

MASS EDUCATION IN MYANMAR (1948-58)

Ph.D DISSERTATION

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MAY 2007

ABSTRACT

Myanmar being a war-torn country, her economy, education, social and political structure had been already destroyed by the time when she achieved her independence on 4 January 1948. It was primarily important to rehabilitate the country. Among the people in Myanmar 80 percent of her population resided in rural areas and 65 percent of them were illiterates. To develop Socio-economic and Cultural Status, Education played vital role. Hence, Members of Old Myoma Students Association including U Nu, the premier had formulated a plan to develop rural area by propagating education basing on this plan set up Education Sub-Committee which drafted Mass Education Plan. Having affirmed the draft plan by the Association in March 1948, it was presented to the government in September 1948. The government initiated Mass Education Council Bill in October in the Parliament. Having the Bill was approved by the parliament it was submitted to President of the Union. The Bill became the law when the President signed the Bill on 4 November 1948. In accordance with the act of the Mass Education Council, Mass Education Council had been instituted under Minister of Education. Its first meeting was convened at secretariat on 20 March 1949. The Council started to open Mass Education Centers and Training School for Mass Education Organizers in October 1949. The Council could recruit 959 trainees of which 777 were male and 182 were female. The trained Mass Education Organizers were then sent to villages to carry out the work of the Mass Education. Although they faced with difficulties at the beginning in the rural area and later organized the villagers, they could open "3Rs" classes, to implement monastic school plan and opened libraries to promote the status of education level of the

villagers. To promote health status of villagers, they had given health education talks, held sports and games of competitions, kept the village and its environment clean with collective efforts. In addition they had tried to organize the villagers to contribute their efforts for digging wells, ponds and drainage and for building latrines. In an effort to promote economic status of villagers, they could impart their knowledge of animal husbandry and give domestic science training courses. The Mass Education Organizers also organized the people in the villages and prisoners to learn Buddhist ethic too. By the programme for creation new life for construction of new state the Mass Education Council was to liquidate the profile of low status of beggars. Mass Education movements had been agitated by 292 Mass Education stations in 35 Districts. Twenty teams instituted for creation of new life were dispatched to remote areas in an effort to promote health, economic and social status of people residing in the areas. However, on 31 October 1958, the Mass Education Council Act had been repealed and the staff of Mass Education Council had been transferred to suitable Ministry due to financial difficulties of the government.

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