

CHAPTER III

THE EDUCATION SYSTEM AND CONFLICT IN SOUTHERN THAILAND

A. The traditional education system in southernmost Thailand

In the past, Pondok Institute was a famous source of Islamic knowledge school. There are students both who were local students and those who were from other countries who study Islamic education for propagating the knowledge that they have learned in their country. Niaraf Raden Ahmad has suggested the important ideas that the Pondok at the three provinces of the southern border of Thailand that is the first Pondok system have been organized in Pattani (Pattani, Yala, Narathiwat) and it is one of the oldest educational institutions in Southeast Asia.

There are many great religious leaders that have social roles from Malaysia, Filipina, Indonesia, Cambodia, Myanmar and Muslim from the nearest province from south until the province in the central region of Thailand. Most of them have been educated by mentioned Islamic institutions. Mr. Bandit Samaun and the team stated that when the time has changed, the necessity of Muslims to seek knowledge is even greater. It an inspiration to build up more Islamic education institutions in Muslim societies especially for the provinces in the southern part of Thailand whereby the system was different from the other region of the country because here, most of the Muslim parent prefer their children to study both in the religion field and ordinary field simultaneously.

Islamic private schools are educational institutions are the place where most of the parent in the southern part and it's the nearest part of Thailand prefer to send their children to study. It is because of the parents are aware that private Islamic schools can produce young people to have both religious and ordinary knowledge and the Islamic education are better than other original Pondok institution whereby the learning process

only focus on Islamic education by using Bahasa Melayu as a medium in a learning process with the aim that the Islamic lesson can be inherited. In Pondok, the courses or syllabus are not in written form. There is no limited time but the lesson can be learned throughout a lifetime. There is no education measure or test like the current school system. No level of classes. The only teaching aid is the book.

B. National education system in Thailand

Since 2001 Thailand's educational system is divided into three levels:

Level 1:

First three years of school KG1 to KG3 – 3 years to 5 years old

Level 2:

Primary or elementary school (Prathomsuksa or Prathom)
P1 to P6 – 6 years to 11 years old

Level 3:

Secondary school (Mattayomsuksa or Mattayom)
M1 to M6 – 12 years to 18 years old

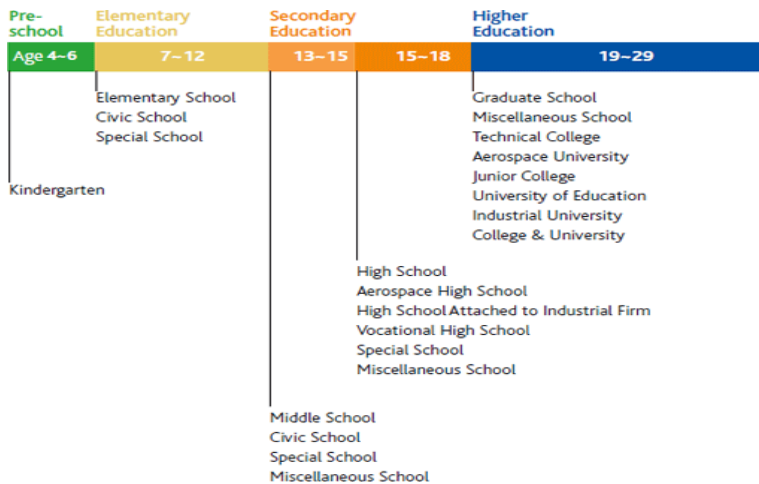


Figure 3.1 Education System of Thailand

(Source: Ministry of Education in Thailand)

The most recent educational reform started with the National Education Act in 1999, which includes the National Education Plan.

Important results of these reforms are as follows:

1. Broader compulsory education up to and including lower secondary education;
2. Curricular reform in primary, vocational and higher education, with particular emphasis on the needs of the community;
3. The establishment of an Office for National Education Standards and Quality Assessment (ONESQA).

The current structure of the Ministry of Education dates from 2003 after merger with a few other educational bodies. There are several departments within the Ministry of Education. For example, the Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) is responsible for primary and secondary education. There is also the Office of Vocational Education Commission (OVEC) and the Office of the Higher Education Commission (OHEC).

Since 2003 education is compulsory in Thailand for children between the ages of 6 and 15 years. The 9 years of compulsory education covers primary and lower secondary education. The language of instruction is Thai, with the exception of a few private schools where the language of instruction is English. In addition, universities offer an increasing number of international program taught in English.⁵⁷

1. Primary Education

⁵⁷ Website of the Ministry of Education, including information on the Thai education system and the administrative structure of the ministry.

Education in Thailand is largely a government responsibility provided through the ministry of education. Two to three years of kindergarten begins this process, followed by 6 years of primary school. The Thai school year is from May to March for primary and middle school, while secondary schools begin one month later. Uniforms are also compulsory during tertiary education.

2. Secondary Education

At high school, students who wish to continue academic education move on to elective courses. Of these, the science and maths / english programs are most popular – other choices include foreign languages and social science. In this way, they are already preparing for tertiary education that may follow.

3. Vocational Education

Thai vocational education system is grounded in high school where students may choose to adopt this more practical form of education. Here they may aspire to two levels of qualification too. These are a certificate in vocational education, and a higher diploma that opens to the door to a university degree.

4. Tertiary Education

Thailand Education Both private and public colleges of higher education and universities are regulated by the ministry of education. They offer excellent study programs in arts, medicine, humanities and information technology. However, many young Thai citizens still prefer to study subjects like law and business abroad.

C. The difference education system in nation Thailand and southernmost Thailand

In the Pondok tradition, teaching is done in Malay and Arabic, and the emphasis is on religious learning. There is no system of assessment in place, and hence these schools are not

accredited by the government. Lessons revolve around prayer and memorising the scripture (Koran), commentaries and exegesis provided by Tok Guru.

There are nevertheless two lingering misconceptions regarding Pondok education in Thailand. First is the mistaken assumption that southern Thai Pondok schools teach only Islam. This is not necessarily the case as many Pondok do integrate secular and vocational subjects into their syllabus as well, even if Tok Guru generally privilege religious education. Second is the popular perception that Muslim parents prefer to send their children to Pondok rather than state schools.

For this reason, the state encourages the Pondok Institute to register and transform into a school. The state also supports the budget, materials, personnel, and the development of teaching and learning. And most importantly, when developing into a school, the curriculum must be written in a way that can be measured and ensures that the institution conducts its teaching and learning programme to the learner. The courses have been developed after the Pondok Institution changed to school since 1961 until 2009.

1. Educational system as a source of conflict

Due to the fact that the way to build up the state is to use Thai traditional culture by assigning all people together turned to the Thai nation in the Field of Marshal. Pibulsongkram, especially for the 12 issues state policy announcement, the national enactment of cultural maintenance 1940. It was a cultural decree that the Thai people must follow 1941, including the establishment of the National Culture Council in 1942 and the use of civil and commercial law on family and inheritance instead of Islamic law. It caused the feeling strange and separated toward other nation in the country. As it was the policy to control the other nation way of life, plus control daily people's routine in many aspects such as the policy by changing names into Thai formal name, the use of Thai language as the medium in teaching process and the language in official contact, not Bahasa Melayu or

else. The Al-Quran learning classes are prohibited and promote people to commit Buddha. A formal dress code requires a hat, put on socks and shoes, cannot wear a sarong, cannot wear hijab, cannot eat a piece and etc. Moreover, it also specifies the punishments of those who disobey the law.

These requirements have limited the freedom of the Muslim people in the southern Thailand, forcing to change their own tradition into others, Thai tradition. Meanwhile, it increases the anger of the local people due to the application of worldly rules to take control of daily life plan that has been strictly followed under Islamic law.

2. Educational system as a target in conflict

The insurgents, who view the educational system as a symbol of Thai Buddhist state oppression, have burned and bombed government schools, harassed and killed teachers, and spread terror among students and their parents. The vast majority of teachers killed have been ethnic Thai Buddhists, and their deaths are often intended as a warning to others. Yet Muslim teachers have not been spared; insurgents have also targeted Muslim teachers at government schools, and Islamic school administrators who resist insurgents' efforts to use classrooms for indoctrination and recruiting. In some areas, insurgents have also pressured Malay Muslim families not to send children to government schools.

The government faces the challenge of protecting children and teachers. When security forces have suspected that insurgents are using Islamic schools to hide or shelter, or that insurgents are seeking to indoctrinate school students into their separatist ideology and recruit new supporters and fighters, The result is that students, teachers, and schools are caught in the untenable position of facing a risk of violence from both insurgents and government security forces. Violations by both sides in the conflict disrupt access to a quality education for hundreds of thousands of children in the southern border provinces Thai Buddhist and Malay Muslim alike

Personnel	Effect	Narathiwat	Pat tani	Yala	Song khla	Total
The number of schools that were arson	Detonation	21	30	28	1	80
	Arson	25	22	34	3	84
	Property damaged	16	3	10	1	30
Total		62	55	72	5	194
Education Personnel	Death	7	8	4	0	19
	Injured	2	6	5	0	13
	Property damaged	4	0	19	0	23
Total		13	14	28	0	55
Total Schools/ personnel	Death	28	38	32	1	99
	Injured	27	28	39	3	97
	Property damaged	20	3	29	1	53
Total		75	69	100	5	249
Sum of total		135	95	155	7	392
Percentage		34.44	24.23	39.54	1.79	100

Figure 3.2 Information of affected educational personnel and arson school

Noted: the data collected from 4 January 2004 until 7 July 2008
 (Source: Information Center of the Southern Border Provinces (2008).
 Summary of the affected educational personnel and students caused by the
 violence at the Southern Border Provinces)

These caused the sense of insecure and the low level of motivation. Most of the professional teacher asking for a job move out from this area caused the lack of experts in education fields. It all happens due to the unsettled and violence situation that affect the development of education management in the local area.

The above figures reflect the failure of state policy caused by unconscious mind and not open minded that cannot understand the diversity of the culture of the citizen as it should be. The incident that happens whether the schools were arson or the attack on the government officials, it reflects a symbolic counteract toward the government that involves in the problems solving and becomes a part of the policy by creating violence and leads to death.