HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AS A TOOL FOR EMPOWERMENT OF FEMALE SEX WORKERS: A CASE STUDY OF ONE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION PROGRAM FOR FEMALE SEX WORKERS IN THAILAND

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Thesis
Entitled

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Supawadee Petrat

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ABSTRACT

Female sex workers' rights are severely violated in Thailand. They are discriminated against and stigmatized as a social evil by every social institution within the mainstream patriarchal society. The EMPOWER Foundation works to promote sex workers' rights and has been conducting non-formal education (NFE) for female sex workers for more than two decades, with accreditation by the Office of Non-formal Education Commission (ONFEC), within Thailand's Ministry of Education (MOE).

This thesis aims to examine the process and content of the NFE program of EMPOWER. It seeks to assess whether Human Rights (HR) issues are integrated into the curriculum, to analyze the impact of the NFE program on female sex workers as well as to identify the factors which influence the empowerment of female sex workers through the NFE program. The study argues that without integrating HR issues into the NFE curriculum, it is impossible to empower female sex workers. The study was conducted at EMPOWER in Chiang Mai Province. Eleven female sex workers and five key informants were interviewed through in-depth interviews by using qualitative, feminist ethnography and a case study approach.

The findings of the study confirm that a NFE program that integrates HR issues into the curriculum is able to empower female sex workers in certain dimensions such as gaining greater self-confidence, self-respect, a sense of their own value, and self determination. Moreover, the NFE program is able to deconstruct discourses in order to counter mainstream social discourses. Therefore, HR education is seen as an important tool for empowering marginalized groups, particularly female sex workers.

KEY WORDS: HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION / NON-FORMAL EDUCATION / EMPOWERMENT FEMALE SEX WORKER / DISCOURSE ON SEX WORKER / DECONSTRUCTION

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NFE	Non-formal education
ONFEC	Office of Non-formal Education Commission
HR	Human rights
HRE	Human Rights Education
EMPOWER	EMPOWER FOUNDATION
MOE	Ministry of Education
UDHR	Universal Declaration on Human Rights
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
ICCPR	International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights
IESCR	International Covenant on Economic Social and Cultural Rights
CLC	Community Learning Center
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1.1 Rational of the study

"The sex industry exists all over the world and has huge variety of forms: sex may be sold as striptease or in go-go bars, nights clubs, pick up bars, massage parlors, saunas, truck stops, restaurants and coffee shops, barber shops, in straightforward brothels which provide no other service, via escort agencies, or on the street. Most of the people who work in these establishments lack formal contracts with the owners or managers but are subject to their control. Those who work in the sex industry are commonly excluded from mainstream society. They are thereby denied whatever international, national or customary protection from abuse is available to others as citizens, women or workers" (Kempadoo & Doezema, 1998, p. 66).

Sex workers have existed in Thailand for a long time. A letter from La Loubere, an Ambassador of France during Ayuttaya reign mentioned that there were about 600 sex workers in Ayuttaya, and there were about 4 brothels located in the Chinese community. These sex workers gave service to Thais as well as foreign men. The owner of the brothels had to pay tax to the state (Preechajareun [1] ,1969). Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh[2], a former professor of religion and philosophy at Thammasat University in Bangkok pointed out that sex workers were also mentioned during the reign of King Rama I. There was taxation of prostitutes and brothels called "tax for the road." Prostitution was legalized in 1934 by King Rama V and allowed prostitutes to be registered so that they could receive regular medical care. This Act remained in force in Thailand until 1960. In that year, the United Nations (UN) supported the abolition of prostitution. The Thai government answered the UN policy by introducing

[1] Preecahjareun is Jit Phumisak, a Thai famous writer.
[2] Dr. Chatsumarn Kabilsingh,a former professor of religion and philosophy at Thammasat University in Bangkok. She ordained as a monk.

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“The Act to Deter Prostitution," replacing the 1934 law. Through this Act, prostitution became illegal until at the present (Dave 1999).

The number of sex workers increased very rapidly. There are several factors driving women to work in the sex trade as follows:

The first factor relates to the failure of government policy. Thailand was initially based on agriculture, and has gradually developed and expanded in the industrial sector since the first National Economic and Social Development Plan from 1961 -the present day. The government opened the door to foreign investors to invest in Thailand. The agriculture sector lacked support from the government and a big gap was created between the rich and the poor.

As mentioned by Kamoltrakul (2003, p 201-213) the richest 20 percent earn 58.5 percent of the total income and the poorest 20 percent earn 4 percent of the total income. At the same time consumerism has expanded very rapidly not only in the urban areas but also in the rural areas. Men and women migrated from the rural areas to the urban areas and abroad in order to look for job. Most of them, especially women, are poorly educated due to discrimination between men and women as well as economic problems. Many women end up working as sex workers

In 1967, Thailand agreed to provide "rest and recreation" services to American servicemen during the Vietnam War and the number of sex workers increased. Many women entered the sex trade in order to serve American solders (Brock, Brooks & Thistlethwaite 1996). The withdrawal of American army bases from Thailand in 1977 had an impact in the sex industry in the country. During that time the government also promoted tourism policy in order to maintain the national income of the country. (Sophonkananan, cited in Kwanruethai 2002, p. 3).

Secondly, there are social and cultural factors. Skrobanek (1991, p. 48), expresses that the desertion by husband or lover, the loss of self-respect due to loss of virginity; the dream of having life abroad and the consequence desire to marry well-off foreign men whom they meet as tourists or are introduced to via mail-order bride companies cause women to enter sex trade as well.

Besides that, women are expected to provide financial support to the parents and members of the family in order to prove that they are good daughters. On the other hand, men can please their parents by becoming ordained as monks. In Thailand

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daughters are cast in the role of caretakers of the family. As in the rest of Southeast Asia, girls are expected to pay back their “breast milk money” (Brown 2000, p. 34).

Though there are no accurate statistics of sex workers in Thailand, the answer from the state agencies ranges between 100,000-200,000. The estimates from NGO are in the range of 1,000,000-2,000,000 (Somswasdi 2004).

The more the number of female sex workers in Thailand increases, the more violations of female sex workers rights. EMPOWER Foundation is among the few non-government organisations which attempt to work toward protecting female sex workers’ rights since 1985. Empower stands for Education Means Protection of Women Engaged in Re-creation. The organization aims to support women in the sex industry and provide opportunities for education, access to health, legal assistance and equal rights in the society. EMPOWER Foundation tries to enable women to take control of their lives and of their working conditions, and restore their pride. Though EMPOWER does not suggest to the women that they leave the industry, it understands that women’s time in this job is limited because of health risks and customers demand for younger women. So EMPOWER tries to help women to plan for their future lives.

EMPOWER has been providing the non-formal education (NFE) program for female sex workers to obtain an educational certificate with the cooperation and support of the Office of Non-formal Education Commission (ONFEC), Ministry of Education (MOE), Thailand since 1992. It’s special program that NFE provides for sex worker. There are 3 levels of education as follows: primary education, lower secondary education and upper secondary education level. The teachers are volunteers and staff of EMPOWER.

1.2 Statement of the research problem

Due to poverty, consumerism and social and cultural factors which have forced many women directly or indirectly to enter sex trade and most of them are poorly educated. When they enter the sex trade, they are subjected to economic, social and cultural as well as sexual exploitation. They are exploited severely by clients, procurers, and state authorities who determine and implement policies on commercial sex and the society as a whole.

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They are labelled and stigmatized by mainstream society under the patriarchal system like “bad” women, ‘sinful women’, ‘women who cause broken families’, ‘sex objects’, ‘property of men as customer’, ‘not human being’ and ‘no dignity’, ‘dirty women’,‘un shameful women’, whores, ‘sluts’ ,‘jai taek’ (broken mind/heart), ‘jai ngaai’ (‘feeble/easy mind/heart), ‘scorned’ etc.They are treated like they are dirty, stupid, lazy, and promiscuous trouble makers. The doctors also view them as disease spreaders, and when men have STDs (Sexually Transmitted Diseases), they call it ‘women’s disease’(Suwanphatthana 1998, p. 157-227).

As discussed by Suvarnananda (1991, p.173) the above dominant social discourse has an impact on the lives of female sex workers. One of the sex workers expressed that ‘we are all prostitutes, we are worthless. We are not worth anything and thus it is no big deal if we are treated badly’.

“I hated myself because I hated my life All the things I came to possess meant nothing. I could not face myself in the mirror. Working in prostitution lost my soul"(Boyer et al. 1993)

EMPOWER Foundation, NGO working on sex workers’ rights in Thailand reported that the police always ignore the cases when sex-workers reported rape or physical violence by the customers. The police attitude is that because they are sex workers they have no right to complain. Besides that, the police always see sex workers as criminals to be punished, and they use loopholes in the laws to take advantage of the women and get money from them. They work in poor working conditions with low paid and long working hours. Since sex work is illegal, then there is no legal protection for female sex workers and they have limitated to access to the basic human rights like health care, education, information etc.

In order to eliminate these problems facing by female sex workers in Thailand, human rights educations through NFE is one of the significant tools to empower female sex workers so as to enable them to gain more knowledge, skill and ability and leads them to gain self-respect, self determination and direct their lives within the social dominant discourse.

The UN emphasises human rights education and states clearly in certain UN mechanisms such as International Covenant on Economic Social and Culture Rights

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(CESCR), International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), International Labor Organization (ILO), and UNESCO. During the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education (1995-2004), the UN urged and supported all member states to make knowledge about human rights available to everyone through both the formal school system and through popular and adult education.

The National Education Act 1999 emphasizes education rights stating that all individuals shall have equal rights and opportunities to receive basic education provided by State for at least 12 years. Such education, provides on nationwide basis, shall be of high quality and free of charge.

EMPOWER foundation with support from ONFEC has been conducting a NFE program for female sex workers since 1992. However, there is no research to examine the content and process as well as the impact of NFE on female sex workers. Therefore, there is a need to conduct a research on this issues in order to give recommendation to certain organizations both government and non-governmental for further development of NFE programs in order to empower the marginalized groups, particularly female sex workers nationwide.

1.3 Objectives of the study

1) To examine whether the contents and process of non-formal education program given by EMPOWER as accredited by the Office of Non-formal Education Commission (ONFEC) has integrated human rights issues.

2) To analyze the impact of non-formal education on the lives of female sex workers in terms of whether non-formal education program is able to make sex workers gain more knowledge, ability, self-confidence, self-respect and self-determination and will be able to control over their lives.

3) To identify the factors which influence the empowerment of female sex workers through the NFE program.

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1.4 Research questions

1) What is the content and process of Non-formal education for female sex workers and to what extent are human rights issues integrated into the curriculum?

2) To what extent does non-formal education impact on female sex workers' lives and choices?

3) What are the factors which influence the empowerment of female sex workers through NFE ?

1.5 Research methodology

Research Design

This research employs a qualitative and feminist ethnography method and a case study research designed to document how NFE was provided to female sex workers and what were the important aspects of NFE program which led to empowerment female sex workers.

1.5.1 Selection of study area and sampling strategy

EMPOWER Chiang Mai has conducted an NFE program accredited by ONFEC since 1992. The students are female sex workers in Chiang Mai. There are about 40-50 female sex workers attending NFE class at different education levels every year such as primary education, lower secondary education and upper secondary education level. Those who graduated will receive an education certificate from ONFEC which is equivalent to the certificate of basic education in the formal education system, as well as a certificate from EMPOWER. So far, about 300 female sex workers completed the NFE program at different education levels provided by EMPOWER in Chiang Mai Province.

Before I started developing my thesis proposal, I consulted with staff of EMPOWER in Patpong in order to explore the possibility to conduct thesis on these issues. I got a positive response from them. I used convenience sampling in a selected area based on the organization's experiences working on female sex workers issues and the fact that it has conducted NFE class accrediting by ONFEC for more than 5 years. It was convenient in several aspects, firstly I have co-operated with EMPOWER

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since I worked with Friends of Women Foundation (FOW), a local NGO working on women's rights issues in Thailand. Secondly I am familiar with people working with EMPOWER and they are able to help me to access the target group. Thirdly I got approval from EMPOWER's staff in Chiang Mai Province, but I also accepted certain conditions of EMPOWER such as while I do my field work, I have to be a volunteer of EMPOWER based on my capacity. I agreed to be facilitator of EMPOWER's workshop on certain issues like gender and human rights issues, helping them to translate short document. Beside that I agreed to disseminate my thesis to the public as well as to continue supporting sex workers' rights.

I started doing my field work in April 2006 and during my field work at EMPOWER in Chiang Mai from May to June 2006, I went to EMPOWER every working day from 10 a.m.-6 p.m. for one and half months. I also volunteered to assist English teacher during the English class and helped some students to reply e-mails to their foreigner boyfriends. Beside that I also attended the workshops conducted by EMPOWER. I also attended an outreach program which not every outsider is allowed to join. I also went to a work place of a sex worker who is one of my case study and her renting room as well as her home town to attend her father's funeral ceremony at Mae Rim District, Chiang Mai. I also sometime socialised with some of sex workers and had a chance to share stories about our personal life in order to build up trust between the sex worker and myself in order to access to effective information. I felt that they are my friends.

I also have cross-checked with documents of EMPOWER and discussed with EMPOWER staff as well as the teachers of the NFE class who are EMPOWER volunteers, officers of ONFEC, and well as made my own observations of the NFE class and EMPOWER 's activities.

1.5.2 Methods for data collection

This exploratory study focused on human rights education through a NFE program as a tools for the empowerment of female sex workers. This study has been carried out through documentary research, in-depth interviews and participatory

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observation. For documenting data, I used audio recorder, note-taking, field note writing and a digital camera. For participation observation, I attended a NFE class as teacher assistant, facilitator at workshop and sitting in the class just to observe and did not take notes during class but took notes immediately after each class.

1) Documentary research

In the first phase, important and related literatures were reviewed in order to develop a better understanding of the female sex workers situation because this issue is very complicated. Besides that, it helped to develop the theoretical framework of my thesis. A variety of texts are reviewed in this part including the general situation of female sex workers, the concept of empowerment particularly women's empowerment, human rights education, the concept of NFE and feminist theories like black feminism and postmodern feminism ideology. Data collection also relates to EMPOWER's background, activities and works collected from EMPOWER publications like books, and diaries, newsletters, brochures, webpage, reports, leaflets etc. Data collection relating to the NFE and the ONFEC was collected from books, the NFE curriculum for teacher and students as well as from the website in order to understand the whole concept of NFE which is under the responsibility of the ONFEC.

2) In-depth Interviews:

This exploratory study relates to human rights education through NFE program as a tool to empower female sex workers. To find out the outcomes of human rights education through NFE, in-depth-interviews of female sex workers attending EMPOWER's NFE program were conducted in order to examine whether human rights education can make female sex workers who are labeled or are stigmatized by mainstream society as 'bad women', 'Not human beings', 'shameless women' etc to gain more knowledge, more capacities, more self-confidence, more self-esteem as well as having self-determination and self-respect. After that whether they are able to recognize their self-value and are able to resist the dominant discourse as well as are able to deconstruct social discourses and are able to control over their lives. The categories of in-depth interview between April-June 2006 as follows:

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Eleven female sex workers attended the NFE program of EMPOWER accredited by ONFEC.

Two female sex workers are at primary education level.

Pen is about 25 years old, and is a single woman. Pen was born in Burma with two brothers and one sister. Her parents are divorced. Her mother, two sisters and herself migrated to Mae Hong Son Province, in the Northern part of Thailand since she was 6-7 years old. When she grew up, she worked as a worker to carry sand from Pai river in Mae Hong Son Province, as a worker in a shop and in the rice fields. After that, her family migrated again to Chiang Mai Province about ten years ago. In Chiang Mai, she decided to run away from the family because she was beaten as well as her mother treated her badly. After running away from the family, her first job was as a waitress in a restaurant and later on, she worked in a Karaoke bar. She now still earns money to support her mother as well as for other members of the family. She never had a chance to go to school. She also does not have any official documentation.

Wanee is 22 years old, a single woman and came from Chiang Rai province, in the North of Thailand. When she was ten years old, her father brought her to work as a domestic worker with a family in Chiang Mai Province without salary. She worked as a domestic helper until she was 18 years old. She never had the chance to go to school. Her parents migrated from Burma, but their children were born in Thailand. They are in the process of obtaining Thai identity cards.

One female sex worker is at lower secondary education level

Lee is 35 years old, a widow with two daughters who are 12 and 6 years old. She was born in Fhang District, Chiang Mai Province. When she was about 9 years old, the whole family migrated to stay in Maerim District, Chiang Mai Province, a Northern part of Thailand. She was expelled from the school at lower secondary level. Therefore she decided to attend beauty salon school and opened a beauty salon shop in the village. She married at the age of twenty and divorced later on. Her mother in law persuaded her to work as a masseuse in Chiang Mai and later on she entered the sex trade working at a bar until now.

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Three female sex workers are at upper secondary education level

Da is 32 years old, a single woman. She was born in Maerim District, Chiang Mai province. She has seven brothers and sisters. All of them are now staying in different places. She still has to provide financial support to her parents who live along Thai and Burmese border. Before working in Chiang Mai, she worked as a worker in a factory at Sankampang District, Chiang Mai Province.

Nan is 20 years old, a single woman and was born in Chiang Rai Province. She is a younger sister of Wanee. She studied at lower secondary education level only for two years and quit it due to economic problems. Later on, she came to work in Chiang Mai Province and stay with her sister. She works in Karaoke bar. She and her family are in the process of applying for Thai identity card.

Ta is 24 years old, a single woman and was born in Payamengrai District, Chiang Rai province. She has one younger sister. Her father works as a head of security guard in Bangkok and her mother is a house wife. She graduated lower secondary education and could not continue her studies due to family economic problems. At the age of 15, she went to work at a factory in Bangkok and she worked in a restaurant in Samutsakhon Province, a central part of Thailand. After that she went back to her hometown and her auntie asked her to work at her restaurant in Chiang Mai. After her aunt moved to Holland, she decided to work at a bar as a cocktail waitress as recommended by her aunt.

One female sex worker completed primary education level

Tik is a 28 year old, married woman with no children and was born in Mae Ai District, Chiang Mai province. When she was young, she had no chance to go to school. Her mother passed away, but she has to provide financial support to her father. She worked at Karaoke bar in Chiang Mai.

Two female sex workers completed lower secondary education level

Dang is 35 years old, a married woman with one son and one daughter and was born in Maesuay district, Chiang Rai Province. She has 5 brothers and sisters. She came to work in Chiang Mai, when she was 18 years old, she worked as a domestic helper in Chiang Mai. After that, she worked as a waitress in a restaurant. Later on, she worked in a bar for short time and married a foreign man from Holland. Her father

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already passed away, but she still has to support her mother and her younger brothers and sisters.

Moo is 25 years old, a married woman and was born at Doi Ang Khang, Chiang Mai Province. Her parents are divorced. When she was twelve years old, her mother, five sisters and brothers including herself migrated to Chiang Mai city and stayed near the railway station. She worked as a domestic helper there. After that she worked as a worker at a shop in Nakhonpathom Province, in the central part of Thailand because her mother migrated to that province. After one year, her mother decided to go back to Chiang Mai. Moo decided to work as a waitress at a Korean restaurant. While she worked there, her colleague persuaded her to work as a sex worker. She is currently 8 months pregnant. She said that after delivery of her baby, she will go back to work at the same Karaoke bar as before.

One female sex worker completed upper secondary education level

Keng is 25 years old, a widow with one daughter who is 8 years old. She came from Lampang Province, in the North of Thailand. When she was young, her grandparents took care of her because her parents divorced. She graduated at lower primary education level and had to stop her education because of economic problems. After that she went to work in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand in order to earn money to support her grandparents. She worked in a shoe shop for a few years and got married at the age of seventeen. Later on she decided to divorce because her husband often beat her. After divorcing, she went back to her hometown and came to work in Chiang Mai as a cook in one restaurant. After that she entered the sex trade when the restaurant closed down and wanted to earn more money to support her family especially her daughter to have a better life than her.

One female sex worker completed upper secondary education level and studies at University level.

Pornpit Phakmai is about 33 years old. She is a single mother with one daughter who is 4 years old. She came from the Eastern part of Thailand. She was a

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volunteer of EMPOWER while she worked in a Bar in Chiang Mai. She is studying for a Bachelors degree at Sukhothai Thammathirat, an open university in Thailand. She also is the director of EMPOWER Chiang Mai.

Five Key informants

Five key informants were interviewed as follows:

Surang Janyam was a former coordinator of EMPOWER Patpong, Bangkok. She worked with EMPOWER for more than 10 years and was responsible for the NFE program. She is now Director of Service Workers in Group (SWIG), an NGO working on male and female sex worker issues.

Nhong was a former staff member of EMPOWER Chiang Mai for about 9 years and had responsible for NFE program.

Bo was a volunteer of EMPOWER Patpong for more than 10 years and was a student of the NFE class graduated lower secondary education level.

Pu is a volunteer of EMPOWER Chiang Mai and is responsible for NFE program.

The Director of NFE Center of Muang District, Chiang Mai Province.

3) Participation observation

In June, 2006, I observed students of NFE classes for the female sex workers as well as a workshop, an exposure trip as well as an outreach program. I also observed the atmosphere in the office when sex workers came to attend the classes, the activities after the classes and observe the words that were written on the wall, in the rest room, an office of EMPOWER. In terms of participation observation, I aimed to look at the following issues:

1. Whether the human rights issues are integrated into the curriculum.

3. Whether the students are able to participate in the class and how (such as asking questions, clarification, sharing their thought and experiences during the class).

4. Whether the process and content lead to the empowerment of sex workers and lead them to recognize their self-esteem, self values and self–dignity as well as to resist the mainstream social discourse and can construct a new social discourse.

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5. The relationship between the teacher and student
6. The general atmosphere before, during and after the classes.

1.5.3 Ethical considerations:

For my field study in Chiang Mai, I introduced myself as a researcher and before starting my field work, I had a meeting with EMPOWER's staff and volunteers in order to explain my thesis and present my interview guideline. After looking at the interview guidelines, they also gave me some suggestions like how to use the proper words which are easy to understand. Most of interviewees did not want their official name to appear in the thesis. Therefore fake names are used for case studies. I got permission from Pornpit Phakmai and Surang Janyam to use their real names. The interviews were taken according the wish and willingness of the interviewees. Before taking interviews, I had to introduce myself and explain the purpose of my study.

I also had to be careful about questions that I asked them. I also told them please feel free to answer or not answer a question that they feel is very sensitive and uncomfortable to answer. I also asked permission from them before recording. A researcher has to understand female sex worker issues particularly the ideology, beliefs of the organization and tried to avoid insensitive questions. The researcher has to believe and respect basic human rights and human dignity otherwise it's not easy to access to information.

Limitations

Time and accessibility

My field work is in Chiang Mai Province, in the North of Thailand and far from Bangkok where I live. Due to limitation of time then I could not access the target group so often and I had to make appointments with them. Sex workers also do not have much time to meet a researcher so often because they have to attend the class during day time and work during night time. I was only able to go to EMPOWER during working day from 10 a.m. 6 p.m. for one and half months.

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CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 The factors driving women to enter sex trade

Sex workers have existed in Thailand for a long time and there are several factors causing women to enter the sex trade as follows:

2.1.1 Poverty

For more than three decades, Thailand has developed into a capitalist country. The first National Social and Economic Development Plan was implemented in 1961-1966 emphasizing industrialization rather than agriculture policy. The first and the second plan emphasized on import orientation. The third National Social and Economic Development Plan placed more focus on export orientation which concerned opening up the country to foreign investors to come and invest in Thailand and give privileges to them. As discussed by Boonmomgkon et al. (2003, p. 169) the export orientation policy of development caused a high level of female migration from the rural areas. Urban employment opportunities for women expanded, especially in the service sector, while rural employment opportunities declined.

Beside that the failure of the State's entire development policy contributed to causing female to work as sex workers (Santisombat 1992).

2.1.2 The Vietnam War and tourism policy

Another factor was the US-Vietnam War and the policy of promotion of tourism. Boonmongkon et al. (2003, p. 174) mentioned that in 1967, Thailand agreed to provide "rest and recreation" services to American solders during the Vietnam War. This led to an increase in numbers of sex workers. Skrobanek (1991, p. 48-49) pointed out that before 1975, tourism policy was introduced to developing countries through international institutions such as World Bank, IMF, and USAID and it has become one of the main ways in which the country can earn foreign currencies. The products sold for tourism by the countries in Southeast Asia such as Thailand,

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Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and many other countries in the third world are not only natural resources such as sea, sand and sun but also sale of their people who are advertised as 'domesticated being' trained to serve international tourists.

At the same time, consumerism has expanded both in the rural and urban areas and has also become a cause of entering the sex trade. A study undertaken in 1990 with the aim of establishing the reasons why some Thai families encouraged their girls to become sex workers. It came up with some depressing conclusions. It found that 60% of families sending daughters to the brothels were not forced to do so because of acute poverty. Instead they were motivated by the desire to own consumer goods like television and video (*Caught in Modern Slavery: Tourism and Child Prostitution in Asia* 1992, p. 41).

2.1.3 Social and cultural factors

Another significant factor is due to social and cultural factors, constructed under the patriarchal system and socialized through families, education, religion, political institutions and media institutions in the society. As discussed by Skrobanek (1991, p. 48), a chairperson of Foundation for Women (FFW) points out that the essential factors driving women to work as sex workers within and outside their home country are not only economic hardship but also other pushing factors such as family problems like desertion by husband or lover loss of self-respect due to loss of virginity, pure inquisitiveness about life abroad or the desire to marry well-off foreign men whom they met as tourists or introduced via mail-order bride companies..

The marriages fail or the parents fail and, invariably, it is girls and women who carry the heaviest burden as the result. Sixty per cent of girls from Northern Thailand enter prostitution in order to support their parents. A majority of Thai sex workers from the north-east do so after the failure of marriage and the subsequent need to support their children (Lin Lean 1998, p. 147-9).

As mentioned by Muecke (1992, p. 891-6) Buddhist texts state that women are as capable as men of achieving spiritual perfection, unfortunately social practice does not marry with this gender–sensitive point of view. Women are seen as less spiritually refined because they are attached to the very unspiritual, material world by their basic

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reproductive functions. A woman is thought to have been born as a woman because of bad karma in a previous lifetime. In order to overcome this disadvantage a woman has to make more religious merit than men. According to Theravada Buddhist traditional of Thailand and Burma, a son may make merit by becoming a monk for a few months. But for daughter there is no similar option. Instead she is encouraged to make merit by caring for her parent. If she does this well, and earns money for her family, she can, conceivably, be reborn as a man in her next life. This desire to help their families has been identified as a powerful factor pushing young women into prostitution in Thailand.

2.1.4 Sexuality

Sexuality is one of significant factor driving women to work as sex workers and it is deeply ingrained in social and cultural norms under the patriarchy system.

> "Sexuality encompasses personal and social meaning as well as sexual behavior and biology. A comprehensive view of sexuality includes social roles, personality, gender and sexuality identity, biology, sexual behavior, relationship, thought and feeling" (Tarshi 2001, p. 4).

Sexuality and gender is all socially constructed The body is the place where biological sex, socially constructed gender, and sexuality come together. Sexual attitudes and behaviors vary considerably from society to society and across historical time period. They also said that sexuality learned from our family, our peers, sex education in school, popular culture, negotiation with partners, and listening to our own bodies. As a matter of fact women still are considered as sex objects, and women are commonly portrayed as child-like or doll-like playthings. These images flow from and reinforce macro-level patriarchal constructions of sexuality and gender based on the following assumptions: Heterosexuality is prescribed or natural for women and men, men are initiators in heterosexual encounters, and sexuality is assumed to be assertive and in need of regular release. Traditionally women have been expected to remain a virgin until marriage, untouched except by her husband, and this attitude still strong around the world. Men's sexually activity is assumed and accepted: after all, "Boys will be boys". Sexually active women and girls are likely to be condemned as

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“Sluts”**.** They also point out that this fundamental contradiction between encouraging men’s sexuality and expecting women to be chaste results in the contradiction of two categories of women: “good” and “bad” women, virgins and whores – the women men marry and the women they fool around with. This double-standard controls women’s sexuality and autonomy, and serves to divide women from each other (Kirk & Okinawa-Ray 2003, p 144).

Society exerts strong controls on sexuality, especially women’s sexuality, through social norms, values, and laws (Tarshi 2001, p. 4).

When we look back to Thai society regarding sexuality, I think the concept of sexuality is also male dominated or under socialization of the patriarchy system and this has been causing the creation of a social discourse which has impacts on the lives of female sex workers in Thailand.

Historically, the Thai tradition has defined a *kulasatrii* (“virtuous woman” or “good women”) as proficient and sophisticated in household duties; graceful, pleasant, yet unassuming in her appearance and social manners; and conservative in her sexuality. Girls are taught that a good woman remains a virgin until marriage and continues to be emotionally and sexually faithful to her husband afterwards; otherwise she is categorized as ‘bad’. As adolescents, Thai fathers are known for being particularly protective and possessive of their daughters, exercising great control over their friendships with other teenage boys. For boys, however, sexual abandon is accepted or even encouraged. They also point out that society also believes that men have more sexual desire than women and the men's sexual desires are often perceived as insatiable, with an immature, uncontrollable character like a child's craving - yet “naturally” and “instinctually” driven in a way that can hardly be limited to their spouses. Hence a man is encouraged to seek sexual pleasure as recreation, and having with commercial sex workers represent an acceptable and ‘responsible’ behavior to fulfill the sexual desires of single and married men. Some Thai fathers were known to pay sex workers to have sex with their sons as a way of giving their youngsters some sex education or acknowledging their adulthood. In primarily male colleges, senior students welcomed freshmen, most of whom had no prior sexual experience, by accompanying them to the local brothel or bars/cafes which offer commercial sex (Taywaditep et al. n.d.). Archavanitkul and Havanon state that one of the most

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consistent findings from sex research in Thailand is that minor wives and commercial sex are common sexual outlets for men of all ages, social standings, and marital statuses. This tolerance of married men's extramarital sex is merely a part of the larger double standard regarding sexual practices, which mandates different rules for men and for women (Archavanitkul & Havanon 1990).

Pyne (1994) mentioned that men have extramarital or premarital sex which will be occurred in the cases of prostitutes or an unmarried woman who seeks sexual pleasure from casual partners, is stereotyped as shallow, emotionally disturbed, and self-destructive. She presumably has lost her virginity because she was immoral, careless, gullible, or blindly following the Western code of sexual behavior. Female sex workers are subject to the same stereotype.

The expressions which characterize women who seek sexual gratification with little restraint are *jai ngaai* ("feeble/easy mind/heart"), and *jai taek* ("broken mind/heart"), suggesting that the women are morally corrupt or out of control. Together, the non-professional women who exchange sex for money and the "carefree" single women in the urban nightlife and singles scenes are categorized as *ying ruk sanuk,* or "fun-loving women," or the slang *kai long,* or "stray chicken." These "depraved" women are seen as "only good for sex but not suitable for being the mother of your children" (Taywaditep et al. n.d.).

2.2 Various perspectives on sex workers

The greater the numbers of sex workers the greater the debates about the perspectives of sex workers. There is no consensus agreement among feminist activists, feminist scholars etc. Each group has their own perspectives and it seems that it not easy to come to a compromise.

Sanitsuda Ekachai[1], a feminist journalist from The Bangkok Post which is one of the leading newspaper in Thailand interviewed Prof. Malee Preukponsawalee, a feminist academic and Jantawipa Apisuk, a female feminist activist on various perspectives on sex workers issues and they brought out four main legal propositions concerning prostitution. Firstly the **criminalization proposition** considers sex workers as bad women, but a necessary evil in the society to prevent good women from rape. Therefore, policy should allow commercial sex under strict control with

[1] A feminist journalist from Bangkok Post, an English Newspaper in Thailand.

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criminal punishment for sex workers in order to keep business discreet and to protect clients. Secondly the **legalization proposition** considers that since prostitution exists in the society and will not go away, it should be legalized and taxed. Hence, policy recognizes prostitution as profession, registers people as sex workers and regulates the sex business venue. Thirdly the **abolition proposition considers** prostitution is part of human trafficking which must be eradicated. Therefore there is a need to crack down those involved in human trafficking while helping the victims quit the flesh trade. Fourthly the **decriminalization proposition** considers although prostitution is part of human trafficking which must be eradicated, sex workers should be allowed to continue to work independently if they so wish. Therefore, it should revoke all laws which criminalize or punish sex workers. They should be given labour welfare benefits as other business employees. Consenting adults should be to sleep with customers without being exploited by pimps, procurers or business operators. Sex workers should be supported to set up groups to protect their rights (Ekachai 2003).

The Coalition against Trafficking in Women (CATW) is a non government organization which consists of network in all regions working on trafficking in women. CATW considers prostitution is sexual exploitation and supports abolition or illegal female sex workers, on the other hand The Global Alliance Against Trafficking in Women (GATWW), an international NGO working on trafficking in women, and End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism (ECPAT), an regional NGO working on child prostitution do not support abolition per se, and are concerned with extreme cases of coercion. The dominant ideology about the position of prostitution within the United Nations is that prostitution is form of sexual exploitation which should be abolished. This view has been legitimized and was passed in the resolutions and laws at conferences such as the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing, 1995 with no input from sex workers themselves (Kempadoo & Doezema 1998, p. 61).

Apisuk, a female activist noted that we have to consider sex workers as service workers under labour law protection so they will be able to access to social welfare, compensation, and healthcare as well as will be covered by the social and security law (Apisuk 2003).

Though there is no consensus agreement with a perspective appropriate to the Thai society. Mostly the various above perspectives have been tackled by women activists, academics and scholars, but we hardly hear the voices of female sex workers

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themselves. We have to look at a holistic approach to solve the problems. A step by step look at short term and long term measurement based on the protection of basic human rights. As human beings, female sex workers have the right to life, the right to liberty and security of the person, the right to equality and to be free from all forms of discrimination, the rights to privacy, the right to freedom of thought, the right to information and education, the right to health care and health protection, the right to freedom of assembly and political participation and the right to be free from torture and ill treatment. Besides that, there is a need to listen to the voices of the sex workers, how they think about those perspectives and to explain their own perspective. Many women do not want to be sex workers but in case there are some women who want to work in this field, they should be able to work based on their own choices and have access to basic human rights protection. Brown said that certainly not all sex workers are victims and not all are forced to sell their bodies. Some of women like their work-but not many-and we can raise questions about which proportion would choose prostitution as an occupation if the society had offered them any other reasonable option (Brown 2000, p. 25). As discussed by Bindman (1998, p. 67) It' s time to look at problems that they are facing now in terms of economic, social and political dimension and how to solve their problems. Society labels female sex worker as "bad" women. This identification influences sex workers' lives and devalues their dignity as human beings. He also mentioned that if we want sex worker to claim their rights as full member of local and world society. To do this we first need to identify prostitution as work. Then sex workers can be included and protected under existing instruments which aim to protect all workers from exploitation, and women from discrimination.

I think that the most significant point is that all strategies about sex worker must be based on the recognition of women's rights to self-determination to choose-on non-stigmatization and non-victimization and the prostitutes themselves can control over their lives and speak up for their own rights.

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) clearly states that everybody is born free and equal in dignity and rights, they are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in spirit of sisterhood/brotherhood, all has right to life, liberty, and security in person. The right to access health care, the right of expression, the right to organize, the right to property, the right to education.

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Everybody is equal before the law and is entitled without any discrimination, to equal protection of the law. In practice or in reality discrimination of sex workers still exists. 'We want to live like any other citizen of this country. We do not ask for much, except to be accepted as human beings' (Kempadoo & Doezema 1998, p. 203).

2.3 Empowerment and human rights education

Due to the fact that sex workers are a marginalized group and their rights are severely violated under a male dominated discourse/patriarchy system. Therefore a significant strategy to solve their problems is empowerment. Empowerment can make female sex workers aware of and recognize their dignity and their rights as a human being and they are able to control over their lives. Though the concept of empowerment become the common term in development as well as human right field. It seems that empowerment could bring positive change for better life of marginalized groups as individual, as a group as well as the policy making. Empowerment is a process which takes time to achieve and it is difficult to measure by quantitative method.

The core concept of empowerment is the idea of power. The possibilities of empowerment depend on two things. First, if the power can change and expand, then empowerment is possible. Second concept, the concept of empowerment depends upon the idea that power can expand (Page & Czuba 1999). Empowerment from women perspectives is when women can speak about gaining control over their lives, and participation in decisions that affect them in the home and community, in government and international policies. In short, empowerment means gaining control of, and participation, in decision making. Empowerment is also a process and is not, therefore, something that can be given to people. The process of empowerment is both individual and collective, since it is through involvement in groups that people most often begin to develop their awareness and ability to organize to take action and bring about change. Therefore, women's empowerment is a process of awareness and capacity building leading to greater participation, to greater decision making power and control, and to transformative action (Karl 1995, p. 14).

Beside that empowerment means adding to women's power and power means having control or gaining further control, being able to define and create from

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women's perspective, being able to influence social choices and decision effecting the whole society (not just areas of society accepted as women's place), being recognized and respected as equal citizens as human beings with a contribution to make. Power means being able to make a contribution at all levels of society and not just in the home. Power also means having women's contribution recognized and valued (Griffen 1987, p. 117-18).

There is no doubt that empowerment can make thing change and activate an important mechanism to make people, especially the marginalized group, fully recognized in their dignity, in their basic human rights as human beings. In the case of female sex workers, it's very essential to look at whether empowerment can make female sex workers gain control, of participation, of decision making over their lives based on self-esteem, self respect and free from the main stream domination discourse.

2.4 Human rights education as a significant tool of empowerment

Human Rights education is regarded as a process for the elimination of human rights violation and for building free and justice societies. The UN urges and supports all member states to make knowledge about human rights available to everyone through both the formal school system and through popular and adult education during decade for Human Rights Education 1995. The defining of human rights education is still in a dilemma. However in general we can say that human rights education is learning processes which leads to developing the knowledge, skill and value of human rights. Different definitions of human rights education have been given by different groups.

Human rights education is essential to envisioning a society that protects human rights and encourages coexistence among people from different racial, religion, social, economic, and cultural backgrounds.

The Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR) states that every body is born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in spirit of sisterhood/brotherhood. All have the right to life, liberty, and security in person, the right to access to health care, the right of expression, the right to organize, the right to property, the right to education. Everybody is equal before the law and is entitled without any

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discrimination, to equal protection of the law. particularly UDHR Article 26, paragraph 2 of the last- named which states: 'Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the UN for the maintenance of peace.

Human rights education is clearly promoted in several Conventions such as International Convention on Economic Social and Culture Rights (ICESCR). Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (CERD), Convention on the All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) as well as UNESCO According to report on the Asian Human Rights Education Trainer's Colloquium of Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC) on human rights education in school generally, human rights education helps students develop their sense of justice and fairness and promote the concept of citizenship. Human rights education therefore, is not limited to expanding knowledge but also aims to change behavior and develop skills. Human rights education is linked to the education reform movement, which advocates replacing the preoccupation with examinations with a concern for total human rights development. Human rights education is not separate from the human rights movement. During a workshop on Southeast Asia workshop: Developing Human Rights Lesson Plans, Mr. Plantilla, a human rights educator stressed challenges to human rights education is that human rights education is not merely a means to learn about human rights but also to realize them. Human rights education can, therefore, be defined as human rights empowerment. He said that the basic challenge of human rights education is translating human rights concepts into a form that affects behavior, attitude, and knowledge (*Report on the Asian Human Rights Education Trainer's Colloquium: Chaing Mai, Thailand* 2001, p. 45-49).

The potential of HRE to enable vulnerable groups to protect themselves and challenge their oppressors. Their definitions relates to words like power, empowerment, conflict, protect, defend, oppressed, and oppressor, victim, violation. The revolutionary pedagogy of Paulo Freire states that pedagogy of the oppressed must deal with the problem of the oppressed of the oppressed consciousness and the

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oppressor consciousness and can lead to solve the problems of oppression with full respect for human rights (Freire 1974, p. 1-25).

The UN Human Rights Conference in Vienna, 1993 clearly states women rights as human rights. Therefore the violation of women rights is the violation of human rights. However, human rights mechanism has to address and have specially measurement to protect women from certain violation and women's right education is one of mechanisms to solve the problems (*United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education* 1995-2004).

I think that human rights education need to address women's rights or feminist perspective in order to make students understand the root cause of the oppression and to find proper strategies to solve the problems.

Feminist thinking and feminist education is very essential for consciousness raising which emphasizes the importance of learning of patriarchy as a system of domination. Understanding how patriarchy becomes institutionalized and it is perpetuated and maintained, how men dominate the every day life of women and how women become victimized, sexist exploitation. Through consciousness raising women gain the strength which emphasized the importance of learning of patriarchy as a system of domination and want to change it. However the most important of feminist education is related to community based. The future of feminist movement must necessity think of feminist education as significant in the lives of every one. The failure to create mass- based feminist education allows mainstream patriarchy to exist in the society. However in order to make to people in the community to access feminist education, appropriate media such as books on tape, songs, radio, and television etc must be used. Feminist education has a positive impact on our lives. The sharing feminist thought and practice sustain feminist movement and feminist knowledge is for every body (Hooks 2000, p. 19-204).

Therefore the concept of HRE in this thesis relates to developing awareness of violation, raising critical thinking of social structure particularly on patriarchy structure and promoting of human rights related values like equality, dignity and justice.

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2.5 The concept of non-formal education

NFE is getting popular in many countries through out the world and became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It can be seen as related to the concepts of recurrent and lifelong learning. As the matter of fact many definitions have been carried out by both scholar as well as the UN agencies. However, there is a need to have clear definition about NFE in this thesis. Coombs and Ahmed defined as ‘any organized, systematic, education activities carry on outside the frame work of the formal (schooling) system which can provide a selective type of learning to particular sub-group of population’ (Coombs & Ahmed 1974, p. 8). The concepts have to do with the extension of education and learning throughout life, non-formal education is about 'acknowledging the importance of education, learning and training which takes place outside recognized educational institutions' (Tight 1996, p. 68). In the 1970s, four characteristics came to be associated with NFE:

1. Relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups.
2. Concern with specific categories of person.
3. A focus on clearly defined purposes.
4. Flexibility in organization and methods (Fordham 1993).

In many northern countries the notion of NFE is not common in internal policy debates - preferred alternatives being community education and community learning, informal education and social pedagogy. The reason NFE is becoming popular is because formal educational systems adapted too slowly to the socio-economic changes around them and that they were held back not only by their own conservatism, but also by the inertia of societies themselves. If we also accept that educational policy making tends to follow rather than lead other social trends, then it followed that change would have to come not merely from within formal schooling, but from the wider society and from other sectors within it. It was from this point of departure that planners and economists in the World Bank began to make a distinction between informal, non-formal and formal education (Fordham 1993).

At around the same time there were moves in UNESCO toward lifelong education and notions of 'the learning society' which culminated in ‘Learning to Be’. Lifelong learning was to be the 'master concept' that should shape educational systems

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(UNESCO 1972, p. 182). What emerged was an influential tripartite categorization of learning systems. It's best known statement comes from the work of Combs with Prosser and Ahmed :

Non-formal education: any organised educational activity outside the established formal system - whether operating separately or as an important feature of some broader activity - that is intended to serve identifiable learning clienteles and learning objectives (Coombs & Ahmed 1974). One of the enduring themes in the literature of non-formal education, according to Fordham, has been that the education provided should be in the interests of the learners and that the organization and curriculum planning should preferably be undertaken by the learners themselves: that it should be `bottom up'. It is also often argued that this should empower learners to understand and if necessary change the social structure around them. Fordham continues: 'Examples where there is a genuine sense of ownership are not easy to find; and almost all have an element of community outreach as part of the general organization' (Fordham 1993).

Council of Europe made a recommendation 1437 (2000) on NFE as follows NFE is an integral part of lifelong learning concept which allows young people and adults to acquire and maintain the skill, abilities and outlook needed to be adapt to a continuously changing environment. It can be acquired on the personal initiative of each individual through different learning activities taking place outside the formal education system. Recommendation 1437(2000) also state that a significant part of NFE is carried by Non government organizations (NGOs) involved in community and youth work. In order to make NFE accessible for all, through measures such as flexible working conditions (for workers who would not otherwise be able to attend, unpaid leave facilities, etc), measures for people in remote areas (travel grants), measures for social disadvantaged persons (poor people, marginalized youngsters, the disabled, minorities) will be taken into consideration (Council of Europe 2000).

In conclusion the above mentioned concept of NFE refers to education outside school institutions which are flexible based on the condition of the learner. The content and process of NFE is to respond to the need and full participation of the learner like bottom up policy and the learner is able to utilize the knowledge in their daily lives and work. It is life long learning and access for all.

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2.6 Black Feminist thought and Postmodern feminism

In term of feminist perspective, this study will look at black feminist thought and postmodern feminist. These two theories fall within the third wave of feminism and are closely relevant to the problems of sex workers.

2.6.1 Black feminist thought

Back feminist thought was developed because Black women who live in America have been oppressed for a long time through several dimensions:

(1) Oppression through Economic dimension. They were forced to work as slave workers in the fields, domestic workers with low wages or without pay. They were exploited not only as workers but also as women. They were sexually abused not only by the employer who are white men but also by black men.

(2) Oppression through political dimension. Forbidding black women to vote and to run for election, excluding African-Americans and women from public office, and withholding equitable treatment in the criminal justice system all substantiate the political subordination of black women, denying literature to slaves and relegating black women to under funded, segregated Southern schools work to ensure that a quality education for black women remained the exception rather than the rule. They have unequal rights in political and public sphere. They also lack of opportunity to participate in decision making

(3) Oppression through ideology dimension.

The issues of black women are often invisible, their identity and their ideas as black women are neglected by the mainstream feminist movement. They lack of full participation within the feminist movement.

> "The recent women's movements failed to adequately address the issue of sexist oppression, but the failure does not change the fact that it exists, that we are victimized by it to varying degrees, nor does it free any of us from assuming responsibility for change. Many Black women are daily victimized sexist oppression. More often than not we bear our pain in silence, patiently waiting for the change to come. But neither passive acceptance nor stoic endurance leads to change. Change occurs only when there is action, movement, revolution. The 19th century black female was a woman of action.

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Her suffering, the harshness of her lot in a racist, sexist world, and her concern for the plight of others motivated her to feminist struggle. She did not allow the racism of white women's rights advocates or the sexism of black men to deter her from political involvement. She did not rely on any group to provide her with a blueprint for change. She was a maker of blueprints" (Hooks 2000).

The black women are oppressed by race, sex, and class. Therefore black women started to build up their identity and raise their voices through their experiences and they were able to shape the their own theory as Black Feminist Thought. Black feminism is considered as the third wave of feminism

2.6.2 The significant ideas of the Black feminist thought

(1) Discovering and reinterpreting and analyzing the ideas of subgroups within the larger collective of U.S. black women who have been silenced. Giving significance to black women's experiences and conceptualized as larger perspective as Black feminist thought. In other words, black feminists cannot be separated from the experiences of oppressed back feminists. It all related and interdependent .

Dialoging, Sharing, documenting women's experiences especially the marginalized group is the best way to understand their thought, their problems, and their voices to be heard in order to develop the knowledge and to raise awareness from generation to generation. Including document their experiences through novel, film, book.

(2) Significance for empowerment.

Black feminist thought tries to find solutions in order to support the struggle of all forms of the oppression toward women. Giving significance the transfer of theory into practice and lead to self-power, control over their own lives, and self – determination. It means that they have to define their own identity by themselves.

A change in consciousness encourages people to change the conditions of their lives. Change can also occur in the private, personal space of an individual woman's consciousness. Equally fundamental, this type of change is also personally empowering. Any individual black woman can develop the inside of "changed

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consciousness" as sphere of freedom. Becoming personally empowered through self knowledge, even within conditions that severely limit one's ability to act, is essential.

The importance of self-determination, the significance of self- valuation and respect, the necessity of self-reliance and independence is that they lead to the certainty of a changed self towards personal empowerment (Collins 1989, p. 117- 119).

(3) Giving significance to the empowerment of oppressed women. Empowerment is within every body. Awareness raising as an individual or as a group to understand oppression, developing a body of knowledge as a tool to against exploitation. Including the rejection of knowledge that labels black women as sex objects and reinterpreting new knowledge in order to build up not only the individual but also group value.

2.6.3 Postmodern feminism

Postmodern feminism is not totally separate from feminism but post modern feminism does not believe in universality of women. They believe in multiplicity of women. Postmodern feminism believes that there is no 'woman' and there is no feminine but every thing has been created through the practicing of discourse. Therefore, there is no permanent and unchangeable woman on the other hand the identity of women is multiple and diverse and was not presented only because of female sex but also related to race, class, age and social orientation (Purisinsit 2002, p. 176). Cixous, Irigaray and Kriateva who are postmodern feminists are interested in language because they were writers. They thought that language is not only for expression but also creates definitions under patriarchal culture. Language was created and was preserved for identity of sex which subordinated women (Beasley, cited in Purisinsit 2002, p. 161).

Women from different groups have different problems and different needs. In order to solve problem, we have to look at particular groups and problems and give the opportunity for the marginalized groups to raise their problems and their needs.

Michel Foucault's thought about power and knowledge can not separate, his synthesis that power is existing everywhere in every social institution and both in the private and public sphere. This power has been practiced through discourses which establish the socially defined truths. Foucalt also state that even Science knowledge

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which is consider by modernism as a highest knowledge because it is defined as the real knowledge and free from social attitude, but this knowledge is still base on the interest of leading class interest. He also refuses grand theory and believes that only the plurality of theories can solve the problems. Hekma mentioned that discourse which created women's subordination does not exist in a single institution but it has expanded to every social institution in the society. She said that in order to eliminate women's subordination, dealing only with political or economic aspects is inadequate to get rid of male domination power. Women have to counter all knowledge and power discourse that makes women more subordinate than men in every place, every social institution in the society. Foucault mentioned that feminism cannot fight against a universal patriarchy but feminism can counter patriarchy phenomena in particular areas, issues, groups etc in a locality (Hekman, cited in Purisinsit 2003, p. 168).

Postmodern feminism's emphasis on the positive side of 'Otherness', of being excluded, shunned, "Frozen out", disadvantaged, underprivileged, rejected, unwanted, abandoned, dislocated, marginalized is a major theme in deconstruction. The deconstruction approach takes a critical attitude toward everything, including particular ideas or social injustices as well as the structure upon which they are based, the language which they are thought and the system which they are safeguarded. Deconstructionists are anti essentialist not only by seeing the search for universal definitions as useless, but also in actively challenging the traditional boundaries between oppositions such as reason/ emotion, beautiful/ ugly, and self/other as well as between disciplines such as art ,science, psychology, and biography (Tong 1998).

Jacques Derrida's main concern was to critique metaphysics and its impact on the theory and practice of philosophy and writing. He rejected two main characteristics of Western philosophy: meaning is grounded in metaphysical presence, and time is oriented to its end. Derrida posed two main alternative ideas: meaning is an affair of language's systems of difference without positive terms, and writing is prior to speech.

In other words, Derrida sought to persuade others to reject Western metaphysics by claiming and demonstrating that written words did not stand for spoken words which did not stand for thoughts which did not stand for Truth, or God, which were not referents of the metaphysical world. On the contrary, Derrida suggested the interpretation of a written text in a certain way. Deconstruction

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Derrida's strategy for demonstrating the fallibility of metaphysical thinking was to deconstruct texts.

The twofold task of Derridean deconstruction sought to expose the problem of centered discourses and displace the boundaries of metaphysics. Through deconstruction Derrida sought to expand the conceptual limits of the meaning of the text imposed by metaphysics, preferring to explore meaning in the margins of the text through unrestricted semantic play and limitless interpretation (Cky J 1996).

Jacques Derrida criticized that language is symbolic order useful for some and of their purpose. Derrida criticized symbolic order, firstly is logocentrism, the primary of spoken word, which is less subject to interpretation than the written word; secondly is phallocentrism, the primacy of the phallus, which connotes a unitary drive toward a single, supposedly reachable goal; and thirdly is dualism, the expression of everything in term of binary oppositions. the only language available to him was the logocentric, phallocentric, binary language constricting his thought. Derrida was pessimistic about destroying the symbolic order. Nevertheless, he believed could weaken the symbolic order by providing suppressed alternative interpretations of the language (Tong 1989, p. 198). He suggested that by deconstructing an old belief, cultural beliefs and the existing language in order to give other alternative ways for marginalized groups to have opportunities in society (Beasley, cited in Purisinsit 2003).

I think that black feminism and postmodern feminism present very challenging perspectives in looking at female sex workers issues in Thailand because sex workers are also marginalized in society and have been oppressed by the patriarchy system through economic, political as well as cultural dimensions. Non-formal education is a space for sex workers to have dialogue as well as to share experiences about their lives and problems. In this space. they are able to empower themselves in order to gain more self-esteem, self-confidence, self-respect and self-determination and greater control over their lives.

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CHAPTER III
FEMALE SEX WORKERS AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

3.1 Empower Foundation (EMPOWER)

3.1.1 Background and Goals of EMPOWER

The sex trade has been existing in Thailand since the earliest historical records were written until the present day. However there are still very few organizations working on sex workers' issues. Empower Foundation (EMPOWER) is the most prominent organizations working on sex workers' rights. It is a non-governmental organization (NGO) founded in 1985. Its first office was set up in Patpong[1], Bangkok, Thailand. The founder members are Chantawipa Apisuk and Max Adijer. The beginning activity was a regular informal discussion with sex workers at a coffee shop in Patpong areas. When sex workers discovered that Max Adijer was a foreigner who could speak Thai, they asked him for help with things such as translating English letters sent by foreign boyfriends. Later on, after the sex workers became familiar with the founder members, they came to seek advice and suggestions on several issues, such as how to deposit money at the bank, what procedure to follow to send their children to school, etc. Two founder members provided counseling for them, not only about personal life issues, but also about working conditions in their work places. 'We never meant to start anything. We were a group of friends learning from and with each other. Pi Noi[2], one of the founder member of the organization said "How do you use those new ATM cards and someone else would say "I can show you". We would help write letters; read the newspaper aloud so we all knew what was happening in our city; we would practice English, we would laugh together. It just went like that and other people became interested and we grew, and grew…we never meant to start anything" (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 12).

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[1] Patpong is one of the bigest red light area located in Bangkok, Thailand

[2] Pi Noi's official name is Chantawipa Apisuk, a founder member of EMPOWER Foundation and a leading woman activist working for protection the rights of sex workers.

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There were several sex workers who wanted to continue studying, so a classroom for sex workers offering beginning language classes was set up beside the road side or in front of bars. After that, it moved to a coffee shop. When more and more sex workers want to attend the language class, the class was moved and conducted in a small rented room at Patpong area. Later on the organization decided to rent a bigger office in order to accommodate the increasing number of sex workers. This office is still being used at present.

Non-formal education (NFE) has been conducting by EMPOWER since the very beginnings of the organization, and the content of this education has responded to the needs of female sex workers

The issues surrounding the sex trade are complicated and there is a big debate about such matters at local, national, regional and international levels. As we have seen from chapter II mainstream attitudes in society regard the sex trade as a social evil and want to demolish it. Many people and organizations seek to change sex workers' lives. People often view sex work as a problem and it's society's job to improve or change sex workers. However some groups particularly sex worker's organization like EMPOWER tries hard to make sex workers' voices heard and fight for their rights. Hence the goal of EMPOWER is not to change sex workers. EMPOWER works so sex workers have the knowledge, support and skills needed to go in the direction they want to go.

EMPOWER strongly believes in education and looks at education as a tool to protect sex workers' rights. Through education, sex workers are able to access to information, gain knowledge, and gain different skills and are able to gain control over their lives with full human dignity. The organization's name also indicates its principles and philosophy:

E- Education
M- Means
P- Protection
O- Of
W- Women
E- Engaged in
R- Re-creation

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In other words, the meaning of EMPOWER is education means protection of women engaged in re-creation.

Though EMPOWER has been working on sex workers' rights for more than two decades, the attitudes of the public and government bodies toward sex workers is still discriminatory.

When it was first established in 1985, EMPOWER referred to 'herself'[3] as EMPOWER Center. Later, in 1994, EMPOWER sought to register officially with the state authorities as a Foundation under the name *Soon Pitak Sitti Ying Borikan*, which can be translated into English as the *Center to Protect the Rights of Service Women* (Sex Workers). However, the Office of the National Culture Commission regarded this name as inappropriate because of the open reference to sex work, and therefore refused to register the organization under this name. In the end, EMPOWER compromised and chose the name *Moonniti Song Serm Okard Puying* instead, which can be translated as the Foundation to Promote Opportunities for Women.

At the present, there are four EMPOWER centers located in the following areas:

Patpong, Bangkok, opened 1985

Chiang Mai, opened in 1991

Mae Sai, Chiang Rai, opened in 1999

Phuket, opened in 2004

EMPOWER also has a small branch on Sukhumvit Road in Bangkok, as well as an AIDS and Health Information Center in Nonthaburi Province.

My research is focus on the NFE program accredited by the Office of Non-formal Education Commission (ONFEC), Ministry of Education (MOE), Thailand at the EMPOWER office in Chiang Mai Province, in the North of Thailand.

EMPOWER in Chiang Mai Province was established in 1991. At present, there are two full-time staff, eight volunteers and external volunteers such as foreigners who are willing to teach foreign languages. In fact most volunteers are from the community of sex workers. Volunteers are evaluated every six months by the group to determine whether they can continue being volunteers or whether they can become full-time staff members. Two full-time staff members are former volunteers.

[3] staff member of Empower always refer to the organization as female

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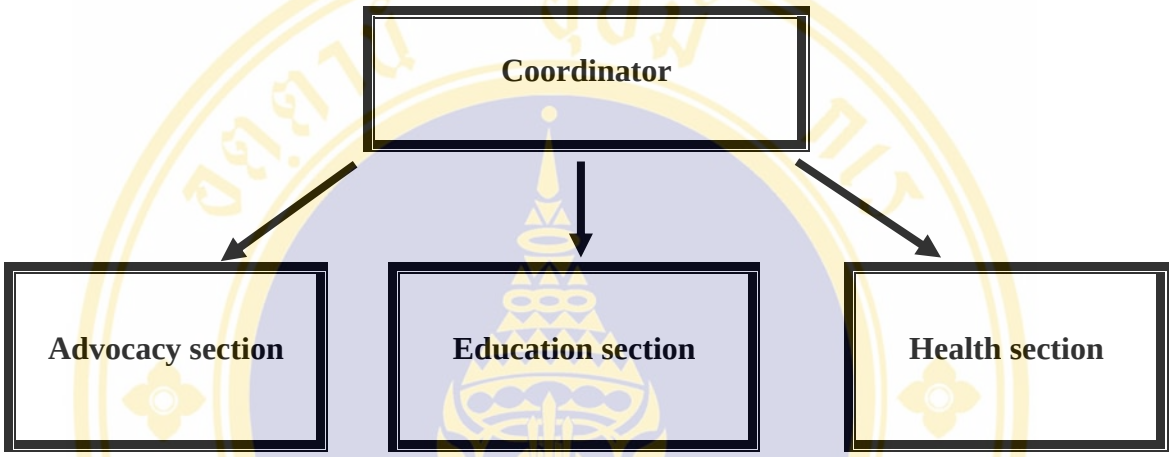
The present coordinator was a former student of NFE class and completed upper secondary education. She is now studying for a bachelor's degree in social science at Sukhothai Thammathirat, an open university in Thailand.

The structure of EMPOWER Chiang Mai



The organization also has a day-care center providing crèche facilities for sex workers who have children. Many children will be at day care center during school vacation. Beside that there is a shelter called 'Our Home' for sex workers who need emergency places to stay. Doctors often provide medical treatment to sex workers at the shelter. The working week is Monday-Friday from 10.00 a.m.-6.00 p.m.

EMPOWER identifies herself as "a sex workers' rights organization" that is an organization run by sex workers themselves. 'She' believes that every person, every woman has the right to choose her job and work safely, without exploitation, with a living wage and without harassment.

3.1.2 Activities of EMPOWER

All centers have applied the same identity, same goal, same strategies and same activities. The activities of EMPOWER are as follows:

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Outreach program or going around the entertainment places like bars, karaoke, brothels etc.

EMPOWER's visits help sex workers feel that they are not separated from the world but they are part of the world. Visits also provide an opportunity to introduce the organisation, persuade sex workers to come attend 'her' activities, and distribute information about HIV/AIDS, labour rights, safer sex practices, migrant worker registration, women's rights, human rights and laws relating to women and sex workers. This information is provided in the form of brochures, a newsletter, and cassette tapes to sex workers in their work places etc. It's aim is also to increase understanding of issues faced by sex workers, to promote a cooperation and support including to encouragement to join activities. Condoms are also given to sex workers directly or to the owner of entertainment places.

On occasions when I joined the activities of the outreach program, I observed that most of the entertainment places were familiar to EMPOWER, and that those conducting outreach activities mostly wore EMPOWER T-shirts in order to represent that they come from EMPOWER.

Drop in Centers (Making a second home)

EMPOWER's offices also function as drop-in centers. The drop-in center in Patpong is on the same street as the entertainment places. The branch in Phuket is in the area where women live. Chiang Mai and Maesai centers are not located in the same places as the entertainment places or living area. The location of the office depends on the need and recommendations by sex workers in each area. It seems that it is a place that makes sex workers feel comfortable to come and fosters the feeling of community. Once sex workers feel more comfortable with the place, they are more likely to attend other activities organized by EMPOWER.

Sex workers can drop in at the center anytime during working hours from 10.00 a.m.-6.00 p.m. except on weekends in order to attend the NFE classes, to chat, to meet friends, to eat, to take a nap, or to use computer and internet etc. Outsiders, must make an appointment before hand.

During my field work at EMPOWER, I sometimes saw sex workers come in and take a rest on the sofa in the office and some of them just drop by to visit or talk to

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friends. The phrase “EMPOWER is our second home” was written on the wall of the office, and even in the rest room.

Counseling

EMPOWER provides counseling for sex workers by phone, face to face and as a group. Sex workers come to seek help on various issues such as personal life, family problems, work place problems, daily life problems. Some sex workers felt that EMPOWER was like their home and they met lots of friends there.

Advocacy

EMPOWER tried to make sex workers as well as broader society recognize that sex workers are a part of society. Female sex workers mentioned that they are not different from other parts of society. EMPOWER also tried to advocate positive examples that the public can support such as using current issues that everyone is facing to make sex workers visible and positive part of everything.

At present, EMPOWER advocates for sex work to be recognized under labour laws with all benefits and protections other workers have e.g. access to social security and safe working conditions.

Education

EMPOWER has conducted education for sex workers for more than 20 years. The organisation emphasizes education for protection, which means all kinds of education for protection against all kinds of life’s risks like: Language education to protect ourselves from being cheated, economic education to protect our salary, geography to protect ourselves from getting lost, IT education to protect our long distance relationship, legal education to protect our legal rights, human rights education to protect our daily lives, health education to protect our health, self defense education to protect our bodies against violence (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005 , p. 1-96).

In addition, adult literacy classes are offered for those who have no chance to go to school and cannot read or write in any language. Most sex workers want to study Thai language because they want to be able to read signs, menus, labels, medicine

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instructions, read and fill out official forms, and all those other daily tasks that involve the written word. Their aim is to manage their lives more efficiently.

Workshops (or in EMPOWER parlance, "meetings with our group")

Workshops aim to provide the opportunity for participants to get to know each other, to share experiences regarding various issues, and to build up friendships with each other, since some students attend different classes. The issues addressed in workshops are suggested by the sex workers themselves. Workshops are also included as a part of the NFE class and has been conducted every Friday.

Media and research

EMPOWER provides information to the media such as newspapers, television, radio, magazine etc. and also produces publications to tell people about the problem of female sex workers, such as the quarterly EMPOWER newspaper; manuals on health, HIV&AIDS, and laws; books on various issues relating to sex workers issues such as 'I Have Rights', 'I'm Fine', reproductive rights for women in general. Research also has been conducted by sex workers themselves.

Networking

'We sex workers are a small group so if we want to make changes we need friends'(*Empower Scrapbook* 2005 , p. 57).

EMPOWER cooperates with non-government orgainisations, people's organizations and government organisations working on human rights and women's rights in order to define common problems and work for solutions at the local, national, regional and international levels.

EMPOWER's activities are interdependent and inter-related. All activities are relevant to the philosophy, beliefs and goal of the organization. The most significant goal is to empower female sex workers as individuals as well as a group and make them aware about their basic human rights and can control over their lives.

Though Empower has many activities, my research emphasized the NFE class, as accredited by the ONFEC. However, I will not neglect other activities that are relevant to NFE class.

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3.2 The process of conducting EMPOWER's non-formal education for female sex workers

In 1995, EMPOWER initiated NFE program accrediting by the Office of Non-formal Education Commission (ONFEC), Thai Ministry of Education. EMPOWER was accredited by ONFEC as a Community Learning Center. According to the Director of NFE of Muang District, Chiang Mai, organizations which are approved to be Community Learning Centers (CLC) should meet the following qualifications, such as being the government organization, legal organization, having human power as well as fund and materials.

Students who completed an NFE program at EMPOWER will receive a certificate based on education level from ONFEC as well as from EMPOWER.

Most of my informants mentioned that they had no chance to attend formal education due to economic problems of their family. Besides that, some not only had economic problems, but also their family migrated to work in city which meant some of them had to keep moving with the family. Only one left school while studying at lower secondary education level because she was expelled for not followed the school rules.

Nhong, a former staff member of EMPOWER Chiang Mai who was responsible for the NFE program for about 9 years mentioned that many sex workers have no opportunity to access to formal education because they came from poor families. Some of them had to leave school in order to earn money to support families and education of their brothers. Besides, women also are expected not only to perform housework, but also to provide for the economic needs of the family. Therefore many women have to sacrifice themselves for the better lives of their brothers, sisters, parents and their families. Most of them do not even completed primary education level.

The NFE program of EMPOWER has been conducted according to the needs of sex workers because they want not only to have official education certificate, which is endorsed by ONFEC, MOE of Thailand but also knowledge in order to seek better alternative ways to teach their children/grand children. The class is also appropriate to the circumstances of sex workers because it is conducted on the working day in the afternoon unlike other NFE centers conducting class on Sunday in the morning. As we know, normally sex workers work at night until late night like 1-2 a.m. and weekend is

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a heavy working day for them. Some said that the NFE class at EMPOWER is not strict and offers more freedom than other centers.

Furthermore, Non of the sex workers dared to attend NFE classes with others because they were afraid that others would know that they work in the sex trade and would look down on them. Therefore, EMPOWER's NFE class only accepts female sex workers and is designed to recognize the conditions affecting sex workers.

> "Many people did not dare to attend the NFE class because they felt that they are nobody as well as too old. I decided to attend NFE class for many reasons. Firstly, I want to prove to my friends that though we are old we still can attend that class. Secondly, it's about our future lives. Before I felt like closing my eyes but now I open my eyes and I felt that world is getting bigger and bigger. Wherever we go, we need documents and information. If we cannot read and write, then we have to depend on others every time. If one day nobody help us, what could we do? If we study, we can help ourselves and become independent. Thirdly, my children go to school and I have to teach them how to do homework. We still can teach them as long as they are at lower education than us. In the first year while I went for final exam, others knew that we came from EMPOWER, everybody thought that we are sex workers. I felt bad, but later on I did not care. Though we are sex workers, we studied the same subject and take same final exam as same as others. Sometimes they did not speak out about us, but we felt it when they looked at us. We told ourselves that we have to be patient and the more we do it, the more we will go through all difficulties and we will win. Some non-sex worker from other centers asked whether we care for our husband and children. Some of our friends did not dare to attend the final exam – this happened in the past during a time when our volunteers were not as strong as the present team. Today the society recognizes EMPOWER and her activities. Today, we are not afraid and not ashamed any more" (Dang).

According to Surang Janyam, an ex-director of EMPOWER Patpong, Bangkok EMPOWER was motivated to set up the NFE program in cooperation with ONFEC because sex workers wanted to continue their education and wanted to have an

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education certificate in order to have more alternatives to lead their lives in the future. She also stated that among the 105 female sex workers working in Patpong whom she interviewed, 4.77% are illiterate, 18.10% are lower primary education level, 27.61% are primary education, 31.42% are lower secondary education, 12.38% are upper secondary education and 5.72 higher education (Janyam 1999).

> "Sex workers do not want to attend the NFE class with non-sex workers because they are shameful. They are afraid that others will look down at them because they are not accepted by society. At EMPOWER, we do not ask about their background. If they want to tell us, it's their decision. If they attend the class here, they can discuss whatever topics that they want. There is no need to feel uncomfortable here. One learner had the courage to inform us that she wanted to drop a class because her boyfriend came and she has to be with him. No-one has a heart to blame her because it's her rights"(Pu).

Non-formal education of ONFEC, Ministry of Education (MOE), Thailand

If we look at the ideology of NFE in Thailand, the ONFEC states that not everybody can access formal education and formal education cannot respond to the needs of all people, therefore the flexibility of non-formal education provides an alternative way for the people to access to education.

NFE education became part of the international discourse on education policy in the late 1960s and early 1970s. It can be seen as related to the concepts of recurrent and lifelong learning.

There are four characteristics can be associated with non-formal education: relevance to the needs of disadvantaged groups, concern with specific categories of person, a focus on clearly defined purposes as well as flexibility in organizing and methods (Fordham 1993). Whereas the NFE concepts have to do with the extension of education and learning throughout life, non-formal education is about 'acknowledging the importance of education, learning and training which takes place outside recognized educational institutions' (Tight 1996, p. 68).

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The concept of lifelong education in Thailand evolved during the period between the Sukhothai[4] era and the early Rattanakosin[5] era, up until the time that a law on compulsory education was proclaimed.

In 1940, an Adult Education Division was established in the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education. In 1970 the adult education activities were considerably expanded, leading to the establishment of the Non-Formal Education Department in 1979, which is mainly responsible for the eradication of illiteracy among Thai people.

The concept of life-long learning in the Thai context has at least two dimensions. The first dimension is in terms of a person's life span. Education does not terminate at the time a person leaves school, but continues throughout life. Learning is acquired from formal, non-formal and informal education. The second dimension, related to the purpose of learning, is that it should focus on the ways of life of people, and for improvement of their lives.

Currently, a broader concept of NFE has evolved in terms of lifelong learning for all. The concept of lifelong learning is that access to educational opportunities must be provided for all people, both in and out of school. They will be able to learn by themselves continuously at any time they require through their whole lives via various kinds of learning materials/media and knowledge sources.

In 1999 the Thai government passed the National Education Act 1999, Section 4 of which stated that there shall be three types of education in Thailand as follows:

Formal education

Formal education services are provided by both public and private bodies within school systems. It is divided into 2 levels: basic education and higher education. Basic education is provided before higher education covering preprimary, 6 years of primary education, 3 years of lower secondary education and 3 years of upper secondary education.

[4] Sukhothai is the first capital of Thailand.

[5] Rattanakosin is an official name of Bangkok, Thailand.

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Non-formal education

Non Formal Education has more flexibility than formal education in determining the aims, modalities, management procedures, duration, assessment and evaluation conditional to its completion. The contents and curricula for non formal education can be adjusted to meet the needs of individual groups of learners. Provided by both public and private bodies to those outside school systems.

Informal education

Informal education enables learners to learn by themselves according to their interests, potential, readiness, and opportunities available from individual, society, environment, media or other sources of knowledge.

At the present, the Ministry of Education is responsible for all education types. According to the 1999 National Education Act, the state shall provide twelve years of basic education to each individual on a free-of-charge basis. Compulsory education will be 9 years.

The education reform process led to the status change of Non-formal Education Department to be Office of the Non-Formal Education Commission (ONFEC) in 2003, one of the administrative units under the Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education looking after the NFE in Thailand. The government has made efforts to promote NFE to achieve lifelong education and equal access to education for all.

I found that EMPOWER initiated the provision of the NFE program as accredited by ONFEC based on the needs of female sex workers as well as relevance to the beliefs and goals of the organization, which holds that education can enable women to take control over their own lives. At the same time the concept of NFE of ONFEC in Thailand is very broad, and somehow, EMPOWER has the space to integrate its beliefs and principle ideology into the NFE curriculum of ONFEC. Beside that the student of EMPOWER who graduated at each education level will receive an official education certificate endorsing by ONFEC, MOE. Students are able to present these certificates for job applications, further study, or simply improving their social status in the society. EMPOWER's initiative received a positive response from ONFEC because it was able to turn the concept of ONFEC into practice. However, the

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NFE policy keeps changing due to the political situation, for example there are sequent general elections, and most recently a military coup. Whenever a new government is formed, there is a new policy introduced, which is best on the ruling party interests rather than the people's interests. Each time there is a change in policy there is no participation by the people.

The research also found that EMPOWER's NFE class utilizes the philosophy and principle of adult education, which considers the learner as the center. At the same time, EMPOWER also believes in the relevance of Bell Hooks. Feminist thinking and feminist education is essential for consciousness raising, which emphasizes the importance of learning about patriarchy as a system of domination. Understanding how patriarchy becomes institutionalized, perpetuated and maintained, how males dominate the everyday life of women, and how women become victimized by sexist exploitation through consciousness raising, women gain strength, come to recognize the significance of the system of patriarchal domination, and are inspired to change it (Hook 2000, p 19-204).

The NFE program initiated by EMPOWER is also relevant to women and education at the global level. The decade between 1976 and 1985 was designated by the UN as the decade of women. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was established in 1979. CEDAW proposed a policy as well as significant measures toward the improvement of women's opportunity, role and status as equal to men. CEDAW also states clearly, that State Parties should apply every appropriate measure to end discrimination in order to ensure the rights of women as equal as men in terms of education particularly to ensure the principle of equality of rights of women and men.

The International Year of Women Conference convened in Nairobi in 1985 drafted the Nairobi Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women to the Year 2000, which states that Education is a standard to promote the fully development of women status. Therefore, education is a principle tools and need to provide to women.

Thailand also signed the Nairobi strategies as well as ratified the CEDAW including the Optional Protocol. Therefore education for women was taken into consideration, particularly a NFE for women who are members of minority groups. In

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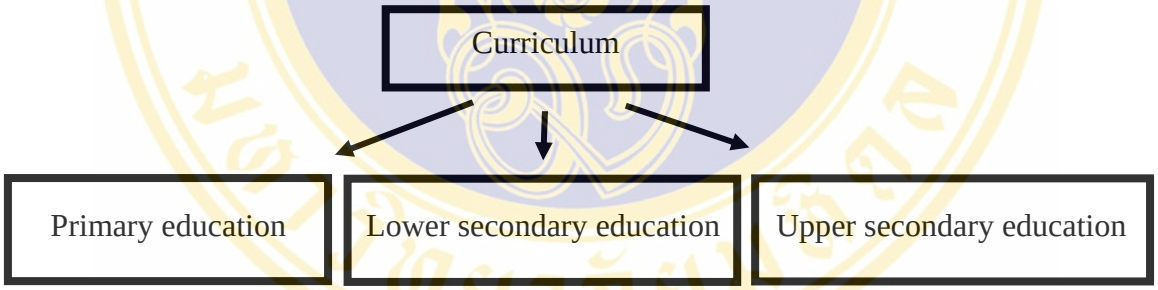
other words, NFE policy in Thailand has been influenced by international policy on women and education.

3.3 The curriculum and content of non-formal education providing by ONFEC

EMPOWER has conducted NFE program which based on the curriculum of ONFEC. Three levels of NFE classes are conducted by EMPOWER as follows:

- Primary education level
- lower secondary education level
- Upper secondary education level

The structure of curriculum and education methodology of NFE in each level providing by ONFEC



The curriculum outline is based on the NFE Curriculum (2001), which is referred to as the core curriculum. All programmes organized by any organization must follow it. However the ONFEC has improved its standardization in order to make it more suitable to target groups. The core curriculum outlines subject areas at each educational level as follows:

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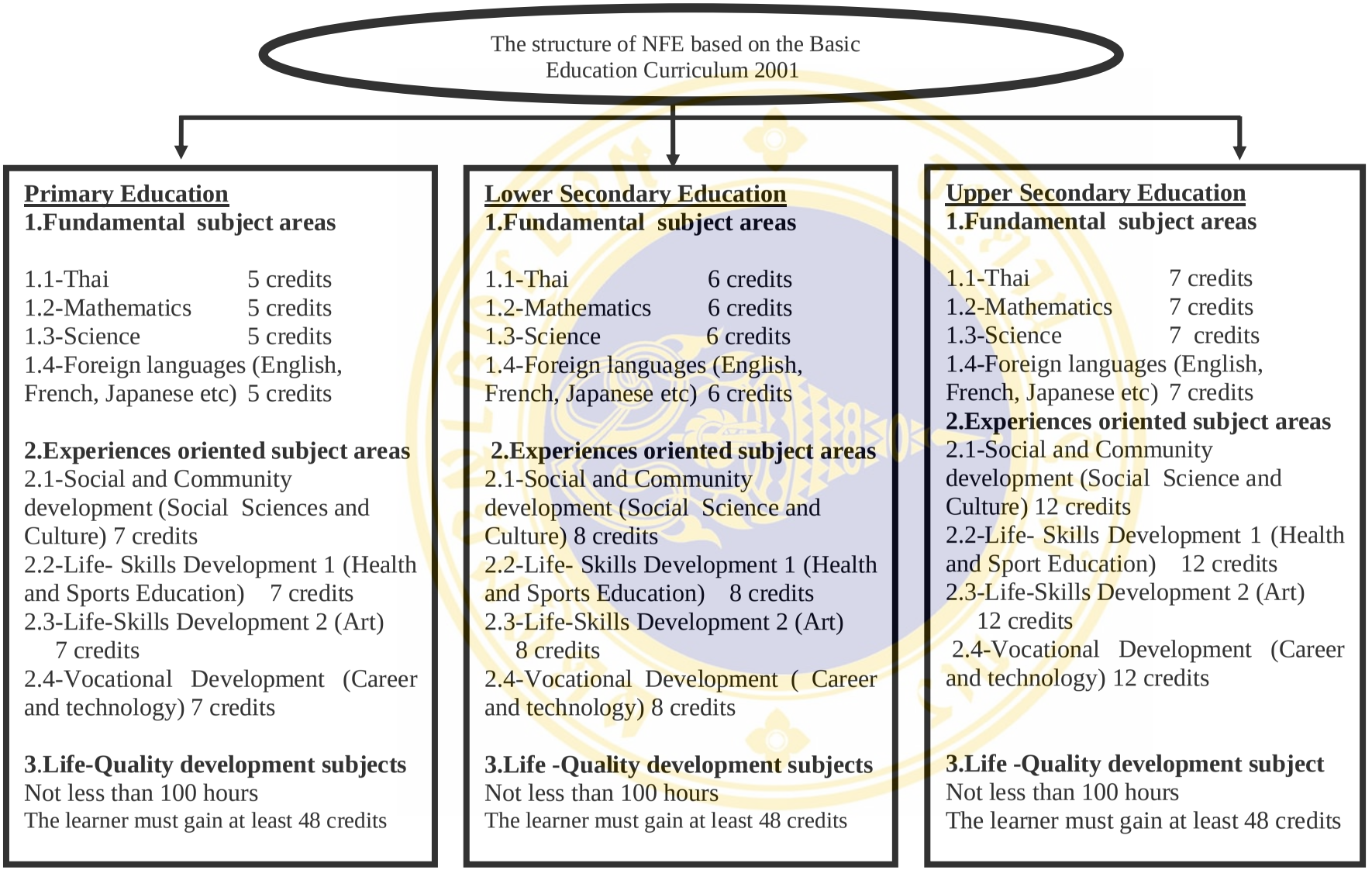

Table 1: The Structure of NFE based on the Basic Education Curriculum 2001

(Source from: Student Hand Book, NFE Center, Muang District, Chiang Mai Province, Thailand)

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The number of credits which must be completed at each educational level is as follows:

At the primary education level, the learner has to register for not less than 48 credits, which consist of the following subjects:

- The fundamental subject area consists of 4 subjects, and each subject carries 5 credits giving a total of 20 credits
- The experience-oriented subject area consists of 4 subjects, and each subject carries 7 credits giving the total as 28 credits

The total number of credits for primary education is therefore 48 credits and the quality of life development activities is not less than 100 hours.

At the lower secondary education level, the learner has to register for not less than 56 credits, consisting of the following subjects:

- The fundamental subject area consists of 4 subjects and each subject provides 6 credits giving a total of 24 credits
- The experience-oriented subject area consists of 4 subjects each subject provides 8 credits with a total of 32 credits

The total credit for the lower education level is 56 credits and the quality of life development activities is not less than 100 hours.

At the upper secondary education level, the learner has to register for not less than 76 credits, consisting the following subjects:

- The fundamental subject area consists of 4 subjects and each subject carries 7 credits giving a total of 28 credits
- The experience-oriented subject area consists of 4 subjects each subject carries 12 credits giving a total of 48 credits. The total number of credits for the upper secondary education level is 76, and the quality of life development activities is not less than 100hours.

According to ONFEC, other special target groups need to learn other subjects or skills which are important for the way of life of each group. They are able add

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suitable content which responds to the needs of the target group into every subject in the experiences subject group.

The student has to register for the whole course, which covers 4 terms. Each term is 20 weeks. They learn by studying in a group, studying on their own, tutorials, and practical work.

According to the Fundamental Education Curriculum in 2001, the learner in every education level has to register in fundamental subject areas for 4 subjects, experience-oriented subject areas for 4 subjects, and the life-quality development subject areas of not less than 100 hours.

The education process is based on the NFE methodology under the fundamental education system 2001. Each year is divided into two terms and each term is about 20 weeks. The whole education period is not less than 4 terms, except for those who pass the evaluation of knowledge and experience or transfer the results of previous study, who are able to graduate sooner than two years.

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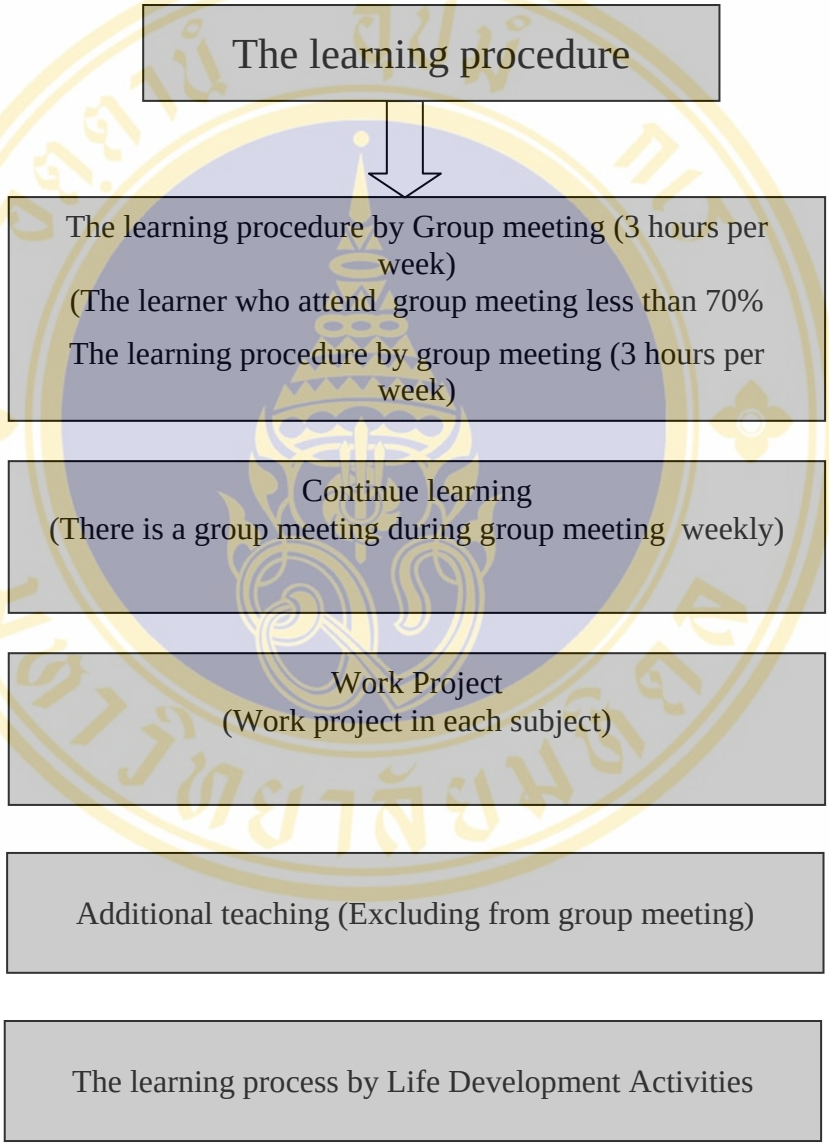
3.4 The learning process of the non-formal education, as determined by ONFEC

Table 2: The Learning Procedure



Source From: *Student Hand Book, NFE Centre, Amphur Muang, Chiang Mai*

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(1) The learning process of group meetings, as stipulated by ONFEC

ONFEC has stipulated that a group meeting be conducted every week for not less than 3 hours per week in order to give an opportunity to the student to share leaning experiences. The teacher plays the role of facilitator to encourage, advise and make suggestions to the students. The following activities occur in the group meeting:

Presenting the results of self-learning/joint activities, which are given by the teacher. The teacher also will have to search for that content. The student will be able to share learning experiences and learn from each other.

Presenting work project which is decided by the group. The teacher provides additional relevant information in order to broaden students' knowledge and carry the work project into the following week. Work projects continue until the end of the semester.

Providing inputs for new teaching content, which is decided by the group. The teacher will provide an additional significant information or knowledge which the student does not understand or does not know.

A test to examine based on knowledge and understanding of the content. Teachers and the education institutions will make the quiz and the student has to answer the questions based on the understanding of the students themselves.

Practicing the learning process, whereby students are able to think, analyze, synthesize and search for knowledge by themselves from the group or media. The teacher will encourage every student to participate in the activities during the group meeting session. During the session, the students express themselves in several ways, like concentrating on listening, asking questions, discussing, or making useful suggestions.

Planning the continuation of the learning process by self-education. The teacher will encourage the student to pay attention to self-education and make presentations in the classes.

(2) Completing curriculum activities/ how to evaluate the result of the study

The students of EMPOWER's class have to take an examination based on the curriculum of ONFEC with other students from other NFE centers. When the students pass the examinations of each level, they receive an educational certificate of that level.

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Measurement and evaluation in each subject group is divided as follows:

Table 3: Learning Evaluation on Each Subject

Learning evaluation on each subject	**Score**
1. Activities, the result self-learning (result of work or piece of work, presenting and discussion	30%
2. Test	10%
3. Work project	30%
4. Final test	30%

The curriculum of non-formal education 2001 is referred to as 70-30 %, meaning nos. 1-3 represent the 70 % conducted by CLC and no. 4 is the 30 % conduct by ONFEC

The midterm examination / quiz will be decided and conducted by the teachers from each CLC, including EMPOWER. Every learner has to take final examinations conducted by the ONFEC at provincial level. The final exam and venue at end of each term will be decided by ONFEC.

Female sex workers who attend NFE class of EMPOWER receive certain privileges. They do not pay education fees such as an application fee, registration fees, text book fees, nor tuition fees for two subject groups. Those who want to register for more than 2 subject groups have to pay tuition fees by themselves.

ONFEC will provide financial support to EMPOWER based on the number of students. This will cover 450 baht per student per semester. This include 400 baht for two subject groups and 50 baht for application form, student manual, registration fees and other expenses.

The contents of the curriculum for the NFE program is the same as the National Education Curriculum for formal education in primary, secondary as well as vocational secondary education level. However, each subject combines all contents together in one book to make it short. The final examination is still conducted by the ONFEC and the content in the examination is still based on the ONFEC's curriculum. The student who wants to complete the curriculum and wants to receive the education certificate based on that level of graduation from ONFEC, Ministry of Education has to follow the standard content.

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3.5 The non-formal education classes conducting by EMPOWER

The NFE classes of EMPOWER are based on the curriculum and the process determines by ONFEC. However, EMPOWER have been integrating their own content into the curriculum.

The total number of sex workers who attend EMPOWER' s NFE class , Chiang Mai and who have received an education certificate from ONFEC since its foundation is about 300 female sex workers. To date, 40% of students chose long distance study and 60% of students chose to attend study in the classroom. The director of the NFE Center of Muang District, Chiang Mai Province also mentioned that sex workers are a special and significant target group but it is very difficult to reach them. There are few organizations like EMPOWER working on sex workers' issues. They seek cooperation with NFE Center of Muang District. It is the obligation of ONFEC to provide education to all. The Center does not provide education to sex workers directly but through cooperation with EMPOWER. This is because the organization has 'her' own teachers who graduated with a bachelor's degree. EMPOWER runs the NFE class and they advertise and persuade sex workers to attend the class by themselves. The ONFEC in Muang District provides part of financial support as well as curriculum determined by ONFEC.

So far, the NFE Center of Muang district in Chiang Mai Province has 4,000 students. One thousand students attend the NFE classes conducted by the community learning centers that are accredited by ONFEC and 3000 students attend NFE class conducted by ONFEC directly.

3.5.1 Background of sex workers who attend the non-formal education class of EMPOWER

At the present, EMPOWER has about 40-50 students attending primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education level. Most students attend primary education level.

The learners who are all female sex workers have different backgrounds, different education levels, different life experiences etc. Therefore, EMPOWER has attempted to provide education based on the needs and the conditions of sex workers.

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The content of the study is flexible and relevant to each student. The teachers and students participate and determine content together particularly for the exposure program, workshop, camping etc. Hence the teaching method and content is flexible and suitable to the condition of sex workers.

I interviewed eleven students, all of whom came from rural areas in the northern part of Thailand, like Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Mae Hong Son provinces and only one coming from the Northeast of Thailand. Seven interviewees are members of an ethnic minority group. Four of seven persons have no ID card and one person neither has ID card nor official document.

The age of interviewees are between 20-36 years old.

In regard to Marital status six interviewees are single, two are married, two divorced and one is a single mother.

Before working as sex workers all of interviewees used to work in other careers such as domestic helper, baby sitter, worker in the agriculture sectors, construction worker, self-employed like beauty salon shop, worker in a small shop, waitress, masseuse. Before entering sex trade, all of them said that working as sex workers provided better income than their previous jobs.

> "It doesn't mean that women working in bars are not good women. They work as sex workers because they have a big burden. If they work as another career and receive a salary of about two or three thousand baht, it is not enough even for their own expenses let alone supporting their family. They have their own expenses, they have to pay rent about 1,500 baht, 1,000 baht support to their children or family. They have left only 500 baht for monthly expenses which is not adequate for survival. If we work at night time, we receive a minimum of 8,000 baht per month". (Ta)
>
> "My impression to work as sex worker is I can earn more money and I can attend the NFE class during day time". (Pen)

Moo's mother with her five sons and daughters migrated to Chiang Mai city in 1999 when Moo was thirteen years old. Moo's first job was a domestic helper, receiving 600 baht per month and later on her salary increased to 1,000, and then

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again .later, to 1,500 baht. She worked as a domestic helper for about 6 years, then she had to quit the job because her mother and the whole family migrated to Nakhonpathom Province, in the central region of Thailand near Bangkok. Moo and her mother worked in a small shop for one year and received 1,500 baht per month each. Later on her mother decided to return to Chiang Mai city when Moo was about eighteen years old. In Chiang Mai, she worked as a waitress at a Korean BBQ restaurant and got 2,500 baht per month. While working there, her friend working at the same place persuaded her to work as a sex worker. She began working as an independent sex worker at discotheque, massage parlor and karaoke. Moo said that "I was working at the massage parlor from 1 pm till midnight and after that I went to discotheque to search for the customer. While I was working at two places, I could earn about 30,000 baht each month. However I had no savings at all because I had to support my family" (Moo).

> "Before coming to Chiang Mai, I worked as a worker to carry sand, stone from Pai river which located in Pai District, Mae Hong Son, Thailand and received wage about 30 baht per day. I never thought one day I would be a singer because I did not have a beautiful voice, did not know how to sing and did not like to sing at all. I was a waitress in the restaurant before becoming a singer at Karaoke bar. My income also depended on the customer. The highest salary that I received was about 12,000-13,000 baht per month and the minimum income was about 7,000-8,000 baht. I also had to give money to my mother. I divided my income into three parts. First is for my own expenses, second is for my saving and third is for my mother. I want to save more money in order to build a house for my mum. My mum is over 40 years old and has no home of her own. My mum stays in a rented house at Maerim Village, Chiang Mai Province and she works as a worker in the agriculture sector like bean picker, rice picker, rice planter, onion planter etc" (Pen).

Some of interviewees mentioned that they entered the sex trade because of their lack of education and no official documents like identity card or education

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certificate requirement. Those who have no identity card or other official card mentioned that it seems that they have no future. 'It's not funny when we think that we do not have any official documents to prove that we are Thai nationals. I feel like a person who has no future and can not stay elsewhere. I feel so desperate. However since I joined EMPOWER, I feel a bit better than before because EMPOWER always welcomes us no matter who we are. Without official documents, we are not accepted by other places." (Pen)

From the study it is clear that all of the interviewees have to support the family, either their own children, parents, sisters and brothers. The marriages fail and the parents fail and, inevitably, it is girls and women who carry the heaviest burden as the result. Six girls from northern Thailand enter sex trade in order to support their parents. A majority of Thai sex workers from the north-east of Thailand do so after the failure of marriage and subsequently need to support their children (Lin Lean 1998, p.147-9). In Thailand women are still seen as being oppressed by the patriarchal Buddhism and duped into selling sex to provide for their families –either to meet subsistence needs, provide education for younger siblings, or purchase consumer goods (Jackson, Cook & Narida 1999, p. 250).

3.5.2 How sex workers know about the non-formal education classes of EMPOWER

Five persons knew about non-formal education class from brochures distributed through outreach activities. Lee, a sex worker as well as volunteer of EMPOWER said that

> "I met the volunteer of EMPOWER at the bar and they told me that the organisation conducts English class for sex workers free of charge. I decided to attend English class because English language is very important for working in a bar. When I started working in bar, at beginning I thought I was the number one. Later on I felt that I was like a child in a kindergarten because I could not communicate with foreign customer and had to depend on friends, like borrowing another person's nose to breathe. I felt so frustrated at that time and tried to look for the

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place to learn English but it was very expensive and I could not afford it" After that Lee attended a non-formal education class at lower secondary education level.

"I got to know EMPOWER at my workplaces during their outreach program. They told us about the NFE class at EMPOWER. I had no chance to attend formal education. I couldn't read. Therefore I decided to attend the class beginning with pre-primary education class" (Pen).

Six persons got to know about the class from friends.

"I knew about EMPOWER through a friend. When I first came to EMPOWER, I was only thirteen years old. One of Dang's friends brought me here and at the beginning I felt that when I came to EMPOWER it was like visiting. I also attended pre-primary education and computer class. Later on I decided to attend the NFE class in 2003. The reason I attended the class here because it's fun and there are several activities"(Nan).

From my observation sex workers who came to apply for a NFE class and language class did not come alone but they were accompanied by a friend.

Every Tuesday and Thursday EMPOWER organize outreach activities by going to the entertainment places in Chiang Mai in order to make friends with sex workers, distribute brochure about NFE class and other activities of EMPOWER and persuading them to come to EMPOWER.

Based on my participatory observations, prior to going on an outreach program, EMPOWER had activities beforehand to prepare. They go to entertainment places in pairs, selecting a new partner every time. Volunteers also prepare brochures which are based on the current activities like camping and make up courses. Besides that they also advertise about the regular activities like NFE class, English class, pre-primary education class (Thai language). Every time, they also bring condoms along with them and distribute to sex worker for free. Whenever sex workers drop in at EMPOWER, they also will be told about activities. At EMPOWER 's office, condoms are displayed in various forms, such as a dress made out of condoms displayed beside the working equipment of sex workers', including sexy underwear, shoes etc. It seem that

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EMPOWER use a real subjects for education sex workers. Sex workers regularly come to EMPOWER to meet friends, exercise, attend NFE class, pre-primary education class, foreign language classes like English and Japanese, applying for new NFE classes, seeking advice etc.

3.5.3 How the non-formal education class is conducted by EMPOWER

Six interviewees began with pre-primary education in order to learn how to read and write. After that they decided to attend the NFE class. One interviewee started at primary education level, four people started at lower secondary education level and one person started at upper secondary education.

Only one interviewee graduated primary school and attended lower secondary education in formal education but she was expelled from the school. When she first came to EMPOWER she attended English class and later on she joined the NFE class at lower secondary education level. It's her second time to attend the NFE class. She gave up the class the first time because she had no time to attend the class and could not pass the final examination.

EMPOWER Chiang Mai has been conducting NFE classes for sex workers on the ordinary subjects in the curriculum as optional classes. Primary education level is conducted on Mondays from 1-3 p.m.. lower secondary education level is conducted on Tuesdays at 1-3 p.m. and upper secondary education level is conducted on Wednesdays at 1-3 p.m.

Pu, a teacher of EMPOWER mentioned that usually the NFE classes in other centres are conducted on Saturday and Sunday in the morning which is not suitable for the schedule and live style of female sex workers because on Saturday and Sunday is hard working day for them and sex workers work in the evening until late night almost every day. Therefore, the NFE classes of EMPOWER are conducted on working days in the afternoon from 1-3 pm. Besides that on Friday there is a group meeting (workshop) to which all students from different education levels as well as sex workers who do not attend the NFE class are invited to attend.

From my observation during my data collection at EMPOWER, the majority of students, and at the very least, ten people, attended primary education. For-lower and upper secondary education classes, there were few students attending the classes,

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which meant these classes were not conducted during the week. For ordinary subjects and content mandated by ONFEC, EMPOWER encouraged the students to study on their own. They will contact the organisation to ask the final examination date.

The teaching curriculum in each subject is provided by ONFEC and details of the subjects are referred to above. However the teachers of EMPOWER mentioned that “We did not follow the whole contents of the curriculum. We have to adjust it and make it suitable for our target group. For instance, when we conduct NFE class on science subjects, we have to use real objects or when we teach about how to calculate we have to show them the calculator and how to use it, when we teach how to count the money, we have to count real money. If we only follow the contents of the curriculum, the learner will not understand. When we teach how to write and students cannot write at the beginning, then they can draw a picture. They also can write a map through picture drawing” (Pu).

In English language class, the content is about sex workers’ lives and work and they can utilize what they learn in their daily work and daily lives. For instance, if they work in ‘beer bar’, the content is about how to communicate with foreign customers, like how to say greetings, how to invite a customer to take a seat, how to invite a customer to drink, how to negotiate with the customer, what to say when they refuse to go with the customer, etc. Lee said that “ after attending English class for six months I can negotiate with the customer. Before attending the class , when the customer said ‘fuck you’, I just smile and say yes without understanding the meaning of it”.

Thai language class, after learner know how to write? the Thai consonants and vowels, and they will teach about Thai language related to sex workers’ work.

Regarding mathematics, though there is little they can use in their daily lives, they have to learn it if they would like to go on to further study.

However the content is adjusted in simple ways in order to make sex workers easily understand the subject. Furthermore, the teacher teaches content which is close to their experiences or which can be used in their daily lives such as how to make simple account, how to calculate the interest etc.

EMPOWER also conducted every day pre-primary education for illiterate sex workers. Those who attend this class are members of ethnic minority groups or Burmese.

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From observation, I noticed that at the beginning of Science class at primary level, the teacher distributed the manual for those who hadn't received it yet. There was no orientation about the subject, the teacher began with lesson one and followed the content of the lesson 1 as in the manual. The teacher tried to explain in easy ways to make students understand. For example, when the teacher explained the components of flowers, she drew a picture on the white board. After that she asked students to draw it. It seemed that the teacher was still following the content of the curriculum. Therefore, in order to integrate content with response to the needs of sex workers so they can utilize it in their lives and work, depends very much on the knowledge and experiences of the teachers. Therefore, there is a need for EMPOWER to have their own content in order to integrate the needs of sex workers into the ordinary subjects in the curriculum.

Sex workers who attended NFE class mostly have to study the ordinary subjects by themselves because they have not much time to attend additional classes every week. They have to study hard and review each subject before taking examinations. At the same time long distance education is quite popular among them because they do not have much time to attend the class and is popular among sex workers who are married to foreigners and stay abroad. They only come back when the examinations are held.

In terms of education related to their profession, foreign languages such as English, Japanese, German, French, etc. are taught in order to responds to the needs of sex workers such as how to communicate with a foreigner, how to write and answer a letter. The achievement is the students are able to communicate with foreigners and they are able to get more money. Beside that they are able to negotiate with the customers as well as are able to protect their rights.

3.5.4 The group meeting or workshop conducted by EMPOWER

According to ONFEC, a group meeting of the NFE class has to be conducted once a week for about three hours and every student has to attend the group meeting. EMPOWER conducts a workshop (EMPOWER call a group meeting as a workshop) every Friday from 1-3 p.m. EMPOWER requires every student from all education levels to attend the workshop. However sex workers who are not students of the NFE

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class also will be invited. The contents of 'Workshop' is determined by EMPOWER and include "HIV and our bodies", "pregnancy protection : contraception", "our bodies; ourselves, equality between men and women; safe sex; how to handle or deal with aggressive or difficult customers; the basic human rights; labour rights, social security laws etc.

The following contents were developed by EMPOWER and are published in EMPOWER Scrap book:

Pregnancy protection: Contraception

Aim: *For women to look at the differences between contraceptive methods and make their own decisions*

Equipment:

One large piece of cardboard with a table of rows and columns draw on it, and some maker pens.

Sample of all family planning methods available in your area

Women health resource book e.g. "Where Women Have no Doctor" (published by Hesperian Foundation www.Talc.com)

Time: *One -two hours*
Method:
Warm up, just for fun

- *Stand up in the circle.*
- *Have women walk around, maybe singing a song most women know.*
- *Call out "STOP! Tell them to quickly find someone born on the same day as you"*
- *Repeat this again and again using same year, same animal year, same zodiac sign and/or any other things you can think of connected to birth.*

Our bodies; Ourselves

- *Sit down together and ask the group what methods they can prevent pregnancy?*

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- *Show the sample as they come up with each method (you may need to have drawings for sterilization operations, don't forget men's sterilization)*
- *Paste or stick the samples in the rows the side of your cardboard.*
- *Next ask what things are important to us when we think about choosing a method to protect against pregnancy?*
- *Use a symbol or write these things in the columns across the top of your cardboard. Whether your group chooses, one thing that need to be included is 'protection against STI's and HIV'*
- *EMPOWER table sometimes looks something like this:*

Method	*Cheap*	*Easy to get*	*No side effects*	*Stop pregnancy*	*Easy to use*	*Enjoyable*	*Protect against STI/HIV*	*Total*
The pill								
Men's sterilization								
Depo Injection								
Condom								

You can see this group would have said they think about: how much does it cost; it is easy to get; does it have side effects; how well does it stop pregnancy, it is easy to use; does it add to enjoyment; does it protect from HIV and STI's

You can prepare some columns before the workshop But remember each group will have it's own things that are important to them. Don't miss the opportunity for a group to think of brand new things

Next ask the group to decide how many points they would give each method per column.
Make 10 points = very good 0 points =very bad. For example "Is the pill very cheap?
Yes give it a nine!" " Give a needle of six, it's expensive"

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Method	*Cheap*	*Easy to get*	*No side effects*	*Stops pregnancy*	*Easy to use*	*Enjoyable*	*Protects against STI/HIV*	*Total*
The pill	*9*	*6*	*4*	*10*	*7*	*8*	*0*	*44*
Men's sterilization	*9*	*9*	*9*	*10*	*10*	*10*	*0*	*57*
Depo Injection	*6*	*4*	*2*	*10*	*4*	*3*	*0*	*29*
Condom	*10*	*10*	*9*	*8*	*8*	*8*	*8*	*58*

When the table was completed the group can see which method they have given the highest score. Are they surprised? Is this the method they think is best?
Use the group knowledge and your resource book to add extra information where needed.

Talk about the need for condoms for STI/HIV protection, whether other method use to protect against pregnancy

HIV and Our body

All HIV/Aids information and activities should be useful to those who are HIV positive and HIV negative because you will have both in any group.

Aim: *Understand what HIV does to your body and what ways can we keep strong.*

Warning!!!!

Have sex workers share safe sex skills in workshop, do general women's health workshops but DON'T do HIV workshops until you are confident that you are ready to support women who are HIV positive.

This workshop is for women who already know the basics of how we catch HIV i.e. sex to sex, blood to blood, and mother to child; and how we protect against HIV

Be prepared: After the workshop women may come and tell you they have HIV or some will want to have a HIV test

Equipment: *enough rope, chalk or material to make two 3 foot or 1 meter lines*

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Time: *At least one hour*

Method:

1. *Use a rope or chalk or material to make to lines on the floor or ground*
2. *The line need to be 10 feet or 3 meter apart, like the goals on a small football field*
3. *If you have a group of 10 women choose 3-4 volunteer to come away from the group*
4. *Make sure you choose at least one or two volunteers who you know will be noisy and love to play*
5. *Have the others stand somewhere in the middle of the area you have marked out*
6. *Ask the volunteers you have chosen to each think a common sickness e.g. diarrhea, TB, gonorrhea, pneumonia*
7. *Get them to stand at one end of the field and introduce themselves by sickness they have chosen "Hello, I'm TB"*
8. *Ask the group how this sickness gets inside our body e.g. we breath it in, come with sex*
9. *Now explain the area they are standing in is a person and these 4 sicknesses are going to come into the person's body.*
10. *The women in the field are like the police who will protect the person by catching the sicknesses and throwing them back out.*
11. *If sicknesses reaches other line the person will become sick.*
12. *Then have the four volunteers sicknesses try and run through the group to get to other line. This should be noisy, fun and rough!*
13. *Ask if anyone knows what we call this protection system (in English it is called the immune system)*
14. *Now tell the 'body police' the person inside has HIV.*
15. *Tell about the quarter or even half of the 'police' that when the sickness come in they are to do nothing, just stand there.*
16. *Have the four sicknesses run through the group again, it should be harder to stop them reaching the other line.*

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17. *Keep telling more 'police' not to do anything until they are unable to stop most of the sicknesses reaching the line.*
18. *Let every body relax.*
19. *Say that this is all real. It is something that comes into a person and slowly over many years tells their immune systems to stop working until the person has no protection and gets lots of sicknesses and that is when we say they have Aids.*
20. *Aids is not a different sickness, it's all our sicknesses but person has no protection.*

As a group discuss what this means.

Sometimes the group will want to discuss why people with Aids are so thin, or have skin problems or other systems.

Sometimes the group will want to discuss how important it is to protect against all sicknesses especially if you have HIV.

Sometimes the group will want to talk about how to keep the immune system strong by eating well, getting enough rest and not being to stressed.

Don't be afraid to go where the group goes. You don't need all the answers.

Another way is to collect all the things the group wants to know and plan together who will find out what.

Managing difficult customers

Aim: *For sex workers to give each other new skill to use with difficult customers*

Equipment: *A drum or taped music*

Time: *One-two hours*

Warm up for fun and get into pairs

Have everyone standing in a circle.

Have them walk around to the playing of the music or drum. When the music stops they must get into group of whatever number you call out as quickly as possible. For example if you call out "7" they must get into groups of seven.

Do this five or six times then call out the number "2" at last.

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When each person has a pair, tell them they have 5 minutes to find out about each other.

They will need to be able to tell the group:

1. Their friend's nick name

2. Where she works

3. What she like about her work

4. What she likes in a boyfriend

5. What she likes about herself

After the time is finished each pair must introduce each other to the group. (It's a test they can all help each other. It just needs to be fun and everyone must speak at least one word to the group).

Then ask the group to think of situation that they themselves or their friends have been in with difficult customers.

Common situations in this workshop are where customers refusing to pay; customers wanting types of sex the woman doesn't want to do e.g. anal sex; customers who have other friends waiting for sex in the hotel room when the woman arrives; customers not wanting to use condoms.

For example in EMPOWER when we looked at what to do with the customer who wouldn't pay, in the first role play one woman showed how she picked up the TV set and told the customer she would throw it out the window of the hotel. The hotel would charge him more than if he just paid her what he owed! Another women said "No we would not do that, we would pretend to cry and get him to feel sorry for us"

Let the group work on each situation for as long as they are interested before moving to the next situation.

Don't worry if you don't? look at every situation, women will continue this together in a less formal way if they feel it is important.

Warning!!! It's best if only sex workers give ideas for what to do. Non-sex workers may not have the experience to give safe ideas and suggestions. If non-sex workers are involved in the workshop they can look at their own risks and situations for violence from men in their lives; or just ask questions to help make the role-play clearer.

(*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 72-79).

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The contents of the workshop are mostly suggested by the sex workers. Those who are facilitators of the 'Workshops' are either EMPOWER staff or volunteers. Sometimes NGO activists or academics who understand sex workers' problems also will be invited to be a facilitator. The methodology employed in the workshop included role plays, ice-breaking, using real life examples, discussions etc. The teacher of NFE class mentioned that the reasons why resource persons for the 'Workshops' mostly come from EMPOWER is because they understand sex workers problems, we speak in the same language, we are sensitive about their problems.

> 'We used to invite doctors to be a resource person but our friends did not understand because the doctors would say some words in English and use academic terminology" (Pu).

Duan Jai said that "I enrolled with EMPOWER to study Thai. I couldn't believe that the lessons were so cheap. I was sure that there must be a trick. I studied for about two weeks before the first workshop. When I got to EMPOWER Pi Nuut said 'No Thai class today, we are having a workshop' She said it was like a meeting. I wanted to go back to my room but she asked me please to stay. I thought 'Oh no! I think that I have been tricked'. Then a lot of other women who I never met before came to join us too. They said they were studying Japanese and English. They were all Thai and because I'm not a Thai I was scared they would look down on me or laugh at the way I speak. First we all had to say our nicknames to introduce ourselves. I was so nervous I did not hear anyone else's name. We played a game together in teams and I was surprised to hear some of the Thai women were as nervous as me! The game was funny. Then Pong began talking about our health. Some women asked questions but I didn't. Mainly I just listened. Some things I knew already, like different size of condoms. Some things were new, like there is also female condom. The time went really very quickly. At the end I felt relieved. I still say I don't like workshops but really I kind of like them too. We get new information and have some fun. Because I knew how I felt at the first day I try to help new students not to worry too much. I tell them that we are a family and they don't need to be able to read and write to learn" (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 68).

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Before workshop was conducted, the brochure about EMPOWER's activities were distributed during outreach program as well as through word-of-mouth advertising by friends.

This is an example of the brochure:

Hello friends, EMPOWER is going to conduct the workshop on **'Pregnancy Protection : Contraception' on Tuesday 13th of June by the professional trainer at EMPOWER' s office.** Therefore, we would like to invite everybody to join this workshop. The registration time is at 11 am and the training starts from 1 pm-4 pm. Coffee break will be served.

Everything is free of charge. For more detailed information, you can ask our volunteer during outreach program or call us at 053 282504

Please do not forget a good opportunity is being offered to you.

Beside workshops, EMPOWER has organized an exposure program regularly on Thursday, and also camping once per year for sex workers who attend the NFE classes as a part of NFE program. However sex workers who did not attend NFE class also are invited to attend those activities. Camping is organized once a year for about 2-3 days at various places such as Pattaya, Chanthaburi, Rayong etc. This year camping was held in Ayuttaya Camping and exposure program also will be included in the curriculum of NFE class.

The most recent annual camping activity was conducted in Ayuttaya province for 4 days from 19-23 June 2006. The venue was recommended by sex workers themselves. There were about 70 sex workers from EMPOWER Patpong, Chiang Mai, Chiang Rai and Phuket participating in this activity. The main aim is to strengthen the relationships between sex workers from different places and to raise awareness of participants about the social security laws.

It seems that EMPOWER give more significance to the workshop, exposure program as well as camping compared with the content in the ONFEC curriculum because EMPOWER can determine the contents by 'Herself'. These activities are integrated as part of NFE program accredited by ONFEC.

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Lee said that she likes English subject and social studies subject because she could apply them to her daily life and her work. She said that she doesn't like Thai language and mathematics.

> 'The content of NFE class that I like most is about human rights, social security laws, safe sex, how to access social services, because we can apply what we learn to our lives and work until now. We have to fight for our rights' (Bo).

> "In EMPOWER we learn by fun, we learn by doing and working things out together. We don't learn by being told or even shown. We discover the knowledge by ourselves" (*EMPOWER Scrap Book* 2005, p. 20, 46).

EMPOWER mentioned that their classes are useful immediately, for example the language must be language we can use immediately and be useful in many situations. If we leave the lesson with one sentence we can use that night with the customer then we will come back again, with our pride and confidence in our ability to learn already growing (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 48).

All interviewees participated in a camping activity at least once a year and most participated more than once. All of them used to attend the weekly workshop.

Sex workers came to EMPOWER not only to attend the class but also attend other activities, both formal and informal, that they can join. Therefore they are able to build up relationships with others as well as being able to access other activities. It's a learning process for them.

Before the class, some sex workers brought their lunch and some food that was sent by their families in rural areas to eat together and share with friends. After the class (after 3 p.m.), some students would check e-mail. Some of them needed help from staff members or volunteers to write e-mails in English in order to communicate with their boyfriends. The charge is about 10 baht per mail and the money will go to EMPOWER.

The black feminist thought states that dialoging, sharing, documenting women's experiences especially the marginalized group, including documenting their

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experiences through novels, films, books etc. is the best way to understand their thoughts, their problems, and their voices to be heard in order to develop the knowledge and to raise awareness from generation to generation.

3.6 Human Rights Education

The curriculum of NFE education class conducted by EMPOWER is based on the National Education Curriculum 2001, which is relevant to basic education as in formal education. The content is very general and there is no content specific to the particular group. However the curriculum is flexible and very much depends on the teachers who are responsible for NFE class.

The most interesting factor is that the NFE class conducts by EMPOWER integrates human rights (HR) issues from feminist perspective into the curriculum which sex workers are able to apply to their lives and their work. Beside that HR issues are able to raise awareness of sex workers as individuals and as a group and somehow can lead them to be free from the domination of society. All interviewees mentioned that HR issues like reproductive rights, safe sex, health, human right, social security laws, basic laws etc. can be used in their lives and work and are therefore very useful for them. Some of them were able to transfer knowledge or gave suggestions to their friends who did not attend the class.

Some of the following contents about human rights done by EMPOWER which was written in EMPOWER Scrap book:

Introduction to human rights

Aim: *For women to know their rights and be recognized by others*

Equipment:

- *About four or five squares of cardboard for each women in the workshop.*
- *Enough colored pencils or find maker pens for the group to share.*
- *Tape for sticking cardboard to wall or large sheet of cardboard.*
- *Prepare a copy of Universal Declaration on Human Rights in the locally understood language and read it yourself a few times before workshop and find out if your country has signed it.*

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Time: *About two hours, sometime longer*

Method:

1. Ask everybody to sit comfortably and quietly.

2. Begin talking, saying 'Imagine you can see yourself with many, many colored balloons tied to your arms.

3. You feel yourself being lifted off the ground and floating away in the sky.

4. You notice that the clouds touch your skin and that you have no clothes on at all.

5. It feels lovely and you floating on and on until you floating over the blue, the blue sea.

6. You float over an island and one by one the balloons begin to lose their air.

7. Slowly, slowly you float down and down until your feet softly touch the ground.

8. You are naked and alone on a magic island.

9. On this island you can ask for anything you really need, anything you feel that everyone should be able to have, anything you feel you have a right to. Remember you will be on the island for a very long time.

10. Now open you eyes and draw or write what things you would ask for. Just draw or write one thing per piece of cardboard.

11. When women finished drawing or writing, asked them to explain what they have asked for to the group.

12. Spread them out on floor as women take it in turns explaining. Put similar demands in the same piles.

13. When the group has finished, take their drawing/writing and stick them in their groups on the wall or large piece of cardboard.

At EMPOWER women usually ask for clothing and shelter; food and water ; love and friendship; Education; Family; Ability to travel; Work; Fun; Temple; Medicine or a doctor; Safety

- *Start to use the word for rights. These are our rights everyone in the world deserves to have.*

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- *Next ask the group to look at the rights we have put up and see if there is something on the board you have not had or do not have in your life now. Ask them to take the thing off the board and leave the room. Don't be surprise to see nearly everyone leave the room.*
- *Call everyone back together and ask women to talk about which right they took off the board and how has that rights been blocked or abused.*

For EMPOWER the most common rights abused are the right to education, the right to travel, the right to health; the right to be safe.

- *Have a discussion about what they have done or what they are doing to overcome this.*
- *Ask to stick the rights back onto the wall or cardboard.*
- *Briefly tell them about story of human rights. After world war II many, many governments got together to agree to make a common statement to protect the rights of everyone in the world. They decided what the basic rights of every human should be and asked that all countries agreed to protect these rights.*
- *Ask the group if they know if their country has agreed to protect these rights?*
- *Bring out your copy of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights (UDHR). Don't go too many details but using common language that everyone in the group can understand, read out the main point of each article. E.g. article 23 everyone has the right to choose their work.*
- *Let women see whether the rights they drew or wrote themselves are included in the UDHR.*
- *If there are rights that no one had thought about before e.g. the right to vote, let the group discuss why they did not think of it, is it a right they use, is it important for their lives?*
- *Discuss how we know that such declaration exists:*

  1. Does it this change how we feel about our rights being abused?

  2. Will this change what we do?

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3. Is there anything we as a group could do to change things?

(Empower Scrapbook 2005, p. 81-82).

How we hang our washing

Aim: *For women to examine a range of attitudes society has to women; our bodies, our value and breaking social rules*

Equipment: *A whole lots of clothes, including men and women's underwear. Rope to make a clothes line.*

Time: *30 minutes to one hour*

Method:

Tip: Try this workshop with women you know a few times until you develop your own style and way of keeping the group involved.

1. Have women hang the rope for a clothes line.

2. Ask the group to hang out the clothes as they would at home.

3. When done ask the group if everyone is happy with how the clothes look. Is it rights?

4. If not, encourage them to change thongs around until everyone is happy.

Then the workshop become a series of questioning everything about the clothes and how they are hang on line. Just allow yourself to flow freely with ideas and answers that come up. There is no set ending the group will take it where they need to go. Here are some questions and ways the discussion can go.

Ask who taught us to hang the clothes like this? When did they teach us? How did they teach us?

Being to move clothes on the clothesline and question why they are where they are. For example: why do these pretty bikini pants have to be hidden under sarong? How will they dry properly? Are women dirty? How? Why? How come my brother's blood from a cut knee isn't dirty but my period blood is? How can men be so much cleaner? Didn't they come out from of a woman's body? Does the way we hang our clothes make sense? Is it a law to make a clothes like this? What would happen

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> *if we did not do it this way? Will we be talked about? What would people say or do? What would strangers say or do? What would the people who love us say or do? Is this what happens when we break other social values? Do the people treat us like we have put our underwear on the top of the clothesline? (Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 11).

"At EMPOWER, we have to give significance to our curriculum because we want our friends to know about their rights in order to protect and prevent ourselves from any forms of exploitation or to avoid all forms of violence. We also want to develop our skills like language skills because it is very useful for our work. We integrate our contents or our curriculum into NFE class" (Pornpit Phakmai)

The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), article 13(1) specifies that State Parties agreed 'Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and the sense of its dignity, and shall strengthen the respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms' General Comments 13/1999 of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) elaborates on the article 13(1) of the CESCR in the following way:

Education is both a human rights itself and an indispensable means of realizing other human rights and democracy.

The potential of human rights education (HRE) is to enable vulnerable groups to protect themselves and challenge their oppressors. Their definition relates to words like power, empowerment, conflict, protect, defend, oppressed, and oppressor, victim, violation. The revolutionary pedagogy of Paulo The pedagogy of the oppressed must deal with the problems of the oppressed, of the oppressed consciousness and the oppressor's consciousness and can lead to solve the oppressed problems with full respect for human rights (Freire 1974, p. 1-25).

At group meetings of other Community Learning Centers usually teachers will teach the subject which was stated in the curriculum like mathematics. The group meeting of EMPOWER is a space to integrate the human rights issues which are related to sex workers' lives. Besides that, EMPOWER also has a regular class to teach the ordinary subjects like foreign language, mathematics, and Thai language.

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EMPOWER also tried to integrate issues that are needed by sex workers and related to ordinary subjects.

I found that the NFE class of EMPOWER does not emphasize the content determined by ONFEC, but it gives significance to content which relates to daily lives and daily work of sex workers as well as the rights of sex workers

Though EMPOWER integrated HR issues into the NFE program, the organization is still obliged to follow the ordinary subjects and system of ONFEC in order to have students pass the examinations and receive an educational certificate. It is very challenging for EMPOWER to create their own curriculum and have it be accepted at the policy making level in the future. However the organization has already set up an EMPOWER University, which serves as a learning center for sex workers not only in Thailand but also in other countries as well.

3.7 The persons who teach the non-formal education

First, teachers from the Office of Non-Formal Education Commission (ONFEC) teach the compulsory subjects based on date/times and semester term. These teachers can change every semester. Most of them play their role like a formal teacher and do not have a close relationship with the students in the class. As a matter of fact, the teachers who teach at NFE class must have knowledge about the community and be able to adjust the subject based on the needs of the target group. Besides, they must have good knowledge about teaching methodology in order to make students easily understand the subjects.

Second, teachers of EMPOWER's Non-formal education class mostly are EMPOWER staff and volunteers. Foreign volunteers teach foreign languages like English, Japanese, French, German, etc. Some of the teachers are still attending NFE class. Though ONFEC states that the teacher must have a bachelor's degree, at EMPOWER, those who are interested can apply to be a volunteer teacher and it is not necessary to have a bachelor's degree.

"Outsider teachers who are allowed to teach at EMPOWER must understand sex workers' problems. They must have a good attitude toward sex workers and not look down at sex workers. They have to realize that their role is not only teaching" (Surang Janyam).

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At present, EMPOWER has one two persons who are responsible for NFE program - their names are Pu and Pat. Pu used to work as masseuse and studies a bachelor degree at one of the universities in Chiang Mai. Pat is a full time volunteer from Thai Volunteer Service Foundation (TVS), a non-government organization working on promoting youth in Thailand and Mekong region.

'When I first came to EMPOWER, I worked as a masseuse at massage parlor. A Singaporean man invited me for dinner and at that time I could only say 'yes'. Later on I saw the brochure of EMPOWER mentioned an English class. So, I decided to join the class. At that time EMPOWER was looking for voluntary teachers, then I applied to be a volunteer for NFE class free of charge. Later on, I got paid 175 baht per day' (Pu).

Pu mentioned that sometimes sex workers also asked for advice or counseling, or asked me to accompany them to buy things and sometimes they also were asked to accompany them to the examination center or contacting other agencies. Some student asked teacher to write English letter to their boyfriends.

Teachers at EMPOWER are not only teachers but are also considered friends, counselors for sex workers. Moreover, the teacher must be able to adjust the content to make it relevant to the students' lives and work. "When we teach mathematics, we have to adjust the content like how much money the student received when they went with the customer, how much they have to pay for the bar and how much for a drink and how much for change etc"(Pu).

Besides that there are 3 volunteers teaching pre-primary education class. One of them graduated from upper secondary education and the rest are still studying at primary education level. Pen, one of the volunteer teachers, said that she still attended primary education for many years because she has to work and study at the same time and still can not read and write well. Pu mentioned that at the beginning she did not know how to teach Thai language because she had no experience or knowledge. She had to improve her teaching qualifications by herself. She felt that she was not a good teacher until now.

Pu also mentioned that teachers (facilitators) who are in charge of the NFE class should have experience and knowledge.

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I found that teachers (facilitators) who conduct the NFE classes must have knowledge on human rights issues particularly sex workers' rights - not all teachers or volunteers are able to conduct the workshop.

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CHAPTER IV
THE IMPACT OF THE NON-FORMAL EDUCATION ON THE LIVES OF FEMALE SEX WORKERS

4.1 The impact of the non-formal education on the lives of female sex workers

4.1.1 Gaining more knowledge and more capacity

The NFE classes make female sex workers gain greater knowledge and ability. As I mentioned earlier, most of the sex workers have less chance to access formal education and most of them graduated only primary school or did not complete primary school. Some of them could not read and write. After attending NFE class, they were able to read and write. They know how to use condom, how to practice safe sex, how to communicate and negotiate with the customer in English language, how to deposit money at the bank whereas before they had to depend on others, how to calculate a salary, how to prevent pregnancy, how to handle with the difficult customers.

> "I completed NFE at upper secondary education level. I strongly feel that if I want to learn only the content that is specified in the curriculum of ONFEC, then I would not be able to apply the knowledge to my daily life. However I had to study it because I wanted to pass my exam. I learned a lot from the contents provided by EMPOWER compared with the contents from ONFEC's curriculum. I also can utilize it in my daily life and work"(Pornpit).

> "Before I could not read and write. I even did not know the days of the week or the months of the year. When I attended the class, I got to know there are 31, 30 or 29 days per month. I could write the date when I received a salary at the end of the month. Before attending the class, I

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> was cheated a lot by my employer. Besides that, when we had knowledge, we can also work in new places. When we work at a new places, we also will get attention from the customers. If we work at same place, we got bored"(Pen).

Sex workers are able to utilize the knowledge from the NFE class in their daily lives and work.

> "Whenever we have workshop or go for camping we will talk about several issues such as health, contraceptives, how to use a condom, reproductive rights, human rights, social security laws, menstruation, ovaries etc. We gain more knowledge and utilize it in our daily lives and work. Besides that we also learn how to live in society" (lee).

Lee also said that she likes learning English and Social Studies because she could apply them to her daily life and her work. She said that she doesn't like Thai language or Mathematics.

> "We could not ignore drunk customers because the customers are the first priority at the work place. I learned tactics like how to deal with them, such as how to make him reach sexual climax in a short time and it works well" (Moo).

They also can apply knowledge for the community. "When we went camping, I liked games very much. Before I had no idea what a game is, after camping, I was able to use those games for activities in my community" (Wanee).

4.1.2 Self-confidence

All interviewees clearly expressed that they gained more self-confidence after attending the NFE program of EMPOWER.

> "Two of my friends did not dare even to speak out or talk to others because their Thai is not clear. After attending the class, I observed that they have more courage to speak out, and are even brave enough to ask a question in the class which I have never seen them do before" (Lee).

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> "I have gained more self-confidence and courage to speak out. Before attending the class, I could not read a sign and a friend of mine had to accompany me wherever I would go. After attending the class, I can read and write, I dare to go out alone. One time I and my friend went to Bangkok. We thought that we got lost. Suddenly I saw a sign name and knew that we were at the right place and asked the people for the name of small soi that we wanted to go" (Da).

Wanee, a student at primary education level as well as a volunteer teacher at pre-primary education of the NFE class said that before attending the pre-primary education class, the students did not dare to speak out while after attending the class they dared to speak out. For example before, whenever they met the police they experienced panic, felt nervous and found themselves shaking; after the class, they had the courage to talk to the police without feeling panic or nervousness like before.

Before the class whenever they have to contact government agencies, go to the bank or go to examination center, they needed someone from EMPOWER to accompany them.

I think that sex workers are able to empower themselves to gain self-confidence because they have knowledge. Beside that they have their own community which is a space for them to express their thought and their feeling.

Empowerment from women's perspective as women speaking about gaining control over their lives, and participation in decisions that affect them in the home and community, in government and international policies. In short empowerment means gaining control, of participation, of decision making (Karl 1995).

4.1.3 Negotiating with customer

The NFE class of EMPOWER also provides tools for sex workers in dealing with or handling with customers. They also demonstrated different sexual intercourse patterns to deal with the customer. Sometimes they shared experiences with each other. When they met a difficult customers, they also told each other about this matter and asked them to beware about it. Sometimes, they also described in detail the appearance of a difficult customer and put it up on the wall at EMPOWER's office.

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> "When we have sex with our husbands, sometime we were forced to have sex with him, sometime we were raped by our husband. On the other hand, when we have sex with a client/customer, we get money and we can decide whether we want to have sex with a customer that we did not like or not" (Dang).

> "After attending the English class, I can ask the customers to wear a condom as well as negotiate about the price before going out with the customer. It makes me feel that I have power" (Lee).

> "At EMPOWER, we began discussing about rights on the first day of the class. Those who are members of EMPOWER have knowledge about laws, basic rights, knowing about work equipment of sex workers, safe sex, basic health care etc"(Dang).

4.1.4 Self-value

All interviewees felt proud that they were not only able to attend NFE class but also are able to receive education certificate like other people in the society which they never had a chance to attain via the formal education system. "I was very excited and proud of myself when I received primary education certificate. I always look at it and smiled to myself that I could make it. I put it in the frame and keep it in the proper place" (Tik).

The students of EMPOWER also attended "Wan Whai Kru," signifying the showing of respect to the teachers, which is organized once a year. Every student and teacher from every NFE learning center will gather at the same place. This year the gathering took place at Suan Dok temple in Chiang Mai. There were more than 2,000 students participating in this event. Each NFE learning center sent two representatives with flowers to show respect to the teachers. There were about 20 students from EMPOWER attending this event as well as two representatives who brought flowers to pay respect to their teachers, who sat in front of the audience. All of them wore student uniforms and they took pictures. This event also made them recognize that they make

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up part of the NFE student body and felt proud to be part of it. Many students were very excited to take pictures with the group.

Nhong mentioned that many sex workers had to enter the sex trade because it is only the sex trade that does not require an educational certificate. Therefore an education certificate can provide them with greater choice in their lives. Nhong also stated that some sex workers who graduated from the NFE class have changed their careers by working at the shopping mall, selling cosmetics or working in a private company and some of them became self-employed. She also mentioned that when sex workers received an education certificate, they felt proud of themselves and some of them put their certificate in a frame and kept it safe. However some sex workers do not place an importance on the certificate itself like Lee. She said that she decided to attend the NFE class for a second time not because she wanted to have an education certificate but because she wanted to gain more knowledge and be able to distribute her knowledge to others. Besides that she wanted to have knowledge to teach her daughters or her grandchildren in the future.

Some sex workers want to have an education certificate because they want to continue for the higher education level like in the university. Some of them study at Ramkamhang, Sukhothai, or Ratchapat Universities.

4.1.5 Self-determination

Most of sex workers whom I interviewed recognized their own dignity and were aware of their rights. Some of them even said that working in the sex trade is their own choice and they dare to tell others that they work as sex workers. Beside that they are part of the society and make a lots of money for the country as well as to support their families. They also demanded to access to the basic human rights like other human being.

> “Empower made me recognize that I’m human being when I became member and student of EMPOWER, we were able to do many activities like other people. Our sisters go to certain places and dare to tell other people that they are sex workers and they did not feel shameful. They share experiences with us, for example, some of our sisters used to be teachers before they became sex workers. “We have to open ourselves what we are working as a sex worker,

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though the society did not accept us, it's fine as long as our family accept us. I told my family that I have worked as a sex worker one year after joining EMPOWER" (Lee).

"Though we work in a different profession to others, we live in the same society. We know that others have better careers than us and we don't have the same chances as them. At least, others could talk to us. We do not like others to look down on us through eyes or words. If others look down at us, we do not accept this. We all know that we also make a lot of money for our country. What we want is to demand our basic rights in order to make society aware that we are part of society" (Ta).

Surang mentioned that EMPOWER's students are different from others sofar as they felt that they have to defend their rights and stand up to fight for their rights" (Surang Janyam).

Empowerment means adding to women's power, and power means having control or gaining further control, being able to define and create society from a women's perspective, being able to influence social choices and decisions affecting the whole society (not just areas of society accepted as women's place), Being recognized and respected as equal citizens as human beings with a contribution to make. Power means being able to make a contribution at all levels of society and not just in the home. Power also means having women's contribution recognized and valued (Griffen 1987, p. 117-18).

Mr. Plantilla, a human rights educator of Asian Regional Resource Center for Human Rights Education (ARRC) stressed that one challenge for human rights education is that human rights education is not merely a means to learn about human rights but also to realize them. He believes that human rights education can, therefore, be defined as human rights empowerment. He also said that the basic challenge of human rights education is translating human rights concepts into a form that affects behavior, attitude, and knowledge (*Report on the Asian Human Rights Education Trainer's Colloquium: Chaing Mai, Thailand*r 2001).

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4.1.6 Deconstruction discourse

A discourse which is created and makes women subordinate does not exist in a single institution but also has been expanded to every social institution in society. She said that in order to solve the problem of women's subordination, focusing only on political or economic aspects is inadequate. Instead, to be free from male domination, women have to oppose all knowledge and power discourse that make women more subordinate than men in every place, every social institution in the society (Hekman, cited in Purisinsit 2003, p. 168).

Therefore, it's very important for sex workers to deconstruct a discourse by their own in order to oppose sex workers subordination by dominant society. This research found out that deconstruction discourses can empower female sex workers and encourage them to fight for their rights.

These new social discourses are utilized to raise awareness among sex workers as well as in advocacy and campaigns aimed at the public and at the policy making. The new social discourse is communicated through verbal, publication, books, newsletter, T-shirt, poster, leaflet, brochure, diary, banner, even at the wall in the office etc. Pornpit Phakmai, a director of EMPOWER states that the new social discourse has been created by their group such as 'sex work is work'. The group brainstormed, discussed together. Sometimes, somebody would think about it and bring to discuss in the group in order to get consensus agreement among themselves. She also said that in changing one thing that kept them apart, the things society teaches us to believe about each other and ourselves also began to change.

> "In EMPOWER we learn by fun, we learn by doing and working things out together. We don't learn by being told or even shown. We discover the knowledge by ourselves" (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 15).

"We should not just accept what we have learned about sex work from the outside. We look at the other professionals and see they also work for money; many have a boss; a salary; a time to go to work and a time to go home. We look at other job and see that those jobs also use their body and their time. Other jobs also have interesting parts; dangerous parts and fun parts. Then we ask ourselves "What is different about my job?" (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 13).

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"We soon developed a sense of pride when we understand that as sex workers we don't 'sell our bodies' we use our brains, our creativity, our art to earn an income that supports our families and us. We are workers: we are professional" (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 13).

"We sex workers are the family leaders. We support between 5-8 family members each, and most of us are also single mothers. Many of us must put the daily financial needs of our family first, before we can think about being sex worker activists. We do not have an extra time or energy needed to run EMPOWER. Some of us feel we have so many responsibilities it is great for us to have one thing in our lives we are not responsible for. We already do what we can for each other we don't want the extra burden of being call a peer educator or volunteer…BUT many of us will be able and willing to choose to be an activist. Non-sex workers must create opportunities for us, not just to join in the work of the organization, but also to take over the organization" (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 16).

"Sex work is able to raise whole family" (Ta)

"Sex workers rights are human rights" (at the wall of EMPOWER office)

"We are not stupid" (Dang)

"We are professional" (Lee)

"We are professionals who know how to use condom" (lee)

"one research study mentioned that sex workers are those who have a mental problem. We immediately respond that sex workers are not people who have mental problems" (Surang Janyam)

"We are not people who spread diseases" (Pen)

"We work in the formal sector and have a work place and working time. We pay tax and when we buy goods, we also pay vat" (Pu)

"Though the society call us bad girls, but we do not harm others" (Nan)

Bindman (1998, p. 67) mentioned that if we want sex workers to claim their rights as full members of local and world society, we first need to identify prostitution as work. Then sex workers can be included and protected under existing instruments which aim to protect all workers from exploitation, and women from discrimination.

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> "We do not care how others will look at us. Though we are sex workers, we also are able to learn the same subjects as well as to take the same examination with others who are not sex workers"(Dang).
>
> "Who we are, we are human, we are women, we are human activist and get acknowledgement for it, we are proud of our work, we are many religions, we are artists, we know sex work is work, we come from many places and the world is our place, We are professional" (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 54-55).

These social discourses are very important not only to raise awareness and empower female sex workers as individuals and as a group but also to make the public aware of the basic human rights of sex workers. These social discourses will be able to replace the mainstream social discourse slowly, if EMPOWER or sex workers themselves put their effort in the public sphere like through public media, public education system, seminars, meeting, public forum etc.

In thinking about power and knowledge, Michel Foucault theorizes that power exists everywhere - in the diversity of social relations and in every social institution, both the private and public sphere. This power is practiced through discourses which produce 'the truth'. He refuses grand theories and believes that only a plurality of theories can solve problems.

Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva post modern feminists, are interested in language because they were writers. They perceived that language is not only for expression but also creates definitions under a patriarchal culture. Language was created and preserved for sexual identities which subordinated women (Beasley, cited in Purisinsit 2002, p. 161).

EMPOWER gave significance to the experiences of sex workers through the NFE classes as well as other activities, and the female sex workers have been developing their analysis and conceptualized their own problems and own knowledge and strategies to solve these problems not only as individual but also as a group. Beside that EMPOWER also utilize deconstructed social discourses as one of significant strategies to influence main steam social discourse. However, as a researcher, I found that EMPOWER still needs to work very hard to empower female

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sex workers not only in Chiengmai Province but also nationwide to fight against mainstream social discourse of domination existing which strongly persists in every social institution.

4.1.7 Emerging of sex workers community

As I mentioned earlier, sex workers did not dare to attend the NFE class with other non-sex workers because they felt afraid that others would look down on them because the mainstream society still considers sex workers 'bad' in many aspects. EMPOWER's NFE class on the other hand made them feel more comfortable and they also met friends. Many sex workers who met at EMPOWER even go out together or still continue to fight for sex workers' rights. They felt that being a group or community made them recognize their self-value (sense of self-worth) and they talked to each other with the same language, sharing similar problems. They also gave moral support, concern as well as understanding to each other. EMPOWER gives them a space and freedom to express their thoughts, their feelings, which they do not have in the mainstream society.

During my field trip and my observation, I found that when sex workers are in a group, they have the courage to talk about their lives and their experiences and they are open to sharing experiences about having sex with customers.

The staff and volunteer and some of sex workers whom I interviewed identify themselves as 'Kon Nai Chum Chon' means that they belong to the community of people working in service sector. When they identify themselves as a community member, I think it is very significant for empowerment among themselves and led them to gain more courage in order to fight against mainstream society. It is very interesting that they have tried to tell the public that they are part of the society and that they are not 'no-body'. It is very good entry point to create a public space as well as to construct new social discourses against the existing dominant social discourse.

Many sex workers expressed that EMPOWER was like a second home; these words were even written on the wall at the EMPOWER office.

Therefore, sex workers decided to attend the NFE class at EMPOWER not only because they want to gain more knowledge or ability but also because they need

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friends and a community to make them feel that they have dignity, self-value as other human beings.

> "My highest motivation for attending the NFE class here is having a lot of friends, having news and information and the fact that here there is a space for women" (Pen).
>
> "My most happy impression from the NFE class is that I got friends with whom we still continue fighting for our rights until now" (Bo).

EMPOWER provides a space for sex workers to access their basic rights like education, health and public space for them to raise their own voices. It's clearly shown that through EMPOWER's the NFE program, sex workers are able to recognize themselves as human beings with human dignity and recognize their rights. They were aware of their self-value and EMPOWER tried to create new social discourses within the mainstream society.

> "When we went for camping or exposure program, we gained new friends. We also share our experiences and tell each other about our work problems and sometimes about our personal lives. We sometimes found that our experiences are useful for others to learn which made us very happy. Sometimes, we also hang around together" (Keng).

> "The first time when I went to the brothels I was shocked. I felt pity for the women working there. I did what all outsiders do: I thought I understood the women and their lives. I tried to work with them until I was no longer an outsider. Then I learned and have real respect and understanding for my sisters who work in the brothels. Sex work has so many styles. If we want to have a strong community and a strong movement, we need to find ways for all sex workers to be part of this" (Pornpit).

The situation of sex workers is quite similar to black women. Black women are oppressed by race, sex, and class. Therefore black women started to build up their identity and raise their voices through their experiences and they were able to shape their own theory as black feminist thought and bring it into practice. Black feminist thought attempts to find ways to support the struggle of all forms of oppression

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towards women. Giving importance to transferring theory into practice so that it leads to self-power, control over their own life, self –determination. It means that they have to define their own identity by themselves.

From my study, I found that the NFE class can led to strengthen sex workers and make them feel that they are not alone. They have their own community who understand their problems and their situation, a space which is rarely provided in mainstream society. They also can make things change as individuals, groups and policy making in the future. Without this community, it is hard for them to fight for their rights against the backdrop of domination by mainstream society.

> "A community is very important for our empowerment. It is hard for us to empower ourselves as individuals. Empowerment happens step by step, with different levels of empowerment through different kinds of learning processes. In my own case, I wanted to learn English in order to communicate with the customers. After that I joined many activities like workshop, camping etc" (Pornpit).
>
> "One can be broken, but together we are strong" (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 11).

4.1.8 Varying levels of empowerment among female sex workers who join the non-formal education class of EMPOWER

The research also found out that there are three levels among the sex workers whom I interviewed. First, there are three interviewees who are able to say that sex work is their own choice and they are able to control over their lives and they are very clear that sex work is work and they must have access to basic human rights like the rights to health care, the right to education, the rights for expression, the right to organize and the rights to access all social welfare. The most significant is that they recognize their own self-value as well as their dignity equal to other human being and have the courage to tell others that they are sex workers and continue to fight for their rights. These sex workers not only attend the NFE class but also have an opportunity to go for trips, meetings, share experiences etc with other organizations as well as sex workers' organizations both inside and outside the country. In addition, they also are key leaders in the organization.

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"Before joining EMPOWER, I was influenced by mainstream society. I always thought that society looks down on us. I was afraid that others would know that I work as a sex worker. I didn't dare to speak out. I didn't dare to associate with others or even dare to associate with the community. I was so lonely and had no friends. When I watched television or read news about sex workers, I felt sad and frustrated because I did not want others to pity us or look at us as victims. I was so upset and would cry alone. Sometimes, I felt that I had no space to express or to share my thoughts. After joining EMPOWER, I felt that I am part of the society. When we just came from a rural area, we did not know about our rights. After knowing about the rights, we are encouraged us to protect and fight for our rights. You also have no right to say that sex worker is dirty because it's really a violation of our rights. I work as a sex worker because of my own choice, there is nothing wrong with it and I do not harm others. We have been given NFE education certificates from ONFEC. If I attend an NFE which is not conducted by EMPOWER, I think I could only get a certificate whereas the NFE conducted by EMPOWER develops our self-confidence as well, it fills in the empty spaces in our lives, and make us feel that we have choices in our lives. We dare to express our thoughts, we have opportunities, we know about our rights and beyond that we have our community. EMPOWER also provides us an opportunity to learn certain things by bringing us to several places and we will be able to open our eyes to see the bigger world. Because of this we feel that we are confident to lead our lives" (Pornpit).

"I felt like I had a burden when I was with my ex-husband because I had to have sex with him as well as to do take care of him, to do house whole work as well as to responsible for my children. I decided to divorce and to work on this direction by myself because I felt I would have more freedom. When we work as sex workers, we have to let other people know and we won't care no matter how they look at us. I told my

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daughter and my family about my work and they can accept it. I sometime, brought by elder daughter to visit my work place" (Lee).

"I feel proud that I work at night time and it is easy to get money. Beside that I am able to attend the class during day time. If other people say that women who work at night time are 'not good women', I do not care and feel nothing" (Pen).

Lee also said that she loves this career and will not leave it. Her future dream is she want to be a small bar owner. Whoever can come in. It's a place for friends to share problems and help each other. For example, if a friend goes out with the customer, then they will get information about that customer like name, address, hotel address and room number etc.

The majority of interviewees can be described as being at the second level is which includes about 6 people who attend the NFE class including the workshop, camping, and exposure program. Those in this category are still unable to liberate themselves like the first group. They realize that through the NFE class, they gain more knowledge, skill and ability including gaining more self-confidence to express their thoughts, courage to deal with certain things on their own, like going to the bank alone, or going out alone. Some of them go to attend meetings and participate in camping activities, but they go with volunteer or key person of the organization. They are brave enough to share their life experiences within the same community. They also want to access to basic human rights like social protection, healthcare, education etc. However I'm still not so sure whether they fully recognize their own self-value as sex workers because they still want to work during the day time, because they consider working at night time is 'not for good women'. They still have contradictions in their thoughts. They still dominated or influence by main stream social attitude. These people often join the NFE class. However, they still want to go through other activities not only the NFE class.

"My future expectation is that I want to work during the day time like others and want to work in an office. If we work during the day time, then we need an education certificate even for work as a waitress in a

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bakery. People think that those working at night time are not good persons because people think that they might work as sex workers. However I do not care about it. If some one tells me that working at night time is not good, I will respond to them immediately and ask them why it's not good, because we also get money" (Nan).

"If people tell us that working as service workers is not good, we ask them back why it is not good and we explain to them that service work is not just having sex with a man, but service work is also including waitress in the restaurant and hotel workers" (Dang).

"No one told their family that they work as sex worker. Mostly they told them that they work in bar, pub, karaoke. In my case I told them that I worked at Night Bar Za because they have no idea about bar, pub and karaoke" (Ta).

"The most significant problem of sex workers is they do not dare to open up to others that they work as sex workers. They still care about the mainstream society opinion. They also do not know about their rights. If they know about their rights, they can solve problems" (Dang).

The third level consists of those who still suffer and feel guilty that they work as sex workers and still look at sex workers as social 'evil', 'bad woman' etc. They are afraid that others will look down on them and do not dare to associate with them. They are not able to break free of mainstream social domination. There was only one interviewee who expressed her thoughts very clearly:

"After working as a cook in the restaurant, I was unemployed for about four to five months. I decided to work as a sex worker because of my daughter. When I was young my mum did not look after me and left me with my grandparents. So I did not want this thing to happen to my daughter. I want to support her to have a better future life than me. I suffer too much working as a sex worker. After I had worked as a sex

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worker for about two months, I met a foreigner who was willing to support me. I felt that he was the one who could bring me out from the suffering situation. He supported me for about five months, then he left me. A second foreign man supported me for about half a year and also disappeared. The third man supported me for about one year and the latest foreign man has been supporting me now for almost two years. I have tried my best to get free from being a sex worker because I care about the society and the people surrounding me. I want to get out from this situation. However, many foreign men only want to relieve their sexual desire, and no one wants to have a permanent relationship with us" (Keng).

There was only one person who directly expressed her feelings that she is suffering very much from working as a sex worker. However she did not look down on others who are sex workers. She seldom attended EMPOWER's activities, particularly the NFE program. She joined camping activities only two times, never attended workshops and never attended the NFE class. She contacted EMPOWER only asking about final examination dates. Therefore, it indicated that those who seldom attend the NFE class of EMPOWER rarely liberate themselves from the dominant social discourse.

The failure to create mass- based feminist education allowed the mainstream patriarchy to continue existing in society. However, in order to provide people in the community access to feminist education, appropriate media such as books on tape, songs, radio, television, etc. must be used. Feminist education provides positive changes to our lives. She also mentioned that sharing feminist thought and practices sustain the feminist movement and feminist knowledge is for every body (Hooks 2000, p. 19-204).

Postmodern feminism differs from mainstream feminism in that postmodern feminism does not believe in universality of women. They believe in multiplicity of women. Postmodern feminism believes that there is no permanent 'Woman' and there is no permanent 'Femininity' but everything has been created through the practice of discourse. Therefore, there is no permanence or unchangeability of women. On the

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other hand, there is a multiplicity and diversity of identities of women and was not presented only because of female sex but also related to race, class, age and social orientation (Purisinsit 2002, p. 176).

Regardless of which level of empowerment the sex workers fall into, the Universal Declaration on Human Rights clearly states that everybody is born free and equal in dignity and rights, they are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in the spirit of sisterhood/brotherhood, all have right to life, liberty, and security in person. The right to access health care, the right of expression, the right to organize, the right to property, the right to education. Everybody is equal before the law and is entitled without any discrimination, to equal protection of the law. In order to achieve it, it tale long process of empowerment and effective activities like human education is needed.

4.2 The process and contents which influence the empowerment of female sex workers through the non-formal education program.

As I mentioned earlier that there were different levels of empowerment among sex workers who joined EMPOWER's NFE program. Hence, the factors which influence non-formal education on empowerment of female sex workers are as follows:

4.2.1 Human rights education

The research found that it is very important to integrate human rights issues from feminist perspective into the curriculum because it led to empowerment female sex workers. Without integrating human rights issues into the curriculum, it is almost impossible to empower female sex workers. All the interviewees mentioned that the content that they were able to utilize to their lives and work are human rights issues which they learned as part of the NFE program conducted by EMPOWER. The highest achievement of human rights education is leading sex workers to gain more self-confident, self-value, self respect, self determination. They also are able to deconstruct mainstream social discourses as individuals as well as a group.

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4.2.2 Female sex workers themselves

Sex workers who attend the NFE classes regularly were able to empower themselves as clearly mentioned earlier.

Although the NFE program was conducted in accordance with the conditions of female sex workers. The research also found that some sex workers were not able to attend the NFE program because they worked late at night, went with their customers to other places, moved to work in other places, and went abroad. Though some of them attended the class, they fell asleep due to their late night work.

Pu, a teacher of the NFE program said that “one of the students here was strong enough to inform us that she want to drop a class because her boyfriend came and she has to go with her boy friend. No-one dares to blame her because it’s her rights. However some of them moved to other places without informing us and we could not contact them” (Pu).

> “I seldom come to EMPOWER and did not attend a workshop because I’m very busy. I would come to EMPOWER just to get the books in order to learn by myself. However I took the final examination conducted by ONFEC every time” (Keng).
>
> “I worked at the massage parlor from 1 pm –midnight and after that I went to dancing places to search for customers. While I was working at two places, I could earn about 30,000 baht monthly. However I had no savings at all because I have to support my family” (Moo).

4.2.3 Teachers/facilitators

EMPOWER’S NFE program has the teachers who understand sex workers’ needs and problems. Most teachers belong to the sex workers community. The organization rejects outsider teachers who do not understand sex workers problems and needs. The teachers (facilitators) play an important role in conduct the class in order to respond to the needs of female sex workers as well as to empower them. Therefore, teachers (facilitators) must have knowledge on human rights issues and they must understand the problems and needs of the target group.

> “When I first came to EMPOWER, I worked as a masseuse at massage parlor. A Singaporean man invited me for dinner and at that time I could

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only say ‘yes’. Later on I saw brochure of EMPOWER which advertised their English class. Therefore, I decided to join a class and during that time EMPOWER was looking for voluntary teacher, so then I applied to be a volunteer for the NFE class with no wage. Later on, I got paid 175 baht per day” (Pu).

“Women at EMPOWER say they want to learn from someone who:
Is kind and warm
Is patient and calm
Likes to teach
Will be creative and fun
Will be sensitive to how we feel” (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 52).

4.2.4 The process and participation

The research clearly shows that sex workers are able to participate in the process at the beginning of the NFE class. EMPOWER decided to conduct the NFE class because sex workers want to have certificates and gain more knowledge. Sex workers also can give suggestions on the content as well as the process of the NFE class. The participatory method is implemented in the class as well as other activities which relate to the NFE program.

“Workshop topics need to come from what the participating group currently needs. Workshop topics can not be planned out for a year and cannot come from the ideas and skills of the teachers (facilitator). EMPOWER choose a topic only a day or so beforehand. Topics are chosen from what everyone is talking about during that week; questions asked by sex workers; important changes to sex workers lives or work; special days; writing proposals. We also look at who is at EMPOWER at the moment e.g. do we have a lot of migrant sex workers who may want information about legal issues? Now sex workers run all the workshops like occupational health and safety, customer skill, and safe sex” (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 69).

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4.2.5 The principle, beliefs and goals of organisation

EMPOWER is a female sex workers' organization and work for female sex workers' rights. EMPOWER believes that education will empower sex workers control over their lives. Sex workers must access to basic human rights as human being. Therefore the organization provides activities to empower female sex worker to fight for their basic human rights.

> "EMPOWER' s goal is not to change sex workers. EMPOWER works so that sex workers have knowledge, support and skill needed to go in the direction they want to go" (*Empower Scrapbook* 2005, p. 12).

Besides that EMPOWER believes that female sex workers have experiences and knowledge to share and to learn from each other and to make things change by themselves. This belief is very relevant to black feminist thought which believes that black feminists have their own knowledge and create their body of knowledge by themselves through several other activities to bring their knowledge into practice. This leads to empower black women.

4.2.6 The government policy

Although the curriculum of the NFE program determined by ONFEC did not respond to the needs of sex workers, the ideology and goal of the NFE of ONFEC is very broad. It gives space for EMPOWER to integrate their own contents to form part of the NFE program. However, the ONFEC could not provide support all activities of EMPOWER. If EMPOWER did not have its own budget, it would be difficult for it to run the NFE program more fruitfully.

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CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

5.1 Conclusion

My research topic examines human rights education as a tool for empowerment of female sex workers with a case study of one non-formal education program for female sex workers in Thailand.

The research focuses on the non-formal education (NFE) program of EMPOWER in Chiang Mai Province which has been accrediting by the Office of Non-formal Education Commission (ONFEC), Ministry of Education, Thailand. This research aims to examine the content and process of NFE, whether human rights issues are integrated into the curriculum, the impact which the NFE program has on the lives of female sex workers as well as to identify the factors within the NFE program which led to empowerment female sex workers.

EMPOWER 's NFE program was initiated because sex workers wanted to gain education certificates endorsed by ONFEC in order to have more choice in their lives. Besides that, they wanted to gain greater knowledge to teach the children in their families. Sex workers did not dare to attend classes with others due to the attitudes of mainstream society which considers sex workers as 'bad' and 'social evil'.

The NFE program conducts by EMPOWER allowed female sex workers access to basic human rights on education. Besides that, EMPOWER is able to negotiate with ONFEC to set up their own Community Learning Center (CLC). Teachers who conduct the NFE program at EMPOWER have to understand problems of female sex workers and respect their basic human rights. EMPOWER rejects outsider teachers who have negative attitudes toward sex workers. Teachers are selected by EMPOWER and most of them are volunteers or female sex workers themselves. Teachers also play roles such as facilitator, counselor, friends and sisters. Students are given central importance and are able to participate in the NFE program in various ways such as giving suggestions about its contents and activities.

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Though ONFEC establishes the curriculum to all CLCs, EMPOWER did not follow the entire syllabus in the curriculum. EMPOWER has created 'her' own contents and 'her' own activities and integrated them as a part the NFE program. The most significant achievement is that EMPOWER is able to integrate content into the curriculum which is based on their principles and beliefs. EMPOWER believes that education is very important to empower sex workers to have control over their own lives. At the same time the ideology of ONFEC is also very broad and can be adapted to EMPOWER's initiative. The most significant point is that human rights issues from feminist perspective have been integrating into the curriculum through workshops, camping, exposure program as well as within ordinary subjects like Mathematics, Science, English language etc. The human rights component from feminist perspective raise the awareness of female sex workers and has led to the empowerment of sex workers to fight for their rights as individuals and as a group. Without integrating human rights content from feminist perspective into the NFE curriculum, it almost impossible to empower female sex workers.

Though female sex workers attended the NFE program, not all sex workers are liberated and free from dominant social discourse on sex worker. It takes a lot of effort by the organization as well as by sex workers themselves to reach that stage because of the domination that still exists very firmly in main steam society and within every social institution. Sex workers who are liberated not only attended the NFE class, and other EMPOWER activities often, but also have many opportunities to attend other activities at national, regional and international level. Most of the sex workers are not totally free from the dominant discourse, but they are aware of their basic human rights and realize their dignity as a human being. These female sex workers often join the NFE program of EMPOWER and other activities of EMPOWER as well. Only one interviewee clearly showed that she is suffering in her work as a sex worker and tried hard to rid herself of that situation. The research found that though she is enrolled as a student of NFE class of EMPOWER, she seldom attended class. Therefore, the NFE program may be considered necessary to empower female sex workers to help them be liberated from the mainstream dominant social discourse, but not sufficient and others activities may be required.

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In fact EMPOWER cannot totally ignore the curriculum of ONFEC because the students have to take a final examination which is conducted by ONFEC and the exam is based on the core contents of the curriculum. EMPOWER has now set up a University for Female Sex Workers. Therefore, it will be a great challenge for EMPOWER in the future to work towards using 'her' own curriculum as well as ensuring that 'her' own education certificate will be accepted by the main stream society.

EMPOWER's NFE program has integrated human rights issues from feminist perspective as well as gender perspective into the curriculum which has an impact upon sex workers in the following ways:

Firstly, sex workers have gained more knowledge. They are able to utilize knowledge in their lives and work, such as know how to use a condom, how to practice safe sex, how to deposit money to the bank, how to communicate as well as negotiate with employers, and how to read and write. Secondly, sex workers have gained more self- confidence, for example they dare to go to certain places alone like the bank, government offices etc. Besides that they dare to express their thoughts and feelings, and have felt brave enough to negotiate with their customers. Thirdly, sex workers gained self-value and felt that that they are human beings and have their own dignity. They are part of the society and are the people who play an important role in supporting better lives for the members in their family. They are able to attend the same NFE class as well as to receive the same education certificates as others who are not sex workers. Fourthly, sex workers have self-determination, some of them are able to decide that sex work is their own choice and do not want others to look at them as victims. Fifthly, sex workers are able to deconstruct discourse on female sex worker through non-formal education and other activities. Deconstructing discourses on female sex worker has been a strategy utilized by EMPOWER to raise awareness among sex workers themselves as well as the public in general. Therefore, human rights education from feminist perspective, if carried out successfully, can become human rights empowerment.

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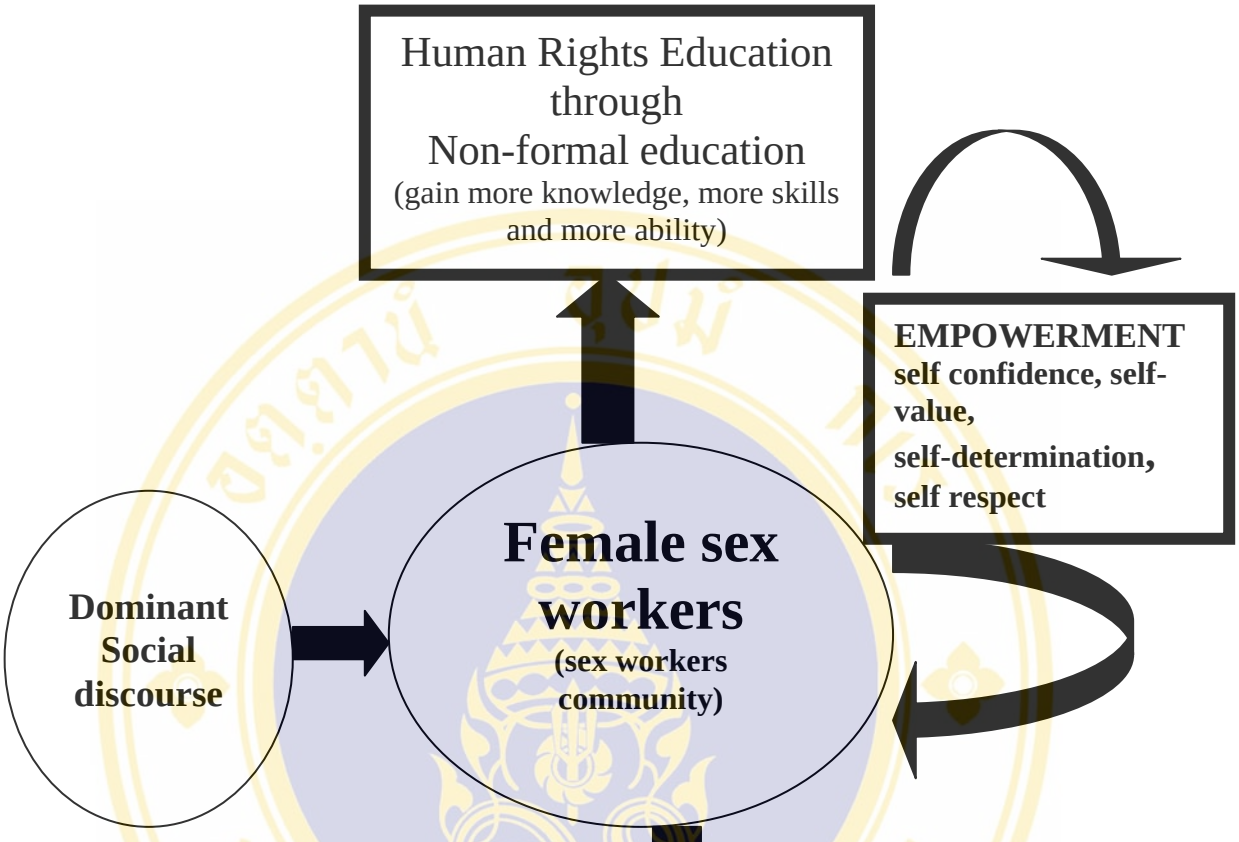

‘Bad’ women
‘Cause of a broken family’
‘Sinful women’
‘Sex objects’
‘Property of men as customers’
‘Not human beings’ and ‘no dignity’
‘Dirty women’
‘Shameless women’
‘Whore’
‘Sluts’
‘Jai taek’ (broken mind/heart)
‘Jai Ngaai’ (feeble mind/heart)
‘Kai lhong’

Deconstructing discourses to counter the existing dominant social discourses

“Sex work as work”

“Sex work is able to raise whole family”

“We sex workers are the family leaders”

“We are professional”

“Sex workers rights are human rights”

etc.

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5.2 Recommendations

1. The curriculum of the NFE program must include human rights issues from feminist perspective into the curriculum because human rights education led to the empowerment of learners as individuals and as a group particularly the marginalized groups.
2. A NFE program must be conducted by facilitators/teachers who fully understand the problems of the target group as well as who have knowledge about human rights from feminist perspective. Therefore, human rights training is needed for facilitators/teachers.
3. Facilitator/teachers who teach marginalized groups like sex workers should play certain roles like a friend, sister, counselor etc., and they should be able to provide assistance for them whenever it is needed based on their capacity.
4. The curriculum of NFE as determined by ONFEC itself still does not respond to the relevant needs of female sex workers. Though ONFEC has given CLCs independence to conduct their own classes and encourage them to adjust the content based on the needs of the community, learners still have to take a final exam in which 40% of the content is based on the ONFEC curriculum. The students have to take a Mathematics examination, and an English examination based on the determination curriculum. If the students want to pass the exam, they still have to study the contents of ONFEC's curriculum. Therefore the CLC should be able to determine the content of the course as well as the exam by themselves based on the needs of community.
5. Marginalized groups especially ethnic female sex workers must have right to shape their own contents by themselves and the CLC must be able to give educational certificates that can be endorsed by ONFEC, MOE.
6. Marginalized groups must have the right to fully participate in educational policy making at all levels.
7. NFE and HR education must integrate gender power relation, gender blind, human rights such as sexual rights into the curriculum in order to deconstruct the negative discourse on sex workers.

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8. Female sex workers must have an opportunity to advocate for human rights by themselves.
9. The government must provide opportunities as well as adequate financial support to all community learning centers for marginalized groups in order to allow all marginalized groups, particularly female sex workers, access to education.

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APPENDIX

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APPENDIX A

Guide line of Research questions

Guidelines for in depth interviews of female sex workers

Background

1. What was your dream when you were young? Did those dreams change when you grew up? / What were you most impressed with when you were young? What things were you least impressed with when you were young?
2. What is your background and your family back ground? / What is your role in your family? / What is the expectation of your family toward yourself
3. To what extent did that make you leave your hometown and why?

Work

1. What are factors that drove you to enter sex trade? /What did you do before entering the sex trade?
2. How are the working conditions (salary/social welfare/problems) at your workplace?
3. What are your methods to solve problems in the work place? What are the most important problems that you face in the workplace and how do you solve those problems?
4. What are differences between working as sex workers and working in other careers?
5. What is the attitude of society toward sex workers and how do you feel about that?
6. What are you most impressed with and least impressed with in respect to your work as a sex worker? Why?
7. Have you told your family that you work as sex worker? If so, Why? If not, why not?

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Non Formal education (NFE) program

1. How did you know about the NFE program?

2. What was your motivation for attending the NFE program?

3. How have you participated in the NFE program?

4. Did you have a chance to share your own experiences or thoughts during the NFE classes? If yes, what were you able to share? If not, why not?

5. What are your favorite contents/methods and least favorite contents/methods in the NFE program? Why do you like or dislike those contents and methods?

6. How has the NFE program been useful for your life, if at all?

7. How did you see yourself before entering the NFE program? Have you seen any changes in yourself before, during or after completing NFE program? If so, what kind of changes, and why did those changes take place? If not, why not?

8. What has been the impact of the NFE program on your lives and work?

9. Do you agree with society's view that sex workers are 'bad women', a social evil? If not, why not, and how do you respond? If you agree, why, and how do you respond?

10. Are you as individual, or as a group, able to find ways to change social attitudes, ways to explain, ways to speak in order to change the way society thinks about them? (ie to deconstruct social discourse to counter mainstream social discourse?) If so, why? If not, why?

11. What are the obstacles as well as your suggestions for the NFE program?

12 What are your future plans after completing the NFE program?

13. What are your dreams for the future?

Guide line for Key Persons

1. Why is the NFE program conducted for female sex workers?

2. What are the objectives for conducting an NFE program for female sex workers?

3. What are the contents and processes of NFE program?

4. Who determines the contents and process of NFE program?

5. What are the roles of NGO and government in conducting an NFE program for female sex workers?

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6. Do you integrate human rights/women rights into the content of your non-formal education program? If so, how? If no, why?

7. Have you seen any changes in the outlook of female sex workers before, during and after attending the class? If so, how? If not, why?

8. What is the impact of non-formal education on the lives and work of female sex workers?

9. Is non-formal education able to build up the self- esteem, self- respect, self-confidence and self-determination of female sex workers, and are they able to exercise control over their own lives independent of negative social discourses? If so, how and in what way? If not, why?

10. Through non-formal education, are sex workers able to deconstruct the discourse? If, so, in what way and how?

11. What are the obstacles in conducting NFE program for female sex workers?

12. Do you have any suggestions/recommendations for the non-formal education program for female sex workers?

13. What are your future expectations for conducting the NFE program for female sex workers?

Guide line for participation observation

1.Is there any participatory process in the classes and is there any participation from students in the class?

2. Are HR issues are integrated in the class?

3. What is the participation of the student in the class?

4.Can the contents and process lead to empowerment of female sex workers?

5. Are female sex workers able to deconstruct social discourses?

6. What is the relationship between students and teachers (facilitators)?

7. What is the general atmosphere in the class?

8. What do students do after the class at EMPOWER?

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APPENDIX B

Real objects/social discourses/words at EMPOWER's office

Working equipment of female sex workers displayed at EMPOWER

Female dress made from condoms displayed at EMPOWER

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Condoms displayed at EMPOWER

Real subjects for education

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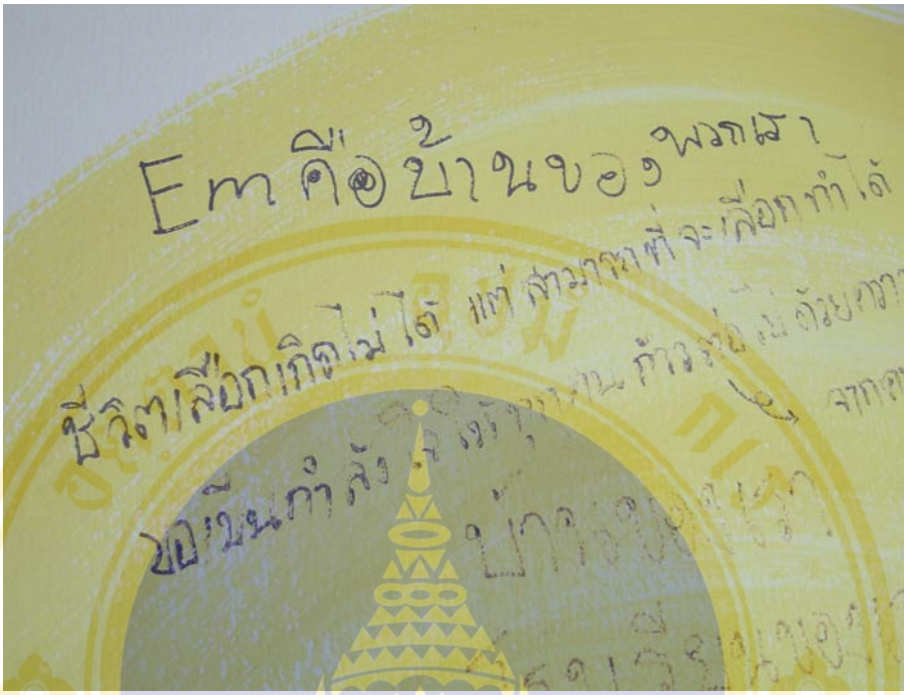

‘EMPOWER is our home’ (written on the wall of the rest room at EMPOWER)

English vocabulary written on every step of staircase to the English classroom

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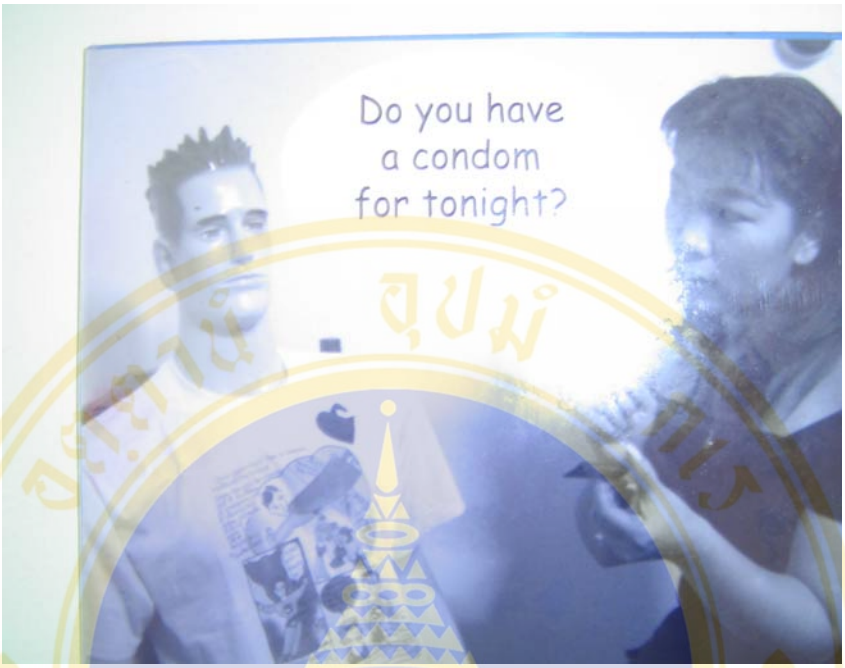
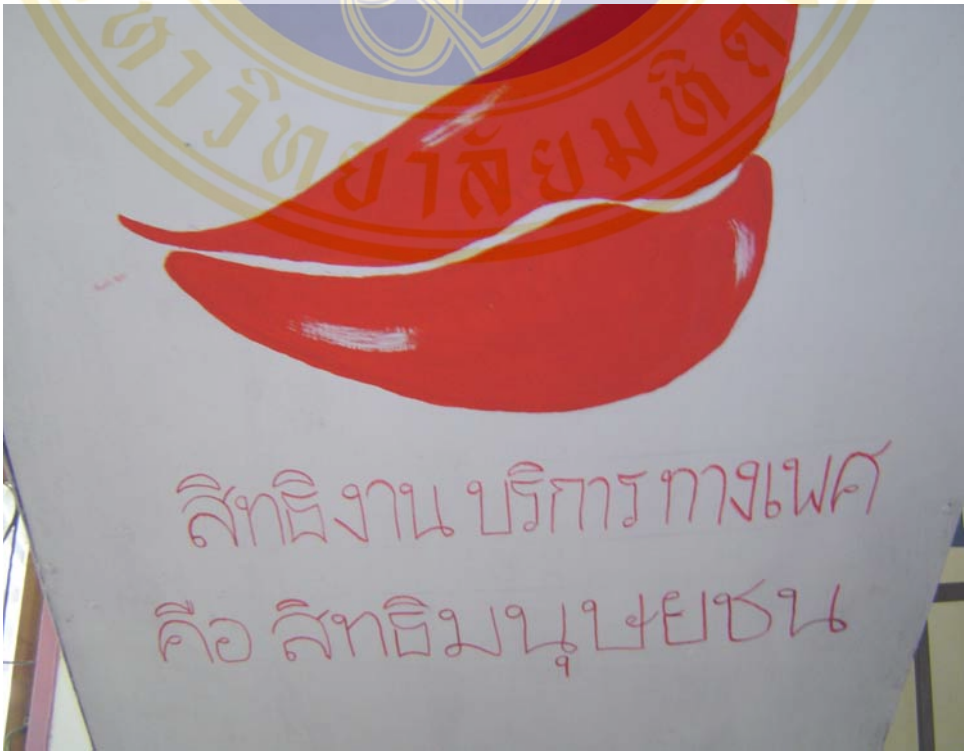


Important daily English conversations which female sex workers need to communicate to customers on the wall of the English classroom



Sex Workers' Rights Are Human Rights written on the wall at EMPOWER

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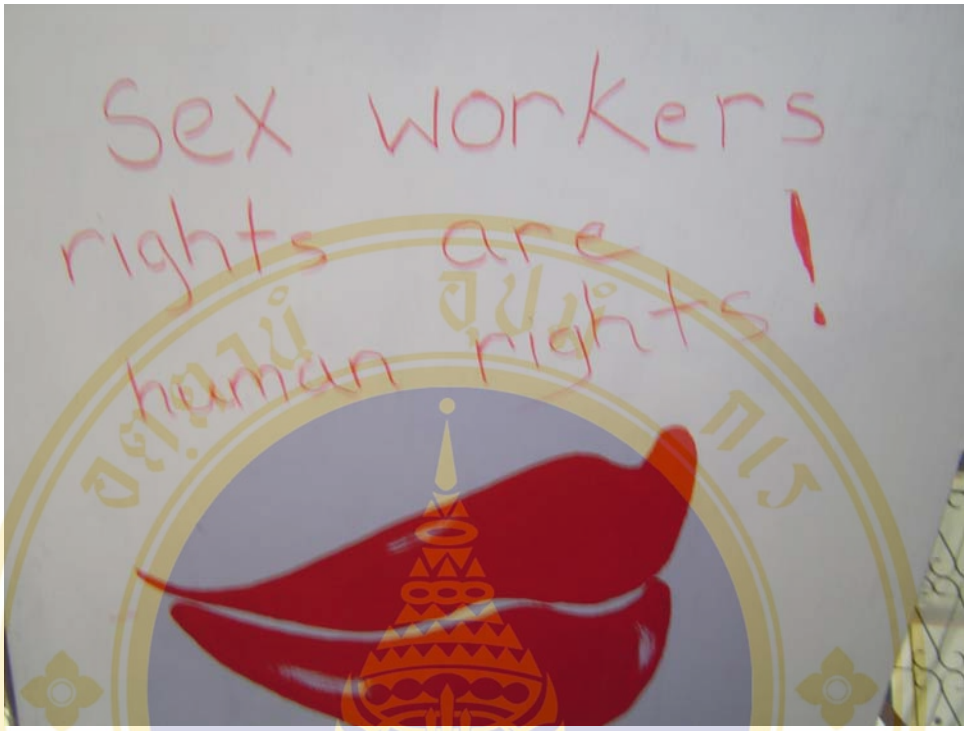

News social discourses are deconstructed by female sex workers

‘Everyone at EMPOWER is a heroine’ (written on the wall of EMPOWER)

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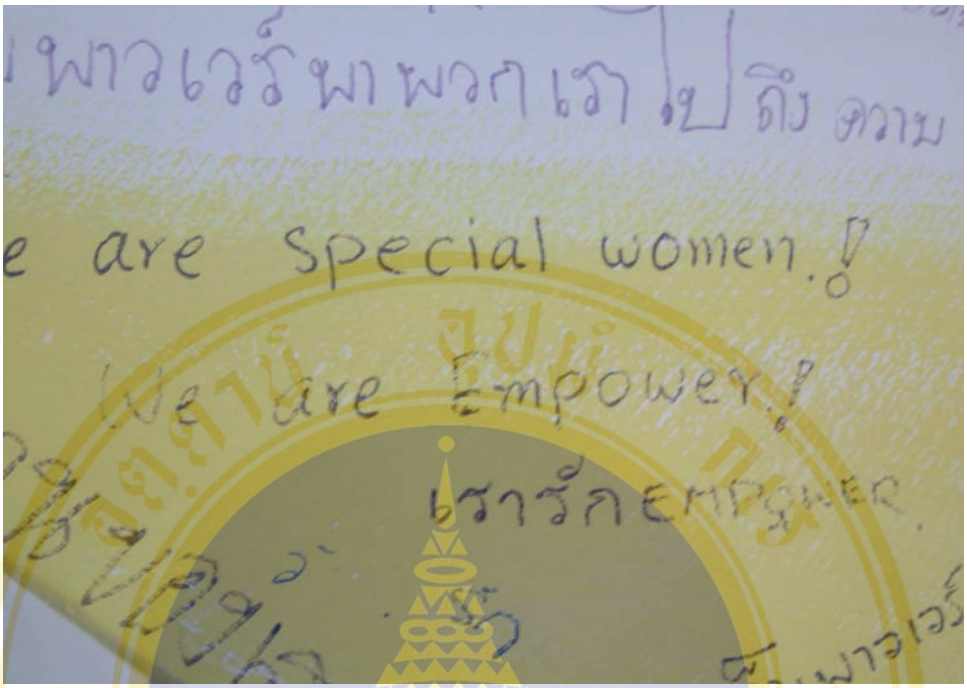

‘We are special women’, ‘We love EMPOWER’
(written on the wall of EMPOWER)

‘I am a house wife, waitress, researcher, accountant, counselor, driver, teacher, doctor etc.’

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