CHAPTER III
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THAILAND, BANGKOK AND THAI CULTURE

Introduction:

In this chapter a brief introduction to the history and geography of Thailand, as well as Thai culture, people, economy, government, and religion are discussed.

Since the present research aimed at studying the change and assimilation that took place among the people of Indian origin who were the first, second and third generation migrants and were settled down in Bangkok, Bangkok Profile is also included in this chapter.

I Profile Of Thailand

1. History:

Thais used to live in Southern China before migrating to the present Thailand. Reliable recorded history of the Thai people in the present Thailand began sometimes in or about the 13th century (Anuman Rajadhod : 1988 : 19) Beyond this period, Mon and Khmer civilizations flourished in the region prior to the arrival of the ethnic Thai. Thais date the founding of their nation to the 13th century. According to history, in 1237, Thai Chieftains overthrew their Khmer Overlords at Sukhothai and established a Thai kingdom. After its decline, a new Thai kingdom in the south of Sukhothai rose to power in 1350. It was led by King U-Thong, the first king of Ayudhya. Some 90 years later, Sukhothai was politically incorporated in Ayudhya. (Ibid : 23)

The history is marked by three eras: Sukhothai (1237-1350), Ayudhya (1350-1767) and Bangkok. After a brief interlude of Thonburi period (1767-1782), the founding of Bangkok in 1782, across the Chao Phya River at the site of present-day city, marked the beginning of the Chakri Dynasty which currently rules the kingdom.
2. Geography:

The Kingdom of Thailand is located on the mainland of South-East Asia. Thai kingdom was established in the mid 14th century. It was known as Siam until 1939. Thailand is the only Southeast Asian Country, which has never been colonized by European powers. One of the developing counties in this region, Thailand is bordered by Laos and Cambodia to the north and east, Myanmar to the north and west, Malaysia to the south. It is located between South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal.

Thailand in Asia's Map

Situated in the heart of the Southeast Asian mainland, Thailand covers an area of 514,000 square kilometers which is equal to the size of France. The maximum length is about 1,650 kilometers and the maximum breadth is about 770 kilometers. Thailand is divided into four big regions: Central, Northern, Northeastern and
Southern. There are 76 provinces in the kingdom. 75 provinces with governors appointed by the central government in Bangkok except Bangkok. Bangkok is the capital of Thailand, the governor is elected by popular vote and four deputy governors are appointed by the governor for a four-year term.

- **The Central** region is known as the granary of the country. This region covers wide rivers, streams and canals, which connect to the Chao Phya River or Maenam Chao Phrya, a very important and famous river. (Maenam means “Mother of water) This region is based in the Chao Phraya River basin which makes it the most important rice growing area in Thailand. The Chao Phraya River also runs through Bangkok, dividing the city into two parts.

- **The Northern** region is a hilly or mountainous terrain. There are many hill tribes in northern Thailand. Due to a cool weather in winter season, northern region becomes suitable for growing winter fruit and vegetables which are distributed throughout the country. Chiangmai is the second largest city in Thailand. A considerable population size and the level of material development lies in this region.

- **The Northeastern** region marked by plateau is the largest region in Thailand. The great river Mekong that lies between Thailand, Laos and Cambodia forms its eastern boundary. Most of the population of this region are poor peasants. The chief cities are Nakhon Ratchasima, Ubon Ratchathani, and Khonkaen.

- **The Southern** area is a narrow isthmus with a mountainous spine and a lush hinterland of great natural beauty. There are plenty of rubber plantations, and fruit orchards in southern Thailand. Furthermore, this region has a long shoreline. People here generally work as fishermen. The hub of the south is Hat-Yai, one of the districts of the Songkhla province. It is well known as a business center of the region. The chief cities are Songkhla, Phuket, Nakhonsrithammarat, and Suratthanan.
3. Climate:

Thailand’s climate is marked by long hours of sunshine and high humidity. The temperature ranges from 20 to 40 degrees Celsius. The climate is tropical with monsoons. There are three seasons in Central, Northern and Northeastern region. The rainy season starts between May and July and lasts to October. Winter starts from November through February. After that the weather becomes dry starting from March to June. The southern region has just two seasons. They are the rainy and dry seasons. In general, rainfall is heavier and longer in Southern Thailand.

4. Population:

By the end of year 2003, Thailand had a total population of 63.1 million, out of which approximately 31.2 million were males and 31.8 million were females. The Northeastern region had a population of about 21.7 million, amounting to for 34.5 percent of the population of Thailand. The Northern region had about 12.7 million people while the Southern region had about 8.5 million people. The population of the Central region was about 11 million, while that of the Bangkok Metropolitan Area was nearly 10 million. During 1990 to 2001, Thailand had a population growth rate of an average of 1.1 percent. Currently, the population grows at a rate of 0.7 percent per annum. The Thai government agency by National Economic and Social Development Board estimates that the population in 2006 will be about 65.3 million and will rise to 67.4 million in 2010. (see table No. 3.1).

The population of Thailand can be divided into three major ethnic groups, Thai, Chinese, and Malay. Thais constitute the majority, amounting to 78 percent of the total population. Chinese is the second largest group, amounting to 14 percent, while Malay constitute about 4 percent of the total population. The other ethnic groups are much smaller in number. They are the Khmer, the Mon, and the Vietnamese, and the mountain-dwelling tribes such as the Moosur, Vah, Mong, Karen, etc.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 9</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>4.78</td>
<td>4.79</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>2.42</td>
<td>2.37</td>
<td>2.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 - 19</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.57</td>
<td>2.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>2.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25 – 29</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>2.64</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>2.62</td>
<td>2.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60 – 79</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>3.61</td>
<td>3.74</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 80</td>
<td>0.40</td>
<td>0.42</td>
<td>0.44</td>
<td>0.46</td>
<td>0.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65.34</td>
<td>65.85</td>
<td>66.35</td>
<td>66.86</td>
<td>67.36</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source**: National Economic and Social Development Board, Thailand, May 2003

5. **Economy**:  

Thai economy represented the world’s highest growth rate from 1985 to 1995, with 9 percent annual growth on an average. The crisis in 1997 affected the other countries especially the Asian countries and South Korea. Exchange rate system was destabilized due to the attack from foreign hedge funds. Following the attack which led to the shift of system, there occurred large capital outflow until Asia faced big economic crisis that spread to Russia and to some countries in Latin America. A few weeks after the floatation of the baht, Thailand sought assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for stand-by credit. The package of US$17.2 billion including bilateral and multilateral assistance from other donors was granted on August 20, 1997. (Bank of Thailand :1998 : 27) Thailand entered a recovery stage in 1999, expanding 4.2 percent and grew 4.0-4.5 percent in 2000, largely due to strong
exports, which increased by about 20 percent in 2000. (Bank of Thailand: 1999 : 13)

In 2001 Thai economy expanded by 1.8 percent while the growth rate was less than in the previous year. The economy was able to prevail under sluggish global environment. Most important, increased downward risks from the external sector did not diminish Thailand's economic stability was originally feared since the beginning of the year. (Bank of Thailand : 2001 : 1-3)

In 2002: Thai economy was expected to grow by around 3.5 percent, particularly on the back of domestic demand, which was mainly stimulated by the government expenditure. Economic stability remained satisfactory as inflation rate as was low as 1.1 percent and the trade balance as well as current account remained surplus.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agro-industries</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal manufacturing</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining and fuel</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Products</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fuel lubricants</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capital goods</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate product</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer goods</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vehicles and Parts</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: In the year 2002 (January – September)
Source: Ministry of Commerce, Thailand
Table 3.4
Thailand’s Export Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.5
Thailand’s Import Partners

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Partners</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taiwan</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: CIA the World Fact Book 2006 –Thailand

Thailand’s per capita income of 80,083 baht (2001) places it in the rank of middle-income countries. Although 60 percent of population still earns its living from agriculture. About 80 percent of the Thailand’s population lives in the urban areas and approximately 10 million people live in Bangkok and Bangkok metropolitan area. By the end of the year 2003, the Office of National Statistics reported that the population of the country was around 63.8 million. Out of these about, 35.5 million people were in labour force. However, the employed were 34.6 million, out of which 14.2 million worked in the agricultural sector whereas 20.4 million worked in the non-agricultural sector. Table 3.6 illustrated the detailed structure of population and employment from 1997 to 2003.
Table 3.6
Population And Employment During 1990 - 2003
(unit : million persons)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Population</td>
<td>56.3</td>
<td>60.8</td>
<td>61.5</td>
<td>61.7</td>
<td>61.9</td>
<td>62.3</td>
<td>62.8</td>
<td>63.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+,- %</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.4</td>
<td>0.7</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>0.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Labour force</td>
<td>31.2</td>
<td>32.6</td>
<td>32.5</td>
<td>32.7</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>34.6</td>
<td>35.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+,- %</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>-0.4</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>30.0</td>
<td>31.5</td>
<td>30.2</td>
<td>30.7</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>32.2</td>
<td>33.9</td>
<td>34.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+,- %</td>
<td>2.4</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>-4.5</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Agriculture</td>
<td>18.3</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>13.5</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>13.9</td>
<td>13.6</td>
<td>14.6</td>
<td>14.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+,- %</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>-5.2</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>-2.2</td>
<td>7.4</td>
<td>-2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-Non-agriculture</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>18.6</td>
<td>19.3</td>
<td>20.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>+,- %</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>-3.9</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>3.8</td>
<td>5.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment *</td>
<td>Na</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>1.41</td>
<td>1.37</td>
<td>1.19</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>0.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(% of labour force)</td>
<td>3.9</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: * Beginning in 1986 the labour force used for calculating the unemployment rate excluded those under 13 years of age.

Sources: Bank of Thailand and the Ministry of Labour

The percentage of population unemployed in the year 2003 was 1.8 percent of labour force or 0.64 million in number. The minimum wage rate was 137-175 Baht per day in the January 2005. The actual wage rates vary and depend on areas. They are also according to the standard of living of each province. In the big cities like Phuket (173 Baht per day), Chonburi (157 Baht per day), Chiangmai (149 Baht per day), the minimum wage rates are high compared to those of other provincial towns while the rate in Bangkok Metropolitan Area is the highest - 175 Baht per day.

6. Government:

In 1932, constitutional monarchy was introduced in Thailand without bloodbath. The Thai King exercises his legislative power through national assembly, his executive power through a cabinet headed by a Prime Minister, and the judicial powers through the law courts.
Thailand is governed by a constitutional monarchy with His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX) as Head of State. He ascended to the throne in 1946. The king formally reigns over a highly centralized unitary state, and he is the symbol of national identity. Democracy in Thailand is the result of the transformation of absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy in 1932. King Prajadhipok (Rama VII) accepted this change without bloodbath. Official power rests with the government, personified by the Prime Minister, the Parliament, and a Bureaucratic system that reaches down to the village level. Under the constitution of B.E. 2540 (1997) the Government comprises the Parliament, which consists of two houses, the House of Representatives (400 seats) and the Senate (100 seats). The latest election held on February 6, 2005, secured the second term for the Prime Minister, Taksin Shinawatra, the leader of Thai Rak Thai Party. (His first term was March 2001-January 2005). This is the first time in Thai history that the cabinet has been formed by one party. The Government consists of twenty ministries and thirty seven ministers such as the ministry of Finance, Interior, Foreign Affairs, Industry, Commerce, Education, Agricultural and Cooperative, Science & Environment, Culture etc. The country has been divided into 76 provinces (called: changwat) each having a governor, appointed by the central government except Bangkok; Subdivisions include districts (called : amphur), communes (called : tambon), villages (called muban), and municipalities (called : tesaban). Furthermore, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration comes under an elected governor. Bangkok is divided into 50 districts or “Khet”.

- **Infrastructure:**

  For more than two decades, successive Thai governments have understood that for Thailand to be attractive to foreign investors, there needs to be both progressive investment promotion policies and sufficient infrastructure. The government has continuously improved the nation’s infrastructure, both in Bangkok and the provinces.
Transportation:
- Railway: total 4,071 kms
- Roadways: total 57,403 kms
  - Paved roads: 56,542 kms
  - Unpaved roads: 861 kms
- Waterways: total 4,000 kms
- Airports: 108 (year 2006)
  - With paved runway 66
  - With unpaved runway 42

Communication:
- Telephone lines in use: 6.797 million (year 2004)
- Telephone mobile cellular: 27.379 million (year 2005)
- Internet host: 786,226 (2006)
- Internet users: 8.42 million (year 2005)

Others:
- Electricity production: 114.7 billion kWh (year 2003)
- Electricity consumption: 107.3 billion kWh (year 2003)
- Oil production: 230,000 bbl/day (2005 est.)
- Oil consumption: 851,000 bbl/day (2004 est.)
- Natural gas production: 22.28 billion cu m (2003 est.)
- Natural gas consumption: 29.15 billion cu m (2003 est.)

(CIA : The World Fact Book 2006 – Thailand: 10-12)

- Service Sector:

  The state of public health in Thailand was relatively good by Asian standards. The Ministry of Public Health has taken up the responsibility for public health, which is the major agency of the Government for delivering services to people. In 2001, the Thaksin Shindwattra administration introduced the universal health care scheme. They charged thirty baht for each case. The government has been providing the fund for this policy which is more than 5 percent of the budgetary needs. In the
year 1999, the Social Security Act came into implementation. According to the law, the employers and government contributed equally 1.5 percent of salary to the social security fund which provided medical and other services to employees.

7. Religion:

There are many religions in Thailand: Buddhism, Islam, Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism and others. Buddhism plays an important role in Thai society. Almost all Thais (94 percent) are Buddhists. Thai Constitution stipulates that Thai Kings must be Buddhists. However, the King must be the upholder of all religions.

- **Buddhism**: Buddhism was founded in India in the sixth century B.C. by Siddhartha Gotama later known as the “the Buddha”. Buddhism first obviously appeared in kingdom of Thailand during the period 13th to 15th century i.e. around Sukhothai Era. In 2002, more than 94 percent of Thai people followed and believed in Buddhism. It is a part of Thai social structure and culture. Thus, Buddhism has been the main driving force in Thailand’s cultural development. Thai norms, beliefs, social values as well as Thai’s art etc. are derived from Buddhism.

- **Islam**: Muslims account for 4 percent of Thailand’s total population. Around 91 percent of them live in the four provinces in the deep South: Narathiwat, Yala, Pattani and Satoon.

- **Christianity**: Christianity was first introduced into Thailand in 16th and 17th centuries by European Missionaries in Ayudhya Era. The total Christian population is about 0.5 percent. The Christians in Thailand have been active in the field of education and health with financial support, and contributions in those fields from various sources.

- **Hinduism and Sikhism**: They constitute around 0.1 percent of the population. The Hindu and Sikh communities in Thailand are mainly concentrated in Bangkok. Hindus worship in the main Hindu temples and Brahma shrines, and also operate their own schools in which the curricula is based on the one provided by the Ministry of Education of Thailand. In addition it teaches Hindi, Sanskrit and English. As for the Sikhs, they are divided into two sects whose members worship at two
different temples. However, Sikhs in Thailand run a free school for the poor and orphan children. It is run by the charitable association of Sikhs in Thailand. (Barbara Leitch : 1998 : 5)

8. Language:

 Thai language is a sub-division of the linguistic group, which includes also the language of Shans of northern Myanmar and its subgroup in Assam and adjacent territories of the Laotians in Laos People’s Democratic Republic, and of many isolated Thai groups in Tongkins and Southern China. Thai language has words in its original form and is monosyllabic. It is unlike that of the Chinese, where each word is independent and complete by itself, and admits no modifications as do the inflectional language. (Anuman Rajadhon : 1988 : 26)

 An estimated 85 percent or more of the Thai people speak the Thai Central language. A number of linguistic scholars marked the reign of King Narai (1657-1688) at the point when this language came into use. The Central Thai was established as the standard form. It was the required form used by officials, in academics, business, and daily transactions. Increasingly, Central Thai was spoken with varied fluency all over the country. There were regional differences in folklore, and culture among the Thai people who use dialects. The Northeastern people use the dialect, known as Thai-Laos or Isan. The Northern people use the Kham Muang, and the Southern people use the Southern Thai dialect. The dialects of the four regions are intelligible with difficulty and have syntactic differences in pronunciation. English is used widely for international communication in Bangkok.

9. Education:

 Historically, education was related to religion, especially to Buddhism. Religious education could be received from the monks in the monastery or “WAD”. The so called “Wads” or Buddhist temples formerly had the sole responsibility for education of boys and young men in ancient Siam. Education was later divided into two institutions, the religious and the royal, when modern education was introduced by the British and the American missionaries into the royal palace. At this point in
the history of Thai education, the royals underwent their Western-Styled education in the royal palace while the ordinary people pursued their education in Buddhist temples. King Chulalongkorn (Rama V, 1853-1910) wanted to integrate monastic instruction with the western education. Unsuccessful in this effort, he appointed his brother, Prince Damrong Rajanubhab to design a new system of education. Western teachers were engaged to provide assistance, and in 1921 a compulsory education law was enacted. In 1917, the first university in the kingdom, The Chulalongkorn University was established.

The Government in 1932 formulated the first formal comprehensive education plan. There were four years for primary education, and eight years for secondary education. In 1936, the Government adopted a new system characterized by five levels of education. They were kindergarten, primary, secondary, pre-university and higher education. In the late 1970s, the six-three-three level was introduced. This included six years of primary schooling, three years of lower secondary education, and three years at the upper secondary level. For the vocational education, one can enter into the education after finishing the lower secondary level. After 3 years, one can obtain vocational certificate and after 5 years, one can obtain higher vocational certificate. For the mainstream education, one spends 4 years in the university to be granted a bachelor’s degree. One can spend at least two years at the university to obtain master’s degree. After getting master’s degree, one can spend at least three years to complete his or her doctorate.

In 1999, Thailand legislated a new Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999) that reformed the entire system and brought about an expansion in the secondary education. The Act is envisioned to fully implement nine years of compulsory education and twelve years of free education. It was made effective in the year 2004. Furthermore, universities are to be made autonomous with increased power to mobilize and utilize resources and revenues. At present, there are about 200 public universities, and 253 colleges in the country. All of them are under the Ministry of Education. Additionally, there are other colleges, which come under special institutions such as the military academy, Buddhist education section etc.
II Profile Of Bangkok

1. History:

Bangkok or “Krung Thep Maha Nakhon” was established as the capital city of Thailand in 1782, the year King Rama I ascended the throne. During the reign of King Rama V, the territorial administration of the country was reformed between 1894–1906 into a number of areas called “Monthon”. Bangkok was in Monthon Krung Thep, which was under the Ministry of Urban Affairs. In 1992, the Ministry of Urban Affairs was merged with the Ministry of Interior. The administration of Bangkok, under a modified Monthon system, was carried on until 1932.

In 1933, two Acts were legislated and affected the administration of Bangkok: The Thai Administration Act and the Municipal Government Act. Under these acts, Bangkok became a province called “Krung Thep” and “Thon Buri” Metropolis.” At the same time, National Executive Council Order Number 25 merged the Bangkok Municipality and the Thon Buri Municipality into the “Metropolitan City Municipality.” In 1972, National Executive Council Order Number 335 reorganized the form of local government in the metropolis by amalgamating the activities of the Metropolis of Krung Thep and Thon Buri, The Krung Thep and Thon Buri Provincial Administrations, the Metropolitan City Municipality and Sanitation Administration into the “Bangkok Metropolitan Administration” or BMA.

In December 1981, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Act 1975 was amended. The amendment stipulated that Governor and Deputy Governors of the BMA should be appointed by the Minister of Interior until the new Act of the BMA came into effect. On the 31st of August 1985, the new Act of the BMA came into effect. According to the Act, the Governor is elected by popular vote and four Deputy Governors are appointed by the Governor for a four-year term. The Bangkok Metropolitan Council comprises of elected members. The number of Council members depended on the population of Bangkok. At the District level, District Council is also elected and its members will be at least 7 depending on population in the District. The Bangkok Metropolitan Council and District Council, each has a four-year term.
2. Geography:

Bangkok the capital of Thailand is situated in the central part of the country on the low flat plain of the Chao Phraya River, which is the most important river that can be compared to the main artery of the nation, at a distance extending from 27-56 kms, from the river Mount adjacent to the Gulf of Thailand. Its latitude is 13.45° north and longitude is 100.28° east.

Bangkok is located on a flood plain delta of the Chao Phraya River. The location was then selected with the consideration as a natural defense from enemies and the richness of water for life earnings. Since its establishment, the city grew steadily in size and importance which covered only 4.14 square kilometers to nowadays a mega city that comprises of 50 districts. Up until now, Bangkok is the growth pole of the whole kingdom with total area of 1,568,737 square kilometers.

3. Climate:

It has a tropical climate with long hours of sunshine, high temperature and humidity. Bangkok has a monsoon type of climate, which can be classified into three main seasons: rainy (May-October), cool (November-January) and hot (February-April). The average annual temperature was 29.2°C in 2002, with the maximum at 38°C and minimum at 19.2°C. The average, highest, and lowest averages during the period of 1993-2002 were 28.8°C, 38.8°C (in 1998) and 13.2°C (in 1999) respectively. The average wind velocity was 1.2 m/sec (4.3 km/hr). The average relative humidity is 73 percent and precipitation is 1,652 mm.

With regard to the global greenhouse effect which increases the temperature worldwide, Department of Meteorology studied the temperature variation of maximum-minimum of BMA’s air temperature during the past 10 years with long term averages. During the decade of 1991-2002, the maximum temperature average in summer is significantly higher than long term average, and the same is true for the winter. It can be concluded that during the past decade the temperature had been cooler in cool season and warmer in hot season.

4. Population:

During 1782–1900, the commencing period of city establishment, Bangkok grew rather slowly. The population then was only 600,000 and urbanized area was about 18 square kilometers. After the Second World War, the city was increasingly populated with rapid urbanization, which brought about number of infrastructures and other constructions. The registered population in Bangkok increased from 1.6 million in 1958 to 5.4 million in 1986, 5.6 million in 1999 and 5.78 million in 2002 which
was 10 percent of the total population of Thailand. The population density is 3,686
per sq.km. with the increase of 0.98 percent per year.

Population migration is on the declining trend. The actual population of city
may not be known, as there are many people who commute to work in Bangkok or
live in the city without registration. However, the study on the non-registered
population in Bangkok indicated that the population may be 8.87 million.
(Department of City Planning 1998)

The average annual income was 78,594 baht (year 2000) and 0.6 percent of
the population is classified as poor. (Office of the National Economic and social
Development Board, 2002)

Most residents in Bangkok are native Thais with around 25 percent of the
city’s inhabitants being Chinese or of Chinese origin as well as Indians, Arabs,
Malays and Europeans.

5. Economy:

Thailand’s main port, Bangkok has always been more cosmopolitan than
other cities of the region. The government sector does play a significant role in
Bangkok along with the private sector. There are a number of activities in commerce,
industries, construction, manufacturing and various kinds of services including
banking and other financial services. Bangkok’s work force includes businessmen,
traders, entrepreneurs, employees, private retailers, street vendors, government
official’s etc. At present, Bangkok can be seen as the heart of Thailand. It is the
cultural, educational, political and economic center of Thailand. This very highly
populated city is currently faced with some unavoidable urban pollution problems in
addition to traffic congestion.

Bangkok is not only the center of tourist attraction in Southeast Asia but
also the important city in the region’s industrial and financial sectors. Bangkok is also
well known for a lot of canals and rivers that wind in and around the city that have
made it famous as “Venice of the East”. Bangkok is also the center of transportation
in Thailand with major roads and railways branching out to various parts of the
country.

- **Industrial Activities:**

  During 1987-1997, there was rapid rise in number of factories, but after 1998, the number of factories, decreased. In 2002, the total number of factories in Bangkok was 20,393, the workers were 578,882 and the capital investment was 276,312.61 million baht with total area of 48.25 sq.kms. As a result of economic crisis and the Bangkok Comprehensive Plan (1999), factory profiles in Bangkok are more likely to be small-scale factories. The trend of capital investment, factories and employees in the Bangkok are now on the increase again.

  The Bangkok Comprehensive Plan defines special zones for industrial estate at Lat Krabang and Bangchan. The total number of factories in two Industrial Estates was 307 in the year 2002. The plan promotes development of nonpolluting and nuisance-free industries to improve the urban environment. Therefore new industries and factories have been shifted outside the Bangkok to Samut Prakan and Pathum Thani.

- **Commercial And Service Sectors:**

  Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) is highly developed economically and with large population and this attracts entrepreneurs to develop goods distribution centers, especially for consumer products at cheap prices. This has caused physical changes and land use changes in the city, and the activities attract more traffics into the areas and subsequently lead to increasing air pollution from motor vehicles.

- **Infrastructures:**

  Bangkok City has been undergoing rapid urbanization and industrialization since 1960. The increasing population is due to the development of infrastructures such as road networks, real estate developments, land value, as well as advancing economy which resulted in expansion into the surrounding areas.
The rapid rise in population has caused community number to increase. The BMA has defined communities into 5 categories which are slum community, suburb community, real estates community, urban community and housing community. In 2002, there was a total number of 1,676 communities in Bangkok, population in communities were 1,402,545, and households were 365,298 with 291,954 houses. The increasing demand for infrastructure can be shown by the following: In 2002, tap water production was 1,505 million cubic meters, with 1,488,638 water users. Electricity demand was 24,400 GWH, mostly for residential users. Base telephones number 1,543,262 and mobile telephones 3,935,127.

Number of canals in Bangkok were 1,671 in 2002. Department of Drainage and Sewerage is responsible for 321 canals and District Offices are responsible for 1,350 canals. There are 675 roads, total area 58.08 sq.kms. with road surface areas at 34.52 sq.kms. (Department of Traffic and Transportation, 2002)

- **Components Of The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration:**

The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) is organized in accordance with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Act 1985, to be responsible for the management of the city of Bangkok. It is the sole organization at the local authority level responsible for the well-being of Bangkok residents with some financial support from the central government. The BMA comprises of two main bodies, the Governor and the BMA Council.

- **Governor of Bangkok:**

The Governor is the chief of the city administration, elected by popular vote for a four-year term. The Governor appoints four deputy governors as executive administrators. The Governor and his team is responsible for policy formulation, supervision and control of all functions under taken by the manpower of BMA headed by the Permanent Secretary for the BMA.

- **BMA Council:**

The BMA Council comprises of elected members. The number of members depends on the size of the Bangkok population. One councilor represents one hundred
thousand people. Currently there are 60 councilors. The BMA council is, the legislative body, which usually takes care of making local laws, ordinances, regulations, rules and by-laws as measures for city development and management. The BMA Council also reads, scrutinizes and approves the consideration and allocation of annual budget. In addition, the Council also acts as the representative of the Bangkok population to indirectly control the performance of the city administration.

• General Responsibilities Of Bangkok Metropolitan Administration:

According to Article 89 of the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration Act 1985 as well as other related laws, the BMA has been authorized to perform the following principal functions within its jurisdictional area:

1. Maintain law and order as well as promote and support the safety and security of lives and properties;
2. Registration as mandated in the related laws;
3. Preventing and relieving public disaster;
4. Maintaining cleanliness and orderliness of the city;
5. City planning;
6. Provision and maintenance of roads, waterways and drainage system as well as construction and maintenance of roads, and drainage system;
7. Traffic engineering;
8. Provision of transportation services and mass transportation system;
9. Provision and control of markets, ferry-piers, and car parks;
10. Maintenance of public places;
11. Building control;
12. Improving slum areas and housing;
13. Provision and maintenance of public recreation areas:

14. Environmental development and conservation;

15. Provision of utilities and facilities;

16. Provision of public health, family hygiene, and medical services;

17. Provision and control of cemeteries and crematoriums:

18. Animal husbandry control;

19. Provision of control of animal slaughtering;

20. Maintenance and control of orderliness in theatres and other public places;

21. Provision of education;

22. Provision of infrastructure;

23. Provision of social welfare and improvement of quality of life for youth, women, elderly and disadvantaged groups;

24. Promotion of sports as well as local cultural heritage;

25. Occupational training and employment promotion;

26. Managing BMA enterprises and promotion of investment activities, either in the form of individual enterprise, partnership, or co-operatives;

27. Development of local developing plan;

28. Tourism promotion;

29. Preservation and maintenance of art, tradition, local intelligence, and culture of the communities;

30. Promotion of democracy, equality, and individual freedom;

31. Promotion of public participation in local development;

32. Disposal of trash, oil, and wastewater;
33. Managing usage of woodland, land natural resources, and environment;
34. Promote and support local governing authorities in local development;
35. Cooperate and coordinate work efforts with other local authorities;
36. Allocate funds in accordance with the specified laws to the local governing authorities;
37. Promote appropriate technology development;
38. Provision and maintenance of the wastewater treatment;
39. Environment and pollution management;
40. Provision and maintenance of the central market;
41. Provision of hospitals and health care, as well as control and prevention of transmitted diseases;
42. Establish museums and public archives;
43. Any activities that will be beneficial to the public in the local communities as specified by the committees;
44. Any activities as specified by this legislation and other laws.

Source: The Department of Public Relations, Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, Bangkok, 2004.
III Thai Culture

Thai culture displays the uniqueness of Thai ways. It is distinguishable from the culture of other ethnic groups. Thai culture is the product of evolving process of socialization giving rise to social heritage. The process of socialization that produces national identity has the abstract beliefs and values as its underlying causes. Those abstract beliefs and values are made concrete by their being symbolized. Symbols make abstract beliefs and values comprehensible.

To gain insight into Thai culture, it is necessary to take into consideration the abstract beliefs and values held by the Thais. Such beliefs and values may be categorized as the one, inherited from the past and still predominant at the present time and the other, adopted from other cultures that have undergone revision to render them integral to Thai cultural identity and survive in these days as cultural heritage.

The Thai beliefs and values are mainly based on Buddhism as the religion, which has been an integral part of Thai society for a long time. Buddhist scriptures were translated into Thai more than 700 years ago. It was evident that Buddhist teaching was adopted by the ruling elite as the principles of conducting the state affairs and by common people as guidelines for living peacefully with others. The foundation of Thai beliefs thus lies in Buddhism, determining the mores of society. The transmission of beliefs and values continues in the present time. At present, technology facilitates the quick transmission of beliefs and values. Thus, modern technology affects the way the cultural identity is preserved.

The present study deals with Thai contemporary culture. The major traits of Thai culture as pointed out by scholars are as follows:

- Love for freedom;
- Respect for the elders and observance of social hierarchy;
- Cultivation of connection;
- Belief in the law of Karma;
- Subscription to superstitious belief;
- Love for fun;
- Inclination for consumption;
The characteristics of Thai way include the following factors:

- Buddhism as the state religion;
- The king as the chief of the state;
- Thai language;
- Thai custom based on Buddhism and other beliefs;
- Etiquettes expressed in the manners of standing, sitting, walking, making obeisance to persons and paying respect to places;
- Thai mentality is consistent with Buddhist teaching of generosity and Buddhist cordiality;
- Arts that include dance, painting, sculpture, architecture, and literature;

It is evident that Thai cultural identity is greatly influenced by Buddhism. Buddhism, firmly established in Thai society, is inherent in Thai beliefs, values, and norms. (Fuen : 1999 : 53-60) The Thai places the triple gems –Buddha –Dharma, Sanga in the highest position. To the Thai, nothing is higher than the triple gems. Thus, he or she strongly believes in the religious teachings about the law of Karma and reincarnation that contribute to his or her inclination to make merit, to do charity work, and to meditate. He or she also gives importance to such other values as showing gratitude to parents, elderly cousins, and teachers and the love for peace and refraining from initiating confrontation.

The scope of this study encompasses 5 major components that include symbols, language, beliefs & values, norms and material objects. What follows is the explanatory description of each the component:

1. **Symbols**:

    Nation, Monarchy and Religion are the three important symbols of Thailand

    - **Nation**:

        Symbol of nation can be ascertained from their flags. Flags convey message about the nations. National flags are mostly rectangular in shape, though some of them are in other shapes. Symbol is generally signified by bands of colours contained
in flags. Flags may feature other symbols concretized in the form of star, sun, moon, or arms. Whatever are contained in flags communicate ideas about nations.

The Thai national flag is a tri-colour flag as it contains three colours and five bands. Two red bands are on the outer edges. Below the red band are two white bands. In the middle is the blue band. The three colours symbolize the three institutions as follows:

- Red symbolizes nation
- White symbolizes religion
- Blue symbolizes monarchy

The land on which Thailand is located has been the cradle of many cultures since ancient times. Tools made of gravel were discovered and ascertained to have been made during the Paleolithic period (10,000 – 500,000 years ago). They were found in the western province of Kanchanaburi and the northern province of Chiangrai. Earthen wares aged about 10,000 years and ascertained to have been made during the Mesolithic age (10,000 – 8,000 years ago) were also found in Maehongsorn in the North of Thailand. They share the same characteristics as those of the wares found in Vietnam and Taiwan. Plants to be partaken as food, herbs, and relish were also found. The things made during the Neolithic age (8,000 – 3,000 years ago) such as pottery, ornaments made from stones and horns, and beads were discovered. Besides, bones of the Neolithic men were also found in Thailand.

During the Iron Age that was about 3,000 years ago, there existed communities interacting with one another. During this period, mankind began to create civilization. Historic and pre-historic era was not distinguishable. (Thai Study, 1999: 65) During the late Iron Age, states were established in this region. However, the formation of Thai nation state was not apparent during this period. Historical records made by the Chinese contained accounts of the existence of the state of Champa in Vietnam, and the state of Srivijaya with its centre in Indonesia that later expanded its territory to cover the south of Thailand. The flourishing states in what is now Thailand were Dvaravati with its centre in Nakorn Chaisri and Tampornling with its centre in what is now the southern province of Nakornsithammarat. The state of Tampornling continued until the rise of the state of Sukhodaya that marked the beginning of Thai history as Thai alphabets were invented by king Ramkhamhaeng.
the great, the third succeeding ruler of the Sukhodaya state, in 1283. The alphabets were inscribed on the slabs. The state of Sukhodaya existed for 200 years with its nine succeeding rulers. It was later annexed by the state of Ayudhya founded in 1350 and collapsed in 1767. Ayudhya was the most flourishing state of Southeast Asia. It made great achievement in economy, arts and politics, with 33 succeeding rulers. Ayudhya was succeeded by Thonburi which lasted only 15 years (1767 – 1782). It was the period of renovation after the destruction of Ayudhya by the Burmese. Thonburi was then taken over by the founder of Chakri dynasty, King Rama I and then began the Ratanakosindra era that continues to this day. The Thai state in the era of Ratanakosindra managed to consolidate its power contributive to the maintenance of its independence during the heyday of colonialism. The Thai kings tried to westernize their country while preserving the Thai cultural identity. Administrative reforms were instituted. Absolute monarchy was supplanted by constitutional monarchy in 1932. Election and parliament representing the interests of the masses were instituted. Parliament is empowered to legislate, while the judiciary protects the rights of people. The government, the parliament, and the judiciary are in the state of checks and balances.

Thailand has long history. At present Thai society evolves from pre-Sukhodaya communities. It has experienced four major crises as follows:

1. The first crisis – the destruction of Ayudhya;
2. The second crisis – the threat of colonialism;
3. The third crisis – the threat of communist insurgency;

Globalization makes the Thais exposed to outside beliefs and values posing danger to their cultural identity. A threat to cultural identity is no less severe than a threat to national sovereignty. In Thailand, there exists the tradition of pulling national flags up to the top of flagpoles at 8.00 a.m. and pulling them down at 6.00 p.m. to the accompaniment of the national anthem being played. The raison d’etre of this tradition is to reinforce the patriotic feeling among the Thais that help to neutralize the ill effects of the influx of foreign beliefs and values.
• Religion:

Buddhism came into existence in India 2588 years ago after the enlightenment of Siddhartha Gautama who later became the enlightened one or Lord Buddha at Buddha Gaya Magarh. Siddhartta Gautama was born in 560 B.C. in Lumbini, which presently lies just north of Nepal’s southern border of India and about 100 miles from the Indian city of Benares. He was born as the son of King Shuddhodhana, a rajah of a local principality.

1. His enlightenment realizing of the Noble Truths and Eightfold Path, which form the basis of Buddhist teachings.

2. All existence is suffering: birth, aging, illness, anxiety, misery, pain, despair, and the inability to satisfy one’s desires.

3. The source of suffering is desire and ignorance.

4. Suffering must be eliminated. One must escape the cycle of rebirth and enter nirvana, the blessed state of nonexistence.

5. The way to eliminate suffering is to follow the Eightfold Path. The Eightfold Path, the Buddha’s prescription for a proper orientation towards life, constitutes a middle path to the attainment of enlightenment. It requires the acceptance and practice of the following:

   1. Right knowledge - referring to the understanding of the Four Noble Truths.

   2. Right attitude – cultivating an attitude of peacefulness and goodwill as opposed to that of sensual desire and malice.

   3. Right speech – not lying or gossiping but directing one’s speech towards harmonious interaction with others.

   4. Right action – adhering to moral actions.

   5. Right occupation – not injuring others through one’s occupation.

   6. Right effort – eliminating evil impulses and nurturing good ones.

   7. Right mindfulness – avoiding the dictates of desires in one’s speech, deeds, and emotional state.

   8. Right composure – attaining the intense level of concentration that enables the practitioner to resist what could distract him from the goal of attaining salvation.
Religion satisfies the human's curiosity about the meaning of the existence of things and the occurrence of phenomena, the interrelationship of things and of phenomena, as well as interdependence of human kind and environment. The religious sanction of social institution helps them function smoothly. Religion also helps persons perceive the meaning of the crisis and problems they are facing. Buddhism has performed those functions mentioned above very well. There were five waves of the spread of Buddhism to the region of what is now Thailand. They were as follows:

1. Around B.E. 300 (B.C. 243), king Asoka the Great initiated the revision of Buddhist teaching and sent missionaries to spread the teaching of Buddha in the nine directions. The nine directions covered the area of India and nearby countries. The missionaries making their journey in the eighth directions were led by Sona Thera and Uttara thera. The eight direction led to the region referred to in those days as Suvarnabhumi covering what is now known Thailand and Myanmar.

2. Around B.E. 600 (A.D.57), the Mahayana Buddhism was brought from China during the reign of Emperor Meng Ti.

3. Around B.E. 1300 – 1500 (A.D. 757 – 957), the king of Srivijaya who was a Mahayana Buddhist established his hegemony over what is now the southern Thailand –the provinces of Nakornsrithammarat and Surat Thani. Thus, Mahayana Buddhism got spread to southern Thailand. Around B.E. 1550 (A.D.1007), Srivijaya’s conquest of the Khamer Empire paved the way for the propagation of Mahayana Buddhism in what is now central Thailand.


5. Around B.E. 1800 (A.D.1257), the Srilankan sect of Theravada Buddhism was supported by king Ramkhamhaeng of Sukhodaya who invited the monks from Nakornsrithammarat having had ordained and educated in Srilanka to establish Buddhism in Sukhodaya. Since then, the Srilankan sect of Theravada Buddhism has been predominant in Thailand.
Though Buddhism is not officially recognized by the Thai constitution as the national religion, the majority of Thais (94%) are Buddhists. Strict adherence to scriptures co-exists with the incorporation of Brahmanism and Spiritualism into Buddhism. Reverence for the Lord Buddha reflects in the presence of 30,764 temples, 10,000 Ashrama Sanga, and 300,000 monks and juvenile monks, and not to mention a large number of nuns. Koon Tokhen (2003 : 219-220) points out that Buddhism shapes the following aspects of Thai cultural identity:

- **Habit**: Buddhist teaching causes the Thai to be compassionate, smiling, forgiving, grateful, polite, and peace-loving.
- **Arts**: Buddhism inspired the Thais to create Buddha images and build temples, stupas, and chetiyas.
- **Language and literature**: the Thais adopted the Pali and Sanskrit words after their being converted to Buddhism.
- **Way of life**: The Thais apply Buddhist teachings in educating social and familial members. Buddhist teachings determine how the members of society should interact with one another.
- **Customs and etiquettes**: The Thais hold many festivals on the important days of Buddhism. Buddhist teachings make them to be grateful to those having done something beneficial to them. Buddhist teachings also influence the ways the Thais make their gesture of respect called “Wai” and “Kraab” in Thai.
- **Education**: Buddhist temples provide the sites for modern schooling. Buddhist temples used to serve the purpose of schooling in traditional Thai society. Though modern education has nothing to do with religion, Buddhist temples provide the sites for modern schooling as already mentioned and still serve the role of conserving folk knowledge and wisdom.
- **Music**: The Thais compose beautiful and melodious music to be played on the occasion of religious rites and festivals.

In conclusion, Thai society is a Buddhist society.
- **Monarchy:**

Monarchy has co-existed with Thai society since ancient times. It is evident that monarchy has been the institution integral to Thai society since the founding of Sukhodaya, 700 years ago. Three styles of kingship were recorded in those days (Fundamentals of Thai culture, 1988: 50) which are as follows:

1. Patriarchal Monarch
2. King of Righteousness
3. Divine Kingship or Deva Raja

These three styles of kingship were adopted by Thai kings through all the historical periods—Sukhodaya, Ayudhya, and Ratanakosindra. Depending on the situation, one particular style was predominant during a particular period.

**Patriarchal Monarch:**

Historians view this style of kingship as indigenous to Thai culture. It is believed that the Thais inherited this style of kingship from their Mongol ancestors. Some historians opined that it was derived from the style of rulership adopted by king Asoka the Great who considered his subjects as his own children. This style of rulership later influenced the Mongol ancestors of the Thais. It was characterised by the king’s acting as father looking after his children. Thus, the king was close to his subjects who were in good position to ask for his help.

**King of Righteousness:**

This style of kingship had its basis on Dharma based on religious doctrines. The Thai kings depended on Buddhism and Brahmanism in their conduct of state affair according to this style of kingship. The principles on which this style of kingship was based were:

**Rajadhamma** : Virtues or duties of the king; royal virtues. virtues of a ruler (Dictionary of Buddhism 2000: 285 – 287)

This principle of Rajadhamma comprises of 10 actions as follows:

1. Dana : charity ; liberality ; generosity -Donation of his wealth to improve the welfare of his subjects.
2. Sila : high moral character -He must be careful in his action, speech, and thought. He must be an exemplar of good conduct.
3. Pariccaga: self-sacrifice - Giving up pleasurable life and even sacrificing his own life for the well-being of his subjects and order of society.


5. Maddava: kindness and gentleness - He must not be rude and arrogant. His manner and posture must be imposing and graceful but not intimidating and threatening.

6. Tapa: austerity; self-control; non-indulgence.

7. Akkodha: non-anger; non-fury - He must cultivate compassion to subdue his anger.

8. Avihimsa: non-violence; non-oppression - He must not act in exploitative and suppressive way. For instance, he must refrain from instituting exploitative taxation and recruitment of labourers. He must also refrain from punishing decent people out of his hatred or his eagerness to take revenge.

9. Khanti: patience; forebearance; tolerance - He must be persistent in carrying out his works until their completion.

10. Avirodhana: non-opposition; non-deviation from righteousness; conformity to the law - He must not be sensitive to praise or criticism. Nor must he be affected by the offering of gifts or money lest the administrative order of his regime becomes ruined.

Cakkavatti-Vatta contains four major aspects that a king should follow. These are further divided into 12 important points as follows:

1. To support his subjects and armed forces;
2. To support the kings of dependent states;
3. To support the members of royal family, including those accompanying him while he makes his journey or excursion;
4. To protect Brahmans and the rich;
5. To protect native people;
6. To protect monks;
7. To protect reproducible birds;
8. To deter the acts deviating from righteousness;
9. To help the poor;
10. To engage monks in conversation;
11. To restrain himself from being sexually aroused in a wrongful way;
12. To give up wrongful desires.

The king was required to abide by the rules based on the three doctrines of the right conduct of the king to ensure the prosperity of his kingdom and his subjects in turn benefited his kingship.

**Divine Kingship or Devaraja:**

The Thais adopted this style of kingship from the belief of the Khmers. According to this style of kingship, the king was believed to be the re-incarnation of one of the three deities of the Brahmanism—Brahman, Siva, and Narayana. Mostly, the kings identified themselves with either Narayana or Siva. Brahmin organized the rite to deify the king. The rite, called “Rajabhishek”, was characterised by the invitation of the deity to possess the king. The belief in the king as deity caused the construction of palatial premises to be modelled after the abodes of deities in heaven. Everything concerning the king was sacred. People were forbidden to catch sight of the king. The language applied to the king was the same as that applied to deities. It was called “Rajashabda”.

Absolute monarchy co-existed with the Thai state until its abolition during the reign of king Rama VII in the Ratanakosindra era. However, the king remains the chief of the state even to day since it is stipulated in constitution. Though the king, as well as the people of Thailand are presently subject to the constitutional rules, he is still viewed as sacred. Criticism directed at the monarchy is forbidden by the Thai law. The king is required to be Buddhist, but he is obliged to support other religions present in Thailand. As the chief of the state, he is not involved in the administration of the state. He exercises his power in the approval of laws through parliament. Those involved in the state affairs are parliament, government and the judiciary.

Though he no longer acts as ruler, the king is still subscribed to religious doctrines on rulership mentioned above, especially the Rajadhamma. He devotes his whole life to the well being of his subjects, initiating more than 2000 projects to improve the quality of life of his subjects, especially the impoverished. He is thus
placed in high esteem by all Thais. The way the Thais show their love for their king is rarely seen in other countries with kings as the chiefs of the state. The reverence the Thais accord to the king makes him the symbol of national unity.

2. Language:

Language is the most important aspect of culture as it is the medium of communication essential to the sophistication of other aspects of cultures. Language is the medium of communication of the inhabitants of state (Pa-Ob. 1989: 13). King Ramkhamhaeng the Great of Sukhodaya invented Thai alphabets in 1283. It is assumed that Thai alphabets were adapted from Mon and Khmer alphabets (Ministry of Education, 1989: 27). Written language enabled the Thais to systematically record and transmit other cultural aspects.

Written language also enabled the Thais to create literature reflecting values, beliefs, sentimentality, and philosophy peculiar to each period of Thai history. Not to mention that it also reflects the thought on economics, society, and politics. Written language produces two forms of literatures (National Commission on Culture, 1988: 40) as follows:

1. Poetry: There exist various styles of Thai poetry with different rules for composing them.
2. Prose: There exist various styles of Thai ordinary written or spoken language, without metrical structure.

The characteristics of Thai language (Pa-Ob, 1989: 17-21) are as follows:

1. Thai language has its own set of alphabets invented by King Ramkhamhaeng the Great. They were adapted and modified from the alphabet fashionable at that time to suit the Thai language. More alphabets were added to help transliterate the Pali and Sanskrit words different in spelling but pronounced in the same way.
2. Original Thai words are monosyllabic.
3. The Thai Language has eight final voiced consonants with no “karant”.
   3.1 Mae Kok has the Thai alphabet a as final voiced consonant.
   3.2 Mae Kod has the Thai alphabet w as final voiced consonant.
3.3 Mae Kong has the Thai alphabet  as final voiced consonant.
3.4 Mae Kon has the Thai alphabet  as final voiced consonant.
3.5 Mae Kob has the Thai alphabet  as final voiced consonant.
3.6 Mae Kery has the Thai alphabet  as final voiced consonant.
3.7 Mae Kom has the Thai alphabet  as final voiced consonant.
3.8 Mae Kerw has the Thai alphabet  as final voiced consonant.

4. Thai vowels can be placed in many positions – front, back, above, and below of alphabets.

5. A single word has different meaning according to the context of the word.

6. A Thai word has its own finesse. It has general meaning and specific meaning.

7. Word order is of the greatest importance to Thai language. Misplacement of words in the sentence results in different meaning.

8. Thai is a musical language with five levels of tonal change. All sounds in nature, including the utterances in other human languages, can be simulated. It is thus melodious.

9. Leaving of space is common in the written Thai, while the speech is characterized by rhythm. The mark of full stop is not present in the written Thai. Ending of sentence is denoted by leaving of space.

10. Thai language has classifiers. Users of Thai are required to use the classifiers that suit the nouns.

11. Thai words contain status. The words applied to the monarchy are distinguishable from the ones used among ordinary people.

12. Thai language contains homonyms borrowed from foreign languages but pronounced in the Thai way.

13. Some words can be omitted in the use of Thai. They are mostly prepositions. The omission may create confusion.

14. Spoken Thai contains additional words denoting politeness.
15. Tonal change creates a new word. New words can also be created through spelling with different alphabets, changing the position of words, combining words, borrowing foreign words – Chinese, English, French, Indian, Portuguese words. Sometimes, the creation of new words is through the simulation of natural sound.

Cultures are perpetuated through the use of language. Thus, preservation of language is essential to the perpetuation of cultures. Thai is the official language of Thailand. The literacy rate is 96 percent.

3. Beliefs And Values:

Beliefs:

Thai beliefs are derived from Buddhism, Brahmanism – Hinduism, and Spiritism. (Suvinai, 2000: 67) The core beliefs, however, centre around Buddhism. The establishment of beliefs results in the creation of rites, customs, and norms evolving from beliefs. Thai norms include going to Buddhist temples to make merit and donation, to listen to preachers, and to join the religious festivals on the days of religious importance such as Magha Puja day and Visakha Puja day. Thais go to Buddhist temples to be named when they are just born, to attend temple schools when they grow up, to be ordained when they are young adults, to be cremated when they are dead.

Most Thais subscribe to Buddhist beliefs which are as follows:

Belief in the Law of Karma: It is believed that past actions affect the individual’s present and future life. Individuals will inevitably face the adverse consequence of their misdeeds. Thus, the belief in the Law of Karma prevents individuals from harming not only each other but also other life forms.

Belief in beneficial effect of virtuous actions and adverse effect of malicious actions: This belief derives from the Law of Karma simplified to serve the purpose of morality. Persons are taught to do meritorious acts to enjoy beneficial consequences and to refrain from doing sinful acts to avoid bad consequences. The principle of five Silas help free persons from involvement in sinful acts. The five Silas are as follow:
1. To abstain from killing.
2. To abstain from stealing.
3. To abstain from sexual misconduct.
4. To abstain from false speech.
5. To abstain from intoxicants causing heedlessness.

Five Silas are perceived as the foundation of morality. It is mainly concerned with prohibition. There exists, however, the principle of the five ennobling virtues providing the guidelines for good actions. They are:

1. Love, kindness and compassion – the supplement of the first Sila.
2. Right means of livelihood – the supplement of the second Sila.
3. Sexual restraint – the supplement of the third Sila.
4. Truthfulness, sincerity – the supplement of the fourth Sila.
5. Mindfulness and awareness, temperance – the supplement of the fifth Sila.

The principles mentioned above are called “Panchadharma”. The observance of the Principle of the five Silas and Principle of “Panchadharma” helps resolve most of the social problems, and the world will be more peaceful.

Belief in one’s ability to get oneself liberated from the “Samsara”:

This belief is tantamount to the conviction that Buddha attained enlightenment characterised by the discovery of “The Four Noble Truths” which are as follows:

i. Dukkha : Suffering; unsatisfactoriness.
ii. Dukkha-samudaya : the cause of suffering : origin of suffering is Tanha. It includes:
iii. Dukkha-nirodha : the cessation of suffering, extinction of suffering.
iv. Dukkha-nirodhagamini pathipada : the path leading to the cessation of suffering.
To get oneself liberated from "the Samsara", one is required to follow the eight paths or "eight margas" (right knowledge, right attitude, right speech, right action, right occupation, right effort, right mindfulness and right composure) falling in the three categories of Sila, Samadhi, and Panya. Though the 8 paths are very difficult to be followed by the majority of people, they are still considered as the ideals to be attained. This belief is ingrained in Thai culture.

**Brahmanism -Hinduism** was first introduced to Thailand by the Indian settlers emigrating to Thailand in the ancient times. In the south of Thailand, many statues of Indian deities including Narayana were unearthed. The Thais also adopted the Brahmanistic -Hinduistic belief indirectly through the Khamers. The belief in the King as deity that regards the King as the reincarnation of Narayana derived from the belief of the Khamers. The Thai kings were named after Brahmanic deities. Rites and rituals integral to Brahmanic beliefs were also adopted.

The shrines of Hindu gods are widely seen in Thailand. They were built by the Indian settlers and by the Thais. Those built by the Indian settlers are Dev Mandir, at Sao Chingcha area, Vishnu Mandir at Sathon Road, and the Shri Mariamma (Uma Devi) Temple at Silom area. Those built by the Thais are the shrine of Brahman at Rajaprasong intersection and Brahmanism temple at Sao chingcha area. Moreover, the statues of Hindu gods are found installed in front of large buildings. Besides; the administrative units of the Thai government consider Hindu gods as their patron deities. For instance, the Ministry of Agriculture, and the Kasesart University (originally known as the University of the Agricultural Science) regard Varuna, the god of rain as their patron deity and have his image inscribed on their badges. The Ministry of Industry regards Narayana as its patron deity and has his image inscribed on its badge. On the whole, the Thai bureaucracy is symbolized by Garuda, the vehicle of Narayana. It is thus evident that Brahmanism –Hinduism has influenced the Thai beliefs.

**The belief in spiritism**: The Thais categorize spirits as:

- Beneficial spirits. These spirits do not harm people. They are house spirits, ancestral spirits, and tree spirits.
- Harmful spirits. They always harm people. They are evil spirits.
There are some spirits guarding villages or communities who dwell in the spirit houses built for them by people at the entrances to the villages or communities. Spirit houses are also placed on the area of ones’ houses to enable the house owners to worship them for the prosperity of their life.

In cities or towns, shrines were built as dwelling places for the spirits guarding the cities or towns. Rites are organized to offer sacrifice to these spirits. Ancestral spirits are mostly worshipped in the north and the north-east of Thailand. They are the spirits of the dead ancestors.

Shrines were also built for the forest, mountain, and tree spirits, and on the places where so many people died in accidents and catastrophies, large spirit houses were erected as dwelling places for spirits of the dead persons lest they become wandering and harmful spirits.

The belief in spiritism leads to the creation of charms, fetish, and talismans to prevent disaster from occurring to holders as well as to improve the luck of holders. Amulets in the form of the various styles of Buddha images were also made. They were used to ward off accidents, to enhance one’s charm, and to develop invulnerability. Buddha images are attached to chains and worn round ones’ necks. Thus they are easy to carry.

There are also non-Buddhist amulets in the form of a band of cloth inscribed with Yantra, in the form of rounded metal called Takrood, and in another form of amulet called Pitsamorn. However, Buddha images are more popular as they are easy to carry –just wearing them around ones’ neck or fastening them with ones’ dress. Carrying Buddha images is a way to remind oneself of Buddha and to protect one from danger.

Values:

Values regard that something is held to deserve, importance or worth, principles or standards of behaviour. Earlier values were mostly derived from Buddhist Philosophy. But they have undergone a change. Therefore the Current Values (Koon, 2002: 24 – 28) include:
• Reverence of and loyalty to the king.
• Fondness for money. Admiration for the rich and for the ones seeking wealth.
• Admiration for the persons with power and influence and for the persons seeking power and influence.
• Inclination for merit-making.
• Fondness for fun.
• Inclination for consumption and consumerism.
• Fondness for appearances, luxury and extravagance.
• Fondness for festivals.
• Subscription to the belief in omen, divination, and occultism.
• Inclination for gambling.
• Importance is placed on higher formal education. Admiration for those with higher formal education. Emphasis is placed on degrees and not on knowledge.
• Inculcation of sympathy, generosity.
• Emphasis on seniority, rank, and title.
• Emphasis on gratefulness.

There are positive and negative values. However, as modernization goes on, the negative aspects of Thai values—fondness for money and power, fondness for luxury, admiration for those with money and power with no interest in the way they obtain money and power, and inclination for gambling are being reinforced. The predominance of such negative values will ruin society in the long run. An effort was made to promote positive values. The five basic values are promoted by the National Commission on Culture in its plan called “The Guideline for the Promotion and Development of Culture 1986. In accordance with the National Policy on Cultures” (The National Commission on Cultures 1988 : 48-49). They are as follows:
• Self-dependence, diligence, responsibility
• Thriftiness
• Observance of rules and law
• Observance of religious precepts
• Patriotism, ties with religion and loyalty to the king

An effort was made to inculcate these basic values in the mind of children and adults to help contribute to national development.

4. Norms:

Norms derive from beliefs. They are categorized as conventionality and tradition.

- **Conventionality** is manifested in the manner and posture indicating Thainess. The conventionality expressing Thainess include:

  **WAI** : It is the gesture of respect when people meet each other. It is characterized by placing palms together, with all fingers keeping straight and touching one another in the shape of lotus while elbows touch the sides of the body. Wai indicates the tendency of the Thais to be humble and ready to honour others. Wai is considered good manner that brings prosperity and good luck to those performing them. Emphasis on social hierarchy gives rise to different styles of Wai.

  In making the gesture of respect to Buddha (images or statues), one first performs Wai before prostrating oneself. The gesture is done three times. The five organs—two knees, two palms, and forehead—touching the ground signify the highest esteem.

  In making the gesture of respect to the king, one performs Wai with one’s hands at the level of one’s chest. Then one raises one’s hands above one’s head, holding one’s head high. One then again brings one’s hands down at the level of one’s chest.

  In making the gesture of respect to parents, elderly cousins, and teachers, one performs Wai with one’s hands at the level of one’s forehead. The tips of one’s thumbs touch the tip of one’s nose. Then one bows one’s head and lower the upper body. The Thais hold parents, elderly cousins and teachers in high esteem.
In making the gesture of respect to the person who is one's senior, one first performs Wai with the tip of one's thumbs touch the tip of one's chin. One then bows one's head and lowers the upper body.

In making the gesture of respect to the person equals to one in age, rank, and title, one first performs Wai with one's hands at the level of one's chest. One then bows one’s head gently.

When the younger person performs Wai to the older person, or when the person of lower rank or title performs Wai to the person of higher rank or title, the older person or the person of higher rank or title is required to perform Wai in return.

Thus, it is obvious that the social convention of performing Wai is latent with messages of respect, status, and social hierarchy. The Thais view the performance of Wai as indicative of one's being cultured. One is required to perform Wai with intent and the sense of respect. The Thais strictly observe this convention. Those failing to perform Wai are regarded as haughty; and they certainly lose the admiration and esteem of other members of the society.

The Utterance of “Sawaddee”: It is used to greet each other. “Sawaddee” derives from the Sanskrit term “Svasti” which means having merit. First used by Phya Uppakit Silpasarn, it was officially sanctioned on January 22, 1943. It is used to the accompaniment of Wai.

In the past, the Thais greeted each other with the utterance of “How do you do?”, “Where did you come from?”, and “Have you had your meal?”. (Silpawattanatam, 1982 : 69) Frequent meetings made it difficult to find suitable greeting words. “Sawaddee” was thus thought of to suit all occasions. The utterance of Sawaddee is always followed by the utterance of “How do you do?”, and “Where did you come from?”

Greeting with Smile: The Thais are smiling people as they are gay and fun-loving. As a result, Thailand is also known as “The Land of Smile”. Greeting, beginning with the utterance of “Sawaddee” followed by inquiry about the state of physical and mental health and ending with smile is
one of the characteristics of Thai way of life. They even wear smiles during their involvement in negotiations and formal contact.

- ** Tradition** is the pattern of behaviour to be emulated by the members of a society. It is divided into:

  **Mores**: It is tinged with morality. It is essential to the order of society. Violation of mores leads to punishment by society. Gratefulness to parents and those having done something beneficial to ones is the quality of decent people. The Thais admire those who are grateful.

  **Institutions**: It is the ordered tradition of ceremonies, such as the ceremony for paying respect to teachers, ordination ceremony, and wedding ceremony. The procedures of these ceremonies are fixed and clear. The ceremonies that can be organized without so much attention to written procedures are the ones performed successively through generations. The organization of these kinds of ceremonies is supervised by those proficient in holding ceremonies. What has recently become institution is getting higher education according to one's values and one's chance to become successful in the world.

  **Convention**: It has nothing to do with morality. It is the pattern of behaviour persisting through generation after generation. It is concerned with the way we stand, sit, sleep, talk, keep social boundary, eat, and other social manners. For instance, the Thais use fork and spoon in eating, not resorting to hands. But in eating some kind of food, such as glutinous rice, the use of hands is required. Various styles of Wai adopted by the Thais to suit different situations are also by convention. Another example of convention are bowing ones head when walking pass those having higher rank and title than those of us and getting dressed in the way that honour places and hosts.

To make it easier to comprehend, Thai ceremonies are categorized as 1. Familial ceremonies 2. Participated ceremonies 3. Local customs 4. The royal and the state ceremonies (Fundamentals of Thai Culture, 1988: 525-535)
• Family Ceremonies:

  Birth Ceremony: Before giving birth, mother sees only beautiful things to pacify her mind. Three days after children are born, they are brought to morale-boosting ceremony. One month after birth, children are brought to the same ceremony again; and they are named.

  Topknot-Cutting Ceremony: When girls reach the age of puberty at around 11 and boys at round 13, they are brought to Topknot-cutting ceremony, held simultaneously with the new house celebration ceremony and birthday celebration ceremony. Topknot-cutting is not practiced these days.

  Ordination Ceremony: Boys are ordained as novices. To be ordained as monk, one is required to reach the age of 20.

  Wedding Ceremony: A man, accompanied by an elder, goes to ask for a woman’s hands. Engagement and settlement of dowry and putting up of residence for the married couple are ensured. On wedding day, food is offered to monks.

  Funeral Rites: It is very important in Thai society. As Buddhists, the Thais have dead bodies cremated. An offering is made to monks on behalf of the dead so that his or her spirit attains pleasant state. It is the expression of ones’ gratefulness to the dead.

• Obligatory Type of Ceremonies.

  Buddhism Lent Festival: The ceremonies having to do with such festivals are characterized by the erection of large candles giving off light until the end of the lent. An offering of light bulbs is made nowadays instead of making candles. However, the ceremony of making candles still exists. It is an important merit-making festival.

  Loy Kratong Festival: Signifies the continuation of the belief in the necessity of making an apology to Ganga, the goddess of rivers. The belief stems from the fact that rivers are polluted by their usage. Floating Kratongs on rivers is an act of apology to the goddess Ganga. Kratongs are normally made of banana leaves to worship the goddess Ganga. They contain flower leaves, candles, jossticks, and flowers.
Songkran Festival: The festival is the celebration of New Year according to the solar calendar. It is marked by offering food to monks, pouring sacred water on the hands of elders while asking for their blessings and then splashing.

The Merit-Making Festival: It is in the tenth month to deliver merit to the spirits of the dead ancestors. The festival reflects the importance the Thais place on gratefulness to their ancestors.

The Celebration of Buddhism’s Important Days are the Celebration of Visakaha Puja Day: The day on which the Lord Buddha was born, enlightened, and dead, and the celebration of Magha Puja Day on which the Lord Buddha delivered his sermon on discipline.

- Customs Relevant to Careers: There are customs relevant to careers, convention on dressing, customs regarding the play during festivals, and tradition of food—the people of the North and the Northeast eat glutinous rice and people of the South are fond of spicy food and vegetables.

- Royal Ceremonies—State Ceremonies: The royal ceremonies are performed by the king as required by tradition. The king may choose to perform particular ceremonies. The numbers of the ceremonies to be performed by the king are varying by the passing of time. The royal ceremonies fixed in the royal calendar are as follows:
  - Ceremony on the New Year day.
  - The merit-making ceremony held in memory of the death of king Chulalongkorn the Great.
  - The merit-making ceremony on Magha Puja day.
  - The ceremony to change the vestment of the Emerald Buddha is held three times annually according to the change of seasons.
  - Sacrificing ceremony for the Pra-Siam Devadiraja, the god protecting the country.
• Songkran ceremony.
• The ceremony of offering food to monks on the coronation day.
• The ploughing ceremony.
• The merit-making ceremony on Viskaha Puja day.
• The merit-making ceremony on the cremation day of the Lord Buddha.
• The ceremony to celebrate the queen’s birthday.
• The ceremony to celebrate the king’s birthday.
• The ceremony to offer Kathin cloth.

The state ceremonies are organized by the government, but they are presided over by the king. They are:

• The ceremony to celebrate the Chakri day.
• The ceremony to celebrate the constitutional day.
• The ceremony held in memorial of King Taksin the Great.
• The ceremony to begin the parliamentary session.

These are the examples of the royal and the state ceremonies. The Thais are familiar with the ceremonies to celebrate the birthdays of the King and the Queen. Other ceremonies are currently strictly performed these days.

There are ceremonies held to make sacrifice to spirits. Those ceremonies stem from the belief in spiritism. Spirits are categorized as beneficial and harmful spirits (Silpa Wattanatam Thai, 1982: 96-98) Beneficial spirits do not harm people if they are not made angry. They are house spirits, ancestral spirits and tree spirits. Harmful spirits harm people even though they are not put into trouble by the deeds of humans. The belief in spiritism reflects in the organization of the ceremonies to offer sacrifice to such spirits as guarding spirits of land, forest and mountains to protect oneself from danger as well as to bring good luck to those performing the ceremonies.

The deities mostly worshipped by the Thais are Hindu gods and their consorts. They are Brahman, Narayana, and Shiva, as well as their consorts – Saraswati, Laxmi and Uma Devi or Pavati respectively. In addition, the Thais also worship the spirits of the late kings, heroes, and heroines from Thai history. The
shrines for these spirits were built and the ceremonies were organized to show respect
to these spirits and to offer scarifies to them.

The belief in spiritism is supplemented by the belief in omen and
divination. The books on the interpretation of dream and omen are widely available
in Thailand. Also, Astrologers and those providing the service of protecting persons
from bad luck and prolonging person’s longevity are not hard to find in Thailand.

5. Material Objects :

Material objects demonstrating Thainess are :

• Thai Food :

Rice is the main food of the Thais. In the north and the northeast of
Thailand, people mainly consume glutinous rice. Rice is consumed with fish, pork,
chicken, and vegetables. Culinary art is of importance to the Thais. They developed
the art of sculpting food to contribute to its attractive appearance. Thai food falls into 5
categories (Silpawattanatam, 1982 : 43-49) as follows:

Kubkhaos are the edible things to be eaten with rice. They fall into
4 categories as follows:

1. Soup and Curry, such as soup, spicy soup, and spicy curry.
2. Fried dish and Salad
3. Kruengkiang, such as Todman, Homok, and Salty fish
4. Relish, such as Lone, and various kinds of Namprik (Chilly
Paste)

Sweets : Thai sweets are constituted of five ingredients as follows:
1. Rice or Glutinous rice flour
2. Coconut milk
3. Sugar
4. Eggs
5. Beans

They fall into the category of boiled, baked, jam, loykaew (sunk into
syrup and eaten with ice), poached, syrupy, and grilled.
Fruits and Vegetables: They are the ingredients of almost all kinds of Kubkhao. The parts of them that are used are heads, trunks, stems, flowers, seeds, fruits, and leaves.

Soft Drinks: There are various kinds of soft drinks made from various parts of plants such as fruit, flowers, leaves, and roots.

Snacks: The ingredients of Thai snack are rice flour, wheat flour, glutinous flour, vegetables and meat. Thais eat snacks between main meals or as appetizers e.g. Saku-Sai-Moo, Khaw-tung-Na-Tung, Pun-Sib, Krob-Khem etc.

• Clothing:

To the Thais, clothing is a very important matter. It not only has to be with covering one's body but also with enhancing one's physical appearance. In the past, women's clothes were categorized as the ones to wear and as the ones to cover ones' bodies. Men's clothes were categorized as shirts and the clothes used in covering ones' bodies. Thus, there were few patterns of dressing. What indicated ones' status were not pattern of dressing but the quality of the material used in making clothes as well as how the clothes were made. The colours of clothes were changed from time to time to bring good luck to those who wore them. On Sunday, one wore red clothes. On Monday, one wore white or pastel-coloured clothes. On Tuesday, one wore violet clothes. On Wednesday, one wore deep orange clothes. On Thursday, one wore green or yellow clothes. On Friday, one wore deep blue clothes. On Saturday, one wore black clothes. The tradition is still alive today, though it is not strictly observed.

The Thais nowadays adopt Westernized dressing, due to the fast pace of their daily life, requiring them to be active and quick, since the Thai traditional dressing produces awkward movements. Thus, the Thais adopt traditional dressing on very special occasions such as joining merit-making festivals and going to temples. Also, the members of royal families adopt the traditional Thai dressing when they join the reception ceremony held for the royal guests. However, the Thais especially Thai women always opt for Thai fabric to be made into clothes; and the government has currently promoted the use of Thai fabric. Besides, the Thai traditional dressing has currently been made more convenient to be adopted.
• **Cosmetics:**

In Thailand men and women use Thai herbal plants such as Makham (Tamarind) and Khamin (Turmeric) to nourish their skins and enhance their physical appearances. They also use Thai perfumes extracted from Thai plants. Nowadays, most Thais use foreign-made cosmetics. However, the producers of Thai cosmetics currently have adopted sophisticated production technology to improve the quality of their products. Many Thais turn to Thai cosmetics, using them in conjunction with the foreign-made ones.

• **Ornaments:**

They are made of gold and silver. They are kept as ornaments as assets to be translated into monetary value. In Thailand, gold is used in making rings, chains for wearing round one’s neck, earrings, bracelets, earrings for wearing round one’s wrist. It is shaped in Thai style. They are enameled in many colours. The popular colours are blue, red, and green. Their designs are of the Thai style including flowery designs, creeper designs, Prachamyam designs, and Kanok designs. Currently, ornaments have been made in modern style, while the Thai characteristic is preserved. Thai jewelers play an important role in the development of modern Thai jewellery. Thailand, as a major producer and exporter of jewellery products, produces various kinds of jewellery popular among Thai men and women.

Status is also reflected in the use of such ornaments as rings, earrings, bracelets made of gold, silver and jewellery which have been the objects of Thai women’s fondness even today.

• **Architecture:**

Thai architectural works included houses, temples, and palaces. As Thailand has been an agricultural country dependent on water supply since ancient times, the Thais had their houses situated near rivers or other sources of water. The area in which houses were situated was large and it could be used to serve such agricultural purposes as animal husbandry, gardening, and rice growing. Many houses were grouped together to form communities, with temples and currently, bureaucratic offices, as centres of the communities where communal activities took place. Traditional Thai houses were made from wood, with triangular roofs and elevated
floors to cope with seasonal flood. Familial members might work under the house, busy with making handicrafts to get supplementary incomes. The materials used in constructing houses were indicative of the owner’s status. The wealthy could afford pillars made from teakwood and roofs constituting of tiles. In addition, status of owners was also indicated by furniture. Traditional Thai furniture was made from hard wood fashioned in Thai way. It might be sculpted in an elaborate way, gilded or set on a pearl. Thus, it was an artistic work. Traditional Thai houses do not suit the modern lifestyle in the heavily populated cities where land was scarce. The destruction of forest by industrialization and urbanization leads to the scarcity of wood. Imported, wood is high priced, compared to other materials used in constructing houses. Most of the Thai townsfolk’s and city dwellers now live in two-storeyed, western-style houses. The two storeys are used to the full, in contrast to the past when only the second storey was used. Furniture is thus designed to complement modern architecture.

- **Other Items:**

Other items include utensils, ornaments and works of arts as objects of worship and as objects for collection. They are:

**Appliances and Implements used in Kitchens, Offices, or in Other Places:** They are made from the materials easily found and less expensive, in contrast to the past when they made tables, cabinets, bed, and furniture from hard wood that was sculpted in an elaborate way. The scarcity and high price of wood makes it impossible to stick to ancient practices. Appliances are now designed and made in modern style with the emphasis on utility.

**Works of Art as Objects of Worship and as Objects for Collection:**

- Buddha images are made in various sizes and forms – small images, coins, and small statues placed in one’s house for worshipping.
- Coins are used in transaction; or the ones for collection of those issued on special occasions.
- Stamps
- Banknotes
- Dishes including the expensive ones called Bencharong and crystal wares.
- Drawings include traditional Thai drawings painted on canvass, paper, and other materials
- Ornaments and jewellery made of precious stones.

Thai cultural objects are continued to be used till today. They were subject to change and adjustment to suit the changing situation while its identity was maintained.

This study covered all aspects of current Thai culture. The five aspects of Thai culture were used as variables (factors) while determining the extent of Indians, assimilation with Thai culture.