

SEXUAL ATTITUDES AND EXPERIENCE OF RURAL THAI YOUTH

PIMONPAN ISARABHAKDI

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

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Researcher: Pimonpan Isarabhakdi

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Tel. (662) 441-9666, 441-0201-4 Ext. 115, 262

Fax. (662) 441-9333

E-mail: directpr@mahidol.ac.th

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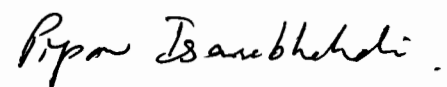
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Pimonpan Isarabhakdi

ABSTRACT

This research report analyzes quantitative data related to the sexual attitudes and behaviour of 623 young men and 605 women selected from rural areas of two regions of Thailand. The results document major differences in the way that young men and women think about sex and their sexual behaviour. Both men and women hold more permissive attitudes towards premarital sexual behaviour of men than for women. This is reflected in very low levels of premarital intercourse for females, while approximately half of the never-married males had experienced sexual intercourse. Moreover, while the few young women who had premarital sex confined their sexual activity to relationships with a strong emotional attachment, usually including a commitment to marriage, males did not confine sexual activity to girlfriends, but had relationships with multiple partners, including sex workers. The results support an interpretation of a strong sexual double standard in Thai society that view female sexuality as passive, while that of males is seen as active. The double standard also values sexual innocence and naivete among women while valuing overt displays of sexual potency, shown through numbers of sex partners, by males.

Even though the rural youth are knowledgeable about contraceptive methods, the practice is quite low among sexually experienced youth. The low level of condom use coupled with the fact that most of these young men are sexually active with prostitutes may result in not only these young men are at risk, but this pattern of activity puts at risk the health and lives of their future wives and children. Young women, particularly those who are never married, who experienced sexual relationship, may take a risk of getting pregnant and contracting sexually transmitted diseases due to cultural barriers and inaccessibility to services. Using contraception is linked to the process of defining oneself as sexually active, thus sexually active young people may take the risk of getting pregnant rather than discussing the need for contraception among themselves. Moreover, Thai women are socialized to value virginity and sexually innocence. Being knowledgeable in sex and expressing the need to take precautions may convey an image of being sexually experienced. The report concludes with some policy options that could help alleviate some of the negative outcomes of the sexual double standard in Thai society.

ทัศนคติและประสบการณ์เกี่ยวกับเพศสัมพันธ์ของเยาวชนในชนบท

พิมลพรรณ อิศรภักดี

บทสรุป

รายงานการวิจัยฉบับนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์ที่จะอธิบายลักษณะทางประชากรและสังคมของประชากรวัย 15 - 24 ปี ที่อาศัยอยู่ในเขตชนบท รวมทั้งความคิดเห็นและประสบการณ์ในเรื่องเกี่ยวกับพฤติกรรมทางเพศ การคุมกำเนิด การป้องกันโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์ และพฤติกรรมการมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงบริการของเยาวชนชาย รวมทั้งศึกษาปัจจัยต่างๆ ที่เกี่ยวข้องกับความเห็นและพฤติกรรมเหล่านั้น

ข้อมูลที่ใช้ในการศึกษาค้างนี้เป็นข้อมูลจากโครงการวิจัยเรื่องปัจจัยที่มีผลต่อพฤติกรรมทางเพศโอกาสในการตั้งครรภ์และการติดเชื้อโรคทางเพศสัมพันธ์ของกลุ่มเยาวชนชนบท ซึ่งได้รับการสนับสนุนการทำวิจัยจากองค์การอนามัยโลก โครงการวิจัยนี้เก็บข้อมูลจากประชากรที่มีอายุระหว่าง 15 - 24 ปี ที่อาศัยอยู่ในเขตชนบทภาคเหนือ 3 จังหวัด และภาคตะวันออกเฉียงเหนือ 3 จังหวัด รวมประชากรตัวอย่าง 1,228 คน จำแนกเป็นเยาวชนที่ไม่เคยแต่งงานชาย 577 คน หญิง 517 คน และเยาวชนชายและหญิงที่แต่งงานแล้วจำนวน 46 และ 88 คน ตามลำดับ การเก็บข้อมูลภาคสนามดำเนินการในระหว่างเดือนกรกฎาคม ถึงสิงหาคม พ.ศ. 2538 เครื่องมือที่ใช้ในการเก็บข้อมูล คือ แบบสอบถามที่ผู้ให้ข้อมูลเป็นผู้กรอกข้อความเอง โดยเยาวชนที่ให้ข้อมูลจะมารวมกันที่จุดนัดหมาย เมื่อผู้วิจัยได้อธิบายวัตถุประสงค์ และแบบสอบถามจนเป็นที่เข้าใจแล้ว เยาวชนจะตอบแบบสอบถามโดยแยกกลุ่มชาย และกลุ่มหญิง รวมทั้งผู้ให้ข้อมูลจะนั่งห่างกันเพื่อให้มีความเป็นส่วนตัวและผู้อื่นไม่สามารถเห็นคำตอบได้ นอกจากนี้ผู้วิจัยยังได้รวบรวมข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพโดยการจัดสนทนากลุ่มอีก 8 กลุ่ม ผลจากการวิเคราะห์ข้อมูล สามารถสรุปได้ดังนี้

1. ลักษณะของเยาวชนและเครือข่ายทางสังคม

เยาวชนที่เป็นตัวอย่างในการศึกษาค้างนี้ กว่าครึ่งหนึ่งไม่ได้เรียนในโรงเรียนแล้ว และกลุ่มที่ไม่ได้เรียนนั้นส่วนใหญ่จบการศึกษาเพียงการศึกษาภาคบังคับเท่านั้น สำหรับเยาวชนที่กำลังเรียนอยู่นั้นเกือบทั้งหมดเรียนอยู่ในระดับมัธยมศึกษา ผู้ที่ไม่ได้เรียนหนังสือแล้วส่วนใหญ่ทำงานในภาคเกษตรกรรมและงานรับจ้าง ส่วนผู้ที่ยังเรียนหนังสืออยู่ มีเพียงจำนวนไม่มากนักที่ทำงาน เยาวชนส่วนใหญ่ยังอาศัยอยู่กับพ่อแม่ซึ่ง

รวมถึงเยาวชนที่แต่งงานแล้ว มีเยาวชนที่แต่งงานแล้วประมาณ 1 ใน 3 เท่านั้นที่แยกมาอยู่กับคู่สมรส ดังนั้นพ่อแม่จึงเป็นผู้ที่เยาวชนในชนบทเข้ามาพูดคุยขอคำปรึกษาในเรื่องสำคัญๆ โดยเฉพาะแม่จะเป็นที่พึ่งสำคัญของเยาวชนหญิงในชนบท และพ่อจะเป็นที่ปรึกษาสำคัญของเยาวชนชาย อย่างไรก็ตามเยาวชนเหล่านี้โดยเฉพาะเยาวชนชาย มีโอกาสที่จะได้พบปะสังสรรค์กับเพื่อนมากพอสมควร เพื่อนจึงเป็นบุคคลสำคัญในลำดับรองลงมาจากพ่อแม่ที่เยาวชนพูดคุยปรึกษาหารือด้วย

ในการศึกษาครั้งนี้พบว่าประสบการณ์ของเยาวชนชนบทที่สำคัญประการหนึ่งคือ ประสบการณ์ย้ายถิ่น โดยประชากรที่เป็นตัวอย่างเหล่านี้เกือบ 1 ใน 3 เคยไปอยู่ที่อื่นนานกว่า 1 เดือน ซึ่งส่วนใหญ่จะเป็นเหตุผลทางด้านเศรษฐกิจคือ การไปทำงานในโรงงาน และงานรับจ้างทั่วไปในกรุงเทพฯ และเขตเมืองอื่นๆ โดยผู้ที่เคยไปอยู่ที่อื่นเหล่านี้มักจะมีเครือข่ายทางสังคม เช่น พี่น้องหรือญาติที่ช่วยเหลือ ในการไปหางานทำ และให้ที่พักพิง

2. ความคิดเห็นและประสบการณ์เกี่ยวกับพฤติกรรมการมีเพศสัมพันธ์

เยาวชนที่ศึกษาโดยส่วนใหญ่คือ กว่า 1 ใน 3 มีความเห็นว่าทั้งผู้ชายและผู้หญิงไม่ควรจะมีเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงาน นอกจากนี้เยาวชนอีก 1 ใน 3 ยังมีความคิดเห็นที่เป็นทวิมาตรฐาน (Double Standard) เกี่ยวกับการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงาน กล่าวคือ เห็นว่าผู้หญิงไม่ควรจะมีเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงาน แต่การมีเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงานของชายนั้นเป็นที่ยอมรับได้ เป็นที่สังเกตว่าแม่จะมีเงื่อนไขว่าถ้าบุคคลที่มีเพศสัมพันธ์ด้วยจะเป็นคนรักหรือแฟน และทั้งชายและหญิงมีความรักซึ่งกันและกัน เยาวชนหญิงก็ยังไม่ยอมรับที่หญิงและชายจะมีเพศสัมพันธ์กัน แต่เยาวชนชายยอมรับเงื่อนไขนี้ได้ และเมื่อพิจารณาถึงสถานภาพสมรสของเยาวชนแล้ว จะพบว่า ผู้ที่เคยแต่งงานแล้วจะมีการยอมรับพฤติกรรมการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงานมากกว่าผู้ที่ยังไม่เคยแต่งงาน

นอกจากนี้แล้วคำตอบที่เยาวชนกล่าวถึงความคิดเห็นของพ่อแม่เกี่ยวกับการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ของบุตร ยังแสดงให้เห็นว่าเยาวชนคาดว่าพ่อแม่จะมีความคิดเห็นที่แตกต่างกันในเรื่องการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงานของชายและหญิง เป็นการย้ำให้เห็นทวิมาตรฐานอีกครั้งหนึ่ง โดยเยาวชนชายประมาณ 1 ใน 3 คิดว่าพ่อแม่ยอมรับได้ถ้าลูกชายจะมีเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงาน ในขณะที่เยาวชนหญิงเพียงร้อยละ 10 คิดว่าพ่อแม่ยอมรับในพฤติกรรมนี้ นอกจากนี้แล้ว ความคิดเห็นของเยาวชนเกี่ยวกับความรู้สึกของพ่อแม่ ยังแสดงให้เห็นค่านิยมและธรรมเนียมปฏิบัติ เมื่อชายหญิงมีเพศสัมพันธ์กันก่อน แต่งงานโดยเยาวชนชายร้อยละ

40 และหญิงร้อยละ 60 ยังคาดว่าพ่อแม่จะขอให้บุตรปรับแต่งงานทันทีถ้ารู้ว่าบุตรของตนมีความสัมพันธ์ทางเพศกับเพื่อนเพศตรงข้าม

3. ประสบการณ์เรื่องเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงาน

3.1 เพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงาน

ประสบการณ์การมีเพศสัมพันธ์ที่พบในการวิจัยครั้งนี้มีความสอดคล้องกับความคิดเห็นต่อการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ของกลุ่มเยาวชนที่เป็นตัวอย่าง เยาวชนชายจะมีประสบการณ์เกี่ยวข้องกับเรื่องเพศในทุกๆ ด้านในสัดส่วนที่สูงกว่าเยาวชนหญิง โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งประสบการณ์การมีเพศสัมพันธ์ ก่อนแต่งงาน เยาวชนชายที่ยังไม่ได้แต่งงาน ครึ่งหนึ่งตอบว่าเคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์ ส่วนเยาวชนหญิงที่ยังไม่ได้แต่งงาน มีเพียงร้อยละ 2 เท่านั้นที่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์

ความแตกต่างในสัดส่วนของผู้ที่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์ระหว่างเพศชายและหญิงนั้น สามารถอธิบายได้ว่า เยาวชนชายส่วนใหญ่จะมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงที่ไม่ใช่แฟนหรือคนรัก แต่มักจะมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงบริการ ทั้งนี้อาจเป็นเพราะค่านิยมที่ผู้ชายควรจะมีประสบการณ์ทางเพศ รวมทั้งความอยากรู้อยากลอง ในขณะที่การมีพฤติกรรมเกี่ยวกับเพศสัมพันธ์ของหญิงที่ยังไม่ได้แต่งงาน ไม่เป็นที่ยอมรับในสังคมไทย เยาวชนหญิงที่ตอบว่ามีประสบการณ์ทางเพศนั้น ทุกคนจะมีความสัมพันธ์ทางเพศกับแฟนหรือคนรัก ซึ่งจะมีการแต่งงานกันภายหลัง ดังที่พบในการวิจัยครั้งนี้ว่าผู้ที่แต่งงานแล้วจะตอบว่ามีเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงาน ในสัดส่วนที่สูงกว่าผู้ที่ยังไม่ได้แต่งงานมาก คือผู้ที่แต่งงานแล้วเพศชายร้อยละ 89 และเพศหญิงร้อยละ 19 มีประสบการณ์ด้านเพศสัมพันธ์ก่อนแต่งงาน

เยาวชนชายที่มีประสบการณ์ในเรื่องเพศก่อนแต่งงานนั้นมีลักษณะที่สำคัญคือจะเป็นผู้ที่แต่งงานแล้ว ไม่ได้เรียนอยู่ในโรงเรียน กำลังทำงานหรือเคยมีงานทำ มีประสบการณ์การย้ายถิ่น หรือไปอยู่ที่อื่นมาแล้วไม่น้อยกว่า 1 เดือน ซึ่งลักษณะดังกล่าวนี้อาจมีความเกี่ยวข้องกับอายุด้วย เพราะจากการสำรวจนี้ เยาวชนในกลุ่มอายุ 20 - 24 ปี จะมีประสบการณ์ในเรื่องเพศมากกว่าเยาวชนในกลุ่มอายุ 15 - 19 ปี

3.2 พฤติกรรมการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ในช่วง 6 เดือนก่อนการสำรวจ

เยาวชนชายที่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์ร้อยละ 37 ไม่มีเพศสัมพันธ์ในช่วงระยะเวลา 6 เดือนก่อนการสำรวจ โดยกว่าเกือบ 3 ใน 4 (ร้อยละ 70) มีเพศสัมพันธ์กับคู่อุปสรรคเพศสัมพันธ์ประเภทใดประเภทหนึ่ง อีกร้อยละ 30 มีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงตั้งแต่ 2 ประเภทขึ้นไป ในกลุ่มเยาวชนชายที่มีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงประเภทใดประเภทหนึ่งนั้น ประมาณครึ่งหนึ่งมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงบริการ อีก 1 ใน 3 มีเพศสัมพันธ์กับ

คนรักหรือเพื่อน ส่วนผู้ที่มีคู่เพศสัมพันธ์มากกว่า 1 ประเภท ก็มักจะมีหญิงบริการรวมอยู่ด้วย ดังนั้น หญิงอื่นๆ ซึ่งมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับชายเหล่านี้จึงมีโอกาสเสี่ยงต่อการได้รับเชื้อโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์ โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งถ้าการร่วมเพศนั้นไม่มีการใช้วิธีการป้องกันโรคที่ถูกต้อง

3.3 การมีเพศสัมพันธ์นอกสมรส

ในกลุ่มเยาวชนที่แต่งงานแล้ว ชาย 41 คน และหญิง 79 คนนั้น มีผู้ที่ตอบว่าภายหลังแต่งงานแล้ว เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับคนอื่นซึ่งไม่ใช่คู่สมรส เป็นชาย 9 คน และหญิง 2 คน หรือร้อยละ 21 และร้อยละ 3 ตามลำดับ สำหรับประเภทของผู้ที่มีเพศสัมพันธ์ด้วยนั้น หญิงบริการได้ลดความสำคัญลง แต่จะเป็นหญิงที่มีความสัมพันธ์เป็นเพื่อน หรือหญิงคนรู้จักมากขึ้น ส่วนหญิงที่แต่งงานแล้ว และมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับชายอื่นตอบว่า มีเพศสัมพันธ์กับคนรัก

4. ความรู้ ทัศนคติ และการปฏิบัติเกี่ยวกับการคุมกำเนิด

เยาวชนที่เป็นตัวอย่างในการศึกษาครั้งนี้ รู้จักวิธีการคุมกำเนิดหลายประเภท โดยวิธีที่รู้จักมากที่สุดคือ ยาเม็ดคุมกำเนิด รองลงมาคือ ยาฉีด การทำหมัน ถุงยางอนามัย ห่วงอนามัย และยาฝังคุมกำเนิด โดยเยาวชนหญิงรู้จักวิธีการคุมกำเนิดวิธีต่างๆ มากกว่าผู้ชาย ยกเว้นในเรื่องถุงยางอนามัยเท่านั้นที่เยาวชนชายจะรู้จักมากกว่าเยาวชนหญิง

นอกจากเยาวชนจะมีความรู้ในเรื่องการคุมกำเนิดแล้ว เยาวชนเหล่านี้ยังมีทัศนคติที่ดีต่อการใช้วิธีคุมกำเนิด เพื่อจำกัดจำนวนบุตร รวมทั้งคิดว่าจะใช้วิธีการคุมกำเนิดเมื่อแต่งงาน อย่างไรก็ตามทัศนคติเกี่ยวกับการใช้การคุมกำเนิด ได้แสดงให้เห็นว่าเยาวชนเหล่านี้ยังมีค่านิยมว่าการคุมกำเนิดนั้น ควรจะใช้ในกลุ่มผู้ที่แต่งงานแล้วและไม่ต้องการมีบุตร รวมทั้งภรรยาควรเป็นผู้ใช้วิธีการคุมกำเนิด และจากการสำรวจนี้ก็พบว่า วิธีการคุมกำเนิดที่ผู้ที่แต่งงานแล้วกำลังใช้อยู่ส่วนใหญ่ เป็นวิธีคุมกำเนิดที่ผู้หญิงเป็นผู้ใช้ คือ ยาเม็ดคุมกำเนิด ยาฉีด ห่วงอนามัย และหมันหญิง

สำหรับการใช้วิธีการคุมกำเนิดเมื่อมีเพศสัมพันธ์ครั้งแรกของผู้ที่ยังไม่ได้แต่งงานนั้น พบว่าเยาวชนชายกว่า 1 ใน 3 ไม่ใช้วิธีการป้องกันใดๆ ส่วนผู้ที่ใช้วิธีการคุมกำเนิดนั้น จะใช้ถุงยางอนามัย ทั้งนี้วิธีการป้องกันอาจมีความสัมพันธ์กับประเภทของผู้ที่มีเพศสัมพันธ์ด้วย โดยผู้ที่มีเพศสัมพันธ์ครั้งแรกกับหญิงบริการ จะใช้ถุงยางอนามัย ส่วนผู้ที่มีเพศสัมพันธ์ครั้งแรกกับหญิงที่เป็นคนรักหรือเพื่อน มักจะไม่ใช้วิธีการป้องกันใดๆ ซึ่งตรงกับคำตอบของเยาวชนหญิงที่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์โดยส่วนใหญ่ตอบว่าไม่ได้ใช้วิธีป้องกันใดๆ เมื่อมีเพศสัมพันธ์ครั้งแรก สาเหตุอาจเนื่องมาจากกรณีเพศสัมพันธ์ครั้งแรกของเยาวชนหญิง

เหล่านี้ไม่ได้มีการเตรียมตัวมาก่อน อาจเกิดขึ้นเนื่องจากภาวะจำยอม โดยที่เกือบทั้งหมดกล่าวว่าไม่ได้ตั้งใจที่จะมีเพศสัมพันธ์ในครั้งนั้น

5. ประสบการณ์เกี่ยวกับการเที่ยวหญิงบริการ การใช้ถุงยางอนามัย และโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์

5.1 เพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงบริการ

การศึกษานี้พบว่า ประมาณร้อยละ 45 ของเยาวชนชายที่เป็นตัวอย่างเคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงบริการ สำหรับอายุที่เกี่ยวข้องหญิงบริการครั้งแรกอยู่ระหว่าง 13 - 22 ปี โดยมีอายุมัธยฐานที่ 17 ปี แต่ประมาณร้อยละ 80 ของผู้ที่เคยเที่ยวหญิงบริการนั้นมีเพศสัมพันธ์ครั้งแรกกับหญิงบริการเมื่ออายุไม่เกิน 18 ปี ซึ่งนับว่าเป็นช่วงอายุที่อยู่ในวัยอายุรุธอวัยกลอง แต่อาจยังไม่มีวุฒิภาวะที่ดีพอ ดังนั้นเยาวชนเหล่านี้ น่าจะมีความเสี่ยงต่อการติดเชื้อโรคทางเพศสัมพันธ์สูง โดยเฉพาะอย่างยิ่งในการศึกษานี้พบว่า เยาวชนเหล่านี้มักจะดื่มสุราหรือของมีเมาเมื่อกจะไปใช้บริการหญิงบริการ รวมทั้งเยาวชนเหล่านี้ ส่วนหนึ่งยังไม่มีความรู้เรื่องการป้องกันการติดเชื้อโรคทางเพศสัมพันธ์ที่ดีพอ ดังจะเห็นจากการที่เยาวชนชายตอบว่าใช้วิธีป้องกันการติดเชื้อโรคเพศสัมพันธ์โดยการกินยาหรือล้างอวัยวะเพศภายหลังการร่วมเพศกับหญิงบริการ มีเยาวชนชายบางส่วนเท่านั้นที่ใช้วิธีการป้องกันอย่างถูกต้องและสม่ำเสมอ

ในช่วง 6 เดือนก่อนการสำรวจนี้ เยาวชนชายที่เคยเที่ยวหญิงบริการกว่าครึ่งหนึ่ง ไม่ได้มีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงเหล่านี้อีก โดยผู้ที่หยุดการมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงบริการนั้นส่วนใหญ่จะเป็นผู้ที่แต่งงานแล้ว หรือกำลังเรียนหนังสือ ไม่ได้ทำงาน ส่วนผู้ที่ดื่มสุราและผู้ที่มิเพศสัมพันธ์ครั้งแรกกับหญิงบริการจะมีสัดส่วนของผู้ที่ยังคงมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงบริการมากกว่าผู้ที่ไม่เคยดื่มสุราและมีเพศสัมพันธ์ครั้งแรกกับหญิงที่เป็นคนรักหรือเพื่อน

5.2 ความคิดเห็นเกี่ยวกับการใช้ถุงยางอนามัย

เยาวชนชายมีความรู้ว่าถุงยางอนามัยมีประสิทธิภาพดีในการป้องกันการตั้งครรภ์และการป้องกันโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์ แต่เยาวชนชายจำนวนไม่น้อยที่เห็นว่าการใช้ถุงยางอนามัยนั้นเหมาะสำหรับใช้เมื่อมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงบริการเท่านั้น นอกจากนี้เยาวชนชายที่เคยมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงบริการมากกว่าครึ่งหนึ่ง ยังมีความเห็นว่า การใช้ถุงยางอนามัยไม่สะดวก และทำให้ความสุขทางเพศลดลง แต่ในภาพรวมแล้วเยาวชนชายที่เป็นตัวอย่างในการศึกษานี้เห็นว่า ถุงยางอนามัยเป็นสิ่งที่หามาใช้ได้ง่ายและไม่แพง

5.3 โรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์

การศึกษานี้พบว่า เยาวชนชายมีความรู้ในเรื่องชื่อโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์มากกว่าเยาวชนหญิง โดยโรคที่รู้จักมากที่สุดคือ โรคเอดส์ อันแสดงให้เห็นถึงการให้ความรู้การประชาสัมพันธ์เกี่ยวกับโรคนี้อย่างกว้างขวาง โรคที่กล่าวถึงมากเป็นอันดับสองคือ โกลโนเรีย และมีการพูดถึงโรค “กามโรค” ซึ่งเป็นคำรวมในการเรียกโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์มากพอสมควร

อย่างไรก็ตาม เมื่อประเมินความรู้เกี่ยวกับการแพร่และรับเชื้อโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์จะพบว่าสัดส่วนของเยาวชนหญิง สามารถให้คำตอบที่ถูกต้องต่อคำถามแต่ละข้อจะมีมากกว่าสัดส่วนของเยาวชนชายที่ตอบได้ถูกต้อง นอกจากนี้ยังพบว่า เยาวชนชายบางส่วนไม่มีความรู้หรือมีความเข้าใจผิดเกี่ยวกับการได้รับเชื้อโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์จากหญิงบริการและการรักษาโรคด้วยตนเอง เยาวชนชายบางคนเชื่อว่าหญิงบริการจะไม่มีโรคเพศสัมพันธ์เพราะได้รับการตรวจร่างกายเป็นประจำ ในกลุ่มเยาวชนที่เคยเป็นโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์ประมาณครึ่งหนึ่ง เคยรักษาโรคด้วยตนเองโดยการซื้อยาจากร้านขายยา

6. ข้อเสนอแนะ

ผลการศึกษานี้แสดงให้เห็นถึงหิวมาตรฐานในด้านการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ของหญิงและชายในสังคมไทย ซึ่งอาจเป็นผลมาจากการอบรมสั่งสอนโดยบุคคลในครอบครัว ทั้งในเรื่องของบทบาททางเพศและเรื่องเพศ ดังนั้นการศึกษาเกี่ยวกับการสั่งสอนอบรมในเรื่องเพศภายในครอบครัว รวมทั้งการศึกษาถึงแนวทางในการเปลี่ยนแปลงทัศนคติในเรื่องการมีประสบการณ์ด้านเพศสัมพันธ์ของชายและการมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงหลายคน ควรจะมีการศึกษาต่อไป

ผลการศึกษาที่สำคัญประการหนึ่งคือ ลักษณะสำคัญของผู้ที่ไม่เคยมีประสบการณ์ด้านเพศสัมพันธ์ หรือผู้ที่หยุดการมีเพศสัมพันธ์กับหญิงบริการ คือ เป็นผู้ที่กำลังเรียนอยู่ ดังนั้นโรงเรียนจึงน่าจะเป็นแหล่งที่จะให้ความรู้ในเรื่องเกี่ยวกับความถูกต้องและความเหมาะสมของการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ ควรชี้ให้เห็นว่าการมีเพศสัมพันธ์อาจมีได้ในวัยอันควร กล่าวคือเมื่อมีความพร้อมในวุฒิภาวะ รวมทั้งการเน้นเรื่องความรับผิดชอบของผู้ชายในการที่จะใช้วิธีการป้องกันการตั้งครรภ์และการแพร่และรับเชื้อโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์ และการสร้างทักษะให้กับผู้หญิงในการที่จะต่อรองเกี่ยวกับการมีเพศสัมพันธ์ และวิธีการป้องกันการตั้งครรภ์และโรคติดต่อทางเพศสัมพันธ์

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rationale for the Study

Although there is a clear trend among young men and women in Asia and the Pacific to marry later in their lives and the birth rate among young women is dropping, the levels of sexual relations prior to marriage are on the rise. The period of exposure to sexual activities is also lengthened because the average age at menarche continues to decline. Social and economic changes, including urbanization, industrialization and education, have eliminated many of the traditional restraints on sexual activity before marriage and have exposed many adolescents and young people, especially adolescent girls, to the risks of unwanted pregnancy and abortion, which in turn, increase the risks to their reproductive health and well-being (Dixon-Mueller, 1996) including the dangers of unsafe abortion and the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection.

As in other Asian societies, Thais maintain traditional prohibitions against premarital sex through cultural mechanisms designed to encourage female chastity. Nonetheless, there has recently been increasing levels of premarital sexual activities among adolescents, especially in urban areas. A series of studies have documented an increasing acceptance of premarital sexual relations and more widespread experience of premarital sex among male and female adolescents (Prasartkul et al., 1987; Chompootaweep et al., 1988; Pitaktepsombat et al., 1989; and Ford and Kittisuksathit, 1995). The increase in premarital sexual activity is important because of its association with increased risk of pregnancy and of contracting

sexually transmitted diseases. Young people usually lack information about reproductive health or have little or no access to sexual and reproductive health services.

The early onset of sexual activity is associated with less effective contraceptive use, to unintended pregnancy and to becoming a parent "too soon". Studies show that women delay about one year on average between starting sexual activity and first using contraception (Progress, 1997). In Thailand, premarital adolescent pregnancy places the health and social consequences overwhelmingly on the unmarried girl (Porapakham et al., 1986; Pitaktepsombat et al., 1989). In addition to the health effects of unwanted pregnancy, there are emotional, economic and educational consequences too. In contrast, the male adolescent suffers no health effects of pregnancy and he also suffers little socially.

Most of the surveys on premarital sexual practices of Thai male adolescents find that more than half of male adolescents are sexually active and the majority of these activities appear to be with commercial sex workers, while the majority of young sexually active females engage in such activity with their boyfriends. The linkage between prostitutes and male adolescents' sexual activity is important because the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases among male adolescents is attributed almost entirely to contact with prostitutes and thus may be transmitted to other sexual partners, e.g., girlfriend, and spouse. With the rapid spread of AIDS, one of the major public health problems in Thailand, female adolescents are at a greater risk of infection from HIV and other sexually transmitted diseases than they have ever been. This is because nearly all males who reported having premarital sexual activity with friends also reported having sex with prostitutes (Havanon et al., 1992; Prasartkul et al., 1987; VanLandingham et. al., 1993 ; Xenos et. al., 1993).

Knowledge of contraceptive methods is considered to be universal among Thai adults. But studies of contraceptive knowledge among Thai adolescents show that rural adolescents tend to be less familiar with family planning and less knowledgeable about sexually transmitted diseases compared to urban adolescents. Rural young people also have less access to services that would protect them from pregnancy and diseases. In fact, most of the service outlets for youth, (i.e., Youth Counselling Center, Adolescent Counselling Clinic) are located in Bangkok and major provincial urban areas.

Despite the large number of young people in rural Thailand and their exposure to pregnancy and to Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), few studies have looked at rural Thai adolescents. To date, most surveys of Thai adolescents have involved specific groups such as factory workers, in-school students, or urban residents. Thus the results suggest that problems exist primarily in the urban population, especially Bangkok. This is misleading as in-school students, factory workers or Bangkok adolescents compared to rural adolescents are better off in terms of their education, financial situation, and access to health services (Porapakham et al., 1985; Xenos et al, 1993).

This study is designed to provide a better understanding of sex-related behaviour and their determinants among rural youth who represent the majority of Thailand's young population, and upon whose behaviour the future composition of the Thai population depends. This information is useful for designing preventive intervention programs to reduce risk behaviour related to early pregnancy, and to contracting STDs and HIV among young people. This is especially important for the long-term health of young Thai women and children who are potentially at risk for HIV infection as these women reach their prime childbearing years.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

This study aims to

1. describe rural Thai youth in terms of their;
 - a. socio-economic and demographic profile,
 - b. attitudes toward premarital sexual behaviour,
 - c. sexual experience,
 - d. knowledge, attitudes, and practice of birth control,
 - e. knowledge and practice of preventing STDs,
2. examine attitudes toward using condoms and experience with visiting prostitute among rural young males, and
3. study factors that influence the sexual attitudes and behaviour of rural Thai youth.

1.3 Related Studies

1.3.1 Incidence of Premarital Sexual Relations Among Youth in Thailand

Though there is a general belief that adolescent sexual activity is increasing in Thailand, the proportion of young females who are sexually active is still very small. At the same time, a high proportion of adolescent males are sexually active. This is because of the cultural setting of Thailand where there is a double standard in premarital sexuality, with male sexual activity being accepted more than female sexual activity and with women holding more traditional views than men. This norm is still very strong and dominant in the society (Praditwong, 1990; Yap, 1987).

With an increase in the awareness of rapid changes in Thai society together with a spread of sexually transmitted diseases from the sexual service sector to the general population, a series of surveys on sexual behaviour among Thai youth have been done. They document an increasing acceptance of premarital sexual relations and more widespread experience of premarital sexual activity.

As in most modernizing societies, norms and social sanctions toward premarital sex are shifting in the direction of greater permissiveness, especially in urban areas. Premarital sexual intercourse is acceptable for many youth if part of a stable, affectionate relationship. Prasartkul et al. (1987) reported that 40 percent of male youth and 36 percent of female youth endorsed premarital sex for engaged couples.

Though changes in attitudes concerning premarital sex have been occurring among Thai adolescents as the society has developed, differences in attitude and experience of premarital sexual relations are very much pronounced between sexes. Females are more traditional than males. Females place a higher value on virginity and disapprove strongly of premarital sexual relations for women but not for men. A study of students and teachers in Bangkok found that 39 percent of students and 62 percent of teachers reported premarital sexual intercourse as permissible for males (Chompootawee et al., 1988). Praditwong (1990) also reported that 27 percent of adolescents both in and out-of-school agreed that single men should be able to have sex with any women they wanted while only 1 percent agreed to this type of behaviour for single women. It should be noted that the approval for single men having sex with anyone indicates an acceptance of sexual activity with prostitutes. Results from a focus group study of adolescents living in Bangkok by PDA (1985) has shown that there was more permissiveness toward single males engaging in sex, especially with prostitutes, as it was felt by some respondents that this allowed males to gain sexual experience.

Research on premarital sexual intercourse among Thai youth reveals inconsistency in proportion of sexually experienced youth. For example, while 14 percent of school boys aged 17-19 reported having sexual intercourse with their girlfriends, only 1 percent of school girls reported having sex with their boyfriends (Muangman, 1979). Prasartkul et al. (1987) found from a non-representative sample that at least 66 percent of males and 9 percent of female youth were sexually active. In a 1989 nationwide survey of youth, Wongboonsin and Porapakkham reported 30 percent of males and 3 percent of female youth ever had sex. The survey of sexual behaviour of unmarried female adolescents in Bangkok conducted in 1993 found that 3 percent of the sample stated that they were sexually experienced (Soonthornhada, 1996). Also in 1993, a survey of young single factory workers found that 9 percent of female respondents and 63 percent of male respondents report having engaged in sexual intercourse (Ford and Kittisuksathit, 1996).

The inconsistency may be because of difficulties in accessing information concerning premarital sexual activity in a setting such as Thailand where premarital sexual activity is a sensitive issue. It is considered by adolescents as deviant behaviour, and which can result, (at least for females), in ostracism for those who engage in it (Praditwong, 1990). The small proportion of girls who are sexually active may reflect reluctance among young women to admit premarital sexual activity. In deed, indirect data indicate that premarital sexuality does occur even among rural adolescents. The typical consequence of premarital sex appears to be early marriage, which acts both to prevent pregnancy out of wedlock and to preserve the reputation of the girl's parents (Yoddumnern, 1981).

1.3.2 Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice of Family Planning

Thai adolescents appear to have a high level of contraceptive knowledge, although prior to secondary school there does exist some differences by educational level (Deemar, 1986; Wongboonsin and Porapakkham, 1989; Praditwong, 1990). Males have also been found to be more knowledgeable about contraception (Muangman et al., 1983). A slightly higher proportion of in-school adolescents compared to out-of-school adolescents, have knowledge of contraception (Porapakkham et al., 1986).

However, the level of knowledge or awareness of contraception may not correspond with an accurate understanding of particular contraceptive methods. While the percentage of "have ever heard of at least one contraceptive" is high, it appears that the level of detailed knowledge is low (Deemar, 1986; Prasartkul et al., 1987; Chompootaweep et al., 1988). The lack of detailed knowledge may be reflected in the use of contraception. Even among sexually active school adolescents who have a positive attitude towards family planning less than 10 percent actually practice family planning (Muangman, 1979). Moreover, a significant proportion of users (26 percent) rely on less efficient method, i.e., rhythm and withdrawal (Koetsawang, 1984). Wongboonsin and Porapakkham (1989) reported that 39.8 and 8.5 percent of youth who are sexually active ever used condoms and other traditional methods respectively.

When asked about where to get family planning methods, Pitaktepsombat et al. (1989) found that almost 30 percent of youth said that they did not know. The low level of contraceptive use and low level of knowledge of places where they can obtain contraceptive methods may reflect the structure of family planning services

provided to unmarried persons. The most obvious gap in the area of contraceptives is that public family planning agencies require the husband's name and address on client service record forms implying that family planning is for married couples only. Thus, sexually active youth must rely on drug stores for contraception or use nothing at all (Prasartkul et al., 1987).

Among married youth, the norm of two child family is well accepted. Results from two national surveys in 1987, the Thai Demographic and Health Survey and the Survey of Contraceptive Practise of Thai Women 1987 found that more than half of the ever-married women aged 15-19 and 20-24 years are currently using contraceptive method (Chayovan et al., 1988; Leoprapai and Thongthai, 1989). Among those current users, the pill is the most popular method while the condom is among the least popular. The 1996 contraceptive prevalence survey confirms that the levels of knowledge and use of contraceptives of adolescents appear relatively high (Chamrathirong et al., 1997).

1.3.3 Knowledge and Experiences of Sexually Transmitted Diseases

The proportion of youth who have ever heard of sexually transmitted diseases is quite high, but the knowledge of important details such as symptoms and prevention of diseases is considerably less (Porapakkham et al., 1986). Based on test scores, Daengpium and Limtrakool (1983) rated their respondents' (458 male students in Chiangmai) on overall knowledge of types of venereal diseases and their prevention and treatment as high, 19 percent; medium 26 percent and low 45 percent.

Of all students in the study of Chompootawee et al. (1988), 85 percent knew that someone who had sexual intercourse with a prostitute could get STDs.

However, only 42.5 percent of male students knew about gonorrhoea, and 34.4 percent of females knew about syphilis. Significantly, more students in the upper grade than in the lower grades knew about STDs. This finding also corresponds with the discussion in Porapakkham et al. (1986).

As reported in various surveys, the incidence of venereal diseases among male adolescents is a major public health problem in Thailand. Daengpium and Limtrakool (1983) found that 20.5 percent of their respondents (males and females) had ever had a venereal disease. In 1987 the Venereal Disease Division of the Communicable Disease Control Department of Ministry of Public Health reported that 58.6 percent of all STDs cases were youth aged 15-24 years.

Besides gonorrhoea and syphilis which are the two most serious sexually transmitted diseases in Thailand, AIDS is now one of the most serious problem. Two studies on knowledge of AIDS among adolescents (Sittitrai, 1989; Prasartkul and Isarabhakdi, 1989) showed that knowledge is universal but superficial and inaccurate. AIDS ignorance is still high among youth.

1.3.4 *Males' Experience of Visiting Prostitutes*

A review of the 3 studies concerning sexual behaviour of school students in Bangkok showed that the proportion of those who ever had sex with prostitutes ranged from 17 to 35 percent (Porapakkham et al., 1986). The proportion is much higher in the study of Wongboonsin and Porapakkham (1989) where 52 percent of male youth reporting they ever had sex with prostitutes. A direct question about the first sexual partner was asked in Paothong's (1985) study on sexual transmitted diseases and condom usage among male high school students in Bangkok. Service girls or prostitutes was reported as their first sex partner by 55 percent of the respondents.

Not only single men visit prostitutes, both married and unmarried males in every age group were found to be clients of the brothels (Sawaengdee and Isarabhakdi, 1990). In Srisuwapan's study (1991) of characteristics of husbands who ever visited prostitutes, she found that among 400 married male respondents, 75 percent of them ever had sexual intercourse with prostitutes. Only 25 percent of those who ever frequented prostitution have stopped that behaviour for more than 5 years. The main reason was they prepared themselves for getting married. As AIDS is wide spread in Thailand, 43 percent of husband stopped visiting the prostitutes. The rest, 23 percent of currently married men are still having sexual relation with prostitutes since they believe that condoms can prevent them from contracting HIV.

1.3.5 *Use of Condoms*

Condoms are considered to be one of the less efficient contraceptive methods. Nevertheless, condom use is considered one of the most effective methods of prevention of sexually transmitted diseases.

The condom has been widely available in Thailand for decades. Its use has been largely confined to commercial sex encounters and thus condom use has a negative image among monogamous couples. A family planning product market survey by CSN and Associates found that 62 percent of those who used condoms used them for the prevention of STDs (cited in Muangman, 1989).

Among ever-married youth, condoms are among the least popular methods (Chayovan et al., 1988; Leoprapi and Thongthai, 1989; Praasartkul and Isarabhakdi, 1998). Since condoms are widely used in sex with sex workers, the wife does not perceive herself to be at great risk for STDs or HIV. She views STDs,

especially AIDS as a result of immorality rather than sexual behaviour. Unprotected sexual intercourse of married couples may increase the risk of becoming infected with STDs if their sexual partners have extramarital intercourse with commercial sex workers.

Many studies find that the condom is widely known among single youth. About 65 percent of youth in a national survey conducted by the Institute of Population Studies in 1988 knew that condom can be used for the prevention of contracting HIV. However, the incidence of using condom as a venereal disease prophylaxis was very low (Wongboonsin and Porapakham, 1989; Chompootaweep et al., 1988; Porapakham et al., 1986).

Qualitative research with low income prostitutes in rural areas of Thailand found that young men are among those who reject the use of condoms when having sexual intercourse with prostitutes (Sawaengdee and Isarabhakdi, 1990). Among the frequent customers such as the truck drivers, Sawaengdee and Isarabhakdi (1991) also found that the majority of truck drivers do not like to use condom when they had sexual intercourse with prostitutes. They dislike it because they believe that it is not natural and decreases sexual pleasure.

In a study of AIDS awareness among youth in Bangkok, Prasartkul and Isarabhakdi (1989) found that none of their respondents, neither in-school nor out-of-school youth, considered using condoms regardless of the type of sexual partner. The inconvenience, loss of mood and sensation are all cited as disadvantages of the condom. Given this type of sexual behaviour of young Thai men, they are at considerable risk of HIV infection.

Chapter 2

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Data used in this study are from the project titled “Determinants of Sexual Behaviour that Influence the Risk of Pregnancy and Diseases among Rural Thai Young Adults.” The survey of young adults was conducted in three provinces in the North and three provinces in the Northeast during July and August 1995. It was supported by the Task Force for Social Science Research on Reproductive Health, the World Health Organization.

2.1 Studied Population

Since youth represents the transition stage from childhood to adulthood, the range of 15-24 years is the age interval commonly used for defining youth. This present study adopted this standard definition of youth. Young people age 15-24 who were living in rural areas in the North and the Northeast of Thailand were selected. Although no claim has been made about representativeness of the sample for all rural youth, the socio-demographic breadth of the sample, which include both married and unmarried males and females, provides a portrait of how sexual attitudes, perceptions and behaviour differ across groups. This study seeks to examine possible differences in sexual lifestyle which may relate to youth’s past experiences. Presumably, different experiences of the early and late adolescents will affect later lifestyles and in turn affect ultimate sexual attitudes and behaviour. Those currently married were selected as they will not feel embarrassed as they have already engaged in sexual activity, and may provide more information on their sexual experience than those who are not married. The data analysed in this study pertain to 623 males and 605 females aged 15-24 years.

2.2 Sites of the Study

This study focuses on the Northeast and the North, because large numbers of young adults reside in each of these two regions. Evidence also indicates that a high percentage of population of each region have migration experience in provincial urban areas or in Bangkok. A simple random sampling procedure was employed to select 6 provinces, three provinces in the Northeast and the rest in the North. Three districts of each sampled province were selected using stratified sampling procedure according to distance from a district to the provincial urban center. The first district had easy access to the provincial center. The second district was further and the third was the furthest. However, with good road conditions, the trip from every sampled district to the provincial urban center can be made in 2 hours or less by car. One sub-district of each sampled district was selected according to its size of population in order that approximately 50 youth could be recruited for the study.

2.3 Recruitment of Samples

The problem that the researcher faced was that it was not possible to obtain a large number of young people from selected rural areas. Many youth were no longer in the villages because they had gone to nearby towns, or to other urban places as well as Bangkok. There were few young people living in each village. To solve this problem, the Community Development Officers at the provincial level were contacted to identify potential sub-districts to be studied. Those subdistricts had to have at least 50 youth residing in those areas. Approximately 50-60 youth (25-30 males and 25-30 females) from each sub-district were recruited for the study.

It was also difficult to identify and bring together the young villagers, especially those who were not in school as they were usually working, or looking for a job and were therefore not available at the same time. The village headman or the leader of a youth group in a village (if available) was approached and asked for cooperation in identifying youth who met the criteria and arranging for them to be brought together. Another strategy used for improving attendance rate was that the questionnaires were administered only on weekends or in the evening when youth returned from school or from their work.

2.4 Data Collection Instruments

Accessing information concerning premarital sexual activity in a setting such as Thailand where premarital sexual activity is still a sensitive issue in Thai society is quite difficult (Chompootawee et al. 1988; Prasartkul et al. 1987 and Yoddumnern, 1981). As education has been compulsory in Thailand since 1921 and was initially compulsory through grade 4, and is presently compulsory until the end of grade 6, it is assumed that most Thais, particularly the young, are literate. This study used structured self-administered questionnaires (SAQ) to obtain data. The use of SAQ enhances privacy and allow respondents to feel free to answer personal questions that may not be admissible if asked by using face-to-face interview technique. In addition, eight focus group discussions were conducted.

2.4.1 *The administration of the questionnaire*

To administer the questionnaire, respondents were gathered together at a designated place, for example, a reading center, a temple, a community multipurpose hall. Respondents were divided into two groups - male and female. They were required to sit apart from each other when filling out the questionnaire to preserve privacy and reduce shared responses. A classroom setting was avoided.

Respondents were given the questionnaire, then the moderator gave an informal talk and explain the purpose of the study, the need for complete and honest responses. The moderator read and explained each part of the questionnaire. The moderator was also present at all time to answer individual questions the respondents may have. The respondents were informed that their answers to all questions would be kept strictly confidential, and in particularly, that neither parents nor anyone else would have access to any of their answers.

The questionnaire consists of approximately 80 questions. It took the respondent about 30 to 45 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire was designed by beginning with neutral, easy to answer questions about family characteristics, schooling, and employment in order to prepare the respondent for more personal questions. These more personal questions were related to their sexual attitudes and practice including information about their knowledge, attitudes and practice of family planning and sexual transmitted diseases.

This methodology has proven to be effective for both provincial urban and rural youth in a previous research project conducted by the Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University (Prasartkul et al., 1987). The study found

the methodology has several advantages; 1) the respondents feel free to answer all questions, 2) fewer interviewers and time are needed to conduct the survey, reducing study costs, and most importantly, 3) all respondents were administered the questionnaires at the same time, therefore there was no discussion and opinion that would affect other respondents' answers.

However, there are some disadvantages for example: 1) some respondents had difficulty in understanding questions, and 2) answers may not be complete or consistent. These problems were minimized through a careful pretest of the questionnaire and an orientation before filling out the questionnaire. In this study, only 4 out of 1,232 questionnaires were not completed and therefore were not used for the analysis. The following analysis is based on 1,228 questionnaires derived from 623 males and 605 females.

2.4.2 Focus group discussion

In addition to quantitative data derived from self-administered questionnaire, at the end of the fieldwork, 8 focus group discussion were conducted. The focus group discussions are expected to help address the reasons why particular attitudes held by respondents. None of the young adults who fill out questionnaires participated in the focus groups as these discussions provide an independent cross check on the validity of the survey data and their attitudes were not influenced by questions and options that existed in the questionnaire. There were approximately 7 to 9 participants in each focus group. Participants in each focus group were homogeneous with respect to gender and marital status. Altogether four focus group sessions were held in each region, one such discussion with never-married males, one with never-married females, one with never-married males, and one with never-married females.

2.5 Analytical Procedure

The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics to describe the young men and women in regard to their socio-economic and demographic characteristics, family background, lifestyles and socialization, attitudes towards premarital sexual behaviour, attitudes towards family planning and sexually transmitted diseases, sexual behaviour within and outside marriage, and contraceptive behaviour within and outside marriage. A comparison between younger (15-19) and older (20-24) age group and between never-married and ever-married young person were undertaken where appropriate. These data were interpreted in light of results from the focus group discussions.

Chapter 3

YOUTH, FAMILY AND FRIENDS

3.1 Profile of Respondents

The sample consisted of 623 males and 605 females aged 15-24 years. They were from rural areas of 3 provinces in the North and 3 provinces in the Northeast of Thailand. The profile of sampled youth in respect to age group, region of residence, rank among siblings, and living arrangement by marital status and gender are shown in Table 3.1. The majority of the respondents were never married (over 90 percent). Just 12 percent of respondents from the Northeast and 10 percent of the northern respondents ever married. Between males and females, in both regions, females were more likely to have been ever married than were males. Among those who were ever married, approximately 10 percent were divorced or separated.

The proportion of never-married samples from the Northeast was a little higher than that from the North. However, among ever-married respondents, proportion of northeastern respondents was much higher than their northern counterparts. There was no difference in the proportions of male and female respondents in each region.

Approximately 70 percent of respondents were in the 15-19 age group. The much smaller proportion of respondents in 20-24 year age group may be due to the fact that youth in this age group are very mobile. They are more likely to work or study outside their community. The average age of the entire sample was 18.3 years

old. The average age of male respondents was higher than the average age of female respondents.

Regarding differences in average age by marital status, ever-married males and females were older than never-married males and females. The average age of ever-married males was 21.1 years old and 20.7 years old for ever-married females. For never-married respondents, average age of males was slightly higher than females (18.3 versus 17.7).

Almost half of the never-married samples were the eldest children in their families. But only one-fourth of the ever-married were in the first rank order of siblings. When taking region of residence into consideration (data by region are not shown in a table), rank order of siblings of northern respondents was concentrated in the first and the second order. On the other hand, only half of respondents from the Northeast were ranked at the first three orders. Approximately one-fourth of them was ranked at the fifth and higher orders. Moreover, the average number of siblings of northern respondents was only 3.0 while the comparable number of northeastern respondents was 4.7. These findings confirm the pattern of regional differences in levels of fertility with the North displaying lower level of fertility than the Northeast (Chamrathirong and Guest, 1992).

Regarding current living arrangement, the majority of never-married respondents lived with their parents. Over 60 percent of ever-married respondents were still living with their parents. Only one-third of ever-married respondents was living with their spouses. A small proportion of youth was living with relatives and other persons. Among those who were not living with parents or a spouse, most

were students living with relatives, friends, and highly respected persons in their villages such as a monk, teacher, and village headman.

Table 3.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents by Marital Status.

Characteristics	Never-married			Ever-married		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Age						
15-19	69.5	78.5	73.8	28.3	36.4	33.6
20-24	30.5	21.5	26.2	71.7	63.6	66.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Average age	18.3	17.7		21.1	20.7	
Region of residence						
North	47.8	46.8	47.3	41.3	42.0	41.8
Northeast	52.2	53.2	52.7	58.7	58.0	58.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Rank among siblings						
First	41.2	49.1	45.0	29.1	24.5	26.8
Second	26.9	28.0	27.4	22.0	19.3	20.7
Third	14.3	7.9	11.2	14.4	16.9	15.6
Fourth and higher	17.6	15.0	16.4	34.5	39.3	36.9
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Living arrangement						
Father and mother	81.2	83.2	82.1	50.0	55.7	53.7
Father	3.3	2.7	3.0	6.5	4.5	5.2
Mother	11.0	8.1	9.6	8.7	3.4	5.2
Relatives	3.7	5.2	4.4	6.5	2.3	3.7
Spouse	0.0	0.0	0.0	26.1	33.0	30.6
Others	1.3	0.0	0.9	2.2	1.1	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of cases	(577)	(517)	(1,094)	(46)	(88)	(134)

The distribution of educational attainment of youth by marital status and gender is shown in Table 3.2. Forty percent of sampled youth were in-school students, this proportion also included 4.8 percent of youth who were enrolled in non-formal education. The majority of ever-married youth were not in school. Only 4 percent of ever-married youth were enrolled in non-formal education. For never-married youth, female youth were more likely to be in school and to be enrolled at a higher level of education than males. This is not surprising since studies indicate that at present parents are encouraging their daughters to be educated (Knodel and Wongsith, 1989; Havanon and Knodel, 1993). It may also imply that many male youth left their communities to look for jobs elsewhere or to obtain their education outside their communities, while female youth obtained their education in the community or in the town nearby and still stayed with their parents. Among those who were out-of-school, both ever- and never-married, the majority completed primary level which is the compulsory level of education for Thais.

Table 3.2 Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Educational Attainment by Marital Status and Gender.

Educational Attainment	Never-married		Ever-married	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
In school youth:				
Level attaining				
Primary school	0.3	0.6	0.0	0.0
Junior high school	14.2	18.4	0.0	0.0
Senior high school and higher	21.9	25.8	0.0	0.0
Non-formal school	4.9	4.6	4.3	5.7

(Cont.)

Table 3.2 (Continued)

Educational Attainment	Never-married		Ever-married	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Out of school youth:				
Level completed				
Primary school	43.1	41.8	71.7	77.3
Junior high school	9.5	5.6	17.4	11.4
Senior high school and higher	5.8	3.3	6.5	4.5
Non-formal school	0.2	0.0	0.0	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of cases	(577)	(517)	(46)	(88)

Table 3.3 shows the distribution of respondents classified by employment status, type of job, gender and educational status. About 39 percent of sampled youth were working at the time of the survey. Among those who were not employed, 46 percent used to work. One-third of the respondents (32.8 percent) had never worked. When looking at schooling status, approximately two-thirds of in-school respondents were not employed. On the other hand, about 57 percent of those who already left school were employed. There was no difference in proportion of in-school males and females who were working at the time of the survey. However, a higher proportion of out-of-school males than females had worked. The three major occupations of respondents were agricultural, unskilled waged labour, and skilled waged labour. Working for government or state enterprise, and private organizations were the least common. Unskilled labour, skilled labour, and factory workers predominated among respondents who used to work but were not employed at the time of the survey. These people might be engaged in temporary jobs such as unskilled labours that usually are hired and paid on the daily basis. Some might

take factory jobs outside their communities and had returned home by the survey period. The proportions of males were higher than females in almost every kind of job. The exceptions were in the categories of factory workers and sales.

Table 3.3 Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Work Status by School Status and Gender.

Employment Status/ Type of Work	In school		Out of school	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Currently working/ Type of work:				
Agriculture	3.8	2.7	24.3	19.1
Sale	1.7	2.3	1.6	3.5
Unskilled labour	5.8	8.1	16.5	7.0
Skilled labour	4.6	3.1	10.5	6.7
Government employee	1.3	0.0	1.8	1.7
Private organization	0.0	0.4	1.6	1.4
Services/ Waiter/ Waitress	1.3	0.8	0.5	0.9
Factory worker	0.4	1.2	1.8	6.4
No answer	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.0
Not working but used to work/ Types of work:				
Agriculture	1.3	0.4	2.1	5.8
Sale	0.8	1.5	1.3	1.7
Unskilled labour	13.3	8.1	14.4	11.9
Skilled labour	4.2	1.5	6.0	4.6
Government employee	0.8	0.0	0.3	0.0
Private organization	0.8	0.8	2.1	2.6
Services/ Waiter/ Waitress	0.4	0.8	1.8	2.0
Factory worker	0.8	2.3	2.6	9.3
No answer	0.4	0.0	0.0	0.0
Never worked	58.6	66.2	9.7	15.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of cases	(577)	(517)	(46)	(88)

3.2 Family Background

With respect to parents' characteristics, Table 3.4 shows parents' marital, educational, and occupational status. Most of respondents' parents were married and living together. Only 5 percent of them separated or divorced. Approximately 10 percent of respondents had lost either father or mother and less than one percent had lost both parents.

The majority of parents had finished primary (compulsory four years) education. However, fathers on the average, had higher levels of education than mothers did. There were 6 percent of fathers who had education higher than primary school compared to only three percent of mothers. The difference in educational level also reflects the difference in occupations occupied by fathers and mothers of respondents shown in the same table.

Almost all of respondents' parents were working. Only less than one percent and 5.5 percent of respondents' fathers and mothers respectively were not working. The majority were engaged in agriculture. A higher proportion of mothers than fathers engaged in sales and trading. The proportion of fathers in professional occupations such as government or state enterprise employee was about 5.6 percent whereas 1.5 percent of mothers' responses fell into this category.

Table 3.4 Percentage Distribution of Parents' Characteristics by Gender.

Parental Characteristics	Male	Female	Total
Parent's marital status			
Living together	79.8	80.8	80.3
Separate because of work	3.0	2.1	2.6
Separated / divorced	4.8	6.3	5.5
Father or mother passed away	11.4	10.4	10.9
Both parents passed away	0.6	0.3	0.5
No answer	0.3	0.0	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Father's education			
Primary school	78.8	78.3	78.6
Junior high school	1.3	2.6	2.0
Senior high school	2.7	3.1	2.9
Vocational school	0.6	1.0	0.8
College/ University	0.8	0.5	0.7
No education	5.5	5.6	5.5
Father passed away	8.5	7.8	8.1
Don't know/ no answer	1.8	1.0	1.4
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mother's education			
Primary school	85.6	86.4	86.0
Junior high school	1.8	0.7	1.2
Senior high school	0.5	0.8	0.7
Vocational school	0.3	0.5	0.4
College/ University	0.6	0.5	0.6
No education	6.6	7.6	7.1
Mother passed away	3.4	2.5	2.9
Don't know/ no answer	1.3	1.0	1.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

(Cont.)

Table 3.4 (Continued)

Parental Characteristics	Male	Female	Total
Father's Occupation			
Agriculture	66.1	63.1	64.7
Sale	6.9	6.3	6.6
Unskilled labour	8.0	10.9	9.4
Skilled labour	3.2	3.6	6.4
Government employee	5.1	6.1	5.6
Not working	0.3	0.3	0.3
Father passed away	8.5	7.8	8.1
Don't know/ no answer	1.8	1.8	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Mother's Occupation			
Agriculture	69.5	66.9	68.2
Sale	10.6	11.1	10.8
Unskilled labour	6.3	9.1	7.7
Skilled labour	1.9	1.5	1.5
Government employee	1.4	1.5	1.5
Not working	4.7	6.1	5.4
Mother passed away	3.4	2.5	3.0
Don't know/ no answer	2.2	1.3	1.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number of cases	(623)	(605)	(1228)

3.3 Socialization of Youth

3.3.1 *Interaction with family members*

Interaction within the family is expected to be an indicator of closeness of the respondent to his or her family. In this study, respondents were asked whether they have any discussion among family members. As shown in Table 3.5, there was no difference in frequency of discussing general matters for males and females and

for ever-married and never-married youth. Almost two-thirds had some discussions among family members, with responses range from quite often to very often. Only 1.6 percent of never-married and 3.0 percent of ever-married youth said they hardly ever or never had discussions within the family.

When asked about more relaxed interaction with other members of their families, such as, chatting and teasing, the proportion of ever-married youth reported having this kind of interaction much more often than did never-married youth. The differences between ever-married and never-married youth may be accounted for the stricter discipline for never-married youth who stay with their parents. On the other hand, ever-married youth were more likely to stay with their spouse. Their relationship differs from the relationship between parents and child.

Table 3.5 Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Interaction with Family Members by Marital Status and Gender.

Interaction with Family Member	Never-married			Ever-married		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Frequency of discussing about general topics						
Very often	32.1	31.5	31.8	37.0	33.0	34.3
Somewhat often	38.1	42.4	40.1	32.6	37.5	35.8
Once in a while	27.4	25.3	26.4	30.4	25.0	26.9
Hardly ever/never	2.4	0.8	1.6	0.0	4.5	3.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Frequency of chatting/teasing with others						
Very often	24.3	33.3	28.5	43.5	40.9	41.8
Somewhat often	36.2	37.7	36.9	30.4	33.0	32.1
Once in a while	35.7	26.5	31.4	26.1	23.9	24.6
Hardly ever/never	3.8	2.5	3.2	0.0	2.3	1.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(577)	(517)	(1,094)	(46)	(88)	(134)

3.3.2 The first person that the young will consult when they have serious problems

Respondents were asked to name the first person whom they would talk to when they had serious problems. The results are presented in Table 3.6. There are differences in the kinds of people young males and females reported as a person whom they consulted most. Among never-married youth, females were most likely to name their mother. It is likely that these females were being socialized in the same way their mothers had. Males were equally more likely to talk to their mother or father. It should be noted that only two-thirds of never-married and half of ever-married youth would consult their parents when they had serious problems. Males were also more likely than females to make a decision about the problem by themselves. A higher proportion of females than males talked to friends or sisters.

The pattern of persons that ever-married youth would first talk to when they had serious problems differs from the never-married counterparts. For married females, proportion of those who named a mother decreased and there was a substantial increase in the spouse category. Among married males, fathers were most important whereas mothers were reported less as a person the young married males would discuss their problems with.

Table 3.6 Percentage Distribution of the First Person that the Young Talk to When They Have Serious Problems by Marital Status and Gender.

First Person Young People Talk to	Never-married			Ever-married		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Decide by self	14.1	6.8	10.6	10.9	9.1	9.7
Father	32.1	11.6	22.4	43.5	13.6	23.9
Mother	33.2	55.8	43.9	17.4	36.4	29.9
Brother	3.0	1.2	2.1	0.0	0.0	0.0
Sister	3.5	7.6	5.4	6.5	2.3	3.7
Friends	10.4	15.5	12.8	4.3	3.4	3.7
Boy/ girlfriend/ spouse	1.0	0.0	0.5	17.4	34.1	28.4
Other person who has close relationship	2.8	1.6	2.2	0.0	1.1	0.7
Total Number	100.0 (577)	100.0 (517)	100.0 (1,094)	100.0 (46)	100.0 (88)	100.0 (134)

3.3.3 *Having close friends*

In responding to a question asking whether they had close friends, young people were more likely to socialize with persons of the same sex. Table 3.7 shows that both ever-married and never-married females were most likely to report they had close friends of the same sex as them. Among male youth, the proportion of ever-married males reported having close friends of the same sex is 43.5 percent while 61.4 percent of never-married males reported so. Higher proportion of ever-married males and females than never-married reported they had close friends of both sexes. It is more likely that friends of both husband and wife became friends of the couple. Slightly higher proportion of female for both ever-married and never-married, on the other hand, reported they did not have any close friend.

Table 3.7 Percentage Distribution of Sex of close Friends by Marital Status and Gender.

Sex of Close Friends	Never-married			Ever-married		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Same Sex	61.4	72.5	66.6	43.5	61.4	55.2
Opposite Sex	4.5	1.4	3.0	8.7	2.3	4.5
Both Sexes	32.1	23.8	28.2	41.3	27.3	32.1
No Close Friend	2.1	2.3	2.2	6.5	9.1	8.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(577)	(517)	(1,094)	(46)	(88)	(134)

3.3.4 *Frequency of going out with friends*

Frequency of going out refers to how often the respondent person spends the evening with friends outside his or her home. Going out can be regarded as a necessary prerequisite if the young are to have the opportunity to engage in sexual intercourse. The more frequently the young person goes out, the more he or she is exposed to peers, their standards and the opportunity for sexual interaction. Moreover, going out implies the freedom of young people to socialize with their peers. The question was phrased as "How often during the week do you socialize with friends outside the home in the evening?" Table 3.8 presents a wide range of frequency of going out. Respondents spent a considerable part of their leisure out of the home. As expected, males were more likely to socialize outside their own home than females. Though a slightly higher proportion of females than males reported they never socialized with friends in the evening, almost half of never-married females reported they met with their friends every evening. For ever-married youth, both males and females, frequency of socialization outside the home with friends in

the evening decreased. It may indicate that married women have increased their responsibilities in household chores.

These answers may not indicate activities that young people did and degree of socialization among young people but it implies that most rural young people have frequent social interaction with their peers outside their home in the evening.

Table 3.8 Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of Spending the Evenings with Friends outside His or Her House, Marital Status and Gender.

Frequency of Meeting Friends in the evening	Never-married			Ever-married		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Never	2.9	7.2	4.9	0.0	9.1	6.0
Once in a while	12.3	14.5	13.3	15.2	25.0	21.6
1-2 times a week	14.0	16.6	15.3	8.7	20.5	16.4
3-4 times a week	14.9	13.9	14.4	30.4	11.4	17.9
Everyday	55.8	47.8	52.0	45.7	34.1	38.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(577)	(517)	(1,094)	(46)	(88)	(134)

3.4 Exposure to Mass Media

There is not much difference between males and females in exposure to some types of the mass media (see Table 3.9). Most respondents often listen to radio and watch television, however, a larger proportion of females was more likely to frequently listen to radio and watch television than males. Significant difference between males and females in exposure to entertainment outside the house is noted when asked about seeing movies, a higher number of males than females reported

they see movies quite often. Moreover, a proportion of ever-married females who reported never went to see movies in the past 6 months increased. These answers may reflect the greater freedom of going out and spending time outside the house of males compared to females as well as the increasing responsibilities in the household for married females.

Table 3.9 Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Frequency of Exposure to Mass Media by Marital Status and Gender.

Type of Mass Media/Frequency	Never-married			Ever-married		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Radio						
Everyday	37.1	31.7	34.6	39.1	25.0	29.9
Somewhat often	35.4	40.2	37.7	28.3	39.8	35.8
Once a while	21.7	25.0	23.2	26.1	27.3	26.9
Never	5.9	3.1	4.6	6.5	8.0	7.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Television						
Everyday	41.9	55.1	48.2	45.7	56.8	53.0
Somewhat often	30.7	30.2	30.4	26.1	28.4	27.6
Once a while	21.7	25.0	23.2	26.1	27.3	26.9
Never	4.0	1.9	3.0	0.0	1.1	0.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Movies						
Everyday	8.5	3.1	5.9	10.9	10.2	10.4
Somewhat often	35.4	17.6	27.0	21.7	8.0	12.7
Once a while	44.0	50.3	47.0	54.3	43.2	47.0
Never	11.8	28.8	19.8	13.0	38.6	29.9
No answer	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Newspaper						
Everyday	12.0	17.2	14.4	6.5	12.5	10.4
Somewhat often	43.8	42.2	43.1	34.8	30.7	32.1
Once a while	30.7	27.5	29.2	43.5	38.6	40.3
Never	13.2	13.2	13.2	15.2	18.2	17.2
No answer	0.3	0.0	0.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(577)	(517)	(1,094)	(46)	(88)	(134)

Differences in the proportion of males and females in the frequency of meeting friends and going out for movies can be explained by different socialization processes for male and female adolescents in Thailand. Boys compared to girls are often given fewer responsibilities and allowed considerable freedom. Girls are given more responsibilities toward family and household and have much less social freedom (Rabibhadana, 1984).

3.5 Experience of Living away from Home

The migration rate of Thai population is high, particularly migration from rural areas to provincial urban areas and to Bangkok. Migration surveys in Thailand have found that migrants are predominantly young men and women. These migrants move mainly because of economic reasons. Table 3.10 demonstrates that approximately one-third of the young people in this study had ever been away from their house or their family for more than one month. The proportion of males who had ever been away was slightly higher than females. Half of the females who ever left home went to Bangkok while 40 percent of males who ever left home did so. The second major destination was provincial urban areas of different provinces. The proportion of youth who went to rural areas was the smallest. Only 2 males reported they went to work in a foreign country.

Table 3.10 Percentage Distribution of Respondents Who Ever Lived Away from Home for More Than One Month Since They were 13 Years Old and Places of Destination.

Experience/ Destination	Male	Female	Total
Ever lived away from home for more than a month			
Yes	33.4	28.4	30.9
No	66.6	71.6	69.1
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(623)	(605)	(1,228)
Places of Destination			
Provincial urban (same province)	11.5	14.5	12.9
Provincial urban (different province)	27.9	26.2	27.1
Rural area (same province)	12.0	5.2	8.9
Rural area (different province)	5.3	2.9	4.2
Bangkok	40.4	50.0	44.7
Foreign country	1.0	0.0	0.5
No answer	1.9	1.2	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(208)	(172)	(380)

Most of the young in this study temporarily left their home because of economic reason. As shown in Table 3.11, one-third of them engaged in unskilled waged labour when they were away. About 13 percent of males had a job as skilled labour while 9 percent of females fall in that category. To work as a factory worker was the second most important activity when away from home. Sixteen percent of females and 13 percent of males had worked in factories when away from home. Approximately 12 percent of the young participated in summer and sport camps, with the majority of these youth activities supported by the Department of Community Development, the Ministry of Interior.

Table 3.11 Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Works and Accommodations while They were away from Home by Gender.

Work/ Activities	Male	Female	Total
Ordained as a monk	5.3	0.0	2.9
Visit/ pleasure	4.3	7.6	5.8
Summer school/ sport camp	12.0	11.6	11.8
Vocational training	0.5	2.9	1.6
Agriculture	2.4	1.7	2.1
Sale	7.7	4.7	6.3
Unskilled labor	30.8	36.6	33.4
Skilled labor	12.5	8.7	10.8
Government employee	1.4	0.0	1.6
Services/ waiter/ waitress	2.9	5.8	4.2
Factory workers	13.0	15.7	14.2
Fishery	2.9	0.0	1.6
No answer	4.3	4.7	4.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Person with whom / places where the young stayed while they were away			
Parents	1.9	1.2	1.6
Brother/ sister	14.4	14.5	14.5
Relatives	36.5	43.6	39.7
Employers/ place of work	22.1	19.2	20.8
Friend/ acquaintance	17.8	8.1	13.4
Rented house/ dormitory	4.8	11.0	7.6
Training center	1.0	0.6	0.8
No answer	0.4	1.7	1.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
(Number)	(298)	(172)	(380)

Social networking has been found as an important factor contributing to high migration rate in Thailand. It is common for Thais to migrate to places where they have relatives, friends, and acquaintances. As also demonstrated in Table 3.11,

the majority of youth who ever lived away from home stayed with relatives, brother/sister, friends and acquaintances at their place of destination. Females were more likely to stay with relatives while higher proportions of males stayed with friends. Females were also more likely than males to stay in a dormitory. About 21 percent of the young who ever migrated stayed at places employers provided.

Chapter 4

ATTITUDES TOWARD PREMARITAL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR

Premarital sexual attitudes may have an impact upon behaviour and timing of marriage. The more permissive the attitudes the more likely that premarital sexual activity will occur earlier. On the other hand, the subsequent early marriage may occur as a result of premarital sexual relationship. In this section, attitudes and experience of sex-related behaviour of ever-married and never-married youth were analyzed. For the never-married, comparison of early (15-19 years) and late (20-24 years) youth was examined whenever it was possible.

4.1 Premarital Sexual Attitudes

Attitudes toward premarital sexual behaviour of rural women and men are shown in Table 4.1. The survey responses indicated that most of them disapprove of sexual activity before marriage among youth their age. However, there are differences in attitudes between young men and women. Among never-married respondents, both males and females have more liberal attitudes towards male premarital sexual behaviour than that of female behaviour. Approximately 63 percent of males and 95 percent of female respondents stated that never-married women should not have sex before marriage, while only 27 percent of male and 63 percent of female thought the same about premarital sexual activity for unmarried men. It is interesting that the relatively large percentages of both males (26 percent) and females (21 percent) agreed that unmarried men should be able to have sex with any women they want. At the same time only 7 percent of males and 1 percent of females agreed to this kind of behaviour for women. This approval may indicate an

acceptance of sexual activity with prostitutes. Males exhibited more liberal sexual attitudes than females. It should be noted that for both never-married male and female respondents, older youth had more liberal attitudes about premarital sex than did their younger counterparts.

Ever-married males were more permissive than ever-married females. However, ever-married males in this study were less permissive about premarital sexual behaviour than their never-married counterparts. It is interesting that ever-married females were more permissive toward premarital sexual behaviour than never-married young females. Even the attitude that men should be able to have sex with any women was more acceptable to ever-married females than for ever-married males. This permissive attitude may be related to age of respondents. For example, never-married respondents who were in older age group had more permissive attitudes than the younger ones. Another reason is that after marriage, it is generally accepted that men would engage in extramarital sexual relationships, mostly with commercial sex workers. Married men who frequent prostitutes are not seen as unfaithful. It is considered to be better situation than husband's having a minor wife since there would be no obligation or responsibility in this kind of involvement.

Table 4.1 Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Attitudes Toward Premarital Sexual Behavior of Women and Men.

Attitudes toward premarital Sex of women and men	Never-married				Ever-married	
	Male		Female		Male	Female
	15-19	20-24	15-19	20-24	15-24	15-24
Women should never have sex before marriage	65.3	94.6	57.7	94.6	71.7	85.2
Women may have sex with steady boyfriend before marriage	22.2	3.4	30.9	2.7	21.7	11.4
Women may have premarital sex with their acquaintances.	4.5	1.0	6.3	0.9	4.3	1.1
Women should be able to have premarital sex with any man they want	8.0	1.0	5.1	1.8	2.2	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Men should never have sex before marriage	30.4	64.8	17.7	55.9	32.6	46.6
Men may have sex with steady boyfriend before marriage	35.2	12.6	38.9	16.2	30.4	19.3
Men may have premarital sex with their acquaintances.	9.7	3.0	16.0	2.7	13.0	3.4
Men should be able to have premarital sex with any woman they want	24.7	19.7	27.4	25.2	23.9	30.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(414)	(209)	(438)	(167)	(46)	(88)

4.2 Premarital Sexual Standards

Based on answers to attitudes toward premarital sexual relationship of "single women" and "single men" shown in Table 4.1, five premarital sexual standards were constructed and results are shown in Table 4.2. Rural young females generally had conservative attitudes toward premarital sexual relationship. Among never-married females, 63 percent hold an abstinence standard which means that both men and women should not have sexual relations before marriage. One-third of them said that premarital sex should be allowed for males but not for females. Rural never-married males also have conservative attitude toward premarital sexuality. Slightly more than one-fourth of them held the abstinence standard while 38 percent stated that premarital sexual relationship was acceptable for males but not for females. Males are more likely to support premarital sexual activity if a man and a woman are in love with each other (23 percent of males compared to 2.5 percent of females). The most permissive standard, men and women may have sex with any one they want, was held by 13 percent of never-married males and less than 3 percent of never-married females.

The premarital sexual standards of ever-married youth indicate that males have more permissive attitude than females. However, the proportion of ever-married females who held conservative attitudes dropped to 47 percent compared to 63 percent of never-married females. Nevertheless, almost 40 percent of both sexes held the double standard that premarital sex is legitimate for males under any conditions but not for females. These attitudes clearly indicate a double standard pertaining to premarital sexual behaviour that strongly exists in Thai society.

Table 4.2 Percentage Distribution of Respondents by their Premarital Sexual Standards.

Premarital Sexual Standards	Never-married		Ever-married	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Abstinence before marriage (wrong for both sexes)	26.2	62.9	32.6	46.6
Double standard (legitimate for males under any condition but not for females)	37.6	31.7	39.1	38.6
Permissiveness with affection (if both are in love)	22.9	2.5	23.9	10.2
Permissiveness with affection for female (but not necessary for male)	6.2	1.7	2.2	2.3
Permissiveness without affection	7.1	1.2	2.2	2.3
Total Number	100.0 (577)	100.0 (517)	100.0 (46)	100.0 (88)

4.3 Perception of Parents' Attitude toward Premarital Sex of Children

An indirect indicator of parents' attitude toward sexual intercourse of their children was asked and results are shown in Table 4.3. Never-married respondents were asked what would be the reaction of their parents if they learned that the respondent had premarital sexual relationship. Double standards pertaining to premarital sexual relationship for males and females are also reflected in these responses. For males, parents would be more likely to accept males' premarital sexual behaviour. One-third of males said their parents would accept what they did

and 2 percent of them said their parents would pay no attention to it. On the other hand, only 9 percent of never-married females thought that their parents would accept and none of them said their parents would ignore it.

The perception of youth on parents' attitudes toward premarital sex further shows that the traditional marital customs are highly regarded. Approximately 60 percent of females said their parents would ask them to get married as soon as possible and 40 percent of males thought their parents would do the same. It is interesting that very few young people said their parents would talk and discuss with them. Some of the young said they would not even let their parents know about their behaviour. These answers reflect the prevalence of traditional norms regarding premarital sexual behaviour of young people, particularly among females. It may also indicate the lack of parent-child communication in this matter. Most parents do not talk about sexual related knowledge with their children.

Table 4.3 Percentage Distribution of Respondents' Perception of Parents' Attitudes toward Premarital Sex of children by Age and Sex

Parents' Attitudes	Male			Female		
	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total
They will accept.	29.8	38.5	32.5	8.6	10.1	8.9
They will ask respondent to get married as soon as possible.	36.6	45.0	39.2	59.3	60.6	59.6
They will not allow respondent to see the sexual partner again.	25.1	11.8	21.1	21.5	14.7	20.0
They will be regret and unhappy.	1.3	0.6	1.1	8.3	12.8	9.3

(Cont.)

Table 4.3 (Continued)

Parents' Attitudes	Male			Female		
	15-19	20-24	Total	15-19	20-24	Total
They will ignore it.	2.9	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
They will not accept it.	1.6	0.6	1.3	1.5	1.8	1.6
They will talk/ discuss the matters.	1.8	2.4	2.0	0.5	0.0	0.4
Respondent will not let the parents know about his/ her sexual behavior	0.8	1.2	0.9	0.3	0.0	0.2
Total Number	100.0 (414)	100.0 (209)	100.0 (603)	100.0 (438)	100.0 (197)	100.0 (605)

Chapter 5

PREMARITAL SEXUAL EXPERIENCE

5.1 Premarital Sexual-Related Behaviour

The sociocultural and gender norms that send contradictory message about sexuality and impose different standards of behaviour for boys and girls affects the expression of sexual experience of males and females in Thai society. As shown in Table 5.1 males were much more likely than females to experience premarital sexual related behaviour. Almost two-thirds of males reported they have ever masturbated while only 10 percent of female did so. There were also large and significant differences between male and female never-married youth in reporting had ever dated with 58 percent of males and 17 percent of females stating that they had dated. For other sexual related behaviour, such as holding hands and kissing, males reported that they ever had those experiences in much higher proportions than females. Male and female respondents in the older age group were more likely than the younger respondents to experience these sexual-related behaviours.

For the most intimate behaviour, having intercourse, half of the never-married young males had experience of intercourse, while only 2.1 percent of never-married young females did so. This result confirms findings from other studies that sexual experience is common for young Thai males while engaging in causal sex is a very rare phenomenon for never-married young Thai females, particularly in rural areas. This is consistent with the reports of respondents regarding their attitudes toward premarital sex in which females were more traditionally oriented than males.

Experience of premarital intercourse among ever-married respondents is more common than for the never-married respondents. Almost all of the ever-married males reported having premarital sexual relationship while many of the ever-married females also did so. As Table 5.1 shows, 89 percent and 19 percent of ever-married males and females respectively reported having sexual intercourse before they married. The higher percentage of ever-married females than never-married females who reported having premarital sexual intercourse (19 vs.2 percent) may be due to the fact that premarital sexual relationship leads to marriage as part of social control. On the other hand, married females may not be reluctant to admit that they had premarital sexual intercourse since most of them had premarital sexual relationship with their present spouse.

Table 5.1 Percent of Never Married Young People Reported Ever Had Premarital Sexual Related Behaviors and Percent of Ever Married Who Had Premarital Sexual Intercourse.

Sexual Related Behaviors	Never-married				Ever-married	
	Male		Female		Male	Female
	15-19	20-24	15-19	20-24	15-24	15-24
Masturbation	53.8	77.8	6.9	10.8	-	-
Dating (going out alone with a friend of opposite sex)	50.8	73.9	16.3	18.0	-	-
Holding hands	53.9	64.2	26.6	30.6	-	-
Kissing	37.2	61.4	5.7	5.4	-	-
Having premarital sexual intercourse	37.4	79.0	2.2	1.8	89.1	19.3
Number	(414)	(209)	(438)	(167)	(46)	(88)

The proportion of both males and females who have had sexual intercourse rose steeply with age, with almost all having experienced intercourse by the end of their teenage years (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 Proportion of Never-Married Male Youth Who Had Sexual Experience by Age.



5.2 First Intercourse Experience

5.2.1 *Age at first intercourse and age at marriage*

The age when respondents had their first premarital sexual intercourse ranged from 13 to 20 for males and 13 to 23 years old for females. Males experienced their first sexual intercourse at a younger age than females (16.6 vs. 17.6). Table 5.2 shows approximately 28 percent of sexually experienced males reported that they had their first intercourse before they reached age 15.

Among the ever-married respondents, the average ages of marriage were 20.1 and 18.1 years for males and females respectively. There was not much difference between the average age at first intercourse between males and females (17.3 and 17.1 years). But the difference between age at first intercourse and age at marriage for males was greater than for females (2.8 and 1.0 years). Obviously males were more likely to engage in sexual intercourse than females before they got married. On the other hand, most of the ever-married females had premarital intercourse with the men who became their present spouses and they got married soon afterward.

Table 5.2 Percentage Distribution of Respondents by Age at First Premarital Sexual Intercourse.

Age at First Sexual Intercourse	Never-married		Ever-married	
	Male (N=288)	Female (N=11)	Male (N=41)	Female (N=17)
13	0.7	(1)	0.0	(1)
14	5.9	(-)	9.8	(1)
15	21.5	(1)	2.4	(1)
16	21.1	(1)	26.8	(4)
17	22.5	(1)	24.8	(3)
18	15.9	(4)	9.8	(3)
19	8.7	(2)	9.8	(2)
20	3.5	(-)	7.3	(1)
21	0.0	(-)	7.3	(-)
22	0.0	(-)	2.4	(1)
23	0.0	(-)	0.0	(-)
No answer	0.3	(1)	0.0	(-)
Average age at first intercourse	16.6	17.6	17.3	17.1
Average age at first marriage	NA	NA	20.1	18.1

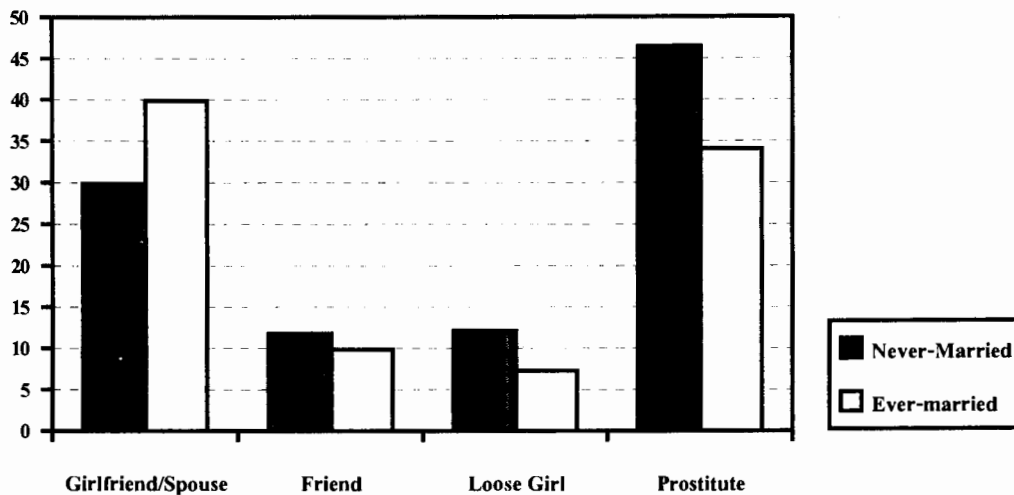
Note: For males only the total percentage is provided while numbers are shown for females at their respective ages.

5.2.2 *First sexual partner*

The results of this study show male-female differences in the type of the relationship in which first intercourse occurred. The results are shown in Figure 2. Almost half of never-married males reported that a prostitute was their first sexual partner. This shows that prostitution is a major component of sexual culture for young men, who see visiting prostitutes as a source of enjoyment. Prostitutes are also important sources of experience where a man could learn about sex. Only 30 percent of never-married males reported that a girlfriend was their first partner. The comparable percentage for females was 100 percent (results not shown).

Types of first sexual partners of ever-married males were different from those of never-married males. Prostitutes were reported as the first sex partner of 34 percent of ever-married males. Almost half of ever-married male youth who had sexual intercourse before marriage reported non sex workers or girlfriends as the first sex partner. Half of these partners were their current spouse.

Among ever-married females, boyfriend and current spouse were persons most frequently cited as first premarital sexual partner. It is clear that the first sex experience for rural young women occurred in a committed relationship and in emotionally intimate relationships, while for men the relationship could be casual. This difference is consistent with the view that males are more likely to view sexual activity as an end in itself and do not restrict intercourse to a particular type of relationship. Women, however, seem to view coitus within the framework of romantic and marital relationships (DeLamater, 1987).

Figure 2 First Sexual Partners of Male Youth Who Had Premarital Sex

5.2.3 Motivation for having first premarital intercourse

Responses to the reasons for having first premarital intercourse as presented in Table 5.3 also indicate differences between young men and women in their type of the first sexual relationship. Young females were more likely to engage in premarital sexual intercourse because they were in love. Almost half of those who ever had premarital sexual relationship did not expect the intercourse, it just happened. The majority of young males had their first sexual intercourse because of curiosity. Sexual desire was not a major reason for female to have premarital sexual intercourse while relatively high proportion of young males (66 percent) said this was a reason. These answers may reflect a sense of personal-control over their sexuality, males are more likely to initiate sexual activity than females. It is interesting that peers' influence was somewhat important for the young men. Approximately 40 percent of young men said they wanted to be the same as their friends while only one female reported that reason. Most ever-married young males reported curiosity

as one important reason for their first intercourse experience. Sexual desire and love were the second and third reasons cited by ever-married men. Pressure from peers is also quite important for this group.

Almost half of females reported that they did not expect that sexual intercourse would occur, it just happened. One-fourth of them was not willing to have their first sexual intercourse. It is because of pressure from the partner, they could not resist. For ever-married females, slightly more than half of them said they were in love, however, at the same proportion, they were not willing to have sex, it was pressure from the partner. Again, this confirms that females viewed sexual relationships as an intimacy and romantic love as well as a commitment to a relationship while most males had their first sexual intercourse because of curiosity and sexual desire. In Thai gender scripting it is expected that the man makes the sexual advances and the woman is expected to resist. Women who engage in sexual intercourse viewed it as "submission." They perceived it as love and commitment. Some surrender to pressure because they want to sustain the relationship and please their boyfriend.

Table 5.3 Reasons for Having First Premarital Intercourse Reported by Respondents Who Ever Had Premarital Sex.

Reasons	Never-married		Ever-married	
	Male (N=288)	Female (N=11)	Male (N=41)	Female (N=17)
Curious	87.2	(4)	92.7	(5)
In love	42.6	(5)	73.2	(9)
Wanted to be like friend	40.1	(1)	34.1	(1)
Sexual desire	66.1	(1)	75.6	(4)
Chance it just happened	36.7	(5)	12.2	(3)
Pressure from partner/ peers	9.7	(3)	43.9	(9)

Note: The responses are based on multiple-response questions. For females the numbers in parenthesis refer to number of responses not percentages.

5.3 Current Sexual Behaviour of Sexually Experienced Never-Married Youth

One objective of this study is to identify the risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases by the young. Among the unmarried, 289 males and 11 females ever had sexual intercourse. At the time of the survey, 183 males and 4 females were sexually active in the past six months prior to the survey. The current sexual partners reported by never-married youth is presented in Table 5.4. All four females reported their boyfriends as their current sexual partners while males reported various types of girls as their sexual partners. Prostitutes were still a major type of sexual partner, followed by girlfriends and friends.

Table 5.4 Percentage Distribution of Never-married Youth Who were Sexually Active and Their Sexual Partners during the Past 6 Months.

Current Sexual Behavior/ Sexual Partners	Male	Female
Currently Sexually Active		
Yes	63.3	(4)
No	36.7	(7)
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(289)	(11)
Current Sexual Partners		
Girl/ boyfriend	32.2	(4)
Friend	32.8	(-)
Loose girl	9.3	(-)
Prostitute	61.7	(-)
Number	(183)	(4)

Note: Multiple-response question

Table 5.5 shows patterns of sexual partners of sexually active young men. The patterns of sexual partners are important as they relate to the risk of contracting STDs. It should be noted that young men in this study did not confine their sexual relationship with their girlfriends. Though 70 percent of young males who experienced sexual intercourse had only one sexual partner, half of them had a prostitute as their current sexual partner. Among others who had a single partner who was not a prostitute, partners varied from girlfriend, friend, and loose girl. Almost one-third of sexually active young men were having sex with more than one sexual partner. Among those who currently had multiple partners, almost all had a prostitute as one of their sexual partners. Close attention should be paid to these people as to whether they were using any STD protection when they have sex with prostitutes since venereal diseases may be transmitted to other sexual partners, e.g., girlfriends and friends.

Table 5.5 Percentage Distribution of Pattern of Sexual Partner of Sexually Active Never-Married Males.

Pattern of Sexual Partner	Percent	Number of Cases
Girlfriend only	15.8	29
Friend only	13.7	25
Loose girl only	4.9	9
Prostitute only	35.0	64
Girlfriend + friend	2.7	5
Girlfriend + prostitute	8.7	16
Girlfriend + friend + loose girl	1.1	2
Girlfriend + friend + prostitute	3.3	6
Girlfriend + loose girl + prostitute	0.5	1
Friend + prostitute	11.5	21
Friend + loose girl + prostitute	0.5	1
Loose girl + prostitute	2.2	4
Total	100.0	(183)

5.4 Factors Associated with Sexual Behaviour before Marriage of Young Males

The comparison of characteristics of young men who reported ever had premarital sexual intercourse and those who never had premarital sex are presented in Table 5.6. It is clear that age, marital status, school enrollment, employment status, and experience of living away from home are related to premarital sexual intercourse experience of young males. The proportions of those who had premarital sexual intercourse are similar among those who lived in the North and in the Northeast.

Among the 15-19 year old never-married males, 39 percent of them already had sexual intercourse. The percentage for 20-24 year old never-married males who experienced sexual intercourse increased to 80 percent. The majority (89 percent) of ever-married young men reported having sexual intercourse before getting married while a smaller proportion (50 percent) of never-married male respondents reported having such experience.

There is significant difference in premarital sexual experience by schooling, employment and migration experience of young male respondents. Approximately two-thirds of young men who have already left school, those who were employed or ever employed, and those who ever been away from their family had experienced premarital sexual intercourse. Only one-third of those who were in school, were not employed, and never been away from home had sexual intercourse before marriage.

When looking at living arrangement, there is a significant difference between those who lived with both parents and those who lived with either a father or a mother or other relatives. Young males whose both parents were presence in

the family were less likely to have premarital sex when compared to young males who lived with only one parent or with other relatives.

Table 5.6 Percentage Distribution of Male Youth by Selected Characteristics and Experience of Having Premarital Sexual Intercourse.

Characteristics	Had Premarital Sexual Experience	Did not have Premarital Sexual Experience	Total
Age group ***			
15-19	39.1	60.9	100.0
20-24	80.4	19.6	100.0
Region of Residence			
North	54.2	45.8	100.0
Northeast	51.8	48.2	100.0
Marital Status ***			
Never-married	50.1	49.9	100.0
Ever-married	89.1	10.9	100.0
School enrollment ***			
In-school	32.1	67.9	100.0
Out-of-school	66.2	33.8	100.0
Employment ***			
Not working	31.1	68.9	100.0
Used to work / Currently working	61.7	38.3	100.0
Parents' marital status			
Married	51.2	48.8	100.0
Divorced/ separated	50.0	50.0	100.0
Widowed	65.3	34.7	100.0
Living arrangement *			
Father and mother	50.6	49.4	100.0
Father or mother / others	61.5	38.5	100.0
Experience of living away***			
Yes	70.2	29.8	100.0
No	44.3	55.7	100.0

Test of Chi-Square Significance

* P < .05 ;

** P < .01 ;

*** P < .001

5.5 Extra-Marital Sexual Relationship among Currently Married Respondents

The primary reason for studying ever-married youth in this study is that many studies find that a high proportion of married men are still sexually active with sex workers. It is also widely documented that the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases among men is almost entirely attributed to contact with prostitutes. Moreover, condoms are one of the least popular methods used for family planning among married couples since many people perceive that condoms are used either specifically or implicitly as a venereal disease prophylaxis. Therefore wives are at high risk of STDs and HIV infection from husbands if they had unprotected sex with husbands who contracted STDs from prostitutes.

Among 41 currently married males and 79 currently married females in this study, 9 males and 2 females admitted they ever had extra-marital sexual relationships. Commercial sex patronage among married males is not as common as among never-married men. Sexual partners for currently married males who had extra marital sexual relationship varied from lover, friend, loose girl, to prostitute. The two females had extra-marital sexual relationship with their lover.

Table 5.7 Percentage Distribution of Ever-married Youth who Reported Having Extra Marital Sexual Relationship by Type of Partner and Gender.

Ever had extra marital sex	Male		Female	
	Percent	(N)	Percent	(N)
Never had	78.0	(32)	97.5	(77)
Ever had	22.0	(9)	2.5	(2)
With :				
Lover		(1)		(2)
Friend		(3)		
Loose girl		(2)		
Prostitute		(3)		

Chapter 6

KNOWLEDGE, ATTITUDES, AND PRACTICE OF CONTRACEPTION

It is important to know whether the young are aware of contraceptive methods. This is because the main factor behind Thailand's rapid fertility decline has been the acceptance of contraception as a means of fertility control. Knowledge and attitudes about contraceptive use may help in understanding not only the acceptance of family planning in the future but also the risk of getting pregnant and contracting STDs of those who are engaging in sexual activity.

6.1 Knowledge of Contraceptive Methods

This study found that rural Thai youth appeared to have a high level of contraceptive knowledge. The young were asked whether they know of or have heard of contraceptive methods. As shown in Table 6.1, most of the young knew or had heard about the pill, followed by injectable, sterilization, condom and IUD. The proportion of youth who reported of knowing these methods ranges from 43 percent to 82 percent. It is interesting that 21 percent of youth also mentioned Norplant, the latest method approved by the Ministry of Public Health. In general, females were found to be more knowledgeable about methods than were males. The only exception is that higher proportion of males than females reported they knew or had heard about the condom.

When taking marital status in to account, knowledge of contraceptive methods of never-married males was found to be significantly lower than that of never-married females. However, among ever-married youth, there was no difference in the

proportion of males and females who reported knowing or having heard of contraceptive methods. To what extent knowledge and positive attitudes toward contraception among the young will encourage their future practice of contraception is unknown. However, it is reasonable to assume that knowledge and positive attitude towards birth control is related to subsequent practice.

Table 6.1 Percent of Respondents Who Ever Heard/Known of Contraceptive Methods by Type of Method, Marital Status and Sex.

Contraceptive Methods	Never-married		Ever-married	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Pill	71.8	91.9	82.6	86.4
Injectables	46.6	74.6	73.9	78.4
IUD	39.0	45.5	47.8	45.5
Norplant	15.6	23.8	58.2	50.6
Condom	58.2	50.6	67.4	51.1
Sterilization	53.9	61.6	58.7	51.1
Number	(577)	(517)	(46)	(88)

Note: Multiple-response question

6.2 Attitudes toward Use of Family Planning

The positive attitude toward family planning among respondents in this study is, however, reserved for family planning practiced by married couples only. This is not surprising as the National Family Planning Program only promotes the use of contraception marriage. Attitudes toward use of contraceptive are shown in Table 6.2. Half of never-married males and 71 percent of never-married females

agreed that married couples who do not want to have children should practice family planning. The proportion of those who agreed that family planning should be used only within marriage increased to 72 and 77 percent of ever-married males and females respectively. The more liberal attitudes toward using contraceptive methods was found in 24 percent of never-married males who said anyone can practice family planning, even if they are not married, while only 14 percent of never-married females said so. Ever-married women were found to have more liberal attitudes toward using family planning than did ever-married men.

Regarding contraceptive decision making, in many developing countries, women have little say in what they intend to do with regard to their reproductive role. However, it has been argued that cultural barriers to the adoption of contraception in Thailand are almost non-existent. Also the high degree of female autonomy in Thailand has been argued to give women a large role in reproductive decisions (Knodel et al., 1987).

Questions were asked to gain some indication of how the young view contraception and reproductive decision making. Respondents were asked who should be the one to use birth control, husband or wife. Approximately 59 percent said the wife, while 29 percent said whoever agrees to use it, and only 6 percent thought it should be the husband. However, when asked about who should make the decision regarding the number and timing of having children, the majority said both husband and wife should discuss this. Almost the same proportion of males and females, 6 and 5 percent respectively said the wife should make decision about the number and timing of having children. Twelve percent of males and only 2 percent of females thought that the husband should be the one who makes the decisions.

The most common solution to an unwanted pregnancy is induced abortion. Abortion is legal in Thailand in very restricted circumstances, involving the consent of a physician, and related to situations that endanger the mother's health. In this study only 4 percent and 1 percent of never-married males and females respectively saw that induced abortion should not be permitted in any circumstance. The most frequent response was that abortion should be allowed in a situation where to continue the pregnancy would be harmful for mother and child. However, a smaller proportion of males than females agreed to this situation. It may imply the lack of knowledge of how pregnancy may affect the health of mother and child among male respondents. It also should be noted that many of respondents were reluctant to show their attitude toward induced abortion, with almost 30 percent having no opinion about this issue.

Table 6.2 Percentage Distribution of Attitude about Family Planning among Respondents by Marital Status and Sex.

Attitudes	Never-married		Ever-married	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
(In general) Who should practice family planning?				
No one should because it is against nature.	5.2	1.6	6.5	4.6
Married couples who do not want to have children.	50.1	70.9	71.7	77.3
Anyone can practice, though they are not married.	23.6	13.6	8.7	15.9
Don't know / no idea.	21.1	14.0	14.0	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(Number)	(577)	(517)	(46)	(88)
Among husband and wife, who should use contraceptive methods?				
Husband	5.0	8.7	4.3	3.4
Wife	63.1	52.0	67.4	70.5
Anyone who agrees	24.6	34.4	26.1	23.9
Don't know/ no idea.	7.3	4.8	2.2	2.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(Number)	(577)	(517)	(46)	(88)

(Cont.)

Table 6.2 (Continue)

Attitudes	Never-married		Ever-married	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Who should make decision regarding the number, timing and spacing of children?				
Husband	12.0	1.2	13.0	5.7
Wife	5.4	5.0	8.7	4.5
Relatives	1.2	0.0	0.0	0.0
Husband and wife	81.5	93.8	78.3	89.8
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(Number)	(577)	(517)	(46)	(88)
In what situation should abortion be allowed?				
Should not be allowed in any circumstance.	3.1	0.8	10.9	4.5
Should be allowed in a situation when to continue the pregnancy would be harmful for mother and child.	33.4	46.0	34.8	47.7
Should be allowed if a woman does not want to have a child at the time she is pregnant.	29.3	27.3	23.9	26.1
No opinion.	34.1	25.9	30.4	21.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
(Number)	(577)	(517)	(46)	(88)

6.3 Intention to Use Family Planning

In order to assess the potential family planning use, questions on intention to use contraception in the future were also asked. Rural Thai youth shared with their elders a positive attitude toward the use of family planning. Most never-married respondents said they would use contraceptive when they got married (Table 6.3). There is little discrepancy between males and females in intention to use contraception. The pill was the most popular method they intended to use. A

higher proportion of females intended to use the pill and injectables while males were more likely to plan to use condoms and vasectomy. Among those who did not intend to use contraceptive, the major reason for not planning to use contraceptive methods was because they wanted to have children. Only a few respondents reported being afraid of the side effects and some said they never thought about contraception.

Table 6.3 Percentage Distribution of Contraceptive Plans and Contraceptive Method That Never-Married Youth Plan to Use When They Get Married.

Family Planning Method Used	Male	Female
Plan to use:		
Pill	31.2	52.4
Condom	18.9	2.5
Injectables	13.7	16.8
IUD	3.5	2.9
Withdrawal	0.3	0.6
Safe period	4.2	3.1
Female sterilization	6.8	6.8
Vasectomy	4.5	1.4
Did not specify the method	0.3	0.4
Not planning to use because:		
Want to have children	10.7	6.0
Afraid of side effect	1.7	3.1
Don't like	1.6	0.0
Inconvenience	0.2	0.0
Don't know about methods	0.5	0.0
Don't know how to get a method	0.2	0.0
Never think about it	1.6	3.7
Did not give any reason	0.2	0.2
Total	100.0	100.0
(Number)	(577)	(517)

6.4 Use of Contraception at First Intercourse

Respondents who ever had premarital sexual intercourse were asked about their use of contraceptive method during first intercourse and about their current use of a method. A high level of knowledge of contraceptives is not followed by a high rate of practice. Table 6.4 shows that among never-married men who ever experienced sexual intercourse, approximately 54 percent said they used condom, 12 percent used the pill, 3 percent reported using withdrawal and one percent used injectables at their first intercourse. However, 30 percent of never-married males who experienced sexual intercourse did not use any method at the time of first sexual intercourse.

Among the 11 females, only two females used contraceptive methods when having first sexual intercourse. One female reported her sexual partner used a condom, and another used withdrawal while 9 females did not use any method. This is understandable as most did not plan to have sexual intercourse. Also the use of contraception involves a communication and negotiation process which is difficult for Thai women who are socialized to be sexually reserved. By expressing the need to take precautions she may convey an image of being sexually knowing, experienced and active in the use of contraceptives.

The pattern of family planning methods used by ever-married respondents who had premarital sexual intercourse is associated with the type of sexual partner and reasons for having first sexual intercourse. Since females did not expect a sexual relationship, almost all of them did not use any method. Only one ever-married female reported her partner used a condom and another reported using

withdrawal. Almost half of young males did not use any method. About one-third used a condom. Withdrawal and pills were used by 10 and 7 percent of males respectively.

Table 6.4 Percentage Distribution of Respondents Who Had Premarital Sexual Intercourse by Contraceptive Method Used at First Intercourse.

Contraceptive Methods	Never-married		Ever-married	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
Pill	11.8	(-)	7.3	(-)
Condom	54.3	(1)	36.6	(1)
Injectables	0.7	(-)	0.0	(-)
Withdrawal	3.1	(1)	9.8	(1)
Did not use any method	30.1	(9)	46.3	(15)
Total (Number)	100.0 (289)	(11)	100.0 (41)	(17)

Note: For females the number in parenthesis refers to the number of cases not percentage.

6.5 Family Planning Practice among Ever-Married Youth

When married youth were asked whether they have ever discussed family planning with their spouse, 90 percent answered yes. The proportion of currently married youth practicing birth control methods is also quite high. Table 6.5 shows that approximately 80 percent of currently married youth reported they or their spouse were using a contraceptive method. Most of them were using efficient contraceptive methods. The pill was the most popular method, followed by the injectables. The IUD was used by 5 percent of married youth and there were six

percent of females who reported using female sterilization. One female reported her husband used withdrawal and one male used the safe period. The reason of high use of temporary methods may be because young couples have not achieved desired family size. Half of currently married respondents had no child. Among those who had children, most had only one child. There was only one female respondent who reported having three children. For those who were not currently using any contraceptive method, most were planning to have a child. Very few said they never thought of using the contraceptives.

Most of the few married respondents who reported extramarital sexual intercourse reported using contraceptives with another persons other than their spouse. Only one male and one female who had sex with a lover did not use any method. All men who had extra marital relationship with ‘loose girls’ and prostitutes used condoms. However, this study cannot assess whether they consistently used condoms.

Table 6.5 Percentage Distribution of Currently Married Youth by Current Use of Family Planning Methods

Family Planning Method Used	Male	Female
Currently using		
Pill	43.9	39.2
Condom	7.3	0.0
Injectables	22.0	26.6
IUD	7.3	5.1
Withdrawal	0.0	1.3
Safe period	2.4	0.0
Female sterilization	0.0	6.3
Not currently using because:		
Want to have children	12.2	19.0
Inconvenience	0.0	1.3
Never think about it	4.9	1.3
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(46)	(88)

Chapter 7

MALES' EXPERIENCE OF VISITING PROSTITUTES, CONDOM USE AND SEXUALLY TRANSMITTED DISEASES

Studies of sexual behaviour of young Thai men have found that their primary sexual activity is with prostitutes. In Thailand, there is social acceptance in using commercial sex for pleasure. Moreover, having sexual intercourse with prostitutes allows men to gain sexual experience. There is a saying among teens that visiting prostitutes is where male teenagers can get first sexual experience. Going to brothels is a social experience for men rather than just a sexual experience (VanLandingham and Grandjean, 1994). Moreover, the availability of low-priced prostitutes and the easy accessibility to brothels in rural areas make it convenient for young males to frequent prostitutes (Nopakesorn et al., 1991). As a result, one of the most important health problems that related to sexual behaviour of the young is contracting and transmitting of sexually transmitted diseases. This is because most young men who have ever experienced sexual relationship have sexual intercourse with sex workers. Therefore, the prevalence of sexually transmitted diseases among young men is almost entirely attributed to contact with prostitutes. The pattern of sexual partners of young men makes women who are not sex workers vulnerable to contracting STDs. Nearly all males who reported having sex with sex workers also reported being sexually active with girlfriends and friends. Thus, women who had unprotected sex with infected men are at risk of contracting STDs and HIV.

7.1 Experience of Visiting Prostitutes

7.1.1 Pattern of visiting prostitutes

It is found in this study that out of 623 male respondents aged 15-24 years, 277 or 44.5 percent of them have ever frequented prostitutes. However, approximately 58 percent of male respondents who ever had sex with prostitutes did not visit a prostitute or any other sex workers during the last six months prior to the survey. Many said they were afraid to visit sex workers for fear of getting HIV infection since they have heard about the risk from the mass media. Table 7.1 shows that many of the rural young males had an early age at first intercourse with prostitute. The age at the first visit ranges from 13 to 22 years old. The median age of first visiting sex workers of male respondents is 17 years old. However, 80 percent had their first visit at the age of 18 and under.

Table 7.1 Percentage Distribution of Male Respondents by Age at First Visiting Prostitute.

Age at First Visiting Prostitute	Percent	(Number)
13	0.7	(2)
14	3.6	(10)
15	17.7	(49)
16	20.6	(57)
17	24.5	(68)
18	18.1	(50)
19	9.7	(27)
20	2.5	(7)
21	1.8	(5)
22	0.7	(2)
Total	100.0	(277)

7.1.2 *Behaviours that are conducive to contracting STDs*

This study found that males who visit prostitutes are at risk of contracting STDs because of their behaviours that are conducive to STDs infection. Table 7.2 and Table 7.3 show the behaviours that may increase the risk of STDs infection: drinking alcohol and inconsistent use of condom during visiting prostitutes respectively.

It has been found in many studies that men who visit prostitutes usually had whisky or beer before going to brothels (Sawaengdee and Isarabhakdi, 1990; VanLandingham et al., 1993). Drinking is a part of having friends and also helps one become close friends. As VanLandingham et al. (1993) explained that men from rural areas drink alcohol frequently, indicating their boredom as well as need for companionship. The relationship of drinking alcohol and visiting prostitutes is that alcohol reduces inhibition along three dimensions: it reduces social shyness with men, it reduces sexual shyness with women and prostitutes, and it reduces concern over HIV and other STDs. Approximately 59 percent of young males who visited prostitutes in this study also reported that they had whisky or beer every time or almost every time before going to brothels. Only 11 percent of them never drink any kind of alcohol before visiting prostitutes.

Table 7.2 Percentage Distribution of Male Respondents who Ever Frequented Prostitutes by Frequency of Drinking Whisky/ Beer before Going to Brothels.

Frequency of Drinking Whisky/ Beer	Percent
Every time	23.1
Almost every time	35.4
Half-half	14.1
Seldom drink	16.2
Never drink	10.8
No answer	0.4
Total Number	100.0 (277)

The method used for STD protection that was reported by three-quarters of the young men was using condom. However, there were some misconceptions about methods of STD prevention. Some of the male respondents believed that taking medicine before or after having sex could protect them from getting STDs. Some male respondents reported that they cleaned their penis after having sex. However, approximately 20 percent did not use any method for protection against STDs. For those who reported having sex with prostitutes, only 23 percent said they used a protection method every time they had sex and 35 percent used it quite often.

Table 7.3 Percentage of Male Respondents Reported Using a Method for Preventing STDs When Having Sex with Prostitutes.

Method / Frequency	Percent
STDs Protection Method Used during First Sex with a Prostitute	
Use condom	76.2
Take medicine before having sex	1.8
Take medicine after having sex	0.4
Clean sex organ after having sex	0.4
Condom + cleaning	0.7
Condom + medicine	0.4
Did not use any method	20.2
Total Number	100.0 (277)
Frequency of Using Condoms when Having Sex with Prostitutes	
Every time	77.6
More than 50%	12.3
Half-half	6.5
Less than 50%	1.1
Never	2.5
Total Number	100.0 (277)

7.1.3 Characteristics of male youth who visited prostitutes

Characteristics of males who ever and never visited prostitute are presented in Table 7.4. There is no difference in the proportion of males who ever and never visited prostitutes between male youth who lived in northern and northeastern regions. Young males in the older age group (20-24 years old) were more likely than the younger age group (15-19 years old) to experience sexual intercourse with prostitutes. A higher proportion of ever-married young males than the never-

married males ever frequented sex workers. The striking differentials were observed for school status and employment: in-school versus out-of-school and currently working and used to work versus never work. Out-of-school youth were more likely to have had sexual experience with prostitutes. Similarly, young males who were currently employed or who were ever employed were more likely to engage in commercial sexual relationship than those who never worked. Understandably personal freedom and resource are the most important factors. These findings may be explained by the increasing sexual drive by increasing age, combined with greater independence and increased resources for leisure of those who already left school as well as those who have been employed compared to those who were in-school and unemployed.

Characteristics of young males who were still sexually active with prostitutes and those who have stopped frequenting prostitutes in the past six months prior to the survey are compared and presented in Table 7.5. It is found that higher proportion of male youth who lived in the North were sexually active with prostitutes than those who lived in the Northeast. Moreover youth who were in the older age group were more likely than the younger counterparts to continue having sexual relationship with prostitutes. The difference was also observed for those who were married compared to single respondents. Almost all ever-married youth reported having stopped visiting sex workers in the past six months, while almost 20 percent of never-married male youth were sexually active with sex workers. Approximately one-fourth of those who ever had sex with prostitutes and who were out of school were sexually active with prostitutes while only 10 percent of their in-school counterparts did so. Regarding employment status, those who were not employed were more likely than those who were employed to stop visiting prostitute. Among those who had a prostitute as their first sexual partner, half of

them were still sexually active with prostitute, while three quarters of those who have their first sexual experience with a non sex worker changed their behaviour. It is also interesting that those who always drink whisky or beer before going to a brothel were less likely to stop visiting prostitutes. Those who never drink were more likely to change their behaviour than those who often drank alcohol before visiting prostitutes.

Table 7.4 Percentage Distribution of Male Respondents by Selected Characteristics and Experience of Visiting Prostitutes

Characteristics	Ever Visited Prostitute (N=277)	Never Visited Prostitute (N=346)	Total (N=623)
Region of residence			
North	44.4	55.6	100.0
Northeast	44.5	55.5	100.0
Age group ***			
15-19	32.4	67.9	100.0
20-24	68.4	31.6	100.0
Marital status **			
Ever married	65.2	34.8	100.0
Never married	42.8	57.2	100.0
School status ***			
In-school	23.8	76.2	100.0
Out-of-school	57.6	42.4	100.0
Employment status ***			
Never work	24.3	75.7	100.0
Ever worked / Currently working	52.6	47.4	100.0
Experience of living away ***			
Yes	61.5	38.5	100.0
No	35.9	64.1	100.0

Test of chi-square significance

* P < .05 ;

** P < .01 ;

*** P < .001

Table 7.5 Percentage Distribution of Male Respondents Who Ever Had Sex with Prostitutes by Selected Characteristics and Visiting Prostitutes in the Past 6 Months

Characteristics	Sexually Active with Prostitute (N=117)	Not Sexually Active with Prostitute (N=160)	Total (N=277)
Region of residence*			
North	22.4	77.6	100.0
Northeast	15.5	84.5	100.0
Age group ***			
15-19	14.3	85.7	100.0
20-24	27.8	72.2	100.0
Marital status **			
Ever married	8.7	91.3	100.0
Never married	19.6	80.4	100.0
School status ***			
In-school	10.0	90.0	100.0
Out-of-school	24.3	75.7	100.0
Employment status ***			
Never work	8.5	91.5	100.0
Ever worked / Currently working	22.9	77.1	100.0
First sex partner*			
Prostitute	49.3	50.7	100.0
Non-prostitute	34.1	65.9	100.0
Drinking alcohol before*** visiting prostitutes			
Never	26.7	73.3	100.0
Not often	39.3	60.7	100.0
Always / most of the time	46.3	53.7	100.0

Test of chi-square significance

* P < .05 ;

** P < .01 ;

*** P < .001

7.2 Attitudes towards Use of Condoms

Condom use during sexual intercourse has been shown to significantly control the spread of STDs and HIV infection among sexual partners. Though many studies have documented increasing use of condom with sex workers, it is necessary to understand attitudes towards the use of condom of young males since attitudes may determine the potential usage of condoms. In this study, only male respondents were asked about their attitudes towards condom use and attitudes about contracting sexually transmitted diseases.

Table 7.6 presents attitudes toward use of condoms of males who ever visited prostitutes compared to attitudes of those who never visited prostitutes. There is little difference between these two groups on many attitude items. Most of the young males in this study have positive attitude towards using condoms as birth control and venereal diseases protection methods. They also agreed that condoms are inexpensive and easily available. However, a much higher proportion of males who ever visited prostitutes said that using condoms is inconvenient and that it reduces sexual sensation.

Table 7.6 Attitudes toward Using Condoms of Male Respondents by Experience of Visiting Prostitutes

Attitudes toward Condom	Ever Visited Prostitute	Never Visited Prostitute
Condom is an efficient method in birth control.		
Strongly agree	22.0	14.5
Agree	54.5	52.8
Disagree	8.3	14.2
Strongly disagree	1.8	1.7
No opinion	13.4	16.8
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(277)	(346)
Condom is good for VD protection.		
Strongly agree	24.2	13.0
Agree	57.8	58.3
Disagree	6.9	14.2
Strongly disagree	0.7	1.7
No opinion	10.5	12.8
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(277)	(346)
Condom is good for using with prostitutes only.		
Strongly agree	13.4	5.5
Agree	22.8	24.3
Disagree	42.4	45.8
Strongly disagree	9.8	9.6
No opinion	11.6	14.8
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(277)	(346)

(Cont.)

Table 7.6 (Continued)

Attitudes toward Condom	Ever Visited Prostitute	Never Visited Prostitute
Condom reduces sexual sensation.		
Strongly agree	14.5	6.1
Agree	50.7	32.2
Disagree	19.6	12.8
Strongly disagree	2.9	1.7
No opinion	12.3	47.2
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(277)	(346)
Using condom is inconvenient.		
Strongly agree	14.1	5.2
Agree	46.4	27.5
Disagree	22.5	16.5
Strongly disagree	3.6	3.5
No opinion	13.4	47.2
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(277)	(346)
Condom is expensive.		
Strongly agree	5.8	0.9
Agree	8.3	8.4
Disagree	51.6	40.0
Strongly disagree	14.8	11.9
No opinion	19.5	38.8
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(277)	(346)
Condom is easily available.		
Strongly agree	18.8	11.6
Agree	58.0	52.2
Disagree	9.4	9.6
Strongly disagree	3.6	2.3
No opinion	10.1	24.3
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(277)	(346)

7.3 Knowledge of and Experience with Sexually Transmitted Diseases.

7.3.1 Knowledge of STDs

Respondents were asked to name the sexually transmitted diseases they knew of or had heard about. The results shown in Table 7.7 reflect the publicity regarding the AIDS epidemic in Thailand. Without probing, more than 80 percent of the respondents named AIDS. The second most commonly cited STD, with 54 percent of males and 40 percent of females named is Gonorrhea. The other diseases that slightly more than 10 percent of respondents named are Venereal Bubo and Syphilis. However, many of the respondents, particularly young women, named "Kam-ma-rok" which is the general term used for sexually transmitted diseases in Thai. These answers show that young men in this study were more knowledgeable about the specific names of sexually transmitted diseases than were young women.

Table 7.7 Percent of Respondents Who Named Sexually Transmitted Diseases by Gender.

Names of STDs	Male	Female	Total
AIDS	82.5	81.3	81.8
Syphilis	10.9	10.6	10.7
Gonorrhea	54.1	40.2	47.2
Venereal Bubo	17.7	4.3	11.1
Other STDs	7.1	1.0	4.1
General term of VD (Kam-ma-rok)	20.5	34.4	27.4
Number	(623)	(605)	(1,228)

Note: Multiple response questions

Questions to assess knowledge of contracting AIDS and STDs were asked. Table 7.8 shows the percentage of males and females who answered these questions correctly. In general, females were more knowledgeable than males about AIDS and STDs were contracted but the difference between these two groups is not significant. The highest correct answer rating is for the question which asked about the behaviour that can prevent a person from getting STDs. Nevertheless, almost 30 percent of the respondents were not sure whether AIDS is a curable disease.

Table 7.8 Percent of Respondents Giving the Correct Answer to Questions on Knowledge of Contracting and Prevention of AIDS and STDs.

Question/ Right answer	Male (N=623)	Female (N=605)	Total (N=1,228)
Which behavior that a person can get HIV?			
Having sexual intercourse.	90.9	94.7	92.8
Sharing intravenous needle.	92.6	95.7	94.1
Transmitted from mother to baby.	81.9	86.0	83.9
In what stages can an infected person transmit HIV?			
In every stage even there is no symptom.	80.7	86.0	80.6
Is AIDS curable?			
No.	66.8	75.7	71.2
Which behavior can prevent you from getting STDs?			
Using condom when having sexual intercourse.	92.1	95.2	93.6
Number	(623)	(605)	(1,228)

Table 7.9 further shows young males' misunderstanding about risk of contracting STDs. Almost half of males who ever visited prostitutes believed that prostitutes are free of venereal diseases because prostitutes have routinely physical examination. Approximately 20 percent believed that STDs can be treated by themselves. These proportions were slightly lower among males who never visited prostitute. However, most young males agreed that one who had sex with prostitute could get a STD even at the first visit. It should be noted that quite a large number of male youth had no opinion on these statements. It may imply that they had no knowledge about contracting and treating STDs.

Young people in this study were most likely to learn about sexually transmitted disease from sources outside their home. As shown in Table 7.10, major sources of knowledge about STDs that the respondents reported are three types of mass media namely, television, radio, and newspaper. Health personnel, teacher, and friends were also reported by at least two-thirds of young people as sources of knowledge about STDs. Slightly more than half of young people named parents and close relatives as those who provided this form of knowledge. Girlfriend and boyfriend were among the least cited of those who gave STDs knowledge. The difference in proportion between sexes was large only within categories of friends and boyfriend/girlfriend. Males were more likely than females to discuss and learn about STDs from friends. Only 25 percent of young women reported learning about STDs from their boyfriend while 41 percent of young men received knowledge about STDs from their girlfriend.

Table 7.9 Attitude about Getting Sexually Transmitted Disease among Male Respondents by Experience of Visiting Prostitutes.

Attitudes about Getting STDs	Ever Visited Prostitute	Never Visited Prostitute
VD can be treated by oneself		
Strongly agree	5.1	4.6
Agree	14.4	9.9
Disagree	42.2	37.7
Strongly disagree	19.1	30.1
No opinion	19.1	17.7
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(277)	(345)
Prostitutes are free of disease because they have routine check up.		
Strongly agree	17.7	10.7
Agree	30.3	27.2
Disagree	27.4	27.0
Strongly disagree	7.2	12.2
No opinion	17.3	22.9
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(277)	(345)
One who have sex with prostitute can get VD even at the first visit.		
Strongly agree	27.8	34.5
Agree	56.3	49.6
Disagree	6.1	4.1
Strongly disagree	3.2	2.0
No opinion	6.5	9.9
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(277)	(345)

Table 7.10 Percent Citing Sources of Knowledge about Sexually Transmitted Disease.

Sources	Male	Female	Total
Parents	56.2	56.9	56.5
Siblings / Close relatives	59.7	57.3	58.6
Teacher	78.7	75.4	77.0
Friends	81.4	67.8	74.7
Girl / Boyfriend	40.6	25.1	33.0
Health personnel	83.3	86.8	85.0
Television	89.4	92.1	90.7
Radio	89.2	90.6	89.9
Newspaper	85.7	86.0	85.8
Poster / pamphlet	75.9	69.8	72.9
Other sources	4.3	2.5	3.4
Number	(623)	(605)	(1,228)

7.3.2 Perception of being at risk of contracting STDs

When asked whether the respondents perceived themselves at risk of getting STDs, Table 7.11 shows that 68 percent of males and 75 percent of females said they were not at risk. The major reason provided was that they were not sexually active (40 percent of males and 68 percent of females). For males, using a condom when having sex is the second major reason that made them feel they were not at risk of getting STDs. On the other hand, for those who perceived that they might be at risk, the major reason is they might have sexual intercourse with someone and they don't know whether that person has a STD. The other reason given is that they may get disease from blood transfusion. It should be noted that these reasons mostly related to chances of contracting AIDS and reflected the extensive IEC campaign about AIDS carried by the mass media throughout the country.

Table 7.11 Percentage Distribution of Perception of Being at Risk of Getting STDs

Perceptions of Being at Risk of Getting STDs	Male	Female	Total
At risk because:			
May had blood transfusion	7.4	9.6	8.5
May contact with infected person	6.5	2.8	4.6
May have sex with someone	15.0	8.3	11.6
May share some facilities with infected person	2.3	3.0	2.6
May get from spouse/ boyfriend	0.0	0.5	0.2
Did not give any reason	0.8	0.3	0.6
Not at risk because:			
Not sexually active	40.1	68.0	54.3
Use/ will use condom when have sex	23.1	1.8	11.9
There is medicine to cure the symptom	0.5	0.3	0.3
Spouse/ boyfriend did not visit prostitute	0.0	0.7	0.3
Not promiscuous	2.3	3.2	2.7
Still young/ do not have any risk behavior	0.9	1.1	1.0
Did not give any reason	0.8	0.3	0.6
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0
Number	(623)	(605)	(1,228)

7.3.3 Experience of having STDs

In this study 75 males and 2 females reported ever having had a sexually transmitted disease. Percentage of respondents who ever had STDs and their treatments are shown in Table 7.12. The two females had STD treatment with doctors while only 53 percent of males who ever had STDs went to see doctors. Approximately 48 percent treated STD by themselves by buying medicine from drugstores, 17 percent had visited health personnel at health centers, while 8 percent

had no treatment at all. It should be noted that many of the young males tried more than one type of treatment. Twelve percent of them tried 2 methods of treating STDs while 7 percent sought at least 3 methods of STD treatment.

Table 7.12 Percentage Distribution of Respondents who Ever Had STDs and Their Treatment.

Ever Had STDs and Treatment	Male	Female
Ever had STDs?		
Yes	12.0	0.3
No	88.0	99.7
Total	100.0	100.0
Number	(623)	(605)
Treatments ever used: (Multiple responses)		
Bought medicine from drug store	48.0	(1)
Went to see a doctor at a clinic	26.7	(1)
Went to see a doctor at a hospital	26.7	(-)
Went to see health personnel at a health center	17.3	(-)
No treatment/ did not do anything	8.0	(-)
Number	(75)	(2)

Chapter 8

CONCLUSION, DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Conclusion

This study obtained data from 577 males and 517 females, aged 15-24 years who were never-married and 46 males and 88 females who were ever married. Data collection was conducted in rural areas of 3 provinces in the North and 3 provinces in the Northeast of Thailand during July to August 1995. More than half of the samples were not in school. Most of them had finished primary 6 which is compulsory level of education. Among those who were in school, most of them were in secondary level. Most of the youth in this study were living with their parents. However, they had high degree of freedom in socialization with friends. Moreover, they were very mobile. One-third of them ever lived away from home for more than a month. The major reason for migrating is related to economic reason.

Regarding attitudes toward and experience of premarital sex, results show that young rural Thais have retained traditional attitudes toward premarital sexual activity. The general sexual culture of youth in Thailand can be viewed as the gender construction of the "double standard". Both males and females perceive premarital sexual activity as legitimate for young men, but not for young women. Approximately half of the never-married young males in this study had experienced sexual intercourse, while only two percent of never married females reported this experience. For all girls, sexual intercourse occurred within a framework of an emotional relationship. Young women who have had sexual experience reported

their boyfriends as their first sexual partners. They had sexual relation with one partner who was a steady boyfriend. On the other hand, most of the young men reported curiosity as a major motivation for having first sexual intercourse. Moreover, boys tended to have more than one partner and did not necessarily have their first experience with a steady girlfriend. Almost half of the never-married males reported a prostitute was their first sexual partner. Only 30 percent of them reported a girlfriend as their first sexual partner. The young man who had experienced premarital intercourse was likely to be ever-married, had already left school, and had ever employed. These factors may be related to age of respondents as found that the larger proportion of men in the older age group had premarital sexual experience. Other factors that found to be related to having sexual experience of male respondents are having friends who have sexual experience and having experience of living away from home.

Approximately two-thirds of the sexually experienced never-married men were sexually active during the past 6 months before the survey. However, they were not likely to confine sexual activity to their girlfriends, but to have relationships with multiple partners, of which at least one was a prostitute.

Among ever-married respondents, higher incidence of premarital intercourse was reported. Almost 90 percent of ever-married men reported having premarital sexual intercourse. Prostitute was also found to be a major component of the sexual culture for these young men. The proportion of ever-married females who had premarital sex are also high (19 percent). However, their relationship was confining with committed relationships. Most of them reported their present spouses as their first sex partner.

Most of the respondents have heard or known about contraceptive methods. They had positive attitude toward using family planning, however, it is reserved for family planning practiced by married couples only. Most of the never-married respondents planned to use contraception when they get married. However, high level of contraceptive awareness was not followed by a high rate of practice during sex before marriage. One-third of the males who had premarital intercourse did not use any contraception at first intercourse. Also nine out of eleven females who had premarital sexual experience did not use family planning method when they had first intercourse. This is because most of them had unplanned first intercourse.

Male respondents were more likely to have more knowledge about a specific name of sexually transmitted diseases. However, females were found to be more knowledgeable than men in terms of knowledge about contracting and transmitting of HIV and STDs. Respondents tended to know about STDs from mass media such as television and radio. Other significant sources that young people learned about STDs were health personnel, teachers and friends.

Young males who ever had sexually transmitted diseases often sought different STD treatments. Some of them saw physician or other health personnel. Some of them treated it by themselves by buying medicine from drugstores.

Like other studies, it is found that almost half of the males who ever had intercourse frequented prostitutes. Nevertheless, there was a decline in frequenting prostitutes. Among those who ever frequented prostitutes, approximately 59 percent of them stopped visiting prostitutes during the past six months before the survey.

It should be noted that though male respondents had positive attitudes toward using condoms, very few of them had used condoms consistently. Responses to questions regarding STD protection shows that most of these sexual encounters occurred with inconsistent use of condoms.

8.2 Discussion

The results of this study show that generally young rural Thai females remain conservative in their attitudes toward premarital sexual activity. This does not apply to young rural men. A strong norm supporting a double standard in regard to premarital sexual relationships still exists. Both males and females see premarital sexual activities as a legitimate behaviour for boys but not for girls. However, among sampled youth, premarital sex among young males and females was generally approved of only if it occurred with a steady partner. Very few respondents approved of premarital sex when the couple had no emotional relationship.

Young men reported beginning premarital sexual activity earlier and in a much higher proportion than young women because premarital sex is accepted for men, whereas women are expected to postpone the initiation of intercourse until they marry. The influence of these factors can be interpreted in terms of their providing both physical and social opportunities for exposure to peer group values and peer group support for legitimization of sexual experience. The saying that "a man who never experienced sexual intercourse is not a real man" may help explain peer pressure that results in a high proportion of young males engaging in premarital sexual intercourse. As it is found in this study that the main reasons for boys' initial intercourse were curiosity and because of sexual drive. On the other hand, sexual

behaviour of girls was influenced more by the degree of emotional love and commitment than was the behaviour of boys.

The findings from this study clearly point to the impact of cultural construction and differences in early socialization on patterns of young rural youth's sexual behaviour. The socialization patterns impose constraints on female sexual behaviour in a variety of social and cultural contexts. In Thai society sons are given more freedom than daughters. Girls are given many more responsibilities while boys are allowed much freedom. Boys are always found in "gangs" or "hanging around" (Rabibhdana, 1984). Girls are trained to do the housework. The major reason for daughter not being given more freedom in their adolescence is the fear by parents that their daughters will be enticed or forced into premarital sex. Thai traditional values stress virginity and modesty in females and the importance of the feminine role as wife and mother. Thai women are expected to be virgins when they marry. Even if premarital sex does not occur, gossip in the community concerning the "loose behaviour of the adolescent daughter will indirectly affect their moral standing within the community (Pramualratana, 1992). Moreover, if the pregnant teenage female is in school she is usually forced to leave. If no marriage takes place, her eligibility for marriage in the future is dim, and it is a disgrace to her and her family. Finally, she and her family usually bear the greatest financial responsibility for the out-of-wedlock child.

In rural areas the traditional marital customs are highly regarded. The sexually active woman risks being the subject of gossip and jeopardizes her prospects for marriage. Woman's premarital sexual behaviour is not accepted by parents and the elderly. There is a mechanism that acts against female premarital sex in the rural areas. If a girl had gone out alone with boy or had premarital sex,

rumor of and gossip about her work effectively. The girl's parents would not be happy about this. They must demand that the boy's parents take action, and usually a marriage follows immediately after the negotiation between the boy's and girl's parents (Yoddumnern, 1981). The result from focus group discussions with young women in the North revealed the same situation. Girls cautioned that a girl risks acquiring a bad reputation if she has sex, unlike a boy, he is unlikely to be discreet if he has sex. Young girls in focus group discussions stated that they were afraid of gossip if they went out with a boy alone. However, both young women in the North and the Northeast accepted that there were some young women and young men in the village who had premarital sex but most of those couples got married soon afterward. This type of social sanction may explain the finding of this study that 19 percent of ever-married young women reported having sexual intercourse before they married, whereas only 2 percent of never-married young women reported having sexual intercourse experience. Nevertheless, it should be noted that all the ever-married women who had premarital sex reported their spouse as their first sexual partner.

Since premarital sex is socially prohibited for women, marriage remains the accepted form of obtaining access to sexual relationships. However, men have prostitutes as socially approved alternatives (Porapakham et al., 1986). There is also a general male attitude toward premarital sex that it is "the man's gain and the woman's loss." Boys do not respect girls who engage in sex as virginity for women is stressed in Thai society (PDA, 1985). Many girls in focus group discussions said they didn't want to have premarital sex even if they were in love. They were afraid of being deserted. Boys would no longer want to marry them. They thought that boys like excitement, and may not be eager to marry a girl whom he had sex with. Boys, when asked about virginity of women almost all said without hesitation that it

is very important. However, some said they would not mind marrying a girl who is not virgin if they were really in love.

This study did not find the significant relationship between parents' background characteristics and sexual behaviour of youth. This is because all of the samples were from rural areas. There was not much variation in parents' marital status, educational attainment, and occupation. However, in focus group discussions the influence of parents on young person's sexual behaviour as perceived by young males and females was different. Young women believed that whether parents were married or divorced, does not affect children's sexual behaviour. The decision to engage in sexual activity is up to oneself. No one would be able to lead her to engage in sexual activity. If a person did, it was the willingness of that person to do so. Among young men, however, a father is perceived as a role model. Some of them said they were proud of their father who were capable, especially in terms of having many sexual partners.

Since all respondents in this study were from rural areas where traditional norms and values are still very strong, the relationship between parents and children is very strict and this constrains the discussion among parents and a child about sexuality rather than facilitates such discussion. The young were most likely to learn about sex outside their home. The reasons why young people received very little knowledge from parents may be because parents themselves have little knowledge about sex. Thai parents may have traditional values about sex that would make them feel ashamed to talk about these issues to their children. Even though parents do not endorse premarital sexual relationships, they are not willing to talk with their children. Many parents think that when their children grow up they will learn about sex naturally. This result confirms the findings of Sethaput

and Pattaravanich (1993) that rural mothers provide very little knowledge of reproductive health and premarital sex to their daughters. This means that the mass media, for example, television, radio, and newspapers would be the most important source of knowledge about sex. Moreover, interaction with peers exposes young people to norms and values that affect sexual behaviour. The young may perceive peer's attitudes as desirable and behave according to their peer's values. This study finds that one reason for having first sexual intercourse reported by many male respondents was wanted to be the same as their friends. Moreover, many respondents were aware of friends' sexual experience. It may conclude that the impact of peer influence on sexual behaviour of males is quite important.

Although very few rural never-married women in this study experienced premarital sexual relationship, these women are at great risk of getting pregnant and contracting sexually transmitted diseases. Though the level of knowledge or awareness of contraception among the young people was quite high, it is not associated with high levels of use of contraception. Possible reasons for single youth not using any contraceptive method, or using less efficient methods, are cultural barriers and inaccessibility to services. Using contraception is linked to the process of defining oneself as sexually active, thus sexually active young people may take the risk of getting pregnant rather than discussing the need for contraception among themselves. Never-married young people found it more difficult to think or talk about contraception than married people. Moreover, Thai women are socialized to value virginity and sexually innocence. Being knowledgeable in sex and expressing the need to take precautions may convey an image of being sexually experienced and a contraceptive user.

This study provides information on first sexual partner and current partner only. The pattern of sexual activity between the first intercourse and the time of survey is unknown. However, it can be concluded from data presented above that never-married rural women who are sexually active as well as married women are at risk of STDs and HIV infection due to the inconsistent use of condoms and multiple sexual partners of young males. Inconsistent condom use certainly helps spread sexually transmitted diseases among prostitutes and their clients, and these practices have important implications for Thai women who are not prostitutes, since many Thai men have intercourse with both prostitute and non-prostitute partners.

Among married couples, the condom is one of the least popular methods used for birth control. Condom use has been largely confined to commercial sex encounters and thus has a negative image among monogamous couples. Asking a husband to use condom when having sex may not be appropriate since it may convey that the wife does not trust her husband. The persistence of support for the double standard has implications that go beyond the obvious ones regarding the status of women in rural Thailand. The fact that most these young men are sexually active with prostitutes, in a country in which the risk of contracting HIV is high, is alarming. Not only are these young men at risk, but this pattern of activity puts at risk the health and lives of their future wives and children.

8.3 Recommendations

Findings from this study suggest the following:

1. The double standard in respect to premarital sexual behaviour is still very strong. Studies of how young people are socialized and how attitudes about sex are constructed as well as the way to alter their attitudes and behaviour are needed.
2. One important factor that related to sexual activity of male youth is being a student in school system. Compared to out-of-school youth, students are less likely to have casual sex and to have sex with prostitute. Therefore it is important that any related intervention program should be introduced while youth are in school, prior to the onset of sexual activity.
3. Young men are often found to have concurrent multiple sexual partners which include both non-sex worker and sex workers, and they are most likely to be agents for the spread of HIV. Their attitude toward having multiple sexual partners should be altered. They should be targeted for increasing awareness of contracting HIV as well as using protection. The devastating impact of HIV infection on family or future spouse should also be emphasized.
4. The increasing incidence of sexual intercourse within courtship and the barriers preventing communication between young women and their partners suggest the importance of gender-specific programs in stressing males' responsibility regarding young women and females' self esteem and negotiation skills. The programs should inform young women about risks associated with sexual activity and provide them with resources

that will enable them to reduce their risks. They should be able to resist unprotected sex.

5. Condom use during intercourse should be promoted for dual purposes: (1) as a barrier against STDs, and (2) as a contraceptive method. This strategy would enhance the health of young men and their current and future partners, both prostitutes and non-prostitutes.

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**Institute for Population and Social Research
Mahidol University**

Salaya, Phutthamonthon, Nakhon Pathom 73170, Thailand.

Tel. (662) 441-0201-4 ext. 115 (662) 441-9666 Fax: (662) 441-9333

E-mail: directpr@mahidol.ac.th

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