

# Education Reform in Thailand 4.0: A True Story or a Soap Opera

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## **Abstract**

The objective of this paper is focused on Thailand's educational reform educational is a major event occurs in the country which mostly focus on the new courses and curriculum designed which has made its normal change the concept and idea which every scholar is confused which the new changing policy. It's seem that the changing policy are not focused on the really new road for educational recovered the answer to the future changing which is able to cope with the new disruptive technology. The best the policy makers are always discuss about the standard of the Thai education. This Thai discussion and policy formulation are always concentrated on re-establishment of the new form of changing or separating form the ministry of education to be a single autonomous department or join with the ministry of science and technology, therefore the educational reform is somewhat not going to anywhere. However it is not in sense of reality of policy implementation, it's as if the changing of the era of 4.0 of disruptive technological change will be affected to the curriculum to the standard of the educational in Thailand. Ever though the curriculum development according to the government policy of the educational reform must be participated by national educators, parents and the industrial users must be call to discuss the really problems and how to focus for raised up the standard for the future excellence of the young generations must be used opinions and talent of those said people to form a smart policy for the nation. At present it seems that the top down policy has destroyed the good policy for the sake of standard and national human capital development.

**Keywords:** Top-Down Policy, Higher Education, Thailand 4.0

## **Introduction**

Thai education is the public interest both in the fields of education, education, economics including politics and cultures it must be a matter of education reform. But all learning process once the case when the National Education Act was enacted as what is the National Education Act? Which we have to understand the important of the National Education Act relates to education reform? How it has impact to Thai people at large. In fact, the problem of economic crisis in Thai society relates to educational problems, because the education management can bring about the knowledge and technology into the industrial production process effectively. (Simon, 1999: 15). If education can improve the skills, knowledge and expertise of Thai workers in line with the modern technology, if education can create a new generation of leaders to build a democratic basis for most people, we would have political leaders who have the knowledge to manage the country effectively and have a wide-vision and might not suffer from economic chaos as we are now facing. Although this suffering will be a natural consequence of the economic cycle, it is not a coma as it is. The crisis in Thai society is an economic crisis and a result of the chronic system of politics and the disability

education system. To solve the long-term economic problems, it is necessary to operate an education system. According to the World Economic Forum (WEF), the Global Information Technology Report (2013) has ranked the quality of education in ASEAN countries. Thailand was ranked in the final 8<sup>th</sup>. Although the WEF (World Economic Forum) will reveal Thailand's competitiveness in 2017, it ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> out of 34<sup>th</sup> last year (2016). (Runcharoen, 2015) Thailand is ranked 3<sup>rd</sup> in ASEAN. This may be considered better, but to reform the political system according to the intent of the current constitution will need to reform education together. Education reform therefore is the main goal of this draft Education Act. In fact and directly, many leading countries have educational problems and need to reform the educational of the nation. It is great to think about importing the educational reform the United States, has a problem how to reform the education to change the world. The country of a thought leader, a scientist and world-class inventors like England also has problems. These countries have the concept of education reform urgently and enormously. The United States began to discuss education reform in the 1980s while Britain began to reform during the time Margaret Thatcher as prime minister in the 1980s. Similarly, Thailand discussed about the education reforms after the civil event on October 14, 1973, but it has been exhausted since 1978. It begins to emerge again during the preparation of the 8th Education Development Plan around 1993-94. The movement also influenced the drafting of the 1997 Constitution in relation to education the act. In particular, the provision of state education for 12 years to the public free of charge (Section 43) and the provision of educational law and guidelines for the management of education in Section 81. Therefore, the drafting of the Education Act Article 81 of the Constitution should be considered the guideline for the educational reform as principle on the issues as follows: What is the meaning of education reform? Why reform education? What and why, the government has reform affect Thai people? How does the Education Act play a role in educational reform? The meaning of education reform is a profoundly complex progress. If the change is normal, we do not call that change as "reform". By contrast, if the change is violent and done by force, we call that change "revolution". "Reform" is thus a relatively large change. It's a whole system change step by step, no violence or harm. It is suitable for democratic societies to adopt the principles of change without the use of force and violence. (Ministry of Education, 2003) The question that must be asked in the beginning is Why have to reform education? and What is meaning of reformed? The first answer is that the problem of education is long overdue that cannot solve with the normal way. It is needed to change the system and the vision of the practitioners and educational leaders in line with the right ideas. There may be several important issues that need to be addressed in education, but it is important to mention the following:

Answer to the questions there are quality Quality problem: Quality issues are broad and we discuss to factors to answer the questions according to the introduction above mentioned may be endless.

In the period of Ronald Reagan as the President of United State of American, there was an education report as "A Nation at Risk" published in the National Academy of Sciences to give examples of backwardness in science and mathematics instructional standards at the upper secondary level. So when the President Reagan initiated the goal of educational reform, the goal was therefore to raise the standard and quality of instruction, especially in the field of science and technology to compete with countries around the world. Similarly to Thai society, when talking about the quality of education, it may mean the quality and standards of academic instruction in all levels, and there is a reference to the results of the international assessment of how much the standard of teaching in science in mathematics is ranked. The results of the Mathematics Achievement Assessment of first year elementary school students in the TIMSS Program of the International Association Evaluation of Educational Thailand

was ranked at 18<sup>th</sup>, while Singapore, South Korea and Japan were at 1, 2 and 3, respectively. What is the weak point of Thai education? The answer is the method of teaching is not through how to think independently of the learner but is taught to knowledge of the texts. The original of the framework is not mentioned and even taught. Likewise, the principle of truth is taken as the basis of the conclusion of "Quality and standard" mentioned above is the standard of academic excellence but there are also different quality concepts, for example, the concept of adaptation of teaching and learning to the problem of real life. In this way, there is much talk about the distribution of role and authority to adapt the curriculum to local schools and the lower level authorities. Moreover, it also has the concept of quality education that must look at all human beings as a quality educational product to focus such as Did you graduate from a college or university and help yourself and be socially responsible? Are you a good leader? Are you a quality citizen? In summary, when discussing about the quality and standards of education, the meaning must covers many dimension of quality to define the foundation of educationally philosophy. The instructional programs at various levels must consider the dimensions of the quality that has impacts to the society. (Lim, 2004)

2. Problem of the consistency to the economic development of the nation: The major problems appear in every educational development plan is the E-plan the problem of human resource development in line with the problems and development of the modern economy. Whether we like it or not, Thai society has become a part of a global society that face with new rules for economic and political improvement. It is too late and impossible for Thai society has to solitary that we have to admit and find the way to live personally in this world. No matter how the theory of our economic development is, we cannot deny the fact that we have to develop science and technology and the expect staff to adjust the modern production system to be a able to compete with other countries by using our potential for our natural resources and culture. Therefore, the education of Thai people need participation from the public and private sectors to give their knowledge and skills in the new society that the most is important in the beginning. The dedication to research and development in manufacturing technology for every career is very important. However, from the past up to present, we still lack of scientists, technologists, science and teachers, research must link with to industrial production, a systems of vocational training, a connection to the labor market and practice. Therefore, it neededs to adjust the whole system to make changes and to plan for higher education or post-secondary education, the basic education system should be linked to the business sector, industry and agriculture, and the science and technology should be promoted and linked to the economy section as well. (Ministry of Education, 2003)

3. The problem of the distribution of the opportunity and equality of educational opportunities: This issue is a matter of social righteousness at the mechanism of the free economic system that always helps the stronger to get advantage of the weaker. It allows people with a better economic and social status to gain of the competitive advantage in education to the other areas than the underprivileged and lack financial resources. However, The rich society clusters on some people and causes the large gap between the rich and the poor is generally a society with political instability that lack basic fellowship and always lead to disharmony and disarray. Therefore, in the policy of averaging income, reducing the gap between the various classes is not only to average well-being and peacefulness to the people as a political righteousness, it is also the main policy of political stability and the unity of the nation. This measure of revenue is not as effective as the distribution of educational opportunities to those who have economic difficulties. Equal Opportunity Policy for rural poor from the agricultural and labor sectors, the disabled, are also important the developing countries rank first. Successful implementation of this policy requires planning and allocating budgets by targeting areas and target groups, such as the need to prepare a budget for very poor areas. The education system must have many options and coherent to make a chance for

those who have missed the opportunity to take a lifetime. It is important to give everyone an opportunity to actually study 12 years of basic education to upper secondary education for all people in Thai society. Secondary education is the basis for further study in higher education and high level vocational education as the basis of lifelong learning. (National Economic and Social Development Plan No.11, 2012-2016)

4. Factors the problem of efficiency system and management processes of the study of the effectiveness of management systems is a long-standing issue. If the management system is effective, the other issues mentioned above will be resolved to a certain extent. But the management system has a problem for many years. However, since such management and resolution have been poles for ages, therefore, it is need to sort out the whole system as follows.

4.1 The first thing to consider initially is the difference between educational administration and public administration. Although there are similar parts in the system as a departmental department in the upper management, there should be the difference in the relationship with the school and the administrative of institutes (schools, colleges and universities) these issues are comprised of performance.

a) Flat organization in educational institute management, except the headmaster should have a minimum of supervisors. All teachers must participate in democratic participation.

b) Standardized and quality control systems must on emphasize productivity of students which they are not follow the rules, rules and procedures of the bureaucratic process.

c) The responsibility system for the community is greater than the responsibility for the higher education institutions: Social institution must be close to the community and the feeling of ownership from parents and alumni. The trial and errors in the past are that the assumption that teachers are civil servants who must follow the rules and regulations of civil servants. Even the gratitude is based on the same principle. The administration system of 1980 has been adapted to separate the teacher-teacher considerations from the civilian. However, there are also obligations that must be attached to the civil service's C system. The adjustment of the school administration system and teacher civil servants should take into account the necessity of the difference as mentioned above.

4.2 The Administration Management in Ministry Level is not appropriate. Currently, most departments are self-contained from planning, budgeting, overseeing, evaluating, managing to constructing. To mention roughly, each department is a compact ministry. The ministry itself is not a ministry as it is legally stated but it is a gathering of small ministries. This is a problem that needs to be addressed by determining the mission of each new department to cause the proper political unity and budget allocation.

4.3 The confusing management system between the role of policymakers of budget plans and directed a stage called "Steering" The rider who picks up the rudder with the role of the action of "Rowing" or the golfer. The current rowdy, we do not know, who are reined and who are the operators is because the practitioners and the reins boss who are the same person. Each of the two central government departments is responsible for designing their own policy and implementing the policy. The result of then cannot know whether they succeeded or failed. Moreover, since the practice is full-operate and, the manage problem is the collected at the department. All problems must be returned to the department and cannot be excluded though there will have some power distributed to the future. It therefore should be the central task of the policy. The budget for standardization is called "Steering". In the case of the province, the mission is to carry out the policy of the ministry. If there are administrative problems, it should be corrected in the province.

4.4 The lack of unity in the administration of higher education and the link between basic education and higher education. The current problem is that there are 2 main agencies responsible for higher education namely Ministry of University Affairs and the Ministry of

Education. The method of combining the 2 ministries together without adjusting the administrative system then could not focus on the specification of higher as the community wishes. It seems thus, professional were told to do according the rule and regulation set by a small group of adoring to the minister. However, if it has adjusted according to Article 4.3 and frees universities to become independent, the role of the Ministry in regulating higher education institutions will change. Therefore, it should consider the creation of a unified organization of policies and directing higher education under the supervision of the same ministry that all four are the main problems of the current administration of education which require a reformation. (Disability Portal, 2007)

5. These afforest problems are the majors, in the systematic. There are other related problems remain unchanged, for example, a problem of teacher training, teacher development, and teacher performance. This is related to the quality of education. The problem of private education involving the administration and mobilization of the private sector and Ecclesiastical issues related to informal education. The strategy of reform education reform is to change the whole system or at least is to change the system. To ask whether the education system as mentioned should be change in the whole system or not? You may continue to ask what the whole system mean? The simple answer is that it is at the understanding of the individual as what should the system include? If we keep issuing, it will have never endless. Therefore, you should ask the question in your mind that as you are aware or have experienced something good already as “what is not good and should be eliminated in the education system” You will answer this question in your experience. Nevertheless, as far as the author has brought the problems to clarify, it is predictable that things should be change that is the problem mentioned above. (Milson, 2012.) The main idea the practice is how the strategies of change has effective and cause the negative. This is because the change will always have negative result like over-the-counter medications have side effects so surgical instruments must be designed to match the level of disease. Similarly, the strategy or method of change has required the limit of the educational implementation resources to perform such thinking; these are proposals for reform as follows:

1) Reform the teaching and evaluation of all exiting system: This strategy is used strategy total reform since the change at this point will affect the quality of education standards and able to solve the problem to comply with economic development including preparing people for lifelong education as well. This reform requires the adjustment of the overall administration and management so the correction in this point is the principle of the whole reform movement. The issue to mention and consider is which variables that will make the teaching system desirable. However, at this point, we will not talk about the definition of "Desirable teaching system", but let's assume that academic have a degree of understanding. Thus, the author would like to mention the 6 variables that lead to the desirable teaching system based on the research and study of the author as follows:

1.1) The adjusting of curriculum and defining of philosophy of good teaching and learning process. The details should be considered among the academics, teachers and administrators. There is still no time to consider on the part of the top executive of educational reforming.

1.2) Teacher training and development consistent to the first article

1.3) A good leadership of school principal and director

1.4) The sufficient teaching and learning materials for the school.

1.5) An evaluation system that is consistent with the purpose and philosophy of the 1st article of course

6. Community supporting: For all these 6 factors, can be cited by the law and regulation. Any should be the method that can be defined as a policy and practice later should be open. In countries such as the United States and England, there are no national organizations that define curricula and standards. The proposal of reform in England thus proposed the

establishment of a national board or council. (Anderson, Randle, & Covotsos, 2001), what Thailand has this departmental level organization to responsible, it may also be offered as a focusing as the for teachers training and teacher development cited in the 12<sup>th</sup> National Development Plan has been reformed in this regard, If there are the key principles of this policy consistent with the new concept of teaching and learning. They are needed to arrange the school of administration system in order for school leaders to focus on well-trained teachers and fully utilize their abilities without limit. As a sequence, there must be a proposal to adjust the school administration system to be independent yet must be involved by the community. For the success of the new administration system, teachers and administrators have to develop to the standard. Because the new system does not use the old controls but will look at the success as the quality of students. The evaluation system therefore must be managed with the method of Summative evaluation at final year of each level of education including an internal assessment called "Formative Evaluation" at each level. The evaluation system and the new school management system may be defined in the Education Act. It can see that strategic reform of the teaching system can lead to other strategic developments include: a) Teacher Training Reform and Teacher Development, b) The Adjustment of school management system to be more independent in operation, c) The evaluation system has the "Formative Evaluation" system to monitor and develop students including the external summation is summed up as Summative Evaluation.

1) The Reform of Educational Administration System: The Reform of education management system is another important strategy. The reform of the educational administration system in this concept comprises five aims.

1.1) The aim is to unite the policy at all levels of education especially the higher education, as well as consistency in policy implementation between educational levels.

1.2) The aim is to achieve a clear separation of tasks performance between the central government in monitoring and evaluation of the supervision and division of provinces and schools or higher education institutions to manage and administrate.

1.3) The aim is to distribute more local power to local communities and organizations to co-ordinate more with each locality.

1.4) To achieve the effectiveness of management.

1.5) To aim for the distribution of educational opportunities. If successful in this respect, there should be affected on the solution of the main problem about education management that is not consistent with economic development, according to

Article 3: to the constitution equality of opportunity and opportunity distribution in brief: Administrative reform means that there should be a single ministry acting to lay down policies and allocate all educational budgets and delegate power of duty to the province to act as a representative of the ministry in the province to supervise school and personnel providing basic education to be more independent. The higher education institutions are all juristic persons and may be red tape of bureaucracy. There is a method of allocating a "block grant" to a university. Local governments should be involved in the administration of education in the province. And local government has to be responsible for the management of education in their own jurisdiction. In addition, measures that will change this approach should be included in the Education Act. (Oliver, 1998)

2) The Adjustment of education system in accordance with the modern age: The adjusting of the education system must left the old pattern in the modern age with on means that people must be prepared to study for the rest of their lives. In this preparation, 12 years of basic education must be provided to the majority of the people according to the Constitution that every citizen is entitled to 12 years of basic education. The 12-year-old foundation will affect the ability of people to study all living since this level is linked to higher education. If all people finish at this level, it means that the public is ready to study at a higher level. In

addition, at the post-primary level, the higher education system should be flexible and diversified to be path to study in many directions, but to be linked in the end. Establishing a community college to associate with university and let the universities in this new educational system. The role of informal education is enhanced. This regard, there should be a measurement to promote informal and informal education, and in this regard should be mobilized in order to help with education in accordance with the principle of the Jomtien declaration that "All for Education". In conclusion, Principles and policies Include measures to provide a 12-year basic education and lifelong education promotion. It is an important principle that must be defined in the Education Act.

## Conclusion

Does the education reform really come to the point? The issues of these the education reform is really come to the point, the author would like to raises issues which are a big are and talk of the town that The Board of Higher Education or the Board of Directors has resolved to announce the list of courses that have not been conducted in accordance with the criteria of the curriculum, based on the results of the IQA assessment in the 1st element for 2 years between 2015 and 2016, which results in more than 40 institutions and over 182 under the standard courses. The reasons of how why these courses are not standardized because they do not meet the criteria set by the department. However, the issue is not just a matter of non-standard course solely but the announcement affects has students who are studying in the course since they are also assumed as non-standard. In fact, if we look at some of the courses, just only the instructor of faculty does not get the field and they are short of specialization of the course even the connection of the fields. In other hand, the instructors have no academic works or research papers in accordance with the criteria. Is it sounding reasonable that the curriculum therefore is not up to standard and students in the courses that are also not up to standardized as well? It is a question that the author has in mind that in practical level, education reform should be systematic and point-based, as quality assurance reviews and course judgments must not depend on documented, not just the knowledge of the knowledge to the disciples. So the real principle of reform should be the main goal of education reform, to raise up to global standard of higher education to alleviate the problems and to reduce the gap between the rich and the poor, so the learners and instructors are accept with the application of principle and guideline according the must principles to be applied as follow 1) school and education institute reform; 2) educational personnel reform; 3) curriculum reform and 4) educational administration reformed system. If education reform is covered issues, then the author has support legitimating and effective education reform. It's not just a luxury policy as a soap opera.

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