CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
CHAPTER II

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present research will deal with various aspects - definition of Buddhist educational approach and Thai society, objectives of study, research design, data collection, sources of data, limitations. Let us commence with the definition of Buddhist educational approach.

Definition of Buddhist educational approach

According to Nandasena Ratnapala, "Buddhist educational approach means bringing knowledge and skills to a person, enabling him to translate such knowledge and skills to appropriate situations in life-finally, developing discipline, insight and wisdom"1. The Buddha had given various examples as to how this educational development could be accomplished.

Methodology of the Buddha was one of graduated exercises. Gradual progress, first beginning from the lowest step was the basis of such a process. When we take pupils, he first makes them count one, the unity two, the duality three, the trinity, and thus we make them count up to hundred. This method is illustrated by the example of the ocean. "Just as the great ocean becomes deeper, gradually steepens, gradually becomes hollowed out, and there is no abrupt fall. In exactly in the same way in this doctrine and discipline, the training is gradual, the
working is gradual, the path is gradual, and there is no sudden advance into full knowledge."²

In another example, the Buddha compares himself to an elephant trainer whom by utilising a trained elephant, tempts the wild elephants and catches them. Thereafter, by various progressive methods, the wild elephant is made to learn the ways of the new environment. ‘He’ is thus socialised to adapt himself to new surroundings.

In handling each human being and unique social situations, one has to change one’s strategy to suit individual character, and the particular situation at hand. In the case of Ālavaka, it was the implied use of force and intellectual combat that finally enabled Ālavaka to ‘understand’ himself. Ālavaka ordered the Buddha to get up from his seat and go out of his abode. The Buddha obeyed three times; but on the fourth occasion, he refused to obey him.

Confronted by the Buddha’s decision not to obey his instructions, Ālavaka decided to utilise intellectual argument: “I will ask you a question. If you cannot answer it, I will distort your mind, or I will split your heart, or I will take you by your feet and throw you across the river.”³

The questions were answered by the Buddha to Ālavaka satisfaction and he became a follower of the Buddha.

We observe the same technique applied in the case of Suciloma who was also a great non-human being as Ālavaka. When he met the Buddha, he asked, “Do you fear me monk? The Buddha answered, I do
not fear you." Then Suciloma posed a certain question for which the Buddha furnished the answer satisfying him.

The technique utilised here is that of intellectual confrontation. But, before the questions were asked, a 'test of strength' had already taken place. Ālavaka ordered the Buddha to go out and come in. The Buddha stopped after the third request. The message was clear to Ālavaka. Physical strength is of no use in this context. Suciloma too got a measure of the Buddha when the answer 'I do not fear you' was given by the Buddha.

The most interesting example of intellectual confrontation was in the case of Angulimāla, the great robber who had killed nearly a thousand human beings. The psychology of a murderer who had killed a large number of people is not easy to imagine. However, the Buddha wanted to 'jerk' him out of this murderous psychology. He thus walked fast, and when Angulimāla asked him to 'stop' he replied, 'I have stopped; but you have not done so.' Angulimāla could not understand this. 'How could this be? This monk, while going, tells me that he has come to stop and asks me, who had already halted to stop. I must question him about this'.

This was the intellectual shock Angulimāla got, and this shock lifted him from his murderous train of thought to a higher plain of logical thinking. The Buddha immediately capitalised out of the situation: "I am always at halt, Angulimāla, for, I have refrained from causing any harm to anybody. As for you, you have not refrained yourself from harming living beings. Therefore, I say that I am at halt and that you too must come to your halt."
To Visākhā who lost her granddaughter, the Buddha explained the nature of life in a logical way. In her grief at the loss of the granddaughter, she came with wet hair and wet clothes. The Buddha learning about her loss, asked her, “Visākhā, do you wish to have as many children and grand-children as there are men in Sāvatthi? Yes, she answered. The Buddha asked, how many people dies a day in Sāvatthi? Some days, Venerable Sir, ten people die; some days nine; eight, seven and so on. Some days, at least one man dies. The city is never without anybody dying. Then, do you think, Visākhā, that you can ever be without wet hair and wet clothes? No, indeed Venerable Sir, I do not want so many children and grand-children.”

The Buddha explained to her how suffering increases with attachment. Those who have hundred beloved ones will have hundred sufferings. Those who are with ninety beloved ones will from every house. But in each one of those houses, she found how death had taken place. After being on this quest for some time, she soon realised that death is not an unusual occurrence. It is the lot of everyone who is born. With this realisation, reason was awakened in her. The Buddha was able to make her understand his teaching then.

The Buddha treated Vāsetthi, a mad woman in the same manner, extending his understanding and sympathy to her. The fear, distress and confusion in her mind was dispelled by the Buddha’s kindness. It was then that she was able to appreciate the Buddha’s doctrine. Patācārā who when she lost her beloved children, husband as well as her parents became raving mad, was treated with stones and rejected by the people of the city. The Buddha made her regain her senses and told her that
lamenting over the dead is of no use. Patācārā regained the natural composure of mind, developed insight while looking at the flow of water as she washed her feet, and attained enlightenment.

The Buddha in this teaching, motivated individuals as well as groups to look into themselves than to others outside. From the Bhaddhavaggiya princes, searching for a young woman who had absconded, he asked, “What is better, O Princes - the search for a woman who had run away or an inward search into yourself?” The intelligent princes answered that an inward search into oneself is far superior to the outward search of a woman.

The Buddha often met children and utilised these opportunities to instruct and guide them. One day he saw a group of children catching fish and killing them in a dried up reservoir. The Buddha asked the following question from the children: “Children, do you fear suffering, and do you dislike suffering? Yes, Venerable Sir, we fear suffering, we dislike suffering, the children replied. If you fear and dislike suffering, do not do any evil act, whether in the open or in secrecy. If you do an evil act now, or in the future, you will have no escape from suffering, even if you try to run away from it.”

In his advice to young Rāhula, his son, begotten at the time when he was a householder, the Buddha uses a simile and a situation that young Rāhula could easily understand. “Rāhula, when you come to want to do any deed of body, speech or thought, you should reflect: does it conduce to the harm of self, to the harm of others, to the harm of both? Is it wrong, productive of ill will in result? If you know that it does conduce to the harm of self, or to the harm of others or to the harm
of both and that it is wrong, then Rāhula, a deed such as this, should not as far as you are able, be done by you. You should hold back from it; you should confess it and disclose it so as to come to restrain in the future....”

Sunīṭa the outcaste was admitted to the order without any regard to his low caste status. It was Buddha’s method to translate his teachings to action at all times. When he visited his father’s city, the Buddha went round for alms, accepting food from all and sundry. When the king was hurt by this behaviour, the Buddha calmly replied that this habit of begging alms is an aspect of the lineage of the Buddha. This dealt a severe blow to caste hierarchy existent at the time when the kings or Brahmans never accepted food from those of lower castes.

The Buddha sometimes went in search of individuals - even those who were living far away so that he would be able to instruct, guide and help them. At other times, individuals came to him. “Sopāka was a child ill-treated by his step-father. The young child was cruelly treated, taken to a cemetery, tied to a corpse and abandoned. The Buddha went to him at night when the child was screaming in fear, horror and pain. The child was freed and taken by the Buddha to his monastery where he was ordained as a monk. Punnā was a servant girl and Rajjumālā, another harassed servant who in order to escape beating and the incessant pulling of her hair by the mistress, shaved off the hair. The Buddha came in search of these two and instructed them, helping them to improve their positions”.

The Buddha’s methodology was sometimes followed by a dramatic plan of action. “A monk was suffering from diarrhea. The
Buddha without asking others to attend on him, bathed and cleaned him
and attended on him.”\textsuperscript{11} Another monk, “by name Tissa whose entire
body was festered and full of pus and blood was given up by everyone
even by his fellow monks. The Buddha cleaned and washed him in the
same manner, and this served as an example to other monks. After such
treatment, appropriate sermons were preached by the Buddha to the sick
monk as well as to the Order.”\textsuperscript{12}

The Buddha provided useful instructions when others are
confronted by problems. “It was when king Kosala was disappointed
about the baby girl whom his queen had given birth to that the Buddha
explained to him that a female child, wise and virtuous, would be better
than a male. When a man invited him to advise his daughters just
before they got married, the Buddha provided such instruction.”\textsuperscript{13} The
Jātakas provide us with numerous occasions when instructions were
provided, sometimes utilising example from Buddha’s previous lives.

Whatever education is imparted, should be given in a way that
fits into the particular character of the recipient. “Cūlaparthaka was a
person who after spending a considerable time could not grasp the
Buddha’s teaching. In desperation he was about to return to lay
household life when the Buddha met him. The Buddha asked him to roll
a piece of white cloth for sometime. He then looked at the white cloth,
which was now full of dirt. Cūlaparthaka was made to realise the
impermanence of life through the once white piece of cloth, which has
lost its colour now. His peculiar character was understood by the
Buddha, and a method devised to make him understand reality.”\textsuperscript{14}
This sort of approach was also adopted in the case of Khemā, a young princess obsessed with her beauty. “Here the Buddha, by his miraculous powers is said to have caused the appearance of a very beautiful woman blowing a fan standing close to him. Khemā saw the woman and thought that this woman is certainly more beautiful than me. Gradually the Buddha caused the beautiful woman to change from young age to middle age and finally to old age in which her youthful beauty was replaced by a withered body. The beauty-conscious Khemā understood her preoccupation with beauty is unrealistic in a world which is subjected to change every moment.”15

Sometimes the instructions given in a particular context followed a realistic plan of action involving popular participation. “When the Brahmin who was forsaken by his own grown-up and well-to-do children came for help, the Buddha taught him a couple of verses and asked him to read them when the populace assembled at the local hall. This plan of action resulted in creating a public opinion which finally compelled the children to accept their father and look after him.”16

The Buddha devoted his attention not only to the education of the individual but also in educating the group or community. “The monks were educated individually and also as a group on disciplinary laws pertaining to them. Whenever necessary, the public too were educated. Public opinion at the time hostile to the grant of spiritual status to woman in religion was changed, first by utilising strategies to educate, and then by motivating the public to change over to a more flexible attitude.”17 The act of punishment imposed on Devadatta was executed only after the laity in the city where Devadatta was living were first
educated on the law and its background, and public opinion favourable
to facilitate the function of the act was established.

Education for development is described in Buddhist literature. By
growing in ten ways, such development is achieved. “One ‘grows’ in
landed property (i.e. increases the procession of lands) in wealth and
granary, in child and wife, in slaves, servants and workmen, in four-
footed beasts; in faith (Saddā), in moral habit (Sīla), in what he hears
(Suta), in generosity (Cāga) and in wisdom (Paññā)”¹⁸

Gathering of knowledge or educating oneself is slow labouring
process. It takes place gradually, and not at once. “I, monks, do not say
that attainment of profound knowledge comes straightway. Nevertheless it comes by a gradual training.”¹⁹

Buddha in a conversation with Kesi, a horse-trainer, reveals his
method. The horse-trainer was first questioned by the Buddha as to
how he trains his horses. “By gentleness, Lord. Also by harshness; and
also by both gentleness and harshness, Kesi replies. The Buddha asks
him as to what happens when a horse could not be controlled by all
these three methods. Kesi replied, I destroy it. The Buddha’s method is
also a similar one. He uses gentleness. This is good conduct by body,
Thus its fruit; this is good conduct by speech, thus its fruit; this is good
conduct by though, thus its fruit, the way of happiness in this. By
harshness he means, this is bad conduct by body, thus its fruits; this is
bad conduct by speech, thus is its fruit; this is bad conduct by thought,
thus its fruit.”²⁰ A combination of both these methods is possible as in
the case of Kesi’s illustration. But when all these three methods fail-in
the case of such persons the Buddha just keeps away from them.
The necessity of imparting discipline as part of education which is considered a life-long process in Buddhism had been recognised particularly in the formative years of a young human being. If such discipline is not established in the young, such a person could later grow up into an anti-social character. In such education the influence of the immediate environment on the individual is also recognised. The royal elephant became ferocious having repeatedly listened to the conversation of thieves who assembled near the elephant’s stall. The king’s favourite horse began to limp because of the example of the attendant who looked after the horse. The man had a limp, which the horse emulated. Of the two parrots who were brought up in two different environments; one in a quiet hermit’s grove, and the other in the den of thieves, the first grew up to be a parrot of pleasant talk and disposition while the second followed the rough and obscene talk as well as ways of behaviour of the thieves.

**Definition of Thai Society**

Thailand means ‘Land of the Free’ a country in Southeast Asia, which covers the area of 514,000 square kilometers and had the population 61.5 million according to 1996 estimates. The population density is 110 people per square kilometer. About 77 percent of the population is rural while the rest 23 percent population is urban in nature. Thailand is a developing economy and it depends mainly on agriculture and manufacturing. About 63 percent of the total workforce is engaged in agricultural activities while around 11 percent are
employed in manufacturing section. The contribution of the primary and secondary section to the Thai economy stands to be nearly equal. In the early days, the forestry employed many Thais and the teak was the main forest product but since 1988 the Government has banned the cutting down of the trees.

Thailand has a tropical climate. There are three seasons - a hot dry spring, a hot wet summer and a mild winter. The average temperature at Bangkok, the capital city of Thailand ranges between 17°C in January to 37°C in May. The Northern Mountains region is relatively cooler with average temperature at 0°C in January and 32°C in May.

"In Thailand the farmers cultivate about 25 percent of the nation’s land mostly to grow rice. The other crops include cassava, cotton, maize, pineapples, rubber, sugarcane and tobacco. The other products like bananas coconuts, silk, soyabean, jute etc. The average size of the farm in Thailand is about 2 hectares and around 75 percent of the farmers possess their own land."²¹

Manufacturing activities are becoming increasingly important since 1960. The leading industries at present are cement food products, paper, plywood, textiles etc. Many international companies prefer Thailand to locate their factories mainly on account of cheap labour and favourable government policies. Such companies have plants for assembly of cars and electronic equipment, manufacturing of drugs and chemicals as well as other products. Thailand has rich deposits of Tin. Hence it is one of the leading producers of tin in the world. There are also mines, which produce large amounts of bauxite, iron ore, lead,
manganese, precious stones and tungsten. Natural gas is also obtained from huge deposits in the Gulf of Thailand.

Foreign trade is also playing an important role in the development of Thai economy. Thailand's chief exports include rice, rubber, tapioca products, tin etc. the exports of maize, sugar and tobacco are steadily increasing. The main imports of Thailand include chemicals, machinery fuels etc. The most important trading partners of Thailand are Japan and USA.

"Thailand has the good transportation system in Southeast Asia. The paved roads cover about 39,000 kilometers and more than 38,000 kilometers of railway track. In addition river and canals provide local transportation for passengers and cargo. Bangkok is the largest and busiest port of Thailand. Facilities for air transport are also available in Thailand both at international and domestic levels."\(^22\)

The communication network is also relatively well developed in Thailand as the nation has four major television networks and more than 200 radio stations, owned and operated by the Government. "There are about fifty daily newspapers out of which 20 are published in Bangkok. Most of the newspapers are published in Thai while the rest in Chinese and English languages."\(^23\) The telegraph and telephone systems also link the principal cities in Thailand.

Thailand adopted the national constitution in 1997, which provides for a monarch, a prime minister and a legislature called the National Assembly. The Monarch plays an advisory role as the head of the state while the prime minister is the need of the government. The National Assembly consists of both, a House of Representatives with
500 members and a senate with 200 members. The members of the House are elected by the people of Thailand and serve for four years term. The senators are selected by the people of Thailand and are to serve six years term. The National Assembly elects the prime minister who is then formally appointed by the monarch. The Prime Minister has to select a Cabinet called Council of Ministers which has maximum 35 members.

Regarding local government, it may be observed that the country has been divided into 76 provinces, which in turn are divided into 700 districts. Each province has a Governor and every district has a district officer. The governors are appointed by the minister of interior while the district officers are appointed the director of local administration. Thailand has 7,000 smaller divisions known as communes, which consist about 623,000 villages. The people in each village elect their own Phooyai or headman. The headmen elect a Kamnan from among themselves to work as the chief administrator of their commune. Every city in Thailand is governed by a mayor and a council, both elected by the people.

In Thailand 95 percent of Thai people are Buddhists. They are members of the Theravada school of Buddhism. According to their custom, men above the age of 20 are expected to serve in the Buddhist monkhood for at least few weeks. There are Chinese, Muslims, Hindus, Europeans and Vietnamese who follow their own religion.

In the field of education, it is interesting to note that more than 87 percent of the population of Thailand, of 15 or more years of age is able to read and write. Because the Thai government provides for primary
education free of cost throughout the country and to attend the school has been made compulsory under law for a minimum of six years. "Most of the secondary schools are owned by the government but hardly around 30 percent of the population have completed their secondary education." During 1995-96, "Thailand had 23 universities, 36 teacher training colleges and more than 300 technical colleges." However, a very small percentage of population is graduates. Thailand also has Buddhist Universities which were established to be an educational centre of religious study and to provide facilities for the study of Buddhism and modern sciences for both Thai and Foreign students. These universities also serves as a centre for the propagation of Buddhism at home and abroad and also to train Buddhist monks and novices in the art of preaching among the public at large. They also try to secure maintenance and advancement of Buddhism.

Research Problems

The work is done in order to have more appreciation of Buddhist study in Thai society and Thai education, to see how the Buddhist education has evolved from the early time to the present time. In addition, the work surveys Buddhist views to educational approach, the teaching of the Buddha, Buddhist educational approach in each periods in Thai Society, and the role played by individual monks and Sangha (monastic community).
The objective Study

1) To study the Buddhist educational approach in Thai society.
2) To understand the principles, methods and concepts of Buddhist educational approach from Buddhist viewpoint.
3) To study and analyse what is the Buddha teaching.
4) To study and understand educational role of Thai Buddhist monks.
5) To assess the Buddhist educational approach in Thai Society.
6) To examine different approaches given by eminent Thai Buddhist monks
7) To conclude and suggests Buddhist educational approach in Thai society

Research Design.

Research design is a plan undertaken to form a framework of the work. It starts by tracing the history background of Thai education and Buddhist educational approach in Thai society in brief. It examines how Buddhism plays a role in Thai society from the early period to the contemporary society, Buddhist view to educational approach, the teaching of the Buddha and sees the role of Buddhist monks in Thai society.
When the monastic community was the center of education, Buddhist monks acted as teachers, trainers, and advisors to the community nearby.

The research investigates eminent Buddhist monks and their approach towards education, and see how all have contributed to Thai education. Their methods and ideas are explored and compared to distinguish their stance. Furthermore their different backgrounds are also studied.

The Hypothesis

The present study is documentary. It by and large deals with Buddhists educational approach in Thai society, Buddhist view to educational approach, the teaching of the Buddha and the role - activities and status of Buddhist Thai monks who make a significant contribution to Buddhist education in Thai society. The hypothesis are:

1) Wats or monasteries were the centers of education in the old days.

2) Only Wats or monasteries were the places the people in the old days could find education for themselves.

3) Thai Buddhist monks provided education in the early days of the country. Kings and the learned people become the instructors.

4) A Buddhist educational approach was developed from monastery to university.
5) Thai Buddhist monks play a very important role in education.

Data Collection

This is a descriptive study. The study is conducted for a period of one year and five months i.e. from February 1999 to July 2000. It is documentary. Information collected can be shown in the table as below:

General Description of the Data Collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Editions and Translations of Buddhist Pāli texts: Tipitaka and Commentaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. General Books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Government Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Private Reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Internet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources of Data.

The study mainly focuses on traditional educational approach whose center is the monastery compound, the roles and status of Buddhist monks who are involved directly or indirectly in organizing education for the society.
To undertake the work, data and information have been chiefly gathered from the Buddhist Pāli texts and relevant books and Buddhism. As the study is a documentary one, so there is no field work done.

For the purpose of collecting necessary data relating to the Buddhist educational approach in Thai society, secondary sources of data were used. Basically the study relies heavily on secondary data. The data was thus made available from Buddhists Pāli texts and several books, government reports, private reports, internet were studied, the list of which has been given in the bibliography of the thesis.

Chapter Schemes.

The whole work has been presented in seven chapters. Each chapter is sub-divided as follows:

**Chapter I**, This chapter deals with introduction. It covers in details of historical background and structure of Thai education, Formal and Non-Formal education, information technology application and distance learning, teacher and higher education, policy on higher education development plan and autonomous university. It discusses in detail review and general role of Buddhism in Thai society with special emphasis on education in order to provide necessary background for getting the clear understanding about Buddhist educational approach in Thai society.

**Chapter II**, This chapter deals with the research methodology. It highlights the definition of Buddhist educational approach and Thai
society, research problem, objectives, research design, hypothesis, data collection, sources of data, chapter scheme and limitations.

**Chapter III**, This chapter deals with Buddhist views on educational approach where the method of education adopted by the Buddha has been discussed in details. It is interesting to note that the Buddha had used five different approaches as follows.

1) Gradual approach

2) Approach of Adaptation

3) Illustrative approach

4) Analytical approach

5) Experimental approach

**Chapter IV**, This chapter has been devoted for the detailed discussion of teachings of the Buddha, specially of those aspects for which the Buddha gained direct knowledge at the time of his enlightenment. It includes Rebirth and Cosmology, Karma, The Four Holy Truths, Five factors of personality and The Buddhist scriptures.

**Chapter V**, This chapter deals with Buddhist educational approach in Thai society. It traces the evolution of Buddhist educational approach in Thai society. It covers the study of Sukhothai Period, Lanna Period, Ayuthaya Period, Thonburi Period, Ratanakosin or Bangkok Period. And discussed in the field of role of Sangha, role of Wats and rural society, and Buddhist education and Socio-Economic development of Thailand.
Chapter VI, This chapter deals with educational Buddhist role of Thai Buddhist monks. In this chapter the contribution of three well-known Thai Buddhist monks has been discussed. It includes the role of following monks in the process of propagation of Buddhism and Buddhist education in Thai society.

1) Prince-Patriarch Wachirayanwarorot (1860-1921)

2) Buddhadasa Bhikkhu (1906-1993)

3) Phra Prayudh Payutto (1939 - present)

Chapter VII, This chapter deals with conclusions and suggestions.

Limitations.

It is necessary to mention the limitation of the present study. In tracing the history background of Thai society only the educational perspective is focused while other aspects - social, economical and cultural are by and large ignored.

As regards selecting Thai Buddhist monks who play the important role in Buddhist education, the study is limited to only three eminent scholars i.e. Prince-Patriarch Wacirayanwarerat, Buddhadasa Bhikkhu and Phra Prayudh Payutto - When there are a number of Buddhist monks who also play the vital role for Thai education.

The study has explored the approach given by the theme but has not assessed or evaluated as to what extent their approach is successful.
In addition the study is primarily theoretical. It’s aim is to show dimensions of Buddhist education in Thai society as a whole.
REFERENCES


15. Ibid., p. 56.


23. Ibid., p. 16.
