I. Women suffering under SPDC’s militarization policy

Since the military junta (the military clique of Burmese Army) began its ruling in 1962 after seizure of the democratic political power and continued its second successive rule in 1988, the soldiers have been committing a great many oppressive acts against people. In accordance with its claim, people will be powerful only when the military is powerful, the military forces are being expanded excessively from 180,000 troops in number to 400,000 in 2002. Currently, the military regime in Burma, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), plans to extend the troops number up to 500,000 under the command of Burmese Army. In doing so, people’s land and farms were illegitimately confiscated. Not only compensation were not given but also forced labour was imposed upon people in establishing battalions. In Mudon, Thanbuzayat and Ye Townships of Mon State, over 8000 acres of privately owned land were confiscated in the recent year. The people are greatly suffered due to SPDC’s ’militarization policy’.

Suddenly, after the military deployment or extension in southern part of Mon State, especially in Ye Township of Mon State, women in nearby areas were raped constantly by the soldiers. While the women were working in the farms or orchid plantations, and traveling they were raped by the soldiers.

Some instances of the recent rape cases by the soldiers of Burmese Army are:

Rape: Case One

Miss Ei Zarage 16, was raped by Thein Naing (Army No Ta-176399) at her grandparents’s house on May 22, 2002 at (4.00 AM local time) at Kalein-pa-daw village, in Thanbuzayat Township, Mon State while she was preparing meal for the Buddhist monks in the morning. After a Burmese soldier raped her, her father, Mr. Nai Kun Kyit, secretary of the village asked for help to neighborhood. He was killed by the soldier. Then a fighting between soldiers occurred in the house then killed Mi Zar (16), Mrs Daw Kun Boh (65), wife of Mr Kyit, Mr Wet Tey (41), a hired worker, Min Chit Thau (10), grand child of Mr Kyit were killed. Criminal private Thein Naing (18) also injured to the fire.

Despite it was a crime and utterly human rights violation towards local Mon people and local farmers by the Burmese soldiers, local Burmese Army IB No. 62 based in Thanbuzayat released the news that it was a
fighting between an insurgent group and the Burmese army in order to close down the case. Local member of New Mon State Party (a Mon political party, which agreed for ceasefire with the regime), has lodged a formal legal action to punish the criminals but there is no confirmed information have been released to the public in regards legal proceeding to violators, Burmese soldiers.

When ordinary soldiers have committed crimes and human rights violations in rural areas, top Burmese army officials took the cases to their hands without legal proceeding in the public courts. They only made own judgment to the cases without consents from the victims and related members of the family. As there is no local human rights defenders and commission in the country in Burma, women and young girls in rural were denied to speak for their rights despite they are being raped.

As there is no local protection by the government, women in rural areas are always on the target of rape by Burmese soldiers in Mon State and Southern Burma. An opportunity of rape is well established by the soldiers either when men are away from home and women are only live in farms and bush villages.

Rape: Case Two
A well known rape case also has documented in the New Mon State Party’s human rights report in 2002. The report said that on January 5, 2002, at 6 o’clock evening of the local time, Coporal Kyaw Myint, member of Burmese Army LIB No 61 raped Miss Htaw Yin, a daughter of Mr Nai Maung at Zone-na-thar village in Ye Township. The case has brought to legal action to against the violator to local No. 5 Burmese Military Intelligence Unit for a further investigation by the NMSP local officials.

Rape: Case Three
On July 8, 2002 three Burmese soldiers from LIB No 587 arrested an 18 year old girl near Kun_doo village in southern Ye and committed gang raped case. They repeatedly raped Miss Mi Khin Htaw who is daughter of Mr Nai At until she lost consciousness, Human Rights Foundation of Monland (HURFOM), a border base human rights defenders for local people in the region has covered the story reported in January 2003.

II. Recent Offensives and Violations against Women

In Mon State, Southern Burma, the armed force of the regime, the Burmese Army (as Tamadaw defined by the regime) are putting an operation of into action against a small ethnic Mon groups in late 2003. The military regime, under the plan of barring the revolutionary armed groups from getting from the local...
people, is increasingly terrorized the local civilians in the areas concerned. Under the command of Southeast Command bases in Moulmein, the capital of Mon State, MOMC (Military Operation Management Command) No. 19, No. 3 Tactical Command and the battalions: LIB (Light Infantry Battalion) No. 299, LIB No. 586, IB (Infantry Battalion) No. 97, IB No. 61, IB No. 32, are predominating in southern Ye Township, Mon State. While the military authorities are claiming that the deployment of such many battalions is for the security of local people, but the life of Mon people has slide into homelessness and misery. Despite the motto that (Burmese) Army for the sake of people but the people are threatened through using power and extortion on a daily basis. In fact, the military has been not only imposing oppression, torture and atrocity on people, but also raped women in order to win war.

Moreover, in military offensives, men, women and even the monks were arrested to be used as porters or road guides. In the military operations, when porters were felt ill, they not only had no right for medication, but also beaten with guns for their being unable to do the duty given. As people neither know their own rights nor be aware that their right are being violated, they are suffering whatever the military authorities do. (Editor Note: Although International Labour Organization (ILO) have instructed Burma to eradicate all forms of 'compulsory labour' in Burma since 1999, however, the battalions of Burmese Army still use porters in frontline during their offensives.)

On 9th January 2004, about 200 people from Ye and Yebyu Township, who no longer could not endure the miseries of battle-stricken areas, arrived at Holockhani Mon Refugee resettlement camp (Editor Note: after the armed ethnic Mon political party, New Mon State Party agreed for ceasefire with the regime in 1995, the Mon refugees were spontaneously repatriated without international monitoring, but refugees have been remained in New Mon State Party's controlled area).

Moreover, the military, since previous end of rainy season (in September 2003), has forbidded the local people to go to their gardens and farms. Having no right to make earning through farming they were left with little option other than to seek refuge at Halockhani camp. "If anyone goes to his farm or garden for working, he would be accused of communicating with and were Mon armed group, beaten and tortured," said Nai Kao Chan, a relief worker in the border areas.

That women were used as porters in the military’s offensives has been mentioned above. Those women, were in the day time, used as porters and, at night, used to satisfy the soldiers’ sexual appetites.

As an stance,

On 12th January, 2004,
LIB No. 299 that was operating military campaign in Southern Ye Township, Mon State, sent for three women daily in rotation to work for the military column and raped them. The women from each household of Khaw-za and six villages nearly were rotationally compelled to cook meals and fetch water for the soldiers at the place where the military column encamped. At night time, they were forced to entertain the commanders to sing karaoke songs, give a massage and almost were raped.

Ms. Mi Khin Hling, 23, a woman who was raped said that the women sent for were, in daylight, forced to cook meals and fetch water and, at night, they were repeatedly raped. “They (soldiers) don’t want the married women. If a woman says, she is married, she is beaten. In the day time we have to cook meals and carry water for their showing. After having dinner, they demanded us to have message, and when night fell they raped us. We did not dare resist at all, because we were afraid they will kill us” said a woman who had been raped. The IB No. 299 also kept these women until 6:00 a.m. early morning and asked another 3 women for replacement. The demand for the women to do works at their bases and to committed rape with different raped women.

This sexual violations against women, especially rape or gang-rape, committed by SPDC’s or Burmese Army’s soldiers are very systematic. Not only LIB No. 299 commanders and his soldiers involvement in this violation, but the other battalions also involved.

Another instance is:

A Captain and soldiers of LIB No. 586 that was operating a military campaign against the splinter Mon armed group raped local women and consequently the women due to being ashamed to live in her village, fled to other place.

Captain Hla Khaing of LIB No. 586 that has been combating against the Mon armed group also raped Ms. Mi Myat Hlay (20) daughter of M r. Nai Sway, from Toe-tat Ywa-thit village, and soldiers under Captain Hla Khaing command also raped Ms. Mi Soe Win (25) from Thae-khon Village and Ms. Mi Za Tile (17) from Singu village. However, many rape case were not discovered because the women victims were shame to talk their stories. The rape cases happened in December 2003 and January 2004.

As being described, the raped women victims have been no longer dare live in their villages and ran away to other place.

Information from Testimony with a Displaced Woman

Background information: In the first week of December 2003, the Burmese Army, Southeast Command, launched offensives against a Mon armed group in southern part of Mon State. Under the Southeast Command’s No. 3 Tactical Command, five military battalions: IB No. 61, IB No. 31, IB No. 97, LIB No. 586 and LIB No. 591 have involved in offensives. In order to create ‘fear’ among the people in the area, the commanders and soldiers from Burmese Army have seriously committed sexual harassment against ethnic Mon women in area. The following facts are how sexual harassment happened in the area.

**Burmese Army’s Sexual Harassment against Women**

Name of testified woman: Mi W——,
Age: 19 Years old
Native village: Khaw-za Village, Ye Township, Mon State
(See the area in the Map, on Page 3)

I’m from Khaw-za village (southern part of Ye Township). As the Burmese Army’s commander found I’m tall, he ordered our village headmen to include me in fashion show. The commander ordered the unmarried women, who are tall with 5 feet and 6 inches to involve in fashion show.

I did not want to involve in fashion show and therefore, I fled from my village. Another two girls from my village were selected to involve in the fashion show without their willingness. As the Burmese Army commander requested four girls to involve in fashion contest, the village headmen had to find two girls from town (Ye Town) to involve in fashion show.

Not only the women from our village, they also asked from 10 villages to send 1 to 4 girls to fashion show to involve in contest. They also said to the village headmen that to select even school girls, but they must be in classes of 8 grades to 10 grades. I heard they selected...
villages. Mi Myat Htay’s niece said she is taking refuge in Ye Town, a small town in southern part of Mon State (see in the map). The people who have close relationship with Ms. Mi Soe Win and Ms. Mi Za Tike said they also were hiding in area northern part of Ye Town, where they have their relatives.

Captain Hla Khaing arrested Mi Myat Htay’s father accusing him of having contact with Mon armed group. While the soldiers were interrogating him, he was in humanely beaten in custody. The Captain called Mi Myat Htay to negotiate with her about the release of her father, but at night time, the Captain took her who came to meet him in confidence of his offer, to a house, drove out the owner of the house and then raped her. After raping, he detained her for two days and raped her repeatedly.

While, the second victim, Ms. Mi Soe Win was being threatened with knife and was gang-raped, she shouted for help, the villagers came and rescued her. As she felt too ashamed to stay at her village, Ms. Win also fled from her village. the third victim, Ms. Mi Za Tike had got ashamed for her crying out for help while she was being assaulted to rape by a soldier in her house, therefore she also fled from her village.

Some women were constantly brought by the commanders and soldiers of LIB No. 586 for months along with them during the operation and repeatedly gang-raped. They did not release those women even when the troops arrived close to their native villages. While they arrived into their villages, they could visit at homes and then the army left for operation, they were taken again.

A miserable event that happens to a Mon girl is as below:

After her father was accused as a ‘rebel-supporter, and taken away by the commander of LIB No. 586, Captain Hla Khaing, and his troops, a 20 year old girl Ms. Mi Aye Lwin was again taken by soldiers. They brought her since December 9, 2003, and took her all the time until the end of January 2004. She said to her neighbours that she was gang-raped by the soldiers of LIB No. 586 for nearly two months.

four girls from Yin-dein village.

If the selected girls are not beautiful and too young, they rejected them and forced the village headmen to select again.

Those selected girls have to go to army base (near Khaw-za village) and let them stay in the base for two days and two nights for rehearsal before the fashion show was actually taken place. During these days and nights, we didn’t know, how the commanders and soldiers treat to those girls.

Accordingly to the selected girls, they had to do ‘catwalk’ in front of the army commanders for hours. If the commanders did not like, they were forced to keep walking. The commanders also came and touched their bodies and dragged their cloths during their instruction.

There are about 30 girls in the whole area were forced to be in army bases for several for the rehearsal of ‘catwalk’ for the fashion show. Then, (in second week of December 2003) the commanders hold a contest of ‘fashion show’ in Khaw-za village. Girls were asked to do ‘catwalk’ and posed with their different types in a stage and the commanders selected the most beautiful girl and gave them small prizes.

Besides this fashion show, the young women in many villages have been constantly forced to do works in the army bases and to entertain the commanders of Burmese Army. They asked at least three women from one village to stay at their bases for 24 hours. Those women had to do cooking, carrying water and finding foods for them.

At night time, the commanders forced the women to sing ‘karaoke’ songs together with them especially to entertain them. The women have to serve liquor and foods for them. They also had to do massage for them. Many women are raped, but I didn’t know details.
Her native village is: Kaw-hlaing village, situates in southern part of Ye Township (see in the map on Page No. 3) and she believed that her father was already summarily executed by the soldiers, because she did not meet him. Accordingly to a witness from his village, “she looked too thin and her health condition is so seriously worst. She told us that she wanted the soldiers to kill her. But they didn’t kill her but rape her everytime they brought her during the military operations.

The villagers found she arrived back home for a while and when the soldiers left, they took her again. They never let her take a short rest at her homes.

Accordingly to the villager escapees, another battalion, IB No. 97 commanders and soldiers also involved in rape cases against women in the area. But no detail information are received due to difficult into the area. Many battalion commanders and soldiers in the front lines or in the rural areas always thought the information will not expose out to the world and so that they raped her for months.

Not only the battalions that are in the military operations in the rural areas involved in sexual violations against women, the commanders or soldiers from some the regular army battalions or military training schools that stationed close to the rural Mon villages also committed rapes. Some women are lured to be girl friends by those commanders or soldiers and were raped. After rape, the soldiers refused to marry.

An an instance,

On 3rd January, 2004, at night, a Corporal from No. 4th military Training School (which is under the command of Southern Command) deceivingly raped a 17 years old girl from kyone-ka-dat village, Thanbyuzayat Township.

The Corporal Naing Naing of that Military Training School which stations at Wae-ka-li villages Thanbyuzayat Township deceived that he was in love with the girl, Ms. Mi Mya Htay and she was eventually fallen into the trap of rapist after she agreed for his appointment. Though, after having been raped, Mi Mya Htay requested the Corporal Naing Naing to marry her, but he not only refused to accept her request but also threaten and left her on the way. The people who went to the rubber plantation to collect rubber latex found her crying and took her back home.

Therefore, Mi Mya Htay’s father and villager headmen complained to the commander of Military training School about the rape that the Corporal Naing Naing committed. However, without taking any action against the rapist, the military authorities forced Mi Mya Htay’s father and villager headmen to renounce the accusation.

Accordingly to the local villager escapees, during the whole offensives that took from December 2003 until now, women have been seriously mis-treated such as are forced to involve in fashion show; to entertain the commanders; to serve liquor and food for soldiers; to offer massage to them; and to welcome them with flowers while the soldiers are passing villages. (Editor Note: Look the information from Testimony with a Displaced Woman on Page No. 4 and 5 of this The Plight)

III. License to Rape in Mon State

According to “License to Rape” a well known report published by SWAN (Shan Women’s Action Net-
work), it has been known that many Shan women were raped by the soldiers of the Burmese Army in Shan State, eastern part of Burma. In this report, it summarizes information regarding to sexual violations from 1996 to 2003, which describes 625 women were raped and gang-raped by various ranks of army commanders and ordinary soldiers in Shan State. Although this report is internationally well-known, no legal punishment to those rapists have been acted by the regime. The regime SPDC, or the Burmese Army considers ‘rape’ is a punishment against the ethnic people to not contact or support the concerned rebel armed groups. It creates ‘fear’ among the ethnic community people to win war on ethnic oppositions.

**Killing of Women and Boys in the Recent Offensives**

In order to win war against a Mon armed group in the southern part of Burma, the Burmese Army’s Southeast Command formed No. 3 Tactical Command comprising 5 battalions and launched an offensives in southern part of Ye Township, Mon State. The troops of Burmese Army from 5 battalions killed many civilians, including women and boys during the offensives. Most arbitrary killing relate to ‘suspicion of rebel-supporters’, and ‘restriction of movement’.

During the offensives, the government or Burmese troops tried to arrest some women, who are relatives or wives of the rebel soldiers and killed them summarily without any trial. An instance was as below:

On December 25, 2003, before the soldiers from LIB No. 586 set fire to a fishing village, Khaw-za Chaung-wa village which has about 50 houses, the soldiers arrested a woman, Mi Htay (24 years old) with accusation of a rebel-supporter because her husband was a Mon soldier. Then they shot her and one-year old her baby and they threw them away in the river. According to the villagers, when they were immediately shot, they still survive, but the soldiers threw them into water.

Killing happened to her because her husband was a Mon soldier in Nai Bin led command of the Mon splinter group. As they knew she was a wife of Mon soldier and her baby was the child of the Mon soldier and so that they killed both her child and her. Then they confiscated valuable things in the village and then set the fire to the village. First, they burnt down the house belonged to the woman, Mi Htay and other houses. As the fire did not separate quickly, only a few number of houses were burnt down. Almost the villagers in village fled without taking any of their belongings.

The Burmese Army also instructed to the villagers that all of them must stay and were not allowed to stay at their farms or orchid plantations. The troops also defined that the areas outside of villages are ‘free-fire zones’ and they could fire anyone they found. The soldiers killed many villagers including ‘boys’ who helped their parents at farms or orchid plantations. An instance of killing a boy is as below:

On December 14, while the Burmese Army’s IB No. 31 troops led by Lt. Col. Nyi Nyi Swe in southern part of Ye township operated to uproot the activities of Mon rebels, they also killed a 19 years old boy near Hangan village. When the boy, Mehm Kao Chan, was at his plantation hut, the soldiers shot to him without notice with a suspicion of a rebel. The boy died on the spot.

The boy was at his plantation and waited for father and other family members who came and harvest fruits. During he was waiting and staying at small hut in plantation, the soldiers shot to him suddenly without notice. As the soldiers thought there was a rebel soldier in the hut, then they shot to him. He was only 19 years old and he helped his parents. He was from Hangan village, which situates only about 10 miles from Ye Town.

The soldiers claimed that they made a mistake in killing him because they thought he was a rebel hiding in a hut. Then they also warned to the whole villagers in villages to not stay at the farms or orchid plantations.

Such killing of women, children, boys and girls also happened in many parts of civil war zones in Karen State, Kayah (Karenni) State, and Shan State of Burma. Although the current military regime in Burma ratified Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), the State never inquired against its army personnel for committing in summary execution of women and children.
When Japanese Army annexed Burma as their colony during WWII, they used Burmese women including ethnic women to comfort themselves in sexual appetites. Now, the military also is raping ethnic women through threatening to win on ethnic armed oppositions. In the military operation, the soldiers from Burmese Army feel free to rape any married and unmarried women as they know their higher commanders never take action or punish them for any type of sexual violations in conflict areas. Whenever there was a complaint occurs because of sexual violations in the rural areas, the commanders of the battalion concerned shifted the rapists or subordinate soldiers to another places and forced the families of the victims, or the village leaders to not speak out for these rape cases in the communities again. Since this practice has prolonged in the ethnic rural areas or in conflict zones, the soldiers from the Burmese Army feel that ‘rape’ against women in rural villages is not a ‘guilt’.

Similarly to conflict zones in Karen State, Karenni (Kayah State) and Shan State in eastern border of Burma (with Thailand), the soldiers of Burmese Army have ‘license to rape’ any women in Mon State.

IV. Sexual Violation: the Violations of Rights in CEDAW and other Convenants

Accordingly to Buddhism, the rape or sexual violation is a ‘serious sin’ that break ‘5 main principles of dignity’. Both the community people and the religious leaders, the Buddhist monks, did not accept this practices and always blame to this violations.

Although the members of Burmese Army are culturally and traditionally believing in Buddhism, however, they seriously involve in sexual violations not only in Mon State, but also in other ethnic nationalities’ territories such as Karen State, Karenni (Kayah State), and Shan State, where the armed fighting is in on-going situation. Sexual violation is also unforgivable crimes in the community cultures and if this violation takes place in the community, the rapist must be seriously punished.

The regime also has a legal definition for the punishment to the rapists. The punishment after trial is 10 years imprisonment with hard labour. However, the soldiers of Burmese Army from various battalions were never put to trial and their commanders always tried to close all rape cases committed by their soldiers. If the commanders involved in sexual violations, the concerned Commander-in-Chief of the Command or Commander of Tactical Command have always tried to protect their commanders to not put onto trial.

Almost sexual violations against women have happened and committed by the soldiers of Burmese Army, especially to ethnic Mon, Karen, Karenni and Shan women. This means ‘sexual violation’ is not only ‘inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment’ against women for their accused supports to the rebel soldiers, but also it is a ‘racial discrimination’ because most women are belonged to ethnic communities that differ from the majority Burman ethnic groups. The majority of soldiers and commanders are Burman ethnic people who come from middle part of Burma (or proper Burma).

Since Burma (Myanmar) is a State party to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), it has obligation to make sure all women in Burma including rural women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights. ‘Rape’ in definition is equal to inhumane or degrading treatment to women and it is a serious violation of Political Rights described in Article 7: ‘No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment. …’ of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR).

Burma (Myanmar) also formed ‘Myanmar National Committee for Women’s Affairs (MNCWA)’ to guarantee the rights of women in the whole country and “Myanmar Maternal and Child Care Association” to support the welfare of women and children after its ratification of CEDAW and the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). However, most women victims who suffer from ‘sexual violations’ in the rural areas of Mon State, Karen State, Karenni State, and Shan State do not any access to these State agencies to complain their cases and to receive rehabilitation program for the treatment of their metal and physical health.
Sex Workers in Mon State

I. Livelihoods and Sex Industries

As one of poverty-stricken countries in today's world, Burma (Myanmar) is obviously deteriorating in all aspects including political, economy, social well being, culture, etc., under the rule of the military regimes, and all spheres of the country is being smashed under heavy burden of iron heets. To save its face under the banner of international community, although the current regime in Burma, State Peace and Development Council (SPDC), ratified the rights of women, CEDAW, but the regime has failed to take appropriate measure to provide equal education rights to all women. The women, who have money, could get more further and higher education than the ones who are poor.

Generally speaking, the privileges having right to education are descendants of military clique, and women accessible to education are few among the common people. Educated women are easier to seek livelihood than uneducated ones and can find jobs at government service, banks, companies, and other business spaces. On the other hand, uneducated women could hardly fine their jobs. Due to being uneducated their families face poverty while they have no specified livelihoods, they seek job whatever it might be. Among women living in urban areas and slums, some make earnings as shopkeepers and vendors, and some hard labour that they have to work back-breaking situation regardless of weather conditions. And, some others involve in livelihood of making dresses and weaving in their houses.

Those rural areas seek earnings selling consumer goods and chai (illegal) lottery tickets, making dresses, knotting mats, growing plants and harvesting paddy, trading etc. However jobless women are in a great number, whole some of them illegally entered into Thailand to seek jobs in fishing industries, sex industries and construction sites. Due to sexual violations, arbitrary arrests, summary execution and constant conscription of forced labour, many women in the war conflict zone have fled from their homes and illegally migrated into Thailand. Anyone who falls into the hand of women traffickers has to be taken into brothels in enormous sex industries of Thailand. Many women are deceived by some traffickers into believing that they would have a good job, but miserably plunged into prostitution. On the other hand, the jobless women remaining in their native areas have no option other than to seek earnings through prostitution that makes easy money. Deduced from all-round situation, it is obvious that the root cause of prostitution is family poverty, which is directly related 'lack of equal economic rights to women' obligated by the regime, which ratified CEDAW.

Other course, family economic problem has forced many poor women to become 'sex workers' even though they do not like the jobs, but are trying to find sufficient income for their families. Otherwise a few number of women are so keen to have a life style of elite women that they bargain their lives for luxuries, and some of them fall into prostitution by means of other peoples persuasion. With a strong desire to get higher education, some University and College students voluntarily involve in sex trade to be 'sex workers'.

Culturally, in Burma, selling sex is or sex trade is not acceptable by the community people in general. However, under the deteriorating economic condition in Burma, low wages and unemployment in every where, women from different communities or classes become 'sex workers' and sex trade is increasingly developing in Mon State, Pegu Division, and Rangoon Division of Burma. Increase of sex trade always relates to women trafficking to the prostitution and exploitation on women in various brothels mushroomed in lower part of Burma.

As described above, the root cause of problem of sexual industry in Burma is because of poverty and unemployment, but the regime SPDC ignored to deal in this socio-economic situation and fail to obligate to fulfill the rights to education, employment and free from exploitation of the majority women.

Until now, the discrimination against women in salary or wage payment in equal work hours is happening and the regime has never ensured to abolish this discrimination at workplaces. For example, when a man earns about 500 Kyat per
day in a construction work, a woman could receive only 400 Kyat per day. The women also do not have the right of the same employment opportunities with men as the employers always tried to select only men in workplace as priority. When they could not get the required number of men, then they find women. Discrimination in employment creates serious joblessness among the women and thus, after they have no choice to support their families, some women become ‘sex workers’.

Additionally, the State authorities or Burmese Army commanders also involved in sex trade and involve in exploitation in prostitution. Since the brothel business is illegal in Burma, the brothel owners need to pay to the authorities and army commanders to get permission to operate their business or involved them to be share holders this business. In some cases, the authorities or army commanders also operate brothels for their extra income.

I. Mushroomed Brothels in Mon State, and Involvement of Corrupted Authorities

Although an exact number of brothels in Mon State cannot be mentioned, there are about 25 places that can be located in ten Townships of Mon State. Ten Townships in Mon State are: Bee-lin; Kyaik-hto; Thaton; Paung; Moulemein; Chaungzon; Kyaikmayaw; Mudon; Thanbyuzayat and Ye Townships. In the capital of Mon State, Moulemein City, “Kyaw Tin Beer and Restaurant”, “Ngwe Moe Hotel”, “Royal Guest House”, “Nadi Hlaing Restaurant”, “Si Thu Hein Restaurant”, “Than Lwin Garden Pool”, and Moulemein high way bus station are the places prostitutes are available. Although the brothel owners are putting signboards of ‘restaurant’ or ‘bar’ or ‘guest house’ to be legal accordingly to the laws, but they almost sell sex to the men clients.

“Kyaw Tin Beer and Restaurant” has special rooms for massage. The price is from at least 3,000 to 10,000 kyats. “Ngwe Moe Hotel” has provided for high class sex workers to whom senior officers who frequently come and visit. In “Royal Guest House”, there are no special rooms for sex workers, but with connection, they could be sent for if wanted. “Na di Hlaing Restaurant and Karaoke Bar” has high class sex workers available for taking into on side if wanted. Also in “Si Thu Hein Restaurant” high class sex workers are available as in “Na di Hlaing”. “Than Lwin Garden Pool” in Moulemein has high class resting rooms. Without its own prostitutes, it accommodate the sex worker taken from outside. High class sex workers mean the students from University or College or other women who stay at homes and agree to sell sex only to officers or rich men. They do not stay at brothels waited for client for the whole night. The army commander from Southeast Commande also involve in investment shares in those hotels and guest houses, and so that they are likely encouraging sex business.

These are well-known places in city where the sex trade is arranged by traffickers and local army officers or the regime authorities. Additionally, there are many not so well known places where the men such as taxi drivers, town residents, workers, others can find sex.

Accordingly to a brothel, if there is not involvement of the authorities or army commanders, nobody can operate the brothels, which mean they have to share profits to them from the exploitation of prostitution.

Any brothel overtly being operated is no found yet in a small town near Moulemein, which is called ‘Mudon’. In Than-byuzayat Town, south of Moulemein, only “Za-bei-byu Restaurant” located in Aung-thar-yar Town Quarter is overtly operating brothel or prostitution business. But Town residents said there are over 10 secret places in town where the traffickers and army commanders secretly operate prostitution.

In Ye township, the places overtly operating sex business with restaurant are “Queen Restaurant”, and “Tha-byae Guest House” of Annawa Town Quarter, in which some SPDC authorities involve as share -holders. “Shwe-taung-kyar Restaurant”, and “Golden Lion Club” where provides ‘sex workers’ to the men clients are also operated by the SPDC’s military intelligent officers from No.5 Intelligent Battalion. It is heard that karaoke bar and massage parlor of “Ka-Byar Restaurant”, near by Ye railway station, provides high class ‘sex workers’. This restaurant and massage parlor are owned by U Thawt, Chairman of Township SPDC authorities and other authorities’ share holders.

Captain Lin Oo of Light Infantry Battalion No. 343 that bases in Aru-taung village, in the northern part of Ye Township, operates two brothel business: one is in the entrance of Aru-taung village and another one in Lamine village. He found some sex workers from cities such as Moulemein and Rangoon and take profit from those sex workers.
In the past, the sex business were only operated in big cities such as Moulmein in Mon State, Rangoon and other cities. After 1999, after the Burmese Army confiscated many thousands acres of lands in Mon State and deployed thousands of troops, the army commanders brought the sex business up to small towns and rural villages. This is the main reason for mushroomed brothels in Mon State.

III. Treatment in Brothel

In the brothels, after deducting the cost for room, electricity and water, the sex workers could earn only a small amount of money. If a man client pay for 1000 Kyat, the sex worker really receive only 300-400 Kyat per client. As the currency inflation in Burma is so high, the illegal or black market exchange rate is only: 1 US = 1000 Kyat. If a sex worker receives three clients per night, they could receive only 1 US Dollar per night. Considerably, how the hardship life of sex worker in Burma.

Due to economic hardship in cities, unemployment, low level of education among girls, some under-aged girls (or children under 18 years old) also work as sex workers to sell their sex and find income for their families. Due to limited spaces, dirty surrounding and other difficulties, the sex workers found so much hardship in selling their sex.

Location Map of Mon State

A story of two children who sell sex in Moulmein city is as below:

In a newly opened Brothel of Moulmein, capital of Mon State, two girls are living a critical life by selling their bodies. Ma Ohn Mar Lin, 15 and MaThar-YarAye, early 16, in order to solve their families’ livelihood problem, are selling their bodies at U Than Tun's house (Hlaing Quarter, Moulmein), which is used as a brothel. At this brothel operated by U Than Tun with collaboration of a township police officer, two children have to pay charges to both brothel owners and police officer.

They explained that "we do not want to do this job. Our parents’ earnings are not enough for our families. With our ages, even if we do daily wage labour, our daily incomes would be 100 or 200 kyats per day. Even though we want to do, job is not available every day. Often we are jobless. Therefore, we seek easy money selling sex". U Than Tun is an ex-convict who had been imprisoned for prostitution case in the past and but now he has good contact with police to operate his sex business. The two girls are the youngest among many other women in U
Than Tun’s brothel.

They are not allowed to sleep the whole night, even there are no client. In the evening time, if they came to brothels late they were shouted by the owner. They could not refuse even they are quite tired to receive clients. One worst thing is if they decide to stop as sex workers, the police will arrest them anytime.

The women working as prostitutes in Moulmenin are mostly in age range of from 17 to 25 years old. In Moulmein, brothels are increasing yearly and that shows how the socio-economic situation in Burma has affected to the women in general. The women in prostitution trade came from various areas of Burma. Some were taken by the traffickers from other part of Burma and were sold in Moulmein. These type of sex workers do not receive any income, but are fed by the brothel owners.

In a brothel run by an army commander, Captain Lin Oo, in Lamine village, northern part of Ye Township, it has 4 or 5 girls. Their ages are in range between 15 and 20 years old ages. They were brought from Moulmein city and Thanbyuzayat Town. One sex worker earn a salary of 5000 kyats (or 5 US Dollar) per month plus meals. Captain Lin Oo told them to sign for two years contract by force and the girls had to sign. When he organized the girls, he lured they needed to work as restaurant as serve girls, and could get good salary. But when the girl arrived to the brothel, which is pretended as a restaurant, they are forced to sell sex.

IV. What the regime’s role toward Sex Workers

As the military junta does not declare prostitution as legal business, no one can do this business legally. However, if is found that the barons of this trade are businessmen and, in most case, the military’s senior officers participate in this business as share-holders. In some cases, it is obvious that the military’s senior officers themselves sponsor it.

Since the sex trade is not legal, the regime, SPDC, does not take any responsibility in prevention of illegal prostitution and prevention of sex trade that happen in the country. The regime never admits there are an enormous sex trade and prostitution occur in Burma. It is also observed that the military junta is passive in providing information about HIV/AIDS and STD to sex workers. However, there is little information programme in the work place of prostitution. Therefore, it cannot be known to what extent HIV/AIDS is spreading among the sex workers and men clients, who never know the knowledge of use of condom and avoiding HIV and STD virus. Until now, the regime underestimated the number of HIV/AIDS suffered patients in Burma.

Additionally, sometimes, the authorities and police also arrested ‘sex workers’ and detained them for doing illegal sex business, while the army officers and authorities receive a lot of profits from this business.