

Drug Situation in Thailand

The growing trend of heroin has been started since last year and there is an increase of heroin producers and independent retail traffickers in Thailand, Thailand-Myanmar, and Thai-Lao PDR borderline. Heroin was smuggled through Mae Sai District, Mae Fah Luang District; Chiang Rai Province, and Pai District; Mae Hong Son Province. Besides, the availability and the lower price of heroin indicated that the epidemic problem of heroin is going to return in our society in the near future.

In 1998, the price of heroin in Thailand has been reduced comparing with the last year. It costs 100,000-120,000 baht per 700 grams at the borderline of Mae Hong Son and Chiang Mai Provinces and 120,000-170,000 Baht if trading within the northern provinces. The cost will be higher if it is moved into Bangkok and the other part of Thailand; 250,000-270,000 Baht in Bangkok, and 280,000-350,000 Baht in the South.

However, methamphetamine still remained as the main problem in Thai society. The expansion of the methamphetamine abusers has increased 4-5 times from the last 4 years. It is found that the characteristic of the clandestine methamphetamine laboratories has been changed from large-scale manufacturing site to small-scale and movable manufacture. The sources of production have been changed from the Central to the North, along Thai-Myanmar and Thai-Lao PDR borderline. The smuggled methamphetamine from these areas shares more than 80% of total methamphetamine from these areas shares more than 80% of total methamphetamine supplied in Thailand. The networks of methamphetamine trafficking are

operated by the small-medium dealers who make the epidemic of methamphetamine widespread and difficult to control.



The retail and wholesale price of methamphetamine tablets varied from place to place. The average wholesale price along the borderline in the North and Northeast ranged from 12-20 Baht per tablet. For wholesale price by Thai agents, it will move up to 60-80 Baht per tablet. The average retail price ranged from 100-150 Baht per tablet.

The methamphetamine expansion was resulted by the increasing of producers and traffickers. Moreover, the positive attitude to methamphetamine realized as non-addicted drug, induced the number of the abusers, especially the new abusers. The methamphetamine abusers could be classified into 2 groups, one is non-addicted abuser, and another is addicted abuser. The abusers were drivers, agricultural workers, labors, and the youth in schools and communities.

Marihuana was still available in Thailand both from domestic production and from neighboring countries. The price importing from the neighboring countries will range from 500-1,500 Baht per kilogram, and the price within the country will be 3,000-5,500 Baht. This year, some of marihuana was found to be exported out of the country in the Central and the south. Thus Thailand is becoming a transit country of marihuana from the neighboring countries like Lao PDR and Cambodia. The marihuana epidemic problems in Thailand remained stable, and the addicts were in the same group.

Volatile substances are legally available and low-price drugs, then the epidemic in the youth group and unemployment still exists. A can of volatile substance costs 20-30 Baht, and a tube of glue costs 6-7 Baht.

In case of ecstasy, cocaine, and other new drugs, there was a little bit increase comparing with last year. The epidemic expanded among the limited groups such as the academic people, student, and high purchasing power people. Thai traffickers who have joined with the foreign trafficker's network distributed these illicit drugs. The cost of ecstasy was 800-1,000 Baht per tablet.

The reports of drug situation from the 4 regional offices of ONCB focusing on the difference of drug problem in all regions of Thailand during 1998-1999 were the following:

In the North, the flourishing supply of methamphetamine and heroin, and the lower price of these drugs stipulated the demand of drug users. Besides, some of heroin abusers were the methamphetamine abusers at the same time. Regarding the illicit drug plantation, the opium cultivation has increased in small amount comparing with last year. And the marihuana cultivation has spread widely on the highland area. The heroin and methamphetamine clandestine refineries were proceeded by the cooperation of Myanmar minority groups, Thai financiers, and Chinese traffickers. Thus the characteristic of the refineries have been changed to be temporary instead of large-scale and permanent. The trafficking also changed from the bulk trade to be medium and small scale among the dealers in Myanmar, Lao PDR and retailed traffickers or agents in Thailand.

Some of illicit drugs are smuggled by Hmong hilltribe, who conspire with their network in Lao PDR, in order to distribute to the other parts in Thailand and export to other destination countries. The abusers are labors, the truck drivers, tourists,

and student in school and in communities. It is found that methamphetamine showed the highest proportion of illicit drugs in this area, especially the upper part, while the volatile substances remained stable this year. Besides, an ecstasy is found in the entertainment places and tends to increase particularly in Chiang Mai.

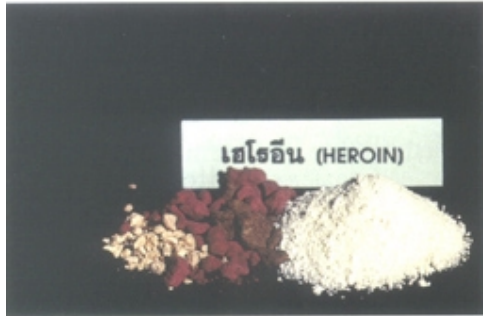
In the Central part of Thailand, the main illicit drugs are heroin, methamphetamine, marihuana, and volatile substances. Methamphetamine remained the main problem in every province in this area, because of the increase in supply and the positive attitude of the addicts. Most of the supply of methamphetamine in this area came from the North, Thai-Myanmar border, and Thai-Cambodia border. Regarding the heroin, the epidemic remained constant and was expected to decrease next year. Since the behavior of the addicts has changed it also decreased the heroin supply within this area. In case of marihuana, there was cultivation in Saraburi and Lopburi Provinces, but in small amount comparing with the amount imported from Thai-Myanmar border and Cambodia. And there were some of marihuana exported to the other destination countries at Samutsakorn Province. In case of volatile substances, the epidemic still existed among the limited groups such as the unemployment, and the out of school youth. Moreover, the sophisticated and expanding trafficking network in this region consisted of the conspiracy of power groups and some governmental authorities.

In the Northeast, under the restricted crops cultivation control measure, there was a decreasing trend of opium and marihuana cultivation. Remarkably, the Northeast has been expected to be one of the

main sources of methamphetamine production in the near future, especially the kitchen lab. The physical characteristic of methamphetamine tablet, which was popular within this region, appears a flatround, orange color, and WY brandname. Thus, the methamphetamine traffickers developed to be the producers, and the abusers developed to be retail traffickers. The increase of supply from Lao PDR stipulated the trafficking, then the price decreased. The volatile substances epidemic also has been criticized, especially the youth in school and communities, because it can be sold legally and cheaply. Regarding the situation of opium, heroin, and marihuana, it remained stable, and expected to decrease next year.

In the South, there is the cultivation of marihuana and Kratom plant, and marihuana concerned as the main problem. Likely, methamphetamine and heroin were smuggled from the northern part of Thailand to this area. Methamphetamine which scattered widely and rapidly among labors, truck drivers, and the youth, was also expected to increase continuously. The retail price of methamphetamine was 120-150 Baht per tablet and it was transported from the northern part of Thailand. Volatile substances remained sustainable problem among the youth groups, whereas heroin epidemic tended to decline. Furthermore, ecstasy still existed among the tourists and high purchasing power groups in big cities. Moreover, codeine and diazepam from Malaysia were continuously increasing and expected to substitute some expensive illicit drugs in the market

Various Types of Drug Spreading in Thailand



Heroin



Raw Opium

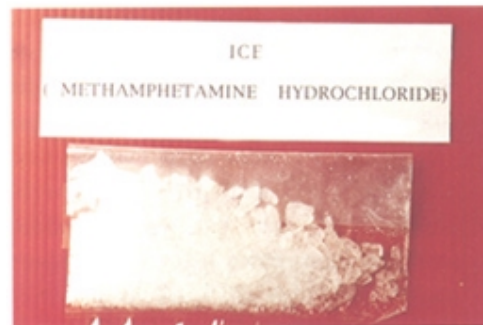
Marihuana



Methamphetamine



Ecstasy



Ice



LSD Paper