

ความเหลื่อมล้ำทางการ ศึกษาของไทยหลัง สถานการณ์การแพร่ระบาดของ ของเชื้อไวรัสโควิด-19

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บทคัดย่อ

บทความนี้มีวัตถุประสงค์เพื่อระบุสาเหตุและแนวทางการแก้ไขความเหลื่อมล้ำทางการศึกษาที่เกิดขึ้นในช่วงหลังสถานการณ์การแพร่ระบาดของเชื้อไวรัสโควิด-19 ซึ่งถือเป็นหนึ่งในปัญหาหลักของสังคมไทยในปัจจุบัน เนื่องจากยังมีเด็กไทยจำนวนมากไม่อยู่ในหลาย ๆ พื้นที่ของประเทศไทยที่ยังคงต้องเผชิญกับปัญหาด้านความเหลื่อมล้ำทางการศึกษาที่เพิ่มมากขึ้น หรือการขาดแคลนโอกาสในการเข้าถึงการศึกษาที่ดีของเด็กไทย เนื่องจากการว่างงานของพ่อแม่ ทำให้ครอบครัวขาดรายได้หรือขาดความสะดวกในการเดินทางไปเรียน หรือขาดความเข้าใจในเทคโนโลยี ประกอบกับภาระที่ครูไทยต้องแบกรับภาระเพิ่มเติมซึ่งส่งผลให้ระบบการศึกษาไทยอาจได้รับผลกระทบเชิงลบในระยะยาวได้ ดังนั้นแล้วสถานการณ์ที่เกิดขึ้นดังกล่าวนี้ได้สร้างความตระหนักในการหาทางจัดการหรือการปรับตัวของแต่ละสถาบันทางการศึกษาและพื้นที่การศึกษาในแต่ละภาคส่วนและภายในครอบครัวเพื่อให้สอดคล้องกับสถานการณ์การแพร่ระบาดที่เกิดขึ้น ณ ปัจจุบัน ซึ่งสามารถทำได้หลากหลายวิธีในหลายระดับสังคมของนักเรียน ได้แก่ 1) ครอบครัวจะต้องปลูกฝังให้นักเรียนเห็นความสำคัญของการศึกษา 2) ครูผู้สอนมีหน้าที่ในการสร้างบรรยากาศการเรียนรู้ที่ดี และช่วยเหลือนักเรียนที่ประสบปัญหาความเหลื่อมล้ำทางการศึกษาเท่าที่จะช่วยได้ ทั้งนี้การดูแลช่วยเหลือนักเรียนไทยจะไม่เกิดประสิทธิภาพสูงสุดหากไม่ได้รับการช่วยเหลืออย่างทั่วถึงจากรัฐบาลไทยซึ่งมีกำลังที่จะสนับสนุนนักเรียนไทยในฐานะอนาคตของชาติได้ไม่ว่าจะในรูปแบบของการสนับสนุนด้านการเงินหรืออุปกรณ์การเรียนการสอนเมื่อสามารถทุเลาความเหลื่อมล้ำทางการศึกษาได้ในระดับที่สามารถควบคุมได้แล้ว จึงจะสามารถหาทางพัฒนาระบบการศึกษาไทยได้อย่างปลอดภัยและมีประสิทธิภาพสูงสุดต่อไป เพื่อเสริมสร้างระดับความแข็งแกร่งของรากฐานประเทศและมีความสามารถทัดเทียมกับประเทศอื่นๆ ได้ต่อไปในอนาคต

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The inequality of education after Covid-19 in Thailand

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Abstract

This article aims to address the cause of and solutions to educational inequality which is one of the major problems of today's Thai society. Currently, there is still a large number of Thai students in some areas of Thailand who are still facing several educational inequalities or lack of opportunity to access decent education due to parents' unemployment which leads to the lack of family income, inconvenience in going to school, or the lack of understanding in technologies. Besides, Thai teachers also have to bear more burden which could adversely affect Thailand's educational system. Therefore, these situations raise the awareness in finding solutions or adapting oneself into this circumstance of each institution and educational area of all sectors including family so that everyone could live in correspond with the Covid-19 pandemic which could be done by several means; 1) Parents have to raise the awareness of education's importance 2) Teachers have to create good atmosphere for the classroom and assist students who are suffered from educational inequality as much as they could. Nevertheless, all the supports for Thai students will not provide the most effective outcome without thoroughly support of Thai Government due to the fact that the government has sufficient supply to be distributed Thai students who are considered "future of the nation". It could either be financial support or learning/teaching devices. If the severity of educational inequality could be alleviated and remain controllable, the improvement of Thailand's educational system could be continued safely and efficiently and will strengthen the country's foundation and be able to compete with other nations in the future.

Keywords: Educational inequality, Urban Area, Rural Area, Covid-19

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1. Educational inequality in Thailand

1.1 Pre-Covid-19 Educational inequality in Thailand

If the word “the inequality” is mentioned, many people have heard and known either more or less. In general, the inequality associates with economic, income, and social parts. However, one thing has been present for a long time, especially for the educational inequality. Here, the meaning of the educational inequality is the presence of different educational quality at schools in each area. The reasons causing existence of the divergent educational inequality may have originated from many things, such as students’ economic or family status, the personal problems of student families, or the problems of students themselves. The problems are premature pregnancy, drug addiction, patient or disabled person caregivers in their families, and their health problems. In addition to the problems derived either from the students’ families or students themselves, school management, different educational organizations, even schools in rural areas having inadequate teachers or educational access resources may be the sources of the educational inequality. (Siwachoat Srisuttiyakorn, 2019)

Currently, the educational inequality is one of the problems in Thai society due to the lack of access to education of Thai children. This problem affects national development aspects of Thailand in the future. If every student can reach excellent education, they will be able to pursue careers in the future, gain enough incomes for themselves and their families. When they have good salaries, well-being, and living quality will be good. In addition, when their families have the magnificent welfare and the living quality, the society and the country will be developed. On the other hand, if children in some areas of Thailand face with either the increasing educational inequality or the educational accessible problems, these problems will adversely affect even more difficult educational development and long-term effects in the future. (Thairath Online, 2020)

Many students in either rural or remote areas have to work for educational support themselves. Some students have to work for their families and leave schools from their study for helping parents’ work; also, some students have to quit from their study because they cannot afford things, such as food, daily items, and even school supplies. Compared to students in rural areas, students living in urban areas have chances to be tutored and have highly competitive

exams for entering famous or ranked academic institutes in the country. These problems reflect the opportunity inequality of poverty children in rural areas or remote areas, in contrast to students in urban areas. The educational inequality is an accumulative chronic problem for so long that many students may not be able to continue their studies. Although education should be an available thing which everyone has access without any class division, data often show in many mass communications that numerous reports associated with education among Thai children cited huge children intolerant to the family poverty problem. Therefore, many of them have to leave schools for working to earn money for their families. Some may disappear from schools more than weeks or months, so this problem largely affects their study. Some cannot come to continuously study again. (Pimphaya Charoensiriphan, n.d.)

3.1 Thailand education situation during the Covid-19 pandemic

In 2021, this year starts not well due to the unexpected Covid-19 pandemic, which affects many aspects of Thailand. First of all, it is undeniable that the most affected sectors in Thailand is economy sector. The employment rate drastically decreased by 2% (745,000 unemployed persons approximately). This was due to the limitation of traveling, which is the main source of income of Thailand. (Kiriya Kulkolkarn, 2021).

Apart from tourism sector, Thailand education was also adversely affected by the Covid-19, whether directly or indirectly. The problems from Covid-19 disease are unavoidable. The educational inequality situation affects diverse aspects, which cause management or the adjustment of each academic institute and each area to response to the occurring disease spread situation and good continuous operation with correct safety.

Existing inequality in Thailand was significant was massive even before Covid-19 pandemic. One of the most noticeable types of inequality in Thailand is economic inequality. There is a remarkable difference between rich people and poor people or urban area and rural area. Especially during the Covid-19 pandemic in which Thai employees became unemployed and therefore could not make enough income to support their families. Plus, job competition, knowledge or educational background, and job market make it harder for some Thai citizens to get

a job with stable job and good income. Therefore, employees that have children who are unemployed cannot provide them with decent educational support, or even worse, they had to remove their children from school during the Covid-19 pandemic in Thailand. (Winit Pharcharuen et. al., 2021)

In 2020, TCIJ reported that the number of Thai children who would be able to study in secondary school and upper secondary school is surprisingly lower than the same of students studying in primary school. To describe, there was 82% of secondary school students compared to the number of primary school students, and only 53% of upper secondary school students compared to the same. The number of Thai students who are categorized as “Extremely Poor Student” had increased by more than 170,000 students due to the increasing unemployment rate which adversely affected the economic status of most families in Thailand as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic (TCIJ, 2020).

3.2 Thailand education in the current situation

The world in the 21st century is changing and is improving both social and technological parts in many countries around the world. As a result, it is necessary to cooperate with people in countries for developing the educational system inside the countries, for creating a bright future for the country and for the new generation, for reducing the educational inequality, and for reforming the education system in the country. (Nae Nae Montawan, n.d.)

Presently, Thailand education is in the wildly learning era. Various education forms are available for quickly studying by themselves. By using new technology to reform the educational systems in Thailand, academic institutes should keep up with the boundless new world and rapid development. Education and research should be learning processes with every place and every time. As seen in numerous Thailand academic institutes, small-, medium-, large-, extra - large-size educational organizations have essential and unavoidable things, which are computers and the internet system. All educational institutions have the same needs. Knowledge and understanding, which are everyone’s requirement for entering into the world of learning society and technology usage, will bring the greatest value and benefit to students. On the other hand, if students use computers and the internet system inappropriately, it may lose the advantages of them. (Patcharapornphin, 2015)

Therefore, if current data cite that both the good educational accessibility and the quality of children, it should consider the educational inequality. Thailand has the educational inequality at quite high level. Even though Thailand has the policy to support people having basic education at least 12 years, which covers pre - elementary school until high school education and vocational education. (Annon Chundhitisakul, 2020) However, some children cannot access basic education according to data originated from Information System for Equitable Education (iSEE)¹. Based on data of the educational inequality among the vulnerable student group in Thailand in academic year 2020 (Table 1), data demonstrate the real situation and the inequality in many dimensions, which are statistical data collected from Equitable Education Fund Network including Ministry of Education, associated ministries, and teacher networks in various areas

Table 1 Education situation in Thailand in academic year 2020

	Year 2019 (persons)	Year 2020 (persons)
<i>Male</i>	3,651,908	3,639,999
<i>Female</i>	3,705,906	3,690,871
<i>Education levels</i>		
<i>Kindergarten</i>	1,074,724	1,053,653
<i>Elementary</i>	3,411,749	3,386,856
<i>Lower Secondary</i>	1,856,763	1,847,104
<i>Upper Secondary</i>	1,014,578	1,043,257
<i>Regions</i>		
<i>Northern</i>	1,306,578	1,305,713
<i>Central</i>	2,229,199	2,223,243
<i>Northeastern</i>	2,688,210	2,665,340
<i>Southern</i>	1,133,827	1,136,574

Source: Information System for Equitable Education (iSEE)

According to data of Thailand education situation in academic year 2020, the results show that 7.3 million persons of all students consisted of 3.6 million

¹ Is database for the educational equality. It is the large personal database covering target groups, such as children and youth, who are lack of capital, and more than 4 million underprivileged persons. This database is linked to 13 - digits identification number of children and family. Also, this large government database includes data from 6 ministries and Geographic Information System (GIS) <https://isee.eef.or.th/>

male students and 3.7 million female students. The pre - elementary school, elementary school, junior high school, and senior high school students were 1.1 million, 3.4 million, 1.8 million, and 1 million students, respectively. Based on each part of Thailand, students in Northern, central plain, Northeastern, Southern were 1.3 million, 2.2 million, 2.7 million, 1.1 million students, respectively. Compared to the number of students in academic year 2019, student amounts in academic year 2020 have reduced, and approximately half of them were in the vulnerable student group (disadvantaged and disabling students). In academic year 2020, Thailand had 31,620 schools. The provinces, which had more than 1,081 schools, having a lot of schools were Nakhon Ratchasima, Ubon Ratchathani, and Khon Kaen. Nakhon Ratchasima, Ubon Ratchathani, and Khon Kaen had 1,441; 1,190; and 1,140 schools, respectively. However, at the same time, some areas in Thailand did not have any schools. The 78 sub - districts, which was 1.08% of totally 7,255 sub - districts in Thailand, did not have any schools. In addition, the results show that 4,580 students, which was 0.06% of total students, lived in sub - districts where did not have any schools. (Thaipublica, 2020)



Figure 1 Sub-districts that has no school in Thailand
Source: Information System for Equitable Education (ISEE)

In addition, Equitable Education Fund (EEF) prepared data of the specific poverty group for assisting this vulnerable group. Compared to other groups, the specific poverty group has less financial statement and well-being, and most

students in the educational system were in this specific poverty group as we mentioned above. Consequently, the prepared data reflected the educational inequality through situations, conditions, and limits. Particularly, households in rural areas are in the vulnerable group, compared to students living in urban areas.

2. The factors causing Thailand educational inequality

The factors or reasons causing Thailand educational inequality may originate from numerous aspects, such as economic status of students' families, personal problems of families or students. The problems may be premature pregnancy, drug addiction, patient or disabled person caregivers in their families, health problems of students. Also, the problems may be generated from different school management or educational organizations, or even schools located in rural areas, lack of teachers, educational resource inaccessibility. In this article, we would like to discuss only 3 main parts, which we consider that the main factors causing the educational inequality are as follows:

2.1 The economic status of students' families

The economic status of students' families is considered to be one of the main and important factors causing the educational inequality. Families having the high economic status, which is recognized as rich, have higher parenting ability than those having the lower economic status or the poverty status due to the capacity for payment or more investment for education. Families having the high economic status have more chances and choices than those do not have enough money. If children grow in family having low economic status, they will understand when their age is enough to be able to recognize. In other words, they recognize family income status, which is not enough for affording things or lives, and cannot continuously pay for educational expenses. As a result, many students are necessary to leave schools for finding jobs and earning money to support their families. In conclusion, the problem originated from families having the poverty economic status is an educational obstacle of Thai children today.

The poverty appears in all societies around the world, and family financial status is one of the big problems of the world. For Thailand, insufficient money has expanded into all parts. The occurring changes were household incomes contributing

to family financial status for the worse. The living conditions are lower. These reasons have become sources of growing poverty and cause more inequality, which is the big issue of Thailand. As UNESCO reported long ago, poverty eradication or poverty reduction is the first goal of education. In addition to poverty reduction, the quality education will provide knowledge, academic background, and professional life skills, so they have professional skills to make a living and to fight the poverty. Therefore, the quality education is so essential. Students, who can access the quality education, can change their living and are independent of others since they can create jobs and build careers. After graduation, if they can earn incomes, their living quality will be better. As a result, good education with quality not only builds the specific personal ability to achieve the economic potential but also is a quality indicator of everyone. The quality education also motivates the economic manufacturing sector, can create the political stability, is a tool to refine people in society, is a citizen who can make change, and underpins the mission of the national society with responsibility as the owner of the society and the country. In summary, the quality education can change people, society, economics, and politics with all dimensions. (Tippaporn Tantisunthorn, n.d.)

2.2 The habitation

The habitation of students in some areas is still quite remote, is arid, and is rural. For example, these places are located at high mountains and are remote locations from either communities or urban areas. Electricity and the internet are inadequate to meet people's needs. Students, who live in arid or rural areas, have difficulty for going to school. The difficulty depends on the different conditions in each area. For instance, some students have to walk across mountains, rivers, or long – distance to be on – time daily. In some cases, many students have to stop to go to schools in the rainy season due to wind, rain, and storms. (Pimphaya Charoensiriphan, n.d.) The journey is difficult and may cause accidents to students because they have to wade through the violently flowing floods. These problems affect to students and discourage student motivation, and they feel that they do not want to go to schools. When these situations happen for a long time, it may cause many students to quit from schools or may make a decision to drop out of schools for helping the family work and earning incomes.

2.3 The educational quality

The educational quality of students would result from the good knowledge and the quality of teachers since teachers are one of the main foundations for developing the country and Thailand education. However, teachers may not be the current dream job of many people due to many factors, such as low compensation and more difficult teaching, because now children can search knowledge from the internet themselves. Instead of studying to be teachers, the smart students tend to study to other occupations or to be tutors as the additional occupation. The efficiency of teachers, who have graduated, may not meet the standard; as a result, the quality of teachers is a priority problem affecting Thailand education. When the quality of teachers is down, it affects the educational quality. In other words, most children do not like to read books and search knowledge themselves. When the quality of teachers is down, students are more bored with study. Possibly, the educational quality may reduce.

To add up, the responsibilities of Thai teachers are usually more than merely teaching their students. According to THE Matter (2021), Thai teachers are considered “Sacrificers” since they are expected to work very hard despite of their low wages. Thai teachers’ salary would start from 15,000-24,750 THB (around 450-707\$) for newly graduated student teachers, while senior teachers would earn 29,980-76,800 THB (around 857-2195\$). Thai teachers relies much on the evaluation results which will be done semester-by-semester as it will dictate the amount of salary to be raised. This means that if Thai teachers wish to have more income, they have to wait every 6 month or up to 1 year so that their salary could be raised. In the meantime, work overload may cause them to give up on teaching regardless of their passion or potential in teaching their students. However, the teachers’ salary may even go lower in rural areas of Thailand. When huge responsibility does not offer compensable income, Thai student teachers (or even current teacher in duty) may eventually decide to turn their back to their degree and get a completely different job that pays them more and could provide them with Work-life Balance. To describe, the job description of Thai teachers does not limit only to teaching and preparing teaching material, but also to do something over their main scope of work. For example, teachers must do some paper works that are not relevant to their teaching subject (e.g., letter to the external agencies, school/students’ assessment),

attending traditional ceremonies, being a part of school activities, etc. This explains why Thai teachers do not have enough time to improve their teaching nor taking care of all the students they are in charge of.

Another difficulty Thai teachers are facing is additional expense they have to bear as a result of the Covid-19. Thai teachers must bear cost of teaching devices such as laptop, copy machine, and internet cost. Thai teachers do not receive enough financial support from the government during Covid-19 pandemic. Though Thai children of today may grow up to be a strong foundation of the country, Thailand's educational sector is not funded the most nonetheless. This could drastically decrease the teachers' motivation to teach and develop Thai students to be able to compare to students of other nations in the future (THE Matter, 2021). At the same time, technology influences the educational quality of students nowadays, such as search or learning from the internet from around the world. In other words, students do not obtain knowledge in one way from teachers due to different interests of each student, so their learning is different. Nevertheless, some areas in Thailand still lack teachers and necessary technology for learning and teaching, so the efficacy of teaching and learning is lower, compared to the developed areas. The quality inequality and educational resource management still have many dimensions because the overall educational problems of Thailand tend to reduce the quality. In addition, there is the educational quality inequality between schools, school sizes, parts of the country, and population income groups. (Pimchanok Puksuk, 2021)

3. The educational inequality of Thailand after Covid-19 pandemic situation

From the first Covid-19 spread period (the end of 2019), the second period (the end of 2020), and the third period which is the serious spread (in 2021) as commonly seen in Thailand, in each day the number of people infected by Covid-19 has increased rapidly and has exponentially grown. When Covid-19 has more spreads and affects many people in Thailand, the obvious observation is Covid-19 causing the distinct and serious social inequality. (Udom Likitwanawut, n.d.) When there are more severely social inequalities, these social inequalities impact on Thailand education and generate more educational inequalities.

The occurring changes after Covid-19 pandemic situation cause seriously and widely

in Thailand, especially the last and current Covid-19 pandemic spread. It has quite disturbed educational institutes because the government has to close educational institutes for reducing the risk and the number of the infected patients as much as possible. Therefore, the educational system has changed from teaching in schools to online classes. The alteration affects the learning system of children, especially children in families which cannot access to resources, such as the internet signal, a computer, a smartphone, or a television. These devices have expenses. In other words, the tools or online classes in Covid-19 spread situation may be suitable for medium – income families or persons who can access these resources. Nonetheless, these devices may not be appropriate to families with poverty because these families cannot approach to resources and various learning skills. In brief, parents or persons in their families have roles and are important for the learning system of students very much. (Arnon Chundhitisakul, 2020) The unambiguous main effects occurring after Covid-19 pandemic are as follows.

3.1 The effects on the economic situation of Thai families

Before Covid-19 pandemic, students having the economic situation with poverty have the educational inequality already. When they have to face many times of severe Covid-19 pandemic, it causes the worse economic situation to their families, particularly students in the extra – poverty group. According to Equitable Education Fund (EEF) survey, the results show that household incomes of this student group were less than 1,500 Baht a month. In other words, the average household income was 50 Baht a day. Before Covid-19 pandemic in 2019, the number of students in the extra – poverty group was approximately 700,000 persons. However, when Covid-19 pandemic occurred, the survey of the first semester (the first semester in the academic year 2020), the number of students in the extra – poverty group was 900,000 persons. In addition to the second semester (the second semester in the academic year 2020), the number of students in the extra – poverty group increased to one million persons or increased 18% from the first semester.

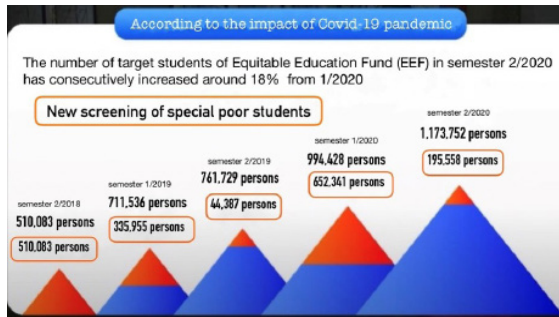


Figure 2 special poor students

Source: Thai PBS (“นักเรียนยากจนพิเศษ” วิกฤต “เหลื่อมล้ำ” การศึกษา: ห้องข่าวไทยพีบีเอส NEWSROOM)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ABLlBKWaZU4&list=LL&index=2&t=599s>

Although the number of students in the extra – poverty group did not increase too much. According to this data, however, the results demonstrate that the presence of poverty among students is associated with family well-being of the children. Also, the average household incomes of students in the extra – poverty group in 2019 were 1,200-1,250 Baht a month. When Covid-19 pandemic occurred, their household incomes of students in the extra – poverty group were 1,021 Baht a month. Their parents lost their jobs, earned lower incomes, or have more dependency. These factors ruin the education of many students and tend to contribute the wider inequality between poor and rich people. Consequently, this financial problem may induce students to miss more classes or their families having less expenditures to support education.

3.2 The effects on the reducing quality of education

With Covid-19 pandemic situation, although Thailand has the educational policy, which provides 12 years with free of charge to all students, some students cannot use this right to study for free until completing the required education since some of them have important responsibility for taking care themselves and their families. Therefore, working for gaining incomes is more important than studying in the educational system. In addition to their responsibility to their families, the additional expenses originated from schools create a greater burden on the students

themselves or their families. Besides, some parents have attitude problems that parents do not recognize the importance of education to meet the needs of children's lives. Consequently, students have to set their future to follow the path as their parents' design by leaving schools for helping work at homes. Thailand, which is one of the countries, emphasizes on the educational accessibility by providing many supporting to the educational policies. For example, Thailand has 12 – year study with free of charge or Equitable Education Fund (EEF), which increases more than 6 million children to enter the education system. Moreover, even though Covid-19 pandemic affects the economic situation, Equitable Education Fund (EEF) has helped the burden of many parents so that children can continuously remain in the education system. (Siripa Inthawichian, 2020) In addition to online classes at homes, students have to sit in front of computer monitors every day, so they lose interactions with their teachers and friends. It may contribute to make stresses on children and teachers. If they have to learn via online classes until the pandemic situation will be improved, learning of children may reduce. To prevent stresses or misunderstand lessons among students until they are bored and reduce their attention to online classes, teachers must be necessary to suitably adjust learning and teaching management of online classes with occurring Covid-19 pandemic situation.

3.3 The effects on the accessibility of the educational inequality

Although online classes can replace normal classes during Covid-19 pandemic situation, the efficacy of online class learning is less than that of normal classes. In contrast to normal classes at schools, the absence of interactions in online classes is between instructors and learners, and friends. Some classes have to learn via practices as the main approach. Particularly, the inadequacy of computer equipment or the internet accessibility discourages some students for learning. Based on the report of Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and College of Education, Harvard University, USA, in 2018², they reported

² (A framework to guide an education response to the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020) by using data from OECD survey. This survey was collected from 15 – year old students with 600,000 persons from 79 countries around the world in 2018. The survey was employed using ICT to cover possession of digital devices, the internet connection, and online teaching approach, so it shows the situation of each country regarding to different preparations. Thailand was also one of the

that in Thailand only 53% of students had computers at homes. If students were divided according to the economic status of the families, up to 91% of economically affluent students had a computer. On the other hand, students with poverty economic status were found only 17%. The reasons for the internet inaccessibility are expensive expenses, the residential areas where are far from the internet signal, and difficulty to access the internet. (Phoomsaran Thongliamnak, 2020) Besides, students have to have knowledge or computer skills or digital skills to study online. For small children, they also need teaching or assistance from their parent for entering the online educational system. If the economic situation of their families is poverty, their families may have less knowledge, computer skills, or the online learning system; as a result, children do not have knowledge or skills to learn from the online system.

3.4 The effects on the preparedness of teachers

Not only Thai students and their parents that are affected by the Covid-19 pandemic in terms of educational inequality, but also including the teachers who have to suddenly adapt themselves to new style of teaching. Teachers who have lower income would find it difficult to afford all the devices they need in their classrooms, including online classroom or hybrid classroom. This could eventually make them become burnout, give up teaching, and find another job. On the other hand, teachers with higher income could buy teaching devices to support their teaching and could still afford their lives without relying on government support.

Moreover, regardless of working in wealthy or poor schools, teachers are required to have less interactions (physical contact specifically) with their students during the pandemic, it makes it even harder for them to be able to ensure that their students are paying attention to the classroom or thoroughly understanding the lecture. Some students could be left behind and end up having bad studying results, which could influence teachers' evaluation of the end of the semester.

4. Suggestions

“In the midst of a crisis, there is always an opportunity.” This statement still applies well. This crisis has a fairly long period of time until students are habituated

countries that participated in the survey.

with Covid-19 spread situation. Not only students but also their families including academic institutes need to adjust and change. The following suggestions as we discuss may be a guideline to improve and develop organizations or institutes.

4.1 The poverty alleviation

Currently, most people in Thailand still face with poverty both no economic stability and increased debt. When Covid-19 pandemic occurred, poverty has increased due to lost jobs and low economic growth. (Aungreutai, 2012) In addition to economic crisis, the number of the elderly has rapidly increased, while the working age population has decreased; also, Thailand's per capita incomes and education levels remain low. (Praornpit Katchwattanah, 2019) When poverty has rapidly increased, it causes many following problems, such as crime, drug, family, health and sanitation, and educational inequality problems. As we mentioned above, our opinion thinks that if Thailand can solve the poverty problem, other problems or inequality of each aspect will reduce. Finally, the educational inequality will decrease.

4.2 The awareness of education's importance

It is important for Thai students to understand the importance of education and learn how much it could help them finding a good job in the future. Therefore, parents or other family member should participate in raising awareness of educations for students. They can help their children in their study to increase family bond and would also make children become more interested in studying.

Teachers should also be responsible in changing styles of teaching by creating a friendly classroom environment. Although teachers may have to spend more time preparing appropriate teaching material (electronic files, videos/audio, device setup etc.). Sometimes, it is necessary for teachers to make their lecture less academic and focus on how to attract students' interests. Due to the fact that online classroom can be boring, teacher may adapt their lecture with entertainment such as games, activities, or songs. Nevertheless, if students are unable to access online classroom, both parents and teachers should be of their assistance as much as they could to prevent them from stopping their will to study.

4.3 The more channel addition for learning

Particularly, rural or arid areas, such as television, should have specific television channels for education. Schools may have channels or a television station for class levels and each subject. Schools should organize class schedules for students who do not have a computer or the internet. The disadvantages of teaching via television is whether students have questions or do not understand, they cannot ask or answer questions. However, at least students can receive knowledge continually, do not miss classes, or quit from the educational system. In Thailand, we have had Distance Learning Television (DLTV) teaching and learning system for a long time. Finally, DLTV in Thailand has the well-equipped database and the operating system. (Phoomsaran Thongliamnak, 2020) However, DLTV is still insufficient to students' requirements. On the other hand, book usage or course materials, and assignments for homework by shipping to students at homes may be alternative ways for learning by themselves during no classes at schools or as course materials for DLTV classes. Books, course materials, or assignments can motivate students with more understanding and update content in each subject.

4.4 Sufficient governmental support and proper management

Lastly, the Government should provide supports to every person involved in educational system of Thailand. The support could be in form of financial support or teaching/learning devices. Most importantly, the government must be responsible in making sure that all Thai students, whether studying in urban in rural or urban area, will be able to reach fundamental education which should be considered as one of the basic needs of citizens so that educational inequality could be completely eliminated. As mentioned earlier, education could strengthen the foundation of the country. Furthermore, proper education leads to the development of country in all respects. Investing in education will benefit the country in long term in terms of increasing competitive level of the country (Ratchawadee Sangmahamad, 2017).

5. Conclusions

With Covid-19 spread situation since the end of 2019, in 2020, and in 2021, it adversely affects all parts of Thailand. The factors or reasons causing

the educational inequality consist of the economic status of their families, the habitation, and the educational quality. In addition to these factors, there are other possible reasons, such as premature pregnancy, drug addiction, patient or disabled person caregivers in their families, and health problems of students, etc. Also, probable reasons may generate by different management of schools or educational organizations, or even schools located in rural areas, insufficient teachers, and educational resource accessibility. After the presence of Covid-19 pandemic situation, there are many following effects. Obviously, Covid-19 pandemic affects the economic status of their families, decreases the educational quality, and increases the educational inequality.

As we mentioned above, factors or reasons and effects after Covid-19 pandemic situation reflects Thailand educational inequality among Covid-19 crisis. This crisis has a high impact on children's education, so we could not let this crisis to discourage their intention and hope of these students in the future. On the other hand, this crisis is an important chance for changing the living quality of students because they are the main force of the nation in the future. Since the living quality of the population in the country will be good, there must be a good education along with it. Education is the cornerstone of life and is also something that defines or indicates knowledge, abilities, and expertise of each individual. If some populations in the country continuously receive the unequally educational opportunities, the educational inequality problem would not be able to be solved and it may lead to the social inequality. When society has more inequality, it will cycle to the income inequality problem and thus will affect the living quality of the population inevitably. Then developing process of the country like other developed countries would be slow or difficult. (Lieutenant General Suphot Malaniyom, n.d.)

However, the educational inequality reduction requires cooperation from all parts. In each area, organizations should take care and work closely to people. Therefore, they have the potential to reach the people as much as possible. Ultimately, the problems can be solved by cooperation and coordination, assistance between government and private sectors. The indispensable part is cooperation from all people to join together for reducing the educational inequality and creating the real equality in the future.

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