transplanting and harvesting, but they shared important roles in the decision making process. In Sandee Village, women managed the reciprocity of labour exchange called ao wun which was an important source of labour. This contributed to the control of women in household production.
Then in the early 1970s the 'modern' pattern of rice production was promoted by the government through its agents at the tambon level. Villagers utilized new varieties of rice, fertilizer, and pesticide in order to increase rice production. Although rice production increased due to the use of fertilizer and pesticide, the increased investment lead to debt. Villagers found it necessary to sell their produce at whatever the market price was, in order to pay their debts. With drought the problems were multiplied. While the wealthy farmers with enough land to produce a surplus easily obtained bank loans to modernize their production and benefit from the government support schemes, the small scale farmers had little access to loans, either government or private. Instead, the alternative was the local traders and money-lenders to whom they paid high interest rates. Undoubtedly, 'agricultural modernization' and 'rural development', as carried out by the government, may have brought about more efficient agricultural production and an average increase in the income and standard of living of rural villagers. However, the indebted villagers in Sandee reflected the failure of agricultural modernization. Additionally, this process facilitated the replacement of the ao wun, the reciprocity of labour, by the waged-labour, and increase the differentiation between men and women in access to outside resources.

As the huanaa krokrua (head of household), men borrowed loans from the Amphoe Muang Agricultural and Co-operative Group to invest in these modern technologies and for two-wheel tractors. Through involvement in the government-sponsored groups, as discussed earlier, men could have access to training programmes relating to the 'modern' technology of rice production while women were encouraged to focus on household-oriented activities. Having access to these outside resources, men became decision makers in rice production. Women were not provided with similar opportunities. Lacking new knowledge and information, their role as decision makers in rice production became much less important than in the past. This change was assisted by the replacement of ao wun which had been organized by them, by the waged-labour needed in the new pattern of rice production.

Nature of Land ownership

It is evident that during the past twenty years, the villagers' access to rice land has changed (Table 6.2). The numbers of villagers with smaller holdings and of
landless rice farmers increased due to the rapid growth of population and the need to sell land to pay debts. They then became waged-labour and worked as tenants in rice fields of other villagers. When women did not have their own land, their situation was even worse. Their life security disappeared.

Table 6.2 Rice Land Holding in 1967 and 1992
(Based on data obtained during fieldwork 1992-1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holding (rai)</th>
<th>Households</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1967</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>no rice land/tenants</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>working their parents’ holding</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 5</td>
<td>63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 - 10</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 - 15</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16 - 20</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 and over</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>142</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In 1967 the largest holding was 50 rai whereas in 1992 it was 40 rai. 1967 data obtained by the Office of Provincial Agriculture, Lamphun province.

Regarding the 1992 landholdings in Sandee, it should be noted that households working in their parent’s holdings will continue working and are expected to gain the whole or partial rice land as an inheritance. There were several households that regularly rent their entire holdings of rice land to tenants: one woman lives on her own, six couples receive government salaries, one couple has has construction business, one couple makes and sells cupboards and wardrobes, and one couple owns the grocery shop. Sandee Village is in a non-irrigation area which has to rely on rain for wet rice production. Faai Mae Saan has normally provided water in the rainy season for approximately 2,000 rai of rice land, but during the past five years there was insufficient water for rice production. During 1992-1993, the majority of villagers still grow rice, but primarily for their own consumption because there was little surplus left for sale. In 1992 there were 18 households that could not grow rice due to insufficient water and seven households that had not grown rice during the previous three years because their rice land is located in higher areas. Facing the drought, the farmers had to invest more on irrigation pumps and other mechanical instruments. The decreased rice price became another burden for villagers.
Employment

During the early 1970s, after the second tobacco factory was established, most households in the village eventually became grower-members and supplied tobacco leaf for the factory. However, the number of tobacco-growers has since diminished and they finally stopped growing because they could not afford to buy fertilizer and pesticide. Women became tobacco factory workers and gained considerable income as extra labourers needed for rice transplanting and harvesting due to the decline of reciprocal exchange of labour called *au wun*. In 1988, a number of women in Sandee became waged-workers in textile and electronics factories in the Northern Industrial Estate, approximately six kilometres from the village. The failure of rice production for sale brought women into the industrial sector, as low-paid labour in the factories. This led to a change of women's role into income earners that 'counted' for their family. As paid workers women to some extent enhance their confidence and independence from their husbands. However, women who had access to the labour force encountered a double burden, being both paid labour and household server. It is quite clear that, within the complex economy, the way of life of women in Sandee has gradually changed in such a way that their burden increases and their unskilled labour, the only asset left, is not likely to bring in higher wages. Earning more income alone does not necessarily presuppose a better quality of life because their opportunities and choices in life are substantially reduced.

Women found themselves working in poor conditions in factories, carrying out the hardest work the lowest wages. Gender-based differences in power and privilege at the workplace often translated into sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. This is particularly true in the case of one tobacco factory in Lamphun Province in which I worked for during April 1982 and March 1984. Some girls were taken advantage of by the male manager. Similarly, from the personal interviews with girls who worked in factories in the Northern Industrial Estate, I was told that:

In the evening, several girls in this dormitory are picked up by the foremen, managers and businessmen from Chiang Mai. These girls seem to be happy with 'modern' life, with new fashion clothes, with entertainment, but they have no future.
The longer period of drought and late rains which became serious since the early 1980s also forced the villagers to search for alternative income because they could not rely on only being rice farmers. They gradually became employed in several industries and businesses. In 1992 almost half of the population (42.19 %) were employed in such diverse jobs as construction, factory work, trade, store keeping, dress-making, working for the government sector, and pig-keeping. These jobs become a major source of income On the other hand, rice growing became a minor job which still needs to be done because villagers require rice for their own consumption. Sandee villagers worked in at least eleven non-agricultural occupations which provided more reliable income than rice production (Table 6.3).

It could be concluded that regional industrialization and urbanization, particularly in the upper northern region of Thailand have significantly contributed to increasing dependence on off-farm employment. This is similar to what Gray (1990) emphasizes in her research young women and transition in Northern Thailand. Gray points to the increase of women's independence on off-farm employment (especially in urban/industrial work) and the increasing non-agrarian nature of rural areas near Chiang Mai city which is creating ‘trans-rural villages’ and ‘dormitory villages’. Gray also found that the urban/industrial off-farm work is dominated by the young with females entering the urban workforce at a faster rate than males. In the case of Sandee, the employment of 34 women in The Northern Industrial Estate as factory workers and of 67 women in the tobacco factory compared to those of male counterparts (three and two respectively -see Table 6.3) is consistent with Gray’s observation.

It is important to note that almost all villagers still grow rice for their own consumption, excepting three households. The category 'government officer' includes policeman, health worker, agricultural extension worker, primary and high school teacher. The category 'others' includes such diverse jobs as gas welding worker, mechanic, gardener, pick-up truck driver, store worker, electrician, guard, painter, child care worker, indigenous doctor, well digger and factory worker temporarily working in Japan. It is obvious that, apart from domestic work, women in Sandee Village have access to as diverse a range of work as many men. There were less
women than men in some occupations, such as construction owner, cupboard-wardrobe making and selling and construction. There were also some sorts of work (such as welding, mechanical work, well digging, guard and electrical work) in which no women were involved. There were more women than men that had access to factory work. Nevertheless, considering the overall picture, there were more men (241) than women (167) that had access to other occupations besides rice growing. Having access to jobs other than domestic work, women gain their own income which support the whole family. Table 6.4 illustrates the range of income of different occupations.

*Northern Industrial Estate women workers*

The number of rural women working as waged-labour may imply that the aim of the equity and efficiency approach of WID promoted by the Thai government in providing rural women more opportunities in 'formal' work has been achieved. However, as long as the household work is not shared, women are faced with at least a double burden. There were many problems encountered by women workers. According to women workers in Sandee Village, almost all factories have poor conditions - they are dusty, loud or lead polluted. Although there were no explicit statistics on the physical and psychological effects due to the poor conditions in factories, all 37 women in Sandee claimed that they used to have headaches and were sick without knowing the causes. Several women who worked in the electronics factory also claimed that their sight had become poorer.

The economic pressure forced women to accept the alternative of being factory workers even when the wages were so low (80 baht per day, compared to 135 baht (in Bangkok) with long hours (8-10 hours) working in poor conditions. Factory workers worked both day and night shifts alternating every two weeks. This affected the everyday lives of women and their families. As pointed out by Saisamon, a 32 year old mother of two, who was an electronic worker:

I found it difficult to adjust to wake up and sleep at an unusual time. It affects my family too. I have to arrange time to take care of my children. My husband just began to help after we had argued for a long time. Right now I cannot manage to join *klum mae baan*. I am too busy.
Table 6.3 Occupation and Gender
(Data Collected during fieldwork 1992-1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Women</th>
<th>Men</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>construction business owner</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traders and store-keeper</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cupboard-wardrobe maker and seller</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pig keeper</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dress maker and tailor</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government officer</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>construction worker</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Industrial Estate factory worker</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tobacco factory</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general labour</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bamboo weaver</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>others</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>children</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>student</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>elder</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>415</strong></td>
<td><strong>406</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6.4 Occupation and Income
(Data collected during fieldwork 1992-1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Income (baht/person/year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>construction business owner</td>
<td>220,000-500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>traders and store-keeper</td>
<td>180,000-252,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cupboard-wardrobe maker and seller</td>
<td>108,000-180,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pig keeper (per couple)</td>
<td>105,000-144,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government officer</td>
<td>84,000-171,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dress maker and tailor</td>
<td>72,000-120,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>construction worker</td>
<td>43,200-54,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Industrial Estate factory worker</td>
<td>33,800-36,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tobacco factory</td>
<td>33,840-32,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>general labour</td>
<td>28,800-32,400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bamboo weaver</td>
<td>5,400-10,800</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Since the wage was so low, the women were exploited in a number of ways. They were indirectly forced to work over time for an extra 7 baht per hour. Workers who could not work 10 hours were asked to quit. Furthermore, the extra pay (*bia khayun*)
was offered for those workers who worked overtime or did not take a day-off for the period of three months, six months, or one year. The factories could also get healthy workers by insisting that workers were between 16-24 years of age. Female workers were preferred because they are easy to manage.

A practice that substantially affected women workers and their babies was the lack of sufficient maternity leave. When the factories were first established in 1987, women was provided only one month maternity leave. From the beginning of 1994, under a new law, women workers are provided three months maternity leave with half salary. Under this law, it seems that working mothers are protected and provided better conditions. However, in practice most pregnant workers were indirectly forced to quit by the suggestion made by the factory's doctor. They received neither maternity leave nor half salary. When they came back they had to start as 'new workers'. Additionally, there was no guarantee that they would get a job after having babies. This law failed to protect women workers from being exploited by the factory. There is no evidence that the factory owner was accused of injustice by the fired workers. In fact, some mother workers in Sandee Village did realize this situation, but their economic suppression forced them to go back to be workers. Because of the surplus women labour in Lamphun and nearby provinces, the powerful factories continued to fire the pregnant workers. Women workers were in a position that did not allow them to create collective action for change. Some of them did not even know the details of the law and they knew nothing about labour unions. The need to work longer hours in the factory also diminished the close collaboration of women in the village activities.

Forms of socio-economic inequality

Highly stratified economic differences among villagers in Sandee Village have gradually appeared and are clear at present (Table 6.5). Households can be roughly categorized into five groups according to income: very poor, poor, middle group, rich and very rich. Income differentials were great between the very rich and the very poor group of villagers. During 1992-1993 a rich household which owned a construction a business earned an average 500,000 baht a year whereas one very poor household
earned only 10,800 baht a year. However, there was only one household that earned 500,000 baht and only five households that could be categorized into the 'very poor' group of villagers. The wide range of income differential was due primarily to the different occupations and jobs taken by villagers.

Table 6.5 Households classified in terms of annual per household income
(Data collected by survey during fieldwork 1992-1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income (bath)</th>
<th>Number of household (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>very poor (18,000 and under)</td>
<td>5 (2.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>poor (18,001-72,000)</td>
<td>66 (30.56)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>middle group (72,001-144,000)</td>
<td>101 (46.76)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>rich (144,001-216,000)</td>
<td>31 (14.35)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very rich (216,000 and over)</td>
<td>13 (6.02)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>216 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Construction business owners could be easily identified as rich or very rich villagers because, in order to do this sort of business, one has to have a large amount of initial finance. The construction business provided employment for 118 villagers (both men and women). The cupboard-wardrobe business also provided employment for 51 villagers. Similarly to those who are traders or store-keepers, furniture manufactures have to own a pick-up truck and have sufficient finance for day-to-day investment (at least 1,000 baht a day). It was also common that pig-keepers owned pick-up trucks whereas some government officers owned them while others did not. Poorer villagers who work outside the village (construction workers or factory workers) commonly own motorcycles for transportation. There were 26 households that did not own motorcycles.

Economic inequality in Sandee Village can be identified by rice land holding, employment of workers, occupation, income or the ownership of other material resources such as a pick-up trucks or cars. Nevertheless, those who have access to jobs outside the village have one thing in common: they have gradually developed a broad network related to their work beyond the village level and more often beyond the district and province levels. These wider networks generally support their work or business. For example, the pig keepers have developed their promised market by
being members of the Chiang Mai Pig Co-operative. Besides the sale quota and information about the pig market and prices, they also gain useful information about farm and financial management through membership. Some construction business owners were members of the construction association which provided useful information. Women workers developed their connections with their friends at the workplace. The villagers' broad networks primarily benefit their own families and kin groups and sometimes go beyond their kin group. For example, Wiwa, the village head's daughter, owns the biggest construction business in the tambon. Her business alone could provide employment for 43 men in the village. Her husband's close connection with the provincial officers contributed to his access to useful information about construction sponsored the government. Information about construction in Tambon Sukjai was provided by her father. These advantages contributed to the rapid progress of Wiwa's business. Gradually, her wealth and the position of her father assisted her family to become the most influential family in the village.

Beside bringing in economic change, these villagers have also brought features of 'modern' culture such as consumerism, the money-led way of thinking, and individualism. As suggested by Suluk (1990:168, emphasis mine):

... the growth of the local elites has led to an ever increasing demand for consumer goods from Japan and the West. This, in turn, requires higher agricultural exports and greater exploitation of the actual agricultural producers, particular rural women.

Respect and status accrue to individuals on the basis of wealth, age, education, party membership, and occupation. In Sandee village, the traditional ranking system does not appear to have created status differences within the village, however wealth-based status differences have now appeared.

Both traditional and modern belief systems strongly influence individual and social behaviour. Yet modernization, urbanization and industrialization have made a number of villagers more materialistic. In the past, the family life was much more valued by women, while today women highly value occupational accomplishment. In spite of the opportunities offered by increasing integration within wider society, however, women remain in a subordinate status exploited by the economic system. It
is important to note that the economic differences within the village accentuated the separation of women from each other.

Social difference, as viewed by women, is measured by different indicators than the economic dimension. For many women, contributions in term of labour in cooking, dish washing and other activities are highly valued. Suwicha, a 45 year old middle class farmer, mentioned that:

For those wealthy villagers who have not helped other villagers, our *klum maebaan* will not help them. We will join their activity as guests to eat and drink without giving help. Yet, for poor villagers, if they help others, we are happy to help them. The 'genuine' rich should have also 'numfat' [generosity or kindness] not just material goods.

This is similar to what Duen, a 39 year old, construction worker mentioned about the wealthy villagers.

Money cannot buy everything. The rich need our help and need to help others too. If you rich but greedy, nobody will help you. If you die, you cannot take money with you. We are in the same village, we have to help each other, either poor or rich.

I have tried to illustrate a number of examples of changes affecting women at the village level, particularly those stimulated by the WID strategy of promoting equality between men and women through income-generating activities. Although it is clear that the increased income meets the urgent needs of women and their families in the short term, this is not necessarily accompanied by a long term improvement in women's status because the prevailing structure within society, which significantly determines women's status, has not changed. I argue that activities which are intended to improve the status of women must recognize the inequalities which exist between men and women, and should focus on supporting structural and institutional changes which will contribute to the empowerment of women. Such activities can address discrimination between the genders, and at the same time can improve the economic situation of women. I now turn to a discuss of changes in the political dimension resulting from the government intervention.
CHANGES IN THE POLITICAL DIMENSION

Local Power Structure

*Po luang baan* and *Kamnan*

All traditional communities whether temple-centred, spirit-centred or geographical communities, have been replaced by the 'modern' administrative 'community' since the village level was firstly included in the local administration in early 1950s. The 'natural' leaders, who were respected by the villagers due to their leadership and their religious-based way of life, have been replaced by the *phuu yai baan* (officially *po luang baan*, the village head) who is appointed by the government as the head of the village. In the past those who provided leadership for the various settlements in the community were not ordinary people, but the *phuu yai* (people of respect).

The weakening-role of the natural leaders, organizations and the religious institution, was, I would argue, due to the imposition of formal leaders and organizations appointed and sponsored by the government. 'Rural development' has developed new power structures at the local level. The administration and organization of village or *tambon* levels are now in the hands of government-sponsored organisations and leaders. For example, the former *suthaa* and *khaet* representatives were replaced by the village development committee (VDC) chaired by the village head, and *sapha tambon* chaired by *kamnan* who are government officers.

In 1992, Thailand was subdivided into 74 provinces, each headed by a governor. The system of rural local organizations is almost entirely administrative. At the lowest level it consists of a modern *po luang baan* (village head) for each *moobaan* (village) and *kamnan* for the head of *tambon* (sub-district). The province is the primary unit of government below the state, and is administered by a governor appointed from Bangkok. The *amphoe* (district) is the lowest administrative unit and is headed by a *nai amphoe* (district officer). Nevertheless, the *nai amphoe* has not
been a legally constituted body. Thus there are three levels of organization below that which is endowed with authority and these three levels lack significant resources even for administration. The tambon and village development committee (VDC) were set up in connection with community development activities from 1956, but they never acquired significant powers. With the political instability after 1973, the basic administrative structure remained the same.

The *kamnan* and the village head are responsible for administrating certain areas in the name of the government and in accordance with government policies, and welfare functions. Chakrit (1979:149) argues that "They are appointed as the linking personalities between the villagers and the government". The influence of the *kamnan* and the village head can be demonstrated whenever resources are provided by the government to the villagers and whenever a political election occurs. Their influence and power are strengthened due to their better access to these resources.

In Sandee Village, the villagers who became the *po luang baan* came from the same kin group. In 1952 Kaew was elected to be *po luang baan* after Sang, his father and the former *po luang baan* had died. In 1971, Kaew resigned, and Somchai, Kaew's son-in-law became the village head. Somchai resigned in 1994 after he had been in this position for 24 years. Being the village head under the 'top-down' local administration (Table 6.1), he became more powerful than before because with his position and authority he had access to material resources provided by the government. This was possible because the village head is the channel that brings government resources into the village. In distributing these outside resources to villagers, he was the only decision maker. The more resources he controlled, the more opportunities he had to exercise power. He developed patron-client relationships with some villagers such as his assistant. His influence as the village head was terminated when Satit, who is from different kin group, was elected to be the new village head in late 1994.

The abbot

In Sandee Village, the abbot was another powerful person. At the time this study was conducted, Wang, 32 year old, was the abbot. Wang was very keen to
implement his ideas about the construction of some buildings in the wat area. For example, during 1993-1994, the ho tham (a hall for keeping the scripture) which cost about 500,000 baht was constructed, although only one-third of 43 participants in the meeting held to discuss this issue, agreed with his proposal. It is important to note that there were no women participating in this meeting as the abbot called for only the heads of households. The abbot could, to some extent dominate the wat affairs, particularly this construction, because he was backed up by Pratuan, the village head of Thamai village, who donated 50,000 baht. Wang left the monkhood in late 1994 and married.

**Sandee Administrative Structure**

Historically, Sandee Village was roughly divided into four hamlets according to its geographical characteristics. It consisted of groups of contiguous dwelling compounds. Later it was divided into 15 khaet (sector), responsible for providing food, in turn, for the monks and novices in the wat. Each khaet consists of approximately thirteen to sixteen households. This indigenous administration effectively served the villagers since the representatives of khaet and household collaborated closely. Women would also influence the decision making process through their husbands because the decision could only be made after the husband consulted his wife. Now Sandee Village is an administrative village led by po luang baan (the village head) under the supervision of local government officials (Table 6.1). The indigenous natural leaders and klum suttha were replaced by the modern po luang baan.

Communal solidarity at the village level is much stronger than at the sub-district level, particularly in single administrative, nucleated villages like Sandee Village. I would argue that this is because there is no institution that promotes solidarity or even the feeling of 'us' at tambon or higher level. On the other hand, terms like baan hau (our village) or muu hau (us) were always expressed and heard from the villagers, reflecting their sense of identity with the village.
It is clear that under the modern Local Administrative Structure (Table 6.1 and 6.2) there is much less room for village women to collaborate in the process of decision making. However, this does not mean that the power structures and institutions cannot be changed. This study aims to show that women can empower themselves when the supporting situation and atmosphere are provided.

**What is ‘development’? Women’s Perspectives**

Throughout this chapter, I have tried to show how changes resulting from government-sponsored development and WID programmes have affected the livelihood of rural women at the village level. It is quite clear that these changes have intersected to disempower large numbers of Sandee women in every dimension. For the women, development has meant less and less control over their own resources and lives. For them, development has meant an increase of the villagers’ selfishness and an increased gap between rich and poor villagers. Sandee women recognized the improvement of village infrastructure such as roads, electricity, water supply and concrete weirs. They saw these improvements as ‘development’ which both the villagers themselves and the government have made substantial effort to achieve, yet the approach was different. Women have more room to collaborate in indigenous approaches to make better the lives of villagers, than in those ‘top-down’ approaches imposed by the government officials.

When 'progress' came under the name of 'development', women lost their control over local natural resources through the monetized economy. They lost their autonomy while becoming increasingly dependent on outside institutions and forces in the wider society. With the loss of natural resources, population growth, and their increasing dependence on market forces, women are finding it more difficult than before to obtain enough food for their own consumption.

Women in Sandee Village have not always been in positions of passivity. These ‘empowered’ women also utilized changes both within the village and wider society to their advantage. Their access to employment in factories benefited them not only in increasing their income which leads to their increased independence of their
husbands, but also allowed them to develop a wider network of friends at the workplace. Their access to outside society provided them more information and choices necessary for survival.

**Power in the Domestic Context**

At the domestic level, gender relationships are experienced by all members of the peasant community, irrespective of their location within the village socio-economic structure. With the growing socio-economic changes and contradictions at the village level, it is my intention to explore how these changes and contradictions display themselves at the domestic level. The analysis will be focused on instances and practices that illustrate facets of power including the distinction between power and authority, strategies of power associated with the notions of influence and control, and the localized forms of power. The issues to be raised include the impact of socio-economic changes, how women can exercise power over men, and the domestic responsibilities of women. I would argue that the localized forms of power are important in the context of gender relations.

I have described the household system in Sandee in which, even though women were not dominant, the household appeared as a sphere of autonomy or relative egalitarianism. This is consistent with Leacock and Etienne's (1980) description of situations of relative egalitarianism in societies in which the household organization was very different from the so-call 'modern' (Western) unit of residence and consumption.

In Sandee, within the household the man is normally recognized as the household head. Due to the fact that surnames were made obligatory in 1913, women on marriage were forced to adopt the surname of their husband. This is a symbolic demonstration of men's jural authority. Men are recognized by the State as the head of the household. This is not because women should be subordinate to men but men are supposed to be physically capable of defending women and children. Additionally, men participate in public rituals as more important participants than women, even
though there were exceptions in the case of female lineage elders acting as ritual officiants.

It is also common that the household head is the most senior of all household members. This also accords with the ideology of senior-junior (phuyai-phunoi) which maintains that a junior must defer to a senior. Among villagers, seniority is a simple function of age, excepting that first cousins, regardless of their ages, are classified according to the relative seniority of the two parents who are siblings (lukphee luknong). A man would expect to marry a woman who is younger than him. This is consistent with woman's expectation to marry an older man. Accordingly, seniority is associated with males and juniority with females. Thus, within the household, the power of women is also threatened by an ideology of male superiority to which even women themselves agree. The classification of males with seniors and of females with juniors is widely accepted in Thai society. In northern Thailand, this identification is particularly important because it ties together the two principle modes of social difference: sex and seniority (Davis, 1984). In the case of Sandee, of 278 married couples in 1992 only in 8 cases were the husbands younger than the wives.

In Sandee, the exercise of power by women and men at the domestic level is complementary. Here gender dominance depends, in a sense, upon context. It is possible to speak of male dominance in the context of the patricentric ideology of 'senior-junior' which structures Thai peasants' ritual and world view. On the other hand, female ties dominate in the structure of residence and inheritance of residential property.

At the household level, whether women can exercise power varies according to the domain about which decisions are be made. In northern Thai peasant society, women are held to be responsible for maintaining the material and spiritual welfare of the household. It is expected that women must also guarantee that there is sufficient food to eat on a daily basis and must manage household budget. Thus food and nutrition eaten by the members of the household are dependent on the decisions of women. Women's capacity to cook well is recognized and highly valued by both men
and women. In Sandee Village, women are recognized more than men in household financial management. Men's spending on drinking and gambling is considered imprudent. Women are recognized as better money managers because they think about the family's needs and goods before their own needs.

In Sandee Village, some decisions within the family are collaboratively made, such as the issue of a child's non-compulsory education, or buying goods such as a refrigerator or television. As discussed earlier, the change in rice production pattern has been led by the introduction of modern technology. When it comes to this issue, it is likely that men are decision makers. This does not mean that women do not take part in rice production. But women were normally excluded in access to modern technology training. It is men who obtain this sort of opportunity because they are recognized as the head of the household.

It is common that women exercise their power in verbal forms. This is one way for women to demonstrate their capacity to control men. An example is the case when women ask their husbands to help with work in the presence of other people, who become wage workers became more financially independent. They have even more space to exercise their power in household. By comparison with the employed women, women who stay at home, raring children become more dependent upon their husbands for financial and material support. This led to evidence that some women lacked confidence because of the consciousness that they have less status than their husbands, when compared to employed women.

It was also common that employed girls were in position to influence other members in the family. Being employed, young women could contribute to household income. Instead of being dependent upon their parents, the employed girls, notably in Northern Industrial Estate factories, had more freedom to make choices that served their own needs and interest.

I would argue that whether or not women can exercise the power at the domestic level, is dependent on the support from their parents and relatives as well as
their financial independence. It is likely that employed women and middle class women have more freedom to exercise their power in the family, than unemployed and poor women.

**Power at the Village level**

This chapter has dealt with one northern Thai peasant village, Sandee Village. Some aspects of changes in its historical context, social life, social organizations, kinship, patron-client relations, and impacts upon village women have been discussed. The ways in which changes facilitated by State-led rural development programmes and the penetration of capitalism have also been explored.

At the village level, the same facets of power which include the distinction between power and authority, strategies of power associated with the notion of influence as well as control, and localized forms of power will be analyzed in the context of changing power relations in the village management and the power which can be exercised by wealthy in the village. I will argue that power at the village level rests with those villagers who have connections and linkages beyond the village level. Therefore, networking between village women and wider society should be developed as a tool for them to exercise their power. Village women have autonomy in terms of strategizing and making decisions in the spheres of socialization, mutual reciprocity, income generation, and community organization and development, even though this autonomy is ultimately dependent on male support.

**Power beyond the Village level: Collective Struggle for Participation in Sapha Tambon**

There was an attempt by the 'kamnan-phuaibaan' club in nine upper northern provinces and women's organizations in northern Thailand to voice the needs for women's participation as committee members in the sapha tambon. This effort materialized as the women's assembly on 'Women's Participation in the Decision Making Process', organized by the above organizations at Chiang Mai University, 12-14 November 1992. I was among sixty representatives of local women from upper northern provinces, including academics, NGO workers and concerned people, who
brainstormed and exchanged their ideas and experiences on the issue of women's participation in the decision-making process. The meeting concluded that the development promoted by the government during the previous forty years created many adverse effects and problems for women, particularly in relation to their participation in comparison to men. These effects and problems include: (i) less opportunity of access to employment, lower payment, and less security in workplace; (ii) less opportunity to make decisions in production, marketing, and development in every level. What has not been done is the equal distribution of wealth to the majority population in rural areas. These lop-sided policies are determined without popular participation, particularly the participation of women who constitute half of the population. The participants called for changes in the WID policy and more support from the government for rural women's organizations and collective activities in production, marketing, workforce, and politics. They also called for a fixed and clear quota for women at all levels in committee, commissions and working groups. Their suggestion was that government should set a four-year election term for official leaders at the village and tambon levels to open more opportunity for new community leaders to emerge, and to deter local influential persons from becoming dominant politically.

Another assembly was organized at the Non-formal Education Center, Lamphun Province, during 18-19 March 1993. Arunya, Wiwa, Pranee and myself, as representatives from Sandee Village, were among rural women including hilltribe women from six provinces in upper northern Thailand, who participated in this assembly workshop. The suggestion for both short and long term solutions was that it is necessary for women to participate in the decision making process at every level, particularly in sapha tambon because the sapha tambon committee plays a significant role in making decisions at the tambon and village level.

These activities were attempts of diverse parties which recognize the importance of the participation of rural women in the sapha tambon channel. Although, the request of having women committee members in sapha tambon has not been approved by the government yet, the participants were encouraged to be aware of
the exclusion of women in local administration structure and the negative effect of this exclusion.

In the following chapters, I will turn to an account of the collaborative action research carried out in Sandee Village and its contribution to empowering women.
CHAPTER 7

FIRST PERIOD OF FIELDWORK: BUILDING CONFIDENCE THROUGH COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH

This chapter and the following chapter explore ways in which rural women exercise power at the village and supra-village levels, and explores how peasant women can collaboratively create their desired changes in a village which has been male-dominated. The focus is on collaborative action research among rural women and some men facilitated by myself as researcher. The account is based on my personal experience in my own village, Sandee Village, between January 1992 and May 1993.

Chapters 7 and 8 give an account of the process of collaborative action research. The chapters contain considerable narrative detail about events and villagers' comments on these events, because these details are necessary to illustrate the collaborative process and to show how the processes has contributed to changes.

The presentation of activities loosely follows the collaborative action research cycle (of planning, action, observation and reflection). I have not used separate headings for the separate parts of each cycle, because this would be awkward and artificial. However, at various points I have added sections which contain my reflections (as researcher) on the overall process and its implication to my argument.

GETTING STARTED

Before starting research in Sandee Village, I spent a month discussing my research with some researchers and academics at Chiang Mai University and explored more books, journals, newsletters, documents, and articles on rural development and women issues. Through discussions, I learned from other researchers' experiences in doing fieldwork, getting information and communicating with rural people. One thing
that struck me was the suggestion about being prepared to deal with powerful villagers and gender issues.

Although the locale of my research was my own village, it was my obligation to inform the local officials involved in the local Administration and Rural Development Structures. These included the provincial development committee (PDC), head of the district office (nai amphoe), district development committee (DDC), sapha tambon (SP) (Figures 6.1 and 6.2). Indeed, this was useful because through the district officer the information about my research was distributed to other officials from the four ‘principal ministries’ responsible for rural development projects at provincial, district and tambon level. Of direct relevance to my research were the community development workers (phattanakorn), school teachers (kru) and sub-district agricultural workers (kaset tambon), health officers (anamai tambon), head of sub-district (kamnan) and village head (po luang baan) of other villages (moobaan) in the same tambon. Although the locale of my research was my own village, it was important to inform these officials because they would have expected me to do so to show my respect to them and whether I would co-operate with them. It also led to pleasant co-operation which they later provided me in terms of discussion, shared experiences and the provision of material resources.

The collaborative action research (CAR) aimed to facilitate villagers, women in particular, to increase their capacity to understand and identify their problems and the root causes of these problems and to create their desired changes. The process of empowering women through collaborative action research started with social reconnaissance which includes two main activities: (a) observing, dialoguing, discussing and interviewing villagers in order to gain greater information; (b) documenting information for the first cycle. The initial idea for action would emerge from the villagers' worldview through the social reconnaissance process. This social reconnaissance was followed by continuous cycles of (a) planning to improve current practice, (b) action to implement the plan, (c) observation of the effects of the action, and (d) reflection as a prelude to further planning, and replanning. The following table
(Table 7.1) outlines the list of major activities during the first and second period of fieldwork.

**Table 7.1 Summary of Activities**  
**First Phase**  
(First period of fieldwork : Feb 1992 - July 1992)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Discussion with academics, inform local authorities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Social Reconnaissance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Core team building</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reforming <em>klum maebaan</em>, setting up working group of bamboo weaving and pig keeping and <em>klum noom sao</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Participating in <em>sapha tambon</em> meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Organizing workshop</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td><em>Pha pa</em> ceremony for fund raising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Second Phase**  
(Second period of fieldwork : Nov 1992 - May 1993)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Implementation of bamboo weaving and pig keeping activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Forming child care committee and its child care improvement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><em>Klum noom sao</em>’s workshop, <em>pha pa</em> and concert for fund raising</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**SOCIAL RECONNAISSANCE**

The following section will explore the methodologies utilized for social reconnaissance.

**Participant Observation**

My appearance in the village was not unusual since, although I work in Bangkok, I regularly visit my mother at home. I also participate in many household or village activities, with relatives, friends or other villagers. What I did during my visits and fieldwork was similar to what villages do in their everyday lives. This kept my relationships firm and valuable. It is important to note that villagers returning home from the outside who failed to participate in village activities and change their language were often criticized by other villagers.
The initial stage of this study started from my entry until the building of the core team. With the primary purpose of knowing 'what is happening', I initially applied 'participant observation' as the primary method of data collection. Because I have grown up in the village and belong to the village I consider myself as an insider who was researching from within even though I had been absent for my study and work from time to time. I was an ordinary participant in the village situations and learned the social rules. However, as noted by Spradley (1980), once we learn the cultural rules, they become tacit and we hardly think about what we are doing. My regular visits to the village had contributed to the possibility to observe the concrete changes such as new roads, meeting places, two-wheel tractors, appearance of factory workers and difficulty due to drought. However, this had been incidental observation within a short period of time. During the two fieldwork periods of this study, participant observation was consciously utilized to observe the impacts of socio-economic changes upon women, family, and the village as a whole.

To be a participant observer I needed to be consciously 'aware' of what I observed. I found that it was quite difficult, particularly at the outset to pay attention, for example, to what one villager spoke of while I also needed to observe the reactions of others. It was something that I had not consciously done before. It took me the first few months to adjust. I needed to remind myself all the time to be aware of what I observed, and to force myself to pay attention to non-verbal and verbal information I otherwise often ignored. I tried to observe village life with a wide-angle lens (that is taking a much broader range of information). For example, having observed the dynamics of women's participation in the village's affairs, I accomplished greater understanding of women's role, status, and capacity.

To become a participant observer was not easy. Although I know almost all villagers, I had spent quite some time re-developing my relationships with villagers in order to make sure that we were moo dieu kan (roughly belong to the same party or group). My role as an participant observer was to witness the reflexive rationalization of conduct, that is the continual interpretation and application of new knowledge by myself and co-researchers in the social environments as an on going learning process.
I myself then became an instrument of data collection. At this initial stage, I gathered data through active participation in the villagers' world where they are already busy interpreting and understanding their environment. As Giddens (1989) points to the condition of entry to the field that is to get to know what people already know, in order to go on in the daily activities of social life.

**Dialogue and Informal Discussion**

Being an active participant, I dialogued with villagers mostly in a very natural way where villagers felt comfortable to tell me everything they wanted. Dialogues were always open-ended conversations which contributed to understanding an individual's or a small group's view about changes, facing problems and how they deal with situations. As dialogue implies equality between the participants, I consciously re-developed relationships, trust, and respect from time to time.

Listening is significant in communication with villagers. The more I listened, the more I obtained information. During the first four months, the most common complaint raised by villagers I had dialogue with were 'nobody listens to me'. For example:

Men will not listen to us (women).
*Po luang baan* (the village head) will not listen to us, we are poor, nobody cares.
I am young, the elders will not listen to me.
My father will not listen to me. He thinks women should not get involved with village development.

Through dialogue with almost all villagers and listening to them carefully, it gradually became that clear there were conflicts between groups of powerful and poor villagers. After some weeks, I knew exactly who I should ask for collaboration. Having dialogue with villagers, I learned that they were not totally passive to changes but they also developed their capacity to search for choices in life. At the same time I also told villagers about my research, my perspective, my personal life and whatever they wanted to know that I could tell them. Little by little, we naturally exchanged information. It is important to listen to people's world-views. During the dialogue, I found that such brief verbal expressions of interest as 'please continue', 'tell me more',
'go on' and non-verbal messages such as facial expressions, head nods, and good eye contact are useful. They are small rewards (Nelson-Jones, 1992) that help to encourage villagers to continue speaking.

**Strategic Questioning**

Under the circumstance where villagers did not speak out, strategic questions were used to stimulate them. Based on the assumption that no one outside a system can tell an insider how to make changes with much legitimacy or effectiveness, strategic questioning encouraged villagers to think carefully about their problems, the root causes of these problems, and what they could do to improve the situation. As suggested by Peavy (1992:5), "The answer to any problem lies in the context where the problem is." Therefore, a strategy for change "... should come from the person, place or society that has the problem." Whenever possible, I joined a small group of villagers and encouraged them to discuss the village situation by asking strategic questions. For example, 'What is now in the village that disturbs you most and how? ', 'Is it possible for us to improve the situation and how? 'Do you think this group can do something about the problem?' Some villagers reflected that my questions reminded them to think more consciously about the causes of changes. The word 'our' contributed to the creation of a sense of a team and action, and accepted the abilities and desires and values of each villager as a part of moo deiw kaan (belong to the same group or team). This led to the development of more confidence in villagers for a collective action. Small group discussion tended to be either male-dominated or female-dominated depending on the issues. It appeared that women tend not to talk about village administration, while men hardly talked about the hardship of household work.

Asking questions about villagers has served as a tool to continue the dialogue or discussion with them. Being asked questions, villagers had the opportunity to present their points of view. Some villagers noticed that this was different from the way they were always told what to do and think by the nakphattana (development workers). It appeared that the criticisms among villagers tend to be made in a more implicit than explicit way. Villagers felt more confident to criticize the others only in
the circumstances that they were among those whom they could trust. In this respect, the strategic questions that could lead to the criticism were useful to cross check the degree of trust villagers had towards myself as participant observer and later facilitator. In other words, villagers' criticisms suggested whether they considered myself as 'moo deaw kan' (roughly, us).

**Informal Interviews**

Using an informal approach, I interviewed Somchai, the *po luang baan*, the abbot, some natural leaders, and poor villagers. This provided the opportunity to obtain information about poor villagers' complaints about the drought and the negligence of Somchai. I interviewed women about government-sponsored activities and I found that some women had never participated in these activities. The provincial and district development officials who were supposed to be responsible for Sandee Village were also interviewed for their perspectives about the government policy on rural development the actual implementation, and about the villagers.

Through the process of social reconnaissance, by utilizing all the methodologies discussed above, I acquired information necessary for discussion with the villagers who I was to collaborate with as the core team. It is important to note that, in contrast to those researchers who conduct research in different cultural setting, as I was in my own village, it was easy to behave properly because I had been socialized in the village. I had much freedom to decide what I should do and when. This largely contributed to saving my time because I did not need to spend time on a period of learning the culture, or on learning the rules needed to avoid misbehaviour.

**GETTING MORE INVOLVED IN VILLAGERS' PROBLEMS**

After a few months I became more involved in the villagers' problems. This section discuss the events that led to my increased involvement. Wandering around the village with pen and field notebook, having dialogue with villagers here and there, taking photographs and participating in household and village activities, became my routine activities during the first three months. In March 1992, the common problem
shared by men and women was the drought. There was no water available from the
artesian well. Factory women appeared to be the group that suffered most from this
drought, because, after coming back from work, they had to manage to get water from
somewhere else, such as from their relatives in nearby village. Nangnoi, a farmer and
factory worker, complained:

I am tired from the factory, my body is full of dust and I want to take a shower,
but there is no water, you know. I have to go and get water from my mother's
house. My husband should have fetched water for me but he didn't. Men do
not help to fetch water. They expect women to do it.

Poor women also suffered because they could not afford to buy water from the city or
get water from somewhere else. They spent hours waiting for water from some
shallow wells. Meeda told me about her problem:

I have no a shallow well at home. To fetch water from my neighbour's well, I
have to wake up very early because the owner needs water too. In fact, at my
sister's place in Sukjai village there is plenty of water, but I have no motor
cycle and container to get water.

It was rather fortunate for poor villagers that they were occasionally provided with
water by the local MP. Some of them sought water from wealthier relatives who
owned pick-up trucks which were used to convey a tank of water from relatives in
neighbouring villages or from the city of Lamphun.

It is quite clear that women, particularly those from poor families and those
who worked outside, particularly suffered from shortage of water. However, under the
formal village administrative structure and with cultural expectations, women had not
much opportunity to voice their suffering. Women could only pass their views
regarding village management through their husbands. Yet, as Somchai had hardly
personally consulted or discussed with the village development committee (VDC)
members, there was little chance for them to achieve their needs through this process.

It became clear that the majority of the population encountered lack of water.
At the beginning, villagers took this problem as an individual problem which each
household had to solve. I viewed this problem as a crucial community problem
because a large number of villagers shared suffering. I took this common need as a starting point to facilitate the collaboration of villagers.

As being po luang baan, Somchai was expected by many villagers to do something about this problem. I interviewed him about his short-term and long-term plan for this problem. He commented that:

I thought that the villagers could help themselves because nobody came to see me and asked for help. They should help each other, phi nong khrai, phi nong man (your relatives help you, my relatives help me). I think it will not be long before it rains. When rain comes there will be water in the underground well and shallows.

Regarding the possibility of getting financial support through the sapha tambon, Somchai claimed that he has asked for it every year, but it was never provided. I later found that what he meant by asking for financial support from the government was his verbal request instead of a written submission.

According to the 'Local Administration and Rural Development Structures' (Figure 6.1 and 6.2), any project proposal from the village level is supposed to be prepared by the village development committee (Figure 6.3) chaired by the po luang baan. A written proposal needs to be submitted to the sapha tambon committee who with the assistance of the 'working groups to support tambon development activities' will consider the project, set the priorities of projects from all villages within the tambon, then submit to the district development committee (DDC) and the provincial development committee (PDC) for consideration. The PDC then decides which projects are to be included in the provincial development scheme and formulates the rural development plan. According to this structure, the villagers' needs and interests seem to be accomplished through a bottom-up approach. However, it is the DDC and PDC who normally decide which projects from the sapha tambon should be provided with the government funds. The decision making process is still in the hands of remote government officials instead of the sapha tambon.

Being the po luang baan, Somchai could be expected to know this process more than the ordinary villagers. However, whether Somchai knew or not, it appeared that he rarely sought advice or discussed problems with other villagers. Somchai was
rarely publicly criticized by villagers because, in Thai society, to question someone's opinion and knowledge could be interpreted as an insult the person. Direct criticism can easily lead to conflict.

**PROBLEMS LED TO COLLECTIVE ACTION**

During the drought, there were two indications that many villagers began to place their trust on and trust me. One day I interviewed the deputy district officer and asked for water. My research assistant was with me, so she knew the officer has approved. The next day, two water trucks came in the village. Somchai did not know where the water came from until he contacted the officer. The information about this was spread through my research assistant. Somchai was not really happy about this information. However, after I visited him, and told him that I did not intend to take over his duty, he seemed to understand.

Another event that led more villagers to trust me was related to the damage of several households due to a summer storm on 16 April 1992. I walked through the village and took photographs of the damaged households for my own record. Later, I learned from Somchai that the district office would provide some financial help for those whose houses were damaged, providing there was evidence to support the claims. I volunteered to write a report and used the photographs as evidence. Help came in the form of tiles since most damage appeared to be the roofs. Under the management of Somchai, some villagers with undamaged houses acquired tiles while some with damaged houses did not. The latter were very upset. Then I was asked by these villagers, mostly women, to be a witness for their claims for tiles because I had observed the event. They also became to trust in me and my capacity to deal with Somchai. I found that the villagers' trust and confidence in me assisted me to get them to collaborate our collective action. It could be concluded that trust is a pre-requisite for collaborative action research.

This is one example that disadvantaged villagers were keen to avoid passivity by using available resources (myself) in bargaining for just treatment. This event could be used to illustrate the use of power and authority by Somchai. As *po luang*
*baan*, Somchai could have used his authority from the State to petition for help from the government. However, when the tiles became available he unjustly used his power and authority giving tiles to villagers who were his close relatives. Those villagers who sought just distribution exercised their power by getting me involved as witness. This is an example of poor and middle income women exercising their power beyond the domestic level. As a villager and a researcher I had no authority, but Somchai was somewhat in awe of my status as an educated woman and my capacity to access information that could threaten his position. I then became a witness with powerful evidence for villagers to negotiate with Somchai.

Another interesting point is that this negotiation was made possible because of their collective action. Being in a small group, these women became more confident. Later this became another good lesson for women to learn about the importance of collective negotiation. To use me as a witness based on their trust of me does not mean that these villagers because totally dependent on me. Indeed, it was their idea to negotiate with the *po luang baan*. I was consciously aware of the possibility of villagers becoming dependent on me. To avoid this, even though I provided necessary information and other sorts of material help, I encouraged villagers to make their own decisions. Villagers then had to be responsible for the effects (positive or negative) of what they decided. Having made decisions by themselves, villagers gradually developed their self-confidence.

It is important to note that, in fact, it was Somchai's wife, Wipada and his daughter, Wiwa, who decided to give tiles to their relatives. This event was an example of women's exercising power at the village level by using the husband's position and authority. This case also demonstrates the powerful rich women taking advantage of other women. Similarly, unlike the deputy district office, I had no authority to order him to provide water to villagers. As government-employee, my position as lecturer at a university in Bangkok did not provide me the authority in Sandee village and beyond the village. However, my position gave me status in the eyes of this officer. I could exercise power beyond the village level because of my position. This confirmed that, in Thai society, it is common for people to pay respect
to an individual due to position or rank. For the poor women who have no position or rank, this make it even more difficult for them to get things change.

With these events, I gradually became involved in villagers' problems. We developed mutual respect and trust towards each other. I demonstrated my commitment to collaborate with them and to improve the village situation. My observation, dialogue, informal discussion and informal interviewing continued. The message I always gave through dialogue and discussion was that capacity could be improved, irrespectively age, gender, or class. I was warned by Woraphong, later a core team member, not to do something against Somchai. When there was a protest against Somchai in 1990, Woraphong was blamed as the initiator. Later, he almost got killed by a truck that continuously followed his motorcycle on the way back from his school.

Indigenous Indicator of Respect: dumhua

While there were signs of the villagers' respect towards myself, there was another event that contributed to the lessening of villagers' respect towards Somchai. In upper northern part of Thailand, dumhua, a practice of showing respect by providing food and other materials such as towels, or clothes, normally occurs in traditional Songkran festival from 13-17 April. It is a tradition in Sandee Village that villagers would dumhua po luang baan (show respect to po luang baan) at his house or in the wat. However, in 1992 and 1993, the dumhua activity for Somchai was organized by Somchai's assistant at one older villager's house instead of Somchai's house. Later I learned that Somchai had allowed some villagers to gamble near his house and he did not want other villagers to know. Many villagers became very upset. In fact, rather than supporting the gambling, Somchai was expected to use his authority to prevent gambling in the village.

Just as some villagers who set their hopes on me, Somchai also placed expectations for outside help through myself.

This year our village is very dry. There is no budget, so the villagers must help themselves. I hope we might get some help. What is your research about? Can you get some help for our village?
His expectation reflected his dependence on government help which he had gradually developed throughout 22 years in his position. Under 'modernization' through a centralized system, the traditional patron-client relationships between nai (king, noble) and phrai (commoner) did not disappear. Instead, the government officials become the new patrons of villagers. Some local officials became Somchai's patrons while he himself became the patron of some villagers under the 'top-down' rural development programmes. The point I try to make here is the centralized system employed by Thai government contributed to the development of the sense of dependency of Somchai. Additionally, the benefits, whether in terms of material resources such as fertilizer and pesticide, or authority and power, contributed to increase his capacity to control villagers, rather than to increase villagers' capacity to be more independent. In some senses, Somchai himself was disempowered.

RESPECT AND TRUST AS A PRE-REQUISITE FOR COLLABORATIVE ACTION RESEARCH

The Need for Respect

The interaction between myself and villagers was based on my belief that villagers must be respected as 'persons', irrespective of their age, gender or status. I encouraged villagers to speak out. From time to time, I kept telling them that it is their perspectives and experiences which are significant, and that they themselves must choose their future. In fact, it is the poorest group of villagers whom I wished to emphasize in my work. Yet, I thought that the neglect other groups of villagers would limit the chance to see the holistic dynamics of their relationships. On one occasion, one of my secondary schoolmates told me that as I was a PhD student she did not expect that I would talk to her. I later found that she was overlooked by her educated and wealthy friends. This reflected the anticipation of one woman drawing from her experience. At this initial stage, I kept a similar distance from all groups, because I wanted to observe and listen to all of them. As a lot of information came from my relatives and close friends, I forced myself to avoid bias towards particular groups of villagers. I had dialogue with villagers who were criticized by others in order to listen to their perspectives. The more I conversed with villagers, the more I obtain diverse
information which was useful for building a rich picture of villagers’ interrelationships.

As a married woman, villagers expected to see my husband with me rather than staying far away, and expected us to have a baby. Although this expectation reflected villagers’ attitude and ideology that link women to typical female work, villagers also respected me as an educated women. Having more education than other villagers provided me with some credit as a respected woman even though at the beginning I had not yet demonstrated my capacity.

Men and women regarded me differently. I noticed that women, irrespective of age, felt free to discuss with me personally or publicly, individually or collectively. Men kept some distance from me compared to women. I hardly conversed with men privately; we were normally in small or large groups. Younger men were likely to consult me in a more personal manner than those older than or the same as age as me.

The Need of Trust

As discussed earlier, another important starting point for CAR was developing ‘trust’. Through dialogue and discussion with villagers, I had the opportunity to present my perspectives and to present myself as one of the village women. As an educated woman, the message I tried to give villagers was that I wanted to share my knowledge and experiences and learn from them too. As Whyte (1991) notes, field relations involve negotiation and exchange between the participant observer and insiders. At the beginning, I provided villagers with nothing but mutual respect by being open, giving useful information, asking strategic questions and listening to them. There was only one occasion that I gave money as wages for three students who I hired as research assistants. For other students who helped collecting village information as required by the sapha tambon (organized by myself), I gave them English lessons. I found that telling the truth was essential to develop trust between myself and villagers. With trust, being a passive observer no longer created suspicious. I told villagers precisely that what I expected to gain from this research were knowledge, an increased capacity in facilitation for myself, enhanced villagers'
capacity in village management and, of course, my PhD. I also found that the quality of data was highly linked with the degree of villagers' trust and co-operation with me. The higher the degree of trust and co-operation, the higher the quality of information. In other word, the quality of data can be improved by the establishment of trusting and co-operative relationships between the participant observer and people in the studied village.

CORE TEAM FORMATION

This section discusses the formation of the core team. It focuses on the process of selecting core team members. During the social reconnaissance period, I found many situations of conflict among villagers of different gender, class, and age, as discussed in the previous section. However, to a large extent, I also found co-operation and a sense of community among them. By the end of April 1992, I found that many villagers were eager to talk to me about the village’s problems such as the drought and the need for just distribution of donated water. These villagers had observed the village’s problems and changes, and the differences between our village and the neighbouring villages. They had discussed these among themselves, before I came to the village, even though there was no progress in terms of action. Their attempt confirmed my belief that villagers always wanted to improve their situation. At this stage, I decided to facilitate the formation of a core team.

The Process of Core Team Member Selection

Who? and How?

As I developed relationships with the villagers, we discussed the current situation of the village more systematically. We found that we had common needs. For example, we would like to see villagers have enough water for their consumption, and the improvement of our village as a whole. Gradually, trust and friendship developed among us. We formed a group which I labelled as 'the core team'. The core team was formed based on our common commitment to improve the village situation. The primary objective of core team formation was to form a committed working group who would collaborate with me in working towards their desired changes.
Additionally, it was my purpose to facilitate group activities to enable them to increase their capacity in collaboration in village management.

The Members of the Core Team

**Arunya** aged 39, single, female middle income tobacco factory worker, pig keeper, was elected to be the president of the women group;

**Lalita** aged 33, female middle income dress-maker, was elected to be a committee member of group;

**Darin** aged 34, female middle income farmer and pig-keeper, was elected to be a member of the working group for pig keeping activity;

**Satit** age 34, male middle income shopkeeper and farmer, grade 7 of formal education, the secretary of village development committee, subsequently elected *po lung baan* (in 1994);

**Woraphong** aged 36, male middle income high school teacher, former abbot, village adviser;

**Damrong** aged 35, male poor farmer and carpenter, was to be the chairman of the child care committee.

Apart from our attitude towards each other in terms of respect, trust, and commitment, the most important factor was that these villagers volunteered to collaborate as core team members. This is crucial, and I highly valued their volunteering. It was my initial intention that I would like the government officials responsible for tambon Sukjai and Sandee Village to collaborate with me in the core team. However, because of the nature of the collaboration where the team members are required to fully participate in the continuous process of planning, acting, observing and reflection, and because of time limitation, none of these officials could become members of the core team. Nittaya, the phattanakorn who was responsible for 25 villages of two tambon, including Sandee Village, commented that:

It is useless to do research without the agreement of my *hua naa* (higher rank official) because my salary will not increase and for sure I will not get a promotion. If the big wheel does not move, how can a small wheel like me move. This year [1993] I have many projects to implement otherwise the funds will have to be returned to the central level. As lower rank officials, we can do nothing but follow the plans identified by planners and policy makers at the central level. Being a developer at the tambon level, there is much less
freedom than for a university lecturer like you to create the ideas of development.

The core team consisted of both men and women even though my intention was to increase the women's capacity. My observations suggested that women and men worked together in the household, farm, and village activities. I believe that to empower women to become co-decision makers rather than just the supporters, women and men should closely collaborate in organizing activities instead of working separately. I think that the government-sponsored groups and organizations in Sandee Village have failed to promote the villagers' participation because women, men, and youth were encouraged to be organized in separate groups and to conduct separate activities. This strategy failed to take into account the villagers' traditional way of cooperation. Women were even encouraged by different departments to form in different groups yet to implement the similar activities imposed by those departments, as discussed in Chapter 6.

Although, most members of the core team were from the middle income group, this does not suggest that villagers from other income groups were not able to make change. There is no doubt that rich and powerful villagers tend to facilitate change more effectively due to their resources. However, during the social reconnaissance period, none of wealthy villagers demonstrated their commitment or willingness to help the poor group. By the same token, although the wealthy villagers may help in rapidly stimulating the process of change, it would be useless if that change did not help to improve the situation of the poor villagers as well.

Only one poor villager became a member of the core team even though I expected more of them, and prioritized poor villagers' problems. This was because I valued volunteering as a crucial factor for collaboration. Those poor villagers who I expected to collaborate, did not volunteer due primarily to their economic oppression. It is important to note that most core team members were from the middle income group. It was this group of villagers who demonstrated their recognition of the problem of water shortage from which the poor and women workers suffered most. As will be discussed, it appeared that almost all activities which resulted from the
collaboration of the core team, and other groups in the CAR, served the poor's interest.

I consider the formation of the core team as an important start, because the core team began with an understanding of the reality of the poor villagers, even though the lack of water was not just a problem or the poor. The action decided upon was based the core group's considerations, not mine, and on their understanding of reality, their perceptions, their immediate needs and problem. I was a member of the core team, my role focused on the facilitation of the group's activities.

**Confirmation of the Core Team Commitment**

The first 'Formal' Meeting

The information I had collected and documented during the social reconnaissance process, would be useless unless it was utilized for the creation of activities that lead to change. So I decided to organize an informal meeting with the core team members aiming to share what I had heard from them and other villagers. This meeting aimed to re-confirm the core team members' commitment and willingness, and identify the first activity. All members of the core team joined this meeting including Monthon who was a middle income farmer and the chairman of water committee.

As facilitator, I began with a presentation of the issues about my research, its objective, methodologies, and time frame. I confirmed my commitment to improving the village situation and asked for their collaboration. I summarised the information I had collected during the initial stage. Some information was added and corrected by the participants. The common problem was lack of water. Participants asked me to tell them what to do. I emphasized that it is 'we' as a group, who would see whether our collective action would lead to an improvement in the situation. I told them my belief that women should play an active role in the village management through collaboration in the decision making process. I also stressed that my role would be as
facilitator, rather than 'coach' and that their role would be as decision makers so 'what to do' would have to come from them.

The discussion focused on the issues of lack of water and the role of the village development committee (VDC). Most members agreed to get Somchai involved. They were quite excited because they had an opportunity to share their perspectives without worrying whether they said was good or nonsense. It appeared that men spoke out more than women. However, I facilitated by asking women questions so that they had a chance to talk. We agreed to listen to and respect each other and to take advantage of each experience including mistakes as a further step in our collaborative learning process.

I took this opportunity to discuss the process of collaborative action research by using the meeting as a case study of my facilitation and asked them to reflect upon my planning and action. Satit suggested we should ask for government help through tambon channels because he had observed and learned that the village infrastructure projects were sponsored by the government. Darin suggested to have Somchai in the next meeting because, being the po luang baan, he might have something to suggest. Arunya and Woraphong suggested we should meet at the sala (village meeting building). All members were concerned about time because they were afraid that they might not have enough time to collaborate properly due to their jobs and their family commitments. In encouraging Somchai to get involved in the water issue, we agreed to develop strategies for influencing and manipulating Somchai indirectly within the limits of correct form, instead of confrontation. As Woraphong suggested:

It is difficult and complicated to directly ask or convince Somchai to learn how to write the project proposal and then submit for the budget. We should indirectly demonstrate by creating other activities and, at the same time, ask him to collaborate.

Arunya suggested that the core team should begin the activity by re-organizing the klum maebaan. Other members agreed to shift the first priority activity from dealing with the VDC members, particularly Somchai, to the women's activity. The planned action was to organize an informal meeting of women in the village.
I asked all participants to reflect on the meeting. The women were excited, because in this meeting they were asked to share their worldview about the village's problem. Woraphong, who had long experience in facilitating village activities during the time he was the abbot, and at school, commented that it was good to ask everyone to share their perspectives. Satit also pointed to the difference between this meeting and those run by Somchai where participants normally just listened to Somchai. Some male members commented that this meeting had allowed the participants to discuss the village's problems, yet they could not see the solutions. They thought that open discussion, as in this meeting, might not be recognized by Somchai because he hardly ever consulted the VDC members. Woraphong commented that the collaborative action research is much similar to the villagers' indigenous way of working to the extent that villagers, men and women plan and act together. His experience in working with the klum noom sao and villagers when he was the abbot was utilized to support his claim.

I thought the meeting was very informal, because women spoke out, even if less than men. I was satisfied with the meeting because I had the opportunity to inform more about my research and our collaboration. The most important thing is that all participants reinforced our commitment to collaborate as a team. For me, it was another important step forward. In organizing the meeting, I was aware of the different of features our culture as regards meetings and group discussion. The methods I had learned from formal education were rather different from what villagers practised. Having access to different learning processes led to the development of different perspectives on how to do things.

This meeting was something new because it was not called for by Somchai or the abbot. It differed from the usual meeting called by Somchai to the extent that not only men but also women were asked to join the discussion relating to village management. Perhaps, this meeting could be seen as threatening in the eyes of Somchai. The members' suggestion to get Somchai involved in the meeting reflected their kraeng (roughly 'fear of offending someone'). Woraphong had experienced unpleasant relationships with Somchai because he was blamed as the initiator of an
earlier protest against Somchai. Arunya feared (kraeng) Somchai's authority and power while Darin feared him because of their relationships as close relatives, and his bunkhum (moral goodness) in terms of help when her husband was away. However, the members were also prepared to learn new things even though they were concerned about the powerful leader.

I did not invite Somchai because I believe, as the po luang baan, he could have influenced the meeting in one way or another. As criticizing one's ideas could be interpreted as an insult the person, Somchai could suffer sia naa (loss of face) if he was directly asked by the core team to do what he was already suppose to do. Causing loss of face in Thai society could lead to serious conflict. Participants might not feel comfortable to criticize his tasks, particularly those related to the water problem. At the same time, he might not be prepared for direct criticisms. Any conflict that occurred in this first meeting might have lead to the difficulties for further collaboration.

Customarily, direct criticism is normally avoided. I realized what I asked them to do was against the custom. However, I convinced that reasonable reflection and criticism could lead to greater understanding and improvement. I did not anticipate that I could develop my capacity to facilitate, or that they could develop their capacity in reflection and criticism within one meeting. I realized that this would be a long learning process. The members' time limitations appeared to be an explicit constraint for our collaboration.

It would be useful to consider the following example. Arunya started working at the tobacco factory, four kilometres from home, at 5:30 am working until 3:30 p.m. six days a week. Then she feed pigs until 6:00 p.m., followed by cooking dinner, and weaving bamboo. She would have time for the core team's activity only during the night time and on Sundays. Although Lalita had her mother and her husband cook for her, she was still busy with her work until 9:00 p.m. Darin was everyday busy with feeding pigs two times a day; during the drought she was even more busy searching for water for her pigs. Her tasks included cooking food and household work.
In relation to Woraphong's comment on collaborative action research and indigenous ways of working, I agreed in part with him to the point that they are similar in allowing villagers to discuss planning, acting and evaluating the outcome of action. However, collaborative action research also emphasizes conscious observation and reflection by participants as active actors.

As the core team members realized the complications involved in trying to encourage Somchai to get involved in the water problem, for instance, by submitting a proposal in order to get the funds for repairing the artesian well, a shift in the first priority activity was agreed. This reflected our anticipation of the possible negative effects of our intended action. In this respect, the power and authority of Somchai as the formal village leader contributed to the reluctance of the members to take any action that was supposed to be done by him. The shift of issue also confirmed my view that what we could provisionally achieve was dependent upon the social context in which our action would occur. Additionally, we collaboratively made a decision on the priority of the next activity based on perceived presumed changeability. Coincidentally this was consistent with my initial intention in working on an issue that primary relates to rural women.

BUILDING UP WOMEN'S CONFIDENCE

The following section discusses the continuous cycles of learning of the members of the core team and klum maebaan through the cycle of collaborative action research which consists of planning, action, observation, and reflection.

The meeting among women was organized by the core team members on 17 May 1992. Maebaan (married women) were informed and asked to participate by myself over the siang tam sai (village loudspeaker) two days before the meeting. The objective of this meeting was to get women together to discuss and find out their consensus on whether they were going to re-organize themselves as a group. As it was getting late, Darin told me to keep asking the women to attend because it was the first meeting for the last two years. Then 53 middle aged, married women, out of about 150, turned out after about one hour of asking via the siang tam sai. The participants
were asked to discuss the current situation of the government-sponsored women's *klum*, and the possibility of women initiating useful activities for those women who suffered from the drought. According to Darin, the *klum maebaan kesettrakorn* and *klum satri maebaan* established by the *kaset tambon* and *phattanakorn*, had failed to create any activity during the past two years. This was due mainly to lack of discussion among members, lack of officials and financial support. Bua-ngen, the president of *klum satri maebaan*, commented about the opportunities, the constraints and activities of the women’s group:

Being the president of the *klum* is difficult work. Even though there is a committee, nobody works or helps me. I have to do everything. I know all of us are always busy working at home and the factory, but if we will not help each other there is no point to form *klum*.

Based on their past experiences of involvement in the *klum noom sao* as committee members, most women suggested that women should organize themselves in a group because being individuals they could do nothing about conditions. However, they felt that there should not be too many meetings. Supha, a factory worker, also commented that:

We should get together whenever a problem comes, and the tasks are done by either women or men who are keen in a particular task. There is no need to set the position beforehand. We all help each other. I think this is the most important thing. If one has no commitment and responsibility, no matter how many positions, there will be nobody to take care of the task.

Arunya pointed to the activities of *klum maebaan kesettrakorn* such as Chinese food and dessert cooking and artificial flower making, which did not serve women’s needs. Most participants saw participation in parades in the city (occasionally requested by the *phattanakorn* or *kaset tambon*) as useless activities which led to quarrels between many couples who later refused to join. After long discussion, the participants agreed to elect a new committee for the women’s group, which from now on, I will refer to as 'klum maebaan'. It consisted of ten committee members who were responsible for essential activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Mrs. Arunya</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Mrs. Kesda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Mrs. Sirirwan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Mrs. Yaowaman</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Group announcer  Mrs. Kingkaew  
Receptionist  Mrs. Wipada (Somchai’s wife)  
Occupation promotion  Mrs. Lalita  
Sport promotion  Mrs. Kraisri (Somchai’s daughter)  
Utensil Service  Ms Sumalee  
  Mrs. Yupa  

The atmosphere during the meeting was very informal. I took photographs for the purpose of utilizing them it as a tool to encourage women's reflection, and for my own record.

With relation to the reflection, all committee members were surprised to be elected, yet they would try their best. Darin was fairly disappointed, because she expected more participants, and because it took too long to get women to come. This affected other participants who came on time. Arunya was surprised that she was elected to be the klum leader. She commented that this may be because she had long experience in working as a committee member with the women's group, and because she was single. Darin was impressed with the meeting because she observed that most participants spoke out both in small groups and in the main discussion. However, there were some women who were too shy to speak out even when they were asked questions.

I was very impressed with the appearance of the new committee and the collaboration of women, because I considered these as positive change. As Wignaraja (1990) has noted, individuals cannot individually address the problem of their powerlessness, this can only be done through collection action. The organization of women around issues of common concern is a pre-requisite for effective and sustainable economic and social development.

It is interesting to note that, as participants knew each other very well, their decisions in electing committee members were not always based on their perceived abilities. For example, it appeared that Wipada, Somchai’s wife was elected to be a member of the klum maebaan’s committee, because they to some extent fear (kraeng) of her position as the wife of the village head. (This was somewhat similar to what
Akin (1982) has observed about one co-operative. He found that the members choose representatives according to perceived opportunities to gain access to resources through these representatives.)

Additionally, Nipa, a poor farmer and factory worker, expressed to me personally that:

I do not really like some new committee members who come from wealthy families such as Wipada. She does not want to be a committee member but some participants still choose her. I remember she gave tiles to her relatives even though their household were not damaged. The same thing may happen if she still on the committee.

Nipa did not comment during the meeting because she knew exactly that this would lead to conflict that would certainly have negative effects on her.

In this meeting, I had another opportunity to develop my capacity in facilitation, and at the same time, to encourage participants to speak out their perspectives. As facilitator, I somewhat controlled the situation to make sure that nobody dominated the meeting. I found that for the facilitator, the issue of time is highly significant, particularly in the situation where the participants are available only within a short time due mainly to their domestic work as well as their natural capacity in concentration. I did not agree with some participants who had chosen Siriwan to be secretary, because I knew that Siriwan was not very good at writing and summarization. She was keen at village cooking and helpful, and thus was respected by women. However, I did not try to convince them to choose someone else because my direct criticism in the meeting would make Siriwan feel inferior. Additionally, I wanted to leave the decision making for the participants. I believe that if Siriwan did not perform her duty well, there would be some change in the future.

As the issue was not very complicated, the meeting goal was achieved without any difficulty. The meeting strategy was appropriate for achieving consensus about the issue of electing a committee. Women's shyness and their reluctance to speak out did not suggest that they had nothing to say. I believe that their lack of experience of speaking in public contributed to their lack of confidence. This was completely
different to their behaviour when we dialogued, where they even criticized the others. Women were more familiar with informal communication, such as natural dialogue and informal small discussion wherever they meet. By doing this, information is rapidly diffused. Again I have learned that women spoke out more when they are being asked questions than when they are expected to speak voluntarily. The value of questioning reinforces the importance of the role of facilitator. I found that women have learned to accepted the majority votes. They also learned to accept an individual's position or opinion. For example, many women were impressed by Darin's capacity, however, when she politely refused to take a position the participants accepted.

At the meeting, women were talking, asking, and laughing; some brought their children or grandchildren with them; kids sometimes crying, run around, and were noisy. It was a scene typical of rural people when they get together. It was their way of life in which everything interrelates. When women joined the meeting, they also took care of their children. I believe that a researcher or development agents cannot expect women to participate without taking into account their tasks related to children. Kaset tambon cannot promote the utilization of high technology for increasing production without considering other social dimensions of a farmers' life.

In this study, photography was used as an effective means to note observations when a literal visual record is necessary or desirable. Photography was used to record the body language of participants and their interactions between themselves which were useful for their reflections. I found that a number of women rarely have access to have photographs taken, so photographs were provided to them as a gift.

The process of the reformation of klum maebaan started with a number of individuals, that is the core team, who were facilitated to form a group and agreed to undertake collective activity. Then a number of women were facilitated and motivated by the members of the core team to re-form into a group in order to pursue women's common interests. However, these women had previously been involved in activities imposed by the government officials and which did not serve their interests. Non-
participants anticipated that the new committee of the *klum maebaan* could follow the same line. This was why they did not participate in this meeting. This challenged my optimism about facilitation as a way of doing things differently to create changes. I believe that, with the help of the core team who understood the villagers' problem, and with my help as a facilitator in encouraging women in making decisions, there would be some changes through our collective action.

**Seeking for Solutions to Problem**

As there had been no conclusion on an action plan during the meeting of *klum maebaan*, the core team members discussed the action plan for the next activity, and the issue of personal limitations in the process of our collaboration and learning. Arunya raised the conflict between her father and herself, because he did not want her to be the president of *klum maebaan*. Since the *klum maebaan* was clearly supported by the core team he was afraid that Arunya could be seen by Somchai as an antagonist. We were all concerned about Arunya's limitation and were ready to support her. As facilitator, I recognized the members' family concern and I believed that their family concern should come first. It is unlikely that women will sacrifice for the group without the support of the family.

The core team decided to organize a meeting for the members of the women's group on 30 May 1992, aiming at a discussion on the current village situation and the role of the village development committee, and sharing information about how to set up village projects and submit proposals to the *sapha tambon*. This plan of action was based on the underlying assumption that continuous activity of the *klum maebaan* might lead to an increase of villager's awareness and consciousness. Darin agreed to inform and invite Somchai. Kingkaew was asked to announce the meeting on the *siang tam sai* which gradually became a useful tool of the core team and the *klum maebaan*.

On 30 May 1992, 38 women participated in the meeting, including the core team members. Somchai did not join the meeting. The issues included the current village situation (the first priority issue), an appropriate way to distribute water
provided by former PM, the klum maebaan's finance, and reflection on photographs. The water provided by the local MP was helpful especially for poor villagers and women who worked outside. However, as nobody arranged the distribution, some villagers who stayed close to the stop point obtained much water than those who stayed further away. As the president of the klum maebaan, Arunya facilitated the meeting but only for a short time and she was very nervous. I facilitated the discussion by organizing a small group discussion, then each group's representative was asked to summarize and present the results of their discussions to the whole group. Although the issues were so serious, the meeting was full of laughing, particularly when the representatives presented the outcomes of group discussion. The atmosphere was full of penkan-ang (informality). Participants were more relaxed than at the first meeting. Some women expressed their opinions with relation to their constraints and their limitations in working together.

Although every small group stated the water problem was the first priority, each small group suggested a different way to deal with this problem. These included directly asking Somchai to do something, going to see the head of district office, and asking the government officials to help submitting a proposal for a village project. Within the main group's discussion, they agreed with the idea of inviting the phattanakorn to visit our village and to help in setting up village project. The action plan for this activity was to organize the meeting at which the phattanakorn was asked to be the speaker. The action plan was set up and such details of meeting preparation as who would be involved, the date, time, speaker, place and facilities, were discussed and each activity was assigned to a particular committee member. I was also asked to contact the phattanakorn to provide information.

For the issue of water distribution, all small groups agreed to ask Somchai to manage it equitably. Arunya generally commented on the role of the VDC, because she expected the committee members to organize an equal water distribution. She suggested to the committee to try the process of planning-acting-observing-reflecting with the VDC members because she hoped that it might work. Satit was asked to invite Somchai. Darin suggested that women should be trained in such useful skills as
how to present our perspective and provide useful information for women effectively. Women should know about village and outside village situations. She would like to learn more - whatever would be useful. Then, Arunya informed the meeting about the klum's finances and facilities such as cooking facilities and flowers for hire.

After the meeting, the core team and some women's group committee members reflected on the circumstances and consequence of this meeting. They were satisfied with the outcomes of the meeting, even though there was no action plan for the issue to water distribution. Lalita commented that the participants did not really concentrate on what the group was talking about. Satit also expressed his opinion that the women complained too much, were rather fussy and slow in making decisions.

I noticed that most participants were middle income and poor women. Although they were faced with difficulties they were willing to participate in women's activities, because they hoped to see improvements that would be of benefit to them. The plan to get the phattanakorn involved as a resource person was a very good idea because, (i) there is tendency for the core team and klum maebaan to obtain information, (ii) the appearance of phattanakorn would put pressure on Somchai to get involved with the issue of drought and the distribution of water, and (iii) it was initiated by the villagers rather than by an outsider. The core team's and the klum maebaan's attempt to deal with the drought by seeking access to outside human resources challenged the perspective of male VDC members towards women's role. Their attempt contributed to a new image of women who were ready to collaborate alongside men in village management. The progress of their activities indirectly demonstrated their potential and capacity. Arunya's comment on the importance of skills and information related to women, reflected her awareness of the need to develop her capacity. I believe that it is this awareness that rural women require, not just the capacity to increase income. The lack of participation of employed women in village management confirmed that their increased income does not contribute to their control over village resources and outside resources. Some women commented that the photograph of women as a group somehow show the strength of women.
Arunya's conflict with her father was not uncommon in Sandee Village. Culturally, Arunya has been forced to be a good daughter by doing household work, raising pigs and becoming a factory worker. She has tried to keep her father satisfied with her behaviour. As the first child and daughter, she was expected to serve the family by doing the household's work. Her father had highly dominated her decisions, she ended up to be single and still did her family's domestic work. As he is not highly respected by other villagers, Arunya's father enjoyed exercising his power in the household over his wife and children. He seemed to be threatened by the respect village women played to Arunya, even though Arunya exercised her power outside the household.

The core team members were concerned about the small number of participants. I found that most of the absentees were wealthier women who did not suffer from drought. I thought that non-participant women might need to see some improvements in the klum maebaan before they decided to get involved. However, it would be useless for the majority poor women in the klum maebaan if these rich women got involved and dominated the klum's activities for their own sake.

Access to Useful Information

The next meeting was organized on 7 June 1992. I asked Nittiya, the phattanakorn (community development worker), to be the speaker and to talk about how to set up village projects in order to submit for funds, and about women's development at the village level. Villagers were asked to join the meeting personally by Satit and Monthon, and via siang tam sai. There were 68 participants including all committee members of the klum maebaan, the core team members, Somchai, some VDC members, the abbot and other villagers, both men and women. Nittaya gave a talk focused on (i) the project preparation and submission process, (ii) possible funding for the women's group through the MP, (iii) rural development funds for the women's group, and the so-called 'successful klum maebaan'.

Satit asked about the possibility of obtaining funds for building an artesian well in the village. According to Nittiya, there is a regular budget provided for artesian
wells, roads, electricity and irrigation. The fund would be released based on the village's project proposal. The proposal must be submitted through the sapha tambon and then to the district development committee (DDC) for approval. Woraphong asked for more details about what content should be included in the project proposal and when it could be submitted. There was also a question about whether the new irrigation canal would reach Sandee Village.

The discussion moved to the issue of 'rural women's development'. At this stage, some men left the meeting. According to Nittiya, the government budget for women's development is available to support women's organizations that already have created activities in villages and not for the establishment of new organizations. Government help is also available through MPs. The rural development fund is also available for women's organizations at low interest. She gave some examples of what she called 'successful klum maebaans' which referred to women's groups which effectively implement activities with the financial support of the Department of Community Development. She suggested that the Sandee women's group should visit these successful groups. During this discussion, the participants began to talk in small groups. I did not know what issue they discussed. Some women left the meeting after Nittiya finished her talk and left the village.

Darin asked the participants to discuss the potential of the klum maebaan in creating activities. Samon, one group member, suggested the women’s group should initiate a bamboo weaving activity, because most families weaved bamboo. The remaining participants agreed to join a bamboo weaving activity. Somchai and Arunya suggested setting up a working group for each activity. Samon and four other women were elected to be the working group for the bamboo weaving activity. There was also a suggestion made by male participants to organize a pig keeping activity. Kitti, Darin and Arunya were elected to the working group. Woraphong and I were asked by the klum maebaan committee members to contact Nittiya in order to get more information about writing project proposals and to write proposals for these two projects.
During the reflection session among the core team members and some *klum maebaan* committee members, many women commented that there had been useful information about funds being available for women's development activities either from the Department of Community Development or through the MP and about the example of the successful women's groups. They hoped that they would be provided with some funds from these sources for conducting the bamboo weaving and pig keeping activities, as required. Woraphong commented that due to their duty Somchai and Nittiya would meet in the *sapha tambon* meeting or at the district office, so it should not be difficult for Somchai to get more information. He expected that Somchai was going to set up the water project. For Satit this meeting was successful because the information about making project proposals was useful. Most participants commented that they were disappointed because most of the VDC members did not show much enthusiasm for setting up proposals.

Nittaya emphasized the availability of government funds for 'women in development' at the village level, rather than 'how to get it'. She failed to discuss the difficulties in the process, such as writing the proposal, competition between all villages, the necessity for the *po luang baan* to negotiate with the members of the *sapha tambon* to get women's project to be the first priority at tambon level, the time frame in waiting for the approval and the possibility that the project may not be approved. Nittaya's emphasis contributed to the women's emphasis on what activity they should conduct rather than on attempts to develop the capacity and skills necessary for writing up proposals and the submission process. Women were thinking about the outcome of the process without enough consideration on the process itself. In fact, it was not going to be easy to get the village project proposal approved by the *sapha tambon* committee. The *po luang baan* had to demonstrate that his village's problem is the most urgent. Moreover, in the *sapha tambon*, the *po luang baan* had to have the *phakphuak* (clique) to support his project. It would be a matter of whether he could lobby and influence other village heads to support his proposal. According to my observation of the *sapha tambon* meeting Somchai was not highly respected by his colleagues. Thus it was unlikely for him to get his project approved unless he could convince them with reasonable information. I believe that villagers should be
informed of both the advantages and the disadvantages of any innovation so that they can be prepared to deal with the difficulty. I realized that Nittiya should have been involved to participate in the planning stage before this meeting because that would have given her more idea of 'what we wanted her to say'. This was a good lesson.

Although there was no sign that the VDC would do anything about the water proposal, this meeting put somewhat more pressure on them, particularly Somchai. They certainly obtained more useful information even though at the time they did not intend to utilize it. It would be too optimistic to expect that the VDC would create change after listening to one talk. The learning process would take time. It was the *klum maebaan* which showed eagerness to make some changes by setting up working groups for bamboo weaving and pig keeping activities. Unlike the VDC members, the *klum maebaan*, like the core team, had demonstrated their capacity to utilize government officials to pursue their interest. They continuously showed their commitment and willingness to improve the villagers' situation.

The idea of setting up a bamboo weaving activity was significant because it concerned the majority of poor villagers. Poor villagers often buy bamboo on credit, and then they have to sell woven bamboo back to the same bamboo seller at a lower price than available from other buyers. The creation of the activity resulted from discussion among villagers. Their discussion contributed to the women's opportunity to make decisions that could meet their needs. In this respect, women were empowered. Besides access to outside human resources through their collaboration in discussion, the women were able to utilize resources such as Woraphong and Kitti for their collective action. As a teacher, Woraphong had more experience with paper work and had more access to development officers than other core team members. Similarly, Kitti has long had contacts with a feedstuff store owner, so he could obtain credit for pig feed for the pig keeping group. It appeared that through their collaboration, the core team and *klum maebaan* had moved beyond their first priority of facing the drought problem to bamboo weaving and pig keeping activities which increasingly served villagers needs.
Indigenous Groups and Activities as Alternative

Due to my concern about the high expectation of *klum maebaan* for government help in terms of financial help, I decided to discuss this issue with the members of the core team and the *klum maebaan*'s committee. I explained the process of getting funds and pointed to the advantages as well as disadvantages of being dependent on outside help. I also encouraged them to think about the possibility of utilizing human and material resources in the village, and to apply indigenous practices in the creation of women group activities. I suggested that during the process of learning to write proposals and submit for funds from the government, the *klum maebaan* should think about alternative way to raise a revolving fund for the bamboo weaving and pig keeping activities. The main point I tried to make was that government help is not the only alternative. The participants were confused about my information and that obtained from Nittaya, wondering why is it difficult to get financial help if the budget is already there. My comment was that although there is a budget, it is insufficient for all projects in Lamphun province and that they might get funds, but it would take no less than one year because budgets are approved annually by the Institute of Budget Bureau.

We discussed our experiences in working with such indigenous groups as *klum noom sao*, *klum chapanakit* and *klum muang faai*, and why these organizations had worked effectively, and still exist. We found that there were some common characteristics among these groups. First, the members had equal access to the decision making process, information and resources. Secondly, these organizations were initiated by the villagers, managed by villagers, aiming to benefit themselves. Thirdly, these organizations had started from what the villagers have and are familiar with. We agreed to apply a similar approach to the *klum maebaan*. Our discussion ended up with an agreement to organize a *pha pa* activity (a traditional ceremony which people contribute cash or labour for merit-making). All participants were happy with the consequence of this discussion even though the action plan was not discussed in detail as we needed the collaboration of other villagers.
I felt much better after sharing my perspective with the group, because I thought that if women could choose between being dependent and independent, it would be incorrect to miss the opportunity of being independent from outside help. Searching for outside help is necessary when dealing with something urgent and beyond the capacity of villagers. For example, Sandee Village needed either old artesian well to be repaired or a new artesian well which would cost more than 150,000.00 baht. It is unlikely that villagers could create activities to get this amount of money within a short period of time. I felt that the klum maebaan should move from small to bigger projects. Project writing and submission, even though they were not beyond women’s capacity, are new for women compared to pha pa which they all have experienced for a long time. The women needed to learn more about the process and the related power structure.

The idea of organizing the pha pa was not immediately translated into action because the core team and the klum maebaan alone would not be able to organize this activity. It is a cultural based activity that needs the collaboration of the po luang baan, the abbot, the elders, women, men and youth. It was necessary to inform the sapha tambon committee to get agreement and for the distribution of the information to neighbouring villagers so that they could participate. For these reasons, in the meantime, I became involved in other related activities.

At this stage, the core team members and some klum maebaan committee members may not have realized that they were gradually developing their confidence through cycles of planning, acting, observing, reflecting. In fact, they had developed their capacity to speak out, listen, negotiate, communicate, share, convince, get help from other members and learn from their mistakes and experiences. The women had managed their time with the group so that domestic work was also done.

**Using the Village Leader’s Negligence as an Opportunity to Build up Awareness**

There was a letter from the head of the District Office which asked every village head to report on village water sources. Toranin, one of the po luang baan's assistants, brought this letter to me one day and asked for help because Somchai had
ignored this letter and refused to write a report. According to Toranin, Somchai complained that he had already sent out information regarding the village's water sources. Nevertheless, Toranin thought that even though some information was submitted, Somchai should report again. Toranin told me that he had observed what the core team members and myself were doing but he was too busy to join. He thought that myself and the core team members could help. He had discussed this with Satit, who told him to ask me. Due to the urgency, I quickly discussed this circumstance with some core team members.

In the letter, the po luang baan was asked by the district officer to report the village situation regarding water sources. This was a good opportunity to at the same time inform the village's water problem. Indeed, Somchai could easily obtain this information by talking with the 'water committee', the other VDC members and other villagers who knew the situation. However, he apparently did not realize the importance of this opportunity. I later decided to discuss this with Somchai because I was confident that the report would be helpful in the future. I encouraged Somchai to write a report but he refused to do so (later I learned that he did not know how to do it) and instead he asked me to do it. I decided to help with the condition that Somchai had to organize an informal discussion with other VDC members in order to gain information about village water sources. I raised this condition because I was sure that Somchai did not know how to deal with paper work and also that he did not like to ask other VDC members for help. At this stage, it was my hope that the intended discussion among them would encourage Somchai to realize the importance of working together.

The Po Luang Baan finally gets Involved with the Water Problem

On 22 June 1992, Somchai asked the VDC to meet at the sala (village meeting place). Most of the core team members participated. Heng, Somchai's son-in-law was asked to share his experience as an expert in construction engineering. There was no facilitator; my role in this discussion was that of a passive observer. The main issue discussed was village water sources. Heng also suggested writing a proposal for the re-construction of the village small faai because it could not store water during the dry
season due to a leak in its base. I accepted the task of writing the proposal, with the condition that Somchai had to collaborate. Somchai suggested organizing a meeting. The core team members were very surprised with his suggestion but they appreciated it. During this discussion, Somchai informed us that five VDC members were invited to join the sapha tambon meeting in 24 June 1992. Somchai nominated Satit, Darin, and three other VDC members who were not willing to go. Darin then nominated Monthon and Damrong, and Satit nominated Ped. All participants agreed.

Finally, Somchai had to get involved with the water problem. According to Toranin, it was core team's and the klum maebaen's activities that contributed to this change. They had demonstrated their concerns in improving the village situation, and Toranin noticed. Being in the position of the po luang baan, Somchai became involved due mainly to the consciousness of his assistant. At the beginning Toranin had placed his faith in Somchai but when his expectation was not achieved, he sought another source of help even though it is not his direct responsibility.

Reflection on Process

I was very impressed with Toranin for his responsibility. I noticed that, since the core team members started their activities, villagers had came to us with expectations that the core team members could help or do something. I would argue that without the concrete activities conducted by us, Toranin would never have developed his trust in us. The idea of repairing a village small fuaai was another unanticipated outcome. It is clear that whenever there was a discussion or meeting, the result somewhat led to further proposals for collective action. Increasingly, events supported my view that what had been needed in Sandee Village was an initiator and a facilitator who could create the atmosphere necessary for the collaboration of villagers where all participants fully participate in decision making process.

My experience in collaboration with the core team members, in a community where the formal leader had ignored his expected duty and role while villagers needed to see improvement, suggests it is necessary to have a facilitator who can confidently encourage the committed villagers to be the initiators. By facilitator, I refer to one
who can help to create an atmosphere in which all participants of an initial group have
a chance to share their opinions and experiences, and feel comfortable to do so.
Facilitation should contribute to genuine participation in which all participants
collaborate in making decisions in every stage of activities. I found that at the
beginning, the core team, particular female members, did not have adequate confidence
even to share their opinion. At this stage, they had demonstrated that they now had
more confidence in getting the po huang baan involved in the water problem.

It took approximately two and a half months from the first meeting of the core
team members for the initial concern (the water problem) to be fully involved and
discussed by the VDC members. This confirmed the view that it takes more than one
cycle of collaborative action research for the objectives of any initial idea to be
achieved. The activities took placed before this stage also supported the view that
there is no fixed formula, methodology or approach for creating a collaborative
process in empowering women in rural development. Experiences so far showed that
the process must be flexible. Any intended action of the group must be dependent on
decisions made by all participants or at least a majority. I have learned that the
outsider, whether researcher or development agent, for example, Nittaya, has to know
the actual current situation and the relationship among the participants. As a facilitator,
I had to develop my skills for facilitating in order to make sure that all members had a
chance to share their opinions, experiences, and decisions so that it could be assumed
that the consensus come from all participants or at least the majority of the group.

At the beginning of this study, I had thought that I could empower villagers. At
this stage I found that I could not empower villagers. What I could do was to help to
create a situation in which villagers, exercise power without totally challenging the
current power structure. The core team learned to share and contribute their
perspectives and experiences which led to useful collective actions, and most
importantly they were confident enough to make decisions by themselves, and then be
responsible for those decisions.

I realized that project writing was new and alienating for the core team, the
klum maebaan, and the VDC. They needed a proper process and an adequate time
frame to learn to do it by themselves with support, in one way or another, by either insiders or outsiders. If they failed to do it themselves, they could have become dependent on someone outside the village, rather than themselves. As I was asked to write the project proposal, I shared my experiences with the core team members, the *klum maebaan* committee members and the VDC members.

**LEARNING MORE ABOUT THE LOCAL POWER STRUCTURE**

The following section discusses the access of some *klum maebaan* committee members and some VDC members to useful information through the *sapha tambon* channel. This opportunity was a result of the negotiation of these villagers with Somchai.

**Preparation for Participation in the Sapha tambon Meeting**

According to the previous discussion, the core team members, notably Satit, Darin, Damrong and two VDC members were to be the representatives of the village to join the *sapha tambon* meeting. However, the invitation letter did not state the main issue of the meeting. Some of core team members guessed that the topic might concern the water problem. For this reason, the core team members agreed to prepare information and the village request. A discussion was organized at 8:00 p.m. on 23 June 1992 at the sala. Incidentally, Kitti, the head of the working group for the pig-keeping project, and some male teenagers also joined this discussion. The major issue was the village's problem of drought. This discussion was very informal and relaxing. Satit was asked by myself to facilitate the discussion. Arunya asked Darin to request information about help for the *klum maebaan*. An action plan was set up to specify who would be responsible for particular issues. For example, Damrong was to ask about water problem, Darin was to request for some help for the *klum maebaan*, and Satit was to share his ideas about other problems. As I would be a passive observer, I was asked to record the details of the outcome of each issue. All participants were happy to express their opinions without hesitation. They were very concerned. The atmosphere of this meeting was very good in terms of enthusiasm and friendliness. Nobody dominated the meeting.
The opportunity for some klum maebaan committee members and some VDC members to join the sapha tambon meeting was a very good start because it would help the participants to better understand the local administration system. Their understanding of details of the issues they were responsible for contributed to their confidence.

Access to more Information from the Sapha Tambon Channel

The sapha tambon monthly meeting is a regular meeting of the sapha tambon committee, (consisting of po luang baan from each village chaired by the kamnan, head of tambon), working groups which support tambon development activities, and other related government officials invited by the kamnan. The meeting was held at soon sarapee (sapha tambon meeting hall) about 2 kilometres from Sandee Village. I saw this meeting as a case study which the core team members and the VDC members could observe the tambon meeting and compare it with our meetings. Forty-eight participants from villages joined this meeting. The meeting started one hour late because the kamnan, the chairman of this meeting wanted to wait for the po luang baan of Thamai Village next to Sandee Village. The issues discussed were as follows:

1. Every po luang was asked for co-operation in the data collection for the basic minimum needs (BMN) of every village for the National Rural Development Project. Each question on the questionnaire was explained in order to make sure that all village representatives understood the questionnaire. However, only half of the participants had questionnaires in hand, and additional sets of questionnaires were not available. A number of participants did not really understand some sections. I asked some questions regarding the data collecting in order to make the explanations more clear for participants because I thought that they had not totally followed what was explained by the officials.

When Koranee, the deputy district officer, explained how to fill in the water sources form, Damrong asked about the budget for 150,000 baht for a new artesian well at our village which was on the list on the white board in the meeting room. We were informed that this budget had been transferred to Nongtha Village where the kamnan was the village head. The reason was that the Department of Natural
Resources could not find underground water in Sandee Village which could be available for an artesian well within the amount of 150,000 baht. The provincial development committee decided to transfer to Nongtha Village, because, otherwise the amount of money must be returned to the Bureau of Budget. Damrong was fairly upset and kept asking questions about the budget for our village. Finally, Koranee promised that he would submit the proposal for a project of new artesian for our village to the Department of Public Works.

The welfare of old-aged people. Villagers aged 60 years and over would get a card which would allow them to claim for free medicine and treatment. Each village needed to survey to find out how many eligible villagers there were and then report to the District Public Health office so that welfare cards could be made.

There would be a workshop regarding a basic law in every day life, on 7-8 July 1992 at the meeting room of The District Office. Five VDC members including one woman and the po luang baan from each village were asked to participate in this workshop.

Nittaya informed the meeting about the foundation of women's committees which consists of at least five women as the VDC members in the each village. Po luang baan was asked to report the details of the committee members.

The Kaset tambon informed the meeting that he will provide free fungicide for rice seed at the kamnan's house on 26 June 1992. All villagers were welcome to collect fungicide.

The Po luang baan of Sukjai village asked for cooperation from every village to buy tickets for a music performance organized for raising funds which would be used to buy musical instruments for Sukjai Primary School. All villages agreed to cooperate.

Somchai did not say anything, even during the discussion about the loss of village's artesian budget. There were a total of eight women at this meeting. However, none of them asked questions or shared any idea. Darin did not ask about the budget for the klum maebaan. Ped, Satit and Monthon did not say anything. The other two representatives from Sandee Village, notably Thongsu, the tambon doctor, and Boriboon, a village intellectual, did not give any opinions.
In reflection on this meeting, Satit, Damrong, Monthon and Darin all expressed their appreciation of their first experience in participating in the sapha tambon meeting. They realized the advantages of participation in tambon meeting because various useful information was provided. They were wondering why Somchai did not comment about our village's artesian project. They were wondering whether he had known about the transfer of the budget, and why he did not tell the villagers. Damrong commented that if more budget was needed to keep this project, he believed villagers would be happy to collaborate in collecting additional finance as we used to do with road, small faai and electricity. Damrong said:

I never realized the importance of the sapha tambon meeting. Now I know we can obtain a lot of useful information from the meeting. When Nittaya was telling about the process of asking for the budget the other day, I did not really understand. I learned more from this meeting.

Damrong was very upset when he reflected about the loss of the artesian budget. He pointed that he never knew that there had been a budget for a new artesian well for our village. He said:

The Po luang baan should have fought for this budget because even though it will not be enough, villagers can add the extra money like we did with our road construction.

Darin complained that she did not really understand the questionnaire and some words due to her limitation in reading. She was not happy with the way Damrong asked questions and expressed his ideas. For her, it was very impolite. She also commented that:

There was no issue directly related to women except the 'formation of women committee' in the village. I do not really know why we need this committee and who are going to be on this committee. Our village already has klum maebaan committee, I think we do not need to have more.

Satit and Monthon saw Damrong as a hero. Satit was impressed by Damrong because he asked questions until Koranee promised in front of many participants that he would submit a new artesian project for Sandee Village. Satit expected that Koranee would do what he promised because there were a numbers of witnesses. Satit complained about the collection of village data:

I do not know why we have to collect data. I cannot see the benefit villagers can get from doing this. The previous collection took almost ten days to finish.
Nothing has happened yet. This time I think the questionnaire is even more complicated. I do not understand many words.

Monthon pointed out another issue that annoyed him:

I do not know what is a usual practice for meetings. I think it is not fair for villagers to wait for the officers or the po luang baan. I feel that Suthon [po luang baan of Thamai village] is so powerful that even the palad amphoe [deputy head of district officer] has to wait for him.

A common comment made by these villagers was that the sapha tambon meeting was much different from the meetings organized by the core team members or the klum maebaan committee that in the former they were not asked the questions or encouraged to speak by the kamnan or other government officials, whereas in the latter the participants were encouraged to share their perspectives by the facilitator.

**Reflection on the Process**

I was very pleased with the core team members and the VDC members because their participation in this meeting had contributed to their increased understanding about the role of the sapha tambon, its committee, the role of po luang and the domination and influence of some government officials in this sapha (council). It is necessary for villagers to know the role of the sapha tambon in village development. What they observed in this meeting was the reality which needed to be considered for their future collective action.

This meeting was heavily dominated by the government officers. It demonstrated the nature of the 'top-down' strategy of government authorities where villagers were more or less ordered to participate in meetings and listen to information that has already been decided, to a certain extent, about 'what villagers have to do' without being asked for their opinions about what they want to do. Participants did not know why they had to collect village data or what would be the benefit from the information. This would not lead to the voluntary participation of villagers and could contribute to villagers' ignorance. For me, the meeting had no sense of genuine participation.
Although it is clear that this meeting process was very dominated by officers, it is useful for villagers to participate because, at least, useful information was provided. There is also some possibility of an unanticipated action like what Damrong did in asking question about the budget for an artesian well. I later found out that, in fact, Thongsu and Boriboon knew about the transfer of budget, but they did not know the reason for this. Boriboon claimed that Somchai also knew this information. It is quite clear that lack of diffusion of crucial information by a few who did have access to information has contributed to the disadvantage of the village as a whole. Here, the issue of power is also involved. The provincial development committee exercised their power in the transfer of budget to Thamai village. But why Thamai, why not somewhere else? The answer of this question could be linked to the influence of the kamnan on this decision. To the best of my knowledge, the kamnan could manipulate the decision making process because of his authority as the chairman of the sapha tambon committee. This incident confirmed that it is not always that case that sapha tambon will enhance the local participation in decision-making process as its superficial rhetoric claims. In this case, instead of making the tambon more independent and capable of implementing a rural development programme, the sapha tambon enhanced the control of local government authorities, notably the provincial development committee, over the utilization of resources provided by the government.

The sapha tambon committee in tambon Sukjai is not quite a people's council as its rhetoric maintained. Rather it is a council of local elites, because it consists of such local elite as the kamnan acting as the chairman of the council and all the pol luang baan within that tambon. Any State funding to the sapha tambon would strengthen the power of the already powerful local elites who constitute the majority of the sapha's members. I see the Sapha Tambon Sukjai as a 'male-sapha' where there were no female committee members, except government officials who occasionally were women. Through this 'male-sapha', women were less likely to be beneficiaries. The support of the autonomy of the sapha tambon was used by many politicians only during the season of ha-siang (asking for votes) for general elections. There was no attempt made by these politicians to correct the structure of inequality in our community and in Thai society as a whole. Additionally, as the sapha tambon
committee has no independent legal status, it is unlikely to be an independent organization for local administration.

The request of the Department of Community Development for the election of five women to be women committee members of the VDC in each village was another example of the government's top-down strategy. The underlying assumption of this strategy is the attempt to get women to participate in village administration and management so that their needs will be considered. Although this strategy could be seen as a short-cut to get women involved in the village power structure as VDC members, this strategy failed to consider the reality that in rural Thai society there is only a small percentage of women who are village or tambon leaders due mainly to the culture. Simply adding, the 'five names of Sandee women' would not make any change to their status or the status of their sisterhood. To 'add' women to the VDC only 'in name' could be seen as a small change in power structure that will not contribute to much change in practice. It will not empower women. I believe that women's empowerment cannot be authorized by the government officials or anyone else, because, through recruitment alone, women do not enhance their capacity and skills in dealing with male partners who dominate the prevailing power structure.

Women themselves should be encouraged to become consciously aware of their own problems and develop their capacity to cope with the problems. I believe that, unless women become active decision makers, they are disempowered. Another point is that men will not change their attitude towards women by 'adding' women on the committee unless women demonstrate their ability. I believe that, in a male-dominated community like Sandee, it will take some time to create an atmosphere in which women's capacities can be accepted as the basis of genuine participation as VDC members and in which they could influence the direction of village development. It will also take time for men to change their attitude towards women as equal partners.

This requirement also reflects the limited space and freedom of development agents at the local level who have to implement the strategy designed by planners at the central level. I do not know whether Nittaya really agreed with this strategy,
however, she has no choice. Like other development agents, she became an instrument of the central government which imposed its policy on rural villagers under the rural development framework. Empowering rural women can hardly take place by the efforts of such development agents. I believe that some rural development programmes planned by the planners at the central level have limited the possibility of empowering rural women by the local officials. This is another dilemma in empowering women in rural development in Thailand. Unless development agents have more space and freedom to facilitate the collaboration of rural women in the decision making process, rural women need to empower themselves. The involvement of women in this meeting at the sapha tambon was seen as women's participation' in the eyes of government officials. In the eyes of villagers, kaan mii suan ruam (participation) denotes willing and conscious involvement in collective action. For this meeting some women (and men) viewed the involvement as a 'waste of time', and 'useless'.

Although a number of NGOs and government officials have come to admit that they were neither supposed to act as the villagers' coach or the pusher of ideas to the rural people, the 'top-down' nature of rural development programmes reflects the fact that the policy makers and the development planners at the central government heavily influence the practitioners at the local level. These planners and policy makers failed to take into account local development agents' and villagers' perspective and the local wisdom. Their policy and plans limit the freedom of both development agents' and villagers' opportunities to practice their own thinking and action.

**Tambon Committee for Women's Development: Whose Interest?**

Another example of 'top-down' strategy was the formation of the Tambon Committee for Women's Development (kammakaan phattana satri radub tambon) which was chosen from the committee members of women's groups within Tambon Sukjai. This committee was expected to develop the co-operation among village women within the tambon. The Kammart's wife was chosen to be the chairwoman while the wife of the wealthy Thamai po luang baan became the vice-chairwoman. Arunya
was chosen to be the secretary of this committee. According to Arunya, there was no useful activity created by this committee except some information about activities organized by the government officials at the district and provincial levels.

For me, this committee is similar to many other government-led committees or groups which became the instrument of the government officials to imposed their information or activities upon. As its formation was not based on their common needs but rather imposed by officials, I believe that it is unlikely for this committee to initiate activity that meets the needs of village women within the tambon.

Doing It Differently: Diffusion of Information for All

The core team realized the necessity of the transfer of information on some issues directly concerning villagers, for example, free fungicide from the kesat tambon, the old-aged health card, loss of artesian project and village data collecting. Satit asked Somchai to organized a meeting on 25 June 1992 aimed to inform villagers about these matters. There were thirty participants. Woraphong facilitated this meeting. Somchai only said some words, then he asked me to talk to participants. I was very disappointed with this circumstance because I expected him to mention the artesian project. Instead of giving information myself, I asked those core team members who had participated in the sapha tambon meeting to tell the participants. Because there was no sample of the questionnaire, participants were informed that there would be interviews around the end of July. Darin, Arunya and some women committee members decided to choose five committee members of the klum maebaan to report to Nittaya instead of electing five new women, because none of the existing klum maebaan committee had yet got involved in the village administration structure. Darin complained that she was not sure what the new elected women were supposed to do.

Most participants were very interested in the reasons why the budget for new artesian well was transferred to Nongtha Village, and why the village data would be collected again. Some participants remembered that it was collected two years ago. I explained that it was the government's policy to obtain the most current information of village situation.
Damrong pointed to the problem of water distribution and asked the VDC members to do something because he did not see any improvement. Some women suggested that, to fairly distribute water, the water truck should use different stop points in turn. Somchai complained that he had asked villagers not to fight over water but villagers were still fighting each other. Satit suggested getting the district officers responsible for the development of water sources and to provide information about the duty and responsibility of the VDC. He also suggested that it would be useful for villagers to have a chance to discuss with the concerned government officers why the idea of establishing the VDC had not translated into practice in the case of Sandee Village. This suggestion was to agreed to by most participants. Woraphong and myself were asked to contact the district officers. Damrong suggested we invite Koranee, because he had promised to submit the new project proposal for Sandee Village. This idea was supported. Nevertheless, there was no conclusion about the intended action.

The pha pa activity was also discussed, including such particular details as the objectives and the action plan. I noticed that the women were more interested in this activity. Participants agreed with the objectives proposed by klum maebaan committee that is to raise money for setting up a revolving fund and for improving the child care centre. It was agreed that this pha pa activity should be held on 19 July, 1992 and should be organized primarily by the klum maebaan with the cooperation of other villagers. Lalita suggested that, as this ceremony would be organised by the klum maebaan, the committee should set up an action plan to define who would be responsible for each activity, otherwise one person would probably have to do too much work. A rough action plan was discussed and set up. Participants agreed to meet again on 28 June 1992, in order to discuss issues not concluded in this meeting.

In the reflection session, the core team members expressed their satisfaction with the agreement of VDC members and the klum maebaan to organize a workshop in order to get the district officials involved in the village's drought problems, and discussions about the role and duty of the VDC. (This was the initial idea of the core team members when they first got together). Satit pointed out that:
It really took time to get to what we wanted to do at the outset, because we could not directly tell the VDC members that they have inadequate ability. I think all activities we have done have led to the agreement of every concerned party to organize the workshop.

He commented that Somchai rarely called for meetings in order to transfer information received from the sapha tambon meetings. He normally used the loudspeaker instead. However, for some issues that need villagers' opinions, there is need for informal discussion.

**Reflection on the Process: The Increasing Confidence and Skills of Participants**

In my view, Damrong, Monthon, Satit and Darin in particular had done well in terms of both their presentation and the details of information. They succeeded in distributing the information from the sapha tambon meeting because they were prepared in advance of this meeting. I noticed that they not only gave information about what was discussed and informed but they also expressed their own opinions. This was particularly clear in Darin's case since she was very confident. I thought that this was because she was directly involved in the previous meeting and had prepared the details of her presentation beforehand.

In the sapha tambon meeting, giving information had been almost the end of the process. Participants were asked or even ordered to do what had already been decided. In this village meeting, information was provided to participants for further discussion and the sharing of their perspectives towards the issues. Then it was the participants who made the decision whether they would take collective action.

It is more informal and relaxed to meet in a small group, for example, when there was a discussion among the core team members. In these circumstances, participants felt more comfortable to speak out and share their perspectives. However, often meetings among a large number of villagers are also needed in order to seek a consensus. A large meeting allowed the members to practice speaking, presentation, and facilitative skills. It was not easy to encourage the members to practice these skills. They were encouraged to practice by answering my questions about their perspective. Leading questions were sometimes useful. At the beginning villagers might only smile
and say yes or no. For the core team, discussing issues before presenting to a large group provided them more confidence. Expressing their opinions about what they had experienced became more easy for them.

For me, facilitation is often difficult to practice. Often, I found it difficult to manage the discussion of the issues and conclusion in the limited time available to villagers. The time limitation put pressure on me because I had to make sure that the powerless group had a chance to share their opinions, and most importantly, that everyone participated in the process of decision making. I also found that, as an educated woman, the core team members, the klum maebaan committee and other villagers placed high expectations on me. It was not easy to change the beliefs, attitudes and expectations of villagers towards an educated person. Although villagers realized that 'nobody is perfect.' They tended to want to listen to my opinion before they made decisions. The message I always gave them was that, because nobody is perfect, we need to be in group in order to get close to a 'perfect performance'. However, villagers continued to expect me to do better, to know more, and to make no mistakes.

There are many factors which contributed to the development of the women's skills, capacity and confidence. These factors include access to useful and correct information, a chance to practice speaking at meetings and the guidance and support of a facilitator and other members of the core team. It would be true to say that their confidence had developed through their collaboration in the processes of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and re-planning. Since they were involved in this research at the outset, they consciously observed what happened, what was going on, and what was the intended activity.

I noticed that, in some meetings and discussions, the core team members somewhat dominated the situation by providing their own perspectives instead of encouraging other participants to share their opinions. Although at this state, the poor women (and poor men) had not yet developed some skills that the core team members had developed. However, this would be less of a problem as long as the objective and
direction of their the activities were helping the poor villagers. The domination of the core team members could lead to benefits in their own affairs without considering their poorest counterparts.

I thought that it was quite acceptable for the core team members to use their improved capacity and skills for their own benefit, whether intentionally or unintentionally. It was my hope, however, that the villagers would develop not only their own skills and capacity, but to build up a wider sense of community so that another new group of facilitators would emerge who would further create an appropriate atmosphere for still more powerless villagers to empower themselves. In this way, more and more powerless villagers would be empowered.

As this study was my first involvement in collaborative action research, my high expectations contributed a lot of pressure on myself in bringing improvement. This pressure in turn contributed to a concentration on the context of change and improvement rather than on the research context. It took quite some time for villagers, particularly the core team members, to realize that they could not expect everything from me and most importantly, they must not depend on me.

Later they agreed to practice facilitating discussions and the meetings. As Arunya was elected to be the president of the klum maebaan, the circumstances forced her to learn and practice facilitation. Through a long process of learning and reflecting from mistakes, and being criticized and supported by the core team members, Arunya later could facilitate the klum maebaan's discussions more effectively. I believe that, if villagers have a chance to learn and practice by themselves, they later could come to depend on themselves instead of outsiders.
COLLECTIVE ACTION BROUGHT CHANGES: WORKSHOP AND PHA PA ACTIVITIES

The Villagers As Decision Makers

The core team members, some VDC members and some klum maebaan committee members, agreed to meet again on 28 June 1992. This meeting aimed to get villagers together in order to further discuss the action plan for workshop and the pha pa activity. In addition, the village small faai project, the pig keeping and bamboo weaving activities and the re-election of male and female representatives of 15 khaet (sectors) in the village were also discussed. Woraphong and myself were asked to facilitate this meeting. Kingkaew was asked to announce the meeting on the loudspeaker. Ninety-seven participants (62 women and 35 men) participated in this meeting. Somchai was the chairman and he was asked to talk to participants at the beginning of the meeting. Kitti and Samon reported the progress of the pig-keeping and bamboo weaving activities, respectively. The core team reported the progress of these project proposals. There had not been much progress for the project to repair the village small faai since the VDC members needed the suggestions of Heng. The issue of khaet representatives was discussed, then female and male representatives of 15 khaet were re-elected. New representatives were asked to collaborate in the pha pa and workshop activities.

Then Woraphong facilitated the discussion of the action plan for the pha pa activity. The objectives and rough action plan developed in the previous meeting were reviewed, since many participants did not know about this proposed activity. The abbot agreed with the objective of this activity (to raise fund for klum meabaan and child care centre). Somchai was asked to inform the sapha tambon committee members and asked for permission to make sure that there was to be no similar activity in other villages on the same day. Participants agreed to hold the pha pa ceremony on 19 July 1992. Klum maebaan committee members agreed to be organizers with the mutual help of the core team, the VDC members and other villagers. All intended activities were discussed and there were volunteers who would be responsible for each aspect. Each khate agreed to prepare their own kruea taan (money tree, a tree branch
with banknotes and other materials such as books and pencil hanging by yellow robe). As the organizer, the *klum maebaan* also agreed to set up their own *krua taan*. Woraphong suggested to persuade the youth to join the activity. The core team members agreed to organize informal discussions with the youth on that evening. As it was the first meeting among youth for three years, I was asked to facilitate this discussion. I asked Prasit, who works as *kaset tambon* in another province, to facilitate the meeting of youth because I wanted to get more resource people involved.

Then the discussion moved to the details of workshop preparation. The *Klum maebaan* and the core team agreed to organize this workshop on 16 July 1992. I informed the participants that the *nai amphoe* (head of district), and two *palad amphoe* (deputy heads of district), would certainly join the workshop. The action plan for the workshop was discussed, particularly about what villagers would obtain from it. Satit asked participants to tell non-participants to join the workshop. All 15 *khate* agreed to provided food and drink for the participants in the workshop and Darin and Lalita agreed to manage this task. Arunya and other *klum maebaan* members agreed to prepare *sala* for this meeting. The abbot and Woraphong suggested preparing a chart in order to provide general village information. The abbot volunteered to help writing and drawing a village map. Damrong suggested that the organizer should officially invite the *po luang baan* of other *mooban* (villages) to participate in both the workshop and *pha pa* activities. This suggestion was accepted and the invitation letters were prepared by my research assistant, then Somchai was asked to distribute these letters at the next *sapha tambon* meeting.

During the reflection session, Satit commented that he was satisfied with the action plans because the intended actions were made by a large number of villagers. He expressed his hope members that:

.... the *po luang* and other VDC members will learn from these preparations and may realize that he should discuss the village affairs with other Village Development Committee members and, if it is possible, with all villagers.

*Klum maebaan* committee members, particularly Arunya, and the core team members were satisfied with this meeting. Arunya was happy because the arrangements for the
pha pa activity were discussed and planned, and this process, as well as the decisions, were made by a large number of villagers. Darin was very impressed with the crowd of participants, because she viewed the increased numbers of participants as one factor that could contribute to development of the villagers' awareness of collaboration.

Damrong was fairly disappointed with the small faai project, because there was no progress. The participants were quite excited with the proposed visits of the district officer and his deputy because they might have a chance to discuss the water problem, the village small faai repair project, and the progress of the new artesian project that Koranee had promised. It seemed to me that Somchai was quite happy with this meeting because of the crowd of participants. Villagers were surprised that I could manage to get the nai amphoe and his deputy to visit our village.

For me, it was the first time that the proposed actions would concern the majority of villagers. At this stage, although these intended activities may not have served the initial objective of the core team members (solving the water problem), they were the outcome of the collaboration within the initial group. The most fascinating thing to me was that, through our collaboration, the klum maebaan came to the front as a major actor. The increased number of villagers in this meeting was another positive sign which contributed to increase the cheerfulness of the core team members. An increased number of villagers participated in this meeting because the familiar pha pa activity, which was based on their beliefs and culture, was being planned. Although workshops were not new villagers were interested in the planned workshop because of the visit by of nai amphoe and his deputy as, these officials had never visited Sandee Village before.

Nevertheless, I noticed that there were some men and women, who had actively participated in klum room aso before their marriage, who hardly participated in the current activities organized by the core team, the klum maebaan or the VDC. There are many factors that become constraints for participation in village activities. Nongkran, a female tobacco factory worker, used to be an active leader of the klum room sao and was later the secretary of the government-sponsored women's group.
She hardly participated in the *klum maebaan* activities because of time limitations due mainly to the domestic and factory work. She said:

In the past, I was so proud to be elected to be the *klum* leader and enjoyed working with villagers, because I was single and had nothing much to take care of. According to my experience, I realize how important and useful being in a group is, and how difficult it is to effectively manage a group. In fact, I want to participate in every activity because I know that those who organize activities need all villagers to collaborate. I feel that the more participants the more we gain.

Nevertheless, since Nongkran got married she was too busy. She mentioned that:

It is even harder if a husband does not understand and see the importance of the *klum maebaan*. *Klum maebaan* committee members substantially need understanding and support from their family otherwise it could end up with conflict. Due to his job [as cupboard seller], my husband cannot support the housework, my kids keep me busy, it is really difficult to get chance to do something I like. Now, for me, family has to come first.

There are some other factors that contributed to non-participation in the activities initiated by the core team, the *klum maebaan* or the VDC. First, as I have explored earlier, villagers tended to solve a problem by themselves, individually or collectively. If the problem goes beyond their capacity and needed the cooperation among villagers, they tended to wait for initiation by the *po luang baan*. Secondly, many villagers did not understand the appearance of the core team, its link with the *klum maebaan*, and what these groups tried to do. This was due largely to their lack of participation. It would be incorrect for an ‘initiating’ group to assume that the rest of villagers should know the objective of their group and the process of collaboration. It was only after this meeting that the goals of the core team and the *klum maebaan* appeared to become clear for non-participating villagers.

**Workshop implementation**

The plan for the workshop was discussed and then revised at the meeting on 12 July. The preparation of the *sala* for the workshop on 15 July was voluntarily done by the core team members, some VDC members, and some *klum maebaan* committee members. The workshop was held on 16 July 1992 aiming to provide an opportunity for VDC members and concerned government development agents to share their
perspectives and experiences. There were 123 participants (82 women and 41 men) including five po luang baan who participated only in the opening session of the workshop. Woraphong facilitated the morning session which began with a short religious activity led by Suphong, the district officer. Then Arunya presented the rationale and the objectives of the workshop. Suphong briefly talked about the essential role of the VDC members and the collaboration of villagers in village administration and management. Then he left the village. Other po luang also left the workshop after that. Boriphat then talked about the significance of improvements of the skills of VDC members for effective access to the government. Koranee talked about the essential roles and duties of the VDCs and the khaet-representatives in village administration and development. Apart from being an audience, the klum maebaan members also served lunch provided by villagers in each khaet. All women helped serving lunch and doing the dish-washing.

As Nittaya, who I had asked to talk in the afternoon session, did not come, I asked Koranee to run this session instead. Koranee began by briefly exploring what he called the ‘village development process’ which included identifying problems, setting up goals, setting up action plans, evaluation of action and the continuity of the project. He emphasized that the action plan must be practical. In discussion, he followed the action plan that I had prepared with Nittaya. By the application of brain-storming techniques, the participants were asked to form six small groups. Each group was asked to discuss the most urgent problem, and asked what they would do if they were VDC members. During the formation of small groups, the workshop was full of laughing and confusion. At this stage, a number of women who were absent for dish-washing came back to the small group discussion. Some women who did not join the workshop at the beginning had watched the participants from the house near the sala. Somchai and Toranin did not join any small group.

Each group was asked to present the outcome of their discussion to the main forum. The presentation session was very lively, relaxed and informal. There were various urgent problems proposed by each group: the need for a seed-dropping machine, mosquito nets; books and facilities and lunch for children in child care centre,
repairing the old artesian well, just water distribution, establishment of a village revolving fund and improvement of the village library. Koranee then summarized on the outcome and asked Satit to record.

He asked all participants to consider these suggestions which he viewed as 'actions plans' and said they should look for ways to translate them into action. He also emphasized that all villagers need to cooperate with the VDC. The Po luang and other VDC members alone could never improve the village without the cooperation of villagers.

During the reflection, the organizers expressed their satisfaction with the results of the workshop. For them, the positive signs were the appearance of the nai amphoe and two deputy nai amphoe, the number of participants which implied the scope of the information distribution, the collaboration of klum maebaan members, and the suggestions of participants towards village's problems. Klum maebaan committee members, particularly Arunya, Darin and Lalita, were excited with the fact that four of the six representatives in the small group discussion, were women. For them, these women were keen to take this opportunity to demonstrate their capacity. They were concerned about the need of mosquito nets for the child care centre. They expected that the klum maebaan would get enough funds from the pha pa activity to solve this problem. They also commented that the message from Koranee was very clear in saying it was the po luang baan and other VDC members who needed to facilitate the process so the needs of villagers would be met with the support of all villagers. However Darin mentioned that

I cannot predict that the po luang baan and other VDC members will do something about what has been suggested by each group. I do not think the po luang baan could follow all issues because I noticed that he did not pay attention. The VDC should have been recorded what representatives have suggested and consider for further action.

Arunya was very excited. She reflected that:

It was the first time in my life that I spoke in front of a lot of villagers and the officers. I was very nervous at the beginning but I felt better after a while. And when I finished, I felt relief. I am not sure what the VDC members think about this meeting. For me, I was so lucky to have this opportunity. In our village, individual women have never been respected as leader but when we work as a
group, the villagers accept and respect our group. Being within a group, I can feel good and confident.

I thought that the ideas, information, and issues provided and discussed by the officers, and the participants were fairly directly related with the objective of the workshop. However, the speakers emphasized the theoretical level of local administration. There was not much focus on the problems from Sandee Village. Actually, I had talked with the speakers in advance about what the core team expects from this workshop. During this discussion I noticed that Koranee and Boriphat were rather surprised, because they had never been asked to be serious about the content of their talk. However, it did not turn out as I expected, because what they mentioned dealt abstractly with 'what the po luang baan and other VDC members should do' without touching on the current water problem of Sandee Village. I thought that villagers might found it difficult to link all this with the reality in the village. Nevertheless, Koranee did go closer to the actual role and duty of the VDC members by asking them about their current discussions. Perhaps I was too eager to see some change although I realized that it is impossible for VDC members to understand the process of access to government resources within one or two meetings or workshops. I believe that after VDC members have experienced for some time they could learn from their practical experience.

The small group discussion was far more helpful for participants in developing their skills and capacity. This discussion encouraged villagers to consciously re-think and identify their current problems, the roots of problems and possible solutions. In this workshop, these problems were heard by a lot of villagers particularly the po luang baan and VDC members who are expected to do something about them. Through this discussion participants were empowered by having an opportunity to voice their concerns and demonstrate their awareness of their current situation. Without this discussion, they would not have a chance to publicly reflect on what they viewed as crucial problems. I believe that the current problems of small groups of poor villagers need to be heard by the majority of people because this could contribute to the awareness of the whole community towards the problems. Additionally, through this workshop, VDC members directly gained more information about villagers' problems. I
believe that, under the prevailing power structure of Sandee Village, it was this kind of workshop which could be utilized as a tool to facilitate the empowerment process. However, without the collaboration of the core team members and some klum maebaan members, this workshop would never have taken place in Sandee Village.

Having the nai amphoe and deputy nai amphoe visit and give a talk at the initiation of villagers was unusual not only in Sandee Village but also in other villages in Tambon Sukjai. It was viewed by other village leaders as something new and admirable. Many po luang in the same tambon thought that this was made possible by myself. It was true in part, because I was the one who contacted these officials. However, I believe that without the continuous collaboration between villagers and myself for some time, this workshop would never have taken place.

Although there were pressures from the core team's activities and from needs such as the requirement for water sources, Somchai did not demonstrate his awareness of these pressures. At this stage, I thought that Somchai was indirectly threatened by the activities initiated by the core team. However, there was no sign of any attempt to be more concerned about villagers' problem. His failures to report the village water situation or to manage water distribution, reflected his lack of consciousness of his role as the po luang baan. In discussions or meetings, he hardly ever shared his perspectives. On one occasion I decided to talk to Somchai about the various activities and this workshop. He explained:

I have worked for a long time, and I feel very tired. It is good for you to stimulate villagers. It is more difficult now. I know every problem of our village but it is not easy to get funds to solve every problem. The MP cannot help much at the moment. Some VDC members are not really helpful while I am so busy. I am glad you can help.

This was consistent with what I was told by Satit who believe that, although Somchai was quite happy with all activities organized by the core team or the klum maebaan, if anyone made a mistake he would not provide help or support. Satit had been told by some villagers that Somchai claimed that it was he who asked the core team and the klum maebaan to create activities. Somchai had some loss of power, even though he still had authority as the po luang baan. At this stage, his lack of ability and
consciousness was quite clear when compared to the core team members and some *klum maebaan* committee members. Thanud, a secondary school teacher, who participated in most activities, reflected that:

I appreciate the initiative of yourself, Woraphong and other active villagers. Our village needs more creative villagers with initiative because the *po luang baan* is quite slow and is not aware of change in wider society. It is good to have this group. They are useful as a stimulator to encourage other villagers to realize the importance of groups rather than individuals in dealing with problems. I am always ready to help.

**Implementation of The Pha Pa Ceremony**

The objective of this activity was to raise funds for the *klum maebaan* and the child care centre. On the night of 18 July 1992, a mobile movie was brought to entertain villagers and visitors, for which donations were called for. Then on 19 July, in the morning the core team, some *klum maebaan* committee members and others were gathered at the *sala* where a *klum maebaan*’s *krua taan* (money tree) was prepared. *Po luang baan* of other villages participated and gave the money which had been donated by their villagers, for merit making, to the *klum maebaan* committees. Lunch for the guests was provided by villagers from 15 *khaet*. At *every khaet*, the *krua taan* were also prepared and decorated with the donations of villagers within the *khaet*. Similarly, youth group members also prepared their own *krua taan*. The *krua taan* of Thanai Sukjai villages were brought to join this ceremony. Then around 6:00 pm all *krua taan* were brought by a parade of villagers. Approximately 400 participants joined this *pha pa*. After the religious activities, a group of women cleared the *sala* while *klum maebaan* committees members, the core team members, some VDC members, an abbot and some *khaet*-representatives, helped and witnessed counting the money. I noticed that some *khaet*-representatives who never participated in any activity, joined in this counting. This ceremony raised an amount of 20,082 *baht* (approx. US$800). Yaowaman, the treasurer of the *klum maebaan*, was asked to hold the money.

During the counting activity in *wiharn* (main hall in the temple), Dang, Lalita’s husband came and asked her to go home. Lalita refused to go because the counting was almost finished and she wanted to help until it was finish. Dang was drunk. After a while he came back and hit and dragged Lalita outside the temple. Woraphong stopped
him and brought Lalita home. This incident was seen by all the rest of the participants. Everybody was shocked. After that I went to Lalita’s house since I felt responsible for this circumstance because I was one of the organizers. There I met Lalita, her parents and Dang. Her father blamed her husband and controlled the situation. I went home feeling guilty because I was the one who had asked Lalita to join the core team.

I believe that the violence of Lalita’s husband concerned many issues. First, Dang’s economic status highly depended on Lalita’s business. He had no job, even though he graduated and became a lawyer. Later he helped Lalita work at home and took care of cooking for the family. Although Dang contributed fairly to Lalita’s business, in a culture where men are expected to work outside the household, to be the source of income, and to be the head of household, Dang was faced with the pressure of this expectation. His dignity and his control of money was threatened. Second, being a member of the core team, Lalita was becoming powerful as a klum maebaan committee member which reflect her reputation. She became involved in activities beyond the household level and was respected by her colleagues and villagers. Her husband on the other hand, helped her work at home and was not much respected by villagers, because he is from another province and also due to his personality. He was, thus, threatened by Lalita’s reputation. Thirdly, he felt jealous about Lalita’s ex-boyfriend, even though he had married already.

**Evaluation on the Outcome of the Pha Pa Ceremony**

Woraphong suggested that the villagers should be quickly informed of the amount of money from the pha pa ceremony because this money came from the donation of villagers. So, the following night, 20 July 1992, I announced via the loudspeaker about an informal meeting to discuss the outcome of the pha pa activity. However, only fourteen villagers participated in this meeting. Yaowaman informed the participants of the total amount of money counted the previous night. Woraphong suggested a re-count, because the counting had been quite rushed. He was right, there was a little mistake. The total amount of money was 20,087.75 baht. The participants also discussed the distribution of this fund. After deduction of the expenses, the amount of 10,978.75 baht was distributed to set up the klum maebaan revolving fund,
and another 5,489.00 baht was set aside for fixing the mosquito nets in the children’s bedroom and for the improvement of the playground of the child care centre.

After discussion with the core team members, all klum maebaan committee members and some VDC members, I found that they were impressed and satisfied with the outcome of the pha pa ceremony. Woraphong was impressed with the participation of villagers:

I am quite surprised with the crowd of participants. I believe that the number of participants reflect their willingness to join this pha pa. I am very glad to see the cooperation of villagers. Congratulations to all of us. I believe that we are succeeding at one level in encouraging we villagers to help ourselves, besides searching for outside help. This strategy is quicker than waiting for the budget from the government.

Arunya was satisfied with the cooperation of klum maebaan members and all the villagers who participated in this pha pa. She stated that:

I was so proud to see the parade of villagers and their krua taan. I never expected a large number of villagers like this. I feel so glad and proud as I assume that villagers participated in this activity because they recognized our endeavour in creating useful activities.

She was also concerned about the violence made by Lalita’s husband. Although she thought that it was family affair, she suggested that during this time the core team members should not ask Lalita to join activities, because getting involved and helping the core team may have been one of the reasons why Lalita’s husband assaulted her. However, nobody knew the real reason. We let Lalita decide herself. It was very fortunate that after a while she continued to collaborate with the core team and the klum maebaan.

According to a suggestion from the workshop and the requirements of Kingkaew, the child care worker, the mosquito net needed to be fixed in the bedroom and the playground needed to be levelled. Arunya suggested that there should be someone responsible for this activity because Kingkaew was always busy with the children. Woraphong agreed with the idea that there should be a temporary working group responsible for planning and implementing the job. When the job was finished, the temporary working group should also be finished. Satit volunteered on behalf of
the VDC to help in buying gravel and to organize villagers to help to grade the playground. Kingkaew volunteered to hire the carpenter to fix the mosquito net.

In my opinion, the primary objective of this pha pa ceremony (raising funds) was successfully achieved. The amount of 10,978.75 baht was enough for setting up the revolving fund. And, although the amount of 5489 baht was not enough to improve all the conditions of the child care centre, it was enough for the urgent need to fix the mosquito nets and improve the playground. I was also delighted with the large number of participating villagers, which reflected the substantial success of the collaboration process.

It is not difficult to demonstrate the reason for this achievement. According to my observations, the organization of a pha pa ceremony in order to raise funds was the most appropriate decision at the time. Although there would have been a chance to get funds from the government, it would have taken too long due to the inadequate skills of the VDC in setting up proposal. The organizers made the right decision based on their culture and beliefs. Another important point was that villagers were confident that the money from the tham bun (merit making) would be used to create useful activities due to the open discussion of this issue during the planning stage. Being participants in this pha pa, they also had a good time with other villagers, and this sort of opportunity did not take place very often. Instead of only searching for help from outside, the initiating group considered and applied the existing cultural practices and beliefs for the group’s objective. This is a way of building up development activities from within. After the workshop and the pha pa, I noticed that the klum maebaan committee members and several other women gained greater confidence in influencing the plans and the activities which would be done based on the support of the revolving fund.

The significant ideas underlying the formation of a temporary working group in utilizing the funds was that, first, the intended action plan had to proceed as quickly as possible so that all villagers who had donated money could see the progress of the activity. This is a very important point because villagers expected to see whether their money would be used in the activities of the klum maebaan that had been set up as the
objectives of the *pha pa*. The second point was that the formation of working groups to carry out the task reflects the intention of the core team members and the *klum maebaan* committee to decentralize management. This strategy contributed to increased genuine participation by villagers.

Before I left the village for Australia after the first period of fieldwork, the core team organized a party for me. It was attended by the core team members, some *klum maebaan* members, the *po luang baan*, and some VDC members. During that party, the core team gave me an electric lamp and most of them expressed their appreciation and thanks for my collaboration. I did not expect this party and their gift because I thought that it was I who needed to thank the villagers for their cooperation. I see this party and gift giving as their kind-hearted action which is typical of a culture that has been practiced by villagers for a long time. From this action, I felt that the villagers were satisfied with what I have been done with them. This gave me more emotional support.

**REFLECTION ON THE FIRST PERIOD OF FIELDWORK**

**A Reflection on Progress during the Visit by my Academic Adviser**

I had been informed that my academic adviser, Dr. Bob Fisher, would visit me in Sandee Village from 1-3 July 1992. I informed the *po luang baan*, the core team members and *klum maebaan* committee members about his visit. The core team organized the welcome activity by our traditional ceremony called *bai sri soo kuan* for him. He had a chance to have a look around the village, wells, the small *faai*, the village forest and see some activities such as water distribution and a funeral. During his visit, I discussed with him about my research process, my collaboration with villagers and the outcome of some activities.

At this stage, I tried to evaluate my progress and the consequences of this research since I had first started. At the beginning of this research I felt that I had adequate knowledge and experience to do collaborative action research. Nevertheless, I found that I was not totally correct. I felt that my understanding of the theoretical
perspective was insufficient and this led to my inadequate confidence. Having
discussions about my research with some academics from a local university in Northern
Thailand provided me with greater understanding of qualitative research, rural
development, women's issues and the society of upper northern Thailand. However, I
still felt that I needed to understand better the processes of collaborative action
research and its relevance to the rural development process in Northern Thailand. At
the beginning, I also had inadequate theoretical understanding on the notions of
participations and empowerment which I later emphasized as a theme of this study.
This lead to missing relevant information. At this stage, I still felt that I had inadequate
ability to facilitate the process with various collaborators.

Consequently, I had not yet developed adequate ability in analysis of the
consequences of each cycle of collaborative action research in terms of asking what the
process achieved and what had I learn about the process? My willingness and
aspiration as a villager from Sandee has contributed to my attempt to create change.
This was consistent with the expectations of villagers, particularly the core team, in
myself as initiator of improvement in the village. This attempt lead to my over-
emphasis of personal involvement in getting villagers to create changes whereas I often
failed to step back and analyze the circumstances and consequences as a researcher.
The expectations of villagers also created a pressure on myself. All these factors lead
to my concentrating on the outcomes of each cycle of collaborative action research,
rather than focusing on the factors that affected the processes. Often, I failed to
distinguish between the reflections of the core team and other collaborators about each
cycle of collaborative action research and my own reflections on the process as a
researcher.

Reflection on the Process and Outcomes

This study follows the suggestion made by Chairat (1985:337) that "Further
research on 'development' in Thailand be it rural or national development, must
recognize the dynamic of existing social structure in Thai society." I realize that in
order to adopt any approach for change, I must truly know the community so that I
can modify the approach to fit the conditions of the community. As the primary
purpose of this study was to empower rural women through collaborative action research, the prerequisite task was to know and understand as much as possible about the women and village. In trying to understand women's situation in the society, I was obviously dealing with specifically human phenomena which included meaning and spirituality.

During the first period of fieldwork (January-July 1992) in Sandee Village, the collaborative action research began with a social reconnaissance or community study which aimed to collect information necessary for analyzing the ways villagers learn, think, feel and act and to see how these might be changed to betterment as defined by the poor villagers. As Gran (1983:243) puts it, "Collecting information means creating communication." I created communication with villagers at the same time as carried out the 'reconnaissance'. The data collection was based on the underlying assumption that women sometimes desire a greater measure of autonomy rather than a greater amount of material wealth, defining development and self-reliance in ways outsiders cannot easily see.

When I reflected about what was done with villagers during the first fieldwork, I realized that there were many factors that contributed to the positive change and improvement. At the beginning, it did not appear to villagers that I was going to do my research in Sandee Village even though I did inform them. The villagers did not see me as a researcher, but rather as an educated villager. At the time I was their friend or relative. I viewed these relationships as an advantage and a very good start. At the outset, the methods I used were informal and flexible. What I did was not alienating to villagers. They were interviewed, had pictures taken and their stories were recorded. Yet these actions were not against the way of life of villagers. As one villager it was acceptable for me to visit villagers at home, having lunch or dinner and having discussions with them. The core team became involved in my research through our natural dialogue. They did not realize how important they were for 'my study'. What they utterly wanted was to solve the problem of drought. It was our worry and anxiety about villagers' suffering from the drought that contributed to our collaboration.
The social reconnaissance process helped in understanding the number of people's organizations in the village. Additionally, through this process I discovered a group of villagers, both men and women, who were concerned with the village's problems. They appeared to be natural leaders who demonstrated their willingness and commitment to improve the village's situation. The collaboration between myself and these villagers, who I labelled 'the core team', started when villagers were faced with the drought.

The information obtained was a useful basis of discussion with the core team in order to decide what should be given the first priority at a particular time. They developed potential through establishing priorities that gave purpose and direction. The prioritized issue were dealt with in continuous cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting. The action plans were translated into action in a very flexible way in which the limitations of the core team members, particularly those of women, were recognized.

In collaboration with the core team members and the klum maebaan committee which aimed to create collective action, my primary role was as facilitator. However, to create change in Sandee Village there were a number of conflicts fueled by a rapid socio-economic and power structural changes. It is clear that many of these conflicts were between the powerful and the powerless villagers. In this situation, it was not easy for me as facilitator to create the atmosphere where the powerless villagers could increase their capacity to negotiate with the powerful villagers in such a way that their interests were met.

However, through continuous cycles of planning and action, we found that change could be initiated. Entering into dialogue and group discussion, we learned to respect the individual's own limitations, capacity and potentiality. We learned to analyze the current problems, identify the root causes of the problems, and to take action to improve the situation. Through these continuous cycles of learning, a problem-centred orientation was adopted. This process was possible because participants were decision makers, not just passive actors. Through this process,
villagers produced knowledge, then analyzed, and utilized it to create change. Considering the dialogue and discussion, another interesting aspect was the way in which men and women worked by 'agreeing' with one another. These activities offered an opportunity to discuss sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and to come to agreement.

It is important to note that in the past, discussion about the village situation among neighbours was usual particularly after dinner. Men and women shared and reflected on issues in everyday life. By the same token, discussion also occurred with larger groups in relation to issues which concerned the majority of villagers (such as muang faai, gravel road improvement, or wat affairs). Men and women learned to share their opinions confidently such as the meeting of klum suttha, klum muang faai or klum noom sao. Women also developed their skills needed for negotiation with men. Thus the issue of sharing perspectives was not new in Sandee Village. I believe that the development of these skills was interrupted by the imposition the of 'modern' village administration structure from which women were excluded in the process of village management. As discussed earlier, suttha which referred to both men and women, old and young, was replaced by 'huanaa krohrkrua' (the head of household) which implies men. Recently, the role of huanaa krokhrua which also somewhat allowed women's opinion to be expressed, was to a large extent replaced by the modern 'village development committee' (VDC) chaired by the po luang baan. In the case of Sandee Village, the situation was even worse because the po luang baan rarely consulted or discussed matters with other VDC members. This change contributed to a lack of useful information and opportunities for Sandee women to develop the skills needed for collaboration in the decision making process. I am not saying that we were going back to the past. I wish to make is that the useful strategies for change should come from the villagers themselves.

It is important to note that the powerless villagers have not been totally passive. In fact, they attempted to deal with unjust powerholders by protest or negotiation for resources. Some attempts succeeded but many did not. What I saw missing was the confident person who could facilitate the collective action. Therefore,
what I tried to do in the first phase was to facilitate the formation of a core team (both women and men) and a group of women, the klum maebaan. Then through the learning process of collaborative action research, a suitable atmosphere was created for the participants to strengthen their planning, observing and reflecting skills and their capacity necessary for negotiation with influential individuals or parties inside and outside the village. I have tried to demonstrate my role as facilitator, not 'expert', who needed to know what villagers viewed as the most appropriate way to solve their problems. At the beginning, although I intended to apply the collaborative action research, I did not totally convince villagers to focus narrowly on this methodology. For me, theories guide the framework but the processes were informal and flexible based on the current information which arranged the condition of the process of learning. Often I found that we also learn from our mistakes. I tried to provide useful information, suggestions, and support. I facilitated the activities aiming to make sure that all participants had a chance to share their perspectives, voice their needs and collaborate in making decisions.

Throughout approximately four months of collaboration, villagers had developed skills that contributed to the development of their confidence in creating actions that contribute to changes. This was particular noticeable in women especially when the discussion concerned women's activities. They reflected on issues more than before. Some of them developed facilitating skills themselves, particularly in trying to encourage participants to speak out by asking simple questions. At this stage, I found that this change had occurred in all members of the core team except Woraphong who was already good at facilitation. At the beginning, female members were somewhat dominated by male members in terms of articulating their perspectives. By the end of this stage, the scene of the discussions among them has changed: female members publicly reflected more than before. At this stage, the process and the core participants themselves became the evidence of changes.
CHAPTER 8

SECOND PERIOD OF FIELDWORK: EXPANSION OF COLLABORATION

This chapter explores my further collaboration with villagers in Sandee Village during my second period of fieldwork from November 1992 until May 1993. It discusses how the klum maebaan became the main actor in creating changes in Sandee Village. It focuses on the expansion of the collaboration between the klum maebaan committee members and other groups of villagers, notably the working groups for bamboo weaving and pig keeping, the klum room sao committee (youth group), some village development committee members and the child care committee.

INDICATIONS OF VILLAGERS' CAPACITY, CONFIDENCE AND CONSCIOUSNESS

I left Sandee Village for Australia for three months aiming to discuss and reflect on the outcome of the first period of fieldwork with my research panel and other post-graduate students. During my absence, I kept in touch with the core team members and klum maebaan committee members. Our contact was useful for me in continuously obtaining information about the situation of the core team and the klum maebaan. Incidentally, my absence became a tool to check whether the core team members and the klum maebaan committee could continue their collaboration independently. Woraphong told me, on my return, that many activities were initiated by the core team members during my absence. Woraphong became the facilitator of the core team and Arunya became the facilitator of the klum maebaan. According to Satit, the core team members had waited and observed whether Somchai and other VDC members would set up any project. Up until the middle of September, which is the last month of each year that any project could be submitted for funds, no project was set up by the VDC. The core team members and some klum maebaan committee members collaboratively set up several projects under the facilitation of Woraphong. These included:
1. *Artesian well project.* During my stay in Australia, I contacted Koranee who promised to further submit the new artesian well project. I had been told that the construction of this new artesian well would start at the end of July 1992. I then suggested the core team members should follow up this project. However, until the September 1992, there was no construction. They decided to write an artesian well project proposal requesting a budget of 170,000 *baht* (US$6,800).

2. *Bamboo weaving project.* The working group members and Arunya had discussed and prepared this project and I had roughly drafted the project for them before my departure. Woraphong helped to do the paper work. In this project, an amount of 10,000 *baht* (US$400) of budget was requested.

3. *Pig keeping project.* This project had been discussed and prepared since the working group was formed. The draft proposal for the project was then written by myself as an example for the working group and the *klum maebaan* committee members. This project requested a budget of 50,000 *baht* (US$2,000).

4. *Bank of buffalo and cow project.* According to Woraphong, the general idea underlying this project was an attempt to create alternative options for villagers who have surplus labour after rice production. The animals would be useful in rice production for those villagers who cannot afford two-wheel tractors or hiring tractors. A number of 20 buffaloes and 20 cows was requested.

5. *Village concrete road project.* As the budget for a concrete road was inadequate, this project requested an additional budget of 250,000 *baht* (US$10,000) for materials for the construction of the rest of gravel road in the village. The villagers would collaborate in terms of the labour.

6. *Village forest project.* During the first fieldwork I discussed with the district forest officer to find out the possibility of the Royal Forest Department providing young plants for villagers to plant in the village forest. With high
possibility to obtain young plants, the project aimed to plant trees and declare an area of village forest.

The written proposals for the projects were signed by the po luang baan and then submitted for the approval of the provincial development committee through the sapha tambon. The paper work was done by Woraphong and Satit. Satit told me that at the beginning Somchai refused to sign these projects and wanted to know who wrote them. The core team members were upset because they thought that Somchai would not provide a chance for them to do something useful even though he himself did nothing. Before the end of September, Satit and Monthon asked Somchai again, and he finally signed. Satit commented that:

Somchai is very clever. I think he knows that we care for the poor villagers and will search for something useful. This is why he does nothing but always claims that any outside aid is brought in by him. I do not want to do this any longer. He is not keen to develop his capacity.

Regarding the reaction of Somchai, Darin also commented that:

Everytime he sees or knows I am involved with our group, going somewhere with Satit or Arunya, he won't talk to me. He clearly demonstrated that he won't do anything. He thinks that we take over his duty as if he is too busy and has inadequate capacity. But I think he did not do anything for a long time, not only since we started organizing activities.

As the president of the klum maebaan, Arunya had participated in a meeting with other presidents of women's groups, organized by two local MPs. In this meeting, help was offered in terms of tents, gas cookers, and dishes. She decided to make a request for these.

It became clear that during the three months of my absence, the relationships between the core team members and the po luang baan were worse than before. According to Darin, Somchai thought that he was indirectly insulted by the core team members, whereas the core team members felt that he simply ignored the village's problems and that if he could not help villagers he should quit.

It is important to note that during my absence I had requested funds for the klum maebaan from The Embassy of the Netherlands. This request needed a referee. I asked Woraphong to contact Koranee to write his recommendation for the klum
mae baan. According to Woraphong, he went to see Koranee five times before he finally provided his recommendation. Unfortunately, this project was not approved. Woraphong was very disappointed and upset at the ignorance of Koranee. He commented that:

I was very disappointed and upset because I thought that what I am going to do is to attempt to help villagers. This attempt was initiated by villagers but the chaonaathii (government official), whose duty is to help and support villagers, was not willing to help. He just ignored my request even though they cost nothing. I did not ask for his money. I felt that I was like a beggar. It was very terrible.

I was told the above details by the core team members. The activities discussed above were indications of the capacity and confidence of the core team members and some klum mae baan committee members. They were confident to get Somchai to submit the projects. This was another step in dealing with Somchai after they had tried to indirectly encourage him to do something about the village's problem. As for Koranee's ignorance, it could be interpreted in many ways. Koranee may not really have understood what he was supposed to write as referee even though I also wrote to him asking for his cooperation in providing a recommendation about the appearance of the klum mae baan in Sandee Village. Additionally, as the proposal was written in English, I assumed that Koranee may not have been certain what was it about. As a government officer, Koranee should care for and pay attention to villagers' request. This event reflected the lack of acceptance of the government official of a project initiated by villagers. Koranee may never deal with any project initiated by villagers, and this may have contributed to uncertainty about the impact on himself as referee. This sort of government official has contributed to the reluctance of villagers to approach them for assistance. This dilemma clearly contradicts the promotion of people's participation by the government.

The government's help (in terms of gas cookers, tents and dishes) through the MP obviously reflects the top-down approach of the government because the kind of help was set. This help did not contribute to empowerment of women because it failed to develop women's capacity and consciousness. Women in Sandee Village clearly wanted funds for investment in bamboo weaving and the pig keeping project as the first priority, yet they had to accept this offer as it was better than nothing. This sort of
government help was used by the local MP to negotiate for 'vote'. Thus it helped to enhance the influence of the MP on villagers who accept help.

It is quite clear that without my facilitation, the core team members and some klum maebaan committees were able to make concrete attempts to access government resources based on the information they had learned. Their continued activities reflected their desire to see improvements in the village even though their intuitive contributed to the increased conflict between them and the po luang baam. However, they did not see this as a constraint to initiating useful activities for the village. In this respect, they had empowered themselves through their increased capacity, confidence, and consciousness. In some sense, the po luang baam was disempowered. I view this change as a positive sign of self-reliance because they had done it by themselves.

**Bamboo Weaving Project**

During my absence Arunya organized informal discussions among the working group for bamboo weaving activity and women group members. However, there was no plan for further action because villagers had to wait for the bamboo season and to find out the price and general quality of bamboo of the coming season. Then, on 11 November 1992, Samon and Arunya organized a meeting in which twenty-four women participated. As there had been no meeting of the klum maebaan during my short absence, because women were busy transplanting rice, I was asked to facilitate this informal meeting. The issues discussed included the process of purchasing bamboo from the merchants. The idea of this project was to avoid middlemen during the process of buying fresh bamboo by making direct arrangements through the working group. The underlying aim was to increase the bargaining power of women by purchasing in group.

However, the process of translating the idea into practice was not easy at all. The working group arranged of to purchase six lots of bamboo and sell them to women on credit. Women were provided the money by the klum maebaan for investment through the working group for bamboo weaving. It appeared that there were some limitations and constraints in the managerial process. The working group
managed to purchase the fresh bamboo at a lower price. However, some women who lived far from the purchasing place, found that they had less opportunity to choose the bamboo. This was later was solved by negotiation with the merchant to allow women to choose bamboo before purchase.

Another constraint was that the absence of some working group members to contribute to the workload of the other members during the purchasing process. The lack of ability to properly record the details had led to an error and the rumour of missing money. This affected the reputation of the working group members and the klum maebaan as a whole. However, the problem was solved by a discussion among the concerned people. The discussion of the issue of missing money was a very good way to deal with the rumour, because it allowed the participants to ask questions, while giving the suspected person an opportunity to explain and declare herself. Failing to do this could have lead to a feeling of distrust by villagers.

During the evaluating and reflecting process, there was an informal discussion among the working group members, some core team members, and some the klum maebaan committee members. Lalita pointed to the lack of participation of the elected working members. She commented that:

I don't mind helping record the details but the elected people should come and help. This problem takes place because either we chose the wrong person or the elected person does not take responsibility for the task.

During the discussion, Samon, the leader of the working group, expressed that:

We invested only seven thousand baht, we have got 1,224 baht profit. It is good enough because we were mentally exhausted. I think villagers may realize our endeavour and will again collaborate next year. I will not give up because I feel proud for what I have done with all of us.

Darin also hoped that villagers will realize the sacrifice made by these members. She commented that:

All money and profits belong to the revolving fund of our klum maebaan and this money will be used to create useful activities so that all villagers can gain benefits. I think we should get those villagers who complained to work instead of us. They would experience how hard it is.

Some participants suggested that, in the next season, the money for investment should go to the khaet-representatives and then be distributed to villagers so that villagers
could buy bamboo by themselves, and the working group would not have to work so hard. Darin was quite happy with the outcome of the reflection and evaluation process because it provided an opportunity for the participants to discuss the rumour of missing money. Overall the discussion among participants to solve the rumour of missing money contributed to the increased degree of villagers' trust towards not only the working group but also toward the *klum maebaam* as a whole.

When the rumour started, Nipa's husband did not want Nipa to be a member of the working group for the bamboo weaving activity because he knew very well that there would be only *ninta* (literally: gossip) for most who work for *suanruam* (the villagers at large). This was the attitude of some villagers towards participation (*kaan mii suanruam*) in village activity. Many villagers stated that they did not want to get involved in village activities because they would be indirectly criticized if any activity failed. I believe that it will take time for some villagers to change their attitude towards the participation of women in village management, because in the history of the Village women have not been accepted as leaders in village administration. For a long time, women were asked to be involved in action rather than making decisions. So when women became the leaders of activities that concern *suanruam*, they had the opportunity to get involved in planning and making decision, not just acting.

**Reflection on the Process**

My role during the implementation of the bamboo weaving project was primarily that of an active observer rather than facilitator. In general, it appeared to me that participants were more confident about sharing their opinions during the discussion than they had been during the first period of fieldwork. The request by the working group members for the collaboration of *khaet*-representatives, to collect information beforehand about a number of women in each *khaet* who want to buy bamboo, was a reasonable decision because these representatives already existed. This also contributed to the increase in the number of women participating in the decision making process.
The bamboo weaving activity was an example of how women can deal with problems as a group. They learned how to deal with problems and how to manage problems through the process of planning, observing, acting and reflecting. The benefit may have been small at the outset, yet in the long run, this activity had the potential to become a good source of income. Apart from the benefits and cheap bamboo, the collaboration led to increased individual and the group capacity.

The bamboo weaving activity was the direct outcome of the collaboration of the core team. The core team members, particularly Arunya, Darin and Lalita played an important role in creating this activity at the outset and throughout the implementation process. If there were only men in the initiating group (the core team), I believe that the direction of improvement would have been different. Although the first priority problem was insufficient water, when the klum maebaan was reformed, the primary concern shifted to women's concerns, notably bamboo weaving activity and the child care centre. The bamboo weaving activity was one of many activities initiated by the women's group.

If there had been no women included the core team members, the klum maebaan may not have reformed. Without the klum maebaan, the objective of pha pa ceremony could have been directed to something else rather than women's concerns. The klum maebaan has developed through the collaborative action research process. By the same token, if there were only women in the core team it would have been unlikely for men to experience collaborating with women. Through their collaboration men and women learned to accept each others limitations and advantages. This contributed to the change in men's attitude towards women.

Obviously, the learning process was not smooth. The core group was faced with several constraints, notably the lack of support from the po huang baan, the lack of material and skilled human resources, and more often the lack of the support of their families. However, they had learned from mistakes. The working group members of the bamboo weaving activity, for example, had developed their capacity to deal with problems through a similar process of learning. They even faced rumours and criticism.
However, with the support of the core team members and the *klum maebaan* committee members, they did well in dealing with current problems and constraints. They decided to manage the activity in a way which fitted the needs of villagers. They demonstrated that women could develop their capacity to cope with the problems by working in a group.

One factor that contributed to the success of the working group members was the support from the core team members and some women group committee member. It would be important to note that three women members of the core team, Arunya, Lalita, and Darin became the active leader, committee member and member of the *klum maebaan*, respectively. These women had strongly supported any activity initiated by the *klum maebaan*. They had continuously shared and contributed their ideas and responsibility with the members of the bamboo weaving activity working group. This is not to say that only these women provided support for this activity. Other women group committee members also helped, but it seemed to me that they had less degree of responsibility.

Although most of those who bought bamboo were poor, there were some women who were not poor but still bought bamboo from the group because they wanted to support it. Women treated bamboo weaving as a supplementary source of income. In the words of Sao, a poor farmer, 54 years old:

> It is impossible to get 50-60 baht a day from weaving bamboo as from other jobs. It provides me a supplementary income. Earning on my own, I have more freedom to spend the money.

I think that bamboo weaving cannot be a real alternative as an income-generating activity because women cannot fix the price of the woven bamboo. The financial help from the *klum maebaan* enabled women's to invest in bamboo, however, they still depend on the middlemen for selling woven bamboo. What women in Sandee Village tried to do in relation to the bamboo weaving activity was indeed in their interest. It can be considered as a human resource development strategy, and as a democratization process which was based on rural women’s needs rather than being imposed by the State's interest.
Pig Keeping Project

The idea of setting up a pig keeping activity was proposed by women and men who were pig keepers, after the *klum maebaan* was reformed. The purpose of this activity was to provide short period loans at lower interest than would be available from the wealthy villagers for those involved in the activity. Although the working group was elected, this idea was not immediately translated into the practice because the *klum maebaan* did not have the finance for the working group. Only after the bamboo weaving activity finished its activity for the season, was an amount of 15,000 *baht* (US$6,000) from the *klum maebaan*’s revolving fund transferred to the pig keeping project.

*Selecting the pig keepers*

The members of the working group and some core team members organised a meeting on 26 July 1992. Thirty-eight of forty-one participants became members of this activity. The regulations proposed by the working group were discussed and revised. Darin suggested that each borrower should get at least 5,000 *baht* because this amount of money would be enough to begin to raise pigs. She also suggested that the loan period should be at least four months so that the piglets would be ready to sell. There were different ideas about the interest rate. I suggested setting interest at the lowest rate possible. Some participants proposed charging 100 *baht* of interest for each 1,000 *baht* loan over four months, which is equal to 30% interest per year.

I tried to encourage the participants to consider that the primary objective was to help members, particularly the poor. Therefore, the interest should be lower and the poor should be given priority. However, my argument was not accepted by the participants. Arunya said that she did not agree with my idea because she was afraid that the poor villagers could not afford to repay the money on time. The majority of participants agreed to charge the interest at 30%. Arunya said:

I am happy to pay a higher rate of interest. This is not because I am rich but because I am sure that every *baht* of interest will come back to our *klum maebaan* revolving fund which will be useful for all villagers. I think most members of this activity are not poor so it would be no problem for all of us.
The loan recipients were chosen by lot. By luck, Satit, Suphot and Arunya got loans. I felt that this was not fair to the poor or even for the rest of the members who would have to wait for four months with no guarantee that they would get a loan in the next round. I realized that this activity would not contribute to provide the equal help for all villagers. Instead, it was worse than the private bank. I was rather upset and felt guilty.

After the meeting, I decided to discuss this issue with the core team members. I expressed my opinion and encouraged the core team members to consider other activities which could provide help for more villagers. However, only Woraphong and Lalita agreed with my opinion. Arunya emphasised the benefits of the activity which would lead to an increase of the revolving fund. She insisted that this activity was the outcome of discussion and the agreement of a lot of villagers. For her, it would be difficult to encourage villagers. She said that the approach

...was good for the revolving fund because the interest was rather high and the borrowers are happy to pay for interest. I see this activity as the means of increasing the fund because most of the members are quite rich and this is the way to get money from the rich.

Similarly, Darin thought that I had over-emphasized the poor. She argued that it is impossible to do that because nobody accepts that they are rich. She suggested that:

Although the poor should be the first priority group, if every activity is created for the poor, how can we get the rich to help the poor?. I think this activity is a good activity to get the more wealthy involved, because they will benefit from the activity, not just give. I think everyone thinks about him or herself before someone else.

I did not agree with some core team members that the pig keeping activity should be used as a tool to obtain money for the wealthier villagers. In fact it was used as a tool to serve the wealthy villagers even though the amount of 5,000 baht may have been seen as a small of money in the eyes of the wealthy villagers. I thought that the total amount of 15,000 baht from the revolving fund of the klum maebaan should be used to create other useful activities for the poor villagers, instead. However, I failed to convince the participants.
There was a the epidemic of diarrhoea in pigs throughout Thailand during late October 1992. This affected Suphot's four pigs. The situation was even worse because of the quick drop of selling price due to the rumour of AIDS in pigs. As Suphot had just began to keep pigs for the first time with the group's help and it was not his fault, Darin and I tried to convince the working group members to decrease the interest rate. However, our idea was not accepted. Some participants argued that this was the first activity of this project and if Suphot was discounted, the others would want to be discounted in similar circumstances. Because of the low price of pigs, nobody borrowed money after the third round. Kitti, the head of the working group, said that whether this activity could be conducted in the future depends on the price of pigs. We agreed that in the mean time it would be helpful to use this fund to create another useful activity. All money was then transferred backed to the klum maebaan revolving fund.

Reflection on the Process

It is important to note that, by contrast to the bamboo weaving activity in which all members appeared to be women, the members of the pig keeping activity included both women and men. Arunya and Darin were also elected to be the members of the working group. This was because they contributed to several activities that led to the admiration and trust of the villagers towards them. Moreover, due to their experience, they were confident about working in pig raising. Experience is important, but I believe that it is necessary for experienced villagers to encourage others to become involved in activities as committee members or members of the working group. The whole community should be empowered otherwise the neglected group could delay or retard the whole development process.

I was quite disappointed with the conclusion of the discussion that the interest rate would not be reduced. The villagers were usually flexible but in this case they deferred to the original rules for the activity. A lesson from this is that in setting up rules or regulations for public activity, it is advisable to include provisions for special cases which may arise.
In theory, the facilitator in collaborative action research facilitator is expected to assist the participants to become decision makers (Burkey, 1993; Carr and Kemmis, 1986; Kasting, 1991 and Whyte, 1991). My failure to encourage participants in the pig keeping project to decrease the interest rate in order to increase opportunity for the poor, raises a question about how much I, as facilitator, should try to influence decisions. This is a real dilemma. I believe that a facilitator should have the right to present views and negotiate with the participants, because obviously it is not always the case that the decisions made by the participants would meet the needs of the powerless. The purpose of empowerment is to assist the powerless, rather than to facilitate the more powerful group to act against the powerless.

CHILD CARE IMPROVEMENT

The child care centre in Sandee Village was first established in 1982 with the co-operation of Woraphong (the abbot at the time), Masters students in Non-Formal Education course from Chiang Mai University, the klum room sao and other villagers. A building, which consists of one bedroom, one class room, one toilet, and a large tank, were built. These students donated materials for construction and the villagers provided support in the form of labour. The first child care worker was Kingkaew who began working in the centre without any help from the government. She received the fees from the children's parents as salary. According to Woraphong, at the beginning approximately fifty children aged from three to five were being looked after by Kingkaew. In 1985 a child care committee composed of 5 villagers was formed by the phattanakorn who were expected to collaborate with Kingkaew. Kingkaew was provided salary by the Department of Community Development at the rate of 500 baht per month in 1985, then 1,000 baht in 1988 and 2,000 baht per month in 1993.

The Appearance of Conflict

During the social reconnaissance process, it appeared to me that there was conflict between Kingkaew and many parents. I was told by Kingkaew that there were so many children (35-40) that she could not cope.

I always ask the phattanakorn for more workers to help me because I cannot take care of all children at once. I cannot refuse the parents who want to bring
their children here. The government does not help much. The Phattanakorn never comes to have a look inside the centre.

Through informal discussion with the child care committee members and other parents, different perspectives emerged. According to Nipa, one of the former committee members, the committee had supported Kingkaew in terms of labour and materials. She personally told me that:

Kingkaew does not effectively manage the centre. There are not enough toys and no teaching aids. The building, particularly the toilet, is not clean enough for the children. The committee members in collaboration with other parents, helped to clean the building but after that it turned out the same. She sets fees higher than Sukjai child care centre which is much better than our centre.

Siriporn, a former committee member, said Kingkaew did not have the records of income and expenses for the centre because she claimed that she was always busy with the children. She received all the income from the parents and she also received 1,000 baht per month from the district office of the Community Development Department. Kingkaew claimed that the income was used to buy the materials such as chalk, powder and toys for the children. Woraphong also commented that Kingkaew managed the finances of the centre as if it was her own centre. She had set the fees herself without discussion with the committee for more than two years. The parents paid approximately 80 to 160 baht for each child depending on age.

According to many parents, Kingkaew was not good in creating an appropriate atmosphere for children compared to the centre in Sukjai village. Most parents were not happy with the increased fees but they could do nothing because they had to work outside the village and nobody looked after their children. They could not manage to send their children to the Sukjai Child care centre. They therefore had to depend on Kingkaew.

Although many villagers felt that the child care centre needed to be improved in terms of both facilities and the worker's practices, within Sandee Village where everybody is related through kinship ties, it was not easy for someone to raise the problem or directly criticize Kingkaew because this would lead to conflict. For women who worked outside the village, Kingkaew was very helpful. To initiate some
improvement in the child care centre at that time, one needed to be careful because this threatened Kingkaew's direct interest and control. It appeared that no change had been effected by the child care committee formed by the phattanaakorn. It was only after the pha pa ceremony that an amount of 5489 baht was allocated to fix the mosquito net and level the playground. This assistance contributed to an increased involvement in the centre's decision making process by some klum maebaan committee members and the core team members. Woraphong was confident that if Kingkaew concentrated on looking after the children and left other management tasks for the committee, her workload would decrease. Through the cyclical learning process he believed that the committee could solve the current problem step by step.

The New Child Care Committee

In December 1992, another child care worker was appointed and Kingkaew's salary was also increased to 2,200 baht per month. The selection was done by the District Community Development Office even though I has asked to use some method where villagers could participate in the decision making process. Wongjun, Lalita's distant relative, was selected. Kingkaew was disappointed because she would have liked a her sister-in-law to get the job. This contributed to the inability of the two workers to develop good relationships which later affected their collaboration.

Searching for new Child Care Committee Members

The core team members and some klum maebaan committee members took this opportunity to organize a meeting on 6 January at the wiharn in the temple aimed to discuss the situation of the centre. Fifty-eight villagers joined the meeting including Somchai. Woraphong suggested that the committee members should be villagers who had experience in working with groups because these villagers would encourage other villagers by their success. On the other hand, I suggested choosing new villagers to be the committee members of child care centre because a new group of villagers would have a chance to learn and practice working as a group. The participation of villagers would be broader. Damrong, Wiwa, Lalita, and Rung were elected to be the president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, respectively. The committee was appointed for two years. Somchai suggested that the fees should be divided into three parts, (i) for
buying materials such as chalk, powder and toys, (ii) for improving the building and (iii) for workers' salaries. Kingkaew suggested that the fee should be divided into only two portions, one for improving the centre, the other for workers' salaries. Damrong suggested to try the po luang baan's suggestion for a while, and if it did not work, to discuss the issue again. An action plan for Children's day to be held on 9 January was also discussed.

Children's Day

The child care committee started its work first organizing a Children's Day which was primarily aimed at encouraging villagers to participate and provide support for children's activities. They asked for donations in cash or materials. At the Children's Day, the children had an opportunity to perform dances, sing songs and play games while parents provided support. The organizers were satisfied with the outcome because of the high participation of villagers. An important issue was that the leftover donated money was added to the centre's funds. According to Arunya, this was absolutely different from the management of the po luang baan and his assistants where the leftover money form any collective activity was normally spent for their entertainment.

Further Improvement: A New Building and the Lunch Project

Damrong and Kingkaew visited and observed two child care centres in Sukjai and Pong Village. In discussions with Kingkaew and Wongjun, they came up with a proposal for a meeting on 31 January 1993 which aimed to discuss building a new temporary building and a lunch project. Thirty eight villagers participated in this meeting. Singto, the tambon doctor, volunteered to provide some necessary medicine for the children. A lunch project was supported by participants as a way to provide healthy food for children. The committee members agreed to provide the food tray for which the parents were asked to pay six baht a day.

The new building project was supported because the current 33 children were gathered in one room. The parents collaborated in building construction while materials were managed by the committee. All expenses for the food tray and building
construction were arranged by the committee by borrowing 5,000 baht from the klum maebaan revolving fund.

The klum maebaan committee had received an amount of 20,000 baht (US$800) as a donation from the Rotarian Chumphol Phornprapa, to support our collaborative work, which he had learned about through my report to my sponsor, the Rotary Foundation under the Freedom From Hunger Scheme. This amount was added to the klum maebaan revolving fund.

**Reflection on the Process**

The improvements to the child care centre were the direct result of the collaboration among the klum maebaan and the child care committees, with the facilitation of the core team members. My role was mainly as an active observer and sometimes facilitator. The improvements were totally initiated by the villagers.

I was very impressed with Kingkaew's ability to take care of a big group of children. As I saw it, she was so busy looking after them that she could not manage to do any other thing during the day. It was difficult for her to have any opportunity to access training or to visit other centres to help her development. If she went, the centre would have to close. This would mean the parents would find it difficult to get someone to look after their children. For this reason, there needed to be at least one other worker to help looking after the children. Having worked hard, I think it was quite reasonable for Kingkaew to manage the fees herself. However, in the eyes of many parents and villagers who were involved in the creation of the centre, her control was not proper. This led to conflict.

The idea of having a group of villagers as a committee to help Kingkaew manage the centre was good because this committee had facilitated some positive changes and improvement, notably the construction of a new building, the lunch project and other activities such as Children’s Day, Loykrathong Day and New Year. The discussions among the core team members, some klum maebaan committee members and other concerned villagers contributed to the appearance of this
committee and changes in utilization of the fee and salary. Although Kingkaew was satisfied with the appearance of a new building, the lunch project and the decrease in her workload because of the help of Wongjun, she was upset because she has lost control over the fees. Her income was decreased from about 5,000 baht to about 3,000 baht per month. She had also lost of much of her decision-making power.

Kingkaew reacted to this change by just looking after one group of older children while leaving another group of children and other activities for Wongjun. As a new worker who lacked experience, Wongjun was reluctant to resist. However, the existence of the committee was useful for her as she could raise her concerns and the decision was collectively made. Kingkaew was an example of a woman who exercised her power beyond the household level. This was made possible because of her capacity to control a village resource - the child care centre. However, Kingkaew may not have realized that the improvement of the centre had directly contributed to the confidence of the parents about its operation. In the long run, they would not take their children to Sukjai because they saw that the centre had improved. Without children, the workers would have had no job and no salary.

At this stage, it was clear that the collaboration among villagers had increasingly expanded from the core team members, to the klum maebaan, the VDC, the working groups of the bamboo weaving and pig keeping projects, and to the child care committee. These collaboration and reciprocal relationships among several groups had contributed to the empowerment of each individual group.

**BUILDING UP COLLABORATION WITH THE KLUM NOOM SAO**

**Formation of the klum noom sao**

The core team expanded its involvement to include youth. The klum noom sao (indigenous youth group) had been replaced by the government-sponsored youth group established by the phattanakorn as the klum yaowachon (the group of youth) or by the kaset tambon as the klum yenwa kasettrakorn (young farmer group). According to a suggestion made by Woraphong about encouraging youth to participate in the pha
pa, the core team members organized a meeting of youth on 28 June 1992 which aimed to encourage youth to form into a group, and to encourage youth to collaborate with other groups in creating useful activities in the village. There were fifty participants including the abbot and the po luang baan. This meeting was facilitated by Silapa, who worked as agricultural extension worker in another province. The discussion ended with the election of a youth group committee which included four boys and three girls. Khaet-representatives for the youth were also elected. One representative was to be responsible for three sectors since there are not many youth in each sector. These representatives were expected to provide information for other youth in the same sector. The members of the committee were:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>President</td>
<td>Mr. Narong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vice-President</td>
<td>Ms Rinthong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Mr. Aphichai</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Mr. Yongyuth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group announcer</td>
<td>Ms. Mayuree (who was also my research assistant)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Ms. Mena</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mr. Niwat</td>
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The youth group had agreed to collaborate in the pha pa activity by distributing 300 leaflets which expect to obtain some donations, and they volunteered to set up their own krua taan (money tree). They were also asked by Satit to help the VDC members in collecting village information with relation to basic minimum needs (BMN) data. About twenty high school students agreed to help.

The members of the youth group can be roughly categorized into two categories: students and working youth. During discussions, the students spoke out more than those who engaged in work as factory workers. Generally speaking, the group meeting was somewhat dominated by these students. The girl students spoke out more than the girls engaged in waged-labour. Among the waged-workers, it was rather surprising that the girls spoke out more than the boys. Regarding their perspectives towards the re-formation of the youth group, most of them were happy to participate in the group. Rinthong, aged 26, a factory worker, was rather excited to be elected to be the vice president of the youth group. She commented that:

I am happy that the klum room soa has re-formed again because this means we are going to do something better. I never thought that I would be elected to be
the leader of any group. I do not know anything about being the leader but I will try my best. I have heard much about the core team and the klum maebaan through my sister (Arunya). I have observed their activities. I think that youth should undertake a useful activity too.

Discussion of further actions

A discussion organized by the klum noom sao committee on 12 July 1992, aimed to discuss the management of a set of amplifier and sound equipment for which rent has been provided by the abbot since the former klum noom sao stopped its activity. At the time, voices of klum noom sao's members had never been heard through the village loudspeaker. During the discussion, some participants suggested klum members should arrange this equipment. The abbot said that the equipment was not in a good condition and should be repaired. The youth agreed to improve the condition of the amplifier with the condition that they would arrange the renting in the future. No action plan was set up, because the youth had no finance at the time.

As the facilitator, I encouraged the youths by briefly mentioning what I had learned from the experience of the collaboration process involving the core team and klum maebaan. I also suggested the application of the cycle of collaboration by the youth themselves, and in collaboration with other groups in the village. The message I emphasized included the access of members to full participation in decision making. Even though there was no action plan for further activity, some members of the youth group expressed their satisfaction about the formation of klum since there had been no activity organized by the youth during the past two years.

Dealing with the domination of the abbot

Narong and Rinthong organized a meeting on 21 March 1993 which aimed to discuss an action plan for the management of the amplifier and sound equipment. The core team, the women's group committee, some VDC members and the abbot also participated in this discussion, which I was asked to facilitate. Klum noom sao committee members agreed to manage the sound system by themselves and to organize a workshop aimed to share the experience with other groups both within and outside the village.
**Action plan for workshop and *pha pa* activities**

Narong and other committee members of the *klum noom sao* organized another meeting on 4 April 1993. The meeting included some women's group committee members, some members of the core team and the abbot. The participants agreed to organize a workshop on 6 April 1993. Somchai, Arunya, Lalita, Wiwa and Woraphong were asked to share their experience by giving a talk. I was asked to contact the government officials involved with the youth work. I also asked two NGO workers who worked in a neighbouring village, to participate in the workshop. The *klum maebaan* agreed to help by providing food and drink.

**Workshop Implementation**

On 6 April 1993, the workshop was held at the *sala* starting from 9:00 am until 5:00 pm. There were sixty-two participants. The theme of the workshop was 'reflecting on experiences in village development'. I facilitated the workshop. Somchai was the first person who reflected on his own experience as mediator in disputes among the youth. Arunya shared her experience as the member of the core team and as the president of the women group. She suggested that the *klum noom sao* should encourage discussion and take into consideration different members' perspectives. She emphasized the importance of being in a group, the need for the collaboration between women and men, the need to be prepared to sacrifice and the need to consider all villagers as beneficiaries. Lalita pointed to her experience in developing her competence as a specialist in dress-making through non-formal education. She emphasized that:

> Nobody is too old to develop his or her own capacity. It may take a longer time for the individual to achieve competence through the non-formal education system than through the formal education system. However, those villagers who can access the formal education system do not necessarily become self-reliant. Some have to work in the factory without any guarantee that they will not be forced to quit.

Woraphong emphasized collaboration among the members of the youth group in planning, activity implementation and reflection. He called for the collaboration of youth in village management. He suggested the working girls that:
Even though being waged-workers in the factory seems to be a sound occupation for your to increase income for your family, what you do in the electronic or textile factories can develop only partial competence that does not necessarily lead to economic self-reliance. With this sort of competence, it is less likely for you to be hired after you are forced to quit. Therefore, at the same, you need to prepare yourselves by developing the capacity for alternative employment.

Wiwa reflected on her experience before she became the owner of a construction business. She emphasized on the necessity of working hard. Manot, *phattanakorn*, mentioned the budget that could be provided to any youth group which had already conducted some economic-oriented activity. The instructor from the Lamphun Centre for Non-Formal Education shared information regarding short courses for training youth such as hair-dressing, dress-making, mechanics, and the short course for adult learning. Rawee, the NGO workers encouraged youth to care more about the village forest and environment. He provided information related to his research on the disappearance of forests in five villages in tambon Sukjai including Sandee Village. Anothai, another NGO worker, shared the information about his research on the impact of the small *faai* built in the natural river on the natural food and environment. Sawong, the district education official emphasized that youth could have access to adult education.

During the afternoon session, youth were divided into five small groups, and with a facilitator, and were encouraged to reflect on the information shared by both villagers and the development workers. Sutthida, a factory worker aged 18, points to the diverse useful experience and information she obtained:

I have worked for the electronic factory for three years. In fact, I want to go to the university, yet I could not pass the entrance examination. I do not really like working at the factory because I always have a headache. I would like to quit but it is very difficult to find a good job with only M.S. 3 (grade 9) qualification.

In the small group discussion, Nongmai, a grade 11 student, talked about her difficulty due to a quarrel between her parents because they could not afford to pay for the interest of a loan from the Agricultural and Co-operative group and for her school fees. To cope with this circumstance, they had sold one *rai* (0.4 acre) of their rice land
for 15,000 baht (US $600). Nongmai had never told anyone about this problem, yet in the main forum she was confident enough to share her frustration.

After small group discussions, the representatives of the small groups presented the outcomes of the group's discussions to the big group, followed by a reflection by the facilitator of each group. Comments were made in reflection about (i) the impressions of the villagers' experience and information, (ii) the usefulness of the workshop as a means to provide an opportunity to share information and experience, (iii) the opportunity for youth to voice their difficulties and (iv) the potential capacity of the klum noom sao members as being in group.

**Pha pa implementation**

*Klum noom sao* organized the *pha pa* on 15 April 1993. This *pha pa*, like the one previously organized by the *klum mae baan*, was largely participated in by almost all villagers. The *klum* obtained 8,846 baht (US $353.84) which became the group's revolving fund. Then on 18 April 1993, the youth group organized a meeting aimed to discuss the fund. The abbot asked for half of this amount of money for the *wat* since he claimed that the *klum* used the *wat* to call villagers for *tambun* (merit making). However, The members did not agree. Instead they all agreed to donate 3,000 baht (US $120) to the *wat*, while they kept 5,846 baht (US $233.84) to repair the amplifier and sound equipment.

**Klum noom sao's concert for fund raising**

After the workshop and the *pha pa*, there was an idea to organize a 'klum noom sao concert'. The *klum noom sao* committee organized a meeting on 6 May 1993 to discuss the possibility of a concert. (A 'concert' in this context, refers to a music concert where food and drink are also provided). The objective of this concert was to increase the *klum noom sao*'s funds. Since the activity would need the collaboration of the whole village, the members discussed the action plan with the *klum maebaan* and the VDC committees. They planned to have an audience of 1,500 so the most difficult task was to sell all the tickets. The *klum maebaan* and the VDC committee were asked to help to sell the tickets. The *klum maebaan* was asked to be responsible for
providing food and drink. Men were asked to prepare and manage the motorcycle and car park. As the klum noom sao's funds derived from the pha pa activity were not enough, the youth group committee took a loan from the klum maebaan for the preparations.

Then the youth group committee organized a meeting on 8 May and then on 12 May, 1993 to monitor progress. The music band was changed to cheaper one. According to the letter from Rinthong, the klum noom sao obtained 40,000 baht (US $1,600) from the concert. The amount of 20,000 baht (US $800) was donated to the wat and another US $800 was spent on the construction of the village's sport place.

Reflection on the Process

Although it was my idea that it would be useful to encourage youth to organize themselves in a group and create useful activities for both themselves and the villagers as a whole, this idea was based on the fact that the klum noom sao had helped the klum maebaan on many occasions. These two groups had developed reciprocal relationships. I believe that without the help of each other, it is unlikely that the activities organized by these two groups would have succeeded. Since youth have more access to wider society and have larger networks than middle-aged women, it seemed likely that their collaboration was fruitful because they could share their opportunities and experiences.

I had learned from collaboration with the core team and the klum maebaan that it takes time for a group to achieve even one objective. When I shared my experience with the youth group members, I did not expect all the participants to understand or accept what I had suggested in a single discussion. The specific context in terms of problems, capacities, expectations, and goals, of the klum noom sao will be different from those of the core team, the klum maebaan, and the VDC. Therefore it would be incorrect to assume that the process in developing each group's capacity would be the same. Nevertheless, they could learn from each other. And as each group is part of the whole society, the achievement of one group will more or less benefit another.
As discussed earlier the urbanization and regional industrialization largely contributes to an increase of women's dependence on urban and industrial work. The process of urban transformation from agriculture to urban/industrial off-farm work results in a permanent movement of the young, of both rich and poor households, out of agriculture. This important and growing generalational division among women increasingly diminishes the village-based female collaboration. It is clear that the outstanding constraint for collaborative action research with the youth group committees members, was time limitation. Similar to some klum maebaan committee members and VDC members, the youth group committee members work six days a week and often work on Sundays as well. Their meetings and discussion were organized during the night which seemed suit the majority of members.

At this stage, the use of the siang tam sai (loudspeaker) by the klum maebaan, klum room sao and the core team was clearly demonstrated the capacity to share a village resource to serve their own needs and interests. It was a new phenomena because in the past only the po luang baan and his assistant had used this system to communicate with villagers. When women and youth began to use the siang tam sai, it was not a symbol of the po luang baan any longer. This was another important symbolic change.

**ACTIVITIES, IMPROVEMENTS AND CHANGES AFTER I LEFT SANDEE**

The following details are about activities which, I would argue, reflect the increasing development of the core team members' abilities and consciousness after I left Sandee at the end of May 1993.

After I left Sandee, there were continuous changes resulting from the collaboration of the core team, klum maebaan, klum room sao and the VDC. The most outstanding change was the resignation of Somchai from the po luang baan position. Another striking incident was that Satit was elected to be the new po luang baan. In that election, another remarkable event was that there was a female candidate, Wiwa, the former Somchai's daughter, was one candidate along with two other candidates, Satit and Damrong. In the history of Sandee Village, there had never
before been a female candidate for the village head election. Although Wiwa did not win the election, she demonstrated that women too do have a chance to be chosen. Wiwa received 105 votes. (I assume that most of these votes came from her relatives and from those who became her clients by working for her as construction labourers).

It would be incorrect to conclude that Somchai resigned because of myself and the core team alone. I would say that the collaboration among the various groups led to changes in Sandee Village that led to unpleasant circumstances for Somchai. In other words, he was disempowered by these changes. I also would argue that it is unlikely that Satit would have been to be chosen if he was not one of the core team. This is because his collaboration with other villagers was a good means for him to demonstrate his commitment, willingness and abilities. This had been done without his knowing that one day he would be elected to be the formal village leader. In the eyes of villagers, he had helped improving the village situation without expecting any benefit.

I would argue that my role had been to facilitate the empowerment process, through the collaborative action research, while the core team members developed consciousness and their capacities. Through the collaborative action research process, Arunya became the klum maebaan's president, a job which needs a high level of competence in group management. She then became the facilitator in the process of the collaboration of women. Besides her competence, Arunya increased her consciousness and awareness of the potential of women and the necessity for them to empower themselves. Arunya consistently wrote to me after I left because she needed to reflect and share her experiences. She always listened to me, yet she confidently decided what she should do. As she told me in a letter [Note: all the quotes in this section are from letters]:

It does not matter that you are much younger than me. I have learned a lot from you. You are different from other wealthy and educated women and men, because of your attempt and sacrifice to improve our village. This is the important thing that I learned from you. What I have learned is invaluable. I am not a normal woman any longer. I am a woman who has capacity to help improving the village. I will try hard to further develop my capacity. Thank you for helping and supporting me to change from being nobody to being
somebody. I am proud of myself and the village, particularly of you, my kru (teacher).

On another occasion she wrote:

Thank you for helping to increase the villagers' and my consciousness about working together and unity. Women and men now realize the importance of working together. Now the po luang baan and the VDC have to depend on the klum maebaan in terms of financial help. They accept women's ability. When you come back, you will see lots of improvements in the village that result from your initiation.

Arunya also commented that:

Villagers collaborate more than in the past because they can see the sacrifice of the committee. They see progress and improvements in the village. This means not only the material improvement but also means an increase in terms of awareness and unity.

Similarly, Satit commented that:

I think I have been elected to be the po luang baan as result of our collaboration. Having collaborated with the core team provided me with a chance to demonstrate my commitment. Improvements and changes in the village generated by our collaboration also lead to the villagers' trust. What we have done was so different from what the former po luang baan and the former VDC did. I think that is why villagers needed to change village leader.

On the occasion when Satit, the new po luang baan, was provided with a loan of the approximate amount of 30,000 baht (US $1,200) by the klum maebaan in order to fix the electric pump at the new artesian well, he wrote to me saying that:

The klum maebaan has done a good job that is supposed to be done by the VDC. Without their help, I don't know when I can get this task done that quick. I did submit a project proposal for this task, but I am not so sure that it will be approved by the sapha tambon committee. Waiting for the government's help will take a long time. With financial help from the klum maebaan, I could get this task finished very quickly. This benefits all of us.

With relation to the methodology, he commented that:

Discussion is of paramount importance because, after all, villagers decide which way we should go. I believe that if we collaboratively plan before we act, there will be no conflict.

Woraphong criticized the government development agents:
The government officers need to raise their consciousness to serve the villagers, not to be *chao nai* (master or boss) of the villagers. My motivation to improve the village situation comes from villagers. Their collaboration, based on their 'faith' and 'trust' towards myself, causes me to sacrifice more for the village.

With relation to the leader, he stated that:

A good leader needs to demonstrate by doing, not just by talk because the consequence of action will be an indicator of his or her capacity. However, in the village history a 'one man show' has never worked. Village development activities can work effectively only with the co-operation of villagers.

It would be an overstatement to say that these villagers did not consciously think about the village's problems before I became involved. In fact, numerous villagers were aware of the village situation. The evidence of protest against the former village head reflected their capacity to identify that forests are the property of all villagers. The sale of part of the village forest by the former *po luang baan* was a serious impropriety. To deal with this, villagers had made an attempt to organize a protest as a collective action aimed to change the *po luang baan*. The action was insufficient to make any change. The subsequent process of collaborative action research resulted in an increased capacity to make changes. It appeared that this capacity has led to numerous changes and improvements that in turn, I would argue, link to the most striking change, ultimate resignation of the former *po luang baan*.

Similarly, Arunya, other core team members and other villagers had identified the drought as their problem. However, there was not any action or improvement based on this consciousness, until Arunya and her collaborators were facilitated to work collaboratively. Nevertheless, it is important to note that the collaborative process took time.

It is clear that the *klum maebaan* became an active group that linked other groups in the village. The activities of these groups brought pressure to bear on the leader to provide better information about the resources available from outside. As a group, the women had much more opportunity to gain access to outside resources or help provided by the government and private sectors. In Sandee, where the apparatus
of the state at the local level is not uniformly strong, there was considerable room for women to move. The revolving fund of the *klum maebaan* then began a process of asset creation such as providing electricity for the artesian well, and other activities.

Through collaboration among themselves and with other villagers, the women obtained both material gain, confidence, and emotional support from female and male counterparts. With the revolving fund, the women substantially contributed to the village community such as in the child care centre, fixing electricity for the new artesian well, the bamboo and pig raising activities, and so on. The women moved from short-term personal issues to more long term and systemic issues over time. The *klum maebaan* become a tool against the powerful. All of this turned the women and other poor villagers from passive villagers into the real beneficiaries of development activities as initiated by the villagers themselves.

It appears that the government development agents, such as the *phattanakorn* and the local MP began to provide more material resources, such as funds for the 'saving group' project or the attempt to send the child care centre for the competition (Figure 8.1). This is because the *klum maebaan* and other groups in Sandee became *prom* (meaning active) groups in the eyes of the government officials. This characteristic fits with the norms of most government developers who normally approach the *prom* groups rather than initiating new groups and assisting them to become active.

These government developers tend to develop these norms because, as local government officials, they have to implement State-led top-down rural development projects. Women in the village cannot do much to change these norms, but what they can do is develop their capacity and confidence in choosing whether they are going to accept the government-sponsored projects. With this confidence, the women become actors who actively make optimum use of material resources contributed by villagers themselves and those from outside society. At the same time they can protect their gains from powerful public and private patrons. They developed their capacity to
exercise their power in obtaining material resources, but they also developed the internal strength and collective confidence that helped them to deal with new problems.

In Sandee, a major change was an institutional change in that many villagers developed new thinking in seeing that kaanphattana moobaan (village management and development) is not 'men's business', it is women's business too. I would maintain that as long as women think that development is men's and the State's business, there will be no genuine participation of women. Therefore, women would need to view themselves as active participants who make decisions, instead of as passive actors who are directed or "coached" by the local power holders such as the po luang baan, the kamnan, or the State authorities such as the local development officials.
Figure 8.1 ‘Collaborative’ Village Administration
CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This study examines the mainstream modernization model of development that has long been employed in Thailand. It also examines WID approaches, which, to a large extent, are based on the modernization perspective. The analysis suggests that the rural development programmes under the modernization and WID approaches have had adverse effects on rural women. The transformations that resulted from agricultural modernization and industrialization have contributed to the disempowerment of rural women. The State-led rural development and WID projects have contributed to the dependence of rural women on the wider society, rather than increasing their capacity to make choices in life. This 'top-down' strategy implies a failure of the national development planners in their viewing of rural women as passive participants in the development projects coached by the local government officials who, at the same time, have to follow what was planned from the top. This has limited the full participation of rural women in the decision making process and has resulted in the limitation of their access to resources provided by the government agencies.

I have utilized collaborative action research as a methodology to empower rural women at the village level. This study has illustrated how a number of rural women empowered themselves to be self-reliant, and how they gained respect from men counterparts as co-partners. In testing the usefulness of CAR in a particular village community in rural Thailand, I found that real changes did occur. My collaboration with the Sandee villagers, particularly women, confirms that the continuous learning process of planning, acting, observing and critical reflection largely contributed to the empowerment of villagers. Through the process of critical reflection and facilitation, the women became decision makers, learning to observe and critically reflect on the process, its effects, consequences and limitations. This critical reflection presents vivid evidence that collective action achieved several changes and improvements. Women's views resulting from their critical reflection became an appropriate tool for further reflection that led to further collective action. Becoming
decision makers, women served their needs and interests. Their satisfaction led to the
continuity and persistence of collaboration through which women's capacity and
potentiality were developed and enhanced. In this study, women used CAR as a tool to
understand their problems and organize collective action in order to improve their
situation. The evaluation of the application of CAR suggests that the application of
CAR needs to be contextually and locally based.

A key factor that contributed to the success of villagers in bringing changes is
that they started with small achievable tasks which were culturally based, rather than
with complicated problems. The activities they collectively organized were based
primarily on what resources they had and could bring. The women's collaboration gave
momentum to increased opportunities for greater advancement. New possibilities for
them emerged from their capacity to exercise power. Their collective action implied
the extending of the sphere of the possible, rather than insisting upon the attainment of
unrealistic goals. Sandee women chose activities that expanded, rather than restricted
their interests and needs. In this respect, they strengthened their motivation and
effectiveness. Through their collaboration, women were able to exercise power and
demanded greater access to resources and networking that strengthened their
confidence. The women became confident and willing to change the prevailing patron-
client relationships.

These successes lead to women's confidence and motivation to make further
desired changes. As a group, and by working collaboratively, women were able to
organize useful activities and create improvements that individuals could not conduct
by themselves. This feature is a characteristic of the empowerment process where the
women are facilitated to develop their capacity in dealing with existing problems.
Women are helped to articulate their situation better and find solutions. Through
collective action, options can be discerned in any situation which opens up new options
and choices.

In the village community, village management had long been dominated by
men, and to change this situation was not easy. The fieldwork aspect of this thesis
shows how women can become active decision makers and create desired changes that serve their interests. Women's consciousness raising was made possible because collaboration obtained more information that was useful in making decisions.

Another key factor that allowed women to become active decision makers was the facilitation process. The facilitator created an atmosphere that encouraged women to equally share their perspectives, to critically reflect on issues and on-going processes, and to make decisions. It is this role of researcher as facilitator rather than coach that makes the collaborative process of development different from the 'top-down' one.

The CAR supports my argument that the process of empowering women cannot be carried out by working with women alone. I am confident in saying that collaboration between men and women was very significant. I not only collaborated with women but also with men. This was aimed at increasing the profile of women by demonstrating their competency to become equal partners with men. The practical results of collaborative action with women lead to changes in men's attitudes. Through their collaboration, women and men shared common interests and increased the consciousness that reinforced respect and trust amongst themselves. After all, women cannot be fulfilled at the expense of men, nor men at the cost of women's oppression. Women and men can equally fulfil their needs and interests.

Women empower themselves by valuing their trust, respect, commitment and friendships and exchanges with other women and men. Their collaboration reduces the isolation and alienation of women and men alike. In Sandee, exchanges were not necessarily equal in this process, but the contributions made by each villager were of comparable worth. Women's power was exercised in their transition from passivity to activity, from limited perspectives to broad conceptions.

The improvements during my short absence and after I left the village at the end of my fieldwork indicate the sustainability of the empowerment which resulted from collaboration through the continuous learning process. The process was
institutionalised. These desired improvements also confirmed that my role was that of a 'facilitator'. Unlike a 'coach', a facilitator creates an atmosphere where the collaborators can become active participants who make the decisions. Collaboration takes place when the common goals of the facilitator and collaborators are achieved. Facilitating local women to develop their capacity and skills in village management was seen as the key to empower them to be worthy local resources.

This study suggests that development is not a singular linear process. It confirms that the development process in general, and the WID programmes in particular, should facilitate the rural poor to be able to control their own lives and to make choices where their values and identity are recognized. The study of Sandee Village confirms that the significance of 'people' and their capacity to deal with current changes needs to be the first priority, rather than the GDP rate or other indicators of economic growth and performance.

This study also demonstrates that rural culture and traditions do not necessarily constrain rural development, as suggested by the modernization theory. On the contrary, local tradition and culture can be used as a means to build up economic activity that leads to further social and economic activity. The basic concept and the practice of collaborative development reflect a transformation in development strategy in which a village community articulates needs rather than these being defined by the 'modern' society as suggested by the modernization model.

In this study, the researcher's consciousness served as a source of knowledge and insight into gender asymmetry and how it could be changed in social life. The process of CAR combined consciousness-raising and social change through encouraging empowerment on the part of research participants.

I have tested the usefulness of CAR in my own village. Although it took only a fairly short period of time to develop villagers' trust and commitment due to my existing relationship, I am confident that there are some strong clues as to the benefits of applying collaborative action research as a general methodology for women to
empower themselves. This study demonstrates that CAR does work. These clues and events present a challenge to further test collaborative action research in situations where the researchers are outsiders. It would be of interest to see how long it would take for a complete outsider to achieve benefits similar to those described in this thesis.

Another aspect of this work that deserves further exploration is the establishment of training models for prospective facilitators. These models would need to contain not just techniques but also incorporate themes and ideas about the development of theories similar to those described in this thesis. In this way, the CAR model could become more easily incorporated into development, and particularly WID, approaches.
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Conditions in Sandee Village

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