

Unequal Life and Informal Economy in Thailand

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Thailand's informal economy has increased continuously and produced two kinds of inequality: exclusion and inequity inclusion. This study explores the life of workers in informal economy based on quantitative and qualitative approach. At first, the national statistical data are analyzed. After that, 400 surveys are collected while 20 in-depth interviews are provided. We found that the workers in informal sector earn significantly less than those in formal sector. As well, the minimum wage policy excludes informal workers. Furthermore, the poor and lower paid informal worker could not access the recent welfare policies. Hence, the minimum wage and welfare policies themselves are a part of inequality factors. To close the inequality gap, the concept of minimum wage should be evolved to the basic income concept, while the welfare policies should include the poorest workers. The challenges are both inequity structural change and integration of inequity lens into the system.

Key word: Unequal Life, Informal Economy, Thailand, minimum wage and welfare