



# The Roles of Japanese Women in Social Development



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### I. Statement of the Problem:

In the field of social development, there is a wide range of perspective and dimensions constituting both contents and interpretation at a micro-level of perspectives, social development may be considered in terms of education, public health, urban development, and social development activities. On the other hand, at a macro-level of perspectives, we may consider social development in terms of national development which may include national economy and politics for which the undertakings of this study had been selected for further discussion.

When demographical aspects of social development are considered, women always play an important role in national development where Japan is one of the most successful in an economic sense. Undoubtedly, there should have been a number of important factors that contribute to such success. Japanese women are expected to have played a big role behind their country's

accomplishment. It was the objective of this study to investigate the extent to which the roles having been played by Japanese women in their social development.

### II. Objectives of the Study:

1. To investigate the roles of the Japanese women in social development which constitutes economic, political, and social aspects of such development;
2. To analyze issues, problems, constraints and/or accomplishments in supporting and enhancing the roles of Japanese women in national development;
3. To compare and contrast the roles played by the Japanese women and their Thai counterparts in social development of the countries;
4. To seek for an appropriate model of such social development from those women's potentials which are technical bodies of knowledge and of the implications and applications for national development schemes.

### III. Methods of the Study:

Data from primary and secondary sources for this study were collected as the following:

1. Library research was conducted in different libraries of the universities and other institutions in Japan and Thailand.
2. Informal talks and discussions with various groups of people in the related fields (i.e., university lecturers and students).
3. Interviews were conducted on several Japanese women working in offices and factories.
4. Field trips and visits to private sector agencies and associations were made in Japan and Thailand.
5. Several interviews of female undergraduate students were conducted in Japan.

### IV. Results of the Study:

The results of the study were summarized as the following.

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1. The present-day Japanese women had increasingly played more important roles as equally as men in various aspects of social development. For instance, they participated more in economic development, equally and legally worked well along with male counterparts in working places.

2. Even under this new trend of Japanese women's roles in social development, social values and long-held traditions and customs had still been maintained and practiced, which tended to be obstacles and problems against the role-upgrading processes for Japanese women. This may be due to the long-held beliefs and practices among Japanese women themselves, for instance, when they had the first child they were required by society to work at home in child rearing, taking care of the house chores, and looking after the parents of their husbands. They might again start to work outside their homes after all the children had grown up.

3. Japanese women working at home should have received their shares of wages and pays for their house chores equal to those working outside their homes. This is because while the wives/mothers were working in offices outside their homes, babysitters, childcare maids and housemaids had to be hired to take care of the chores.

4. Certain traditional values, which are usually good examples to the Thai people, were still

maintained and practiced by Japanese men and women, such as their industriousness in the working habits, savings habits, self-disciplines, seniority status, patriotism and nationalism, were major factors contributing to the progresses and prosperity of their nation.

5. Socio-economically, a great number of Japanese women with high ranks in the working echelon were still far from being equal to their male counterparts because of their disadvantageous physiological characteristics. Only a few Japanese women could accomplish such equal socio-economic status in the working hierarchies.

6. It was found that the majority of Japanese women chiefly held the industrial service jobs; the next two jobs were dealing with wholesales and retail trades and restaurant businesses. The least popular among Japanese women was the handicrafts manufacturing business.

7. In general, most Japanese woman worked in offices and single women generally worked in the industrial service business. Most married women worked in the handicrafts manufacturing business and most of them had to work overtime. However, there were still some Japanese women unemployed.

8. Like their counterparts in other Asian countries, Japanese women were quite inactive politically due to the lack of interest and experience in politics.

9. In general, Japanese women were interested in getting together for social development at high level.

## V. Further Implications and Recommendations:

1. Owing to the fact that the scope of this study covered so wide areas of economic, political, and social interests, a period of only one month for the study was too short and too little for this great undertaking. The duration of the study should be extended to appropriate the task.

2. Within the framework of the social science research, it may not be assumed that the study of this nature within a very limited period of time with the mentioned methods of data collection would be a good representative of the target population. The combination of various methods for data collection should be incorporated, such as questionnaire in conjunction with interviews.

3. Since it has been very successful in various aspects of national development: educational, social, economic, and political, Japan will best represent the best model for other countries to follow in social development. "The Role of Japanese Women in National Development" should appropriately be the title of the research in the future.

