CHAPTER ONE

HISTORICAL AND GEOGRAPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

(I) GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION OF YEMEN:

The Republic of Yemen is located on the South-West corner of the Arabian Peninsula between Latitudes 12-20 north of the equator, and between the longitudes 41-54 East of Greenwich.

The kingdom of Saudi Arabia is bordered in the North of Yemen, in the south is Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, in the West the Red Sea whereas the Sultanate of Oman is in the East.

Bab-Al-Mandab locates in the South-West Corner of Yemen, and is divided into two parts by Mayoon Island. Bab-Al-Mandab controls the Strategic Entrance of the Red Sea.¹

(II) AREA AND POPULATION:

The area of Republic of Yemen is 555,000 Km excluding Al-Rub-Al-Khali (the empty quarter desert).

The population is distributed among seventeen Governorates and Sana’a City. Although the population density per sq. km. Varies from one Governorate to another, the general population density for the Republic of Yemen is 28 person per sq. km. ²

Total population of Republic of Yemen by Gender According to 1994 Census.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pop. Within the country</td>
<td>7473540</td>
<td>7114267</td>
<td>14587807</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### (III) PHYSICAL DIVISIONS:

In Physical Structure the Republic of Yemen can be divided into five regions, they are as follows:

1. The Mountainous Region
2. Plateau Region
3. The Coastal Region
4. Al-Rub-Al-Khali Region
5. Islands group.

### (IV) HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF YEMEN:

There are many reasons and theories about Yemen regarding the derivation of the word. The researcher will confine on two theories. Some reasons given are as follows: The first theory has mentioned her as “Yamin” meaning right hand which refers to the geographical location. Hence, the Arab tribes have constantly oriented themselves towards east, the right hand also points to the bright and happy south.

The second theory has derived from the origin of the word “Yumun” meaning prosperous. It may be a reference to its varying landscape which has moderate climate and where abundant water is available for growing many kinds of crops, vegetables and fruits.
Indeed, Yemen was also known in the Greek era as “Eudaimon Arabia” and Roman called it “Arabia Felix” until it became Islamic country and it was called too “Al-Yemen Al-Said” – fortunate Yemen. 6

The Sebans had built the most ancient Dam in the world in Marib city, it was the biggest Dam. In that era, it has contributed to agricultural development. The ancient Yemeni civilization started to decline after the collapse of the Marib Dam with its great irrigation system and the Roman discovery of the trade route to India. 7

In the seventh century, Yemen became part of the Islamic Central state ruled from Madina during the life of the Prophet Mohammed. The country was subsequently continued to be ruled by Islamic governors until the first world war began. 8

In the ninth century the Islamic central state started weakening intermittently and a group of dynasties ruled Yemen, for instance, in 893 A. D. the Zaidi Imamate’s dynasty, in 1047 A. D. the Sulayhid dynasty, in 1229 A.D, the Rasulids dynasty, and in 1918 A. D. Hamid Al-Din’s dynasty was established. 9

However, there were two powers in the region – the Othomans and the British. They were competing with each other for a foot hold in Yemen due to its strategic location on the Red Sea and the Arabian Sea. Moreover, it was their aim of monopolizing, controlling and organizing the trade between the orient East Africa, the middle eastern states and Europe.

The Othomans were forced to sign a treaty with Iman Yahya. The power of Iman Yahya was on the northern part of the country. In 1911 A. D. the country was divided into North and South. 10 The Othomans were in the North, but they were only able to control Tihama coast but were unable to extend to the northern highlands because they feared the fierce tribes. In 1918 A. D., they were forced out of the province by Imam Yahya Hamid Al-Din.
Al-Mekhalfy reported that:

Hamid Al Din’s dynasty was established as a result of a fierce campaign against the Othomans Empire (The Turks)\(^\text{11}\)

Unfortunately, the Imam failed to have control over all parts of natural Yemen because of his losses in the war with Saudi Arabia in 1934 A.D., beside the British had occupied the South of Yemen.

However, the Imam’s failure in controlling over all parts of the country, led him to pursue a strict policy of isolating the country. This policy meant keeping Yemen isolated from the world. The isolation policy had also led the country to become a victim of diseases, illiteracy and poverty. This new system kept the country away from touching with the developments and changes that were surrounded with it.\(^\text{12}\)

Hashem Narrates as to what was the nature of Imam’s authority when he states:

Imam’s personal authority extended

Over all aspects of government: Finance, the Army, Education, Health, Transportation and Justice.\(^\text{13}\)

Furthermore, Imam’s aids were given to members of his family, to a number of Turkish officials that he persuaded to remain in Yemen and the traditional elites, and therefore, he was blamed by the national movement people for inequality among the citizens.

It seems that inconvenience, criticism and an attempted assassination in 1948 have forced Imam Ahmed to improve the relationships with some foreign countries. He established diplomatic relations with the
U.S.S.R., China, the U.S.A. and Germany, at the same time, Yemen had also joined the confederation pact\(^*\) of the United Arab Republic in 1958 A.D.\(^{14}\)

Additionally, Imam sent to Egypt and Iraq military cadets for training and a number of youths had also been sent abroad for higher education.\(^{15}\)

In 1948 A.D., a national movement was raised again Imam’s isolation policy. It was led by a group of educated Yemenis. This national movement tried to assassinate the Imam and attempted a coup three times in 1948 A.D., 1955 A.D. and 1961 A.D. The Imam was injured in the last attempt of his assassination, he remained sick for a short period, then he died. On September 18, 1962 A.D., Imam’s son Al-Bader took his place, but after a few days, on September 26, 1962 A.D., the movement had succeeded in putting an end to the Imam’s regime and declared the new Yemen as the Yemen Arab Republic. But after the declaration of revolution a civil war started between the Republicans and Al-Imam Al-Bader. This civil war lasted for eight years and at the end the Republicans were victorious.\(^{16}\)

On the other hand, the British occupation began in Aden colony, as it occupies strategic location on the Arabian Sea and the route to India. Aden’s occupation was the first step towards separating South Yemen from the North.

The British occupation began gradually to extend towards the north and eastward to include what was called the eastern and the western protectorates.

Aden was a separate crown colony, but in November 1967, the British withdrew from Aden since a nationalist group fiercely struggled to liberate it. Thus, in November 1967, Aden was declared, the People’s

\(^*\) The confederation Pact of the United Arab Republic (U.A.R.) consisted of Egypt and Syria. In March 1958, the unity between Yemen and the U.A.R. formed the United Arab States. The United Arab States
Democratic Republic of Yemen, and came to be known as the only socialist country in South Arabia. ¹⁷

The socio-economic developments, besides the ideologies of the People’s Republic of Yemen and Yemen Arab Republic had taken different ways, due to their different historical and political experiences. All these led to conflicts between the two countries. The unification took place after the war of 1994 A. D..

EDUCATION BEFORE 1962

The progress of any country can be measured by measuring the degree of educational development. As has been mentioned earlier, the Imam had adopted an isolationist policy, in an attempt to protect the country from external intervention. This isolation policy led to confine the education in certain places and to limited centers.

The purpose of education before 1962 were:

(i) Reciting the Quran

(ii) Acquiring the basic skills of reading, writing and the necessary mathematics.

(iii) Studying religious sciences and

(iv) Acquiring Arabic grammar and poetry.

Education, before 1962 was divided into many types according to its purposes. These are as follows.

i) Kuttabs:

The word “Kuttab” has been used to indicate both education and the school’s location. These were attached to Mosques. According to Islamic
instructions, a mosque is not only for worship, but also a place for acquiring knowledge and for social role.

The Mosques were widespread in all parts of Yemen. The main purposes of Kuttabs were teaching children how to recite the Quran and they were taught reading and writing skills, besides the essential of mathematics. 18

The relative size of Kuttabs in 1957 A. D. can be seen from the statistics. There were 53,117 students enrolled in 1,438 Kuttabs and there were 36,350 students in 663 public primary schools. 19

The above figures indicate that most of the children were enrolled in the Kuttabs, inspite of the fact that majority of parents were illiterate, but they wanted their children to be educated.

It is also noticeable that there were no curriculum or textbooks in Kuttabs 20

However, the subjects or the verses of the Quran were determined by Shaikhs (Tutors) according to the level of comprehension of pupils. Moreover, the Shaikhs taught several children of different age groups at the same time and in a room.

**The Methods of teaching were as follows:**

The Shaikh explained the text in detail after that he gave his comments and his own opinion on the text. Students should discuss with their teachers and could ask a lot of questions. 21

It is an undeniable fact that there are still Kuttabs in Yemen.

ii) **Scientific Schools:**

In 1925, the Imam had started establishing some science schools (they were called Intermediate and Secondary Schools). One of these schools
was in Sana’a City* which was the most famous school up to the declaration of the revolution in 1962.

The purpose of these schools were to prepare and train the people who were associated with the Imam’s representatives, the students who would be governors, judges, government officials and teachers for special subjects.  

Al-Thaifani, reported that:

The admission in these schools was by extensive examination and interview, students were selected ** with great care by the Imam’s regime, these schools also remained under strict control and supervision of Al-Imam himself until he was convinced that students will be under his strict control even after their graduation.  

The curriculum included religious sciences, Arabic language, logic, geography, arithmetic and astronomy. These schools were closed in 1964.  

iii) Orphans School:

In 1925 A. D., Al-Imam established Orphans school. It started with 700 students. Majority were orphans and poor children, the purpose of establishing this school was to give a chance to orphans for education and to prepare citizens to hold junior services such as clerks, officers in the army and village teachers.

The curriculum consisted of religious sciences, Arabic language and the basic Mathematics. This school is still continuing its activities and follows the course in modern education.

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* These schools were in big cities only.
** The students were selected from judge’s sons, tribal shaikhs’ sons and high ranking officials.
It is noticeable that the people who participated in the resistance against the Imam's regime have graduated from this school. Furthermore, one of these people became the first President of Yemen Arab Republic in 1962 A.D.\textsuperscript{25}

iv) Modern schools:

Students who had studied in Iraq, Egypt and other countries, returned to their country, eager to use their skills that they acquired, but it was in vain. They found their country was the same as the had left it, except some developed roads.

They felt that the frustration was increasing everyday, since they had seen that their country was a leader of the Arab civilization but it had reached a state of stagnation at that time, and some of the Arab countries had access over good developments.

They started to a protest against the Imam's regime. And the Republicans demanded rewards to the citizens about freedom, citizenship rights and duties, modern education in developing the country and free education. The citizens started joining the Republicans. The Imam felt the danger from masses, so he tried to calm down the situation and to absorb the citizens anger.

First of all, the Imam established twelve Modern Schools. The schools were widespread in the main cities. They were running on modern education system. They were up to intermediate stage only. These schools were affected by Iraq curriculum. The audio-visual aids and textbooks were not available, but the teachers depended on their knowledge in their teaching.\textsuperscript{26}

It is also noticed that there were teachers preparation Institute and agricultural schools established in Sana’a City in the Imam’s era.

Thus, the previous situation shows that the scientific schools and orphans, schools were taken care of by the Imam because they were graduating
judges, high-ranking officials, clerks, teachers and officers who were selected according to the Imam’s conditions. The Kuttabbs did not get support as the students were common people’s sons.

EDUCATION BEFORE 1967

No doubt that the educational philosophy in the British occupation era was based on their aims and for their benefits, furthermore, the students enrolled in schools were tribal Shaikhs’ sons, Sultan’s sons and the prominent families of the society. The British consultant determined the norms when he had opened the Iron Mountain School.

The educational objectives were as follows:

(i) To teach English that could help the people to communicate with the British airforces.

(ii) To eradicate illiteracy.

(iii) To train clerks and typists after intermediate stage.27

Shamsher, reported that:

“On the South (Yemen) of the borders and prior to the British withdrawal from the colony of Aden in November 1967, higher education for many people meant secondary education, where up to 1967 there were six secondary institutions spread throughout the colony.”28

In addition to this there was provision for religious education that confined to religious sciences and Arabic language besides reading, writing skills and essential mathematics.29

EDUCATION AFTER 1962

Since the breaking out of the 26 of September 1962, Republic of Yemen has become a democratic country, and with this change modern ideas,
principles, systems and institutions in every sphere of life in Yemen started. The Republican state of the revolutionary Yemen began from its first year 1963 to make arrangements for educational provisions, a number of decrees were issued on the basis of which the Ministry of Education was established and organized.\textsuperscript{30}

However, the main principles of educational policy reflected the aims and the principles that were adopted by revolution. This was to respond to the needs of the society throughout the 36 years of the revolution. Moreover, it adopted the following principles:

i) Achieving social efficiency.

ii) Achieving social equity.

iii) Achieving economic efficiency.

iv) Ensuring popular participation in planning, financing and implementing educational plans.

v) Adopting a scientific approach in research planning and implementation of education plans and programmes.\textsuperscript{31}

Republic of Yemen has taken many successful steps towards enormous progress in the field of education, since one of the six main aims of the revolution of 1962 was to raise the country’s economic, social, political, educational and cultural standards.

The constitution of 1994 specifies that education is the right of all Yemenis and should be provided by the government through the establishment of educational institutions and Organizations. Besides the legislation of the Ministry of Education it is stated that the basic education is compulsory for all students and is free, so that education spreads rapidly. This was to be done in four phases of development. They are as follows:
The first phase was the establishment phase (1962-1970). The students enrollment witnessed slow progress to the effect because of the Civil war. There were (61,335) students in 1962-63, whereas the number of students in (1970-1971) was 88,217. 32

During this phase there was a gradual awareness of the importance of education.

The second phase was during (1970-1975). This stage aimed at the stability of revolutionary regime. It was characterized as the phase of self-independence and the starting expansion. In this stage, the Ministry of Education prepared the aims of education to be meant more than the teaching of the basic literary skills and the principles of Islamic instructions. The curricula had also been modified to accomplish the educational aims.

Furthermore, at the beginning of this stage, there was a move adopted to “Yemeninate”. The curricula were to be more related to the background and experiences of the Yemeni students beside the curricula should reflect Yemeni curricula too.

It is to be noted that from 1962 until the beginning of this phase, the curricula depended on Egyptian curricula. This phase was also distinguished for accomplishing the following:

i) Standardizing the primary education throughout the country.

ii) Establishing Sana’ a University.

iii) Yemininating the curricula.

iv) Taking care of teachers preparation locally to replace the expatriate teachers.
This stage witnessed a rapid students enrollment which tripled in number. (see table No. 2)  

**Table No. 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>118868</td>
<td>153807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>5768</td>
<td>7306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>1496</td>
<td>2267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The third phase (1976-1981) witnessed several important educational developments which have become more apparent since the advent of development planning to these which involved the following:

i) Universalization of primary education

ii) Expansion of enrollment at the preparatory and Secondary education.

iii) Expansion and improvement of technical, vocational and teacher preparation to meet demands for technical and skilled manpower and preparation of Yemeni teachers.

iv) Expansion and diversification of University and higher education system, both in the national higher education system and in scholarship for studying abroad to meet the economy’s needs and other needs among them the need for a Yemeni teaching force for the preparatory and secondary stages… etc.
v) Expansion of literacy education and basic skills training for adults and youth who missed the chance to eradicate illiteracy and improve people’s development skills.

vi) Educational institutions were expanded not only vertically but also horizontally.\textsuperscript{34}

A wide variety of increase in students enrollment besides an increase in the number of schools and institutions was witness (see Table No. 3)

**Table No. 3**

Development of the Students Enrollment in the Public Schools in the Northern Governorates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>220159</td>
<td>251876</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>17676</td>
<td>21263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>7197</td>
<td>7973</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MOE, Education Development in YAR, 1983, P.54

Phase four (1982-1986), began with the second five year plan. It was considered extension and reinforcement of the third phase and the first five year plan. All the efforts, in this stage, emphasized on expanding the public education which reached the percentage to increase 60%, additionally during this phase efforts were made to improve the education both qualitatively and quantitatively. Moreover, it adopted the National Comprehensive Campaign for Education for literacy.

This phase also witnessed a wide variety of educational institutions being established, for instance, religious, agricultural, commerce,
vocational, technical, and teacher preparation institutions, besides the Ministry of Education also made plans to expand post secondary teacher training institutions by opening two years teacher training institutes and by establishing many colleges of Education in the main cities.

During this phase, Yemeni government emphasized provision of equal educational opportunities for all Yemeni citizens regardless of sex.

The same phase witnessed curriculum development and completed authorization of the secondary textbooks, authorizing the technical education curricula and the primary teacher training institutes curricula.\

This phase also witnessed a great increase in the students enrollment (see Table No. 4).

**Table No 4**

Students Enrollment in the Public Schools in the Northern Governorates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>589186</td>
<td>705062</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>11820</td>
<td>14516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>1496</td>
<td>2267</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MOE, Ibid.

Phase five (1987-1991) also coincided with the beginning of the third five year plan. The main purpose of this stage was preparing “Yemeni citizens” physically, scientifically, spiritually and psychologically, to be a man who has ability to assimilate the contemporary science and its developed technology and using it to serve the social and economic development in its different civilized dimensions. This phase also was an extension of the
previous phase which made efforts to continue the expansion of public education and technical education.

The Ministry of Education also planned to open higher teacher training institutes, the higher agricultural institutes and the higher technical polytechnic institutes which provided a chance for students to acquire basic skills relevant to agriculture, social life in rural and urban areas.\(^{36}\)

This phase also witnessed a great increase in students enrollment (see table No. 5)

**Table No 5**

Students Enrollment in the Public Schools in the Northern Governorates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Stage</th>
<th>1989-1990</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td>1251272</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preparatory</td>
<td>218511</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>82481</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


**EDUCATION AFTER 1967**

After the British withdrawal from Aden, in November 1967, the Peoples Democratic Republic of Yemen began immediately to emphasize on education since declaration of the revolution, it has issued educational legislation for developing all educational stages. It also started establishing the educational Institutions and preparing qualified manpower in all specializations. Education was developed during this phase rapidly. The following statistics reveal that the students enrollment increased greatly. (See table No. 6).\(^{37}\)
Table No. 6

Students Enrollment in the Kindergarten in the Southern Governorates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>1105</td>
<td>104773</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Ibid, PP. 25 and 40

It is noticeable that there was Kindergarten stage in the northern Governorates before unification.

In addition the Ministry of Education prepared three year plans to expand the educational institutions, it also issued the General Education Law in 1972, one of its aims was rebalance between Urban and Rural areas that led to improve the education qualitatively and quantitatively by curriculum development and linked it with social development.38

These improvements reflected in increasing development of students enrollment (see table No. 7)

Table No. 7

Students Enrollment in Basic Education and Secondary Schools in Southern Governorates.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basic education</td>
<td>176579</td>
<td>340042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>4882</td>
<td>33279</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EDUCATION AFTER UNIFICATION 1990

On May 22, 1990, Yemen Arab Republic and People's Democratic of Yemen united to become one country under the name of Republic of Yemen. Sana’a is the capital of the country.

At the outset unified government emphasized on setting out the appropriate basis, principles and aims of education, but the Ministry of Education had encountered many different problems and obstacles, as a result of various political and social systems in both the countries which reflected on the educational process. So it is better to mention those problems and obstacles which are as follows:

i) Educational system differences.

ii) Curricula differences.

iii) Evaluation tools difference.

iv) Laws differences that organized the educational process.

v) There were more than one educational systems in both sovereign states.\(^{39}\)

However, the Ministry of Education has tried to overcome them which led to expand education easily, the statistical data indicated that enrolment increased in all the educational institutions in all the parts of the Republic (See table No.8)

**Table No. 8**

Students Enrollment in Schools of Republic of Yemen in (1994-1995)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational stage</th>
<th>Students</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kindergarten</td>
<td>11412</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basic Education</td>
<td>27331804</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary</td>
<td>323847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: MOE : Education Development plan abstract, 1995, PP. 1-2

If anyone pursue the educational development after unification, he will find that serious meaningful work is done with a view to disseminating knowledge and popularizing education, improving its techniques and developing its curricula. Such efforts reflect the Ministry of Education’s conception that quantitative progress in education must closely be linked with qualitative progress in the technical objectives and practical aspects.

It is noticeable that the figures in the tables above do not include the number of students in private educational and higher education levels.

**COMMENTS:**

No doubt, that, the previous historical abstract of education in Yemen, raises many important points, however, the researcher will confine to the following.

Yemeni educational policy has for many years been closely linked with Arab and non-Arab countries.

1. Yemen adopted some organization systems till curriculum and textbooks of other countries to ensure that the graduates from Secondary schools should be admitted to the Universities outside. By this researcher means that the curricular content and activities were inappropriate and inflexible to enable the students to acquire different skills and knowledge, beside to have positive attitudes to help the
students in life, whose circumstances did not allow them to affiliate themselves to the universities outside.

(2) On the other hand, new schools were opened, and friendly Arab and non-Arab states sent their teachers to Yemen.

(3) The progress was so rapid that it was difficult to evaluate the efforts of expansion.

(4) A number of teacher training institutions admitted students whose scores on the General Secondary School Examination were too low.

(5) The teachers were not allowed to join other colleges. In future, they remained teachers. They would teach the students who will be engineers, pilots, doctors, officers, administrators etc.

(6) The educational authorities never realised that the future of Yemen lies in their hands.

(7) It has been said that, inspite of our preparation and training for teaching, the teachers likely to teach as they were taught. So the urgent need was to revise the admission criteria in educational institutions. It was necessary to restrain the students whose levels of academic achievement were too low for admitting them in the educational institutions at all levels.

(8) The educational process was to go for reform urgently owing to the most graduates inadequacy, the development should be comprehensive in all spheres of the educational process.
THE HISTORY AND THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE

If, Arab students are asked the question as to why do Arab students learn English Language?

The answer will be different from one student to another, according to his purpose of learning the English language such as, Student A’s answer would be “for pleasure”, Student B’s answer would be “to use English for travelling abroad”, Student C’s answer would be “to get better job” etc.

However, all the students study English since it is on the school curriculum, it is compulsory, whether they like it or not. Other students study English because they believe it offers a good opportunity in their professional lives or to get a better job.

Students also study English as it is the first language in many countries in different parts of the world, such as USA, Britain, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Furthermore, English is the second language in many countries too, such as Kenya, Phillipines etc., or in India where it is being taught as third or foreign language.

Students also learn English for specific purposes, for instance, air traffic controllers need English to guide air-crafts through skies, business men need English for international trade, students who will study at Universities in Western Countries and European countries, would need English to survive in those countries, besides, they need it to write reports and for research. Additionally, the students who study for scientific specialization in their own countries, need English to read textbooks, references and articles in English.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE BEFORE 1962

Arabic language is the mother tongue and the official language of Yemen. It is the medium of instruction in schools and universities, in administration and in all spheres of daily life. There was no sign that indicates
that English language was taught before 1962, in the Northern Governorates. The Ministry of Education administered the first examination preparatory students except subjects Science, Mathematics and English in 1963-1964, after it was established in 1963. 42

English language was first introduced in the Northern Governorates in 1964-1965. The curriculum was “the Progressive Living English for the Arab world” as the major textbooks accompanying with “The Green Island Prisoners and Detectives from Scotland Yard” as supplementary textbooks which was taught in all the Arab countries at that time.43

It was continued until the beginning of eighty’s because the Ministry of Education conformed with British Council, in Yemen, to study closely whether the series is in conformity with the background and experiences of Yemeni students at that time. The British Council prepared new series which consisted of six curricula, they began at the preparatory stage (stages seven through nine) and continued at the secondary stage(stages ten through twelve). This series was titled as “English for Yemen”.

In November 1965, Yemen had participated in “The School Curricula Integration Committee” which met in Cairo on 6-8 Nov. 1965. The purpose was curricula integration in the Arab countries.

English curriculum was one of those curricula which was on the table for discussion.44 Some of the Committee’s recommendations were concerning the objectives of teaching English as a foreign language in the public education. They also focussed on the English curriculum, content validity and that it should provide students with proper skills to enable them to use English fluently.45

It should be mentioned here that Yemen’s interest in English language set out since the revolution. The Ministry of Education had introduced English in Northern Governorates in 1964-1965. In the same year,
it participated in the workshop of the curricula integration which was held in Cairo. This indicates the eagerness of the Ministry of Education towards teaching English and developing its curriculum, because this will assist to remove isolation that had hampered the development of Yemen.

At the beginning of seventies, the English Language Department, in the High Faculty of Education in Aden, was established to prepare teachers of English for elementary, preparatory and secondary schools.46

In 1976, the English Language Department in the Faculty of Education in Sana’a was established for preparing teachers of English for preparatory and secondary schools.47 Now a days there are about fifteen English Language Departments in the Faculties of Education, which are spread over the major cities.

In 1976, Sana’a University held an ELT symposium. It was attended by delegates from some of the Universities from Arab world and from various educational bodies. It was opened by the Prime Minister.48

In the opening session of the symposium, the Prime Minister had addressed the organizers and participants by saying:

“…… Before the Revolution our country was long isolated from the rest of the world. So we need English urgently as a means of contact with the world and as an instrument for our open-door policy”.49

He had further added, addressing the participants: “English is our window on the scientifically and technologically advanced parts of the world”.50

The aims of the symposium were, evaluation of the training programmes, the textbooks and the adaptability of the various approaches and
methods of English language teaching according to the educational situations in Yemen and the Arab countries.\footnote{51}

In view of the above, if we look at the aims of the symposium and participation of Yemen in curricula unification in Cairo, after the rise of the Revolution, we shall find Yemen, at that time, to be optimistic of the comprehensive development that required to contact with countries of the world. This contact demanded an instrument to facilitate the negotiations and better communication between other countries of the world.

These requirements were implemented in the English language teaching in Yemeni school.

However, unless these requirements are achieved, the whole educational situation of the teaching English will be worthless.

UNESCO STATUS

“A Higher Council for Curriculum was established in 1984 with responsibility of supervising the Ministry’s curriculum development activities, but this council has been inactive.”\footnote{52}

In June 1988, the Ministry of Education appointed a committee to re-evaluate, “the English for Yemen Series”, but the results revealed its failure to accomplish the students needs, and the educational objectives too.\footnote{53}

In December 1989, Sana’a University conducted a workshop to develop educational materials of three subjects. English, curricula was one of these and had resulted in “English for Yemen Series”.

The workshop was attended by the Deputy Minister of Education, the Chancellor of Sana’a University, representative of the British Council in Sana’a, some of staff of Sana’a University and educators.
The Deputy Minister of Education had opened the workshop. He addressed the participants in these words:

"Today, Sana’a University plays significant role towards the community in general and in education in particular. It has prepared these papers which are in your hands, the purpose of these is to contribute in the development of the limited educational materials. They can be revised and re-evaluated objectively, because these papers provide you with specific information and data about the actual educational situation and the target educational materials."

He then added:

"Ministry of Education expects positive results from this workshop. In the light of the outcome it can take proper decisions for curricula development"*

The aim of workshop was to re-evaluate the curricula of three subjects: English, Mathematics and Science.

English curricula committee had two main tasks. Firstly, examining educational materials including curriculum of English for Yemen. Secondly it was, adoption of the Crescent series of English language teaching texts.54

The Committee analyzed the curriculum being used at that time. The results were contrary to the Committee’s June 1988 results55. The Committee in December 1989 summarized the results in the following words:

"The EFY (English for Yemen) series is needs-based, productive and cost-effective. After extensive revision, the books may be useful for Yemeni preparatory and secondary schools."56
The researcher deduce from above the following conclusions:

1- The committee's June 1988 results were not precise because the Ministry of Education was not satisfied with them. It had given green signal to external evaluators.

2- In 1989, Sana'a University (external evaluator) had selected foreign experts who taught in Faculty of Education in Sana'a University, one of them was from British Council, London, and another was from the Ministry of Education (this was the only one who was Yemeni). Sana'a University had invited them before the workshop started in order to explain to them the purpose and tasks.

3- The 1989 Committee had taken the matter seriously and objectively. So its results were acceptable.

4- Ministry of Education always looked for good curricula to tackle with the problem of the students boredom or lack of enthusiasm in learning English.

5- It had suggested a new 'Series' for the Committee to re-evaluate and adoption of it.

EVALUATION AND ADOPTION OF THE CRESCENT

SERIES OF ENGLISH

The committee, unfortunately, was not able to obtain all the sets of material. It had obtained only the sets of material for level 3 and half of level 8 of the series. This lack of complete sets of material made the

* Researcher was one of participant
Committee handicapped to analyze the series completely. It had therefore, analyzed sets of material for level 3 and half of level 8 of the series only. Therefore, the Committee's comments were based on the analysis of the level 3 and half of level 8 only.\footnote{57}

The comments revealed that the series was inappropriate to Yemeni educational situation for the following reasons:

1- "The present English curriculum consisted of 6 levels.

2- 94% English teachers were non-Yemeni and come from a wide variety of English teaching educational backgrounds, experiences and teaching styles.

3- Very few English teachers are native speakers of English.

4- Classes average strength is 40-50 but can be much bigger, sometimes as large as 150 students. Class size is likely to increase rather than decrease in the near future.

5- The learning style of Yemeni students is related to the culture and traditions of Yemen.

\footnote{66} Technical aids- tape players cassettes, flash cards, pictures are rarely available."

The new series is prescribed for 8 levels. These were designed for use in the Gulf Countries, where as, English for Yemen series is for 6 levels. One should not miss to note that the educational situation and strength in classes in Gulf Countries are different from that of Yemen.

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In 1993, Ministry of Education had started using Crescent English series. Although, the committee had analyzed sets of materials for level 3 and half of level 8 of the series and its results had suggested that pedagogy of it is weak and it (series) is ineffective in Yemeni educational situation, unless adoption is included at all the levels of the series precisely and objectively.

Furthermore, in Yemen, we need English language according to Rivers' expression. When she writes:

"To teach the student to read the Foreign language with comprehension so that he may keep abreast of modern writings, research, and information, to bring the student to a greater understanding of people cross national barriers by giving him a sympathetic insight into the ways of life and ways of thinking of the people who speak the language he is learning, to provide the student with skills which will enable him to communicate orally, and to some degree in writing, with the speakers of English as mother tongue and with people of other nationalities who have also learned this language."

ENGLISH LANGUAGE BEFORE 1967

English in the Southern Governorates during the British occupation was such as any other Arab country which was occupied by the British. English language was taken care of more than the remaining subjects during the British occupation. The purpose of education was to produce
graduate to be clerks, typists and officials who could speak English with British airforces, so the citizens emphasized on learning English because it was the instrument of surviving at that time, even housewives used to speak some English words during their talks in Arabic Language.  

Shamsheer reported that:

“During the period prior to 1967 English remained as the official medium of communication in all spheres of daily official activities. This importance is presently recognized by the State, where English is ranked as the second official language coming after Arabic.”

However, English language was taught from the higher classes of the primary stage, the curriculum included reader under the title “Readers’ series”.

Further, there were simple stories included for supplementary reading in the curriculum. Their titles were as follows:

i) Tale of Two Cities

ii) Robinson Cruose

iii) Yemen Readers

There were six secondary schools in Aden which were:

i) The Aden College

ii) The Girls College

iii) The Government Boys Secondary School

iv) St. Joseph High School
v) St. Anthony High School

vi) Bilquis College.

The first three schools were government sponsored, the other two schools were attached to the Catholic Church (Missions) in Rome. All the subjects were taught through English except Arabic language that was taught through translation method only and it was called a classical Arabic language which created boredom among students for its learning. The last one was sponsored by Merchants from the Northern Provinces.\textsuperscript{63}

Going back to the Aden college, this school was famous one in that era, because most of the educated people were graduated from it, beside this it was attached to Cambridge University and the medium of instruction in this school was English.\textsuperscript{64}

Thus English language ranked as a second language and continued to be so until November 1967, when the British withdrew from Aden.

In 1967, there was revolution and the country was declared as the People’s Democratic Republic of Yemen.

It should be obvious to all that English language started loosing its status. The government was determined to change the British schemes in all spheres of life, and there was no misgiving that the hey-day of English language was over. The government changed the educational system. In the new curricula, by and large, English language occupied the status of a
compulsory subject. However, English language teaching situation did not change.

Ministry of Education replaced the British curricula with new series which was called "Intensive Reading" and supplementary stories. The curricula continued to be in operation until the 1993.65

Ministry of Education adopted the Crescent series instead of English for Yemen series which was taught in the Northern Governorates and the Intensive Reading series that was taught in the Southern Governorates after the unification.

The researcher considers that today the English language occupies the status of a foreign language in Yemen because English is generally taught and learnt for specific purposes, for instance, it is used for reading reference books and periodicals, particularly those concerned with Science, Medicine, Technology etc. In Yemen, its use is confined to:

i) It is used in Universities in the departments of English language and for teaching scientific subjects and in Medical colleges;

ii) It is also used in airports, for international trade by some private companies, and it is used in some private schools as a medium of teaching all the subjects except the Arabic language. In some private schools the language is taught commencing from the kindergarten stage;
iii) There are two programmes telecasted and broadcasted weekly, one on TV and the other on Radio.

iv) It is introduced as a subject in the national curriculum;

v) It is used for communicating with native speakers of English or non-Arab people who visit the country as tourists or for business purpose.

Thus, today English language is taught as a foreign language in Yemen. The curriculum designers, therefore, should be aware of this fact, so that they should state appropriate objectives for teaching and learning English language keeping in view the needs of students and development of society.
CHAPTER ONE: REFERENCES


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