

## Country Report.

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Perhaps all of you know that our country Thailand formally Siam, is an independent constitutional kingdom occupying an area of about 200,000 sq. mil in the centre of Continental South East Asia. The country lies to the west, north & east of the Gulf of Siam, an arm of the South China sea. On the southeast, it is bounded by Cambodia, on the east & northeast by Laos, on the west, north & northwest by Burma, on the south west by the Andaman Sea, a part of the Indian Ocean and on the southern extremity by Malaysia.

More than 93% of Thai ethnic group are adherents to Buddhism and the country boasts at least 20,000 Buddhist temples. The local temple is the hub of community life in every village.

In 1959 the World Health Organization did a survey which indicated that about 1% of Thailand's population is mentally retarded. As the population of Thailand is presently about 35,000,000 mentally retarded in the country.

There are three Thai Government organizations responsible for provide services for the mentally retarded; - The Ministry of Education, The Ministry of Health, and the Department of

Public Welfare under the Ministry of Interior. Unfortunately there is complete lack of coordination between the Ministries concerned regarding aid for the Mentally Retarded.

Services for slow learners fall under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, which provides special classes in certain Government schools only. At present, there is one special class in each of twelve schools, all of which are located in the municipal area of Bangkok. Moreover none of the teachers instructing slow learners have had any special Training beyond the normal teacher training college curriculum.

Children who are lower than the range of slow learners are the responsibility of the Ministry of Health. Its services consist of a hospital with a school attached known as the "Rajambul hospital" situated at 4737 Dindaeng road, in Bangkok. This institution accepts children in the "Trainable" range from ages 7 to 18 years. Now we have 550 children, it cannot be expanded for two main reasons

- a. lack of space
- b. lack of qualified staff.

The institute consists of a hospital for out-patients and in-patients in which seven physicians take charge of treatment, investigation and research work. The in-patients are accommodated in dormitories which boys and girls are separated. A special school

conducts teaching academic subjects as well as Training these handicapped children to help themselves in everyday life, especially in communication and association with other people. Education similar to that in school also takes place in the wards daily, as well as nursing services.

The institute also provides vocational training in various types of handicrafts such as weaving, carpentry and domestic work that include cookery and laundry etc.

Apart from this, a site for vocational training centre for adolescent retarded male age after 18, is founded in the outskirts of Bangkok. Training has been focused on carpentry, <sup>(metal)</sup> metal work and agriculture.

In front of the hospital a research building was constructed, the research work is directed towards preventive measures with regard to mental retardation. It is hoped, in the near future the etiology of the mentally retarded will be more clarified. Now the hospital is planning to extend its works of Mentally Retarded help into the community. This work is co-operated with the basic work of Public Health and Welfare. The main purpose is to expand of Mentally Retarded service to communities. In according to this service, we have to educate personels of Public Health and Welfare in that community on how to prevent,

support and basic treatment and perceive the early stage of the Mentally Retarded.

Currently the institute has employed 7 physicians, 2 dentists, 1 pharmacy, 36 nurses, 2 nurses educators, 1 public health nurse, 38 practical nurses, 6 social workers, 4 psychologists, 12 special teachers, 13 occupational teachers and 194 attendants. The cost for running this institute is quite high and the patient families are expected to bear some expenses if they can afford, particularly for clothing and educational materials.

At present there is the latest one called "Pan Ja Wutthikorns" supported by the Foundation for the welfare of the mentally retarded, Voluntary agency now has 70 pupils. Because of it is a private school so parents pay fee. This institute has classes for elementary school and vocational Training.

Laws:-

There is no definite legislation for mental retardation in Thailand.

1:1 Insofar, the government provide financial assistance very year about 500,000 baths to Rajabukul hospital and provide special teachers to 6-7 government a voluntary school. The teacher of special education has 400 B. in addition of salary for incentive.

1:2 In compulsory education act. They are acception for the handicapped of body and mind. This law should be reconsidered.