

JOB STABILITY MAKES CIVIL SERVANTS THE HAPPIEST

THE NATION

Civil servants and state employees enjoy the best mental health compared to people in other industries, a recent survey showed.

State employees registered 33.8 out of 45 possible points on the mental-health scale.

"Having a secure job is good for their mental health," Sirikorn Khaophuthai of the Thai Health Promotion Foundation said.

She was referring to the three-year survey conducted by the Mental Health Department, Mahidol University's Institute for Population and Social Research (IPSR) and the National Statistics Office.

Ranking just after civil servants on the mental-health scale were students with 32.6 points, the self-employed with 32.2 points and farmers with 32.1 points.

"Workers got the lowest score, 30.1 points, because they do not have a stable income and the lack of job security affects their mental health," Sirikorn said, adding that with 31.1 points, housewives and company employees were not much better.

According to Sirikorn, hostile economic and living conditions can cause stress, depression and even suicides. The survey showed that at least one in 10 people have considered suicide at some point in their

lives because they are unhappy with their living conditions. As per the survey, from 2005 to 2010, 4.6 out of 100,000 people aged 25-59 committed suicide.

"Workers are more prone to kill themselves than people in other occupations. Civil servants have the lowest rate of suicides," she said.

Sirikorn said suicides caused economic and social losses to the country, thus making it necessary for relevant authorities like the Mental Health Department to implement preventative measures.

"Counselling, support from families and communities, as well as life skills can help," she said, adding that people who had strong religious beliefs and came from loving families had good mental health.

From 2005 to 2010, the suicide rate of people between ages 15 and 29 was 2.2 per 100,000. The most common causes for the suicide was heartbreak, learning difficulties and family problems.

Dr Apichat Chamrathirong from IPSR said divorce, separation, death of a spouse, lack of education, unemployment, lack of land and low income can affect people's mental health.

"The government can help by implementing good economic policies. People can also help themselves by being religious," he said.