

2. Quality and Efficiency of Education

Improving the quality and efficiency of education is one of the most important policy issues of the Government. Thus, greater efforts have been put into raising the level of educational quality and efficiency.

2.1 Quality of Education

A. Achievement of Students

One of the most important measures of the outcome of education is the examination result of students. National educational quality assessments have been conducted by the *Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development* at primary level (Grade 6), lower secondary level (Grade 9), and upper secondary level (Grade 12).

Primary Education

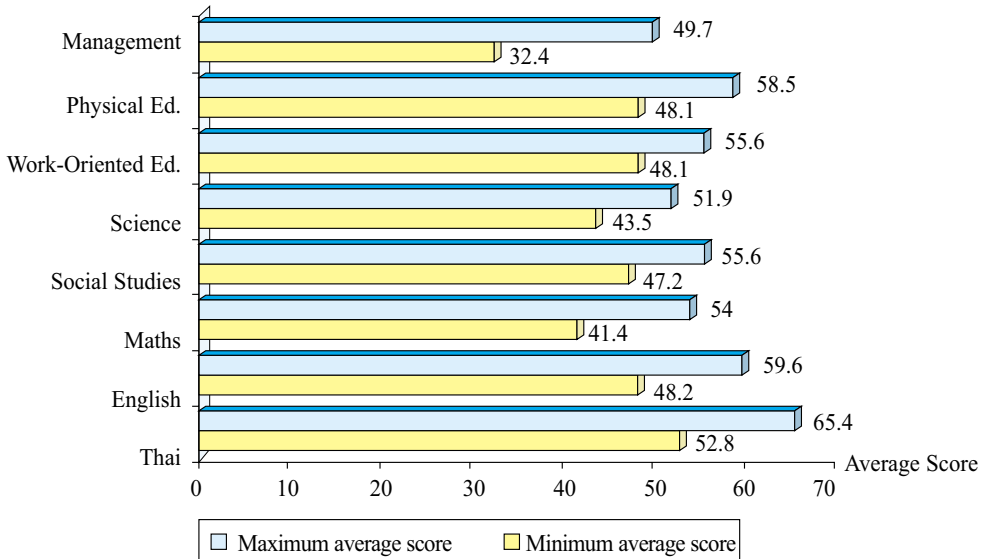
The assessment of primary school student's knowledge in Thai Language, English, Mathematics, Social Studies, Science, Work-Oriented Education, Physical Education, and Management revealed that the quality of primary education was satisfactory in all subjects. The numbers of Grade 6 students with good and fair performance were around 18-20 percent and 62-69 percent respectively. The number of students that had to improve their

performance were about 12-17 percent, particularly in English.

There are, however, differences in educational quality among all educational regions including Bangkok. High differences of student performance were found in proficiency in Thai, English, Mathematics, Physical Education, and Management (Figure 19).



Figure 19 Comparison of Educational Regions with Maximum and Minimum Average Score by Subject of Primary School Students Grade 6



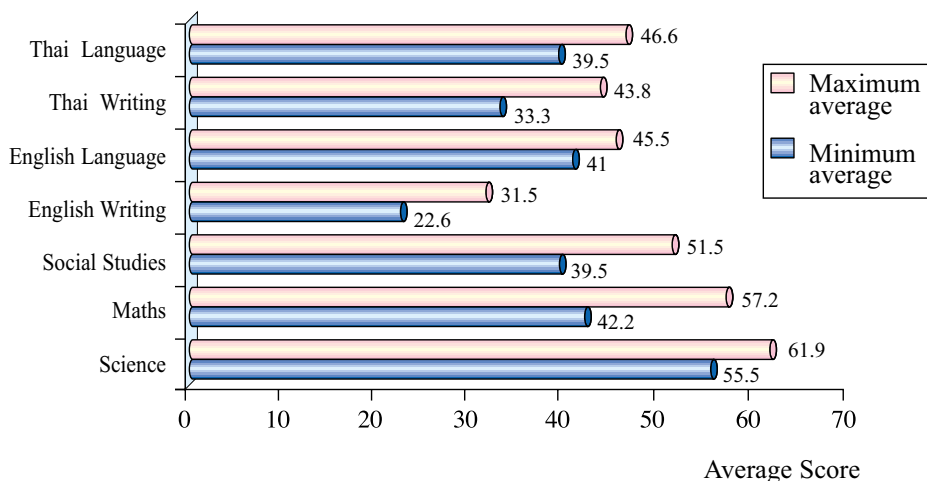
Source : Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, MOE.

Lower Secondary Education

The achievement of lower secondary students in Grade 9 in Thai Language, Thai Writing, English Language, and Science was favourable, with the majority of students passing the assessment criteria. The proficiency in English Writing, Mathematics, and Social Studies had to be improved to raise the level of educational quality.

Considering the inequalities in educational quality, the greatest difference was in Thai Writing with the highest average score in Educational Region 7 in the central area and the lowest percentage of average score in Educational Region 3 in which a large number of students are Muslims (Figure 20).

Figure 20 Comparison of Educational Regions with Maximum and Minimum Average Score by Subject of Lower Secondary School Students Grade 9



Source : Department of Curriculum and Instruction Development, MOE.

Upper Secondary Education

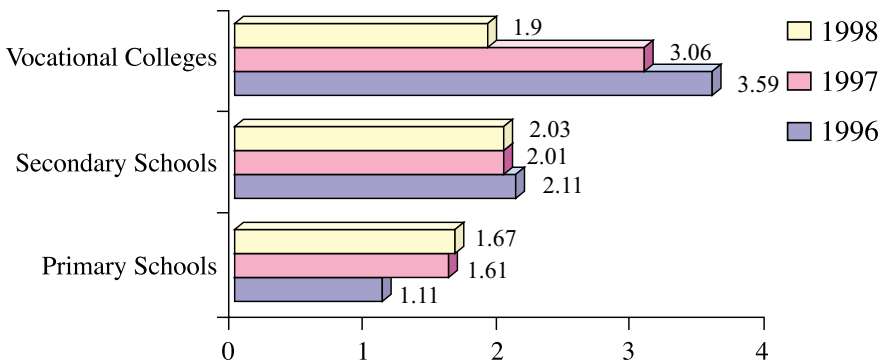
Achievement of upper secondary students in Grade 9 was rather unfavourable, particularly in English, Mathematics and Science subjects such as Chemistry, Biology, Physics, and Physical-Biological Science. There were high percentage of students that had to improve their performance in nearly all subjects.



Among all educational regions, inequalities in educational quality still existed. Differences between regions with highest and lowest average score were found in all subjects, particularly in Thai, English, Mathematics, Chemistry, and Physics (Figure 21).

Teacher-classroom ratio is important in terms of educational quality. If the teacher-classroom ratio is less than one, there are not enough teachers to cover every classroom, which can adversely affect the quality of learning. The total teacher-classroom ratios in primary and secondary schools as well as in vocational colleges in Thailand from 1996-1998 were more than one indicating an adequate number of teaching staff (Figure 24).

Figure 24 Teacher-Classroom Ratio at Primary and Secondary Levels and in Vocational Colleges : 1996-1998



Source : Educational Information Centre, ONEC.

2.2 Educational Efficiency

In order to improve the quality of education, the issue of educational efficiency has been addressed both in terms of internal and external efficiency.

2.2.1 Internal Efficiency

In Thailand, major indicators that can be used to reflect the internal efficiency of the educational system are student-teacher ratio, retention rates and dropout rates.

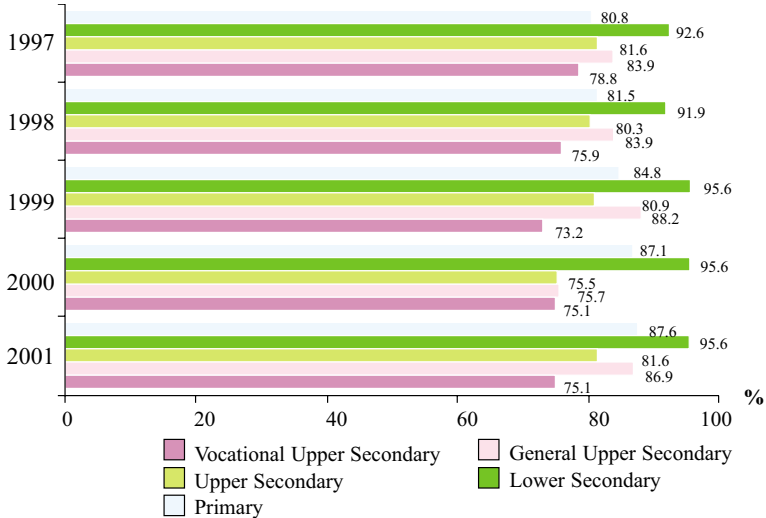
A. Student-Teacher Ratio

At pre-primary level, the student-teacher ratio decreased from 26:1 in 1997 to 20:1 in 1998 which was below the standard set by TCSC at 23:1. The student-teacher ratio at primary level was only 21:1 in 1997 and 18:1 in 1998 which was below the standard, set at 25:1.

B. Retention Rates

In 1999, retention rates increased from the previous years at nearly all levels reflecting improved efficiency in educational provision. The exception was at lower secondary level where the retention rate of grade 9 students tended to decrease which, may be the result of increasing drop-outs (Figure 25).

Figure 25 Retention Rates by Level of Education : Academic Year 1996-1999



Source: Thailand Education Statistics Report 1999.

C. Dropout Rates

Statistics on dropouts is a controversial subject for debate due to poor database setup and management. Caution should be taken when identifying causes and interpreting dropout rates because students leave school for a variety of reasons.

Before the economic crisis in 1997, dropouts in primary education accounted for 2.4 percent. In 1998, one year after the crisis, dropout figures equaled 148,819 or 2.5 percent. At lower secondary education level, the dropouts rose from 3.2 percent in 1997 to 3.6 percent in 1998 or an equivalent number of 89,523. There were also higher dropouts in upper secondary schools, both general and vocational, reaching 8.7 percent in 1998 (Table 4).

Table 4 Number and Percentage of School Dropouts, 1997 and 1998

| Type of Education | 1997 | | | 1998 | | |
|------------------------|-----------|----------|-----|-----------|----------|-----|
| | Students | Dropouts | | Students | Dropouts | |
| | | Number | % | | Number | % |
| Primary | 5,927,940 | 144,185 | 2.4 | 5,936,174 | 148,819 | 2.5 |
| Lower Secondary | 2,462,631 | 77,536 | 3.2 | 2,426,905 | 89,523 | 3.6 |
| Secondary & Vocational | 1,620,434 | 121,862 | 7.5 | 1,676,974 | 146,214 | 8.7 |

Source : Educational Information Centre, ONEC.

2.2.2 External Efficiency : Education and Employment

External efficiency of the educational system can be realized through the relevance of education to the socio-economic conditions of the country. The ability of graduates to enter the labour market following the completion of education can be seen as an indicator of educational efficiency.

The distribution of employed persons by level of education from 1996 to 2000 illustrates that the percentage of persons with higher qualifications has been rising continuously which corresponds to higher educational attainment of the Thai people. The percentages of employed persons with lower qualifications tended to decrease (Table 5).

Table 5 Percentage of Employed Persons by Level of Educational Attainment, (Round 1 : February)

| Level of Educational Attainment | 1996 | 1997 | 1998 | 1999 | 2000* |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| ● None | 4.4 | 4.3 | 3.8 | 4.1 | 3.5 |
| ● Less than Grade 4 | 2.6 | 2.8 | 2.4 | 2.3 | 2.4 |
| ● Lower Primary (Grade 4) | 46.9 | 45.3 | 43.8 | 13.3 | 40.6 |
| ● Upper Primary (Grade 7) | 22.6 | 22.3 | 21.2 | 20.3 | 21.7 |
| ● Lower Secondary | 9.6 | 10.0 | 11.5 | 12.0 | 12.2 |
| ● Upper Secondary | 3.3 | 3.8 | 4.4 | 4.8 | 5.6 |
| ● Vocational | 2.8 | 3.0 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 3.1 |
| ● University | 5.6 | 6.4 | 7.4 | 7.8 | 8.8 |
| - Academic | 3.6 | 4.2 | 4.9 | 5.2 | 5.8 |
| - Technical Training | 2.0 | 2.2 | 2.5 | 2.7 | 3.0 |
| ● Teacher Training | 2.1 | 2.0 | 2.3 | 2.2 | 2.0 |
| ● Others | 0.0 | 0.1 | 0.0 | 0.0 | 0.0 |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |

Source : Labour Force Survey : Round 1 , February 2000, National Statistical Office.

*Preliminary data

Round 3 of the Labour Force Survey in August 1999 revealed that the unemployment rates of persons with different levels of education were less than those in the same period in 1998. In 1999, the unemployment of primary and lower secondary school graduates remained at the same rates as in 1998 (Table 6).

Table 6 Unemployment Rates by Level of Educational Attainment

| | 1997 | | 1998 | | 1999 | |
|---------------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|
| | Feb | Aug | Feb | Aug | Feb | Aug |
| ● Below Grade 4 | 1.6 | 0.6 | 3.3 | 1.9 | 3.6 | 1.5 |
| ● Lower Primary (Grade 4) | 1.3 | 0.4 | 2.8 | 2.0 | 3.1 | 1.5 |
| ● Upper Primary (Grade 7) | 3.5 | 1.0 | 7.8 | 4.1 | 8.5 | 4.2 |
| ● Lower Secondary | 3.1 | 1.3 | 5.8 | 4.2 | 6.6 | 4.2 |
| ● Upper Secondary | 2.2 | 1.3 | 6.0 | 5.5 | 7.0 | 4.9 |
| ● Vocational Education | 2.7 | 1.7 | 4.1 | 6.3 | 5.7 | 4.4 |
| ● University : Academic | 1.8 | 1.7 | 3.5 | 6.0 | 5.4 | 4.8 |
| ● University : Technical | | | | | | |
| Vocational | 3.0 | 3.9 | 5.1 | 9.2 | 8.0 | 2.9 |
| ● Teacher Training | 2.8 | 1.4 | 2.7 | 3.2 | 3.1 | 1.0 |
| Total | 2.2 | 0.9 | 4.6 | 3.4 | 5.2 | 3.0 |

Source : Labour Force Survey : Round 1, February 2000, National Statistical Office.

The impacts of the economic crisis have affected entry into the labour market of persons who have completed different levels of education, particularly university graduates. The survey of the *Department of Employment* conducted in 1997-1999 shows that over half of the graduates in Engineering, Fine and Applied Arts and Architecture are unemployed (Table 7).

Table 7 Percentage of Employed Persons with Bachelor's Degree by Field of Study, 1997-1999

| Field of Study | % |
|---|-------|
| 1. Medicine and related fields | 92.79 |
| 2. Education and Teacher Training | 64.42 |
| 3. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery | 57.78 |
| 4. Business Administration and Commerce | 57.18 |
| 5. Social Sciences | 55.29 |
| 6. Humanities, Religion, and Theology | 54.22 |
| 7. Social Behavioural Science | 52.57 |
| 8. Mathematics and Computer Science | 51.92 |
| 9. Mass Communication and Documentation | 49.46 |
| 10. Natural Science | 49.86 |
| 11. Home Economics | 48.61 |
| 12. Engineering | 48.51 |
| 13. Fine and Applied Arts | 45.86 |
| 14. Architecture | 38.15 |

Source : Department of Employment, Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare.

In conclusion, greater efforts have been put to provide educational opportunities to all people and to raise standards of education in Thailand. However, the desired improvements in education have not been fully achieved. Consequently, effective policy measures and implementation strategies are needed for increasing participation in educational services and improving the quality and efficiency of education.



Performance of students from Chiang Mai College of Dramatic Arts.

