

EDUCATION AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

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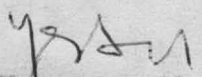
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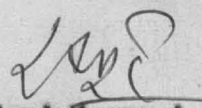
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## DECLARATION

Certified that the material in this Dissertation  
has not been previously submitted for any other degree  
of this or any other University.

  
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## A C K N O W L E D G E M E N T

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( RAVI KAPOOR)

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## CHAPTER-I

### INTRODUCTION

#### A BRIEF REVIEW OF THE RELEVANT LITERATURE AND THE OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Southeast Asia is a region characterized more by its diversity than by its homogeneity. Its principal countries - Burma, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam include both insular and mainland states. Historically, India and China have deeply influenced different civilizations of the region. In the modern times, all but Thailand have undergone some form of colonial experience, and practically all were occupied by Japan during world war II. The pressures of the past and present converge on the region today.

Diversity of the geography and influences of history have resulted in a mixture of races, languages, and cultures. This mixture is not to be found only throughout the region, but is visible within each of its countries. It, therefore, does not come as a surprise that the region includes such a variety of political systems-practising democracies, military regimes, nations under one-man leadership, a communist state, one of the world's few remaining European colonies, and an Islamic Sultanate - nor that each of these regimes has been subject to stresses and strains in the post world war II period. Because of this diversity, variety and complexity, few scholars have been able to or willing to generalize about the region as a whole.

Because of its diversity and recent origins of much of the social sciences literature on Southeast Asia, there are not many good general studies dealing with the area as a whole. Some disciplines, of course, have almost none, due to the very nature of the subject. Anthropological studies, for example are almost non-existent, ~~Even~~ where attempts have been made by other disciplines, they have produced studies encompassing more than one country, these perforce are more often a series of parallel description or unconnected random observations by one or several authors dealing with a single subject, problem or cluster of problems. Some of them, of course, are quite informative and useful; where as some are not. Some of the more recent and useful studies likely to be of value to the topic under investigation have been reviewed here.

A number of available and recently published volumes on modern history deserve mention here. Banda and Bastin's<sup>1</sup> study provides an excellent brief introduction for the beginning student and a very clear and readable one-book summary for the interested person. A companion volume of selected historical readings, somewhat more extensive in historical scope, is available in Banda and Larkin edited 'The World of Southeast Asia' (New York 1967). With its explanatory introductions and careful organization, it might serve as interesting reading for the concerned layman or supplementary reading for the more

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1. Banda H.J. & Bastin J. : The Modern History of South-East Asia, Prentice Hall, 1969

serious student. There are other general histories available by well-recognized scholars, such as D.G.E. Hall, John F. Cady, B. Harrison and so on. Most of these are less specifically oriented towards the modern period.

Geographical studies are available in abundance but they tend to be parallel descriptions of man and his environment. Most are fairly traditional in organization, provide rather less interesting readings for all but the more professionally committed student of geography. If the usefulness of a geography book is to be judged by its table of content and index as well as by the comprehensiveness and accuracy, then Fisher's<sup>2</sup> book measures up well on both standards. There are few geographical facts that reader will not be able to find in his book and it is an enjoyable reading unlike many such other texts.

In the related field of ethnography the best general study is limited to mainland Southeast Asia. Nevertheless, the book by LeBar and others.<sup>3</sup> is an indispensable reference source for all social scientists. It dramatically and beautifully illustrates the fundamental diversity of mainland Southeast Asia.

In the field of politics, the volume edited by George M. Kahin<sup>4</sup> stands out as one of the most useful general studies

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2. Fisher C.A. : Southeast Asia: A Social, Economic and Political Geography, New York, 1966.

3. LeBar F.M. et al : Ethnic Groups of Mainland Southeast Asia, New Haven Conn. 1964

4. Kahin, George M. : Government and Politics of Southeast Asia, New York, 1964.

available, though it admittedly has defects. As is the case with many other volumes, it is really a series of parallel descriptions, each with a pronounced historical bias, and there is no compensating general introduction or conclusion that attempt to point out some of the more striking parallels and contrasts. The editor has done a good job of encouraging the individual authors studying different countries, to address themselves to similar problems in a consistent format. In marked contrast to the detailed country-by-country presentation and the reluctance of the editor to generalize, which together characterize this collection, stands the brief paper-back by Pye.<sup>5</sup> Pye's book is really only an essay on the subject, but it does serve as a good summary introduction for the incoming student, and this was apparently what the author intended it to be.

As pointed out earlier, not much anthropological or sociological work has been done about the region as a whole, although studies about individual countries are available. However, for the students of area studies, Tilman<sup>6</sup> edited book is an important contribution. Designed both for students in area studies and for others with an interest in the region, Tilman's book has been skillfully organized around a number of central problems. As editor Tilman raises the questions about the very significance of the term 'Southeast Asia'; the five articles he has selected, in part one, deal with the historical, cultural, political, and social dimensions of this problem. In part two of the book, questions are raised about the

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5. Pye, Lucial W. : Southeast Asia's Political Systems, Prentice-Hall, Englewood Cliffs N.J. 1967.
6. Tilman Robert, O (ed.) : Man State and Society in Contemporary Southeast Asia, Praeger Publishers, New York/London, 1969.



nature of 'traditional' and 'modern' values, their transmission, interaction and conflict, and about the process of social change itself. The focus in this section is on the man in a changing society. The articles of part three discuss the political ideologies, structures and leadership of the various Southeast Asian States. These questions lead to an examination, in part four, of problems of national integration and of the outlook for the development of a Southeast Asian regional identity. It is in part five that questions are raised about the social and cultural obstacles to economic development and about the prospects for economic progress.

Only book dealing with different social systems of Southeast Asia is edited by Murdock<sup>7</sup>, which is the result of a symposium organised by Murdock in 1957 in Bangkok. In this volume two of the social systems discussed are patrilineal - the Bunun of Formosa and Miao of China, two are matrilineal - the Ami of Formosa and Mhong Gar of Vietnam. The other nine social systems, despite striking individual differences, all belong to the general type which has been variously called "ambilateral", "bilateral", "cognatic" and "nonunilineal". Social structure analysis over the past century has been concerned very largely with unilineal systems, that is, those characterized predominantly by either matrilineal, patrilineal or double descent is highly gratifying. In comparison social systems in which unilineal descent either is absent or is not the major organizing principle have received little attention,

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7. Murdock G.P. (ed): Social Structure in Southeast Asia, Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research Inc., New York, 1960.

and precise knowledge of the subject. Murdock has in his introductory chapter analyzed and compared the nine-unilineal social systems described in the book in relation to one another and to comparable systems described else where in the ethnographic literature.

In the field of education there are still fewer studies of the region. There have been divergent influences on different countries and their educational systems because of different colonial powers which governed them. Since well researched studies of educational development in Southeast Asia are comparatively rare, therefore, a recent publication of Francis Wong Hoy Kee<sup>8</sup> deserves careful consideration. The author seems to be interested in connections between education systems and economic growth, social integration and political unity, and it is this wider perspective which contributes a great deal to the book's value. In the introductory chapter Wong provides a concise outline of some major characteristics of the five countries selected for comparative analysis : Indonesia, Thailand, Malaysia, the Philippines and Singapore. The author then goes on to examine briefly but effectively the growth of education during the periods of colonial rule, and the need to adapt to new developments after World War II. He further points out the slow rate of progress of formal education in many countries, particularly at the higher

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8. Wong, Francis Hay kee : Comparative Studies in Southeast Asian Education, Heinemann Educational Books, Kuala Lumpur 1973.

level. Attention is also drawn to a number of problems which continue to seriously affect school systems in the region and which have also important implications for the wider society. Educational wastage is one of them. The status of vocational education, the high degree of centralization of educational administration, and the relationship between education and economic development are amongst some of the other important topics which are discussed. Wong further examines the difficulties often involved in finding enough finance to provide for increasing enrollments in countries where educational expenditure already constitutes a major proportion of total national budget, and also the difficulties facing planners in attempting to gear education to promote economic development and vocational skills in societies where education is often too literary and academic with a preponderance of enrollements in arts subjects.

Two other important books discussing the educational problems of developing societies and Southeast Asian countries are by Adam Curle<sup>9</sup> and M.S. Huq.<sup>10</sup> Curle admits the dependence of development upon trained manpower, but suggests further that it is the social structure as a whole of the under developed countries which retards their growth. Its gross inequalities and stratifications, which bury talent and smother initiative, will

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9. Curle Adam : Educational Strategy for Developing Societies, London 1963.

10. Huq M.S. : Education Manpower and Development in South & Southeast Asia, Sterling, New Delhi 1975.

not be eradicated simply by training the right number of doctors, engineers, and agronomists. This needs to be done and will undoubtedly help the general situation, but further steps must be taken at the same time if development is to proceed with the comprehensiveness and rapidity which is necessary. He further submits that education broadly seen is the most effective means of altering the outlook of people; This, rather than the inculcation of skills, is what is needed if the structure of society is to be modified.

Huq's latest book suggests that sound educational planning is possible only in the matrix of economic development and must take into account reliable data about manpower, requirements educational inputs and outputs, enrollements, rates of return from different sectors to the individual and society, wastage in education etc. He further discusses the plan strategies for educational development, approaches to different models, economic growth and educational systems of South and Southeast Asia. He puts much faith in the use of non-formal education in the developing countries.

Here a brief review of literature available on individual countries of Southeast Asia will not be out of place. These countries can, however, be grouped under (a) Mainland Southeast Asia, and (b) Insular Southeast Asia. The countries of mainland Southeast Asia are Laos, Cambodia, Vietnam, Thailand and Burma. In insular Southeast Asia can be grouped Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines and Malaysia. Although Malaysia is both mainland and insular, but is grouped in the latter category, as is the common practice.

Behind Charles Archainbault's rather unpretentious little 'The New Year Ceremony at Basak (South Laos)' <sup>11</sup> lies both a dramatic tale with aspects of classic tragedy and a superb study of the use of ritual and a mythical symbols to express alterations in social structure and social experience. Halpern's <sup>12</sup> book is valueable for understanding the social bases of political fragmentation. However, a more reliable and better organized book about the social life of Laos is LeBar and Suddard edited "Laos - Its people Its Society, Its Culture". <sup>13</sup> Although Cambodia is receiving increasing attention in English language publications, but there is still no profusion of material available.

Wendell Blanchard's <sup>14</sup> two volumes provide an entering wedge into the life of people of Thailand, although both of these tend to be heavy on discription and light on analysis. Some what more analytical, better integrated is D.Insor's, Thailand: A Political, Social and Economic Analysis, (New York 1963). Although anthropological studies of Thailand are numerous today, several monographs deserve particular mention. Herbert Phillip's 'Thai Peasant Personality' <sup>15</sup> has successfully interwoven substantive

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11. Archainbault C : The New Year Ceremony at Basak (South Laos), Ithaca, Cornell University, 1971.
  12. Halpern : Economy and Society in Laos, New Haven, Conn. 1964.
  13. LeBar F.M. & Suddard A.V.(Ed.): Laos-Its People, Its Society, Its Culture New Haven, Conn.1960.
  14. Blanchard W. : Thailand; Its People, Its Society, Its Culture, New Haven, Conn.1966
  15. Phillips H. : Thai Peasant Personality, Barkely, California University Press, 1965.

material on the personality traits of central plain Thai peasants with methodological guidelines for further psycho-cultural research. The foremost authority on the overseas Chinese in Thailand is anthropologist G.W. Skinner. His 'Chinese Society in Thailand : An Analytical History',<sup>16</sup> is precisely what the subtitle purports it to be. Students in the social sciences will probably find Skinner's 'Leadership and Power in the Chinese Community in Thailand' (Ithaca New York 1958) somewhat more useful. This is a meticulously documented, carefully analyzed, and cogently presented sociological and anthropological study of the Bangkok Chinese community.

Although Burma has remained virtually, closed to Western scholarly research for the past decade or so, considerable documentation is still available today. But it is mostly historical and military. There studies of various aspects of the impact of religion and customs of Burmese life can be cited. On the macro-level are two volumes of importance. First is Donald Smith's 'Religion and Politics in Burma',<sup>17</sup> It provides a solid, if somewhat formalistic account of the interaction of Buddhism and politics, both under the British and after independence. More historical and difficult, but rewarding in end is Sarkisyanz's 'Buddist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution'.<sup>18</sup> At the micro-level, Nash<sup>19</sup> provides a fascinating

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16. Skinners G.W. : Chinese Society in Thailand; An Analytical History, Ithaca, New York, 1957

17. Smith D.C. : Religion and Politics in Burma, Prenceton, N.J. 1965

18. Sarkisyanz E. : Buddist Backgrounds of the Burmese Revolution, The Haque 1965.

19. Nash, Manning : The Golden Road to Modernity: Village life in Contemporary Burma, New York, 1965

worm's-eye view of social change in the villages of Upper Burma and suggests some useful insights into similar problems elsewhere. Finally, because of its impact on the field, attention must be directed to the study of Edmund Leach,<sup>20</sup> which has been accepted as the standard work on Kachin social and political organization.

About Malaysia and Singapore there is not much published scholarly research in the social sciences. A full study of Singapore politics was made by Thomas J. Bellows<sup>21</sup> in 1968. MacDougall's 'Shared Burden'<sup>22</sup> provides an excellent study of communalism in Malaysian politics, which goes far beyond the usual institutional analysis. There is a paucity of good anthropological and sociological writing on Malaysia, though recent work by Robert Jay and Nash are important. Newell's "Treacherous River"<sup>23</sup> is a fascinating and informative study of a Teochew (Chinese) village, despite the almost nonexistent methodological frame work. Best work on Malaysia's Chinese population has been done by Maurice Freeman<sup>24</sup> and Purcell

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20. Leach E. : Political Systems of Highland Burma, London, 1954.
21. Bellows Thomas J.: The Singapore Party System, Ph.D. thesis: Yale University, 1968.
22. MacDougall John A: Shared Burden, Cambridge, Mass: Harvard Univ. Ph.D. Thesis 1965.
23. Newell, William : Treacherous River, Kuala Lumpur, 1962.
24. Freeman M. : Chinese Family and Marriage in Singapore, London, 1965.

Compendium.<sup>25</sup> The best social history of modern Indonesia is by Wertheim.<sup>26</sup> Geertz is perhaps the leading anthropologist dealing with Indonesia. His 'The Religion of Java'<sup>27</sup> has become the definitive study of the basic cleavages of Javanese Society.

Despite intimate Philippines-American Contacts, there is not a wealth of social science material dealing with this former colonial territory of U.S.A. However, mention may be made of Bernstein's 'The Philippine Story'<sup>28</sup> which is the best brief historical introduction for the period upto the end of World War II. Some of the important social institutions of Philippine have been discussed by John J. Carroll and others in 'Philippine Institutions'. The topics covered are the value system, the family, the economy, magic and religion, education, the mass media, politics and government. Guthrie<sup>29</sup> and his associates have reported on their research into "the psychological factors of social change" to determine to what extent attitudes and values are crucial in modernization.

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25. Compendium P. : The Chinese in South East Asia, London, 1965.
26. Wertheim W.F. : Indonesian Society in Transition, The Hague, 1956.
27. Geertz C. : The Religion of Java, The Free Press, Glencoe Ill.1960.
28. Bernstein David : The Philippine Story, New York 1947.
29. Guthrie George M.: The Psychology of Modernization in the Rural Philippines. I.P.C. Paper No.8, Ateneo De Manila 1971.



From the preceding review of the relevant literature we find that the relationship between education and social stratification has mainly been pursued along two different lines: (i) One line of enquiry has been around the hypothesis that stratification serves to distribute educational opportunity and accessibility unevenly reflecting the stratification of parental generation. Such hypothesis explores the function of education as a social institution, acting primarily to stabilize the class structure by allocating educational chances according to family status, thus producing successive generations of high status families with high education and low status families with little education.<sup>30</sup> The purpose of any society, however, cannot be merely to stabilize the existing social structure. Another purpose of education, therefore, become the transformation of the occupational structure by developing the mass training of middle and high status persons. Thus, consciously or not education becomes an instrument of selecting, training and placing persons in occupations higher than those of their parents. Education thus becomes the institution most relevant for social mobility. Thus encourages the students of sociology to pursue (ii) a second hypothesis about the relationship between education and stratification that educational process is the major mechanism of social mobility. That is, education is considered as a mechanism whereby an ascribed status derived from family, class or race is converted

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30. Mekee J. : Introduction to Sociology, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1969. p.397.

31. Ibid. : p.397.

into an achieved status in the occupational sphere. In other words, we may say, that interaction between education and social stratification has direct influence on social mobility.

We can further say that although education has always been closely related to class, status and power, but since the turn of the century it has also become a part of economic foundations of any society, which is a major avenue of social mobility - a process of selectively moving large numbers of people upward in status in order to fill the social positions created by the rapid expansion of the middle class - as such status placement becomes one of the significant social functions of education. This aroused interest amongst the sociologists, quite recently to study the relationship between education and social stratification and social mobility.

#### Objective of the Study

The above review shows that not much sociological investigations have been made in this field in Southeast Asia. The present study, therefore, makes an attempt to examine in a more systematic order the effect of education on social stratification with reference to some of the countries of the Southeast Asian region namely: Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines and Thailand. And simultaneously an attempt has been made to examine whether there is any possibility to involve a unified system of education in this region of cultural diversification. This type of study seems to be relevant because in a modernizing society education is the main factor of achievement basis of social mobility and

equality. Gore and Chitnis have also supported this view that "...the ideal of equality of opportunity, and the fact, that in a modernizing society 'achievement should be the principal factor in the selection of the elite' - and on the assumption that education is an important index of achievement - the analysis of relationship between stratification and education becomes extremely important."<sup>32</sup>

This study is based on the data collected from different secondary sources which have not fully been utilized by the literature incorporated in the above review. The sources we have used here to examine the role of education on social stratification are : various UNESCO Reports, government records and census reports of different countries and other published material.

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32. Gore and Chitnis S : "Sociology and Educational Research in Gore (ed.)" The Sociology of Education in India, NCERT, New Delhi 1975, p.34.

## CHAPTER-II

### SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

The Southeast Asian world has an area of about 1.5 million square miles, almost evenly divided between the mainland and the fringing islands with a population of over 220 millions.<sup>1</sup> This is an important area because of its resource endowment and a major source of tropical raw materials, that is, food-stuff and industrial crops, such as rubber and fibres. This is perhaps the only major tropical area which enjoys a high degree of accessibility and early integration of most of the area into a commercial and then colonial empires of the Western powers.

The high degree of accessibility of the area, particularly through sea; its location between India and China - two great culture-worlds; its pioneer fringe role in relation to the densely settled lands of eastern and southern Asia - all these things have encouraged what Dobby has described as "a constant convergence" of people on these South-eastern fringes of Asia. The result is a great diversity of people.<sup>2</sup> It is because of this factor that we find cultural diversity in terms of racial, linguistic and religious differences. We are aware of the fact that Hinduism and Buddhism diffused widely throughout this region during the phase of Indianization in the early centuries of Christian era. The Chinese religion spread south into Vietnamese lands during the long period of Chinese control and

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1. The Far East and Australasia 1974, London, 1974, p.377

2. Ibid. : p.378.

left a lasting imprint on the social and political systems of this area. During the middle-ages, Islam reached the area from India and spread to Malaya and Indonesia by displacing Hinduism. In the recent times, both Buddhism and Islam have shown themselves to be factors of considerable political importance in this part of the world.

The most striking feature of the last decade or so of development in Southeast Asia has been growing polarization of various religious groups. There has also been a steadily increasing geographical polarization because of widening disparities between the cities and the enclave economies on one hand, and the rural hinterland on the other. There has been increasing social polarization also which has widened the gap between an affluent city-dwelling minority and the rural masses. There has also been growing cultural polarization between Western educated and Western oriented elites and illiterate traditional masses.<sup>3</sup>

However, inspite of cultural diversity there are four main factors responsible for the unity of Southeast Asia: (a) homogeneity of race modified by different admixtures of Negrite, Indonesian, and Mongal blood according to the time and place of migration and by geographical isolation in forests; (b) one language family, modified by the same conditions and by acceptance of Hinduism and Islam on the coasts; (c) one identical body of primitive beliefs brought down from Central Asia where Babylonian influence had

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3. Ibid. : p.383

introduced cultural features as haruspicy, a good-king, respect for number seven (7), the incantation, the pyramid and so on; and (d) one material culture.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, the people of Southeast Asia are, inspite of the different racial strains among them, remarkably homogenous. Whereas there is an obvious gulf between the Melanesians of New Guinea and the peoples of Indonesia, Southeast Asians generally give the impression of being of common stock.

The socio-economic, geographical and cultural polarizations indicate that the Southeast Asian world is a highly diversified and socially stratified region. Social stratification, in its most general sense, refers to the fact that both individuals and groups of individuals are conceived of as consisting higher and lower differential strata, or classes, in terms of some specific or generalized characteristics or set of characteristics.

It is a common fact that the amount of knowledge that individuals have acquired, either formally, through education, or informally, affects the way in which they behave. As a result of differential amounts and types of education and other learning experiences, the amount of knowledge is differentially distributed and may be conceived of as forming a stratified structure among the individuals in a society. It is in this light that we have to see the system of stratification in some of the countries of Southeast Asia.

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4. Purcell, Victor : The Revolutions of Southeast Asia,  
Thames and Hudson, London 1962, p.18.

The system of social stratification in the 19th century Southern Asia was strongly influenced by both the conquest of most of the Southeast Asia under imperialist expansion and the spread of a plantation pattern of social organization. To begin with later: where plantations were started in virgin or nearly virgin areas, there was a clear organizational principle. The management and staff were white; the labourers brought from other places were Asians.

A plantation was a harsh frontier society, with rigorous discipline and a rigid code of behaviour aimed at maintaining the social prestige of the white managerial group. The labourers worked under a system of indentured labour and were not free to quit or to leave the plantation. Both the planters and the coolies considered their stay at the plantation temporary and dreamed of quickly accumulating enough money to return home as well-to-do men. Some of the workers were thrifty enough to send regularly part of their earnings home, and there were even quite a few who managed to establish themselves as independent traders in the colony and make good in society. But for the great majority, there was no alternative after the expiry of the contract but to sign for another term. For the great majority of the labourers many of whom had been cheated into signing a contract, working on a plantation meant life-long bondage, made even harsher by nearly exclusively male composition of the frontier society.

In later years, a large number of female labourers were employed. Consequently, a kind of normalization accrued in the frontier society, and particularly during the rubber boom of 1920's.

The indentured system came under strong criticism by the home, press and political parties. But the essential traits of the plantation society were nevertheless preserved.

In areas like Java and the Philippines where plantations were established amidst a settled population, the new institution had to be geared to traditional patterns of the surrounding rural society. The plantation management in Java to a certain extent, assumed the paternalistic ways of the native aristocracy and vied these in style of living and forms of leisure, even after the system of bounded labour had been replaced by one of free, paid labour. In the Philippines the cultivation of commercial crops was in the hands of 'caciques', the mixed offspring of the former Malaya chiefs, who used their social prestige to extract the required amount of work from their tenant-farmers, kept in peonage under the share cropping system. Thus the plantation management combined the characteristics of modern enterprise with the ways of a landed gentry. In the Philippines the 'caciques' was at the same time land-lord and magistrate.

The plantation society set a model for colonial society in its totality. The white colonizers superimposed themselves as a ruling caste upon the Southeast Asian social body. Their status was based on ascription. Their dominant position was derived from their white ancestry. Their supremacy in military and political matters, as well as, in education, technical and administrative matters had been attained. The 19th century colonial society was moulded on racial principles : belonging to



the dominant white upper caste provided one with the prestige and power largely independent of one's personal capabilities. A strict ritual was introduced and maintained, by force when necessary, to preserve the white caste from contacts with Asiatics to maintain the former's prestige as a dominant group.

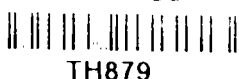
Raymond Kennedy, who was probably the first to analyze colonial society as such in sociological terms, correctly points out to the great differences in colonial patterns correspondings to specific views and attitudes of the colonizing power. He indicates such national peculiarities as the British colonial code, which "draws the most rigid colour line of all..... The entire social ritual of the colonies symbolizes the separateness of rulers and ruled. No where in the colonial world are the lines of caste drawn more rigidly in clubs, residential areas, places of public accommodation, and informal cliques. Now here is the taboo on the inter-marriage stronger and the penalty for infraction more drastic".<sup>5</sup> The Dutch suffered less from preconceptions of racial superiority and inferiority than the British and were more liberal in their attitude toward deviations from the colonial code of caste. Social relations between the natives and white were by no means free and equal, but by comparison with the British colonies, the Dutch East Indies appeared as a zone of exceptional racial tolerance. The policy of the French resembled that of the Dutch in its "relative freedom from racial prejudices".<sup>6</sup> The French ideal of carrying

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5. Kennedy, R. : 'The Colonial Crisis in the Future' in Ralph Linton (ed.) The Science of Man in World Crisis, New York 1945, p.320.

6. Ibid. : p.329.

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their civilization to the colonial peoples, moreover, led them to an attitude of accepting atleast socially those few among the Asian who had fully assimilated French culture.

The Spanish colonizers in the Philippines did not suffer from strong racial prejudices. The Christianization of the Filipines had furthered inter-marriages, from which sprung not only the dominant land-owning group of 'caciques' but also an urban and educated intermediary class of light-coloured Filipons. But on the other hand, the Americans "maintained a rather strict colour line in the Philippines."<sup>7</sup>

Still despite all such differences the general pattern was clearly set. However, different the way the colour line drawn, the fact remains that in each instance of colonization it existed.

Social reality in the different colonies was, moreover, often less varied than formal policies would suggest. The grading of social prestige according to skin and colour and other characteristics pointing to one's affiliation with either racial group was to be found in most of the colonies, regardless of whether the Europeans were included among the European group or relegated to the position of Asiatics. The specialization by Eurasians in clerical or supervisory functions, which commended a certain social prestige as symbols of emancipation from menial tasks and familiarity with the language of the colonizing people, was typical not only in the Dutch colony and Philippines, but in British dependencies as well.<sup>8</sup>

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7. Ibid. : p.332

8. Koop, John C: The Eurasian Population in Burma, Yale University, New Haven, 1960. p.20,48.

And even in independent Thailand the whites especially under the unequal treaties, achieved a status - as foreign advisors, firm managers, or missionaries - that was not even very different from their position in a colonial country. The main difference from the colonies appears to be that the 'advisors' in fact, administrators were chosen from several countries.

On the other hand, even in the colonial countries the Western authorities could not dispense with the traditional Southeast Asian social structure. Even though the 'natives' were formally classified as an inferior caste, the traditional aristocracy of those who were elevated by the colonial government to an equivalent position received privileged treatment and to a certain extent were also accepted socially by the representatives of the colonial upper caste. It was also their off-spring who, by enjoying better educational facilities, could aspire to positions otherwise reserved for members of the dominant caste. This was especially the case in those areas where a certain amount of indirect rule was maintained during the colonial period. Again, Thailand differs not in kind but rather in degree.

For the rest, until the end of 19th century the social differentiation brought about by colonial exploitation was limited indeed. Educational facilities for the mass of population remained very restricted; only after 1900 was a somewhat more liberal education policy adopted, the Americans in the Philippines leading the way in this respect. The spread of money economy into the country side created some new types of workers, such as tailors, mechanics, cart-drivers etc. Plantations under a western management

and railway transport also required technically trained or supervisory personnel. The expanding towns opened opportunities for these who mainly from practical experience and without benefit of school training succeeded in learning a trade or skill.

School teachers and people in lower clerical jobs were also able to rise above the level of the rural and urban masses. But a peculiarity of most countries of Southeast Asia under colonial rule is that upto the end of nineteenth century there was hardly a native intermediate layer between the white upper caste, assisted by the aristocracy, and the uneducated rural masses. Not only were a large portion of the clerical jobs filled up by non-natives but also the intermediate economic level people working in trades and crafts - were largely occupied by groups coming from outside the Southeast Asian area; Chinese and Indians, the latter group mostly in Burma and Malaya, the former all over the area, including independent Thailand.

The social structures of Southeast Asian communities presented a picture of elaborate pyramids of authority, where individuals had their place within a group, and the status of all groups in the society as a whole was carefully defined. The position of any one class in these settings varied from country to country. The degree of individual mobility from class to class was another variant, and ethical justifications for this structure also differed. More important, however, is the fact that fixed gradations of class rank were established and retained in each society for enormously long periods of time, without undergoing radical changes of devastating

social upheavals. In general, a close correlation existed between economic well being and high social position at all levels, with alliances among ruling groups quite common. The peasantry formed the wide base of this structure even when (as in Japan) it was nominally superior to another group (the merchants). Farmers were normally kept under strict rule, had to pay higher taxes, and had a very miserable life. Their condition was tempered only by certain customary restraints and the fact that excessive exploitation would lead to desperation and rebellion.<sup>9</sup> Although there were many uprisings among the peasants such as in China, the social orders still survived in the region. This social stability, in fact, survived many feudal wars, struggles, and invasions down to modern times.

In sum, ethical, political and economic aspects of Asia's culture were closely interdependent supports of a particular type of social order. The result of this interrelationship was that changes at one place had repercussion in other areas, thus setting off a chain reaction of doubt, criticism, and further change that eventually engulfed the entire social order.

After discussing the social stratification system of Southeast Asian countries in general, it will not be out of place to briefly look into the social organization and social stratification in the selected countries of the region. Because of the influence of different colonial powers, on Burma, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, they have been selected for the purpose.

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9. Greene, Fred : The Far East, Rinehart and Co., New York, p.9.

Burma: Traditionally Burma has been a nation of villages. Eighty percent of its estimated population of 26 million are villagers. Because of the numerical dominance and because most city-dwellers are only a few generations away from village living, the gentle but tenacious life pattern of the village lies across even the cities. It is a relatively homogeneous and unstratified society.

The basic social unit in Burma is the family. The country's history would show that it always has been a nuclear family. The Burmese word for marriage, ein-daung-pyu means to set up a house. Each young couple establish their own home, they will raise their own children. But a reverence for all elders and a particular reverence for parents is a part of this culture; the independent household is not detached in love or filial duty.<sup>10</sup> Nash points out that the family and households of Nondwins of Upper Burma are divided into three types: (a) the conjugal family; (b) the extended family; and (c) the joint conjugal family.....<sup>11</sup> The three types do not however, obscure the underlying dynamic of family and house hold formation; that is, the drive for each married pair to set up its own compound as the jural superior.

The familial unit rests on joint, common ownership or control of some kind of real property. At least, it must possess the compound and house in which it lives. Possession of agricultural land is the basis for the extended or joint conjugal family.

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10. Bixter, Norman : Burma - A Profile, Pall - Mall Press, London, 1971. pp.167-68.

11. Nash, Manning : The Golden Road to Modernisation, New York, 1965, p.44.

It is the ownership of agricultural land that provides the material base for a familial unit. The richer families tend to be the extended families; whereas the poor families tend to be simple conjugal families.

On the basis of agricultural land, which belongs to the head of the household, but under inheritance rights belongs to all male and female members, a common agricultural and domestic economy operates. Cooperative field labour exists among men and women of the household, and domestic tasks are shared among the women.<sup>12</sup>

The family is extended through the female link. The mother-daughter role is the 'keystone' role of Burmese familial life as the role of the mother is considered more stable and house-oriented and the girl learns how to become a woman mainly from her mother. The mother is the stable, sure continuing figure in the household. The concept of pon (sense of glory, a religious essence, is limited mostly to men), power and glory, enters into the domestic relations. Pon places men in a higher spritual state than women. In daily life, the role of the women is remarkably coordinated with that of man. Men, however, are economically destined to be self-supporting, and expected to head households and to attain jural separateness and autonomy.<sup>13</sup> In Burma, family rests on role

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12. Ibid. p.48

13. Ibid. pp.51-53

substitutability in many recurrent and significant aspects, which in turn rests on the feature of unitary command within the household. The senior mother-father pair are at the top of the familial organization.<sup>14</sup>

To sum up we can say in Burma one sees a family structure resting on kinship and social organization, living on its own territory, having real assets, demanding role substitutability, economic cooperation, and working under a unitary systems of authority. The strongest, perduring bond is that of mother-daughter. It may turn out, on further analysis of other Southeast Asian societies, that the mother-daughter relationship provides the stable element in the familial organizations as it does here.

Discussing the Kachin social structure of Highland Burma, Leach<sup>15</sup> points out that in theory rank depends strictly upon birth status; all legal rules are framed as if the hierarchy of aristocrats, commoners and slaves had a caste-like rigidity and exclusiveness.

In the pre-British days a very high proportion of the total population were classed as mayam (slaves). Since British disapproved the institution of slavery, so they suppressed the institution of mayam. The chief or village headman owned all slaves. The status of slave was like that of an adopted son or poor doma.<sup>16</sup> Formal

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14. Ibid., p.54.

15. Leach, Edward R. : Political Systems of Highland Burma: A study of Kachin Social Structure, Bell 1964, pp.159-72.

16. Naufville, J.B. : On the Geography of Population Assam, Assam Res. Vol.16 (1828) p.240, quoted by Leach, op.cit.



rules about the payment of hpaga (trade, ritual wealth object).... usually differentiate only classes, namely the chief (du); the free-born commoner (darat); and the slaves (mayam).<sup>17</sup>

In theory Kachin class difference has attributes of caste that is to say it is a ritual distinction. But in practice it would appear to be equally possibly to gain status. An individual, if he wishes to be recognized as of high birth must strive not simply for personal recognition, but for the recognition of his whole lineage. Usually this is not very difficult. Most of commoner lineages can claim some sort of aristocratic connection, and in all such cases there is room for manoeuver and social improvement.<sup>18</sup>

Although in theory class hierarchy<sup>is</sup> supposed to be rigid like Indian caste-system, but in fact it is not. Social climbing is possible through a dual process. Prestige is first acquired by an individual by levishness in fulfilling ritual obligations. This prestige is then converted into recognized status by validating retrospectively the rank of the individual's lineage. The last is largely a matter of manipulating the genealogical tradition.

Indonesia: Unity in diversity is the official motto of the Indonesia Republic. Indonesian geography makes for diversity-numerous large and small islands. A second cause of diversity may be found in the ethnic field. It is not primarily a diversity

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17. Leach, Edward R., op.cit.

18. Leach, Edward R., op.cit.

in a racial sense. Though other racial elements are discernible among some of the Indonesian tribes, the Malayan element is strongly dominant.<sup>19</sup> Apart from the natural geography and race, however, there were still other factors making for diversity. The impact of human technology has led, during a process of centuries, to a number of strongly differing kinds of civilization. For example, (a) Irrigated rice areas of Central and East Java; (b) Harbour principalities along the Coasts of Java; and (c) Shifting cultivation of Western Java and Batavia.

On the other hand, the culture of the early Indonesia presented a basic similarity in more than one respects. There were common cultural traits. With respect to customary law (ADAT Law) most peoples in Indonesia presented a kindred pattern, whereas from a linguistic point of view all Indonesian languages, except a few of minor importance, equally belong to the same family.<sup>20</sup> For all the apparent differences, the different societies were largely based on tradition. The social functions within the village were fulfilled according to traditions. Tradition, too, determined each persons status within the social hierarchy.

This traditional way of life was the common characteristic of agrarian communities in early Indonesia, but it also included the princely and urban spheres as well. One of the salient features of the Indonesian history is that the numerous changes within higher social strata did not appreciably affect the total structure of the society. Peasants general way of life did not change much. The imperial or feudal super-structure remained

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20. Ibid : p.5.

19. Kerthim w.f. : Indonesian Society in Transition.  
THE HAGUE, 1959 P. 2

only a loosely built edifice on a solid base of peasant life.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, the two concepts of diversity and unity, were not only characteristic of the internal situation in the archipelago; they could also serve as a typification of the relationships between early Indonesian and surrounding Asian world.

It is not possible to speak of a single original Indonesian status system. There are sharp divergencies according to whether the community is organized predominantly on a genealogical or a territorial basis. The former type is mostly associated with ladang cultivation, while the latter is found chiefly among peoples practising agriculture on irrigated rice fields.

Within the Javanese desa, a person's social standing was connected particularly with his relationship to land. At the top was the nuclear villager-who owned farm land, compound and house. The man who owned no land but only a compound and house fell into the second rank. One who possessed only a house in another man's compound was classed in still lower category. In the lowest category of all we find those who shared another man's dwelling.<sup>22</sup>

Above the village communities were the principalities, bound together by princely authority. There was a big social gap between the noble families and the common man. There was also a slave class, usually small in numbers, on which the ordinary freeman could, in his turn, lookdown.

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21. Ibid : p.6.

22. ter Harr, B, : Adat Law in Indonesia, New York, 1948. p.71 ff.

During the 17th and 18th centuries a new status system had grown up in the enclaves controlled by the East India Company, which differed subsequently from the old Indonesian pattern. In Batavia, the Dutch employers of the Company formed the upper most social layer; below them came the free citizens, among whom the Christians occupied the most privileged positions; after these came the Chinese; and the Indonesian population, a large number of them slaves, formed the lowest layer.<sup>23</sup> About 1850 the colonial stratification based on race had assumed a fixed form in Java, which was reflected in the laws. However, among the 'Inlanders' a great part of the original status system was preserved. Colonial stratification based on race was merely superimposed on the original Indonesian class system. Finally, mention should be made of a third social stratum besides the Europeans and Inlanders, namely the foreign orientals, composed of the Chinese and the Arbas; they occupied an intermediate position between the Europeans and Indonesians. In Java they formed, in the main, a middle class of independent merchants and artisans.<sup>24</sup>

Some nationalists had expected post-revolutionary Indonesia to be a completely class less society, as there were no large landowners in the country and until a few years ago, there were no indigenous businessmen of substantial means. Perhaps this absence of landlords and capitalists, they thought, provided the framework for a society free from all class distinctions. Economic considerations, however, cannot be considered as the only basis for social

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23. de Haan, F. : Oud Batavia (Old Batavia) Bondung, 1935, p.349  
ff.

24. Wertheim, W.F. : Op.cit. p.140.

stratification. Indonesia, like every other society, has always had its elites. Now the determinant of social status is no longer birth or family background but position in the new power structure - not who one is but what one does.<sup>25</sup>

The Javanese themselves distinguish two primary social groups: (i) the prijaji - the members of the administrative bureaucracy and (ii) the wong tjitig (little people) - consisting of the great mass of the peasants and the lower strata of the urban population. In addition to these they recognize a third level, relatively small in size but prestigious: the ndara or nobility. Distinct from this horizontal stratification there exists a vertical classification of Javanese society based on degree of participation in Islam, distinguishing (1) the wong abangan - who do not regulate their lives according to the basic principles of Islam, and (2) the santri - who follow these principles seriously.<sup>26</sup> Although the criterion of differentiation is the degree of participation in Islam, the two groups can certainly be regarded as two subcultures with contrasting world views, values, and orientations within Javanese culture as a whole.

In Indonesian, income is not a crucial differentiating criterion. For example, the four principal stratified groups - Wong Tjitig, santri, prijaji and ndara - are differentiated more sharply by cultural differences than by wealth distinctions. The extension of educational facilities and growing urbanization

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25. Mintz, Jeanne : Indonesia - A Profile, The Asia Library, London, 1961, p.105.

26. Koentjaraningrat, R.M. : 'The Javanese of South Central Java' in Murdock (ed.) Social structure in Southeast Asia, New York, 1960, p.89.

are contributing towards upward mobility on all levels of Javanese society.

Malaysia : The Malaysians of Malaya are part of the Malaysian world which contains about one hundred million persons. In language general culture, and increasingly in political identity the Malaysian world - Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines - represent a symbol to which Malaysians in Malaya can, and increasingly do, attach strong value. The Muslim religion is an especially binding factor.

The expectations to this homogeneity, however, are important to bear directly upon the Malaysian social organization. First, the large urban centres of Western Malaysia, are not a part of the Malaysian world. These are the domain of the Chinese, the Indians, and the Europeans. Second, in the state of Negri Sembilan and some of the adjoining territory the nature of Malaysian social organization is such as to preclude the easy adoption of new community members. With these exceptions, the peninsula is a common Malaya domain.<sup>27</sup> Although there is little internal migration of the Malaysians within the country, substantial homogeneity exists within the peninsula.

Like the peasant life in other part of Southeast Asia, the Malaysians of Malaya are most meaningfully organized at the Kampong level. This Kampong provides the Malaysians with his primary group. Communal effort is an important part of Kampong life. Typical activities affected by this are the establishment

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27. Ginesberg, N. and Roberts, C.F. : Malaya, University of Washington Press, Seattle 1958, p.216.

and improvement of certain terms of "community capital", such as schools, roads, dams, and drainage channels. The control of water is of special importance because of wet-rice cultivation. Communal labour is also of significance in the development of new rice lands. The face-to-face relationships in the Karpong primary group are reinforced by common participation in important life-cycle ceremonies and in participation in the annual sacred days (Ramjan) of the Muslim religion.

Most of the rural Malaysians are organized in cooperate units of greater or less cohesion. On the one extreme may be placed certain matrilineally organized groups in less developed areas of Negri Sembilan, at the other extreme are bilaterally organized Malaysians living near some large towns of Western Malaya. For the ninety percent of the Malaysians who are not organized matrilineally, the significant corporate grouping tends to be based upon Karpong and neighbourhood rather than kinship. The kinship system of the large majority of the Malaysians is bilateral and is thus more in line with the general characteristics of preferred Muslim social organization.<sup>28</sup>

The extended family, which usually, includes three living generations, is the most inclusive bilateral kinship unit. Beyond the extended family is the Kaum (circle of relatives), which operates as an apparently diffused but generally supportive manner.

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28. Ibid : p.218

Malaysian society on the peninsula is characterized by both a traditional, essentially political, class structure and an emergent, essentially socio-economic, class structure corresponding to that of western society. Traditionally class differentiation exists between the Malay aristocracy and the commoners. There is still a strong interest and feeling of loyalty among the commoners for the Sultan of the State. There are certain marriage restrictions within the aristocracy; as it is not preferred that women should marry beneath their class. There is a similar convention for the Sultan of a State in his first marriage.<sup>29</sup>

Of greater importance than this customary stratification is the class structure which is evolving from the gradual integration of greater number of Malaysians into the increasingly variegated national fabric of Malaya. Under the tutelage of the British the Malaysian have been drawn into a large variety of occupations and roles which set many of them apart from the rural Malaysian scene.<sup>30</sup> These new occupations and roles have been associated with government service. This has resulted in changing relationships with not only other Malaysians, but other ethnic groups in the country as well.

Taylor<sup>31</sup> has used the term "Kampong Class" with reference to the majority rural Malaysians. The socio-economic differentiation

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29. Winstedt : The Malays, New York, pp.50-52.

30. Ginsberg & Roberts : op.cit. 225.

31. Taylor, E.N. : 'Malaya Family Law' in Journal of the Malayan Branch of the Royal Asiatic society, May 1937, p.5.



generally used in the analysis of social stratification would justify them. The social structure of rural Malaysian society tends to differentiate Malaysians in the Kampongs from those in more urbanized situations, on estate, or in road labour crew.

However, within the Kampong class itself there is increasing stratification as the leaders become involved in the administrative functions of Mukim and district government. The feeling is that the real issues of the Kapongs are being neglected in the interest of personal advancement on the part of officers.<sup>32</sup>

In the towns the stratification of society would appear to be occurring at a more rapid rate than in the rural areas. This is not unexpected since the number and variety of opportunities is much greater in towns. In the social survey of Singapore in 1947 there was evidence of substantial stratification and role differentiation particularly related to economic activities.<sup>33</sup>

The Philippines: To begin with pre-Spanish Philippines society we know it was clearly stratified. According to Lynch<sup>34</sup> the strata

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32. Gamba, Charles : 'Rural Development in Malaya', Eastern World, May 1962, pp.20-21.

33. Deptt. of Social : A Social Survey of Singapore, G.H.Kiat and Welfare Singapore Co. Singapore.

34. Lynch, Frank : Trend Report in Studies in Social Stratification and Social Mobility in the Philippines Institute of Philippines Culture, Manila.

that were recognized were atleast four in number but the major distinction was that between the chiefly and non-chiefly class. The chiefly class-principles, consisted of two ranks. The first consisted included the datus (high chiefs), and the second, a large group, was made up of the low chiefs, or freemen, variously called Maharlika or Tunao. The non-chiefly class included at least three major ranks. In descending order they were the freemen or timawa, the bounds or tenants (aliping namamahay or gintubo), and various kinds of slaves.

Espiritu<sup>35</sup> however, points out that before Spaniards came to the Philippines, there had been only three distinct social classes: the chiefs (Maharlikas and datus), the freeman, and the slaves. Although the Spaniards did not disturb this arrangement, but by the process of social change, a different classification emerged during the early seventeenth century. The 'datus' become known as 'cabezas de barangay'.

Another group of government officials become the "goberador-cilles". Their families constituted the aristocracy or the upper class in the Philippines society. The Spaniards called them "Caciques".<sup>36</sup> Thus developed the upper class in the Philippines society. The "caciques" enjoyed special political and social

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35. Espiritu, S.C. : Sociology and Social life, Manila Philippines 1956, p.77.

36. Pelzer, Karl J. : "Pioneer Settlement in the Asiatic Tropics", American Geographical Society Special publication No.29, p.89.

privileges. The Spaniards helped them acquire more and more lands and in making the rest of the people financially dependent upon them.

"Blood" or ancestry was one criterion for social class placement. Ordinarily the child's position was determined by a process of reckoning from the status enjoyed by each of his parents. Higher ranks, however, could be achieved in later life by acquisition of wealth and power. The system was not clearly like caste system. Rather it was one in which there was ample provision for social mobility upward and downward.

When the Americans came to the Philippines they found the "caciques" in power. Although the system was repugnant to their democratic ideals they found it convenient in dealing with the "common tao" the lower class. The 'caciques' group was influential in the movement for reforms, for education and for independence. Its leadership was recognised by the people.

After the Philippines become independent in 1946, 'caciques' retained their position. It has continued to do so upto the present. The most significant change in social mobility is the emergence of a powerful middle class, which is composed of government officials, teacher, and such professionals as lawyers and physicians. LeRoy<sup>37</sup> believes that there are only two important divisions in the Philippines social class structure - the upper and the lower classes.

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37. Le Roy, James A : Philippine life in Town and Country, Putnam, New York.

Macaraig,<sup>38</sup> however, believes in the existence of a middle class also, although it is subordinate in some ways to the upper class.

In the absence of more reliable and detailed studies on the subject of social class differentiation, it is extremely difficult to make a satisfactory classification. However, Fox's<sup>39</sup> essay may be considered as the most competent nation-wide treatment of social stratification. Despite certain weaknesses in historical reconstruction, it manages to make sense out of the extremely complex phenomena of contemporary Philippine social stratification.

Fox bases his description of Philippine social class on a number of sources - historical literature, census reports and survey and personal observation. He sees land ownership and family prestige as the 'principal indices' of social class position. He adds five "additional criteria" - race, cultural-linguistic identity religion, education and occupation. However, Fox also sees wealth as the major criterion of social class distinction and placement.

Fox sees the Philippine population as divided into three large cells with more or less permeable walls: the Filipinos (further stratified into Christian, Muslims etc.); the Asian minorities (stratified ethnic enclaves); and the Euro-American minorities. Cutting through these cells is an economic barrier dividing the upper and lower classes. The so-called emerging middle class is most frequently identified with large cities - composed of minor government officials, teachers, small businessmen etc. along with the many of the highly mobile intellectuals and occupational specialists.

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38. Macaraig, S. : Introduction to Sociology, Manila, 1948, p.281.

39. Fox, R.B. : 'Social Class' Area Handbook on the Philippines, Vol.I, Chicago, 1956.

In conclusion, we may submit that broadly there exists a two class structure within which placement is predominantly on the basis of wealth. Further distinctions are made according to subsidiary markers as language, race, and religion. Only in the large cities does a genuine middle class appears to be emerging.

Thailand: Intensive research on the social organization of Thailand by professional behavioral scientists began shortly after the pacific war and continued without interruption until the present. The bulk of the work concentrated on rural communities to the extent that hardly any major contribution to urban or town studies can be cited, with the exception of Skinner's study of leadership in the Chinese community of Thailand (1958).

On the basis of studies of Kaufman (1960)<sup>40</sup>, Sharp (1963)<sup>41</sup> and of Embree (1950)<sup>42</sup>, we can have some idea of the social organization of Thailand.

In common with that of most other groups of Southeast Asia, the Thai kinship system is undifferentiated. Descent is reckoned both in the male and female lines. Besides the nuclear family which is the primary economic socializing unit, it distinguishes a kindred which includes first and second cousin among whom some informal, social, economic and ritual obligation may obtain. In addition,

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40. Kaufman, Howard K. : Bangkhud - A Community study in Thailand, New York, 1960.

41. Sharp, L. : "Thai Social Structure" Proceedings of 9th Pacific Science Congress (Bangkok 1957), Vol.III, 1963. pp. 129-30.

42. Embree, John T. : "Thailand; A Loosely Structured Social System", American Anthropologists, 52 (1950)

persons may be included who act as kinsmen but lack affinal or consanguineal connections. Kinship terms are widely used in non-kin relationships.

Spouses are freely selected beyond the range of own parents siblings. In rural areas, there is a tendency towards local endogamy limited to one's own village or to a group of neighbouring villages. Parent's consent is usually sought and go-betweens are occasionally used to negotiate unions. In Northeast Thailand, matrilocal marriages are very common. This could perhaps be an older and more traditional norm for the whole society. Inheritance practices appear to differ widely but data are lacking to make valid generalizations. In the Northeast, it is common for all children to receive some share of their parent's property, but only daughters inherit the land.

Formal social groupings beyond the household are the village community with its elected council and headman, the Buddhist temple with its abbot, chapter of priests, lay temple committee, and village clients, and finally, the school with its teachers, village school committee and student. Relationships not linked with authority within these structures and among persons outside of them in economic friendship, or other status, tend to be worked out on an individual basis from a number of alternatives defined in terms of residence, kinship, age, sex, occupation, education, religious roles, and so on. The most coherent and commonly recurring informal association constituted along these principles is the kho raeng group or long khack.

Thai society today is organized into a hierarchy based on economic standing, political power and connections, education, outlook on life, and family background. The rural dwellers who are largely farmers stand below the artisans, merchants, and government officials of the city. The Buddhist clergy stands as a group above or perhaps apart from society. The traditional divisions of Thai society into ruling group, freeman and slaves has been modified into occupational classes of government officials, merchants, artisans, unskilled labour etc. However, consciousness is of status rather than of class. Social status is graded, but there is no rigid line of class divisions.

The people in the rural areas are being influenced by the norms and behaviour of urban areas, particularly those emanating from Bangkok. Like the capital, provincial cities and towns are structured in a stratified hierarchy of ethnic and occupational classes. These and the increasing formal economic relationships of a money economy combine with the traditional basic national organization of church and central government administration to knit the local groupings of family and community into the totality of a national Thai social systems.

From the fore-going discussion of social stratification in different countries of the Southeast Asia, we conclude that the system of stratification in this region is governed by economic social and ethnic, and educational and cultural patterns. It is not as rigid as the Indian caste system and upward social mobility is possible through the criterion of achievement subject to educational and occupational opportunities available to various sections of the society.

### CHAPTER-III

#### EDUCATION AND SOCIAL STRATIFICATION IN SOUTHEAST ASIA

In the context of this paper, the term education is used to refer to book learning or formal education. Education in this sense, as such, had little to do with learning of occupational skills in pre-industrial societies, which were learnt through apprenticeship. Education was neither necessary nor relevant to the practice of most occupations. In modern industrial societies most occupations require formal training which itself is based upon a certain minimum of book-learning. Education is thus an important condition for obtaining occupational opportunity and upward social mobility.

In Southeast Asian countries, education is closely associated with the existing classes, where those who are socio-economically well-off have access to a kind of education which caters to their needs and thus, it sharpens and intensifies the system of class. The path of social mobility runs through the school; the system which divides the young and assigns them to adult statuses by means of years of schooling and specific occupational preparation. The equality of educational provision and access across the division of classes, ethnicity, and race, thus becomes a critical social and educational problem. Therefore, whether the system of education functions primarily as an institution of social inheritance, stabilizing social position across generations, or as an institution of social mobility, assigning to sons, statuses different from their



fathers? It is in this context that we want to examine the role of education in social stratification in Southeast Asian countries. For this purpose, first let us have<sup>a</sup> look at the existing educational system in the countries selected, and then see with the help of statistics and other data whether education can affect the system of stratification.

In the region each colonial power provided a modern educational system, however, inadequate and unsatisfactory to the needs of the people. The portals of Western literature with its range and varied grandeur were thrown open to educated Southeast Asian which explained the power of the West in terms of science and nationalism. The colonial system of education aimed at creating small classes of colonial 'elites' who would look down upon their countryman without Western education. Deliberate attempts were made to prevent the growth of mental unrest. Perhaps the most important aim of the colonial power was to create a moral defeatism among the people. Education, moreover, was not disseminated among the people at large and no provision for a comparatively wide system of education was ever made. As a result, we find large scale of illiteracy in this part of the world (see Table VI page 57).

Massive inequality was generated in the society when there was a considerable difference in the quality and quantity of schooling between rural and urban areas, among various parts of the region and among the neighbourhood and suburbs of the

metropolis. Where schooling was of slight consequence to the fate of the masses, such patterned differences mattered little. However, when education was considered as precursor of adult status, the demand to equalize educational provision was heightened.

Coming to the present educational systems in the Southeast Asian region, we find that they vary widely in their structure and characteristics of production functions. They bear the imprint of the historical forces that shaped them during the different phases of their evolution. The first era represents the earliest period and development, when social institutions, including education were influenced by values rooted in religion. The second era associated with colonial period that brought social and economic changes. The third phase is the current one, commencing with the emergence of these countries as national sovereign states after the end of World War II.

The indigenous system of education, which centered around the prevalent religions during the earliest period, shrank greatly in size but did not altogether die out when the Western system of education was established during the colonial period. The latter gradually became the main form of education, but its number of schools did not grow fast enough to meet the rising demand.<sup>1</sup> Thus a vacuum was created. This vacuum was filled by a system of private schools, some of which were run on commercial line and charged very high fees.

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1. Huq, M.S. : Education Manpower and Development in South and Southeast Asia, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi 1975, p.132.

As a result, now we find as many as three different sub-systems of education in most of the countries in the region, representing (i) the state schools, which are managed and financed wholly by the government (ii) the private schools, which are independent or government aided, and (iii) the indigenous schools. The indigenous sub-systems is almost disappearing and is unimportant. The first and the second sub-systems are the prevalent forms of education. Both the sub-systems are structured alike academically, though the first by its rapid growth is increasingly overshadowing the second in size.

The structural characteristics of the main type of education, including both public and private schools, in the selected countries of the region, have been summarized in the following Table I. Entry into the system is ordinarily through grade I of the first level or through pre-primary classes where they exist. The pressure applied by the growth of population, therefore, combined with the goal of universal primary education, is felt first at the grade that is the point of entry into the system and then gradually carried forward to the higher grades one year at a time.

TABLE I  
Structure of Educational System in Selected  
Southeast Asian Countries

Country	I Level			II Level		III Level
	Pre-School	Entrance age	Duration (Years)	Entrance Age	Duration (Years)	Entrance Age
Burma	4	5	5	10	4+2	16
Indonesia	3	6	6	12	3+3	18
Malaysia	4	6	6	12	3+4	19
Philippines	3	7	6	13	2+2	17
Thailand	4	7	7	14	3+2	19

Source: Statistical Year book 1977, UNESCO, Paris, 1978. pp.118-122.

The distribution of the total enrollment by level of education in the Asian region as such in 1975 is shown in Table II. The educational pyramid statistically represented in the table typifies the structure of the educational system in developing countries of the region, the enrollment being the largest at the first level, declining sharply to little less than a third at the second level, and then tapering off altogether at the third level. The structural skewness thus emerges as a major characteristic of the educational systems and is a serious problem in most of the countries in the region.

TABLE II

Distribution of Enrollment by Levels of Education in the Asian Region (1975) (in '000)

Level	Enrollment	Percentage of Total Enrollment
I Level	160063	69.5
II Level	61691	26.8
III Level	8618	3.7
Total	230372	100.00

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1977, UNESCO, Paris, 1978, p.75.

The growth phenomenon in education is common to all countries of the developing world, but the Asian region as a whole has experienced the growth in education at a much faster rate and its quantitative dimension dominated the development scene for the sheer size of it the total enrollment having practically increased four and a half times from 49.9 millions in 1950 to 230.37 millions in 1975.

Several forces have operated to produce this rapid growth. Education was sought in this region because of the cultural value traditionally attached to it, because of the social status that came to be associated with it, and because of the economic advantages that it was supposed to confer. With the advent of independence in the region, people thought of education as a birth-right, and as a means of access to the benefits of national development.

The Asian region as a whole which has experienced a faster growth in education since 1950 than the rest of the world, has also a vastly greater educational challenge to meet in future. If all the three levels of education are taken into consideration, this challenge becomes more formidable. The wide educational gap between the Asian region and the developed regions is demonstrated by the enrollment ratios as summarized in the Table III below:

TABLE III  
Enrollment Ratio in Different Regions: Age 6-23 yrs.  
During 1960-1975 (% of Population)

Region	1950	1960	1965	1970	1975
World	-	39.4	45.0	46.5	47.9
Africa	-	19.3	23.9	27.4	32.3
America	-	54.8	59.0	62.2	64.2
ASIA	17.3	30.2	35.8	37.4	38.9
Europe	-	56.8	61.2	64.3	67.5
Oceania	-	58.1	59.0	59.0	61.0
USSR	-	56.2	71.9	65.9	61.8
N.America	-	79.3	81.3	81.4	80.4
Latin America	-	37.3	43.0	49.1	54.7

1950  
 figures  
 from S.Y.  
 1974.  
 Unesco  
 1975

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1977, UNESCO, Paris, 1978, pp.101-102.

Another interesting trend in the growth of enrollment has been that although the rate of growth showed considerable variations within the same level from period to period, during a given period it varied directly with the level of education, that is, the higher the level of education, the greater the rate of growth.<sup>2</sup>

The higher rate of growth in the second and third levels seems to be caused primarily by the pressure applied by the rapidly increasing enrollment at the first level on the higher levels, which started from a comparatively narrower base, as indicated by a historical study of the distribution of enrollment by levels, which is summarized below:

TABLE IV

Distribution of Enrollment by Level of Education.  
As percentage of Total Enrollment During 1960-1975 in Asia

Year	I Level	II Level	III Level
1960	75.4	22.3	2.3
1965	72.5	24.6	2.9
1970	70.8	25.7	3.6
1975	69.5	26.8	3.7

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1977, UNESCO, Paris, 1978, p.78.

The growth pattern shows a slight improvement in the ratio of female enrollment to the total enrollment. Here also the degree of improvement varies with the level of education, being greater in the upper levels, as shown in the table below:

2. Huq, M.S. : Op.cit. p.135.

TABLE V

Female Enrollment as Percentage of Total Enrollment in Asia, 1960-1975

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Year	All Levels	I Level	II Level	III Level
1960	37	39	33	23
1965	38	40	33	25
1970	39	41	35	27
1975	40	42	36	30

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Source: Statistical Yearbook 1977. UNESCO Paris, 1978, p.81

There are, however, wide variations within the region, since the ratio of the total female enrollment is still very low in some of the countries with larger population.

According to Huq "the educational systems in the region have been developed on a lock-step pattern, and entry for students is through a single point that is the bottom grade of the system.... The 'output' of one grade becomes the 'input' of the next higher grade."<sup>3</sup>

All the countries in the Southeast Asian region are committed to the objective of universal primary education. This is very natural also, since universal basic education is essential tool in the development of human resources. The countries in this region have usually approached this task by expanding the facility of primary education for the school-age population within the formal school system, hoping thereby to reach the future generations of

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3. Ibid. : p.138.

the adult population. Towards this goal, most of the countries have been making heroic effort since '50's with the considerable inspiration and assistance from world bodies like UNESCO.

By far the most interactable problem before most of the countries in the region is that of low rate of retention resulting in a high rate of wastage, with the expansion of education. The rate of wastage is highest and striking at the first level.

The extent of illiteracy is difficult to be determined correctly, since the available data on the subject is not only inadequate but out of date as well. There is, moreover, considerable confusion in the interpretation of data because of existing differences in definitions, classifications, and different reference periods. Wastage and illiteracy have a close link between themselves in the region. Much of the wastage in the early stages of the first level of education directly adds to the number of illiterates, in the absence of significant arrangements for education outside the formal system. The situation, of course, varies from country to country in regard to wastage and illiteracy.

The high value attached to scientific and technological education as the key to national development and progress is a dominant strain that runs through the national plans and policy-documents of all the developing countries in the region. The basic approach and philosophy underlying the reconstruction of education rests on one deep conviction that progress, welfare and security of the nation depend critically on a rapid, planned growth in



quality and extent of education and research in science and technology.<sup>4</sup>

Education's need for financial resources has proved to be insatiable in all countries, whether less developed or more developed. The trend throughout the world is for educational systems to receive an increasingly large financial input. The most striking point of contrast between the industrial countries and the developing countries in the Southeast Asian region is that the former spend a large proportion of their much-larger national income on education, whereas latter cannot spend so. On the one hand this reflects the distortion in the growth pattern of the developing countries, on the other hand it reflects the constraint of resources that confront all sectors of development in these countries.

After having discussed the structural characteristics of the educational system in the selected countries of the Southeast Asia, we now come to the second point of our discussion as to whether education has been able to affect the system of stratification in these countries of the region.

It is generally known that in traditional, peasant and feudal societies education is largely restricted to the priestly class and to the scribes and there are ritualistic barriers that prevent lower groups from having access to education and learning. In Europe there were no such ritualistic barriers, although education was confined to the priesthood who were mostly drawn from the upper social strates. The other groups that usually

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4. Indian Education Commission Report, (1964-66) New Delhi. p. 718.

acquired rudimentary education consisted of businessmen and perhaps bankers. But rarely would their education go beyond the 'Three R's' and most of it was acquired within the home itself. In such societies, therefore, while education was generally available to all the upper strata, it was actually the possession and privilege of a special group.

Education, of course, is not the sole determinant of social status in society, as we find that even where social barriers to education are removed all equally educated persons do not have the same social status. Considerations of race, religion, income, occupation, family etc. have an important bearing on social status.

Now question arises whether education actually is one of the effective channels of social mobility in any given society. It will depend minimally (a) upon the extent to which education in that society is effectively geared to the occupation and income structures, and (b) Upon whether education is equally available to all groups in society.<sup>5</sup> On examination we find that neither of the two conditions are fulfilled in the countries of the region. Even in most industrial, where the first condition is likely to be fulfilled, second conditions is not necessarily fulfilled. Because even industrial societies vary in the degree to which their education systems are accessible to different sections of their population and probably in no society complete equality of opportunities for education is fully attained. The reasons why in any society education is not

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5. Gore M.S. and Desia I.P. ; 'The scope of a Sociology of education' in Gore (ed) The Sociology of Education in India NCERT, New Delhi. 1967. p.9

equally available to all sections of the population may be, (a) ideological-cultural ones whereby there may be rejection of the very idea of allowing all section of the population equal access to educational opportunities, and (b) there are economic factors, as developing countries are not in a position to spend a higher ratio of their resources on education. Thus in the context of limited educational facilities in developing countries, education becomes a great divider.

In the traditional societies the pattern of communication is predominantly vertical and unidirectional; that is, values and ideas of the society or group are handed over from one generation to the next generation. But in the case of modern developed societies, the pattern of communication tends to be more horizontally patterned than vertical, and is multi-directional. Thus, we find that in any traditional society social organization is patterned vertically, composed of links between generations-the link defined by blood and age relationships are not very important factors and communication does not take that into account. Instead level of literacy and education become much more important factors in this context.

The influence exerted by association in changing the pattern of communication from traditional to the modern type can not be overemphasized. Those who come into contact with others outside their own traditional groups tend to show shift in their allegiance somewhat. By traditional society or group we mean those whose boundaries are set, usually, by a criterion

such as descent.<sup>6</sup> In this context a nation as a whole may be considered as a traditional group, where its code prevent the individual from adopting as a his reference group are outside the nation. As Palmir points out, the more continuous the association and the closer it is, the greater the effect on the pattern of education. Therefore, we can say, that the pattern of association affects the choice of reference groups. It is here that the systems of education acquires significance. However, to reduce barriers between groups, an educational system must obviously recruit its candidates from the whole population, to the maximum extent possible and without discrimination, and must further not segregate its pupils or graduates into different social groups.<sup>7</sup>

By considering the extent of literacy, it will be possible to assess the extent to which communication may be possible outside the traditional group boundaries. It is not necessary that those who are able to read will be able to communicate outside their own boundaries, but one thing is very clear that if they are not able to read, they will find it extremely difficult to communicate with outside world. In the context of present study of education and social stratification in Southeast Asia, it is, therefore, necessary to consider this matter first.

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6. Palmier, L : 'Educational Systems of Southern Asia and Social Stratification' in Gore (ed.) The Sociology of Education in India, NCERT, New Delhi 1967 P. 148

7. Ibid : p. 149

TABLE VI  
Percentage of Illiteracy

Country	Year	Age Group	% of total Population	Male %	Female %
Burma	1962	15+	40.3	20.0	60.0
Indonesia	1971	15+	43.4	30.5	55.4
Malaysia	1962	15+	47.2	41.0	52.0
Philippines	1970	15+	17.4	15.7	19.1
Thailand	1970	15+	21.4	12.8	29.7

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1977, UNESCO, Paris 1978 p.p. 47-48.

The above table shows that, the level of illiteracy is quite high in the region, particularly in Burma, Indonesia and Malaysia, where more than two-fifth of the populations is illiterate; however in the Philippines and Thailand there are more literates than illiterates. Although percentage of illiteracy is much higher in Southeast Asia as compared to European countries, percentage of illiteracy is definitely lower as compared to some of the countries in South Central Asia, notably in India, Nepal and Pakistan.<sup>8</sup> This may be due to the fact that population in South Central Asia is more than Southeast Asia. Another important thing to note is that percentage of female illiterates is much higher than males in almost all the countries, except the Philippines, which can be one of the obstacles in the process of modernization and social mobility.

The reason for having a relatively lower rate of illiteracy in the Philippines (17.4) and Thailand (21.4) may be due to the advantage of a small population but, of course, we cannot rule out the possibilities of other factors, like administrative policies, since even in Malaysia with lesser population, the percentage of illiteracy is as high as 47.2.

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8. Ibid: p.151.

We have to keep in mind that literacy is not the same thing as education. From the point of view of this study, the more important part of education is that at the second level of education (15-19 years) and above. As compared with the first level (5-14 years), where education is carried on in the traditional social context, at the second level students come into contact more with those who come from other communities than their own; and it is this environment at second level that can influence the process of modernization.

The following table no. VII shows the extent to which the adult population aged 25 years and above have been exposed to education at different levels in the selected countries of the region.

TABLE VII

Percentage Distribution of Population 25 years and Above by Educational Attainment and Sex

Country	Year	Sex	HIGHEST LEVEL ATTAINED				Remarks
			No Schooling	I Level	II Level	Post Secondary	
Burma (urban)	1963	MF	67.0	17.2	15.0	0.7	22.1% did not Complete I Level
		F	71.0	20.1	8.1	0.2	
(rural)	1954	MF	87.4	9.6	3.0	0.0	16.2 did not complete I level
		F	91.3	7.6	1.1	0.0	
Indonesia	1971	MF	55.3	17.0	5.1	0.5	Δ
		F	69.3	11.0	2.9	0.2	
Malaysia	1970	MF	57.3	8.1	3.6	0.9	23.8 did not complete I level
		F	66.6	6.3	2.5	0.5	
Philippines	1970	MF	19.7	18.0	6.5	9.6	A+II level 6.8% of total and 5.1% of female did not comple.
		F	22.1	18.2	5.0	9.4	
Thailand	1970	MF	34.1	60.5	4.4	1.1	
		F	43.3	53.6	2.5	0.7	

Δ At I level 38.1 of total and 38.5 of female and at II level 7.6% of total and 6.7% of female did not complete.

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1977. UNESCO, Paris, 1978. pp.59-61.

It is evident from the table above that a very small proportion of the population in this region has enjoyed secondary level of education. The highest figures among the countries selected being scored by the Philippines, (9.6%) followed by Thailand (1.1%). Only in the Philippines we find a better male-female ratio as was the case in the percentage of illiteracy (Table VI). On the basis of figures in table VII, we can conclude that the proportion of the population that is capable of communicating at a national level is not very high.

Because of a higher percentage of illiteracy in most of the countries in Southeast Asia, it becomes necessary to see as to what attempts are being made, in these countries, to expand the educational system. The proportion of national income that is devoted to education can be a fairly good index of a country's effort to reduce the illiteracy. Table VIII below gives us an idea about the percentage of national income that is devoted to education, which reflects the real interest in education in these Southeast Asian countries.

TABLE VIII  
Percentage of National Income Devoted  
to Education 1975 (Burma 1971)

Country	Percentage of G.N.P.	Percentage of All Public Expenditure
Burma	3.4	19.4
Indonesia	3.3	20.7
Malaysia	5.8	17.0
Philippines	1.6	9.4
Thailand	3.6	20.7

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1977, UNESCO, Paris 1978, pp. 532-35.

When compared with some of the advanced countries, we find that the expenditure on education in some of these countries compare favourably with them.<sup>9</sup> It must be remembered that the financial yardstick, though no doubt legitimate as a rough measure of a country's effort to educate its population, suffers from certain inherent defects when used an index of efficiency in reaching that goal.<sup>10</sup>

TABLE IX  
Percentage of Total Expenditure Devoted to  
Education at Various Levels

Country	Year	Pre-scl. & I Level	II Level	III Level	Other types of Edu.	Not Dis- tributed
Burma	1971	33.9	42.8	16.8	-	6.5
Indonesia	1971	47.8	33.6	7.9	-	10.7
Malaysia	1975	38.6	28.5	4.9	22.0	6.0
Philippines	1975	80.0	8.0	5.4	-	6.0
Thailand	1975	64.5	16.6	11.3	2.0	5.6

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1977, UNESCO, Paris 1978. Pp 562-641

Table IX indicates the percentage of total expenditure devoted to education at pre-school and first level, second level, third level and the percentage of allotted expenditure not being utilized. It will be observed that in almost all the countries,

9. See Unesco: Statistical Year book 1977, Paris 1978.p.524-35.

10. Palmier, L.: Op.cit. p.153-54.



with the exception of Burma, the highest percentage of total expenditure is being devoted at the pre-school and first level. In Burma it is the second level of education which gets a higher percentage than other levels. At the third level a very small percentage is being devoted in practically all the countries, highest being again in Burma (16.8) and Thailand (11.3). In Indonesia, the percentage of expenditure not distributed (10.7) is even higher than what is being devoted at the third level i.e. 7.9%. It indicates that first and second levels of education are being considered more important than the third level.

Table X show the enrollment ratio of the students at school at the first and second levels of education. If we look at the first and second levels of enrollment ratios of the Philippines and even Malaysia, it compares favourably with some of the advanced countries like France, Japan, U.S.A. and USSR (UNESCO 1978). But in the case of other countries, we can say that it is better than some of the countries in South Central Asia like Afghanistan, India, Pakistan and Nepal (UNESCO 1978). We can, therefore, say that there are lesser chances of education in this area. Within Southeast Asia differences at the second level between the Philippines and Malaysia on the one hand and Burma, Indonesia and Thailand on the other hand are even more glaring. No country except the Philippines in the group has more than 50% of their second level school age population actually at school. Another point to note is that second level enrollment is uniformly very much lower than the first level. It indicates that a lesser proportion of children of the relevant ages go to school at second level than first level.

TABLE X  
Enrollment Ratios : I and II Levels

Country	Year	I Level		II Level	
		Total	Gross	Total	Gross
Burma	1974	83	M 86	27	M 25
			F 81		F 19
Indonesia	1976	82	M 86	20	M 25
			F 77		F 15
Malaysia	1975	93	M 94	45	M 50
			F 91		F 40
Philippines	1975	105	M 102	56	M 65
			F 108		F 47
Thailand	1976	83	M 86	26	M 29
			F 79		F 22

Source: Statistical Yearbook, 1977 UNESCO, Paris, 1978.  
pp.153-163

TABLE XI  
Female Enrollment at Different Levels. Percentage  
of Total Enrollment at Each Level

Country	I Level		II Level		III Level	
	Year	%	Year	%	Year	%
Burma	1976	48	1974	42	1972	39
Indonesia	1976	46	1976	38	1972	28
Malaysia	1976	47	1976	43	1974	35
Philippines	1974	51	1972	49	1972	55*
Thailand	1976	47	1970	41	1974	43

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1977, UNESCO, Paris, 1978, pp.202-205, 284-292, 384-392.

\* Statistical Yearbook 1974, UNESCO Paris 1976.

In the above table number XI above, we have a glimpses of the extent to which the women are being provided with education at different levels. It must be kept in mind, of course, that the proportion of girls enrolled would always be less than 50 percent. Even in most of the advanced countries of the world female ratio is not more than 49% at first level. In Southeast Asia, the countries that come nearest to it are Philippines which incidently has 51 percent female enrollment, and Burma (48%) followed by Malaysia and Thailand (47%) and Indonesia (46%). All these countries with high female enrollment are practically those which have a high school enrollment ratio. Secondly, these are comparatively less populous countries.

Again we find from the above table that with the exception of Philippines, no country has high a female enrollment at the second level as it has at the first. It shows that at the second level of education, which is very important and crucial, the girls have lesser chances than boys of acquiring education. This can prove to be a hindrance in the process of modernization of these traditional societies. The position at third level is that, with the exception of the Philippines, which is the only country in the region to have higher female ratio (55%), and Thailand which has 43 percent enrollment at the third level, generally female enrollment is lesser than at the first and second levels.

An analysis of the next table (XII) shows that the general enrollment at the third level of education in Southeast Asian countries is very low. With the sole exception of the Philippines which has the highest gross percentage 18.75 in 1972, rest of the

countries have less than 3 percent gross population which has completed third level of education. The figures for the Philippines deserve special mention as they are as good as of any Western country.

TABLE XII

Enrollment Ratio at III Level 1972; (Thailand 1970)

Country	III Level Gross %	Total students All Institutions
Burma	2.43	56310
Indonesia	2.29	251870
Malaysia	2.52	23163
Philippines	18.75	678343
Thailand	1.89	55315

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1974, UNESCO, Paris 1975.  
pp. 141-46; 318-324.

It has been observed in the above table that the proportion of the population at the third level of education in these countries of Southeast Asia is very low. It is, however, not only the numbers that are important, but their distribution between different disciplines is equally important. Table XIII below analysis the figures for these selected countries of Southeast Asia, and Table XIII(a) shows the distribution of female students in different fields of study.

TABLE XIII

Education at III Level: Distribution of Students by Field of Study

Country	Year	Total Enrollment	Humanities %	Education %	Fine Arts %	Law %	Social Sciences %	Natural Sciences %	Engineering %	Medical Sciences %	Agriculture %	Not Specified %
Burma	1972	51811	15.4	6.2	-	1.6	15	4.2	7.3	9.9	2.5	-
Indonesia	1972	255856	4.6	22.9	0.4	9.4	24	2.7	14.9	8.4	5.3	7.4
Malaysia	1974	35246	13.5	36.6	0.8	1.6	8.2	10.5	9.0	2.4	5.8	11.6
Philippines	1974	721398	10.3	9.6	1.8	-	39	2.3	15.1	12.8	4.7	4.4
Thailand	1974	75432	7.1	38.2	1.9	5.8	16.3	5.9	9.1	10.9	4.9	-

Contd.

TABLE XIII(a)

Education at III Level: Distribution of Female Students by Field of Study

Country	Year	Enroll- ment	Huma- nities	Edu- cation	Fine Arts	Law	Social- Science	Natu- ral Scien- ces	Engi- neering	Medical Science	Agri- cul- ture	Not Speci- fied
Burma	1972	20407	14.4	10.6	-	1.3	17.4	42.7	3.5	9.1	1	-
Indonesia	1972	71150	4.6	31.3	0.4	9.6	23.4	3.1	6.9	9.5	3.8	7.3
Malaysia	1974	12198	14.2	48.8	0.7	2.1	8.3	9.0	2.6	1.8	3.0	9.4
Phili- ppines	1974	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Thailand	1974	32709	12.8	43.4	0.9	3.3	18.4	5.5	0.5	12.4	2.7	-

Source: Statistical Yearbook 1977. UNESCO, Paris 1978, pp. 384-92

"The pattern of university education for the region as a whole is somewhat similar to the traditional European one..."<sup>11</sup> In the region, however, there is greater concentration in the humanities, ~~in~~ social sciences and education, whereas fine arts, law and agriculture represent the weakest and least developed areas of education. But, when we consider the individual countries, we find concentration in different subjects in different countries. Humanities seem to be more popular than even in some of the more advanced countries like Japan, France and Germany (UNESCO Yearbook 1974, p.346-60).

We know science and engineering are intimately connected with modernization and industrialization, as such they also attract a fairly good number of students in practically all the countries of our sample. In Burma natural sciences percentage is as high as 42, followed by Indonesia 27% and Malaysia 10.5%. In engineering subjects it is as high as 15.1% in the Philippines and 14.9% in Indonesia. However, when compared with advanced countries, the percentage is much lower. Only Indonesia and the Philippines have more than 10% of their students studying engineering. From this it is easy to conclude that subject that encourage a scientific and modern social outlook are neither sufficiently encouraged nor very popular.

Palmier had pointed out that "none of the individual countries have more than 7 per cent of their students in the subject (education) except for the Philippines which has 20 percent".<sup>12</sup> But, I find in my analysis that except for Burma 6.2% and the Philippines 9.6%, all other

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11. Palmier, L : op.cit. p.163

12. Ibid. : p.165.

countries listed in the table have more than 20% of students studying education with Thailand (38.2%) topping the list and followed by Malaysia 36.6% and Indonesia 22.9%. This shows there is marked awareness about the utility of studying education during the period 1964 and 1972-74 percentage has gone as high as 38.2 from mere 7 percent. Still, however, adequate efforts are not being made into occupations that may help towards weakening traditional boundaries of communication in this part of the world.

Among the girls humanities, education and social sciences seem to more popular than any other discipline. Fine arts, law engineering and agriculture seem to be less popular subjects. Agriculture, which should have been more popular in the traditional societies seems to attract a lower percentage of students as a whole. Only Malaysia and Indonesia have more than 5% of students studying agriculture. Fine arts and law also does not seem to be very popular, except in Indonesia, where 9.4 percent are enrolled for law courses. Social sciences, however, attract a fairly large number of students in practically all the countries of Southeast Asia.

There is no denying the fact that education is a potent factor in social mobility; in weakening of traditional values and groups, and it makes for wider area of communication in modern society. It has served to move people in any developing society from lower status to what Galbraith calls 'the new class', within well defined limits. Silvert found in his study of Latin Americans that, "education confirmed the ascribed <sup>pose</sup> ~~prescribed~~ position of the children from the more privileged status groups



in the community; it was only with regard to individuals of low status that education acted as an important element of social mobility.....<sup>13</sup> In Southeast Asia, for most people education remains the principal means of social advancement out of their traditional groups, though they are perhaps more likely to move towards new occupations than to traditional ones of high status.

For social development and advancement, education must be spread to the underprivileged masses. But it seems in Southeast Asia education is still a scarce goods which still goes to the privileged people, to make them more privileged. To make education a social service freely available, community action is needed, so that it is not distributed in biased fashion among those whom it may serve no function of social mobility.

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13. Silvert, K.H. & Bonilla, F. : Education and Social Meaning of Development  
New York, 1961, pp.152-53.

## CHAPTER IV

### INDIA AND SOUTHEAST ASIA; A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

India and the countries in the region of Southeast Asia have had direct or indirect experience of colonial powers which tried to set up administration and trade subserving their needs and requirements. Moreover, these countries have had long cultural and historical contacts also. After having discussed the relationship between education and social stratification in particular as well as in general, it will not be here out of place to make a brief comparative study of India and Southeast Asia in terms of the existing patterns of education and social stratification.

We are aware that colonial powers in India and Southeast Asia required literate and skilled individuals in varying measures. This led to a greater emphasis on the role of education because language and skills functional to colonial administration were considered important for expanding western culture, strengthening colonial power and establishing some form of cultural liaison through the middle classes. This led to the emergence of new bureaucratic modern middle classes in these countries. Although subservient to the needs of the Empire in the beginning but later spearheaded the advance to the reconstruction of Asian societies on the basis of national independence incorporating modern technology, scientific knowledge and attitudes. India and the

countries of Southeast Asia in the post war period have been attempting to bring about economic and social development in the region. As such the earlier role of education as one of subservience to the administration and cultural needs of the colonial powers has been partly modified and partly continued.

In these countries, even today most educated people still look to government employment as their main source of living. This fact represents the element of continuity of earlier form of education. However, the major direction of advance required from the systems of education in Asia, on the one hand, lies in incorporating into formal schooling, the skill functional to industry, science and agriculture, and, on the other hand, lies in changing the old social image and role of education, in so far as it reflects a superior relationship of the educated vis-a-vis the masses of industrial and agricultural workers. The old civil service officials represented, as it were, superior section of society, ruling the masses from above. But the requirement of the present day is that educated should develop attitudes and skill that will make them not only better leaders of the people but also better workers leading the downtrodden masses of society.

Another significant feature of education in India and Southeast is that each colonially dominated country inherited in some measure the cultural, educational and other traditions of its masters. The differing styles of British, Dutch, French and American higher learning and administration are now represented

in these Asian countries. Now there is a need of restoring older links between India and the countries of Southeast Asia which might have existed in the past but which were shapped during the period of colonial rule. Moreover, there is a need of establishing a common idiom in which India and countries of Southeast Asia in particular and the countries of Asia in general, can at least communicate with and understand each other in the educational field. This is possible only at the higher levels of education.

India and countries of Southeast Asia are facing formidable problems in the higher education. There is a big gap in the intellectual field between underdeveloped countries of Asia and developed countries. Moreover, many of the Asian scholars best suited for higher work migrate to the more developed countries of the West, and in return these countries of Asia get back far too little in the form of foreign scholars or technical assistance. In fact, the institutions of higher learning in India and in the countries of Southeast Asia have not succeeded in creating such a strong tradition of research to make these institutions more attractive to the scholars of their own countries or from abroad. Secondly, they have not been able to create a large pool of trained manpower for the concrete tasks of intellectual and social development in their societies. However, the solution is gradually being remedied particularly in India.

We have to keep in mind that the demands of developing countries are not always similar. This means that the institution of higher learning in these countries have to develop specializations and forms of work and services suited to their societies which may be quite different from those in other societies whose models are available to us for study and adoption. However, we have taken note of the fact that what India and the countries of Southeast require is not the most advanced knowledge but efficient and proper utilization of already available knowledge in science and technology <sup>to</sup> ~~of~~ suit their specific social structures.

Therefore, what actually we find in India and Southeast Asian countries is the task of development being given greater emphasis than research. However, a balance between science, technology, social sciences and humanities suitable to social conditions in these countries and for achieving respective national goals is being made by these Southeast Asian countries.

Another common problem which we find in India, and countries of Southeast Asian is 'excessive spread of higher education relative to the expansion either of school education and mass education or the apparent requirements of manpower in these countries. This has affected the standard and quality of education in these countries. <sup>1</sup> But, of course, higher education has played and continues <sup>es</sup> to play an important role in political developments and in the transformation of family structure, attitudes and the entire social structure in the direction of modernization and social development.

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1 Shukla, S. : 'Some Problems of Educational Development in India and Southeast Asia' in B. Sen (ed) South East Asia ICR New Delhi 68  
p. 176.

Another point to be considered is that of language. It is a common fact that young children learn easily and in a better manner through their own mother tongue. However, higher education in scientific and technical phases, and the languages of Asia have not yet found as close a relationship to each other as might be desirable which necessitates a major effort in the direction of learning languages of developed nations for purposes of science and technology. Therefore, the need is in these countries to develop skills to read and comprehend in foreign languages adequate to the task of grasping modern scientific and technological knowledge, and the promotion of national languages so as to make them adequate vehicles of modern thought and action where they are not already so developed.

In these countries political independence and economic development have vitally affected the social life. It is a common knowledge that these countries had well organized states with a long history, but they became the victims of the Western colonial powers as they lacked a sense of national solidarity. This political subjugation of India and Southeast Asian countries led to a change in their systems of social stratification. The colonial masters, who became rulers, became the upper strata and the rest of the population became the lower strata.

The demands of administration as we have noted earlier made the colonial powers introduce their own systems of education so that they could recruit personnel for various job

Thus, emerged a middle class in these countries, though it was mostly confined in urban areas. The help of local businessman was also required to run the colonial economy which resulted in the emergence of another type of middle class consisting of tradesmen. The third type of middle class in these countries consisted of technical people who after special training were recruited to look after the modern means of transportation and communication. Thus, we may say that the colonial system, due to its own requirements, led to the emergence of middle classes in the countries of this region.<sup>2</sup>

In fact a genuine middle class really started taking shape when Indian and other countries became aware of the social and economic disadvantages of imperialism and so built up national movements in order to achieve independence from these colonial powers. Thus, in a sense, we can say that social stratification in India and other southeast Asian countries showed two trends: the first, a submissive job seeking middle class during the heyday of the colonial powers; and later a genuine self-assertive and radical middle class eager to drive out the colonial powers in order to establish independent governments.<sup>3</sup>

India and other countries of Southeast Asia were basically feudal and agrarian. All these countries are now trying to change and move from this feudal agrarian complex to a democratic society. But there are a number of obstacles and problems these countries are facing, namely of diverse ethnic, religious and linguistic

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2. Kripplswamy, B: 'Social Mobility in South East Asian Countries' in B SARKAR (ed.) Op cit  
P. 413-4

3. Ibid  
P. 414.

groups. The minority groups, whether linguistic or religious, face great difficulties in achieving social mobility in this region. There is also the problem of rural urban differences. In countries like Malaysia and the Philippines, the rural people find it extremely hard to move out of their relatively closed societies. Whereas in India universal franchise has now made the rural groups as much if not more powerful than the urban groups. In India the village boy or girl now enjoys the advantage of higher education within a few kilometres of village. On the contrary in Malaysia and Burma where 80% population lives in villages, there is provision for elementary education only through mother tongue. This hardly enables a rural person to move up in the social scale for getting any government job. A minimum school leaving certificate and knowledge of English is required which is available only in towns and cities.

The obscurantist forces within each society of the region put considerable difficulties in the path of the people of the lower classes to move up and thus, deprive them opportunities to improve their social status. In India, a secular country, as well as in other countries of the region, religious groups enjoy high social prestige and influence opinion. There are, for example, the problems of respect for age, emphasis on virtue, charitableness and service to other people. Though noble social status should not be linked up with such ideals. While a number of changes have taken place in the caste system in India



but in rural areas caste is still a serious obstacle to social mobility. Another important phenomenon in India is the superimposition of the class system within the caste system. This may be observed in the context of marriage alliances and in some other fields of social relations.

All these problems are, however, being overcome through the channel of education and entry into a profession or an administrative service. The individual's desire to qualify himself and to strive hard so as to improve his social status is now a very important aspect in India and other countries of Southeast Asia. The achieved higher status by one's own endeavour is now highly valued in these social systems. A seminar on 'social Mobility' in the East Asian countries held in Tokyo in mid-sixties arrived at the conclusion that 'in almost all the countries of the region education and income have brought upward social mobility.'<sup>4</sup> A general feature in all the countries of this region including India is the importance attached to the achievement of prestige and status through education and professional or administrative occupations.

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<sup>4</sup> Seminar on 'Social Mobility in the East Asian Countries' Tokyo 1966.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

This study aims at examining whether the type of education provided in the Southeast Asian region encourages or not social mobility and weakens the traditional boundaries of communications. In the light of this objective we have first dealt with social stratification and the type of education provided in the selected countries of the region in general, and the relationship between the education and social stratification in particular.

We find that in common with developing countries elsewhere, the countries of Southeast Asia have been directing a great deal of their efforts to the development of education since the end of the Second World War. The rate of progress and the degree of emphasis on development, of course, vary from country to country, depending upon the national resources available. However, a feature common to all the countries in the region is the rapid increase in school enrollment, particularly at the primary level. Secondly, within countries of Southeast Asia, whether as cause or effect of other social forces, educational inequality seems to be greater than modern Western countries, because of the type of social structure of these countries in which education is operating. The educated elite of the new nations tend to form a tiny minority of the privileged and powerful, cut-off from the mass of illiterate peasants and workers, and having more in common

with their Western contemporaries than with their fellow nationals. In the under-developed countries, education has been an inegalitarian force separating small elite from large masses.

In most of the underdeveloped societies, the social status depends largely on community and family and only then on education which again "reflects the advantage of wealth and social origin."<sup>1</sup> A number of studies carried out in India confirm this observation (Baljit Singh, 1958; V.K.R.V. Rao, 1961; P.C. Joshi and M.R. Rao, 1964). Same is true of countries in Southeast Asia where we find that the role of education has been to confirm the ascribed status of students, instead of helping them to achieve status based on their achievement. This conclusion has been further confirmed by Ryan in his study 'Status, Achievement and Education in Ceylon'<sup>2</sup>. But the situation in the countries of the Southeast Asia is gradually changing or shifting from ascription to achievement basis of social ascent or social mobility.

Our study also highlights the fact that except for Indonesia -- where the educational system is beginning to play a positive part in social mobility, as a result of the policy of liberal government scholarships and preference of students for social sciences, education and engineering instead of law and medicine - the type of education provided in the region is still

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1. Singh, Yogendra: Modernization of Indian Tradition, Thomas Press, New Delhi 1973. p.105.

2. Ryan, B. : 'Status Achievement and Education in Ceylon' Journal of Asian Studies, Vol.XX No.4, pp. 463-75.

influenced by socio-economic backgrounds of the student and thus it reinforces their class factor. Education does not do this by itself. The sources of demand for products of the system of education are also important. In the Southeast Asia, government is the main employer of educated people. It is in the government jobs that graduates of Southeast Asia find their statuses confirmed. For example, it was observed that about 89% of the higher degree candidates of one Indonesian university entered to civil service and many becoming government school teachers. In Burma about 70% and in Ceylon about 68% of the graduates have joined government.<sup>3</sup> In the Philippines (1972) although 18.75% (total 678343) college students were enrolled, however, little benefit accrues to the country as a whole. A racial minority-persons of Spanish descent and Chinese-hold most of the property and wealth. They especially the former, send their children, to universities abroad and to them fall the great majority of the key posts. The products of the universities in the Philippines themselves constitute a large group of educated unemployment. To assuage their dissatisfaction, more and more worthless institutions proliferate offering useless diplomas and degrees.<sup>4</sup> This situation in the Philippines further illustrates the fact that much of education may be lost in an unequalitarian social structure. It also exemplifies the problem of educated unemployed in the region.

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3. Fisher, J. : 'Universities and the Political Process in Southeast Asia', Pacific Affairs Vol. XXXVI No.1, 2-15.

4. Curle, Adam: Educational Strategy for Developing Societies London, 1963, p.59

We have observed that there is shortage of engineering and science students in the region, but it would be wrong to conclude without further investigation that even those few have adopted modernizing attitudes and values. There is marked awareness about the utility of education, still adequate efforts are not being made into occupations and fields that may help towards weakening of traditional boundaries of communication in this part of the world. It is still a scarce goods that goes to the more privileged.

We can, therefore, draw the conclusion that education in Southeast Asia has not contributed forcefully to the replacement of traditional attitudes and values by modern and scientific ones, nor it has been able to change the existing systems of stratification to an appreciable extent. Although large scale illiteracy is one of the major problems of the region still sufficient efforts are not being made to increase the enrollment of students in schools and particularly at higher levels of education. The result is that the traditional boundaries to communication are not weakening as they should. Moreover, it tends to reinforce the existing ascribed status rather than promote achieved status through social ascent. In this way education builds up new barriers to communication, and it stabilizes the class structure by allocating educational chances according to economic status of family, thus producing successive generations of high status families with high education and low status families with little education. We can, therefore, submit that with present pattern of education it will be difficult to anticipate or ensure a greater degree of social mobility in the Southeast Asian Region.

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