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KEY WORD : CONTENT ANALYSIS/ CHILD PROSTITUTION/ NEWS

DHANANUCH MEANKERE : A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEWS ON CHILD PROSTITUTION IN THAI RATH, MATICHON AND SIAM RATH WEEKLY.

THESIS ADVISOR : ASSO. PROF. UBONRAT SIRIYUVASAK, Ph.D. 172 PP., ISBN 974-632-105-6

The purpose of this research is to study the news report on the sexual exploitation of children, so called 'prostitution', in the newspapers. Three papers, Thai Rath, Matichon and Siam Rath Weekly, from November the 2nd 2535 (1992) to October the 31st 2537 (1994) were selected for the content analysis. This was during the ruling of the coalition government of Prime Minister Chuan Leakphai which made it a government policy on the prevention and suppression of child prostitution.

The presentation of the news on the topic under study by Thai Rath and Matichon were quite similar. Most of the news were presented as 'events that happened' and were reported constantly or periodically as long as it was hot news and the public showed interest in them. Regarding the presentation of articles with some analysis or indepth investigation which were more detailed and pertained more data, Matichon proved to have given more space and printed more articles.

As for Siam Rath Weekly, a current affair magazine with indepth analysis news, it presented the news on child prostitution in the manner of analysis and discussion, as well as giving opinions about its problems. It stressed the policy on prevention and suppression of child prostitution, and also the enforcement of law and duties of some of the government officials related to this matter, because it was not in consonance with the promulgated policy of the government, but rather in their self interest of profit making in unlawful cooperation with these involved in the child prostitution process.

It was also found that most of the contents of the news on child prostitution were secondary sources since the journalists had obtained them from press conferences and seminars on the problems of child prostitution.

The sources of the news, hence, were mostly from the group of government officials, particularly from the police department and Social Welfare Department, since both of them had received from the government the special duty of finding ways to solve the problem of child prostitution. Another source of news was from the non governmental organisations, very often in the form of critical articles and research material and documents analysing the performance of officials which were not able to do their duty according to the government policy in solving the child prostitution problem.

The study showed that both Thai Rath and Matichon and Siam Rath Weekly presented the news not only because of the importance of the subject itself, but, in doing so, have played the role of the agenda setter, for which the problem of child prostitution was focused and critically analyzed.

ภาควิชา การสื่อสารมวลชน

สาขาวิชา การสื่อสารมวลชน

ปีการศึกษา 2539

ลายมือชื่อนิสิต ธนา นึก

ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษา อุบลรัตน์

ลายมือชื่ออาจารย์ที่ปรึกษาร่วม K