



Care and Protection of Children Among Thai Muslim Families

Aree Jampaklay

Institute for Population and Social Research
Mahidol University

This research project was funded by UNICEF Thailand Program Bangkok.

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Salaya Phuttamonthon Nakhon Pathom 73170 Thailand.

Telephone : (662) 441-0201-4 Ext.115 (662) 441-9666

Fax : (662) 441-9333

E-mail : directpr@mahidol.ac.th

Homepage : <http://www.mahidol.ac.th/mahidol/pr/pr.html>

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Aree Jampaklay

Abstract

Using both quantitative and qualitative approaches, this study examines the care and protection of Thai Muslim children. The results suggest that more attention should be paid to rural children, not only in terms of their educational chances, but also in terms of their living arrangements. Interestingly, no gender differences are found in educational enrollment or achievement. The results also show that within Muslim households, familial support has a positive effect on children's education. The study highlights the need to account for cultural context when examining children's outcomes. The cost of education for Muslims includes not only financial expenses and lost opportunity costs, but also the risk of cultural assimilation. Parental concern about the assimilation of their children may be a strong enough motive, in some cases, to limit their children's schooling.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Rapid change in social and economic features, whether a shift from an agricultural and rural society to an urbanized industrial economy or the higher status of woman has affected many parts of the lives of the people in Thailand. One impact of that change can be seen in the context of family, both in terms of the function of the family and the roles of members within the family. Increasing activities outside the family of parents, particularly of the mother, has reduced time devoted to home, and children. Consequently, the general trend appears to be a decline in mother's time spent with young children. In present day Thailand, it is usual for children to be left with other family members. There is an argument that this situation is an alternative mechanism for mothers who engage in outside work to have others take care of their children, with or without pay (Podhisita et al. 1990). Richter's 1991 study indicated that about 8-10 per cent of children live separately from their mothers (Richter, K. 1996: 327-39). That finding reflects the fact that it is not uncommon for mothers to live apart from their children in Thailand. The reasons for children living apart from parents could be various, including parents' divorce/separation, parents' living apart, migration, or the death of one parent. These events directly affect care and protection of children in the family and the children's welfare. Such impact includes children's chance of education, which leads to their chance of occupation in the future.

To be a valuable resource of the society in the future, children need education, which is actually known to have benefits not only for the children themselves but also for their parents, other family members, and the society at large. Education enhances individual capability to stay healthy, earn a livelihood, have an effective voice in the community, control fertility, and be mobile socially, economically, and geographically. Parents can benefit from their children's schooling through higher family income, economic support when they are older, greater social status, and the improved marriageability of their daughters. Society gains as well, through increases in productivity and income, reduction in population growth, and a healthier and more informed citizenry (Cynthia B. Lloyd and Ann K. Blanc, 1996).

In general, to access education, children need their family's support. Even though government plays the primary role in the provision of schooling, parents and other family members play the deciding role in determining whether or not children actually enroll in school when it is available, and if so by what age, and how long children remain in school. Thus, the achievement of schooling of children will require not only sufficient investments by government but also the active support of families (Cynthia B. Lloyd and Ann K. Blanc, 1996). Even when schools are accessible and affordable, families have to see a net advantage to themselves and to children in forgoing children's full-time participation in domestic and economic activities, and they must possess the means to finance their children's education if they are to willingly enroll them in school and keep them there as they approach adolescence. This family support is influenced by several factors such as parents' attitudes, as well as family's socio-economic status. The findings of the Children and Youth Survey in 1992 reported that almost half of the reasons for children and youths (6-24 years old) not being in school, were economic. About 20 per cent of children and youth answered that they had a responsibility to take care of their family. Besides, 10 per cent were unaware of the importance of education (NSO 1994: 22). Those data reflected the significance of children's family's background for the chance of education.

In Thailand, Muslim is the largest minority group. Being in minority status, Thai Muslims hold not only a different way of life from most Thai whose religion is Buddhist, but also different in socioeconomic status. Education status among Thai Muslims is much lower than Buddhists, although in the principles of Islam, the religion Muslims embrace, parents or guardians who take care of children are responsible for encouraging their children, regardless of gender, to access good education. The census data in 1990 provides some information supporting the above conclusion. It indicates that the proportion of Muslims 17 years old and older who never went to school was 30 per cent, compared to 8 percent among Buddhists (Philip Guest and Aree Uden, 1994: 12).

In fact, Islam pays special attention to the family's function as an original resource for society's development. Thus, many of the principles are directly involved with family and children issues. They include the protection not only for general children, but also for children from broken family, as well as orphans. Meanwhile, Muslim families, like other

groups in Thai society, also inevitably confront the socioeconomic change. It may also affect their family structure and arrangement.

Despite its significance as the largest minority group, few researchers pay attention to studies specifically in the Thai Muslim group relative to general Thai. One other aspect of concern, not different from other areas, is that the knowledge which is related to the family's context among Thai Muslim is obviously inadequate and needs more exploring. Hence, this study wishes to fulfill such lack of understanding. The focus of this attempt is how children in Thai Muslim families are cared for and protected, in relation to their parents' current status and their living arrangements. The familial aspect of children is then extended to examine their chance of education.

Objective

Followings are the aims of this study:

1. to study the children's care and protection in current Thai Muslim families in terms of their family's structure, their parents' current status, and their living arrangements,
2. to investigate education chance among Thai Muslim children (both current education and expected education), focusing on gender difference as well as the reasons of not attending school, and post schooling life, particularly of girls,
3. to assess whether family background influences children's chance of education, and
4. to explore the life of Thai Muslim children after leaving school, particularly occupation opportunities among boys and girls.

Previous related research

Children's living arrangement

Most related studies in Thailand and other developing countries focus on child care alternatives—the effect of incompatibility between child rearing and wage working of mothers, child care arrangement among working women, factors affecting the mother's labor force participation and the impact of child rearing on child health and development. Most conclude that most women still have a conflict between maternal and occupational role. The incompatibility begins with the shift to wage labor and industrialization. Hours worked and wage are positively related to the likelihood that persons other than parents were taking care of children. Low-cost childcare such as substitution from other members in the household has a significant impact on mother's labor force participation. (Richter et al. 1992: 6-7)

In Thailand, the results from a study done in Bangkok and Chiangmai indicate an increase of non-maternal care for children both in Bangkok and Chiangmai. It has been explained by the women's education and fertility decline (Wongboonsin and Prachuabmoh Ruffolo, 1992). This study also suggests that when women's participation in the labor force increases, the fathers play a greater role in childcare and housework.

Not many studies focus on children's living arrangements. The data from the Demographic and Health Survey, reported by United Nations showed some information on living arrangements of women and their children in developing countries. Regarding residence of children apart from their mother, it is found that in some cultural milieux, lineage links are traditionally more important than the conjugal bond. Thus co-residence with the parents is not the only acceptable living arrangement for children. In such circumstances, contrary to common assumptions regarding marital dissolution and children's welfare, the disruption of unions does not necessarily entail a drastic change in the life of the woman and children involved since security is found in lineage, rather than in marriage (Bleek, 1987, mentioned in United Nations, 1995:54). The reasons for children living away from mothers can vary. Some results from studies in African society suggested that women currently in monogamous unions are less likely to send children out of the household than women in polygamous unions.

For children who live apart from their mother, the data from the Demographic and Health Surveys from 18 countries show the proportion of children under 6 years not living with their mother ranges from nearly zero to as high as 20 per cent. In Thailand, the proportion is 5 per cent for boys and 3 per cent for girls. Richter's study, conducted on migrant women currently living in Bangkok, provides some information about children's living arrangements for children who live apart from their mother: reason of separation, frequency of contact and support. It is found that 16 per cent of children lived separately from their mothers at least a month before reaching the age of five. The majority of them lived outside Bangkok and lived with maternal grandparents. Only a very small percentage lived separately from their mothers but with their fathers, whether because of a divorce or for another reason. The most frequent answer for the reason of separation was that the mother was working and there was no one to care the child. The remaining reasons were that mothers had to migrate to work so the children were left behind, mothers had too many children to take care of, and relatives or children themselves decided that they should live elsewhere. However, most children who didn't live with their mothers were visited by their mothers frequently; either every day or every week. And the majority of the mothers sent money to their children monthly but in small average amounts. Giving money and other goods to the child is associated with a visit by the mothers. The generally small amounts of money indicate that the children were mainly supported by the family they were living with (Richter et al. 1992:63-69).

Children education

There is increasing consensus in the international community that near universal primary schooling is not only prerequisite for the achievement of low fertility but, more importantly, an essential aspect of basic human development. Investment in schooling is a top priority for developing-country government as well as for international donor assistance. (Cynthia B. Lloyd and Ann K. Blanc, 1996) The study done by Cynthia B. Lloyd and Ann K. Blanc in 1996, using data from the second and third phase of the Demographic and Health Surveys, shows some information on the relationship between familial determinants and children's educational attainment in sub-Saharan Africa. They find that the resource of a child's residential household--in particular the education of the household head and the household standard of living-- are determinant

factors in explaining differences among children in school outcomes. By contrast, a child's biological parents appear to play a less critical role, as demonstrated by comparing the school outcomes of orphans with the outcomes of children whose parents are still living. Both boys and girls living in female-headed households show universally better school outcomes than children living in male-headed households when similar resources are compared.

There has not been any attempt to study children in Muslim families in Thailand, either in terms of children's being in family, or examining whether the familial context of children affects their education. This study, thus, focuses on children's being in a Thai Muslim family and the effect of familial context on their educational chances. The finding serves as primary information to understand the context of family and children in Thai Muslim group.

Conceptual Framework

The key concepts of this study are care and protection, educational and occupational chance.

Care and protection: Care and protection of children is measured by some circumstances of the family that children live in. This includes parents' status, people who they live with, and who cares for them. The variables studied are as follows:

- Parents' current status: married and living together / married but living separately / divorced or separated / father dead/mother dead / or both parents dead
- Living arrangement of children: live with parents / live with mother / live with father / or live with others.
- Duration of living apart from parents
- Experience of living apart from mother in first 5 years
- People who cares for children in the family
- Contact between parents and children who are not co-resident
- Children's rights to choose people they want to live with (for broken home children and orphans)
- Type of household: both parents and children/ single parents and children/ both or single parents, children and grandparents/ both or single parents, children, grandparents, and parents' sibling/children without parents

- Number of household members
- Number of children in the household
- Number of siblings
- Place of living
- Relationship to household head

Educational chance: Educational chance is measured by school years currently enroll and expected education for children 6 years and older, and expected education only for children younger than 6 years. Six years of age is used as a cut-off age for pre-school age and school age children. Although in general children start primary school at age 7, some of them start one year earlier. Using 6 years of age will cover early-entering school children.

- Current schooling status (both religious and general)*: number of school years currently enrolls.
- Expected education (both religious and general): This variable is meant to capture the highest years of education the children is expected to complete in the future by parents or people who take responsibility for children.
- Not attending school during school ages and reasons: It explores children who are no longer in school including the reason why they left school.
- Dropout from school at any level: This information captures the level of education at which children left before completing at any level of education; these are left school before completing primary level (1-5 years), before completing secondary level (7-8 years), or before completing high school (10-11 years).
- Never attending school and reasons: This variable provides the reasons for never attending school among children who have never attended school

Occupational chance: For those who are currently not in school, information on their lives is collected, in particular girls. This variable includes the main activity, income, income management, and experience of occupation training.

* Religious education in this study includes any kind of study about Islam. In southern Thailand, especially in 4 provinces, namely Pattani, Satun, Yala, and Narathivas, religious education is typically provided in private schools. It is put in the curriculum of the school together with general education.

Chapter 2

Methodology

To achieve the objectives, primary data, with both qualitative and quantitative approaches, were employed in this study.

1. Quantitative study

Pre-test: A survey questionnaire was designed and developed consistent with the study's objective and conceptual framework. A pre-test was also conducted to improve the questionnaire. One Muslim community in Bangkok was selected for the pre-test interview. Most of the residents there have Malayu blood. Their ancestors used to live at the southern border of Thailand, but were captured by Thai government and then settled in Bangkok. Some of them speak Malayu. They were assumed to have almost the same characteristics as the sample we would use in the south for the real fieldwork. The pre-test provided information which was useful for questionnaire improvement.

Study's site: The site of the study is 2 provinces, purposely selected from 4 southern provinces where the majority of residents are Muslims, namely Satun, Yala, Pattani, and Narathivas. This study intended to conduct research in low economic status areas. In terms of household income and individual income, Pattani's economic status is the lowest among 4 provinces (or even among 14 southern provinces), followed by Narathivas (NSO 1996 : 33). Therefore, those 2 provinces were selected to be the site of this study.

Study's sample: Since the study's aim is to investigate children and the contexts surrounding them, the study sample is households with at least one child, regardless of child's current living place. In this study, a 'child' is any person under the age of 18. Respondents of the quantitative study were people who were currently caring and taking responsibility for those children in the household. The data was also obtained from the children themselves, if available.

The sampling process: The sample was selected in the following way:

In urban area: Fifty randomized Muslim households in the municipal areas of those 2 provinces were interviewed. So, 100 households in urban areas were interviewed.

In rural area: multi-stage random sampling was used to select the research district, sub-district, and village as follows:

1. select 2 districts from each province by simple random sampling method. So, 4 districts from 2 provinces were involved.
2. select 2 sub-districts from each selected district by simple random sampling method. So, 8 sub-districts from 2 provinces were involved.
3. select 1 village from each sub-district by simple random sampling method. Thus, 8 villages from 2 provinces were involved.
4. In each village, 50 households with at least one child less than 18 years old were interviewed. Thus, 400 households in rural areas were interviewed.

Therefore, the total sample size is 500 households: 100 households in urban area, and 400 households in rural areas.

2. Qualitative study

In-depth interview

In both the urban and rural selected areas, a number of children and their caretakers were selected for in-depth interviews. Respondents were people who care for children as well as the children themselves if they could respond. One child of each type below, regardless of gender and place of living, was purposively selected according to the key concepts of the study.

Regarding living arrangement:

- Children from a broken family who currently live apart from parents
- Children from a broken family who currently live apart from mother
- Children from a broken family who currently live apart from father
- Children whose mother died who live with father

- Children whose mother died who live apart from father
- Children whose father died who live with mother
- Children whose father died who live apart from mother
- Children whose parents died
- Children of living apart parents who currently live apart from parents
- Children of living apart parents who currently live apart from mother
- Children of living apart parents who currently live apart from father
- Children of living-together parents who live apart from parents

Regarding education:

- Children who are 6-11 years old but do not attend school
- Children who are dropout from school at primary level
- Children who are dropout from school at secondary level

Focus group discussion

Four groups of girls between the ages of 12-17 who have already left school were interviewed in focus group discussions. Two focus groups discussions in urban areas and two in rural areas were held.

The qualitative data was supplementary to the quantitative data analysis.

3. Selection and training of supervisors and interviewers

For the qualitative approach: The data was obtained by the researcher, myself. I have one assistant who holds a bachelor's degree and can speak Malayu. She helped me in recording conversation, translation, asking questions, and recording cassette transcriptions. In addition we also discussed how to ask questions in order to achieve the answer that we expected, and what the answer implied.

For quantitative approach: Two field supervisors and ten interviewers were recruited and trained. Both of our supervisors have adequate field supervision experiences. Bachelor's degree, Malayu language skill and some experience in field survey were required for interviewers. In this fieldwork, to fulfil the language requirement, and also familiarity with the

site and people, ten interviewers from students of Islamic Studies College, Prince of Songkhla University at Pattani were recruited. They were trained to understand the study's objectives, research procedures, data collection tools and so on. These were also included in field manual that was developed before training. Perhaps because they are Muslims, this study interested them very much. They were not only employees; at that moment, they were also real personnel of this study.

4. Data collection

The qualitative data were collected a half a month before the fieldwork for the quantitative data was conducted. While quantitative data were collected by interviewers, qualitative data were collected by myself and one assistant as already mentioned above. The quantitative data collection lasted about 1 month.

Chapter 3

Children, Parents' Current Status, and Living Arrangement

Data for 1,479 children from two provinces of lower southern Thailand were collected to represent Thai Muslim children in the South. I begin by describing some of their characteristic distributions, shown in table 3.1. Children's parents' status and children's living arrangement are then presented. Data from both quantitative and qualitative approaches is not independently discussed. Although the findings below rely mainly on the quantitative data, the data from the qualitative approach is also discussed as supplementary information.

Children's general characteristics

- *Age and gender*

The proportion number of boys over all is a little bit higher than girls; however, this is not the case in urban areas. The mean age is about 8 years. More than one third are younger than 7 years old, around one third are in primary school age, and one fourth are older than 12 years. The distribution of age groups is different between children in urban and rural area. The fact that the mean age of rural children is about one year and a half lower than urban children and the higher proportion of children 0-6 years higher in rural area together reflects higher fertility as general profile of rural area relative to urban area.

- *Number of family members, Number of children in family and Number of siblings*

Almost two thirds of the children live in families of 6-10 persons. There are more children in the rural than urban area who live in a big family (11 persons and more). This finding, not surprisingly, implies that large family is preferred by rural Muslims more than by urban Muslims.

The number of children in the family in which our sample children live and the number of living siblings also reflect the family's size and may affect children's well being. The result shows that more than one third of the children spend their lives in a family in which there are at least 5

children. The high fertility in Thai Muslim group appearing clearly in the proportion of children who have at least 5 living siblings is quite remarkable (29 per cent). The difference of number of children in the family and number of siblings between urban and rural children, however, is not clearly seen.

- ***Type of household structure***

Over half of the sample children live in nuclear families with both parents. Nuclear families are obviously more usual in urban area than rural area. It is worth noting that joint families, or families composed of parents, children and parents' sibling, including grandparents, are much more common than joint families without grandparents (14.7 per cent relative to 2.8 per cent). This feature reflects the significant function of elderly in linking two (or more) sibling families together. When grandparents are dead, the sibling families tend to live separately. Proportions of joint family with grandparents and nuclear family with grandparents are about the same. A very small proportion of family with only children and their single parents without other relatives (2 per cent) suggests that it is not common in Thai Muslim family to live without relatives after separating or divorce or death of spouse has occurred. This result may also be seen as the supporting information for the network support in familial context. Very few families composed of children living with other relatives without parents presenting (2.4 per cent). Here, there seems no evidence of family-structure difference between urban and rural area.

- ***Relationship with household head***

Just as the household structure that children live in are of various types, the relationship of children with household head is varied as well. Most of them, however, are children of the household head (80 per cent). Most of the remaining are grandchildren or great grandchildren. It is the Thai tradition to pay respect to the oldest people of the household. So, for the family with grandparents, a grandfather (or a grandmother) was nominated as household head, even though most of the business of the family is in the hands of other persons.

Table 3.1 Some characteristics of children by place of living

	Place of living		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Age group			
0-6 years	34.2	41.8	40.2
7-12 years	31.9	34.6	34.0
13-17 years	33.9	23.6	25.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean	9.5	8.08	8.3
Gender			
Male	49.5	52.8	52.1
Female	50.5	47.2	47.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of family member			
2-5 persons	25.1	30.3	29.1
6-10 persons	70.4	60.0	62.0
11+ persons	4.6	10.0	8.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean	6.9	7.1	7.0
Number of children in family			
1-2 children	20.2	25.2	24.1
3-4 children	49.2	37.8	40.2
5+ children	30.6	37.0	35.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean	3.8	3.9	3.9
Number of living siblings			
1-2 siblings	27.0	32.8	31.6
3-4 siblings	45.3	37.9	34.8
5+ siblings	27.7	29.3	28.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mean	3.5	3.6	3.6

Table 3.1 Some characteristics of children by place of living
(continued)

	Place of living		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Type of household			
Both parents and children	70.0	62.7	64.2
Single parents and children	3.3	1.6	2.0
Both/single parents and children with grandparents	10.1	14.7	13.7
Joint family with grandparents	14.0	14.8	14.7
Joint family with grandparents	1.3	3.2	2.8
Children without parents	1.0	2.7	2.4
Others	0.3	0.3	0.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	307	1172	1479
Relationship with household head			
Children	87.0	78.2	80.1
Grandchildren, great grandchildren	12.1	19.9	18.3
Niece, nephew	1.0	1.2	1.1
Sister, brother	-	0.4	0.3
Others (step child, daughter in law)	-	0.3	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	30.7	1172	1479

Parents' current status

Current status of parents of children is shown in table 3.2. Most of the children's parents are living together. Children whose parents are divorced account for four per cent. Children whose father is dead are almost three times more than those whose mother is dead. Very few of them face both parents' death. Parents' current status among children in rural and urban area is not different at a statistically significant level (Chi-square value is not shown). However, it should be noted that children's parents who are married but live separately occurred in the rural area more than in the urban area. The main reason of parents' living apart is because father has left for work (not shown in the table). This information suggests one possible reason: the migration stream, which typically flows from rural area to urban area. This study also shows that divorce is the main cause of living-apart parents. In Thai Muslim family, it is in rural area that divorce happens more frequently. This finding is quite surprising, given the information that broken marriage in general occurs more often in urban areas than rural areas.

More information about children whose parents are divorced or dead is also collected and shown in table 3.3-3.4.

• *Children with divorced parents*

For children of divorced parents, more than two-thirds were younger than 4 years when their parents divorced (table 3.3). Most of the remaining were between 4-9 years. The in-depth interview of three children from broken families also shows that two of them were even younger than one year when their parents divorced. For divorced parents, while most of the fathers are remarried, less than half of the mothers do the same. This result reflects the fact that divorced men are more likely to remarry than divorced women. In other words, children whose parents are divorced are more likely to have their father remarried than to have their mother remarried. Among those whose fathers are remarried, more than half were younger than 4 years when fathers got remarried and about 40 per cent were younger than 4 years old when mothers got remarried. So, it is not a long time after facing parents' divorce that a substantial proportion of children confronts a second event--their parents' remarriage. Furthermore, the result shows that most fathers and mothers who are remarried have more children with the new spouse.

- ***Children whose one parent is dead***

The age of children at a parent's death, current status of surviving parents and age of children at surviving parents' remarriage are shown in table 3.4.

It appears that a remarkable proportion of children whose one parent is dead experienced this event when they were young kids. Over one third of them were younger than 4 years when either mother or father is dead. The data further shows that three-fourths of the children whose a parent is dead have their surviving parents remain widowed. Those surviving parents who are remarried, however, have more children with the new spouse to care for.

Because there are only two children who lost parents, their detailed information is not shown here.

One fact from the finding reveals that divorced parents are two fold more often to be remarried than parents whose spouse dead. What is similar between them is that those who are remarried are likely to have more kids. Consequently, children from their former spouses must be inevitably affected by this condition.

Table 3.2 Current status of parents by place of living

Current status of parents	Place of living		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Married and living together	93.2	90.0	90.7
Married but living apart	0.3	1.4	1.1
Divorce	2.9	4.0	3.8
Father is dead	3.3	2.9	3.0
Mother is dead	0.3	1.5	1.3
Both parents are dead	-	0.2	0.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	307	1172	1479

Table 3.3 Some characteristics of children whose parents are divorced by place of living

	Place of living		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Age of children at parents' divorce			
0-3 year	75.0	63.8	65.5
4-6 year	25.0	10.6	12.7
7-9 year	-	17.0	14.5
10+ year	-	8.9	7.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	8	47	55
Current status of father			
not remarried	25.0	24.0	24.0
remarried but no more children	-	13.3	11.1
remarried with more children	62.5	62.2	61.1
remarried but no information about children	12.5	-	1.9
Unknown	-	4.3	1.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	8	47	55
Age of children at father's remarriage			
0-3	66.7	55.9	57.5
4-6	33.3	17.6	20.0
7-9	-	14.7	12.5
10+	-	11.7	10.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	6	34	40

Table 3.3 Some characteristics of children whose parents are divorced by place of living (continued)

	Place of living		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Current status of mother			
not remarried	75.0	55.3	58.2
remarried but no more children	25.0	10.6	12.7
remarried with more children	-	29.8	25.5
remarried but no information about children	-	2.1	1.8
Unknown	-	2.1	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	8	47	55
Age of children at mother's remarriage			
0-3	-	45.0	40.9
4-6	-	10.0	9.1
7-9	50.0	25.0	27.3
10+	50.0	20.0	22.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	2	20	22

Table 3.4 Some characteristics of children with one parent dead by place of living

	Place of living		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Age of children at parent's death (year)			
0-3	25.0	44.2	40.6
4-6	25.0	21.2	21.9
7-9	8.3	17.3	15.6
10-12	16.7	5.8	7.8
13-17	25.0	11.5	14.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	12	52	64
Current marital status of surviving parent			
not remarried	75.0	73.1	73.4
remarried but no more children	-	5.8	4.7
remarried with more children	16.7	21.2	20.3
Unknown	8.3	-	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	12	52	64
Age of children at surviving parent's remarriage (year)			
0-3	50.0	14.3	18.8
4-6	-	35.7	31.3
7-9	50.0	21.4	25.0
10-12	-	21.4	18.8
13-17	-	7.1	6.3
Total	-	-	100.0
N	2	14	16

Children's Living Arrangement

Aspects of children's living arrangement are discussed in this part. The welfare of children depends on a multitude of factors surrounding their families, households and their community. Generally, child welfare depends heavily on parents, the primary agents providing children with essential care (United Nations, 1995: 54). Parents, however, may not be the only important providers of children's support and childcare. In Thailand it is not uncommon for mothers to live apart from children, even when they are very young (Richter et al, 1992: 63). The findings below show some information of living arrangement among children in Thai Muslim families.

- *Experience of living separately from mother in first five years of age*

The respondents were asked whether each child in the household had ever been separated from his/her mother at least a month when he/she was younger than 6 years. Table 3.5 shows that around 9 per cent of Muslim children have lived separately from their mothers for at least one month during the first five years of age. This number is relatively smaller when compared to the percentage from a household survey of ever-married women in Bangkok metropolitan area that found 16 percent of children lived separately from their mother for at least a month before reaching the age of five (Richter et al, 1992: 63). The number in the table shows that children in the rural area had separated from their mothers almost twice more than in the urban area, though the difference is not statistically significant. The reasons of separation are mainly due to mothers' work, which is stronger for mothers in the rural area. The mean length of separation is about two years and a half. Living apart for a long period, at least four years, was experienced by almost one third of the children. A higher proportion of living apart from mother in rural children shows once again that they are in situation which should be a cause for concern.

- *Current living*

This information gives picture of children's leaving temporarily from home for any reasons. It is found that only a few children were currently living away from home. Children in the rural area live apart from home more than in the urban area, even though it does not differ significantly,

and over one third of them leave for work while all children in the urban area leave for study.

Who children live with

The finding in table 3.6 presents a picture of the current living arrangement of Thai Muslim children. While it is clear that most Muslim children live with both parents, the data provides some notable information. Children who live with single parents, either mother or father, account for about 8 per cent. The proportion of those who live apart from father is about twice as high as those who live apart from mother (10.6 per cent compare to 5.6 per cent). That living apart from the father is more common than living apart from mother is consistent with findings of previous study (Richter et al, 1992: 64).

Children's living arrangements in the rural area are different from children in the urban area significantly at 0.05 level. Children in the rural area live without mother and father about three times more than children in the urban area. As discussed earlier, this situation could be explained that because people in the rural area migrate to urban area more than people in urban area migrate elsewhere. In handling childcare problems, some parents-migrants might decide to leave their children in the rural area with other relatives instead of taking children to the destination place. Consequently, children in the rural area are found to live apart from their parents more than children in the urban area.

For those who live apart from both parents, the proportion of those who live with maternal grandparents or relatives is over four times more than those who live with paternal grand parents or relatives. This finding is not only consistent with previous study, which found that the majority of children who live separately from their mothers live with their maternal grandparents (Richter et al., 1992: 63), but also consistent with Islamic principle that grants rights to the maternal side to take care of children of divorced parents and orphans over the paternal side.

- ***Children who live apart from mother***

As shown in table 3.6, about 6 per cent (1.4 plus 4.2 per cent) of children currently live separately from mother. Table 3.7 further provides more information about these children. While the main reason of living apart is

mothers leaving for work, parents' divorce accounts for a substantial proportion of children who are not co-resident with their mother. This result is consistent with many analyses in several countries that found that marital disruption is an important factor influencing the overall frequency of mother/child separation (United Nations, 1995: 54). Note that the children presented here do not include children whose mother is dead.

Times and length of contact between mother and child measure the strength of ties between them. This information also implies the opportunity of children to spend time with mothers and the time of mothers caring for children. The result suggests that one third of children who live apart from mothers meet with mothers every 1-3 months. Substantial proportions of them (16 per cent), however, have not seen their mother for years. Moreover, the proportion of those who have never seen mother at all after they were left accounts for 6.5 per cent. Regarding the length of time spent together for each meeting, most of children spend time with mothers between 1 day to half a month. Around one fifth spend less than one day with their mothers for each meeting.

The results from in-depth interviews of children who live apart from their mothers indicates that typically the mother comes to visit children around once or twice a year. They mostly stay together less than one day. The reason of living apart suggests that divorced mothers are less likely to keep good contact with children who are left with paternal relatives.

“She (mother) came for a minute, gave me 20 baht and then she left.” --- said a male teen who live without both parents because of their divorce.

It is quite obvious that children whose mother still survives but do not live together do not frequently see each other. It is remarkable that some of them have never seen their mother after she left. It is shown in table 3.6 that very few of them live with father. At this point the significant role of relatives, especially maternal grandparents clearly appears.

- *Children who live apart from father*

As noted earlier, almost one-eighth of children currently live separately from their father. Further data suggests that among them almost half were left because of parents' divorce, while one third were left due to fathers' work (table 3.6). The majority of them (one-third) meet their

fathers every 4-6 months. It is noted that almost one-fifth have never seen their fathers since they were left. Among those who still meet with their fathers, almost all of them stay with their fathers not longer than 7 days in each meeting.

When comparing the proportion of the parents' divorce as the reason given of living separately between children living separately from mothers and children living separately from father (24 per cent to 47 per cent), it is once again clear that divorced mothers tend to leave children less than divorced fathers do. Furthermore, the number of children who have never seen their father after being left is about three times that of children who have never seen their mother after being left. This finding indicates that leaving mothers keep better contact with children than leaving fathers do.

- ***Child's right concerning their living arrangement***

One question also asked is regarding child's rights about their living arrangement. According to Islamic principles, a child with divorced parents or orphans over 7 years old has full right to make a decision about who they want to live with (Boonchom, nd: 170). The finding shows that over half of children aged 7 year and older who live apart from either mothers or fathers are not decision-makers concerning their living arrangement. A substantial proportion of them (39 per cent), however, did make the decision by themselves. That a remarkable number of children are not allowed to have these rights reflects the fact that this Islamic principle regarding child's right on living arrangements is not strongly followed by adult Muslims.

Table 3.1 Children's experience of separation from mother in first five years of age, and reasons of separation by place of living

	Place of living		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Experience of separation from mother in first five years of age			
Yes	5.9	9.1	8.5
No	94.1	90.9	91.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	307	1172	1479
Reasons of separation (for children who were ever separated from mother only)			
Mother is dead	-	10.3	8.8
Parents divorced	11.1	6.5	7.2
Mother had to work	50.0	72.0	68.8
Grandma wants to care for children	11.1	9.3	9.6
Other Reasons	27.8	1.9	5.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	18	107	125
Current living			
Living in the household	99.7	98.5	98.8
Living away from household	0.3	1.5	1.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	307	1172	1479

Table 3.6 Living arrangement of children, and who children who live without parents live with by place of living

	Place of living		Total
	Urban	Rural	
Living arrangement			
Live with both parents	92.2	86.9	88.0
Live with father, without mother	1.0	1.5	1.4
Live with mother, without father	5.2	6.7	6.4
Live with others, without parents	1.6	4.9	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	3.7	1172	1749
Chi-square = 8.163*			
Who children who live without parents live with			
Paternal grandparents	1	6	7
Maternal grandparents	3	32	35
Paternal relatives	1	2	3
Maternal relatives	-	7	7
Older brothers/older sisters	-	5	5
Great grandparents	-	2	2
Co-worker	-	2	2
Husband's family	-	1	1
N	5	57	62

* significant at 0.05 level

Table 3.7 Children who live separately from mother, and children who live separately from father (excluding children whose mother, or father is dead), and people who made decision about children's living arrangement

	Percent of children
Reason for separation from their mothers	
mother left for work	51.6
parents' divorce	24.2
children leave for study	6.5
Grandmothers want to care for children	9.7
other reasons	8.1
Total	100.0
Frequency of meeting with mother	
Everyday	9.7
once in 1-3 months	37.1
once in 4-6 months	22.6
once in 7-12 months	8.1
once in more than 12 months	16.1
Never	6.5
Total	100.0
Length of staying with mother at each meeting (days)	
Never	6.5
Less than one day	21.0
1-15	62.9
Total	100.0
N	62

Table 3.7 Children who live separately from mother, and children who live separately from father (excluding children whose mother, or father is dead), and people who made decision about children's living arrangement (continued)

	Percent
Reason for separation from father	
father left for work	34.3
parents' divorce	47.2
children leave for study	6.5
grandmothers want to care for children	6.5
other reasons	5.6
Total	100.0
Frequency of meeting with father	
Everyday	15.0
once in 1-3 months	13.1
once in 4-6 months	33.6
once in 7-12 months	15.0
once more than 12 months	5.6
Never	17.8
Total	100.0
Length of staying with father at each meeting	
never	15.0
less than one day	24.3
1-7 days	57.9
more than 3 months	2.8
Total	100.0
N	108
People who made decision about children's living arrangement	
children themselves	38.5
parents	51.9
others	9.6
Total	100.0
N	52

Chapter 4

Schooling Status, Children's Educational and Occupational Chance

As noted before, children in this study are under 18 years old. To assess their schooling status and chance of education, I divided them into two groups: children under 6 years and children 6 years and older. Even though, primary school age in general starts at 7 years, some children starts first grade at 6 years. In order to cover these children in schooling status, in this study, 6 years was used as a cut-off age of pre-school age (younger than 6 years) and school age (6 years and older).

This chapter presents schooling status, chance of education, and occupation of children under the following issues:

- Expected education of children under 6 years: this part include expected education, type of expected education and opportunity to achieve higher than high school level
- Children age 6 years and older in overall picture: current schooling status,
- Children age 6 years and older who are currently in school: education level, expected education, type of current education, and opportunity to achieve higher than high school level.
- Children age 6 years and older who are no longer in school: highest education obtained, type of education obtained, and reasons for quitting school
- Children age 6 years and older who have never been to school: reasons for never been to school.
- Occupational chance: For children who are not currently in school, current main activity, income, income management and experience in occupation training are discussed.

Expected education of children under 6 years

Because the target groups are young children, the information about education presented for this group was obtained from their parents or people whom the children live with. The educational information that can be examined for this pre-school age group is education in the future or expected education. The opportunity to achieve education higher than secondary school level is also included. The differences between gender

and location are discussed as well. In particular, of interest in this study, I assess expected education by parents' status, living arrangement, and type of household. Tables 4.1-4.5 show the results mentioned above.

- ***Expected education by gender and place of living***

Expected education is grouped into 4 categories: primary (1-6 years), secondary or high school (7-12 years), college (more than 12 years), and religious education. Religious education includes all levels of religious education.

Even though higher than primary level is expected for most of the children, those who are expected to have only compulsory education appear in substantial proportion (13.6 per cent—table 4.1). The difference is found between urban and rural area with a high level of statistical significance ($p < 0.001$). Urban children are twice as likely to be expected to obtain higher than high school level than rural children are. About two thirds of rural children are planned to stop education after they finish secondary.

Although that significant difference of expected education among children less than 6 years between rural and urban children is found, difference between boys and girls in Thai Muslim community is not statistically significant.

- ***Expected education by parents' status***

When expected education is considered by parents' status in table 4.1, the finding shows that children of married parents are most likely to gain higher than high school level (significant at 0.05 level). Although children of divorced parents and children whose parents are dead are expected to have higher than high school level in equal proportion, the proportion of those expected to have more than primary school is higher for those whose parent is dead. It indicates that children of divorced parents tend to have the lowest education.

- ***Expected education by living arrangement***

The result does not suggest a significant difference of expected education considered by living arrangement, though children living with both

parents are clearly most likely to obtain higher than primary education. However, it is interesting that children who live with mothers without fathers are expected to do so least, even compare to those living without both parents. The result seems to imply that fathers expect higher education for children than mothers. This is, however, not statistically significant.

Supplemental information obtained from two cases from the in-depth interview study. They are siblings whose father is dead, and currently left with paternal grandparents. The grandparents they live with already bear a big burden of educating their daughter who is studying at high school. The children's mother has gone to another country for work and not yet sent them any support. Given all surrounding situation, it is quite straightforward to understand why the education their grandparents expect them to have is just primary level.

- ***Expected education by type of household***

To be more appropriate in using Chi-square to test the difference, I grouped the type of household children live in into two categories: nuclear family (parents or single parents and children without any relatives) and extended family (there are other persons present in the household beyond parents and children). Children who live without parents are included in the second type that is extended family. No evidence from this study supports that the type of household influences expected education of children under 6 years significantly, even though the children from nuclear families have the highest proportion expected to reach higher than high school level.

- ***Opportunity to achieve higher than high school***

This information was obtained by asking parents or people whom children live with "How much chance do you think this child will obtain higher than high school?" The answer is in category high, moderate or low. The result considering opportunity by gender and place of living is shown in table 4.2.

The finding indicates that there is no significant difference between boys and girls under 6 years for the opportunity to achieve higher than high school, even though girls have a lower proportion.

The factor of place of living shows a strongly significant influence on opportunity to gain college education. Clearly, the given answer for urban children to have high opportunity is in higher proportion than rural children.

The reasons for low and moderate opportunity mainly bear on economic problem, while the majority of the reasons for high opportunity implies a positive attitude toward education (not shown in the table).

- ***Type of expected education***

Type of expected education is not statistically different among boys and girls. Over half of them are expected to have both general and religious education which emphasis on religious education. Just a small percentage may receive pure religious education (less than 10 per cent).

While the difference of type of expected education between boys and girls is not statistically significant, the difference is significant between urban and rural children. Even though most of children both in rural and urban areas are expected to have both general and religious education, the proportion of rural children expected to have education with a religious emphasis is twice as high as for urban children. This reflects the fact that Muslims who reside in the rural area value religious education more than urban residents.

The qualitative findings also suggest that Muslim parents are typically likely to expect their children to study both general and religious education. The further explanation is disclosed by the qualitative approach. One reason that is quite straightforward is that they are preparing their children to live their lives as good Muslims by investing in their religious education. The other important reason is, however, regarding the cost of schooling. The schools with general and religious curriculum are mostly private schools and the cost is lower than general schools. Most of these schools are developed from "Pondok", which originally was the significant institution for Muslims seeking to learn Islam.

"Studying at general and religious school is cheaper. If we don't have money for tuition, we can delay to pay it"--- said a father who has a pre-school age child concerning his expectation on his child's education.

Table 4.1 Expected education of children under 6 years by gender, place of living, parents' status, living arrangement, and type of household

	Expected education				Total	N
	Primary	Secondary/ high school	College	Religious education		
Gender						
Male	12.3	42.9	42.5	2.3	100	261
Female	15.0	43.4	40.0	78.7	100	225
Chi-square =	2.27					
Place of living						
Urban	4.0	17.3	78.7	-	100	75
Rural	15.2	50.0	34.8	41.6	100	411
Chi-square =	51.74	***				
Parents' status						
Married	12.9	42.7	42.7	1.7	100	465
Divorced	45.5	36.4	18.2	-	100	11
One parent /parents are dead	9.1	72.7	18.2	-	100	11
Chi-square =	14.38	*				
Living arrangement						
With parents	13.0	41.6	43.6	1.8	100	446
With father	-	66.7	33.3	-	100	3
With mother	22.7	68.2	9.1	-	100	22
With others	18.8	50.0	31.3	-	100	16
Chi-square =	13.48					
Type of household						
Nuclear	13.2	42.7	42.4	1.7	100	287
Extended	14.4	44.1	39.6	2.0	100	200
Chi-square =	0.425					
Total	13.6	43.2	41.6	1.6	100	487

* Significant at 0.05 level , * ** Significant at 0.001 level

Table 4.2 Opportunity of children under 6 years to achieve higher than high school level, and type of expected education by gender and place of living

	Gender		Place of living		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	
Opportunity to achieve higher than high school level					
High	26.0	26.3	41.3	23.4	26.1
Moderate	45.4	40.4	42.7	43.1	43.1
Low	28.6	33.3	16.0	33.5	30.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	262	228	75	415	491
Chi-square = 1.48			Chi-square = 14.02***		
Type of expected education					
General education	13.0	11.8	10.7	12.8	12.4
General and religious Emphasis on general education	14.5	15.8	38.7	10.8	15.1
General and religious emphasis on religious education	59.9	54.8	31.0	61.4	57.6
Religion education	5.3	9.2	2.7	8.0	7.1
General equal to religious	7.3	8.3	12.0	7.0	7.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	262	228	75	415	490
Chi-square = 3.56			Chi-square = 47.99***		

*** Significant at 0.001 level

Schooling status of children aged 6 years and older

Among children aged 6 years and older, schooling status overall is discussed by gender, place of living, age group, parents' status, living arrangement, and type of household. The data are presented in tables 4.3-4.5.

- ***Schooling status by gender, place of living and age group***

By and large, most children are currently in school. However, about one eighth no longer attend school. This number includes those who have never been to school. Note that among those who have never been to school, children aged 6 years whose parents or guardians consider too young to go to school or will be going to school next year are excluded from this part of analysis.

Table 4.3 indicates that there is no significant difference of schooling status by gender or place of living. When the children are divided into two age groups, it is found that children aged 6-12 years are currently in school more than children aged 13-17 years. The proportion of children aged 13-17 years not currently in school was one fourth.

- ***Schooling status by parents status***

Schooling status classified by parents' status is shown in table 4.4. Children whose one parent or parents are dead show the lowest proportion currently in school and the highest proportion no longer in school. The differences were statistically significant. It seems that for those age 6 years and older the education status of children from divorced parents is better than for orphans.

- ***Schooling status by living arrangement***

The result suggests that not only parents' status but also living arrangements do matter with schooling status of children age 6 years and older. The proportion of children currently in school is lowest for children who live with single parents. The difference is statistically significant. Children with single parents also have a high proportion no longer in school. There is a difference between children under 6 years and children aged 6 years and older. While expected education of children under 6 years is better for children who live with father (table 4.1), schooling

status for children aged 6 years up who live with father and who live with mother is not different.

• *Schooling status by type of household*

Again, it is clear that type of household is one factor affecting schooling status significantly. Children who live with single parents without other relatives are less likely to be currently in school, so more likely to be no longer in school. Those who live with single parents or parents together with grandparents are most likely to be in currently in school. The data also shows that a high proportion of children who live without parents are currently in school. This finding reflects the importance of non-parents supporters in Muslim families.

While in children aged younger than 6 years, only parents' status and place of living show an influence on expected education, opportunity to achieve higher than high school, and type of expected education, in children aged 6 years and older, parents' status, living arrangement, and type of household appear to have an impact on children's schooling status. It seems that the familial context can explain current schooling better than expected schooling of children.

Table 4.3 Schooling status of children aged 6 years and older by age group, gender, and place of living

	Schooling status			Total	N
	Currently in school	No longer in school	Never attended school		
Gender					
Male	87.8	9.8	2.4	100.0	498
Female	87.8	10.2	1.9	100.0	468
Chi-square =	0.30				
Place of living					
Urban	89.0	10.1	0.9	100.0	227
Rural	87.4	10.0	2.6	100.0	739
Chi-square =	2.33				
Age group					
6-12 years	96.6	1.2	2.2	100.0	586
13-17 years	74.3	23.6	2.1	100.0	381
Chi-square =	128.646	***			
Total	87.8	10.0	2.2	100.0	966

Table 4.4 Schooling status of children aged 6 years and older by parents' status, living arrangement, and type of household

	Schooling status			Total	N
	Currently in school	No longer in school	Never attended school		
Parents' status					
Married	89.1	8.6	2.3	100.0	868
Divorced	82.2	15.6	2.2	100.0	45
Parents/single parents are dead	72.2	27.8	-	100.0	54
Chi-square =	23.00***				
Living arrangement					
With parents	89.0	8.6	2.4	100.0	833
With father	77.8	22.2	-	100.0	18
With mother	77.8	20.8	1.4	100.0	72
With others	86.4	13.6	-	100.0	14
Chi-square =	16.09**				
Type of household (1)					
1	88.0	9.5	2.5	100.0	650
2	73.1	26.9	-	100.0	26
3	93.9	5.2	0.9	100.0	114
4	83.9	13.4	2.7	100.0	149
5	92.6	7.4	-	100.0	27
Chi-square =	15.92**				
Total	87.8	10.0	2.2	100.0	966

*** Significant at 0.001 level

** Significant at 0.01 level

(1) Type of household

1. Parents + children
2. Single parents + children
3. Both/single parents + children + grand parents
4. Both/single parents + children + parents' sibling + grand parents
5. Children without parents

Children aged 6 years and older who are currently in school

For those children who are currently in school, I first examine their current school level by age group (table 4.5), type of education they are enrolled and opportunity to achieve further than high school by gender and place of living (table 4.6). I finally discuss expected education by gender, place of living, parents' status, living arrangement, and type of household (table 4.7).

- ***Current school level by age group***

Children age 6-12 years are mostly in primary level, while more than half of those age 13-17 years are in secondary/high school level (table 4.5). The point in this table is to show that the proportion of children who should have already finished primary level (13-17 years) but are still in primary level is quite remarkable. These children account for more than one fourth of children aged 13-17 years old.

- ***Type of education by gender and place of living***

Type of education is measured only for children who have finished grade 6 and are studying in secondary or high school level, because children who are in primary school typically study compulsory school which is general education. It is found that half of those who are studying higher than primary school are studying in both general and religious education (table 4.6). Type of education is almost the same for boys and girls, but place of living affects type of education significantly. Rural children are more likely than urban children to be in both general and religious education, and pure religious education.

- ***Opportunity to achieve higher than high school by place of living***

Table 4.6 also indicates that there is no difference between boys' and girls' opportunity to achieve higher than high school. There is, however, a gap between urban and rural children. The proportion of urban children who have high opportunity of achieving higher than high school is larger than that of rural children, and rural children are expected to have low opportunity twice as often as urban children significantly.

Table 4.7 includes expected education of children who are currently studying in any type of school, characterized by gender, place of living, age group, parents' status, living arrangement, and type of household.

- ***Expected education by gender and place of living***

No significant evidence indicates the difference in expected education for boys and girls who are currently studying. A significant difference does appear when place of living is considered in that urban children are expected to reach a higher level than rural children.

- ***Expected education by age group***

Less than half of children currently in school are expected to study further after completing high school. The proportion expected to have higher than high school education is higher among children aged 13-17 years. The difference is statistically significant. Since many of these children are at high school level, and the calculation does not take into account those who have already left school, the expectation for them to reach higher education is higher compared to children in the 6-12 years group. However, some of them (7.8 per cent) are still expected to stop studying after primary level.

- ***Expected education by parents' status***

Children from broken-families and orphans are less likely to reach higher than high school. The proportion reaching higher than high school level is lowest in orphans and this is statistically significant. This situation is consistent with education status, where it is found (table 4.4) that orphans' education status is lower than broken-family children's education.

- ***Expected education by living arrangement***

The proportion of children currently in school expected to quit school after primary is highest in children who live separately from their fathers. Children who live with fathers present the highest proportion of being expected to keep on studying after high school; this number is even higher than proportion of those who live with both parents, and the difference is statistically significant. It is noteworthy that expected

education both for children younger than 6 years and 6 years and older appears to be better for children who live with father relative to children who live with mother. Meanwhile the better status of current schooling among children living with father relative to children living with mother does not appear. It seems like fathers expect higher education for children, while in reality they cannot afford better than mothers.

• *Expected education by type of household*

Beside parents' status and living arrangement, type of household is clearly a significant factor influencing expected education among children aged 6 years and older. The children who live with single parents without any other relatives are most likely to stop education at primary level. This information once again implies the supporting role of non-parents for children's education. It should be clear, however, that expected education of children in the household with grandparents without joint family and children household with grandparents with joint family present different pictures. Household with grandparents without joint family seems more likely to provide positive effect on children's expected education than household with grandparents with joint family. If the household with grandparents and joint family reflects a big household, it could be argued that children in the big family will have disadvantage in education more than advantage. This data does not conflict with each other because household with grandparents does not necessary mean big size of household.

Table 4.5 Current schooling level of children aged 6 years and older who are currently in school by age group

Current schooling level	Age group		Total
	6-12 years	13-17 years	
Pre-school	21.6	-	14.4
Primary school	77.2	27.6	60.0
Secondary school/high school	1.1	65.7	22.6
Religious education	0.2	6.7	2.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	565	283	848

Table 4.6 Type of education and opportunity to achieve higher than high school of children aged 6 years and older and currently in school by gender and place of living

	Gender		Place of living		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	
Type of education					
General education	42.6	36.0	49.4	33.0	39.2
General and religion education	43.6	55.9	44.2	53.0	50.0
Religion education	6.9	6.3	1.3	9.6	6.6
Non-formal education	6.9	1.8	5.2	3.7	4.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	101	111	77	135	212 (1)
Chi-square = 5.48			Chi-square = 9.44*		
Opportunity to achieve higher than high school					
High	23.2	25.0	37.4	19.9	24.1
Moderate	44.1	47.6	44.8	46.1	45.8
Low	32.7	27.4	17.7	34.0	30.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	440	416	237	763	856
Chi-square = 2.80			Chi-square = 33.55***		

*** Significant at 0.001 level

* Significant at 0.05 level

(1) Children who are studying at primary level are excluded, because the type of primary school is general education. The type of school, therefore, is typically decided after children finish primary school.

Table 4.7 Expected education of children aged 6 years and older who are currently in school by gender, place of living, age group, parents' status, living arrangement, and type of household

	Expected education				Total	N
	Primary	High school	College	Religious education		
Gender						
Male	13.9	38.3	46.0	1.8	100.0	439
Female	11.8	39.9	46.4	1.9	100.0	416
Chi-square =	2.80					
Place of living						
Urban	6.9	21.7	71.4	-	100.0	203
Rural	14.7	44.5	38.3	2.5	100.0	652
Chi-square =	33.55	***				
Age group						
6-12 years	15.4	39.8	43.5	1.4	100.0	573
13-17 years	7.8	37.6	51.8	2.8	100.0	282
Chi-square =	14.57	**				
Parents' status						
Married	11.8	38.1	48.0	2.1	100.0	779
Divorced	24.3	43.2	32.4	-	100.0	37
Parents/single parents are dead	23.1	53.9	23.1	-	100.0	39
Chi-square =	18.77	**				
Living arrangement						
With parents	12.0	37.1	48.7	2.1	100.0	748
With father	7.1	42.9	50.0	-	100.0	14
With mother	28.6	51.7	19.6	-	100.0	56
With others	8.1	56.8	35.1	-	100.0	37
Chi-square =	29.82	***				
Type of household (1)						
1	13.2	36.0	48.8	2.1	100.0	570
2	22.2	72.2	5.6	-	100.0	18
3	11.2	36.4	50.5	1.9	100.0	107
4	14.5	52.4	31.5	1.6	100.0	124
5	4.0	48.0	48.0	-	100.0	25
Chi-square =	30.47	**				
Total	13.0	39.1	46.2	1.9	100.0	855

** Significant at 0.01, *** Significant at 0.001

(1) Type of household

1. parents + children
2. single parents + children,
3. parents/single parents + children + grandparents
4. parents/single
5. children without parents

Children aged 6 years and older who are no longer in school

It was mentioned in table 4.4 that 10 per cent of children aged 6 years and older had quit school after finishing some education level. Tables 4.8-4.9 provide more details regarding their highest education, type of education and reasons for quitting school.

- ***Highest education level obtained by gender and place of living***

The significant gender difference does appear in the highest education of children who are not in school any more. Boys obtained education higher than primary school more than girls at a statistically significant level (table 4.8). Among those boys who finished higher than primary school or continued studying after primary school, however, most of them dropped out before completing secondary/high school. It is interesting that dropping out before finishing secondary school is in quite remarkable proportion for boys, while girls who had chance to keep on studying after primary level would finish secondary school, though none of them finished more than that. Even at primary level, boys dropped out more than girls. Over 80 per cent of girls have completed primary school education. This finding seems to suggest that while boys were more likely to receive higher chance than girls to enter secondary or high school level, the problem is the substantial proportion of them just cannot do a good job to complete it. This fact might partly explain why expected education for children who have not yet been in school and who are currently in school is not different between boys and girls.

“It doesn’t matter boys or girls, if they can study well and I can afford it, I will.”--this answer came from a father who has sons and daughter still in school when asked which one he will support to keep on studying under the limitation of funding.

Children in urban area reached higher than primary school in higher proportion than children in rural school. Here, the finding proves one more time that rural children still have significantly less chance to access education than urban children.

- ***Type of education obtained***

When only children who obtained higher than primary school were selected, the type of education they obtained is presented in table 4.8.

The result shows that type of education among children who already quit school is not different significantly among boys and girls or even among urban and rural children. It appears that the majority of them (47 per cent) studied both general and religious education and less than one third studied only general education. This result reveals the strong demand for religious education in Thai Muslim group.

• *Reasons for quitting school*

Reasons for quitting school are mainly financial ones (table 4.9). The second most frequent reason is that children themselves did not want to study. However, some of them (6 per cent) suggested that because children have to be engaged in family work, they stopped attending school.

Further information came from focus group discussions. General information shows that all girls participating in focus group discussion finished at most at primary school level. Most of them stopped studying because of their families' economic problem. They were, of course, upset about doing that.

"I want to keep on studying but my parents don't have funds" -- said a girl from a rural area.

Other reasons, however, are found in some girls for quitting school. One is due to the responsibility to help with their families' housework.

"I have a younger brother. My parents have to work. I have to care for him, That's why I can't go to school." --- said a 14-year-old girl from a rural area.

Another reason given by an urban girl was that she had left school at grade 3, primary school because she could not bear the way a male teacher punished students by beating them several times when they could not do a good job in class.

"When he was drunk, he beat pupils. My parents have never hurt me. So I can't stand it. My parents also told me to quit"

While reasons related to financial problem that has negative effect on children's education seem acceptable, the case of punishment by teacher, however, is not reasonable compared to a girl's education. It does not

seem serious and sounds funny but it leads to a significant consequence; it means the future of a girl. This example actually relates to the issue of teacher and school's quality, which really affect children's education.

Table 4.8 Highest schooling level obtained by children aged 6 years and older who are no longer in school by gender and place of living

	Gender		Place of living		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	
Highest schooling					
less than grade 6	38.8	29.2	17.4	39.2	34.0
Finished grade 6	38.8	58.3	43.5	50.0	48.5
Dropped out before finished high school	12.2	-	17.4	2.7	6.2
Finished high school	8.2	12.5	21.7	6.8	10.3
Dropped out before finished high school	-	-	-	-	-
Finished high school	2.0	-	-	1.4	1.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	49	48	23	74	97
Chi-square = 10.21*			Chi-square = 12.54**		
Type of education finished					
General education	27.3	33.3	33.3	25.0	29.4
General and religious education	54.5	33.3	55.6	37.5	47.1
Religious education	-	16.7	-	12.5	5.9
Non-formal education	18.2	16.7	11.1	25.0	17.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	11	6	9	8	17
Chi-square = 2.25			Chi-square = 1.98		

• Significant at 0.05 level, ** Significant at 0.01 level

Table 4.9 Reasons for quitting school of children who are no longer in school

Reasons for quitting school	Percent of children
Financial problem	44.3
Had to help family's work	6.2
Do not want to study	36.1
Health problem	2.1
The school is very far from home	3.1
Already married	3.1
Afraid of teacher	3.1
Parents are too busy to arrange children to go to school	2.1
Total	100.0
N	97

Children aged 6 years and older who have never been to school

In this part, for children who have never attended school, the reasons for not doing so is described as well.

- *Reasons for never attending school and reason for quitting school*

It is shown in table 4.10 that for more than half of the children aged 6 years and older who have never attended school, it is because of lack of ability to study or because they themselves do not want to study. Some of them, however, do not study for a variety of other reasons. These reasons relate to school, as well as to parents' belief. The cause regarding school's atmosphere making children not want to go to school appears again at this point. Two cases from in-depth interview show detailed information. It also reflects an attempt and cooperation of parents and school in helping children who do not want to come to school because of having problems in adjusting with school life. Some reasons are being afraid of the teacher and having problems with other students.

"She stopped going to school a few days after the semester's beginning. She said that some other naughty students hurt her, and she didn't know how to face that situation. She was also afraid of her teacher.

I tried so hard to force her to go back to school. I talked to her about how much benefit schooling will provide. I even beat her, but she kept not going. So I gave up.”--said a mother of 9 year old girl who has never finished school even grade one. They live in an urban area.

Another girl also living in an urban area has an almost similar situation. In stead of father, it is her mother who is a breadwinner. Her father has a health problem, so he stays home and takes role as a househusband. This 10 year-old girl also does not want to go back to school because she cannot cope with school. She was not happy in school and her schoolteacher does not seem to be able to help. Her mother is too busy and her father is not capable. She ends up by living her life caring her two younger brothers who are toddlers.

“We (parents and teacher) have never met to talk about this problem. I don’t know what to do. I have tried to convince her but she really doesn’t want to school. I don’t want to force her.” --Told by her father.

Table 4.10 Reasons for never attending school among children aged 6 years and older

Reasons for never attending school	Number of children
The children do not want to study	5
The children have problems of ability to study	9
The children are afraid of teacher, friends	2
The children are not registered in household registration	2
The children have just come back from Mecca	3
The children are expected to study pure religion	1
N	24

Children's occupational chance

It was mentioned earlier, and the data shown in table 4.4, that around one eighth of children aged 6 years and older are not currently in school. These children are of those who had attended school but are no longer in school, and those who have never been in school at all. For both groups, then, I pay attention to their main activity, their income, income management and occupational training. The result is shown in table 4.11

As other parts, the data from both quantitative and qualitative are discussed together. Some Muslim girls who are not currently in school, both who live in urban and rural area, participated in focus group discussion and in-depth interview approach. The result provides some information, particularly on occupational situation.

- ***Main current activity, amount of income and income management***

Since they are currently not in school, I would like to know what they do in everyday life. The data in table 4.11 shows that nearly one third of them do nothing. Also almost one third do the housework, which means that they do not get paid. Around one fourth are in the labor/service sector. It is clear that most of them, almost two thirds, who answered doing nothing or doing housework, cannot support themselves. They are dependent on their family.

While boys engage in labor/service and agriculture more than girls, girls do the housework in higher proportion than boys. This reflects that most girls do work without receiving any income. The higher proportion of boys being reported doing nothing suggests that when boys are not employed in work, they are less likely to help with housework than girls.

Urban children are employed in labor/service more than rural children. They are also more likely to do nothing. And obviously, rural children help with housework more than urban children.

The proportion of children with no income suggests that there is overlap between those who do nothing and those who work but do not receive income. The majority of work without income can be explained by housework. The agricultural work probably explains the remainder. The amount of income also reflects the fact that the proportion of boys who can earn income is higher than girls. Among those who can earn income,

about half get 51-100 baht/day. The proportion of children getting 50 baht or less is also quite substantial; they account for almost one third of those who earn income.

Forty per cent spend all their income for themselves. Almost half give some money to the family. Note that almost one-eighths give all the money they get to the family. It is, therefore, quite clear that children who work support the family. In addition, the result shows that girls give money to the family than boys do. What is interesting is that urban children seem to give money they earn to family more than rural children, even though the amount of income that children earn does not seem to differ between urban and rural area.

More information is provided by qualitative approach. Almost all girls attending focus group discussions as well as in-depth interview study, who had already quit school, do not earn income. All of them, however, are the main person in the family responsible for housework – cooking, washing, taking care of their house, and caring for their younger brothers or sisters. They cook for everybody; they wash for everybody in the family. This burden is even harder if she is the only one daughter in the family.

“I have to do laundry for my older brothers too. The first one works while the other one does nothing. He left school when he finished grade 6 and still cannot find a job. Because I am girl, I am supposed to help” – an urban girl.

“When I have some free time from the housework, I will meet my friends in the village and we will have some chat. That’s it.” – a rural girl.

Their lives after getting out of school are mostly spent within the village for rural girls. Most of them have seldom been to town. Some rural girls who were in-depth interviewed had never been to town. All their personal things are bought for them by their parents.

“After I finished grade 6, I have hardly gone outside my home. My parents have never taken me anywhere outside the village.” –
-- said a rural girl.

“The transportation to get to town is not convenient at all, unless you have motorcycle, and a few people in the village have motorcycles.” – a rural girl

“I am worried if I let her go to town by herself or even with her friends. Life outside our village is dangerous. We don’t have leisure time to take her.” – a father who has a teenage daughter.

• *Occupational training*

Most children who are not currently in school have never attended any occupational training (table 4.11). For those who have, types of occupational training are sewing, mechanic/electric and farming.

One problem about occupation training came up in the in-depth interview study. In one village, sewing training had been held for a few weeks. Then, all sewing machines were taken by a village headman before the end of training course.

“After that, we didn’t have sewing machines to practice on. And no one dare ask the village headman where they were taken to. So...the training was over.” -- said a 17-year-old girl, who is also a public health volunteer.

Sewing machines in another village were placed at the village headman’s house, taken care of by his wife. They are available for villagers to use. But considering in real practice, how convenient is it for villagers to use sewing machines in the village’s headman house, compared to using them in another public place in the village.

It is still a question how a village can provide with any type of the training. It was found that not every village has the training for villagers even the training from government sector. The qualitative approach gives a possible answer: it seems as if the village headman is a significant factor to have the training. A village headman who is active and pays much attention to the village’s development is more likely to be assigned the training.

• *Occupational chance*

All girls attending focus group discussions in rural area had never applied for any jobs. Even though they want to work, they have not been allowed by parents to do so.

“I would like to be a restaurant employee” – a 16 year-old girl

“I would like to be a fish factory worker like my older sister, but my mother told me to stay at home to take care of her” --- a 17-year-old girl from rural area whose mother is often sick.

“My father has never let me find a job since I am a girl. I have to take care of all the housework” -- said another rural girl.

It is common that parents are worried about their daughters more than sons. So the daughters who quit school are mostly kept at home until they get married. It is, therefore, not surprising to find that over half of the focus group participants and girls interviewed wished they were boys. The reason involves to independence to decide about their lives, which is much more available and flexible for boys.

Two girls who participated in focus group discussion in urban area still think about furthering study.

“I am waiting until my parents have enough money”

The possibility that her hope will be fulfilled seems small. She, however, does not think about seeking a job to help her parents make money.

Two girls in urban area who had worked in Malaysia were interviewed. They got jobs from a network of some women in their community who have worked in Malaysia. One used to work as Batik household industry employee. She earned around 200-300 baht a day. She was quite happy with that work. Unfortunately, her work was just seasonal. She had to stop working when the number of customer orders was reduced. She then moved to another job as a grocery employee, but the problem was a satisfactory place to stay. She had to stay by herself at a house in a rubber plantation, around 20 kilometers from her place of work. After one month, she quit that work, since it was too dangerous for a girl.

“I wasn’t afraid of ghosts, but I was afraid of men” --- said a girl.

She finally came back home, doing nothing except housework. She is still waiting for the second chance to work in Malaysia once again.

The other girl is still working as a restaurant employee also in Malaysia. She was on leave for a month when the interview was conducted. Her salary is 3,000 baht per month, including accommodation, for 12 hours a day of work. This is not her first job in Malaysia. She used to be a nanny for a couple. She quit that work after few months because she does not like the kind of work and the payment is low.

“It is quite boring that you have to stay home all day. I don’t have a chance to meet people in my peer group. In my current work, I made a lot of friends. I admit that this work is also hard because you have to stand and walk all time that the restaurant hour, but I like it more than being a nanny.”

With her current job, she seems satisfied with it, even though she is not sure how stable it is.

It is seen that most Muslim girls who left school do so at grade 6 approximately. The chance to have a career, which will help them to stand on their own feet, is very small. Especially in rural areas, they take roles only as daughters, wives and then mothers, and spend time mostly on housework. They are not expected to work before marrying. Girls in rural areas are not likely to be capable to have work for their future. They can be kept like this because they lack education, both general and religious. As long as parents or guardians do not view schooling as a significant property to give to their daughters, they can not have the capability to stand for themselves to be a resource who can participate in family and community’s progress.

The situation of urban girls who are not in school appears in different form from that of rural girls. They have more freedom to find jobs. But still, the problem stems from lack of education that becomes a barrier to achieve chance for occupation. For those who have the opportunity to work, they are more likely to get only unskilled work. There are so many various forms of risks they must confront once they enter the labor market: working in non-stable work, staying by themselves in a dangerous place or working for long hours for a small pay. Some seem happy to work hard, but are they really happy? Or do they just seem happy because they have no better choice?

Table 4.11 Current main activity of children who are not currently studying by gender and place of living

	gender		Place of living		Total
	Male	Female	Urban	Rural	
Current main activity					
Labor/service	27.9	22.8	40.0	21.5	25.4
Agriculture	19.7	3.5	-	15.1	11.9
Housework	18.0	43.9	12.0	35.5	30.5
Trade	1.6	1.8	-	2.2	1.7
Do nothing	32.8	28.1	48.0	25.8	30.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	61	57	25	93	118
Amount of income (baht/day)					
No income	59.3	71.4	60.0	65.3	64.2
50 and less	13.1	8.9	4.0	13.0	11.1
51-100	23.0	12.5	32.0	14.1	17.9
101-150	4.0	5.4	4.0	5.4	5.1
151 and more	1.6	1.8	-	2.2	1.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	17	88	50	105	105
Income management					
Spend all for him/herself	46.2	31.3	30.0	43.8	40.5
Give some to family	42.3	56.3	60.0	43.8	47.6
Give all to family	11.5	12.5	10.0	12.5	11.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	26	16	10	32	42
Occupational training					
Never	91.8	92.9	91.7	92.5	92.3
Sewing	-	7.1	4.2	3.2	3.4
Mechanic/Electric	6.6	-	4.2	3.2	3.4
Farming	1.6	-	-	1.1	0.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
N	61	56	25	92	117

Chapter 5

Summary And Discussion

The information from both the quantitative and the qualitative approach on care and protection of children among Thai Muslim families was presented in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. The findings lead to some concerns regarding children's living, especially their educational and occupational chances.

The study's findings

Parents' current status

Parents who are married but live separately are found more in the rural areas. Divorced parents mostly got divorced when their children were younger than 4 years. They also mostly remarried when their children were young. Divorced fathers are remarried more than divorced mothers, and divorced parents are remarried more than single parents whose spouses died.

Children's living arrangement

About two thirds of children live in nuclear families with both parents or single parents. Over one fourth live with both/single parents and grandparents. Children in rural areas have experience of separation from mother during the first five years of age about twice as often as children in urban areas. They also live apart from both parents about three times more often than children in the urban areas. Living arrangement of 7-year-old-up children who are not co-resident with mother/father are mostly decided by others, especially by parents, even though according to Islamic principle they have the right to choose who they want to live with. While the most important reason which causes children to live separately from mothers is their mother's work; among those who live separately from fathers the main reason is their parents' divorce. This reflects the fact that divorced mothers take care of children more than divorced fathers. Children who live apart from father and have never seen their father since they were left appear in higher proportion than children who live apart from mothers and have never seen their mother since they

were left. It implies that mothers keep contact with children more than fathers do.

Schooling Status and chance of education of children

About one eighth of children aged 6 years and up are not currently in school. Those who enroll mostly engage in both general and religious education, with an emphasis on religious education. Rural children significantly have less chance than urban children to have high education. They also are expected to be, or are studying religious-emphasis education in larger proportion than urban children. There is no evidence, however, showing that boys and girls differ according to schooling chance. Living arrangement, parents' status, and type of household are associated with schooling status of children age 6 years and older rather than with expected education of children younger than 6 years. Children of divorced parents, children whose mothers or fathers died, or who live with single parents are more likely to stop studying before secondary level, or less likely to be in school than children with parents.

Chance of occupation

For those who are not currently in school, Muslim boys engage in paid jobs more than girls. The occupation chances of Muslim girls seem quite small. They mostly hold education not higher than compulsory level. There are factors limiting them from having occupation training and occupational experience, especially gender role. As girls, especially in rural area, they are expected to stay at home more than go outside to work. Urban girls have less limitation in seeking a job. However, as a consequence of insufficient education, they face the problem of taking jobs which put them at risk or jobs that they are not satisfied with.

Discussion

- While most studies relevant to children's well-being pay attention to children in urban area in terms of crowded living, this study finds clear evidence suggesting that children in rural areas are faced with worse conditions, both in terms of living apart from parents and parents' current status, than children in urban areas. They, therefore, deserve receiving more attention to explore in more detail their living arrangement and other dimensions of its consequence.

- The education situation of Thai Muslims in general is, as is already well known, lower than Thais. This study has shown that besides the gap between Muslims' and Thais' education, there is a gap between urban and rural Muslims, in terms of expected education and opportunity to achieve higher than high school for children under 6 years, current educational status, expected education and opportunity to achieve higher than high school as well for children 6 years up. In particular, expected education, which implies education in the future that the parents or the custody of children expect their children to have, relates not only to their economic situation, but also their attitude toward education. This is not to say that Muslims in the rural area value education less than Muslims in the urban area. They are only less likely to do so if the benefits of education are not clear compared to the cost they have to invest. Decision about children's schooling is presumably made by the family with immediate cost and longer-run return in mind. The family is unwilling to invest in their children if there is no clear expectation of returns both for children and for family as a whole. As Muslims, the cost of investment in education is not only in form of financial expense or time children spend in school, but also in terms of cultural assimilation. It is possible that children will be assimilated and ignore their original religion on the way of education process. For some parents, this concern might be considered as a major risk in making decision on education of children. This concern is reflected by the remarkable proportion of children who are expected to have or who are studying both religious and general education. So, while the benefit should be made clear, the cost should also be minimized. Any attempts to improve education among Thai Muslims should consider this concern. In addition, both urban and rural children's education should be developed to the same level or at least almost the same.
- Thai Muslims mostly expect their children to have both general and religion education. This study found that over half of children currently in school are studying both. It is due to one or both of the following reasons: to have their children grow up in Islamic atmosphere, or to pay less for the cost of school. General education is perceived as more expensive, not in term of tuition fee, but other costs they have to meet. In their perception, a school with religious and general curriculum is more familiar and more flexible. In fact, there

are many schools with religious and general curriculum in the four provinces in Southern Thailand, that Muslims could access. The children can choose to attend only a religious curriculum or both religious and general curriculum. Of course, to take both, they have to pay more. However, one weak point of taking both religious and general education, which most Muslims also realize, is that the children would have less chance to get a good job than taking only general education. This is because the time would be divided and the general education content would be less concentrated. So, finding the way to support the dual-curriculum schools and to solve this problem is something that the government should think about.

- The study suggests that Thai Muslim children who live with only single parents without other relatives have lower schooling status, while those who live with both/single parents along with grand parents, or even those who live without parents have higher schooling status. It indicates that besides parents, other relatives also provide support to children's education. However, the function of family support needs more examination on how non-parents play a role in supporting children's education.
- This finding reflects the significance of the family support networks. Some literature points out that family support networks may have a greater tendency to further education of boys than girls because of higher returns this investment may bring to the corporate family unit. This study, however, does not provide any evidence that Thai Muslim family favor investment in education more for boys than girls. Although the principle of Islam that strongly values education might not be consistent with the fact that Muslim overall have relatively low education, the similarity of education level between Muslim boys and girls obviously reflects the lack of gender bias in Thai Muslim society.
- Even though many types of occupational training are taken to various groups by many organizations, both government and non-government, this study found that very few Thai Muslims, especially the young generation, have access to occupational training. Since their education is mostly just compulsory education, it is hard to find other than unskilled jobs, so they need more training to get chance for a good job. If we believe that it would be good for children who have

already quit school to have job and earn their own income, we should encourage them to attend occupational training. At the same time any training should be followed up to find out whether the target group can really access it or not. People who arrange training also have to be concerned about and prepare the market for the output from many occupation training.

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**INSTITUTE FOR POPULATION AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
MAHIDOL UNIVERSITY**

Salaya Phutthamonthon Nakhon Pathom Thailand. 73170

Telephone : (662) 441-0201-4 Ext. 115 (662) 441-9666

Fax : (662) 441-9333

E-mail : directpr@mahidol.ac.th

Homepage : <http://www.mahidol.ac.th/mahidol/pr/pr.html>