

English Summary

Study on The situation of child prostitution: Lampang Province

By Mr. Adul Duangdeetaweerat and the team

“I don't sell my body. Only if I like that customer and he shows me warmth and care, I'll go with him” Nong Mai who works as a drinking partner in a first-class karaoke in Lampang used the following term that describes this as:

Free of charge if I like you. If you can do it well, do it one more time.

The objectives of the Study on the situation of child prostitution: Lampang Province are as followed:

1. To study the severity of child prostitution situation in Lampang.
2. To identify factors placing children at risk of prostitution in Lampang
3. To use research results as a guideline for child prostitution prevention in Lampang

Methodology

This study combines quantitative and qualitative data. The quantitative data are as follow; the numbers of drop-outs in secondary schools and technical colleges, both private and public, in Lampang; and the numbers of brothels, nightclubs, pubs, karaoke and etc in Muang district. The qualitative data are from literature review, observation and interviews with 17 children who are now sex workers in Muang district; home visits of each child sex worker; and interviews with ex-sex workers in those target areas.

The interview with child sex workers followed various steps. Firstly, researchers went out as customers to build up relationship with the target groups - girls selling sex in discotheques, pubs, bars and karaoke. When a firm and good relationship had been built, the researchers changed their roles to real researchers, while child prostitutes became informants who were willing to provide information. After the interview, home visits of children at the villages in order to gather social and economical background of each child were done. It took 3 months for data gathering.

Summary findings

General

Lampang has a long documented history of prostitution way back since 1916. It is likely that girls were tricked and trafficked into sex industry since 1957 when Thailand started implementing its national development plan which Lampang was identified to be a tourist attraction. During 1972-1996 brothels transformed to restaurants but main service available is sex selling. Instead of being trafficked, girls entered sex trade willingly. From 1996 till now, brothels and such kind of restaurants have been transformed to various kinds of night entertaining establishments with sex selling available. Children from lowland, highland, students and college students are found in sex trade during this last period.

Lampang has great economic growth during the last ten years. Many factories were constructed. There have been jobs available for people in the area. Other businesses, such as, hotels, resorts, shopping malls, educational institutes and nightly entertaining establishments have grown rapidly. In 2000, there were 99 night entertaining establishments with sex selling

(openly or underground) in Lampang, which 75 places are in town and 24 in other districts. Customers can buy sex from waitresses and drinking partners. Children from lowland and hilltribe were found working in such places. The highest educational background of the hilltribe girls is at grade 6, while most of the girls from lowland finished grade 6 and secondary school. Some school children sell sex through agents and the Internet.

How and where they sell now

Night and day entertaining establishments with child prostitutes found in Lampang can be divided into 5 major categories as followed. Due to the time limit of the study, the research team has surveyed specifically in restaurants with gardens and karaokes only.

1. Restaurant with/without garden

1st grade restaurants: Girls work as waitresses, drinking partners and singers. Some are still studying in schools and colleges. Customers can buy sex from singers, waitresses and in some restaurants there are professional prostitutes available. Price is approximately 1,000-1,500 during office hours and 800 baht after office hours. Most of the customers are over 35 years old and have good income.

2nd grade restaurants: Similar to the 1st grade but are cheaper, dirtier and lower class of customers. Children under 18 years of age are found working as prostitutes. Customers can buy sex from singers, drinking partners and waitresses Customers mostly are middle class men aged over 35 years.

2. Karaoke: The new well-known form of night entertaining establishments

1st grade karaokes: 2-3 storied building, air-conditioned and decorated with dim lights, with common room and private room for those who want privacy, fully decorated with big TV and nice sofas. Girls aged 18 up work as waitresses, receptionists and drinking partners. Customers can buy sex from drinking partners and waitresses after working hours. Price is app. 1000-1500 baht. Customers are 35 years and over with medium to high income.

2nd grade karaokes: similar to the 1st grade but smaller and there is no private room. Girls are not as nice as those in the 1st grade karaokes. They do not have to wear uniforms. Some girls started their first job here. Customers can buy sex from drinking partners and waitresses during and after working hours. Customers need to inform and discuss the price with the owners. Girls under 18 years of age are found selling sex. Customers are 35 years and over with low to medium income.

3rd grade karaokes: former brothels

It is totally different from the above two types of karaoke. It is obviously for selling sex. In the front, there is jukebox with liquor and drinks available. There are many small rooms available for customers at the back. Price is app 100-200 baht. Customers are low class men with low-income aged 45 and up.

3. Pub

The music is loud, hard and rousing. Most of the staffs– DJs, singers, musicians and waiters - are male teenagers. Most of the customers are teenagers and children. They do not intend to buy sex due to their low income. Some just look for friends who might be able to develop to be sex partners. However, some girls, who sell sex on the Internet and phone, come to look for customers in front of pubs when they have no appointments.

4. Direct sale (girls on calls)

Phones are used as a means to contact. Most of the girls are studying in secondary schools and colleges. There are 4 call centers with 4-5 girls in each place. Price is around 1,500-2,000 baht and customers pay for hotel. Customers are men with high income.

A sample of conversation between a customer and an agent

Customer: Hello
Agent: Hello. Whom would you like to talk to?
Customer: I would like to talk to the owner.
Agent: I am speaking. I would like to know whom you get this number from.
Customer: From ...
Agent: Let me know the qualifications of the girls you would like to have. I will send two for you to choose.
Customer: What educational levels are they in?
Agent: Both secondary school and vocational school.
Customer: I want a talkative secondary-school girl. How much?
Agent: They are part-time and the price is 2,000.
Customer: Any discount?
Agent: 1,500
Customer: Where do we meet?
Agent: Tell me where you want to meet. I will bring 2 girls for you to choose.
Customer: Why does it take so long?
Agent: I have to go see them at the dormitory that they stay and I am not sure they will be around. They usually go to pubs after 8 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

5. Selling on internet:

These girls usually sell during daytime on weekends. Many girls lied to their parents that they would work on homework with friends. Researchers chatted with them in the “girls selling bodies” room using Perch program.

Following are some parts of sample conversation through chat room (K is the researcher and Kitty 55 is the girl.)

K: Why do you sell?
Kitty 55: To pay for tuition fee, clothing and other things
K: You don't get support from family? Tuition fee?
Kitty 55: Yes but I used it up.
K: What did you have in mind when you first sold?
Kitty 55: I did not think of anything. I want money ...
K: You live with your parents at home. Don't they reprimand you when you stay overnight in Chiangmai?
Kitty 55: I told my parents that I work on my paper with friends ...
K: What will parents, friends and teachers do if they know you sell?
Kitty 55: Friends might not talk to me. I might be expelled from school if teacher knows.
K: Why do friends not talk to you?
Kitty 55: They are object to this job. Not a good job.
K: What about parents?
Kitty 55: They won't know because I do it on weekends ...

Customers

Before and during World War II, customers were merchants from other provinces and soldiers. After WWII, customers were the same groups. Number of soldiers decreased while customers who were local people in the area increased. Nowadays, customers can be divided according to kinds of sex workers

1. People with low income and labourers use service from brothels, which now transformed to 3rd grade karaokes.
2. Middle class men and some students use service from restaurants and 2nd grade karaokes.
3. Middle to high-class customers use service from restaurants and 1st grade karaokes. Both lowland and hilltribe girls are found.
4. High-class customers buy sex from hilltribe and lowland girls through agents.
5. Teenaged students use service from pubs where teenagers like to hang out.

Who are at risk?

Children at risk found in this study are

- children study in town and stay at dormitory away from home,
- drop-outs who stay with friends at dormitory,
- hilltribe children, children working as waitresses and
- drinking partners in night entertainment establishments.

Risky factors

“We have to make money so our parents can be happy like others. Your siblings will have a chance to study. A lot of staffs in our restaurant go out with customers and they are well paid. Also the customers are fair and kind”, said a restaurant owner to new waitress to remind them that they have to be grateful to the parents.

“I want to have good family with father, mother, and children. I want to have a boyfriend who understands and stay with me at all time but I don’t know where I can find him. I also want to have a motorbike like others”, said Dao, the child prostitute aged 17 years old.

Tricked and forced into prostitution in brothels was a major risky factor but it is no longer important nowadays. Factors continuously considered to be serious are identity, limitation of choices in life, lack of skills, for example, life skills, analyzing and solving problems skills. New factors are persuasion from friends and relatives without forcing them; learning from the work environment in night entertaining establishments – being seduced by customers regularly, colleagues selling sex; unawareness of dangers in the work they do; and consumerism.

How do they enter the process?

The process has been changed from girls being tricked, trafficked and sold to agents by parents to volutarily entering. Children are lured by luxuries and brand name products and try to find ways to earn easy money. Some of them keep it secret from friends and family as they mentioned in the research “If my friends know what I do, they won’t talk to me.” Girls who do not continue their study after primary school, dropouts and who study in town away from home entered the sex trade in slightly different ways. Girls who finished grade 6 and dropouts usually help their parents with farm work in their own villages. They come to work in town because relatives, friends or people in the same village who used to work in restaurants and karaokes persuade them. Higher income from work in town is a strong motivation for their decision to leave the villages. Some girls take jobs in town because they

want to escape from their sad and broken married lives. The girls mentioned above usually start their job in 2nd grade karaoke because skills and experiences are not needed. They change the job to 1st grade karaoke when they gain experiences and skills. Some ends up being singers.

Girls who study away from home and some dropouts are one of the groups at risk. Most of them are students in vocational schools, staying at dormitory in town. They enjoy their freedom and spending money sent by families. Usually parents do not have close supervision and guidance on them. Some girls who are expelled from schools need to earn their income because they do not want to go back and get support from families. Most of them work as drinking partners or waitresses in 2nd grade karaokes because their friends persuade them and some apply for the jobs volutarily. They do not hesitate to go out with customers because they already have sex experiences with boyfriends. However, they do not call this sexual affair “selling body” because they go with customers due to their enjoyment, satisfaction and money is not the primary factor. Some girls have not been out with customers yet, but are at risk due to their daily work environment

Period	Situation	Process	Risk factors	Types of customers
1916-1941	A railway from Bangkok to Lampang was constructed. Some bangkokians opened brothels in Lampang.	Some women were trafficked to Bangkok.	- Lack of life skills, analyzing and solving problem skills	Merchants from other provinces and soldiers
During World War II (1941-1945)	Free Thai group used brothels as an information outlet and newsgathering.	Both Thai and Japanese prostitutes	- Lack of life skills, analyzing and solving problem skills	Merchants from other provinces and soldiers
After World War II (1945-1957)	Economic problems. Some brothels changed to restaurants with topless show and sex selling at the back of the restaurants.	Some women were trafficked.	- Lack of life skills, analyzing and solving problem skills	Merchants from other provinces Number of soldiers decreased. Number of people in the area increased
Tricking girls into sex industry (1957-1972)	Big economic development. Demand of younger girls increased.	Many girls (illiterate, finished grade 4 or dropouts) from up country were tricked into prostitution by agents. Parents agreed because they thought their daughters would have good jobs in town. Brothels were still opened. Being prostitutes was not socially acceptable.	- Lack of life skills, analyzing and solving problem skills	Girls work in brothels in Lampang and other provinces. Customers were not specified in the study.

Period	Situation	Process	Risk factors	Types of customers
Golden age of sex industry (1972-1996)	Tricking and trafficking of girls decreased. Some brothels were closed and reopened as restaurants with singers who were prostitutes. Changing status as singers could upgrade their prices when they sold sex.	Many girls – lowland, highland, burmese and Tai Yai (most finished grade 6), entered the sex trade voluntarily. However, Agents still played important roles in recruitment. Some parents sent their daughters to brothels directly. Being prostitutes was socially acceptable.	- Lack of life skills, analyzing and solving problem skills	Girls work in brothels in Lampang and other provinces, for example, Phrae, Chiangmai, Utraradit, Samutprakarn, Songkla. Customers were not specified in the study.
1996-2000	Economic crisis. AIDS epidemic. New different forms of sex selling place, such as pub, karaoke, and direct appointment with customers through the Internet or appointment through agents.	Girls from town, highland, students and college students are found in sex market. Some are studying; some are dropouts and some finished only grade 6. Some work as waitresses or drinking partners with customers in night entertaining establishments before end up in prostitution.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Lack of life skills, analyzing and solving problem skills - Enter by willingness of the girls - Girls get used to seduction by customers when work as waitresses and it easily leads to prostitution. - Children do not feel that they are forced to work. - Girls are lured by luxuries or brand name products. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Laborers and low-income elders who use services from brothels which are now 3rd grade karaokes. 2. Low to middle class customers and some college students use services from restaurants or second class karaokes 3. Middle to high-class customers use services from pubs or first grade karaokes. 4. Rich customers buy sex from hilltribe, pupils and students through agents. Famous places are pubs, which teenagers like to hang out.