Features of Thai Families in the Era of Low Fertility and Longevity

**Higer number of households in Thailand**

- **Year 1990**: 12.3 m. households, 4.4 members / household
- **Year 2010**: 20.3 m. households, 3.1 members / household

**Lower number of household members**

**Type of Thai Families / Households**

- Single-parent family (7.1%)
- One-person household (13.9%)
- Parents and child (26.6%)
- Three-generation family (33.6%)
- Husband and wife without children (16.2%)
- Skipped-generation family (2.1%)
- Unrelated household (0.6%)

*Note: Info from year 2013

**7 factors leading to changes in Thai family structures**

1. **Low fertility**
   - Thai people have fewer children
   - Year 1964: 6 children
   - Year 2014: 1 – 2 children

2. **Longevity, especially in Thai women**
   - Thai average age
     - Year 1964: 56
     - Year 2014: 72
     - Year 2040 (estimated): 75

3. **Changing composition of the Thai population**
   - Fewer children, more elderly, shrinking working age
   - Year 1980: 6%
   - Year 2040 (estimated): 32%

4. **Migration**
   - Fewer young people employed in agriculture; more migrate to urban areas
   - Year 2010: 44%

5. **Higher household debt**
   - Year 2014: 81%

6. **More women with higher education**
   - More than half of the female population hold an undergraduate degree & are in the workforce
   - Year 2010: 59%

7. **Changing lifestyles**
   - Delay in family formation
   - Year 1960: 25yr
   - Year 2010: 28yr
Higher number of skipped-generation families: 400 K

More than half of the skipped-generation household heads are the elderly, mainly women:

Expenditure of skipped-generation families: 12,056 $/month

3 in 4 skipped-generation families are in rural areas:

Factors leading to skipped-generation families:

- Rural to urban migration of parents of workforce age
- Higher cost of living in urban areas
- Lack of support system in city, leading to family’s support in hometown

Cumulative cost of raising a child until the age of 20:

- 1.92 million $ (Year 1987)
- 5.6 million $ (Year 2013)

Childrearing is a burden: lack of freedom & harder work

Either child or career

Women devote twice as much time than men on household & childrearing

Insufficient number of quality childcare

Most women have fewer children while adolescent pregnancy and union before the age of 18 have increased.

47.9 per 1,000 of women aged 15-19 in year 2014

Factors leading to not having a child:

- Late marriage & low fertility
- 1.92 million $ (Year 1987)
- 5.6 million $ (Year 2013)

Higher number of single-parent families has increased from 0.97 million to 1.4 million households.

Number of single-parent families has increased from 0.97 million to 1.4 million households.

Challenges faced by single-parent families, especially single mothers:

- Poverty
- Unable to get formal employment because of childrearing duty
- Lack of affordable housing
- Depression and stress
- Lack of adequate support mechanisms – proper childcare, proper employment for single mothers or a lack of emotional support and counselling

Factors leading to single-parent families:

- Divorced, separated or widowed main factors for single-parent families.
- 100 k divorced couples

About 2.7 million Thais are living alone and the number is increasing.

More women live alone:

- 66% (Year 2013)

More than half of the skipped-generation household heads are the elderly, mainly women:

More women live alone:

- Single people
- Couples working in different locations
- Divorced / separated couples
- The widowed elderly
- Adolescents studying outside of hometown

Majority of those who live alone are of workforce age:

- 6% (Year 1987)
- 14% (Year 2013)
- 20% (Year 2033 estimated)

Who live alone?

- Single people
- Couples working in different locations
- Divorced / separated couples
- The widowed elderly
- Adolescents studying outside of hometown

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Recommendations

1. **Support an enabling environment to enhance family solidarity**
   - Encourage the elderly to maximize their capacity and caring for other family members
   - Enhance family bonding

2. **Enhance social policies with target populations**
   - Policy to ensure needs of the vulnerable families
   - Skipped-generation families with the elderly facing poverty or disability who also take care of grandchildren.
   - Single-parent families
   - Impoverished household

3. **Promote environment enabling voluntary fertility and family life among women**
   - Work environment
     - Flexible employment mode for women
     - More paid maternity leave
     - More leave days for parents whose children live upcountry
   - Promote gender equity between men and women in family roles and shared responsibilities for parenting
   - Family planning and quality childcare
     - Family planning for couples in accordance with their own reproductive decisions
     - Increase the affordability of infertility treatment
     - Improve coverage and affordability of quality childcare esp. for child under age of 2

4. **Invest in building capacity of young people**
   - Promote opportunities for compulsory education for all and support teen mothers to continue education
   - Enhance young people to have necessary vocational skills
   - Reduce early marriage and teen pregnancy

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