

# NEW LIFE OF THAI WOMEN IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

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## ABSTRACT

Based on surveys conducted in provinces in the Northeast, there were 19,549 women from this region were married to male foreigners and have settled in foreign countries. To create better understanding of this phenomenon and its impacts either short or long term on the Thai society, this research survey on 'New life of Thai women in foreign countries' therefore was conducted to gather basic demographic, socio-economic characteristics and other related information of the 'cross-culture' married couples who returned home for a short visit. The impacts of cross-culture marriage on people's way of life and the community in many aspects were also assessed for future planning.

The interviews were conducted among the randomly selected 219 cross-culture married women and their parents who lived in villages in 5 Northeastern provinces. Additional information for the analysis of this issue was also collected from the secondary source in many provinces in the Northeast region.

The survey findings revealed that despite these women were originally from rural areas with low education, mostly, they had smoothly led the married life in foreign countries where they had settled down with their spouses. They could adjust themselves without much difficulty either on language, new way of life, and spouse's family. Economically, they had better standard of living, increase of income for more than 10 times of that they used to earn before marriage. Their spouses were willing to take care for spending of the family back home (parents or children from former marriage). In the short run, it appeared that cross-culture marriage was beneficial to these women. In addition, when returning home for a short visit these women usually spend more lavishly on consuming products or on housing, land. Such spending could help stimulate economic growth in the region. On the other hand, the anticipated negative long term impacts from the cross-culture marriage phenomenon would be the increasing negative attitudes toward Thai men (laziness, irresponsible, drinking) that might lead to more cross-culture marriage, the stimulation for materialism to grow among teenagers in the village who witnessed the lavish consuming behavior among these women. These are issues that need further investigation to be used for setting up social preventive measures.

The study recommended that the Government-related agencies should develop some measures to help women who were married to foreigners to be well prepared in many respects for settling down in foreign countries. These women should be able to play their part in the country's social and economic development even they live in foreign countries. They can act as culture diplomat, can be the dealers for OTOP products or to help the Government

in organizing the OTOP exhibition in the area they lived in order to make Thai products known to people in foreign countries.