Prostitution In Thailand Essay, Research Paper

Prostitution In Thailand

While millions of children in America are waking up to watch Saturday morning cartoons, children of the same age in Thailand are waking up to a new strange sexual partner in bed with them. A main problem faced by children in America is deciding on what kind of ice cream they want to eat. In Thailand the children are faced with what STD have they encountered? Thailand has the worlds largest commercial sex industry. These child prostitutes will be joining the millions of older established prostitutes. Together they will lead a life of drug addictions, crime, violence, disease, and unhappiness. Why should any human be subjected to this kind of tragic lifestyle?

Thailand is in the heart of Southeast Asia bordering the Andaman Sea and the Gulf of Thailand. Thailand comparatively is slightly more than twice the size of Wyoming. They have a population of 60,037,366 (July 1998 est.). The Thai economy is in a deep recession. It’s odd to think that a country so small could have problems as big as theirs.

The greatest cause of prostitution is poverty. Poverty caused through drought, low wages, especially for women and debts make many women and children vulnerable to being forced into prostitution. The rapid growth in population, the slow growth in agriculture and the spread of market economy in the rural areas encourage migration to the cities, where many unskilled female and child laborers can easily be deceived or forced into the sex business. In many rural areas there are starving people, who have insufficient shelter, and no money but have children. They are apt to sell them to pimps for a small fee. The children can be sold for as little as five hundred dollars or even alcohol. Due to the severe famine in many rural villages of Thailand a child might try to provide for his or her family and turn to prostitution. These are the most common scenarios of why poverty leads to prostitution.

A broad description of the problem would entail over two million women and children in prostitution, of which 800,000 are children aged 15 or under. Twenty percent of these children are boys (World Health Organization) these people are victimized by sexual exploitation. They are being enticed; coerced and sold into sexual abuse, the vast majority from desperately poor families who may not be aware their children are trafficked across borders, taken to brothels and bonded into debt. Seventy five percent of all Thai men visit prostitutes on a regular basis (WHO). Twenty percent of Thailand’s prostitution takes place with foreign men (WHO). From these facts one can conclude that prostitution in Thailand is as common as “Wall Street” in New York.

A long-term cause of prostitution in Thailand dates back to the Vietnam War. During the war the Thai sex industry provided American soldiers with prostitutes and “for rent wives”. By the time the soldiers left, Thai men had found that they liked this new availability for sex. Men no longer needed to sneak off to brothels they now went openly. Another long-term cause is the Asian belief that sex with virgins rejuvenates a man, and can also heal venereal disease. Men and women were never viewed as equals in Asia. From ancient times men mistreated and disrespected women. So many men have no remorse for their actions. They feel that the women some how owe this to them. These long-term causes have just kept building up to produce the out of control prostitution of today.

The most prominent short-term affect that triggers prostitution is the poverty. Another affect is the demand. There is a great demand for prostitutes, recruiters recruit both boys and girls as young as seven. Sex tours are popular for tourists. These tours go through all of Thailand and let the tourist sample prostitution of all ages from many different regions. These sex tours are easily accessible especially through the Internet. Sex tours begin at only 2,000 US dollars for seven days and nights. These short-term effects make prostitution so routine.

As mentioned before Thailand is in a great recession. A recession is when the economy shrinks and there is a negative growth. Since the country as a whole is not making any money, poverty is the conclusion. Politically Thailand is unstable. They are filled with corrupt officials who do not enforce the laws (prostitution is one.). These factors are definite causes of the prostitution

Ironically prostitution, as well as sex with minors is illegal. Law enforcers and the government commonly overlook these laws. This quote further describes the importance of keeping prostitution alive and running:

Sompop Boontryuth, who started a refuge for Thai girls called the Daughters Education Program, has said, “It’s not safe in this (Thai) society to try to improve women’s lives because there is big money in prostitution. Some locals are agents and middlemen; the police and politicians are involved; also businessmen and owners of hotels, guesthouses and bars – whoever can use the services of these girls. The flesh trade is very profitable and there appears to be a lot of vested interest in keeping it alive and well. In this article in Newsweek magazine (dated June 29th, 1992) entitled “Fighting A Killer”, Ron Moreau writes, “Reliable studies show that more than 400,000 Thai men visit prostitutes each day, and at least 75 percent of all Thai men have paid for sex. … In an alarming new study, 73 percent of new recruits in the Thai army said they had lost their virginity to a prostitute.”

Another reason officials overlook prostitution is in hopes of economic growth. After the Vietnam War ended Thailand wanted to boost its tourism. Having thousands of prostitutes did boost the tourism. Tourism boosted the local economy. In all this growth, the government made no attempt to limit prostitution. It is also hard to control the prostitution when many of the officials are corrupt. Since there are so many pimps and madams they will often pay the officials a large sum of money so that they will not stop the business. These are factors that contribute to why prostitution is not slowing down.

An important effect on Thailand’s society is that children’s child hoods are being stolen from them. Children are not safe in their own home. Neighbors, parents, or strangers can sell them into prostitution, or they can be kidnapped into it. Children are in such demand because younger children are believed to be less susceptible to aids and other STD’s. But that is untrue since their bodies are so small and not used to sex with many men, their bodies get injured internally and it takes longer to heal. The open wound is a breeding ground for STD’s. These children grow up with a STD and have sex with hundreds of more men, then these men spread the disease, and results in a killer chain reaction.

This contributes to the out-break of the AID’s epidemic, which also has a huge effect on all of human society. Over 1.5% of Thailand’s population is infected with the AIDS epidemic. Since it is overwhelmingly Western sex offenders who come to have sex with these prostitutes they too contract the disease. Then after their vacation they go back to their own country and infect others. The only way to slow down the disease is to get rid of the prostitution, and stop it from infecting millions of others. A task which is easier said then done.

All long- term consequences of prostitution are negative. By the year 2000 an estimate of 3.5 million Thai women will be HIV positive, and so will one third of their children. Millions of prostitutes will be dependent on drugs. More children’s lives will be ruined. There will be a vast increase in suicides to try and escape the abusive lifestyle they lead. If we don’t take serious action to stop the prostitution soon Thailand will be lost in a downward spiral. Luckily the government is trying to take action in controlling the prostitution and many non-government organizations have been formed.

One of, which is called EPCAT (End Child Prostitution in Asian Tourism) It is an international organization, founded in 1991, with headquarters in Thailand. The organization’s goal is to eradicate child prostitution worldwide. It has launched a four-part action plan that has had remarkable results in just five years. The core of ECPAT’s plan is lobbying governments to persuade them to enact laws protecting children. The group then works to make sure the laws are enforced. Further ECPAT works with rural leaders to convince parents not to sell their children into prostitution. The organization also campaigns to dissuade tourists from the sexual exploitation of children and publishes the names of foreign pedophiles found in Asian countries. Other major non-governmental organizations tackling the problem of child prostitution include: UNICEF, the International Labor Organization (ILO), and the World Tourism Organization. Although the royal Thai government and other non-governmental groups are trying their best to put an end to prostitution, it still is a huge problem. It will take years to resolve.

To show an example of how out of control the problem is I will share with you this story that took place on January 30th 1994. A fire broke out in a brothel in Phuket in southern Thailand. The charred bodies of five young girls aged between 9 and 12 were discovered in the basement ruins of the brothel. They had been chained to their beds and locked in to prevent their escape. (http://www.jubileecampaign.demon.co.uk/children/tha1.htm). That is a complete violation of human rights. No one should be treated like that.

Another story is about a girl named Fon. She was born on the outskirts of Bangkok; Fon left school when she was 12 years old. She wanted to earn money to help her family and herself, so she went to Bangkok and got a job in a restaurant. She was lured to another city about 60 miles away, supposedly to work. But she ended up in a brothel where the owners kept her as a prisoner and forced her to have sex with a succession of different customers each day. Once when she and a friend tried to escape they were caught and severely beaten by the owners. Later, Fon found that she was pregnant. She never recovered truly from the beating and became increasingly sick. The brothel owner realized there was no more profit to be had from her and released her. It was later discovered after a blood test that Fon was HIV positive. About a month after the blood test she gave birth to a baby boy. Unfortunately the baby died of AIDS-related illnesses when he was l8 months old. These stories are only a few of the stories shared by the prostitutes of Thailand. It’s a shame that anyone has to live through what these women live through.

Prostitution is a life of drugs, crime, disease, violence, sexual exploitation, and unhappiness. The women, boys, and girls do not deserve to live in that kind of lifestyle. The people of Thailand should not have to constantly live in fear of contracting some deadly disease. The children should be leading normal child hoods. The poverty must be stopped. That is the only way the prostitution can be stopped. Prostitution in Thailand is out of control. If it is not stopped soon I’m afraid of what the outcome might be. The problem is not only faced in Thailand but it causes a chain reaction that effects the entire world.

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