

Executive Summary

The tendency of inappropriate pregnancies among adolescents has been continuously increasing in Thailand. The research project entitled “Familial roles and inappropriate pregnancies prevention among Thai adolescents” under the support of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security are aimed ; 1) to describe familial roles on prevention of inappropriate pregnancies of their female children (aged 10-19) ; 2) to indicate the familial factors that are associated with adolescent pregnancies and ; 3) to acknowledge the strategies to prevent teenage pregnancies at early age proposed by their families.

This research was designed to use mixed methods quantitative and qualitative approaches. The study population were 19,022 households in 2009 registration from 4 provinces (in 4 regions) - namely Chainat (Central), Kamphangpet (North), Chaiyaphum (Northeast) and Chumphon (South). Using stratified random sampling, 100 households from each province was selected as sample altogether 400 households. The survey of 400 households was done by using self-administered questionnaires for quantitative study. 10 households of 100 samples in each province were selected, and in depth interviewed by the researchers. The data collections of both techniques were conducted during February and March 2010.

Results

It was found that about 16 percent of study families have ever experienced children's pregnancies during teenage age (or inappropriate age). It was found most in the North (30 percent). The familial roles in 3 parts, namely 1) family relationship creation; 2) self economic dependency and; 3) family orientation were tested in order to find out the association with teenage pregnancies in their families. It was revealed that the factors that associated with pregnancies of children at statistically significance were mostly on economic roles, i.e. the family's upset when children buy expensive things, giving

money every time children ask for, family's saving status, teach children to differentiate between costly and cheap goods, and teach to hold sufficiency economy. Two factors in family relationship creation i.e. open dialogue with children, and to point out the bad effect of disobedience were associated with children's pregnancies. And only one factor in family socialization which was associated with teenage pregnancy was to teach their children how to refuse inappropriate sex.

In addition, the proposed strategies were mentioned. i.e. 1) to create family ties by doing activities together within and outside home, to share household responsibilities to children, and to accept their misbehaviors ; 2) to build up sufficiency economy in their families by creating savings, unextravagance and sufficiency economy; and; 3) to use friendly teachings on how to select good friends, how to set up life target, how to behave properly, should realize female value and how to protect themselves ; 4) to give sexual and reproductive health education, e.g. to care for sexual health, to be aware of courtship, the bad effect of sexual risk behavior and how to prevent unwanted pregnancy etc ; and 5) the study families mentioned the on going project or former projects that were useful for adolescents.

They also suggested that there should be new projects such as family education on adolescent behaviors, sex education for adolescents, proper way of living of female adolescents including study tours that they could learn the effect of sexual misbehavior.

Discussion

It is not surprising that about a half of study families accept their children's sexual intercourse while schooling, as globalization affect values and lifestyle of Thai adolescents including premarital sex and inappropriate pregnancies. However, the family is still important in playing role on pregnancy prevention of their children. According to the research results, economic factor are mainly associated with teenage pregnancies, e.g. children's money expenses, consideration on buying necessary or unnecessary goods, these can detend female adolescents from materialism and sexual permissiveness.

Also, factors related to family relationship are significant in terms of talking openly among family members that create trust and dare to reveal their problems even their love affair. Being aware of the bad effect of disobedience this can obstruct their wrong doings-especially sexual intercourse.

The family role on socialization which is associated with pregnancy prevention, that is to teach how to refuse inappropriate sex, is the guideline for female adolescents, to be considerate about survival from unready which is risky by sexually transmitted diseases.

Recommendations

For policy implications

1) The results reveal that most families have not or less taught sex education to their children, therefore :

- Should create family awareness on needs to teach sex education to their children, and not leave it to school only.
- Should educate families about knowledge and understanding on sexuality. Available package for pregnancy prevention should be employed.
- Should integrate morality and ethics that are appropriate to local culture.

2) The results reveal that the family still plays an important role on teenage pregnancy prevention, therefore :

- Should promote the family's ability to differentiate the risky and non risky behaviors of their children (e.g. sexual behavior, drug abuse etc.)
- Should modify families's negative attitude toward children's pregnancies and guide them to solve their children's problems.
- Should introduce to the family the art socialization to their children, the gender value and responsibility for sexual behavior.

3) The results reveal that study families accept and realize the benefit of some projects implemented by some agencies therefore :

- Should support the sustainable projects of the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security that are beneficial to adolescents.
- Should revise the feasibility of new projects and strategies as recommended by the study families.

For further studies

- Should conduct research on specific groups such as male adolescents, adolescents are not living with their parents, families who have pre-teenage children etc.
- Should conduct research on other topics such as awareness of inappropriate pregnancy among adolescents, families and communities, methods of sex education applied with specific context, and effect of inappropriate pregnancy on their family.
- Should do research and development (action research, participatory action research) in order to acquire knowledge and improve adolescents' risky behaviors.