

The Challenge of Thai Disabled Women

By

Torsangrasmee Teetakaew, Ph.D

College of Educational Innovation Research, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology
Ladkrabang

Abstract

The study of the situation of Thai disabled women (Torsangrasmee Teetakaew, 2021) has an interesting data that shows the increasing number of disabled women during the next 20 years. This is a big challenge for the preparation of the quality of life for the disabled women living through the aging society. The objectives of this research are to estimate the number of disabled women in Thailand over the next 20 years and analyze the situation by using a sample questionnaire of 2,300 disabled Thai women from 30 provinces as well as from in-depth interviews from 10 leaders of disabled women in various activities. The results of the study showed that the number of women with disabilities will increase from approximately 990,419 in 2021 to 1,014,015 over the next 20 years, which is a 1.95% increasing rate annually. The increasing rate of disabled women aged 60 years and above is 3.62% per year. In contrast, the percentage of younger age group will be increasing gradually at 1.44%, 1.14 %, 1.17 %, and 0.85 % for age group 0-5, 6-14, 15-21, and 22-59 years old accordingly. When classified by the type of disabilities, it was found that the number of women with disabilities increases across all types. There is an increase of approximately 1.78 - 3.01% per year for intellectual disability, learning disability, and visual disability. These types have a higher rate compared to other types of disability. The study of the situation of women with disabilities also indicated that 50% of the samples have a monthly income of less than 5,000 Thai baths and 24% of the disabled women didn't receive an education. If education is encouraged, this could result in an increase in employment rate and higher quality of life for them. Disabled women also need government services for careers, employment, and income for their self-support. However, the spread of COVID-19 is also a big concern among disabled women. They need more support from the government for health prevention and living standards during this crisis, as well as enough sustenance, data and information, and technology and tools support. In conclusion, the challenge of Thai disabled women is from the soon-to-come aging society, which can be prepared by using and promoting the concept of active aging to elevate the living quality for all Thai disabled women in the next 20 years.

Index Terms— Thai Disabled Women, Aged Society

Introduction

To live in a happy society, everyone should live in a good environment. The environment that no one is left behind, especially disabled people, elder, low-income, and disabled women. Disabled women are one of the priority topics in Thailand. In 2017-2021, the second edition action plan to improve the quality of life for disabled women is made with the motto "Disabled women can receive equal treatment and to not be discriminated against." Under four main strategies, 1) Encouraging disabled women to receive their basic human rights, welfares, and opportunities, 2) Encouraging positive and healthy mental health to all women, 3) Protecting women from all kinds of violence, and 4) Encouraging and empowering women.

It is important that Thai society care and give value to disabled women. Considering the past statistic from the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security from 2015-2020, the result shows that the number of disabled women increases every year. In 2015, the number is 604,536. In 2016, the number is 705,930. In 2019, the number is 990,395. And in 2021, the number is 1,014,015 and will continue to increase to 1,386,088 in the next 20 years.

As the number rises, comes the issues for people with disabilities community including understanding their rights and not to be the victim of discrimination. Based on the research, disabled people have experienced discrimination within the family as well as sexual assault. These issues are still happening in Thailand. The question is “Why aren’t these issues fixed yet?” And if the number of disabled women continues to rise, we, as a demographer and a member of the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, need to find the solutions to this issue. This research analyzed the issues by using the 2015-2020 data from the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities and population estimation data of Thailand from 2010-2040 (revised version) of the Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council. The data were analyzed to be used to understand the root causes better in order to come up with a constructive solution to help women with disabilities in the future.

Research Methods

The method used in this research is the Mixed Method which is Quantitative Research, Survey Research, and Qualitative Research, as well as In-dept Interview.

Qualitative Research

Qualitative Research is a study of concepts, theories, laws, and policies that are for disabled women. These are guidelines to create research tools and In-depth interview questions to ask seven disabled women. The main points asked in the questions are:

- 1) Accessibility to basic rights and services received by people with special needs.
- 2) Anything related to disabled people having access to basic rights and services.
- 3) Issues confronted from trying to receive basic rights and services.
- 4) Experiencing discriminations from trying to receive basic rights and services.
- 5) Proposal regarding the solutions to the issue as well as new rules and regulations.
- 6) Policy and campaign to support and protect disabled women.

In each interview, the researcher recorded the voice memo in order to write scripts, analyze, and conclude in this research.

Quantitative Research

Quantitative Research is divided into two parts:

Inserting the population data from the past five years (2015-2019) into the analyzing tool, the predicted numbers of disabled women in the next 20 years can be determined. The method to find the prediction is as follows:

Step 1: To predict the number of disabled women in the future, the first thing to do is to categorize them into the age group.

Step 2: Calculate based on the segment (0-5, 6-14, 15-21, 22-59, and 60 years and above) by distributing the number of each group equally.

Step 3: Use the equation: The number of disabled women in the future (based on age) = number of disabled women in the future of each age group * the ratio of disabled women of each age segment.

Step 4: Use the equation: The number of disabled women in the future (based on the type of disability) = number of disabled women in the future of each age group * the ratio of disabled women of each age segment (For further explanation, visit Part 2 of Data Analysis)

2) Collecting data process. In collecting data, the research gave out a survey to each woman with special needs around the country. In each province, 30 surveys were given out. In total, 2,300 surveys were used as part of the data. The surveys were divided into two parts as follows:

Part 1: The questions asked about the basic information of the respondents such as gender, age, highest education, status, number of children, current address, career/job, and salary per month, source of income, type of disability, cause of disability, and caretaker.

Part 2: The questions asked about how many sources and understanding of human rights and welfare they receive from the government, as well as rating satisfaction score to services they receive.

Analyzing the data

Analyzing the data is divided into 3 parts:

Part 1: Analyzing the main topics like disabled women, situations, and accessibility to human rights using the data from the past five years (2015-2019) and from the surveys.

Part 2: Analyzing the number of disabled women in the future by using the data from the past five years (2015-2019) to predict the populations of disabled women in the next 20 years.

Part 3: Suggestions and solutions to improve the quality of life for disabled women by using the data from the questionnaires and in-depth interviews.

Results and Discussions

The main issue for disabled women, situations, and accessibility to the human rights of disabled women in the current situation.

Given the number of people with disabilities around the country in 2019, 2,006,775 people are holding the "Disability Card." The ratio of male and female is about the same at 959,133 females (47.79%) and 1,047,642 for males (52.21%). Separating the number based on age group, the study found that 13,904 people are children and young adults (0-21 years), 5,808 of which are female (41.77%). Most of them have a disability related to their brain and ability to think. 68,117 people with disabilities are the schooling age, 25,201 of which are female (37%). 845,050 people with disabilities are in the age gap between 15 to 21 years old, 333,318 of which are female (39.44%). Most have physical disabilities. 71,434 people with disabilities are of working age, 26,354 of which are female (36.89%) and have disabilities related to their brain. 1,079,503 of the people with disabilities are 60 years and older, 26,354 of which are female (36.89%) and have disabilities with movement.

Table 1.1 Number and percentage of disabled women in 2019

Type of disabilities	Age									
	0-5 years		6-14 years		15-21 years		22-59 years		60 years and older	
	People	%	People	%	People	%	People	%	People	%
Visual	159	2.74	854	3.39	1,241	4.71	23,696	7.72	75,549	12.70
Hearing	496	8.54	2,272	9.02	2,759	10.47	50,373	16.41	131,558	22.12
Movement	1,549	26.67	5,439	21.58	5,700	21.63	129,322	42.13	342,153	57.53
Mental and behavior	24	0.41	168	0.67	420	1.59	39,369	12.83	20,129	3.38
Intellectual	1,700	29.27	7,990	31.71	9,141	34.69	37,637	12.26	5,739	0.97
Learning	27	0.46	951	3.77	909	3.45	1,039	0.34	301	0.05
Autistic	245	4.22	1,211	4.81	583	2.21	433	0.14	34	0.01
Multiple	1,607	27.67	6,302	25.01	5,534	21.00	23,323	7.60	18,114	3.05
Other	1	0.02	14	0.06	67	0.25	1,772	0.58	1,122	0.19
Total	5,808	100.0	25,201	100.0	26,354	100.0	306,964	100.0	594,699	100.0

Based on table 1.1, disabled women in the age gap between 0-5, 6-14, and 15-21 years old tend to have disabilities related to intellectual (29.27%, 31.71%, and 34.69% consecutively). The disabled women in the age gap between 22-59, and 60 years and above tend to have disabilities related to movement (42.13% and 57.53% consecutively). The main reasons for disabilities are unidentified by the doctor (50.72%), unknown (23.25%), and disable from illnesses (19.13%).

Table 1.2 Number and percentage of disabled women in 2020

Type of disabilities	Age									
	0-5 years		6-14 years		15-21 years		22-59 years		60 years and older	
	People	%	People	%	People	%	People	%	People	%
Visual	141	2.63	793	3.16	1,178	4.46	24,544	7.33	75,383	12.06
Hearing	447	8.33	2,221	8.86	2,633	9.97	52,868	15.79	139,394	22.30
Movement	1,419	26.43	5,385	21.49	5,669	21.47	134,500	40.17	362,738	58.03
Mental and behavior	19	0.35	157	0.63	416	1.58	40,567	12.11	21,861	3.50
Intellectual	1,569	29.23	8,012	31.98	9,260	35.06	48,072	14.36	6,164	0.99
Learning	27	0.50	1,006	4.02	1,013	3.84	2,145	0.64	329	0.05
Autistic	211	3.93	1,343	5.36	659	2.50	1,149	0.34	34	0.01
Multiple	1,534	28.58	6,129	24.46	5,534	20.95	29,404	8.78	18,240	2.92
Other	1	0.02	10	0.04	48	0.18	1,606	0.48	973	0.16
Total	5,368	100.00	25,056	100.00	26,410	100.00	334,855	100.00	625,116	100.00

Based on table 1.2, disabled women in the age gap between 0-5, 6-14, and 15-21 years old tend to have disabilities related to intellectual (29.23%, 31.98%, and 35.06% consecutively). The disabled women in the age gap between 22-59, and 60 years and above tend to have disabilities related to movement (40.17% and 58.03% consecutively).

Table 1.3 shows the different causes of disability. Most disabled women with visual disabilities are caused by accident (91.62%). Most disabled women with movement disabilities are caused by a genetic factor (16.64%) The details are in table 1.3.

Table 1.3 Shows the type of disability and the causes of the disabled women

Type of disabilities	Illness		Genetic		Born		Accident		No reason		Unidentified	
	People	%	People	%	People	%	People	%	People	%	People	%
Visual	147,179	71.48	1,543	27.08	109	24.12	45,102	91.62	74,981	32.80	235,142	47.11
Hearing	287	0.14	36	0.83	14	3.10	22	0.04	1,367	0.39	1,781	0.36
Movement	22,817	10.99	948	16.64	17	3.78	1,839	3.78	18,812	8.09	36,813	11.38
Mental and behavior	14,803	7.09	487	8.35	48	10.62	711	1.44	81,315	35.35	97,769	19.39
Intellectual	8,909	4.33	274	4.81	8	1.77	254	0.52	20,720	9.01	32,439	6.50
Learning	3,440	1.67	1,368	24.01	133	33.85	230	0.47	20,260	8.81	38,366	7.69
Autistic	77	0.04	25	0.44	13	2.88	0	0.00	1,213	0.35	1,409	0.28
Multiple	8,776	4.26	1,016	17.83	90	19.91	1,047	2.13	11,541	5.02	32,839	6.58
Other	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	2,390	0.32
Total	205,888	100.00	5,697	100.00	452	100.00	49,225	100.00	230,009	100.00	499,148	100.00

In terms of the marital status of disabled Thai women, the data found that 146,245 are single, 184,395 are married, 35,646 are divorced, 6,697 are separated, 88,120 are widows, 11,162 are living together but not marry, 3,520 are others, and 483,348 are unknown. That is to say, most disabled women are married (19.23%) and single (15.25%). However, the majority chose to keep their marital status private.

In terms of education, the data for the year 2020 found that 62.65% received primary school education, 5.76 % received a high school education, and 23.81% are unknown. In the year 2019, the study also found that 25,432 of them are qualified to receive an education but chose not to. 3,025 received less than early primary school education. 59,191 received secondary school education. 52,191 received a high school education. 7,863 received higher education. 9,866 received a vocational certificate. 222 received a diploma. 1,413 received some bachelor's degree or equivalent. 1,317 received more than a bachelor's degree. 233,113 did not receive an education. That is to say, most disabled women received primary education (61.65%) and secondary education (5.44%),

In terms of career, the data for the year 2020 and 2021 found that most of the disabled women are unemployed (8.51 %) and are agriculturists (4.57 %). However, most chose to remain their career private 80.97%. In the year 2019, the study found that 117,472 disabled women chose not to identify their jobs or is unemployed. 7,829 are a student or a business owner, 2 are office workers, 4 are state enterprises, 23,066 are freelance, 822 are a bureaucrat, 3,822 are a worker, 44,374 are an agriculturist, and 6,145 are others. Based on the previous data, it is found that 24% of disabled women did not receive an education, and 12% of disabled women are unemployed or choose not to identify their careers. If education is encouraged this could result in more jobs and higher quality of life for them.

The year 2020 data shows that, as for religion, disabled Thai women have different religions, including Shintoism, Buddhism, Christianity, Hindu, and Brahminism. Most of them are Buddhist (54.09 %) and Islamic (2.66%). However, 42.84% chose not to identify their religion.

In terms of having access to utilities, 91.52 % don't have a telephone number and only 8.48 % have a telephone number. This data is similar to data from 2019.

In term of having a caretaker, using the 2019 data, majority of them have caretakers 72.04 % and 27.96% does not have one.

In terms of population distribution across Thailand, based on the 2019 data, disabled women who are 0-5, 6-14, 15-21, and 22-59 years old live in Northeastern Thailand (30.70%, 31.98%, 33.92%, 37.96% consecutively). And those who are 60 years old and above mostly live in the Northeastern part of Thailand as well (44.34%).

The 2020 data shows that most disabled women live in Northeastern at 41.05%, North at 22.25%, Central at 20.15%, Southern at 11.76%, Bangkok at 4.48%, and Unidentified at 0.31%.

For the same topic, but now using the data from 2015 to 2019, it's found that the majority of disabled women at any age live in the Northeastern, then Central, Eastern, and Northern. The majority of them have a caretaker (70.98%) while some don't have any (29.02%).

In term of receiving welfare and public service from the government, the interesting findings from the survey are:

Disabled women have received public services from the government such as walking paths, bathrooms, and news. Next on the list are reduction of transportation costs such as train and airplane. However, things that they still lack of is being able to understand some medium and news because not all media have a sign language translator.

For the disabled women who have not received any public services from the government, they say what they want the most from the government is support for careers and income. This is to help them take care of themselves and live on a daily basis.

Based on the statistic, most disabled women are satisfied with the public services they received from the government and giving the highest rating (average score = 3.57). Considering the answers, here are the seven factors: 1. Human rights and equality (4.17 rating) 2. Well-being (3.80 rating) 3. Socializing (4.17 rating) 4. Facilities (3.46 rating) 5. Career, Employment, and Salary (3.45 rating) 6. Education (3.32 rating) 7. Sport and recreation (3.26).

Using the rating and comment from disabled women regarding how satisfied they are with the government's response to their conditions (human rights and equality), the overall score is high at a 4.17 rating. The first thing that disabled women are satisfied with is the Disabilities Identity Card (4.44 rating), disability allowance (4.36 rating), and the knowledge and understanding of their rights and laws (4.01). The factor that has the lowest rating is not having enough knowledge to file the lawsuit when discriminated against (3.88).

Using the data and the satisfaction score regarding the public services from the government, the well-being came on top at a 3.80 rating. Next, receiving services and treatment from the hospital (4.02), and receiving understanding and knowledge about health, mental health, emotions, society, and intelligence can lead to living a normal life (3.73). The factor that has the lowest rating is having an annual body check-up (3.64 rating).

Using the comments regarding their satisfaction with public services from the government and education, the overall score is on average at a 3.32 rating. When considering other factors, three factors are considered on average and two factors are considered high rating. The two highest rating factors are receiving books for free (3.35 rating) and receiving a standard education and the IEP program (3.34 rating). The factor that has the lowest rating is supports from the education institution (3.26 rating).

Using the comment of how satisfied they are with services from the government with career, employment, and salary, the overall rating is average at 3.45. When considering other factors, two factors are considered high rating, and four factors are considered on average rating. The three highest rating factors are being employed (3.51), being trained (3.48), and being employ through an agency specifically for people with disabilities (3.25).

Using the data regarding their satisfaction with the government on socializing and living in the community, the overall score is high at a 3.55 rating. When considering other factors, three factors are considered at a high rating, and six factors are considered on average. The three highest rating factors are living with family and having a caretaker (4.05), going to social gatherings like religious events or cultural events (3.81), and living

a life full of purpose (3.75). The factor that has the lowest rating is adjusting to their residency (3.18 rating).

From the data on how satisfied they are with public services from the government regarding sports and recreation, the overall score is on average at 3.46. When considering other factors, one factor is considered on average. And that is being able to join activities in the community such as sport and recreation (3.26 rating).

Based on the comment on how satisfied they are with public services from the government such as facilities, the overall score is on average at 3.46. When considering other factors, one factor is considered high and two factors are considered on average. The two highest rating factors are accessing the facilities for people with special needs, such as a ramp and bathroom for people with disabilities (3.66 rating), and a discount on public services (3.48 rating). The factor that has the lowest rating is accessing news and information via sign language, Braille, and audio (3.25 rating).

To conclude, 33.2% of disabled women gave a score of on-average, 25.5% reported highly satisfied, and 20.1% reported extremely satisfy with the privilege and benefits they receive from the government.

The analysis about the quality of life of disabled Thai women after the COVID-19 situation is as below

Table 1.4 *The number and percentage of disabled Thai women who are affected by the COVID-19*

Effect from the COVID-19	Number	Percentage
No affect	380	16.5
Affected	1,920	83.5
Total	2,300	100.0

From the table 1.4, it founds that most of the disabled women are affected by the COVID-19 situation, 1,920 women (83.5%) while about 380 women (16.5%) are not affected.

Table 1.5 *shows the number and the percentage of disabled women who are affected from the COVID-19 situation based on different factors*

Effect from the COVID-19 situation based on different factors	Percentage
Health, Hygiene, Public Health, Risk of Infection, and Worrying	63.4
Work, Career, and Income	59.6
Social and Family and Worrying about the spread of disease within the family	54.1
Stability and long-term effect	48.2

From table 1.5, it is found that the the highest factors effect is Health, Hygiene, Public Health, Risk of Infection, and Worrying at 63.4%, next Work, Career, and Income at 59.6%, Social and Family and Worrying about the spread of disease within the family at 54.1%, **and lastly** Stability and long-term effect at **48.2%**.

Table 1.6 shows the number and percentage of disabled women who are affected by the COVID-19 situation and received help

Received help after being affected by COVID-19	Number	Percentage
Did not receive help	331	14.4
Received help	1,969	85.6
Total	2,300	100.0

From the table 1.6, it is found that the majority of disabled women received help from the COVID-19 situation, 1,969 women (85.6%) and 331 women (14.4%) didn't receive help.

Table 1.7 shows the percentage of disabled women who received help from the effect of COVID-19 situation, based on the type of help

Type of help	Percentage
Have access to information and public news from the Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities about the plan to manage the COVID-19 situation.	64.0
Received disability relief fund, pause on loan, and emergency loans	57.4
Access to additional channels to purchase consumer goods through online platforms which fasten the time arrival	25.4
Received masks and hand sanitizer	41.8

From the table 1.7, it finds the highest type of help is to have access to information and public news from the Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities about the plan to manage the COVID-19 situation at 64.0%, next Received disability relief fund, pause on loan, and emergency loans at 57.4 %, Received masks and hand sanitizer at 41.8%, and lastly Access to additional channels to purchase consumer goods through online platforms which fasten the time arrival at 25.4%.

Analyzing the prediction of disabled women population

Using the data from the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities years 2015-2020 to calculate in the population analyses program, it's predicted that from 2021 – 2040 (or the next 20 years), the type of disabilities will be different in each group. The type of disabilities is classified into nine types which are visual, hearing, movement, mental and behavior, intellectual, learning, autistic, multiple, and undefinable, as well as divided into five age group are preschooler (0-5 years old), grade-schooler (6-14 years old), adolescence (15-21 years old), adult (22-59 years old), and elder (60 years old and above). With the current data from registered people with disabilities, the prediction is underestimated as there are still numbers of people who are not registered and avoid registering as people with disability due to parents' belief. However, comparing the numbers of people who register and the number of disabled women, there is not that big of a difference (less than 1%) for both to define or for practical.

Using the data from 2015-2019, it shows that the number of disabled women tends to gradually increase. In 2015, the number of disabled women is 604,459 people. In 2016, the number had increased to 959,026 people, as the number of Thai elder population increases. However, there seems to be a decrease in disabled women population, from 18% per year to 9% per year. When considering the age range, it's found that the number of disabled women tends to increase as the age gap increase. Meanwhile, the numbers of disabled women tend to increase in every single age gap as well. As can be seen, the age gap is important to predict and

study the number of disabled women in the future. It is important to protect women to not be disabled as they aged.

Table 2.1 *The numbers of disabled women from 2015-2019*

Age	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
0-5	834	1,767	2,936	4,402	5,808
6-14	16,492	19,143	21,373	23,435	25,201
15-21	21,943	23,491	24,629	25,635	26,354
22-59	231,187	253,625	271,400	290,729	306,964
60 and above	334,003	407,826	468,748	537,797	594,699
Total	604,459	705,852	789,086	881,998	959,026
Percentage		16.77	11.79	11.77	8.73

The overall estimation of the Thai population has a preliminary agreement regarding the numbers of populations in which the death leads to a decrease in the population and the birth result in an increase in the population. However, for disabled women, empirical data shows that the number of disabled women didn't decrease from aging to death. However, the numbers of aging disabled women are in fact increasing. With the two observations, 1) parents avoid registering disabled women with the young women group, and 2) some of the disabilities are not from birth, it comes later in life through illness or other factors. For example, disabilities that have to do with movement, mental illness, or behavioral. Moreover, the number of disabled women tends to “Decreasing Increase” and the structure of aging disabled women has an impact on the number of disabled women in the future. In other words, the change in the number of disabled women in the future is a result of the change in the structure of the aging population. Therefore, if the numbers of Thai populations tend to increase in the future, rationally the number of the disabled elder will increase, and the number of disabled women will increase in the future as well.

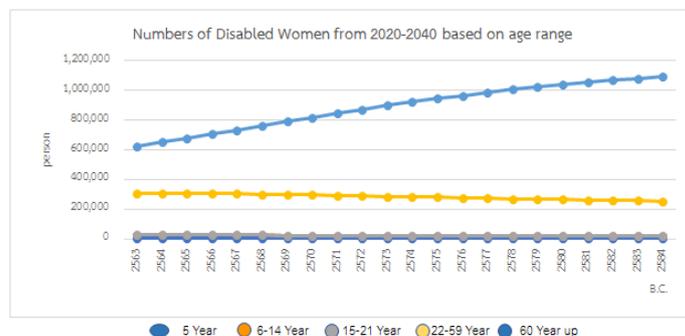


Fig.1 *shows numbers of disabled women from 2020-2040*

Figure 1 shows the number of disabled women from 2020 – 2040. It shows that the numbers have increased from 981,878 in the year 2020 to 1,365,196 in the next 20 years, or 1.95 % per year. The number of disabled women who are older than 60 will also increase by 3.62 % per year. As we can see, the percentage increase for women of this age is higher than the overall disabled women because of the population structure in Thailand which is drastically increasing in the elderly population, and the ratio of disabled women age 60+ is higher in comparison. In the meantime, the change in population structure in Thailand results in a decrease in disabled women in young and working age.

When categorizing the type of disabilities, we found that the number of disabled women increases across different types by approximately 1.78 % – 3.01 % per year. Intellectual

disability, multiple disabilities, and vision impairment are the leading types in increasing numbers compared to other types.

Table 2.2 *Numbers of disabled women based on age range*

Age range	0-5	6-14	15-21	22-59	60 up	Total
2558	834	16,492	21,943	231,187	334,003	604,459
2559	1,767	19,143	23,491	253,625	407,826	705,852
2560	2,936	21,373	24,629	271,400	468,748	789,086
2561	4,402	23,455	25,635	290,729	537,797	881,998
2562	5,808	25,201	26,354	306,964	594,699	959,026
2563	5,368	25,056	26,410	308,445	625,116	990,395
2564	5,297	24,802	25,935	307,267	659,713	1,014,015
2565	5,223	24,566	25,449	305,785	677,119	1,038,142
2566	5,151	24,352	24,966	304,006	704,064	1,062,538
2567	5,075	24,164	24,461	301,973	731,637	1,087,311
2568	4,995	24,023	23,933	299,691	759,570	1,112,214
2569	4,922	23,725	23,682	296,952	787,862	1,137,142
2570	4,843	23,428	23,462	293,943	816,154	1,161,830
2571	4,768	23,137	23,280	290,800	844,266	1,186,250
2572	4,689	22,851	23,133	287,529	871,300	1,209,482
2573	4,610	22,525	23,043	284,234	896,898	1,231,310
2574	4,531	22,207	22,789	281,337	920,878	1,251,742
2575	4,449	21,889	22,539	278,512	943,422	1,270,812
2576	4,370	21,563	22,296	275,740	964,349	1,288,319
2577	4,290	21,232	22,047	272,966	984,198	1,304,732
2578	4,210	20,900	21,805	270,126	1,003,150	1,320,191
2579	4,130	20,561	21,525	267,278	1,021,113	1,334,606
2580	4,052	20,216	21,232	264,402	1,037,998	1,347,900
2581	3,973	19,876	20,931	261,570	1,053,446	1,359,816
2582	3,896	19,529	20,660	258,822	1,066,919	1,369,825
2583	3,819	19,181	20,366	256,226	1,077,966	1,377,557
2584	3,743	18,840	20,076	253,683	1,089,746	1,386,088

Table 2.3 *Numbers of disabled women based on types of disabilities*

	Visual	Hearing	Movement	Mental and behavior	Intellectual	Learning	Autistic	Multiple	Unidentified	Total
2558	71,816	118,956	275,422	39,373	50,161	1,998	1,572	42,224	2,937	604,459
2559	82,800	139,307	331,558	45,152	54,102	2,281	1,792	45,916	2,944	705,852
2560	89,594	155,719	379,731	50,421	57,066	2,614	2,023	48,967	2,951	789,086
2561	96,736	173,294	435,956	55,695	59,963	2,931	2,268	52,179	2,976	881,997
2562	101,499	187,458	484,163	60,110	62,207	3,227	2,506	54,880	2,976	959,026
2563	100,861	194,930	504,042	62,604	63,817	3,507	2,737	55,307	2,590	990,395
2564	115,930	202,473	500,191	61,488	65,746	3,048	2,375	59,230	3,535	1,014,016
2565	119,427	208,081	514,097	62,233	65,579	3,032	2,351	59,757	3,585	1,038,143
2566	122,976	213,765	528,189	62,961	65,387	3,015	2,328	60,282	3,635	1,062,539
2567	126,592	219,547	542,527	63,681	65,168	2,998	2,304	60,809	3,685	1,087,311
2568	130,239	225,371	556,968	64,382	64,925	2,981	2,282	61,333	3,734	1,112,214
2569	133,908	231,215	571,446	65,041	64,675	2,967	2,259	61,850	3,781	1,137,143
2570	137,557	237,019	585,820	65,668	64,399	2,954	2,235	62,352	3,827	1,161,830
2571	141,173	242,764	600,049	66,273	64,118	2,941	2,213	62,847	3,871	1,186,251
2572	144,631	248,248	613,630	66,824	63,816	2,929	2,190	63,301	3,913	1,209,482
2573	147,892	253,412	626,413	67,322	63,514	2,917	2,169	63,720	3,951	1,231,310
2574	150,953	258,259	638,422	67,809	63,187	2,900	2,144	64,081	3,987	1,251,743
2575	153,820	262,795	649,661	68,254	62,855	2,883	2,119	64,404	4,021	1,270,812
2576	156,469	266,977	660,023	68,649	62,513	2,865	2,093	64,679	4,051	1,288,320
2577	158,968	270,915	669,781	69,005	62,154	2,847	2,067	64,917	4,078	1,304,733
2578	161,339	274,642	679,014	69,321	61,780	2,828	2,042	65,123	4,103	1,320,192
2579	163,570	278,140	687,684	69,601	61,378	2,806	2,015	65,286	4,126	1,334,606
2580	165,650	281,389	695,741	69,839	60,955	2,784	1,987	65,410	4,146	1,347,901
2581	167,536	284,325	703,018	70,031	60,528	2,762	1,960	65,495	4,163	1,359,817
2582	169,154	286,829	709,228	70,163	60,084	2,738	1,932	65,521	4,176	1,369,825
2583	170,449	288,812	714,150	70,229	59,633	2,714	1,904	65,483	4,184	1,377,558
2584	171,850	290,970	719,504	70,327	59,202	2,691	1,877	65,474	4,194	1,386,088

From the data estimating disabled Thai women, we can see that Twenty years from now, the number of disabled women continues to increase, especially in the elderly. Twenty

years from now is an important period and challenging to combat to improve the quality of life of disabled Thai women. Not only preparing for the change in population structure but also issues, found from the in-depth interview, regarding the role of disabled women in making a movement about their human rights. Part 3 is as below:

Recommendations on how to improve quality of life for disabled Thai women

Using the data from the survey and the estimation of disabled Thai women, along with questionnaires from in-depth interviews, to analyze and explain the situation, suggesting ways to improve the quality of life of disabled Thai women. The main findings are as below:

The issues with human rights and equality are one of the most important topics. Starting from the basic human right to acceptance and respect in humanity, disabled women need to feel their sense of belonging both socially and lawfully. This leads to policy and rules planning that is related to them which can then result in the promotion and improvement of disabled women's life appropriately and respectfully. This includes healthy life, education, income, care benefits, opportunity to work, role in the society, living freely, the ability to participate in sports and social events such as religious and cultural, and the right to practice life skills according to their goals and living situation. However, issues with accessing human rights and welfare are still happening, as listed below:

- 1) Haven't registered to receive disability benefits. This issue occurs because parents didn't report to the government about their child's conditions since when their children were younger. Another reason is that the disability that comes later in life, such as mental health. With registering for mental health, they will receive more benefits and treatment from the hospital. However, the patients can choose not to receive the recommendation or choose not to register by themselves.
- 2) Have no access to media and information. This issue occurs as the information is too old and hasn't been updated to match the current situation. Some media are not appropriate for some types of disabilities as well, such as blind or mentally ill people.
- 3) Violating disabled women's rights. Some disabled women do not receive appropriate protection, unaware, and afraid to report. These issues come from the system like policy, law, and operation.

However, the common issue is that when violence occurs, the government chooses to mediate. Nevertheless, violence is a criminal case that can't be mediated. When the government chooses to mediate, it is considered duty omission. Disabled women have the right to be taken care of and received treatment and appropriate investigation until they are able to enter society normally. The issues raise the question to the relevant staff if "What they are doing is considered appropriate?" One of the survey participants shared the idea that the staffs, who work in the disability department, mindset is that they (the staffs) feel as if they are fixing this issue based on human rights (Right Based). They think that they are doing the job as social charities. The department should use the social model to articulate appropriate procedures for people with disabilities. Disabled women are also human beings. Therefore, human rights should also apply to them. Society should take responsibility for disabled people by supporting and participating in social events to solve the 3 main obstacles that disabled women are facing. Those obstacles are (1) Physically Barrier such as building, man-made environment, and basic utilities (2) Systematic Barrier such as administrative system. Society lacks generosity in law and political institutions. (3) Attitude Barrier such as negative attitude towards disabled women, prejudice, and stereotype. By taking care of these

issues, the procedures and structures to protect disabled women with their needs can be changed. From data found, disabled women want to live life like any other women: education, employment, family, being in the society, getting access to services, traveling, medical treatment, and other human rights. Lastly, but most importantly, to be able to make decisions about her life on her own.

As the Thai population structure will shift to an increase in aging women, enhancing human rights and welfare for disabled women for the next 20 years is an important issue that required planning. Therefore, implementing the support plan for disabled women is an important topic that can't be done by just one department alone. Disabled women's issues and other disabled people's issues are one of many factors that are related to promoting the quality of life of the population in different aspects and directions. Therefore, placing this issue in every ministry is a must, and the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security should be the Focal Point to raise this issue. It will require a guideline to work sustainably, practically, and wholly under the vision that disabled women are also human.

Recommendations

From the research above, these are 7 challenges disabled women are facing and should be considered as part of the policy for improvement:

Issues that should be considered for improvement policy:

Definition of disabled women has to be separated on its own

In the past, the topic of disabled women is often included with other disabled people, which leads to ignorant and inappropriate responses to services and welfares specifically for disabled women.

Role of disabled women

The issues about disabled women should be a universal concern, not just the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security. The disabled women population wants to receive supports and improvement from different departments and having the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security as the Focal Point. They are also looking to see a Convention about the rights of people with disabilities: CRPD and management on discrimination against disabled women as well as children and immigrants issue.

Disable women's rights

Disabled women should have a space to express their opinions as well as being able to get involved in different movements in society, including holding a position in important organizations so they can be the voice to raise awareness, make decisions, and support other disabled women. There should be more solutions to support disabled women in the following areas:

Consultation on how to protect themselves from assaults, especially for those who are not comfortable filing a complaint. However, if the assault has already happened, consultation on how to take care of themselves aftermath should be provided. With this issue, having protectors and caretakers raising awareness would be helpful as well. Another important aspect

to think about is staff training. This is to make sure that they truly understand and able to communicate with disabled women effectively, such as sign language training.

Remedy Restoration or rehabilitation

Forwarding the issues to the relevant person to take care of resolve the issue effectively

Career and Salary.

Fixing the regulation at the Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities on the usage of funding, loan money, and take funding from employers to spread it across disable people is something to look at. When disabled women have the money, they use it as a power to make their own decisions on how they spend money on themselves and family members. Disabled women should get trained in life skills and professions that can help them stand up by themselves.

Technology

Some disabled women still don't have access to technology because they don't have the resources or WiFi. Government should work on developing technology that can facilitate disabled women to live more comfortably. The government should also invest in the system and tools that allow disabled women to access essential topics like communicating with the government agency, searching for work, and receiving news and medical advice.

Making media publicity appropriate for disabled women

The media should have visualization and captions that are easy for blind people to understand, as well as educate them on how to protect themselves from any infringement, including sexual harassment. In terms of people with mental illnesses, the media publicity needs to be adjusted accordingly. That said, distribute news using a spreading method or having volunteers knocking on the doors. This is because some people with mental illnesses might want to keep this part of their lives private.

Preparing disable people, especially disabled women who are unmarried or childless, to entering the aging society

Disabled women need to prepare themselves for the living situation, health, and insurance. The principle used is Active Ageing by the World Health Organization that focuses on preparing them in 3 areas: healthy physically and mentally, stable lifestyle, and involvement in the community.

The challenging part of being disabled women in the next 20 years is how they will live in a good condition, considering all the changes in the economy, technology, and pandemic. Even though the population and the life span for these women tend to increase, however, if their quality of life remains inferior, lack of education, unstable income, and living alone, how will the government support service and welfares that can cover the increasing numbers of disabled women in the upcoming years? On the other hand, if we can protect disability from happening with elder women through the aged proactive idea, that allows Thai women to live stably in life, income, and health, it will be a key fundamental that leads to values and powers that will encourage them to be involved in the community. It is all depending on how much we realize the importance of this topic and how do we prepare ourselves for the future to comes.

Acknowledgement

This study is successful because of the participation from all the disabled women. The gratitude is extended towards the Department for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities

that allows the researcher to study the important issues which can then be used to improve the quality of life for disabled women in the future. Lastly, I would like to thank the Dean of Population Studies of Chulalongkorn University, and Dean of Collage of College of Educational Innovation Research of KMITL, staffs, and faculty who always support me.

References

- Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities, “Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities: CRPD”, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities: Bangkok, 2009.
- Office of the National Economic and Social Development Council (NESDC), “Report of Population Projections for Thailand 2010-2040 (Revision)”, First Edition. Amarin Printing & Publishing: Bangkok, 2019.
- Strategy and Planning Division. Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, “The Quality-of-Life Development Manual for People with Disabilities Project to empower disabled people and creating opportunities and equality in the society”, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Bangkok, Thailand, 2016.
- Strategy and Planning Division. Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, “Women Improvement Plan Second Edition 2017-2021”, Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities. Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, Bangkok, Thailand, 2021.