

Abstract

This is a study on “Promotion and Protection of Traditional Thai Masseuses”. The objectives of the research were to study reason for choosing this occupation, work conditions, problems and needs as well as ways to promote and protect the masseuses. The data were collected from 60 graduates of the Central Welfare and Female Vocational Training Center in Nontaburi province. Twenty masseuses were owners of the parlour, 20 worked on calls in private homes and the rest worked at the Center. Questionnaire, observation and interview were used to collect the data. The data analysis was based on using percentage and average.

The findings were as follow:

The youngest age of the sample was 18 and the oldest was 57. The majority of the samples who came from Nontaburi and Bangkok lived in rented homes with grade 4 education and divorced. Their former occupation was casual labour. They became masseuses because it was considered as an independent occupation. Those who owned the parlour opened from 11.00-20.00 hours without holidays due to incoming customers, having to take care of them and having to assign the work to the staff. Those who worked on calls had no fixed working hours depending on the calls from the customers. They took time off when there was a need. Those who worked at the Center worked from 08.00-16.30, wearing uniform while performing the work. The Center had staff who looked after their payment and leaves.

Problems faced by the owners were lack of unity among staff and high rental rate of the premise. Problems faced by those working on calls were cancellation of appointment without prior notice, difficulty in travelling to homes during the rainy season. A problem faced by those working at the Center was that some days they had fewer customers. Needs of the owner included good location of the premise with cheaper rent, having sense of professionalism among staff. A need of those working on calls included having identification card for graduates of the training courses to prevent them from being looked down upon as prostitute in disguise. A need of those working at the

Center included wanting to join the Social Security scheme with willingness to pay for the contribution to the Center.

The researcher suggested that the government declare clear policy and directions to protect masseuses, expanded the scope and responsibility of the Labour Inspector, set up funds for lending to masseuses to expand their business, determined minimum wage and provided opportunity for the masseuses to join the Social Security scheme, conducted campaigns to change the society's attitude to see the worthiness of the masseuses, promoted their skills to enter the world market. The masseuses themselves should monitor their profession by not allowing other profession to smear their image.