

Committee IV
Crises in Education in the 1980's:
A Survey of Educational Values and Systems

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DIFFICULTIES IN EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SOUTH ASIA

by

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C O N T E N T

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SUMMARY

Difficulties in Educational Development in South Asia

I. The present state of education in Asia.

(Introduction)

It is already more than twenty years since the term 'human resource' was introduced in the fields of educational development. Since then an approach to human factor in the development has contributed to a considerable extent as a strategy for human resource development, or a frontier of the activities of international organizations for development and assistance as well as of development policies of various countries. Today the question of 'human resource' has become the field indispensable for the study of social and economic development.

It has become almost commonly recognized in recent decades that education has important bearings upon the modernization of a society. It is on the basis of this common recognition that some of the acute scholars have been showing a keen interest in the development of education in far east countries of Asia. The development of education provided the basis on which to industrialize. In the first place, it fostered a common will to accept the new civilization and second it trained the people who were to shoulder the responsibility of industrialization in various fields.

(Education in the days before the war)

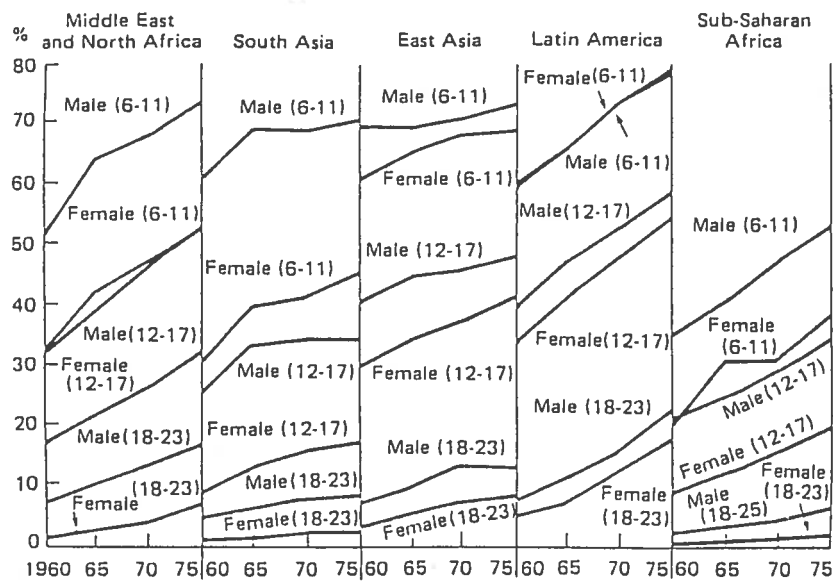
Asian countries, excepting a few like Thailand and Nepal, were subjected to long years of colonial rule and only emerged

independence after the Pacific War. Hence they are keenly in need of filling the educational gap forced upon them in the past. Education of the people was almost completely thrown aside in these countries during the years of colonial rule which ranged from one hundred to three hundred years, and even after the turn of the century which saw many advanced countries exerting much greater efforts toward diffusion of education, education in their colonies and dependencies remained un-attached. There was even idea that education would at best be instrumental infusing independence-consciousness into the people. For example, in Indonesia 50 years ago when almost of the population was illiterate, only several young applicants for universities were allowed to receive university education in the Netherlands every year. Again, in Buddhist countries like Burma, Thailand, Laos, Kampuchea, Vietnam, pagoda (temple) school served as the only educational institutions where the most elementary education was given by Buddhist priest, to which the ruling authorities would rarely extend the helping hands. Hence Asian countries, still only a short period since their independence, and having many other preoccupations, have been making painful efforts toward the development of education, so as to build their nations with their own hands.

(Educational development in the past 25-30 years)

We can see clearly the outline of educational development

in Asia(South and East), comparing to the other regions of world, by using the enrollment ratio of three stages of school as following figure I.



source: Unesco and World Bank

Fig.I. Enrollment Ratios, by Region, 1960-75

In this figure I, we understand that enrollment of east Asia(South and East Asia) is around 70 per cent in male and female of primary level and also understand that female in South Asia is still 45 per cent of enrollment in 1975, while rate of increase since 1960 is fairly high.

These improvements are of course to correspond the eradication of illiteracy of people in each regions. Unesco statistics indicate that the average ratio of illiteracy

is almost 50 per cent in the third world and the number amounts to 800 million. In this connection, we can estimate that illiterate population in South Asia will be 414 million.

II. The various problems facing the educational development in South Asia.

The present study on the educational development in South Asia is undertaken out of the following items: (1) Education as a fruitful investment, (2) The population problems, (3) Quality of education in South Asia, (4) Educational planning in the region, (5) Problems of health in the region.

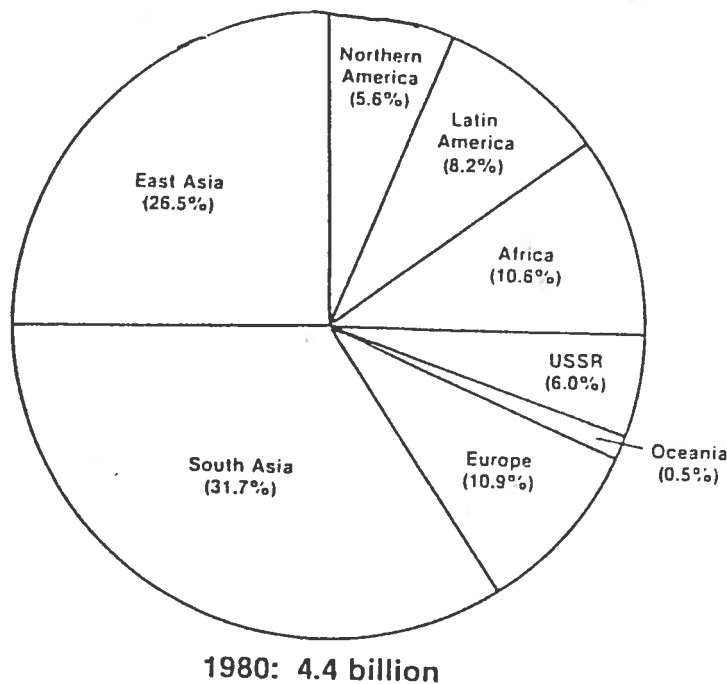
(1) Education as a fruitful investment---

Development of education is a process which promotes knowledge, maturity and capacity of the constituents of society and is conducted through school education, training given by industries and organizations, adult education and individual's self-development. Professor T.W. Shultz who casted a new light on this subject matter incorporated the concept of human capital into the main stream of economic analysis, making the start for developing similar studies. By the activities of such organizations as UNESCO and OECD in their assistance to educational development and the training of manpower for technical reform, every country in Asia has spent considerable energy on education with the understanding that education is a productive investment providing

the society with profit which corresponds to that of an usual capital investment.

(2) The population problems---

One of the most influencing factor to the development of education is that of population increase. The population in Asia totals, in 1980, 2,576 million which is 58.2 per cent of the world population. And South Asia shares 31.7 per cent and East Asia does 26.5 per cent of all.



In South Asia, 41.4 per cent of population is the young one under 15 years old.

Human resource has a short active period as labor power due to the low health standard and the surplus of unskilled

labor in contrast to the extreme shortage of skilled labor, in addition to the substantial shortage of top administrators, professionals and subprofessionals. On the other hand, more than 50 per cent of adult population (over 15 years old) is illiterate. In order to make labor force of the traditional society into the carrier of modern industries, the training in skill to cope with new technics must be provided as well as the reform in old customs for living.

(3) Quality of education in South Asia---

There is a large number of dropout, reducing enrollment less than half by the end of the fourth grade in several countries. (World Bank survey) The percentage of female enrollment is gradually increasing; 55 per cent in primary enrollment as 24 per cent of 1960. Many of teachers lack qualification in schooling or in teaching experience. Furthermore, the increase in educational expenditure is substantial (16 percent average capital expenditure and 84.0 per cent current educational expenditure), 85.0 per cent of current expenditure being teachers' salary.

(4) Educational planning in the region---

In 1960, the Asian countries met at Karachi, Pakistan to have a common objective in educational development and decided a 'blueprint' plan of establishing 7-year free, compulsory education in twenty years by 1980. This is what is called Karachi Plan, along Addis Ababa Plan in

Africa and Sandiago Plan in Latin America.

In 1965, the Karachi Plan was revised at a more exact basis to introduce the Asian model. Asian model for educational development adopted at Bangkok conference is an educational development plan in accordance with social and economic development. There the necessary educational expenditure for entire regions in 1980 is estimated in proportion to the growth rate of GNP. The importance of this model consists in the education of the middle and high class manpower that contribute most to the accelerating development. It is necessary that the emphasis be transferred from primary education to secondary and highdr levels, vocational and technical education be expanded and the finance be selectively allocated to the fields of natural sciences and applied sciences. Man-power plan is the field to be developed and the experience of OECD's M.R.P. (Mediterranean Regional Project) will be useful as a methodology to be applied to Asia.

However, it was hard for some countries to achieve the goal, while in the last ten years enrollment in primary education in region was doubled and in many countries enrollment surpassed 80.0 per cent and literacy class for crusade against illiteracy is notable. Thus the target of Karachi Plan can be said to attain in about two third of countries concerned.

Plans for educational development in Asia are all based on the presupposed assistance from developed countries. It cannot expect that any assistance at once breaks through the present retention, much less educational assistance should be matched with the direction of self-reform that a country tries to undertake by itself. DAC places its first priority on the assistance to the qualitative aspect of educational system. Educational cooperation in Asia must be decided upon through consideration to correspond to the need of particular nation irrespective of the cooperation is bilateral or multilateral.

(5) Problem of health in the region---

Investment in health is as in the case of education a key factor for social and economic development. High mortality of infant and young people and the short average life span of adult clearly tell the low standard of health in Asia. Malaria rapidly decreased, however, communicable diseases and bronchial diseases still persist, causing substantial loss of human resource. The number of medical doctors is small (in 1977, one doctor for 34,600 population in Nepal and 14300 in Indonesia) and the hospital accommodation is as poor as one bed per 1,000 population in eight countries. Nutrition condition is by no means good; intake of proteins, animal proteins in particular, is insufficient; food processing is inadequate leading to a considerable loss; and

various taboos for food and diet are still persistent. These conditions of health are of course not favourable to the growing children.

An important function of education is to promote national unification. Especially in such multi-racial states as Indonesia, Malaysia, Burma, or in India where many languages co-exist, education will prove to be a great centripetal force. It also serves as a motive power to get rid of the colonial remnant and develop the traditional society into modern state. In order to take over the posts previously held by foreigners there must first be a class of leaders; then groups of the low-level leaders to work in agriculture and industry must grow if social and economic development is to be promoted. And to this the diffusion of primary education and the rooting out of illiteracy is prerequisite. Again, education as a former of national feeling is deeply concerned with religion. In the Philippines about 90 per cent of the people are Catholic; in Indonesia, Malaysia, Bangladesh, and Pakistan, Islamism is given the status of a state religion; and Thailand, Burma, Laos, Kampuchea, Vietnam, Sri Lanka, and Korea are overwhelmingly Buddhist countries. In these countries school education tries to give a new significance to these religions which are deep-seated in the hearts of the people.

Looking at the history of some developed countries such as Britain, France, Germany, Netherland, U.S.A., or Japan, U.S.S.R., we recognize that they developed their educational system first at the base and only subsequently in the middle and at the top of educational pyramid. However, this picture of development of education from the base upwards to the top has been completely reversed in the Third World. In Asia, educational systems over the last 30years have been growing much faster at the top than at the base. ** This is simply causes of the weekness of basic-fundamental education in Asia.

** Referred to Prof. Mark Blaug's work 'Universal Primary Education': A Report of a Workshop, edited by R.L. Smith Feb. 1979

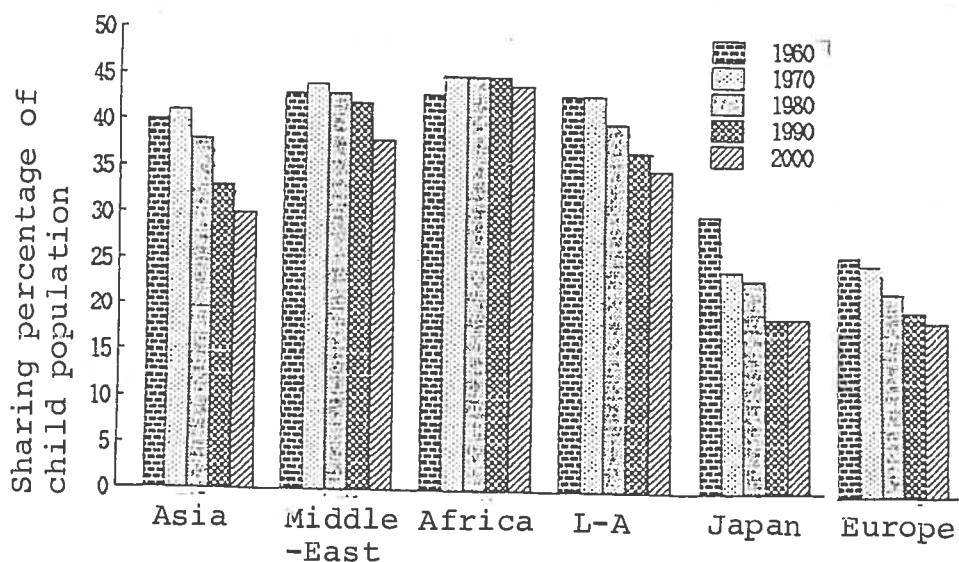
This type of educational development in Asia leads to over-expansion of upper secondary and higher education, and eventually invites graduate unemployment in high school and university level. This is of course meaning the over supply of graduates and under demand in labour market, of which rate of economic growth is relatively lower. Families have spent not a small sum of money, expecting their younger generation to obtain good jobs.

This unemployment is not merely giving disappointment to them but also causes the social unrest. To find a good job, the student should enter to so-called elite school,

after long race of study and examination. This tendency prevails in the society a kind of egoism, and deprives the feeling of mutual aid.

Educational pyramid of Asia is also influencing the proportion of the educational budget devoted to primary, secondary, and higher education, that is low proportion to primary. And child popularion 0--14 age of Asia is 38 percent to whole population in 1980. According to United Nations projection, percentage in 2000 is still high which is almost 30. (refer to figure 2) This means that burden of finance to basic education does not decrease long, because the enrollment ratio is becoming greater up to 100 percent.

Fig. 2 Ratio of child population to all



Source: UN, Demographic Indicators of Countries:

Estimates and Projections as Assessed in 1980.

III. Education for the human resources development in South Asia

The population structure of Asia is characterized by extremely high percentage of younger population owing to high birth rate and the reduced mortality of the young people. The imbalance in population structure raises various questions: is it by any means possible for the region to support such rapidly increasing population while maintaining certain standard of living?

A question of whether or not the socio-economic development with emphasis on the production of food natural resources are possible will be investigated by the dependency ratio, which is the ratio of non-labor population such as children and the aged to the total labor population.

The second problem posed upon human resource by the change in population structure is related to education. It is by no means easy to provide compulsory education to rapidly increasing school age population (5 to 14 years old), which is 480 million in 1970 to be 604 million in 1980. Supposing the present school enrollment is 50.0 percent and that in 1990 is approximately 100percent, the enrollment is expected to be 2.5 times larger in the twenty years. This necessitates extraordinary efforts in the provision of school facilities and training of teachers.

The third problem is opportunity for employment. The young people is continuously provided into labor market, causing

overflow of labor power in general.

The only countermeasure for population problem in developing countries in Asia is the reduction of birth rate.

The Europe in the 19th century ^{was provided with frontiers where excess population} was sent as immigrants.

However, there is no other way for Asia than to promote formal family planning program for reducing birth rate.

In order to maintain human resource necessary for development, Asia has to manage the population problem properly.

The Asian countries must try in fast the storage of human resource as well as the physical capital for development. As observed in the previous part, there is an excess provision of labor in the region. Precisely speaking, however, it is the surplus provision of unskilled labor and the lack and shortage of appropriate human resource, or skilled labor raises great economical problem. This contradictory surplus and shortage of human resource are by no means two different questions but closely interrelated with each other. Professor F. Harbison points out this question, though paradoxically, that the shortage of skilled labor is one of the factors producing surplus of unskilled population.

The South Asian countries are suffering from the shortage of specialists such as scientists, farm managers, veterinary scientists, engineers and medical doctors. And yet these specialists prefer living in the urban areas and furthermore

their skill are not fully utilized because of the lack of sub-specialists (technicians, nurses, agricultural assistants and technical managers, etc) who assist them. The shortage of such sub-professionals is attributed to the fact that the enrollment capacity of educational institutions is small and that the students tend to choose to go up to colleges and universities for higher degree rather than staying in industrial training schools. On the other hand, the percentage of secondary school teachers of natural science and mathematics in particular is extremely high and this can be one of the major causes for the shortage of intermediate manpower. The South Asia is in shortage of top-level administrators both in government and private industries. However, the shortage of clericals such as book-keepers, clerks and stenographers is also serious.

These countries have expressed their eagerness for industrialization since World War II and the complete program for the economic development emphasizing industrialization has been planned in an attempt to break through the traditional society and the vicious cycle of poverty. It aims at large scale industrialization utilizing various modern technology. Unless rapidly increasing labor power is absorbed into industries other than agriculture, it is hard to raise the living standard of all countries not even maintain the present income or living. However, there is

little possibility that modern industries will succeed to absorb surplus agricultural population to increase employment substantially for instance by the end of this century when the population is expected to be doubled. Above all, modern industries by no means require intensive labor, producing a phenomenon which some economist calls 'backward flow effect.' Expansion of employment opportunity cannot be expected but even a kind of labor uncertainty is produced.

The overwhelming majority of industrial population in South Asia is at present the employees of handicrafts and traditional industries. While not a small portion of population is engaged in tertiary industries, the use of such labor is limited to the extremely low level. The concentration of population in urban areas is remarkable, thus producing slums and unemployment. The transition from traditional social relation to modern industrial relation in the region raises complex and difficult problems. Even in the primary industry, utilization of labor still remains at substantially low level. Agriculture in the labour extensive, with small product per unit to cause poverty among farmers.

In order to transform labor fostered in the traditional society to the carrier of modern industries, changes must be made of various social relations including customs for living and human relations. In this process of change,

training of the skill for adopting new technics is provided. Such training of new skill is conducted in formal school education but in most instances in the form of in-service training. As a matter of course, it is difficult to make those who are without basic general education well qualified in jobs which require skill. Providing the ability to read and write and the standard of general knowledge are leveled up, the pool of skilled labor will naturally be enlarged. In the same token, literacy education for adults must be considered since education and training contribute to the economic development in improving the quality of labor. In improving the quality of human resource, health and nutrition are, previously mentioned even more important in certain aspects, and enough attention must be paid to these two factors in the development program for all countries. In fact, health standard is far below and the nutrition standard has not even reached the minimum necessity. One index representing health, nutrition and the economical result of those aspects is an average life span. Aside from the humanistic viewpoint, the long average life span results in longer productive activity of labor, thus giving profit to the society. Should one be unable to engage in productive activity because of the impaired health and insufficient nutrition, the expense paid him by the society until he grows up to be an adult can never be repaid.

The average life span in the South Asian countries in the 40's and the first half of the 50's. The low standard of human resource can be attributable to the low nutritional standard as well as in sufficient public health and medical care.

IV. Education and cultural values in South Asia

(Education and cultural background)

In the previous parts, the major problems of educational system have been chiefly studied, and this chapter deals with the field of values concerning the education, which seems of most importance in the region.

The education is constructed on the basis of culture of each country, which is formed by natural circumstances, traditional customs of life and in the depth of religion. Therefore, it should be said that the essential character of education is made on the fundamental value of culture.

Thus, the level of education--enrollment, literacy ratio and scholastic results--of each country is also influenced by the type of cultural value. So, we cannot grade the level of education simply by the western standard.

For example, the literacy ratio in Islam society is relatively low by the standard of UNESCO. As the literacy ratio is taken by the ability whether to read and write a small sentence, it surely ought to be low in Islam society, which has one third population of whole South Asia. But the ability of learning by heart is excellent in Moslem people, who do find the direction among the daily way of life by remembering of lesson of the Kohran. (Though African children are not good at the reading and writing, the ability of speaking and listening is fairly good.) As the example is mentioned above, we should take account of the limitation of Western standard, and also think about the difference of cultural background.

(The diversity of culture)

There are many kind of cultures in vast area of South Asia, comparing that of Europe and America.

The languages of the region have many a difference of origin and a few of them is transformed into Roman style and almost rest is keeping classical style of letter. In India, there are 14 official languages and not a few country has plural languages in it. (See the chart-language and religion of South Asia.)

Four world religions are there in the region--Buddhism, Islam, Hindu and Christianity. The chart states that many of the countries have plural religions as in the case of

Language and Religion in South Asia

| | Main Language | Main Religion |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|
| AFGHANISTAN | Puchut, Persian | Islam |
| BANGLADESH | Bengal | Islam |
| BURMA | Burmese | Buddhism |
| INDIA | Hindu and 13 Official languages | Hindu |
| INDONESIA | Indonesian | Islam |
| IRAN | Persian | Islam |
| KAMPUCHEA | Khmer | Buddhism (Hinayana) |
| LAO PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC | Lao | Buddhism |
| MALAYSIA | Malay (Chinese, Tamil) | Islam (Buddhism, Hindu) |
| MONGOLIA | Mongol | |
| NEPAL | Nepali | Hindu (Buddhism) |
| PAKISTAN | Urdu | Islam |
| PHILIPPINES | Tagalogue (English) | Roman Catholic |
| SINGAPORE | English, Chinese, Malay, Tamil | Buddhism, Islam, Hindu, Christianity |
| SRI LANKA | Singhalese, Tamil | Buddhism, Hindu, Islam, Christianity |
| THAILAND | Thai | Buddhism |
| VIET-NAM | Vietnamese | Buddhism (Mahayana) |

Source: T. Toyoda, Education in Asia, 1981

language. There are 600 million Hindu people, 350 million Moslems, 160 Buddhist and 50 million Christian among 1,200 million whole population in South Asia. It goes without saying that the diversity of culture affects the various phrases of education. Now we are going to take the case of Malaysian as a cultural complexity.

Malaysia has 14 million population and among it, there are 46 percent Malayan and 34 percent Chinese and 9 percent Indian origin (thus, non-Malayan is over half). Three kind of races have a different own culture (language, religion and customs) and form a society traditionally without mingling each other.

There exist not only the difference of economy but the conflict of political interest between Malaysian and Chinese. This communalism cannot be understood without taking the cultural characteristics and social structure of two races. The differences of family system and blood relation are most important among these. The Chinese has a strong sense of ancestor worship and people of same family or clan invoke the spirits of their ancestors all together, and stand up in unity for their prosperity. The Malayan is on the contrary living in a small 'nuclear family' of a couple and child, and the family member connects loosely each other and conducts freely in self-centered way.

The Chinese lives in group among the Buddhism, Confucianism

or Taoism which were brought from the China continent, while the Malayan does separately amid the worship to Monotheism 'Allah". Thus, two races seem very hard to reduce the opposition, ^{as} based in the depth of culture. These examples seen in Malaysia have similar cases in South Asia, too.

(Trends of moral and religious education)

The family and society have been considered an original place for moral education for long in Western countries. Surely the family is indispensable place to the moral instruction of children. But the influence from family and church has recently so decreased in them that the moral education from school has gained in importance so much. The moral value from teacher is transferred to pupil, whether teacher intends or not, through the speech, behavior, and guidance of teacher or the selection of teaching material.

Then what is the background in increasing attention of moral education? First is that the progress of science and technology has been accompanied with the feeling of materialism, unlimited destruction of nature and the race for military expansion, and therefore, it is needed greatly to bring up the moral value and consciousness so that we might utilize the result of science and technology to the welfare of mankind. The confusion of morality of today is second. There are increase of crime, violence flooding in

TV and disorder of sex. The standard of traditional value are unable to hold ground against these tides. And the common value has not yet been established enough to connect the people each other and the finding of common value is wanted seriously to gain the social solidarity. Especially the young generation is in the position of judging the right value in the society.

The moral education has a close relation to religious education, and the situation comes from the history, in which the school in South Asia was under the patronage of temple and church.

There are not a few country where the religious education is the basis to moral education in public school. Thailand is the example. In Philippines and India, the moral education in public school is secular in the meaning of that a special religion may not be instructed. However, the secularism is not anti-religionism at all, in which religion in general can be instructed. In India, the spiritual value is taught in order to introduce the deep interest to religion. At the same time, we should recognize the increase of the people who have no faith to religion (Many of youth is apt to estrange to religion.) and therefore we have to endeavour in finding of the new way to moral education at present.

V. Some of the measures to overcome the difficulties of education in South Asia.

In the previous chapters, many of the problems of education have been pointed out in the educational system and in the cultural values. Now we should like consider some of the measures to overcome, after repeating the existing problems concerned.

(Illiteracy problem and enrollment)

Illiteracy results from the lack of opportunity for attending school in the past. The problem of illiteracy in the region is expected to decrease as enrollment increases.

In general it is hard to obtain the precise data on illiteracy mainly due to the fact that no clear distinction has been made between literacy and illiteracy. It is fortunate, however, that some data on the subject are now available since the anti-illiteracy drive held in Teheran in 1965. Then a question arises how such illiteracy can be reduced.

As previously mentioned, the first is to increase enrollment but 'literacy class' for adult people is often found in many countries, held during farmers' slack season in Malaysia and Indonesia which is reported successful.

The question of enrollment or enrollment ratio is the first to be considered in this connection. Let us consider the retention ratio in order to investigate the reality of enrollment. This is an important index to determine the waste

investment in education but indispensable for the study of actual registration. The retention ratio in the region indicates the decrease in registered students in the first grade. It is also clear that the greatest number of dropouts occurs between the first and second grade, reducing the total number of registered students to almost less than half in fourth grade in most countries. The dropout is more remarkable among female compared with male and in rural rather than urban area. It will be proper to refer to a characteristic that retention ratio is in proportion to enrollment ratio.

(the quality of teachers)

Teacher is the second point of study on the quality of education. One aspect is the number of students per teacher and the other is the qualification of teachers.

The number of teachers has been increasing to a large extent, however, the number of students is simultaneously increasing: the percentage of teachers to students in primary education rose from 40 in 1960 to 45 in 1980. This indicates that the number of students per one teacher has increased, giving extra burden to the content of education. Not much change is observed in secondary and higher education. The variation in the number of students per teacher naturally influences the quality of education provided the capacity of a teacher remains the same.

The qualification of teachers is defined in terms of his basic school education and teaching experience. It is concluded that the quality of teachers has been improving, although gradually, in the countries of all three groups. In this part, the measure is that social status and income of teachers should become higher in the coming years.

(Problems of educational tools)

Textbook is another important key to influence the quality of education. It is usually written by a teacher or a group of teachers in teacher's college or specialists in university under a team of inspectors and is constantly prepared and revised. Its publication is handled by government or a private agency, or sometimes both. In most countries, textbooks are free or rental and in some countries sold at the cost price. Manuals for teachers are prepared in all countries except Afganistan and Indonesia. However, work-books for students are prepared only in a few countries.

Lastly, various educational tools are also important to consider. Beginning with chalk and black board, radio, tape-recorder, specimens of rock, tools for experiment in science class and all such things influence more or less the quality of a class. Such educational tools are considerably scarce in Indonesia whereas relatively rich in Malaysia. These steps towards the development of educational tools should be taken fast by the government, relying the inter-

national assistance.

(Planning of education and vision of education)

Defining an educational plan, C. A. Anderson states "a procedure to prepare a series of decision for future educational activities." It can be defined as a technic in a broader sense which a nation (or sometimes a local autonomous entity) or a group of nations conduct in order to achieve the objectives of education.

The planning of education has a long history in some sense but the modern planning of education is characterized by the following points. First, it should not be limited to formal school education but should be general to include vocational training and adult education. Second, it should be a long term program; i.e., 5-year-plan or 10-year-plan. Third, it should have a close relations to social and economic development. Therefore, in forming an educational plan, one has to foresee the future need to the society and, recognizing that education can play an important role in the social and economic development, consider functionally and positively the most efficient way of allocating educational resources in various fields.

It has passed more than twenty years since Karachi Plan in 1961. Some of the countries in South-East Asia could reach the target (7-years compulsory education) in quantity, though not so in quality. Therefore, the vision of educa-

tional development should be considered on a basis of establishing the qualitative basic education, putting importance on the cultural values.

(Problem in cultural values)

We have mentioned on the diversity of culture in the previous chapter, and the culture in South Asia has almost foundation in rural area. We see clearly the great strength of religion in consideration of cultural tradition in the rural village. The religions of Asia prevail the life of rural village into the mist of conservative, and prevent from using new technics and entering to modernization. In another area, they took a rather passive attitude toward the pursuit of materialistic and economic benefit, because they put importance on spiritualism.

The traditional culture is in a critical situation, having an impact from western countries. It has to select one among the following conditions--to reject the new culture or to accept the new one quickly or to respect the tradition for the purpose of creating new balanced culture. In this point it is better to recollect of some opinion, though it may be extreme, by M. Gandhi who took the economic development as degradation of human being, and by A. Khomeyni who insists the simple life which is only introduced from Mohammedan thought. The cultural tradition which is old and highly valued has been formed historically on the basis of adaption

and fusion of foreign culture. This is said to be a capacity of comprehension. South Asia is in an ethnical ethos which is elastic, by that she will adapt itself well to new civilization.