

The Women's Voice of Unwanted Pregnancy Among Thai Teen Mom: A Feminist Perspective

Abstract: The objective of this study was to examine the experiences of teenage mothers with unwanted pregnancies, in the context of gender-power relations within the patriarchal capitalist system, using a socialist feminist perspective. Qualitative research methods were used with 10 teenage mothers who cared for their own child. The findings were ; The unwanted pregnancy was caused by sexual intercourse with a boyfriend or restaurant customer who deceived or coerced the teenager into having sex. The decision stage led to the unwanted pregnancy. The young women felt pressure to choose between abortion or continued pregnancy and finally to giving birth. Most of all pregnant teens choose to abort by themselves by traditional oral medicines, and some search for an illegal abortion service but could not find one or were too late in their pregnancy. After giving birth and caring for their children, they had no freedom in life because they were mainly responsible for care of the child. They suffered and felt tired from caring for their child and doing all the housework, and they could not go to school or work. So, the teen moms lacked power to negotiate anything in the household and had to depend on their husband because they had no a paid work, and did not have money or economic power. Conclusion were the teenage pregnancy is forced to fall under voluntary control for selecting motherhood. No teenage pregnancies need to be a real mother, but they have to agree to be a mother; they are aborting unsuccessful. Being motherhood because they are afraid of abortion. And they were forced to have pregnant by the man who is the father of the children and the relatives.

Keywords: Unwanted pregnancy, Feminist perspective, Teen mother, Women study, Patriarchal Capitalism, Experience, Women voice.



Phetcharat Netmuy

Mahidol, Social and Humanities Faculty , Medical and Health social sciences, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities

E-mail: phet_muns@hotmail.com / web: graduate.mahidol.ac.th

เสียงสะท้อนของผู้หญิงในกลุ่มแม่วัยรุ่นไทยตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อม: แนวคิดสตรีนิยม

บทคัดย่อภาษาไทย: การวิจัยนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อศึกษาประสบการณ์การตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อมของแม่วัยรุ่น ผ่านความสัมพันธ์เชิงอำนาจระหว่างหญิงชายภายใต้ระบบทุนนิยมชายเป็นใหญ่ โดยใช้แนวคิดสตรีนิยมสายสังคมนิยม ซึ่งเป็นการวิจัยเชิงคุณภาพที่ทำการศึกษาในแม่วัยรุ่นตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อมที่เลี้ยงดูลูกในช่วงแรกเกิดถึง 2 ขวบปีแรกทั้งหมด 10 ราย พบว่า ประสบการณ์การเป็นแม่วัยรุ่นตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อมนั้นแบ่งออกเป็นสามระยะ คือ ระยะแรกเพศสัมพันธ์ที่นำไปสู่การตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อม เป็นเพศสัมพันธ์ที่เกิดจากการชักจูง โน้มน้าวล่อลวงและใช้กำลังบังคับให้วัยรุ่นหญิงมีเพศสัมพันธ์ในครั้งแรกโดยชายคู่เพศสัมพันธ์ที่เป็นแฟน/คนรัก/ลูกค้าในร้านอาหาร ระยะต่อมาการตัดสินใจที่นำไปสู่การเป็นแม่วัยรุ่นตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อม เป็นช่วงที่วัยรุ่นหญิงตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อมได้รับแรงกดดันมากเป็นพิเศษ โดยเมื่อรู้ว่าตนเองตั้งครรภ์ก็ต้องตัดสินใจเลือกระหว่างการยุติการตั้งครรภ์กับการดำรงครรภ์ ซึ่งวัยรุ่นหญิงตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อมส่วนใหญ่เลือกการยุติการตั้งครรภ์โดยการกินยาขับเลือดและหาสถานที่ทำแท้งแต่ไม่สามารถทำได้สำเร็จจึงต้องดำรงครรภ์ด้วยความจำยอมและในระยะสุดท้ายการเป็นแม่วัยรุ่นตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อมที่ต้องเลี้ยงดูลูกในช่วงวัย 2 ขวบปีแรกนั้นชีวิตส่วนใหญ่ของแม่วัยรุ่นผูกติดอยู่กับการเลี้ยงดูลูกเพราะลูกยังเล็กและต้องพึ่งพาทำให้แม่วัยรุ่นตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อมต้องยากลำบาก กลายเป็นผู้รับภาระหลักในการเลี้ยงดูลูก และนอกจากนี้แม่วัยรุ่นตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อมยังต้องรับภาระทำงานบ้านร่วมกับ บพทสรุปคือ การเป็นแม่วัยรุ่นตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อมตกอยู่ภายใต้การถูกบังคับควบคุมไม่มีอิสระในการเลือกเป็นแม่ด้วยตนเอง ซึ่งแม่วัยรุ่นตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อมทุกคนในที่นี้ไม่มีใครต้องการที่จะเป็นแม่อย่างแท้จริง แต่ต้องเป็นแม่เพราะความจำยอมอันเนื่องมาจากทำแท้งไม่สำเร็จ ต้องเป็นแม่เพราะความกลัวไม่กล้าทำแท้ง และต้องเป็นแม่เพราะการถูกโน้มน้าวให้ดำรงครรภ์โดยชายผู้เป็นพ่อของเด็ก ในห้องและญาติผู้ใหญ่ในบ้าน

คำสำคัญ: แม่วัยรุ่น/ตั้งครรภ์ไม่พร้อม/ระบบทุนนิยมชายเป็นใหญ่/สตรีนิยม/ประสบการณ์

Introduction

In 2009, the young girls who are 15-19 years old can give birth than the other period of ages. The youngest pregnant girls who is below 10 years old and 15 years old around 3,000 girls per year can give birth. (Benjaporn Panyayong,2010:p.12). In 2009 there are the pregnant rates for 15.19 years old in the young girls are high 132,147 persons. (Reproductive Health Unit, Department of Health, Ministry of Public Health). From the study “about reproductive right and infringe among teen woman from situation of reproductive right among teenage woman in Thailand project” are making the database reproductive rights situation of young women across the country and found the young girls who have ever been pregnant; they had unwanted pregnancy 69.7 percent (Nartruedee Dendoung,2008)

The effect of the policy to reduce the populations for developing country on last 50 years ago. Since 1957, the causing “low birth rate and low quality” The government said that the quality birth have to come from the mother who have only ready and attention. According to the government said “low birth rate and low quality” it is effected the unwanted pregnancy. Especially, the most women who had been watched that the cause of low birth and low quality that is the young mother. The women aged less than 18 years old. The government watched the young girls who had below 15 years old; they was not ready to be mother and the young girls was aged less than 18 years old is not considered to be adult follow the legal. Teenage mother who had unwanted pregnancy; they had not accepted in Thai society and it became a social problem because the Thai society had the period of the mother ages.

The social has created the women's ideology "Women should reserve and always stay at home. The unwanted pregnancies in teenage mothers (the former pregnancy) are being a bad girl, the credulous mother and unaccepted from the Thai society. It makes the family and social always blame the unwanted pregnancy mother

The society and government still have an attitude about the teenage pregnancy ; they are fault and have a problem, but the government never take care and lack of enough help; for example, they have a information about the teenage pregnancies are not ready to take care the children. They do not have work and without the welfare.

This study, the researcher uses the conceptual framework of masculine capitalism follow the feminist concept to explain on the teenage mothers with unwanted pregnancies experiences. A researcher believes the causes of teenage pregnancy are not ready that it is a problem and ignorant.

The feminist concepts are started on 1960 in America and Europe countries. From the idea, explain to ignore the problem of the social. Meanwhile, the female are oppressed by the male clearly all around the world for a long time (Nartruedee Dendoung,2008). Grimshaw

said feminism is belief that the women were cruel atrociously and they had been distressing from the unfair social system (Grimshaw, 1986, quoted in Varunee Phurisinsit, 2002 p. 3). The feminist concept is belief that the women were cruel because of the capitalism and patriarchy system. The capitalism said the worker have been taken advantage by the entrepreneur. The Patriarchy said the father is the most power person in his family and then the authority of his father from the family to society. Finally, it became the authority of the man from the family to society moreover the social are respect the masculinity It makes disparities between female and male because they believe the male were oppression against to female clearly.

Eisenstein explained the men are the most power in the capitalist society. Being defined as a woman is “Mother” they were not the worker in the male’s ideology. Female had to stay at house and only doing the housework. He tried to improve in their ideology about the work for women, so he gave a new define as “Working mother” (Varunee Phurisinsit, 2003: p.118)

The feminist are analyzed about the women life always take advantage from the men such as sexual, cruel, reproductive, and making the ideology for Feminine and masculinity in the society (Nartruedee Dendong, 2008)

Methods

The study of research is a qualitative research by using purposive sampling to select 10 volunteers who have unwanted pregnancy mother is 13-21 years old and they have to take care their children is newborn to 2 years old from Phichit province in Thailand.

Sample

The study in focused on the experiences of the unwanted teenage pregnancy that are 13-21 years old around 10 volunteers. During the study the teenage mother which they have a children in newborn to 2 years, but they do not want to have a child any reason.

Instrument

In this study, the researcher conducted in-depth interview by talk to the teenage mother who is an unwanted pregnancy.

Procedure

The researcher has hidden their real names. While the interview have not pressure to answer all the questions and they can stop the interview if they want. The researcher is recorded sound and makes notes to collect all data. Then, the researcher is analyzed content analysis by using the feminist theory, the capitalism for analyzing the data and presents the result of research in a descriptive.

Result

From the study, the experiences of a teenage mothers with unwanted pregnancy; their children are 2 years old and they were born in Phichit province. There are 2 single mothers and someone has educated the lowest Matthayom 2 and the highest is a high secondary levels. When they had known that they were going to be pregnant and there were 6 teenagers tried to abort, but it was not successful and 4 teenagers were still be pregnant because they were afraid of aborting. 7 teenagers were leave from school and there were 2 teenagers had stopped to study anymore. Later, there were 2 teenage mothers are doing work in the offices and the other are still staying at houses for taking care of their children. The results of the teenage mothers' experiences are

1ST periods "Having sex into the unwanted pregnancy"

A: The first sexual: It is having confidence and taking the opportunity

Persuaded with the love promise words

The main reason that the girls were allowed to have sex because of their couples tells them persuade and following the romantic's ideology. Some makes a promise to get marry in later; for example,

"Let's he want to be engaged and after he discharge from the soldier. We would get marry (Having sex). He said, it was not any problem because we already have engaged, so the girl decides to have sex with him." (Case 8: O)

Not unwilling, but the girl couldn't fight him

After the man couldn't persuade with the girl to have sex unsuccessful. Then, the man will have trick and violate to have sex with the girl.

"When we were a new lover, he usually gave me everything I want. Because he was a sweet words and I also had confident in him. Finally, he took me his house, but I wasn't unwilling. He also rape me and I couldn't fight him." (case10:May)

B: Having sex into the unwanted pregnancy: The man wants, but it become the woman's mistake

He wanted to have sex, but I didn't know

Every a teenage girls couple, they are illegal. Only the men knows when he wants to meet and having sex with his couple; for example, he comes to meet his couple on the week-

ends, but he had planned and tried to persuade to have sex. On the other hand, his couple hadn't prepared themselves to safe sex.

"We were lovers for a while, on that day I went to his house. He told me love and wanted more close up than these. He also rape me, but I didn't know what to do next."(case 4: Anne)

Sometime he didn't use condom

When the man came to have sex with teenage girls. The men sometime protected against pregnancy by using a condom.

"My boyfriend sometime was protected by himself by using a condom."(case2: Jubjang)

He was not ready, but why I didn't protect by myself

Meanwhile, the male who is her lover doesn't not have the responsibility for contraception, but he try to push out of his responsibility.

"I told my boyfriend. He was shock and said that he was not ready. Why I didn't protect to pregnancy by myself" (case 8: O)

I wouldn't like to pregnant, but it was my big mistake with the birth control pill

It is the illegal marriage. The man is determined when they will come to meet their girls. Absolutely, the teenage girls don't know about the exact of a couple sexes. So, preparing prevent pregnancy by using birth control pills are uneven. These unwanted pregnancy happened by their lover. Some girls didn't protect themselves because they didn't know when they have sex, so it happened to the unwanted pregnancy.

"I usually take a birth control pill, but I wonder why it happened to pregnant. I take a twenty tablet panels, but sometime I didn't take it." (case 1: Sai-Tharn)

2nd periods "Decisions that lead to unwanted pregnancy."

A: Became aware that an unwanted pregnancy

I was shock and felt guilty, stress, confuse, embarrassing and want to die

Women experiences when they have an unwanted pregnancy and they have a lot of feeling. Mostly, they are shock first because it is unexpected for them. Some girls are too young to have a child; moreover, they still study. Some young women feel guiltily to their families. All

of them are sad/upset. They don't need it happens. From this situation, it makes them disappointment, stress, confuse, and they don't know what to do next.

“I would have never thought before about the kid, but it was my big fault to pregnant. I was sad because I had studied and I wouldn't have stopped everything on that time.” (case2: Jubjang)

“I wouldn't have alive anyway. All my neighbors liked to gossip me.” (case 8: O)

“I felt very guilty. On that time, I was on last semester of Mathayom which it had almost finished education. I was thinking of my family and my brother was supposed me to study. I afraid of they would be sad me.” (case 6: Bam)

I knew that I was pregnant, I told my boyfriend, consulted friends, and my parents.

The unwanted pregnancy for young girls is a bad situation to effect all their life. After it happens to them, they always consult to find a good way for helping them by someone who is their confidence such as their couples, friends, relatives and the finally person that they will consult is their parents. Because of they are afraid to tell.

“When my boyfriend knew, he was shock and didn't know what to do next. I afraid to tell my parents. First, he told me to take some menstrual stimulants, and I did not take it. I was consulting a friend who had an experience; she had conceived and suggested me to tell my parents.” (case2: Jubjang)

“I afraid that my parents sad because they worked hard to suppose me study, so I didn't what to do until I had 6 months pregnant and it had really started to grow. I decided to tell my mother, she cried with something happened, but my father didn't talk to me for a while. I knew that he would be very angry and they didn't hit me.” (case6: Bam)

B: Reasons for pregnancy

An unwanted pregnancy in the teenage girls, nobody attends happen. There isn't much choice for this. Absolutely, there are 2 choice to force them to select, aborting and don't aborting. The teenage girls don't want to pregnant until they give birth. This is the main reason to have pregnancy:

Abortion was not successful

With unwanted motherhood, they don't want to be labeled a spoiled girl. This young girl try to abortion by taking menstrual stimulants because they believe that medication makes the child away from their body. And drugs are easily available sell in the market such as Ben Lo®

woman medicine or liqueur. The teenage mother select to take this medicine when they have pregnant and no one success to do like that.

“its normal menstruation is 25 days, but it's lack out. And the end of the month, I decided to take a medicine and drink liqueur for aborting, but I didn't let it out.” (case 9: Fay)

The blood medicine doesn't cause a miscarriage. Some girl have also struggled to be the teenage pregnancy who does not want to pregnant and try to find a place of abortion. However, they can't find that a place because of the age of pregnant and some doesn't know where it is.

God-fearing – death – not aborting

Although embarrassing, the teenage pregnant. They are not dare for aborting because of they fear for paining and aborting bleeding to death. In addition, Thailand is a Buddhist society that believes in the sin. The sin of aborting is scary. For these, it makes the teenage pregnancy are getting scare for aborting; even though, they are not ready to be motherhood. Absolutely, they become as a teenage pregnancy.

“I had thought to aborting, but I didn't. My friend told me how much pain, so I was afraid not to do it anymore.” (case 6: Bam)

“I had never considered abortion; I wouldn't like to do because it wasn't good thing.” (case 10: May)

“My grandma wanted me to aborting, but I fear for bleeding to death.” (case 8: O)

Persuaded to maintain pregnancy

Maintain pregnancy until giving birth become the pregnant teenagers. Not caused to a real teenage girls, but they are possessed by man and parents or relatives to need her not aborting.. Finally, these women become the teenage pregnancy.

“When I knew that I had a pregnancy, but thought of abortion was only one way for help me. On that time, I wanted to study and when I checked it my boyfriend was with me. He shocked and tried to help me find the way out. We didn't know what to do and he told me not aborting because we were afraid of sin.” (case 3: Keaw)

C: After decide to maintain the pregnancy become a teenage mother.

Don't go to school because it is embarrassing. Leaving school and no one supposes about study

Embarrassing is one of the cause that the teenager who have pregnancy can't go to study anymore because it is a shameful and can't face to the teachers and friends. And although, some teenage pregnancy still study but they was deprived and forced them to leave school. Teachers need them leave the school because the teenage pregnancy is not a good sample. And another group of teenage girls who have an economically problem and their parents are supposed them that some parents' stops do anything for them.

“The teacher wanted me leave the school because they afraid of I would be a bad sample.” (case 4: Anne)

“I had to apply for study in the higher secondary. After I finished in Mattayom 3, I also had stopped to study because I had no money. On that time, my father would suppose me all, but when he knew that I was pregnancy. He was very angry me and he had stopped to take care me liked to break off relationship.” (case 8: O)

Studying as usual, the teachers are very kind and allow the teenage pregnancy study

Some teenage pregnancy is lucky because they have been given the opportunity by the school. Allowing them surrogates to school as usual. And also allowed the students to approach women. It also has the support from teachers who care and looking forward to teaching as well.

“The teachers who were intimate with me. They asked me what happened to me, and they also consulted and suggested me how to perform something like this. Because I almost had finished study in school.” (case 6: O)

Shameful, gossip and contempt by the neighbors

During the teenage pregnancies when they are in school. It is not appropriate because Thai society believes the children should have studied rather than as a mother. Teenage pregnancy is deviated from the expectation of society. The neighbors are not seen them as a spoiled girls. It's heretical to be punished. So, the neighbors' liked to gossip and contempt the girls for punishing. Pregnancies are embarrassing. The teenage pregnancies also believed that. It makes them to be withdraw from the society because of they are shy.

“It was gossip that I was young and already pregnant. They blamed me all.” (case 5: Fa)

“Before I had pregnant, they never had blamed me. When I had pregnant, they was look down me, and said my boyfriend left me. I might be a single mother.” (case 8: O)

Unemployed and refuse to get work

When the teenage pregnancies have to maintain pregnancy until give birth. A group of the teenage girls who had been unemployed and jobless. Because their pregnancy is the cause of them can't do anything before.

“My kid was involved me on the job. I couldn't apply me for a job because of I had pregnant.” (case 9: Fay)

3th period: A teenage pregnancies have to care for their children who are two years old.

Life is tied with the child, can't study and no work

The teenage mothers are the part of causes stop to study because their new roles are care for their children. Their husband has not have role to care. These mothers can't work outside the house.

“When my friends came to visit me, I would like back to school. I always told my friend to study because of I didn't want them same as me.” (case 3: Keaw)

“I didn't have work, but I had to take care my kid. No one helped me to take care. Sometime my mother helped me. And my kid was 6 months and I had to wait to grow; I would find a job.” (case 6: Bam)

No work, no money and have to rely on money from a husband, No argue in the house

The teenage mothers have to care for their kids. They can't go work outside and don't have money, so they can't argue in the house. Even though, their husband is only one decision everything in their family. Because the husband who is breadwinner. By the teenage mother have to contraception protect for pregnancy instead of the husband. Other, the teenage mother there are a duty to do housework. A teenage pregnancy have increased twice as tired as their children and do housework at the same time.

“I would like to have a second kid again because we wanted. But my husband decided how many children to have because he was the breadwinner and working alone.” (case1: Sai-Tharn)

“My husband worked alone. He was responsible for all costs. And after birth, I had to do chores for sharing the work.” (case 1: Sai-Tharn)

Difficulty of trying to be motherhood

Although, it is an unwanted pregnancy in the teenager and they was pressured and stress to be the motherhood. These teenage pregnancy were trying to adjust and learn to be a mother's role for taking care the best their children. So, the teenage mother must have more caring their children and no one talks to the father's role to do as a father.

“It was very trouble because when I had a kid. I had no anything about caring the kid. At first I felt uncomfortable and when they had a fever, I didn't know what to do.” (case9: Fay)

When the teenage mother is a single mother. They have to face to trouble because they care for children alone. At the same time, the man doesn't show his responsibilities and do liked something isn't happened.

He cheated on me and has a new wife

As the teenage mother are not ready to have responsibilities for caring their kinds. For husband doesn't care for everything to support the women and kids. He can't be responsible for caring child, so he also still seeking sexual outside the house and never care for his family. In Thai society as a man who has a new wife is not as common; on the other hand, the women feel as a serious affair.

“He changed and never had caring the family. He seldom gave me money, some he gave only 500 - 1000 baht. He was cheated me because of he had a new wife. When his mother knew, she also was blaming him because she was care for her nephew. Cheating made me hurt.” (case5: Fa)

Conclusion

1. Sexual into the unwanted pregnancy. The man who takes power by trying every possible way to get teenage girls to have sex. With all the love and commitment that leads to convince trusting the woman following and fore the women when they don't have sex with him.
2. Becoming a teenage pregnancy is not established and is the mistake in Thailand. Beuase of the people still falls until the overwhelming pressure of thought control and oppression of women under customary. During the teenage pregnant and after they give birth, they always take care their children such as leave a school, jobless, neighbor gossip and facing to guiltily, grieving and death.
3. The teenage pregnancy is forced to tall under voluntary control for selecting motherhood. No teenage pregnancies need to be a real mother, but they have to agree to be a mother; they are aborting unsuccessful. Being motherhood because they are afraid of abortion. And they was force to have pregnant by the man who is the father of the children and the relatives.

References

- Ministry of Thailand Public Health (2010) (1st) National Reproductive Health Policies and stutery.Thailand. Retrieve in [http://rh. anamai.moph.go.th/vision.html](http://rh.anamai.moph.go.th/vision.html)
- Dendoung,N.(2008). Reproductive rights situation of young women in Thailand.Bangkok: Women and Families Unit. Ministry of Thailand Social and Humanist.
- Dendoung,N.(2008). Power and Conflict on Women's Body. Reproductive Right and Sexuality of Teen Women: A Feminist Perspective. Bangkok: A.P. Graphic decide an printing.co.
- Panyayong,B.(2010).Review of Knowledge:Teenage Pregnancy.Nontaburee: Ministry of Thailand Public Health.
- Phurisinsit,V.(2002).Feminist: Process and Social Perspective in the 20th Century.Bangkok:Kobfile printing.