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INTRODUCTION: THAILAND
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SECTION I

EDUCATION IN THAILAND: A BRIEF ACCOUNT

1.1.1 Introduction
In the early days of Thai history, education was primarily provided by the religious and royal institutions. Buddhist monks gave basic education to boys in classes set up within the compounds of monasteries, while children of the royal household and from families of the nobility were educated in order to serve in the court and govern the provinces. During the reign of King Rama V (1863-1910) there was increased recognition of the need of educated people to staff the growing bureaucracy. As a result, the Thai education system was modernized and made more accessible to the general public. This began with the 1898 Education Proclamation which was strongly influenced by the British system. It stipulated two educational goals—the academic and the vocational.

There are over 37,000 educational institutions and nearly 20 million students in the Thai education system. The Thai education system consists of 15 year free basic education: 6 years of “Prathom (Primary education P1- P 6) and 6 years of “Mattayom” secondary education, M1-M6). Enrolment of the basic education system begins at the age of 6.

The current Thai education system stems from the reforms set by the 1999 National Education Act which implemented new organizational structure, promoted decentralization of administration and called for innovative learner-centered teaching practices. The Thai education system provides 9
years of compulsory education, with 15 years of free basic education guaranteed by the Constitution.

1.1.2 **Structure of Thai Education:-FE, NFE, IE**

Under the present educational system, various types and methods of learning are offered to learners regardless of their economic, social and cultural backgrounds. Educational approaches are classified as formal, non-formal, and informal. All types of education can be provided by educational institutions as well as learning centres organized by individuals, families, communities, or private groups, local administration organizations, professional bodies, religious institutions, welfare institutions, and other social institutions. There is a tripartite structure of Thai Education system: Formal, Non-formal, and Informal education.

**1.1.2.1 Formal Education (FE)**

Formal education services are mainly provided to those within the school system, and are divided into basic and higher education.

1.1.2.1.1 Basic Education

Basic Education is provided by early childhood development institutions, schools, and learning centres, and covers pre-primary education, 6 years of primary, 3 years of lower secondary, and 3 years of upper secondary education. The current compulsory education requirement covers 6 years of primary and 3 years of lower secondary education. Children are expected to be enrolled in basic education institutions from age 7 through the age of 16, except for those who have already completed Grade 9.

1.1.2.1.2 Higher Education

Higher Education at the diploma, associate, and degree levels is provided in universities, institutes, colleges, and other types of institutions.
1.1.2.2 Non-Formal Education (NFE)

Non-formal education services are provided by both public and private bodies to those outside the school system, i.e. early childhood population, school-age population who have missed formal schooling and over-school-age population:

1. Provision of Non-Formal Education for Pre-School Children:

   1.1 Provision of educational services to 2-6 year-old children or from birth to 6 years.

   1.2 Early childhood development in centres established by local communities for children aged 3-6 years.

   1.3 Family-based early childhood development.

   1.4 Child development of the private sector organized by the Council of Early Childhood and Youth Development Organizations consisting of 50 member organizations.

2. Provision of Fundamental Education for Literacy

This educational service is provided to promote literacy for adults aged 14 years and over who are still illiterate. Non-formal activities to eradicate illiteracy are currently organized as follows:

   2.1 The Literacy Campaign, with volunteer teachers and volunteer village tutors, has continued to promote eradication of illiteracy among the adult population.

   2.2 Functional Literacy Programme, organized for illiterate adults, emphasizes integration of literacy and problem-solving skills for the improvement of quality of life.
2.3 The promotion of Thai Language Usage for Thai Muslims in 5 southern border provinces.

2.4 Hill Areas Education, aiming to provide educational services to promote literacy among the hill tribes by using non-formal education volunteer teachers.

3. **Provision of General Non-Formal Education**

This educational service provides continuing education programmes for those having no chance to learn formal education from primary to higher levels, and is normally organized in public schools or official premises, factories or other organizations. Learners are awarded the same qualifications as those in the formal school system. The learning process is organized in 3 ways: classroom learning, distance learning, and self-learning.

4. **Vocational Non-formal Education**

Non-formal vocational and technical education and training can be divided as follows:

4.1 Training Course for Vocational Certificate: This programme is designed for those who have passed XII standard who have no chance to study at a higher level. It is organized to provide educational opportunities to target populations in rural areas through training in vocational skills and promotion of quality of life leading to a certificate equivalent to that of general lower secondary school.

4.2 Short-Course Vocational Training: Short-course vocational training is provided in many areas by both public and private institutions and agencies. These courses are offered for the duration from 3 hours to 1 year depending on the content and objectives. Pre-employment training and
upgrading training are offered by educational institutions as well as related agencies, such as Skill Development Institutions. At present, short-course vocational training programmes are designed to serve the needs for self-employment and to articulate with formal programmes in order to serve lifelong learning.

4.3 Interest Group Programme: Teaching and learning activities are organized according to the individual needs and interests of the general public. Those having the same interests can from a group of 5-15 persons and receive training of up to 30 hours.

4.4 Non-Formal Programme for Certificate in Vocational Education: Non-formal education activities leading to the Certificate in Vocational Education are provided through distance learning toward secondary school graduates, both the unemployed and those working in public organizations and private enterprises. This programme requires at least 3 years of study, except when there is a transfer of academic performance or experience.

1.1.2.3 Informal Education (IE)
Informal Education enables learners to learn by themselves according to their interests, potentialities, readiness and the opportunities available from individuals, society, environment, media, or other sources of knowledge as follows:

1.1.2.3.1 Informal education programmes provided by libraries, museums and science / technology centers, etc. as well as by mass media i.e. radio, television, newspapers and magazines, etc.

1.1.2.3.2 Informal education programmes of community learning networks i.e. community learning centers, village reading centers,
sub-district health offices, sub-district agricultural offices, as well as natural learning sources in each community.

1.1.2.3.3 Learning from various sources as follows:
1) Local wisdom which includes culture and the body of knowledge in each community;
2) Local media which plays an important role in passing on knowledge and social values through several kinds of performances
3) Families which are learning sources from birth for all the people; and
4) Networking through cooperative activities.

It could be perceived that all Ministries are involved in providing informal education to promote lifelong learning. The services provided include educational activities or academic and professional programmes for different target groups related to the responsibilities of each Ministry.

1.1.3 Special and Welfare Education
Special education is provided by the Bureau of Special Education Administration, and by the Development of Social Development and Public Welfare, as well as by some universities, lab schools, municipal schools and private foundations. Special education is also provided for children who are hearing-impaired, mentally retarded, visually-impaired, physically-impaired or health-impaired. Other groups of children who need special education services are specific learning-disabled, autistic (Developmental Disabilities), emotionally behaviorally disordered, as well as gifted and talented children. With an emphasis on individualized education programmes, and
commensurate with their potential, disabled students receive education from various types of school:

1) Special Schools: There are currently 43 such schools, targeting those with mental, physical, visual or hearing impairments. In practice, however, children with any type of disability will be accepted in these schools.

2) Special Centres: There are currently 78 Special Centres, one in each province throughout the country, that render services in specially set up locations, in inclusive schools, hospitals, and in the home. The centers also organize meetings and seminars for parents of the disabled as well as staff of various organizations, conduct research, and develop curriculum for short-term training for the disabled.

3) Inclusive Schools: There are currently 18,618 inclusive schools, which are regular schools that accept disabled children. In providing education for the disabled, these schools are assisted by Special Centers and Special Schools in terms of teachers, training, materials and facilities, and coordination with concerned agencies.

Welfare education is provided for those who are socially and culturally disadvantaged. Students are given special vocational training relevant to the locality of a particular school for further employment. Students receive education form the Welfare Schools. Welfare Schools are under the supervision of the Office of the Basic Education Commission. Disadvantaged students who are deprived of the opportunities to attend regular institutions are able to study in Welfare Schools, which provide free education, food, clothing, school supplies, and in most cases, accommodations. Special vocational training is usually included in it. There
are 42 Welfare Schools located in 35 provinces, accommodating 39,731 disadvantaged students, most of whom (approximately 92%) were boarders. Included among these were 5,449 minority children and 608 disabled children. It should be noted that students with disabilities in the Welfare Schools include only those able to study in an inclusive school; others study in special schools that accommodate their types of disability.

1.1.4 Vocational and Specialized Education

In the general stream of basic education, career and technology-related education is offered to school children at both primary and secondary levels to provide them with work experience and basic knowledge for career preparation and technological application. Formal technical and Vocational education and training is conducted at three levels: upper secondary, leading to the lower certificate of vocational education; post secondary, leading to a diploma or the associate’s degree in vocational education; and at university level, leading to a degree. With a start at upper secondary level, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Thailand provides eight major fields of study, namely; Trade and industry, agriculture, home economics, fishery, business and tourism, arts and crafts, textile, and commerce. Credit accumulated by learners is transferable within the same or between different types of education, regardless of whether the credits have been accumulated from the same or different educational institutions, including learning from non-formal or informal education, vocational training and work experience. According to the National Education Act, technical and vocational education and training are provided in educational institutions belonging to the public and private sector, enterprises, or those organized through co-operation of educational institutions and enterprises.
For the formal programme, students learn theoretical and practical subjects in schools and spend a semester in the workplace. The dual-vocational training (DVT) programme is offered at certificate or upper secondary level as well as diploma or post-secondary level. The DVT curriculum and assessment system has been organized in close collaboration with enterprises, and students in this programme spend part of their time studying theories in schools and the rest of the time participating in hands-on training in enterprises.

In academic year 2007-2008, there were 63,800 DVT students in 51 programmes and 12,000 companies. Participation of the private sector, especially industries and business in vocational education, has been highly considered at both policy and institutional levels. The credit-accumulative programme provides opportunities for adults who are unable to participate in full-time study at an institution. An assessment system for validation of their experiences is also provided to evaluate their knowledge and skills. In addition, credit accumulated can be transferred within the same or between different institutions. In summary, vocational education is provided through formal programme, the dual-vocational training (DVT) programme, and the credit accumulative programme.

Specialized education, both at basic and higher education levels, is provided by ministries, bureaus, department, state enterprises and other public agencies in accordance with their needs and expertise, taking into consideration national education policy and standards. Courses are offered for graduates, from XII standard to upper secondary schools, both from
general and vocational streams. All responsible agencies have developed their own curricula as follows:

1) Curricula for the production of professional soldiers and police include the curriculum for Preparatory School for the Armed Forces Academies; curricula of the military, naval, air force academies and police cadets; and curricula for preparing warrant officers for graduates from lower and upper secondary schools.

2) Curricula for specific technicians include those for training military technicians to work in the Armed Forces, and those for training specific technicians for various agencies such as Irrigation College, Railway Technical School, etc.

3) Medical Science curricula are organized for secondary school graduates requiring 1-4 years of study in the institutions of the Ministry of Public Health, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and the Thai Red Cross Society.

4) Curricula for other specific purposes are organized for graduates from lower secondary school, both in general and vocational streams and general upper secondary schools are required by each institution, such as the Merchant Marine Training Centre, Cooperatives School, Postal School, and Civil Aviation Training Centre, etc.

1.1.5 Teacher Education

As education spread, the need for teachers inevitably increased. This resulted in the establishment of teacher training schools both in the metropolitan and provincial areas to prepare teachers for elementary and secondary schools in 1975. However, in 1975, as a result of the expansion of compulsory education, high rate of population growth and the need to upgrade the quality
of secondary school teachers, the teacher colleges began to offer a five-year programme leading to a Bachelor’s Degree in education. Teacher colleges performed this function effectively by improving teacher qualification to fill almost all teaching positions.

The Teacher Colleges Act (TCA) was revised in 1984, and in 1992, His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej graciously conferred the name title “Rajabhat Institute” on the teacher colleges. The Rajabhat Institutes Act of 1995 brought changes to the institutional structure, administration and autonomy of the colleges. Then The Rajabhat Institutes became Rajabhat University from 14th June, 2004. The effect of these changes in the establishment of 40 locally oriented and autonomous institutions endowed with a greater flexibility and capacity to provide for the country’s future educational needs.

At present, Thailand attaches great importance to improving the status and quality of teachers. Teachers, in particular, are the key agents in reforming the teaching-learning process.

Given the shift from teacher-centered to learner-centered approaches, teachers must be able to function as facilitators, to enable students to become independent in thought, action and problem solving while adhering to ethical and moral values of the society.

Under the current reform measures, Thai teachers are being supported and encouraged to attend training courses, locally and abroad. The following training activities are among those organized especially for teachers:
1) Development of the 5 years Pre-service Education Programme -
This programme requires completion of a 5 years bachelor’s degree, with the
first 4 years dedicated to coursework and the final year devoted to teaching
practice at an approved school.

2) Training for teachers of English -
The Ministry of Education made projects focused on improving the English
language proficiency of in-service teachers. The Ministry works closely with
international agencies, including the British Council and the Regional
English Language Office of the United States Embassy, as well as the AUA
Language Centre, and ERIC Centres.

3) Training activities to strengthen professional standards of teachers-
It was expected that the first round of training should have been completed

4) Completion of the Bachelor’s Degree in Education for in-service
teachers: Rajabhat universities have been conducting a special program since
2003 for in-service teachers who must meet this requirement. It was
expected that all in-service teachers would have attained at least a Bachelor’s
Degree in Education in the year 2007.

5) In-service programmes for a Post-graduate Certificate and Master’s
Degree in Teaching: Teachers holding a Bachelor’s Degree in fields other
than teaching are encouraged to undertake in-service programmes leading to
a Post-graduate Certificate or a Master’s Degree in Teaching.

1.1.6 Improving Teacher Effectiveness through Certification in
Thailand
In Thailand at present there are approximately 680,272 teachers responsible
for education of around 20 million students, the future manpower of the
country. The importance of the teaching profession to the way of life of the Thais has increasingly been recognized. Among several other educational issues, the constitution of the Kingdom of Thailand specifies that the State shall

“develop the teaching profession.”

In fact, teaching is the only profession so specified in this highest law of the country. This strongly substantiates the importance of teachers in the Thai society.

1.1.7 Educational Reforms

With the present Constitution as the legal foundation, Thailand has enacted the National Education Act of 1999 (NEA), which has been eventually approved and has become effective from August 20, 1999. The Act is expected to be an apparatus of educational reform for a better Thailand. The National Education Act of 1999 (NEA) is composed of 9 Chapters as follows:

Chapter 1 General Provisions: Objectives and Principles
Chapter 2 Educational Rights and Duties
Chapter 3 Educational System
Chapter 4 National Education Guidelines
Chapter 5 Educational Administration and Management
Chapter 6 Education Standards and Quality Assurance
Chapter 7 Teachers, Faculty Staff and Educational Personnel
Chapter 8 Resources and Investment for Education
Chapter 9 Technologies for Education, and Transitory Provisions
1.1.8 Teaching Profession Reform

Siriporn Boonyananta\(^2\) (2000) states that the National Education Act, Chapter 7, has 6 policy-oriented projects to be done, namely:

1. Professional License for Thai Teachers
2. Professional License for Administrators
3. Preparation of Teacher Production and Development plan
4. Remuneration System for Teachers and Educational Institution Administrators
5. Administering Personnel Affairs of Teachers
6. Fund for Development of Teachers, Faculty Staff and Educational Personnel

1.1.9 Professional License for Thai Teachers

The Professional License for Thai Teachers Project has sailed through the research and public hearing process and the report has already been sent to the Education Reform Office.

The purpose of the research on Professional License for Thai Teachers was to propose professional licensing system for Thai teachers in accordance with the National Education Act of B.E. 1999, Section 53, and Chapter 7 in the second paragraph which read as follows:

“Teachers, administrators of educational institutions, educational administrators and other educational personnel of both the state and private sectors shall have professional licenses as provided by the law.”\(^3\)
The research results expected are:

(1) The body of knowledge concerning professional licenses and professional organizations for teachers, and

(2) The academic information to be used as basis for drafting the new, or revising the existing Teachers Act in order to include issues of professional licenses.

1.1.10 Major Characteristics of the Proposed Professional License for Thai Teachers

1.1.10.1 Principles of Licensing Teachers

As stipulated in the National Education Act, the licensing for the teachers will be developed so that teaching will be further enhanced and become a highly respected profession.

1) The ultimate goal of licensing teachers is full development of learners and teaching profession

2) Teachers are guaranteed to receive at least the same welfare and benefits as they are having at present.

3) Participatory approach will be employed in developing and assessing teachers.

4) A system to license teachers will be delegated to local authority and School Board for initial selection and approval.

5) A proposed system to license teachers must be fair, transparent and accountable.

1.1.10.2 The Objectives

Thailand attaches great importance to improving the status and quality of teachers. Teachers, in particular, are the key agents in reforming the teaching-learning process. So the objectives are -
1) To raise the standard of teaching profession.
2) To develop all round learners with knowledge along with morality.
3) To raise the overall standard of Thai education.
4) To stimulate teacher reforms leading to nationwide educational reforms.

1.1.10.3 Who are required to have Teaching Licenses?
According to the Education Act, all the teachers teaching in all levels of education except higher education at the degree level need to have teaching licenses by 20th August, 2002.

1.1.10.4 Types of Teaching Licenses
There are two types of Teaching Licenses:

1) Two-year Provisional License, issued to each new batch of teachers.
2) Standard License, to be renewed every five years.

1.1.10.5 Teacher Qualifications
For becoming a professional teacher, one must complete the following criteria.

1) Thai nationality.
2) At least 18 years of age.
3) Bachelor's or higher degree in Education. Holders of degrees other than education need to be trained to meet the standard of teaching profession.
1.1.10.6 Methods of Issuing Teaching Licenses

1.1.10.6.1 For new recruits
The most significant agents of learning reform are teachers. In order to recognize the importance of the teaching profession and quality of teaching and learning, there are methods of issuing teaching licenses for new recruits as follows:

1) Issuing a two-year provisional teaching license to applicants with Bachelor's or higher degree in education. Holders of degrees other than education need to be trained in teaching profession for not less than 24 semester credits.

2) After at least 2 years of satisfactory teaching experience, and having met the standard of teaching profession, the applicant will be given the standard teaching license which has to be renewed every five years. Official evidence of self-improvement and professional development as required by the Professional Organization must be submitted in the course of renewing a teaching license.

1.1.10.6.2 For in-service teachers
In accordance with the 1999 National Education Act, a professional teaching license is required of in-service teachers, for which a Bachelor’s Degree in Education is required. It was recently stipulated that in-service teachers will be allowed to teach in an educational institution.

1) Issuing a standard teaching license to teachers with Bachelor's or higher Degree and with at least two years of teaching experience. This standard teaching license must be renewed every five years.
2) Issuing a provisional teaching license to teachers with at least Bachelor's Degree and less-than-two-years teaching experience. After having completed two years of teaching experience the teacher will receive standard teaching license as in 1).

3) Issuing a provisional teaching license to a teacher without a Bachelor's Degree who will need to get a Bachelor's Degree within five years in order to receive a standard teaching license. A teacher with a standard teaching license will be entitled to receive salaries, remuneration, welfare and other benefits as stipulated by a new law stated in Section 55 of the National Education Act of B.E. 2542 (1999).

A new Organization for Administrators, Teachers Educational Institution and Educational Administrators will be established as an independent body administered by a professional council under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Religion and Culture. This Organization shall have the powers and duties for setting professional standards; issuing and withdrawal of licenses; overseeing maintenance of professional standards and ethics; and developing the profession of teachers, administrators of education institution, and educational administrators.

1.1.11 Reform in Learning and Teaching

Learning and teaching reform is at the heart of educational reform and can be implemented without specific regulations. As the reform of learning is aimed at providing highest benefits for all the Thai people, it has been implemented widely through various efforts from policy level to institutional or grassroots level.
As indicated in Section 22 of the National Education Act, education will be based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self-development and are regarded as being most important. The teaching-learning process will aim at enabling learners to develop at their own pace and to maximize their potential.

1.1.12 Learners as the Centre of Learning

In order to have the child-centered learning provided by law, Section 22 of the National Education Act states that,

“Education shall be based on the principle that all learners are capable of learning and self-development.”

To reform teaching learning, both teachers and learners must change their roles. Teachers must change from a ‘teller’ to a ‘facilitator’, while learners can learn by themselves, provided they are assisted by teachers how to learn, where to get information, and how to make use of it.

1.1.13 Teachers as Agents of Learning Reform

The Office of National Education Commission (ONEC) in collaboration with the Learning Reform Sub-committee has initiated two major projects for teachers: National Teacher Award, and Master Teacher Award. These projects are created with the belief that there are a large number of capable and hardworking teachers, but they may not be able to progress in the wider public due to the lack of opportunity. Therefore, we have to sort them out, reward them and set them as ideals for other teachers in terms of teaching-learning reform. Who are the National Teachers? The National Teacher Award was designed to be the highest award ever presented to teachers. It aims at honoring the teachers who have achieved an excellent record in the
past performance and who can demonstrate their future research project as beneficial for the improvement of teaching and learning. For the first phase of 5 years, emphasis will be placed on teachers in 4 subject areas - Thai, English, Mathematics, and Science. The award winners will receive a financial allocation for their research.

In 1998, four teachers were declared the National Teachers and in 1999 six more teachers were given the prestige. While carrying on their teaching function as usual, these excellent teachers conduct their research and are visited by teachers from other schools to observe their classrooms and exchange opinions on the learning reform.

Who are the Master Teachers? The Master teachers are those who, by following the child-centered concept, organize their outstanding classroom activities which can be a good sample for other teachers. These master teachers are required to form a teacher network of at least 10 persons and extend their teaching methods through the "Kalayanamitr Nites" (friendship-based supervision) to the network members. ONEC also gives them financial support for the supervisory activities. In 1998 thirty teachers were chosen to be master teachers and ninety-six more were selected in 1999.

The Ministry of Education, with the approval of His Excellency Minister Somsak Prisananantakul, has accepted the idea of learning reform through national teachers and master teachers. Teachers who are likely to change their teaching methods under the child-centered concept will be selected as the so-called "Lead Teachers." They will attend the workshop on child-centered learning, under the supervision of national teachers and master teachers. It was expected that in 1999 about 30,000 teachers will participate
in the workshop. While implementing their teaching methods, these lead teachers will also expand their methodology to their network of ten teachers. Thus, within two years, all 600,000 teachers were expected to be completely transformed to be "Teachers of the new Millennium." These teachers would be agents of change for the learning reform in schools all over the country.

It is imperative that all concerned carry out the development of teachers and education personnel to contribute to the success of learning reform and to benefit all stakeholders, especially the target of these efforts, the learners.

1.1.14 Higher Education

The demand of higher education has risen over the years because of increasing demand for qualified manpower that can contribute to the modern economic development. Higher education is provided at the associate degree and degree levels, and is offered in universities, educational institutions, colleges, and other types of institutions at associate degree and degree levels.

Higher education is the principal concern of the Ministry of Education, which coordinates the operation of 78 State Universities and 89 privately operated universities and colleges. The language of instruction at the universities is Thai, with the exception of Economics major courses at Thammasat University, which are conducted in English. Special courses in English are arranged for foreign students at the discretion of the university. The government and private sector provide scholarships for outstanding and needy students. Education at the degree level is extended to Buddhist monks as well. There are two Buddhist Universities namely Mahamakut Buddhist University and Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya Buddhist University,
established with the approval of the Ecclesiastical Elders’ Council and with budgetary support from the Office of National Buddhism, Ministry of Culture.

Students can take admission to the higher education sector after the High School Entrance Examination taken at the end of Mattayom 6 (12th Standard Class). Recent reforms have increased the importance placed on Grade Point Averages (GPA) for final university entry.

Higher education is predominantly provided at universities and colleges. The two distinct levels of educational attainment are the diploma level and graduate degrees. Over 2.2 million students are currently enrolled in the higher education sector and participation rate of university age students has increased significantly over the last few years from an average of 26% to the current average of 40%. In recent years, there has been significant increase in higher education opportunities with 78 public universities and 89 private higher education institutions.

1.1.15 Autonomous Universities: Future Direction

The concept of university autonomy was introduced in Thai higher education over 3 decades ago. The First 15-Year Plan for Higher Education (1999-2004) stipulated that future public universities be established as autonomous institutions from the beginning, whereas existing public universities should also be incorporated.

Currently, there are thirteen autonomous Universities under the supervision of the Office of the Higher Education Commission, namely Suranaree University of Technology, Walailak University, King Mongkut’s University of Technology Thonburi, Mae Fah Luang University, Buddhist University,
Mahachulalongkornrajavidyalaya University, Mahidol University, Burapha University, King Mongkut's University of Technology North Bangkok, Thaksin University, King Mongkut's Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Chiangmai University and Chulalongkorn University. While the government is still able to direct, supervise, audit and evaluate the institutions through this office, they enjoy a greater degree of flexibility and innovation, receiving funding through block grants, and having full control over the administration and management of finance and budgets (budget management and procurement system), and personal matters (academic programmes and university structures), and personal matters (personal system, recruitment, remuneration and benefits).

Autonomy is seen as a significant step toward strengthening public higher education institutions so that they will be more accountable to the public, more adaptive to educational and social needs and market demand, and more proactive and dynamic in prioritizing their goals, outputs, and outcomes. Continuous effort will be made to encourage public higher education institutions to transit to autonomous universities to generate innovation, cost-effectiveness, accountability, performance-based assessments, good governance and long-term social and economic development.

In conclusion, the major aspiration in educational reform in Thailand is to provide quality education for all as a means to develop Thai people in all aspects. In this regard, participation from all stakeholders and support from government policy on education are the key of factors success in pushing forward education reform.
SECTION II
THE STATUS OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE IN THAILAND

1.2.1 The Role of English Language in the World

English language is considered to be the most important language in the world today. It is the first language in Britain, the United States of America, New Zealand, Canada and Australia, second language in Philippines, Singapore, Kenya, and so on and a very important foreign language in most South-east Asian Countries as in Thailand, Myanmar, Vietnam and third language with ambivalent status in India. The importance of English leads some countries to send their students abroad to master the language because English is the language of administration, law, judiciary and the medium of instruction in scientific, medical and technical education. Furthermore, knowledge of English is needed because almost every advance in science, engineering, trade, and politics as well as in all the other branches of human thought are discussed, printed and made available in English. Businessmen and traders are in need of English to have access to the developments in business administration and also for the purpose of business communication. Doctors are in need of English for the purpose of being able to read medical papers written in English and to attend meetings for discussion with multinational participants on matters related to their profession.

Pharmacies are in need of English to read the instructions and contents of drugs. The maintenance instructions for equipment are written in English. Pamphlets of some universities and colleges are published in English. Modern agricultural and farming methods even in tropical countries are
written and interpreted in English. English is important because modern developments have brought the countries in the world closer together. As a result, people start learning English in order to meet these vital needs. Being involved diplomatically, commercially, educationally, technologically and scientifically with the West as well as the rest of the world, Thais should know and understand English.

English appears to be a flexible language to be adapted to different situations in different parts of the world. It is becoming the most favored second or foreign language. Its internationality leads both developed and developing countries feel a strong need to promote it at different levels in their work and schools. In this regard, the researcher states that English language is a very important language because it is an international language; and not only a worldwide language for communication but also an instrument for developing a solid knowledge base. It is very important to support the young, particularly teenagers, in their learning and using English language in every field; this includes its use in communication, searching for information to increase knowledge etc. by the implementation of practice and further studies.

If students of Asian and non-Asian countries are asked the question why they learn English, their answers will not necessarily be similar because they learn English for various reasons such as ‘for pleasure’ or ‘to use English when travelling abroad’ or ‘to get a better job’ or ‘to search for new knowledge not found in the mother tongue’ or ‘to survive in the countries they are going to’ or ‘to write reports’ as well as ‘to read articles and references in English’.
To conclude, English language is fundamental to the various branches, academic or non-academic, in a society. It has its own significance in comparison with other languages because it is regarded as an international language. Hence, a great number of governments treat it as the most important language and give it a separate place in the school curriculum. Furthermore, English has been considered either as a first language or a second language or a foreign language or a third language in the school and college curricula. Due to the importance of the language, it has become a compulsory subject in these countries, especially in Thailand.

1.2.2 History of English Language in Thailand

The earliest form of education in Thailand may be said to have begun in the middle of the Sukhothai period (13th Century) when King Ramkhamhaeng invented the Thai alphabet. Stone inscriptions of that period tell of moral, intellectual and cultural education.

Early education was, however, limited mainly to the aristocracy and clergy. It was necessary for princes to be literate so that they could administer their provinces and communicate with the palace in the capital, while monks had to know how to read the religious texts from which they preached sermons to the laity. The remainder of society was either in service or engaged in farming so they had little need for reading skills, village lore being transmitted orally. Buddhist monasteries were virtually the only source of semi-public education and only a very small portion of the population, mostly male, received any formal education.
The reign of King Mongkut (1851-1865) saw the turning point of modernization in Thailand and the growth of Western influence. The first printing press was set up and education patterns of Thai children were restructured to suit the new needs of the nation. The knowledge of English became a necessary tool and an English teacher was hired to teach the royal children. The King himself had mastered English and Latin.

The modernization policy was further pursued by King Chulalongkorn (1868-1910) who, realizing the need for better trained personnel for royal and government services, opened a school in the Palace. An 'English School' was also established in the Palace to prepare princes and court children for further studies abroad. Schools were also founded outside the palace for the children of commoners, and government textbooks were printed for use in Bangkok and, at a later period, in the provinces.

The Department of Education was established in 1887, and was assigned the full responsibility of education and religious affairs of the entire country. When it became a full-fledged Ministry in 1982, new approaches were employed, placing more emphasis on 'popular education'. Thus government primary schools were established throughout the kingdom so that literacy, good citizenship and a better standard of living for the people could be achieved.

The early 20th Century witnessed many developments in education in Thailand. In 1910 the first university in Thailand, Chulalongkorn University, was founded with four faculties namely, (i) Medicine, (ii) Law and Political Science, (iii) Engineering, and (iv) Arts and Science.
The private sector is an important mechanism in the provision of education at all levels and of all types. The extent of responsibilities and the regulations pertaining to the participation of the private sector in national education was laid down for the first time in 1918 when the Private School Act was passed. The ‘Compulsory Primary Education Act’ was proclaimed in 1921 and the first school of Arts and Crafts was established in 1922.

According to the National Education Act, private educational institutions can provide education at all levels and of all types. The administration and management of education by the private sector will be independent with the State being responsible for overseeing, monitoring, and assessing educational quality and standards as for state educational institutions.

It is thus essential for the government to provide support for private educational institutions to promote the role of the private sector in educational provision. Clear-cut policies and measures have been defined by the State regarding the participation of the private sector in the provision of education. Besides, private educational institutions providing education at degree level will be allowed to function with autonomy, develop their own system of administration and management, flexibility, and academic freedom.

Regarding the adoption of the system of constitutional monarchy in the year 1932, a National Educational Scheme was formulated, making formal recognition of individual educational ability, regardless of sex, social background, or physical conditions. This scheme has been regularly revised to ensure that every citizen is provided with the four major aspects of education, namely, Puttisuksa (Intellectual education), Chariyasuksa (Moral
education), Palasuksa (Physical education), and Hattasuksa (Practical education).

1.2.3 The Status of English Language in Sisaket Province at Present

Sisaket province is located in the north-east of Thailand. The north direction stretches up to Roi-et province. The south direction stretches up to Cambodia. The east direction stretches up to Ubonratchathani province. The west stretches up to Surin province. This province has a total area of about 8,839.97 square kilometers. The population in the province uses native ethnical language such as, Laos, Yuier, Kher, Suier and Thai.

The distance from the main city to Cambodian border is about 135 kilometers. The route to the border runs through the district of Kantharak, Khun Han and Phu-shing. There is a border pass called Sa-ngam which is linked to the highway no. 67 leading to the province of Siem Reab in Cambodia. A temporary border check-point is established close to the Khmer ruin sanctuary known as ‘Prea Vihear’ in Khmer. This sanctuary is in the district of Kantharak. Declared as a permanent border pass in November 2003, Sa-ngam had a high potential for economic growth, trade and tourism. It is the route which links the three countries: Thailand, Laos, and Cambodia. In addition, the border trade, tourism and travel are also important. This border pass leads to one of the world’s wonders, Angkor Wat and Angkor Thom in Cambodia. It is estimated that 1,500 person travel to and fro across the border checkpoint every day. Their main purpose is trade and tourism.

Muang is one of Sisaket’s districts. The history of the province goes back to the Ayutthaya Period (approximately 1739). The legend had it that the
square-shaped castle was built in the forest of the trees known as ‘Lumduan’ in local dialect. The King of Ayutthaya appointed Kripakdee See Lumduan as the governor of the area. Sisaket was believed to have been built at the same time with its neighboring province ‘Surin’ as the two provinces have many things in common.

The researcher is working on the status of English teaching in Sisaket, with the focus on only one district, that is, Muang district. The Department of General Education has set up the project of English learning and instructing. The project is called “Project for the Improvement of Secondary Teaching (PISET)”. The objective of the department was to improve the quality of English learning and instructing for secondary schools. The project is funded by the UK government. The experts from the United Kingdom organize training courses for Thai English teachers. The training courses correspond to 5 indicators of the national standards for English language proficiency of teachers, comprising linguistic competence, communicative competence, knowledge of foreign language teaching theories and approaches, ability to organize learning consistent with the syllabus, and on-going professional development.

There is a project aimed to set up the English Resource and Instruction Center: ERIC both in the center and in the provinces of the country. The project is established in Muang district of the province. The secondary school which was chosen for ERIC is SatreeSiriket. The school was evaluated and accredited by the Department of General Education. The first center of ERIC was established in 1984. Afterwards, the branches of ERIC spread to Education Area Offices in many provinces in the country. Finally,
the Department of General Education had 88 branches throughout the country. Department of General Education had extended the project of English learning and instructing. This project can be called in English as Project for the Improvement of Secondary Teaching (PISET). PISET is divided into two periods: one from 1984 to 1989 and the other from 1989 to 1992. After collaboration between PISET and the UK government had ended in 1992, the Education Office of the Department of General Education was responsible for ERIC. During 2002-2005, the Department of General Education established the World Bank Loan project for the development of the secondary schools with the aims to improve the quality of English teaching. The schools which had ERIC centre were chosen to be the Student English Access Room (SEAR). The reason is that these schools with ERIC were developed by a good teaching system. ERIC centres can be used as an academic prototype to improve the quality of both teachers and students alike.

In 2002-2003 the Act of National Education of 1999 was reformed. The Office of Basic Education Commission was established to take responsibility in managing the basic education. Under the Office of Basic Education Commission, there are Offices of the Educational Service Areas in provinces. The Education Office was replaced by the Office of Education Service Area which changed the purposes and roles of ERIC to cover both the primary and secondary schools. There are four educational service areas in Sisaket, each of which has the ERIC Centre. Each centre attempte to promote the teaching-learning methods for communicative purposes and improve the instruction and proficiency in foreign languages with focus on English. The attempts made include a long-term strategic plan (2005-2015)
to increase the ability of Thais to communicate in English and a plan to review the entire system of English teaching and learning in Sisaket.

During 2005-2006, the Ministry of Education allocated approximately 10 million baht to ERIC center in the province to use for nearly 20 projects to improve the English proficiency of Thai teachers of English. Some of the projects include “a project to upgrade English language proficiency of 500 primary and secondary school teachers of English in four educational service areas and an “Intensive Course for ERIC 2006” to train 180 qualified individuals as the trainers of the teachers of English. In carrying out these projects, the ERIC Center works closely with international agencies, including the British Council and the Regional English Language Office of the United States Embassy, as well as the AUA language Centre. Training activities corresponded to 5 indicators of the national standards for English language proficiency of teachers, comprising linguistic competence, communicative competence, knowledge of foreign language teaching theories and approaches, ability to organize learning consistent with the syllabus, and on-going professional development.

Two types of bilingual schools, namely English Programme (EP) and Mini-English Programme (MEP) are operating in the province. The Office of the Basic Education Commission (OBEC) assesses schools desiring to be bilingual schools in terms of curricular substance, the teaching-learning process and knowledge/qualifications of teachers and accordingly grants them permission. In the EP, English is used as a medium of instruction at the secondary level. English is used in all subjects, except Thai Subject and Social Studies (only the parts of the curriculum that are related to Thai
tradition, culture and law). In the MEP, English is used as a medium of instruction for 8-14 periods per week. All the subjects can be taught in English depending on the readiness of school, except Thai Subject and Social Studies (only the parts of the curriculum that are related to Thai tradition, culture and law). In 2008, there were around 45 provincial schools wishing to be bilingual schools. Among these, 25 provincial schools, 10 primary schools and 15 secondary schools, were approved to conduct MEP, 15 schools (5 primary schools and 10 secondary schools) were later approved to conduct EP.

In Thailand, English is a compulsory subject for all the students from the upper primary school level (5th Standard) up to the higher secondary level (12th Standard). In Sisaket, schools normally follow the American credit and grade point average system. The final high school level is the Mathayom 6 (12th Standard) which is equivalent to Grade 12 in the International system.

In summary, English is a compulsory foreign language subject for all the students in Sisaket province from 5th Standard up to 12th Standard. The ERIC Centers are the provincial centers of academic development of English teaching-learning process in educational service areas. It has the goal of operation for improvement of teachers and students. In addition, focusing on using English in teaching and learning, the bilingual schools in Sisaket province are working for individuals with different capabilities and aptitudes.
1.2.4 Aims and Objectives of teaching of English in Thailand

1.2.4.1 Learning Area of foreign Languages
In the present global society, learning foreign languages is very important and essential to daily life, as foreign languages serve as an important tool for communication, education, seeking knowledge, livelihood and creating understanding of cultures and visions of the world community. Foreign languages enable learners to be aware of the diversity of cultures and viewpoints in the world community, conducive to friendship and cooperation with various countries. They contribute to learners’ development by giving them better understanding of themselves and others. The learners are thus able to learn and understand differences of languages and cultures, customs and traditions, thinking, society, economy, politics and administration. They will be able to use foreign languages for communication as well as for easier and wider access to bodies of knowledge, and will have vision in leading their lives.

The foreign language constituting basic learning content that is prescribed for the entire basic education core curriculum is English, while in case of other foreign languages, e.g., French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Pali and languages of neighbouring countries, it is left to the discretion of educational institutions to prepare courses and provide learning management as appropriate.

1.2.4.2 Aims of English Language Teaching in the National Curriculums
The English Curriculum aims to cultivate two linguistic abilities: an ability to give access to the society and culture and an ability to use English to
communicate effectively, grammatically and appropriately. The Ministry of Education set forth the aims and objectives of English Language Teaching in the national curriculums as the compulsory foreign language to all the classes from Higher Primary Schools to Higher Secondary Schools. The learning area for foreign languages is aimed at enabling learners to acquire a favourable attitude towards foreign languages, the ability to use foreign languages for communicating in various situations, seeking knowledge, and pursuing further education at higher levels. Learners will thus have knowledge and understanding of stories and cultural diversity of the world community, and will be able to creatively convey Thai concepts and culture to the global society. The main contents include:

1) **Language for Communication:** Use of foreign languages for listening, speaking, reading and writing, exchanging data and information, expressing feelings and opinions, interpreting, presenting data, concepts and views on various matters, and creating interpersonal relationships appropriately

2) **Language and Culture:** Use of foreign languages harmonious with the culture of native speakers; relationships, similarities and differences between languages and cultures of native speakers; languages and cultures of native speakers and Thai culture; and appropriate application

3) **Language and Relationship with Other Learning Areas:** Use of foreign languages to link knowledge with other learning areas, forming the basis for further development, seeking knowledge and broadening learners’ world views

4) **Language and relationship with Community and the World:** Use of foreign languages in various situations, both in the classroom and the
outside community and the global society, forming a basic tool for further education, livelihood and exchange of learning with the global society

1.2.5 National English Curricula 2001

Strand 1: Language for Communication

Goals and Standards

Standard F1.1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of listening and reading process, interpret ideas from various kinds of reading materials and use these ideas critically.

Standard F1.2: Students will communicate skilfully to provide and obtain information and news, express feelings, emotions and exchange options by using appropriate technological tools and managerial skills.

Standard F1.3: Students will demonstrate an understanding of speaking and writing processes, present information, ideas and concepts on a variety of topics creatively, efficiently and appropriately.

Strand 2: Language for Culture

Goals and Standards

Students will demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between a language studied and its speaker’s culture and apply it appropriately. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of culture through comparison of the target culture and their own, and apply it appropriately.
Strand 3: Language and Relationship with Other Learning Areas

Goals and Standards

Students will use the target language to expand their knowledge of other disciplines as the basis for their development and vision.

Strand 4: Language and Relationship with Community and the World

Goals and Standards

Students will use the target language in various situations in their educational institution, community and society. Students will use the target language as a tool for their further study, career, and everyday life.

1.2.6 National English Curricula 2008

There are the newest versions of National English Curricula 2008. The emphasis is placed upon the four strands of English competency and performance. The four strands consist of Language for Communication, Language and Cultures, Language and relationship with other learning areas, Language and relationship with community and the world.

Strand 1: Language for Communication

Goals and Standards

Standard F1.1: Understanding of and capacity to interpret what has been heard and read from various types of media, and ability to express opinions with proper reasoning

Standard F1.2: Endowment with language communication skills for exchange of data and information; efficient expression of feelings and opinions
Standard F1.3: Ability to present data, information, concepts and views about various matters through speaking and writing

Strand 2: Language and Culture
Goals and Standards
Standard F2.1: Appreciation of the relationship between language and culture of native speakers and capacity for use of language appropriate to occasions and places
Standard F2.2: Appreciation of similarities and differences between language and culture of native and Thai speakers, and capacity for accurate and appropriate use of language

Strand 3: Language and Relationship with Other Learning Areas
Goals and Standards
Standard F3.1: Usage of foreign languages to link knowledge with other learning areas, as foundation for further development and to seek knowledge and widen one's world view

Strand 4: Language and Relationship with Community and the World
Goals and Standards
Standard F4.1: Ability to use foreign languages in various situations in school, community and society
Standard F4.2: Usage of foreign languages as basic tools for further education, livelihood and exchange of learning with the world community

According to the National goals and standards of education of the 2001 and 2008, students are expected to have ability in using English communicatively and efficiently after completing High School education. It
means Thai students have to study English between eight and twelve years in school. They are also required to use English to communicate with native and non-native speakers with great confidence.

1.2.7 Higher Secondary Education
The three-year higher secondary schooling system is divided into two parallel tracks: general or academic, and vocational tracks. General higher education is provided by the DGE, demonstration school of the RIs and universities, and private schools. That of the vocational stream is organized by the DOVE, DFA, RIT and King Monkut’s Institute of Technology North Bangkok. The structure of higher secondary school curricula includes 4 components:

1) Core subject: Basic subject corresponds to life and society in general and must be taken by all students. All of these subjects are prepared by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, Ministry of Education.

2) Prescribed elective subjects: These basic subjects which are different according to local conditions and needs. The local authorities are given an opportunity to choose subjects offered according to the number of credits, or to prepare the subjects offered by them in addition to those prescribed by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development.

3) Free elective subjects: These are subjects open for learners to choose according to their interests, aptitudes and needs. Students can choose either the subjects prepared by the Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development or those created by the local authorities.

4) Activities: All the schools are required to organize three types of activities for learners: those organized in accordance with the regulation of
the Ministry of Education; guidance, remedial teaching or academic
development activities; and independent activities of learners.

1.2.8 Objectives of Teaching of English in 10\textsuperscript{th}, 11\textsuperscript{th} & 12\textsuperscript{th} Standard Classes

The Ministry of Education designed the National Curriculum for the Higher Secondary Schools in Thailand, and then the National Educational Commission appointed by the Ministry of Education set up the objectives of the teaching of English for the Higher Secondary Schools (10\textsuperscript{th}, 11\textsuperscript{th} & 12\textsuperscript{th} Standard Classes). The teaching/learning of English has been running along with the objectives given by the Commission step by step. English language was being taught as the compulsory foreign language throughout the country. However the objectives of teaching English in the Higher Secondary Schools are designed and given as follows:

1.2.8.1 Objectives of Teaching English in 10\textsuperscript{th} Standard Class

The National Educational Commission designed the objectives of teaching English in 10\textsuperscript{th} standard class. The objectives are involved in the teaching/learning of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the objectives are given as follows:

1. Students are able to listen to the sentences, passages or any story and are able to answer the questions.
2. Students are able to listen to the conversation on any topics and able to answer or explain in detail.
3. Students are able to speak about or explain any situation: the past, biography and tourism.
4. Students are able to speak on passages, telephone appointments or different occasions correctly.
5. Students are able to read and understand how to fill any forms properly.
6. Students are able to read any passage or story and to complete sentences with correct grammatical use.
7. Students are able to write to explain or describe experiences or any picture given in any situation.
8. Students are able to write sentences to describe any situation in correct grammatical use.

1.2.8.2 Objectives of Teaching English in 11\textsuperscript{th} Standard Class

The National Educational Commission designed the objectives of teaching English in 11\textsuperscript{th} standard class. The objectives are involved in the teaching/learning of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the objectives are given as follows:

1. Students are able to listen to conversation of different situations or places given, and able to answer the questions.
2. Students are able to listen to stories, tales, minutes of meetings, weather forecast or essays, and able to conclude them.
3. Students are able to make conversation in any situation in day to day life.
4. Students are able to speak and describe places, pictures, things or portraits in any situation.
5. Students are able to read the tales, short stories, experiences in any situation, and express opinions.
6. Students are able to complete complex sentences.
7. Students are able to read and understand the passages, news, medicine labels, advertisements and short stories.
8. Students are able to write any letter; a personal letter, a business letter or an official letter.
9. Students are able to describe and write any story with proper grammatical structure.
10. Students are able to find out the word-meaning and information from a document, a dictionary or a telephone book.

1.2.8.3 Objectives of Teaching English in 12th Standard Class

The National Educational Commission designed the objectives of teaching English in 12th standard class. The objectives are involved in the teaching/learning of the four skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. However, the objectives are given as follows:

1. Students are able to listen to news reports, newspapers, or conversations in any situations and then are able to summarize them.
2. Students are able to listen to dialogues, stories, songs or poems, and then are able to conclude and criticize them.
3. Students are able to speak and communicate good relation with persons through conversation.
4. Students are able to speak or convey the expression of feelings and thoughts in any situation.
5. Students are able to speak, in order to get information on any topic.
6. Students are able to converse to get information on any topics, and then able to analyze the same.
7. Students are able to read newspapers, advertisements, maps or any type of printed material, and then criticize them.
8. Students are able to read passages of different countries or cultures, and then are able to explain the contrast.
9. Students are able to read the provided information i.e. graphs, symbols, tables or memo, then able to explain them.
10. Students are able to write or fill memorandum, resume or any forms correctly.
11. Students are able to write memorandum, table or letter, then able to explain the same.
12. Students are able to write or complete forms providing any information, any letter or any forms.
13. Students are able to write sentences, essays, passages or conversations in correct grammatical language.

1.2.9 The Plan of the Study

The present study attempts an evaluation of the of English language teaching presently in force in Sisaket province. With this in mind the first chapter deals with the Education in Thailand and history of English language and its present status in Muang district, Sisaket province of Thailand. The second chapter deals with the theoretical framework consisting of various second language acquisition theories and their use in various methods and approaches. The third chapter deals with the Research Methodology and explains the manner of preparation of a questionnaire as well as its implementation. The fourth chapter deals with data analysis and makes an attempt of validating the hypothesis. The fifth chapter presents the
conclusions, discussions and suggestions for improving the efficacy of teaching of English language as well as those for further research.
References


