**Information of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities in Thailand**

 Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEP), the main organization to provide accessibilities and inclusive equality for persons with disabilities (Hereafter “PWDs”) through mobilization and integration of empowerment of PWDs. Our goal is to give accessible rights for PWDs, to be able to live an independent life and create equality among the society under 3 following concepts: 1) Policies development and good governance 2) Empowerment of PWDs to be equally able to access their rights, welfare and facilities and 3) Participation of connection and organization for PWDs which allows PWDs to be a part of the society. In 2020, DEP has mobilized 5 significant issues which are 1) Empowerment and vocational development 2) Accessible rights for PWDs 3) Welfare and facilities 4) Database connection and 5) Human resource and PWDs management.

 Currently, there are 2,015,385 PWDs in Thailand who are holding ID card for PWDs (2.89% of Thailand population) which is divided in to 1,051,878 males (52.19%) and 963,507 females (47.81%). The largest group is found to be living in Northeast Thailand (814,063 PWDs). The runner-up is Northern Thailand (416,075 PWDs). The third place is Central and Eastern Thailand (241,141 PWDs) and the less group is from Bangkok (90,982 PWDs). (Last updated on December 31st, 2019)

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| **No.** | **Types of disabilities** | **Quantity (PWDs)** | **Percentage** |
| 1. | Physical disability | 995,419 | 49.39 |
| 2. | Hearing impairment | 379,701 | 18.84 |
| 3. | Visual impairment | 192,502 | 9.55 |
| 4. | Mental and behavioral disorders | 155,591 | 7.72 |
| 5. | Intellectual disability | 137,570 | 6.83 |
| 6. | Autistic | 14,175 | 0.70 |
| 7. | Learning disability | 11,569 | 0.57 |
| 8. | More than one type | 122,963 | 6.10 |
| 9. | Diagnosis awaiting | 5,895 | 0.29 |
| **Total**  | **2,015,385** | **100** |

**Job holding and environment development in workplace**

**PWDs in working age (between 15 - 59 years) 850,270 PWDs which is found to be:**

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| **No.** | **Types** | **Quantity (PWDs)** | **Percentage** |
| 1. | Job holders | 265,918 | 31.27 |
| :2. | Be able to work but unemployed | 203,490 | 23.93 |
| 3. | Unable to work | 54,904 | 6.46 |
| 4. | No intention to specify | 325,958 | 38.34 |
| **Total** | **850,270** | **100** |

The most common job for PWDs is agriculturist (25.79%). The respective is freelance and business owner (6.67%), employee in private sector (4.69%), and civil servant (0.36%). 37.83% are found to be unwilling to specify details.

It is consistent with the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) , the convention that ensure the rights, freedom and human dignity for PWDs and also support the elimination of barriers and discrimination which are considered to be a large obstacle to PWDs’ daily life. It still conforms to strategy 3 of 20-year National Strategy, National Strategy on Empowerment of Human Resource which is the strategy that support PWDs at all age to have a necessary skill in different aspects, be prepared for whatever will come in the 21st. century. Strategy 4, Equality and Equity in Society, the strategy that emphasizes on the coordination of all entities for mobilization by assembling people to come up with project that improves healthcare, economy, social welfare and environment for PWDs in order to be able to live an independent life. Furthermore, there are also organizations that support participation of PWDs such as provincial PWDs center, general PWDs center, social development and human security volunteers, organizations for PWDs and PWDs network form all across the country.

 As for the issue of encouraging employment for PWDs in accordance with the Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act, BE 2550 and amendments, there are articles regarding encouraging employment for PWDs, as follows;

**Section 33:** For the purpose of the Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, employers or owners of the establishments and State Agencies shall employ Persons with Disabilities to work in suitable positions in proper proportions to the entire number of the employees in the establishments or State Agencies. The Minister of Labor shall issue Ministerial Regulations to specify numbers of employees with disabilities that the employers, owners of the establishments and State Agencies shall employ.

**Section 34:** Employers or owners of the establishment who are obliged to send money to the Fund as prescribed in paragraph one but failed to do so, or delayed in making payment or made an insufficient payment, shall pay interests at the rate of seven and a half percent per annum of the outstanding amount to the Fund. Employers or owners of the establishments who employ Persons with Disabilities or send money to the Fund as prescribed in paragraph one shall be eligible for tax exemption at certain percent of the amount they pay as wages or salaries to employees with disabilities or of the amount they send to the Fund, as the case may be, as prescribed by the law.

**Section 35:** In the event that any State Agency does not wish to employ Persons with Disabilities for work under section 33 or any employer or owner of the establishment does not employ Persons with Disabilities for work under section 33 and does not wish to send money to the Fund under section 34, the said State Agency, employer or owner of the establishment may grant concessions, arrange places for distributing products or services, hire subcontract employees or hire employment services by special means, provide apprenticeship or equipment or facilities and sign language interpreter or other assistance to Persons with Disabilities or caregiver of Persons with Disabilities based on the criteria, procedures and conditions as prescribed by the Committee in the Rules.

Statistics for PWDs employment in establishment from 2011 – 2019 in accordance with Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act, BE 2550 are as follows; 254,937 persons for Article 33, 183,160 persons for Article 34, and 62,109 persons for Article 35. Statistics for PWDs employment in government agencies from 2011 – 2019 in accordance with Persons with Disabilities Empowerment Act, BE 2550 are as follows; 16,635 persons for Article 33, and 9,201 persons for Article 35.

**Situation regarding education and knowledge training**

Analysis of PWDs situation in December 31st, 2019 shows that there are 73,686 PWDs that do not have access to education (3.66% of PWDs that have Identification Card)

 1) There are 4,725 PWDs that are too young to receive education (6.41% of PWDs that do not have access to education)

 2) There are 45,979 PWDs that have reached the age but do not have access to education (62.40% of PWDs that do not have access to education)

There are 22,982 PWDs that do not have access to education (31.19%) and 1,956,807 PWDs that have access to education (95.97% of PWDs that have Identification Card)

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| **Order** | **Education level** | **Rate** |
| 1. | Primary school | 81.68 |
| 2. | Non-Formal Education  | 23.82 |
| 3. | Secondary school | 8.39 |
| 4. | High Vocational Certificate  | 1.72 |
| 5. | Bachelor’s degree | 0.18 |
| 6. | Higher than bachelor’s degree  | 0.19 |
| 7. | Diploma | 0.03 |
| **Total** | **100** |

The National Action Plan to Improve the Quality of Life for Persons with Disabilities Issue 5 (2017 - 2021) focuses on empowering and developing PWDs at all age (Infancy or first discovery of disability, adolescent, working age, and old age) through various agencies. Thanks to the Ministry of Education for supporting accessibility to education to PWDs and for developing vocational training curriculum for PWDs.

The Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEP) has developed PWDs Assessment System in the form of data linkage platform in cooperation with 17 agencies. There are 29 databases for Welfare benefits for PWDs, for them to be able to receive benefits from the government equally. Furthermore, it also focuses on PWDs of all age to be able to have access to education through PWDs Service Center which is the focal point on accessibility to education, rehabilitation, and development of vocational training curriculum to provide income and career opportunity for PWDs, including encouragement for employment for PWDs in public and private sectors, improving vocational training curriculum for 8 Vocational Training Centers to be more updated, such as, Computer Graphic and Online Business, Thai Massage, and Agriculture and Processing to prepare PWDs for work and independent living.

DEP has education guidance projects and Social Enterprises for PWDs, Innovation for PWDs in school age (both formal and non-formal education), development of digital technology related skills such as, cyber awareness course, vocational skills development course, Microsoft training course, and online business training, creating channels through social media, podcast radio training course, online writing techniques training course, animation training course, Line stickers making training course, short movies making training course, advanced digital skills training course, advanced analysis training course, data linkage training course, IOT agriculture training course, training course for caretakers/parents to be leaders on technology awareness, and supporting jobs for PWDs in coordination with the network. In addition, there is an education management system in place for children with disabilities to prepare them before getting in schools, and development of student care systems.