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Some Aspects of Compulsory Education in the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam

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SOME ASPECTS OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION
IN THE PHILIPPINES, THAILAND
AND VIET NAM

By
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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Loyala University in Partial Fulfillment of
the Requirements for the Degree of
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LIFE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Purpose of Compulsory Education

The growing concern about providing basic education to the mass of people all over the world is reflected in many investigations and projects conducted by the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). The object of one of its recent investigations is the development of compulsory education in various countries. The principle underlying this action is stated in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "that everyone has a right to education, that education shall be free at least in the elementary and fundamental stages and that elementary education shall be compulsory."

That the idea of compulsory education has been generally accepted is a fact. In many Western countries, education has long been compulsory and universal, and more recently, the other countries of the world have enacted laws establishing compulsory education for their peoples.

One might question the apparent inconsistency of the two ideas. If it is the right of everyone to receive education, then why should there be laws to compel people to attend school?
If we admit the perfectibility of man, and if we consider education a process through which man can advance toward perfection, or if, from a more practical point of view, we consider education a means to free man from ignorance, poverty and diseases—for the individual's own benefit and for the good of society at large—then we agree that everyone should have access to education.

Although not every country has in its constitution a special article explicitly binding the government to provide education for all its people, it is no less true that this responsibility rests upon those in charge of the nation's welfare since education is a means to promote material welfare as well as intellectual and moral development. Therefore, in order to secure opportunity for all the members of a very complex society to fulfill their duties as well as to enjoy their rights, it is necessary that certain regulations should be established.

If the idea of compulsory education implies the right of the individual to receive education, and the duty of the state to provide it, reciprocally it also contains the concept that since man is a member of a society he has responsibilities towards it; he has the duty to contribute to the welfare of society by developing his abilities through education in one form or another; and society has a right to demand that he fulfill his duty. Furthermore, the acceptance of democratic ideology by a society makes it a requirement that its members
be enlightened, and thereby equipped with at least the basic skills to secure accurate information which will enable each person to make sound judgments and to work out plans of action appropriate to the circumstances.

Another purpose of compulsory education, if adequately enforced, is to prevent premature full-time employment where there exist no regulations for minimum age of admission to work, thus protecting the children's health and physical development as well as providing for their intellectual growth and moral training.

The compulsory education law is therefore a guarantee for both sides. It provides educational opportunity for all individuals in a given society; on the other hand, it secures for society a means to progress. When the law states that education shall be compulsory, this means the state is compelled to provide means for educating its people as well as that the individual is compelled to attend school.

The history of education in various countries shows that the establishment of compulsory education has been influenced by different causes and motives, depending on the predominant social and political forces of the times. In the early days of American education for example, religious and moral motives prevailed; in many countries, education has become an instrument for promoting national interest—either political loyalty or economic progress. Whatever force may have motivated the enactment of the compulsory
education law, the latter is a device to allow a long-range, systematic educational program to be established and carried on. It can be the expression of a social trend as well as a police requirement.

B. A General Survey of Compulsory Education in Various Countries

The movement for free elementary education was started in Europe at the end of the 18th century but the idea of universal free compulsory education was not wide-spread until the Industrial Revolution brought about its numerous political as well as social implications.¹

In the United States, Massachusetts pioneered the move by enacting the Educational Law of 1852, compelling all children of 8 to 14 years of age to attend school. By 1880, 29 states had enacted such laws. By 1918, compulsory school attendance became legally established in all the states. The majority of states and those containing the major part of the population of the United States require children between 7-16 to attend school, and in general the extent of compulsory education covers the elementary course.²

¹Hollis, P. Allen, Universal Free Education. Stanford University Press, California, 1934, p. 3
²Ibid. p. 24
The Preliminary Report on the World Social Situation published by the United Nations Department of Social Affairs in 1952 gives the following data with regard to compulsory education.\(^3\)

Of the 40 countries and territories of the African Continent, only Algeria and French West Africa have compulsory education for children 6 to 14, and 8 to 14 years old respectively. In some territories, such as Madagascar, Kenya, Northern Rhodesia, and Union of South Africa, education is compulsory for European children only; in other territories it is compulsory only in urban districts.

In Asia, 8 out of 12 countries listed have compulsory education laws; in Europe, 23 out of 30; all the countries in Latin America (20 listed); in the Middle East, 9 out of 16; in Northern America and the Carribean territories, 7 out of 12; and in the Oceanian countries 3 out of 7 have such laws. However the enforcement is not equally successful all over the world.

According to the UNESCO reports,\(^4\),\(^5\),\(^6\) France, England, and Australia are listed among countries in which compulsory education may be considered satisfactorily applied. France


\(^{4}\text{Jean Debiesse, Compulsory Education in France. UNESCO, Paris, 1951.}\)

\(^{5}\text{W. O. Lester Smith, Compulsory Education in England, UNESCO, Paris, 1951.}\)

\(^{6}\text{Compulsory Education in Australia, UNESCO, Paris, 1951}\)
enacted its compulsory education law in 1802; England, in 1870; the six Australian states, between 1872-1893. The age limits are respectively 6 to 14 in France; 5 to 15 in England; and 6 to 14, 15, or 16 in Australia, according to states.

In these countries as well as in some other countries, such as Belgium, Canada, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Netherlands, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United States, there is a trend towards raising the legal age for leaving school. This is an index of success in the enforcement of compulsory attendance in these countries, which index correlates with their low illiteracy rate and the fact that the enrolment in primary and secondary schools is larger than the total population between 5 and 14 inclusive—the average age range for primary education.

The statistics of illiteracy show that those countries whose economy is predominantly agricultural have higher percentages of illiteracy than those countries which have a predominantly industrial economy.

In the United States for example, there was only a 3% illiteracy among the people 14 years old and over, according to an estimate based on a sample survey made in 1947. In Belgium,


the 1947 census shows a 3% illiteracy among the persons 10 years old and over. Literacy in Sweden is practically universal. No exact data was given for Japan, the United Kingdom, Australia, Norway and some other European countries which are believed to have very low illiteracy rates. (In these countries, over 95% of the adult population are thought literate.)

On the other hand, India has 80% illiteracy among the people 10 years old and over, according to an estimate based on a sample taken at the 1951 census; Egypt, 78%; Burma, 60%; and China, 56%.

These figures bear out the fact that in industrial countries the development and provision for elementary education were more advanced and the compulsory school attendance law more successfully enforced than in agricultural countries. I.L. Kandel gives two reasons for this difference, in the introduction to his study, *Raising the School-Leaving Age*:

In the first place the industrial revolution everywhere led to the aggregation of populations in urban centers, where the establishment of schools to accommodate large numbers of pupils was easier than in rural areas with sparse population and inadequate means of communication and transport. The second reason was the rise of factory systems with steam power-driven machinery demanded literate workers, while manual skill and physical strength continued for a long time to be the chief requisite for agricultural work.

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10 Ibid.

11 Kandel, p. 12
The explanation given by Kandel is quite plausible, but does it imply that industrialization should be a prerequisite for compulsory education? The first explanation seems to answer the question affirmatively, and the second seems to reverse the conditions: compulsory education is indispensable for the development of an industrial economy.

What can be done then to develop elementary education in agricultural countries?

C. Statement of the Problem

As an attempt to answer the question put forth in the previous section, the writer proposes to study the problem of compulsory education in three countries whose economy is still mainly agricultural, namely the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam. In fact, about 70% of gainfully employed Filipinos derive their livelihood from agriculture.\(^{12}\) In Thailand the percentage is 80%.\(^{13}\) Although no recent statistical figures are available for Viet Nam it is common knowledge that the great majority of the people live by farming.

The purpose of this study is to compare some aspects of the problem as it arises in each of these countries, and on the basis of the various factors influencing the development of compulsory

\(^{12}\)**Fact Sheets on the Philippines**, Philippine Association, Manila, 1954, p. 34

\(^{13}\)**Virginia Thompson, Thailand, the New Siam**, McMillan, New York, 1941.
education to propose some practical solutions--applicable to Viet Nam in particular--to raise the education and living standards of the people simultaneously and rapidly.

The study is carried on with the presumption that a program of compulsory education even properly enforced would not alone provide the best answer to the needs of these countries, but it must be supplemented with some other less conventional educational programs.

The results of the investigations on the problem of compulsory education, conducted by UNESCO, have been published in a series of reports presented by individual countries. These reports show that although the principle of free compulsory primary education for all has been accepted in general, its practice, especially in economically undeveloped countries, needs much improvement to be satisfactory. They also show that although the problem is common, still, each country has to deal with some specific phases depending on its social and cultural background, its geographic conditions and its economic development. The caste system in India, for example, although abolished by law, still, in fact, constitutes an obstacle to the establishment of universal compulsory education.14 One of the problems Thailand has to face is how to integrate the Malay and Chinese population in a

national educational system. The lack of roads and means of transportation quite common in rural areas obviously prevents the expansion of education in isolated localities.

In their effort to promote literacy among the people, governments may enact laws and regulations compelling the parents to send their children to school, but how can legislation be enforced when it is a matter of primary necessity for children of 6 to 10 years of age to contribute to the meager family budget by helping their parents, either out in the rice fields or at home?

How can the government cope with the lack of school buildings and equipment when funds are limited?

For the sake of compulsory education, would school authorities be justified in employing untrained teachers to instruct the children when no qualified teachers are available? or should a high standard be the rule in the selection of teachers, thus allowing thousands of children to grow up illiterate?

How many years should compulsory schooling last in order to secure permanent acquisition of the basic skills?

At what stage is it desirable to prolong the initial duration of compulsory attendance?

What curriculum should be adopted that would best fit the abilities and interests of the children and meet the demands of

the communities, without creating barriers in the process of social integration and the preservation of traditional values?

What program of study should be established to secure proper articulation with the higher school level and, at the same time, provide those who desire to start working with some instruction and experience in subjects related to their vocational interests and activities?

The present study is an attempt to bring together certain pertinent findings presented in the separate reports by UNESCO, supplemented with data from some other sources available at this time, so as to make possible some comparisons leading to practical suggestions concerning elementary education in agricultural countries. In this study, emphasis is placed on the examination of the various measures taken by public authorities to enforce the law of compulsory school attendance; whatever mention may be made of private contribution in the educational task, it is only incidental.

The procedures used in this study consist mainly of documentary research. Most of the materials used in this study are factual data. They are arranged in five chapters. The first chapter is an introduction, and is broken down into three sections. The purpose of compulsory education is briefly discussed in section A; in section B, an attempt is made to present a general survey of compulsory education in various countries; the purpose, scope and plan of this study are stated in section C of
The second chapter deals with some factors contributing to or hampering the development of education in the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam.

The third chapter is divided into three sections: each section contains data related to the establishment and implementation of compulsory education in one of the three countries respectively. In each section, consideration is given successively to the following points: legislation, administration and organization finance, curriculum, teacher training, and school facilities.

In the fourth chapter, an attempt is made to compare the present situation of compulsory education in these three countries with reference to some problems specific to each of them.

The significance of the findings and some suggestions may be found in the last chapter of this study.
CHAPTER II

FACTORS INFLUENCING THE DEVELOPMENT
OF COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN THE
PHILIPPINES, THAILAND
AND VIET NAM

From what has been discussed previously it appears that compulsory education is not an educational problem as such although it does involve the planning of the school curriculum, the training of teachers, methods of teaching etc... It is rather a problem of organization that has to contend with several factors. In order to have a better understanding of the problem itself, it is necessary to have some idea of the context within which it arises.

Among other things, education is also a social process; the establishment of an educational program is therefore strongly influenced by the social structure and cultural environment; on the other hand the realization of such a program depends, for a large part, if not entirely, on the material facilities the country can afford. This, in turn, is conditioned by geographical factors.
With no attempt to go into detail, this chapter will present some facts related to the general background of each of the above-mentioned countries and their significance as regards the development of education.

A. Geographical Factors

Generally speaking, the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam are all three located in South East Asia. A comparison of their respective longitudes and latitudes shows that these countries are quite close to each other and all situated in the tropical zone, which is characterized by hot weather and heavy rainfall, and subject to the monsoon cycle. These weather conditions may seriously impede school attendance in these countries. For example, in Viet Nam, during the raining season, the narrow, and unpaved roads are transformed into muddy paths; certain low areas are immersed under several feet of water when the rivers overflow due to heavy rains in the mountains; of course, all surface traffic is held up during such periods, and for the children who usually walk a long distance to school, there is no question of going out.

The fact that the Philippines archipelago consists of more than 7,000 islands, does not facilitate transportation either. Although waterways play an important part in carrying passengers and goods in all three countries, still many sections are hardly accessible owing to the lack of adequate means of transportation.
Another common factor in these countries, and a factor related to poor transportation, is the uneven distribution of their population. For example, the general density of the Philippine population is 69 per square kilometer but in the Luzon island it is 60 per square kilometer; in the Visayas, 65 per square kilometer; and in Mindanao and Sulu only 30 per square kilometer. The most densely populated areas, in central Luzon and Cebu, count 192 inhabitants per square kilometer. Certain good agricultural provinces in Mindanao have only 17 inhabitants per square kilometer. The Thai population generally settles along the river valleys; the mountain regions are sparsely populated; the highest density is to be found in the central region, especially the area adjacent to Bangkok. In Viet Nam, the population is concentrated in the lowlands—82% of the population are crowded in 13% of the territories. The delta of the Red River in the north has a density of 450 persons per square kilometer; in certain small areas, such as Nham, Nam dinh, the density is as high as 1500 per square kilometer. The density of the population

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in the plains along the coast of center Viet Nam is over 200 per square kilometer. The vast and fertile delta of the Mekong in the south has comparatively lower density—less than 200 inhabitants per square kilometer. The mountains and highlands are very scarcely inhabited.  

This uneven distribution of the population does not, however, constitute a serious problem in implementing compulsory education as one could be led to think—except in certain mountain areas where people are more isolated—because in general, the inhabitants, in the Philippine islands as well as in Thailand and Viet Nam, group themselves together in organized communities. The Philippine "barrios" or the Thai "tambons" or the Viet Namese "lang" comprising 50 to 500 families or more offer an organizational pattern which facilitates the establishment of schools.

B. Language Factor

Ethnologically, the Filipinos belong to forty-three groups, speaking 8 distinct languages and 87 different dialects according to areas. Among the eight leading Philippine languages, spoken by 90% of the inhabitants of the country, Tagalog has

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been officially adopted as national language. However, even though taught as a course in all schools, and the most widely used, Tagalog is spoken by only one third of the total population. In addition to the native languages, English has become an important medium of communication among the Filipinos: one third of the Filipinos can speak English; government documents and publications, magazines and newspapers are printed in English. The Spanish language, introduced by the Spanish rulers seems to have given way gradually to English since the latter became the official language during the American regime. However, knowledge of it is still considered to give prestige; recently it has been reintroduced as a required course in the secondary school curriculum.\(^5\)

Under the Spanish, and later the American regimes, Spanish and English were successively used as the official media of instruction in all schools; consequently, many children would spend the three or four years in school, struggling with a language entirely new to them, and upon leaving school, would neither know the new language well enough for practical use nor would they satisfactorily reach any of the goals set out for them by the school. In too many cases they would relapse into illiteracy. In short, there was a considerable wastage of time, material, and human resources. The language problem is still

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acute even now that the Philippines has become an independent republic, although it has taken a different bend, because of the diversity of languages and dialects as mentioned previously. The question now is: should the schools be conducted in the local vernacular, thus making learning meaningful and more effective to the children, or should instruction be given in Tagalog, the national language, instead—for the sake of promoting national spirit and also to ensure greater unity in the Philippine educational program? Advocates of both sides have valid arguments to support their views. While a decision concerning the medium of instruction is still pending, it is the general consensus that the language situation does constitute an important handicap for the development of education in the Philippines. 6

In this respect Thailand and Viet Nam are more fortunate. In spite of differences in accents and local idioms, the basic language in Thailand and in Viet Nam is spoken throughout the two countries respectively. However, a similar language problem—on a smaller scale—arises when plans are drawn to develop education among the minority groups, such as the Malay-speaking people in the southern provinces of Thailand, 7 and the mountain and plateau dwellers in Viet Nam. 8

6Ibid. p. 22-23
7M.L. Manich Jumsai, Compulsory Education in Thailand, UNESCO, Paris, 1951, p. 87
8Charles Bilodeau & al., p. 141
C. Religious Influence

The most important element in cultural changes in the Philippines, resulting from its contact with the West, is religion. Today the Philippines is the only country in Asia with a population almost entirely professing the Christian faith. During the Spanish period the Catholic Church played a very important role in the educational development of the country. According to Canon law, "parents are bound by a most grave obligation to provide to the best of their ability for the religious and moral as well as for the physical and civil education of their children and for their temporal well-being... If there are no Catholic schools--elementary or intermediate--the Ordinary especially must see to it that they be established." 9 Up to that time no formal education existed in the Philippines. Therefore, upon their arrival, the Spanish missionaries opened schools with the primary objective of teaching religion to the people. In this educational task they were encouraged by the government; however, the latter did not directly assume any responsibility concerning the matter until 1863, when an Educational Decree was promulgated whereby the government was to give some financial help; but the organization and operation of the schools were largely left in the hands of

9 Antonio Isidro, Compulsory Education in the Philippines, UNESCO, Paris 1952, p. 59
the clergy. 10 During the American regime and under the present Republic, the principle of separation between the Church and State has led to the establishment of a state system of education; however, the religious organizations have continued their interest and activities in education, thus contributing to the extension of education among the masses of the people.11

The influence of Buddhism on education in Thailand is as considerable as that of the Catholic religion on Philippine education. The first Thai schools were opened and conducted in the temples by the Buddhist priests to teach the boys reading, writing, arithmetic and moral precepts according to Buddhist beliefs. The priests are highly respected and looked upon by the people for spiritual and intellectual leadership.

Members of other religious groups also have contributed to education in Thailand, namely the French Catholic Mission of the "Societe des Missions Etrangeres" and the American Presbyterian Mission.12

In Viet Nam as in Thailand, the very first educational endeavors must be credited to the Buddhist religion; later on, it was reinforced by Confucian tradition: the classical Confucian


11 ------, Compulsory Education in the Philippines, p. 56

12 Manich Jumsai, pp. 17 & 81
teaching constitutes an important part of the traditional school curriculum. Veneration for the great master and his teaching is evidenced by the numerous Confucian temples erected by the kings and the people of Viet Nam in his memory and in the memory of outstanding scholars of the nation.

More recently, schools have been opened by Catholic missionaries whose contribution to the extension of education deserves consideration. Mention should be made of the early missionaries who came during the 17th century, and who initiated the use of Roman alphabet to transcribe phonetically the spoken Vietnamese language into a simple writing system. At first, designed to spread religious instruction among the native people, this new writing system (Quoc-Ngu) was refined later on, and is today the medium of communication in school as well as in everyday life. Until the beginning of the 20th century, books were written in Chinese characters, or in "Nom" a system of characters derived from Chinese. The reading and writing of the "Quoc-Ngu", being far more simple than the characters, can be learned in a few months. As a medium of instruction, it is a great contribution to the spread of elementary education among the people.

D. Economic Conditions

The most salient feature of economic life in the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam is the fact that on the basis of natural resources, all three have great potentialities. The land is fertile for agricultural development and, if properly cultivated, can provide enough food for many more than the present population. The forests abound in excellent timber of different varieties and the soil contains valuable minerals. However, in none of these countries have the natural resources been exploited sufficiently or adequately to provide the people with more than a subsistence standard of living. As a matter of fact, the economic status of the people is very low in the Philippines as well as in Thailand and Viet Nam, compared with the standard of living in Western countries.14 The yearly income of the average worker is far below the minimum necessary to meet the ordinary needs of life. The inadequate system of land tenure favors the concentration of wealth in the hands of a few to the detriment of the mass of peasants who become easy preys of usurers, each year loaded with heavier and heavier debts, which they will never be able to pay back. This situation is not to facilitate the extension of education. The poverty and low incomes of the laboring class

make any plan for taxation to support the schools unworkable. Furthermore, in these countries where most of the farm work is done by hands, children of school age are needed to help, either in the rice fields or for housework while the parents are tilling the land or harvesting. It should be noted that even though in too many cases the parents cannot afford sending their children to school, owing to economic difficulties, their attitude towards education nevertheless is most favorable. Quite often the family are willing to make great sacrifices to provide for the formal education of at least one child.

E. The Government and Education

In the case of the Philippines and Thailand, not until the end of the 19th century had the government become directly concerned with the education of the people. Prior to that time, education was left in the hands of religious organizations. The governments contented themselves with giving encouragements to the educational endeavors, without taking any direct action as to the organization or supervision of the schools. The same situation prevailed in Viet Nam until the beginning of the 20th century as far as primary education was concerned. Today the conditions have changed: subsequent to the spread of democratic principles in these countries, the respective governments recognize education of the mass as one of their most important tasks, and an integral part of their program of national recon-
struction and development; their aspiration to raise the standard of living makes it necessary to bring education to their people.

The Constitution of the Philippines, Article XIV, section 5 reads: 15

All education institutions shall be under the supervision of and subject to regulation by the state. The government shall establish and maintain a complete and adequate system of public education and shall provide at least free public primary instruction and citizenship training to all adult citizens.

The expenditures for public education in the Philippines have been increasing year by year and constitute the largest item of all governmental expenses. According to the President budget message, the expenditures for public education during the year 1950-1951 represent 38% of the total expenditures of the Philippines government. 16

The Constitution of Thailand granted by King Prajadhipok after the coup d'état of 1932, contains several articles related to education:17

Art. 56. Every citizen must receive primary education.
Art. 63. It is the duty of the state to promote and foster education. All institutions must be under the care of the state. Education is the responsibility of the state...
Art. 64. Primary education in state and municipal schools shall be given free of charge. It is the duty of the state to equip the schools suitably.

16 Ibid.
17 V. Jumsai, p. 52
To achieve the educational aims stated, the Ministry of Education was provided with an increasing budget. The latter, in 1932, was 4,986,406 ticals, representing 6.7% of the country's budget, as compared with 468,811,664 ticals, or 22.1% in 1950.\textsuperscript{18}

In Viet Nam several decrees were issued recently by the government, establishing compulsory education and planning for the campaign against illiteracy.\textsuperscript{19}

In summary, it can be said that in the Philippines, Thailand and Viet Nam, among the factors influencing the application of compulsory education, several are favorable. These are political, religious, social, and geographical. On the other hand, the economic factors in all three countries present great obstacles. In addition, the Philippines is faced with a major language problem.

\textsuperscript{18}Ibid. p. 85

\textsuperscript{19}Bilodeau & al., pp. 122-23
CHAPTER III

ESTABLISHMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF

COMPULSORY EDUCATION IN THE

PHILIPPINES, THAILAND

AND VIET NAM

A. In the Philippines

Prior to 1863 there was no systematic administration and control of education by the government. From Madrid, royal orders were issued to the missionaries to organize schools and educate the people but no measures were taken by the government to enforce the orders. From the legal point of view, since 1863 up to the present time, five important steps have marked the development of compulsory education in the Philippines:

1. Subsequent to the plan drafted by a commission set up in 1855 according to a royal order of 1832, an Educational Decree was promulgated in 1863. This decree established the responsibility of the government to provide education for the people. It determined the school curriculum, the length of the school

1Isidro, The Philippine Educational System, pp. 99-127
term, and the vacation period; also it provided for the establish-
ment of a normal school to train men teachers. A royal decree
in 1863 provided that instruction should be free and compulsory,
and that children between 6 and 14 years of age were required to
attend school. To ensure the application of the Decree, three
regulations were set up:

a) Fifteen years after the establishment of the school, no
Filipino who did not speak, read, and write Spanish could become
a member of the "principalia" (elite class) unless that right was
gained by inheritance.
b) Only those who could speak, read or write Spanish could be
exempted from personal labor service.
c) Five years after the publication of the Decree, no Filipino
could be appointed to government positions without the above
qualifications.

2. Under the first Philippine Republic (1897-98) the public
schools were removed from clerical control. The Constitution
provided for the separation of religious instruction and civic
education which was to be free and compulsory. 2

3. The Educational Act 74 of the Philippine Commission, passed
in 1901 during the American regime, marked a significant step in
Philippine education; by establishing the Philippine public

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2Isidro, Compulsory Education in the Philippines, p. 17
school system it laid down the foundation of the present school
system.  

4. The fourth legal provision related to compulsory education
is the Educational Act of 1940, also known as Commonwealth Act
586. This law was enacted as a remedial measure to the yearly
"school crisis" faced by the school authorities during the early
years of the Commonwealth. It provided for four major changes in
the school organization:

a) The elementary course was reduced from 7 years (4 primary
grades and 3 intermediate grades) to 6 years (4 primary and 2
intermediate).

b) Attendance in the primary grades was made compulsory.

c) Adoption of the two single-sessions plan. According to this
plan, a given school building was to serve two different groups
of children, one in the morning, the other in the afternoon,
under the same teacher. For the children, the school day was
thus reduced to one half, for the teacher the work load became
heavier; on the other hand, more children could be accommodated.

d) The support of elementary schools became the responsibility
of the national government instead of local authority; however,
the chartered cities were to support the intermediate grades.

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3Isidro, The Philippine Educational System, pp. 99-127

4Ibid.
5. The latest legislation on compulsory education is the Elementary Education Act of 1953. This law re-establishes the 7 year elementary school program reduced to 6 years by the Educational Act of 1940; it fixes the attendance age: all children 7 years old must be enrolled in school; and the duration of compulsory attendance: all children enrolled in school must remain until completion of the elementary course (7 years). This law also provides for the appropriations out of the national treasury for educational purposes.

The administration of the Philippine educational system has always been highly centralized. The Decree of 1863 vested the supreme authority over primary instruction in the civil governor of the Philippines. The latter was assisted by a supervisory board, known as the "Superior Commission of Primary Instruction," composed of 10 members, including the diocesan prelate, the director of the men's normal school, and other prominent leaders in the community. The provincial supervision and inspection was vested in the chief of the province, assisted by the provincial school board. The members of this board included representatives of civil and religious authorities. The local school was under the direct supervision of the parish priest.

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6 Isidro, The Philippine Educational System, pp. 9-14
During the American regime, the Educational Act 74 placed the entire system under the executive supervision of the Department of Public Instruction which later became the Bureau of Education, and is today the Bureau of Public Schools; at the head of the system was the General Superintendent, later, Director of Education, assisted by a Superior Advisory Board. The control and supervision of provincial schools and schools in Manila were placed under the Division Superintendents, assisted by the deputy division superintendent. In each municipality a school board was created to supervise the local schools.

The general organization of the system as provided by Act 74 is still in effect at the present time. It is patterned after the American system and includes from primary level to university level courses. The complete elementary schools, offering 4 years of primary courses and 3 years of intermediate courses, are found in towns; larger barrios have complete primary schools, and smaller barrios have one, two, or three grades only.

The financial support of the Philippine public elementary schools, before 1939, was the responsibility of both the local government and national government. Through taxation, the former was to provide 1/3 of the costs and the latter 2/3. The Commonwealth Act 381 passed in 1939, provided that: a) primary education should be supported by the national government; b) the intermediate grades should be supported by chartered cities and municipal governments; c) national grants would be provided the
municipal districts which were unable to maintain its intermediate grades.

This plan did not work well, because many municipalities could not maintain their intermediate classes. School taxes could not be levied. To remedy the situation, the Commonwealth Act 586 or Education Act of 1940 provided that the national government should assume the responsibility for the entire elementary system and support both primary and intermediate grades. Chartered cities were required to support their intermediate grades, with aid from the national government. Accordingly municipal school funds were abolished and the collection of tuition fees in intermediate grades was prohibited by law; however, a matriculation fee, not to exceed 2 pesos was allowed for the purchase of library books and school equipment. The acquisition of sites for school buildings was the responsibility of the local authorities.

The curriculum of the elementary school established by the Educational Decree of 1863 emphasized the study of Christian doctrine; in addition it included some reading and writing in Spanish and arithmetic. The Educational Act 74 established a new curriculum in accordance with the objectives of elementary education as reorganized by that time. English was to be taught as the official language; besides the 3 R's, the courses of study included civics, music, principles of hygiene and sanitation.

\[7\text{Ibid. pp. 131-139}\]
as well as instruction in some vocational subjects. In 1940, other subjects were added to the curriculum mentioned above: physical education and pre-military training for boys, and social studies. In the intermediate grades, home economics was prescribed for girls and industrial arts for boys; besides, agricultural intermediate course were offered in farm schools.

The Educational Decree of 1863 which introduced compulsory education in the Philippines, also provided for a normal school for men, which school was opened in 1865. In 1893, a normal school for women was organized in Manila. Prior to 1863, anyone was allowed to teach; in many places, priests were the only teachers. The curriculum included religious and moral courses, general education, some elements of practical agriculture, and pedagogy. No tuition fee was required at the normal school in Manila, but the students had to agree to teach for a period of 10 years after graduation. The duration of training was 3 years. The present Philippine Normal School in Manila was established according to the Educational Act 74. In the beginning, candidates to this school were required to know English and the four fundamental operations in arithmetic. The entrance requirements were revised several times later, and in 1916 they were fixed as follows: a) candidates must have completed the first year of secondary school; b) they must be at least 16 years old; c) they must be

8Ibid. pp. 113-116
in good health and be free from physical defects; and d) they must agree to teach one year after graduation. The academic requirement was raised to 2 years of secondary education in 1926-1928; and from 1928-29 on the completion of the 4 year secondary course has been required. At present candidates with the stated qualifications are admitted only after a competitive examination and personal interview. Also the duration of the training is now 4 years instead of 2 as it was before 1954-55. The curriculum includes: general education, education courses, and practice teaching. Upon completion of the course, the candidate is granted the elementary teacher certificate.

In addition to the Philippine Normal School there are today 7 other normal schools operating under the Bureau of Public Schools and offering the same curriculum, with the same admission requirements as the Philippine Normal School.

One of the major problems in enforcing compulsory education in the Philippines is the problem of school facilities. After the promulgation of the Educational Decree of 1963, few school houses were erected and the equipment was all very rudimentary, notwithstanding the plans of the government to open schools in every town. After the reorganization of the educational system and

9 Ibid. pp. 14-19
10 Compulsory Education in South Asia and the Pacific
11 Isidro, Compulsory Education in the Philippines, p. 16
during the Commonwealth period, many schools were opened, but they still could not meet the increase of the school population. The 1939 census shows that only 41% of the children of 7 to 10 years old were in school; only 58.1% of the children of 11 to 13 years old were enrolled. The conditions were still worse after the war: in 1947, more than one half million children of school age could not be admitted in public primary schools. Today the situation has improved: the number of schools has increased since 1948; however, they are still not sufficient to accommodate all the children of school age.

B. In Thailand

While the earlier kings did manifest genuine interest in education, the idea of bringing knowledge to the masses was not their main concern. They fostered literary circles among the princes and court officials, sent students abroad to learn Western sciences and languages and opened schools in the royal palaces to teach the children of princes and noblemen. Finally, at the end of the 19th century, King Chulalongkorn realized the necessity of extending education to the people. It was he who initiated the modern Thai educational system in 1871, first by

12Isidro, The Philippine Educational System, pp. 101-102
13------, Compulsory Education in the Philippines, p. 46
establishing several schools in the capital and other cities, and later, in 1887, by setting up the Education Department, which later became the Ministry of Education, to draw plans for a national program of education and see to its realization. Rapid progress in education was obtained from this time on, and in 1921 the king signed the law on compulsory education, known as the Primary Education Act.\textsuperscript{14} This law provided that all children of 7 to 14 years of age must attend school, unless exempted for specified reasons; that an education tax should be collected to support education; that education committees be set up to run the schools and raise funds to maintain them; that all public schools should be under the administration and supervision of the Ministry of Education; and that private schools must follow the rules and regulations established by the Ministry of Education in matters related to compulsory education.

The Thai Constitution of 1932 explicitly stipulates that all citizens must receive primary education, and that primary instruction must be given free of charge.\textsuperscript{15} In 1935, the revision of the Primary Education Act of 1921 changed the compulsory attendance age from that of 7 to 14 to that of 8 to 15.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{14}Fanich Jumsai, p. 39
\textsuperscript{15}Ibid., p. 52
\textsuperscript{16}Ibid., p. 56
To combat illiteracy among adults, the government passed a law on compulsory education for adults in 1943; but the law was repealed the following year, due to objections from adults.\footnote{\cit{Ibid.}, p. 83}

When the Education Department was first established in 1887, it was not responsible for the administration and organization of all the schools in the country, but only for those in Bangkok. Education in the provinces, districts, and villages was the responsibility of local administration and religious authorities. By 1913, primary education became the joint responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of City Administration. The instructional and supervisory activities were carried on under the Ministry of Education; the administrative tasks came under the province of the other two. On the local level, education officers were sent out by the Ministry of Education to assist the provincial governors and district administrators in the organization and supervision of schools. In villages this was the responsibility of local administrators assisted by education committees set up for this purpose.\footnote{\cit{Ibid.}, p. 44}

The Ministry of Education as reorganized in 1937, was divided into several departments headed by Directors-general, under the general supervision of the Under Secretary of State
for Education. Primary education became one of the several divisions of the Department of General Education, according to this administrative setup. A royal decree, on June 5, 1951, abolished the Division of Primary Education and instituted the new Department of Elementary and Adult Education.19

When the State system of education was started by King Chulalongkorn in 1887, the learning program consisted of 2 parts; in 1896, these 2 parts were divided into 3 standards each; the whole program was to be covered within 6 years. In 1913 the system was revised, and patterned after the British and Japanese combined systems. Primary education included 5 years of study: 3 years of general courses and 2 years of vocational courses, which were mostly agricultural. On the secondary level there were 2 parallel programs, general and vocational, both lasting 6 years upon completion the students who had chosen the general curriculum could continue in higher education. This system still exists today with only a few changes: for instance, it makes provision for adult education, and pre-primary instruction for children from 3 to 7 years of age. The 2 years of vocational education on the elementary level are no longer in operation. Primary education now covers 4 years of general study. Various vocational courses are offered on the secondary level: the latter lasts 6 years, followed by 2 years of pre-university courses.

Before the promulgation of the Primary Education Act of 1921 there were very few schools for girls; the first one was established in 1880 by King Chulalongkorn in memory of Princess Sunate. The percentage of girls receiving formal education, by 1918-1919, was only 2% of the total number of girls of school age, as compared with 20% of boys of school age. Since the compulsory education law was enforced, the enrolment of girls in schools increased rapidly. Today almost all primary schools are coeducational, so are the institutions of higher education; but secondary education and teacher training are provided separately for boys and girls. 20

It is to be noticed that the Thai State system of education includes private as well as public-supported schools. When the system was first initiated, there was no strictly controlled budget for its operation. The king merely ordered the Royal Treasury to see that adequate sums of money were given to the Ministry of Education to ensure the carrying out of the educational scheme. The amount allocated to education by the government was to be supplemented by financial support from the people. This money was raised by education committees, in the form of education taxes and other contributions; but if the people could not afford this, no punishment was imposed. The same financial arrangements were provided for by the Primary Education Act of

20 Virginia Thompson, Thailand, the New Siam, McMillan Co., New York, 1941.
1921. In 1930 the education poll tax was abolished and replaced by a grant from the Royal Treasury.\textsuperscript{21} Today the financial support of the Thai schools comes from three sources: national budget, municipal funds, and private sources. According to sources of support, the schools are classified into 4 types:\textsuperscript{22}

a) Local schools, managed by Provincial Administrative Bodies out of the Primary School budget of the Ministry of Education. (All are elementary schools)

b) Municipal schools, run by municipal authorities out of the Primary School budget of the Ministry of Education, plus a limited amount from municipal funds (Mostly elementary schools)

c) Government schools, administered by the Ministry of Education out of the national budget. They include secondary schools, teacher training, vocational and technical schools, and institutions of higher learning.

d) Private schools, organized and financed by private enterprises and organizations, but in certain meritorious cases subsidized by the government.

The curriculum of the first government schools whose purpose was to train government officials, stressed reading, writing, arithmetic, book-keeping, and administrative work. When the

\textsuperscript{21} Manich Jumsai, p. 45

education system was reorganized in 1913 and extended to the people, the primary curriculum provided for 2 years of vocational training after completion of 3 years of general study. The subjects taught included moral instruction, Thai language, arithmetic, history, geography, hygiene and physiology, drawing, scountcraft, and agricultural and other vocational subjects according to the needs of the students in different localities. Religious instruction was formally introduced into the curriculum of the government schools in 1929. In 1933 the primary classes were extended to 6 years; 4 years of general education and 2 years of vocational education. The latter were abolished in 1937. Today the primary curriculum, covering a period of 4 years, includes, in addition to the general program established in 1913, civic instruction, nature study, health and physical education, singing, handicraft, scouting for boys, and Red Cross work for girls.

An educational pilot project started in 1951 at Chachoengsao (100 kilometers East of Bangkok) under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Education, put under experiment a program of post-primary education also called primary extension. This program consists of 3 years of schooling beyond the 4 years in the primary school. The curriculum which is designed for the rural areas, has

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23 Virginia Thompson, Thailand, the New Siam, Mc Millan Co., New York, 1941

a strong vocational trend, although it includes general subjects as well.  

The first teacher training college for men was started in 1892 and for women in 1913. By 1919 the number of teachers graduated from these two schools was 1,190 men and 180 women. This was far too insufficient to staff the school system if compulsory education was to be enforced. To meet this considerable shortage of teachers, a provincial system had to be initiated, with various shorter courses, enrolling boys and girls of academic level lower than required for admission in the regular training colleges.  

In 1934 a normal school was opened in Bangkok, where the Buddhist priests were trained in modern methods of administration and education. Today elementary teachers are trained in provincial schools. Teacher certificates are classified into 4 types:  

a) local elementary teacher certificate, granted to candidates having completed a training program of 3 years beyond the primary courses (equivalent to 6 years of education, including the preparatory year). The holder of this certificate is qualified to teach only in schools within the locality where the training is given.

25 Chachoengsao Pilot Project, Ministry of Education, Bangkok, (N.D.)

26 Manich Jumsai, p. 76

27 Sargent, p. 21
b) provincial elementary teacher certificate, granted to students having completed a program of 2 years beyond grade III secondary, (equivalent to 10 years of education).

c) national elementary teacher certificate, requiring one year after the completion of the provincial elementary teacher training program, or after completion of the 6 year secondary course, (equivalent to 11 or 12 years of education).

In return for the free tuition, board, and lodging they receive during the training period, the students pledge to teach under the Ministry of Education for a term twice the period of their study. The curriculum consists of theory and practice of teaching, general education and school administration. No entrance examination is required.

The tradition of conducting schools in the temples has an advantage in the extension of education in Thailand: it reduced to a certain extent the problem of school buildings, especially in the early years of compulsory education. Not only local but government schools as well as private schools depended on temple buildings. By 1922, the year following the promulgation of the Primary Education Act, the law was in operation in 52% of the villages; 80.5% of the 4,488 schools opened at that time, were held in temple buildings. By 1932 the percentage of villages where the compulsory law was enforced, increased to 88.7%; the number of temple schools also increased, although the percentage as compared with the total number of schools became smaller; of
the 7,638 schools existing in 1932, 5,433 were conducted in
temple buildings. By 1950, the figures were respectively 18,497
and 8,680. In spite of the increasing number of schools opened
each year, they are still insufficient; besides, a large number
of school buildings are inadequate, and the equipment is extreme-
ly poor: not always do local schools have benches and desks for
the children, not to mention other school materials and text-
books.29

C. In Viet Nam

The traditional educational system in Viet Nam dates as far
back as the 11th century when, under the reign of the Emperor
Ly Thanh Ton, the first examinations were instituted.30 These
examinations, held periodically, and revised several times
through the centuries, had lasted until the beginning of the 20th
century; they enabled the government to control education in the
nation, and to recruit government officials. Schools of advanced
study were opened in the capital and in larger cities to the sons
of mandarins (higher government officials) and deserving students
holders of scholarships. In the provinces and districts a system
of secondary schools was started by Ho Guv Ly during the 14th

28Manich Jumsai, pp. 42-45
29Ibid., p. 70
30Deo-Buy-Anh, Viet Nam Van Hoa Su Cuong, 2nd edition,
Bon Phuong, Saigon, 1951, pp. 254-266
century. However, to a large extent education was a private enterprise, and left to individual initiative; and this was all the more true with primary education as proved by the numerous private schools in all villages. These schools were opened and conducted by scholars, retiring mandarins, junior graduates or unsuccessful candidates to government examinations. The children were taught to read and wrote Chinese characters and moral principles according to Confucian philosophy. Education was not imposed upon the people, but rather sought for, because of the honor and privileges it conferred upon those who could afford it. Thousands of people from early adolescence to old age would spend their lifetimes presenting themselves to the examinations again and again with persistent hope of success and honor. Among the common people although few could reach advanced education, most of them were literate at least in the essential Chinese characters in common use.

During the French regime, Vietnamese education underwent different stages of reforms in the 3 parts of the country: In Cochinchina (southern part) right after this section became a French colony, the traditional educational system was replaced by the Franco-Vietnamese system. Primary, as well as secondary and higher education was organized in a modern pattern. Chinese characters were replaced by Quoc Ngu and French. From 1927 onwards primary education became compulsory for all children between 7 and 12 years of age. In Central and North Viet Nam,
educational reforms were introduced more gradually. The traditional system was first reorganized in 1908, but was maintained in substance; only ten years later was it replaced by the Franco-Vietnamese system, when the educational order of December 21, 1917 was issued. However, no provision was made to establish compulsory education in these parts of the country. The law on compulsory education for the entire Viet Nam was issued only a few years ago, on January 20, 1952. This decree makes primary education compulsory for all children between 6 and 14 years of age and fixes the duration of compulsory attendance at 3 years. At the same time, another decree was issued concerning the campaign against illiteracy. According to the terms of this decree all persons between the ages of 13 and 50 years who were not able to read and write their native tongue, must enroll in the literacy classes. 31

The administration of public education during the French period was the responsibility of the Director General of Public Instruction established in each of the 3 parts of the country, and the provincial Directors who were responsible to the former. The administrative pattern still remains today with a few changes. At the top of the system is the Minister of National Education. The Ministry of National Education is divided into several departments, including the Department of Primary and

31 Bilodeau & al., p. 122
Popular Education. The Director of the Department of Primary and Popular Education in each region of Viet Nam is responsible to the Ministry of National Education for professional and technical matters but depends on the governor of the region for administrative arrangements. Provincial primary inspectors are responsible from the technical and administrative standpoints alike to the Director of Education attached to the governor of the province.

The Ministry of National Education is not directly responsible for the financial support of Primary and Popular education. The expenses of primary education are paid for out of local budgets. Popular education is supported chiefly by funds supplied from American Economic Aid.

Primary education in the Franco-Vietnamese system was divided into 2 cycles: the elementary cycle and the complementary cycle, each covering 3 years. Those schools that offered both cycles were called schools of full-exercise and existed only in cities, chief towns of provinces and larger districts. The average district and village schools offered only the elementary cycle. In some communal schools only the first course of the elementary cycle was available.

\[32\] Ibid., p. 123
\[33\] Ibid., p. 125
The curriculum included courses in general education. The study of French was introduced as early as the 2nd year of the elementary cycle. Courses in Chinese characters for beginners were given in the first year of the complementary cycle. But these courses had gradually been dropped out. Today primary education consists of a 5 year cycle. Primary schools may cover either the complete cycle or only the first 3 courses. The program of study as revised by the Ministry of Education in 1949 pays greater attention to the functional aspect of education. Instruction is given entirely in Vietnamese. The study of French is postponed until the student enters the first year of secondary school.

Besides the regular primary courses, a popular system, composed of rapid primary courses and courses for adults, had been inaugurated to supplement the insufficient number of regular primary schools. Rapid primary courses are open to children between 6 and 18 years old; they consist of 2 sections, lasting each 4½ months. These are make-up courses for pupils who have passed the statutory age-limit for admission to primary schools. Courses for adults are open to people over 18, who are unable to

34 Naspero, p. 92
35 Chuong trinh Tieu Hoc, Bo Quoc-Gia Giao-Duc Viet Nam, 1950
read and write or who desire to improve their literacy skills; these courses last four months, divided into two periods of 2 months each.36

Schools for the training of teachers did not exist in the traditional educational system. For centuries, learning had consisted in memorizing the material handed out by the teacher; the content of the subjects taught had remained unchanged; anyone who could read and write and had some understanding of the classic books could open a school and teach according to his knowledge. In the modern system, primary teachers are trained in the normal schools in Hanoi and Saigon and also at the training courses attached to secondary and normal schools.37 Students graduated from normal schools were qualified to teach in the schools of full-exercise. Teachers in village schools in general had no academic training beyond the primary courses. In 1949, an order issued by the Ministry of National Education set up a program for rapid training of primary teachers.38 The training period was to last 9 months (one school term); admission requirements consisted of: a) completion of the first cycle of secondary education (equivalent to 9 years of education: 5 years of primary

37Marpero, p. 92
38Bilodeau, & al., p. 152
plus 4 years of secondary schooling); b) a competitive examination; c) an age-limit between 18 and 25; and d) an agreement to serve in state schools for at least 10 years. Student-teachers were provided free tuition and maintenance during the period of training. This program has been in operation since, with some modifications. For instance, candidates to the Saigon Normal School are required to have completed the 6-year primary course; be not less than 14 years old, and pass a competitive entrance examination. The program of study lasts 4 years, whereas in Central and North Viet Nam, the training period lasts only one year, but candidates for admission are required to have completed 9 years of education.

School facilities in Viet Nam have never been adequate. The number of primary schools in operation by 1930 was over 4,000 with an enrollment of approximately 260,000 pupils. No figures are available from that time until 1951. The data for the year 1951-52 are valid only inasmuch as the regions controlled by the national government are concerned. According to the report on compulsory education in Viet Nam, in 1952 the school population in these regions was estimated at 1,400,000. Of this number,


40 Hespero, p. 92

41 Bilodeau & al., p. 128
approximately 978,000 children were out of schools; even taking into account the 49,600 pupils enrolled in rapid primary courses and 80,000 pupils in private schools still more than half of the children of school age received no schooling of any kind. During the school year 1954-55, the primary school enrollment in the regions under the national government was 359,820, including those refugee schools evacuated from North Viet Nam.42 As the total population of South Viet Nam today is estimated at 11 million,43 on the basis of 10% of the total population,44 the number of children of school age in this section is 1,100,000; of these, roughly 740,000 were out of school. The problem of school facilities is all the more serious when one considers the overcrowded classrooms. No infrequent are classes of 80 or 190 pupils under one teacher.45 In many cases, classes are held in makeshift premises, straw huts, sheds erected in haste; accordingly, lighting and ventilation are most defective; the children study either under sunlight or in semi-darkness because the buildings are either open on all sides or the walls do not have proper windows.


44Milo deau & al., p. 128.

45Ibid., p. 130.
CHAPTER IV

PRESENT SITUATION: SOME PROBLEMS OF
COMPULSORY EDUCATION SPECIFIC TO
EACH OF THESE COUNTRIES

The preceding chapter has given a brief account of the different steps towards the establishment of compulsory education in the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam, and the measures taken to implement compulsory education in these countries. The question now is: How successfully has the program been carried out? If the rate of illiteracy is taken as an index to measure the success of compulsory education, some progress has been recorded in the Philippines as well as in Thailand. In 1918 the Philippines had 55.5% illiterates among its population; in 1939 the percentage decreased to 51.2%; in 1948 it was only 38.7%. There has been a reduction of 16.8% in 20 years.\(^1\) In Thailand, the 1937 census shows an illiteracy rate of 68.8%; in 1947, the percentage decreased to 46.3%. The reduction is 22.5% in

\(^1\)Seminar on Fundamental and Adult Education, Manila Bureau of Printing, 1951
10 years.² No figures are available in the case of Viet Nam to allow a comparison between the three countries in this regard; besides, the criterion of literacy differs:³ in the Philippines it is the ability to read and write, in Thailand, the ability to read only. However these data give some idea of the results obtained in educational endeavors in the Philippines and Thailand. In Viet Nam it is obvious that no significant results can be expected as yet, since the law on compulsory education was issued only a few years ago; besides, the general conditions of the country have been during the last decade, most unfavorable to its implementation.

A comparison of the number of children actually in schools with the total school population might give some indication as to the achievement and shortcomings in the implementation of compulsory education. According to the statistics for 1948, in the Philippines, out of 4,158,561 children of 7 to 14 years old, 2,661,131 were actually in schools.⁴ In Thailand, the total number of children at compulsory attendance age in 1948 was 2,540,909, out of which 2,435,775 were in school.⁵ In Viet Nam,

⁴Statistics 1948, Bureau of Public Schools, Manila
as indicated in the last section, out of a school population of 1,100,000 approximately 740,000 children are receiving no schooling.

If the success of compulsory education is measured by the percentage of pupils who have completed the primary course as provided by the law, the results appear somewhat different. In the Philippine primary schools, from 1945 to 1950, out of every 100 children who enter grade I, only 47.38% reach grade IV.6 In Thailand, the percentage is 56.2% for the same period of time7 From 1921, when the compulsory education law was passed in Thailand, up to 1948, only 14.4% of all the children had completed primary education.8 The discrepancy between these figures and those related to the number of children actually in schools indicates that many children sent to schools stay in the lower grades for several years, or leave schools after attending for only one or two years.

What are the possible cause of these unsatisfactory results?

The first attempt to introduce compulsory education in the Philippines was initiated almost one hundred years ago (1863); in Thailand, compulsory education has been applied for 35 years;

6Isidro, Compulsory Education in the Philippines, p. 24
7Computed according to Statistics 1942-54, Ministry of Education, Bangkok.
8Manich Jumsai, p. 60
but in neither country has the law been fully enforced. Education became compulsory in 1927 in South Viet Nam, but not until 1952 for the entire country. In fact the law has not been in operation since. Besides, the terms of the Decree of January 20, 1952 are concerned only with the attendance. No provision is made as regard its implementation and financial support. In all three countries the compulsory attendance law covers only the primary level, and although the compulsory attendance age, at the present time, ranges from 8 to 15 in Thailand and from 6 to 14 in Viet Nam, the program of study normally lasts only 4 years and 3 years respectively. This arrangement has been adopted so that older children who had not yet started school could enroll, and also to allow or compel those who are already in school to continue their study at least in the primary grades, even in case of failure at the annual promotion. In fact, a large number of children in Thai schools remain too long in the lower grades. In Viet Nam, due to the overcrowded classroom situation, pupils in public schools are not allowed to stay in the same grade more than 2 years; here the law and regulations do not seem to be in complete agreement. The Philippine Educational Act of 1940 shows the great concern of the school authorities about the problem of keeping the children who have enrolled from leaving school before becoming permanently literate. The pertinent portion of this Act related to compulsory education states:

Sec. 5. No child shall be admitted into the public
elementary schools except on condition that he shall remain in school until he shall have completed at least the primary course.9

This law did not explicitly state that all children of a certain age must enroll in school. Up to 1953, the primary courses covered 4 years while the compulsory attendance age was from 7 to 14. Since 1953, the period of compulsory attendance in the Philippines has been prolonged to cover the complete 7-year elementary course. Experience in other countries, England and the United States for example, has shown that prolongation of schooling can be done gradually only, and its realization depends, among other factors, on the degree of industrialization, urban development, and the standard of living of the people. In countries where people need more time to make a living it is not possible to impose a long period of compulsory school attendance.

It has been noted that the administration of primary education in the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam is highly centralized. Not only do the schools in these countries have to follow the educational policy and standards established by the central office, they are also dependent on the latter in matter of curriculum and textbooks, methods, etc. In the initial stage administrative centralization might be necessary to prevent the

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9 Isidro, Compulsory Education in the Philippines, p. 23
danger of laissez-faire, or incompetence, and to secure certain uniformity in the system. However, in countries where transportation and communication are poorly provided, if the field workers have to refer to the central office for every detail, little progress can be expected, even over a long period of time. Suggestions have been made in various reports on education, in the Philippines as well as in Thailand, to provide local school authorities with more autonomy, and a wider margin for initiative in the adaptation of curriculum, and the selection of textbooks, and to share responsibility in school finance.

It has been indicated that the financing of public primary education in the Philippines and Thailand is largely the responsibility of the national government; in Viet Nam it depends on local authorities. A common feature, however, is the lack of definite sources of school revenues: either the money comes from the national or local budget, it is obtained through appropriations by congress or the municipal council; but no income is earmarked for educational purposes, to enable long-range planning. As indicated previously, the budget of the Ministry of Education in Thailand has increased from 2.9% of the national budget in 1923 to 22.1% in 1950.10 The expenditures for education in the

10Manich Jumsai, p. 85
Philippines in 1948 represented 23.2% of the total expenditures of the national government; for the year 1950-51, they amounted to 38% of the total public expenditures, the largest item in the national budget. In spite of the tremendous efforts on the part of the national government in the Philippines and Thailand to increase their school budgets, the appropriations provided are still insufficient to meet the expenses needed to train and hire additional teachers and build new schools to accommodate the increasing school population.

In Viet Nam, during the last ten years, owing to the unstable political situation and the fact that people were forced to move from one area to another, economic life has come to a very low ebb; consequently little money, if any, could be raised by the local government to support education. According to the data furnished by the Ministry of National Education the total public expenditures on primary education in Viet Nam in 1952, 1953, and 1954 amounted to 129,377,100 piasters, 139,216,000, and 160,835,700 piasters respectively. During the same years, respectively 3,369,300 piasters, 2,765,100, and 3,286,800 piasters were spent for the training of teachers. According to an

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11 Isidro, The Philippine Educational System, p. 136
12 Compulsory Education in South Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO, Paris, 1954
estimate made by Mr. Le-Quang-Hong in 1952, a total amount of 2,297,600,000 plasters would be needed to improve the condition of the existing schools and to provide for additional school facilities, including school buildings, equipment, and teachers. Obviously the country is in no position to afford such an enormous investment.

Another most important problem in a program of compulsory education is the problem of teachers demand and supply. The problem is where to find enough teachers with proper preparation to teach the increasing number of children in schools. Up to 1954, a qualified, certificated primary teacher in the Philippines must have completed 13 years of education including elementary and secondary education and professional training. In Thailand the highest primary teacher certificate requires 11 or 12 years of education. In Viet Nam, the academic and professional training of a primary teacher lasts all together 10 years. This is the theory.

In fact, up to 1951, the Philippines had to employ a large number of unqualified teachers. The Monroe Commission in 1925 reported that 95% of the elementary teachers had no professional training, due to the lack of personnel and practice teaching facilities at the normal schools. According to the UNESCO report of the

14 Bilodeau & al., p. 129

15 Isidro, The Philippine Educational System, p. 198
mission to the Philippines in 1950,16 out of 65,000 teachers of the nation, 35,000 were unqualified due to the same reasons as mentioned above. To supplement the insufficient output of the 8 public normal schools, a large number of private teacher training schools have been in operation, but few were provided with qualified instructors and adequate facilities for observation and practice teaching. According to the survey study on compulsory education in South Asia and the Pacific, in 1951,17 48.02% of the 12,388 teachers graduated that year could not be employed for lack of vacancies in public elementary schools. In 1952, there were 27,168 teachers graduated from public and private normal schools; in 1953, 20,652. Apparently, the Philippine schools do not suffer from a shortage of teachers; rather, the problem would be to give employment to the surplus of teachers. However, assuming that the UNESCO report of 1950 is accurate, the true problem is how to improve the quality of training given to the student-teachers.

In Thailand, according to the statistics taken in 1926, the percentage of certificated teachers was 10.95% for the entire country.18 In 1927, 67.94% of the government school teachers

17 Compulsory Education in South Asia and the Pacific, UNESCO, Paris, 1954
18 Manich Jumsai, Compulsory Education in Thailand, p. 49
were qualified; in local schools, the percentage was only 2.02%\textsuperscript{19}

The Sargent report of the Mission to Thailand in 1950,\textsuperscript{20} stated that 7 out of 8 elementary teachers were without proper preparation. Mr. Manich Jumsai, in his report on compulsory education in Thailand commenting on the unsatisfactory results of Thai primary education stressed that the major cause of this failure was the lack of well-trained teachers:\textsuperscript{21}

While the system grows rapidly from year to year the supply of adequately trained teachers is not proportionate to the needs; therefore, teachers have had to be drawn from among the students of elementary and secondary schools who have little or no idea of teaching and no experience at all, and whose academic qualifications are far short of what is desirable.

The number of teachers needed for new posts and to replace those who retire is approximately 5,000 each year, but the total output of primary teachers for 1951 was estimated at only 1,804 men and women. It was found that among the uncertificated teachers, 12,094 had received education in only one of the primary grades; 25,217 had had either one, 2, or 3 years of secondary education.\textsuperscript{22} The statistics for the year 1953\textsuperscript{23} show there were still only 1,346 qualified teachers against 2,177 unqualified teachers.

\textsuperscript{19}\textit{Ibid.}
\textsuperscript{21}Manich Jumsai, p. 61
\textsuperscript{22}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 63
\textsuperscript{23}\textit{Statistics 1942-54}, Ministry of Education, Bangkok.
local teachers in Thai schools.

In Viet Nam, the number of primary teachers in service during the year 1954-55 is 7,665,\(^{24}\) according to the data furnished by the Ministry of National Education; the number of student-teachers in training schools in 1950 was only 69;\(^{25}\) and in 1952, 134.\(^{26}\) In the same year the graduates from the normal schools of Hanoi and Saigon totaled 124.\(^{27}\) The proposal by Mr. Le-Quang-Hong on teacher training, in his report on compulsory education in Viet Nam is indicative of the urgent need for teachers, even with very limited training. The author of the report wrote:\(^{28}\)

In the beginning these teachers (1st cycle primary) might be recruited from among candidates holding the primary certificate or having done one or two years of secondary schooling... These masters would have to attend a training course for three months before being appointed to take charge of a class. In this way, a large number of masters could be trained rapidly.

Similarly significant is the ministerial order of September 21, 1949, laying down a program for the rapid training of school masters and mistresses for primary education mentioned earlier.

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\(^{26}\)Bilodeau & al., p 149

\(^{27}\)Ibid.

\(^{28}\)Ibid., p. 145
The success of an educational program depends, among other factors, on the material of instruction the school offers as well as the methods used to instruct the children. It is of general consensus, among school authorities in the Philippines as well as in Thailand and Viet Nam, that school curriculum should be designed so to provide the children with a functional knowledge of the basic principles and skills that will enable them to develop their personal abilities and become happy, useful members of society; also it has been recognized that the methods and techniques of teaching must correspond with valid findings of modern psychology. However, it has been found that practice has not measured up to theory. For instance, in the Philippines the elementary school curriculum still puts too much emphasis on the academic aspect of reading, writing, arithmetic, and social studies. Besides, the fact that a Filipino child from his first day in school has to labor with a foreign language, and to study every other subject in this alien tongue, creates a great handicap for learning. One may question the amount of understanding acquired by the children in learning the other subjects through the medium of English, especially when learning consists mostly in memorization, with limited opportunities for pupils to participate actively in discussions and express themselves freely.

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A large number of children, on leaving primary school, have not acquired a sufficient command of the English language to have any practical value in daily life. To find a solution to this language difficulty, a 6-year experiment was conducted in the school division of Iloilo, starting in 1949, in which the vernacular and the English languages were used as media of instruction to determine their respective effectiveness. The results showed that compulsory education in the primary grades would be more effective with the use of the vernacular. However, further research is needed to find out the best solution to this intricate problem because the adoption of Tagalog as national language has other implications.

Another weakness of the Philippines elementary school curriculum is that it is designed to develop in the children habits of living which are not traditional in the home and community from which they come. This observation had led the Educational Mission to the Philippines to recommend that the elementary school curriculum be planned so as to develop an understanding and appreciation of Filipino tradition and ideals, and prepare the child to participate effectively in group and community activities.

In Thai schools, although instruction is given in the mother tongue, it is still not effective. The children often must spend

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30 Isidro, Compulsory Education in the Philippines, p. 61
31 Report of the Mission to the Philippines, p. 23
several years before they can read and write, due to the unsystematic and dry method of teaching. An experiment was started in 1946 to introduce a new method of teaching reading and writing based on modern educational psychology. However, no further development of the project has been reported. The method used in teaching health and nature study as well as the other subjects is also formal and bookish; besides there is no attempt to correlate the different subjects. One interesting feature in the Thai Primary syllabus is the place of boy scout training and Junior Red Cross instruction, the latter given to girls.

In Viet Nam, the new plans for primary and adult education prepared in 1949 by the Ministry of National Education reflect the modern trend of doing away with the restricted academic curriculum and outmoded teaching methods, for instance, the fact that a large part of the afternoon is allocated for observation trips, practical training and singing etc... shows the concern for functional learning. However, this new program has been in operation only in a few larger centers, due to the shortage of qualified teachers and lack of school facilities.

32 Manich Jumsai, pp. 66-67
CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

From the factual account presented above it appears that the most important problem with regard to compulsory education in the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam is the financing of the entire program. All the problems of accommodation, teacher training and supply, school materials, etc., are directly linked with the problem of raising funds. Where shall they get sufficient money to build and equip school houses? to train and hire teachers? to help needy parents so that they could send their children to school? On the other hand there is the question of time. According to general experience, to ensure permanent functional literacy, a minimum period of primary schooling from 5 to 8 years is required.1 By functional literacy is understood the attainment of a certain standard of basic knowledge necessary for everyday living. At the Seminar of Fundamental and Adult Education held in Manila in 1951, the following points were stressed

1Sargent, p. 17
as required in functional literacy: 2 a) the ability to speak and understand one's language clearly and easily; b) the ability to read matters necessary to daily life; c) the ability to express ideas in writing; d) the ability to make simple arithmetical calculations; e) the knowledge of the history, government, culture, and institutions of the community and country; and f) the ability to appreciate vital human relations.

Even supposing that effective compulsory education of 5 years could be extended to all the children between 5 to 14 years old in the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam, still it would take several generations before functional literacy or primary education could be spread to the total population of these countries. Education, at all levels is a long process; but modern industry and techniques spread all over the world in no time, and their implications in social and cultural life must be dealt with somehow. In these economically undeveloped countries where people are strucken by poverty and diseases, literacy stands as some kind of luxury; but then the problem becomes a vicious circle. If the latter is to be broken, it must be attacked on its various fronts simultaneously. In other words, a concerted program must be planned which will include mass education, health service,

land reforms, an effective system of taxation, and administrative organization. Also a program of technical assistance must be set up with the view to increasing the production of local resources. To improve the economic conditions of the people there should be a fairer distribution of income. Credit unions and cooperatives should be developed to help the peasants free themselves from usurers, and to give them a chance to raise their standard of living. It is beyond the scope of this short study to discuss these different approaches to the problem. However, it does not seem irrelevant to mention at this point the Community School Program and the Fundamental Education Program in operation in the Philippines and Thailand. As an experiment to provide the masses of people with basic elements of literacy, health practice and technical principles and skills so as to improve their living conditions, these programs have given promising results. In Viet Nam not much has been done actually in this direction, although the first steps have been made to set up a Fundamental Education center at Tan An under the auspices of UNESCO and FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization).

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3Isidro, Compulsory Education in the Philippines, pp. 41-45
The fact that the Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam have adopted these relatively new devices for mass education confirms the hypothesis presented previously in this study that compulsory education, as generally practised, does not, alone, adequately meet the educational problems faced by these countries; it must be supplemented by other devices offering sound, basic contents and at the same time being flexible enough to suit local needs and resources and keep pace with changing conditions; yet it must be practical and inexpensive to extend widely in a short period of time. This does not mean that the problem of compulsory education should be left completely out of focus. Fundamental education and rapid primary courses may be quite expedient, still they are emergency devices; they must be followed by appropriate adult courses if permanent results are to be obtained and if the whole process is not to be started all over again. While efforts must be devoted to finding solutions to immediate problems, it is no less important to look forward to the future and plan a long-range program to be developed systematically.

In the case of Viet Nam, compulsory education now exists only on paper. This does not mean that this state of affairs should be prolonged indefinitely; even though one cannot always predict the course of events, there is hope that the country will know peace and order again some day and that conditions will be favorable for the realization of a nation-wide educational
program. Up to now, only temporary measures have been taken to provide rapid primary and adult education, which in fact is reduced more or less to minimum literacy. Likewise, proposals have been made for the rapid training of primary teachers. Again, this plan is only temporary, intended to alleviate somewhat the acute shortage of teachers. In none of the reports published so far is there any mention about long-range plan. It is understandable that owing to the political upheaval the country has been going through, the problem of education, while recognized as one of the most important, must give precedence to other more urgent problems. However, concurrently with the study of plans for economic development, serious research should be conducted in the field of public education since the two are interrelated to a certain extent. It is not enough for the government to merely issue laws compelling the children to attend schools—-it has been noted that the problem is rather to provide sufficient school facilities—there should be legal provisions to secure school funds. Since it is difficult to collect a large amount of money to apply compulsory education to the whole country at once, a program of gradual enforcement could be initiated whereby those districts and centers already equipped with sufficient school facilities and efficient administrative organization would first enter the plan. As soon as conditions allow, the enforcement would be extended to other sections.

More specifically, the problem of teacher training must be
given special attention. The traditional school teacher was highly respected because of his knowledge and wisdom. In fact, in popular saying, he was next only after the king. Although the teaching profession did not secure pecuniary compensation to its members, young people were attracted by the ambition and hope to raise their social status. Because of his high status the teacher enjoyed the confidence and cooperation of the parents. The cooperation of the parents is of considerable importance, not only to ensure regular attendance in a program of compulsory education parents are willing to give support, financial and otherwise only if they value the school program and those in charge of carrying it out. It is questionable whether the modern school teacher still enjoys equal consideration with his conferees of the traditional school. Several changes have occurred during the last fifty years. Today, the simple fact that the school teacher has become a salaried worker, with very small salary, somewhat lowers his social status. The average primary school teacher has no more than 6 or 7 years of schooling; this low academic standard is not to raise his position as recipient and dispenser of wisdom.

Future teachers should receive such education and training as to prepare them properly for their task. As noted previously, the requirements for qualified primary teachers exist only in theory. If the teaching profession is to retain its traditional prestige, it should require its members to abide strictly to certain minimum standard. On the other hand those who enter the profession
should have the guarantee of economic security and social status corresponding to the service they render. If school buildings and equipment are necessary to carry on an educational program, it is still more necessary to secure the service of qualified teachers. As an emergency measure to teach minimum literacy, the proposal by Mr. Le-Quang-Hong mentioned previously is not without sense, but it is imminent that continuous efforts should be devoted to improve the quality of primary education.

Since primary education is the foundation on which any further schooling should rest, and because it will be—when compulsory attendance becomes effective—the formal education that the majority of children will receive, the problem of curriculum is very important. While the children should acquire some basic ideas of the present world and learn to appreciate modern techniques—in health and sanitation or in agriculture, for instance—they should be taught to respect certain traditional values, and to appreciate and preserve whatever is good in their own culture, for instance: respect for parents and elderly people, obligation to the family and the country, the desire to acquire wisdom, and love of peace and order.

As mentioned above, in the Philippines as well as in Thailand and Viet Nam the trend is toward modernization in all fields. In

6See p. 61
business and industry as well as in education, modern methods and techniques developed in the Western world are gaining more and more prestige in Asian countries. But while machines can be purchased entirely made and ready for use—although sometimes even machines have to be modified to suit new conditions—one should guard against importing methods and techniques of teaching wholesale, and, what is far more important, the philosophies underlying them. Just as the children in primary schools should be taught to appreciate what is good both in the traditional culture and in modern civilization, it is of utmost importance in the planning of any educational program, that serious study and reflection be devoted to discern the strengths and weaknesses of the traditional as well as the modern philosophies underlying its aims and objectives. This condition is all the more imperative if school attendance should become compulsory for all children.
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The thesis is therefore accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts.

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