Domestic Violence:
An Exploration of Wife Abuse in Thailand

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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABA</td>
<td>American Bar Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>ADB</td>
<td>Asian Development Bank</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APSW</td>
<td>Association for Promotion of the Status of the Women (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Centres for Disease Control and Prevention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSDHA</td>
<td>Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHANGE</td>
<td>Centre for Health and Gender Equity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECOSOC</td>
<td>United Nations Economic and Social Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ESCAP</td>
<td>Economic and Social Commission of Asia and Pacific, United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVAW</td>
<td>Elimination of Violence Against Women Programme (UNIFEM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFW</td>
<td>Foundation for Women (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FORWARD</td>
<td>Foundation for Women, Law and Rural Development (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FOW</td>
<td>Friends of Women Foundation (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GO</td>
<td>Government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GAATTW</td>
<td>Global Alliance Against Traffic in Women (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HCF</td>
<td>Hotline Centre Foundation (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCMII-II</td>
<td>Million Clinical Multiracial Inventories II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCFV-C</td>
<td>National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCWA</td>
<td>National Commission on Women’s Affairs (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NESDB</td>
<td>National Economic and Social Development Board (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
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<td>NSO</td>
<td>National Statistic Office of Thailand</td>
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<td>OSCC</td>
<td>One-Stop Crisis Centre (Thailand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>OWAFD</td>
<td>Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development, Ministry of Social Development and Human Security (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PACS</td>
<td>Police Academy Cadet School (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PSDW</td>
<td>Para-Social Development Worker Project (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SASIN</td>
<td>Graduate Institute of Business Administration of Chulalongkorn University (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEAMEO</td>
<td>South-East Asian Ministers of Education Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>TNCWA</td>
<td>Thailand National Commission on Women’s Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>TDRI</td>
<td>Thai Development and Research Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>United Nations Children’s Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNIFEM</td>
<td>United Nations Development Fund for Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNFPA</td>
<td>United Nations Population Fund</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNODC</td>
<td>United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN Women</td>
<td>United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women</td>
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<tr>
<td>VTW</td>
<td>Voice of Thai Women (Thailand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WCN</td>
<td>Women’s Constitution Network (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WIC</td>
<td>Women’s Information Centre (Thailand)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHO</td>
<td>World Health Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPRC</td>
<td>Women’s Rights Protection Centre (Thailand)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWUG</td>
<td>Women Workers’ Unity Group (Thailand)</td>
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CERTIFICATE OF AUTHORSHIP

I, hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, understand that it contains no material previously published or written by another person, nor material which to a substantial extent has been accepted for the award of any other degree or diploma at Charles Sturt University or any other educational institution, except where due acknowledgment is made in the thesis. Any contribution made to the research by colleagues with whom I have worked at Charles Sturt University or elsewhere during my candidature is fully acknowledged.

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4 October 2013

Signature

Date

(Mrs. BOONSERM HUTABAEDYA)
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ABSTRACT

This study examines wife abuse in Thai families. It identifies the major causes and social effects, the responses of service agencies and critically analyses those responses. The result is the development of an alternative way to prevent and respond to domestic violence that is appropriate for Thailand. A qualitative research method was used with purposive sampling method to select participants. Abused wives, the respondents from service agencies, and the policy makers were interviewed by using semi-structured interviews. The data displayed in descriptions, tables, and figures.

Thai women typically encounter more than one kind of abuse. Physical abuse is the most common kind of abuse, followed by psychological abuse. The key factors contributing to wife abuse were personal characteristics of the husband and cultural factors followed by economic, sexual and substance abuse triggers.

The research acknowledges Thai society’s efforts to establish broader public awareness on domestic violence and wife abuse and gender equality, empowering Thai women to be self-confident, socially and economically independent and equal with men before the law. New ways of considering domestic violence in Thailand can generate multidimensional intervention approaches that appropriately address the complexity of wife abuse. Community-based engagement and support can play a greater role in protecting and assisting victims and witness of wife abuse. The victims of abuse and families are central to any intervention and therefore their participation in program development is necessary.

Keywords: Domestic violence, Wife abuse in Thailand, Violence
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

In 2001 researchers at Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University estimated that between 41% (in Bangkok) and 47% (in the up country area) of women in Thailand who were over the age of 18 experienced physical or sexual violence by their intimate partners (Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University & Foundation for Women - FFW 2001). Domestic violence however, does not only relate to physical or sexual assault. Figures of this magnitude are deeply concerning for any country. This research examines wife abuse in Thailand. It defines its scope, major causes, social effects and analyses the existing responses made by human service agencies. The research critically analyses the way in which people in Thailand view domestic violence and how services respond.

The aim of research is to develop a new and culturally appropriate way to respond to domestic violence with the ultimate aim of reducing its incidence in the Kingdom of Thailand.

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE RESEARCH

The Importance of Domestic Violence and Wife Abuse

Since the 1970s the term *domestic violence* had been used to designate wife abuse, and later the meaning was broadened to encompass violence in other forms of intimate relationships, in which women are usually the victims (Davis 1995, pp. 780-782).
Domestic violence is known as a hidden problem. Specific studies have been undertaken only in the last 25 years, most of which originated in Western Europe, North America, Australia and New Zealand. Increasing numbers of studies are now being undertaken in developing countries (Schuler 1992, pp. 157-171) with the exception of Asia though new research is being reported (Song & Kim 2007; Chung 2008). The information from countries around the world shows that all cultures and societies face the problem of domestic violence and that most of the victims are women (United Nations Development Fund for Women - UNIFEM 2003b). Davies (1994) also noted that the incidents of violence against women are usually in the home and men are usually the perpetrators.

The World Bank (1994 cited in Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 1) and the World Health Organisation (hereinafter WHO 2002a) defined “violence against women” as a major health and “human rights issue”. WHO (2002a), noted that 10-69% of women in different parts of the world were abused by male partners, and at least one in five of all women where domestic violence was reported, suffered rape or attempted rape.

The WHO’s (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, et al. 2002) report on small South-East Asian region studies of wife abuse, found that the most were conducted in India. The WHO report showed the incidence of domestic violence ranges from “3.4% in Kyauktan, Myanmar”; to “40% in a central provincial hospital in Thailand” (WHO 2000, p. 148; Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy, et al. 2002; Mannan 2002, p. 3).
Wife Abuse in Thailand

The National Commission on Women’s Affairs (hereinafter NCWA 2000a, p. 5) in their 2000 report *Out of the Silence*, made the following observation. First that “As in many countries around the world, the issue of violence against women in Thailand”, including wife abuse, has up to now been little known in the public sphere, “as women who were suffering from abuse endured their situation in silence” (NCWA 2000a, p. 5). Second that:

… perpetrators went unpunished. Public awareness of violence against women in Thailand first began in the late 1980s when medical staff in hospitals and child protection workers discovered links between cases of child abuse and histories of wife abuse in the family. Some extreme cases also gained media attention (NCWA 2000a, p. 5).

Third that the non-government agencies “committed to women’s issues broke the silence in Thai society by advocating for women and educating the public about the problem. However, most cases of violence still are not reported to authorities due to lack of an effective response system” (NCWA 2000a, p. 5), and “poor statistical data has helped to limit awareness of the problem in the public sphere. The government policy response is limited because of the lack of information” (p. 5).

Some studies revealed that a large number of Thai women suffer from domestic violence in which the husbands were the perpetrators. Most involved both physical and mental violence. For instance, Hoffman, Demo and Edwards (1994, p. 131) in a study in Bangkok found that more than 123 representative samples of 619 husbands where the family had at least one child, were perpetrators of physical abuse of their wives at least once during their marriage.
… 20% reported hitting, slapping or kicking their wives at least once since marriage. Socioeconomic status was negatively related to occurrence of physical abuse of the wife (Hoffman, Demo & Edwards 1994, p. 138).

A study using data collected from 400 of the outpatients’ women at central provincial hospital in 1997 stated that “[o]ver 40 per cent reported suffering physical or mental violence from their husbands, and half reported to have been sexually assaulted by a stranger” (Weerawatthanodom 1997 cited in WHO 1998, pp. 50-51; cited in Mannan 2002, p. 4).

The records of the Gender and Development Research Institution-Thailand (GDRI 1999) an NGO which provides services across the country, showed that an increasing number of women and children – over 40,000 of them – came to seek assistance from emergency homes operated by the Association for the Promotion of the Status of Women, Thailand, from 1974 to 1998. In 28.4% of these cases it was found that they suffered from violence in the family. Thompson and Bhongsvej (2001), GDRI officers, summarised the statistics of those who have called the Hot-line centre within six months of the year 2000. They found that there were 891 cases of domestic violence. They informed that women who have been physically abused and sexually assaulted are reported to the police at the rate of approximately one case per hour.

The NCWA (2000a, p. 4) revealed, “the most pervasive form of violence against women is abuse by a husband or intimate male partner. Violence against women has become increasingly recognised as deserving of international concern of action”, but the incidence is underreported. A psychiatrist from Ramathibodi Hospital in Bangkok,
Thailand insisted “the women victims often cope with violence in similar ways and
deny to outsiders that there is a problem” (Poonyarat 2002, p. 1).

Most women only come to see a doctor when they are severely injured, suffering from
broken arms, legs or head injuries…When asked about their injuries, they often deny that
their husbands injured them and say it resulted from an accident (Kongsakhon cited in

In 2002 the report from Friends of Women Foundation (herein after FOW), an NGO in
Thailand, who conducted a content analysis of five daily newspapers, pointed out that
during January to June 2002 more than 55% of reports on domestic violence were
instances of spouse abuse. Some victims were killed, and others were injured by their
partners. Most of the victims were women rather than men (FOW 2002).

However, there are no official statistics concerning the percentage of Thai women who
are beaten by their husbands or intimate partners, except for some data from reports on
domestic violence. For example, a report by the Children and Women’s Rights
Protection Centre, Bangkok Metropolitan Medical College and Vachira Hospital,
Thailand (2002), indicated that of the 506 women over 15 years old who came to seek
assistance from the hospital during the period from October 2001 to September 2002,
over 40% of them were abused by their husbands.
The Development of My Interest and Concern in the Issue of Wife Abuse

My academic background in Thailand is in Social Work with a major in Community Development. My Master’s Degree research emphasised developing the professional potential of rural women. I learned how women played an important role in earning their family’s living by working and taking care of their family members along with their husbands, most of who worked on farms. Women’s role in the family not only covered all the housework, but they were also responsible for working outside the house along with the men. For instance, they worked in the rice fields helping their husbands or they had some other occupation to supplement the family income, such as silk weaving or making handicrafts. The roles of Thai men and women in the past and present are different. In the past, men and women were complementary in their sharing of duties and responsibilities, but at present the family roles are based on mutual cooperation and support in sharing of duties that were previously sex specific (Yoddumnern-Attig, Richter, Soonthorndhada, et al. 1992). I worked with rural women as a rural development worker for more than ten years. I gained experience working in remote areas and realised that some Thai women in the countryside suffered through living with husbands who were not taking responsibility for their households. Limanonda, Wongboonsin, Wiboonset, et al. (1995) found in their study that most family responsibilities were the burden of the woman or the wife rather than the husband. This traditional role was true both in urban and rural areas in Thailand. However, the wives still continued living together with their husbands even though they were suffering, because they were taught that to be good wives they must accept the male’s power as the leader of the family (Suriyasarn 1993).
The situations I learned about from daily news reports, study reports and research findings in Thailand along with my own experience as a professional practitioner have sparked my interest in issues of *domestic violence*. As a practitioner and academic I have continued to address these issues in the forefront of my work. In 1991, I studied the way of life of Thai women in the Central Region of Thailand. The findings of this research underscored the importance of the roles of today’s Thai women as house workers who take care of all the family’s members, while men are still accepted as family leaders. The women are also responsible for the family finances and work in the field side by side with the men. As a result, I have discovered more details about family crises and family violence issues in Thailand. This, in turn, encouraged me to explore in greater depth the facts surrounding the present situation of *wife abuse* and *wife abusers* in my society. I became particularly interested in why violent incidents occurred in families, how the victims solved their problems, who they turned to for help and who could help them, as well as a host of other questions.

In 1998, I conducted a survey research on the *Characteristics of Services Concerning Family Violence Problems of the Government and NGOs* in Bangkok, Thailand (Hutabaedya 2001). The Research and Development Unit at Sukhothai Thammathirat Open University supported the research. While I will discuss this research in greater depth in my review of the literature below, I will first note a few findings from this research here. The report disclosed more information about the response of service providers to the victims who came seeking help, and also provided additional information about groups that I considered to be victims, including males and females, children and adults. However, this research was a survey of domestic violence of all kinds; it was not specific to abused wives only. The result of the research pointed out the responses of the service agencies to everyone who came to ask for help, for instance...
girls who were raped by male relatives, and male and female elders who were neglected by their children. The vast majority, almost 95%, who came to service agencies were abused wives. The offenders were their own husbands (Hutabaedya 2001). The findings inspired my decision to conduct an in-depth study of the issue of domestic violence with specific emphasis on abused wives as the victims and their abusive husbands.

**Perceptions on Domestic Violence and Wife Abuse in the Thai Context**

Domestic violence is usually viewed as a *family affair* and a private matter (Lertsrisantad 2002). It was pointed out that violence in the family is influenced by values and attitudes related to gender relations and attitudes towards women in Thai society (Kongbua, Leelamanee, Bhongsvej, et al. 1999). Thai men are held to be superior to Thai women. The belief that they have more rights than women allows men to use violence over their family members, such as women and children who they consider inferior to them and accept their power. Furthermore, women are taught to keep family problems within the family compound. When they are abused they usually remain silent about it. Some abused women learn to tolerate the abuse. They do not tell anyone and dare not divorce, because of the belief in Thai culture that considers any break-up the woman’s fault. Most Thai women themselves also believe this (Kongbua, Leelamanee, Bhongsvej, et al. 1999).

Even though the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand, 1997, provided more specific protections for women and others in the family, and promoted more equality between women and men than other Constitutions did in the past, there was still no Act of a democratically elected government to give women legal protection against domestic violence. From 2001 until the early 2007: women senators draft a domestic
anti-violence bill to submit to the parliament because Thai law was an obstacle in the process of wife abuse problem solving. Poonyarath (2002, p. 2) referred to Skrobanek, a Chairwoman of the Foundation for Women, Thailand, who made the following statement about this obstacle.

Legally, we need to establish special regulations to protect women who are injured and harmed by their husbands. Full implementation of the law is needed (Poonyarath 2002, p. 2).

The NCWA (2000a) recommended that the criminal justice system should be improved, because even though “there are laws against most instances of rape, against sexual harassment and against most forms of domestic violence” (p. 8), women who have been abused they said are still acutely apprehensive about turning to the police. The NCWA noted:

Firstly, the laws are ambiguous and incomplete laws which do not confront the complexity of gender-based violence... legally a man can still rape his wife. Secondly, the police have not been properly trained to understand or regard the complexities. Even the specially trained women officers assigned to handle women’s cases are not adequately prepared to deal with the nature of gender-based violence. Lastly, the attitudes among the police, the prosecutors, the judges, society and even the family of abuse survivors encourage women to keep silent. Lack of law enforcement is considered a tremendous problem (NCWA 2000a, p. 8).

The NCWA (2000a) also claimed, “there was no reinforcement that crimes such as domestic violence were indeed crimes and were unacceptable” (p. 10). The NCWA therefore, assessed that the view held by those who enforce the law was that domestic violence was a private concern and should be “resolved within the home” (2000a, p. 10). The NCWA (2000a) claimed, “police preferred to do little enforcing and to
spend more time mediating…. Some police believed raising the legal issue only aggravates the situation” (pp. 10-11). Because there was no specific law addressed to domestic violence and wife abuse, there was no counselling or rehabilitation required of any abuser. In the opinion of Pujekwinyuskul, Jamsuttee and Naetayasupa (2003, p. iv) the criminal justice system in Thailand is ineffective. They indicated that the legal system had provisions for criminal penalties for the perpetrators of domestic violence, but they were seldom imposed. There was no mechanism or monitoring system to further protect the victims of violence. They also found that the personnel in criminal justice agencies had a negative attitude toward domestic violence cases and most of them perceived domestic violence cases as ordinary misdemeanours.

In 2007 the democratically elected government of Thailand was dissolved and replaced by a military led administration. On the 6th of July 2007 the new administration passed the Domestic-Violence Victims Protection Act B.E. 2550 (A.D. 2007) providing women protection. The new legislation currently requires police and courts to act to protect women in line with the NCWA recommendations. It was enforced in November 2007.

In 2003 Chinlumprasert made three significant observations about Thai research into domestic violence. First that a body of knowledge regarding domestic violence and wife abuse which could provide support for a campaign to stop all forms of violence in Thai society was lacking. From 1981 to 1990 most of the studies focused on the incidence and effects of domestic violence on children and women victims. These studies were aimed at ways to help them.
This research therefore, aimed to fill this first gap by providing a comprehensive and credible knowledge base. Further its methodology required the development of a new model or framework that looked at the victims’ problems and needs within a broader policy and social context.

Second Chinlumprasert (2003) found that research studies from 1997 to 2001 examined gender-based violence and patriarchy theory. Few (four out of twenty-five) investigated the factors contributing to or causing domestic violence and wife abuse or the consequences for abused wives who are unable to identify the origin of the problems so that remedies could be found.

This study begins with a literature review that uses credible international research to identify and define the nature of domestic violence, the factors contributing to it and studies that examine particular hypothesized causes.

Third Chinlumprasert (2003) stated that the results of research findings in the past were not used to improve legal systems and services provided to victims of abuse, or measures for protecting women’s rights and safety. She maintained that this disconnection appeared to be associated with attitudes of some Thais that family problems are personal problems and their misunderstanding that domestic violence comprises physical and psychological abuse alone.

This research, due to its inclusion of service providers, policy makes and those who advise on or are consulted about the drafting of legislation and regulations, makes explicit the connection between individual concerns, professional practice, public policy and good government.
Pradubmook (2003) pointed out in the past there was no research on domestic violence. She suggested the creation of a structure and process for domestic violence research. She further stated that domestic violence and wife abuse were such a serious social problem all Thais should be involved in surveillance to defend against violence in families. This research acknowledges the seriousness of domestic violence and attempts to explore the phenomenon in a deep and comprehensive manner that may shed light on whether universal surveillance is warranted, feasible or achievable.

Some other observations about research into domestic violence by Chinlumprasert (2003) are that most existing research used quantitative methodologies (three out of four in the year 1981 to 1990 were quantitative as were fifteen out of twenty-one in the years 1991 to 2001). Fourteen out of twenty-one studies used questionnaires and nine out of twenty-one used psychological questions adapted from foreign countries that Chinlumprasert argued may not be appropriate to Thai culture.

This research is qualitative and exploratory. It deliberately makes space available to collect information directly relevant to Thai culture and Thai sensibilities. It is also structured to hear the different voices and views from people in different segments of the story – that is the victims, workers and service providers and, policy makers. Semi-structured interview guides are used to enable some comparative analysis and to enable vignettes and personal stories to be told.

For Chinlumprasert (2003) the duplication of research studies was not able to inform the development of a new model or new conceptual framework for domestic violence. As a
result there was no capacity for research to contribute to development, continuity or
enforcement of policies and plans related to domestic violence and wife abuse.
As indicated above this research intends to explore this topic so that there is new
information available to enable the construction of new models of policy and service
implementation on domestic violence and wife abuse in Thai society.

As an outcome of this research project’s preliminary conversations and engagement
with victims, service providers and policy makers, specifically targeted additional
research has been funded into attitudes and roles of multi-disciplinary teams in problem
solving in domestic violence (Hutabaedya, Patrathiti & Apiwattanalanggarn 2008). The
research project’s preliminary findings were used as evidence to support the writing of
the Domestic Violence Protection Act 2007. It also led to a contribution to the United
Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, Development of
inter-sectoral agencies guidelines for the implementation of Domestic Violence Victim

This research project’s strength was in its qualitative nature – the capacity to explore
and acknowledge the complexity of the issues and concerns that lead to domestic
violence and its prevalence. The research did not propose a quick answer but led agency
workers and policy makers to a deeper consideration of what was necessary, feasible
and achievable in the Thai context.

Wife abuse is one of the most serious problems in Thai families. This is not only
because it is so widespread, and it affects the abused wives so intensely, but also
because it is gender-based violence “in which the female is usually the victim and which
arises from unequal power relationships between men and women” (UNIFEM 2003b, p.
3). I decided to use the term *wife abuse* in this study to describe domestic violence against women where a male partner or husband abuses his wife or unregistered spouse. The scope of wife abuse includes all kinds of abuse, for instance physical abuse, psychological abuse, sexual abuse, verbal abuse, and economic abuse.

**1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEMS**

The research problems addressed in this study are: What is wife abuse in Thai families, why does it happen, and how can the problem be resolved?

The four contributing questions are:

1. What is the nature and incidence of wife abuse in Thai families?
2. What are the factors that cause wife abuse, and what are the effects of the abuse?
3. What are the responses of service agencies to assist in situations of wife abuse and what are the results of those responses?
4. What do various stakeholders see as some better ways that wife abuse issues can be managed and resolved?

For this exploration of wife abuse in Thai families, the boundaries of the study were set as follows:

1. The information on the nature and incidence of wife abuse in Thai families was collected from wives who had directly experienced this violence and from workers in service agencies.
2. The information on the triggers that cause wife abuse, and the effects of the abuse, including the reaction from various stakeholders was collected from the abused wives.

3. The information on the responses of service agencies to assist the abused wives, the results of those responses, and suggestions to solve the problems of wife abuse was mainly collected from the abused wives, the workers from service agencies, and policy makers.

The identification of the research problems and contributing questions will address the primary objectives of this research.

### 1.3 JUSTIFICATION FOR THE RESEARCH

This study explores domestic violence in Thailand from the perspective of the women victims. By engaging with the women and their experience, this study aims to better understand the inefficiencies and processes they endure. By also investigating the views and experiences of agency workers who respond to domestic violence and policy makers in Thailand, the research seeks to identify where practice and policy can be varied so that victims are better supported and more effective and culturally appropriate programs for the eradication of domestic violence can be developed.

Given the main research question and the four contributing questions, it could be asked whether this research can be ‘balanced’ if we do not also interview the alleged abusers – that is the men. In sub-section 199 of United Nations General Assembly (UN 2006, p. 60) appears the following:

> Despite the sensitivity of the topic, it is possible to collect reliable and valid information on
violence against women. However, specific safeguards are needed to protect both respondents and interviewers. WHO [World Health Organization] has developed safety and ethical guidelines for conducting research on domestic violence. These address issues such as guaranteeing the safety of both respondents and interviewers; ensuring the privacy and confidentiality of the interview; providing special training on gender equality issues and violence against women to interviewers; providing a minimal level of information or referrals for respondents in situations of risk; and providing emotional and technical support for interviewers. Failure to adhere to these measures can compromise the quality of the data and put respondents and interviewers at risk of physical or emotional harm (UN 2006, p. 60).

Given the context in Thailand, the fears of women, service providers and policy makers, any attempt to identify and locate abusers to start that conversation risks the safety of the researchers, agency workers, abused wives and their children. The research proposal with this component would not have met the WHO guidelines nor been accepted by a human research ethics committee, the participants or participating service agencies. The research therefore does not claim to comprehensively address the questions but to examine it from the perspective of the participants.

**Importance for Theory Development**

Creswell (2003) proposed that “a theory is an interrelated set of constructs formed into propositions, or hypotheses, that specify the relationship among variables” (p. 120). The development of theories occurs when researchers test a prediction many times. Theory development is a result of recalling investigations. Creswell goes on to say that those who develop theory “combine independent, mediating, and dependent variables based on different forms of measures into hypotheses or research questions” (2003, p. 120). This research, which investigates wife abuse, is important for theory development for the reason that the subject of domestic violence, and wife abuse in particular, is still
little known, and many people have remained uninterested in the problem despite its serious consequences in Thai society.

Qualitative research was selected as an appropriate methodology to explore this new topic that only a small number of researchers have studied. This exploration is also fitting in order to investigate more extensive information (Neuman 2003, pp. 29-30).

In this respect, the findings of my research are expected to be valuable within Thailand. The research should help to give greater clarity to the concept of wife abuse within the context of domestic violence. It will help Thai people understand issues of wife abuse within the context of Thai families and contribute to an ongoing debate within this country about issues of protection of women and the preservation of the family.

**Importance for the Policy Makers and Practitioners in Thai Society**

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, United Nations (hereinafter ESCAP, 2004) found that domestic violence and violence against women is perceived as a private matter. The results from the findings from this research will be of importance to promote a change to develop more preventive strategies at both the policy level and in service implementation.

This research seeks out important information about the perceived causes and the resulting problems of wife abuse from service agency staff at front-line and management levels, and from decision-makers involved in policy development. The results of the study will provide additional data on wife abuse in Thailand that has not
previously been available. An outcome of the study is the development of a new way to perceive wife abuse that can lead to improving policy and services.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

Constructivism was the most appropriate paradigm for this study. Creswell (2003) offered: “constructivist researchers often begin with the focal point of the research, which assumes that the inquirer will proceed collaboratively” (p. 11). The inquirer, for Creswell includes and unites the information from all participant and proceeds in a collaborative manner seeking reform and change. Two important theoretical perspectives are the feminist perspective and critical theory. Feminism takes women’s diverse experiences and makes them “problematic” as Creswell puts it (2003). Research may focus on sociological factors including policy that achieve social justice and diminish oppressive social arrangements. Critical theory as Fay (1987, p. 90) states is “concerned with empowering human beings to transcend the constraints placed on them” by key sociological factors; race, class, and gender (Fay 1987, p. 90).

Qualitative method is an appropriate strategy of study for this research. Patton (1990) pointed out that qualitative research methods are particularly relevant to studying families since there are many aspects of family processes and interactions that are concealed behind closed doors, or may be too personal or complicated to measure. As this research requires an in-depth understanding of the interviewees’ background, experiences and their ideas, the semi-structured in-depth interview method was chosen for data collection. To ensure that respondents were able to understand questions clearly and unequivocally, additional questions were constructed. It also allows the interview to seek clarification and ask for an expanded answer where that is helpful for
understanding. The semi-structured interview instruments consisted of three sets of guidelines for questions: one set for interviewing abused wives, one for interviewing respondents from service agencies, and another for interviewing policy makers.

1.5 OUTLINE OF THE RESEARCH

The research results are arranged in eight chapters as shown in Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1
Research Structure

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION
Chapter 2 REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE
Chapter 3 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT
Chapter 4 METHODOLOGY
Chapter 5 BACKGROUNDS OF THE RESPONDENTS
Chapter 6 FINDINGS REGARDING WIFE ABUSE IN THAI FAMILIES
Chapter 7 FINDINGS REGARDING THE RESPONSE TO WIFE ABUSE
Chapter 8 ANALYSIS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Source: Developed for this study

Chapter 1 introduces the background of the research and addresses the research questions. The justification of the research is given and the research methodology is
explained. The outline of the report, the definition, and delimitation of the study are then provided.

Chapter 2 provides a review of the relevant literature concerned with the conceptualisation of domestic violence and wife abuse. The purpose of this chapter is to explore the concept of domestic violence, to assist in better understanding the nature of wife abuse in particular, and to reach a greater understanding of the causes and effects of wife abuse. The variables and factors are defined. The concepts and theories used in the research construct are furnished as underpinnings for the research questions.

Chapter 3 provides a broad understanding of the background and context of Thai families with specific information regarding wife abuse in Thailand. This chapter describes the social context of Thai families and discusses the problems that they experience, including problems related to gender relations. Additional information is included on the perceptions of wife abuse in the Thai context, followed by a discussion of the official policies and legislation with regard to domestic violence and wife abuse, and information on the service agencies that render services to abused wives and their families.

Chapter 4 aims to explain and justify the research methodology, along with descriptions of the qualitative research method, purposive sampling, data collection, data analysis, issues of reliability and validity, ethical considerations, and reporting. It outlines the within-case and cross-case analytical process and the linking of participants’ vignettes, examples and stories to make real and human the effects of wife abuse and Thailand’s current methods of responding to abused wives.
Chapter 5 presents backgrounds and information on the respondents who were the participants of this study. The participants comprised twenty abused wives who came to ask for assistance from service agencies, twenty respondents who worked at the service agencies, and ten policy makers. The demographic characteristics of the respondents were obtained by interviewing participants using semi-structured interview guides. Firstly within-case analysis is used to show the views of each group of participants.

Chapter 6 presents the findings of the research regarding wife abuse in Thai families. This chapter explains the nature and incidence of wife abuse, followed by data on the causes and effects of wife abuse. The presentations also include information on Thai values and beliefs that impact upon the occurrence of wife abuse in Thai families. Again this begins with within-case analysis and the cross-case analysis supported by vignettes and stories from the participants.

Chapter 7 presents the findings of the research regarding how service agencies respond to wife abuse and how to improve responses. This chapter includes some basic information on the service agencies, information about the abused wives who came to the service agencies and their needs, the kinds of services the agencies provide for abused wives and their intervention strategies. The respondents’ perceptions of the results of the services provided to the abused wives and their families are also presented. The findings also include regarding suggestions on how to solve the problem of wife abuse. The information covers the ideas and suggestions on how to improve responses to abused wives. Again the process of within-case and cross-case analysis is used and highlight gaps between how the women victims and service workers see the main issues compared in the views of policy makers.
Chapter 8 presents the analysis, implications and conclusions of this research. Outcomes from exploration of wife abuse in Thailand are discussed. The findings are also compared to the theoretical foundations, and are discussed in the context of the perceptions of values and beliefs of Thai people in the background and context of Thai families. Then conclusions are drawn from the research to point out possible contributions of the research in terms of domestic violence and wife abuse theories and the improvement of policies and practices, and potential areas for future research are outlined. A diagram that summarises the findings is included.

1.6 DEFINITIONS

The operational definitions of terms used in this research are as follows:

Violence

The key attribute of the word violence is about producing injuries, and it is defined as any purposeful act that threatens, attempts or actually inflicts physical harm or pain or injuries to another person (Gelles & Cornell 1990, p. 22, Straus & Gelles 1988, pp. 14-36).
Abuse

The word *abuse* is a general term for the use or treatment of something wrongly or badly (Cambridge Dictionary Online 2007). There is agreement that abuse is the more generic term; maltreatment and violence are considered subtypes, (Emery & Laumann-Billings 1998, pp. 121-135; Hines & Malley-Morrison 2005). This word describes a pattern of behaviour directed by a husband or the abuser at his wife or the victim in a variety of forms. The word *abuse* is different from *violence* on the basis of distinct levels of intent. Incidents of abuse and battering do not necessarily imply intention to do harm (Straus 1991). There is some general acceptance too that the term *violence* is best suited for “having the intention of physically hurting another person” (Steinmetz 1987, p. 729). Rippon (2000, p. 456) includes “perceived as having the intention” to his definition.

Domestic Violence

The term *domestic violence* is used to describe the violent actions and negligence that occur in varying relationships. This term first came into common use to define the problem of wife abuse and has been expanded to encompass other forms of abuse by partners in intimate relationships with primary focus on women as the victims (Davis 1995, pp. 780-782; United Nations Children’s Fund - UNICEF 2000a, p. 2). Domestic violence can occur in all forms of violation, namely: physical abuse, psychological abuse or emotional abuse, verbal abuse, social abuse, sexual abuse or marital rape, and financial abuse (Sarantakos 1996, pp. 269-271). In addition, this term refers to “threat or abuse that occurs between two people in a close intimate relationship, and includes current and former spouses and dating partners” (Centres for Disease Control and
Prevention 2006, p. 1; 2010). As the United Nations Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs (1993, p. 6) noted “[t]he forms of violation may vary from one society and culture to another”. In this research the emphasis is on studying the violence in families where the victim is the wife and the abuser is the husband.

**Wife Abuse**

Wife abuse is defined as a type of domestic violence where a wife is the victim, and her husband is the abuser (Sarantakos 1996, p. 268). The victim and abuser are cohabiting together legally or de facto. As Centre for Health and Gender Equity (hereinafter CHANGE 1999) stated

> Wife abuse is normally a pattern of abusive behaviour and controls rather than an isolated act of physical aggression. The abuse of a wife by her intimate partner can take many forms including physical assaults, psychological abuse, and coercive sex including controlling behaviour. (CHANGE 1999, p. 5)

**Abused Wives**

Abused wives are married women who are abused by their husbands or partners. Some of them still stayed in violent situations in their families but some came to service agencies to seek help. The dynamics of violence in spousal or martial violence often focuses on the wife or victim rather than the husband or abuser. The abused wife, having sought agency services or police assistance, is frequently a cooperative informant regarding the violent marriage (Rosenbaum & Maiuro 1990).
Wife Abuse in Thailand

The term *wife abuse in Thailand* is focused on studying the wife abuse incidence in the huge city of the Bangkok Metropolis, Thailand, which is complex city rife with family problems. Bangkok is also the centre of the support system for family crises as it is the capital city of Thailand. The abused women came from across the country but most of service agencies, the government and non-government service agencies, are located in Bangkok. The NCWA (2000a) noted that the One-Stop Crisis Service Centre - OSCC focusing on violence against women were initiated in 1999 in seven Bangkok hospitals and sixty health centres (p. 25), and at that time, there were approximately fifteen non-government agencies in Bangkok, five of which were active and had centres in other provinces throughout Thailand (p. 14). Therefore, the service workers’ and policy makers’ experiences and knowledge go beyond the boundaries of Bangkok city.

1.7 LIMITATIONS

There were some expected risks in this research project, as some of the data was collected from abused wives who were, at the time of the research, still experiencing abuse problems. For this reason, it was necessary to develop a protocol that would recognise the difficult circumstances in which abused wives found themselves. Wives who experienced abuse problems were also expected to have some anxiety when they were interviewed because their problems are very sensitive and they might not want to speak about their bitter lives. However, after the aims of the research and the reasons for asking about their experiences of abuse were explained, and after they were assured that they could stop anytime if they were uncomfortable in telling about their lives, the abused women were willing to cooperate.
This research has three main limitations: the small sample size, the limits of time, and the limits of coordination. The study was designed to use a small sample size because the aim of the research was to clearly explain the nature and incidence of wife abuse in Thai families. This kind of design is fitting for describing the situation of individual cases in depth, but the limitation is that the findings cannot be generalised to elucidate the problem on the macro level or to give an accurate picture of the situation of wife abuse in the whole society. Survey research would lead to results being generalisable would show how severe the problem is in Thai society. The sensitivity of the topic and the unwillingness of people involved in domestic violence to identify themselves would make a large survey unfeasible.

The period of time for collecting data from the respondents was estimated at six months. The exact dates for collecting data could not be fixed in advance because neither the number of abused wives who would come to the service agencies, nor their willingness to participate, could be predicted. However, twenty willing participants were found by coordinating with those service agencies that were willing to be involved. Some agencies wanted to keep their cases confidential and therefore were unwilling to participate.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has provided the foundations and the justification for undertaking this research as an exploration into domestic violence, specific to wife abuse in Thailand. The research problems and the contributing questions were identified. The justification of the research has been addressed in terms of its importance for theory development
and for policy makers and practitioners. The methodology used for this research was briefly described and justified. An outline of each chapter in the research, the important definitions and limitations were also provided.

The rest of the research report will now continue to provide a detailed description. The next chapter will provide literature review relating to domestic violence and wife abuse, and generate a specific conceptual framework to explain the relationships within the research questions.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In this chapter the concepts and theories of domestic violence and wife abuse are reviewed, and the conceptual framework of the research is outlined. The first section describes the nature of domestic violence and wife abuse. Then, the theoretical explanation of domestic violence and wife abuse are discussed. The risk markers related to wife abuse and the consequences of wife abuse are outlined. The last section presents the issues concerning the subject of intervention in wife abuse.

2.1 NATURE OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND WIFE ABUSE

This section discusses various views of the definitions of domestic violence and wife abuse. The types of domestic violence and the forms of wife abuse are also presented from a variety of viewpoints.

Overview of Domestic Violence and Wife Abuse

Violence according to Fraser (1995, p. 2453) connotes domestic violence, street crime, and school-related offenses. Violence is about producing injuries, and it is defined as any purposeful act that threatens or actually inflicts physical harm or pain or injuries to another person (Straus & Gelles 1988; Gelles & Cornell 1990; Reiss & Roth 1993). Violence is considered in terms of unjustified use of force, often vehement force, in order to inflict physical injury on people or damage to property (Andermahr, Lovel & Wolkowitz 1997, pp. 208-209). The definition of violence used by WHO (Krug,
Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002) does not require actual injury. The definition associates intent with the act or threat of an act that is likely to cause harm to anyone – including the perpetrator, for instance punching oneself or threatening suicide. They exclude from the definition any occasion when harm occurred and where there was no intent.

The intentional use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high likelihood of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm, maldevelopment or deprivation (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 5).

When we speak of abuse, battering, and assault, we must take into account the concepts of intention, consequence, and degree of repetition. Emery and Laumann-Billings (1998, pp. 121-135) considered that violence is a subtype of abuse. They defined violence as involving serious endangerment, physical injuries, and sexual violation, and explained minimal or moderate forms of abuse, such as hitting, pushing, and name calling, as maltreatment. The word battering is defined by Smith, Thornton, De Villis et al. (2002, p. 1210) as a dynamic series of incidents, they say “patterned” where force or manipulation are used and the result is that one partner in the relationship feels vulnerable, powerless and trapped. The Centre for Health and Gender Equity (CHANGE 1999, p. 5) include wife beating, battering or domestic violence, and “[i]t frequently includes controlling behaviour such as isolating a woman from family and friends, monitoring her movements, and restricting her access to resources” as violence against women.

The WHO World Report on Violence and Health (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 89) states that battering is repeated assault within a single relationship. However, the words “‘violence’, ‘abuse’, and ‘battering’ are frequently used interchangeably”
(Hegarty, Hindmarsh & Gilles 2000, p. 1). Assault, on the other hand, reflects a legal connotation that the violence was unlawful (Straus 1991, pp. 19-47).

The term domestic violence came into common use in the 1970s to define the problem of wife abuse with the primary focus on women as the victims (Davis 1995, p. 780) including the behaviours defined as battering (Saunders 1995a, p. 789). The UNICEF report Domestic Violence Against Women and Girls report (see also Hawke 2002) (Innocenti Research Centre, UNICEF, 2000a, p. 2) explained that the term domestic “refers to the types of relationships involved rather than the place where the violent act occurs” and that “[v]iolence in the domestic sphere is usually perpetrated by males who are, or have been, in positions of trust and intimacy and power” (p. 3). The UN (1993, p. 6) also noted: “domestic violence is used to describe actions and omissions that occur in varying relationships”. The range of behaviours includes and is not limited to incidents of physical attack, in the form of physical and sexual violations. The Australian Medical Association (AMA) declared in a 1998 position statement that

Domestic violence is an abuse of power. It is the domination, coercion, intimidation and victimisation of one person by another by physical, sexual or emotional means within intimate relationships (AMA 1998, p. 1).

Geffner, Sorenson and Lundberg-Love (1997, p. 122) contribute: “… the use of physical force, or threat of such force, against a current or former partner in an intimate relationship, resulting in fear and emotional and/or physical suffering”.

The frequently substituted terms of spouse abuse, marital violence, and partner abuse also refer to domestic violence. Spousal abuse may be defined as the application of force to cause pain or injury between two persons involved in a relationship (Wallace
1995, p. 164). Early on, definitions of spouse abuse did not include sexual abuse, rape within marriage, emotional, psychological financial abuse or coercion (Magyar & Gelles 2003). Restricting spouse abuse to physical violence proved to be far too limiting (Schechter 1982; Straus & Gelles 1986; Chalk & King 1998; Magyar 2002).

Wallace (1995, p. 164) categorised two forms of violence, the lesser form including yelling and throwing things and the more severe form including striking and hitting. Wallace also explained that the word *spouse* is gender-neutral, meaning people who are married, cohabiting or involved in a series of relationships, and “*spousal abuse* is defined as any intentional act or series of acts that cause injury to the spouse” (Wallace 1995, p. 164).

*Marital violence* may be defined as behaviours generated to perpetuate intimidation, power, and control by the abusing spouse over the abused spouse. These patterns may “occur in physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and economic forms” (Straus & Gelles 1986; Walker 1991 cited in Hampton & Corner-Edwards 1993, pp. 113-114; Hampton 1999, p. 169). The above authors indicate that women are usually the victims. The scope of the problem of marital violence is difficult to define, due to the fact that labelling interpersonal interaction as abusive is a very subjective matter. It has been placed within the context of a serious social problem, however, because of its grave consequences. In the United States of America, the National Institute of Justice, Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Women’s Freedom Network 1997, p. 1 cited in MenWeb 2011, p. 1) states that “[d]omestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women - more than car accidents, muggings, and rapes combined” (World Bank 2013, p. 1).
The Human Rights Watch on Women’s Rights Project (1995, p. 34) agreed and indicated this was a global problem. This is supported by the CHANGE report (1999) which stated that:

Around the world at least one woman in every three has been beaten, coerced into sex, or otherwise abused in her lifetime. Most often the abuser is a member of her own family (CHANGE 1999, p. 1).

The United Nations Populations Fund-UNFPA (2000, p. 1) noted “violence against women is a pervasive yet under-recognised human rights violation”.

Thus, the term wife abuse used in this study means a type of domestic violence where the wife is the victim, and her husband is the abuser. Both wife and husband, cohabit in either a legal or de facto relationship. It includes physical, emotional and other forms of abuse.

**Types of Domestic Violence and Wife Abuse**

Domestic violence has been described in various forms, for instance the abuse and neglect of children, the sexual abuse of children, violence between spouses, abuse and neglect of the elderly, violence between siblings, and courtship violence and abuse. Various authors, both researchers and practitioners, have sought to categorise the different types of domestic violence. Many have models with at least four types (Rodenburg & Fantuzzo 1993, pp. 231-236; Aguilar & Nightingale 1994, pp. 35-45; Wallace 1995, p. 3; Murni 1999, p. 5). Within these the most commonly identified are physical abuse, psychological abuse or emotional or controlling, sexual abuse, and economic abuse. Other writers separated the types of domestic violence into seven
categories: “child physical abuse”, “child neglect”, “incest in young children”,
“extrafamilial child sexual abuse”, “woman battering”, “elder abuse and neglect”,
“psychological maltreatment of children”, and “psychological maltreatment of women”
(Ammerman & Hersen 1999, p. 436). Sarantakos took a different perspective and
developed a six-type model related to the types of perpetrators and victims. The most
comprehensive model that is directly related to this study derives from the National
Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Canada (2000) which added financial abuse and
religious abuse with a resultant model.

*Physical violence* includes physical abuse and entails physical actions or the use of
weapons, such as knives, guns, sticks, and other objects, as well as the administration of
chemicals or other substances as abuse (Eddington & Shuman 2005, pp. 3-4). This type
of violence produces visible signs such as bruises, cuts, lacerations, and burns, broken
bones, addiction, incapacitation or death (Tjaden & Thoennes 2000, p. 15; Campbell,
expression of the physical abuse may be in a variety of actions, such as biting, hitting,
slapping, pinching, choking and others. The perpetrators of physical violence sometimes
carry out their actions on things, such as breaking items that are dear to another person,
slamming doors, or kidnapping or physically hurting children instead of their spouse

*Emotional abuse*, sometimes called psychological abuse, is expressed in a variety of
ways and includes actions such as mental cruelty, prolonged silence, refusal to
communicate, or passive/aggressive behaviour, it means doing things that aggravate the
partner or not doing what one would expect. The National Clearinghouse on Family
Violence, Canada (1996, p. 1) and Pandey (2004) also describe emotional abuse as the
expression of excessive jealousy, inability to trust, need for control of the partner’s behaviour, verbal abuse and intentional damage to personal property. Pandey (2004, p. 132) notes that “[m]en who are psychologically abusive may try to limit whom their partners visit or talk to on the phone, so that the women become isolated from friends and relatives”.

*Verbal abuse* involves verbal assault and aims to cause psychological pain to the spouse. It comprises constant criticism, blaming, false accusations, name-calling and disrespect toward a family member or the people or things he or she cares about. This form of abuse is thought to be as damaging as or more damaging than physical violence and often occurs together with other forms of violence. Generally, verbal abuse is often reported to be used by women more than men, but Straus and Sweet (1992, p. 270) reported the opposite. In their study it was found that both men and women used verbal abuse equally, and it was not a replacement for physical violence. Their study concluded that verbal abuse was often associated with alcoholism and drug use, and that the use of verbal abuse decreased with age and with the number of children.

*Social abuse* refers to actions and behaviours that are intended to restrict the partner’s social actions and relationships or limit the movements of a relative. The aim of most social abuse is to isolate a family member from friends and relatives, forbid some activities, criticise the victim’s role performance, and restrict work opportunities and/or other community involvement, including enforcing beliefs and standards. Social abuse has been proven to be as destructive as other forms of abuse (Lissette & Kraus 2000, p. 42), and both men and women can inflict it on their family members.
Sexual abuse is any forced sexual activity, and includes infecting women with a sexually transmitted disease by engaging in unsafe sexual practices. Abuse of this kind can include “rape, demands for sex in a way that degrades the victim, use of penetrating objects and any form of physical abuse directed at the sexual areas of the body or done during sexual activity” (National Clearinghouse on Family Violence - Canada 2000, p. 4).

Passive abuse is explained as a form of neglect, such as emotional neglect and physical neglect (Sarantakos 1996, p. 270). The spouse can inflict it upon the partner, the partner’s parent, or upon the children. This form of violence can be as serious and damaging as any other form of violence.

Financial abuse is described as preventing someone from having financial independence, economically exploiting a family member, or preventing a family member from having any control over the family’s money and expenditure decisions (Murni 1999, p. 5).

Religious or spiritual abuse involves ridiculing someone’s beliefs, using religion to manipulate someone, or denying someone involvement in spiritual or religious practice. This kind of abuse tends to occur in religious cults or sects that stress patriarchy, obedience to authority, submission of women to men, and physical punishment for religious infractions. Such groups tend to be regarded as deviant in modern societies and are commonly labelled by others as cults (Mignon, Larson & Holmes 2002, p. 33).
Wife Abuse and the Extent of the Problem

CHANGE (1999, p. 5) reported on their analysis of more than 50 population based surveys across the globe that there is consistent coincidence of physical violence and abuse of a psychological nature and, in a significant proportion of cases, sexual violence as well.

A report from the Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute by Alvazzi del Frate and Patrigini (1995, p. 2) on the victimisation of women found that that “wife abuse is a severe problem in many developing countries”. Intimate partners physically assaulted women at a rate of 67% for rural dwellers and 56% in urban areas of Papua New Guinea. Argentina’s intimate partner physical violence rates for 1988 were 25% of married women: in one slum area in Ecuador in 1989 the results were 80% of women interviewed and a 1986 Puerto Rican study found that nearly two-thirds of all married female respondents had suffered from violence (physical and/or emotional) by their husbands and remained in such an environment on average between 6 and 9 years prior to seeking assistance (Alvazzi del Frate & Patrigini 1995, p. 2). Fifty percent of women murdered in Puerto Rico (1977-1978) and in Bangladesh (1983-1995) were killed by intimate partners (husbands and ex-husbands). Based on data that came from the United States, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Peru, India, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, UNICEF reported that abused women were “12 times more likely to attempt suicide” than women who had been free of abuse (2000a, p. 4).

Psychological or emotional abuse is the second most common type of wife abuse and it has serious negative health outcome (physical and mental) for victims of domestic violence (Yoshihama 1996). The World Health Organisation (1997, pp. 7-8) and
Benninger-Budel and Lacroix (1999) state in their report on violence against women that they suffer mental torture and live in terror and Pandey (2008) states that the victims/survivors of psychological abuse reported that ongoing psychological violence or emotional torture is “often more unbearable than the physical brutality, with mental stress leading to a high incidence of suicide and suicide attempts” (Pandey 2008, p. 32).

An analysis of thirty-five studies from industrialised and developing countries by the World Bank (1994), shows that 25-30% of all women have suffered physical abuse inflicted by a present or former intimate partner. They reported that “[a]n even larger percentage of women have been subjected to psychological abuse” (Heise, Pitanguy & Germain 1994, pp. 7-8).

It is through emotional abuse that the abuser undermines, isolates, and terrorises the abused woman. Researchers (Mouradian 2000, pp. 2-4) have graphically described the methods of men who have learned to terrorise their wives without touching them, thus avoiding the legal consequence of actual physical abuse: (1) isolation, (2) humiliation and degradation, (3) “crazy-making”, (4) threats to harm the woman and those she loves, and (5) suicidal and homicidal threats.

Sexual abuse, a form of wife abuse, which includes rape by a husband or “an intimate partner, is not considered a crime in most countries” (UNICEF 2000a, p. 4), including Thailand (Pongsapich & Jamnarnwej 1998, p. 32). Forced sex, when cohabiting with the perpetrator, is not considered as rape in a marriage in many societies (UNICEF 2000a, p. 4). A global study found that “10-15% of women reported being forced to have sex with their intimate partners” (Heise, Pitanguy & Germain 1994, p. 4). While many women fear rape by a stranger, in reality, most sexual abuse of women is
committed by current or former male intimate partners (Browne 1997). Finkelhor and Yllö (1985) described three types of marital rape or sexual abuse by male partners. The first type is *battering rape*, which occurred in one-half of marital rape cases in their study. The rape essentially is a continuation of battering behaviour. *Force-only rape* occurred in relationships with little other violence. Perpetrators use only as much force as needed to get their wives to have sex with them; the purpose was to have sex and not to hurt the woman. *Obsessive rape* involves a preoccupation with sex. It usually includes a desire for unusual sexual activity such as anal intercourse, bondage, and insertion of objects into the vagina.

To understand more clearly about sexual abuse, Dunham (1990) explained that attitudes are affected by gender labelling. According to Dunham women have been labelled as *passive* while men are considered *active* agents. Men are perceived as the producers of fertility, and women as reproducers, as passive agents and child bearers. Because of this labelling, men are more likely to control women’s sexuality.

Economic violence or financial abuse means having no or little access to the family’s money, such as cases where the wife has no control over what is spent or saved, over any decisions about family or personal purchases. Davis (1995, p. 782) states that “[e]conomic abuse occurs when women are denied access to the resources to which they are legally and morally entitled”. Murni (1999, p. 7) adds in her report, a study in Indonesian society, that sometimes men were not capable of providing adequate financial support for their families for reasons such as losing a job, lacking enough education to find a job, getting drunk, using drugs, gambling and other problems. Murni also explains that a common cause of economic violence was related to the traditional role of men to support their families economically. Sometimes the men did not want to
give money to their wives at the correct time although they had it in their hands.

Sometimes it was found that men liked to manipulate the family financially in order to control their wives by not giving them what they needed and not letting them handle household money. When their wives were financially dependent, the husbands felt they could control them.

**2.2 THEORETICAL EXPLANATIONS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND WIFE ABUSE**

Initially the theory was grounded in considerations of criminal behaviour. It evolved through biological and then psychological explanations to the multi-factorial frameworks operating currently (Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker et al. 1998, p. 2). Connors (1989 cited in Kantor 2002, p. 6) referred to two key theoretical frameworks used to locate the cause of domestic violence. Connors admits that neither provides a comprehensive explanation. The first theory focuses on individual characteristics involved in the abuse and the second on structural causes of domestic violence.

When the causes of domestic violence are located in individuals’ psychology or social experienced they are considered to be eradicable. This description isolates the environment and circumstances of domestic violence from examination, “maintaining its position as a private and individual problem” (Connors 1989 cited in Kantor 2002, p. 6). As domestic violence is worldwide in all classes, racial, and socio-economic levels, individual pathology as a causal explanation fails. There appears to be more complex and diverse causes.
The second theoretical framework locates social structure as causal. As a result family violence is accepted as normal. The unequal gender-based distribution of power and roles in society is replicated and institutionalised within families.

Domestic violence is seen in a social context that tolerates the subordination of women. It is explained as structural rather than as isolated within individual relationships because the violence is located in the framework of cultural, socioeconomic and political power relations with factors in the family, community and state reinforcing social norms that allow domestic violence to occur (Kantor 2002, pp. 6-7).

A third theoretical framework is contributed by McCue (1995) who classified the theories which explained the causes of wife abuse in three categories: individual models, sociological or family-oriented models, and feminist theories. A fourth is offered by Loue (2001): ecological and integrated models. Loue explains ecological framework of partner violence that

[1.] the mesosystem -the culture, [2.] exosystems-the formal and informal networks in which the family participates, and [3.] microsystems- the family setting in which violence occurs, and [4.] ontogentic-the family history of the parents [partners] (Loue 2001, p. 23).

WHO (2002b) support the idea of ecological based frameworks:

The ecological framework highlights the multiple causes of violence and the interaction of risk factor operating within the family and broader community, social, cultural and economic contexts. Placed within a developmental context, the ecological model also shows how violence may be caused by different factor at different stage of life (WHO 2002b, p. 13).
Ecological frameworks attempt to develop a balanced analysis of the different personal, social, economic and cultural contexts of a difficult reality. Carlson (1984, pp. 569-587) noted that while the ecological model could identify a broad spectrum of causal factors it does not and cannot specifically identify every factor that might contribute to couple violence. This criticism can be levelled at most social science including economics because there are multiple and complex interacting variables being expressed in any individual event.

Gondolf’s (1993) work provides an integrating theoretical framework. He presents both micro and macro theories of battering. Several macro-level theories offer explanations on why so many men batter women. Macro level theories might be loosely categorised as sociocultural theories. These theories suggest that power is central to the ordering of society, and social norms are fundamental to social stability. Macro theories best explain why so many men are predisposed to wife battering, but they say less about what compels individual men to commit a violent act. As Gondolf (1993, p. 239) explains “the macro theories tell us how a gun is put in a person’s hand but not why a person pulls the trigger”. Several micro theories attempt to explain the compulsions that produce violent acts. These social-psychological theories see violence as a process rather than an isolated event. By describing this process, or the dynamic of violence, the micro theories not only show how individuals become violent but also imply ways to interrupt and avoid violence. Theories of this type include the cycle of violence, and power and control theory.

Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker et al. (1998), who reviewed the theories of causation where prevention was concerned, found that the “explanation of domestic violence typically focused on societal factors, family variables, or the characteristics of individuals”
They found that there was insufficient empirical evidence to claim primacy of any single causal theory and resolved that “each contributed a valuable perspective” (p. 32). Domestic violence and wife abuse is a complex problem that must be understood within the context of social, cultural, and socioeconomic factors. The consequences of such abuse are enormous, not only for individual victims and their families, but for communities as well. This statement is in keeping with UNICEF (2000a) and Keeling and Mason (2008, p. 117) who supported multi-disciplinary work in domestic violence. Thus, the intervention and prevention of domestic violence requires approaches, which are multi-dimensional and address the full range of concern facing victims, perpetrators, their families and the community at large.

In the following section, a number of the key theoretical frameworks and models related to domestic violence are examined. Each theory’s explanation of the cause of domestic violence is articulated. There follows a brief examination of the strengths and weaknesses of treatment and or responses to domestic violence, based on each theoretical framework or model. The theories extend from the micro level to the macro level. They are: biological theory, psychopathology theory, family systems theory, social learning theory, exchange theory, feminist theory, and ecological theory.

**Biological Theory**

Despite some fluctuations in popularity, criminal behaviour has been viewed through a biological framework for over a century (Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker et al. 1998, p. i).

... violent behaviour is biological and organic and can be explained by genetics, biochemistry, and changes in brain development due to trauma. For example, it is believed that some abusive men
have histories of head injuries, which have affected their ability to solve problems and control impulsivity (Rosenbaum, Hoge, Adelman et al. 1994, pp. 1187-1193 cited in Wolfe & Jaffe 1999, p. 134).

Head-injured men however were shown by Warnken, Rosenbaum, Fletcher et al. (1994, pp. 153-166) to be no more physically aggressive in the domestic environment than uninjured men.

Genetic differences are not however, considered to be purely deterministic. Most theorists provide the capacity for social influences and learning. Rather, genetic predispositions do not necessarily have penetrance that is they only influence outcomes not predict them. Even in the genetics of breast cancer, though frequency is remarkably high, the penetrance of the mutations is unknown and thus the lifetime risk of developing cancer is difficult to predict (Biesecker, Boehnke, Calzone et al. 1993). In domestic violence, the context and the triggers or cues are relevant (Branningan 1997; Ellis & Walsh 1997; Ellis 1998).

Biological theory may not be appropriate or helpful to an examination about domestic violence and its prevention, in part because it could remove all individual responsibility for violent and harmful actions and inactions. According to this theory, the way of changing abusers’ behaviour is through drug therapy to assist people predisposed to violence to cope with the stressors of family life. The changes of perpetrators’ behaviours that may be at the root of intimate partner violence need more studies (McCue 2008, p. 14).
Psychopathology Theory

In the early 1970s, the prevailing theory explaining why men battered was psychopathology (UNIFEM 2006a). The framework of the battering problem is explained in terms of intra-personal pathology, emphasising how early life experiences create the specific pathological personalities seen in abused women and abusing men. This theory focuses on development through psychosexual stages. According to Wolfe and Jaffe (1999, p. 134), the roots of domestic violence lie within the psychopathology or dysfunctional nature of an individual’s personality structures and these are more susceptible to the influence of early childhood experiences than biological factors would be.

Mignon, Larson and Holmes (2002) go on to say that studies of male batterers, (Dutton 1995, Holtzworth-Munroe et al. 1997) indicate the development of trust and capacity for emotional regulation is compromised if one witnesses or is a victim of domestic violence. Poor emotional regulation can result in hostile, dependent, insecure adults who struggle to develop positive relationships. Magdol, Moffitt, Caspi et al. (1997, p. 76) report “among men who perpetrate severe physical violence against their partner: being poorly educated, under great economic stress, socially isolated, intoxicated, or suffering a mental disorder”.

Wolfe and Jaffe (1999) also found that the behaviour of perpetrators of domestic violence did not correspond to profiles of individuals who have mental illness because there is an element of control in targeting the violence. That is, people who are mentally ill and have behavioural outbursts do not limit these behaviours to their intimate partners.
Psychopathology views the violent persons as ill and needing to be treated medically, for example using psychopharmacology (Freeman 1979, pp. 136-139). Davis (1995) and Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker et al. (1998, p. ii) agree that the perpetrator of domestic violence is a serial offender with entrenched behaviour patterns. Intensive, medically based treatment is recommended. Psycho-educational approaches may be less successful and talk therapy too lengthy. Psychopathology as a cause of domestic violence is contested. While some researchers claim that battering is developmental in origin others claim that only 10% of offenders have a psychological profile outside normal range (Dutton & Starzomski 1993; Gelles 1993). Personality traits, mental illness, and psychopathology are agreed factors in domestic violence. Social and environmental factors are again relevant.

**Family Systems Theory**

Straus (1973) and Giles-Sims (1983) provided an explanation for domestic violence through their application of a social system approach. No longer was violence merely about individual pathology but about the dynamics found in the complexity of family relationships – the family system. As systems seek homeostasis, violence is one of the mechanisms the system can use to maintain equilibrium. Sometimes violence will increase or decrease to benefit the family system’s balance. This theory leads to the analysis and recording of family dynamics to explain how violence is generated, managed, maintained and stabilised. Abuse is seen as a characteristic or symptom of the complex set of family relationships. Some theorists completely ignore gender and the power differentials between women and men in applying systems theory to spouse abuse. Instead they examine the contributions of both partners to developing and
maintaining the system of interactions and family dynamics that enables abuse to occur and or be reinforced. Some theorists acknowledge that women tend to be the abused partners but do not talk about gender or power interactions. From a family systems perspective, marital counselling is essential to identify dysfunctional patterns and to bring about change in the marital system. Each partner is held responsible for his or her own specific contribution to the violence-producing dysfunction and for changing the way the partners relate to one another.

This approach has the capacity to identify the problem as being that of the system in the relationship and to not result in direct blame to any individual member of the family. It is the family or couple dynamics that are the problem and everyone needs to be involved in the processes or treatment and change to enable the family and couple system to develop and stabilise around a new equilibrium that does not involve acts of violence or abuse. Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker et al. (1998, p. ii) noted “[a] strength of this approach is that it can readily accommodate female-to-male violence and child abuse”. It has the capacity to involve children as part of the whole family system and to hear their views and experiences within the family and to engage them in the repair of the whole system. I am not using the family systems theory to explain the cause of wife abuse, determine intervention or attempt to eradicate wife abuse because it can appear to discount the individual responsibility for behaviour and individual duty of care for vulnerable family members. Systems theory does not address power differentials within the family or in the external social environment. The use of systems theory can lend support to those who believe that women (and children) are responsible for the equanimity (feeling and emotional climate) of the husband or adult male (Stordeur & Stille 1989). It can often be used to keep families together before the violence has ended.
instead of being used after all people are in a safe environment and are seeking reconciliation based on new ways of relating to each other.

The family system approach sees violence as a symptom of a dysfunctional set of relationships. Violence is addressed by creating healthier interactions between family members, abused wives and abusive husbands, and witnesses of abuse.

**Social Learning Theory**

Albert Bandura’s social learning theory (1977) and social cognitive theory (1986) reinforce the idea that childhood experiences in the family of origin of perpetrator contribute result in learning that increases the human’s risk or vulnerability to commit abuse. This theory proposes that violence is one of many learned behaviours that can are modelled, rewarded, and supported within families, social environment and culture. Emery and Laumann-Billings (1998, pp. 121-135) have studied the ways parents model violence and aggression as methods to resolve problems especially within close personal relationships. There is an association between those who have violent fathers and people who use violence in their own intimate partner relationships (Hotaling & Sugarman 1986, pp. 101-124). Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker et al. (1998, pp. ii) however, raise the question about why that association does not always occur. Some violent people come from peaceful homes and some people from violent home never exercise force or manipulate others. Results like this encourage researchers to turn to other societal and cultural sources of learning like television, myths, cartoons and fairy tales.

This theory has also been used to explain battered women’s tendency to remain in the battering relationships. The theory of learned helplessness by Seligman (1975) stated
that battered women were in a situation where they had learned that they could not control nor change the consequences no matter what responses they made. They failed to believe that any of their voluntary or competent actions could change their life situation. Their only choice, as they perceived it, was to remain passive and stay in the relationship. From this perspective, intervention should teach both partners how they have learned and been rewarded for the present behaviours and give them opportunities to learn and be rewarded for a new repertoire of actions and supporting beliefs.

A number of well-developed cognitive-behaviour models have developed out of the base of social learning theory because learning theorists noted that changed behaviours and change outcomes lead to changed thought processes. Equally cognitive-behavioural theorists noted that irrational and negative thinking often undermines a person’s attempts to change behaviour and thus short-circuit their best intentions (Davis 1995, pp. 783-784). Numerous techniques have developed for working both with abusive men as a group and within couples aiming to eliminate to violence, teach new behaviours, and change dysfunctional thoughts that serve to maintain the violence in the relationship.

If families are the most powerful environment for human social learning and there is an association between violent early experience and acting violently to resolve relationship challenges, then it follows that this can be unlearned through alternative methods of modelling and restructuring family communication dynamics (Danis 2003). As Wha-Soon (1994) suggested, alternative behaviours can be modelled to the whole family and to individuals, people can be taught to recognise triggers and their responses and to choose different strategies. People can be taught alternative ways to deal with
stress, frustration, anger and regulate their arousal so that they can learn and apply alternative communication strategies.

**Exchange Theory**

Exchange theory or social control theory is based on the notion that all humans are motivated solely by self-interest. It proposes that relationships last only as long as the people benefit involved and end when they cost too much. A key proposition is that conflict in relationships is normal and the type of relationship determines how the conflict is resolved. Conflicts in business for instance, are not usually resolved by physical assault. As Gelles (1997, p. 202 cited in Corry, Fiebert & Pizzey 2002, p. 1) states “people hit and abuse family members because they can”. Conflicts involving family members are more difficult to avoid and more costly to walk away from than other kinds of social relationships, such as friendships. In the absence of conflict-resolution skills, anger may escalate and lead to violence especially when the costs of being violent, such as criminal sanctions or divorce, appear to be less than the rewards, for instance the release of anger, the gaining of power and control over others (Gelles & Cornell 1990; Straus & Gelles 1990).

Using exchange theory, Eddington and Shuman (2005, p. 8) explain that behaviour is shaped by both rewards and punishments. Women understandably attempt to avoid punishment (violence) by complying with the violent person’s demands. When batterers show kindness, this can act as a reinforcement thus gaining further compliance from the victim of abuse. For the abuser, the violence leads to the desired outcome and thus also gains reinforcement.
From this perspective, there are three goals of intervention: (1) to reduce the rewards of being violent, (2) to increase the costs of violent behaviours, and (3) to increase the social controls that militate against violence. Interventions may occur at the individual, family and social levels and include teaching family members to resolve conflicts non-violently, working toward full employment policies and adequate income supports to reduce family stress, and ensuring that women have access to supportive and valuing community resources that will enable them to either leave men who abuse them or have the violent men effectively removed from their environment (Davis 1995, p. 784).

In this model, both members in a relationship are considered to be equal; men and women are equally culpable and it does not address patriarchal or power issues. This model neglects the children and the outcomes for them and it neglects the idea that the relationship with children is destroyed or compromised by abuse of their parents. Exchange theory is linear and takes no account of relationship dynamics and relationship costs. The violent person may get what they demand and lose levels of intimacy and trust. For this reason I am not relying solely on exchange theory to explain causation of wife abuse in this study.

**Feminist theory**

There are many different models of domestic violence within feminist theory. Bograd (1988) has identified four main themes in feminist analysis of domestic violence.

These are 1) that as the dominant class, men have differential access to material and symbolic resources and women are devalued as secondary and inferior 2) intimate partner abuse is a predictable and common dimension of normal family life 3) women’s experiences are often
defined as inferior because male domination influences all aspects of life 4) the feminist perspective is dedicated to advocacy for women (Bograd 1988, p. 14).

Although there are different feminist approaches, their basic understanding of wife abuse is that the issue has to be understood in the context of the society which is traditionally structured in a way that women have been devalued as inferior (McCue 1995). Feminists view physical violence that occurs in intimate relationships as only one aspect of a pattern of behaviours and policies that are designed to control women and to maintain male supremacy. Patriarchy and the biological difference between the sexes are used to explain the relations of power. Patriarchy consists of a social system that establishes shared interests and interdependence among men that enable, if not require, them to dominate women. Under patriarchy, some men have more power than others. As Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker et al. (1998, p. iii) state “[t]he power imbalances create and perpetuate violence against women. These imbalances exist at a societal level in patriarchal societies where structural factors prevent equal participation of women in the social, economic and political systems”.

One prominent feminist belief is that patriarchy is used to control women’s behaviour outside and inside the family. Gelles (1993a, p. 13) claims that women’s subordination and oppression and the historical continuity of abuse of wives have their origins in patriarchal social structures. Hampton (1999, p. 14) highlights how the economic and social arrangements in the broader community can both directly and indirectly increase the costs to a woman of leaving a violent home thereby supporting the male dominated social order.

Intervention requires a continuum of services that abused women need to escape their economic and psychological dependence on abusive men. Shelters offer temporary
respite and protection while providing a supportive environment in which women can share their stories with one another and learn that abuse does not stem from personal but from social pathology. Shelters provide a place in which women become responsible for themselves, learn to trust themselves and develop confidence in their ability to live apart from their abusers. However, the shelters themselves are needed to provide programmes of support and training to assist these women to be able to negotiate the social environment, to get employment and stop being abused within the whole social scheme.

Women also need economic support. In the short run, economic assistance may help family and child witnesses. In the long run, however, abused women need jobs with salaries and benefits that allow them to support their families, and many need education and training to make a successful transition. Women also need permanent affordable and safe housing, legal assistance to help them successfully negotiate the often-difficult process of separation, divorce, and obtaining child custody and child support payments. While focusing on the needs of individual battered women, feminists emphasise the need for major social transformation, comparable worth, substantial transformations in social and family values, respect for diverse family forms, and the achievement of real equality including equal pay for all women.

Dutton and Golant (1995 cited in the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Canada 2000, p. 8) suggested that feminist models ignore individual personality issues that contribute to violence. Rather the cause is structurally located – in societal based patriarchy. One of the key criticisms of feminist theory is that it fails to explain why, in cultures dominated by patriarchy, that only a minority of men harm women.
Ecological Theory

Ecological theory was formulated by Bronfenbrenner in 1977, in what he called “[a]n ecological model of human development” (Johnson 2002, p. 12). Edleson (2000) states that “the ecological framework suggests that behaviour is shaped through interactions between individual human beings and their social environmental” (p. 3).

When applied to domestic violence his framework considers the causal factors of domestic violence operating at different levels. Carlson (1984, p. 569) proposed that there are four levels: “individual level”, “relationship level”, “community level”, and “societal level”. Carlson joins together the mesosystem and exosystem levels of the original model. Carlson (1984, pp. 569-587) defined each of these levels. Thus, the individual level is limited to considerations of the person as a unique element. At the individual level one considers biological, personal preferences and traits, demographics factors, health and personality disorders, substance abuse, and history of traumatic events as victim or witness. This level considers the individual’s values and underpinning beliefs, attitude, capabilities and talents subjective perceptions. The relationship level includes the dynamics between family members, intimate friends and relationship patterns. It examines the quality of the martial / partner relationship and how kinship patterns operate. This level focuses on the nature of family life, and often interacts with the individual level. The community level refers to the interactions between all formal and informal social arrangements in the near community including local financing and economic arrangements, law, health, education and the structure of the local community (neighbourhood and province). At the societal level the model considers broad social factors, such as culture, political-economic foundations,
responsiveness of criminal justice system, income security and social welfare arrangements etc.

One of the weaknesses of this theory Carlson admits (1984) is that while it does allow a broad spectrum of causal factors to be considered, it does not specifically identify every factor that might contribute to spousal abuse.

One of the benefits of the ecological framework theory comes from the acceptance that there is no single theory or single cause of domestic violence. As a result a series of risk factors can be developed for each of the levels above and these can translate into the development of a multilevel response that is: the ontogenic (offender programs), microsystem (interventions through families friends and colleagues), mesosystem (police, courts, hospitals) and the macrosystem (a coordinated community approach) (Danis 2003).

The multi-dimensional framework of domestic violence and wife abuse

Given no single concept or theory has been able to explain the phenomenon of domestic violence fully, a multidimensional perspective should be a consideration for scholars. The integration of theories can involve consideration of social factors, characteristics of the relationship, and individual factors.

The framework of this study uses a multidimensional approach, in conformity with the ecological perspective, which explains that the phenomenon of domestic violence and wife abuse are extremely complex and rooted in an interaction of many factors. Family system theory explained that the source of abuse is located within imbalances in
dynamics and relationships among family members. Social learning theory focussed on the notion that the abusers have the power to exploit victims while victims lack sufficient power to rebuff the abuse and lack sufficient resources to offer an alternative reward. Exchange theory stated that the abusers have learned their behaviour by being witness to or victims of abuse themselves and have received approval for abusing others. Battered women have learned that they can neither control nor change the consequences, and so remain passive and stay in the relationship. The third perspective is in the micro level, the individual characteristics of the perpetrators of abuse, which may include psychopathology, or deviant personality traits that result from problems in the completion of childhood development stages. The framework for theoretical analysis used in this study is shown in Figure 2.1.

**Figure 2.1**

*Theoretical Explanations of Domestic Violence and Wife Abuse*

![Diagram showing theoretical explanations of domestic violence and wife abuse]
This study of wife abuse in Thailand, draws upon a number of the theories: those based on the characteristics of the individual, those focused on relationships in the family, and those based on the structure of society. The individual factors, family relationship factors, and social factors are stated as risk markers associated with wife abuse, and they remain to be proved. The resultant response to wife abuse in Thailand will therefore be multidimensional.

A variety of specific theories that have been used to explain wife abuse have been described. Psychopathology theory describes abused wives and abusive husbands as having pathological personalities, for instance the cruel experiences in childhood of a woman might make her think she deserves abuse. Family system theory explains the abuse in the view of the interaction system, seeing abuse as a characteristic of a relationship. Social learning theory describes the victims and perpetrators reactions as a learning behaviour. The husband acts violently as he perceives this as a way to handle problems and get rid of frustration. This theory also explains why some abused wives remain in abusive relationships, because they have learned to accept the situation. Exchange or social control theory explains that people are often violent in families simply because the abusers, or abusive husbands, think they can get away with abusing their wives. Lastly, feminist theory explains the problem by looking at the patriarchal framework of society. Patriarchy is grounded in a relation of power as well as biological differences between men and women. It is pointed out that men have more power to control women’s behaviours both inside and outside the family.
2.3 RISK MARKERS FOR WIFE ABUSE

Saunders (1995b) explains that the term *risk markers* is more correct to use than *risk predictors* “since a causal relationship between these variables and domestic violence have not been confirmed through longitudinal study” (Saunders 1995b cited in John & Gant 1999, p. 9) and “there is no one single factor to account for violence perpetrated against women” (UNICEF 2000a, p. 7). A number of factors associated with wife abuse cover individual, demographic, relational, and situational factors, all of which are interrelated (Gelles & Cornell 1990, pp. 72-78). The designation of these factors was based on research conducted in the 1970s and 1980s. Besides these factors, some variables that have been reliably associated with an increased risk of abuse are relationship status, socioeconomic factors, age, childhood experience with violence, and alcohol use (Davis 1995, p. 782). Heise, Pitanguy & Germain (1994, p. 45) add four other factors that perpetuate domestic violence, those are: “[v]iolent interpersonal conflict resolutions”, “[e]conomic inequality between men and women”, “[m]asculine ideal of male dominance, toughness, honour” and, “[m]ale economic and decision making authority in the family”.

The literature review found several risk markers concerning domestic violence, namely: individual factors, family relationship factors, social factors and environmental factors.
Individual Factors

Demographic factors

Black, Schumacher, Smith - Slep et al. (cited in WHO 2002) identified in their multi-study analysis that individual characteristics and history as well as demographic factors were lined, if not predictive of, a likelihood to physically assault an intimate partner. Allen (1999, pp. 1-4) stated that the most reliable measures are demographic variables: age, socio-economic status, and race/ethnicity.

Age

Johnson and Grant (1999, p. 9) state “spouse abusers tend to be in their early thirties or younger”. Being younger increases the odds of partner physical aggression by 93.0% (Allen 1999; Kantor, Jasinski & Aldarondo 1994; Pan, Neidig & O’Leary 1994). Howell and Pugliesi (1988, pp. 15-27) found that men under 39 years of age were nearly three times more likely to physically assault an intimate partner than older men. A moderate effect between age and partner sexual aggression, that is young women (under thirty years of age) and older women (over fifty years of age) were more likely to be sexually victimised than middle-aged women (Finkelhor & Yllö 1985; Mahoney & Williams 2007). In addition, all forms of marital violence occur most frequently among those under thirty years of age (Gelles & Cornell 1990, p. 74). Howell and Pugliesi (1988) reported that younger husbands (under 19 years) engage in spouse aggression three times more frequently than men 39 years or older. Marital violence can occur at any stage of marriage, but as the data on age would appear to indicate, marriages between younger people have the highest risk of wife abuse.
Socioeconomic status

The term *socioeconomic status* comprises of demographic variables of status and financial well being including a person’s educational level, employment status and income. Schumacher, Feldbau - Kohn, Smith - Slep et al. (2001, abstract) state that: “[i]n general, socio-economic status (SES) variables do not appear to significantly increase risk”. Finkelhor and Yllö (1985; Mahoney & Williams 2007) found that education status, measured as years of education is, frequently and consistently associated with physical aggression in relationships. Black, Schumacher, Smith - Slep et al. (Allen 1999) similarly found that women who did not complete high school were at greater risk from partner sexual violence than those who had completed high school or college.

One of the main factors associated with wife battering is the employment status of the husband because men are socialised as the family providers (Gelles & Cornell 1990, p. 75). They also pointed out that unemployed men had rates of wife assault that were higher than the rate for employed men.

This result contradicts an earlier survey of Kantor and Straus (1989), which found that “a husband’s employment status was not a significant predictor of his partner abuse perpetration, but occupational prestige was a significant predictor of such aggression”. Occupational prestige measures not merely employment, but the type of occupational status of the individual. Sugarman and Hotaling (1989) found no significant association between employment status and men’s reports of their own psychological aggression.
Allen (1999) noted that income and its relationship to physical and sexual aggression is a frequently studied risk factor and the results are consistent. That is, lower income is linked to increased aggression in intimate partner relationships. Gelles and Cornell (1990) go further to say that there are studies that successfully link spousal violence with low socioeconomic status. Findings like these do not mean that wife abuse is confined only to low income, low status families, they can also imply that middle and upper-class families may be able to keep violence in their families a secret.

*Race/Ethnicity*

Race based studies, particularly in the United State of America, indicate higher levels of abuse from men in racial groups that are relatively marginalised and powerless. Allen (1999) reported that men who said they were Black or Hispanic were a small increased risk for intimate partner violence than those are White or non-Hispanic. There are no comparable studies in Asia or Thailand in particular and it is questionable whether studies based on racial origin would be valid in the Thai context.

*Psychological factors*

Consistent characteristics and pathology have been found in those who commit either physical or psychological abuse of their wife and in the wives themselves. Gelles and Cornell (1990) included in their list: low self-esteem, management of arousal, assertiveness, authoritarianism, personality disorders, and psychological stress.
Low self-esteem and a vulnerable self concept are associated with men who assault and batter their wives. Three of five studies reported a significant and negative relationship between the batterers’ self-esteem and aggression. From Hotaling and Sugarman’s reviews (1986), the findings of five out of seven studies supported that relationship. These reviewers note however, that self-esteem is an inconsistent risk marker for husband-to-wife violence. That is, there are some people with high opinions of themselves who nevertheless assault and abuse their spouse.

Researchers are still struggling to discern whether abused wives have individual characteristics or disorders that predispose them to being abused or whether the abuse itself so damages them that they are more vulnerable to re-victimisation. Those who have studied abused wives find a stronger association with characteristics like dependency, reduced self-esteem, sense of inadequacy and feeling of helplessness (Ball 1977; Hilberman & Munson 1977; Walker 1979; Gelles & Cornell 1990; Gelles 2002).

Beasley and Stoltenberg (1992) found in their study of male spouse abusers that the personality characteristics of anger and hostility were associated with partner physical aggression. Men who used physical aggression had difficulties with controlling or redirecting anger whether precipitated from an external or internal source, that is state or trait anger. One can experience feelings of anger and hostility and be able to manage these so that they do not have negative behavioural outcomes.
Interpersonal assertiveness

In broad terms, the ability to state one’s desires and needs is the essence of assertiveness. Being able to refuse a request, make a request or initiate a connection with another person is respectful assertion of the self. Non-assertive behaviours are usually either too passive or too aggressive and deny respect to at least one of the parties involved (Cornelius & Faire 1989; Vincent, Van Hasselt & Hersen 2000; Black, Schumacher, Smith-Slep, & Heyman 1999).

Consistently failing to behave with appropriate assertiveness (too passive or too aggressive) sets up expected patterns of response and can result in resentment and hostility, thus leading to an escalation of communication difficulties. For example, when a person is overly aggressive and achieves their goal they see the relatively non-assertive person as weak. The person who lacks appropriate assertiveness equally may resent the behaviour of the aggressor. This is what Cornelius and Faire (1989) call a “Lose-Lose” situation.

Assertiveness itself is associated with spouse aggression (Allen 1999; Dutton & Strachan 1987; O’Leary 1988). The researchers found two separate types of assertiveness: general, where people are assertive in all facets of their lives and “spouse-specific”, where people are less assertive in some aspects of daily living but strongly assertive with their spouse. The writers do not make a distinction between appropriate assertiveness and those who assert themselves regardless of generating a defensive response. However, Dutton and Strachan 1987 report that their research found:

The resulting profile of assaultive men was a group high in the need to exert power in relationships with women but lacking in the verbal resources to do so…. this combination of a high need for
power and a deficit in verbal ability to generate influence produces chronic frustration, which may increase the risk of violence when combined with other factors (Dutton & Strachan 1987, p. 145).

Authoritarianism

Authoritarianism is the belief that one has a legitimate right or authority to expect compliance with requests and demands. This belief is seen to underpin a personality characteristic, which could be a risk factor for domestic violence and spouse abuse both physical and psychological. Hastings (1997) reports that authoritarianism on its own was not associated with partner aggression but in combination with income measures it became a strong predictor. Black, Schumacher, Smith-Slep et al. (1999) say that “low-income men with strong authoritarian beliefs and high-income men with less authoritarian beliefs were more likely to engage in partner physical aggression”.

Personality

Many studies attempted to find a correlation between individual personality and intimate partner violence. Kantor and Jasinski (1998) report that men who commit wife abuse are more likely to have difficulties with impulse control, feel insecure and be more emotionally dependent. Black, Schumacher, Smith et al. (1999 cited in WHO 2002) further found that these men had higher levels of overall anger and hostility, are more likely to suffer from depression or a personality disorder (antisocial, aggressive and/or borderline). As indicated earlier in this paper there is also evidence that not all physically abusive men show such personality traits.
Psychosocial stress

Research by Barling and Rosenbaum (1986), Pan, Neidig, and O’Leary (1994) and Julian and McKenry (1993) found that stress in everyday life and stress in the home were not associated with partner physical aggression. However, workplace-based esteem stress that, leads men to experience lower self-esteem was significantly associated with this type of abuse.

In addition, social stress and social isolation were factors that were strongly related to the risk of wife abuse (Gelles & Cornell 1990). The types of stress and isolation that are related to marital violence are unemployment, financial problems, sexual difficulties, low job satisfaction, large family size, and poor housing conditions. The more socially isolated a family is, the higher the risk that there will be wife abuse.

Investigations have also been conducted into situational stress as a potential risk factor in cases of partner aggression (Telch & Lindquist, 1984). Men who engage in partner physical aggression have been found by Telch and Lindquist (1984, p. 246) to have significantly

… poorer communication skills, as assessed with a communication questionnaire, than their non-violent counterparts. Poorer communication skills could be expected to lead to less successful, more conflictual interactions, which would likely be experienced as more stressful (Allen 1999, p. 8).
Violence experience factors

The WHO (2002a, p. 98) reported that violence in a man’s family of origin was a powerful risk factor for partner aggression. Various studies (Johnson 1996; Leonard & Senchak 1996; Zimmerman 1996; Aldarondo & Kantor 1997; Ellsberg 1999) showed that abuse rates were higher for men who had either been victims of abuse as children or seen their mother abused. The research findings however are not in universal agreement (Riggs & O’Leary 1996).

Gelles and Cornell (1990) warn that a violent background does not predetermine a violent adulthood. Although the chances of being an offender and victim are increased if one grows up in a violent home, there are many people who experience an extremely violent childhood but grow up to be nonviolent. Caeser (1998 cite in WHO 2002, p. 98) found that “... not all boys who witness or suffer abuse grow up to become abusers themselves”. Gelles and Cornell were unable to identify the key factors that provide immunisation against a violent future.

Alcohol and drug use

All studies that investigated alcohol and drug use as risk factors for partner aggression found a significant association between alcohol and drug use, particularly problem drinking, and partner aggression (Rosenbaum & O’Leary 1981; Telch & Lindquist 1984; Kantor & Kantor 1989; Barnett & Fagan 1993; Julian & McKenry 1993; Murphy & Cascardi 1993; Heyman, O’Leary & Jouriles 1995). The use and abuse of drugs were also considered to be risk factors of significance in instances of partner aggression.
The studies of marital violence typically found a relationship between alcohol use and abuse and domestic violence (Gelles & Cornell 1990). Every study of wife abuse conducted revealed a close link between alcohol and violence. The information from Leonard and Jacob (1988, pp. 383-406) supports the belief that men beat their wives when they are drunk. However, in their study Kantor and Straus (1990, pp. 203-224) found that in only 25% of cases was either partner drinking at the time of abuse. As Geffner and Rosenbaum (1990, pp. 131-140 cited in Johnson & Grant 1999, p. 15) state, “[a]lcohol is considered neither necessary nor sufficient for the occurrence of spouse abuse”.

Correlations between partner violence and the use of other drugs are less than that for alcohol. Violence is associated with drugs that have a depressing effect (Taylor & Chermack 1993, pp. 78-88). There was some evidence of a link between domestic violence and use of stimulants such as cocaine and methamphetamines (Fagan 1990).

**Family Relationship Factors**

Marital conflict or discord, psychological aggression, jealousy and power needs, and decision-making patterns are relationship factors. Each has been investigated to identify their influence in triggering partner physical and psychological aggression, and sexual abuse.
**Marital conflict or discord**

Marital conflict and discord are seen to be evidence of a disrupted relationship. They are therefore a consistent marker for partner violence. Black, Schumacher, Smith - Slep et al. (Allen 1999, p. 9 cited in WHO 2002, p. 99) found a moderate to strong relationship between marital discord and male initiated intimate partner violence in all studies they reviewed. Hoffman, Demo and Edwards (1994, pp. 131-146) in their study of Thailand showed that verbal conflict in the marital relationship even after controlling for socioeconomic status, was significantly related to physical partner abuse.

**Psychological aggression**

While psychological aggression is linked to partner physical aggression, but only weakly linked to partner sexual aggression. Frieze (1983) and Meyer, Vivian and O’Leary (1998) found that physical aggression was a greater risk factor for partner sexual aggression.

**Jealousy and power needs**

Jealousy and power needs “are often related to psychological aggression, particularly dominance and isolation tactics. Jealousy can be defined as “a feeling of resentment or suspicion toward a rival” (Allen 1999, p. 9). Dutton, Van Ginkel and Landolt (1996 cited in Allen 1999, p. 9) used the Conflict Tactics Scale (CTS) and found that high scores for jealousy significantly correlated both with scores for total physical and severe aggression. Their conclusions support Dutton and Strachan’s (1987, p. 152 cited in
Allen 1999, p. 9) findings that “overall partner-aggressive men had significantly greater mean scores on the measure of power needs than non-aggressive men”.

**Decision-making pattern**

Decision-making patterns, or power balance, were also found to be related to domestic violence. Families in democratic households where the decision making is shared are the least violent. Homes where all the decisions are made either by the wife or the husband have the highest rate of violence (Gelles & Cornell 1990).

**Social Factors**

UNICEF (2000a, p. 7) states that inequality between men and women is the results from historically-based structures. The factors contributing to unequal power relationships are socio-economic forces, male power, legislation, and cultural factor.

The lack of economic independence contributes to women’s inability to protect themselves against harm or injury from violence and to effectively remove themselves from intense relationships (UNICEF 2002a, pp. 7-8). Violence, lack of economic resources and dependence, are linked in a vicious cycle. UNICEF (2000a) also found that threats and fear of violence inhibits women from pursuing employment outside the home and instead limits them to lower-paid, exploitative or domestic positions. As a consequence women lack economic independence, and are unable to remove themselves from an abusive relationship. As Levinson (1989, p. 89 cited in WHO 2010, p. 25) found “wife beating occurs more often in societies in which men have economic and decision-making power in the household, where women do not have easy access to
divorce, and where adults routinely resort to violence to resolve their conflicts”.

Conversely, as UNICEF (2000a) reports, in some societies men perceive the increased capacity for women to participate in the economy and enjoy independence as a threat, especially where the man is unemployed, has a lower status job, lower salary and where he feels his power is undermined in the household.

Culture is implicated in legitimising violence against women. As UNICEF (2000a) explains in some cultures religious and historical traditions, some of which have entered law, sanction the chastising and corporal punishment of wives. In some circumstances the wife was deemed property or a chattel owned by the husband (or originally her father). This concept of ownership also legitimises control over women’s sexuality.

Women’s sexual activity is sometimes tied to honour codes in families and is sanctioned in laws. The control of women’s sexuality serves to protect patrilineal inheritance of wealth and property. Alston (1997) viewed the traditional sex-based division of labour in the rural Australian context as an important concept both economically and emotionally in relation to violence against women. Furthermore, gender stereotypes and patriarchy affects women. Alston (1995, p. 21) also stated that women not only marry their husband, but often they also marry into a family system which is hierarchically structured across generations, so they are often not only subordinate to their husband but also to their husband’s family members: parents and brothers. Krug, Dalhberg, Mercy et al. (2002, p. 100; Heise 1998 pp. 262-290) agree and state that “structural inequalities between men and women, rigid gender roles and notions of manhood linked to dominance, male honour and aggression, all serve to increase the risk of partner violence”.

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In brief, almost all individual factor variables identified above have some relationship to partner physical aggression. Youth, poverty, low educational level, unemployment or employment in low status positions, provides only a moderate risk for partner physical abuse by males. These demographic variables may be the relevant risk markers in the study of wife abuse. Race and ethnicity findings are not valid in the Thai context.

Psychological risk factors, that is measures of psychopathology, appear to provide a strong relationship to partner physical aggression. If a person holds an internalised belief that condones partner physical aggression, behaves with inappropriate spouse specific assertiveness and has generalised raised levels of anger and hostility there is an increased risk of partner physical aggression. Research however, has not confirmed a relationship between low self-esteem, authoritarianism, public assertiveness, and raised stress levels with partner physical aggression. Most of the studies showed that violent experiences in family of origin and alcohol and drug use are linked with wife abuse as risk factors.

The key relationship factors that are linked to a higher risk for intimate partner violence are marital discord, partner psychological aggression, high levels of jealousy and power needs and poor balance in decision-making.

The manner in which the institution of the family is structured privileges males and is itself a risk marker of domestic violence and wife abuse including financial abuse and control centred around women’s sexuality and reproduction.

The summary of this section is shown in Figure 2.2 below.
2.4 FACTORS RELATED TO WIFE ABUSE FROM STUDIES OF ASIAN AND THAI FAMILIES

Most of the literature concerning wife abuse and factors associated with wife abuse reviewed above was derived from studies about wife abuse in Western society. However, there have been some studies that investigated the nature of wife abuse in Thai families and other Asian societies.

**Wife abuse in the People’s Republic of China**

UNIFEM’s China Country Profile (2004) found that rather than being an issue of rights and dignity, domestic violence is considered a private issue. Women have resigned themselves to the inevitability of domestic violence in their lives and many do not
report offences. The lack of reporting abuse results in adverse outcomes for many thousands of women in the People’s Republic of China.

Few studies of wife abuse in China are found. Xu (1997) examined the extent to which wife abuse existed in urban Mainland China. Xu stated that 57% of married women in the Chengdu urban area of China had been abused. The incidence of non-physical abuse appears greater than that of physical abuse. The low frequency of physical abuse suggests that wives often suffer in anguished silence.

Xu (1997) considered culture to have a significant influence on human behaviour:

… according to Confucianism, women must subject themselves to three obediences, which dictate that a woman must obey her father before marriage, her husband after marriage, and her son after the death of the husband (Xu 1997, p. 280).

Xingjuan (1999) examined a range of factors that contribute to the likelihood of violence in families in Beijing and its suburbs. She found that the abused women in the city proper had relatively high education levels but the levels of the victims in the suburbs were generally low. The abused women from urban areas not only had high educational levels but also quite high vocational levels, different from the situation in suburbs where the levels of education were relatively low.

Xingjuan (1999) describes the actions of men in the Chinese suburbs studied as “particularly mean and cruel” and identifies four motivations for this abuse: money, jealously, sexual demands, and substance (alcohol and drug) abuse.
Chihua (2001) reported abused women often believe that battering is a part of married life, or blame themselves for having done something wrong to trigger violence. As a result, the abused wives remain silent or their relatives discourage them from coming forward and filing charges.

Surveys conducted in 2001 and 2002 pointed out that domestic violence occurred in between 23% and 35% of families and victims were overwhelmingly women (UNIFEM 2004). The report in 2001 pointed out that domestic violence occurred in one-third of the 267 million families in China (China Daily 2003, p. 1).

The study of Xu, Zhu, O’Compo et al. in 2005 (pp. 78-85) found that the prevalence figures of domestic violence against Chinese women are comparable to or even higher than data gathered in other studies. This recent study showed that two out of five Chinese women between the ages of eighteen and sixty had experienced physical violence from their partner, and one out of five had experienced physical violence in the past year. However, the rates still could be underestimated because some women believed that family problems should be discussed only within the family.

**Wife Abuse in Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China**

There are also some studies that examine the causes of wife abuse in Hong Kong. The study of Tang (2004), the sample of which included 1,132 married women aged eighteen or older, revealed that about 67.2% of women reported psychological abuse and 10% experienced at least one incident of physical abuse by their husband (Tang 1999; Tang, Au & Ngo 2000). Tang (1999, p. 174 cited in Chui 2002, p. 8) stated “[t]he
ethical norms of Confucianism prescribe a patriarchal, patrilineal, and patrilocal family system, and have rooted Chinese women into their inferior, dependent, and submissive roles in which they play throughout their lives”. Tang referred to the data in 1999 from Harmony House in Hong Kong, which indicates the main causes for wife abuse, as identified by the abused women, were hot temper and male chauvinism on the part of their male partners. Other significant causes included jealousy, financial problems, childcare problems, sex problems and gambling. Other significant factors include extra-marital affairs, habitual gambling and substance abuse.

Tang analysed the probable solutions that could change the individual factors affecting wife abuse in Hong Kong by looking at two divergent views regarding appropriate management of domestic violence. The first is a welfare-oriented approach that focuses on mediation or conciliation. The second view emphasises that domestic violence, despite the fact that it occurs within the family and between intimates, is a crime and demands that such conduct be treated no differently from any other crime.

**Wife Abuse in the Kingdom of Cambodia**

In a survey of domestic violence in Cambodia, Nelson and Zimmerman (1996) pointed out that 16% of women reported being physically abused and injured. Cambodian women are ashamed of being in abusive relationships (Samen 1997). In many cases women described a low level of abuse or denied it completely, but others — neighbours, relatives and local officials — told different stories, saying that beatings were regular and cruel. A large number of women were beaten while they were pregnant. Data from the Cambodia Demographic and Health Survey (National Institute of Statistics and Directorate of Health, Cambodia 2001) revealed that 23% of
Cambodian women who have been married and were aged fifteen to forty-nine had experienced physical violence. The most common offenders were current (75%) or previous husbands. Phally (2002, pp. 45-50) from Project Against Domestic Violence in Cambodia, referred to the results of a demographic and health survey in the year 2001, which revealed that 25% of Cambodian women suffered from some form of domestic violence either physical, sexual or psychological.

Samen (1997) found the most common reason women gave for staying with abusive husbands was for the sake of the children because Cambodian people believe that children without a father in the home will feel ashamed and will be looked down on by the whole community. The second most common reason is because they have nowhere to go. Women had no other safe shelter options for themselves and their children. This was particularly true of women who lost both parents under the Khmer Rouge. A number of women decided that there was no possibility of leaving and had instead developed a coping strategy to limit harm and injuries. When women tried to divorce, the court or other officials usually stopped their attempts. The failure of the social services, criminal and civil legal systems to respond adequately to the problem leads victims to believe that there is nothing that they can do to change their husband or their dangerous situations.

An unequal power relation within marriages, as dictated by traditional norms, is pointed out as a factor that contributed significantly to domestic violence in Cambodia (Cambodian Men’s Network 2004). The results of survey research by the National Institute of Statistics and Directorate of Health, Cambodia (2001) found that one in ten women experienced marital control by their husbands through psychologically violent behaviours: exhibiting jealousy and anger if the wife speaks to other men, accusations
of infidelity, restricting interactions with friends and family, and insisting on knowing her whereabouts at all times.

**Wife Abuse in Japan**

Tsunoda (1995) writes that wife abuse in Japan is so frequent that it is not recognised as a serious social concern, rather it is judged to be a normal.

The most important reason is that in Japan men and women are not equal socially, economically or politically, in both private and public life. This inequality reflects the strong patriarchal structure of the family and society as a whole. Once a woman marries, she becomes a member of her husband’s family. As a result, she is considered a possession of her husband, sometimes even a possession of her husband’s family. Many Japanese use the verbs of giving and obtaining when referring to a bride. Japanese courts and many major legal scholars support this concept of possession of a wife, affirming that marital rape is not a crime, or a rape at all, but simply the exercise of the legal power of a husband (Tsunoda 1995, p. 1).

In an Asian Human Rights Commission (1999) report on Japanese discrimination against women is the report of a 1992 survey that found that while 77% of women indicated that their male partner had physically assaulted them, only 34% made contact with official services like police, social services workers or courts.

About one-third of female murder victims in Japan are killed by their male intimate partners. Physical violence by husbands ranks as the second most frequent cause for divorce petitions, and emotional violence by husbands ranks as the fifth leading cause (Asian Human Rights Commission 1999, p. 1).
A survey on domestic violence of the Cabinet Office in 2002 revealed that in total almost one out of five or 19.1% of women had experienced one or more types of violence (Gender Equality Bureau, Cabinet Office, Government of Japan 2004). The United Nations (2002, p. 22) indicated that more women in Japan are abused every year. In 30 years, from 1971 to 2001, the numbers of the victims rose 280%. In 2001 it was 30% higher than the preceding year.

The Gender Equality Bureau located in the Cabinet Office (2004) related that violence against women is viewed and understood as a structural problem. By this they mean that it is rooted in hierarchical social structures, unequal distribution of economic power, and gender-based social roles. In February 2007 one Japanese cabinet minister commented in a speech that women were “baby-making machines” (Walsh & Oda 2007; Japan Times 26 February 2007). While there was some sanction the minister did not understand that his comments effectively breached the Human Rights of Japanese women. Hence, the effectively and consistent application of the concept of human rights has not been afforded to Japanese women.

**Wife Abuse in the Republic of Korea (South Korea)**

South Korean women are frequently victims of abuse just like women around the world (Lee 2000). In a survey of spousal abuse, 38% of married women reported that they had been physically abused by their husbands (Kim & Cho (1992). Despite the high incidence Korean women were reluctant to report sexual assault crimes. Wha-soon (2001) reports that a survey in 1999, found that 35.6% of women had been physically assaulted by their husbands after marriage, and 32.8% of men admitted physically assaulting their wives.
The tradition of Confucianism in South Korea influences the attitudes of men that they have the right to control the members of their household and to expect domestic and sexual services from their partners or wives (Lee 2000). UNIFEM (2004, p. 1) reports that in Korea there is a common belief that wives deserved to be battered, and “... men believe they own their wives, that treatment of a wife is not important, and family affairs should be solved in the privacy of the family”. These values support male behaviours that weaken women’s human rights.

These attitudes are still in place in spite of legislative changes. In November 1997 the Special Law Regarding Domestic Violence and the Punishment of Offenders and the Law on Sexual Assault Crime and Assault was passed in the National Assembly (Hampson 2000). By this law, people came to see that domestic violence is not a private matter but a social crime. The Law allowed anyone to report the crime to the police, not just victims. The police are now obliged to act to stop the violence. Offenders can no longer claim that their actions are nobody else’s business. Under the law victims of abuse have access to counselling centres and temporary shelters. Offenders are ordered to receive counselling through a special correctional program. However, the next challenge lies in changing social and cultural beliefs that continue to locate domestic violence in the private sphere and define it as part of family life.

Wife Abuse in Malaysia

After Malaysian legislation recognised domestic violence as a crime, almost immediately there was an increase in police reports (Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labour, Malaysia 2006, p. 18). The number rose from 1,409 cases in the
year 1995 to 2,136 cases in the year 2000 (January-September). Another report, from Police Headquarters-Malaysia (cited in UNIFEM 2003a), pointed out that between January to July 2002 the number of domestic violence cases was higher among Malays as compared to other ethnic groups such as Indians or Chinese. The number of domestic violence survivors is highest in the twenty-six to thirty-five year age range. The motives for domestic violence came from miscommunication among partners, jealousy, and financial problems. Violence during pregnancy was also referred to as spousal assault (Kamarudin, Sarpin, Zakaria et al. 2007, pp. 376-378)

The UNIFEM (2001) Malaysian study found that a victim of domestic violence often required medical attention during the crisis period. In addition, she also often needed protection, safe accommodation, support, counselling, and legal assistance. The One-Stop Crisis Centres in Malaysia, first established in 1986 at the University Hospital in Kuala Lumpur, were established in 90% of government hospitals across the country by 1997.

The All Women’s Action Society (2004) produced a Malaysia country profile for UNIFEM and found that even though Malaysia had passed the Domestic Violence Act in 1994, the social perception remains that domestic violence brings shame on the family, causes social stigma and results in women keeping silent for the sake of their family’s reputation. The report cites problems in Malaysia in the implementation and enforcement of the legislation may be due to these “deep-seated cultural attitudes and lack of operational know-how, as well as the assumption by government agencies that women will automatically have access to laws and policies once they have been in place” (UNIFEM 2001, p. 1).
Wife Abuse in the Republic of Philippines

A significant number of Filipinas experience domestic violence at some time of their lives (Jimenez 1997). Cabaraban and Morales (2003, p. 7) state that 25% of women reported having been physically harmed, usually by their husband.

Among the women who experienced physical abuse, 19 percent said that the abuse occurred frequently physical abuse happened when the husband was drinking and during quarrels and disagreements. Women said the reasons for husbands’ violence were jealousy, gambling, having an affair, and being engrossed in barkada (clubs where friends gather for drinking and gambling and other activities (Cabaraban & Morales 2003, p. 7).

The data gathered by the Philippine National Police and Department of Social Welfare and Development (Kababaihan Laban sa Karahasan Foundation 2004) revealed that there was an increasing trend in the number of physical injury cases reported. The numbers of reported cases in the year 2002 were double the 1999 statistics. Moreover, the Philippine National Police pointed out that three women and nine children were raped everyday from January to September 2003, and during the same period twelve women and five children were battered daily (Tandoc & Quismundo 2004).

As a result of women’s non-government agencies activities, Philippine society has for many years been aware of violence against women as a problem (Kalakasan 2004). Wife beating and sexual abuse remain as private problems which people regards as not to be discussed outside home (Tandoc & Quismundo 2004). An innovative approach to the problem of violence against women is a hospital-based crisis centre, and another pioneering approach to the problem are the women’s desks within police precincts throughout the country (Jimenez 2002, p. 57).
Wife Abuse in the Republic of Singapore

In Singapore the precise incidence of marital violence is unclear (Ng 1999). In Ng’s paper, she referred to reports of the Accident and Emergency ward of a public hospital where approximately 130 cases were treated in 1996:

... studies showed that 94% of the victims of spousal violence were women. In 1997, about 900 people, or close to half of all reported cases, suffered injuries that resulted in bruises, and in six out of 10 cases, victims were punched, pinched, scratched, pushed, kicked and slapped (Ng 1999, p. 5).

Another report of the Subordinate Courts in Singapore (1998) showed that the majority of domestic violence is spousal abuse, and in more than 80% of cases, the husband was the aggressor. Ng (1999) reports that various household items: knives, scissors, belts, irons, pots and pans were used as weapons. The victims suffered serious injuries; a few of them were beaten until they became unconscious; half of them were battered while pregnant and some of them were miscarried. Ng (1999) also reported that of three out of four family-related killings dealt with by the High Court in Singapore women were killed by their husbands.

Another study of seventy consecutive referrals to the Department of Psychological Medicine, Singapore National University Hospital, for the treatment of drinking problems, found in 30% of the cases that family violence was also involved. Kua and Ko (1991) report that one in three wives had been physically abused and drinkers with records of family violence were generally younger with more severe dependence on alcohol than the non-violent drinkers. They also state that “[t]here was no relationship
between family violence and the ethnicity or marital status of the drinkers” (Kua & Ko 1991, p. 1).

The Association of Women for Action and Research (AWARE) Singapore reports:

It has taken many years of struggle and awareness-raising programmes in Singapore to break that silence, to offer safe spaces for the victims and to get laws enacted to provide for greater protection to victims of violence. For instance, because of these laws, an increasing number of complaints are filed in the Family Court. In 1996, 1,306 cases were reported; in 1997 the reported cases grew to 2,019 and in 1999 to 2,280 (AWARE 2000, p. 1).

A report in the year 2000-2002 showed that most of the reported cases of spousal abuse in 2000-2002 were physical abuse. The reasons for the abuse ranged from matters concerning children to arguments over money, affairs, and alcohol abuse (Rehabilitation and Protection Division of the Ministry of Community Development and Sport 2004).

In 2007 the United Nations under the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) provided a list of issues and questions to Singapore. In this document the UN accepted that Singapore had implemented numerous initiatives to reduce domestic violence (United Nations 2007, p. 2). Two positive steps were noted. The first was that courts could make compulsory orders for the perpetrator, victim and/or family members of a victim to attend counselling or any other related programme such as a rehabilitation or recovery programme for perpetrators or victims of trauma (UN 2007, p. 2).

The second was that the Ministry of Education ensured that all educational materials including texts neither stereotyped nor discussed women in a demeaning manner (2007
However, the report still considered that Singapore’s State party’s reservations about the removal of all forms of discrimination against women continued to delay the full implementation of the Convention (UN 2007, p. 1).

Wife Abuse in the Socialist Republic of Vietnam

A national study (Vietnam Women’s Union 2004) reported that most men in the research sites realised that they have committed rude behaviour against their wives. This behaviour was due mainly to alcohol, the naturally hot temper of males, and uncontrollable character. On the contrary, women were usually quiet and hid the evidence of abuse. The abused wives only report their husbands when they can no longer stand abuse.

Quy (2000, p. 20) claims that many Vietnamese husbands are very manipulative, beating their wives, causing pain and injuries to their wives but still maintaining that they love and admire them. While some women realised their husband’s violence was a problem, many women believed they had done something wrong or that their husbands simply had a quick temper.

Loi, Huy, Minh et al. (1999) in their report on gender-based violence in Vietnam for the World Bank found that the widespread belief is that men are justified when they hit their wives and that women are the cause of domestic violence. They also pointed out that:

… the two greatest contributing factors to domestic violence are economic hardship and alcohol abuse. In many incidents these two issues are inexorably linked. Other major factors include issues of sexuality (adultery, jealousy, and sexual incompatibility), harmful social habits such as
Loi, Huy, Minh et al. (1999, p. 10) indicated that financial equality was an important variable in regards to domestic violence as the rate of violent behaviour was generally lower in households where both wife and husband shared income generation and control over its expenditure.

According to Quy (2000) the cause of domestic violence in Vietnamese society was the patriarchal system of ideologies, practices, and oppression that combine to obstruct justice, equality and advancement for women. Patriarchy combined with some aspects of tradition as well as Confucianism, whose emphasis on hierarchy and duty has also influenced Vietnam. The result is the normalisation of domestic violence as well and the continued devaluing of women. Illustrating this, some victims of abuse believed it was not only acceptable for a man to beat his wife, but also his right. Quy’s study (2000) also found evidence indicating a strong cause and effect relationship between poverty and domestic violence, and a connection between domestic violence and excessive drinking and gambling.

**Wife Abuse in the Kingdom of Thailand**

In Thailand, only a small number of studies on domestic violence have been completed. Very few of them are about spousal abuse in particular or the incidence of wife abuse.

The studies on domestic violence indicated that a variety of factors are associated with wife abuse. Most of these factors are the same, particularly family income, alcohol consumption (Petsuksiri 1985; Chotiratana 1994; Thanaudom 1996; Skuntaniyom 1998;
Hutabaedya 2005; Kovindha 2007), level of education (Thanaudom 1996; Skuntaniyom 1998), drug addiction (Chotiratana 1994; Thanaudom 1996), and history of gambling (Chotiratana 1994; Thanaudom 1996). Other significant factors included spousal conflict, history of psychosis and emotional problems.

Petsuksiri (1985) found the main factors involving wife abuse could be grouped into the categories of individual factors and violence experience factors. Regarding the set of individual factors, the study concluded that the predominant factors provoking violence in the reported families were anger, adultery-related matters and alcohol use. Family violence was found to be more prevalent in low-socioeconomic-status and young-parent families (nineteen to thirty years old). Lastly, the study showed that most of the families had a history of family violence, usually related to adultery or frequent arguments. The perpetrators were reported as having a history of psychiatric problems.

Chotiratana (1994) also discovered some of the factors that affect domestic violence, especially in cases of abused wives. The majority of husbands injuring their wives were older than forty-six years of age, uneducated or educated to a low level. Most of them were employees and obtained an income of between 2,000-5,000 baht or $ 71.4-178.5 AUD (28 baht = $ 1 AUD: the exchange rate in 2002) per month. Most of the wives who had been injured were between twenty-six to thirty years of age, uneducated or educated to a low level, and had no income and no occupation. Likewise the study of Sirivattana (1995) concluded that most of the abused wives had low socioeconomic status, low-prestige occupations and low incomes. The circumstances that led to domestic violence were: insufficient income, alcohol use, history of gambling, drug addiction, history of psychosis and emotional problems.
Chotiratana (1994) stated that, in most cases, violence occurred in circumstances when anger, temper and loss of self-control were pronounced. Furthermore, the issues of adultery, alcohol consumption, gambling, and dissatisfaction with some of the spouse’s behaviour appeared as the most predominant situational factors provoking the husbands to attack their wives. Most of these issues also appeared to have caused some quarrelling incidents prior to the attacks.

In terms of power, rights and status of females, the findings from Chotiratana’s study (1994) and Hutabaedya (2005) pointed out that most of the husbands who injured their wives had the attitude that males are superior. Hutabaedya also found that most of the family members who are affected by alcohol consumption also agreed that males’ power caused domestic violence. Moreover, they believed that males have the right to scold or punish their wives and that wives must endure and accept their husbands’ leadership. Husbands who injured their wives mostly had a violent family background or were raised in violent families, and regarded family violence as normal. They also had violent experiences such as being violated or using violence to settle disputes when they were young.

Thanaudom (1996) and Jampaklay, Haseen and Yoddumnern-Attig (2010) stated that the significant factors associated with physical and emotional violence against women were significantly related to lower educational level, lower income, single marital status, unemployment, greater number of children, being in a nuclear family, more stressful life events (e.g., gambling or drug and alcohol problems of the husband), and women’s endorsement of traditional gender roles (p. 4). Skuntaniyom (1998) found only four factors related to wife abuse: education level of the husband, family income, spouse conflicts and alcohol consumption. Most of them agreed that alcohol drinking
was both a cause and factor in domestic violence, family economic problems and unemployment, and a cause of gambling addiction. Kovindha (2007) stated that while the gender factor was directly related to domestic violence, education level and socio-economic status were not significant to domestic violence.

Sirivattatna’s study (1995) pointed out that wife abuse had an impact on the circumstances and mental health aspects of the victims, and could lead to obsessive-compulsive, anxious, aggressive and depressive behaviour patterns. Qualitative research by Chansantor (2001) revealed that during the first period of abuse, women tend to blame themselves and try to improve themselves. But when the violence escalates and intensifies, they view themselves as victims and put the blame on the husbands. During this phase, some try to escape and some fight or try to find social support. In the last phase, some divorce but some choose to stay on, which depends on their belief in the ideology of the mother, the ideology of having one husband and also the strength of their social supports. A study by Chaisetsampun (2000, p. ii) indicated:

> Forms and severity of the abuse had changed over time, developing from emotional abuse to physical abuse. Feelings of the key informants after each episode of the abuse were different, depending on the number and severity of the abuse. Initially they felt confused and sad, but when the abuse took place repeatedly, they felt angry and vengeful. However, when the abuse did not reoccur and their husbands vowed not to do the same, their negative feelings subsided.

A recent study of 580 women selected only from slum communities in Bangkok by Aekplakorn and Kongsakon (2007, pp. 763-768) found 53.8% reported at least mild violence from their partner (any verbal assault at least one month. Moderate violence (any verbal assault of one time or more per week) was reported by 12% of the total. One third however, (34.2%) reported severe violent episodes (any form of physical or verbal
assault on most days). Most of the types of violence (98.7%) were psychological abuse, followed by physical abuse and sexual abuse. Aekplakorn and Kongsakon (2007) attribute the cause of the violence to low socioeconomic status, personality characteristics, and alcohol consumption of the couple.

Through a reflexive discussion of Rujiraprasert, Sripichyakan, Kantaruksa et al. (2009), Feminist-based researchers, found that the women moved through a set of stages as abuse victims: concealment, revealing and finally disclosure. Each stage had its own set of behavioural strategies. Concealment included “covering, isolating, silencing or revising, in order to protect their sense of self and safety, and their husband’s image or family well-being” (2009, p. 332). Revealing included revealing their stories by yielding to questioning, “hinting, telling or sharing to release tension” (2009, p. 332). Moving towards disclosure was influenced by wife abuse myths, and the attributes and responses of those in whom they confided. The research noted that some women did not experience positive outcomes after disclosure; some were blamed, some re-victimised, some gossiped about. Conversely, others felt relief, experienced increased sense of self-worth and gained the assistance they needed.

A research study by Hutabaedya (2001) on kinds of services provided from government and non-government service agencies concerning domestic violence problems pointed out that most of the victims who came to service agencies were abused wives. The main services provided by the organisations were consultation, legal advice, professional counselling, health services, and financial assistance. This research also found that most of the people who came to the agencies for help were satisfied with the services that they received, even though their problems were only partly solved. It was pointed out
that the problem could not be solved at its root since there were no adequate laws to prosecute the aggressors and to prevent the abuses until June 2007.

In June 2007, the new administration, the National Legislative Assembly of Thailand, approved new legislation, an Act for the Prevention and Resolution of Domestic Violence that criminalised marital rape. The law also provided additional protection for women from violence, and amended laws in gender responsive ways (UN 2007, p. 21).

Careful review of research into wife abuse in Asian and Thai families revealed that the factors related to domestic violence and wife abuse are mostly similar to those found in other studies. Chotiratana (1994), however, found the majority of Thai husbands injuring their wives were above forty-six years of age, while most of the Asian studies stated that most of the offenders were young. In all Asian research, the most significant factors related to domestic violence were social. That is, factors relating to unequal social-roles and status, patriarchal structure of the community, gender based divisions, male dominance in power and influence and pervasive cultural attitudes about men and women are more powerful predictors of wife abuse than individual, psychological, relationship or family experience factors.

According to the wife abuse studies in Asian and Thai families, a variety of factors causing wife abuse were found, and are presented in Table 2.1.
### Table 2.1
Factors Related to Wife Abuse from Studies of Asian and Thai Families

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factors Related to Wife Abuse</th>
<th>Places of Studies Where Factors Were Found</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Individual factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Demographic factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Age/young parent</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Socioeconomic status</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Education status</td>
<td>China, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Employment status</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Income/financial problems/economic hardship</td>
<td>Hong Kong, Japan, Vietnam, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Large family size</td>
<td>Vietnam, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Psychological factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Anger and hostility/hot temper/male chauvinism/psychological and emotional problems</td>
<td>Hong Kong, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Authoritarianism</td>
<td>Korea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Personality/irresponsible behaviour</td>
<td>China, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Alcohol and drug use</td>
<td>Philippines, Singapore, Vietnam, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Gambling</td>
<td>Hong Kong, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Experiences of violence factors</strong>: child abuse and child witness of abuse</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family relationship factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Marital conflict and marital discord/childcare problem/expected domestic services</td>
<td>Hong Kong, Korea, Philippines, Vietnam, Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Jealousy and power needs</td>
<td>China, Hong Kong, Philippines, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Sexual aggression-expected sexual services-refusal to have sex/sex problem/extra-marital affairs or adultery</td>
<td>China, Hong Kong, Korea, Philippines, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Conflicts regarding relationships with extended family/friends and relatives</td>
<td>Thailand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social factors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Unequal social-roles and statuses/patriarchal structure/gender based/male dominance/cultural attitudes</td>
<td>China, Hong Kong, Korea, Cambodia, Japan, Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Developed for this study from the sources indicated in the text*
2.5 CONSEQUENCES OF WIFE ABUSE

Exposure to marital violence affects people in various ways: Barnett, Miller-Perrin, and Perrin (1997, p. 140) concluded that violence is perhaps one of the most powerful elements in producing behaviours that characterised victims in general and battered women especially (p. 215). Adverse outcomes of family violence can also be experienced by the abuser and by the children. The United Nations Strategies for Confronting Domestic Violence (1993, p. 9) commented “children in families where the wife is abused run the risk of being injured or killed by the abuser if they become involved in an incident of violence, either by chance or in an attempt to protect their mother”. Similarly, the Department of Justice, Canada (2001, pp. 4-5) discussed the impact of wife abuse under four categories: effects on abused wives, impact on children, impact on abusers, and cost to society. In addition, “no one in a violent family escapes harm when the abuse occurs in the family” (Ammerman & Hersen 1990, p. 115).

The primary victim is the wife who is beaten; the children who have shared a residence with such a couple are also victims. Finally the abuser himself is harmed by what he is doing to those nearest and usually dearest to him. They also pointed out the economic impact of abuse.

Hutabaedya (2005) found that alcohol - abusing offenders not only caused physical and psychological abuse but also increased family expense, increased quarrelling with family due to disinhibited behaviour and modelled drinking behaviours that children copy.
Impact on Abused Wives

The WHO (2002a, p. 100) stated that there are profound impacts on a woman’s health, both immediately and long-term from partner abuse. The act of abuse undermines nearly all parts of a woman’s life. It can affect her capacity to work, to gain economic security, and sustain her physical and mental health, her sense of positive agency and her worth. Tolman and Wang (2005, p. 147) state that “domestic violence can interfere with women’s ability to work, and may result in loss of welfare benefits and poor economics outcomes”.

Physical health effects

“Violence can lead to injuries, ranging from cuts and bruises to permanent disability and death” (WHO 2002a, p. 102). Some studies (Tjaden & Thoennes 2000; Ellsberg, Pena, Herrera et al. 2000) suggested that between 40 and 70% of all women abused by a partner will ultimately sustain physical injury. Tjaden and Thoennes (2000) noted that there can be “… serious complications for the mother, foetus and later, the infant…”.

Sexual health effects

Johnson (1996) reported that

Sexual health effects include sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), including HIV, chronic pelvic, genital or uterine pain, chronic vaginal or urinary infection, bruising or tearing of the vagina or anus, frequent pregnancy (when unwanted or contraindicated), infertility or early hysterectomy, and sexually addictive behaviour (Johnson 1996, p. 184 cited in National Clearinghouse on Family Violence 2001, p. 5).
Psychological effects


The victims of domestic violence are reported to feel guilty for having been subjected to violence, and for staying with the violent partner or violent husband (Sarantakos 1996, pp. 289-290). In many cases the wives also felt ashamed and degraded, experienced a sense of failure for not having achieved a happy family life, and demonstrated low self-esteem. They often did not want to talk about their experiences to other people and kept it to themselves. Many wives perceived psychological abuse to be more painful and damaging than physical abuse (Murphy & Cascardi 1993, p. 102).

Psychiatric effects

Psychiatric effects of domestic violence according to Barnett, Miller-Perrin and Perrin (1997, p. 220) and the National Clearinghouse on Family Violence (2001, p. 5) state that: “[p]sychiatric effects include depression, suicidal thoughts, dissociation, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, eating disorders, adjustment disorder with depressed mood, and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder”.
Stress is a very potent element in the lives of battered women. Evidence indicates that long-term stress experienced by battered women frequently results in physical illness.

**Impact on Children**

Ellsberg, Pena, Herrera et al. (2000 cited in Chandra, Herrman, Fisher et al. 2009, p. 555) state that child witnesses of domestic violence have a greater risk of “… emotional and behavioural problems, including anxiety, depression, poor school performance, low self-esteem, disobedience, nightmares and physical health complaints”. Barnett, Miller-Perrin, and Perrin (1997) revealed that children are prone to suffer psychological damage in four general areas: (1) immediate trauma; (2) adverse effects on development; (3) living under high levels of stress, particularly fear of injury to themselves and their mothers; and (4) exposure to violent role models. UNICEF (2000a) adds health problems like obesity and sleep disorders and social problems like poor social interactions and performance at school. UNICEF (2000a, p. 10) reports that domestic violence makes “… it hard to develop close and positive friendships”. The children can display suicidal tendencies and are at increased risk for developing conduct disorders; and for becoming violent as adults. Golden, Jackson, Peterson-Rohne et al. (1996) explained the result from severe physical abuse, including shaken baby syndrome is that brain injury is likely to lead to an increase in violent behaviour.

**Impact on the Abusers**

The National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Canada (2001) catalogued the impact of wife abuse on the offenders: anger, denial, emotional problems, rejection and isolation. They are damaged by the abuse itself and some attempt to cope by substance
abuse. If they then abuse again and are gaoled, they can become multiply abused over their life-time. The picture is quite dire when one considers that many of these men were themselves abused as children or were witnesses of abuse. Abusers are responsible for “the harm they do to themselves and others” (Travis 2000, p. 9). They may kill their partners, children, extended family members and some also commit suicide.

The abusers are viewed as *bad* people in need of punishment or *sick* people in need of treatment (Mignon, Larson & Holmes 2002). Geffner and Pagelow (1990) stated that no one in a violent family escapes harm when spouse abuse occurs. The abuser himself is harmed by what he is doing to his wife who is nearest to him.

**Economic Impact of Abuse**

The economic impact of intimate partner violence for victims, the families and society is considerable. The cost burden of properly responding to domestic violence is borne primarily by health services, including mental health services, and the criminal justice system (Carlson, Worden, Ryn et al. 2000, p. 17). WHO (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 103) state that “[a]lthough partner violence does not consistently affect a woman’s overall probability of being employed, it does appear to influence a woman’s earnings and her ability to keep a job”. They also comment that greater demands on social service agencies and lost productivity in the workplace put an increased economic burden on the state.

In brief, the consequences of wife abuse can include impact directly on the wives physical health, sexual health, psychological well-being, and mental health. Impact on
children is also revealed as an effect of abuse. Child witnesses of abuse often displayed health and behaviour problems.

2.6 PREVENTION, PROTECTION AND INTERVENTION OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND WIFE ABUSE

Barnett, Miller-Perrin and Perrin (2005) challenge researchers to consider prevention and intervention strategies in their analysis of domestic violence. For Barnett et al. (p. 17) prevention refers to all manner of social support and educational programs designed to prevent the incidence of domestic violence. They define intervention as societal responses to domestic violence after it occurs. “Such responses include programs to identify and protect victims, criminal justice sanctions for perpetrators, and various treatment options for offenders and victims” (Barnett et al. 2005, p. 17).

Prevention of Domestic Violence and Wife Abuse

Wolfe and Jaffe (1999, pp. 135-137) divide domestic violence prevention into primary, secondary and tertiary prevention. Primary prevention, like primary health prevention, attempts to address causal factors and hence stop abuse before it occurs. These efforts are often population –based, demographically focused or directed to children. Sometimes particular community groups are targeted. Secondary prevention targets at-risk individuals early to reduce severity of abuse and to prevent repeat or escalating abuse. It can also include protocols for teachers, social workers, police and non-government organisations. It can include training and education in communities and for extended family members. Tertiary prevention aims “to intervene once the problem is already clearly evident and causing harm” (Wolfe & Jaffe 1999, p. 133). Tertiary
prevention is most commonly used. It emphasises identifying that the offence has occurred, determining who is victim and who is offender, putting in place behavioural and harm control (including protecting bystanders), treating and punishing offenders and supporting victims.

Intensive collaboration and coordinated services across agencies may be vital in tertiary prevention efforts to address chronic domestic violence and to help prevent future generations of batterers and victims. However, tertiary efforts can be very expensive and often show only limited success in stopping domestic violence, addressing long-term harms, and preventing future acts of violence (Albee 1985 cited in Wolfe & Jaffe 1999, p. 136).

Primary prevention efforts include training designed to provide new parents with knowledge and skills as well as home visits for at risk families (Barnett, Miller-Perrin & Perrin 2005, pp. 18-20). These authors continue to explain that:

... family support and training programs have become increasingly common as part of community efforts to enhance the knowledge and competence of new parents. Many involve home visits with at-risk (i.e., poor, single, young) parents of newborns or expectant mothers. These contacts give the service providers opportunities to work with the parents in a safe, nonconfrontational environment, and they may also prevent some of the social isolation that is often associated with abuse (Barnett, Miller-Perrin & Perrin 2005, p. 27).

The WHO (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 108) reports that the evaluation of preventive campaigns of some projects “found increased knowledge and awareness of domestic violence successfully changed attitudes and norms.”
Intervention of Domestic Violence and Wife Abuse

The word *intervention* is defined as those means of trying to improve an existing problem, and trying to stop future occurrences or relapses, or helping people lead nonviolent and safe lives (Hamby 1996). Minnesota Advocates for Human Rights (2003) noted, “[t]hese core principles are founded on the premise that the goal of intervention is stopping the violence, and that the focus on intervention is to implement policies, procedures and protocols that will protect the victim from additional harm…” (p. 1).

*Theoretical implication for wife abuse intervention*

There is no single theoretical explanation or framework that explains the aetiology of domestic violence or identifies the best course for prevention and intervention (Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker et al. 1998, pp. 31-32). There are difficulties translating theoretical analyses into clinical practice and some purely clinical approaches ignore the realities of social-political life (Bograd 1994). Many researchers call for integrations of theoretical frameworks for example feminist and psychological approaches, and for the development of multi-dimensional theoretical frameworks (Dutton &Starzmonski 1997; Anderson 1997; Renzetti 1994). As Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker et al. (1998, p. 31-32) note “... one conclusion would be that the different orientations should be seen as complementary and additive rather than competing”.

As Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker et al. (1998) argue, the agreements, commonalities and overlaps of theoretical perspectives can generate creative options for prevention and intervention. If violence is hereditable, early social learning and ensuring the child is not
exposed to violence may reduce the expression of that trait and reduce consequent psychological and emotional damage to the child. Finally as the authors suggest, feminist perspectives could guide our thinking on ways to counter male privilege at all levels of the social, economic, and political environment, including community tolerance to violence against women and children. There is general agreement that the victims of abuse, the abusive husbands, and also witnesses of abuse, who experienced domestic violence as children, should be the targets of planned intervention.

**Intervention strategies of domestic violence**

Clearly, “success” in intervention depends on whether the processes and programs generated centre first on victim safety, improve offenders’ acceptance of responsibility and accountability, and change community attitudes and beliefs in ways that consistently reject domestic violence as part of the social fabric (UNIFEM 2006a, pp. 1-2). To reduce domestic violence re - victimisations, Mears (2003, pp. 134-137) recommends that various interventions be presented: legal interventions, social service interventions, health care interventions, and collaborative interventions.

**Legal interventions**

The WHO (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 104) reports from their analysis of 10 years worth of studies that legal remedies and judicial reform focused on the criminalisation of abuse. New legislation or amendments of current penal codes criminalised “... physical, sexual or psychological harm” by intimate partners (p. 1). In some places special courts were established to deal solely with domestic violence and
training of police, court personnel magistrates, court support and advice workers was widespread.

After support services for victims, efforts to reform police practice are the next most common form of intervention against domestic violence. Early on, the focus was on training the police, but when training alone proved largely ineffective in changing police behaviour, efforts shifted to seeking laws requiring mandatory arrest for domestic violence and policies that forced police officers to take a more active stand (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 105).

And,

the intended message behind such legislation is that partner violence is a crime and will not be tolerated in society (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 104).

There have been some creative programs developed. For example, to deter men from violent behaviour, some communities use “public shaming” including “picketing an abuser” in their own or at work or “requiring community service as a punishment for abusive behaviour” (Mitra 1998 cited in Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 105). Larrain (1999, pp. 105-130) talks of all-women police stations which is a Brazilian innovation which can now be seen in Latin America and parts of Asia.

Pujgekwinyuskul, Jamsutee and Naetayasupa (2003) suggested, “domestic violence has to be ended because it violates fundamental human rights” (p. iv). They acknowledged the centrality of the criminal justice system in the protection of victims and found that a criminal justice pathway was the only one available in Thailand at the time to deal with domestic violence; that police attempted conciliation between the couple to avoid criminal proceedings but there was no mechanism or monitoring to provide protection to the victim following such conciliation and, criminal justice personnel were found to
lack the knowledge and attitudes necessary to be motivated to protect the victim. As a consequence the report recommended changes in criminal proceedings to include application of enforceable protective orders that victims find easy to apply for and are affordable; mandatory rehabilitation for offenders; breaches of the order should result in immediate criminal penalties; personnel in criminal justice agencies need to be clear about their role and be trained so that they integrate positive attitudes towards victims in their performance in cases of domestic violence and; a multi-disciplinary team approach that includes police, lawyers, doctors, psychologists and social workers ((Pujgekwinyuskul, Jamsutee & Naetayasupa 2003, p. v).

To protect the victims of abuse, the anonymity of the victims in the media and public should be avoided (Akapin & Jaemsuthee 2005, pp. 7-14). The address of the victims should not be released to the accused on legal documents. They note that at the time Thailand had no legislation in place to allow protection of the victim’s privacy.

*Social service interventions*

Emergency accommodation and crisis centres for women have been a key part of social intervention: getting the women and children to a place of safety and providing essential social, emotional and financial support. These centres provide combinations of support groups and individual counselling, medical and health care, life and work skills training, job preparation, children’s programs, advocacy with social and legal services and referrals for drug and alcohol rehabilitation or treatment (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002).
The WHO (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002) observed that the provision and maintenance of these facilities has proved to be expensive and as a result some countries have another method, for instance: “to set up an informal network of ‘safe homes’, where women in distress can seek temporary shelter in the homes of neighbours. Some communities have designated their local place of worship” (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 104).

Boonmongkon, Kovindha, Thurston et al. (2005) agreed that globally domestic violence has poor outcomes for women’s health. They acknowledged that while Thailand had policies and plans in place to reduce violence against women and children and while there were programs and all manner of co-operative and collaborative venture in place, “the governmental sectors do not focus on gender-based violence; the services are passively focused on the victims and immediate health problems, not on long-term proactive measures for the prevention of domestic violence” (Boonmongkon, Kovindha, Thurston et al. 2005, p. 2).

*Health service interventions*

Health interventions have focused on raising the awareness health care providers, encouraging staff to develop and use screening and response protocols in a routine manner. Health services are the most likely to be contacted by victims following physical and psychological harm; they provide a “critical opportunity to intervene” (Mears 2003, p. 136). The field has moved from medical clinicians avoiding asking questions about domestic violence to the systematic application of screening and identification measures and specific protocols for the care and treatment and of abused patients including mental health interventions and referrals to psychiatric or counselling.
Mears (2003, p. 136) also reports that while “these efforts indicate that screening and identification procedures may increase the detection of domestic violence cases … their effectiveness may be offset by frequent staff turnover and the need to train new staff members”.

Grisurapong (2004) reported on the One-Stop Crisis Centres (OSCC) within hospitals and their effectiveness to identify and compassionately respond to all victims of violence in the home. Grisurapong saw this as one of the essential components of a comprehensive system that linked women to and supported women through legal and other social services.

*Collaborative interventions*

Interventions that include and integrate many stakeholders (community organisations, community-based intervention programs, services targeting victims and offenders with government service providers) seek more than to provide collaborative and coordinated responses. They also provide a forum for information exchange; identify and respond to service delivery problems; provide training to promote best practice; establish guidelines; monitor and audit practice and agencies; and achieve primary prevention goals through community education and awareness raising (Littel, Malefyt, Walker et al. 1998).

From 2003-2006 the Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development-OWAFD in the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security in Thailand granted each of the 77 provinces in Thailand 10,000 baht (approximately $ 350 AUD each) and in 2007 this increased to 20,000 baht (approximately $ 700 AUD each) specifically for
campaigns and activities to stop violence against women and children. The evaluation team (Kamhom, Vasinarom, Pattanasri et al. 2008) estimated that 27,016 people had been actively involved in 2007, which amounted to 9.62 baht per person (approximately $0.31 AUD per person). For this amount of money active communities produced white ribbon days, marches, small targeted training and information, limited media campaigns managed to involve over 20,000 people each year. To achieve this people mobilized their networks, connections, goodwill and social and human capital. Unpaid women did most of this work. The evaluation encouraged the OWAFD to focus the calendar for all levels of government to be involved on the issue of family violence at the same time; to consider varying the budget allocation to provincial need; to encourage participation from the government sector and; to be part of follow-up plans. The OWAFD was encouraged to work with existing active community-based groups and generally increase collaboration, cooperation and partnerships. In particular the OWAFD could generate policies which aim to stop violence against women and children and stop domestic violence which can be integrated into all government agency plans, projects and activities – that is a whole of government approach. This process is not to reduce or limit the freedoms of provincial governments to also generate their own ideas and programs that better reflect local needs and customs (like traditional holidays). Finally the evaluation noted that many of the people involved in doing this work do so at the expense of time with their own families. There is a risk that should their family suffer significant stress as a result, the credibility of the program could be lost.

Wife abuse interventions in Thailand

Chaisetsampun’s study (2000, p. 7) on wife abuse in Thailand found that the abused wives handled the problem by themselves by “telling someone else, and notifying a
superior person so that they would be helped. The decision to choose any of these ways was dependent upon the severity of the abuse, the availability of help, and how their previous decision had worked”. The assistance needed, as identified in this study, included provision of safety, moral support, compassion, encouragement to develop independence, access to responsive and supportive legal and health services.

My earlier study (Hutabaedya 2001) investigated the characteristics of services concerning family violence (including wife abuse) contributed by the government and non-government organisations in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area and nearby provinces of Thailand. The study described four types of services offered, covering prevention, alleviation of the problem, resolution of the problem, and follow-up. It was found that some of the agencies emphasised solving problems more than prevention, or concentrated their services on only one of the above areas, according to the objectives of the agency. The agencies coordinated with other agencies as necessary in providing their primary services such as protection, career training, rehabilitation and legal services.

The study also revealed that of the people who came to the agencies for help most said the main service they received was counselling. The next most frequently provided service was the provision of safe housing for the victims of physical, social and sexual abuse. The people who suffered from economic abuse stated career training was the main service they received. Most of the people who came to agencies for help said in their evaluation of the services that they received help to solve their problem in part because they thought that the problem could not be solved at its roots. Still, the majority of the victims of every type of abuse felt satisfied with the services they received. They also felt that the services provided help to alleviate their problems, and the agencies
provided good service. However, the victims who came for help suggested that the agencies should provide quick services with sincerity and provide assistance to other family members affected by the problem. They also wanted to see laws passed to punish offenders and wanted all families to be happy.

Kittayarak (2005, pp. 84-86) reported on a restorative justice approach to domestic violence, developed in 2002. This project was named *husband rehabilitation clinic*, and aimed to establish a diversion programme at the prosecution level for treatment of abusive husbands. Boonsit, Claassen and Piemyat (2004) stated:

... Current criminal justice system responses, while providing initial safety for the abused spouse, are not viewed as satisfying by any of the parties. Justice system officials of Thailand view restorative justice as providing hope for a more constructive response in dealing with domestic violence cases... (Boonsit, Claassen & Piemyat 2004, p. 1)

The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada (2007, p. 2) addressed the ongoing challenges of police attitudes where domestic violence is deemed to be a “family matter”. Restorative justice should be used for changing abusers behaviours where police, probation officers and community members work together with their families. Other research cited indicates that victims and the wider community also hold this attitude. The WHO study in 2005 found that the abused women “had never spoken to anyone about the physical violence they suffered from a partner” (WHO 2005, p. 2).

In 2008 Hutabaedya, Patrathiti and Apiwattanalanggarn (2008) studied the attitudes and roles of multidisciplinary teams in the problem-solving of domestic violence. They found that given the patriarchal beliefs and attitudes that result in a double-standard on gender roles and the limitation of legal, medical and social responses to domestic
violence in Thailand, a multidisciplinary team approach was considered vital to progress. The researchers therefore sought to examine the attitudes and roles of members in multidisciplinary teams who work together around problem-solving in the field of domestic violence; to identify the factors that hinder and support them; to suggest guidelines and methods for effective multi-disciplinary problem-solving and to suggest ways of enhancing multi-disciplinary teamwork (2008, p. 1). The findings are multifaceted and complex and will be used to develop training materials, programs and inform policy and team management decisions in the years to come.

In brief, the goals of domestic violence and wife abuse intervention are to stop the violence and protect the victims from additional harm by the abuser. The theoretical perspectives on wife abuse intervention provided various approaches to deal with the victims of abuse, the offenders, and the witnesses of abuse. The various interventions, aim to reduce domestic violence, improve health care responses, and develop collaborative interventions.

### 2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study draws upon a number of the theories in multidimensional perspectives. A variety of specific theories that have been used to explain wife abuse have been described. The consequences of wife abuse have been clearly articulated for the wives, the children, and the abusers. The economic impact of abuse is included in this conceptual framework. The goals for intervention are to stop the violence and protect the victims from additional harm by the perpetrator of domestic violence.

The conceptual framework of the research is shown in Figure 2.3.
According to the framework that is shown in figure 2.3, this study on wife abuse in Thailand draws upon the multidimensional perspectives based on individual factors, family relationship factors, and social factors that are stated as risk markers associated with wife abuse, and they remain to be proved.

Various theories have been used to explain wife abuse. These are psychopathology theory, family systems theory, social learning theory, exchange, social control and feminist theories.

Psychopathology theory describes abused wives and abusive husbands as having pathological personalities. Family system theory explains the abuse as a characteristic of a relationship in family. Social learning theory describes the victims and perpetrators reactions as a learning behaviour, which explains why the husband acts violently to handle problems and get rid of their frustration, and some abused wives have learned to live in an abusive situation. Exchange or social control theory explains that the abusers or abusive husbands think they can get away with abusing their wives. Lastly, feminist theory explains that the power relationships or patriarchy causes violence in families because males have more power to control females inside and outside the family.

Domestic violence prevention strategies and interventions, which aim to reduce and eliminate domestic violence and wife abuse, are presented in this research. The prevention targets the groups that may be at risk of the problem before it occurs, those groups exhibiting early signs of the problem, and the groups where there is clear evidence of abuse. Prevention focuses on social service to families, community education, family support, training programs, school-based programs, and community
awareness campaigns. The goals of intervention are stopping the violence and protecting the victims from additional harm by the abuser.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explored the concept of domestic violence and wife abuse and also reviewed research attempting to explain the causes and effects of wife abuse. It is concerned with the nature of domestic violence and wife abuse, theoretical explanations of domestic violence and wife abuse, factors associated with wife abuse, consequences of wife abuse, and prevention of and interventions in wife abuse.

The conceptual framework for this study (Figure 2.3) is constructed from various specific theories of domestic violence and wife abuse. It also takes into account the Asian context. The components of investigations are the contributing factors to wife abuse and the risk markers of wife abuse. The impacts of wife abuse and the responses to reduce and to eliminate wife abuse are also studied.

The next chapter provides a clearer understanding of the background and context of Thai families, and information concerning wife abuse in Thailand.
Figure 2.3

Conceptual Framework

**Contributing factors**
- **Social factors**
  - Unequal power/male superiority/patriarchy
  - Marital conflict/discord
  - Psychological aggression
  - Jealousy & power needs
  - Fearfulness of abandonment & intimacy
  - Imbalance of power
- **Family relationship factors**
  - Young (less than 30), low educated/unemployed/low income
  - Low self-esteem, anger, authoritarian, personality disorder, stress
- **Individual factors**
  - Witnessing & experiencing violence
  - Alcohol & drug consumption

**Risk markers**
- Impact on abused wives
- Impact on children
- Impact on abusers

**Impacts**
- Psychiatric effects & depression, suicidal thoughts, dissociation
- Psychological & behavioural problems
- Physical health
- Psychological health & substance abuse to cope
- Viewed as bad/sick people/offender
- Individual, family & social cost due to health care services/mental health/criminal justice system

**Reduction & elimination**
- Target groups at risk of problem, early signs of problem & face to abuse problem
- Focus on social service to family & community education, family support & training programs, school-based programs & community awareness campaigns
- Legal interventions & restorative justice approach
- Social service interventions
- Health service interventions
- Collaborative interventions

**Source:** Developed for this study
Chapter 3

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

This chapter provides a greater understanding of the background and context of Thai families and information regarding wife abuse in Thailand. It begins with a description of the social context of Thai families, and followed with a discussion of gender relations. Perceptions of wife abuse in the Thai context are also included. Thai policies and legislation with regard to domestic violence and wife abuse are also discussed as are the service agencies providing support for abused wives and their families.

3.1 SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THAI FAMILIES

In 1994 United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (hereinafter UNODC) stated “Thailand is undergoing ever-accelerating socio-economic transformation which exercises tremendous strains on its basic social institution, the Thai family” (1994, p. 1). In the past, Thai families were very close living in large extended families (3-4 generations) often with other relatives living together in the same house or compound. Thai families, like families in other societies, were the place where socialisation of children instilled in them the values and norms to establish their roles and status as adults.

The report of Graduate Institute of Business Administration of Chulalongkorn University -SASIN (2010), examines how the rapid and complex flow of global culture is affecting Thai culture and society (p. 25). SASIN used Jan Aart Scholte’s (2000, pp. 25-26) framework on the dynamics of globalization and examined the obstacles and
opportunities presented for Thailand. In the section on cultural dynamics and Thai community development SASIN states:

Community development should be based on participation of community members which [sic] can occur by making a culture of rights a norm for all stakeholders to express and exchange their ideas and contributions (SASIN 2010, p. 32).

SASIN’s recommendations about cultural dynamics and the strategic management of cultural change at family, community, culture and rights levels incorporate aims to restore a realization and pride in Thai culture and to improve collaboration and opportunities for all Thais (2010, pp. 35-36).

The structure of the typical family has changed in recent times from an extended family to a nuclear family. According to the National Statistics Office of Thailand (hereinafter NSO 2005, p. 1) 55% of the Thai population lived in nuclear families, which principally consisted of father and mother with their children. In 1999 the average household size fell from 6 persons in 1970 to 5 in 1985, and dropped to 3.5 persons per household by 2002 (NSO 2005).

The factors affecting change in Thai family structure were the changing population structure; the Asian economic recession and crisis in the year 2004; increased internal migration of family members to 6.7% (NSO, 2004, p. 26); the changing concept and status of Thai women, and changing family values (Office of Women’s Affairs and Family Development, hereinafter OWAFD 2004, pp. 16-21).

According to the NSO (2005, p. 1) in 2005 the total population of Thailand was 63,265,000. Males numbered 31,364,000 and females 31,901,000. If current statistics on
domestic violence remain static i.e. 41% in city 47% up-country we are looking at between 13,079,410 and 14,993,470 women being directly harmed by domestic violence. Any disease, any threat to so many humans in any nation would be deemed a national disaster and/or require active international assistance UN Peace-Keepers and/or an alliance of friendly countries is providing coordinated health or military aid.

The proportion of older citizens is increasing that is, “the proportion of people aged 60 and over increased from 4.8% in 1960 to 10.5% in 2005, and is likely to reach 25% by 2040” (Bryant & Gray 2005, p. 2). In many rural families, it is found that aged parents and young grandchildren are left to live together while more young parents migrate to urban city to find better jobs. In 2003, 68% of the population lived in rural areas and 32% in urban areas (Bryant & Gray 2005 p. 3).

The Asian economic crisis of 2002 affected rural families. They were in trouble due to higher debt burdens, lessening of agricultural income, unemployment and increased migration to urban areas for paid employment in factories. These changes have consequences for family structure and integrity. Curran (2003, pp. 4-5) described the migration of young people from rural areas to Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand, as follows:

Young migrants struggled to make ends meets in Bangkok factory dormitories or slum dwellings, felt pressures to work harder, and to become modern and enjoy their lives while at the same time sending money home to help support their families’ rising debt load or help their younger siblings go to school (Curran 2003, p. 4).

Greater migration is seen from the worst affected rural areas (OWAFD 2004, p. 1). The incentives to migrate are higher wages, opportunities and the satisfaction of other
needs. The new values are then transferred to the young as well as to the adults in villages. More often, when the ones who migrate to earn a living in town return to their village they have brought along with them some urban ideas and values especially individualist and materialistic values (Vungsirphisal, Siwaporn & Supang 1999).

The development of the country is in line with the Thai National Economic and Social Development Plans, the first of which came into effect in 1961. These plans provided direction for the country’s general economic and social development. The labour force was moving into the industrial and service sectors because these sectors had experienced higher growth rates, of the order of 11% and 8.9% respectively, as compared to the agricultural sector, which trailed behind with an annual growth rate of merely 2-3% (Tantiwiramanond & Pandey 1997). A document from the UN (2004) referred to information from the Thai Development and Research Institute-TDRI, which indicated that one quarter of the population lived below the poverty line while about 30% of the rural populations were considered poor. The region with the largest number of poor people was the northeast where about 80% of the nation’s poor lived and continue to live, most working in the agricultural sector. The structural transformation from an agricultural to an industrial economy has affected family relationships and women’s participation at all levels. More women have moved out of agriculture. In 2004, women’s labour employment rates were only slightly lower than men’s employment rate, 96% for men and 95.4% for women (Satyawadhna 2005, p. 5).

A rapid process of industrialisation and urbanisation took place amidst the largely agrarian population of Thailand. Thailand made gains in achieving high economic growth and low population growth, marked by declining fertility, high internal migration, and Bangkok-centred industrialisation. It expanded its health and education
services. However, the benefits of growth are not well distributed. There are class and urban-rural inequalities in access to and range of health services, and further gender inequalities in health and education services. As Tantiwiramanond and Pandey (1997) note “economic growth is beset not only by poverty and inequality, but also by environmental degradation, the spread of AIDS, lack of trained personnel, and urban deterioration”, all these affect women. All the factors that strain a country’s potential for economic development: poverty and inequality, environmental degradation, the spread of AIDS, lack of trained personnel, and urban deterioration (Tantiwiramanond & Pandey, 1997; UNFPA 2011) affect women.

The social and economic development in Thailand over the past forty-five years, as mentioned above, while having positive impacts, has also had negative effects on Thai families and has made the institution of the family more fragile. Ways of life and relationships among family members have been especially affected (Limanonda 1998). Spielmann (1994) recalls that traditionally, most Thai people were agrarian and the women worked at in the home and village environment, but as the economy shifted, more men and women sought employment elsewhere. The changing socioeconomic situation had an impact on the situation of most Thai families and the relationships between family members (Department of Mental Health, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand 2004, p. 6).

At the individual level, OWAFD (2004, pp. 59-60) noted that, in the total picture, Thai family members are still at the low level of education together with having preconceived ideas and wrong beliefs that are partly transmitted by family and environment. Central among the wrong beliefs is blaming women in cases of sexual aggression where the women are the victims.
At the level of society, OWAFD (2004, p. 62) noted that, in general, Thai society lacked an appreciation for the significance of the family on society. Without this realisation there was neither the consciousness nor will to cooperatively develop family life, to help and support each other or to assist in solving problems affecting families. In brief, the Thai way of life changed rapidly after the First Economic Plan. Thailand became more industrialised than before. This affected family life, particularly as more women began to work outside the home. The national development plans and resulting economic growth had both positive and negative effects on the society. The evaluation of the last Plan, the Ninth Social and Economic Plan, pointed out some problems and obstacles in family development. They noted obstacles to the maintenance of warm and loving families, to removing domestic violence, to enabling self-sufficiency through proper career paths and options and, to providing services for families that have problems and need to recover.

3.2 GENDER RELATIONS

The ways in which Thai women and men relate to one another are products of Thai values and practices. Roles and status of Thai women and men, division of labour in the families, and the unequal rights and power granted to women and men are discussed as follows.

Roles and Status of Women and Men

Throughout Thai history, the roles and status of women and men in the Thai family have gradually changed in accordance with the prevailing social forces operating from
within and outside the society earlier times, from the Sukhothai period (12th century) up to the early Bangkok period (end of the 18th century), the people’s perceptions of women within Thai society changed little. The demarcation line drawn between the roles of women and men was clear and rigid according to Thompson and Bhongsvej (1995, p. 1). In contrast, Thai society accepted and regarded women as highly as *motherhood*, which conveyed a deep respect. Suriyasarn (1993) concluded that the status of Thai males and females were equal in the Sukhothai period and that women’s status was eroded during the Ayudhaya period and extreme oppression of women continued in the Ratanakosin or present period.

Suriyasarn (1993, p. 1) maintained that in the Sukhothai period of Thai history males and females were considered complementary to each other, as in the traditional Thai proverb “Man is paddy and woman is rice” or *chai kao pleuk, ying kao sarn*. She related that:

… since ancient times, roles have been assigned to men and women in different ways. The male roles were ‘the breadwinner, the head of the family, the ruler and the protector of the country’, while women ‘looked after the home, the children and the menfolk and managed the family budget’. However, this does not necessarily mean that Thai women have always had an inferior status to men. In fact, Thai women held in high esteem and were treated well according to the illustration from the Sukhothai era seven centuries ago (Chulachata 1980 cited in Suriyasarn 1993, p. 1).

Suriyasarn referred to a quotation from Chulachata (1980 cited in Suriyasarn 1993, p. 4): “[w]omen, especially intelligent women should control expenditure of money, men who are husbands should listen.”
The status of women began to worsen from the beginning of the Ayudhaya period in the fourteen-century. Suriyasarn (1993, p. 1) noted “In the 1361 Law on Husband and Wives, men were allowed to practice polygamy and wives were divided into different classes (that is hierarchies of wives). Husbands could punish their wives physically. In this period, the status of women was characterised by the saying, ‘Women are buffaloes and men are humans’, or ying pen kwai, chai pen khon”. She also explained the Thai women’s status:

The extreme legal oppression of women continued until the nineteenth century and the current Ratanakosin period. In 1804, laws consolidating the earlier laws of the Ayudhaya period classified wives into three categories: 1) major wife (Mia Klang Muang), a woman who becomes the wife of a man through parental agreement; 2) minor wife (Mia Klang Nork), a woman who becomes the wife of a man upon the request of the latter; and 3) slave wife (Mia Klang Tasi), a woman who is bought by a man to become his wife. These laws were in effect until a century ago when King Rama IV prohibited men from selling their wives and parents from compelling their children to marry. The status of women (and men) was further improved when King Rama V abolished slavery (Suriyasarn 1993, pp. 1-2).

Generally, women’s roles were confined to the family setting while those of men were ascribed to extend beyond the family boundary. Men were responsible for supporting and protecting the family where men were at the centre. Women were subordinated to men and were regarded as the property first of the father and later the husband. The traditional role of women and men in the Thai family is pointed out in this quote:

The husband had ritual superiority over his wife and was the head of the family. Hence, the wife was supposed to show respect for her husband in certain symbolic ways. However, in daily life there were but few tasks which could be performed only by person of one sex. Thus, to some extent, the traditional husband-wife relation reflected a division of labour of convenience (Suriyasarn 1993, p. 2).
Bhongvej (2004, p. 4) supported Suriyasarn’s views in this quote: “these stereotypes are firmly established in the mindset of men and women, and take a longer time to change than the roles of men and women, which have been changing at a much faster rate”.

Pongsapich (1994) and Bhongvej (2004, p. 4) noted: “the traditional view of men as the protector, leader and breadwinner, and women the follower and homemaker is still pervasive despite the fact that many women now have jobs outside the home and are active in the public arena”. The perception that a “woman’s place is in the home” still persists. This view affects people’s expectations from boys and girls. Families socialise their sons and daughters to play different roles. Girls are expected to look after their younger siblings and help their mother with the domestic chores while boys are free to play and do not have many domestic responsibilities (Pongsapich 1994). Phananiramai (1997, p. 1) explained that Thai cultural traits dictate different expectations and values for sons and daughters. Boys are taught to be strong, superior, and not to cry, but “girls are taught to be submissive and to behave like a “lady” - soft-spoken, polite, and non-assertive” (Thompson & Bhongsvej 1995, p. 6). Girls are expected to be good daughters, good wives and good mothers. That means that girls are more restricted and their lives are more confined by the social customs and traditions that have been practiced for generations (Thompson & Bhongsvej 1995, p. 6). A study of Kammongkol (2005) supported this view:

Thai society determines the role of women and they are expected to have more responsibilities than men. The role of Thai female begins in behaving like a good daughter of the family, performing household chores then finally becoming a housewife and a mother (Kammongkol 2005, p. 1).
Some researchers pointed out that the status of Thai women was quite high (Yoddumnern-Attig, Ritcher, Sonthorndhada et al. 1992). To support this view, Sirisambhand (1991) noted that Thai women, enjoy a relatively higher status than do women in most other parts of Asia, for example, China, India or Pakistan. Distinctive cultural characteristics have developed that emphasise mutual dependence of the sexes in productive relations. A relationship with parental families is one of the factors “contributing to the high status of women in Thailand compared with other societies because marriage does not break them away from their parental families” (Gray & Punpuing 1999, p. 4). On the contrary, they usually keep powerful individual relationships and financial responsibilities toward their own family, particularly with their parents and cousins who comprise the extended family (Yoddumnern-Attig, Ritcher, Sonthorndhada et al. 1992; Gray & Punpuing 1999). Gray and Punpuing (1999, p. 3) also state:

In most places of work, in the entire range of industries from agriculture to business and administration, there are women as well as men. Women with good education have achieved considerable occupational advancement, but many others remain concentrated in traditionally ascribed low-paying occupations. In addition, women working in the informal sector are subject to exploitation (National Statistical Office 1995a, p. 15). There are more women than men classified as unpaid family workers, and on average men get paid approximately 50 per cent more than women (National Statistical Office 1995b, pp. 58-30).

**Division of Labour in Thai Families**

Thai women and men have different roles, as seen from their activities, duties and responsibilities (Bhongsvej 2004). In their roles as mothers, women spend more time with their children, thereby playing a critical role in the upbringing and socialisation. According to the belief system of most Thais, the mother is likened to the entrance or
gate leading to the house compound (Vootikarn 1983 cited in Yoddumnern-Attig, Ritcher, Sonthorndhada et al. 1992, p. 17). The father is the household authority figure and is responsible for the welfare of its members. All decisions regarding activities associated with extra-household matters, such as the external political domain are subject to men’s decisions and authority, but on the other hand, the mother is responsible for the domain within the house and compound. Bhongsvej (2004) supported this view and noted that the gender based division of labour, roles and obligations were inflexible.

A study on the care of young children in Bangkok (1992 cited in Sonthorndhada 1996, p. 67) showed how urban Thai women are managing both their childcare and work responsibilities. This study stated that most women with young children must work outside their home, so their children are more self-reliant at a younger age and they lack a warm and secure atmosphere.

Thai women are increasingly becoming one of the key family income earners, whether single or married. Results from a Thai labour force survey conducted in May 1989 by the NSO reveals that female employment rate in Thailand is higher than that of other Southeast Asian countries. Women represented 45.5% of the total labour force. It also seems that women are highly active in a wide variety of industries along with men (Suriyasarn 1993, p. 6).

Women prefer to rely on relatives, particularly the grandmother, to care for young children, but some with no relatives who live close by have limited alternatives: to use a child care centre or live separately from their children. This finding reflects changes in domestic capabilities among urban Thai women under the changing economic structure and their increased responsibilities outside the household.
In the past, the roles of men and women were complementary, with little, if any, sharing of duties and responsibility, at present, male and female familial roles are based on mutual cooperation and support in sharing the undertaking of duties that were previously gender-specific (Yoddumnern-Attig, Ritcher, Sonthorndhada et al. 1992, pp. 23-24). Some Thai men participate in the childcare role (Gray & Punpuing 1999). The responsibility for childcare can be an enriching experience for men as well as women, but it has been denied to many men because childcare has been ascribed as a female gender role. As modernisation proceeds and many women take up occupations that are not compatible with childcare, the traditional gender division of labour is eroded. Men are likely to play important roles in maternal and child health by supporting women, especially working spouses.

Gray and Punpuing (1999) and Phananiramai (1997) observed that by tradition it is the Thai women who manage the household budget. Phananiramai (1997, p. 2) commented that the norm that women are entitled to manage household income and expenditures is not only accepted but it also gives women the authority for food, routine expenses and health care (Gray & Punpuing 1999).

The Asian Development Bank (hereinafter ADB 1998, p. 25) noted that Thai women usually manage family finances “Their access to credit differs in the informal and formal financial sectors. Informal credit is accessible to women. Money-lenders in rural area often demand evidence of a wife’s knowledge before approving a loan requested by her husband because women are known to control family expenditure, and women are considered more credit-worthy for the disbursement and repayment of loans” (ADB 1998, p. 25).
Soonthorndhada (1992 cited in Yoddumnern-Attig, Ritcher, Sonthorndhada, 1992, pp. 68-69) indicated, on the one hand, that Thai woman, in the past, played a less significant role in the labour market and their domestic responsibilities were less complicated. On the other hand, at present, they have adopted different patterns of domestic activities, due both to changes in societal obligations and to changes in individual attitudes and values.

**Unequal Rights and Power of Women and Men**

Inequality in rights and power features particularly in interpersonal relationships between men and women, Gray and Punpuing (1999) found that this is

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\text{... mediated through expectations about the acceptable behaviour of each sex. Women are expected to display submissive or passive characteristics, which can make it very difficult for them to assert their rights or aspirations... Men also suppress the appearance of strong feelings and emotions, either positive or negative. A major difference between men and women is that men are given a high level of freedom in their personal lives, particularly in adolescence (Gray &Punpuing (1999, p. 4).}
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The pattern of Thai socialisation of boys and girls roles is the result of “the Thai value system and its associated set of norms and behaviour patterns, which mainly derived from Buddhist doctrine” (Spielmann 1994, p. 2).

Social relations were characterized by verticality, deference of subordinates to-wards superiors. These "respect patterns" were universal and based upon status inequalities in all social relationships. The social hierarchies were determined by such factors as age, power, education, wealth and religious or government role, and were well entrenched within each individual. The
older - younger and the senior - junior pattern guided the relationships effectively, so that the younger would always show respect for the elder. Status differences were reflected in conversation, since the pronouns used varied with rank and role of the speaker and that of the one spoken to. The family offered early and ideal training for this pervasive deferential behaviour. Family matters had priority over individual concerns (Spielmann 1994, pp. 2-3).

Moreover, family matters had priority over individual concerns; this did not diminish respect for the individual in which is a key consideration Thai culture (Spielmann 1994).

As in most societies, socialisation between sons and daughters in Thailand was different. Sons were given more freedom from their adolescent years, while daughters were given much more responsibility and much less freedom to socialise outside the home. One of the reasons found was the fear by parents that their daughters would be enticed or forced into premarital sex. And even when such incidents did not occur, gossip in the community concerning the loose behaviour of the daughters would affect the parent’s moral standing in the community. This fear is clearly expressed in the common traditional Thai saying that having a daughter is like having a toilet in front of one’s house, whereas there is no comparable saying concerning sons (Yoddumnern-Attig, Ritcher, Sonthorndhada et al. 1992, p. 50).

Suriyasarn (1993, p. 2) related the differences between sons and daughters in Thai family that:

… by tradition, Thai sons were expected to temporarily enter the monkshood usually at the age of twenty for two reasons. One was for them to become socially mature and capable of taking on the role of an adult, especially the responsibilities of family life. The other reason was that, since merit is transferable in Theravada Buddhist beliefs, the son’s ordination would benefit the parents in their next lives. As a result sons were typically encouraged to be ordained (Suriyasarn 1993, p. 2).
Values and practices regarding gender relations in Thai society, which is traditionally patriarchal, are reflected in an important Thai saying that goes, “the man is the front feet of the elephant, the woman is the hind feet”, or *chai pen chang tauw naa, ying pen chang tauw lung*. This symbolises the tradition of having the male act as head of the family and female act as a follower. The Thai husband was traditionally responsible for providing for the family by working outdoors, while the Thai wife was responsible for all matters inside the house and raising the children.

Not only is Thai society a patriarchal society, but in addition, a double standard exists whereby certain behaviours are accepted for males but not for females. For Limanonda (1998) culture-based values on gender relations especially around the superiority of men and perpetuation of double standards, not only influence families but also potentially disrupt family stability. Similarly, Wasiksin and Hemaprasit (2002) found that most Thais prefer to have sons rather than daughters. They believe that a daughter could have sexual troubles but a son could play a more important role. They also pointed out that most people believe that adultery by the husband is the fault of the wife.

Chayovan, Prachuabmoh Ruffolo and Wongsith (1995 cited in Phananiramai 1997, p. 2) states that society normally accepts differential standards between men and women. For example while a husband can leave his wife if she commits adultery, it is less accepted for a wife to leave her husband on the same grounds as long as he supports her financially and takes good care of her. Kammongkol (2005) also reported on the double-standard in Thai society; the woman can experience social sanctions if she decides to live with her partner before marriage, is unfaithful to the vows of matrimony, or has
more than one partner even though men are permitted to have more than one wife (Kammongkol 2005, pp. 2-3).

Adultery by Thai men has long been part of Thai tradition, especially for those who can afford it. Thai society may well be alone in the extent to which people turn to blind eye to men’s extra-marital affairs. To have a minor wife is now a growing practice in the view of a women’s counsellor (Fletcher & Gearing 2001), who said that it affects all layers of society, even men who are not well-off end up taking minor wife. Some husbands cite a poor sex life or marriages turned sour, but these are seldom the reasons. Fletcher and Gearing (2001) state: “... fear of AIDS seems to have added to appeal of a minor wife. One sexual attitude is that sex with a mistress is safer than sex with a prostitute or casual partner”.

The relationship of man and a mistress may end in a few short years. Then their children suffer when the man decides to move on. Lawyers consider that it is notoriously difficult to win to support for children of such liaisons. Increasing cases of second households are putting a strain on the original family. Most of the women, who were in trouble, came to service organisations because their husbands had minor wives (Fletcher & Gearing 2001).

In short, patriarchal values are accepted in Thai society and passed down through the socialisation process. The double standard practices, in which men are considered to have a superior position to women, are a factor that contributes to domestic violence and wife abuse.
3.3 PERCEPTIONS OF WIFE ABUSE IN THE THAI CONTEXT

“In Thailand, the silence surrounding domestic violence is deafening. Only very recently has discussion about domestic violence and wife abuse in particular, become public” (United Nations Development Programme, hereinafter UNDP 2000, p. 3). Many academics, officials and workers from women’s organisations have raised this issue as Voice of Thai Women, (hereinafter VTW) stated in (1997, p. 15): “[d]espite the mounting evidence, no comprehensive study on the incidence of domestic assault in Thailand has been undertaken.”

Kongbua, Leelamanee, Bhongvej et al. (1999) concluded that violent incidents in Thai families are influenced by the values and attitudes related to gender relations and the attitudes towards women in the society and on the part of women themselves. The root of the problem is the Thai cultural belief that men are superior in the family. Men have the right to do anything to women and to do whatever they want, for example resorting to violence in solving problems, or being unfaithful to their spouse. Another attitude is that violence in the family is a private matter or a family affair. When there is a violent incident, nobody is expected to intervene, as it is perceived as personal. This further perpetuates the attitude of men to believe that they are superior to women with regard to their rights or that men have more rights than women and this allows men to use violence. This conclusion is the same as that reached by Lertsrisantad (2002). She pointed out that most Thai people still perceive violence that occurs against women in families is a personal issue that outsiders should not get involved in.

The reality of the situation regarding domestic violence and wife abuse, as reported from women’s shelters, is that women are in fact victims of violence committed by their
husbands. This cannot be considered an inevitable clash between teeth and tongue. The study of Lertsrisantad (2002) also shows that the husbands had beaten about 50% of them in the past. The women who come to the women’s shelter are usually in bad shape with head wounds, broken arms, collapsed chins and bodies full of wounds caused by knifings and beatings. NCWA (2000a) reported that the health consequences of wife beating are unrecognised, yet the abused wives who come to the hospitals or health centres may suffer long-term health problems.

These chronic health problems include physical trauma, multiple contusions, fractures, bruises, bites, as well as burns on the face, head and abdomen. In addition to direct injuries, women who suffer from abuse may experience stress-related disorders, such as gastric distress, lower back and pelvic pain, headaches, insomnia and hyperventilation. A variety of psychological and mental health symptoms, such as anxiety disorders and panic attacks, depression, sense of helplessness and declining coping skills, self-blame and lowered self-esteem, may further accompany these physical impairments (NCWA 2000a, p. 20).

Thai women have been taught to keep family problems within the family compound (Kongbua, Leelamanee, Bhongvej et al. 1999). So when she suffers from violence, the chances are she will keep it to herself, believing it shameful to tell anybody. This leads outside people to think that women do not need help. Moreover, the cultural belief that once married, the couple should remain together until death is still prevalent. Divorce is regarded as an embarrassing matter. Some women stay silent; bearing a tortured married life, because of the Thai cultural belief that good woman should marry only once. Many women, even though they have to suffer a great deal, choose to tolerate abuse to keep the marriage intact. In addition, some women not only are unaware of their own rights, unaware that they should not have to tolerate abuse within their families, but even worse, many victims consider that it is their own fault when violence occurs.
The experiences of women’s organisations also reveal that Thai men in all social classes and all occupations display wife-beating behaviour. Men who beat their wives are not always addicted to alcohol, gambling or drugs. To explain the behaviour of men who use violence against their wives, it is necessary to consider social and cultural factors. It can be seen that Thai society has a belief that men are the stronger sex. They are the head and leader of the family, so they can have power over their wives. Domestic violence is therefore a consequence of the family system that gives rights and power to men to govern their wives and children and to use violence to deal with any problems.

The attitude of the police to domestic violence incidents, particularly wife abuse, has been mentioned as a limitation to the efforts to help and protect the victims. On 18 November 2003 activists from women’s groups urged the police to abandon their practice of treating domestic violence as a family matter and to begin taking legal action against husbands who physically and sexually abuse their wives. Many participants in the seminar, held as part of the Campaign to End Violence Against Women, had information to support their calls for change (Charoensuthipan 2003; Bunyapipat 2006).

In summary, Thai values and attitudes influence unequal practices between men and women, silences the victims so and avoid implementing proper processes of redress. However, it is not as if these actions occur in a policy or legislative vacuum as the next section shows.
3.4 POLICY AND LEGISLATION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AND WIFE ABUSE

Thai government policies on women, including those on domestic violence, are the result of Thailand’s commitment to international obligations and application of these in the nation. The most relevant of these obligations are the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the International Labour Convention, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (herein after CEDAW) (UNIFEM 2000, p. 1).

Thailand signed CEDAW on 9 August 1985 and agreed to “eliminate discrimination and ensure that women and men have equal rights and opportunities from the State” “with seven reservations since then the Thai Government gradually dropped the number of reservations to CEDAW from seven to two with the following consequences” (UNIFEM 2000, p. 1; NCWA 1997).

Women now have access to all government positions, whereas previously they were barred from certain positions such as district officers. … Women now have an equal opportunity to enrol in all types of educational institutions, including all military academies. … Children are no longer obliged to take their father’s nationality, but may take their mother’s. … Ministry of Interior regulations now allow for equal pay for work of equal value by men and women. … Women are now accorded a legal capacity identical to that of men in relation to administering their property (UNIFEM 2000, p. 1).

The remaining two relate to Articles 6 and 27. Thai Family Law must be amended in two ways for the requirements in Article 6 to be achieved: first to permit women to be known by their original family name after marriage and second, to have the same
grounds for divorce as men. Article 27 on settling of disputes by the International Court of Justice however, is unlikely to receive assent, as Thailand will continue to claim the right to sovereignty in all international conventions (ADB 1998). UNIFEM notes that the Thai government

… committed itself to the implementation of both CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action in the Eighth Socio-economic Plan of Thailand. Whether those commitments remain on paper or are followed by appropriate amendments in existing national legislation and enforcement remains to be seen (UNIFEM 2000, p. 1).

The Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 1997 guarantees equal rights of all Thais. Further, in the Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand 2007 (p. 10) it states “men and women shall enjoy equal rights”; “unjust discrimination against a person on the grounds of a difference in origin, race, language, belief, education or constitutional political view shall not be permitted” and; “measures determined by the State in order to eliminate obstacles to or to promote a person’s ability to exercise their rights and liberties, as other persons are so capable, shall not be deemed as unjust discrimination.” Sections 199-200 of the Constitution provide a mandate to an independent National Human Rights Commission to investigate charges of human rights abuse and propose corrective measures. This includes abuses of women’s human rights.

Another law about sexual intercourse—Section 276 of the Criminal Law Code (quoted below) — however undermined confidences wive abuse would be outlawed in Thailand.

Whoever has intercourse with a woman who is not his wife, against her will, by threatening with any means whatsoever, by doing any act of violence, by taking advantage of the woman’s
inability to resist, or by causing the woman to mistake him for another person, shall be punished with imprisonment of four to twenty years and a fine of eight thousand to forty thousand baht (Pongsapich & Jamnarnwej 1998, p. 32).

By including the words *not his wife* this law appears to give a husband the right to rape his wife. It is not considered a crime because the Family Law also states that married couples shall cohabit as husband and wife (Pongsapich & Jamnarnwej 1998). UNFPA (2001) viewed that “respect for the rights of women cannot be attained if the country’s criminal code condones violence in the home by giving men the right to rape their wives” (p. 22). Another law, “Section 1445 of the Civil and Commercial Law Code, allows a man to demand compensation from any man who has had sexual intercourse with or has raped his wife or fiancée. A woman, however, does not have the same rights, and this perpetuates the perception of wives as commodities” (UNFPA 2001, p. 22).

The transformation of Thailand from a polygamous to monogamous society continues to be unattainable for Thai women. This is even though Thailand introduced civil marriage registration in 1935 that, under Family Law, requires both members of the couple to swear that they are single before a registry officer before a license is issued (WHO 2001).

As seen from the examples of legislation mentioned above, equality of women and men is established in the constitution and in stated policy discrimination against women continues in laws and the quality of their enforcement and in smaller laws and regulations. Contradictory, ambiguous and poorly enforced laws provide opportunities for people to offend against women with impunity. Until consistent legislation, policy
and effective compliance measures are in place, women’s human rights in Thailand are not fully protected (NCWA 2000b).

A study by Pujgekwinyuskul, Jamsutee and Naetayasupa (2003, p. 4), which evaluated the current Thai criminal justice system, found that the “criminal justice system is recognised as an important tool to end domestic violence and to protect victims of this incident continuously and seriously”. However, there is serious doubt in Thailand whether the current system can cope with the number of cases and extent of the problem. They stated that the system responds insufficiently to domestic violence. The conclusion of the research indicated that while the legal system has provisions for criminal penalties for the perpetrators of domestic violence these are seldom imposed. After a case has been initiated through the police it must run its course and cannot be retracted. The offence is public. The police officers therefore try to encourage reconciliation between the couple in order to avoid criminal processing of the offender. Pujgekwinyuskul, Jamsutee and Naetayasupa (2003, p. 4) related “there is no mechanism or monitoring system to further protect the victims from domestic violence”. Lastly they found that “personnel in criminal justice agencies have a negative attitude on domestic violence cases because the victims and perpetrators have used to have a relationship or live together. They perceive domestic violence cases as ordinary misdemeanours” (2003, p. 4). They discount the seriousness of the offense because it occurred within the scope of a personal or intimate relationship.

To work towards seeking an end to domestic violence, whether physical, mental, or verbal, is one of the Thai Government’s set of plans for the development of the family. A Cabinet meeting of the Thai Government, 29 June 1999, approved measures to decrease the violence against women that were submitted by the NCWA. The Cabinet
also declared November to be *Campaign to End Violence against Children and Women Month* and asked for the cooperation of all government agencies and departments in running this policy. Every year during November there are many activities organised through the cooperation of government agencies and non-government agencies to make Thai people aware of the effects of domestic violence.

Thailand has undertaken to support and develop women’s human rights (NCWA 2000). At the international level, on 10 December 1948 the Thai government signed Article 7 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which says:

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All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal ... All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination (UN 1948).
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The government’s official policy and legislative programs have led to various activities to combat the problem of domestic violence and wife abuse. The 1997 Constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand declared support for the protection of human rights. The government set a policy to eliminate violence against women and children in families, but that time no law specifically addressed to the matter of suppressing domestic violence. Somsawadi (cited in Women in Action 2001) considers that there is no action policy regarding domestic violence. In 1997 during the drafting of the Thai Constitution, women’s and human-rights groups campaigned and lobbied “pushing for a provision on equal rights, and a clause on state protection against domestic violence that included family members, children and juveniles” (p. 3). Somswadi (in Women in Action 2001, p. 3) commented at the time that this gave “Thai society ammunition to demand state intervention in domestic violence”.

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Somswadi also pointed out that, giving the offender prison sentence further damages and harms the wife and any children due to the loss of family income leading to negative socioeconomic affects. Thus abused and sometimes, traumatized women must now be the sole income earner, sole parent and go through psychological and emotional pain of seeing someone she loves and the father of her children incarcerated. Moreover, prison does not stop violent behaviour and she risks another episode on his return.

Somswadi (in Women in Action 2001, p. 4) noted “Thailand’s punitive approach to the problem of male hostility at home, which at best simply postpones the cycle of violence”; it provides a brief reprieve.

Perpetrators of domestic violence are subjected to jail terms but not to any programmatic activities that would put an end to their violence-prone nature. In the medical and psychiatric professional fields, services for violent men are limited. Rather, available services concentrate on servicing victims of violence: they receive counselling on how to cope with the violent nature of their partner (Women in Action 2001, p. 4).

In July 2007, the military administration, which replaced the democratically elected government in 2006, passed the Domestic-Violence Victim Protection Act B.E. 2550 (A.D. 2007), providing women protection. It was enforced in November 2007. By this Act, the criminal justice system is can now be an effective instrument to deter people from violence, protect the victims of violence in families, and rehabilitate the abusers.

3.5 SERVICE AGENCIES INVOLVED WITH WIFE ABUSE IN THAILAND

Thai society expects the couples resolve domestic differences without external assistance. The abused person suffers silently. The suggestions and advice especially
from non-family members rarely helps. Abused women seek police and medical help only when the violence escalates and results in serious physical injury (FFW 2002).

Research conducted by the Institute of Population and Social Research, Mahidol University and the FFW (Archavanikul, Kanchanachitra & Im-em et al. 2003) reveals that most women living with an intimate partner had no information about domestic violence organizations and services (Archavanikul, Kanchanachitra & Im-em et al. 2003 in VTW 2003, pp. 1-5). Thus the numbers of women seeking help from these organisations in the government and/or non-government sectors were few. Effectively women lack access to existing services. Moreover, these organisations are located only in Bangkok and a few other big cities. A few big provinces provide shelter homes for women through their Public Welfare Departments. A full range of necessary services is not available and few women seek the assistance provided.

The findings also showed that women with children were more at risk. At present few shelters accommodate children. Women are forced by the lack of service to choose between their own safety and that of their children. Services need to be extended to accommodate children. Provision of these services is not only “in line with a client-oriented approach, which both serves the women’s need and respects their decisions” (Archavanikul, Kanchanachitra & Im-em et al. 2003 in Institute of Population and Social Research, Mahidol University 2003, p. 390), it also reduces the number of times children witness domestic violence. It therefore constitutes primary prevention for children.

In additional to the provision of temporary shelters, an effective response from medical personnel is critical “women injured by their partners’ attack did not always reveal the
cause of their injuries to doctors and nurses attending them. Hence, the ability of medical service providers to identify intimate partner violence-related injuries is of critical importance (Archavanikul, Kanchanachitra & Im-em et al. 2003 in Institute of Population and Social Research, Mahidol University 2003, p. 390).

The findings of the Institute of Population and Social Research and the FFW (in VTW 2003, p. 1) show that “intimate partner violence has significant health impact”. The report also cited key social institutions: the family, school, and media, as places where cultural change can begin to end domestic violence. The writers however, prefer that all organisations and social sectors, including civil society network, and grassroots community groups would collaborate to take concerted action to eliminate this form of violence.

The Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare & the Family Planning Organisation of Thailand gathered data on the kinds of assistance and activities provided by both government and non-government organisations to help alleviate or reduce domestic violence in Thai families (Thajeen 2002). There are a number of governments and non-government services. The next sections look at these services in detail.

**Government organisations**

The NCWA, established in 1989, aims “to improve the protection and safe recovery of victims”. The mission of the NCWA is to lead the program for the “advancement of women in Thailand” (NCWA 1997 – in Thai). The NCWA intended to target NGOs and the private sector so that Thai women are encouraged to actively participate. Originally the NCWA was located in Prime Minister’s Office but is now called OWAFD and is in
the Ministry of Human Security and Social Development. The OWAFD comprises at least five major government service organisations that provide services to victims of violence (OWAFD 2003a; UN 2004, pp. 6-50).

1. One-Stop Crisis Centres (OSCC) has been established in seven Bangkok hospitals and 21 provincial hospitals to provide medical treatment, counselling, and consultations on social welfare and legal matters.

2. Centres for the Protection of Children, Youth, and Women within the Police Department were established in 1998. Officers at the centres have received training to better understand the problems being faced by these vulnerable groups.

3. The Ministry of Social Development and Human Security provides: a 24-hour hotline staffed by social workers and psychologists, nine shelters for children and families, four Protection and Career Development Offices, and seven Women’s Aid and Career Training Centres.


5. The Bangkok Metropolitan Administration oversees a Centre for the Protection of the Rights of Children, Youth, and Women. They provide a telephone hotline service. In each district office there are inspectors for women’s and children’s security and a complaint centre that works cooperatively with the local police, hospitals and other service units.

However, UNIFEM (2003a) found that one-stop crisis centres require additional funding, trained personnel and publicity and that the Centres for the Protection of the Rights of Children, Youth, and Women provide limited protection.

Non-government organisations

NGOs in Thailand have been active to address “health, social, culture, political and human rights issues affecting the population” (NCWA 2000a, p. 14). NGOs play a critical role in raising the “issues that may be provocative and sensitive in nature, challenging attitudes, structures and systems within societies are often neglected in the
formal sector” (NCWA 2000a, p. 14). WHO (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002) stated that the NGO services in Thailand concern health and education, research, and policy.

They range from grass-root women’s and community organisations, to national networks of women, and from those who provide services such as health and education, to those who carry out research or influence policies at the highest levels. Some of the NGOs work exclusively on or predominantly address health concerns, while others have a wider focus, such as poverty alleviation and women’s empowerment (Krug, Dahlberg, Mercy et al. 2002, p. 1).

Over the past two decades, groups of activists have formalised their commitment and established the non-government organisations. The development of these kinds of organisations is related by NCWA (2000a). For example,

… focus on violence against women in Thailand’ originates from women in academia who formed groups to discuss and address problems affecting Thai women. Over the past two decades, the action-oriented members of these groups formalized their commitment and established NGOs. Typically, these organizations envelop multiple issues faced by Thai women, such as unequal status in society and marriage, domestic violence, economic inequity, sexual harassment and other forms of discrimination. To date, there are approximately 15 NGOs in Bangkok addressing issues related to women and approximately five of these NGOs are active and also have centres in other provinces throughout Thailand (NCWA 2000a, p. 14).

WHO, South East Asia Region Office (1998, p. 22) notes:

Many NGOs in Thailand have established programs providing assistance to women and children who are victims of gender violence. Among these are the Children Rights Protection Centre run by the Foundation for Children, the Emergency Home for Women and Children, run by the Association for Promoting Women's Status, and the Centre for Protection of Women's Rights' and
Women's Club run by Friend of Women Foundation. However, the Emergency Home for Women and Children is the only refuge specifically aiming to assist battered women and sexually-abused women in Bangkok, and there is none in the rest of the country. (WHO – SEARO 1998, p. 22)

NGOs and NCWA work on new official approaches to provide services to victims of abuse (WHO, South East Asia Region Office 1998, p. 23).

On the individual level, many NGOs offer services that include crisis intervention, legal aid, shelter, hotlines, individual and family counselling, education and information on options. … The alternative solution was to develop a centre that allowed women to call by telephone, anonymously if they wish, and discuss the issues they faced. … On a community level, NGOs efforts are composed of public awareness campaigns and capacity building for systems that confront violence cases. Friends of Women Foundation (FOW) is dedicated to raising public awareness of the unfair treatment of women and coordinating efforts to improve the status of women in Thai society. FOW provides legal advice and social services to women who have suffered from abuse, rape, sexual harassment, the problems related to unwanted pregnancies and other forms of violence and discrimination. FOW also organizes gender-sensitivity training for various groups, such as female police investigators (NCWA 2000a, p. 15).

With regard to policy at local, national and international levels, NGOs attempt to advocate for greater sensitivity to women’s rights in laws legislation and regulations. Some activities that NGOs engage in to eliminate violence against women include training, provision of shelters, counselling, legal assistance recreational and vocational opportunities, groups, awareness raising, training on exploitation, public speakers and community development.

Both government and non-government organisations in Thailand cooperate to establish new social values and campaign for communities free from violence against women and children (Thajeen 2002). The purpose was to establish safe houses and rehabilitative
services, including medical care, counselling and all other appropriate help for girls and
women who experience violence. Comprehensive research on the problem of violence
against women was needed to explain gender-specific information. Budgets have been
provided down to the level of community resource for projects related to eliminating
violence against women. Projects have been conducted to raise consciousness among
government officials and help them realise that violence against women is a criminal
violation of women’s human rights. The important goal is to provide education to make
girls and boys, and all members of society, aware of the effects of violence on families,
communities and society, and promote training to teach women and girls how to protect
themselves. Lastly, some campaigns have aimed at raising the awareness of people
working in the mass media to make them realise their responsibility for promoting new
images of women and men in place of old images that perpetuate violence, and their
role in informing people of the causes and effects of violence against women. Activities
were organised at all levels, from the individual to the community and national levels,
to build up a sense of responsibility for the protection of women and children.

Hutabaedya’s research (2001) described the characteristics of both government and non-
government organisations concerning domestic violence problems, including wife
abuse. Most of the organisations working to help people who suffer from domestic
violence offer services covering prevention, alleviation of the problems, resolution of
the problems, and follow up. Some of the agencies emphasised solving problems more
than prevention, or concentrated their services on only one of the above areas according
to the objectives of the agency.

The study of Hutabaedya (2001) also concluded that, in terms of operational budget,
most of the government agencies were funded by government and most of the private
sector agencies funded by donations. The services they provided most, in order of frequency, were consultation, legal advice, professional counselling, health services, and financial assistance. Additional, less common, services included accommodation, food and supplies, and entertainment. The major resources used by the agencies in the provision of services were money, personnel, academic support and coordination. Most of their budgets were spent on public education campaigns, assistance to affected families, and financial assistance for people who came for help, including funding to help them to start a new career, with the aim of helping them, their families, and groups at risk.

Most of the workers who gave services to the victims found in Hutabaedya’s study were social workers, psychiatrists, and lawyers. Academic support provided by the agencies consisted mostly of education concerning the legal rights of victims of domestic violence, such as the rights of children and women, as well as individual rights. The agencies disseminated information to community leaders and families by holding training sessions, developing learning materials and educating people on how to change their family status. The agencies coordinated with other related agencies as necessary in providing their primary services such as protection, career training, rehabilitation services and legal services. The agencies followed up on the cases that came to them by contacting the people who came for help either while they were living in the housing provided by the agency or after they had returned to their homes to see how well the problem had been solved, to give additional counselling, to collect data and to evaluate the agency’s work. The Social Service Department’s network in every province also took a part in evaluating the work of the various agencies.
The obstacles faced by the agencies were mainly problems with providing services, problems with the people who came for help, and coordination problems. The obstacles to providing services included problems with policy, planning and budget allocations. Problems with the people who came for help were specific problems in various cases and problems resulting from the violence those people had suffered. As for coordination problems, there were problems with the organisational structure of other agencies the agencies had to work with, a different understanding and awareness of the problems, complicated work processes, lack of continuity, lack of follow up, and lack of a central organisation. The other problems faced by the agencies included assumptions and attitudes in society about domestic violence, attitudes towards the perpetrators, lack of appropriate legislation to prevent the problem and provide justice for victims, the attitude of law enforcement officers toward female victims, the lack of interest on the part of administrators of related agencies, and the lack of emergency treatment facilities.

The study of Hutabaedya (2001) was a research survey, which was not focussed on a particular group of victims, and the respondents were from agencies specifically providing services to abused wives only. The information from this study is limited, as it could not explain specific cases of abused wives. However, the experience gained was useful for improving the process in this research.

In brief, the government and non-government organisations provided help to lessen violence in Thai families in different ways. The OWAFD, a government agency, is working as a coordinator of agencies to enable increased protection, and opportunities for recovery for victims and facilitate the working of some care services through funding. There are at least five main government service organisations for victims of domestic violence. Non-government organisations in Thailand have worked to fight
against unequal status of men and women in society and relationships both domestic and work-based and other transactions where discrimination may occur for example education and access to finance. Even though, the service agencies, both GOs and NGOs have attempted to provide a variety of kinds of assistance, many obstacles still exist.

CONCLUSION

This chapter demonstrates that the challenges that exist for domestic violence services are deeply embedded in Thailand’s economic and social system. Rapid economic change with concomitant movement of population coupled with changes in the gender role and status of women is pitched against a rich cultural history with embedded values and division of labour. The rights and power of women and children are in flux. Families are more likely to have a nuclear structure than traditional communitarian structures.

The experience of women and service providers is that legislation is lagging behind need and that the outcome is the perpetuation of the silencing of women and extension of resultant poor outcomes for children. Government, universities and services agencies have been working together, delivering research based advice, developing programs to eliminate violence and care for victims. There continue to be barriers to legislating against domestic violence.

The challenge of this piece of research is to find a way through this impasse so that a culturally appropriate response to domestic violence and wife abuse can emerge for Thailand. The next chapter outlines the methodology for this piece of research.
Chapter 4

METHODOLOGY

The objectives of this study, an exploration into issues of wife abuse in Thailand, are expressed in four questions. Those are (1) “what is the nature and incidence of wife abuse in Thai families?”; (2) “what are the factors that cause and what are the effects of wife abuse?”; (3) “what are the responses of service agencies to assist in situations of wife abuse, the results of these responses?”; and (4) “what do various stakeholders see as better ways that wife abuse can be managed and resolved?”

This chapter outlines the research methodology. A justification of the research methodology will be set out in the first section. The next section contains descriptions of qualitative research method, purposive sampling, data collection, and data analysis, issues of reliability and validity, and ethical considerations, followed by reporting the findings. This process is consistent with the work of Seibold (2003) on the research frame and research strategy.

4.1 JUSTIFICATION OF RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The word methodology, as the concept of an inquiry paradigm, is described as a basic set of beliefs, constructed by humans, which guide action (Denzin & Lincoln 1994, 2000, p. 19). The term methodology is defined as “a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed” (Harding 1987, p. 3), or way of proceeding in, gathering evidence. In addition, “methodology focuses on the best means for gaining knowledge about the world” (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p. 157), and details how the
A research paradigm is a basic philosophical framework that guides all aspects of study and reflects the researcher’s beliefs concerning what can be known about the world and how can we know about it (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). The five basic research paradigms: positivism, postpositivism, critical theory, constructivism, and participatory are evident by the principles of inquiry on which they are based, and the procedures by which researchers attempt to examine reality (Guba & Lincoln 1994; Lincoln & Guba 2000, p. 158). The different research paradigms are compared in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1**

**Research Paradigms and Principles**

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<tr>
<th>Principles</th>
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<td>Methodology</td>
<td><em>Paradigms</em></td>
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| (Procedure on how the reality is examined) | *Methodology*
| | “Experimental/ manipulative; verification of hypotheses; quantitative methods” (Lincoln & Guba 2000 p. 168) and surveys. |
| | “Modified experimental/ manipulative; critical multiplism; falsification of hypotheses; may include qualitative methods” (Lincoln & Guba 2000 p. 168) and surveys/case study |
| | “Dialogic/ dialectic” [al]” (Lincoln & Guba 2000 p. 168): dialogue between researcher and subjects that transforms the social situation |
| | Interpreting findings constructed from interaction between researcher and respondents; “hermeneutic dialectic” (Lincoln & Guba 2000 p. 168) |
| | “Political participation in collaborative action inquiry; primacy of the practical; use of language grounded in shared experiential context” (Lincoln & Guba 2000 p. 168) |

Detail on the research paradigms and principles can be found in Appendix A (Justification for Methodology).

After consideration of the research paradigms and principles described in Appendix A and as the objective of this research is an exploration of wife abuse, the constructivist paradigm was chosen as the most appropriate paradigm for this research as a summary shown in Table 4.2.
### Table 4.2

**Critique and Justification of Research Paradigms**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paradigm</th>
<th>Critiques on nature of knowledge</th>
<th>Conclusion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Positivism</strong></td>
<td>Examine reality by testing hypotheses and using quantitative methods. Treating respondents as independent objects and neglecting the respondents’ ability to reflect on specific problem situations (Wallace 1983 cited in Schutt 2003). Assuming reality to be simply accessed and measured with no error that is not this kind of testing, thus this approach is unmatched with the research.</td>
<td>Inappropriate for this research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Postpositivism</strong></td>
<td>The realist approach supports the existence of reality. Suggests a determinist world. Causal relationships are sought. The knowledge is based on empirical observation, and measurement (Creswell 2003, p. 7). Hypotheses need to be formulated and tested and theories refined to understand the world. The scientific method involves collecting information using validated and calibrated instruments. Trained personnel collect observations and results. Unmatched with this research that could not collect data by observation.</td>
<td>Inappropriate for this research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Critical theory</strong></td>
<td>Structural/historical insights revealing contradictions. Basis for action, change potential and mobilization (Horkeimer 1993; Bohman 1995; 2012). Critical theorists are concerned with the interaction between researcher and the investigated object in such a way that the researcher seeks to change the phenomenon (Perry, Alizadeh &amp; Riege 1997). This paradigm unmatched to the aim of research.</td>
<td>Inappropriate for this research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Participatory</strong></td>
<td>Extended epistemology: subjectivity, the lived experience and knowing through action are valued. Aims to “create a political debate and discussion” to make changes (Creswell 2003, p. 9). Endeavours to empower those affected by the experience. Practical and collaborates with participants. The participatory knowledge base is inappropriate for this research.</td>
<td>Inappropriate for this research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Constructivism</strong></td>
<td>Individual reconstruction coalescing around consensus (Schutt, 2003; 2006). Emphasis on how different stakeholders in social settings construct beliefs (Neuman 2003; Lincoln &amp; Guba 2000; Schwandt 2000; Crotty 1998). Uses an interactive research process. Researcher identifies the different concepts of respondents, and then seeks participants’ perspectives.</td>
<td>Appropriate for this research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Adapted from indicated sources this study.*
Justification of Research Strategy–Qualitative Research Method

This research is in the field of social science which is a “scientific field” if one uses a rigid definition of science (Collins 1989, p. 134; Neuman 2003, p. 69). Social science is a science that studies people’s social life. Research on families is an arena within social science research (Greenstein 2001, pp. 10-11), which may deal with phenomena described as backstage behaviours or actions that are hidden from the public, “such as child abuse, domestic violence, and child rearing are not generally visible to persons outside the family” (p. 9). Greenstein (2001) also stated: “[a]s better research produced higher-quality data, social scientists realised that because incidents of domestic violence are often only known to members of the family, and perhaps, to close friends” (p. 9), which has led to gross underestimates of the frequency of such behaviour. The use of research is explained below.

The use of research

The use of research is divided into basic research and applied research (Neuman 2003, pp. 20-22). Neuman (2003) says:

… basic research (also called academic research or pure research). Applied researchers, by contrast, primarily want to apply and tailor knowledge to address a specific practical issue. They want to answer a policy question or solve a pressing social problem… It’s true that knowledge produced by basic research often lacks practical applications in the short term. Yet basic research provides a foundation for knowledge and understanding that are generalisable to many policy areas, problems or areas of study. Basic research is the source of most of the tools—methods, theories, and ideas—that applied researchers use. Big breakthroughs in understanding and significant advances in knowledge usually come from basic research. In contrast to applied researchers, who want relatively quick answers to questions for use within the next month or year,
Basic research seldom has direct application to practice but it has the potential to stimulate new ways of thinking about and examining current situations. It can result in revolutionising and improving practice. Even though some policy makers and practitioners often express their concern “that basic research is of little relevance, public policies and social services would be ineffective, and misguided” (Neuman 2003, p. 22), and at worst harmful unless they are based on valid and reliable research. In contrast, applied researchers balance research with pragmatics. They have to balance rigor with the realities of implementation. The work requires competent research that takes into account the constraints and realities of the social field, the industry and characteristics of the workers who will have to adapt their work practices and behaviours, within cultural, political and economic limitations.

This study is applied research as its findings should be useful to practitioners and other stakeholders such as counsellors and caseworkers, or decision-makers such as managers, committees, and officials.

*The purpose of research*

The three purposes of research according to Neuman (2003, p. 29) are “based on what the researcher is trying to accomplish: explore a new topic, describe a social phenomenon, or explain why something occurs”. He goes on to say that some studies may aim to both to explore and to describe, but Neuman says (2003, p. 29) “one purpose is usually dominant”.

basic researchers painstakingly seek answers to questions that could have an impact on thinking for over a century. (Neuman 2003, p. 21)
Exploratory research is used when a researcher wants to explore a new topic or issue that few researchers have written about. It can be the first step in a series of studies or may be also done where variables may need to be better defined than in previous studies. The researcher’s goal is to explore the phenomenon so that greater precision is available for future research. Sometimes an exploratory study is needed to find out how to approach a topic or the participants. As Neuman (2003, p. 30) states that the researcher must be “creative, open-minded and flexible; adopt an investigative stance to explore all source of information”. He goes on to say that qualitative techniques for gathering data are frequently used because they can accommodate new types of evidence and uncover issues otherwise hidden from view.

Descriptive research “presents a set of specific details of a situation or the social setting of a relationship” (Neuman 1997, p. 20). In Neuman’s view “description and exploratory research have many similarities. They blur together in practice. In descriptive research, the researcher begins with a well-defined subject and conducts research to describe it more accurately” (2003, p. 30).

Explanatory research is used when a researcher desires to know why. Neuman (2003, p. 31) explains that “it builds on exploratory and descriptive research and goes on to identify” causes and reasons.

Exploration is the appropriate purpose of this study because wife abuse is not well understood in Thai society. Greenstein (2001) suggested that “a basic purpose of social and behavioural research is to find out what is going on” (p. 2).
In summary, due to the four contributing questions of this research stated above, this study falls within the category of applied research, entirely in the area of social science. Exploration is the basic purpose of the research.

4.2 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH METHOD

Overview of Qualitative Research

In discussing the direction for procedures in research design employed in social science research, Creswell (1994, 2003), and Mertens (1998 cited in Creswell 2008, p. 14) note three alternative strategies for inquiry: the quantitative approach, the qualitative approach, and mixed methods approach.

The quantitative and qualitative approaches differ in many ways, but complement each other, as Neuman pointed out (2003). An investigator using a quantitative approach primarily seeks cause and effect relationships, uses reductionist techniques to identify specific variables, builds hypotheses and questions, uses measurement scales, observes and tests theories (Creswell 2003). Creswell also stated that the researcher employs strategies: “experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data” (2003, p. 18).

On the other hand, Creswell (2003, p. 18) explains that qualitative approach is based on “constructivist or participatory perspectives” or both. “It also uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher collects to open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data. Finally, a mixed methods approach is one in which
the researcher tends to base knowledge claims on programmatic grounds” (Creswell 2003, p. 18). In mixed method data collection, numeric and textual information is collected and the final data set holds quantitative and qualitative information. Axinn and Pearce (2006, p. 11) say “[m]ixed method data collection is only likely to produce high-quality data if each of the component part is of the highest possible quality”.

However, qualitative research and quantitative research are in sharp contrast (Punch 2005). The differences between the two styles come from the nature of the data and the underlying assumptions. The nature of qualitative research is non-numeric sometimes called “soft data, in the form of impressions, words, sentences, photos, symbols, and so forth, dictate different research strategies and data collection techniques than hard data” (Neuman 2003, p. 139); numbers that can be statistically analysed.

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) define the term qualitative research as “a complex, interconnected family of terms, concepts and assumptions” (p. 2):

Qualitative research is an interdisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and sometimes counterdisciplinary field. It crosscuts the humanities, the social sciences, and the physical sciences. Qualitative research is many things at the same time. It is multiparadigmatic in focus. Its practitioners are sensitive to the value of the multimethod approach. They are committed to the naturalistic perspective and to the interpretive understanding of human experience. At the same time, the field is inherently political and shaped by multi ethical and political positions (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p. 408).

The aims of qualitative research are to elicit the contextualised nature of experience and action, and to attempt to generate analyses that are detailed, taking individual events and interpreting them to larger meaning systems and patterns (Rice & Ezzy 1999, p. 1). A process used to make sense of data is usually represented in the form of words rather
than numbers. This type of data has always been the staple of some fields in the social sciences, including studies about families (Gilgun 1992, p. 24; Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 1). However, Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 299) viewed that there are no fixed formats of reporting and the data are being analysed and interpreted in a myriad of ways. Punch (1998) supported this view by explaining that the older models of research report could be mixed with new approaches.

Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 1) state that qualitative data is “a source of well-grounded, rich descriptions and explanations of processes in identifiable local contexts. With qualitative data one can preserve chronological flow, see precisely which events preceded which consequences, and derive fruitful explanations”. Miles and Huberman state, regarding the strengths of qualitative data:

…one major feature is that they focus on naturally occurring, ordinary events in natural settings, so that we have a strong handle on what real life is like (Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 10).

The purpose statement of qualitative research begins with the

… researcher asks at least one central question and several sub-questions. They begin the questions with words such as how or what and use exploratory verbs, such as explore or describe. They pose broad, general questions to allow the participants to explain their ideas. They also focus initially on one central phenomenon of interest. The questions may mention the participants and the site for the research (Creswell 2003, p. 116).

The process of qualitative research includes ways of conceptualising, collecting, analysing, and interpreting data. It involves the researcher’s “use and collection of a variety of empirical materials case studies; personal experience; introspection, life stories; interviews; artefacts; cultural texts and productions; observations; and historical,
interactional and value texts - that describe routine and problematic moments and meanings in individuals’ lives” (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p. 3).

In addition, Creswell (2003) explains the variations in the way theory is used by qualitative inquirers. The researchers “employ theory as a broad explanation, much like in quantitative research. This theory provides an explanation for behaviour and attitudes” (p. 131). “A theory explains how and why the variables are related, acting as a bridge between or among the variables”. It may also be “a theoretical lens or perspective to guide their study and raise the questions of gender, class, and race, (or some combination)” (p. 131).

“Qualitative research methods are especially relevant to studying families because there are many aspects of family processes and interactions that are hidden to be easily ascertained with quantitative methods” (Franklin 1996, p. 253). Thus, the qualitative approach is justified as an appropriate method for this study, which is about exploring the nature and incidence of wife abuse, causes and effects of wife abuse, and responses to wife abuse. Patton (1990, p. 14) views “qualitative methods facilitate study of issues in depth and in detail”.

**Qualitative Research Strategy–Phenomenology study**

Creswell (2003, pp. 14-15) describes the following five traditions of qualitative inquiry: ethnography, grounded theory, case study, phenomenological research, and narrative research.
Ethnographic study

Punch (2005, p. 154) explains “Ethnography was developed by anthropologists to study human society and culture. In a qualitative ethnographic study, data are interpreted through a socio-cultural perspective”. The ethnographic approach, being a method of discovery, is particularly useful when dealing with something new, different or unknown.

Grounded theory

Imel, Kerka and Wonacott (2002, p. 4) say “[g]rounded theory has as its goal the development of a theory through inductive approaches. The theory is grounded in the data... Secondary concerns are discovery with description and verification”. The theory and patterns emerge from the data.

Case study

This kind of study is deep description and analysis of a phenomenon, experienced by an individual or collection of people and can include case studies of whole communities. The approach has tight boundaries (who are in or out of the case being examined) and is integrated that is, parts of the case are closely related. Case studies are “sometimes combined with other types of qualitative methods” (Imel, Kerka & Wonacott 2002, p. 4).
**Phenomenological research**

Merriam (2002, p. 7) states “a phenomenological study focuses on the essence or structure of an experience”. Imel, Kerka and Wonacott (2002, p. 4) support Merriman’s explanation that

Inner experiences are compared and analysed to identify the essences of the phenomenon being studied. In one sense all qualitative research is phenomenological in nature but, because of its focus on experience and understanding, phenomenology stands on its own as a type (Imel, Kerka & Wonacott 2002, p. 4)

**Narrative analysis**

Imel, Kerka and Wonacott (2002, p. 7) explain the narrative analysis that: “[i]n narrative analysis, first person accounts in story form, biography, autobiography, life history, oral history, autoethnography, and life narratives are used in data analysis. Common types of analysis are psychological, biographical, and discourse analysis”.

The objective of this research is to explore wife abuse in Thailand. The information is gleaned from the experiences of stakeholders concerning the phenomenon of wife abuse. To understand the lived experience is the concerning of phenomenology as philosophy not just as method. The phenomenological approach is an appropriate strategy for this research.
Selected Qualitative Research Method: In-depth Interview

Creswell (2003, p. 181), and Marshall and Rossman (2006, p. 1) state “qualitative researchers uses multiple methods that are interactive and humanistic”. Data collection increasingly involves participants and demands sensitivity from researchers. Creswell (2003, p. 181) goes on to say “actual methods of data collection, traditionally based on open-ended observations, interviews, and documents, now include a vast array of materials”, for instance You Tube clips, sound recordings, e-mails, social networking pages, scrapbooks, and other emerging forms.

The key aspects of qualitative research include the overall research perspective; the volume and richness of qualitative data; the flexible nature of research design; the importance of the participants’ frames of reference; the distinctive approaches for analysis and interpretation and; the kind of outputs that are derived from qualitative research (Bryman 1988; Miles & Huberman 1994; Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Holloway & Wheeler 1996; Denzin & Lincoln 2000; Mason 2002; Patton 2002 cited in Ritchie & Lewis 2003, p. 3). Certain data collection methods have also been identified with qualitative research, such as observational methods, in-depth interviewing, group discussion, narrative, and the analysis of documentary evidence.

A foundational step in qualitative studies of family experience is to establish relationships with one or more participants through interviews (Gilgun, Daly & Handel 1992, p. 41). In-depth, qualitative studies have helped identify basic themes in the experience of abused partners, primarily battered women. Although different interviewers have different styles, employ different strategies, and draw from different samples, there is remarkable consistency in the basic descriptions offered. In virtually
all accounts, “abusive behaviour represents an attempt to control, dominate, or gain power over one’s partner” (Pence 1989; Ptacek 1988 cited in Murphy & Cascardi 1993, p. 91). In-depth qualitative interview studies of battered women, have offered very important insights, helped accentuate the subtlety and complexity of psychological abuse, uncovered a central theme of domination and control and identified many variations of abusive behaviour (Murphy & Cascardi 1993). These efforts have helped to highlight the often-devastating effects of psychological abuse, including the disorientation and self-doubt associated with tactics of mind control (Andersen, Boulette & Schwartz 1991). Qualitative studies have offered an integrative framework to understand how physical and psychological abuse operates in tandem to establish domination and control.

The term to interview is used to signify the active search for a full understanding of a person’s life. As Chirban’s approach (1996, p. 1), “emphasises how the interviewer gains a deeper understanding of the interviewee though self-awareness, authenticity, attunement, personal characteristics and the forming of a new relationship”. The interviewer’s task is to introduce an approach for open and earnest communication where both participants express their thoughts and feelings (while the interactive-relational approach enables the interviewer to achieve an effective in-depth interview.

Interviewing has become increasingly valued in modern life; interviews have the potential to convey the power of life inherent in human contact. However, many interviewing approaches reduce the process to fact-finding ventures. Approaches to interviewing that ignore or overlook the dynamics between interviewer and interviewee often result in lifeless or less than effective interviewing (Chirban 1996, pp. xi-xii).
The interviewer sets the stage for the interviewing process, and conduct of the research.
The quality of the interaction and relationship of the researcher with the participant, affects the success of the in-depth interview. The interviewer begins the interviewing process by identifying the objectives and establishing rapport. By clearly identifying the goals and clarifying one’s expectations for an interview, the interviewer sets the course and direction of the interview. He or she needs to recognise his or her role and professional concern when establishing the tone and course of the interview. By explaining the goals for an interview, the interviewer initiates a collaborative process with the interviewee from the initial engagement. By responding to concerns of the interviewee, the interviewer expresses interest in the interviewee to address factors that may interfere with the process of the interview (Chirban 1996, pp. 37-38).

Generally, the data collection method selected is dependent on the requirements of the research question and the available resources. In-depth interviews are purposely used for obtaining an in-depth understanding of a phenomenon, drawing on a few informants’ information, and are the most common approach to understanding human beings (Pernice 1996; Denscombe 1998; Grbich 1999).

The in-depth interview technique is described by Doyle (2003, p. 108) as “an interview that can provide reliable evidence to answer a research question or to help solve a social problem and that can be defended against sceptical critics - - bears little resemblance to an ordinary conversation”. The best techniques for conducting valid, reliable interviews are more akin to advanced listening skills rather than light-hearted social conversation. Doyle (2003, p. 108) goes on say that in some interviews need “the interviewer asks questions that participants may have already answered, which almost never happens
outside of interview studies due to social norms that dictate that conversations should not be repetitive”.

Doyle (2003) relates: “research interviews require the use of skills - for example, careful listening, noting nonverbal cues, monitoring the progress of a conversation while participating in it and taking notes”. Research interviews require careful planning and preparation and the interviewers need training. Moreover researchers must achieve sufficient knowledge of the field to ask sensible and intelligent questions; understand the respondents’ answers; consider who is relevant “to interview, how many people to interview, what type of interview to conduct, and how the interview data will be analysed; and learn established techniques for ensuring that the interview data are unbiased (even seemingly subtle factors like interviewer’s mood, personality, dress, and manner can alter participants’ responses and bias the data” (Doyle 2003, p. 109).

Miles and Huberman (1984) indicate that the construct validity of qualitative interview data could be achieved with less instrumental question preparation. The reason is that there is high flexibility to generate the appropriate measure of constructs from open-ended interviews. However, a strong \textit{a priori} instrument can help researchers establish the depth and breadth of interview questions that have been constructed around the research question. The \textit{a priori} instrument is also appropriate to provide external validity and reliability because of its generalisation power from comparable cases and cross-case analysis. As for the data quality concerns associated with free flowing interviews without the obvious constraints of \textit{a priori} instruments, interview questions may be used only used as a guide to confirm, at the end of the interview, all aspects of importance that have been probed.
The aim, to obtain deep and insightful information, is an important criterion for selecting the research method. As my research requires an in-depth understanding of the interviewees’ background, experiences and their ideas, the in-depth interview method was chosen for collecting data for this research.

Selected Semi-structured Interviews as Research Instruments

Piergiorgio (2003, pp. 269-270) explains that interviews differ in terms of their degree of standardisation that is to say, the varying degree of freedom/constraint placed on the two participants (the interviewer and the respondent). Three basic types of interview can be distinguished: structured, semi-structured and unstructured. Selection of the type of interview has to be based on the research question and purpose. The type of interview selected will determine the pragmatics of the interview: place, length, recording devices and orientation protocols (Punch 2005, p. 170).

The structured interview is designed to answer pre-formulated research questions. Britten (1995, p. 251) goes on to say: “structured interviews consist of administering structured questionnaires, and interviewers are trained to ask questions (mostly fixed choice) in a standardised manner”. In the interviewing process “all respondents receive the same set of questions asked in the same order or sequence by an interviewer who has been trained to treat all interview situations similarly” (Fontana & Frey 1994, p. 363; 2000, p. 649; Gubrium & Hostein 1998, p. 649).

Burgess (1991 cited in Oka & Shaw 2000, p. 6) notes “unstructured interviews, also called informal conversation interviews do not have predetermined set questions; instead the researchers and interviewees talk freely”. Oka and Shaw (2000, p. 6) also
describe “unstructured interviews are often used in combination with participatory observation”. New researchers find them difficult because the interviewer has to be sufficiently knowledgeable and have good communication skills to keep the conversation flowing, focused on the participants’ interests and within the context of the overall research purpose (Oka & Shaw 2000).

Oka and Shaw (2000, p. 6) say “semi-structured interviews sometimes called guided interviews, that the researchers prepare interview guides that consist of set of questions… The guides allow researchers to generate their own questions to develop interesting areas of inquiry” or explore novel ideas introduced by the participant during the interviews (Flick 1998, p. 76 cited in Oka & Shaw 2000, p. 6).

In this research an in-depth, semi-structured interview was used to achieve the greatest depth and breadth of information could be obtained. Respondents were asked to tell about their experiences of domestic violence and wife abuse issues from their own perspectives. I probed for additional information by means of unstructured open-ended questions, which provided opportunities for both interviewer and interviewee to discuss some topics in more detail. In addition, if the participants had difficulty answering a question or provided only a brief response, I could use cues or prompts to encourage them to consider the question further, clarify their original response or, follow up something they introduced that might have been relevant to understanding the complexities of their experience.

In brief, qualitative method was used in this research. The phenomenological approach is an appropriate strategy, and the in-depth interview method was chosen for collecting data. The semi-structured interview approach was appropriate for this study. The
interview guides consisted of three types of a guide for interviewing abused wives, one for interviewing respondents from service agencies, and another for interviewing policy makers. The three types of interview guides and the sets of guides are shown in an appendix B, C and D.

4.3 PURPOSIVE SAMPLING

Patton (1990; 2002. p. 230) states, “qualitative inquiry typically focuses on in-depth small samples, even a single case, selected purposefully... The logic and power of purposeful sampling lie in selecting information-rich cases”. It is an efficient way to explore and identify key issues in a research topic.

Neuman (2003) explains that purposive sampling, as used in selecting the respondents of this research,

is acceptable as a kind of sampling for special situations. It uses the judgement of an expert in selecting cases with a specific purpose in mind... With purposive sampling, the researcher never knows whether the cases selected represent the population. It is used in exploratory research or in field research (p. 213).

The selection of participants or the sample units is made based on certain criteria. Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p. 78) say participants “are chosen because they have particular features or characteristics which will enable detailed exploration and understanding of the central themes and puzzles which the researcher wishes to study”. These may be socio-demographic characteristics, or may relate to specific experiences, behaviours, or roles. Purposive sampling is used to “select unique cases that are especially informative… select members of difficult-to-reach, specialised populations…”
and to identify particular types of cases for in-depth investigation” (Neuman 2003, p. 213).

The aim of this research is to investigate the nature and incidence of wife abuse, factors that cause the wife abuse, and the effects of abuse. Abused wives who had direct experience of abuse and who came to service agencies for help were the first group of participants chosen for the research. They were considered to be the richest source of data to answer these study inquiries. In this research the participants need the special characteristic of being able to disclose their experience of abuse to a stranger – the researcher- who has no role in proving any service or support. The research findings of Rujiraprasert, Sripichyakan, Kantaruksa et al. (2009) show that women who have the capacity to tell the story of their whole lives are difficult-to-reach, are a unique group, and are especially informative. Through reflexive discussion with women abuse victims and survivors, these researchers found that the women moved through a set of stages: concealment, revealing and finally disclosure. Each stage had its own set of behavioural strategies. Concealment included “covering, isolating, silencing or revising, in order to protect their sense of self and safety, and their husband’s image or family well-being” (2009, p. 332). Women in this stage are by definition not particularly informative and therefore would not be selected for the study. Revealing included revealing their stories by yielding to questioning, “hinting, telling or sharing to release tension” (Rujiraprasert, Sripichyakan, Kantaruksa et al. 2009, p. 332). Women in this stage too would only be able to hint at what occurred. Women in this stage would be easier to engage but would not be as informative as someone who had been though all the stages.

This research, at the beginning did not have the benefit of Rujiraprasert and colleagues’ research findings. The cases of abused wives were selected from those who came to
service agencies in a period of time that was fixed to collect data. Only women, who had the capacity and were willing to participate and to disclose their experiences of abuse to the researchers, after they understood the objectives of the research, were chosen.

A valuable informant is one who has the time and willingness to take part in the investigation, and has the knowledge and experience the researcher requires (Morse 1994). The sampling, by virtue of the nature of the research could not be a convenience sample. Therefore, the women victim respondents of this research constitute a purposive sample.

The respondents from service agencies who provided services and policy makers from professionals in a variety of areas were also selected. To select cases for in-depth interviews, additional options for choosing samples within these three groups were used. For the group of respondents from service agencies, participants who directly provided services to abused wives—those who were two members from each agency— a member from management and service provider who worked as social workers or psychologists were selected. Patton (1990) also recommends that key informants be sought out during the preliminary phase of research, when establishing the parameters object of study. Interviews with the key informants are usually heterogeneous; each one is unique and has its own development and its own focus. At the policy-maker level, stakeholders in interdisciplinary fields who were involved with this specific issue, for instance, senators, government officers, police officers, psychiatrists, and social workers were chosen. The different perspectives of the stakeholders are in keeping with the constructivist paradigm (Schutt 2003).
The respondents of this study are members of three target groups, namely, abused wives, respondents from service agencies, and policy makers, as shown in Figure 4.1.

**Figure 4.1**

*Cases for In-depth Interviews*

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fifty Cases for In-depth Interviews</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Abused wives</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten Abused Wives who came</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>seeking help from Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Services Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten Abused Wives who came</td>
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<tr>
<td>seeking help from Non-Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Respondents from Service Agencies</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten Respondents from Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services Agencies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ten Respondents from Non-Government</td>
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<tr>
<td>Services Agencies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Respondents from Policy Makers</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ten Policy Makers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*Source: Developed for this study*

According to those ideas, the respondents of this study were selected only the participants who willing to give information. These respondents, all key informants were chosen to interview during the preliminary phase of research.

In efforts to conduct better research on domestic violence issues, family violence researchers may suffer from a number of methodological limitations (Barnett, Miller-Perrin & Perrin 1997, pp. 277-278). Access to victims is usually difficult, and their vulnerability raises many ethical dilemmas in working with them. Perpetrators are often reluctant to discuss their own violent behaviour (See Chapter 1 Section 1.3). In addition, ideal experimental research designs (for example multi informants) are rarely feasible.
and long-term longitudinal studies are difficult and costly to conduct. Fortunately, family violence researchers are becoming increasingly aware of these methodological shortcomings and most are working to overcome the problems. Thus, these limitations explain why in this study only a limited number of cases of abused wives were selected to study in in-depth interviews; not only because subjects were difficult to engage but also for ethical reasons. The multi informants who had experiences in working with the cases of abused wives—the respondents from service agencies and the policy makers in a variety of professional areas—were also investigated in in-depth interviews.

The samples in this research are “not intended to be statistically representative…the characteristics of the population are used as the basis of selection. It is the feature that makes them well suited to small-scale, in-depth studies” (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, p. 78).

In conclusion, purposive sampling method is used to select the respondents of this study. Three groups of key informants consist of twenty abused wives, twenty respondents from ten service agencies, and ten policy makers.

**4.4 DATA COLLECTION**

The interviewing of this research was done with respondents in relation to select individual cases. As the main data collection tools in qualitative research, Punch (2005) says “... it is a good way of accessing people’s perceptions, meanings, and definitions of situations and constructions of reality” (p. 168). The questions to be considered in semi-structured interviews determine the topics to be covered.
Piergiorgio (2003, p. 277) explains that qualitative interviewing is a difficult art. The most difficult part is getting the interviewee to talk which involves encouraging the respondent to speak freely while the interviewer listens attentively, only interrupting occasionally to ask for clarification, or to subtly steer the conversation back to the key issues. It is a matter of gaining access, if not to the inner mind, then at least to the respondent’s feelings and most genuine thoughts. The qualitative interview is a process of social interaction between two individuals. Piergiorgio made the following suggestions for conducting interviews.

**Preliminary explanation**

Start by describing the objects of the research, explaining why the interviewee has been chosen and why she is going to be asked certain, perhaps personal, questions and, if necessary, justifying the fact that the conversation will be recorded, etc.

**Primary and secondary questions**

According to the distinction made by Kahn and Cannel (1967, p. 205 cited in Piergiorgio 2003, pp. 277-278), a primary question means any question that introduces a new topic or asks for content. Secondary questions, by contrast, are intended to elicit more fully the information already asked for in a primary question.

The questions that appear in the interview guide were not asked sequentially and they serve only as primary questions for the participant. The secondary questions resulted in narratives from those interviewed.
Probing

An essential ingredient of the interviewer’s skill is the ability to uncover and to highlight the subject’s true positions, even those that are most deeply hidden. To this end, the interviewer will make use of so-called probe questions. These are not so much genuine questions as neutral prompts designed to encourage the interviewee to lower her defensive barriers, to elucidate further and to provide more detail. Such intervention is intended to spur the subject’s initiative, to get her to talk, though without influencing what she says; therefore, rather than answering questions, the subject will follow the course of her own reasoning, choosing which issues to discuss further and how to expound upon them. This kind of probing may take various forms: repeating the question, repeating or summarising the answer given, encouraging and expressing interest, pausing, and asking for elucidation.

Language

The language used in a qualitative interview can be adapted to suit the characteristics of the interviewee. However, it should be borne in mind that language is the fundamental means of establishing a climate of empathy, and therefore of communication, between the interviewer and interviewee.
The interviewer’s role

Qualitative interviews can only be carried out face-to-face. Moreover, qualitative interviews are recorded. The temptation to write a summary while the interview is taking place should be avoided, as the result would be incomplete, dull, or even incomprehensible. By contrast, recording ensures the interviewee’s account is preserved in its original and rich form. In transcribing recorded material, it is always advisable to write out the respondent’s speech in full, including dialect forms, errors in syntax, unfinished sentences and so on, as it is these very features of the spoken language that make the interview lively and communicative. Finally, it should be added that recording the interview enables the interviewer to concentrate solely on the conversation and to maintain a more natural relationship with the interviewee; this would be much more difficult if the interviewer had to take notes (Piergiorgio 2003, p. 280).

In the chart below is an outline of the process used by the researcher. The primary questions in the guide were not used in a lock-step manner. However, they enabled the researcher to check that all the data was covered so that within-case and cross-case analyses could be performed with consistency.

The detailed process of interviewing the participants is as follows:
Figure 4.2
Process of Interviewing the Participants

1. Welcome and introduce participant and researcher

   State the goals and purpose of the research and clarify the participant’s understanding of the information sheet. Indicate that there are some questions everyone will be asked and some that will come from listening to the participant’s experiences.

2. Offer to answer any questions

   Introduce the consent form and explain that the participant may withdraw at any time with no penalty, that the material is confidential and stored securely, and that the interview may be stopped at any time.

3. Clarify if there are any questions again

   If there are none ask if the participant is willing to proceed. If so turn recording device on. Note the index.

4. Ask a general and open-ended question

   Listen and mark off any items in the interview guide that the participant answers without prompting.

5. Ask clarifying and probing questions relevant to the participant’s contribution.

   Check that key questions on the interview guide have been asked for comparative analysis. Take time to do this carefully since the participant may be unable to return.

6. Ask is there anything else the participant wishes to add, especially if there is a question.

   Thank the participant for his/her time.
As can be seen from the above the interview guides were not used as questionnaires nor were they intended to be. The interview guide is a requirement as part of the application for ethics approval to conduct the study. The interview guides ensure key segments of the research are covered and are tools for starting the conversations with the participants.

To approach each group of participants of this study, first information about service agencies that provided assistance to victims of domestic violence were accessed. These included both government and non-government service agencies located in Bangkok, the place of study. The agencies were contacted to request permission to interview the abused wives and the service providers. Finally, twenty cases of abused wives were selected from among those who were willing to participate in the interviewing and were willing to spend forty-five minutes to one hour to share their experiences of abuse, details of services they received from the agencies and the results. Ten of the abused wives were from the abused women who received services from government agencies, and ten from those who received help from non-government agencies.

The participants from service agencies were selected from among the employees of the government and non-government agencies who were service providers and they were willing to participate in in-depth interviews. For the other group of respondents—policy makers—ten, who had experience in the issue of domestic violence, were selected from different professions. The selection mainly considered respondents who could make decisions in establishing policies. Thus, all of them were chosen from the personnel in policy level from government and non-government organisations from variety areas that involving working for the victims of domestic violence. This group of respondents was comprised of a public prosecutor, a director of women affairs, a doctor in public health,
a psychiatrist, a professor, a police officer, a professor of law, an international officer, a freelance social worker who had experiences worked for women in difficulties, and a senator.

The data collection process for each participant commenced with making an appointment for interviewing. The interview procedure involved three steps.

**Step one**

Permission to interview clients was requested from the social workers or service workers from the agencies who provide services to abused wives. Of those available for interview only those who expressed a willingness to participate would be interviewed during the six months of the data-collecting period. Some service agencies felt that it would be unethical to divulge any information of their clients, so they did not allow contacting with the abused wives who came to their agencies.

**Step two**

Before interviewing the participants, I explained the purposes of the study and asked for the consent of each respondent. Also, permission to tape record the interviews was requested and participants were informed that they had the right to stop the interview at any time if they felt uncomfortable or simply wanted to stop. It was also confirmed that information they provided would be kept confidential. Specific information would not identify them by their names and most of the information would be used collectively. Further, the research records would be maintained under lock and key for up to 5 years destroyed afterwards.
Step three

The participants were interviewed using the semi-structured in-depth interview guides, as primary questions. All conversation including secondary question was rerecorded. According to the description of Patton (1990, p. 348) the recording device is an indispensable piece of equipment for researchers using qualitative methods. Patton also describes that “tape recorders do not tune out conversations, change what has been said” because of interpretation “(either conscious or unconscious), or record words more slowly than they are spoken”. In brief, the attempt to take verbatim notes during the interview can negatively affect the quality of the interview itself. The recording device however, notes tone, pace cadences and breathing patterns that may also indicate an emotional layer of response – something notes cannot capture.

Patton suggests the following as a means of explaining the need for the audio record and obtaining the participants permission for its use.

I’d like to tape record what you have to say so that I don’t miss any of it. I don’t want to take the chance of relying on my notes and thereby miss something that you say or inadvertently change your words somehow. So, if you don’t mind, I’d very much like to use the recorder. If at any time during the interview you would like to turn the tape recorder off, all you have to do is press this button on the microphone, and the recorder will stop (Patton 1990, p. 348).

During data collecting I not only used the recording device, but also took brief notes. Patton (1990) says that the use of a recording device does not entirely eliminate the need for taking notes. He outlines two purposes notes can perform. Brief notes can assist in constructing new questions and to record something to clarify or follow up later
(without breaking the flow of the participant’s contribution. Second, notes can make analysis easier by highlighting where key quotes occur and to record non-verbal behaviours that the device cannot capture. Note taking can however, become a kind of nonverbal feedback to the interviewee about when something was sufficiently important to have been written down; conversely, the failure to take notes will often indicate to the respondent that nothing of particular importance is being said.

Patton (1990) warns that immediately after researcher needs to check that the recording device functioned properly and if a malfunction occurred the researcher should immediately note everything that can be remembered from the interview. This rigor ensures the quality of data and validity of the inquiry. If the device functioned properly, the interviewer should go over the interview notes immediately to ensure “to make certain that they make sense, to uncover areas of ambiguity or uncertainty” (Patton 1990, pp. 352-353) and to review the quality of information received from the respondent. Patton (1990; 2002, p. 380) also states that because “the raw data of interviews are actual quotations”, the most desirable data to obtain would be full transcriptions of interviews.

If the interviewees became too anxious or unwilling to continue, the interview was terminated. Fortunately, all of the respondents were willing to participate the interview. Nobody was too anxious or wanted to terminate.

Data was collected over six months between October 2001 and March 2002. The interviews were carried out face-to-face. The duration of the interview with each participant varied, from forty-five minutes to about an hour.
The place for interviewing abused wives and the respondents from service agencies was at the agency, which were the most convenient place for the participants. The interviews with policy makers almost all took place at their offices, except for the freelance academic who made an appointment at her home.

For this research data is collected over a period of time limited to six months. The data collected from the abused wives is limited by the dates on which interviews with respondents could be scheduled. There are two reasons for this limitation. The first reason is that since the abused wives came to service agencies because they wanted someone to help them, they came when they needed help. The second reason is that only the abused wives who were able and willing to give information could be interviewed for the study.

**The Limitation of Coordination**

Another important limitation of this research is in gaining the cooperation of the service agencies as some noted that it would be unethical to divulge any information about their clients. For this reason some of the agencies did not allow contact with the abused wives who came to their agencies.

**4.5 DATA ANALYSIS**

Data analysis is ongoing, including a preliminary analysis phase. Rubin and Rubin (1995, pp. 226-227) define data analysis as the final stage of listening to hear the meaning of what is said. Thus, analysis begins while the interviewing is still under way.
As Rubin and Rubin (1995, pp. 226-227) state, after completing each interview and then again after finishing a cohort of interviews, the researcher examines the data, pulls out the concepts and themes that describe the world of the interviewees, and identifies which areas require more detailed examination. This preliminary analysis tells the researcher how to continue interviewing and allows the researcher to know when no more new ideas or perceptions are being uncovered. After the interviews, the researcher begins a more detailed focused analysis of what the respondents said. Additional themes and concepts can be uncovered in this step.

Dey (1993, p. 31) describes how the core of qualitative analysis lies in “the process of breaking data down into bits, and seeing how these bits interconnect, to a new account based on our reconceptualisation of the data”, and then breaking down data again in order to classify it, and make a connection between the concepts and the results that are provided in the findings of the research.

Operationalisation of in-depth interview data must be systematic (Miles & Huberman 1984). Descriptive data operationalisation is the process of presenting specific details in a format that other researchers can easily understand and draw their own interpretations from (Patton 1990; Yin 1994). Descriptive transcripts are prepared around criteria of constant comparison and negative cases, utilising theories and analytical induction (Glaser & Strauss 1967). Indeed, analysis of the empirical material proceeds along two tracks: the quantitative data is analysed by using statistical tools (frequency distributions, tables of the relationships among the variables, multivariate analysis etc.)” while text and of transcriptions are analysed according to the typical modalities of qualitative research (Piergiorgio 2003, p. 285).
This study analysed the data according to the three main analysis components (Miles & Huberman 1994, pp. 11-13): data reduction; data display; and drawing and verifying conclusions. (See Figure 4.2)

**Figure 4.3**

*Data Analysis Process of Qualitative Research*

Data reduction

Punch (1998, p. 203; 2005, p. 198; 2009, p. 174) refers to Miles and Huberman (1994, pp.11-12) that the “data reduction occurs continually throughout the analysis, It is part of analysis. In the early stages, it happens through editing, segmenting and summarising the data. In the middle stages, it happens through coding and memoing, and associate activities such as finding themes, clusters and patterns”. As Punch (1998, p. 203; 2005, p. 198; 2009, p. 174) also notes, “in the later stages, it happens through conceptualising and explaining, since developing abstract concepts is also a way of reducing the data. The objective of reduction is to reduce the data without significant loss of information.
In qualitative analysis, an additional important component of not losing information is not to strip the data from their context”.

**Data display**

Data displays organise, compress and assemble information this is especially the case with qualitative because it is so bulky and dense. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 11) regard displays as essential, often using the phrase “you know what you display”. Punch (1998, p. 203; 2005, p. 198; 2009, p. 174) refers Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 11) that they have “no doubt that better displays are a major avenue to valid qualitative analysis”. There are many different ways of displaying data–graphs, charts, networks, diagrams of different types–and any way that moves the analysis forward is appropriate. Punch (2005, p. 175) says: “displays are used at all stages, since they enable data to be organised and summarised, they show what stage the analysis has reached, and form they are the basis for further analysis”.

**Drawing and verifying conclusions**

Reducing and displaying data assists in drawing conclusions. The conclusions come after the data is clearly displayed but to display the data it has to first be understood and hence the research will have made some vague conclusions along the way. It is possible for some tentative conclusions to be identified early in the analytical process. Conclusions are not finalised until all the data is analysed and until the tentative conclusions (propositions) have been checked and verified (Punch 2005).
The reduction of data in this research starts with within-case analysis. The cases are – women victims, service providers and finally policy makers. Cross-case analysis is then used where matrices are developed to organise data and search for a pattern between the cases. For each case study, the main kind of data analysis is referred to as within-case analysis for example the results for the victims. Here the data is compared to the theories presented in research conceptualisation and frame of reference. When comparing the data to theory patterns are sought: either the data fits the theory, or it does not. Basically, in within-case analysis, the research data either verifies or falsifies or does neither. That is it agrees or disagrees, supports or is critical of previous research. It parallels the findings of other studies or does not. This is a primary contribution as a scientist—to what has already been done by observing the same thing in a new setting, or finding something new and presenting that to the old research. Within-case analysis is quiet repetitive of both data collected and the theories used in the frame of reference; the focus is on summarising rather than repeating. It reduces the data and moves on to display that data in cross-case analysis.

As this research conducted more than one case, cross-case analysis was also used. Matrices were constructed of various data sets and compared one case to the others. In this cross-case analysis, similarities were found with the within-case analysis findings. Often other patterns or discoveries were also found. The overall purpose was to gain a better understanding of phenomena.

The women victims were asked about their personal characteristics, this is within-case analysis. The service providers were also asked (within-case). Comparing the two sets of findings in the cross-case analysis shows a disparity. Future analysis can be generated from the findings.
Or, in the question on what are the types of abuse, the women victims’ answers in the within-case analysis again differed from the service providers answers. The cross-case analysis shows that the women and service providers define the types of abuse differently. This finding has implications not only for service provision and statistical collection on types of abuse that is the implications for policy but for education of victims and service workers and for building operational definitions for qualitative research projects.

Thus, the coding process connects the participants’ responses to key questions. The conceptual framework for the research was, as a result, tested in this process. There were no responses of any of the participants (victims, service providers or policy makers) that could not be directly coded to an item within the conceptual framework. This acts also as evidence of internal validity (Walker 1985).

In this study, the data analysis began during the stage of data collection, after some of the interviews were finished, although data collection was not yet complete. Data collected from qualitative methods was transcribed to understand the content of each interview in order to obtain more thorough results. The categories were crossed checked with each other for the three groups of respondents. The data set was presented in descriptions, tables and figures in the final report. The results were summarised and presented according to the context and some additional findings were presented to reflect more important views and ideas from the stakeholders.

For example, one of the primary questions (See Appendix B, C, and D) was “[h]ow long have you known one another and/or had a relationship with one another before you
lived together. The raw statistical response for this answer for the abused wives is 14 knew their husband for less than six months and of these six for less than one month. Six knew their husbands longer than 24 months. The qualitative answers coded to this question change the way the results will be reported because of the shared themes. The six women who had known their husbands longest were all confident in their relationships before marriage/living together. Five who had known their husband less than a month were a result of “love at first sight” or having been introduced and or influenced by friends or had an arranged marriage. The one stand-out story presented as a quote is of a woman who was engaged to someone else, that is who was going through the appropriate traditional process, was captured and raped by a different man and her family basically left her with the rapist. This story says something deeper about the value of women and the support they can expect especially given the banality of the words used by the woman to describe her abandonment and violation of rights: “[m]y parents felt that since the damage had already been done, and as he didn’t have a wife, they wouldn’t make an issue of it and let me to stay with him.”

The process then is: quantitative data collection, coding of qualitative responses to the primary questions, identification of shared themes in the qualitative responses, reporting the quantitative data in ways that reflects the meaning from the participants and adding particular quotes that highlight some feature not in the shared themes, a graphic example to humanise the statistics, a novel perception or a dissenting view.

The final stage of the analysis was to look closely at the responses of all participants and seek other insights. Qualitative researchers use coding to identify shared themes and concepts that arise from the participant responses. Some of these are already identified in the “call-out” shapes in many of the Figures presented in the research. Seale, Gobo,
Gubruim et al. (2004, pp. 478-479) indicate the advantages that exist for experienced and knowledgeable researchers in constructing coding schemes. In this research an extensive literature review and past research activity led to the development of a comprehensive framework. In turn the framework informed the construction of the interview guides. Even in those answers or from participants’ responses, key themes emerged which have already been identified in the literature for example male power and Thai culture.

The understatement of some of the descriptions of violence like quarrelling and fighting when what occurred is grievous bodily harm or assault with a deadly weapon required the researcher to stand outside the experience and to ask critical questions. One way is to chunk statements around particular concepts for example “the good wife”. The good wife it appears sticks by her husband, is faithful, is her husband’s property, ensures the family does not break-up, maintains the relationship, does not make a fuss, works hard, does extra work to meet family expenses, hides excess money she believes the family will need later and lies about where this money came from, acquiesces to the husband’s decisions about family expenditure and protects her husband’s self-image. The participants link “the good wife” to Thai culture.

The initial step was to identify the words and statements that make up a theme then see the links the participants make time and again between this theme and another concept.

The researcher also seeks the negative that is, looks for “cases that don’t fit the model” (Denzin & Lincoln 2000, p. 782). For instance, husbands are said to believe that they are more worthy, more valuable and that they should have control over their wives is something all the participants agreed on. These beliefs and their resultant behaviours
however, lead to harm to women and children and to the abuser himself. Again the participants connected this belief to Thai culture. Thailand is a country of a long and stable civilization where women were valued, with a constitutional monarchy, where democratic reform is possible, where legislation to protect women for domestic violence was passed by a military led administration during a time of political upheaval, and where there is a woman Prime Minister. It is a country centred on Buddhism that lauds self-control. Yet words related to men’s behaviours include “out of control”, “irrational”, and “thinks he is the boss”. Women say their lives are ones of fear, distrust and terror. Thailand is a country where 14 million women are victims of these behaviours.

It can be seen that the next step of seeking the negative leads to an important question. If this is not Thai culture, then what culture is it? Coding and seeking the negative leads to new insights and opportunities for further research.

4.6 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Reliability and validity are critical issues, establishing the quality of research design (Denscombe 1998). Patton (2001 cited in Golafshani 2003, p. 602) states “reliability is a consequence of validity in a study”. Golafshani (2003, p. 601) refers to Patton (2001) that “the validity and reliability are two factors which qualitative researcher should be concerned about during the phases of design and analysis and evaluation of any study”.

Golafshani (2003, p. 601) explains the term reliability as “a concept used for evaluating quantitative research”. It is about the ability to replicate the study and get the same results. In the view of Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p. 270) “the extent to which replication
can occur in qualitative research has been questioned on a number of counts”.
Reliability is sometimes talked about in terms of the conformability of findings, or the trustworthiness (Glaser & Strauss 1967), the consistency (Hammersley 1992; Robson 2002) or the dependability (Lincoln & Guba 1985) of the evidence.

Eisner (1991, p. 58 cited in Golafshani 2003, p. 601) says “a good qualitative study can help us understand a situation that would otherwise be enigmatic or confusing”.
Stenbacka (2001, p. 551 cited in Golafshani 2003, p. 601) relates that qualitative study provides understanding and credibility of the results for this set of respondents in this time and place.

**Validity** is affected by both the researcher’s perceptions and their choice of paradigm assumptions so it is a “contingent construct, especially grounded in the process and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects” (Winter 2000, p. 1; Creswell & Miller 2000, p. 128). The internal validity of the research is achieved by checking that the methods used, the precision of analysis and the interpretation contain no known bias and that the criteria used for selection inclusive of the constituencies known, or thought to be of importance (Hammersley 1992). The phenomena should be “identified, categorised and named in ways that reflect the meaning assigned by study participants… sufficient internal evidence for the explanatory accounts… portrayed in the findings in a way that remains true to the original data and allows others to see the analytic constructions that have occurred” (Ritchie & Lewis 2003, p. 274).

Golafshani (2003, p. 602) relates that in the constructivism paradigm knowledge can change depending on the context. Knowledge is socially constructed. Constructivism acknowledges multiple coexisting realities perceived by people. Therefore, triangulation
which requires multiple methods and sources for gathering data, or in theoretical triangulation the examination of one data set using multiple theoretical frameworks, in research is necessary. Golafshani (2003, p. 602) also explains that “methods chosen in triangulation to test the validity and reliability of a study depend on the criterion of the research” (Golafshani 2003, p. 604); there is no single method for all qualitative research. Denzin (1978) for instance suggests a procedure for establishing validity by using more than one investigation, source of data, or method to provide confirmation of the findings. Yin (1994), recommends other procedures for the design and execution of data collection, to enhance reliability and validity.

Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p. 274) state: “there is a strong link between the validity of qualitative data and the extent to which generalisation can occur”. Unless there is some degree of confidence in the internal validity or credibility of a research finding, then there would be little purpose in attempting any of the three types of generalisation previously described.

Walker (1985) states that internal validity deals with the question of how the findings match reality.

In this study multiple data sources (in-depth interviews and documents) were collected. These combined data collection methods can be used to corroborate information and enhance reliability and validity through converging lines of inquiry of data sources (Patton 1990). Selected information from these multiple sources, relevant to the theoretical requirements of the study and the emergent model, were gathered and used to develop validity. Using this approach, researchers can build a formal and presentable
database so that other researchers can review the evidence directly. This will enhance research reliability (Yin 1994).

To ensure and increase the reliability and validity of this study, I selected the participants based on their experiences: victims, services agencies and policy makers direct involved in wife abuse. The same semi-structured question guide was used for interviewing all respondents in each case without leading, being presumptive or offensive. The answers to the questions were reviewed and read to the interviewees for verification after they were interviewed. The wordings of all quotes were checked from the audio recordings. The data was analysed not only for each case (within-case) but also for comparison between the respondents (cross-case).

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

All social research involves ethical issues because the research involves collecting data from people, about people. It can be intrusive and examine sensitive and intimate issues (Punch 2005, p. 276). Qualitative researchers in particular need to be mindful of ethical issues in the collection, analysis and reporting of such information.

As the objects of inquiry in an interview are human beings, consideration of ethical issues is essential for the researcher (Fontana & Frey 2000, p. 662). Thus, the researchers must take are to avoid any harm to participants. Fontana and Frey (2000, p. 662) explain “traditionally, ethical concerns have revolved around the topics of informed consent (receiving consent by the subject after having carefully and truthfully informed him or her about the research), right to privacy (protecting the identity of the subject), and protection from harm (physical, emotional, or any other kind)”. 
The interviewer needs to have an ethical framework for dealing with such issues.

Patton (2002, pp. 406-407) says:

It is important to anticipate and deal with the ethical dimensions of qualitative inquiry. Because qualitative methods are highly personal and interpersonal, because naturalistic inquiry takes the researcher into the real world where people live and work, and because in-depth interviewing opens up what is inside people - qualitative inquiry may be more intrusive and involve greater reactivity than surveys, tests, and other quantitative approaches (Patton 2002, pp. 406-407).

Greenstein (2001, pp. 178-179) comments on the ethical issues in research on families and children that the rights of human research subjects may be defined in four broad areas: informed consent, anonymity and confidentiality, right to knowledge of the findings, and right to remedial services. According to Greenstein, the cornerstone of ethical research on human subjects lies in the principle of informed consent:

The regulations require that each potential research participant be provided with these details, including with a list of possible risks or discomforts, a description of possible benefits, a statement concerning confidentiality, information about whom to contact concerning the study. A statement of participation is voluntary and that the individual will suffer no adverse consequences for either refusing to participate or for withdrawing at any point during the study (Greenstein 2001, p. 178).

Informed consent is presumed to protect the researcher from charges that harm, deception, or invasion of privacy have occurred. Proper respect for human freedom generally includes two necessary conditions (Guba & Lincoln 1989; Denzin & Lincoln 2000). Subjects must agree voluntarily to participate—that is, no coercion of any kind is used and; their agreement must be based on informed consent.
On the point of anonymity and confidentiality, no identifying information should be retained in the researcher’s files following the completion of data collection. Confidentiality, on the other hand, has to do with the selective release of information from the researcher’s files and it must be assured as the primary safeguard against unwanted exposure. Information must be kept confidential even if it does not contain explicit identifiers such as names, because identity could be deduced based on other reported characteristics. Researchers need to make great effort to minimise any harm (including social and psychological harms) to the participants when reporting research findings (Greenstein 2006). Further, the research has an ethical obligation to inform the research participants about the nature of the research finding to meet the obligation of their right to knowledge of the findings.

Fine (1998 cited in Denzin & Lincoln 1998) argues that using qualitative research can result in the research participants being interpreted through the eyes and cultural standard of the researcher. For Fine, this is a form of colonisation. Punch (1998) examines the problems of betrayal, deception, and harm in qualitative research. These are problems directly connected to a deception model of ethical practice. Punch argues for a commonsense, collaborative social science research model that makes the researcher responsible to those studied.

Gilgun, Daly and Handel (1992) state that although all researchers face ethical dilemmas, the kinds of issues that qualitative family researchers face are unique in that they actively have chosen to enter into personal relationships with the participants. Thus, qualitative researchers are more likely to become party to participants’ intimate thoughts and feelings and may also become aware of conflicts and abuses. With regard to participants’ discussions of their private experiences in this investigation, I was
sensitive to the importance of rapport and the need for anonymity and confidentiality. Interviews with the participants, particularly abused wives, were conducted at the service agencies with which they were already well acquainted, and in rooms where discussions were able to be kept confidential just like the situation when they first came to talk about their suffering from abuse. Emotionally charged issues such as religious or personal beliefs were discussed openly with participants for whom there was relevance; or when no conflicts or overt discomfort about such discussion emerged. The respondents were assured that all names and identifying information would be altered during the write-up of the research, and it was emphasised that what they told me about their experiences of violence would not be discussed with anyone else. In addition, it was explicitly stated that it was appropriate to refrain from discussing any given issue if they found it too uncomfortable to do so. They were assured that they were not being judged on their remarks and that I was really most interested in whatever was meaningful to them.

On the ethics issue, Patton (1990) gives the view that “... [w]hile interviews may be intrusive in reopening old wounds, they can also be healing” (p. 170). When interviewees are open and willing to talk, the power of interviewing poses new risks. The ethical issues pertaining to qualitative research “... include confidentiality, informed consent, emotional safety, and reciprocity” (Oka & Shaw 2000, p. 17).

Oka and Shaw (2000, pp. 14-15) explain: “very few people would willingly express their most private details, opinions and emotions in public documents knowing that their names would be published”. Confidentiality is imperative: anonymity safeguards privacy. Oka and Shaw (2000, p. 15) suggest that the researcher “should pay as much attention as possible to maintain the confidentiality of the individual participants,
changing the facts where necessary as long as the changes do not mislead the essential elements of the report”.

**Informed consent**

Qualitative research design causes particular problems in relation to informed consent because of its flexible design. Polit, Beck, and Hungler (2001) defined informed consent below:

Informed consent means that participants have adequate information regarding the research, are capable of comprehending the information, and have the power of free choice, enabling them to consent to or decline participation voluntarily. This section discusses procedures for obtaining informed consent (Polit, Beck & Hungler 2001, p. 78).

The importance of repeatedly confirming informed consent in qualitative research is emphasised below:

… an awareness that such events cannot entirely be predicted. As a result, a revised view of informed consent seems warranted, in which consent is negotiated at different points in the research cycle. Informed consent is not something that can be handled once and for all at the beginning of a study (Bartunek & Louis 1996, p. 58).
**Emotional safety**

Oka and Shaw (2000, p. 15) note that the emotional safety in qualitative research “gives inquirers many opportunities to involve the participants in exploring emotionally sensitive topics”. Padgett (1998) goes on to say:

> Many qualitative interviews elicit intense discussions of painful life events such as divorce, death of a family member, and domestic abuse. Sensitivity to research ethics dictates that we do not introduce these topics gratuitously; they should either be volunteered by the respondents or inquired about when they are the focus of the study (Padgett 1998, p. 37).

Weiss (1994) states that competence in listening skills provides the space for participants to fully explore sensitive topics.

> There are obvious resemblances between the research interview and therapeutic interviewing. The research interviewer resembles a therapist by encouraging the respondent to develop thoughts and memories, by eliciting the respondent’s underlying emotions, and by listening closely to the respondent’s utterances (Weiss 1994, p. 134).

Patton (1990, p. 354 cited in Oka & Shaw 2000, p. 18) explains that it is precisely this “... therapeutic nature of qualitative interviews can cause an ethical dilemma. While interviewing, the participants begin to regard a researcher as therapist and open their mind more than they would usually for researcher”.

**Reciprocity**

Glesne (1999 cited in Oka & Shaw 2000, p. 16) explains: “qualitative researchers tend to have more personal relations with research participants, and reciprocity of research
will be more acutely noticed among both researchers and participants”. Glesne (1999, p. 126; Glesne & Peshkin 1992, p. 122) goes on to say:

As research participants willingly open up their lives to researchers—giving time, sharing intimate stories, and frequently including them in both public and private events and activities—researchers become ambivalent, alternatively overjoyed with the data they are gathering, but worried by their perceived inability to adequately reciprocate (Glesne 1999, p. 126; Glesne & Peshkin 1992, p. 122).

In their writing on qualitative research in social work, Oka and Shaw (2000) note that the participants are often socially disadvantaged. Social work research provides the evidence necessary to underpin advocacy efforts so that social conditions and the welfare of participants can be improved. It is this cooperation of researcher and researched that can bring social change.

According to this study, wife abuse has been seen as a personal or private problem in Thai society. As mentioned in Chapter 3 of this research (Kongbua, Leelamanee, Bhongsvej et al. 1999; Lertsrisantad 2002), domestic violence is commonly viewed that violence in the family is a private matter or a family affair. So when a woman or a wife suffers from violence, she will keep it to herself. In addition, the Thai cultural belief still prevails that once married, the couple should remain together until death. This belief means that people within Thai society strongly censure and blame women who expose their private problems. So talking about and gathering information regarding this kind of problem from abused wives is considered to be very sensitive. Most of the Thai women interviewed were uncertain and unwilling to discuss openly their problems and their experiences concerning the abusive situation in their lives.
The ethical principles applied to this study are autonomy (confidentiality, informed consent), non-maleficence (do no harm, including keeping people emotionally safe), respect (collaboration to avoid a discourse of the participant being constructed as “other”), and beneficence (reciprocity and advocacy).

4.8 REPORT OF THE FINDINGS

Neuman (2003, p. 469) relates that a research report is “a written document… that communicates the methods and findings of research project to others”. It is a record of the research process; it is more than a summary of findings which including with “the reasons for initiating the project’s step, a presentation of data, and a discussion of how the data related to the research question on topic” (Neuman 2003, p. 469). To write a report on qualitative social science, Bogdan and Taylor (1975, p. 141) remarked:

A report, article, or monograph based on qualitative research is not, or should not be, an individual’s off-the cuff view of a situation. Rather, it should be a descriptive and analytical of data that have been laboriously and systematically collected and interpreted (Bogdan & Taylor 1975, p. 141).

In the writing stage, Morse (1994, p. 231) says “qualitative research writing is different from quantitative research writing. The quantitative report consists of a concise presentation of the methods and results of the study”. Morse (1994) encouraged researchers to make sure in the design of qualitative research that there the data is systematically presented and that there is a compelling argument for the researcher’s findings that accounts for or refutes alternative explanations. Writing the report findings is often a fragmented activity. The researcher has to “engage more consistently with the
data… try to record any insight in memos” (Seibold 2003, p. 7). Sussman and Gilgun (1996, p. 255) note:

The writing up of qualitative research generally involves setting out the themes constructed in the analysis and illustrating them with quotes intended to represent the lived experience of informants. Stories, metaphors, diagrams, dialogue, and paradigm cases are often part of the write-up. Links to previous research and theory demonstrate the wide applicability of qualitative findings (Sussman & Gilgun 1996, p. 255).

Maione and Chenail (1999, p. 5) refer to Chenail (1994, p. 8) and (Constas 1992) in the views of constructing research report “qualitative researchers must clearly describe their working methods, accounting for the choices they made in constructing their inquiry” The researchers suggest:

… describe the setting for their study and how they gained access to the site. In addition, they recount the process of generating and collecting their data, the means for processing and analysing the data, the ways in which they will re-present their analytical observations, and how they conducted quality controls in their work (Maione & Chenail 1999, p. 5).

Maione and Chenail (1999, p. 5) also provide Wolcott’s explanation (1992) that “during this process, it is important for qualitative researchers to take great care to delineate what they are attempting to do in their work, and how they participate in their ongoing research endeavours”. They say “through these self-reflective narratives, qualitative researchers establish their credibility through an accurate and honest account of their actions” (p. 5).

The qualitative presentation does not rely on statistics to show the conclusions. Instead, the researchers “build confidence in their findings or constructions by attempting to
saturate herself with observations of the phenomenon in question” (Maione & Chenail 1999, p. 5). Walcott (1994, p. 258) states that “...interpretations are our claims to the independent creation of new knowledge...”. Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 433) describe the interaction between “display and analytic text” thus:

The display helps the writer see patterns; the first text makes sense of the display and suggests new analytic moves in the displayed data: a revised or extended display points to new relationships and explanations, leading to more differentiated and integrated text and so on (Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 433).

There many forms of reporting qualitative research and not just as text (Punch 1998, p. 266):

Reporting qualitative data may be one of the most fertile fields going; there are no fixed formats, and the ways data are being analysed and interpreted are getting more and more various. As qualitative data analysts, we have few shared canons of how our studies should be reported. Should we have normative agreement on this? Probably not now—or, some would say, ever (Miles & Huberman 1994, p. 299).

In qualitative research it is not enough just to display the findings. As Ritchie and Lewis (2003, p. 301) explain “the main challenge in qualitative reporting is to find ways of telling the story of the research in a clear and cogent way”. Qualitative research findings need to balance plain description and interpretation while showing the colour, tapestry and depth of the participants’ perspectives (Patton 2002). Quotations from participants’ interviews need to be contextualised and connected to related texts (Oka & Shaw 2000, p. 7; Kvale 1996). Quotes need to be used sparingly to and only relevant and illustrative quotes should be used (Day 1979). Balance is needed between the quotes, the story telling and their interpretation and analysis. The researcher needs to be transparent.
about the bases for interpretation and the conclusions. It is important to show the evidence that supports all conclusions (Hammersley & Atkinson 1995; Holloway & Wheeler 1996; Morse, Kuzal & Swanson 2001). In summary, it is up to the qualitative researcher to decide the best way to report.

The presentation of this research report accords with the above. The process of writing began with writing the conceptual framework and reviewing the literature, covering the different concepts and theories of domestic violence and wife abuse. Then, the background and context of Thai families and information involved with wife abuse in Thailand were the next issues written up. Next, the variables, factors and themes of research to explore wife abuse in Thailand were defined. Rice and Ezzy (1999, p. 239) refer to the explanation of Day (1979, p. 8), and Attig and Winichagoon (1993) in their article:

> Although qualitative reports do not strictly follow the format of scientific reports. It does not mean that they do not have any structure. The structure of qualitative reports emerges from an interaction between the topic being studied and the researchers’ own style and system of logic (). The report writing needs to have a framework or plan so that it can be developed into a complete piece of work. Thereafter, the introduction of the study was delineated to set the scope for research writing (Rice & Ezzy 1999, p. 239).

In parallel with writing up the findings on the concepts and theories of domestic violence and wife abuse, the background and context of Thai families, and information involved with wife abuse in Thailand, the outline of the research methodology was constructed. The writing of this chapter was completed after collecting, analysing, and interpreting data, when the details of the research procedure were finished.
The report on the results of the analysis of the data is displayed in three parts with examples of the richest descriptions. It begins with the presentation of the findings regarding the background information about the respondents, including a demographic description of the three groups of participants. The findings regarding wife abuse in Thai families follows with an analysis of the data collected in interviews. Included is a discussion of the participants’ perceptions on what factors cause wife abuse and the consequences; how to respond to wife abuse; and suggestion on how to solve the problem of wife abuse. That section is followed by a discussion and recommendations. These findings and recommendations are presented in graphical form as a guide for future research and practice. Finally, the first chapter that includes the outline of the research completed the documentation.

CONCLUSION

This chapter has explained and justified the methodology used in this study. Constructivism study model is chosen as the most appropriate paradigm, and the qualitative method is chosen as the strategy of study. Because the main objective of the thesis is exploring the wife abuse phenomenon as a kind of family suffering situation, the thesis is justified as an applied research study, entirely in the area of social science. The word ‘exploration’ is given as a basic purpose of the thesis because the nature and incidence of wife abuse in Thai society are little known.

According to the qualitative research method, the essence of the phenomenological research is chosen to understand the live experiences of the respondents. This research required an in-depth understanding of the interviewees’ background, experiences and their ideas. The semi-structured in-depth interview method is used in collecting data.
The data collecting procedure follows the interview guide that decreased the errors in the data collecting process. The respondents consisted of twenty abused wives; twenty key informants from the ten service agencies and ten policy makers.

Data collecting took place from October 2001 to March 2002. All of the interviewing was done with informed consent and permission to record. Each interview lasted for forty-five minutes to one hour. The procedure of collecting data was only begun with the consent of each participant. Data collected through the qualitative method was transcribed to clarify the content of each interview in order to obtain more thorough results.

The chapter explains the detailed process of the research, the structure of the reporting of data, the process of analysis and the construction of the final document.
Chapter 5

BACKGROUND OF THE RESPONDENTS

This chapter presents the general background of the respondents. The data in this part was collected from twenty abused wives who sought assistance from service agencies; twenty respondents from service agencies; and ten policy makers from a variety of fields, but all of whom have experience involving issues of wife abuse. This size is designed for describing cases in-depth and aims to clearly explain the nature and incidence of wife abuse in Thailand.

5.1 GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE ABUSED WIVES

Personal Background of Abused Wives and Their Husbands

The background of the abused wives and their husbands is presented in terms of their age, level of education, religion, occupation, and income.

Age

The youngest was eighteen years old while the oldest was fifty-five. The average age was 33.2 years. Fifteen of the twenty abused wives were under forty years old, and five of them were over. The age of the husbands ranged from nineteen to fifty-eight years, with an average of 36.5 years. Eleven of them were under forty years old, and other nine of them were over. When comparing the age of the husbands and wives, couple by
couples; fourteen of the twenty husbands were older than their wives, four were younger and two were of similar ages.

**Level of education**

The overall level of education was relatively high. Only six of both wives and husbands had left school at the completion of grade six. A further four wives and three husbands left at the completion of secondary school, while ten wives and ten husbands completed either a junior degree, diploma or a bachelor degree. One husband had completed a graduate degree.

Before 2002, the compulsory education required in Thailand was only six years, so most Thai people received at least primary school education. However, after 2002 the state announced a new law extending compulsory education to the first three years of secondary school. Therefore, most of the respondents and their husbands had achieved the compulsory education and up to a junior degree or diploma. Also, because they were located in Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand, it should be pointed out that the level of education might be expected to be generally higher than in other parts of the country.

**Religion**

Most of the wives (eighteen out of the twenty) and their husbands were Buddhist. Two of the twenty in each group were Moslem, while none of the abused wives or their husbands were Christian. This is in keeping with the religious make-up of the Thai population that almost all of them are Buddhist the next group are Moslem, Christian,
and others (NSO 2000). As the sample is small, no inferences can be made about any connection between belief system and abuse.

**Occupation**

Ten out of the twenty wives were employees in the private sector while six of them were owners of small businesses (three out of the six were food vendors, one was a tradeswoman, one a shop owner, and another a car repair shop owner). Another three out of twenty were housewives, while only one of them was a teacher in a government school. Of the husbands, twelve of the twenty were employees, two owned businesses, one was a teacher in a government school, and five of them were unemployed. Some respondents said their husbands who were unemployed spent their time raising fighting cocks and at cock fighting events and they had no stable income, so they considered them jobless.

**Income**

It was found that the abused wives’ incomes tended to be higher than those of their husbands. Seventeen out of twenty wives received income from their work. Twelve of the twenty earned less than 10,000 baht ($344 AUD) per month (2000 Exchange rate $1 AUD=29 baht). Only three of them declared that they did not have any of their own income and they depended on the income of their husbands. Fifteen of the twenty husbands had some income, with nine of them earning less than 10,000 baht per month. Five of them had no stable income and relied on their wives for support.
Even though a document from the National Socio-Economic Development Board of Thailand (2005) indicated that the poverty line of Thai family income was 1,230 baht ($ 35.6 AUD) per head per month in 2004, the respondents seemed not to have experienced financial problems. The abused wives attempted to maintain a balance of income and expenses by working hard to make enough money to cover their own and their children’s living expenses because they could not depend on their husbands.

Further data on the financial situation indicated that some of the families did not have enough income to live on. Some of the husbands did not have regular jobs and the wives had to work to get more money, and this income was not sufficient to pay off their debts or expenses. Only one of the wives and three of the men earned more than 20,000 baht ($=689.6 AUD) per month.

A comparison of the income generated for family use by abused wives and their husbands shows that fourteen of them had separate incomes. Four couples lived on income generated only by the husbands, and two couples lived on income generated by the wives alone. Of the sixteen abused wives who had their own income, eleven of them still left the entire decision-making in matters of family finance to the men. This is consistent with the view that in Thailand the husband still has more power than his wife. However, in some cases where the husbands were jobless or did not have regular jobs, the wives had to be responsible for all the expenses in the family without any real help from their husbands. In the cases where the couple had separated, the abused wives had to take care of themselves and their children with their own income. In only one case is there a process underway to sue for divorce.

The data is presented in Table 5.1 is below.
Table 5.1

Personal Background of Abused Wives and their Husbands

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Background</th>
<th>Abused wives (N=20)</th>
<th>Husbands (N=20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age: the age distribution of respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 40 years old</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 40 years old</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory/Fundamental education</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior degree/ Diploma/Under graduate</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buddhist</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moslem</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Occupation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee in private sector</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Owner of small business</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife (woman) and jobless (man)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Income (1 A$ = 29 baht)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No income/no stable work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 10,000 baht</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 10,000 baht</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this study

Personal Characteristics of the Abused Wives

The information in this part presents the self-perception of abused wives and the views of service workers, who provided assistance to them, on abused wives characteristics.

Eight of the twenty wives perceived themselves as very quiet and passive or silent. Five of them perceived themselves as very independent and refused to be controlled. Another three of them described themselves as usually prone to worrying, and lacking self-confidence. Two said they did not like to lie and always spoke frankly, one of these two
said she got angry easily when she knew her husband lied to her, but got over it easily when he promised not to do it again. They said they would get angry if anyone told them a lie or tried to fool them. Another two said that they lived modestly or economically. They liked to work to save money for their family, and they viewed that their husbands had the opposite characteristic.

I came from a poor family which owned no land or even a house. I finished only six years of basic education. I wanted to live a simple life with my family. So far, I have only experienced violence and hard times from my husband (Abused Wife Number 6).

The data present in Figure 5.1 is below.

**Figure 5.1**

*Abused Wives Characteristics as Perceived by Themselves*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>quiet &amp; passive silent</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>independent</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lacking self-confidence</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>straightforward</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>live modestly</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Developed for this study*

Fifteen service providers (whose views are related to all the women they have worked with over many years and not just the cohort of women in this study) supported that the wives were not self-sufficient and depended on their husbands. They were described as lacking of self-confidence, obedient to their husbands and afraid to make their own decisions. Next, nine of the twenty service providers related that many of the wives had
undesirable personality traits such as dependence on drugs or alcohol, were financially irresponsible, or had other personal problems. The women in this study were all capable of disclosing abuse and discussing it with a stranger, via the researcher. None give their personal characteristics as being drug or alcohol affected, being financially irresponsible or having other personal problems. So, these are a different batch of women than those usually encountered by the service providers. These are the ones who are on the pathway to overcoming domestic violence. They said that often these women came from single parent households or dysfunctional families. They described them as nitpicking, prone to complaining, overly talkative, unfaithful to their husbands, and said they liked to go out for fun, ignoring or neglecting their children and husbands. Five of them also said the abused wives were nervous, stressed, depressed, despondent or scared and suspicious.

In addition, a few wives (four of the twenty wives) admitted that their weak points were that they came from poor families, had little education, or lacked knowledge and skills. That is why, they said, they did not know how to solve their problems. Two of them perceived themselves as hard working because they did not want their children live in difficulties. The other wives did not relate this information. Some of the service providers supported these views, and they said that is why the wives could not live on their own.

**Information on Abused Wives’ Families**

The information on respondents’ families relates to the household composition, family structure, type of family, number of children and the ages of them, and head of the household.
**Family composition**

The number of members in the families of abused wives ranged from two to six persons. The mean was 3.4 members. This number is close to the average household size of the Thai family which is 3.5 persons per household in the latest survey (NSO 2003).

Six families consisted of just two members; they were husband and wife who had no children. Three were composed of three members, with two families consisting of a couple with one child, and another family consisting of a mother and two of her children. In the five families with four members, three of them consisted of a couple and two children each; one consisted of a couple with one child and a mother-in-law, and the other consisted of a couple with one child and a cousin. In the four families with five members, three were couples with three children, one a couple with two children who lived with the husband’s father, and another was a couple with one child who lived with the wife’s father and mother. The last two families had six members, one was a couple who lived with their three children and a son-in-law, and another was a couple with two children and a cousin.

**Family structure**

It was found that there were three types of family structures of abused wives: extended family, nuclear family, and single parent family. Most of them, covering sixteen of the twenty families, lived in nuclear families comprised of wife, husband, and children. Three out of twenty lived in extended families. They had relatives and in-laws living
with them. It seemed to make little difference to the families, as some of the relatives such as an aunt or other relatives could not make important decisions for the family and sometimes they were powerless in that household. However, in the families who lived with parents and parents-in-law, these relatives usually had quite a high status in that household and had significant decision-making power. They owned the house and other assets, so the family members had to respect them, including the way they judged what was right and wrong. The husband and wife had to pay attention to the opinions of their parents or in-laws. One of the abused wives who lived with her parents stated that their conflict sometimes stopped when her parents got in between, however, her parents could not get involved with every activity between the couple.

Lastly, one respondent lived in a single parent family consisting of just the mother and her children. Her husband who had abused her had left her with her other two children and refused to take any responsibility for her or the children left behind.

**Number and age distribution of respondents’ children**

Six out of twenty of the wives reported not having any children yet, but two of them were pregnant. Five of the respondents had only one child and six of them had two children. There were three families that had three children. The youngest child was eighteen months old while the oldest was thirty-four years of age. Thirteen of the thirty-four children were under ten years of age, and twelve children ranged from ten to nineteen years of age. Therefore, twenty-five of the children were below the age of twenty. The remaining nine off-springs were over twenty years of age.
**Head of the household**

In thirteen of the twenty families, the head of the household was the husband of the abused wife. Only six of the households were headed by the abused wives, while the father of one of the abused wives headed one family. It was found that in the households in which the woman was considered to be the head, the families relied solely on the income of the wife; the husband did not contribute any resources.

The respondents cited many reasons why they considered the men to be the head of the household. One reason given by eight of the respondents was that the husbands were considered to be the leaders and the women had to rely on them. Another reason was that the men were responsible for looking after the family’s expenses, even if they did not earn the income themselves; this was cited by three of the respondents. Another two respondents stated that their husbands were older and had more income. A similar number gave the reason that their husbands owned the house and the wives were only residents. Only four respondents stated that women should be the heads of the household because they looked after all the family members and they thought that men and women are equal.

In summary, more than half (eleven out of nineteen abused wives) based their decision on culture or deeply held beliefs. Four out of nineteen of them based decision on authority and financial power, and four of them are on the ground of gender equality. These findings are in keeping with the recent statistics of the household structure in 2002 (NSO 2005) which showed that 55.5% were nuclear families, 32.1% were extended families, and the other 0.6% are comprised of unrelated individuals. The household heads were males in 69.8% of the households and women headed the other
30.2%. This latter percentage had risen from 27.8% in 1999, 29.1% in the year 2000, and 29.8% in 2001.

The data is presented in Table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2**

Information of Abused Wives’ Family

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family Information</th>
<th>Abused Wives (N=20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Household composition</strong> (mean = 3.4)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 persons</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 persons</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 persons</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 persons</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 persons</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family structure</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear family</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended family</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single parent family: mother and children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Family composition</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife and husband/wife, husband and children</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife, husband, children, and relatives/son or daughter in law</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wife and children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of respondents’ children</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 - 2 persons</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 – more than 3 persons</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No children</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age distribution of respondents’ children</strong> (answer more than one) (N=34)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 5 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 – 9 years</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 – 14 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15 – 19 years</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 – 24 years</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 25 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Head of the household</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husbands/partners</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abused wives</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wives’ parent</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this study
Marriage Background

The data in this part concerns the marital status of abused wives, years of marriage, and the relationship of the abused wives and their husbands before marriage.

Marital status

Fourteen of out the twenty wives stated that they were still living together with their husbands but only nine of the fourteen reported being legally married. Nine of this fourteen reported being legally married but other five of them just lived together without a license. Two of the twenty wives were temporary separated. Three of them were taking legal proceeding to obtain a formal divorce. They were in the process of legal action to force their husbands to pay for their children. Only one was legally separated and living in separate house from her husband.

In discussing with the wives, among those who were living together, ten stated that they needed to keep quiet because of the family status, for their children, or due to their economic dependency. It seems clear that they had decided to stay with abusive husbands for a variety of reasons and hoped for a change in their husband’s behaviour. Few of them revealed that they did not have enough resources to leave their husbands or to live alone. They relied on their husbands’ authority.
Years of marriage

Eleven of the twenty wives had been married for less than ten years. In this group, five of them revealed that they had only lived together for one year; one had been married for two years; two had been married for three years; one for five years, and the other two had been married for seven years. Another six of the twenty had been married for between ten and twenty years. In this group, one had been married for ten years, two for fifteen years, one for seventeen years, one for eighteen years, and one for twenty years. Only one out of the total sample reported being married for thirty years. Two of the twenty respondents had been married for only a matter of months— one of them for one month and another for three months, but they had already been abused.

Relationship before marriage

According to the findings, the relationships of respondents and their husbands before they got married can be classified under three categories.

First, nine of the twenty abused wives reported that they and their husbands knew each other for less than one year before living together. One in this group reported that she had known her husband for only one month before he carried her off by force and raped her.

Thirty years ago I met my husband for the first time when I was selling things... When we met, I didn’t even know his name, but he sent me three love letters. But I wasn’t interested because I already had a fiancé and was planning to get married in a few months. He (the husband) captured me and raped me. My parents felt that since the
damage had already been done, and as he didn’t have a wife, they wouldn’t make an issue of it, and let me to stay with him (Abused Wife Number 4).

The other abused wives in this group reported that they knew their husbands for just two to six months before living together. They made the decision to live together because they thought that they had met the person who would really love them and look after them for the rest of their lives. One woman said that she and her husband were close before getting married, but her parents did not like him because he had no stable job and he was younger than she was. They decided to live together without her parents’ permission. Finally he left her after he knew that she was pregnant.

Six of the couples knew each other from studying or working in the same place for more than two years. The abused wives said they were confident that the relationship between them and their partners was very good before they decided to live together or get married. One of these respondents said that they had a good relationship before they got married. He was mostly good, but she did not like him when he was drunk.

Five of the wives did not know anything about their husbands. Three of them said they just met them and it was love at first sight, and two of the abused wives were in an arranged marriage. One of the three women said that she married him after she just met him.

One of the two women who agreed to an arranged marriage was recommended to her husband by relatives, and another was recommended by a friend. The woman who was recommended by relatives to get together with her husband stated that they did not love each other but they were forced to marry. Another woman who was introduced to her
husband by a friend decided to marry him after a few months even though she didn’t
know him well. Her decision was due to the influence of her friends.

In Thailand arranged marriages were common in former times. These days, the
traditional kind of marriage arranged by relatives is no longer commonplace. These
cases above reflect the point that still women in Thai culture are still influenced by the
traditional expectation to obey their parents. Often, they feel they cannot make their
own decisions about how to live their lives, even in terms of marriage or choosing
someone they love and deciding to live together. Also, in some situations the woman
felt forced to live with a man who abused her even the first time they met. Some women
are expected to tolerate abuse for their whole lifetime, to satisfy their parents or to
conform to the Thai cultural belief that a good wife should have only one husband.
Also, once a woman has a child, she might feel that she cannot leave because her child
must have both a mother and a father.

**Relationships between couples**

The wives also reported that sometimes, abusive incidents were caused by family
problems that had gone unsolved for a long time. The most common problems involved
the relationship between husband and wife. Fifteen of the twenty of them said that they
fought often, usually over issues involving the husband’s use of power over other
family members.

Our family life was not smooth. We were always quarrelling and fighting. Our income was
not enough to meet our expenses, so I had to work to get more money, and then I had to
hide it so my husband wouldn’t know. I lied and told him the money I used to pay our
expenses was money I had borrowed. Otherwise, I was afraid he wouldn’t give me any
more money for family expenses or would take away my money for his own use (Abused Wife Number 4).

Meanwhile, five of the twenty women considered that normally their relationship with their husbands was good. Two out of this five said that their husbands would not help with the housework or that they had difficulty understanding each other, but overall they related they could communicate with each other well except when their husbands were drunk.

We had a good relationship. We were happy. But it wasn’t very good when my husband was drunk (Abused Wife Number 12).

From discussions with the workers, eleven of them said that the wives who still remained lived with their husbands for many reasons. Six of this eleven said the wives were willing to endure for the sake of their children because they wanted their children to have both a father and a mother and did not want them to feel they were from a broken home. Others said they wanted to stay with their husbands for financial and social reasons. Women are brought up to believe in the value of staying with one man their entire lives and that they should remain faithful to him no matter what.

Women are taught to stick with their man and be faithful. Once they are married they are considered the property of their husband. That is considered a good quality in a wife. Every woman wants to be a good wife. They do not want their family to break up. They believe that if they break up then that shows that they are not a good woman or did not fulfil the role of a good wife, and that is why their husband left them or they went separate ways (Respondent from Service Agency Number 5).
Most of the abused wives remain friendly with their husbands and their relationships are generally maintained. This happened even with the authorities and the court; they tried to persuade the couple to reconcile the conflict if possible (Respondent from Service Agency Number 5).

Nine of the twenty workers noted that most of the wives who came in for assistance had poor relationships with their husbands as well as with other members of the family. They observed that often the relationship between husband and wife was like that between master and slave. The wives were like servants under the power of their husbands. The wives did not trust their husbands and were not confident in themselves. They felt oppressed and did not dare to express their feelings. Some lived in a state of fear and felt they were dependent on their husbands. Even though they came in to the shelter they wanted their husbands to come and take them home and wanted to continue living with their husbands even if it meant being abused again. They related that some of the wives asked for a safe place to stay, but then called their husbands to ask them to come and pick them up and take them back home. If they got in a fight again they would go back to the shelter again. Some came frequently but always returned home.

Their relationships are not good. The wives don’t trust their husbands and are never sure if they will hurt them again. They try to be very careful but they feel much pressured (Respondent from Service Agency Number 14).

Some of them still want to stay with their husbands. They call their husbands to come and pick them up. Some of them were abandoned by their husbands but still hoped they would come and try to make up and take them back again. If they did get together again, the women would come back to the agency for help as soon as they got in a fight again. Some of them came in again and again (Respondent from Service Agency Number 15).
**Husbands’ backgrounds**

Nine of the twenty wives related that they knew everything about their husband’s background, while nine of them thought that they knew few things about their husband’s background, and the other two stated that they knew nothing at all about it.

An abused wife who thought that she knew her husband’s background very well before they decided to get married, and viewed that she knew a lot about her husband stated:

> I knew where his house was. I knew his family. When we first got together we lived at his parents’ house. We come from the same village, but we just never knew each other personally before (Abused Wife Number 4).

Three of them knew that their husbands were from broken families, and some knew they were from a family in which the father had power over everybody in the family. Two wives said that their husbands were womanisers but they thought that they would give up this behaviour after they were married.

> In my husband’s family his father was very influential. He played a strong role in influencing his children’s ideas. He always insulted and expressed hate against his wife (Abused Wife Number 20).

> My husband never lived with his parents ever since he was small. He never had a warm, loving family. He was always at odds with his brothers and sisters. There were six of them and he was the oldest brother. He had trouble getting along with other people, including his own parents (Abused Wife Number 7).
My husband just loved to have fun. He liked to get together for a good time with his friends. He had lots of girlfriends, besides seeing me. I guess he just gets bored easily. But I could accept it. I thought his character would change after we got married (Abused Wife Number 5).

The wives who did not know much about their husbands’ backgrounds revealed that they knew only what their husbands told them, so they believed that they were good people. One said six months after she got married, her husband changed and started to behave cruelly towards her.

Before we got married I thought my husband was wonderful in every way, but after we got married I realised I had misunderstood him. Everything was just the opposite of what I had hoped and I was very disappointed (Abused Wife Number 10).

Husband’s relationship with members of his own family

Nine of the twenty wives believed that their husbands did not have a good relationship with the members of their own families. Six of them considered that their husbands had good relationships with the members of their own families, and other five thought that the relationships were somewhat good.

In discussions with the wives who thought that their husbands’ relationships with the members of their immediate families, especially their parents, were not very good. The wives said that they did not see their families very often and lived somewhere else. Three wives said their husbands had told them that they did not get along well with their fathers or siblings. As for the wives who reported that their husbands had good relationships with their families, they said that their husbands helped their families by helping pay for their expenses or giving money to their parents from time to time.


*Husband’s background as an abused child or witness of family abuse*

Ten of the wives thought that their husbands did not have backgrounds as abused children or witnesses of abuse. Five wives perceived that they had, and the other five wives did not know.

The wives who stated that they did not think there was any history of violence or abuse in their husband’s family, two of them said their husbands had told them that their parents did not love them or did not want a son. They said their husbands were starved for affection or neglected as children. Two of them said this drove them to use drugs when they were teenagers, but that they had given it up before getting married. One wife stated that her husband said he was angry with his father, and when his father died he even refused to go to the funeral. Another said that her husband’s opinions were very different from those of his parents. He felt he was treated unfairly in his family because his parents loved and paid more attention to his siblings. A few of them said their husbands never talked to them about their families.

My husband… He was so angry with him (his father) that he didn’t even go to his funeral when he died, and ordered me not to go either. But I went anyway and when I got back he was really angry and we got into a bad fight (Abused Wife Number 13).

They didn’t see eye to eye. He (my husband) felt his family took advantage of him and treated him unfairly because he was the eldest. His parents didn’t pay much attention to him but loved and valued their younger children more (Abused Wife Number 7).
5.2 GENERAL BACKGROUNDOS OF THE RESPONDENTS FROM SERVICE AGENCIES

The data in this part concerns the general backgrounds of the respondents who provided assistance to abused wives such as their age, level of education, area of study, position, years of experience in domestic violence and wife abuse, responsibilities regarding wife abuse, experiences in the issue of wife abuse, and their understanding of wife abuse.

Age

The youngest service workers were twenty-seven years old while the oldest was fifty-four. The average age was 37.2. Eleven of them were under forty years old; other nine were over forty years old.
Level of education

Fourteen of the twenty respondents had completed undergraduate degrees. Three of them had finished lower than undergraduate degrees; one had only finished secondary school while the other two had completed diplomas. Another two had graduate degrees and only one had completed a doctorate.

Area of study

The respondents came from a range of disciplines. Eight of them studied in the area of Psychology. Five of them studied in the area of Social Work or related areas of study. Three of them studied in the area of Religious Studies, with financial support from the Christian charity organisation where they worked. Two studied Mass Communication and one studied Political Science. One of them graduated in Law.

Position

Fifteen of the respondents were working as social workers and psychologists in the operational level, and the other five were in management positions.

Years of experience in domestic violence/wife abuse

All of them had worked dealing with wives who had been abused. Seven of them had worked for two years, three had worked for three years, five had worked for four years, three had worked for five years, and the remaining two had worked for twenty-five years and thirty years.
The data present in Table 5.3 is below.

Table 5.3
Information of Respondents from Service Agencies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Information</th>
<th>Respondents from Service Agencies (N=20)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age:</strong> the age distribution of respondents (average 37.2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Under 40 years old</td>
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<tr>
<td>Over 40 years old</td>
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<td><strong>Level of education</strong></td>
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<td>Diploma</td>
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<td>Under graduate degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Graduate degree</td>
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<tr>
<td>Doctoral degree</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Area of study</strong></td>
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<td>Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Social work</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Science</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Law</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>Social welfare work</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive director/Director/Head of the centre</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psychologist</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Years of experience in domestic violence/wife abuse</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 years</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 years</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>more than 5 years</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this study

**Responsibilities regarding wife abuse**

All of the respondents from service agencies gave counselling to the abused wives who needed assistance from the agencies. In the pre-counselling stage, the service workers
asked the victims about their problems and considered the kinds of assistance needed in each case. They investigated the signs of abuse such as the psychological status or severity of depression of the women. Some of the wives had been referred to a safe place for pre-natal care. In their counselling duties, the service workers gave support to the abused wives to help solve their problems. Some of the workers also provided information and suggestions to wives on how to prosecute their abusers, how to ask for a divorce, or how to sue for alimony and child support. Some of them stated their main duties concerned the victim’s physical and psychological health, while some of the agencies provided safe places or emergency homes for abused wives and their children. Other responsibilities included providing funding for basic sustenance, career development, and education for children who came with their mothers. One of the most important duties was to cooperate with other service agencies to assist the abused wives.

The data present in Figure 5.3 is below.

**Figure 5.3**

**Responsibilities of Respondents from Service Agencies**

Source: Developed for this study
The service providers did not mention that their work involved cases of sexual abuse, because in Thai society and under Thai law, forced sex in marriage was not considered illegal. It was not considered a crime. The explanation of Pongsapich and Jamnarnwej, (1998, p. 32) on the Criminal Law is that husband and wife should cohabit as husband and wife, marriage made any sexual relation between the two rightful both by law and custom. In addition, Thai women do not normally talk openly about matters of sexual intercourse, particularly with unfamiliar persons.

In general, all of the respondents said that from their experience as a provider of services, they provided assistance in a variety of forms.

### 5.3 GENERAL BACKGROUND OF THE POLICY MAKERS

Ten of the policy makers were chosen from among stakeholders who were in high positions at organisations that help abused wives. The general backgrounds of them is presented in term of their age, level of education and area of study, position, years of experience in domestic violence/wife abuse, work experience, and their understanding of wife abuse.

**Age**

The youngest of the policy makers was forty-eight years old while the oldest was seventy-two. The average age was 55.6. They tended to be older than the respondents from service agencies. Half of them were younger than fifty years old, and the others were older.
**Level of education and area of study**

Six out of the ten policy makers had graduate degrees, two of them had undergraduate degrees, and the other two had doctoral degrees. They came from a variety of fields of study including Psychology, Sociology, Law, Social Work, Public Administration, Medical Science, Psychiatry, Political Science, and Economics.

**Years of experience in domestic violence/wife abuse**

Half of them worked with abused women for twenty or more years. One out of five worked for forty-five years, and the other four worked for twenty, twenty-five, thirty and forty years. The other half had worked in this area for less than ten years, two for ten years, and the others for one, two and three years each. In general, they had worked with domestic violence for longer than the respondents from service agencies had.

**Position, work responsibility, and experiences in working with abused women**

Six of them were government officials and the others were non-government professionals. They occupied positions that had the authority to make decisions.

**The Public Prosecutor**

She has been involved working on cases involved with drugs, helping families, and arguing criminal cases involving families. She is responsible for criminal cases involving the physical assault of wives by the husbands.
The Government Official

She has been involved in setting national-level policies for the development of families and women, implementing such policies, and coordinating with other private and public sector organisations. She has set up networks to help abused women such as a hotline staffed by expert volunteers, including lawyers, doctors and social workers, to receive complaints. She has made suggestions on how to improve management and proposed new legislation to help protect victims of abuse, and organised a human rights education program.

The Professor (Emeritus)

She has pushed for research funding and the policy that is informed by evidence to protect the abused women and children. She gives advice on how to move on the prevention of domestic violence.

The Psychiatrist

She teaches and advises on mental health problems and has acted as a presenter on public education programs in the mass media. She gives advice to women who have mental health problems resulting from being physically and psychologically abused by their husbands.
The Professor in the University in Bangkok

She teaches and carries out research, such as a survey of the state of knowledge about women and the media. She was a committee of the National Commission for Women’s Affairs, and an advisory chairman of a women’s non-government organisation. She carries out research and has written textbooks on women and the media; works as advisor to a non-government organisation involved with offering assistance to abused wives and has pushed for research funding on gender studies, mass media, and media for health.

The Police Officer

He assists families and provides protection and welfare for children, youth and families, as well as presents ideas for policies to address family problems. He has experience in domestic violence problems through police work, especially handling cases of accusations of abuse lodged by women against their husbands.

The Professor of Law

She teaches undergraduate and graduate-level law courses. She was an academic member of the Parliamentary Subcommittee on Youth, Women and the Elderly and a member of the Ladies Law Graduates’ Association. She has pushed for research funding on women’s equality.
The International Officer

She is involved in managing the implementation of the Elimination of Violence Against Women Programme – EVAW Program and working as an advocate for the rights-based approach for the elimination of violence against women with government, media, and bilateral and multilateral development agencies.

The Free-lance Academic

Her important role is in setting policies and development plans to benefit families, women, children and youth. She was a chairman of a non-government sector women’s organisation fund. She worked as a policy advisor on ways to eliminate violence against women and children in Thai society.

The Senator

Her work entails examining government policies regarding families and the protection of the rights of women, children and the elderly, as well as lobbying for legislation to better protect the welfare of families and eliminate domestic violence. She had organised a pilot program to provide more education for the girls about legal rights.

The data is presented in Table 5.4 below.
Table 5.4
Information of the Policy Makers

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<td><strong>Years of experience in domestic violence/wife abuse</strong></td>
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<td>less than 10 years</td>
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<td>Government officer</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
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<td>Non-government officer</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed for this study

The respondents’ understanding of wife abuse

Seven of the policy makers expressed the opinion that women are more likely to be abused by their husbands than others. The kinds of abuse were not different from those found in other societies, which are physical, psychological, verbal, social, and economic abuse as well as sexual harassment or forced sex where the abuser was a man they love. Two of them related that wife abuse in Thailand also included isolation and abandonment.

Isolation is found in cases of husbands who command their wives to do or not to do as they desire, and abandonment is found in cases of irresponsibility or leaving a wife and children to earn their living themselves. One respondent said her understanding of wife
abuse included cases where the wife was isolated from friends, her thinking was
dominated, and she had no liberty, no chance for self-development, and was under the
control of her husband. They stated that women could be abused even in high class
society and families with a high level of education, in which cases the situation is
usually caused by psychological pressure.

According to the Policy Makers’ experiences, some forms of wife abuse found in Thai
families may restrict a wife’s career opportunities or may sometimes result from envy of
a wife’s career success. The violence is compounded with social abuse in cases where
the husband thinks that his wife is a competitor, not a companion.

Some of the respondents explained wife abuse as a kind of domestic violence that
derived from the traditional social structure in which women have been devalued as
secondary and inferior, and from patriarchal values. They also mentioned what they
believed to be the causes of wife abuse, including personality disorders (for instance:
losing temper, anxious person), and the values of Thai society and socialisation, which
accept violence as a common behaviour. This is involved with cultural concepts about
masculinity or gender-based violence.

Wife abuse is domestic violence, especially by a husband against his wife, resulting from
patriarchal social and cultural values that consider men superior and women inferior.
Women’s status drops to its lowest after they marry (Policy Maker Number 5).

The culture in Thai society has impacted on the creation of family values that place
importance on the role of the male as husband and father with power over the other
members of the family. Domestic violence arises from a pathological abnormality on the
part of the perpetrator and an upbringing in which violence is considered normal,
resulting from social values (Policy Maker Number 9).
In brief, the policy makers, who worked with the women who have been abused for twenty years and more, pointed out that wife abuse in Thailand was caused by relationship dynamics in the family, personality disorders, and the values of Thai society and socialisation.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION**

The small group of participant victims in this study represent a broad range of ages and length of time in relationships. Their family structures and religion is consistent with general population proportions and most have achieved education about the current minimum level in Thailand. Most of the women were employed and a larger proportion of the husbands were unemployed than the number of women who worked only in the home. Most of the households did not indicate that they were poor. The women came from a range of occupational levels and settings; some were business owners.

The size of their families was similar to population norms and the types of family structure also reflected normal Thai families (extended, nuclear and sole-parent). Most of the women agreed that men were the head of the family. In some families where the woman was the main income earner the woman claimed to be the head. The main reasons why men were seen to be head of the family were social and a lesser proportion based in on the husband’s larger share of property ownership. An unexpected finding is that even when the women were had a separate income or when they earned more than their husband they still deferred to him on decisions about family finances.
The marital status of the abused wives consisted of about half being legally married the others in de facto marriages or separated. For the wives, the stability of the marriage is no less important for the women who are not legally wed. The reasons the women stay though abused are to do with the status of the family, security for the children and economic security. The length of the marriages covers the fully range of a few months to 30 years.

The couple's relationship before marriage included being raped and a forced marriage through to short periods, years of knowing the husband and traditional arranged marriages. The influence of past cultural traditions is still present though arranged marriages are more rare. Not all the women knew a lot about their husband's background. The husbands came from a mixture of family backgrounds. Most of the wives revealed that they argued with their husband often. A smaller proportion said that the relationship was fine except when the husband was drunk.

The wives perceived themselves to have a range of personal characterises and the largest proportion said they were quiet and passive. The service providers however, described the majority of their clients as lacking self-confidence, obedient and afraid to make their own decisions or as having undesirable characteristics like drug and alcohol use, being financially irresponsible or with other problems. The service providers’ clients often had disrupted families of origin.

The service workers were generally qualified at the post-secondary up to the doctoral level. Most had at least an undergraduate degree. They come from a broad range of discipline areas and most were direct service workers. On average they had about 4 years’ experience working with abused wives. The workers provided counselling,
assessment, referral, support information, legal advice, safe accommodation, material aid, career development and child care for the women. No information was gained about sexual abuse since Thai women will not discuss sexual matters with unfamiliar people.

From the workers' experiences women were reluctant to leave abusive relationships because of the social stigma attached to children who come from a 'broken home', financial considerations and social consequences for the broader family. Workers observe that women who go into safe shelters leave and return to their husbands.

The policy makers' average age was 55.6 years and again from a broad range of disciplines. All had degrees and the majority has post-graduate qualifications. All the policy makers had worked with abused women for longer than any of the workers in the service agencies. They were from government and non-government agencies.

The policy makers included issues related to isolation and abandonment as a type of abuse they noted particularly in Thailand. Otherwise their experience is that wife abuse is the same as in other countries. The policy makers noted the influence of traditional Thai social structure, which is patriarchal and devalues women. They noted that personality disorders, ability to manage anger, personal values, socialisation around masculinity and gender-based violence were also significant factors contributing to wife abuse.

The background and information of respondents of this study revealed that Thai women have less power than men. Men not only have more power in public area but also in the families, which women accepted them as heads of the household and decision makers. These are observed as causes of domestic violence and wife abuse in Thai families.
which involving with family relationship, family socialisation, and the traditional social structured that devalued women as secondary and inferior according to the patriarchal values.
Chapter 6
FINDINGS REGARDING WIFE ABUSE IN THAI FAMILIES

In this chapter the views of all participants are combined to identify the corporate views on a number of key themes that focus on wife abuse issues. The views and quotes due to the size of each group means that the views of women appear in a one in three ratio to those of professionals, service workers and policy makers. The responses of each group (victims, service providers and policy makers) to the primary questions is analysed separately (within-case) and where the questions are shared analysed together (cross-case) to identify similarities and differences in perception, understanding and experience. The additional themes that come from the non-structured responses are identified.

6.1 NATURE AND INCIDENCE OF WIFE ABUSE IN THAI FAMILIES

The data in this part is derived from the wives, and the services workers. Their experiences and understandings of the abuse and their quest for assistance are described. The feelings of the wives are also stated, including their husbands’ reactions and the progression of the abuse. In addition, the wives’ perceptions of the witnesses to the abuse and their reactions are explained. The descriptions of the situations afterwards, and the wives’ reactions are reported.
Kinds of abuse

The wives suffered several different kinds of abuse. Most suffered more than one type of abuse. The categories therefore overlap. Eighteen of the twenty wives had been physically abused, fifteen reported being psychologically abused, eight reported having been sexually abused while six reported being verbally abused, five were economically abused, four were socially abused, and three were neglected.

Fourteen of the twenty service providers stated that physical abuse was the most common kind of abuse, eight stated psychological abuse, four stated economic abuse, other three stated neglect, by which they mean that the husband had refused to take responsibility for the family and had other affairs, and only one stated the abused wives suffered from sexual abuse.

The wives and the workers had different understandings about the kinds of abuse, in particularly verbal abuse and social abuse. The service workers stated that verbal abuse is an action of making others feel upset, such as blaming, scolding or refusing to communicate, but they explained that verbal abuse caused psychological harm, so it could be considered psychological abuse. They perceived that neglect was a kind of social abuse, and they considered failing to take responsibility for the family to be a type of economic abuse. When the husband of a wife did not accept his status as father of an unborn child for example, and abandoned his wife when he knew she was pregnant the service workers regarded this failure to take responsibility as a form of economic abuse. To them it was the same as husbands who did not contribute to the family expenses because they had no stable income or had become involved with other women and did not care about their wives and families nor did they give them any money for support. However, the wives themselves, who felt deeply hurt by the abusive
incidences, preferred to differentiate the kinds of abuse. For the wives verbal, abuse was different to psychological abuse and, neglect and abandonment were different from economic abuse. For wives, psychological abuse is worse than verbal abuse and does not necessarily involve words but can be done in silence. Abandonment for the wives was not only economic but also resulted in a loss of security and sense of safety.

The service providers stated that most of the wives who came in for assistance did not want to talk about sexual matters. They said Thai people in general feel that it is embarrassing to talk about sexual relations and that such matters should be kept private.

Details of the different kinds of abuse are shown in Figure 6.1 below.
From the perspective of the wives in this study there is usually a starting point or incident that is followed by a verbal argument. Most abuse follows the pathway indicated by the arrows but it is not limited to it and some women report any of the others forms of abuse in any combination. The speech balloons (or “call-outs”) indicate
the women’s examples of the types of abuse. The graphic examples from life experience assists with the definition of terms.

*Physical abuse*

The physical abuse the wives suffered was mainly in the form of punching and hitting, and the damage ranged from minor injuries to serious injuries that required hospitalisation. Most of the incidents started with verbal arguments and escalated to physical violence. Then the wives were hit, punched, slapped, pushed, strangled, or knocked against walls or other objects. As a result the wives got bruises, black eyes, broken arms or fractured skulls. Abused Wife Number 18 said:

> I was slapped when he got angry. My eyes were swollen for many days. Once he (my husband) pushed me down, so my left arm was broken, and my head was also hurt.

Physical abuse included the use of weapons which resulted in skull fractures in some cases. The wives stated that their husbands used sharp metal objects, knives and pieces of wood.

> He also chased me with a knife and almost cut my hand off. I still have a scar. If I didn’t do what he wanted or if I argued with him he would always abuse me (Abused Wife Number 4).

One of the wives reported that her husband poured acid on her because he wanted to force her to grant him a divorce as he requested.
Psychological abuse

Both groups of respondents reported that psychological abuse usually occurred together with other kinds of abuse, such as cursing, ridiculing, criticising, or comparing to other people, especially other women, such as a minor wife or mistress. Also, incidents of psychological abuse often occurred together with expressions of jealousy or violent emotion, such as uncontrollable anger when the husband was dissatisfied. Some of them said the husbands abused her to show his power over his wife. A wife who was physically and psychologically abused related:

I was physically abused until I had black eyes, a broken arm and a fractured skull from being hit, pushed and kicked. I felt totally discouraged, like there was no way I could solve the problem (Abused Wife Number 10).

Sexual abuse

The wives were subjected to sexual abuse when their husbands forced them to have sex according to their desires even if the woman was not ready or willing. Some reported being forced to have kinds of sexual relations that they did not like, such as oral sex. Abused Wife Number 4 indicated:

Sometimes when my husband came home drunk I knew he would force me to have sex…He forced me to have sex in the way he wanted. He threatened to kill me twice.
Verbal abuse

The verbal abuse most frequently reported by the wives was in the form of being harshly cursed and criticised when having an argument with their husbands. Verbal abuse also took the form of threatening, ordering the wife to leave the house, and instructing the wife to do as the husband wanted or forbidding her from doing things he did not want.

I was verbally abused. He cursed me, criticised me, hit me... If I didn’t do what he wanted or if I argued with him he would always abuse me (Abused Wife Number 4).

Economic abuse

The wives who reported suffering from economic abuse stated that their husbands refused to take responsibility for the family’s expenses. Some of the husbands were unemployed or did not have steady jobs so they could not contribute to the family’s upkeep. In some cases they had an income, but it was insufficient. Some of the husbands spent most of their income on personal pleasures like going out to entertainment venues, drinking, or visiting prostitutes. In some cases, the economic abuse took the form of the husband making himself a financial burden for his wife or making her responsible for paying his debts. A wife described economic abuse below:

My husband really loved to go out, and he visited prostitutes too. When we first got married we suffered through the hard times together, and both had to work hard to build up our finances. We got along together well then and didn’t fight. But once our financial situation improved and we had a house and a car, my husband started going out more and he met other women. He ignored me and didn’t give me any money (Abused Wife Number 5).
Social abuse

The wives revealed that their husbands refused to allow them to meet and associate with their friends or relatives, including both the wife’s own family and the husband’s family. In two cases the wives were restricted by not allowing them to meet anyone or, not allowing them to work outside the home. The husbands enforced their restrictions with threats and by taking away their wives’ rights. For instance, some husbands gave their wives only a very small amount of money so they could not afford to go anywhere and had to live under difficult circumstances.

A wife, who was subjected to physical, verbal, psychological and social abuse, said:

He (my husband) wasn’t responsible for taking care of the family. After we got married he forced me to quit my job and just stay at home. If he wasn’t satisfied with anything I did he would curse me and yell at me. Usually he only gave me a little money to use. It wasn’t enough, because I had to take care of our adopted child. We couldn’t have one of our own. I also had to pay for food for the pet dog he loved so much. Later I was more emotionally hurt when I found out he had a new girlfriend. Once he brought her home and said how much better she was than I. Later, after we got in a fight, he wouldn’t let me see anyone, not even my family or his relatives, because he didn’t get along with them very well (Abused Wife Number 13).

Neglect and failing to take responsibility for the family

The wives reported the neglect in the form of failing to pay attention to them, having affairs or taking on minor wives, or failing to take responsibility for children. For example, in one case, the husband left when he found out his wife was pregnant and
refused responsibility for the child. Their husbands refused to take responsibility for family expenses; they abandoned their wives and children.

He refused responsibility when he found out I was pregnant. He just disappeared… He left me to face the problem by myself. Once he phoned and told me to get an abortion. He wouldn’t accept his own child. I tried to get an abortion, but I couldn’t because my pregnancy was too far along to do an abortion safely, so I had to decide to keep the baby (Abused Wife Number 15).

Places where the incidents occurred and the frequency of abusive incidents

All of the wives stated that most of the abusive incidents occurred at home. However, since they were abused frequently, some of the incidents also occurred in other locations, such as when they were on vacation. In one case, violence occurred at the wife’s parents’ house. One instance occurred at the guard station in front of the housing estate where the couple lived (the husband was sitting there drinking with the guard and the wife came to ask him to come home). A wife stated that she was abused when they went out together for fun:

My husband got drunk. He thought there was something going on between me and one of the friends we went out with, so we got in a fight and he hit and pummelled me (Abused Wife Number 1).

In another case the abuse took place at the wife’s place of work.

My husband came to see me at work and saw me talking to a co-worker who was a man. He started yelling at me viciously, so I had to leave work early. No matter how I tried to
explain, he wouldn’t listen. He hit me and punched me until I got a black eye and bruises all over (Abused Wife Number 12).

When asked how often they were abused, ten of the twenty wives reported that they suffered abuse every day. Eight of them reported being subjected to abuse three or four times a week and an equal number reported being subjected to abuse once or twice a week. Two of them said the abusive incidents were infrequent. Only one of them was abused only twice throughout her relationship with her husband, but she was so physically and emotionally affected by these incidents that she sought assistance from a domestic violence relief agency.

**Progression of the Incidence of Wife Abuse**

*The first and the latest incidents of abuse before asking for help*

The wives were asked about the kind of situation that triggered the abusive incident both the first time they were abused by their husbands and the last time before they came to seek help from the service agencies.

*The first time of abuse*

Eight of the twenty wives said that the incident occurred when their husbands got drunk and became enraged. Five cases the violence started because of money troubles.

I lost some money and my husband got very angry. He wouldn’t listen to reason. He hit, punched and stamped on me until I was in critical condition (Abused Wife Number 3).
Four wives stated that the first incident of abuse was sexual abuse, for instance: rape or forced sex. Another three said the first time their husbands abused them it was because they did not please him (he wasn’t satisfied with anything she did). In these cases, the husbands not only beat their wives but also forced them to carry out their orders.

The last time of abuse

Eleven of the twenty wives stated that the last situation was the same as the first time. It means they were fighting when their husband got drunk or went out carousing. Six of them were arguing because of money problems. In one out of these six husbands asked the wife for money to go out drinking and the wife refused to give him. In another case tension arose because the couple did not have enough money to meet their expenses and they got into a fight. Two wives explained that their husbands were dissatisfied with something that they did. Only one was abused because she accused her husband of having a mistress.

Nine out of the twenty wives reported that the kind of abusive incident that occurred just before they went out for help was physical abuse. Another five reported psychological abuse, four reported verbal abuse, and the rest two reported sexual abuse.
Figure 6.2
Comparing the First and the Last Incidents of Abuse

![Comparison chart]

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 6.2 is a simple graphic representation of the reported differences between the first and the last incident of abuse before seeking help. The figure shows that there does not appear to be a great difference between the types of events that precipitate help-seeking and the first event.

Length of time remained in abusive situations

The wives remained in the abusive situation for different lengths of time. Eight of them reported that they stayed in abusive relationships with their husbands for a year. Two of them had suffered for two years and five years each. Two of them had suffered for three years. The other two reported being in an abusive situation for seven and nine years each. Four of them reported ten, twenty, twenty-five, and forty years, respectively and another two were abused for fifteen years. The longest period of time that the wives remained in abusive relationships was the whole thirty years after they began living together, but the shortest period of time was a month after the marriage.
Results of the abuse

Ten wives said that as a result of the last abusive incident of abuse they felt they could no longer stand it. One of the ten had already divorced, three were in the process of taking legal proceedings to ask for a divorce, and the others did not want to be separated but they remained in the same house for the sake of their children.

Six of the twenty wives stated that the result of the abuse was that they got injured. Other two reported that they had to leave the house; one said she was ordered by her husband to leave, and one reported that she decided to run away. Two said they were abandoned after they got pregnant.

Progression of abusive situations

The abusive situations confronted by the wives progressed in several different ways. For fourteen women reported that their husbands abused them more severely and more frequently as time went on. They reported that the violence escalated progressively.

…the violence got worse…At first he just cursed and ridiculed me. Later on he hit me and we fought (Abused Wife Number 11).

For five wives the severity of the abuse lessened with time. For another five wives their husband’s abusive behaviour had maintained the same, without changing. Even if the abusive incidents did not happen frequently, it always affected the wives.
Discussions about the abusive incidents with husbands and the results

Eleven of the twenty wives discussed the matter with their husbands to try to prevent further abuse. They asked their husbands not to use violence again. After talking together the men said they were sorry about what happened and promised not to do it again. Two of the eleven wives reported that their husbands also suggested to them to do what they wanted so that they wouldn’t have to get angry again. However, the wives’ appeals did not have a very good result.

I begged my husband to talk things over reasonably and change his behaviour. He seemed to understand well and said he would not do it again; but as soon as he got drunk, it was like always, he hit me and used violence just as before (Abused Wife Number 14).

Three of the eleven wives stated that the situation was worse than before the discussion. Only one said that she felt better than before discussing with her husband. The other five said there was no change in their relationship with their husband as time went on. Their relationship has never been stable. Some days they would get along with each other, but other days they would fight. This resulted in an atmosphere of mistrust.

We always quarrelled for the whole year we were together. We never trusted each other (Abused Wife Number 9).

The further data from nine of the twenty wives, who dared not discuss with their husbands, reported that as time went by they became more estranged from their husbands and talked to them less or even not at all. Two of them characterised their relationship with their husbands as getting steadily worse. For example, Abused Wife Number 14 stated:
At first it wasn’t as hard to bear, because my husband always apologised after every incident. But later he got more and more abusive, until I couldn’t stand it anymore.

Figure 6.3

Severity of Abuse

According to Figure 6.3, the more time passed the more the abuse became intractable. The situation got worse than before even though some of the wives discussed with their husbands not to abuse them.

Similarly to the views of the wives, thirteen of the twenty service workers reported that the wives did try to discuss the abuse issue with their husbands and asked them to stop such behaviour. Seven of them said that the wives did not dare to discuss the issue with their husbands and stated that such a discussion would not have good results. Only two of the thirteen workers said that after the discussion the wives reported “it was better than before”.

Source: Developed for this study
In the views of the workers, the results of such discussions depended on several factors. For instance, if the discussion took place at a time when the husband was in a stable state of mind, in a good mood, not irritable, and sober, most wives found that they could communicate with their husbands well, and he would usually agree to do as their wives requested.

Usually the abused wives and their husbands fought and argued more than having reasonable discussions. Most of the abused wives could not really have stable, open discussions with their husbands. Talking it over would only have a positive result when the husbands were in a stable state, but if the wives tried to talk to their husbands while they were in a bad mood or drunk, then trouble would happen, so it didn’t really help (Respondent from Service Agency Number 10).

The wives who never discussed their family problems had various reasons for choosing not to. Few women did not want to discuss the issue of sex even though their husbands frequently forced them to have sex when they were not ready or willing because they found it embarrassing, so they continued to endure sexual abuse.

In fact I never discussed the problem, especially the problems involved with sex. I was too embarrassed and didn’t dare to talk about it (Abused Wife Number 4).

The summary of discussions is presented in Figure 6.4 below.
Figure 6.4

Conclusion of Discussions about the Abusive Incidents and the Results

![Diagram of Discussion and Results]

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 6.4 is a graphic representation of the outcomes for wives whether they instigated a discussion with their husbands to reduce further incidents of abuse or not. The results were no different for the wives who promoted discussion than if the wives stayed silent. The reasons women gave for being reluctant to discuss abuse are indicated. The wives who did not attempt to discuss felt more estranged from their husbands.

Wives’ Reactions

Ten of the twenty wives stated that they tried to fight back when their husbands physically abused them, but they were incapable of defending themselves. Often they asked for help.
At first, I fought back, but later I got tired, so I would just do nothing, not argue and not fight back. Sometimes I asked an older person to help stop the problem, but it didn’t work (Abused Wife Number 5).

I used to fight back because I couldn’t stand any more of it. Once I threw an iron at him. When we got in a fight, I would stand up to him. I hit him and scratched him, but I ended up with getting hurt … (Abused Wife Number 14).

Another five wives reported that when they were abused they tried to endure and did not try to fight back, because they felt it was useless. They agreed to do what their husbands wanted, even if they did not like it or thought it was wrong. They thought that was the best way to avoid getting hurt or yelled at. However, their experience was that the more they submitted to their husbands’ wishes, the more their husbands abused them.

Another three wives reported using another approach. They tried to avoid violence from the beginning, but their efforts were not successful. When they could not stand being abused anymore, then they tried fighting back. Abused Wife Number 10 said this about the results of her efforts to fight back:

At first all I did was cry, but after it happened more and more often, I started to fight back or yell for help. But I still didn’t dare to tell anyone about it because I was embarrassed. If anyone asked me, I would keep quiet. As a result of trying to fight back when my husband hit me, I ended up in the hospital.

One of these three wives reported that she consistently tried to avoid confrontations with her husband and did not fight back. She hid from her husband or sometimes ran away to her parents’ house.
I tried to avoid him. Like, by walking away and staying somewhere else. Sometimes when my husband came home drunk I knew he would force me to have sex, so I would lock myself in the bathroom for a long time until I was pretty sure he was asleep, then I’d come out (Abused Wife Number 4).

Two of the twenty wives were somewhat different. One said she decided to fight back as hard as she could because she could not stand it any longer, but as a result she got seriously injured. The other went directly to a private sector service agency that offered help for victims of domestic violence at first time she was neglected.

It was direct physical assault. I got hit and punched, and hurt in many ways. I got black eyes, a broken jaw and a broken arm until I passed out. He was the one who took me to the hospital. He stayed by my bedside and visited me every day, but I wouldn’t talk to him (Abused Wife Number 11)

I came to ask help from a private sector shelter because I wanted somewhere to hide until my baby was born. (Abused Wife Number 15, whose husband abandoned her when he found out she was pregnant)

The information from the service workers supported the data from the abused wives. Fourteen of the workers stated that the wives who had come to their agencies for help had tried to defend themselves when their husbands abused them, but none of them could win a physical fight against their husbands. Most of the wives tried to avoid confrontations, but were still the victims of abuse. In particular, if the husbands were drunk or affected by drug taking, the wives would try to get away. In some cases, this made the problem even worse. Six of the workers stated that the wives asked for help, in particular from agencies offering assistance to victims of domestic violence.
Reporting to Others

Fourteen of the twenty wives did report the incidents to others and the other six did not. Of those who said they did tell other people about the situation, five of them said they told people who worked at service agencies, welfare officials, or law officials. An equal number (other five of the fourteen) said they told their parents or other relatives. The other four reported to their friends or co-workers.

Reasons for reporting or not reporting

Six of the fourteen wives who reported the abuse to others said they did so because they wanted help and did not know how to solve the problem themselves. Another four said they wanted someone to listen to their problems, offer them encouragement, or comfort them. Two of them hoped that the person they reported the problem to could help keep their family together and an equal number wanted legal advice to file for divorce or request alimony or child support payments.

Six out of the twenty wives who did not report the problem to anyone said the reason was because they thought it was futile, and no one could help them.

Results of the reporting

All of the wives who reported abusive incidents (fourteen out of twenty) to others viewed that the result of reporting made them better in different ways. Seven of them said they felt better and less stressed and their morale improved because they felt someone understood them and was willing to listen. Another three said that
understanding within their family improved. Two of them said they learned more about their legal rights and were able to take legal action. Of the remaining two wives, one said she was advised to endure the situation and to do what her husband wanted and the other said she found a way out of the problem. The abusive situations, wives’ reactions, and the reporting to others and the results of reporting are shown in Figure 6.5 below.

**Figure 6.5**

**Abusive Situations Before Seeking Help from Service Agencies**

![Diagram showing the relationship between abusive incidents, wife's reaction, reporting to others, and results of reporting.](chart)

*Source: Developed for this study*

Figure 6.5 is a chart that graphically summaries the findings that when an incident of abuse occurs the women react differently and each of their types of reactions has a consequence. Not reporting as a reaction typically led to more harm no matter what
earlier responses of the wife might have been. Wives told a variety of people, indicated by the grey shapes and the outcomes of reporting are indicated by the lilac shapes. The women interviewed all were linked to a service agency once they had reported the abuse.

6.2 CAUSES OF WIFE ABUSE

The discussion of the causes of wife abuse, gathered from the wives, the service providers, and the policy makers, covers the conditions that may trigger incidents of abuse and the most important factors contributing to wife abuse.

**Conditions that may trigger incidents of abuse**

The wives mentioned a few different conditions that may trigger incidents of abuse (which they answered more than one factor). Twelve of the twenty wives named the personal characteristics of their husbands as the main condition that triggered incidents of abuse. Eleven of them stated that the use of alcohol or drugs was a major trigger of abuse. Of these only one of them had drugs, other than alcohol, as the cause. Three of them named family problems as the main cause of the abuse. The explanations on the conditions leading to abuse are shown in Figure 6.6.
Figure 6.6

Conditions That May Trigger Incidents of Abuse

![Pie chart showing the conditions that trigger abuse](chart.png)

Source: Developed for this study *answered more than one factor

Figure 6.6 is a simple frequency chart that graphically represents the conditions that trigger abuse from the perspective of the wives. It is clear that wives perceive the core risks to be the personality of the husband and the use of alcohol.

**The factors contributing to wife abuse**

The personal characters of the husbands were the important factors in the view of most of abused wives, while others wives regarded conflicts relationship between them were the important factors. Their arguments led to physical hurt. Other also perceived sexual factors and economic factors were more important. Few of them considered that alcohol and/or drug use factor was the important factor.

The views of wives, service workers, and policy makers, varied. Details of the factors that contribute to wife abuse, personal factors; cultural factors; economic factors; and sexual factors, are below.
Personal factors

The personal characteristic of the abusers as perceived by the wives and the service workers were nearly the same.

Husbands’ behaviours contributed to wife abuse

The data on the wives’ perceptions about their husbands’ behaviours cover several types of behaviour which they thought were factors that contribute to wife abuse.

Jealous of wife

Twelve out of the twenty wives believed that their husbands were not jealous but other eight claimed to have jealous husbands.

In discussions with the wives, a majority (twelve) of them stated that their husbands were not jealous of them because their husbands already had complete control over them and all the other members of the household. They did not need to be jealousy. However, the others who had a different idea said their husbands were jealous of them for many reasons. For instance, some husbands felt bad because their wives had higher incomes than they did. Two of them said sometime their husbands afraid their wives might be interested in another man or have an affair, or would give more affection to another person. Often, expression of these feelings of jealousy led to arguments.

Everyone in the family knows my husband likes to sound off. He bosses everyone around and everyone is afraid of him (Abused Wife Number 9).
My husband was jealous of me because I made more money than he did. I had to give him a share of my salary too. If I ever didn’t have enough money to give him he would get violent or would be very angry (Abused Wife Number 7).

Losing temper

Fifteen of the twenty wives stated that their husbands did tend to lose their temper, but the other five said the opposite. In addition, the wives informed that their husbands were irritable, easily angered, and tended to make a fuss for no reason. Ten out of the fifteen said that normally their husbands were rather quiet and sullen, but when they drank they lost control and couldn’t control their emotions. Then they would easily lose their tempers. One of them also said that her husband’s anger episodes were triggered by taking drugs. Another one said her husband usually lost his temper out of jealousy because he didn’t want his wife to spend time with other people, either girlfriends or other men. Three of these fifteen reported that their husbands were afraid that their wife would find someone better than themselves. One of the three said her husband was afraid she would go back to her ex-husband.

When he got drunk he would get enraged, moody, irate and suspicious. He was afraid I was having an affair (Abused Wife Number 12).

My husband had a short temper and was irritable. You could never be sure about him. Sometimes he got very angry over nothing. He liked to drive me out of the house and then throw my things out after me (Abused Wife Number 7).
Anxious person

Twelve of the twenty wives considered that their husbands were not anxious people, and other eight thought that they were. In the discussions with a majority of the wives, they did not say that their husbands were particularly anxious by nature, because they didn’t seem to have any plan for their lives or worry much about the future. Usually their husbands got whatever they wanted, so they had no reason to be anxious. Nevertheless, the other who stated that they were anxious felt that their husbands had anxiety-prone personalities. They were moody or emotionally unstable. The thing they were most anxious about was worrying that their wife would have an affair. Two out of the eight said their husbands were anxious about money.

Controlling other people

Thirteen of the twenty wives noted that their husbands controlled other people, but other five of them did not think so. Only two said they did not know about this aspect of their husbands’ behaviour.

My husband was very controlling. He complained, scolded and beat me to make me do what he wanted, in terms of everyday life, expenses and sex (Abused Wife Number 4).

He was very moody and his mood changed quickly. He was irritable and wanted everyone to do his bidding (Abused Wife Number 7).

The data is shown in Figure 6.7 below.
Figure 6.7
Husbands’ Behaviours as Perceived by Abuse Wives

![Bar chart showing husbands' behaviors perceived by abuse wives](chart.png)

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 6.7 is a simple frequency chart that graphically demonstrates the wives' perceptions of their husbands (N=20). Most of the wives considered their husbands were jealous, had difficulty controlling their temper, were anxious as a general rule and needed to be in control.

As for the perception of the service workers, twelve of them perceived that the abusive husbands were jealous, selfish, emotional, easily angered, irresponsible, aggressive, unreasonable, and unwilling to accept other’s opinions. Next, ten of them said the husbands liked to use their power over their wives and liked to physically or verbally force others to do their bidding. Eight of them noted that the husbands liked to drink or use drugs. Four of them said the husbands had psychological problems. Three said the abusers usually came from families with a history of domestic violence, other two lacked love and warmth in their families when they were growing up.

… whenever a husband and wife got into a conflict then they would show their true colours.

Some couples would just argue and that was that. But some husbands were scary when they
were angry and liked to try to demonstrate their power and threaten their wives. If the situation was worsened by another factor that increased the tension, like stress from the workplace or worries over money, or especially if the husbands were drunk or used drugs, then it would be worse (Respondent from Service Agency Number 11).

Husbands’ beliefs contributed to wife abuse

The perceptions of abused wives on the husbands’ beliefs that could be factors that contributed to wife abuse are below.

Men are more powerful and women are submissive

Ten wives believed strongly in the superiority of men in the household, seven of them stated that their husbands believed a little, only three wives stated that their husbands believed not at all. Discussions with the wives showed that the husbands believed they were in charge and had more power. They considered themselves the leaders of the household and the main providers, so they believed they should make all the decisions.

My husband always liked to show off his power. He liked to say that he provided for us, and it was thanks to his hard work that we had food on the table and enough to get by (Abused Wife Number 4).

My husband thought he was boss. His word was final on everything, even family matters. He always wanted to control my actions (Abused Wife Number 9).
**Husband has property rights over his wife’s body**

Thirteen wives stated that their husbands strongly believed that they had property rights over their wife’s body. Five of them stated that their husbands believed this somewhat. Only two viewed that their husbands did not believe this at all.

From the discussions with the wives, almost all (eighteen) of them expressed the perception that their husbands believed they had rights over their wife’s body. The husbands believed it was their right to order their wives to do what they wanted or to stop doing something they didn’t like. For instance, if they didn’t want their wife to see a friend, either a girlfriend or a friend of the opposite sex, they could forbid it. Three wives also said their husbands believed they had the right to physically abuse their wives. If their wife ever refused to follow their orders, argued or displeased them in some other way they would beat her.

I had no choice but to put up with it. Whether I could accept his power or not I kept it to myself. Whenever there is a conflict or a couple gets in an argument, it’s always the wife who has to suffer and stick it out (Abused Wife Number 7).

**Husband’s belief in the superiority of men in the household**

Ten wives thought that their husbands believed strongly in the superiority of men in the household, seven of them stated that their husbands believed a little, only three wives stated that their husbands believed not at all. In the discussions with a majority of the wives who said their husbands believed the superiority of men. They also believed that their husbands were the heads of the family who were responsible for earning a living and who own the house and other valuable things, such as vehicles, land etc. Besides
this, they believed that their husbands were superior in the household because they had
been taught social values to accept that men are leaders and women are followers.

I think men are leaders. They are the heads of the household and the main providers. They
are responsible for the family’s expenses and well being (Abused Wife Number 4).

I think women are followers. Men are higher. They have the role of leading because men
are better leaders (Abused Wife Number 5).

The data is shown in Figure 6.8 below.

**Figure 6.8**

*Husbands’ Beliefs as Perceived by Abused Wives*

![Bar chart showing husbands' beliefs](chart.png)

*Source: Developed for this research*

Figure 6.8 is a simple frequency chart that graphically represents how the wives
perceive their husbands beliefs of themselves in relation to their wives, that is
more powerful having rights over the women’ body and being superior.
Cultural factors

Half of the ten policy makers and five of the twenty workers viewed that cultural factors were the most important in contributing to wife abuse.

The policy makers explained that cultural factors also affect entire families and part of the problem is inherited social values in the form of family behaviour that is passed on through the socialisation process. They also explained that through their upbringing, boys are taught to have a different role and status from girls. Parents give them different chores and responsibilities. The parents have certain expectations about how the male and female children will behave when they are grown up as appropriate to their sex, including acting out the proper roles of husband and wife. They pointed out that the way Thai families live is a direct result of cultural factors.

The teachings make us believe that men are more important than women…The role of the father is important. If the father sets a bad example, such as by not working or by refusing to take responsibility for the family, that will set an example for the way that his sons may lead their lives in the future. In particular, if a father abuses a mother, such as by hitting her while the children are watching, this will be an experience that will shape the family life of those children in the future as well (Policy Maker Number 4).

According to the respondents Thai beliefs and the values that relate to those beliefs generate the factors that contribute to wife abuse. Details of the respondents’ personal values and their perceptions of Thai social values follow.
Thai social values that contribute to wife abuse

In the respondents’ personal views, the largest number of them, ten of the twenty wives, eleven of the twenty workers, and eight of the ten policy makers, perceived that Thai values contributed to wife abuse a great deal. Besides that, the next most common perception from the respondents shows that six of the wives perceived that Thai values contributed to wife abuse a little, and the same number perceived that Thai values contributed to wife abuse not at all. Nine of service workers perceived that Thai values contributed to wife abuse a little. Apart from this, two of the policy makers perceived that Thai values contributed to wife abuse a little.

The service providers and policy makers were asked to indicate their perceptions of the level of equality actually demonstrated within Thai society that is, the extrinsic degree of equality rather than their deeply held personal beliefs. A majority of the respondents, fourteen service workers and seven policy makers, perceived that Thai men and women were unequal. Apart from that, four of the workers thought that Thai men and women were very unequal, while another two workers and three policy makers believed that Thai men and women were very equal. The data is shown in Figure 6.9 below.
Figure 6.9
Perceptions on Thai Social Values

![Figure 6.9](image)

*Source: Developed for this study*

Figure 6.9 is a graphic representation for the views of service providers and policy makers about their perceptions of equality between men and women in Thailand. There is a polarization in these results with the weight of evidence indicating that most services providers and policy makers accept that men and women do not experience equality in Thailand.

A majority of them, twelve service workers and seven policy makers, perceived that Thai values contributed to wife abuse a great deal. The rest eight workers and three policy makers perceived that Thai values contributed to wife abuse a little.
Figure 6.10

Perceptions of Thai Social Values that Contribute to Wife Abuse

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 6.10 is a simple frequency chart that graphically shows the views of service workers and policy makers about the effect that Thai social values have on wife abuse. There are responses to suggest that Thai social values have no effect.

From the views expressed by the respondents, who indicated that Thai men and women were very unequal (4), they also gave some other opinions on the subject. In terms of biology, the wives viewed that men have more physical energy than women, and men are considered superior to Thai women. In the family role, it is clear that every Thai woman is responsible for all of the housework, serving her husband and other family members by cooking, cleaning the house, washing the clothes and rearing her children, while the Thai husband is supposed to be the breadwinner. He is not expected to do housework. Even nowadays, though Thai women have changed their role to include working outside the house to earn money, still the responsibility for housework has not changed because the wife is still expected to serve all of the family members. So the woman has to endure a lower status.
The largest number of the wives, fourteen out of twenty of them, confirmed that men have more rights. A majority (ten out of twenty) of the workers also echoed those of the wives.

According to the principle of human rights, men and women are equal. But in practice and in reality, there is still inequality between Thai men and women. This might be a result of the attitude in Thai society that men should be leaders and women should be followers (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).

Men and women are equal in their human status only, but in reality, in Thai society men are dominant. Men are the leaders and the ones with power (Respondent from Service Agency Number 8).

Thai men and women are certainly not equal because men take advantage of women in many ways. For example, in terms of family responsibilities, housework is considered women’s work, whereas when dealing with others outside the house, the man is considered the head of the household and the family’s representative. In terms of sexual relations, Thai society generally accepts that it is all right for men to have affairs or minor wives, but if women do the same thing they are immediately branded as bad by other people in society. Even in terms of how men treat women, Thai society considers it normal for a husband to beat and abuse his wife. Husbands have the right to physically abuse their wives because they consider it teaching or discipline (Respondent from Service Agency Number 20).

The personal values of the policy makers were similar to those of the service agencies who believed that most Thai people are still influenced by the traditional social values that have been passed down from the past. This is reflected in the following comment from Policy Maker Number 10:
In Thai society males and females are not brought up as equals. They are taught to treat each other differently according to their gender roles. Men are considered to have power over women. Men are taught to be superior and women are taught to be inferior.

In discussing with the policy makers, almost all of them believed in the concept of human rights even if the way they treat one another is not always equal, especially the way men treat women. This is because of the influence of Thai culture on the way of life and thinking of Thai people. They suggested that cultivating the value of human equality in the new generations of Thai children could change this situation. In addition, the policy makers gave the opinion that children should be taught to be self-sufficient. They expressed the belief that one problem contributing to abuse is that women often tolerate abuse and bad treatment because they have been taught to depend on their husbands. However, only one of them, who was a policeman, said this about the inequality of the sexes in terms of careers. He put the view that women who were police officers could only work at certain positions, but that active patrol duty involving apprehending suspects and other high-risk jobs could only be done by men.

Even though under Thai law men and women are equal, still for working in certain careers, women’s anatomies are not appropriate, such as work that requires great physical strength. In police work, for example, the job positions and work responsibilities of men and women are naturally different.

Here are some policies makers’ views on the inequality in the rule of the Thai law and Thai social values. They also viewed that the inequality of people varied by different levels of education.
Women are not accepted as equal in many aspects. Personally, I think that even the laws give men more rights than women do and allow them to be superior (Policy Maker Number 1).

I feel women and men are equal in their humanity, but in practice they are not equal. In society in general the majority of both men and women believe there is equality between the sexes, with the exception of people who have had little education and are socially disadvantaged. They tend to believe that men have more rights than women (Policy Maker Number 2).

The inequality of Thai men and women affects the perception of equality of husband and wife which contributes to wife abuse. Eleven of the twenty wives agreed that married women belong to their husbands, that men are in control of their wives’ bodies, and that men have more rights than women. On the contrary, other nine of them disagreed. Fifteen of them disagreed that married men belong to their wives, and only five agreed with that perception. Eleven of them disagreed that men should make decisions for their wives but the others nine agreed with this perception.

The data is shown in Figure 6.11 below.
Figure 6.11
Thai Values Regarding Husband and Wife Equality
as Perceived by the Abused Wives

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 6.11 is a simple frequency chart that graphically demonstrates the views of the abused wives about Thai social values. The abused wives do not necessarily agree with the above statements about men and women in Thailand.

When asked more about some of the other aspects of inequality between men and women, ten wives stated that the inequality between themselves and their husbands contributed to the abusive incidents a great deal, but the other ten did not agree. They stated that the inequality contributed to wife abuse just a little.

For the personal values of the respondents, fourteen service workers and seven policy makers stated that they disagreed that married women belong to their husbands and that married men belong to their wives. Eighteen service providers and seven policy makers disagreed that men should make decisions for their wives. Not only did most of the
policy makers disagree with those issues, seven of them also disagreed that men are in control of their wives’ bodies, but three did hold that view.

From the discussions with the respondents, the main point of view was that Thai society may not generally accept the equality between men and women, or the idea of anyone belonging to another, but it should emphasise respecting each other. Thai people should pay attention to the roles and responsibilities of men and women in the family and should emphasise their abilities more than gender differences. However, almost all of them accepted that domestic violence or violence against wives usually occurred in the relationship between husband and wife, and it was generally accepted that husbands could use their power over their wives. Meanwhile, they also noted that wives were accustomed to following their husbands and accept their status as inferior to their husbands. Therefore, since men believed they had power over their wives and owned their wives, and then it was their wives’ duty to do whatever the husbands wished, including fulfilling their sexual needs. This attitude affects marital rape.

Men think that they are in control of their wives’ bodies, so wife abuse is justifiable for them (Respondent from Service Agency Number 6).

Women are seen as nothing more than tools for sexual release. They are presented as sexual objects that men can do with as they please. Marital rape is one example. In addition, the mainstream culture makes women accept this oppression (Policy Maker Number 7).

The policy makers viewed that violence was also a result of pressure and stress on the part of the abuser. They took stress out on people inside their homes whom they considered them as their property and had little power.
Many of the men have low social status. They cannot exercise their power outside their homes, so they want to exercise their power inside their homes. This comes from the power structure in which men are considered superior (Policy Maker Number 3).

In addition, the family compound is also viewed as a protecting factor against wife abuse in decreasing the husband’s power. In discussion with the majority of respondents, nine of the twenty wives, twelve of the twenty workers, and six of the ten policy makers, believed that an extended family could help to decrease violence in the home. Some of them thought that an extended family was warmer and more secure and that elders could be intermediaries between husband and wife. In addition, some of them believed the elders in a Thai family had more power than the male abuser in the role of husband, who would be likely to follow the orders of his parents or parents-in-law.

It would be a big help if elders of the partners or couple intervened, because in Thai tradition younger people are supposed to give respect to elders, especially their own parents (Respondent from Service Agency Number 6).

Extended families are more beneficial than nuclear families because there are neutral people whom the couple respect, such as parents or elder brothers or sisters, and who have more authority than the husband. The husband, or the abuser, would tend to defer to these older authority figures, so domestic violence would be reduced due to the other family members helping (Policy Maker Number 3).

Another policy maker added that the nuclear family structure could promote the building of better family ties, thereby reducing the likelihood of violence. The minority of respondents believed that extended families sometimes caused violence while the members in a nuclear family could better adjust themselves to get along together more
easily. One abused wife, based on her experiences in an abusive relationship for more than thirty years, perceived that nobody in the family, no matter what type of family, could help a wife in an abusive incident. She gave her reason below:

No particular type of family can protect a woman from being abused. From my experience, whenever my husband began any abusive incident, no one in the family would help me. Sometimes they wanted to help, but they could not because they thought it was a personal matter between the two of us. The family elders, like my own parents, only told me to endure and to do what my husband wanted (Abused Wife Number 4).

_Inequality of husband and wife on the decision making in the household_

Decision-making patterns revealed a picture of shared power in the family. The activities examined included money management, taking care of children, purchasing valuables, dealing with friends and relatives, and other activities in the family. Thirteen out of the twenty wives and seven of the ten policy makers agreed that the wife was the person who made the decisions in money management activities. On the contrary, fifteen of the twenty service workers thought that the husbands made the decisions in money management, and the other five pointed out that the wife did.

Most of the respondents, fifteen wives, eighteen of service workers, and nine policy makers, viewed that the wife was the person who made decisions about taking care of children, but the others stated that the husband was the one who did that.

For the activities of purchasing valuables, the majority of the respondents, eleven wives, sixteen service providers, and eight policy makers, indicated that the husband was the
person who decided what to do or not to do. The others thought that it was mainly the wife’s decision.

In dealing with friends and relatives, the majority of (twelve of) the wives and (fourteen of) the service workers had a similar views that the husband made the decisions in this activity, while the others noted that the wife did. In the opposite, most of (seven of) the policy makers pointed out that the wife decided on her own, yet two of them perceived that the wife and her husband decided together, and another one thought that activities in this category were decided by the husband.

As for other important activities, almost all of eighteen of the service workers and nine of the policy makers noted that it was the husband’s decision. They related that the husband was the person who decided on other important things such as buying a new car or career investment or moving to a new house. Only two of the service workers noted that the wives made decisions in this activity, and one of the policy maker thought that such matters were decided together by wife and husband.

The data is shown in Figure 6.12 below.
In Figure 6.12 the response of the wives, services workers and policy makers are compared on the questions of who makes key decisions in the domestic sphere. It is clear from the Figure 6.12 that workers and policy makers perceive that the wives have more individual say in decision making than the wives experience and, that the wives experience more joint decision-making than service workers or policy makers recognize.

In discussion, some (three out of twenty) of the wives said that the main issues that wives and husbands could consult each other about and decide together were issues
involving their children, such as where they should go to school, how their behaviour was, and whether or not they should get married. However, in terms of caring for, teaching and disciplining the children, it was mainly the responsibility of the wives.

Others (seven of the wives) gave the opinion that decision-making in the household was directly related to their husband’s use of violence. They said their husbands stated that as the head of household they had the right to do whatever they wanted. The husbands tried to use their power to suppress their wives and force them to do what they wanted.

I had to take care of everything that came up in the family. My husband was not responsible for making any decisions. He hurt me and verbally abused me because he thought he was always right and he was the leader of the household so he could do anything he pleased (Abused Wife Number 6)

It may seem that most of the responsibilities for decision-making in the household fell to the wife, but some incidents demonstrated that in fact most of the husbands had greater power over the decisions both inside and outside the home.

For buying things to use in the house or to eat, the wife will make the decisions, but for major items like TVs, furniture, or for renovations to the house, the husband and wife have to decide together (Abused Wife Number 4).

Overall, the perception of the policy makers was that wives were generally in charge of making decisions in certain limited areas of family activities, such as money management and taking care of children, but when it came to other activities like purchasing valuables and making important decisions that affected the entire family, such as buying large items, investing in a business, moving house or buying a new house, they clearly stated that the decisions were usually up to the husbands. The wife
would usually consult her husband, because he was considered responsible as the head of the household. In some cases, although both the wife and husband may participate in the decision-making process, if they were in disagreement as to what should be done, the husband’s word will be final. Cases where the husband’s word was final usually occur in families where the wife was financially dependent on her husband, such as families where the wife did not have her own income. Women whose only job was to take care of the house have to let their husband determine their fate. Nevertheless, the group of policy makers perceived that for some matters both the husband and wife were automatically involved in the decision-making. An example is decisions regarding the future of their children. Most couples who lived in the city or who were highly educated would make decisions together.

**Economic factors**

Economic factors are likewise related to other factors, reported by some of wives, such as unemployment or income that is insufficient to meet the family’s expenses. Two of them related that the husband was irresponsible. Two others related that their husbands even asked their wives to give them money that was needed for family expenses to go out drinking.

He didn’t contribute anything to the upkeep of the family. Some months he gave me a little money, some months none at all. He used all his money to buy whisky (Abused Wife Number 9).

In our family we had money problems because of his irresponsibility. He often took my grocery money to buy liquor. We often got into conflicts over money and that’s why we quarrelled all the time (Abused Wife Number 7).
Some of the service providers also reported that economic factors caused wife abuse. A Respondent from Service Agency Number 4 related:

Some of abused wives said that their husbands are unemployed. The poverty of the household makes them suffer. Most of them quarrel because of the economic crisis in the family. Some of the women who came to ask for help also asked for funding, and supporting their basic needs, such as meals for herself and for her children.

The policy makers also gave their explanations of economic factors:

Economic factors can bring about problems of domestic violence. Usually it is because the husband is the primary breadwinner of the family or because the husband has the most power as head of the household, so he makes all the decisions about family spending. If the husband is dissatisfied with his wife, he might use his power by cutting her budget or withholding her spending money. Economic factors also affect poor families, such as if the husband is unemployed or does not have a regular income. Often the husband will not be responsible for the family’s expenses and it becomes the burden of the wife to try to make enough money to support herself, her children and her husband (Policy Maker Number 10).

Men and women are not equal because most women are economically dependent on men (Policy Maker Number 9).

Meanwhile, they said that most of the wives who were abused admitted that they were unable to survive on their own. They also viewed that society requires both men and women to believe and accept this, and society designates the husband’s role as the protector of the wife so she was dependent on him emotionally and socially. At the same time, the husband was also expected to be the breadwinner providing for the family, so the wife depended on him economically as well. They were of the opinion that it was mainly women’s inability to be independent that made them endure staying...
with their husbands, even when their husbands were abusive, until eventually they reached a point where they could stand it no longer and went to seek assistance. Here is a comment on men being socialised to have power over women.

Men are brought up to be the heads of the household with the highest authority in the family. That is why they think they can do whatever they want to their wives. If a woman accepts this kind of authority then she will be like a slave in her own household (Policy Maker Number 1).

Economical factors effected to decision-making within Thai families

The majority of the respondents, twelve of the twenty service workers and seven of the ten policy makers, viewed that level of income was the major factor that decided whether the husband or wife had more decision-making power. The others (eight of the twenty of service workers) did not agree with this view. They thought that the deciding factors were social class, level of education personal capability. The policy makers had similar views. They also viewed that education was a deciding factor.

However, from their experiences seventeen of the twenty workers perceived that the wives accepted their husbands’ role as the main decision-maker and leader because he was a man and they gave deference towards his status as the major breadwinner supporting the family. They felt this was especially true in families where the wife was financially dependent on the husband or in low-income families. By contrast, in couples where both the husband and wife were well educated they were more likely to share the decision-making power and reach joint decisions.
In most Thai families the wife will accept and defer to the person who is the main income earner, usually this is the husband. In low-income families there is greater dependence so there is more chance the husband will make the decisions. But in high-income families both the husband and wife will find it easier to decide on things and they will make most decisions together (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).

In the upper class society, they share the decision-making power with their partner. This is also generally true in middle class families, but in the low-income class the decision-making depends on the husband (Respondent from Service Agency Number 5).

All policy makers described that the differences between husbands and wives in these factors, which gave one of them greater decision-making power, were an important cause of family conflicts, often leading to violence. Three of them explained that conflicts over decision-making between couples often led to violence because decisions were not made based with respect for each other’s rights. For example, they said that some decisions that affect all the family members might be made by the husband. The husband might decide to spend his income on going out drinking with his friends rather than buying groceries or other necessary items, and this would cause difficulty for the other family members. If the wife expresses her disapproval and dissatisfaction with this behaviour, the husband might become angered and hurt her. In some cases, if a wife does something her husband does not like, he might punish her by withholding her expenses. They said some husbands abandoned their wives and children and some had affairs with other women. The husbands did these things based on decisions they made taking into account their own happiness only. In some cases conflicts arose because the wife’s opinion differed from that of her husband on subjects such as their children’s education. However, since Thai society is traditionally patriarchal, wives and children are not free to make all their own decisions. In many cases children are affected or
abused by the decision-making structure in their families. For instance, their father may force them to study the subject that he chooses.

In cases where the wife does not agree with her husband’s decision or refuses to do as ordered a fight will usually erupt. This causes family problems. The ones who are most heavily impacted by such conflicts are the children, who are usually forced to do what their father wants (Policy Maker Number 5).

They (the wives) live under their husband’s power, so he thinks he can do anything he wants if he is not pleased with his wife. The more conflicts there are in the relationship, the greater chance there is that abuse will occur, whether the wife can stand it or not (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).

**Sexual factors**

Some of the wives and the workers related that sexual factors were the most important factors caused wife abuse. On the contrary, the policy makers did not mention these factors.

Sexual abuse related with the cultural factors. Women are subordinated to men. They have to response their desire, even though the wives do not want to (Policy Maker Number 10).

**Sexual relationship problems**

Sixteen wives revealed that they and their husbands did have a sexual relationship problem, and only four of them said they did not have a problem.
Discussions with the wives revealed that the sexual relationship problem was due to excessive sexual desire on the part of their husbands. Another problem they reported was that some of their husbands had affairs or kept minor wives. This always led to arguments. Some became oppressed and stressed when they found it impossible to avoid having sex with their husbands. They said they did not want to discuss it or talk about it openly. Both the wives and their husbands thought that having sex was part of the natural duties of a married couple. If the wife refused to have sex, the husband would mistakenly assume she was having an affair. So it could say that sexual relationships between these couples were a matter of satisfying the needs of and creating happiness for the husband only. The wife felt obliged to fulfil her duty. This created a problem in the relationship.

He (my husband) forces me to do what he wants against my will. This happened ever since we first got together and has continued up to now, for over 30 years. He has high libido and wants to have sex often. He likes to try strange things he sees in the videos and dirty magazines he gets from his drinking buddies (Abused Wife Number 4).

My husband has had many affairs with other women. He even pays for their living expenses and keeps them openly. He doesn’t feel it’s wrong. He likes to compare the other women to me and that really makes me feel terrible (Abused Wife Number 13).

Alcohol and drug factors

Two wives identified alcohol and drugs as factors in abusive situation. However, both the workers and the policy makers included alcohol and drug used as personal characteristic. They cited that personal factors were a very important cause of abusive situations. From their experience, the violence was more likely to occur when the abusers had drunk alcohol or taken drugs. This kind of abnormal condition or disorder often made the husbands lose
control, become unreasonable and act with no thought or restraint. This coincides with the view of Policy Maker Number 3:

The personal behaviour of the abuser plays an important part in the wife abuse situation. In some cases the husband may not think of himself as having power over his wife, or may not realise he is involved in a power relationship under normal circumstances, and might not display any unwanted behaviour. But when he becomes angered he might lose control, such as if he has a fit of jealous rage, or is stimulated by alcohol or narcotics. Then he might not be able to control himself and might hurt his wife. When he sobers up or gets over his anger, he will apologise, and the wife will almost always forgive him.

In discussions with policy makers, most of them said they could not say what factor was the most important. One of them listed five major factors as the causes of wife abuse:

*The first factor* is the personal factor. The abuser might have an abnormality or pathology (mental illness). *The second factor* is upbringing. Some abusers were exposed to violence in their families as children. *The third factor* is social values or cultural factors, i.e. the patriarchal values of Thai society, or the common belief that domestic violence is normal and acceptable, that it is a private matter between husband and wife, and that the abuser should be forgiven. In some cases the abuser may even blame the abused party for the situation. For instance, he may say his wife deserved to be beaten because she did not fulfil her duties as a housewife. *The fourth factor* is other conditions that may stimulate incidents of abuse, such as drinking, unfaithfulness, or quarrels that result from difficult economic circumstances, for instance if the husband has his salary reduced or loses his job. If a man has good family relationships such problems will not cause him to act out against his wife, but if their relationship is not good to start with, it could result in violence. Lastly, *the fifth factor* is the personality or behaviour of the victims. Some of the victims may accept the situation because they believe they deserve it or are in the wrong. They may believe that if they agree with their husbands about their supposed faults then their husbands will stop abusing them (Policy Maker Number 10).
Almost all (nineteen out of twenty) of the wives revealed that their husbands abused drugs and/or alcohol and only one said he did not.

Eleven of the twenty wives reported that their husbands were under the influence of alcohol and drugs when they abused their wives. They said their husbands used alcohol or drugs because they were stressed. Ten of the eleven said their husbands drank and just one said her husband took amphetamines.

My husband didn’t have many friends. He often got in trouble with his co-workers. In the evenings, when he got home from work, he liked to sit and drink with the guards of the housing estate. I always had to go out and try to get him to come back home. That’s the reason why we usually got into fights. If I didn’t go out to get him, he would say I didn’t care about him. Sometimes he accused me of having an affair or liking another man and ignoring him. That’s why we started arguing (Abused Wife Number 9).

In discussing with the wives who revealed that their husbands abused drugs and/or alcohol, ten of them said their husbands were regular drinkers. They considered that their husbands’ drinking led to abuse problems. Three of them reported that their husbands liked to go out with friends to drink. Often the husbands came home late and fights erupted. Two of them found out that their husbands had sexual relations with other women when they went out drinking. Other two reported being forced to have sex when their husbands were drunk. One of wives said her husband was addicted to marijuana and used amphetamines.

My husband’s drinking is the root of all our problems. He curses me and insults me and then gets more and more violent until he hits me (Abused Wife Number 12).
In brief, the respondents viewed that the personal factors were the most important factors contributed to wife abuse. The comparison of the most important factors contributing to wife abuse in the views of all respondents is shown in Figure 6.13.

Figure 6.13
Comparison of the Most Important Factors Contributing to Wife Abuse

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 6.13 is a simple frequency chart that graphically shows the differences in views of abused wives, service workers and policy makers on the most important factors contributing the wife abuse. Policy makers are less likely to locate the causes of wife abuse in individual factors. The abused wives and service workers are more likely to locate the most important factor contributing to wife abuse as in the individual abuser.

The relationships of those factors contributing to wife abuse are shown in Figure 6.14.
Figure 6.14

Relationships of the Factors Contributing to Wife Abuse

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 6.14 represents the complex web of factors contributing to wife abuse and some of the examples relevant to Thai women and the Thai experience. Not all of the contributing factors need to be present.
6.3 EFFECTS OF WIFE ABUSE

The findings in this part presented the effects on abused wives and effects on witnesses of abuse in the views of the wives and the service workers.

Effects on abused wives

Fifteen of the twenty wives affirmed that the abuse had a significant psychological effect on them. Only five of them indicated physical injuries as the most significant effect. Three of this five were so seriously injured by their husbands that they had to be hospitalised. The other two of the five said they were too ashamed to see a doctor about their injuries. One of these latter two also said she did not have enough money to pay for medical care, so she had to suffer with the injury until it healed by itself. This caused enormous physical and psychological suffering.

The effects reported by the wives were similar to those listed by the workers. Sixteen of the twenty of them stated that the major effect on the abused wives was psychological while the other four were physical. The wife and the worker described the physical effects of abuse:

When we got in a fight, I tried to run away. My husband got really angry and tried to take away my bag. He hit me until I passed out. One of my ribs was broken and I was badly bruised. My husband was the one who took me to the hospital [during the interview the respondent was still in the hospital]. He comes to visit me every day. He says he’s sorry and won’t ever do it again. He says he’ll give up drinking and has already cut back. But I won’t talk to him (Abused Wife Number 9).
They feel hurt and as if they have been damaged or lost something. It causes them to have many negative thoughts and may cause them to deal with other people in violent or abusive ways (Respondent from Service Agency Number 10).

**Feelings of abused wives**

Eleven of them stated that they felt sad, nervous, disappointed, sorry for their children, wanted a divorce, bored with life, fearful, distrusting, or embarrassed.

[I was] sad, worried, embarrassed, and wanted to kill myself. I was very worried about my future and the future of my children. I didn’t want my children to have problems, but I wanted them to have both parents together. I felt sorry for my parents, too, because they were disappointed in my married life and very sad about it (Abused Wife Number 15).

Six wives reported feeling hurt, despondent about the problem, burdened, depressed, self-destructive, emotionally pressured, and self-critical.

I was preoccupied with the problem and couldn’t concentrate on my work. I felt burdened and depressed. I wanted to kill myself. I didn’t know how to find a way out. I didn’t know whom I could ask for help. I just thought I wanted to die (Abused Wife Number 13).

In addition, three wives reported feeling angry, vengeful and detested their husbands. They wanted their husbands to be punished.

I really hated my husband. I wanted the police to arrest him and punish him. I really, really wanted that (Abused Wife Number 13).
Husbands’ reactions

Eleven of the wives stated that after their husbands abused them they felt sorry and tried to make it up to them. They said their husbands asked forgiveness each time, but after a few days their behaviour went back to normal and they abused them again. For instance, in the case of a husband who liked to go out frequently and get drunk, after his wife forgave him and they made up, a few days later he would start drinking again, go out, get into a conflict with his wife, and get in a fight. Eventually he would lose control and abuse his wife.

A wife said that even though her husband felt sorry and asked forgiveness, he never improved his behaviour:

He would apologise and say he was sorry, but he was always the same. Even though he promised never to do it again he never tried to improve (Abused wife Number 8).

Other eight wives stated that after their husbands abused them or got violent, they stopped speaking to each other. They said that their husband acted as if nothing had happened and would not ask forgiveness. Both the husband and wife would let time pass and not talk about the incident.

He would not have any reaction, as if he hadn’t done anything (Abused Wife Number 7)

One of the wives said that after her husband abused her, he was still angry and tried to win the fight by saying she was bad. He sent her out of the house and brought another woman to live there instead.
He kicked me out of the house. He didn’t care about our child or me and brought in another woman to live at the house, even though I was still living there (Abused Wife Number 13).

Effects on witnesses of abuse

Fifteen of the twenty wives and sixteen of the twenty workers stated that family members were witnesses of abuse. In particular the parents of the women, the parents of the husband, children or other relatives were witnesses.

Eight of these sixteen workers who stated that family members were witnesses of abuse said that children were the most affected by wife abuse. Only four of them stated that the abusive situation of the couple had a major effect on their children. Three out of this four said their husbands ordered them to leave the house, so they had to take their children with them. The move was very difficult for the children because they had to take up temporary residence at a shelter. One wife reported that her husband also abused one of her children by hitting him.

The service providers reported that the wives who came in to their agencies to ask for assistance frequently brought small children with them since the children were too small to care for themselves. Most of the children were closer and more attached to their mothers than their fathers. Of the wives who came in for assistance by themselves, in most cases it was because they did not have children or their children were already grown up. They revealed that some were pregnant with their first child.

If they do not have young children they come alone. If they have young children they will bring them along (Respondent from a Service Agency Number 3).
Some of the wives stated that friends or neighbours were aware of the abusive incidents when they occurred. One of them said that customers who came to eat at her food vendor shop witnessed the abuse. She said that no one was aware of it when she suffered abuse at home because the couple lived alone.

Effect on child witnesses to abuse

Ten of the twenty workers stated that children who witnessed abuse were emotionally affected. For instance they missed their home when they were out in the shelter or felt angry or depressed or hopeless about their lives. Seven out of the ten said that the children were affected in terms of their behaviour. They acted aggressively or committed petty crimes. Three others noted that the child witnesses were said to have school problems.

Children were witnesses to the abuse, and they were the people who were affected the most in every instance where a husband abused a wife. For example, children who witnessed the incident would be shocked and scared. Some tried to get involved to stop their fathers, and they themselves were injured. If not, then usually if the mother left the house, she would take the children with her, so they had to relocate and change schools. Some of the children who were a little older tried to protect their mothers, such as by fighting back and trying to hurt their fathers. These children become problems for society (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).

Nevertheless, when asked about the effects on the children when the wives came to the agencies, five of the ten service workers said that the children usually wanted to go back to their fathers. They often displayed aggressive behaviour and were very depressed and not cheerful like normal children. They said many of the children were too young to understand the situation but were affected by having to leave their homes, and the
children misbehaved and refused to attend school. The children who were old enough to know what was going on often felt hopeless because they could not help their mothers escape being abused by their fathers.

A wife had this to say about the effect on her emotional state and on her children:

I became uncertain about the situation of the family and there was a feeling of distrust. I tried to kill myself twice. I tried to hang myself once before I decided to break up with him, and once I tried to poison myself. I had to stay at the hospital for several days. I was very depressed and worried about my children. I felt like my children had become aggressive and violent (Abused wife Number 4).

Several workers thought that the most serious effect of wife abuse was on the behaviour of the children.

All children will feel uneasy and unhappy, although the child’s education will rarely be affected (Respondent from Service Agency Number 8).

They also noted many other negative effects on children who were witnesses to the abuse. They often had problems at school because they were emotionally upset and worried over their mothers getting hurt. The behaviour of fathers who got drunk and hit their wives affected the children, especially if the children were close by or tried to stop their fathers. In addition, most children became aggressive and tried to use violence to solve problems.
Witnesses’ reactions

Eight of the twenty wives said the witnesses did not get involved because they thought it was a personal matter or because they were tired of that kind of situation. Six of them said that witnesses who were their elders tried to stop the abuse and also tried to help solve the problem between the couple. Other three wives stated that their parents were very angry over the incident and tried to intervene to solve the problem by suggesting they get divorced. Witnesses who were small children begged their fathers to stop hurting their mothers. The wives stated that none of the efforts to stop the abuse were effective.

My husband’s parents tried to stop him, but it was no use. He yelled at them not to try to get involved, because it was a matter between the two of us. Our child tried to beg him to stop, but in the end they told me I should do what he wanted so he would stop hurting me. My parents just told me to be patient and endure because they didn’t want the family to break up. They asked me to think of my children (Abused Wife Number 4).

Abused wife Number 7 said her children asked their father to stop yelling at their mother:

My children, especially my daughter, would always tell him to stop scolding and yelling at me, but if he kept hurting me, she would ask me to leave the house since he was trying to kick us out.

Three wives said that friends or neighbours came to comfort them, give them encouragement and listen to their problems when their husbands were not home. Two out of these three had no reaction or they refused to acknowledge the incident or tried to stay away. The reactions of witnesses, which were reported by just one of the wives,
was that the child witness scolded both the mother and father and didn’t want to get close to them, or did not acknowledge the problem or have any reaction because the child was still too small.

The effects of wife abuse are shown in Figure 6.15 below.

**Figure 6.15**

**Effects of Wife Abuse**

- **Psychological effects (15)**
  - Sad/hungry/disappointed/sorry for the children/want to divorce/bored with life/fearful
  - Distrusting/embarrassed/feeling hurt/despondent about the problem/burdened/depressed self
  - Feel angry/vengeful and detesting their husband: want husbands to be punished
- **Physical effects**
  - Psychological effects (16)
  - Physical effects (4)
  - Missed home/angry/depressed/upset/worried over their mother/hopeless
  - Affected to their behaviours: refused to attend school/aggressive/committed crimes
  - Have school problems/want to go back to their fathers
  - Were injured (while their father abused mothers) abused

**Witnesses:**
- Children (most affected)
- Wives’ parents
- Husbands’ parents
- Relatives
- Neighbours/customers

*Source: Developed for this study*
Figure 6.15 represents the range of effects wife abuse has on wives, witnesses and particularly child witnesses from the wives perspective and experiences.

In brief, personal factors were the most important factors contributing to wife abuse in the views of a majority of the wives and the workers. On the contrary, the cultural factors were the most important in the views of the policy makers. A majority of the respondents reported psychological effects and other also reported physical effects.

**6.4 ROLES OF THAI INSTITUTIONS ON EQUALITY AND THEIR IMPACT ON WIFE ABUSE**

The institutions discussed in this part are the main social institutions that influence all Thais’ behaviour, personality and attitudes. The presentation of the respondents’ perceptions concerns the impact of those institutions towards promoting equality between Thai men and Thai women.

**Thai religion**

Thirteen out of twenty of service workers believed that the Thai religion tended to create or foster attitudes of gender inequality. Seven of them had disagreed. Half of them perceived that the Thai religion had a positive impact and the other half felt it was negative. The participants explain this apparent contradiction.

In the discussions, they stated that every religion values the lives of both men and women and teaches that they should be equal and that people should treat each other appropriately. Buddhism, which is considered the national religion of Thailand, the
largest number of people in the country are Buddhists, is influential in designating how men and women should act towards another, how parents should treat their children and how children should treat their parents. Nevertheless, in the opinion of a majority (thirteen) of them, Buddhist teachings have been adapted for their application to fit in with Thai culture, which sees men as dominant in the family and society. In Buddhism as practiced in Thailand, men have more opportunities to participate in religious activities. For instance, only men are allowed to be ordained as monks and novices. Society at large does not accept the ordination of women as bhikhuni or Buddhist nuns. That is why they believed that Buddhism demonstrates that men are more important than women and have more rights. Women have no decision-making rights, with the exception of more highly educated people. The majority of religious activities are organised mainly for the participation of men only.

Half of the policy makers also believed that religion in Thai society had a negative impact on creating equality between the sexes this attitude influences men to treat women as inferior, and this in turn can contribute to wife abuse. The following are typical comments suggesting a negative influence of Buddhism.

Women are blocked from joining in certain religious rituals, so in practice the religion does not promote equality between men and women (Policy Maker Number 4).

Women are not given full acceptance in terms of religion. This affects inequality (Respondent from Service Agency Number 9).

On the contrary, some respondents viewed the impact of Buddhism in the positive comments below.
Buddhism believes in the equality of men and women. Buddhism is the foundation of Thai culture. The principles of Buddhism uphold the value of women and men as equal (Policy Maker Number 1).

The religion advocates peace in the family, community, society, and the world. Therefore, if people followed the principles it would almost certainly be positive, not to mention about equality or inequality between men and women (Respondent from Service Agency Number 6).

They also stated that Buddhism taught the method to solve personal and family crisis in many ways, such as the virtues for a good household life or Gharavasa-dhamma.}

Thai government

Eleven service providers perceived that the Thai government had a positive role in the issue of the equality of Thai men and women but other nine of them thought it had a negative role. Again, the policy makers were split half-and-half on this issue.

The respondents who regarded the impact of the Thai government as positive said that every recent administration had adhered to a policy that placed emphasis on equal rights for men and women as stated in the current constitution (promulgated in 2007). In its working principles the government has tried to take concrete steps to provide equal opportunities for all people. As for the respondents who thought the government’s role was negative, they said that even though the government’s official policy stated that men and women were equal, there was a weak point in that women had fewer

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1 Virtues for a good household life (1) Sacca: truth and honesty, (2) Dama: taming and training oneself; adjustment, (3) Khanti: tolerance; forbearance, and (4) Câga: liberality; generosity (Phra Brahmagunabhorn (PA Payutto) 2005, p. 149).
opportunities than men to advance in their careers. The service workers also said that women who held important posts in the civil service, government agencies or as elected leaders were given less respect and social acceptance than men were in the same posts. This echoes the earlier comments by the policing member of the policy respondents.

The work practices in the Thai civil service have created a situation of inequality that matches the real situation in Thai families and society at large, in which men are accepted as having a superior role and status to women. Nine of them said that men and women in Thai society were still unequal:

Men hold most of the political power. Since men have more power, even if the laws try to make provisions for equal practices, still most people accept the male role as having more power. That means that most men have more opportunities to advance in their careers than do most women (Respondent from Service Agency Number 20).

This reflects the social acceptance of the inequality between men and women that impacts family relations.

**Thai media**

Sixteen of the service workers and all of the policy makers believed that the Thai media, such as television; newspaper; radio and others, had a negative impact on attitudes toward gender equality and on wife abuse. Only four workers held the opposite view.

Discussions with the respondents on this issue revealed that in their opinions, the Thai media portrays women as a kind of merchandise. All of the policy makers and most of the service workers criticised the Thai media for reflecting the influence of patriarchal values in traditional Thai culture. Attitudes about inequality are frequently expressed in
the media, such as by casting males and females in certain traditionally accepted roles.

This affects the attitudes of consumers and the general public.

The female body is used as an advertising medium and women are seen as sex objects. Sometimes the media relay socially irresponsible messages, especially messages concerning violence against women and children. Most media producers lack consciousness of equality between the sexes (Policy Maker Number 5).

The media sets the value of women according to their beauty. They should be housewives and ladies. The media wants women to accept that as their role. Also, the media broadcasts images of women being raped or beaten by men and presents this as normal. For example, in soap operas or movies the hero abuses the heroine. The media also reflects the double standards that are accepted in Thai society. If a woman has an affair she is branded as immoral, but in contrast, if a man does the same society does not consider it wrong (Respondent from Service Agency Number 4).

The media impacts inequality between men and women, because the media presents images and content about the use of violence. Women are shown as sex objects. This violates the rights of women and children. Most of the managers of media agencies are men (Policy Maker Number 3).

**Thai family life**

Sixteen of the twenty service providers and all of the policy makers considered that Thai family life created negative attitudes toward the equality of Thai men and women, which impacts wife abuse. Only four workers believed the opposite.

Discussions with the respondents, almost all of them viewed that Thai people are taught by their parents what their proper roles and responsibilities in the family should be. They said there are many different ways of socialisation, including direct teaching by
elders and learning from the examples set by parents and other elder family members. They explained that the kinds of work delegated to males and females are not seen as being of equal value. Women are generally expected to carry out work to serve other members of the family, whereas men are expected to do work concerning using their power and authority to make decisions, and social functions in which they are seen as the leaders of the family. They viewed that it may be true that there is no tradition in Thai families that clearly shows that parents love or value their sons over their daughters, or that accord men greater rights or dignity. Parents give equal care to their male and female offspring, and each is given social opportunities to fulfil their roles according to their potential. However, they discussed that whenever family resources are limited, the men or boys are generally given the first right to those resources. The women or girls are expected to make sacrifices. For instance, in poor families the parents are more likely to support their sons’ education first and their daughters may have to drop out of school and help earn money.

Here are some examples of a few perceptions about socialisation in Thai families:

In the atmosphere of the Thai family, men are valued above women. This affects people’s attitudes about how they live their lives. Boys are brought up differently than girls. They are brought up to fulfil a certain role when they grow up. The idea that men are the heads of the households and have superior power is passed down in families (Respondent from Service Agency Number 3).

The way of Thai family life impacts the way of children’s lives. For example, children can see that their mother and father express different roles and have different duties and responsibilities (Policy Maker Number 2).

As a result of seeing their parents fulfilling different roles, when children grow up they have certain expectations about how they want their husband or wife to act and to treat...
them. If a boy grows up in a family where the father is dominant, it is likely that he will have the same kind of behaviour.

Families have an important role in bringing up children. In most families, males and females are not treated equally. The work of men is usually valued more highly. Some kinds of work are designated as ‘men’s work’ and some as women’s work. You could say that the roles of men and women in Thai families are given a different value. Men’s work is always seen as more important (Policy Maker Number 5).

Parents in Thai families see men as the leaders of the household. Even though the status of women has improved, men are still the ones to carry on the family line. That is why men are seen as having a greater opportunity. If a family has sufficient resources, then the boys and girls will be treated equally, but if a family has insufficient resources, they will give more opportunities to their sons. In the minds of the general public, men are seen as more important than women (Policy Maker Number 3).

**Thai business**

Sixteen of the twenty service workers and nine of the ten policy makers perceived that Thai business had an impact on negative attitudes toward the equality or inequality of Thai men and women and an impact on wife abuse. On the contrary, four workers and one of the policy makers perceived that the impact was mainly positive.

In discussing with the respondents, most of them agreed that the business sector is very important for national development because it is a source of revenue. They viewed that in most businesses, both men and women work at all different levels, from owners of enterprises, to management, to operations-level staff. Cases of inequality in the business world can most readily be seen with workers at the operations level. Women labourers
are often treated unfairly. They said that some companies will not hire women who are pregnant, and some workers who become pregnant are not given their full rights to maternity leave. Many are given only one month maternity leave and are not given their full wages. Overall, the status of women in the business sector is not different from men for most topics, but usually women are paid less than men are when performing the same work.

Economically, men are the breadwinners while women are usually restricted to staying at home. When women do work outside the home, their work is seen as less important (Policy Maker Number 7).

Some women in the business sector are taken advantage of. They are treated unfairly from the highest levels to the lowest levels, such as in terms of compensation, responsibility, and promotion (Respondent from Service Agency Number 7).

**Thai culture**

All of the respondents, the service workers and the policy makers, perceived that Thai culture had a negative impact on the equality of Thai men and women and the wife abuse issue. They explained that the most important reason is that in Thai culture the way children are socialised, boys and girls are brought up to have different roles in the family. A boy is going to perpetuate the family name while a girl will change her family name after she gets married. Other issues have been discussed earlier. Thai culture dictates that women must serve other family members:

In Thai society men are not taught to honour and respect women. They are not taught to be gentlemen and help ladies. Thai culture teaches women to serve men. Most men expect women to take care of them. If their wives refuse to do so, it creates a serious problem. You could say that
Thai men expect their wives to be their servants and to be in an inferior position (Policy Maker Number 5).

Thai culture makes women socially disadvantaged:

Thai culture has a negative impact on the status of women in the family. Women always come second to men. Therefore, they are disadvantaged as a group. Thai society values men over women. For example, most people like to have sons. Usually men make the decisions in the household. If men have extramarital affairs, it is generally accepted more than for women. In addition, it is socially acceptable for men to drink but women who drink will be castigated (Policy Maker Number 10).

Women are imprinted to accept their inferior status:

According to Thai culture, women should be calm and discrete, proper, deferential, patient and willing to make sacrifices for the family. They are taught to put up with abuse from their husbands because they believe they are inferior. When a family has problems, most people believe the woman did not fulfil her proper role. That is why most women do not want to tell anyone about their family problems, even if they are being physically abused, because they feel ashamed about it (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).
Thai social agencies

Eleven service workers and seven policy makers believed that the Thai social agencies had a negative impact on forming attitudes about gender equality and on wife abuse in Thailand. They reported that Thai social agencies, including government and non-government agencies, collaborated to promote the equality of Thai men and women by organising activities to meet that objective. In contrast the others argued that in some agencies, especially the government agencies, the male and female officers discriminated against women in their roles and status. They suggested that the best way to develop a new generation of people who understand the equality of all human beings would be to start with basic education.

The institutions with the greatest impact on gender equality and on wife abuse

Nevertheless, most of the workers also added that at present many non-government agencies play an important role in promoting wider knowledge and understanding about human rights and equality between the sexes. This is in addition to providing legal assistance regarding women’s rights.

The institution of the family has the greatest impact on building attitudes about the equality or inequality of men and women, because it is the first institution to closely train and socialise humans. People’s personalities are formed in their families, along with their ideas about equality or inequality of the sexes (Respondent from Service Agency Number 17).

The summary is shown in Table 6.1.
Table 6.1
Summary of Findings on the Perceptions of the Roles of Thai Institutions on the Issue of Equality and Impact on Wife Abuse

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The Thai Institutions</th>
<th>Perceptions</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Thai Religion</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Thai Government</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Thai Media</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. Thai Family Life</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>5. Thai Business</td>
<td>✓</td>
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<tr>
<td>6. Thai Culture</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The greatest role impact on gender equality & wife abuse*

| 7. Thai Social Agencies | ✓           |

Source: Developed for this study

Table 6.1 indicates the overall view of the respondents on the effect of the above institutions on wife abuse. Overall, it appears that Thai culture in general is seen to have the greatest negative influence. In contrast the Thai government was, at the time of the research seem to be having a positive influence.

**The interest in wife abuse within the Thai family and society**

Twelve of the twenty service providers and nine of the ten policy makers stated that people in Thai society were the *most interested* in wife abuse. They became aware of the problem of wife abuse from news stories in the mass media, like newspapers and television. They viewed that the media often reported on various cases or incidents of
wife abuse. The cases that attract the most attention from society are cases in which the wife is severely injured or dies under unusual circumstances, such as when a woman mysteriously disappears and later police discover that her husband killed her. Cases in which the victim or the perpetrator of the abuse is a celebrity or a member of the social elite also gain public attention. Nevertheless, although society at large is very interested and concerned about such cases, little effective response to stop domestic violence is evident.

Society is interested, but that does not solve the problem. People are interested in learning about the problem and criticising it, but nothing is seriously done to solve it. Any real solution must be tied to the institution of the family (Respondent from Service Agency Number 2).

Six workers considered that after society at large, communities were the second most aware of the problem of wife abuse. They viewed that at present some communities have addressed the issue by creating networks to help protect victims of domestic violence, both women and children. Many of these networks are quite effective in practice.

The family is not aware of the problem of domestic violence or wife abuse and its effects, but society is well aware of the problem. There are efforts to have the community participate in preventing and solving the problem (Policy Maker Number 8).

Thai communities and society feel very strongly about the issue while individual families feel a bit ambivalent as long as it doesn’t happen in their own family (Respondent from Service Agencies Number 5).
All respondents perceived that most of the Thai institutions had negative impact on equality of gender and on wife abuse. In the opposite, they viewed that the Thai government had positive role in the issues of equality of Thai men and women. They also viewed that the Thai culture was the institution with the greatest impact on gender equality and wife abuse.

A finding from the cross-case analysis is that policy makers added a category of abuse: abandonment. The women and the policy makers seem to understand its critical importance but the service agency workers reduce it to one of the other categories of abuse. Abandonment for the women leads to loss of their security.

A finding is that the workers wanted to reduce the number of types of abuse for instance neglect was economic but the women’s experience is also psychological and emotional. The women thought that verbal abuse was different to psychological abused whereas the workers wanted the two combined. Psychological abuse could occur by the strategic use of silence. Differences in definition of this type have effects for accuracy in determining categories for statistical purposes, service provision and funding, policy - making and the building of legislation. If researchers (particularly quantitative) use categories developed without checking their validity with those who have the lived experience the findings may not be useful in practice.

At the time of the abuse the women admit that they did not want to discuss sexual abuse. The service providers and policy makers agree that women do not speak of sexual assault within marriage. However, the researcher’s experience is that the women did speak about sexual violence – if not graphically. This too may be something worthy of following up.
Unstructured responses

The coding and matrix building for the unstructured responses in this section revealed a powerful theme related to the structural and socially reproduced inequality between men and women in Thailand. There was no element of Thai life where this theme was not experienced. It summarises to a very strong statement: Thai men have power over women. They have done so for long enough that women believe it to be true, that their place is to acquiesce and that for them they can see no way out. Neither the Constitution, nor legislation, nor UN Conventions, nor anything else seems to have been able to shift men’s behaviours or women’s beliefs.

CONCLUSION

The findings in this chapter revealed the suffering of the wives, causes and effects of abuse, and also the Thai values and beliefs that contributed to wife abuse, which challenges the stakeholders to decrease or eliminate the incidence. The wives who are abused, the service providers and the policy makers have different perspectives on the causes and effects of abuse. There is no one agreed viewpoint and most views indicate that the problem is multi-dimensional. These findings lead to the information in the next chapter, on how the service agencies respond to wife abuse.
Chapter 7

FINDINGS REGARDING THE RESPONSES TO WIFE ABUSE

This chapter explores how the service agencies dealing with domestic violence in Thailand respond to the wife abuse cases that come in seeking assistance. The responses of each group (victims, service providers and policy makers) to the primary questions are analysed separately (within-case) and where the questions are shared, analysed together (cross-case) to identify similarities and differences in perception, understanding and experience. The additional themes that come from the non-structured responses are identified.

7.1 INFORMATION ON SERVICE AGENCIES

In this section, the respondents were asked to define their agency’s missions or goals for serving abused wives, identify the target groups that the agencies intended to provide help to, and the kinds of services that the agencies could provide. Lastly, the wives gave information on the personnel from the service agencies that dealt with them when they first came to the agencies.

**Agencies’ missions or goals to serve abused wives**

The service agencies included both government and non-government agencies. Nine of the twenty agencies had clearly stated underpinning principles to assist abused wives to solve their problems by themselves.
Our agency tries to help them to help themselves and even help others who suffer from the same problem. We also empower them to stand on their own feet financially and to be accepted in the society as human beings (Respondent from Service Agency Number 2).

Five of them stated that their agency’s mission was to provide emergency assistance within 24-hours to abused wives in crisis situations. Next, three workers stated that their agency’s main goal was to prevent wife abuse and the other three noted that their agencies help solve the problem of domestic violence along with promoting equality between the sexes and upholding women’s rights.

Our mission is client centred. We alleviate crises of abuse, both physical and psychological crises. Our agency works 24-hours every day. We cooperate with other professionals (Respondent from Service Agency Number 8).

The data is shown in figure 7.1 below.

**Figure 7.1**

**Agencies’ Missions or Goals to Serve Abused Wives in the Views of the Respondents from Service Agencies**

- need specific legislation: strengthen social & family network: 5
- focus on problem solving & include protective measures: 10
- call for authority of government organisation to eliminate domestic violence & wife abuse: 1

*Source: Developed for this study*
Figure 7.1 is a simple frequency chart that graphically shows the views of the Respondents from Service Agencies (N=20) on the agencies’ missions or goals to serve abused wives. A majority of them empower the abused wives to help themselves.

**Target groups of service agencies**

The service workers had a direct responsibility to help not only abused wives, but most of them also dealt with domestic violence in general and other family problems, for instance: alcohol and drug abuse in youth or deviant behaviour, and helping poor families. These agencies had many kinds of services for a variety of target groups.

Thirteen of them stated that the children of the abused wives who came for assistance were also a target group. Four of them reported that their agencies provided services to abused wives only. Only three named the husbands as another target group for their agencies’ work. One service provider stated that children usually came to the agency with their mother.

The most common service provided for other family members of the abused wives was childcare while the women were at work (thirteen service providers). The agencies also provided help with childcare expenses, provided scholarships for the children, provided milk for small children or sent the children to foster homes or orphanages if the parents were divorced and there was no one to care for the children. Most of them (ten of the thirteen) revealed that the agencies also provided counselling for children to help them deal with the problems in their families and the situation of abuse.
The children who are witnesses of abuse also have to face the problem. (…children who witnessed the incident would be shocked and scared. Some tried to get involved to stop their fathers…). They should know what is happening in their families and they should learn how to deal with their families’ situation. We provided counselling to them (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).

As for the services rendered to the abusers or the abusive husbands, the service providers stated that they provided counselling to help the men understand the problems in their family and how using violence affected the situation. The agencies intended to help the abusers change their behaviour in order to solve the domestic violence problem.

We would like to help abusers by changing their behaviour, but normally only the women came to ask for help (Respondent from Service Agency Number 18).

Kinds of services of the agencies and the service providers

Fifteen of the twenty workers stated that the most common service provided by their agencies was a safe place for abused wives and children. Fourteen of them said they empowered economic self-reliance, which included occupational training and financial assistance for starting new careers. Thirteen of them reported that their agencies provided a referral service for the abused wives to refuges or provided information on other sources where the abused wives could gain assistance. Next, nine of them said they provided health care services, including prenatal care. Lastly, three of them said they provided childcare and child welfare services.

We refer them (the abused wives) to other agencies for a safe place as we don’t have our own. We provide financial help for self-reliance and for their children (Respondent from Service Agency Number 7).
The staffing configuration in service agencies differed. Eleven of the twenty service agencies had psychologists or counsellors to work directly with client women. Next, nine of them said the person who dealt with the abused wives most was a welfare worker, legal worker, medical worker, or a service provider who was in the managerial level of the service agency. The data is shown in figure 7.2 below.

**Figure 7.2**

**Kinds of Services of the Agencies and the Service Providers**

![Pie chart showing services provided](chart.png)

*Source: Developed for this study *answered more than one services*

Figure 7.2 is a simple frequency chart as respondents could select more than one answer. It graphically shows the variety kinds of services of agencies and the service providers in the views of the Respondents from Service Agencies (N=20).
7.2 INFORMATION ON HOW THE ABUSED WIVES CAME TO THE SERVICE AGENCIES AND THEIR NEEDS

Persons who advised the abused wives to come to service agencies

Nine service workers said that people close to the abused wives, for instance friends, relatives or acquaintances, advised them to seek assistance from the service agencies.

When we ask them who introduced you to come to this agency? Most of them say that they dared not talk about the abuse to anyone, except only their friends, and they advised them to come to ask for help from this agency (Respondent from Service Agency Number 2).

Next, six of them stated that many of the abused wives made their own decision to come. They said the wives had heard of the service agency before or had read about it in a magazine or newspaper. Five of them stated that the wives were referred by other agencies. They gave the additional information that the agencies that referred the wives to them were health care service agencies and the police. In the case of health care service agencies, they sent them to the service agencies after they had recovered from their injuries in the hospital. Police, however, usually bring the women to be examined by physicians so that they could have evidence to bring the case to court.

Number of times the abused wives sought help from service agencies

Seven of the twenty wives stated that this was the first time they had come in to ask for assistance from the service agency. Five of them said they had come in for assistance more than five times. One out of these five reported coming in over ten times. Three out of the twenty reported coming in for assistance twice only. Another three had come in
three times. One out of twenty reported that she had come to the agency four times. Another one said she had come in to the service agency every day as long as she had been suffering from the problem of abuse in her family.

Meanwhile, ten service providers stated that most of the abused wives who came in for assistance came in only once. Four of them stated that the abused wives came in an average of four times each, and another four reported two times only. Other two said each abused wife usually came in three times.

The data is shown in figure 7.3 below.

**Figure 7.3**

**Number of Times the Abused Wives Sought Help from Service Agencies**

![Bar chart showing the number of times the abused wives sought help](chart.png)

*Source: Developed for this study*

Figure 7.3 is a simple frequency chart that graphically shows the number of respondents including the Abused Wives (N=20) and the Respondents from Service Agencies (N=20) which a majority of them had come in to ask for help from the service agencies in the first time.
Reasons to come to service agencies

It was found that the abused wives had different reasons to come to service agencies. Thirteen of the twenty wives and seven of the twenty service workers said the main reason why the abused wives came to ask for help from the agencies was because they could no longer stand being abused by their husbands, wanted to separate, and hoped the agency could help. One of them decided to leave her husband after he tortured her for a long time.

In the past, I left the household for almost a year and he kept running after me. Finally, I returned home and we had a new child; 12 years after I had a second child. We (my husband and I) always quarrel but I can’t stand it any longer after the last time he hit me (Abused Wife Number 6).

Two out of the thirteen wives said there was great tension in the household because they had stopped talking to their husbands. One out of these thirteen said that her husband had splashed her with acid.

Another wife said her son told her not to stand for the abuse anymore. She came to the agency to ask for a suggestion on how to divorce.

My son asked me why I have to stay with him (his father) and he told me he will take care of me (Abused Wife Number 4).

Three wives and six workers said the abused wives came to service agencies because their husbands had ordered them out of the house and they needed somewhere to stay temporarily. One of the three wives said that when she fought with her husband he often
sent her out of the house. She didn’t want to leave because she had nowhere to go and was worried about her children, but in the end she had to find a temporary shelter.

I came to ask for assistance from the agency because I was forced to by the circumstances. When we fought, my husband kicked me out of the house and locked the door. I felt I had nowhere to turn and no one to consult (Abused Wife Number 7).

Another reason cited by two of the wives was that they were pregnant but had been abandoned by the baby’s father. They felt ashamed and rejected by society and wanted somewhere to hide. Another two wives said that they wanted someone to help them and give them advice for solving their problem because they felt unable to solve the problem by themselves and they came primarily for legal assistance. Another seven workers supported the wives’ reasons that they wanted assistance from the service agencies.

They (the abused wives) said no one could help them in their time of crisis. They believed that our agency could help them and would not abuse them (Respondent from Service Agency Number 6).

In discussions with the service providers, they explained the reasons why women may feel they should endure the abusive situation that in Thai society women are brought up to believe that women who have more than one husband are bad people. Women who separate from their first husbands may be viewed as having some bad personality traits that their husband could not stand, or they might be criticised as impatient. As soon as they prepare for marriage they are taught to be a good wife that ‘whether the burden is heavy or light you must let your husband has his way’. These beliefs cause many
women to try to endure abuse until they reach a point where they really cannot stand it any longer.

Every woman wants to be a good wife. They do not want their family to break up. They believe that if they break up then it shows that they are not a good woman or did not fulfil the role of a good wife, and that is why their husband left them or they went separate ways.

(Respondent from Service Agency Number 5).

In concert with the other respondents, seven of the ten policy makers gave the opinion that the main reason the abused wives came to the service agencies was that they could no longer stand being abused and wanted help to stop the violence. The other three said that the abused wives wanted help in changing their husbands’ abusive behaviour. Two out of the three stated that some of the abusive husbands required psychological treatment because they had mental health problems. The results indicate that for policy makers the most important reason the wives decided to seek help was because they had to leave the abusive situation. Policy makers viewed other assistance provided by agencies as non-essential.

From the discussions with most (seven of the ten) of them, they said that the abused wives, who came for assistance, had been repeatedly abused for a long time some had been abused ever since they first got married and had endured the situation for many years and that these women’s lives were in danger. The policy makers took particular note of those cases where husbands had threatened women with weapons and seemed entirely out of control when they were drunk. Furthermore, they understood that many wives felt psychologically pressured because their husbands had abandoned them and refused to take responsibility for their children. They appreciated the economic
problems and accepted that in some cases the women could not support themselves because they were unemployed and relied on their husband’s income.

One of the seven policy makers made this comment about why some abused wives came to request assistance from service agencies:

The abused wives have already tried to tolerate the situation for some time. At first, when their husbands abuse them they do not want to let their neighbours or anyone else in society know. They are embarrassed. Then, after a while the husband will become more and more violent. This is the natural pattern that once it occurs, abuse is usually repeated with increasing violence and increasing frequency. Eventually the abused wife will come to seek help because she is abandoned by her husband and cannot take care of herself. She has nowhere to live and no one to care for her. Usually, the women who come to seek assistance take their children with them. Some are pregnant (Policy Maker Number 3).

The policy makers made other comments about the reasons an abused wife might stay in an abusive situation for some time before coming to ask for assistance. Two major reasons were cited. First, the largest number (four of the seven) said that the abused wives wanted help from anyone at all who had enough power to make their husbands stop abusing them and could help by changing their husbands’ behaviour. At the same time, they wanted someone to listen to their troubles and help relieve their emotional distress. Often they were so upset and insecure that they could not eat or sleep. One of the policy makers who had worked as a psychiatrist said:

Most of the women who came in for advice were ill. They could not sleep but didn’t know why. When I asked them I found out that they were both physically and emotionally hurt. In the end it turned out the reason was a conflict with their husbands. Their husbands abused them and they had endured it for a long time.
The policy makers (three of the seven) were aware that some women wanted to stay with their husbands for the sake of their children. Economic and social reasons again were another reason like the children needing to have two parents.

One observation from analysis of the interviews on this subject was that in fact they wanted someone to train their husbands or do something else to change their behaviour and make them into good husbands, which mean being more responsible for their families and not going out drinking or having affairs with other women. Some of the service agencies had personnel who could help in this manner, such as police officers, but the abused wives did not want their husbands to be arrested. They hoped that the police could protect them and prevent their husbands from beating them, but under Thai law for the police to take action in a domestic violence case, they have to take the perpetrator into their custody and write up an official accusation.

If the police arrested the husband, the wife would post bail to get him out. The abused wives did not really want to press charges against their husbands. The policy makers explained in some cases, wives who were severely beaten reported the incident to the police and asked for protection and safety, but the police refused to file a report or offer any assistance. Then the women were abused even more. In other cases the police did file a report and the case had to go to court.

The data is shown in figure 7.4 below.
Figure 7.4
Comparing the Views of the Respondents on the Reasons to Come to Service Agencies

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 7.4 is a frequency chart showing participants response as a percentage: Abused wives N=20, Service providers N=20 and Policy Makers N=10. It graphically shows the different perceptions of abused wives, service providers and policy makers on the reasons why women present to agencies.

When the abused wives were asked why they chose to come to a particular agency, nine of the twenty of them stated that they thought that the service workers from the agency might help them keep the family together.

Five of them stated that they had to be hospitalised for injuries after their husbands hurt them and the hospital referred them to the agency. Three of them stated that their bosses or colleagues recommended that they go to the service agency for assistance. That is to say, persons who were close to them perceived the difficulties from the abuse. Other three gave different reasons. One said she wanted her children to be safe. Another said
she had heard of the agency before so she went there when she felt it was necessary.
The last one saw a television program about the agency and realised that the services it
offered were what she needed at the time. The data is shown in figure 7.5 below.

**Figure 7.5**

*Reasons for Choosing a Particular Service Agency*

![Figure 7.5](image-url)

*Source: Developed for this study*

Figure 7.5 is a simple frequency chart that graphically shows the reasons why the
abused wives had come to the particular service agencies.

*The Abused Wives’ expectations from the service agencies*

Ten of the twenty wives and ten of the agency workers said the abused wives expected
the personnel at the service agencies listen to their problem and give them advice and
guidance on how to live their lives. The agency respondents said some of the abused
wives expected service workers to provide therapy to change the behaviour of their husbands.
The abused wives who came for assistance did not want their husbands to be punished but hoped that the agency would call in their husbands to talk, make them stop using violence, and give them therapy to change their behaviour (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).

The abused wives said this about their expectations:

I thought the agency could help me. I expected that they would help make things in my family better so we could live together happily and safely and not hurt each other again. I felt sorry for my kids (Abused Wife Number 7).

I expected the personnel to give me advice and help me find a way to solve the problems in my life and the life of my child (Abused Wife Number 10).

Five of the wives said they expected that the agency could help them solve the problem and maintain confidentiality, and they expected legal assistance to help them file for divorce and apply for alimony and child support (in case the problem could not be resolved). One of this five said she expected the agency to help give her treatment for psychological rehabilitation. Equal to this number, another five of the wives wanted the agency to provide a safe place for them to stay and basic necessities until they could become self-reliant.

Seven service workers perceived that the abused wives expected help to solve their problems, particularly in the form of financial or legal assistance or medical treatment, including career assistance. The remaining three of them expected to be given a place to stay or a safe place to hide, plus food for themselves and their children.
I wanted to break up with my husband so I looked for somewhere to hide, because if I stayed with him longer I wouldn’t be able to resolve it (Abused Wife Number 19).

Almost all (nine out of ten) of the policy makers supported the views of abused wives that the wives who came for assistance expected the service workers to listen to their problems and give guidance. They said when the abuse was repeated again and again, the violence became more severe and more complicated. The wives felt they could not solve the problem themselves. They insisted that most of the wives who came for assistance did not want to get divorced, except in cases of extreme abuse.

The women hoped that after they came in for assistance from the service agency then their family life would improve. They wanted someone to intervene and help improve the relationships in their family. They were hoping for change. Most people, especially women, think it is not good (Policy Maker Number 2).

Lastly, only one of the ten said that the abused wives expected to receive services such as psychiatric treatment and therapy from qualified personnel who understood the problem of wife abuse. They hoped the personnel could give them counselling to help them solve the problem and expected that the personnel would keep the information confidential.

The data is shown in figure 7.6 below.
Figure 7.6

Comparing the Views of the Respondents on the
Abused Wives’ Expectations from the Service Agencies

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 7.6 is a frequency chart showing participant responses as a percentage: Abused wives N=20, Service providers N=20 and Policy Makers N=10. It graphically represents what the abused wives expected from the service agencies in the views of the Abused Wives, the Respondents from Service Agencies, and the Policy Makers. Most of them decided that they wanted someone listen to them and understand their problems.

7.3 SERVICES PROVIDED TO ABUSED WIVES

Services responses to abused wives and families

As indicated earlier the kinds of services provided by the agencies are physical and psychological treatment, legal advice and information on women’s rights, career assistance, referral to another agency, and child welfare. The respondents were allowed to give more than one answer.
Almost all (nineteen out twenty) of the wives, and most (eighteen out of twenty) of the workers reported that the agencies offered counselling services. Another, eight of abused wives and fifteen of service providers reported that the service agencies also provided basic necessities to help the wives who were in trouble, such as food and shelter for the abused wives and their children who had left home with them. The next most common type of assistance was health treatment, reported by four of abused wives, and four of service workers; followed by legal advice, reported by three wives, and three service workers. Assistance in starting a new career was another form of assistance reported by four of abused wives and five of the service respondents.

Child welfare and scholarships for education were other kinds of services that one out of twenty of abused wives and one agency reported were provided for children.

They (service providers from the agency) gave suggestions to solve my problem, and besides that I was given a loan for starting a new occupation and my daughter also got a scholarship for further education (Abused Wife Number 7).

One of them said that the personnel from the agency met with her husband to discuss the problem so that he could gain a better understanding of the results, and he agreed to try to improve his behaviour.

Furthermore, when asked how many abused wives came in for assistance each day, some of the service workers said on average one to ten women came in each day, not including abused wives who called on the telephone to ask for advice or make inquiries. They said it was impossible to give an exact number of how many abused wives they served because it depended on the situation.
The highest number of abused wives coming to my agency is forty-eight per month
(Respondent from Service Agency Number 19).

Fourteen out of the twenty service workers stated that from one to five abused wives came to the agency daily. Four of them said their agencies served on average six to ten abused wives per day. The remaining two of them said that less than one abused wife came to the agency per day, or just one to five abused wives per week.

At least one case comes to the agency every day and the highest number was three cases per day, but it would be five including the women who call in (Respondent from Service Agency Number 2).

Two of the respondents said their agency primarily provided shelter for abused wives who were pregnant and whose husbands had abandoned them.

The data is shown in figure 7.7 below.

**Figure 7.7**

*Comparing the Views of the Respondents on the Kinds of Services Provided for Abused Wives and Families*

*Source: Developed for this study *answered more than one services*
Figure 7.7 is a simple frequency chart as respondents could select more than one answer. It graphically shows the kind of services provided for abused wives and families. Counselling offering services and basic necessities are services that a majority of respondents stated.

**Collaboration with other agencies in dealing with wife abuse**

The respondents said that collaboration might occur in the form of referring certain cases to seek assistance from other agencies, accepting cases referred by hospitals, or coordinating with other agencies to ask for help or additional services in cases where the agency dealing with the case lacked certain resources or facilities.

The service workers gave more information on collaborating with other agencies in dealing with wife abuse, kinds of collaboration activities, referral to other agencies, and reasons for referring cases. The data is shown in Figure 7.8 below.
Figure 7.8
Collaboration of the Agencies in Dealing with Wife Abuse

![Collaboration Diagram]

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 7.8 indicates the different agencies that may collaborate as taken from the agency respondents to the study. The frequency of the collaboration and co-operation was not explored. As a result this graph shows the possible network of collaborative support. It does not indicate actual collaborative support nor the frequency that support is requested.

Sixteen of the twenty service providers said their agencies sometimes referred abused wives to other agencies. Nine of them said their agencies collaborated with other agencies to provide temporary shelter for the abused wives (and sometimes their children) that had left their homes and wanted a safe place to stay.

In most cases we referred them (abused wives) to an agency that could provide a safe place for them to stay, legal assistance, or career training. In some cases we sent them to an agency
that was located near the abused wife’s home if she wanted to return home (Respondent from Service Agency Number 10).

We referred some of the women to the Good Shepherd Sisters and Emergency House. The abused wives are referred to these agencies for temporary shelter and reconciliation (Respondent from Service Agency Number 6).

The next most common types of collaboration reported by six workers were obtaining vocational training, legal assistance to sue for alimony, and moving the abused wife back to her hometown. Four of them reported collaborating with other agencies to provide psychological rehabilitation, therapy or ethical training, and lastly, one of this group reported collaborating with other agencies to provide childcare.

A service provider that referred abused wives to vocational training agencies in cases where they wanted to find a job to support themselves said this:

The agencies we referred them to provide shelter and rehabilitation programmes, including vocational training for the abused wives. They also gave a moral training programme (Respondent from Service Agency Number 7).

As for the reasons they referred some of the abused wives to other agencies, one respondent stated:

Our agency did not have enough space for the abused wives to stay, and our facilities were not convenient for them. In some cases, our shelter was too far from the school where the children were enrolled so we referred them to another shelter that was closer (Respondent from Service Agency Number 3).
The other four of the respondents said they did not refer cases for two major reasons: either their agency was able to provide a wide range of services so they could meet the needs of every abused wife who came in, or the agency was able to provide counselling so that the wives could find a solution to their problems and were able to contact other agencies themselves if they needed additional assistance, such as vocational training.

The data is shown in figure 7.9 below.

**Figure 7.9**

**Kinds of Services Needed to Collaborate with Other Agencies in Dealing with Wife Abuse in the Views of Respondents**

![Pie chart showing the distribution of services needed](image)

*Source: Developed for this study*

Figure 7.9 is a simple frequency chart that graphically shows variety kinds of services the abused wives needed the agencies to work together on helping them.

**Risks of collaboration**

Six of the sixteen service workers stated that there were some risks of collaboration with other agencies in dealing with wife abuse, but other fourteen out of these sixteen
stated that they had not encountered any problems in collaborating with other agencies.

The problems stated from the respondents were:

Three out of the six stated that when the agency referred an abused wife to another agency the case became more complicated and in some cases the wives were mistrustful and did not give accurate information.

Some of the cases became more confusing when we sent them out to another agency. I think because they did not want to talk about their miserable lives several times or they did not tell all the truth about what happened to them (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).

Two out of the six stated that the government agencies could not provide complete services to the abused wives because of budget limitations. They had only a few services that were aimed directly at abused wives and their budgets were insufficient. Most of the government agencies had other more urgent tasks, such as assisting abused children. They put less priority on the abused wives because they thought that the abused wives were adults who could help themselves. They also said some of the service agencies could not give full assistance to the abused wives who were referred to them because they had too many cases to deal with and/or did not work efficiently.

Some agencies, particularly the government agencies, have limited budgets to run the programs of assistance for abuse cases. They also have many difficult cases to take care of (Respondent from Service Agency Number 3).

One out of the six stated that some of the agencies lacked qualified personnel in some areas, such as psychiatrists in particular.
However, the largest number of the service providers who said they did not encounter any problem when they collaborated in helping the abused wives felt it was because they did the best they could. One out of these fourteen said:

So far there has been no risk because we have only tried our best to help them (abused wives). For instance, we do not get involved in legal matters, but when we send them to a lawyer we follow up what happens to them (Respondent from Service Agency Number 6).

7.4 RESULTS OF SERVICES PROVIDED TO ABUSED WIVES

How the service agencies assisted the abused wives

Fifteen of the twenty abused wives said the service agencies had helped them a little, and the other five said the agencies had helped them a lot in solving the problem of being abused by their husbands. The majority of service workers (twelve of the twenty) and policy makers (seven of the ten) had similar views to the abused wives that their agencies were able to help the abused wives a little, while the others said they were able to help the abused wives a lot.

I think my family life is better now after the worker gave some guidance to me. I can release my frustration and try to calm down when we (my husband and I) have a conflict (Abused Wife Number 10).

The friendly atmosphere, good guidance and financial help offered by this agency made my life better and safer (Abused Wife Number 6).

In all cases we can help them to recognise and prioritise their problems and needs. Then assistance can be given accordingly. This method is already a big help to them. …Normally,
they do not find anyone to help them. So they come to get help accordingly (Respondent from Service Agency Number 6).

The data is shown in figure 7.10 below.

**Figure 7.10**

**Comparing the Views of the Respondents on How Much the Service Agencies Assisted the Abused Wives**

![Data Chart](chart.png)

*Source: Developed for this study*

Figure 7.10 is a frequency chart showing participant responses as a percentage: Abused wives N=20, Service providers N=20 and Policy Makers N=10. It graphically represents how much the agencies assisted the abused wives. Most of the respondents agreed that the service agencies had helped the abused wives a little.

As for the results of coming to the agencies, all of the abused wives gave the opinion that the service agencies were able to help them in a variety of ways. Twelve of them reported that their psychological state improved after they received counselling. Five of them said that after they came in for help their family life improved noticeably and their husbands changed their behaviour and were not as violent. Other three said that after
they received legal assistance they were able to take their husbands to court. Some were satisfied because they won their appeals for alimony.

Speaking about how her psychological well-being improved, one abused wife said:

After I got out of the hospital and went to the service agency I began to feel better. Gradually I was able to think of ways to solve the problem I felt more hopeful about my future (Abused Wife Number 10).

Another abused wife reported that after she came in for assistance her family’s status improved and her husband began to behave better.

I think my husband began to act better after he talked with the psychiatrist at the service agency. I felt that his behaviour went back to the way it was when we were first married. He doesn’t get drunk anymore (Abused Wife Number 9).

All of the service workers believed they were able to help the wives to a certain extent, they said that whether or not the service agencies were able to help them find a solution to their problems depended on the wives themselves and other factors. The results of the assistance depended on the complexity of the problem and on the husbands. On this subject, one service provider said:

The agency cannot help all of the abused wives. It depends on what the abused wives decide and also depends on the husband who is the abuser, as well as the characteristics of each individual problem (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).
In terms of the obstacles the agencies faced in providing assistance to the abused wives, one service provider said that in some cases the wife herself is part of the problem.

When they have a problem, the abused wives come in for help. If they ask for a place to stay we refer them to a shelter. In some cases we cannot solve the problem because the abused wife decides she wants to go back to her husband after she gets over her anger against him. The agency cannot provide much help. If the couple gets in a fight again or the husband abuses the wife again, she will come back in to ask for assistance from the agency again (Respondent from Service Agency Number 14).

In discussions with the policy makers, most of them (eight out of ten) considered that most of the service agencies were successful in helping reduce the severity of the problem.

Firstly, assisting the abused wives was an attempt to deal with the end result of the problem but could not treat the root cause, because the family environment remained the same and the abusers who were their husbands did not change, except in those cases where therapy was provided to change the behaviour of them.

The service agencies can only help solve the problem to a certain extent because the social status and the families of the abused wives remain the same. The root cause of the problem has not been solved (Policy Maker Number 1).

Secondly, the government does not provide enough assistance for abused wives. For instance, there are not enough Emergency Houses. The private sector bears most of the burden of providing assistance, even though the government has a policy of eliminating violence against women and children. In addition, the government services do not have enough qualified personnel and lack personnel who understand the problem and instead
have personnel with the wrong attitude about the problem of domestic violence. Also, they do not have a proper way of dealing with the abusers.

There are not enough service agencies. At present the non-government service agencies can only manage the problem on a small scale through pilot programs. They cannot keep up with the scale of the problem... The government does not provide financial support for the operations of the non-government service agencies, so their capabilities are limited. That is why they cannot provide assistance as needed (Policy Maker Number 7).

Another policy maker viewed that:

The personnel don’t understand the problem of domestic violence. They don’t understand the nature of violence by husbands against wives. For instance, some police believe that fights between husbands and wives are like a clash between tongue and teeth that is unavoidable, and that they will soon make up. So the police try to reconcile the couple and discourage the wife from pressing charges. Yet when she goes back home, the wife is usually subjected to even worse violence (Policy Maker Number 3).

Lastly, the limits of the assistance depend on the abused wives, who are often in a position of financial dependence and cannot help themselves. Some of the service agencies do not solve the problem in an appropriate way. They may alleviate the problem to a degree, but their ability to truly empower the women to be stronger and braver to face the problem and solve it themselves is limited.

They solve only the end result of the problem. They should develop their work to help make the women stronger and braver so that they can take an equal role to men in society. Then women will have greater potential to solve their own problems (Policy Maker Number 4).
Views on kinds of services that could better help the abused wives

Fourteen of the twenty abused wives and eleven of the twenty service workers were in agreement that services that could help the abused wives lead better lives would be providing counselling, listening to their problems, giving them encouragement, and giving them guidance and advice on how they could become more self-reliant.

The second largest number of both groups, four abused wives and four workers, reported that providing legal advice and information on women’s rights would help improve the abused wives’ status. Next, other two abused wives and three service workers stated that providing financial assistance for their family expenses, like food, shelter and basic necessities would help.

Lastly, other two service workers said that the services that could better help the abused wives were services to solve their overall problems, for instance physical and emotional help, and helping them become financially and socially self-sufficient, rather than concentrating on alleviating any specific problem. They viewed that the kinds of abuse suffered by the abused wives arose from a combination of many different factors. The needs of the wives were complex.

The data is shown in figure 7.11 below.
Figure 7.11

Comparing the Views of the Respondents on

Kinds of Services That Could Better Help the Abused Wives

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 7.11 is a frequency chart which graphically shows the kinds of service that could better help the abused wives. Counselling and listening to their problems are the most significant services in the views of respondents.

7.5 VIEWS ON HOW TO IMPROVE ASSISTANCE TO ABUSED WIVES

The responses of the abused wives and the service workers regarding which services need to be provided to improve help for the abused wives. These data are given from a broad view, not just specific to service agencies that already provide services. Some views extend to other systems or organisations providing services to abused wives.
Counselling services

Eleven of the twenty abused wives and six of the twenty service workers thought that the system for providing counselling services should be improved, especially in terms of response time.

The respondents needed the agencies to provide services to not just the abused wives but to change the abusers’ attitudes and their behaviour. They expected the government agencies to provide 24-hour service because the incidents of domestic abuse can occur at any time of day or night. They also needed prompt services, so as to the quality and quantity of services should be improved, especially funding more budgets, training the staffs to be more professional.

The wives said often the agencies were slow in coordinating with other agencies in providing further assistance.

When I was abused I needed someone to help me as soon as possible because sometime it hurt so much and nobody could help me. Not only I but I met someone else who suffered and she took her children out of home. She does not know where to go. Some women needed suggestions for earning the way of life and some crisis situations needed help immediately, such as when the women were injured (Abused Wife Number 1).

There should be many services agencies that abused women can access to services. It should be helpful if the service providers coordinated in helping the victims of abuse rapidly (Abused Wife Number 6).

The agency respondents supported the abused wives viewed to improve quality and quantity of services.
The agencies ought to provide services for the abusive husbands to change their behaviours. In addition, the service agencies should provide 24-hour service. The government agencies should change their operations to stay open everyday with no holidays (Respondent from Service Agency Number 20).

The government agencies need to improve the quality and the quantity of their service resources. They need higher budgets, more qualified service staff who are appropriate for their positions, and sufficient numbers of staff to provide services for all the abused wives who come in. The staff need more training and experience to help them better analyse the problems of the women who come in for assistance and provide more appropriate and relevant advise to solve their problems holidays (Respondent from Service Agency Number 5).

They also needed prompt services, and improved quality of service through increased funding and training of staff members to a professional level.

**Reform law to punish abusers**

Besides the above suggestions, six of the twenty abused wives and four of the twenty service providers wanted the government to reform laws to punish abusers and require them to change their behaviour. They wanted laws to protect women and other family members who might be victims of abuse, especially the violence from intimate partner.

I think the law could help protect the women from the abuse. Like other wives, I don’t want my husband to be in jail but I want someone to change his behaviour. Stop his drinking behaviour. When he was not drunk he was so nice to me, but he always assaulted me when he drank (Abused Wife Number 14).
I would like to ask for a law to protect every abused wife and punish the abuser (Abused Wife Number 13).

In terms of legislation, the service providers thought that laws should be changed to make it easier for state officials to punish abusers or to order them to change their behaviour.

From my work experience, I found that in fact most of the abused wives did not want their husbands to be punished by imprisonment or a fine, but they wanted law enforcement officials to issue a warning and hoped that this would cause the husbands to change their behaviour and stop abusing their wives (Respondent from Service Agency Number 2).

I agreed that the laws should be revised to provide greater protection for the abused wives and other family members who were affected by the violence in family (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).

One said that Thailand had laws to punish anyone found guilty of physical assault. But rarely did such cases of domestic violence reach the courts as the couples fear that it would negatively affect their lives together.

Most women want to keep their families together despite the abuse. Few want to divorce, but most want laws to protect them (Respondent from Service Agency Number 18).

Provide more diverse services

Next, five of the abused wives and two of the service providers suggested the service agencies to provide more diverse services to meet the needs of abused wives and other
family members who were affected of abuse indirectly; particularly the children. An abused wife stated that:

I hope that every woman who is the victim of abuse as I was can receive assistance one way or another. I want the government to help solve the problem of poverty. I want them to sympathise with and help women who are taken advantage of by men or who are oppressed, because this can lead to many problems. I want people to have pity on the children whose parents fight. Women who are oppressed by their husbands must endure a lot of suffering to try to keep the family together because they don’t want their children to have problems (Abused Wife Number 7).

In addition, the workers suggested that every service agency should provide a wide range of services in order to prevent a repeat of the situation or an escalation of violence. One service worker gave this example:

There was one case that was a front-page story in the newspapers about a man who raped his own daughter (twelve years old). The reason was that the husband abused his wife habitually until she could not stand it any longer and she ran away to a shelter. She took only her smallest child with her and left her two older daughters at home. When the husband came home drunk and didn’t find his wife, he became enraged. He raped his oldest daughter and was about to attack the younger one, but neighbours heard her screams for help and called the police just in time (Respondent from Service Agency Number 3).

The limited availability of shelters in Thai society means that there are very few safe places provided for the victims, so the wife can take with her only children too young to help themselves, leaving the older children to fend for themselves. The father may not have hurt his children if he was not drunk and was in control of his faculties but there was no guarantee of safety. This situation reveals that the service agencies can only
provide partial assistance and may fail to consider other factors involved in the problem. The abuser who caused the problem should also be considered for rehabilitation.

**Provide education on women’s rights and gender equality**

Next, a majority (thirteen of the twenty) service providers and four abused wives viewed that the service agencies and other institutions: for instance educational institutions; to educate people on women’s rights or gender equality, to instil values of peaceful coexistence and to empower women.

They stated that the main things the agencies should do were to provide more education on women’s rights, both on a practical level and a policy level, and to create a greater understanding of equality between the sexes. They viewed that the service agencies should empower the women to be self-reliant as they had their rights to be independence.

I think the agency should work to instil the value of equality between the sexes so men and women could live together peacefully and should empower women to be self-reliant (Abused Wife Number 5).

The service agencies should help teach women to be self-reliant and *stand on their own two feet.* Then they would not depend on their husbands or feel they needed to put up with abuse from their husbands (Respondent from Service Agency Number 17).
Prohibit the production and sale of alcoholic beverage

Lastly, two of the twenty wives viewed that the government should prohibit the production and sale of alcoholic beverages. They noted that their husbands only abused them when they were drunk. As long as their husbands were sober they could still communicate with them normally and reach an understanding, but whenever they were drunk they were like different people. They would lose control and become violent.

The government should not support alcoholic products because I believe that alcohol is a cause of the violence problem in the family. A drunken man can not only hurt his wife and children, but he also causes financial trouble for the family members (Abused Wife Number 12)

The data on these suggestions is shown in Figure 7.12 below.

**Figure 7.12**

**The Suggestions of Abused Wives and Respondents from Service Agencies to Improve Assistance to Abused Wives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Abused wives</th>
<th>Service workers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Improved counselling services</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reform laws to punish abusers</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide more diverse services to meet the needs of abused wives</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate people on women’s rights/gender equality</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prohibit the sale &amp; distribution of alcohol beverage</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Developed for this study*
Figure 7.12 is a frequency chart that graphically shows the views of respondents on how to improve assistance to abused wives. They had different suggestions. A majority of the abused wives needed the better counselling services while the service providers suggested educating people on women’s rights and gender equality.

**Improve the service system**

All of the policy makers recommended that the government should be the main organisation to provide assistance to abused wives, and they suggested improving more assistance for the victims of domestic violence.

In discussion with the policy makers, half of them had views that the service agencies should educate to change people’s belief that *domestic violence is a personal issue*. The target groups for education should be both men and women to change the way of thinking regarding human dignity and gender equality according to the principles of human rights.

Some of the mistaken attitudes in Thai society should be changed. In fact, domestic violence is not just a personal issue; it is a social problem. It is a problem that can be passed down through the generations because witnesses to domestic violence may use violence against others. If the attitudes cannot be changed, then no laws will be effective (Policy Maker Number 3).

Four policy makers thought that the government agencies should set the operational policies for providing assistance to all involved in the domestic violence problem, including abused wives, other victims, and the abusers. Three of them suggested increasing the number of service agencies, and developing more personnel to give
assistance, such as counselling, shelter and other assistance to abused wives. Other three viewed that the government agencies should improve the service system to provide 24-hour service to serve the victims of abuse.

At present the data is scattered and has not been used effectively in forming policies and improving operations. Two service providers pointed out that the government agencies should improve the data acquisition system to be more thorough and systematic.

The service agencies should interested in getting more data on domestic violence and wife abuse, and the data collecting system should be made more systematic (Policy Maker Number 4).

Two others suggested that the agencies should provide diverse services by coordinating the operations of professionals from fields such as psychology, social welfare, nursing, and law. In addition, women who had directly experienced the problem of abuse and had recovered from their personal crisis should be recruited to provide counselling and exchange experiences with other abused wives. This would be beneficial because the counsellors could understand the problem thoroughly and the abused wives who come in for counselling would feel more at ease to discuss the problem. A policy maker recommended improving the service provision of the government agencies.

The service system should be improved by using people who experienced the problem themselves to offer services to others in the same situation. At present only a little assistance is available compared to the scale of the problem. Efforts to prevent and solve the problem are insufficient and unclear. For instance, the government may announce that this is the year to reduce domestic violence, but the government does not have an action plan. There is only an awareness campaign. Also, in terms of studies of the domestic violence issue, the research has been scattered. Some studies are only case studies and data has not been compiled on a
large scale. Data is limited because of problems with the confidentiality of the information (Policy Maker Number 6).

**Figure 7.13**

**The Suggestions of Policy Makers to Improve Assistance to Abused Wives**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestion</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Recommend the government to be the main organisation to provide services to abused wives</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educate to change people's beliefs</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve the data acquisition system</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set the operational policies</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increase number of service agencies &amp; prepare the service workers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide official policies &amp; laws to reduce domestic violence</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide diverse services</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Developed for this study*

Figure 7.13 is a frequency chart that graphically shows the views of policy makers on how to improve assistance to abused wives. A majority of them recommended the government to provide services to abused wives.

Furthermore, the policy makers recommended ways to improve help for abused wives to be more adequate and effective. Their opinions are grouped below as three possible scenarios.

Firstly, most (eight of the ten) of the policy makers called for changing the focus of services in advance. They wanted the service agencies to pay more attention to preventing domestic violence, especially wife abuse, by encouraging women or other victims to be on their own, making them more aware of their rights and empowering them.
Secondly, more than half (six of the ten) policy makers recommended improving the service systems of government agencies, which tend to work according to the bureaucratic system. The service agencies’ work should be systematic and comprehensive enough, both at the policy level and also the operational level.

Thirdly, the policy makers recommended that agencies better prepare their personnel to give them proper knowledge and experience. The agencies’ policies need to be clearly stated and consistently applied. They need sufficient budgets that need to be well managed. Their work systems should also be linked to other agencies, such as non-government organisations, so they can work together and support each other’s work in a well-coordinated way. On the contrary, they viewed that the non-government agencies showed progress in work that helped women at a practical level. The NGOs succeeded in promoting ways to empower these women, particularly the abused wives. These policy makers recommended that service providers have better educated and more experienced worker to assisting victims of abuse (three out of six).

Lastly, half (five of the ten) of them viewed that the infrastructure needs to be improved to provide better services. That means that when a woman comes in for assistance, she could be provided with a full range of comprehensive and coordinated services from professionals from different fields without having to pass through many complicated procedures. For instance, if a woman is beaten by her husband, when she comes to the hospital for medical treatment, she should receive not only treatment for her physical injuries but also counselling or therapy from a psychologist. If she needs a place to stay or financial assistance, a social worker should provide further assistance.
In addition, discussion with these five policy makers, they viewed that police officers should make a report of the incident and advise the woman about pressing charges so the abuser can be punished or required to get therapy so the incident will not be repeated. This could help prevent an escalation of violence. Programs to provide this kind of comprehensive service have been initiated in some hospitals now. The effectiveness of their services should be evaluated so that any inadequacies can be overcome and a model can be created for other hospitals. In addition, the courts, legislators, law enforcers, and lawyers need to play a role and educational institutions can help provide training and education.

Taken as a whole the policy makers views and recommendations are quite cohesive. They are in effect saying that an effective response to wife abuse will only come with a coordinated and integrated approach driven by government and engaging in participation with the NGOs. The first consideration is governance that is the government is the lead agency to develop the policies and procedures funding and operational requirements for the provision of services in relation to domestic violence. That these services not only be delivered through government agencies but that a woman seeking help will find no wrong door. That is, whether the victim of domestic violence goes to a hospital or a shelter, a legal advisor or counsellor she will be connected to all the relevant and available services. The response is one akin to integrated case management with many service providers funded and accredited to provide identified services and required to work co-operatively with the other services in the network. To enable this there has to be legislation to allow the sharing of information or at least structure guidelines and protocols to ensure the privacy of the service recipient.
The second prong is education for the broader community and specifically for the workers in the service agencies whether they are police, nurses, psychologists, social workers housing officers or child carers etc. As part of the funding agreements there must be the provision of training and minimum levels of educational attainment and experience, supervision and in-service training to build the skills and capacities of the workers in these areas.

As part of the accountability measures attached to service funding will be the requirement for the submission of accurate and audited data to inform the government about service delivery and identify the areas for service improvement, diversity in delivery and further education and training.

This model of accountable, service provision in partnership with NGOs and communities is used in other countries of the world to deliver aged care, disability services, family support, mental health and even some adult correction functions. An integrated model can meet all the suggestions for improved service and the recommendations of the policy makers to focus on prevention including educating women of their rights (eight of the ten policy makers). The development of partnership agreements and networks of service agencies addresses the problem of bureaucratic service delivery noted by six of the ten policy makers. This coupled with the tying of funding to accountability requirements including reporting will enable the systematic delivery of standard services and facilitate the development of special program to deal with diverse needs. Tying funding to performance and accountability and setting standards for staff qualification and support enables the agencies to build their professional competence and capacity which is a recommendation of three of the policy makers.
The development of the network of services, case management as a method of practice and partnerships will build the cooperative infrastructure needed to enable every woman who has been abused to find the right service at the first attempt. Five policy makers were particularly concerned with this issue and added that police should be required to report domestic violence and advise the woman to press charges so that the offender can be directed to a corrections program or therapy.

In all these changes to policy and procedure monitoring and evaluation are necessary for service improvement.

The adequacy and effectiveness for specific programs for abusers and child witnesses

According to information gained, in Thailand there were no specific activities for abusers or child witnesses who were affected by abuse in the family. The findings show that five of the ten policy makers recommended programs to change the behaviour of abusers while eight out of ten of them proposed programs to educate children in gender equality.

As for the suggestions on programs for abusers, five policy makers viewed that the service agencies should provide specific programs to try to improve the behaviour of abusers so that they would not use violence and might respect human rights. The other three of them recommended educating a greater understanding of gender equality, while a couple of them suggested programs to provide life skills training to married couples so they could live in peace.
The data is shown in Figure 7.14 below.

**Figure 7.14**

Views on the Adequacy and Effectiveness for Specific Programs for Abusers

![Pie chart showing views on specific programs for abusers](chart.png)

*Source: Developed for this study*

Figure 7.14 is a frequency chart that graphically shows the views of policy makers on the adequacy and effectiveness for specific programs for abusers. A majority of them suggested changing the abusers’ behaviours not to use violence and respect human rights.

As for the views on specific programs for child witnesses of abuse, most of the policy makers pointed out that the service agencies should provide education in gender equality. In addition, other one of them suggested programs to teach children to love each other, and another considered that it was important to train them to live in peace and follow the principle of non-violence.
The data is shown in Figure 7.15 below.

**Figure 7.15**

**Views on the Adequacy and Effectiveness for Specific Programs**

**for Child Witnesses of Abuse**

Figure 7.15 is a frequency chart that graphically shows the views of policy makers on the adequacy and effectiveness for specific programs for child witnesses of abuse. A majority of them suggested providing education in gender equality to children to realise their basic rights.

*Source: Developed for this study*
7.6 VIEWS ON HOW TO PROMOTE COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN COMBATING IN WIFE ABUSE

The reduction of domestic violence and wife abuse was a common purpose of stakeholders who worked with victims of abuse. Community participation is one of the directions that the service agencies considered to be the way to combat wife abuse.

All the policy makers and half of the twenty abused wives noted that people in communities should play a greater role in providing assistance for abused wives. They thought that community leaders, rather than senior family members, should be responsible for conciliation in family conflicts. In today’s society, most families are smaller and married couples no longer live with their parents. Two of the service providers viewed that:

I recommended recreational activities in the community through the awareness of people related to domestic violence and wife abuse by promoting the community participation (Respondent from Service Agency Number 6).

The community leaders or elders in the community should involve in helping the victims of domestic violent, abused wives, and witnesses of abuse. I think they can bring the couple together because the senior persons are highly regards in Thai society (Respondent from Service Agency Number 17).

Change attitudes towards family problems

Five of the twenty service providers suggested that the attitudes of communities towards family problems should be changed so that people outside the family would not hesitate to intervene in problems of domestic violence.
The battering between husband and wife is a situation that Thai people will not be involved with or to be intervene according to their views of it being a personal issue. Nobody should get involved. The Thai people also view that the conflict between a couples is a common matter (Respondent from Service Agency Number 1).

Three of the agencies’ respondents also suggested that there should be special legislation to protect community members who make reports to the police or initiate investigations into possible cases of domestic violence. The service workers also wanted the government to provide some supporting resources for activities to assist victims of domestic violence.

Some people in community would like to participate by reporting the violence incidents to the agencies or polices but they are afraid of their safety. I think there should be a special law protecting the reporters. I heard that some reporters were in trouble from the abusers (Respondent from Service Agency Number 7).

The government should support the community to help the difficulties by protecting them. The community organisation should be subsidised the budgets and training the communities how to assist the victims of abuse and others. Activities to eliminate violence by intimate partners are important in my view (Respondent from Service Agency Number 16).

Lastly, other two service providers suggested that the government should provide welfare or provide communities with special budgets for activities to assist victims of domestic violence.
Community should be the guard against domestic violence and wife abuse

Most of the policy makers (eight out of ten) stated that communities should be the guard against domestic violence and wife abuse. In their view traditional Thai society was based on strong family relationships and close and respectful family-type relationships between members of the community. If married couples had a problem they would consult with their elders who lived in the same household. Family members would warn each other not to do anything inappropriate. However, nowadays Thai society has changed and most families are nuclear families. Most married couples do not live together with other relatives. Therefore, community members should take over the role of relatives. Older people, monks, and teachers can help participate in building secure families with good family relationships. Now in some places there are campaigns to encourage neighbours to inform the police or welfare officials if they suspect women or children in their neighbourhood are being abused.

Community members should participate by keeping an eye on domestic violence and wife abuse problems, and inform or report the incidents of abuse to the police or service providers to help victims (Policy Maker Number 5).

Families, temples and schools should participate in preventing and solving the problem in their communities (Policy Maker Number. 4).

The different institutions in the community should play a role in helping families. Religious leaders and community elders who have experience in family life but whose responsibilities as breadwinners have decreased, so they don’t have to spend as much time working, should take an active role in society and in promoting culture (Policy Maker Number. 6).
Empower women to participate in community activities

Another two of the policy makers viewed that this opportunity could be achieved through the work of community networks. They suggested that promoting greater participation in community activities by women would have many benefits. In particular, it would give women more access to the world outside their families. It would also strengthen their sense of self-worth and would prove to other people their value in working for the benefit of society. The women could be stronger and less likely to be subjugated by men. The women could be better equipped to deal with the problem if it occurred.

We would support women as the silent majority, comprising more than half of the nation’s population, and would empower them, making them realise that they have rights equal to men (Policy Maker Number 10).

The family network is a kind of cultural capital. There must be a process for communities to play a role that is supported by the law. A people participation process should be promoted to enhance women’s roles and give them greater participation in community activities (Policy Maker Number 9).

7.7 VIEWS ON ADEQUACY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF LEGISLATION AND POLICIES RELATED TO WIFE ABUSE

Views on the adequacy and effectiveness of legislation

All the policy makers were of the opinion that Thailand had no adequate or effective legislation to help reduce wife abuse. They considered that there should be specific legislation to eliminate domestic violence in Thai society.
A specific piece of legislation is needed in our society. Domestic violence legislation will be a tool for the service providers to help the victims of abuse, since they cannot work effectively without the power to coerce the abusers to adjust their behaviour (Policy Maker Number 1).

One of them who supported the writing of a Domestic Violence Act in Thailand viewed that the Act should focus on problem solving and included protective measures.

I think the Domestic Violence Act can improve things. Legal officers at the organisation which is responsible for proposing the legislation should focus heavily on problem solving and add more protecting measure in the details of the bill (Policy Maker Number 8).

These are the opinions of the policy makers regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of legislation that should lead to a process of protecting abused wives and family members rather than punishing the abusers.

Right now, Thai society does not have any laws specifically aimed at reducing domestic violence and preventing the problem. I think if there is such a law it will help the victims, most of whom are women, have a better understanding of their rights and it would help the people working at service agencies do their jobs more easily (Policy Maker Number 5).

Laws are tools that can help operational personnel perform their jobs more easily, because sometimes legal power is needed to solve the problem. The current laws are for punishing the abusers, such as criminal laws against causing bodily harm. But I think the laws should cover the process of providing education for women about the law and about their rights and responsibilities (Policy Maker Number 6).
Laws should be amended to include measures for preventing and solving the problem and they should be easier to implement. For example, they should provide protection for witnesses of abuse and people who report incidents of wife abuse. They should require communities to participate in preventing and solving the problem (Policy Maker Number 4).

However, five of them provided ideas on how to make the specific legislation more effective and applicable. One of them suggested strengthening the family and social networks by empowering families to help their family and their neighbourhoods.

I think not only the law can help reduce the domestic violence but the legislation should support to strengthen the family role and the network between families to make them help each other, empower them to work for the difficulties people. The legislation should protect the reporter to the police and the witnesses of abuse. The legislation should offer more alternatives to the victim of abuse (Policy Maker Number 10).

To strengthen the families that face the conflict, one of the policy makers called for authorities of the government to look at the readiness of couples to get along together, to identify the causes of their problems through discussion, to interview their close friends, and consult with psychiatrists before suggesting solution that both sides can accept and practice together.

I can not say how long it will take for each couple. It’s up to parties or both of them because they have different backgrounds. The officials are only a mirror helping them to reflect on their problems. The two sides need time to think about themselves and must bend towards each other (Policy Maker Number 7).

An additional idea about how to bring the conflict between couple to the awareness of family was the use of a restorative justice model below.
Solving the problem through restorative family practices allows more time for both sides to seek out the root of their problems. But if the case is sent to court, they will only have 15 days to find a solution. This may not be enough to fully resolve the problem (Policy Maker Number 7).

The policy makers also called for the government to fund support for the victims in case of injury where they were unable to work. To the abusers, the Act should prescribe a probation period, and order them to participate in rehabilitation programs.

The bill should not emphasise punishment as the sole resort. The courts would ask the accused to undergo psychiatric care and afterward place the abuser on probation for a given period (Policy Maker Number 2).

A policy maker who was a police officer said that the Act would make the work of the police a lot easier as the current rehabilitation program in Thailand is voluntary.

The way it is now, the police are authorised to help mediate a conflict but often when couple returns home, they resume fighting. The implementing agencies must have laws as tools. If the wife does not want to charge her husband, we have to release him.

Without a domestic violence bill, participation in a rehabilitation program is voluntary. Once the bill is introduced, any man who assaults his wife, even if he does not cause serious injuries, will have to take part in this program (Policy Maker Number 8).

The data is shown in Figure 7.16 below.
Figure 7.16
Views on the Adequacy and Effectiveness of Legislation

![Figure 7.16: Views on the Adequacy and Effectiveness of Legislation]

Source: Developed for this study

Figure 7.16 is a frequency chart that graphically shows the views of policy makers on the adequacy and effectiveness of legislation. All of them agreed that there should be a legislation to eliminate domestic violence, and the Act should focus on problem solving and include protective measures.

### Views on the adequacy and effectiveness of policies

All the policy makers were aware that Thailand had prescribed policies to eliminate domestic violence, but almost all (nine of the ten) of them viewed that the current policies to prevent and reduce domestic violence as neither sufficiently adequate nor effective. To the contrary, only one policy maker held the opinion that current policies were appropriate, adequate and effective.

This policy maker stated that Thailand had adequate and effective policies to reduce violence in families. Men and women were equal under the Constitution of the
Kingdom of Thailand. However, it was conceded that there were some weaknesses in monitoring outcomes on these policies.

In discussion with the policy makers who viewed that the Thai policies to reduce domestic violence were not effective and adequacy, three of them stated that the policies were too broad and lacked a tool for their implementation. They suggested proposing the domestic violence bill as they stated in the previous section.

Even though Thailand had policy to reduce violence in family but the policies were inadequacy and were not effectively implemented. Thailand had signed the agreement to eliminate discrimination and unequal rights of men and women since 1985 or almost twenty years, but there was no bill for fundamental support and protection of human rights (Policy Maker Number 3).

In addition, they held the view that those government agencies should make serious efforts to eliminate domestic violence, particularly wife abuse, which was an issue that affects the stability of family relationships.

Some of the ideas of the policy makers regarding the adequacy and effectiveness of policies were below.

The government should set a clear policy and should support the enactment of a law to comply with Clause 30 of the Constitution addressed at eliminating violence. The government’s policies on developing women also need to be more concrete (Policy Maker Number 4).

The Thai government set an official policy about reducing domestic violence in 1996. The policy calls for having government hospitals provide services to assist victims of domestic
violence and training for police officers to better prepare them to fulfil their law enforcement duties (Policy Maker Number 7).

They pointed out that the weakest point of the current policies is in their implementation. Almost all of them shared the view that government officials should ensure that existing projects follow and meet the policy objectives.

I think we have a family development plan, policy to eliminate violence against women and children, and service providing projects. The weaknesses are the way we have of implementing the policies. I think the officials should work seriously on the matter of intimate violence. The government should subsidise more budgets to the programs and projects assisting the victims of abuse (Policy Maker Number 10).

One of them suggested the provision of official statistics on the problem of domestic violence, and emphasis goals for domestic violence prevention. She would like to provoke the governments to create more action plans and improve the data collection system regarding domestic violence.

**Unstructured responses:**

The coding and matrix building for the unstructured responses in this section revealed three themes: rehabilitation, crisis services and the role of government. Rehabilitation focused on the complex process of moving the woman victim from trying to endure and tolerate through the crises to security. It is security of self, housing, finance and for their children and future. Rehabilitation is from their current state to the state of equality: from ill health to well-being, from danger to safety, from lack of protection to legal advocacy and support. Rehabilitation includes the abusers.
Crisis services as a theme focused firstly on their absence, that is they are still inaccessible to many women: “no-one could help me”, and secondly on staff members’ needs for better support, resources and training to meet the requirements of the task.

Finally role of government was an appeal by the women, service providers and policy makers to the only mechanism available in a democracy – the administration of the law through government processes to ensure that policy and regulations, powers and authority are mobilised effectively and efficiently to build a safe society for women. It is an appeal for the recognition that domestic violence is not a personal problem but a legal, social, economic, educational, health, policing, community, family, problem that is costing and will continue to cost the country dearly.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Most Thai women do not seek help until the abuse is beyond their capacity to endure. Many accept the social mores that privilege their husband’s authority and imply that a woman who has more than one husband is bad. Women experience acute embarrassment about abuse and worry about the economic and emotional consequences for their children if the marriage ends. They are usually referred to the agencies by friends or other agencies and if they self-refer it is after establishing that they can be confident in the agency’s capacity to assist. Many go only once to an agency and the average number of times they present is four. When the wives come they want the abuse to stop and most do not want their husband to be punished. They would prefer therapy, training, or treatment options for the husband so that they and their children do not suffer additional harm by having no breadwinner. They request legal advice and medical treatment. They are seeking safe shelter and often need basic necessities.
Agencies and their workers provide safe haven, material goods, transport, advice, counselling, guidance, referral, child care, child welfare services, education and re-training for employment for the women and work in ways that seek to empower the wives, build their problem-solving capacity, resilience and sense of self-worth. Agencies collaborate with each other and although they can only help a little, they are perceived to be making a positive difference by the women, themselves and policy makers.

More services with faster response rates and more highly trained staff are needed. Agencies need to be able to respond to women where long-term abuse has resulted in diminished mental health. Agencies need to be able to respond to the threat of poverty for the families escaping violence. Education and training pathways for women are a key factor in addressing poverty. One gap is the lack of facilities for older children who are not able to go into shelters; they are sometimes left behind.

There are many areas where the women, service providers and policy makers indicate change is needed. Prevention programs that include community education on rights, gender equality, peaceful coexistence and non-violence are needed. Community participation in this is recommended. Neighbourhood networks can be built and respected elders engaged. Diversionary pathways for abusers are needed that may include mediation, therapy, training, rehabilitation and support. Programs for child witnesses and witness protection programs for those who report abuse are also recommended.
The cross-case analysis revealed a difference of opinion about whether current legislation is adequate. There is evidence that Clause 30 of the Thai Constitution and policy on reducing domestic violence (1996) exists but there is little evidence of concerted follow through in terms of integrated programs and services, data collection, monitoring or analysis. New legislation was suggested that could support identification charging, comprehensive assessment and restorative justice methods of response rather than expecting women to lay charges against their husbands. Participants wanted more active police response. Compensation to support victims of domestic violence who are unable to work was suggested.

The weight of opinion supported the idea that government should be the auspicing body setting policy, standards and guidelines, providing funding and requiring accountability from agencies. Government would be responsible for data acquisition and analysis and could fund prevention, community education, treatment and training programs that are to be implemented by agencies in a collaborative way.

In short, the approach to wife abuse in Thailand needs the following components:

1. Assessment of the dynamics of the whole family in cultural environment and social ecological model.
2. Better intervention supported by legislation to get offenders into effective rehabilitation.
3. Service collaboration through integrated case management.
4. Nationally agreed knowledge and skills competency levels for all domestic violence workers (to ensure no myths or mis – defining of types of abuse and ensure quality service delivery).
The findings in this chapter demonstrate the diversity of need, complexity of responses and challenges facing women and service agencies at present. The policy and legislative implications of service improvement are highlighted and shows that indeed there needs to be an integrated and multi-dimensional response to wife abuse in Thailand.
Chapter 8

ANALYSIS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

This exploration of domestic violence, with particular focus on wife abuse, is primary research based in Thailand. The purpose of this study is to develop a new and culturally appropriate way to respond to domestic violence with the ultimate aim of reducing its incidence in the Kingdom of Thailand. In order to achieve this aim it was necessary to explore the nature of wife abuse and to identify some of the major causes and effects of abusive incidents within marriage in Thailand. A constructivist research paradigm was used to enable the collection of views from abused wives, service providers and policy makers and to allow for different perspectives and constructions of the topic from the various stakeholders. The study uncovered ways to guide the thinking behind the development of the responses to wife abuse in Thailand. At the very least, the research findings give greater clarity to the concept of wife abuse within the context of Thai families and contribute to ongoing debate within Thailand about protection of women and the preservation of the family.

This chapter summarises the major findings on the nature of wife abuse and its causes and the views that the research participants have about ways in which wife abuse can be addressed, reduced or eliminated. A multi-dimensional analysis was applied using six theoretical frameworks: Social Learning Theory, Exchange Theory, Psychopathology, Feminist Theory, Family Systems Theory, and Ecological Systems Theory. A multi-dimensional and multi-focal set of interactive programs to address varying parts of the

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problem of wife abuse in Thailand is recommended. The description of these interventions and the things they do not address – the gaps – will enable the identification of future areas of research and inquiry.

8.1 OUTCOMES FROM EXPLORATION WIFE ABUSE IN THAILAND

The Nature of Wife Abuse

The prevalence of wife abuse in Thailand, the types of incidents, is the same as is found in other places in the world except that for Thai women the frequency of incidents of physical violence against women by their intimate partners alone is 41% to 47% of women over 18 (Institute for Population and Social Research at Mahidol University & FFW 2001). This represents approximately 14 million victims. International research admits that domestic violence rates are underestimates. These figures have not changed since 2001 even though legislation change occurred in 2007. The findings of this research from abused wives, service providers and policy makers reiterates that domestic violence also includes forms of violence that do not currently appear in statistical reports (See Figure 6.1). Physical abuse is the most common kind of abuse, followed by psychological abuse. As found in many countries, wife abuse is the most common type of violence against women. Healey, Smith and O’Sullivan (1998) viewed violence against women as “physical and psychological damage to victims, deaths, increased health care costs, prenatal injury to infants, increased homelessness of women and children” (Healey, Smith & O’Sullivan 1988, p. 2).

Thai women typically encounter more than one kind of abuse. Of the women in this study ninety percent reported physical abuse and seventy five percent of them were psychological abused. Thai women and policy makers want abandonment included as a
type as abuse. The duration of marriage and length of time women remain in abusive situations shows that thirty percent of them are in abusive relationships for more than ten years, and the longest period of time that women in this study experienced repeated abuse is more than thirty years. These findings indicate that abuse of women within marriage arrangements is not only common but in some cases routine. The abuse is often described in banal items that understate its severity and downplay the effects on the woman. Quarrelling can mean assault with a deadly weapon.

This study also found that women actively attempt to stop the abuse using a variety of strategies. Their strategies include discussion with the husband, avoiding the situations that result in abuse, acquiescing to the husband’s demands, fighting back and, telling other significant people (often family members and friends) (Figure 6.5). The results from these strategies are mostly unsuccessful. The first and last episode of abuse for the women studied was not significantly different (Figure 6.2) and when wives discuss the abuse with the husband the outcomes are usually worse, that is increased estrangement of the wife, worse abuse or, no change, which in itself, causes great distress to the wife (Figure 6.3). Women finally seek help because they can no longer stand the abuse, for safety and shelter, because they have been ordered to leave and because they want the violence to stop (Figure 7.4). Delays in their leaving appear to reflect Thai social norms that married happiness is the responsibility of women. Women believe that in some way they deserve to be abused because the marriage is unhappy. Women know that individually they have no means to stop the abuse.

This research shows that some of the wives expect to tolerate abuse for a whole lifetime to conform to the Thai cultural belief of a good wife; the idea of the good woman, wife and mother is taught in early socialisation and reinforced in education. Also once a
woman has a child, that child must have both a mother and father. This norm too is a major social barrier that hinders women’s ability to effectively cope with the abuse by seeking out domestic violence services where they exist or getting help within their extended families and communities. The research also shows that wives depend on their husbands socially and economically because they do not have enough resources to leave their husbands or to live alone.

The witnesses of abuse, both in the home and outside, do not get involved because they believe that violence between couples is a personal matter. This is reinforced by the lack of protection for witnesses and that women must lay the charges. In normal criminal assault matters, police lay the charges. Many times the only witnesses are children. When witnesses tried to intervene (even parents and elders), the wives reported that the intervention was unsuccessful. Witnesses themselves experienced negative outcomes from the abuse (Figure 6.15). There is no protection for witnesses. The lack of protection reduces women’s options for a safe place to go locally especially where there are no domestic violence services or refuges.

Abused wives as a result, keep silent until they can no longer stand the abusive incidents and finally decide to report to service workers. This decision means removing children from their communities and schools. Policy makers recognised that abused wives for the most part do not want their husbands to be punished or imprisoned but for the abuse to stop. Incarceration brings humiliation for the family and loss of an income stream. Imprisoning the abusive husband punishes the children as does relocating the children when the mother cannot get help locally.
The silence surrounding this problem is still deafening. Even though numerous scholars and women’s organisations in Thailand specified wife abuse as a severe health problem, women possess little information and the awareness of people in the whole country is limited. Although wife abuse is perceived as a common problem worldwide, it must be acknowledged that when compared with western countries, where the push for gender equality has empowered women with greater freedom, Thailand’s record on wife abuse demonstrates that it is in epidemic proportions.

**The Causes of Wife Abuse**

There are mixed and inconsistent views about the causes of wife abuse in Thai families. Wives, services providers and policy makers provided multiple focal points for possible causes of violence. Individual characteristics of the wife and husband, socio-economic status, education, social values norms and mores were all mentioned as possible causes. A majority of the abused wives and the service workers in this research identify the causes of abuse as based in the husband’s personal characteristics. Some service providers also cite individual characteristics of the woman. The largest number of the policy makers considered that cultural factors were the most important. The findings provide evidence that wife abuse in Thai culture is about power of men and the subordinate roles of women. The service providers confirm that there are men who believe that their wives belong to them, have to take care of them and be responsible for all work in the house, and are also be always available for them to release their sexual needs. There are other behaviours and characteristics of some men like alcohol and drug use, sexual desires and demands, and economic factors.
These different foci are easy to explain and reconcile. The experiences of the wives and services providers are up-close and personal. They deal daily in individual behaviour and detail. The service providers can also see patterns but it is the policy makers who see the overall trends and issues that go beyond the individual.

Thai family life, culture and history were named as causes of wife abuse and they provide only a partial explanation since, not all Thai men abuse women. The women in this study, the service providers and the policy makers agreed that the way to promote Thai women’s freedom from domestic violence or being abused is not only by empowering them through education or financial independence, but also releasing them from the ancient cultural ties. First, Thai cultural traditions and beliefs hold the man to be the head of the household and that a good wife should have only one husband. There are sayings comparing women to water buffalo and men to the farmer and which reinforce the normalcy of domestic violence as merely the clashing of the tongue against the teeth. Second, there is a belief that women are weak and therefore the weakness of wives means that they cannot be on their own. Women who incorporate this belief make the decision to allow themselves to be under the control of their husbands. Roles of men and women have been assigned in different ways since ancient times. The male roles are breadwinner, the head of the household, the ruler and the protector (Suriyasarn 1993). The wives believe that they will be safe because their husbands can take care of them and the family members, so they abdicate their rights to their husbands. The cultural mores also inform the responses of family members, service providers and police. There is a process of normalisation of the violence rather than normalisation of equality and respect.
The participants in this study identified key institutions in Thai society that promulgate cultural beliefs that are harmful to women. These are Thai religion, media, family life, business, Thai culture and social agencies (Table 6.1). All of the respondents in this study, the service workers and the policy makers, perceived that Thai culture had the greatest harmful impact on wife abuse. They stated that Thai culture causes women’s social disadvantage and imprinting of inferiority, it supports disrespect of women and it causes negative gender attitudes. Only the Thai Government as an institution was seen to be a positive influence for women.

There are interesting features of Thai domestic violence that have been uncovered by this research for instance, the level of education of fifty percent of abused wives in this study and their husbands is relatively high. A majority of the wives are employees and have their own incomes, but the husbands still decided most of the important activities in family, including household expenditure. In addition, the service providers reported that in general the wives did not depend on their husbands because they had their own income. However, some of the wives were unemployed, and they had insufficient income because their husband was a poor financial manager.

The service providers described the wives as lacking self-confidence, obedient to their husbands and afraid to make their own decisions. These characteristics however, could be consequences of the abuse itself and not an original individual trait. It would be hard to sustain the notion that 41%-47% of all Thai women over 18 lack self-confidence as an individual characteristic. It would imply that lacking self-confidence is somehow a biologically determined variation in Thailand. There is no credible evidence to support such a conjecture.
Decision-making in households that centralise male power has a great chance contributing to wife abuse (Gelles & Cornell 1990). Unbalanced authority of decision-making seems to be a cause of the relationship problems between husband and wife. This too is one of the areas where the abused women, service providers and policy makers agreed. Early learning and socialization influence the continuation of the view that Thai women lack confidence and will obey.

In previous research on relationships between wives and husbands, “women’s education and employment serve as frequently used proxy measures of women’s status… Education and women’s paid employment is considered to improve women’s ability to gain greater power in decision-making, and consequently, more control over reproductive decisions” (Mason 1984 & 1985 cited in Sa 2004, p. 4). Thus, Sa (2004) go on says that some of the scholars believe “women who are better educated and who have paid work have more options that allow them to get out of an abusive relationship” (p. 4). In contrast, in Thailand being a woman with economic independence can make things worse. It would appear that the strength of the cultural belief in the superiority of men leads women who have their own jobs and income, who may be in high positions and have more income than their husbands so they have perceived power outside home, to be just as much if not more at risk of wife abuse. This finding means that strategies to counter wife abuse by educating young women and ensuring equal representation of women in all levels of employment will not be sufficient. Focusing only on women, building their strengths and capacities will not lead to the hoped for reduction in wife abuse.

The location of wife abuse incidents is another important point of discussion concerning prevalence of wife abuse. Many wives reported that most of the abusive situations
occurred at home. The observation is that the abusers often choose to abuse their wives in private. Abuse incidents in the home also show the power of abusers over their wives in this private arena. It is abuse out-of-sight. In any other context it would be defined as cowardly bullying that the offender knows is wrong so only does it where there are no repercussions or credible witnesses.

The service workers reported that the women who came to the agencies were nervous, stressed, depressed, despondent or scared and suspicious. The workers not only reported the psychological and physical effects to the wives, but also on other members of the family, especially children. Previous studies (National Clearinghouse on Family Violence, Canada herein after NCFV-C 1996, p. 1; Pandey 2004) identified that the great cost of wife abuse is both personal and societal. Clearly it is not merely a private matter but has fiscal and infrastructure implications for the country. There are implications for Thailand’s future, education, health and civil society.

This study (like the findings of the NCFV-C 1996) identifies an urgent need to establish extensive public awareness on domestic violence, wife abuse and gender equality as a critical step in addressing this problem. The above is represented graphically in Figure 8.1.
This figure graphically displays the multi-layered nature of wife abuse and the sources of possible causes.

**Applied Theoretical Analysis**

Theory as explicated in Chapter 2 of this study when applied to the results leads to a multiplicity of approaches to wife abuse in Thailand none of which is sufficient in itself to stem the epidemic. For instance, the views of the women themselves, the workers and even the policy makers demonstrate gaps in their knowledge and awareness and sometimes perpetuate myths about domestic violence and the capacity of women. They recognise that better knowledge and skills training are required for all who respond to wife abuse – especially police. Feminist Theory, Social Learning Theory and Ecological Theory can all, when applied, result in a call for the establishment of a broad public awareness on domestic violence, wife abuse and gender equality as a crucial step in addressing this problem. Accurate and up-to-date information is required at all levels; the community, the workers, the policy makers, and the legislators and the courts. Feminism would push for challenging concepts and constructs that perpetuate patriarchy and which demonise or pathologise individual women or men. Social
Learning Theory would support early learning and for the new information to be taught in school including strategies for children on what to do if they are witnesses of domestic violence. Children in other places are successfully taught what to do in house fires with catchy phrases and practice activities. Many of these are broadcast as community services announcements. Ecological Theory would ensure that such attention is paid to learning for hospital, health, policing, and other workers and service providers. Educational and competency standards are needed for workers and response staff. In this way a consistent message and set of service principles and standards are demonstrated when a women seeks assistance.

In this section each theory in the multidimensional framework developed for this study will be systematically applied and the resultant programs for addressing and responding to wife abuse in Thailand will be identified. Each intervention strategy is based on the results of this study and therefore is responsive to Thailand unique qualities and culture.

**Social Learning Theory**

The effects to the child witness of abuse, explained by social learning theory are that the social environment during childhood experiences in the family of origin can affect a child’s understanding of the world and social interactions and may contribute to the perpetuating the violent behaviour and victim response throughout subsequent generations. The National Clearinghouse on Family Violence (NCFV 2005; 2012) explains, “children from violent homes are being taught that violence is effective way to gain power and control over others”, or they are more likely “to accept the excuses of violent behaviour and have an increased risk of acting aggressively toward peers and adults”(NCFV 2005; 2012, p. 7). Governments do not normally invite the development
of future citizens who think that violence is a legitimate way to resolve conflict or who are oppositional and defiant towards authorities. Hence, a broad based educational program which indicates that domestic violence is unacceptable, what to do about it, and what are alternative ways to effectively manage disputes and conflict needs to be part of a package directed at children and young people – including young men and women. Like Singapore, the Department of Education needs to check that not one book denigrating women are used in any education of young Thais (United Nations 2007).

As the result of witnessing abuse of their mother, children can experience sadness, withdraw, have low self-esteem and/or other emotional problems. Advocacy for the victims of wife abuse, should aim to assist children who are witnesses of their mothers being assaulted as the important target. A child protection process is necessary to adequately respond to child witnesses of domestic violence. Clearly, from the reports of the women, safe places are needed so they can take older children with them when they are escaping violence and not be forced to leave those children behind. Or that the offenders are removed from the house and the wives and children’s lives are not further disrupted. The offender’s return would be based on progress in court ordered rehabilitation. Not on the wife’s guarantee.

**Exchange Theory**

Family conflict is difficult to avoid, but the absence of conflict resolution skills may escalate and lead to violence. For instance the release of anger, the need to gain power and control over their wives and other family members, to reduce internal anxiety or for some other benefit can only persist, according to exchange theory, if the abusers believe they have a permit to behave in this way. This perspective suggests that family members
need to behave in a way that reduces the reward of being violent. That is, that violence
does not lead to the preferred outcome of the violent person. Currently wives obey when
someone is violent thus reinforcing the violent behaviour. If they were able to act in
ways that expose the violence and increase the social cost of the violence to the
perpetrator then there would be no remit for violence in the household. However, the
real scenario is that the violence escalates until the woman complies or is gravely
injured and she is returned to the household with no social sanction against the abusive
person – indeed the sanction is culturally against her. So exchange and control theory
helps explain how the current system of hospital emergency care, women’s shelters and
policing in the area of wife abuse effectively control the wife and indicate to her that she
has no privilege to exercise her power, thereby reinforcing for the abusive husband, that
he has a positive social sanction to continue his behaviour – that is to achieve his wants
by the means of violence and threats of violence.

Appropriate intervention at the family level to teach family members to resolve conflicts
non-violently is likely to be ineffective since these too are based on the assumption of
equality in the relationship between the man and woman and equality before the law.
The external systems currently fail to lay charges of assault on behalf of the women, fail
to investigate on the basis of the injuries sustained and the report of the woman to a
domestic violence service or hospital or police station, and fail to charge and prosecute
cases of wife abuse. For them to be able to do so legislation, policy and procedures need
to be written, taught and implemented. Until that happens the current response to wife
abuse in Thailand actively reinforces the practice and actively places women and
children at continued and increasing risk of harm. Figure 7.4 shows clearly that women
want the abuse to stop and that policy makers are aware of this need. New legislation is
in place. The political process lacks focus. Funding the administration and application
of this new legislation is needed. A whole of government approach is needed overseen by executive government (Prime Minister and Cabinet) to ensure domestic violence is seen as a crime and that woman and children no longer need to be victims.

**Theories of Psychopathology**

The other type of personal behaviour of the abusive husbands, as perceived by a majority of the abused wives of this research, is that they easily lose their temper. The wives provided details that their husbands are irritable, easily angered, and tend to make a fuss for no reason. The service providers also state that the stress experienced by the abusers perhaps from other parts of their lives, contributes to an increase in the risk of wife abuse. In addition, the wives reported that they are isolated and neglected. These forms of abuse many not translate to physical violence, they increase the wife’s anxiety around the husband and constitute other forms of abuse.

At the individual level, personality theory is frequently used to explain the characteristics of the abuser. The violent person, who has long-standing and firmly entrenched violent reactions, is viewed as ill and in need of treatment. The trigger stressor related to marital violence may be unemployment, financial problems, and/or sexual difficulties. Healey, Smith and O’Sullivan (1998) perspective hold that “being physically abusive is a symptom of an underlying emotional problem” (p. 21). They go on say that the treatment aims are “exposing and resolving the root cause” and to providing the violent person with alternative behavioural options through “individual and group psychodynamic and cognitive-behavioural therapy” (p. 21). As violent reactions and patterns are long standing and firmly entrenched and treatment must be
intensive, individualised and medically based (Davis 1995; Cunningham, Jaffe, Baker, et al. 1998).

Substance abuse is seen by most people as a sub-set of psychopathology – of individual failing. Alcohol and drug use by husbands is classified by the policy makers as a personal factor in perpetrators was perceived as a stimulus for domestic violence and it was the greatest risk perceived by the abused wives. In the issue of conflict over substance abuse, drug and alcohol use is increasing in family conflict that indirectly increases wife abuse. There is an argument that not all men who are drunk beat their wives and not all men who beat their wives are drunk (Geffner & Rosenbaum 1990). Nevertheless, from this research, the evidence that the wives reported is that their husbands abused them when they are drunk. Alcohol use as it correlates with wife abuse and other types of domestic violence seems to continue to be a significant risk factor for physical aggression (Kantor & Kantor 1989; Murphy, Meyer & O’Leary 1994).

**Feminist Theory**

There is an argument against identifying wife abuse as evidence of underlying psychopathology or an illness. Frequently mentally illness is proved to be absent in wife abusers. People who are violent as a result of a mental illness do not limit their violence to their intimate partners or their wives, but the offenders of wife abuse attack only their wives. People whose aggression is triggered by alcohol equally do not only engage in aggressive behaviours with their wives. As Dutton (1994, p. 169) states “the result of feminist analysis of wife abuse has been acceptance of the powerful and complex role of social factors” present in the context of violence. Abuse exists within a gendered society dominated by male power. From the feminist perspective, unless male power and
gendered social relationships are addressed, no effective response to wife abuse will be achieved.

**Family Systems Theory**

Healey, Smith and O’Sullivan (1998) comprehensively summarise the application of Family Systems Theory to wife abuse. First, both wife abuse and domestic violence are the tangible outcome of a dysfunctional couple relationship or family system. Therefore, the cause the abuse lies within the structure and interpersonal dynamics of the family. Communication problems and poor conflict resolution within intimate relationships are seen to be critical features and intervention involves and teaching communication skills, appropriate assertiveness and conflict prevention and resolution strategies for the whole family. Controversy surrounds interventions based on family systems theory as it does not address inappropriate use of power by the abuser and as interventions, which fail to address power, are potentially dangerous. In counselling the abused wife is encouraged to discuss openly unresolved problem that result in later retaliation by the batterer. This concern is a valid one. As the results of this on wife abuse in the Thai context show, conversations with abusers usually result in worse long-terms outcomes for the woman and the children.

**Ecological Theories**

Stress and isolation are related to the abuser’s aggression. Telch and Lindquist (1984) pointed out that abusive men have significantly poorer communication skills. The aim of intervention is to build the capacity for secure attachments between abusers and their wives, and family. A cognitive behavioural approach is used to teaching offenders
alternative ways of non-violent thinking and behaviour. Anger management techniques are the primary method for the abusers in short-term intervention to make them feel they can control themselves. To develop the abusers’ behaviours to be non-violent, social learning theorists view that changing behaviours and altering outcomes leads to changed thought processes. Irrational and negative thinking often undermines a person’s attempts to change behaviour and thus short-circuits their best intention. Numerous techniques have been developed for working both with abusive men as a group and within couples aiming to eliminate violence, teach new behaviours, and change dysfunctional thoughts that serve to maintain violence in the relationship. However, again these techniques have been generated and applied in societies and cultures where there is an acceptance that men and women are equal and the deeply embedded cultural understanding about women is different from the experience in Thailand.

If we accept that the husbands are not suffering from psychopathology but that husbands’ behaviours are as a result of some external stressors then there is also an epidemic of adult males in Thailand whose needs are not being addressed. One could interpret the claims of the wives that their husbands fail to pay attention to them, that they have affairs with other women or take on minor wives, or fail to take responsibility for children, and they act irresponsibly as escape hatches that adult men are using which are akin to self-medication of people in pain. They might also be symptoms of unmet social and psychological needs in these men that require investigation and development of targeted programs. To suggest otherwise, that is to accept that more than 47% of adult men in Thailand are active abusers of women (including non-physical forms of abuse) would be damning for Thai men and the Thai way of life. If men are behaving this way, it is not because they were born to abuse or because they are sick but because something is wrong for them. Men form a large proportion of the Thai population and
are worthy of study and to have their psychological, social and emotions needs considered in any examination of patterns of intimate partner abuse.

Furthermore, in relation to the abusers’ use of power and control, this research found that the victims rarely report sexual abuse. According to the context of Thai society issues about sex are not openly discussed, particularly with unfamiliar people. That is why the victims or social workers do not normally identify sexual abuse as a form of abuse. Even though, the current details in the law have changed, and women’s rights are more respected. The activities, in practice, are still ignored. The public needs more information that is correct and up-to date. Services personnel need knowledge and skill to be able to raise and address sexual assault as a routine question to reduce reticence of women.

Personal factors are deeply associated with cultural factors. Most of the policy makers consider that cultural factors are the most important citing the patriarchal values of Thai society. Cultural factors affect entire families and part of the wife abuse problem is inherited social values in the form of family behaviour that is passed on through the socialisation process. The ecological approach, formulated by Bronfenbrenner (1977 cited in Huitt 2009), indicates that “...human beings do not develop in isolation; they develop in a variety of contexts (environments in which the individual human being is in constant interaction) have a major role in human development and behaviour” (Huitt 2009, p. 4; 2012, p. 3). Thus “the family factors in an ecological model of family violence refer to processes in the family such as parenting skills, family environment, family stressors, and family interactions. For instance family stress associated with financial difficulties, poverty and unemployment may decrease a family’s capacity to function” (Little & Kaufman Kantor 2002, p. 134). Further Bronfenbrenner comments
on how exo-systems, that is independent systems that exist outside the family (like schools, hospitals, legal systems) have effects on the way the family operates just in the same way as building a freeway through a rainforest can affect the rainforest ecology.

In the next section the consideration of theory and the findings of this research are drawn together to develop a way to consider wife abuse in the Thai context and to form the basis for developing program and essential skills for workers who are required to respond to incidents of wife abuse. The model is shown in Figure 8.2 below.

**Figure 8.2**

**The Application of Theoretical Frameworks and the Multi-disciplinary Approaches**

This figure graphically displays the application of the various theoretical frameworks and the multi-disciplinary approaches which include legislative changes, policy change about education, health services, quality of training, and educational delivery, funding of health and welfare services, community education and awareness programs.
Implications for Practice

The origins and effects of wife abuse as discussed above should be the subject of conversations among all the obvious stakeholders, other victims and other strong and active agencies and advocates. Definitions of terms need to be consistent to make sense for victims. The integrated multidimensional approach to intervention that acknowledges and incorporates the complexity of this problem is the preferred model. It needs to contain psychological, interpersonal, cultural social, policy and economic considerations (Healy, Smith & O’Sullivan 1998). Integrated case management therefore is necessary since no agency and no single worker can provide all the services needed.

With regards to the “multidimensional” approach the theories of domestic violence and wife abuse (reviewed in Chapter 2 of this research) engage the societal level, the family level, and the individual level. Each perspective partially explains the causes of wife abuse. Each theory provides practitioners with different approaches and techniques to use in working with victims of abuse and the abuser. The multidimensional approach allows multiple collaborative and cooperative integrated responses to wife abuse. Family treatment is "a global intervention which takes into consideration all family members involved in the abuse as well as the context in which it occurs… all the members of the family should be treated as individuals, as well as the nature of their interrelationship" (Patrignani & Vill 1995, p. 9).The integrated rehabilitation process response is for all including abusers. The inclusion of programs to court ordered rehabilitation is recommended.
Patrignani and Vill (1995) offer the three main types of treatment approaches as follows:

The first is a behavioural approach in that it tries to modify the behaviour of the offender(s) or of all family members involved. The second is a cognitive approach which attempts to modify the psychological profile of the offender. The third treatment approach is based on the re-establishment of appropriate relationships within the family… The effects of abuse are difficult to treat, because abuse is very often not a single and uniform act but includes a large set of variables and elements which have to be identified and taken into consideration … Most treatment of victims relies on a combination of individual, family and group therapy. The main objectives of the majority of the treatment programmes are to restore, whenever possible (Patrignani & Vill 1995, p. 9).

It assists victims to recognised their strengths and regain “a sense of self-esteem by neutralising feelings of guilt, eliminating depression and, when needed, by remedying the developmental retardation” (Patrignani & Vill 1995, p. 9) (social and psychological and sometimes language) as the case of abused children. It is essential to the treatment and therapy of the victim that the intervention seeks change in both the family and the offender. Positive change will be temporary without attention to the dynamics of the victim-offender relationships. The complexity of this individualised approach requires that it be delivered through integrated case management.

At the macro level, Healey, Smith and O’Sullivan (1998, p. 16) note: “social theories of domestic violence attribute the problem to social structures, cultural norms and values that endorse or tolerate the use of violence by men against women partners”. As found in this research, and stated earlier, the feminist perspective considers that abuse exists within a gendered society dominated by male power. Women’s inferior position within the family must be placed in an entire social context. At this level, the liberal feminist
model of intervention supports the education of men on how “these social and cultural norms influence their actions and attempts to re-socialise them emphasising non-violence and equality in relationships” (Healey, Smith & O’Sullivan 1998, p. 16). In their view this approach does not address structurally and culturally embedded power. A more helpful approach includes advocacy for definite change in the social structure, especially in the area of equality and power in relationships (p. xi). It calls on practitioners to strengthen structures and power relations to protect women and to limit environmental factors that contribute to abuse of wives.

In brief, an effective response to wife abuse in the Thai context acknowledges that wife abuse is a serious health problem that requires legislation with active follow-through, cultural change, community engagement and empowerment, organisational change to ensure the costs are borne by the abusers and that the needs of victims and dependent children are met. That is, a multi-layered and multidimensional approach is the only effective response for Thailand.

Another way of dealing with wife abuse, Patrignani and Vill (1995) suggest is “to modify the situation by reducing the crime opportunity. Family violence is special because it occurs between person [people] with a close relationship and who usually live under the same roof. In this context, one of two options can be taken to prevent both abuse and repetition” (p. 9). The first option is “to treat both the family at risk and the potential offender, with the aim of keeping the family united” (p. 9). The second option, is “to separate the victim and offender, which requires at least temporarily dividing the family. Sometimes this separation needs to be permanent”. The final option is “a very serious decision and needs to be based on hard and reliable information. Some of the indicators that are often associated with decisions to separate are the
severity and duration of the abuse, the parenting skills, the socio-economic situation, and the family structure” (Patrignani & Vill 1995, p. 9). The removal or not, of a child-witness needs to be based on assessment of the child’s safety including the emotional and psychological harm of witnessing the abuse itself. The prediction of repetition could be the determining factor in removing children from the violence incidents. If child protection legislation includes exposure to domestic violence as a type of child abuse, more potential exists to have the populace take domestic violence seriously and realise that it is not a private matter.

Special intervention should apply to the victims. Patrignani and Vill (1995) state the important of the safe place:

… shelter should be underlined. Shelters are not only seen as safe heaven on a temporary basis. They also represent a chance to start a new life, a place in which women can consider ending the relationship with the violent partner. However, shelters are usually designed for short-term stays, which means that the abused wives will have to leave the shelter and decide whether to turn to her partner or to end the relationship (p. 9).

Abused wives need co-ordinate services of support that encourage self-sufficiency and independence and, legal protection. However, in Thailand it is not easy for some women to live alone because they are socialised to believe in the primacy of male power and consequently do not access opportunities for their future support by earning a living. To enable them to be free from domestic violence requires supporting them in variety ways, for instance: protecting them and their children under women and children’s rights within the Thai legislation and empowering them to participate in community activities that generate community protection programs. Change agents from within the community, government and non-government agencies can develop
these programs. There can be a combination of protection roles using elders in communities, community leaders, stakeholders (agencies and policing) and social workers. These existing and strengthening components should be integrated together using the core principles of charity and compassion to be consistent with Thai culture. The significant aim is to develop programs that are both family-centred and victim-centred.

As SASIN (2010, pp. 35-26) noted, cultural change management in Thailand across all levels of the community needs to “restore a realization and pride in Thai culture and to improve collaboration and opportunities for all Thais”. Clearly, the culture being reported by those women victims, service providers and policy makers is not the sort of culture that leads to a sense of pride.

What this negative analysis shows is that while the majority of authors and the participants see the cause of domestic violence in Thai culture and indeed many authors and researchers of domestic violence in Thailand agree, there might be a strong contrary view to be made from this research. It is a view that would allow engagement within Thai Buddhism, government, all institutions, families and communities to build in all aspects of Thai life, behaviours that reinforce and restore a grounded and evidence-based re-definition of Thai culture: of Thailand as a civilized, mature, compassionate, charitable, self-controlled nation where 14 million women are not abused. A Thailand worth celebrating.
Implications for Theory

Qualitative research is important to explore a new topic or issue that no researcher has written about. An exploration is fitting as the first-stage sequence of the study in order to know enough to outline a more systematic or more extensive study (Neuman 2003).

The findings reveal that, to some extent, the nature of wife abuse is mostly similar to what happens in almost every country in the world (Human Rights Watch on Women’s Rights Project 1995). The information from the findings has underscored the concern that the incidence of wife abuse, in which a wife is the victim and her husband is the abuser, is a global epidemic that tortures, injures, or kills the victims (UNICEF 2000a). The wives, the victims of abuse, are often in great danger in their own homes. While physical and psychological abuse are the most common kinds of abuse, other kinds of wife abuse that occur include sexual abuse, verbal abuse, economic abuse, social abuse, and neglect and failing to take responsibility for the family: abandonment. In Thailand abandonment is a separate form of abuse that needs to be included in the list of categories. Some abusers not only refuse to take responsibility for their families, but some of them even made themselves a burden to their families. We do not know the frequency cause or extent of this form of abuse.

The current research also presents contributions to the theoretical framework to explain the factors that cause wife abuse. A specific contribution of this research from the within-case and cross-case analyses is that wives and service providers perceive the personal characteristics of the husbands as the most important condition that triggered incidents of abuse, followed by the influence of alcohol and drugs and problems within the family. From the analysis of the unstructured responses, cultural factors were
identified as the most important condition that caused abuse; all participants shared this.

The policy makers’ perspective is consistent with the explanations by UNICEF (2000a), which concluded that male-dominant, or patriarchal values influenced personal behaviours and the beliefs of both men and women. Men are socialised as family leaders, and the expectation of the sex roles is for women to play an important role inside the family, and for men to play a more important role outside the family.

8.2 IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Further multi-professional research on effective interventions and approaches to addressing wife abuse is needed and should be expected to examine the consequences of witnessing abuse, especially for child witnesses, and their experience of family violence.

The findings of this research are relevant mainly for abused wives in Thailand. It is a severe problem, and it is also related to other kinds of domestic violence. Future research should focus on the study of a wider variety of situations of domestic violence, which may be interconnected with wife abuse or an investigation could be made on the postulation that wife abuse is a result of violence in the family.

The study of wife abuse in the view of Sharpe and Taylor (1999) mostly relies on “participant self-reports of the frequency of their own and their partner violent behaviour” (p. 173). Only the cases that faced severe violence, so the victims felt impelled to go out to report the problem to the service agencies, are the cases available for the study samples. This factor could limit any study’s generalisability because it is socially desirable for participants “to under-report their own perpetration of abuse”
(Sommer 1994, p. 9; Sharpe & Taylor 1999, p. 173). Similar limitations also apply to this study, which was specifically aimed at studying abused wives who came to ask for help from the service agencies. There is no way to estimate the real situation of wife abuse and domestic violence in the wide range of population. Future research should attempt to study the incidence of violence common families to estimate how much violence occurs. Careful definitions of categories of domestic violence are essential to progress quantitative research. Furthermore, both urban and rural families should be studied to compare the nature and incidence of abuse, compare the factors contributing to the violence and to compare the results of the abuse in the families in both areas.

A specific study to find ways to improve the intervention for the victims of wife abuse, the witnesses, and the abusers in Thai society is warranted. As mentioned in the findings, rehabilitation programs for abusers are limited, as are studies of the abusers. In fact, no study has yet been made of the perpetrators of intimate abuse in Thai society. Research in the future should pay attention to studying whether identified abusers who seek help have the same characteristics as those who do not. If so, specific interventions can be tailored for these people.

In the intervention and treatment of domestic violence cases, a research and development study should be made on the specifics of intergenerational violence transmission so that prevention programs can be developed (Krajewski, Rybarik, Dosch, et al. 1996 cited in ARMY Family advocacy program 1999, p. 3).

It is also important to study the process of intervention to construct an appropriate model to help victims of abuse and perhaps a special program for abusers and witnesses. Family centred and victim centred responses should form the base of interventions. The
key people in interventions should include those who are already respected within the community such as elders and community leaders. Furthermore, the understanding of the complexities of domestic violence and wife abuse and their consequences should be revealed and expounded to Thai people. The process of intervention programs and the result of implementation should be monitored and evaluated.

Studies are needed on the quality of pre-service education for service providers - their knowledge and skills. Standards need to be developed so that funding agencies can use the quality standards performance measurement as a basis for ongoing program funding.

Research is needed to identify appropriate responses to wife abuse within the Thai culture, where Buddhism is the national religion of Thailand and influences the way of life of all the people. Research is needed about the possibilities of creating a dialogue between theories and religious beliefs so that people can maintain Buddhism and live in a society where there is no wife abuse. Thai Buddhist values in keeping with a proud Thai culture free of abuse of the vulnerable would comprise a common and shared goal. The advocate practitioner will benefit from theoretical frameworks that can combine the doctrine of Buddhism to develop the relationship of the couple, the family and people in community. Currently in Buddhism husbands and wives are identified as having responsibilities to each other. Research, dialogue and theory development are needed so that Thai Buddhism is no longer seen to be a major contributing factor to the perpetuation of male dominance and violence.
8.3 IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

This research finds that the causal factors vary. There is no single approach that can be successfully implemented. A mixed model or multidimensional intervention focused on the goal at rehabilitation that incorporates psychotherapeutic elements and cultural components is likely to be more effective. It improves treatment to the abused wives, the witnesses of abuse, the abusers, and focuses on the whole family.

In addition, the results of this research are in conformity with Patrignani and Vill’s report (1995) which say the victim of wife abuse is: “often hopeless and alone in facing the crisis, and does not know where to seek help” (p. 9). Even though the findings of Patrignani and Vill’s report state that various agencies provide services, such as “support, advise and help victims, there is still need for a more systematic and organised plan of action in order to implement adequate and prompt responses to the problem of family violence…welfare, police, court, health, education, and social services, need to be constantly stressed” (1995, p. 9) or marketed positively. The development of multi-disciplinary and multi-agency teams to work on wife abuse is an immediate, concrete improvement that can be made.

Moreover, this research creates a challenge for policy makers, service providers and community development workers in Thailand. To effectively combat domestic violence in a culturally appropriate manner, a new Thai model has to be developed. It has to be community-based and driven; it needs the engagement and support of elders, monks and teachers–people who have high cultural capital value. It needs substantial backing and support of the government financially and with supporting and enabling legislation. It needs coordinated commitment from police and service agencies and of central
importance, it has to engage abused women themselves, include them in all levels and promote their involvement not only in this process but also in public life. This is a different model to address an old problem in a new way, and in a new era in a culturally rich society.

The research findings regarding intervention indicated that the service agencies should provide comprehensive services to assist abused wives and their families, including witnesses of abuse. Professionals from many fields, for instance health workers, social workers, legal officers, and educators should work together in coordination. In line with the recommendations of Hampton (1988), cooperation between government and civil society should be built up and developed at all levels to combat wife abuse. This also indicates a “multidisciplinary approach”, with a variety of professional areas working together, for instance, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, doctors and others. A holistic understanding of each case is needed, and the specific needs of each individual should be responded to in order to meet the goal of giving abused wives the capacity to decide their own future. In additional, the community should play greater roles in help protecting the victims of abuse.

As for the result of intervention regarding violence in intimate relationships, Krajewski, Rybarik, Dosch, et al. (1996) say “These results confirm those found in other studies and reinforce recommendations of the battered women's movement to integrate violence-free principles into school curricula” (p. 93).

The identification of an appropriate therapeutic response within the Thai culture, where Buddhism influences the way of life is necessary. The advocate practitioner can combine the doctrine of Buddhism to develop the relationship of the couple.
As noted earlier in this chapter alcohol use of husbands was perceived as a stimulus for domestic violence as perceived by the abused wives. Policy makers placed alcohol and substance use into a category of personal characteristics. Specifically targeted research on drug and alcohol use and domestic violence in the Thai context is necessary. If there is no correlation, the results can be used in educational programs so that substance use is not seen as a legitimate excuse for violence.

In the next section the consideration of theory and the findings of this research are drawn together to develop a way to consider wife abuse in the Thai context and to form the basis for developing programs and essential skills for workers who are required to respond to incidents of wife abuse.

**Wife abuse interventions**

Patrignani and Vill (1995) explain:

…family treatment is a global intervention, which takes into consideration all family members, involved the abuse as well as the context in which it occurs. In other words, not only the offender and/or victim, but all the members of the family should be treated as individuals, as well as key as the nature of their interrelationship (p. 9).

The reduction of the crime opportunity is a particular challenge in the Thai context. Complex and comprehensive assessment processes are needed to ensure that services are tailored to the needs of the woman and her children. Assessment and intervention needs to be victim and family centred, it needs to ensure that the woman feels supported, has the capacity to earn a living, is assured that her rights will be protected.
and has a culture and awareness raising component so that women can begin to challenge the notion of male supremacy; so that they appreciate that traditionally women were esteemed and valued in Thai culture.

In this study the nature of wife abuse in Thailand was found to be just as complex as in any other location. The Thai experience of wife abuse includes abandonment as a particular category of abuse experienced by women, recognised by policy makers but not yet in texts for training future workers. Researchers need to be aware that some definitions are culturally based and terms developed from research in different societies may not completely describe the phenomenon in the country being studied.

The multi-dimensional approach presented in this study was supported by the research findings. The implications for future practice and future research project revolve around the development and implementation of effective multi-disciplinary teams, and rehabilitation for offenders and where all the family members are also assisted through a process of integrated case management. Rehabilitation of the offender needs to be connected to court orders where there are powers to allow the family to undergo the rehabilitation as a unit or require them to be separated temporarily or permanently. The decision to “allow the offender back” or for the victim to “return home” may best be made based on informed and evidence-based decision-making on the risks of harm for all the people involved including the children.

More and better shelters and integrated services are needed that include cross agency and cross-sector partnerships, including elders and community leaders.
Current legislation needs a whole of government approach with leadership from the executive government (Prime Minister and Cabinet) to ensure that appropriate funds and prosecution of the legislation proceeds at all levels of the government’s concern: e.g. the checking of content in children’s lessons and books and removing material that denigrates women, improved health services, improved educational quality control for service workers including police, standards of service delivery and performance based funding, review of funding to communities who are raising awareness about domestic violence, changing child protection legislation so that exposure to domestic violence is also defined as child abuse etc.

Research is needed to consider the degree to which personal characteristics and circumstance lead to abuse and the weight born by culture and intergenerational violence. Much more research should focus into community awareness and concern about wife abuse and, the resilience of women victims and their strengths.

Finally the biggest opportunity and challenge rests in the direct engagement research and practice in the area of developing a set of guidelines that bring together human rights, gender equality and the best features of Thai Buddhism, compassion, charity, self-control so that cultural change can begin in Thailand. This work can result in a Thailand with pride in its care for its people, reduced health care burden, safe women, safe children and reduced violence. (See Figure 8.3)
Figure 8.3

Multi-dimensional Model of the Future Implications

Delivered in an integrated, multi-disciplinary way on and through all layers or sources and causes

OUTCOMES

Continuum of Prevention, Intervention and Rehabilitation
Identification of Strengths, Resilience, Capacity Building and Change

This figure graphically displays the multi-layered nature and causes of wife abuse with the overarching theories that leads to a series of outcomes in a continuum of prevention, intervention and rehabilitation, and also identification of strengths, resilience, including with capacity building and change at all the levels and for all the stakeholders.
SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The findings of this research have implications for developing both the theoretical framework to understand the problem of wife abuse in Thai society and for developing adequate policies and practice to address the problem. For academics, empirical evidence, potential of new areas for research is presented. For practitioners, the findings are directly applicable to their intervention strategies. The model developed (see Figure 8.3) can be used as a base for teaching, targeting research, focusing funding on prevention, response and rehabilitation and to identifying where policy and legislation are lacking.
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