CHAPTER - II

THE SALIENT FEATURES OF THAILAND

This chapter will give a brief account of the salient features of Thailand wherein the present study is undertaken. The salient features include Thailand's geographical feature, its political organization, its population, its natural and other resources, its infrastructural facilities and its society. This is done with a view to provide some background knowledge about the Thailand and its people.

Thailand is an independent country of South-eastern Asia, lying between Burma on the west and Indo-China on the East. The people call themselves Thai (the free) and their country "Muang Thai" (the land of the free).\(^1\) Thailand was earlier known as Siam because it is inhabited by the Siamese. The Siamese government in 1939 announced officially the change of the name from Siam to Thailand.\(^2\) Thailand means "land of the free" or "free land".

Thailand covers an area of 198,000 square miles. The greatest distance between north and south, between east and west and coast line are 1,1000; 480; and 1,635 miles respectively.\(^3\) Of the total area the shares of the cultivated

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(2) Ibid.
The Map of Thailand No. 2.1
showing the four regions of Thailand.
and the forest land are 44% and 25% respectively.

**Climate:**

The average temperature in Thailand is 27.6°C or 80.7°F and the lowest temperature is 23.7°C or 74.7°F. Thailand has two distinct climates: a tropical savanna climate in most parts of the country, and a tropical monsoon climate in the southern and southeastern regions. There are three well-defined seasons: the Hot season (March through May), the Rain season (June through October), and the Cool season (November through February). Thailand has four natural geographical regions, viz., Northern, Northeastern, Central, and Southern.

(1) **Northern Region:**

The north part of the country lies between two important rivers, viz., The Salween and the Maekong. This region is high steep mountain. These mountains run in parallel ranges in a north-south direction. This region occupies about 60,000 square miles. The mountains and hills are thickly forested. The forest include much teak, and the logs of teak are made into rafts and floated down the rivers to the saw-mills of Bangkok.

(2) **Northeastern Region:**

The Northeastern region is known as the Khorat Plateau. Khorat is a principal town. Hence this plateau is named
after Khorat. It is a high, dry plain that stretches from
the mountains to the Indo-China border. This region occupies
about 55,000 square miles of area. The red sandy soils are
not very fertile. The rainfall is low. Even though the rain
fall is low, this region is damp and muddy for half the year.
It is hot, dusty and dry for the remainder part of the year.
This region is sparsely populated. The low rainfall handi-
caps agriculture. Therefore, people give emphasis on the
rearing of the livestock such as cattle, buffaloes and henses.

(3) Central Region:

The Central part of Thailand is low flat river valley
of about 68,000 square miles. This is formed by the chief
rivers of Thailand such as Chao Phraya, and number of other
rivers. The Chao Phraya is commonly referred to as Maenam.
Maenam is a Thai word. Its meaning is river. This region is
practically one vast alluvial plains stretching from the
foothills on the West to the edge of the plateau of eastern
Thailand on the east. This is the great rice-producing area
of Thailand. Therefore, rice cultivation is the main occupa-
tion of the people of this region. The Bangkok delta plain
is the most fertile part of the Central Lowlands. This part
is intensively cultivated and is known as the "rice basket"
or "hinterland of Thailand."

(4) Southern Region:

The southern region of Thailand is long and narrow.
This region is tropical and mountainous. It contains many Thailand's minerals. It receives as much rainfall as the land of Central Thailand. It is covered with dense forest. Evergreen forest accompany higher temperatures, higher rainfall and only a short dry season. The north-south ranges often composed of granite and limestone. The flat plain yields rice-crops.

**Political Organization:**

Throughout the history of Thai society, political organizations in Thailand have not been very stable. The Thai society have been ruled by absolute Monarchy, armed forces and democratic forces. The change in form of government often took place throughout the history of Thailand up to the recent past when the armed forces again took over the government of the country into hands of the military regime. Following is a brief historical account of the nature of political organizations of Thailand. (Thai society).

Until 1932, Thailand remained under absolute monarchy, later on under constitutional monarchy and thereafter, Thai politics have been dominated by the military government, whom most of its council members were from the armed forces.

The recognised national pillars which bring into unity of Thailand's more than 52 million people giving them the strength and resilience to remain free are:- The nation, Religion and the Monarchy. Thais are freedom-loving people,
and free enterprise has been part of Thailand's Ideal for many generations.

The nature of political organization is clearly indicated by a government under a constitutional monarchy with a democratic form of government. The Metropolitan Administration such as of Bangkok, which is the capital city, is administered by an elected governor and is divided into 24 districts. Outside Bangkok, there are a Division of 72 other provinces. They are also administered by appointed governors.

The 72 provinces are further divided into districts, sub-districts, group of villages and villages. Above all these, the Thai's have been given freedom in lawful pursuit of their livelihood. Thus, providing paternalistic form of government for freedom of action, speech, and enterprise.

Throughout the course of history Thai's fought many battles to maintain their freedom. This has now led to their maintenance of independence and sovereignty. In the past two hundred years through western ideas democracy was introduced in the country through education and communications.

In summary the highest powers are in the hands of the King, then the Prime Minister with his Council of Ministers follows. From the Prime Minister there are various divisions, we have governors subjected to provinces and district heads and last is the group village and village heads. This is
the nature of Thai's political organization; in a nutshell it is a democratic kind of organization.

Provinces:

There are 73 provinces in Thailand. Among these provinces, there are ten provinces which are large in their geographical spread. The following Table No. 2.1 shows the name of these ten provinces and their total area in square kms and population in order of rank.

Population:

The total population of whole of the Kingdom of Thailand is 52,545,529 according to the notification of the Central Registration Bureau, Ministry of Interior, Thailand in 1986. Of the total population, 26,430,919 were males and 26,114,610 were females. The total population of the above ten provinces is 10,724,119 persons or 20.41 per cent of the Thailand's total population. This means that one-fifth of the population occupy these ten provinces. The Bangkok's (the Central City of Thailand), population is 5,446,708. The Bangkok's share in the total population is 10.36 per cent. This shows that the single city of Bangkok contributes major share in the total population of Thailand. Bangkok's population is increasing at an alarming rate and posing a threat to nation building activities.
TABLE No. 2.1

Table showing the names of the provinces and their areas in Square Kilometers and Population.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Name of Provinces</th>
<th>Sq.Kms.</th>
<th>Populations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Chiangmai</td>
<td>22,993</td>
<td>1,285,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Ubon Ratchathani</td>
<td>27,758</td>
<td>1,758,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Nakorn Ratchasima</td>
<td>19,590</td>
<td>2,243,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Kanchanaburi</td>
<td>19,486</td>
<td>629,816</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Chiangrai</td>
<td>18,304</td>
<td>983,576</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Udonthani</td>
<td>16,605</td>
<td>1,690,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Tak</td>
<td>15,609</td>
<td>322,564</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Nakhonburi</td>
<td>14,244</td>
<td>157,524</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Lampang</td>
<td>13,815</td>
<td>739,982</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Phetchaburi</td>
<td>13,660</td>
<td>912,916</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total 182,564 10,724,119

or 20.41% of the Thailand's Population
Population of Ten Largest Cities in Thailand:

According to 1986 statistics, the population of the ten largest cities in Thailand is given in Table No. 2.2

The percentage of the population of the above ten largest cities to the total population is 36.40 per cent.

Language:

The national language of Thailand is Thai. It has its own alphabet, quite unlike the Roman. The written Thai language reads horizontally from left to right as in English, consists of 44 consonants and 32 vowels that combine to formulate syllabic sounds. In the written language it is important to understand that words within sentences are not separated, punctuation is rare and grammar can be complicated. The sounds are combined with five tones, i.e., even, high, low, rising and falling to produce a melodious, lyrical language.

Generally speaking, spoken grammar is simple. The basic structure of Thai sentences is subject/verb/object with adjectives following nouns. In many cases, verbs can be changed into nouns with the use of a prefix, e.g., Khit (think) with the prefix Khwam becomes Khwam Khit (thought).

Each Thai word is complete in as much as there are no suffixes, genders, article or plurals. Tenses are indicated by standard auxiliaries, e.g., Pai (go) with the auxiliary
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sr. No.</th>
<th>Names of the cities</th>
<th>Total Population</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Bangkok</td>
<td>5,446,708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Nakhon Ratchasima</td>
<td>2,243,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ubon Ratchathani</td>
<td>1,758,868</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Udonthani</td>
<td>1,690,356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Khonkaen</td>
<td>1,600,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Nakhon Si Thammarat</td>
<td>1,359,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Buriram</td>
<td>1,316,393</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Chiangmai</td>
<td>1,285,662</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Sisaket</td>
<td>1,222,743</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Surin</td>
<td>1,203,943</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>19,128,990</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>or <strong>36.40%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Cha (will) become Cha Pai (will go); with the auxiliary Kamlang (verb to be + v. + ing) becomes Kamlang Pai (am going); and with the auxiliary Læo (= v. + ed) becomes Pai Læo (went).

Although satisfactory for common use, this system of language is inadequate for coining new Thai words that can accurately convey western concepts or scientific terms. As a consequence, Thailand keeps pace with international trends and scientific developments. Thai is still a growing language.

English is the second language of the country. Most of the educated Thai people have some degree of fluency in English which is taught beyond the fourth grade.

Thailand is well known as a Buddhist Kingdom and even today it enjoys its own distinctive culture like drama, literature, music, architecture, sculpture and painting, basket and silk weaving, pottery and jewellery etc. Thai sculpture, architects and painters have contributed the world's most expressive Buddhist art and its artisans are recognised world-wide for their craftsmanship.

Education:

Educational facilities are given more and more to the Thai people. The percentage of educated people was 70.8 in 1960 and it is increasing now-a-days. In Thailand it is
compulsory that a child should study at least four-year school and near about 95% of the children are studying in the schools. In 1962 it was made compulsory that students should study at least for 7 years in school. There are 394 kindergarten schools, about 28,700 elementary and upper elementary schools, 1,822 secondary, 7 technical, 34 teacher training and mandated special schools. In the 9 Universities of Thailand there are 43,000 students excluding 45,000 of Ramkhamhaeng University.

Crops:

The main agricultural produce of Thailand is rice. Rice is grown abundantly in Thailand because the climate and monsoon of Thailand is suitable for rice growing. Thailand gets the average net farm income from southern region. The contribution of the average net farm income by southern region is at the top level considered to the central, north, northeast regions. More than 80 per cent of farmer's own their land on which they cultivate.

Rice is the principal crop of Thailand. Thailand is one of the world's largest rice exporters. Rubber is considered as a major crop. But now the cultivation of the rubber is lowered because of unstable world market price. Other crops are maize, cotton, fiber, crops like Kenaf, jute, kapok, tobacco, sugarcane, cassava, coconut, oil seeds specially soya-bean, peanut, castor-bean etc., fruits,
vegetables and other miscellaneous fruits and vegetable which can be grown in their particular season. Silk textile product is also one of the export items of Thailand. In some suitable areas palm oil is also being grown by some private enterprises.

**Forestry:**

The forest wood is used as fuel and charcoal for domestic consumption. Teak is one of the valuable forest products in the north side of Thailand. Other valuable forest products are hardwood, and resins and oils. These are extracted from forest trees such as stick lae, gum benzoin and other gums, gamboge.

**Fisheries:**

Fisheries play a vital role in the economy of Thailand. Fisheries ranks next to agriculture in both extent and value. Fishing industries provide a major source of inexpensive animal protein for the Thai people. Fishing is done on the coastal water and also from sea. The annual production of fish is near about one million metric tons. Their values are estimated nearly about 4,000 million baht represents close to 4 per cent of the gross national product. It seems that fishing is given a great importance.

**Livestock:**

The livestock includes animals like cattles, water
baffaloes, swines, chicken, ducks etc. Water-baffaloes are mostly used for rice-cultivation because they are found suitable to work in the water field.

**Minerals:**

In Thailand minerals are found in great variety. Minerals are tin, tungsten, wolfram, fluorite lead, zinc, etc. Tin is ranked first because it is the most important mineral. Tin contributes its valuable share to the economy. Tin is mined mainly in the south by dredging and gravel bumping methods. Tin melting and refining plants are also situated there. Tin metal is exported under the protection of Government. Fluorite mines are centered around north and middle part of the country. Thailand has also discovered gas in the gulf of Thailand with the construction of the separation plant. This plant is constructed by the Government of Thailand to utilize gas as a nation's own energy resource. The idea behind the development of all the natural resource is to develop self-sufficiency. Iron deposits are also found throughout the country. Coal is also found in Thailand and is graded as lignite, the minerals like tungsten, lead, zinc, antimony and manganese are also found in Thailand and the same are exported to other countries to strengthen the Thai economy. Besides, zinc, rubber, maize, kenaf are also export commodities.

**Fuels:**

Charcoal, wood and rice husk are traditional sources
of energy. Charcoal is used mainly as household fuel.

**Water Resources:**

Thailand has got a nature's gift in the form of water. Water is found largely in the country. Exploitation of the water resources is of great importance to the economy of the country. Among the projects undertaken, the Bhumipol dam is constructed in 1964 for the purpose of the generating hydro-electric power for irrigation and flood control in the Chao Phraya Basin. This dam is the largest water resource development of the country. The other major dams on tributaries are the Namphrom, Lamdome Noi, and the Khao Yai.

Thailand is taking keen interest in the investigation of the lower Maekhong River for future regional development. The Maekhong is one of the world's last unexploited river having vast hydro-electric power potentials.

**Highways:**

There are now 12,000 kms. of National Highways and 9,000 kms of provincial highways connecting every provinces of the country. The highways reach every part of the country. Transport of fright by highways account for nearly 60% of the total fright. This is because that highway transport can provide door to door services, saves time and it is flexible.
Inland Waterways:

Inland Waterways are seen mostly in the central plain region. There are near about 10,000 commercial barges operate or run on it. Sand, paddy, rice and maize are the principal commodities that constitute the greatest volume of the traffic. The importance of inland waterway is mainly for transportation of heavy commodities. The ministry of communication is now proposing a study of inland waterway in order to establish an investment programme that will bring the waterway into close competition with other modes of transportation.

Ports:

Apart from the port of Bangkok city there are other 21 coastal ports of which 15 ports are on the gulf of Thailand side and 6 ports are on Andaman sea side. Phuket Port, a deep-sea port, on the Andaman sea side provide facility for exporting of refined tin and rubber. The another port called as Songkhla port, on the Gulf of Thailand side, is also a deep-sea port.

The port of Bangkok which is a river port handles about 95 per cent of the country's import and about 80 per cent of the export. It is the only general cargo port in the country. Its normal cargo handling capacity is 1,300,000 tons annually.
Air Transport:

Air transport in Thailand is relatively very small volume of traffic compared with other modes of transport. There are three airline companies in the country. Thai Airways and Thai International which are state enterprises and Air Siam which is a private company wholly owned by Thai Nationals. Thai Airways are the domestic airline which also operates International flights to Penang and Vietian. Thai International and Air Siam both are International Airlines. At present Thai International operates flights, in Asia and to Australia, while Air Siam operates flights to Los Angeles on a mixed passenger cargo basis.

Electric Power:

Electric Power is supplied mainly from thermal and hydro power plants under the transmission system operated by the Electricity Generating Authority of Thailand (EGAT) which has the total installed capacity of 969 MW. The principal hydro-electric installations are at Bhumipol Dam (420 MW) in the north, with lesser amounts at Nampong Dam (25 MW) and Nampung Dam (6 MW) in the northeast. In the North Bangkok plant there is a thermal power whose capacity is near about 267.5 MW, with lignite. The other plants are at Krabi (60 MW) in the south and Mae Moh (12 MW) in the north. In the northern and in the central part the transmission line system provides the power available. Near about
33 provinces of central and northern the power is supplied by EGAT; 10 provinces in the northeast and 8 provinces in the south. The EGAT sells bulk power to Metropolitan Electricity Authority (MEA) and Provincial Electricity Authority for distribution in Metropolitan and provincial areas respectively. The PEA which is a isolated diesel plant supplies the power, instead of supplied by the EGAT.

**Manufacturing:**

Thailand's small-scale industries are mainly aimed at processing rice, rubber and forest products and also for manufacturing cement, gunny-bags, textiles, paper, sugar and light consumer goods. In manufacturing Thailand is considered as backward because of lack of facilities. Policy of the Thai Government is to encourage private investment and also to encourage foreign manufacturers.

**Weight and Measures:**

The metric system is in general use, though various traditional measures are used for simple trading. Kilometer is about 0.62 miles, kilogram is 2.2 pound, meter is about 39 inches and litre is 1.06 liquid quarts. Traditional measures are widely used in local trading one Rai of land is 0.395 acres (0.16 hectar), one standard picual is 132.28 pounds (60 Kgs) and one standard kwien is 528 U.S. dollars (20 hectolitres).
Currency:

The unit of currency is the Baht (tical). One hundred Satang is equal to one Baht. The largest denomination of coin is one Baht and the bank note is 100 Baht. One Thai Baht now-a-days is equal to one Rupee of India.

The Society:

Thailand is largely a rural society, as about 85 per cent of the population lives in villages where economic activities are centered on agriculture. Secondly, Buddhism is at the center of Thai view of life and forms the foundation of most attitudes both in the city and countryside. Therefore, the understanding of Thai society is largely based on the knowledge of the rural social organization in Thailand. Bangkok, the capital of the Thailand and metropolis, is an expanding commercial centre in which considerable urbanization and westernization are seen. The following is the brief description of Thai society in brief.

While the people of Thailand are Buddhists, their religion is permeated with animism. Hence spirits' worship and propitiation of the spirits are prominent, especially in a time of sickness or crisis. From Brahminism, the Thais have adopted notions of the heavens and hells, as well as certain ceremonies and ideas about their political system. Much energy, money, and manpower are involved in the conduct of Thai Buddhism. Almost every population center has its
temple - affiliated buildings and staff of local monks. In the life of rural people of Thailand, the Buddhist monk has the most respected social role. There are status gradations within the organization, i.e., Sangha of which the monks are a part, and monks are at the top of the hierarchical system in rural communities. The religious achievement has traditionally been valued above wealth and political power.

Buddhism has undergone certain changes in appearance caused by the stress of Bangkok's fast paced urban lifestyle. However, it remains the same, and its influence is powerful both in the city and the countryside.\(^4\)

The history of Thai nation showed the closed relationship between Buddhism and Thai nation. This is because the history of Buddhism is the history of Thai nation. Buddhism is still the state religion of Thailand. The constitution of Thailand provides that the King who is the symbol of the nation must be Buddhist. Buddhism has profoundly influenced art, traditions, learning and character of Thai people. The manner and thinking of the people in Thailand have been shaped by Buddhism. This shows that the Buddhism has become an integral part of Thai life.\(^5\) Thus Buddhism is at the

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\(^4\) Thailand in the 1980s, Publication of the National Identity Office, Office of Prime Minister, Kingdom of Thailand, 1984, pp.228-29.

center of Thai view of life and forms the foundation of most attitudes. 6

A Hierarchical Society:

The vertical social relationships over others is an interesting characteristic of Thai society in both urban and rural areas. The vertical relationships are characterised by inequality and respect of inferiors toward superiors. Phillips illustrates the respect patterns as follows. "These patterns are based, in the first instance, on the status inequalities that exists in almost all social relationships within the family, usually in terms of the relative ages of people; elsewhere in terms of age, wealth, power, knowledge, and religious or governmental role. Secondly, they are based on the assumption that every individual, regardless of his position in the hierarchy, deserves respect." 7

The older-younger patterns guides relationships so that younger members in their greetings and in other ways show respect for their elders. Status differences are reflected in conversation since the pronounces used vary with the rank of the speaker and with that of the person

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(6) Thailand in the 1980s, Publication of the National Identity Office, Office of Prime Minister, Kingdom of Thailand, 1984, p.228.

spoken to. The family is a training ground for the superior-inferior patterns appropriate with relatives, teachers, monks, government officials, and others.

**Rural Social Organization:**

The family household is the most prominent element in the social organization of Thai Rural society. There is high degree of integration with the family and kinship providing an organization role. Economic, religious, education, etc., acquire relevance as they are brought into the life cycle activities of the family household. "The Thai consists of homogeneous spiritual community, sharing the same language and religion, agreeing upon the fundamental questions of morality and torn by no debates on what it means to be a Thai...

Every citizen knows his country has a King, and his King is to be respected and revered, honoured and obeyed... His picture of the world would be incomplete without the King's image in the centre, for the King embodies the values of national unity. His (the King's) person - all that it symbolizes - moulds the society of villages into a nation sharing common values and moving toward a common destiny.

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Marriages are almost monogamous in rural Thailand. Polygyny has been known to occur in both rural and urban areas, chiefly in the urban areas. The Thai rural family types are (1) the nuclear family, which predominates, (2) the limited extended family; and (3) the extended family. Polygyny has been mainly an urban phenomenon in Thailand. In 1955, a family law was enacted to check the tendency of polygyny. However, the extent of polygyny has been very little.

The Kindred:

The kindred is another unit of social organization generally found in rural Thailand. In addition to relationship, the exchange principle and mutual reciprocity are fundamental in the kindred group. The families look to one another for exchanges of resources and labour, such as assistance with farming tasks, loans of food and farming tools and loans of many.

Mate Selection and Marriage:

The Thai youth of marriageable age seeks a bride among the young women that he already knows. There are many opportunities for heterosexual contacts resulting from association among young people in school, ceremonies, more exchanges are in other affairs. While young men are free in their social contacts, young ladies are kept under surveillance by their parents. Therefore, the parents of the girl prefer that
courting takes place at their home. The young Thai generally seeks the approval of parents before marriage occurs.

However, in respect of family formation in the city, single young men and women have more freedom for social interaction and restrictions are few. Still, those who are tradition-bound, seek proper social contacts for men and women at the time marriage. Though, marriage rites in the city are curtailed, the marriages in other respects resemble the traditional rural marriage.

In comparing Thai and western societies in regard to marriage, Chandruang observed: "Our marriage is purely a personal agreement with social sanctions, but their (western) marriage is a religious and legal contract. In Thailand, marriage is governed by public opinion and social pressures."

The family is the source of identity, provides for shelter and sustenance for members, cares for the aged and trains the youngers for careers in framing and home-making, etc. Nearly, every aspect of life in rural society in Thailand is fused through family and kinship units. This feature is in contrast to the relative autonomy of economy, religion, family, etc., in urban industrial societies.


Westernization is widespread in Bangkok compared to Thailand as a whole. However, many rural social values are seen in the city such as regard for religion, personal habits and respect for elders and superiors.

The Thai rural society is largely peasant-oriented. However, a middle class life style is observed in Bangkok. This is reflected in the existence of a high proportion of families engaged in employment in government or business. The urban family organization reflects a separation of family and occupation. This separation has caused the differentiation of sex roles and changes in the household activities, etc., as is observed in other urban areas.

To summarise, Thailand is an independent country of south-eastern Asia, lying between Burma on the west and Indo-China on the east. Thailand means "land of the free people" or "free land". Thailand covers an area of 198,000 square miles of which 44 per cent of the land is under cultivation and 25 per cent land is under forest. The well-defined seasons are the hot, rainy and cool seasons. Northern, Northeastern, Central and Southern are the four natural geographical regions. Northern region is high steep mountains and hills and hence thickly forested. The forest is known for teak wood. Northeastern region is a high, dry plain where red sandy soils are not very fertile. The low rainfall here handicaps agriculture and hence people rear livestock. Central region is the great rice-producing area of Thailand
and hence rice cultivation is the main occupation of the people in this region. Southern region is rich in minerals such as granite and limestone.

The political organizations in Thailand throughout its history are unstable. The Thai society have been ruled by absolute Monarchy, armed forces and democratic forces. In the recent past the armed forces again took over the Government of the country into the hands of the military regime. The nature of political organization is clearly indicated by a government under constitutional monarchy with a democratic form of government. For the purpose of administration, Thailand, besides the Bangkok's city administration, is divided into 72 provinces headed by the Governors. Each province is further divided into districts and sub-districts. Thais have been guaranteed freedom by providing paternalistic form of government for freedom of action, speech and enterprise.

The total population of Thailand is 52,545,529 of which 26,430,919 and 26,114,610 are males and females respectively. The largest ten provinces of Thailand have 20.40 per cent of the Thailand's total population. The Bangkok's (the Central and the capital city of Thailand) share in the population of the country is 10.36 per cent. The single city of Bangkok contributes major share in the nation's total population. The ten largest cities including Bangkok in Thailand have 36.40 per cent of the total Thailand's population. This shows that excluding Bangkok city, the other
largest cities' share in the total population is small. The alarming growth of the population of Bangkok is a threat to the nation building activities.

The national language of Thailand is Thai. Although satisfactory for common use, the system of language is inadequate for coining new Thai words that can accurately convey western concepts or scientific terms. As a consequence, Thailand keeps pace with international trends and scientific developments.

Educational facilities are given more and more to the Thai people. This is because seven years' schooling is compulsory in Thailand. The emphasis on early schooling has resulted in high rate of literacy.

The rice is the principal crop in Thailand. Thailand is one of the world's largest rice exporters. The other crops are rubber, maize, cotton, fiber, kenaf, jute, tobacco, sugarcane, coconut, oil seeds, etc.

Teak, hardwood, resins, oils, charcoal, etc., are valuable forest products in Thailand. Tin, tungsten, fluorite lead, zinc, manganese are the minerals found in great variety in Thailand and are exported to other countries to strengthen the Thai economy. Tin contributes its valuable share in the country's economy. The gas and iron are found in the gulf of Thailand. Thailand is developing its natural
resources to have self-sufficiency. Fisheries play a vital role in the economy of Thailand.

Thailand's small-scale industries are mainly aimed at for processing rice, rubber and forest products and for manufacturing cement, gunny-bags, textiles, sugar and light consumer goods. In manufacturing Thailand is considered as backward because of lack of facilities.

The plenty of water resources are used for generating hydro-electric power for irrigation. Thermal power stations are erected for supply of electricity for household and industrial consumption.

The network of transportation, viz., road highways, waterways and airways are established for transporting passengers and goods inside and outside Thailand.

The unit of currency is Baht. One Baht is equal to one rupee of India.

Thailand is largely a rural society and the Buddhism is at the center of Thai view of life both in the city and countryside and hence the understanding of the Thai society is generally based on the knowledge of the rural social organization of Thailand.

While the people of Thailand are Buddhists, their religion is permeated with animism and Brahminism. The history of Thai has shown the close relationship between
Buddhism and Thai nation. The manner and thinking of the people in Thailand have been shaped by Buddhism. Thus the Buddhism has because an integral part of Thai life and forms the foundation of most attitudes.

The vertical social relationships over others is an interesting characteristics of Thai society in both rural and urban areas. The vertical social relationships are based on the status of inequalities within the family in terms of age, wealth, power, knowledge and religious or governmental role. Many rural social values have been observed in the city in respect of regard for religion, personal habits, and respect for superiors and elders.

The Thai rural society is largely peasant-oriented. However, a middle class style of life is observed in Bangkok. The urban family organization reflects a separation of family and occupation and this has caused differentiation in sex roles. Marriage is a personal agreement involving social sanctions. The men and women have more freedom for social interaction. Marriages are almost monogamous in rural Thailand. Polygyny has been known to occur chiefly in urban areas.