**DEFENCE SERVICES ACADEMY**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**THE HISTORY OF EDUCATION IN MYANMAR**

**(1962 – 1974)**

**By**

**ZIN MAR WIN**

**M.A THESIS**

**MARCH, 2025**

**PYIN OO LWIN**

**DEFENCE SERVICES ACADEMY**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

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**ABSTRACT**

This thesis examines the history of education in Myanmar during the Revolutionary Council period (1962–1974), focusing on the policies, reforms, and their socio-economic impacts. The aim of this thesis is to analyze the government’s educational strategies, particularly its efforts to expand access to education, introduce socialist-oriented curricula, and centralize control over academic institutions. Additionally, the study explores the challenges and consequences of these reforms on students, teachers, and broader society. The research employs a historical methodology, utilizing primary sources such as government records, policy documents, and contemporary newspapers, alongside secondary sources including academic books and journal articles. Through qualitative analysis, the study reconstructs the educational landscape of the period, highlighting key policy shifts and their implications. The findings suggest that while the Revolutionary Council sought to promote mass education and align the curriculum with socialist principles, the system faced significant obstacles, including resource shortages, ideological constraints, and the suppression of academic freedom. These factors led to mixed outcomes—expanded literacy rates but also declining educational quality and restricted intellectual discourse. The study concludes that the policies implemented during this period laid the foundation for Myanmar’s socialist education system, shaping future educational reforms in the country.

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# **INTRODUCTION**

The Revolutionary Council (RC) government (1962-1974) marked a significant period in Myanmar's educational history, as it sought to reform the education system to align with socialist principles. The government aimed to make education accessible to all social classes, emphasizing state control over curricula and administration. During this period, significant transformations occurred in the basic education sector, higher education sector, and vocational education sector, each reflecting the broader ideological shifts in governance and policy.

**The basic education sector** witnessed a push towards universal primary education, curriculum standardization, and nationalistic content reinforcement. The government sought to reduce educational disparities by expanding school infrastructure, nationalizing private schools, and introducing a curriculum that emphasized socialist values, national identity, and vocational skills. However, challenges such as resource constraints, quality of education, and disparities in rural and urban areas persisted.

**The higher education sector** underwent restructuring to align with the Revolutionary Council’s emphasis on state-led economic planning and socialist governance. Universities were placed under strict government control, and academic freedoms were restricted. The government established institutions aimed at producing graduates equipped with skills relevant to national development needs, often prioritizing technical and applied sciences over humanities and social sciences.

**The vocational education sector** received renewed attention as the government sought to equip the workforce with practical skills necessary for industrial and agricultural development. Technical and vocational institutes were expanded, with an emphasis on training skilled labor to support state-driven economic projects. However, challenges such as outdated curricula, limited industry collaboration, and insufficient funding remained obstacles to achieving the desired outcomes.

**Research Objectives**

* To examine the policies and strategies implemented by the Revolutionary Council in the basic, higher, and vocational education sectors.
* To analyze the impact of these reforms on educational access, curriculum development, and institutional structures.
* To assess the effectiveness of vocational education reforms in addressing the labor market needs of the period.
* To evaluate the broader socio-political implications of the educational transformations under the Revolutionary Council.

**Research Method**

This thesis adopts a historical research approach, utilizing both primary and secondary sources. Archival materials, government reports, policy documents, and contemporary newspapers will be examined to understand the official perspectives on educational reforms. Additionally, secondary sources such as academic papers, books, and interviews with scholars on Myanmar’s educational history will be analyzed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the era’s educational changes. A comparative analysis of pre- and post-1962 educational policies will be conducted to assess the impact of the Revolutionary Council’s policies.

**Research Questions**

* What were the key educational policies implemented by the Revolutionary Council in basic, higher, and vocational education?
* How did the government restructure the education system to align with socialist principles?
* What were the major challenges faced in implementing these reforms, and how were they addressed?
* What was the impact of these reforms on student enrollment, curriculum content, and educational accessibility?
* How did the changes in vocational education influence labor market trends and economic development during the period?

This thesis aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of Myanmar’s educational history by analyzing the complex interplay between political ideology, state control, and educational development during the Revolutionary Council era.

**CHAPTER ONE**

**BASIC EDUCATION**

Myanmar's education system has its roots in Buddhist-based monastic education. Not only did commoners attend monastic schools, but princes also studied monasticism. The kings governed the country using the knowledge and skills they acquired from the monasteries. During the Pinya period, there were two types of monks: the *Aranyawathi* monks and the *Gamavathi* monks. *Aranyawathi* monks, who led “*Pwe Kyaung*” taught a combination of worldly knowledge, vocational education, and Buddhist teachings. These schools provided training in skills such as swordsmanship, spear-throwing, elephant and horse riding, and astrology—subjects that were essential for the princes. *Gamavathi* monks, who led “*Tae Kyaung*”, focused primarily on Buddhist teachings, with a strong emphasis on Buddhist literature. The monastic education curriculum was deeply rooted in the teachings of the Buddha, contributing to the cultivation of good morals and ethics. Thus, monastic education offered both secular and metaphysical knowledge, bridging practical skills and spiritual development.[[1]](#footnote-1) As monastic education evolved to encompass a wider range of livelihood activities, vocational subjects were also introduced.[[2]](#footnote-2) Historically, there were two forms of education: formal education and informal education.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Formal education follows a prescribed curriculum and includes tests based on proficiency. Upon passing a level, students advance to more advanced curricula. After successfully completing all required courses, a certificate of completion is awarded. Informal education, on the other hand, is more flexible in terms of age, time, and location. It is designed for individuals who are unable to attend formal school or pursue education for various reasons. This form of education takes place without strict time constraints and is offered in convenient settings.[[4]](#footnote-4)

In 1948, the year of Myanmar's independence, there were 4,619 monastic schools across the country. Sir Arthur Phayre, the High Commissioner, was the first to study monastic education during colonial times. The curriculum in these monastic schools was rooted in Buddhist scriptures and included subjects such as grammar, mathematics, ethics (Niti), medicine, and astrology. Monastic education went beyond basic literacy, offering knowledge in Pali literature, Buddhist teachings, history, moral values, and fostering a sense of patriotism. Sir Arthur Phayre presented a report to the Governor-General of India, highlighting the significance of monastic schools to Myanmar and its people. In response, the Governor-General sought to establish an educational system that suited the needs of the colonial administration while addressing perceived deficiencies in monastic education. One of the key measures taken was the introduction of Christian missionary schools, aimed at producing intellectuals to serve the colonial government and promoting Christian missions. Christian missionary activities had already begun in Myanmar as early as 1800.[[5]](#footnote-5)As a result of the colonial education system, Myanmar's monastic education gradually declined. Nevertheless, until the onset of World War II, monastic schools remained central to the country's literary education, playing a pivotal role in the history of Burmese education.[[6]](#footnote-6) The British government's educational reform introduced a modernized and restructured education system.[[7]](#footnote-7) Under British rule, Myanmar's education system lacked a formal departmental structure. Although Western education was introduced during the colonial period, the monastic curriculum remained largely unchanged. A School Textbook Committee, composed of 15 members, was established during this time, and between 1881 and 1884, the Department of Education published over 30 textbooks.[[8]](#footnote-8) In 1867, the Department of Education was established, and educational activities were systematically managed.[[9]](#footnote-9)

The colonial education curriculum included the teaching of English, along with subjects such as mathematics, science, and geography. However, the system produced only a small number of professionals, such as lawyers, doctors, and engineers. The primary aim of colonial education was to cultivate a modern intelligentsia capable of providing the colonial government with petty officers and clerks for bureaucratic administration.[[10]](#footnote-10) During the colonial period, as more primary school graduates entered the workforce, high school graduates also saw increased success in securing employment. To obtain suitable jobs, the educational journey was divided into three stages: from primary to seventh grade, from seventh grade to matriculation, and from matriculation to a university degree, with increasing emphasis on each stage. In elementary education, subjects such as English, mathematics, and history were taught by Burmese teachers, while middle and high school instruction was carried out by English and Indian teachers. This created challenges for Burmese students, particularly in understanding instruction. Higher education in Yangon began in public schools as early as 1876. In Sittwe and Mawlamyine, however, secondary education was temporarily suspended due to a shortage of teachers. Despite these difficulties, the government implemented a policy requiring each province to have at least one high school. As a result, the English-Burmese High School in Yangon expanded its role, becoming a central institution in the colonial education system.[[11]](#footnote-11)

The Burmese people's struggle for independence began in 1920, when educated young students and monks rejected the British government's dyarchy and demanded self-government. National education also took root in 1920, marked by a student strike against British oppression and the University Act. Myoma National School, established during the colonial era, produced political and military leaders, as well as the nation's most renowned athletes, film artists, musicians, and literary figures. This school became a symbol of instilling patriotism in its students. The Myoma National school was inaugurated on 17 December 1920, at the site of U Ariya School, where the student strike camp had been located on Tawra Road in Bahan. Master U Ba lwin was its first headmaster.[[12]](#footnote-12)

Japan's current education policy aims to establish a system that emphasizes industrial and vocational skills to support the country's development. A solid understanding of history, economics, and foreign languages is crucial for the global recognition and prominence of the Burmese people.[[13]](#footnote-13) During the Japanese occupation of Burma, there was only one type of public school, unlike the earlier system, which included public schools, local education group schools, government-supported schools, and private schools. The education system was structured into three levels: primary, middle, and high school, which correspond to today's primary, post-primary middle, and high school levels. Primary schools were established in villages, while middle and high schools were located in small towns and cities. Additionally, a system of free education was implemented across all schools.[[14]](#footnote-14) During the Japanese Occupation period, primary schools were established in larger villages, while middle schools were set up in smaller townships. High schools were only opened in major townships. Instead of assigning just one teacher per village school, up to twelve teachers were appointed, depending on the number of students. The Japanese also introduced a free education system.[[15]](#footnote-15) The curriculum remained largely consistent with that of the British, but notably, they removed words and elements that had been adopted under British rule.[[16]](#footnote-16)

On 1 August 1942, General Eda, the Commander-in-Chief of Japan, issued Military Order No. 12 concerning education. It stated:

“In education, the government must reduce the influence of English and the United States as much as possible, and instead, instill the spirit of East Asian development. Additionally, the use of the Nippon language should be encouraged wherever possible, while the use of English is discouraged. Special attention should be given to ensuring that young people are healthy and motivated to pursue education. Moreover, they must be open-minded and show interest in all sectors of industry.”[[17]](#footnote-17)

In Myanmar, new educational policies and projects were introduced during the AFPFL period. In 1948, the Government of the Union of Myanmar announced an educational policy titled the “Education Plan of the Government of the Union of Myanmar”.[[18]](#footnote-18) The declaration mandates free and compulsory primary education, the implementation of a class classification system within schools, and the division of classes as follows:

1. Elementary school (kindergarten to fourth grade),

2. Secondary school (fifth to seventh grade), and

3. High school (eighth to ninth grade).[[19]](#footnote-19)

On April 30, 1962, the Myanmar Socialist Education Policy, implemented by the Revolutionary Council of the Union of Myanmar, was published. The National Revolutionary Council emphasized the need to reform the existing education system, which was viewed as inadequate for career development. The goal was to establish a new education system grounded in strong moral values, prioritizing science and supporting career development. The Revolutionary Council aimed not only to ensure that everyone had the right to basic education but also to provide special encouragement to intellectually gifted and hardworking individuals pursuing higher education.

Studying the state of schools in mountainous and border regions presents numerous challenges. The Revolutionary Council's policy aimed to provide basic education to all ethnic groups. However, significant difficulties were encountered in offering instruction in the native languages of these communities. Teachers sent from the mainland struggled to teach effectively due to language barriers. Despite the government's efforts, ethnic textbooks have not been effectively utilized to this day. To address the weakness in basic education in these regions and the shortage of qualified teachers, scholarships were awarded to students from border regions starting in 1962. Additionally, in 1964, the Union Ethnic Peoples Development Institute was established to train ethnic youth. Between 1962 and 1968, the Institute trained 3,147 trainees.[[20]](#footnote-20) While efforts were made to publish textbooks in ethnic languages, by 1970-71, only Kachin textbooks had been published and printed, Karen textbooks were still being compiled, and Shan textbooks were still in the printing stage.[[21]](#footnote-21)

**Basic education planning**

In 1962, the Revolutionary Council government implemented economic, social, and political reforms to align with its policy of improving Myanmar's basic education system. During this period, the Department of Education, in coordination with the National Plan, developed a preliminary social education plan. This plan included primary education as a key component of the country's broader economic strategy, which encompassed basic education, industrial agriculture, vocational education, and higher education. The primary education plan involved the following processes.

**(a) Educational Extension Processes**

1. Expand and establish primary schools to ensure universal access to basic education.
2. Increase the number of post-primary schools and university colleges in response to the growing number of primary-level students.[[22]](#footnote-22)
3. Expand infrastructure, including buildings and furniture, and allocate the necessary financial resources.
4. Broaden access to education through the expansion of scholarships and grants.

**(b) Educational Activities**

1. Reduce the wastage of primary education.
2. Establish a strong foundation for secondary education to facilitate further learning at higher levels.
3. Align educational pathways with the requirements of the economic plan and national development needs, ensuring that students have access to high-quality education based on their abilities.
4. Develop methods to closely integrate education with regional industrial, agricultural, and livestock activities.
5. Improve the teaching capabilities of schools and enhance management skills to promote good discipline.
6. Develop a modern, effective examination system.
7. Establish educational channels at the post-primary and university levels to produce skilled professionals who will benefit the country.

**(c) Socialist Character Training Activities**

1. Ensure that trainees in teacher education departments acquire and practice socialist moral values.
2. Implement the practical development of education in schools.
3. Prepare school textbooks to support the development of socialist values.

The preliminary education planning period was established for 1964 to 1970. During this period, key aspects such as the number of schools, industrial and vocational institutions, colleges and universities, required funding, and the number of teachers, buildings, and furniture were addressed.[[23]](#footnote-23) Since 1962, during the Revolutionary Council government, reforms have been introduced in the primary education sector. The traditional four-year system was extended to a five-year system, covering kindergarten through fourth grade.[[24]](#footnote-24) Every child who reaches the age of five is entitled to attend kindergarten, and by the age of ten, they are expected to complete primary education. In implementing basic education reforms, efforts to expand educational access were conducted alongside initiatives to improve educational quality. The key areas of focus for educational development included:

1. Reforms in management oversight
2. Changes in the curriculum and content
3. Compilation and publication of school textbooks
4. Teacher education and training
5. Production and distribution of teaching aids
6. Promotion of school library activities
7. Support for practical education development
8. Fostering cooperation among parents, teachers, and students

The main goal of basic education is to provide a well-rounded education encompassing knowledge, skills, excellence, strong character, and effective communication abilities.[[25]](#footnote-25) Education management was structured through a combination of central control and regional administration. Within this centralized management system, the Ministry of Education established the Central Council of Universities, the Council of University Education, the Council of Basic Education, and the Council of Industrial Agriculture and Livelihood. These councils were tasked with supervising and regulating university education, basic education, vocational training in industrial agriculture, curriculum development, and examinations. To expand educational activities and increase spending on educational initiatives, further investments have also been made in this sector.[[26]](#footnote-26)

Under the 1964 Revolutionary Council government, the General Education Seminar was held at Mandalay University in Mandalay from 19 to 24 October 1964, lasting six days. The seminar aimed to develop a socialist education system aligned with Myanmar's socialist path, seeking ideas and strategies to reform the existing education system and establish a new model that would support both educational and career development. The seminar's theme was “Towards a New Socialist Education System”. Primary, middle, and high school teachers, along with education representatives from each district, attended the event. Colonel Hlahan, the Minister of Education, served as a patron, and he, along with other education representatives, discussed curriculum reform, enhancing teacher quality, improving examination methods, and effectively implementing educational development initiatives.[[27]](#footnote-27) The primary discussions focused on educational management for implementing the new basic education system, establishing school libraries, completing school furniture needs, compiling and publishing school textbooks, and initiating courses to enhance teacher training departments.[[28]](#footnote-28)

**Objectives of Basic Education, 1966**

The Revolutionary Council enacted the Basic Education Law in 1966. The objectives outlined in this law are as follows:

1. To ensure that every citizen of the Union of Myanmar receives a sound basic education and develops into a healthy, intellectually capable worker with good character.
2. To cultivate citizens with the spirit and ability to build and sustain a Myanmar socialist, who understand and adhere to the principles of Burma socialist Programme.
3. To provide vocational education at appropriate levels for the construction and maintenance of Myanmar's socialist society.
4. To prioritize scientific education that promotes increased productivity and vocational skills.
5. To establish a strong educational foundation for continuing to university education.[[29]](#footnote-29) In December 1967, a significant event was held to review and discuss the progress of education officials.[[30]](#footnote-30)

The Examination and Evaluation Seminar was held over four days, from 29 December 1970, to 1 January 1971, at the University of Arts and Sciences, Yangon. The purpose of the seminar was to “conveniently discuss and advise on examination and inspection issues, university admission policies, and vocational science school examination matters in line with the new system-based education”.[[31]](#footnote-31) The theme of the seminar was “Learning, Testing”. In June-July 1971, the Government of the Union of Myanmar adopted a plan for the implementation of the first four-year plan under the Burma Socialist Programme Party.

1. Ensure that schools, teachers, and students operate according to the established plan.
2. Provide students from the secondary to university levels with education in the manufacturing industry (or operations) through a combination of theoretical learning and practical experience.
3. Facilitate opportunities for secondary school graduates to enter the workforce, while allowing those who wish to pursue higher education to continue their studies alongside employment.
4. Universities should admit students based on the country's needs, and, if possible, inform them in advance of their assigned department and the type of profession they will prepare for.
5. Enable village cooperatives to take responsibility for school buildings, furniture, and supplies within their communities.[[32]](#footnote-32)

When the Constitution of the Union Socialist Republic of Myanmar was adopted in 1973, the Revolutionary Council repealed the 1966 Basic Education Law and enacted a new Basic Education Law to align with the new constitution. In addition to the five objectives above, the 1973 law further emphasized the importance of arts education for the preservation and development of the nation's culture, arts, and literature.

On 3 January 1973, the Constitution of the Union Socialist Republic of Myanmar was enacted. Key provisions related to education include:

Section 10: The state is responsible for nurturing the physical, intellectual, and moral development of young people.

Article 152: (1) Every citizen has the right to education. (2) Burmese is the common language, and there is also the right to teach other ethnic languages. (3) Every citizen is required to complete compulsory basic education as prescribed by law.

In 1974, the Burma Socialist Programme Party announced the following educational policies and objectives:[[33]](#footnote-33)

1. To ensure that everyone has the opportunity to receive basic education.
2. To cultivate a strong socialist character.
3. To develop and promote the necessary science and technology for building the socialist system.
4. To produce scholars, intellectuals, skilled workers, and knowledgeable experts who will contribute to the construction of socialism.
5. To train and nurture workers to become well-rounded individuals.
6. To allow those with superior intellect and diligence to pursue university-level education.
7. To enable workers to obtain university or post-graduate degrees while continuing to work.

Although the government introduced policies under the new Basic Education Law, the overall quality of education began to decline due to the teacher-centered teaching system.[[34]](#footnote-34)

**Basic Education Policy of the Burma Socialist Programme Party**

The basic education policy outlined in the Education Policy and Objectives published by the Burma Socialist Programme Party in 1974 includes the following points:[[35]](#footnote-35)

1. To organize pre-primary and primary education systematically, fostering socialist spirit, character, discipline, and social awareness.
2. To instill discipline in students from the earliest stages of education.
3. To make primary education compulsory at the appropriate time and gradually expand it as the country’s situation allows.
4. To ensure basic literacy for every citizen, promoting literacy as a national movement.
5. To aim for comprehensive development in all educational areas.
6. To align the education system with production, incorporating vocational training related to local industries alongside basic education.
7. To integrate education with the workplace, enhancing the knowledge, skills, and expertise of workers and enabling them to pursue university-level education.
8. To introduce pre-vocational skills from basic to secondary education levels, familiarizing students with manufacturing fundamentals and offering comprehensive training.
9. To implement a plan for increasing vocational skills and access to higher education.
10. To re-examine and improve the classification of education levels and the curriculum for different levels of education.
11. To develop strong, healthy citizens by promoting sports, national defense preparedness, physical education, basic military training, and school health programs as part of the basic education curriculum.
12. To establish training programs that foster socialist character and behavior.
13. To incorporate the teaching of "ratha" education to develop "ratha" sensitivities.
14. To emphasize the teaching of Burmese at all levels of education.
15. To enhance the examination and assessment system.
16. To implement policies promoting ethnic unity and development.
17. To introduce basic political science subjects into appropriate classes within basic education schools.[[36]](#footnote-36)

In 1974, the Burma Socialist Programme Party announced the following educational policies and objectives:[[37]](#footnote-37)

1. To ensure that everyone who desires basic education has access to it.
2. To promote the development of a strong socialist character.
3. To advance and disseminate the necessary science and technology for building a socialist system.
4. To train individuals to become well-rounded workers.
5. To allow those who are intellectually gifted and diligent to pursue university education.
6. To enable working individuals to obtain a university degree, allowing them to study at the graduate level while remaining employed.

**Education Extension Activities**

Myanmar's socialist education policy and goals emphasize that “everyone has the opportunity to learn basic education”. To achieve this objective, two main activities have been undertaken.[[38]](#footnote-38) The first is the construction of new schools, the expansion of school dormitories, and the acceptance of more students, depending on the country’s financial resources. Special emphasis has been placed on improving education in mountainous, remote, and provincial areas. The second task is to reduce the number of elderly illiterates.

In line with the goal of making basic education accessible to all, the following table illustrates the progress made in basic education over the past ten years, particularly in the expansion of primary, middle, and high school levels.[[39]](#footnote-39)

**Table (1) Growth of the number of schools**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Graded school** | **1961-62** | **1970-71** | **Increased schools** |
| Elementary school | 12851 | 15534 | 2683 |
| Middle school | 625 | 1033 | 408 |
| High school | 308 | 527 | 219 |

**Table (2) Growth in the number of students**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **1961-62** | **1970-71** | **Increased Students** |
| Elementary level | 1681908 | 3177739 | 1495831 |
| Secondary level | 189100 | 624538 | 435438 |
| High level | 65059 | 167714 | 102714 |

**Table (3) Growth in the number of Teachers**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Level** | **1961-62** | **1970-71** | **Increased Teachers** |
| Elementary level | 40280 | 59042 | 19555 |
| Secondary level | 6370 | 14264 | 7890 |
| High level | 2331 | 6775 | 4444 |

On 14 February 1972, government reforms were introduced to develop a new administrative system for the Union of Myanmar. As part of this reorganization, the Department of Basic Education was established.[[40]](#footnote-40) On 16 March further restructuring led to the transformation of the “Myanmar Education Directorate” into the “Basic Education Department”, although this department has since been dissolved.[[41]](#footnote-41)

**Table (4) The number of teachers and students in the states**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **High School** | | | **Middle School** | | | **Primary School** | | |
| **School** | **Teacher** | **student** | **School** | **Teacher** | **student** | **School** | **Teacher** | **student** |
| 1961-62 | 42 | 189 | 4070 | 119 | 600 | 16,540 | 1438 | 3825 | 159,245 |
| 1968-69 | 82 | 621 | 15195 | 227 | 1208 | 45,714 | 2328 | 7776 | 367,760 |
| 1969-70 | 83 | 648 | 17,331 | 234 | 1458 | 50,108 | 2534 | 8280 | 391,970 |
| 1970-71 | 84 | 722 | 19,333 | 244 | 1520 | 61,027 | 2724 | 8705 | 41,715 |

**Examination System**

The system of assessment through examination was introduced with the establishment of elementary schools, as these tests serve to measure a student’s academic ability and knowledge. In 1942, among the fourteen types of government-administered examinations, those related to basic education were as follows:[[42]](#footnote-42)

1. English High School Examination

2. English-Burmese High School Examination

3. English Secondary Scholarship Examination

4. English-Burmese Secondary Scholarship Examination

5. Myanmar High School Examination

6. Myanmar Secondary Examination

7. Burmese High School Teacher Examination

8. Burmese Secondary Teacher Examination

9. Kindergarten Teacher Examination

At the basic education level, fourth-grade examinations conducted by the government were overseen by regional examination teams. Beginning with the 1967-68 school year, the seventh-grade government examination shifted to an eighth-grade examination, now supervised by state examination boards. The ninth-grade and matriculation examinations, managed by Yangon University, required students to pass the ninth-grade examination to qualify for matriculation. The university entrance examination is the most pivotal in Myanmar's examination system. Since 1966-67, university examination results have been categorized into two lists: (A) and (B). Students on List (A) are eligible to attend both university colleges and vocational colleges, while those on List (B) may attend vocational universities and colleges with the same rights as (A) list students. The university entrance exam thus became a determinant of students’ life goals. University entrance exams were evaluated not only by university instructors but also by high school principals and teachers.[[43]](#footnote-43) A four-day examination seminar was held from 29 December 1970, to 1 January 1971, at Yangon University of Arts and Sciences. Its purpose was to discuss and provide guidance on examination, inspection, university admissions, and vocational education assessment issues, ensuring alignment with the new system-based education model.[[44]](#footnote-44)

In the field of education, teachers have been trained, but there remain significant challenges in producing qualified educators. During Prime Minister U Nu’s tenure, students who had completed grade seven were offered an emergency three-month teacher training program.[[45]](#footnote-45) Under the Revolutionary Government, those who passed both levels (a) and (b) of the basic education examination were provided with a year of teacher training. While teacher quality may be emphasized, the focus on meeting the required quantity of teachers remains essential. Between 1962 and 1972, there were only 12,163 primary education teachers.[[46]](#footnote-46) During this period, the number of students increased from over half a million to more than three million, yet the number of teachers remained at just 71,196. Consequently, the student-teacher ratio indicated that each teacher was responsible for teaching an average of forty-three students. Additionally, the number of teachers who were employed but either did not report to work or relocated to urban areas remains uncalculated. This is partly due to the reluctance of city-appointed teachers to serve long-term in remote mountainous regions. Contributing factors included significant disparities in social status between rural and urban areas, transportation difficulties, and instances of unrest rather than the presence of organized armed groups. Furthermore, qualified male teachers were often unwilling to accept long-term primary teaching roles in underdeveloped areas. When opportunities arose, they frequently transferred to other government departments with clearer paths for advancement. This trend partly explains why female teachers came to outnumber male teachers in the basic education sector. In 1961-62, only two secondary-level schools operated, staffed by seventy-eight teachers, while six primary schools were staffed by fifty-five teachers. By 1971-72, three secondary-level schools were staffed by 120 teachers, and 11 primary schools employed 160 teachers.[[47]](#footnote-47)

The Revolutionary Council government actively promoted school education and improved public access to education. The country's economic growth and its industrial and agricultural development were hindered by a large population with low literacy rates. Consequently, the Revolutionary Council prioritized eradicating illiteracy through a public movement. In relation to universal literacy, the Political Report at the 1965 Party Seminar stated, “The most fundamental level of education, which everyone should have the opportunity to attain, is literacy. For the socialist system to be successfully established, everyone must achieve a higher level of awareness and progress, grounded in a wealth of knowledge. For this to occur, it is evident that everyone literacy is essential. Therefore, reducing and eventually eliminating illiteracy should be pursued as a mass movement.[[48]](#footnote-48) In 1964, the Myanmar Literacy Movement, a public initiative, was launched to support elderly, illiterate individuals in Myanmar in gaining literacy skills. During the summer of 1964-65, four volunteer students from the Yangon Teacher Training Institute conducted literacy experiments for the elderly in East Sanpya Village, Meikhtila Township.[[49]](#footnote-49) The Revolutionary Council government established and implemented a plan to eradicate illiteracy to build a strong foundation for a socialist economic system, support improvements in manufacturing, and facilitate the spread of ideas and knowledge. This illiteracy eradication plan began in 1965, with initial years focused on preparing strategies for its implementation. Practical tests were conducted to refine teaching methods and determine effective instruction periods. Illiteracy eradication was organized as a public movement, beginning with a pilot project during the summer school holidays of 1965, from April 19 to May 18. Three "R" schools conducted one-month courses across 556 locations in 37 state educational districts. As a result of these efforts, 66,771 people gained literacy in the summer of 1966, 68,497 in 1967, and 29,224 in 1968. Teachers and students collaborated with local volunteers, while additional outreach used film, radio, music, and art to mobilize national support. From 1969 to 1973, literacy campaigns expanded to achieve district-wide success in 12 districts. The Myanmar Literacy Movement eventually gained recognition from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO).[[50]](#footnote-50) The following table details the outcomes of the illiteracy eradication campaign.[[51]](#footnote-51)

**Table (5) Nationwide Literacy Campaign and Results**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Year** | **Number**  **of Camps** | **Lecturers** | **number of attendees** | **A literate person** | |
| **A literate person** | **A little literate** |
| 1 | 1966 | 2530 | 18032 | 173733 | 66771 | 66363 |
| 2 | 1967 | 2631 | 20541 | 145376 | 68497 | 58804 |
| 3 | 1968 | 9825 | 93177 | 93177 | 29223 | 26511 |

Building on insights gained from the initial tests, efforts were expanded to include literacy programs for the elderly, the compilation of instructional materials for students and teachers, studies on effective teaching methods, and initiatives to encourage community-wide involvement. At the 1968 Party Seminar, a new approach was proposed: rather than conducting short-term courses nationwide during the summer, it was decided to concentrate efforts within a single district and conduct two intensive literacy courses. Mithila District was selected for this initiative, and on 25 March 1969, three "Rs" literacy courses were launched in factories, workshops, and villages across the district. Local residents, alongside university students who volunteered as teachers, facilitated these efforts, with additional support through donated books. By 13 June 1971, the entire Mithila District had achieved literacy, representing a significant milestone in the campaign.[[52]](#footnote-52)

**Curriculum**

As part of the educational reforms implemented by the Revolutionary Council, a new curriculum was introduced by the Post-Primary Education Board for the 1961-62 academic year, replacing the Pyitawthar-based curriculum that had been in use since 1954. This revised curriculum remained in effect until 1967. The curriculum details are outlined as follows:

**Elementary Level**

1. Myanmar Language
2. Basic Mathematics
3. National History
4. Geography
5. General Science
6. Public Policy
7. Home Science
8. Crafts
9. Physical Education
10. Painting
11. Basic Agriculture

**Middle Level**

1. Myanmar Language
2. English
3. Basic Mathematics (arithmetic, algebra, geometry)
4. National History
5. Geography
6. Basic General Science
7. Public Policy
8. Home Science
9. Industrial Arts
10. Physical Education
11. Painting
12. Basic Agriculture

**Higher Level Curriculum**

(High School Leaving Certificate and University Entrance Exam)

**(a) Non-compulsory Subjects**

1. Burmese
2. English
3. Mathematics (Numerical Algebra and Geometry)

**(b) University Entrance Track**

Students intending to pursue university studies may select two subjects from the following options:

1. National History
2. Geography
3. Public Policy (Ethic)
4. Pali
5. General Science
6. Economic Cooperation
7. Physics
8. Chemistry

**(c) Non-University Track**

Students not planning to attend university may choose two subjects from the following vocational options:

1. Agriculture
2. Handicraft Industry
3. Burmese Calligraphy and Typing
4. English Shorthand and Typing
5. Accounting
6. Small Business Organization
7. Secretarial Practice
8. Domestic Science
9. Fine Arts
10. Physical Education

In the general curriculum above, the primary and secondary levels serve as foundational curricula, while the higher level enables students to continue vocational education if desired.[[53]](#footnote-53)

Under the Burma Revolutionary Council, a new system-based education model was implemented. One of the practical development initiatives, aligned with the comprehensive education policy of this new basic education system, was the Human Resources Project. Known as the *Luyeechon* Project, it began in 1964. The term "*Luyeechon*" was introduced by the education department of the Revolutionary Government, with Joint Secretary and Deputy Minister Yae Tun serving as chairman and junior Secretary U Thaung Htut acting as convener of an eleven-member committee. A small group of directors coordinated this initiative to support practical educational development.

The objectives of the Luyeechon Project were as follows:[[54]](#footnote-54)

1. To foster the emergence of more academically outstanding students.
2. To increase active participation in educational and practical development activities.
3. To encourage knowledge gathering and an understanding of global contexts to promote socialist principles.
4. To develop beneficial and constructive competition within the country.
5. To enhance participation in sports, thereby improving sports achievements and physical fitness.
6. To build confidence in the construction of a socialist society.
7. To provide training guidelines for merit award recipients to serve as role models, so they may, in turn, teach in townships, schools, and districts, setting an example for other students.

The *Luyeechon* (Talent) Project Central Committee selects talented individuals at various educational stages across townships, districts, states, and regions, encompassing science, colleges, and universities. The committee identifies candidates who demonstrate personal excellence at the school, township, district, and state levels. The final selection is approved by the Central Committee of the *Luyeechon* Project, with evaluations based on 60% intellectual ability and 40% practical educational development. The first *Luyeechon* project was implemented in the summer of 1964, focusing on selecting top-performing students from grades seven through ten. By 1965, the Luyeechon Project expanded to include talent centers in industrial high schools, agricultural high schools, science programs, colleges, and universities. Since 1966, teacher training departments have also been involved, and as of 1976, the Institute of Ethnic Development has selected additional trainees. The table below illustrates the outstanding individuals selected during the Revolutionary Council period.[[55]](#footnote-55)

According to the *Luyeechon* project, selected participants were divided into two camps: Ngapali and Inlay *Luyeechon*. These participants traveled to their designated areas, forming a mobile *Luyeechon* camp for approximately eleven days. Afterward, all participants regrouped and resided together at the Yangon *Luyeechon* camp for an additional seven days.[[56]](#footnote-56)

The review report on the basic education sector during the Revolutionary Council period highlights several needs and weaknesses. According to the report, there were 13,284 primary schools with 1,746,214 students in 1962–63. By 1967–68, the number of primary schools had increased by 983, serving a total of 2,791,190 students. At the secondary level, the number of schools grew from 651 in 1962–63 to 878 in 1967–68, with student enrollment rising from 192,871 to 488,648. Additionally, high schools increased from 322 in 1962–63 to 519 in 1967–68, with enrollment rising from 97,853 to 129,697. However, due to the growing students, schools increasingly relied on financial contributions from students' parents for building maintenance and furnishing.[[57]](#footnote-57) Furthermore, challenges persisted in the basic education sector, especially in training qualified teachers.[[58]](#footnote-58)

The use of the Burmese language as the primary medium of instruction in Myanmar's basic education sector, where numerous ethnic groups coexist, has been largely effective in central regions. However, significant challenges have arisen in the mountainous areas of states with limited Burman populations. The Revolutionary Council government did not address strategies to resolve this issue. Additionally, the separation of science and arts tracks based on students’ scores led to an emphasis on science, diminishing the importance of humanities subjects such as history, philosophy, psychology, literature, and sociology. In 1974, Myanmar transitioned from military rule to a one-party dictatorship. Article 152 of the 1974 Constitution declared that all citizens have the right to education and that basic education is compulsory.[[59]](#footnote-59)

**Review**

During the Revolutionary Council period, a review of basic education policy identified several areas needing improvement. Buddhist-based monastic education persisted, while new laws were enacted to expand primary education. Schools and university colleges were established, and curricula were revised according to the new system. In Burma, where many ethnic groups reside, the Burmese-language-based education system was effective in central regions but faced significant challenges in mountainous areas. In 1962, the Union Ethnic People’s Development Institute was opened with the main objective of allowing ethnic youth to continue serving as basic education teachers in their regions. According to the 1974 Constitution, every citizen was guaranteed the right to education, and basic education was made compulsory. Overall, the reforms in the basic education sector during the Revolutionary Council era centralized the previously independent education system that had been implemented by the former democratic government. The literacy eradication program for rural populations without access to education proved successful, and initiatives in human resource development and practical education were undertaken. However, issues such as policy instability and frequent changes persisted after the dissolution of the Revolutionary Council and during the Burma Socialist Programme Party era.

**CHAPTER TWO**

**HIGHER EDUCATION**

Myanmar is home to numerous universities. University education, which originated during the colonial era, was formally institutionalized after independence through the University Act, establishing Yangon University and Mandalay University College. Today, institutions of higher education in Myanmar are categorized as universities, colleges, and science schools, offering instruction primarily in the Burmese language.[[60]](#footnote-60)

Between 1920 and 1959, education laws in Myanmar underwent several amendments.[[61]](#footnote-61) When the University of Yangon was established in 1920, the term “university” was not yet commonly used. The Act passed in 1920, written in English, is referred to in Burmese as the “Yangon University Act”. Initially, the institution was named the “University of Science”. The term “university” is derived from the Latin word “*universitas*”, which signifies an institution dedicated to learning, while collegium refers to “a place where scholars gather”. After 1930, the terms “university” and “college” began to appear more frequently in academic and official articles.[[62]](#footnote-62)

The university structure generally follows two models: (1) unitary and (2) collegiate. The Yangon University Act of 1920 established University College and Judson College under the Yangon University. Subsequently, the Medical College and Teachers’ Training College were opened in 1930, followed by the Agricultural College in 1938. However, when World War II reached Burma in 1942, the Yangon University Act was suspended. In 1946, the Department of Education established an interim university to continue offering university-level courses.[[63]](#footnote-63) Mandalay Intermediate (*Upaza)* College reopened in 1947 and was renamed Mandalay University and College in 1948. It subsequently merged with Yangon University and began offering degree-level courses.[[64]](#footnote-64) In July 1949, the University of Yangon became a separate, self-governing institution operating as a "unitary" university.[[65]](#footnote-65) In 1953, the Military Academy in Ba Htoo was designated as an affiliated college of the University of Yangon. Additionally, several new colleges were established: Mawlamyine College in 1954; Kyaukphyu College, Yankin College, and Hteetan College in 1955; Magway College in 1955; and Pathein College in 1958.[[66]](#footnote-66) That same year, Mandalay University and College was elevated to the status of an independent university, and Magway College was placed under its administration.[[67]](#footnote-67)

In the post-war period, Yangon University, organized under the unitary system, established faculties of Medicine, Engineering, and Education in 1946. Subsequently, faculties of Law, Arts, and Science were introduced in 1947. After independence, three additional faculties were expanded and inaugurated: the Faculty of Agriculture in 1948, the Faculty of Social Sciences in 1958, and the Faculty of Forestry. However, in 1959, the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences was abolished, and Deans of Students were appointed.[[68]](#footnote-68) As a result of political changes and evolving circumstances, the departments and faculties previously part of Yangon University were reorganized into separate entities. The first department to gain independence in the post-war period was the Department of Geography and Geology. The Department of English offered courses in English literature and language, as well as French, German, and other European languages.[[69]](#footnote-69) In 1955, the Department of Economics was divided into two distinct departments: the Department of Commerce and the Department of Economics. The Department of Economics provided degree programs in General Economics, Administration, and Accounting, while the Department of Commerce offered similar programs focused on General Studies, Administration, and Accounting.[[70]](#footnote-70) Since 1956, the Department of English and the Department of Modern European Languages have expanded their offerings to include Latin, French, German, and Persian.[[71]](#footnote-71)

**Post-war Students' Union**

In 1942, during the general strike, the University Students' Union boycotted the university in support of the independence movement. After World War II, the University Students' Union and the All-Burma Students' Union (ABSU) were reorganized in 1945 with the initiation of an emergency university course. The University Students' Union primarily addressed student affairs, education, and political issues, eventually evolving into a political party movement after independence. In 1953, the October Uprising occurred following the university's closure for only 15 days, prompting widespread student protests. On 19 October 1956, the government issued a directive requiring all unions in Burma to be dissolved within 30 days. In response, the Struggle Committee for the Sustainability of Unions was formed and led protests on the university campus. During this time, the fall of a three-years expulsion system at Yangon University further incited demonstrations, with the University Union at the forefront. Under the Revolutionary Council government, tensions between university students and authorities escalated, culminating in the notable July Uprising of 1962. Students gathered at the University Union Building to protest stricter school regulations. The government responded by demolishing the University Union Building and indefinitely closing the university and its affiliated colleges. Since the July Uprising, the University of Yangon Students' Union—established during the colonial era and dedicated to student advocacy and national liberation—was dissolved, marking a significant shift in student activism in Myanmar.[[72]](#footnote-72)

In 1962, the Revolutionary Council was established, and by 1964, universities were reorganized under a new system. Under this restructuring, the former vocational faculties were transformed into separate universities.[[73]](#footnote-73) On 30 April 1962, the Revolutionary Council announced the Burma Socialist Programme, which introduced four guiding principles for university education:

1. promoting education that supports vocational training;

2. prioritizing scientific disciplines;

3. fostering the development of high moral character; and

4. providing special encouragement to individuals with exceptional intellectual ability and the potential to pursue higher education.[[74]](#footnote-74)

Since October 1964, universities and colleges in Myanmar have been reorganized, with the former Faculty of Education being transformed into a vocational education institution known as the “University of Education.” The traditional university education system, which was conducted in English, was replaced by a new system in the Burmese language.[[75]](#footnote-75) The new university education system abandoned the previous Combination System and adopted the Majoring System, which focuses on specialization in a single subject. Students who pass the high school or university entrance examination are admitted based on merit scores determined by the University Admission Selection Board.[[76]](#footnote-76) Under this system, the Yangon University of Arts and Sciences offers nine arts subjects and seven science subjects.[[77]](#footnote-77)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Arts Subject | Science Subjects |
| Pali | Mathematics |
| Law | Zoology |
| Geography | Botany |
| Philosophy | Chemistry |
| English | Physics |
| Burmese | Forestry |
| History | Geology |
| Psychology |  |
| Anthropology |  |

The University Entrance Examination Board in Myanmar has categorized students who have passed the university entrance examination into 20 groups based on their scores in five subjects. Students with the lowest marks are placed in Group 1, followed by Group 2 for the next tier, Group 3, and so on, up to Group 20 for those with the highest marks. The group scores from each of the five subjects are then aggregated to determine the individual qualification level of each student.[[78]](#footnote-78)

Following the establishment of the Union of Burma Revolutionary Council on March 2, 1962, Article 17(a) concerning education states:

The State Revolutionary Council recognizes the need for reform in the current education system, which fails to adequately support livelihoods. Consequently, a new education system will be established, emphasizing support for livelihoods and fostering high moral values. Special priority will be given to science education. The primary educational objective is to ensure universal access to basic education. Furthermore, opportunities for higher education will be encouraged and made accessible exclusively to individuals who demonstrate both intelligence and effort.

In 1962, the educational system included 655 teachers, 16,514 students, and 863 graduates. There were eight universities, degree colleges, and colleges, as outlined below.[[79]](#footnote-79)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| No. | University, Degree College, College |
| 1 | Yangon University |
| 2 | Mandalay University |
| 3 | *Thekgyi* University |
| 4 | Mawlamyine College of Education |
| 5 | Taunggyi College of Education |
| 6 | Magway College of Education |
| 7 | Pathein College of Education |
| 8 | Kyaukphyu College of Education |

During the socialist era, the education system also produced intellectuals and professionals who significantly contributed to economic, administrative, and social development. In the administration of university education, Yangon University and Mandalay University were reorganized into departments directly overseen by the government. To formulate university policies and manage the implementation of higher education, two central governing bodies were established under the University Education Law of the Union of Myanmar (1964): the Central Council of Universities and the Council of University Education.[[80]](#footnote-80) The Minister of Education serves as the Chairman of the Central Council of Universities. The responsibilities of the Council are as follows:

1. Formulating policies for university education.
2. Submitting recommendations to the government for the establishment of new colleges and scientific schools under the auspices of universities.
3. Considering and deciding on postgraduate degrees, diplomas, and certificates to be awarded by universities.
4. Limiting the number of students admitted to universities in consultation with the Burma Socialist Programme Party and the Socialist Economic Construction Committee to ensure the availability of the required number of scholars.
5. Reviewing and determining the annual budgets of universities.
6. Identifying and deciding on research activities that benefit the entire country.
7. Deciding on the conferment of honorary degrees.
8. Defining tasks aligned with the objectives of university education.
9. Supervising the activities of university administrative bodies and making decisions on all issues presented to the Council.

Similarly, the Minister of Education serves as the Chairman of the Council of University Education Bodies. The responsibilities of this Council include:

1. Establishing standards for university education.
2. Determining the qualifications required for university admission and the selection system.
3. Establishing rules and systems for conducting university examinations.
4. Defining the basic qualifications for university teachers at all levels and organizing research activities to enhance their education.
5. Overseeing the research activities of each university education body and managing related duties.
6. Coordinating activities among university education bodies.
7. Examining proposals for university education improvement submitted by individual education bodies and forwarding them to the Central Council of Universities.

To achieve the objectives of the universities, various subjects were expanded and modified. The main course in Oriental Studies (Pali) was discontinued at Yangon University of Arts and Sciences and instead offered at Mandalay University of Arts and Sciences. Similarly, the main course in English was transferred to the University of Education, Yangon.[[81]](#footnote-81) Students interested in psychology and law selected subjects relevant to their arts disciplines under the guidance of professors and focused on studying a single major language in depth during their fourth year.[[82]](#footnote-82)

The higher education center of Upper Burma, initially established as Mandalay University and College, became an independent university in 1958. The Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Agriculture, and Magway College, which were previously affiliated with Yangon University, were subsequently integrated into the University of Mandalay. Beginning with the 1961 academic year, Taunggyi College and Myitkyina Intermediate(*Upasa*) College were established under the University of Mandalay, offering Honors degrees as well as Master of Arts and Master of Science programs. The educational activities of Mandalay University underwent significant changes after the Revolutionary Council assumed power on 2 March 1962.[[83]](#footnote-83) Under the University Act of 1964, the responsibilities of the University Administration and Academic Board of Yangon University and Mandalay University included determining the curriculum, conducting examinations, and awarding degrees and diplomas. Furthermore, the Academic Board of Mandalay University was tasked with supervising the curriculum, teaching, and examination processes at Magway College, Taunggyi College, and Myitkyina College, all of which were affiliated with the University of Mandalay. The primary disciplines available for study in the Arts and Sciences faculties at Mandalay University include:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Arts | Science Subjects |
| Burmese | Mathematics |
| History | Chemistry |
| Geography | Physics |
| Philosophy | Zoology |
| Psychology | Geology |
| Pali |  |
| Foreign Languages |  |

The initial degrees offered are the Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) and Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.), while the postgraduate degrees include the Master of Arts (M.A.) and Master of Science (M.Sc.).[[84]](#footnote-84)

To successfully implement the education policy, a university education seminar was held in April 1964, inviting teaching staff and other stakeholders to participate in discussions organized into five (5) groups. The discussion groups focused on the following topics:

1. Objectives, structure, and organization of university education.
2. The new university education system and its implementation.
3. Teaching, research, and training.
4. Coordination between vocational schools and universities.
5. Evening courses and external examinations.

The seminar addressed specific objectives for university education, teaching methodologies, core subjects of study, teacher training, strategies for changing students' mindsets, and initiatives to enhance the knowledge and skills of working individuals. Based on these discussions, the Revolutionary Council Government of the Union of Burma enacted the “University Education Law of the Union of Burma, 1964” (Law No. 9).[[85]](#footnote-85) Despite these efforts, the lack of effective management by the Revolutionary Council Government in the 1960s and 1970s led to instability in education-related activities. The government prioritized quantity over quality, resulting in a significant increase in university enrollment. To address this issue, a plan was devised to establish regional colleges in each state and division, offering workplace-related subjects to support regional development. In 1970, regional colleges were established to implement the policies of the Programme (Lanzin) Party. By the 1976–77 academic year, seventeen regional colleges had been opened, one regional college in 1977-78 academic year and two additional colleges in 1978-79 academic year were established during the 1977–78 academic year, bringing the total to twenty regional colleges.[[86]](#footnote-86) Furthermore, the Union of Myanmar Education Law of 1964 was repealed, and the University Education Law of 1973 was enacted. This new legislation re-designated former vocational universities as universities of applied sciences. It also reorganized the Central Council of Universities, introducing significant changes. The provision in the 1964 law to “determine the annual expenditure of universities” was removed, while a new provision to “determine the basic educational qualifications of university teachers at all levels” was added.[[87]](#footnote-87) During the socialist era, universities were expanded to train and produce intellectuals and professionals with six (6) key objectives:[[88]](#footnote-88)

* 1. To develop skilled and competent professionals aligned with socialist ideology and ethics to support the construction of a socialist society in Myanmar.
  2. To cultivate professionals capable of advancing the socialist economy, public administration, and social welfare.
  3. To prioritize education in skills and sciences that directly support livelihoods.
  4. To conduct research aimed at ensuring the success of socialist system development.
  5. To educate and train individuals to take pride in their work.
  6. To continually enhance the knowledge, perspectives, and skills of those contributing to the construction of a socialist society in Myanmar.

The objectives of regional colleges are as follows:[[89]](#footnote-89)

* 1. To implement the educational policies established by the Burma Socialist Programme Party.
  2. To provide vocational training that promotes self-reliance.
  3. To equip students with practical expertise.
  4. To deliver applied education in disciplines essential to the manufacturing industry.
  5. To contribute to regional development.

The first year of regional college focuses on practical courses, while the second year emphasizes vocational skills. Subjects in the first year provide a foundation in basic arts and sciences to support the specialized studies in the second year. Students in their first year are required to choose one of four (4) subject streams: Arts (Ordinary), Arts (Mathematics), Science (Biology), or Science (Mathematics). The courses for each stream are as follows:[[90]](#footnote-90)

* Arts (Ordinary): Political Science, Burmese, English, History, Geography, Logic, Psychology.
* Arts (Mathematics): Political Science, Burmese, English, Mathematics (Arts), Geography, Logic, History (or Psychology).
* Science (Biology): Political Science, Burmese, English, Chemistry, Physics, Biology.
* Science (Mathematics): Political Science, Burmese, English, Mathematics, Chemistry, Physics.

Political Science is a compulsory subject. Mathematics in the Arts stream is tailored to support statistical studies, while Mathematics in the Science stream is designed to aid in engineering applications. In the second year, students can select from twenty vocational courses, including office administration, agriculture, animal husbandry, fisheries, accounting, electrical work, mass communication, printing, film production, home economics, and food processing.[[91]](#footnote-91)

Upon completing two years of study at a regional college, students are awarded a diploma. Those who pass the university entrance examination may continue their education at a university. Diploma holders who wish to enter the workforce can enroll in a one-year vocational course. Additionally, students who do not pass the university entrance examination are eligible to attend vocational courses. For individuals who join the workforce but later wish to pursue higher education, university correspondence courses offer a pathway to continue their studies.[[92]](#footnote-92)

In 1954-55, the number of university students increased from 690 to over 1,000. During this period, Mandalay Medical College was expanded, and the Universities of Arts and Sciences in Yangon and Mandalay, along with the technical colleges in Pathein, Mawlamyine, and Magway, were upgraded to degree-granting institutions. Following the enactment of the University Education Law in 1964-65, universities and colleges were reorganized according to the new education system. As a result, the number of university students grew to over 20,000, and two types of universities were established: the University of Arts and Sciences and the University of Skills and Knowledge.[[93]](#footnote-93) Consequently, ten universities were created from the two major institutions, the University of Yangon and the University of Mandalay.[[94]](#footnote-94)

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| No. | University |
| 1. | University of Arts and Science, Yangon |
| 2. | University of Arts and Science, Mandalay |
| 3. | University of Medicine (1), Yangon |
| 4. | University of Medicine (2), Mingalardon, Yangon |
| 5. | University of Medicine, Mandalay |
| 6. | Rangoon Institute of Technology, Yangon |
| 7. | University of Economics, Yangon |
| 8. | University of Education, Yangon |
| 9. | University of Agriculture, Mandalay |
| 10. | University of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine, Insein, Yangon |

There are seven (7) colleges affiliated with these universities, but they operate independently in terms of administration. They are as follows:

(a) University of Arts and Science, affiliated with Yangon:

1. Mawlamyine College
2. Pathein College
3. Workers' College

(b) University of Arts and Science, affiliated with Mandalay:

1. Magway College
2. Taunggyi College
3. Myitkyina College

(c) University of Medicine (1), affiliated with Yangon:

1. University of Dentistry

The most significant activity for the development of higher education is conducting research at universities and colleges. Research not only contributes to the enhancement of educational standards but also helps address challenges in the country’s manufacturing industries. The Revolutionary Council government established a policy requiring final-year university students to compile a research paper, aiming to engage both teachers and students in research activities. Additionally, the University Academic Bulletin is published every three months.[[95]](#footnote-95) University educational departments engage in two types of research: departmental research and individual research. The government encouraged teachers from these departments to present their research at academic conferences and established research guidelines in collaboration with experts from the fields of administration and economics.[[96]](#footnote-96) From 1966 to 1971, the departments of education, economics, social sciences, and culture presented 1,712 research papers at these conferences. Of these, 149 papers focused on the social sciences, reflecting the government’s policy of scientific guidance. In contrast, only 110 literary research papers were presented between 1967 and 1971. This suggests that while various research projects were undertaken to support the development of the country’s economic, social, and cultural sectors, literary research was less emphasized compared to social science research.

The fundamental requirement for research activities is financial support. The Revolutionary Council government provided financial assistance for university research activities and allocated the necessary funds. The following amounts were designated for expenditure on research projects and the budgets of universities and colleges.[[97]](#footnote-97)

**Costs for research project proposals**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Academic year | Kyats | Pya |
| 1 | 1964-65 | 25065 | 65 |
| 2 | 1965-66 | 27412 | 62 |
| 3 | 1966-67 | 65688 | 40 |
| 4 | 1967-68 | 73171 | 80 |
| 5 | 1968-69 | 52853 | 26 |
| 6 | 1969-70 | 52736 | 74 |
| 7 | 1970-71 | 57536 | 59 |

Before 1964, the percentage of students studying science was 60%, while 40% studied arts in the new education system. The proportion of students studying science was higher than that of those studying arts. To implement the new education system, a committee was formed to develop and coordinate research policies and activities. Under this committee, there were 11 academic research groups, namely:

1. Agricultural Science Research Group
2. Forestry Science Research Group
3. Medical Science Research Group
4. Industrial Science Research Group
5. Mathematics and Physical Science Research Group
6. Chemical Science Research Group
7. Biological Science Research Group
8. Geoscience Research Group
9. Social Science Research Group
10. Language, Literature, and Culture Research Group
11. Engineering Science Research Group

Research seminars were also held on the Yangon University campus starting in 1966.[[98]](#footnote-98) Between 1966 and 1971, 1,706 research papers were submitted by teachers and lecturers from various universities to the relevant research seminars.[[99]](#footnote-99) Former Minister of Education Dr. Nyi criticized the colonial education system and the post-independence university education system while praising the unique advantages of the socialist education system. In his view, the new socialist education system was characterized by the following features:[[100]](#footnote-100)

1. Having specific goals
2. Establishing and opening universities separately
3. Prioritizing science and vocational education
4. Adapting the curriculum to suit contemporary needs
5. Developing a specialized study system
6. Designating the Burmese language as the medium of instruction
7. Encouraging research
8. Changing the teaching style
9. Implementing a planning system

**University Administration and University Academic Council**

During the Revolutionary Council era, each university had both a university administrative board and an academic board. The administrative board was composed of nine members, including the rector as the chairman, two members selected by the Department of Education, two representatives from the Central Council of Universities, three university faculty members, and a registrar. The administrative board had the following responsibilities:

* 1. To manage personnel matters, such as appointments, promotions, transfers, and leaves of university employees, in accordance with government regulations, directives, and orders.
  2. To oversee financial activities as authorized by regulations, directives, and orders.
  3. To establish rules and regulations for students and ensure strict compliance with them.
  4. To address matters concerning the university campus.
  5. To supervise and organize physical and cultural activities for students.
  6. To manage the health of university staff and students.
  7. To handle all school-related affairs.
  8. To make recommendations for the awarding of scholarships and tuition fee waivers.

The responsibilities of the University Academic Council included:

* 1. Determining the curriculum.
  2. Developing the curriculum.
  3. Conducting examinations and announcing the results.
  4. Awarding degrees, diplomas, certificates, and prizes.
  5. Supporting the establishment of new departments.
  6. Determining and recommending the necessary qualifications for various levels of academic positions.
  7. Reviewing and approving the books to be published by the university.

**New system exams**

In implementing the new education system, the 100-point percentage system was replaced by the Grade Point system. The grading scale was divided into five levels, ranging from Grade One to Grade Five, with the passing grade in the main subjects set at Grade Three. If a student obtained an average grade of Grade Four or higher in the fourth-year main course examination, they were considered eligible to enter the Master of Arts (MA)/Master of Science (MSc) program. If the average grade was below 3.5, the student was not permitted to directly enter the MA/MSc program but was instead required to take a one-year qualification course. Graduates from the old system who entered the MA/MSc program were also required to begin with the qualification course, starting from Part (1). The qualification course was divided into Parts (1) and (2), with the final year of the MA/MSc program corresponding to Parts (1) and (2). Under the new university education system, examinations were held twice per academic year. The first semester ran from November to February, with exams in March. The university was closed from April to May 15. The second semester ran from May 16 to September 15, with exams held from September 16 to 30. The next semester began in November. A student was considered to have passed if they had an overall average grade of 2.57 across all subjects and at least a Grade 3 in the main subjects. Due to student unrest, beginning in the 1972-73 academic year, examinations were conducted only once per academic year. Honors courses, which had been suspended after the introduction of the new education system, were reopened in the 1980-1981 academic year. Students who passed the fourth-year course were permitted to take a one-year honors course. From the 1985-1986 academic year, the honors system was reinstated after completing the second year of study.[[101]](#footnote-101) From the 1984-1985 academic year, the Grade Point system was abolished, and the 100-point mark system was reintroduced. Additionally, for arts subjects, the exam score was set at 80 marks, with the tutorial marks set at 20 points, totaling 100 marks. For science subjects, the exam score was set at 80 marks, with practical work contributing 20 points. A student passed the exam if they achieved a minimum score of 50 for major subjects and 40 for general subjects. Students who failed the same course twice were no longer allowed to continue their studies in universities and colleges but were given one final opportunity to retake the exam as external students.[[102]](#footnote-102)

The postgraduate courses, namely the Master of Arts and Master of Science programs, are divided into two parts. The first part is the Master of Arts/Master of Science qualification course, and the second part is the Master of Arts/Master of Science degree course. The qualification course lasts for two years, with one examination held per year. In the second year, students must submit a practical examination and a thesis. The duration of the qualification course is typically a minimum of two years and a maximum of five years. Subsequently, in the final year of the Master of Arts course, the examination period was reduced to one year, while the thesis period was extended to either two or three years. Only those who scored 65 marks or more in the examination were considered to have passed.[[103]](#footnote-103)

Universities throughout the Union of Myanmar also serve as places where students from all ethnic groups gather and study. Ethnic students in universities represent the young people who will eventually provide leadership as experts and professionals in various regions and sectors. These students are nurtured on campus to foster unity and mutual respect among them. With this objective in mind, when the new universities were established in 1964, ethnic literature and culture committees were formed at these institutions.

To guide and oversee these committees, the Central Committee for Ethnic Literature and Culture of Ethnic Nations was formed on February 11, 1965. The committee comprised teachers, staff, and students from various ethnic backgrounds across university colleges. The chairman of the committee was U Tin Ae (Shan State), and the members included U Soe Thein (Myanmar), U M Zau Nang (Kachin), U San Tha Aung (Rakhine), U Htun Aung Chein (Karen), U Thant Zin (Myanmar), Dr. Min Tin Mon (Mon), U Aye Kyaw (Rakhine), Saya Wol Lak Kan Gyi (Karen), along with ethnic teachers and students from various universities. The main objectives of the Central Committee for Ethnic Literature and Culture were as follows:

* 1. To promote and cultivate the literature and culture of all ethnic groups.
  2. To foster mutual appreciation and respect for the traditional customs and literary cultures of each ethnic group.
  3. To eliminate narrow-minded ethnic views.
  4. To unite all ethnic groups with a shared sense of purpose and spirit.

To implement these objectives, the Sub-Committee for Ethnic Literature and Culture was established under the leadership of the Central Committee. Initially referred to as a “sub-committee,” it later dropped the word "sub" and became known simply as the Ethnic Literature and Culture Committee. The committees included:

* Kachin Ethnic Literature and Culture Committee
* Kayah Ethnic Literature and Culture Committee
* Karen Ethnic Literature and Culture Committee
* Chin Ethnic Literature and Culture Committee
* Shan Ethnic Literature and Culture Committee
* Mon Ethnic Literature and Culture Committee
* Rakhine Ethnic Literature and Culture Committee
* Pa-O Ethnic Literature and Culture Committee

In total, there were eight committees. Later, the Myanmar Ethnic Literature and Culture Committee expanded to include a ninth committee.[[104]](#footnote-104)

The ethnic literature and culture committees organized various activities to promote the literature and cultures of their respective ethnic groups. These activities included the publication of magazines, brochures, postcards, and calendars, as well as the organization of speech classes and dance workshops. State days, national holidays, and New Year's celebrations for each ethnic group were also observed. Additionally, traditional events such as Maung Mae Thit Lwin's (Fresher) welcome ceremony, the final-year students' farewell ceremony, the Asriya offering (Mentor Homage) ceremony, and the scholarship award ceremony were held in accordance with established traditions. University ethnic cultural lectures and demonstrations took place annually from 1977 to 1982.[[105]](#footnote-105)

The Workers' College was established in September 1947, after World War II, to provide university education to older individuals who had been unable to study during the war. Initially, the *Thetgyi* University operated at Myoma Boys' School (Dagon).[[106]](#footnote-106)

In 1948, the *Thetgyi* University was supported by part-time teachers from the University of Yangon. It followed the prescribed curriculum, enabling students to take the examinations conducted by the University of Yangon as external candidates. In March 1962, the Revolutionary Council, as part of its efforts to improve workers' living conditions, introduced educational facilities to allow workers to pursue university education. On 1 October 1964, with the introduction of the new education system, the *Thetgyi* University was brought under the administration of the Education Department of the Revolutionary Government. It was subsequently renamed "The College of Workers." Additionally, the evening courses offered by the University of Yangon, which had commenced in 1963, were integrated into the College of Workers. The College of Workers then became affiliated with the University of Yangon in academic matters.[[107]](#footnote-107) Since the Workers' College had a limited number of students, it has been conducting external examinations annually since 1970 to make university education accessible to the general public. The program has a duration of five years, and only core subjects, including Burmese, Geography, History, Philosophy, Psychology, and Pali, are eligible for examination.[[108]](#footnote-108) In 1972, with the implementation of the new Myanmar system, the Myanmar Historical Commission was reorganized under the Ministry of Culture as the Department of State History Research.[[109]](#footnote-109) To accommodate individuals who wished to pursue university education but were unable to attend due to work commitments, a correspondence course was introduced in Yangon during the 1975–76 academic year.[[110]](#footnote-110)

The Revolutionary Council's policy of deprioritizing academic subjects resulted in significant changes to both basic education examinations and university education. Between 1961 and 1970, the Yangon and Mandalay Universities of Arts and Science collectively produced approximately 30,525 graduates. In 1965, Mandalay University awarded 256 Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) degrees, 135 Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) degrees, 8 Bachelor of Arts (Honors), 12 Bachelor of Science (Honors), and 2 Master of Science (M.Sc.) degrees. With the introduction of the new education system in 1964, emphasis shifted toward vocational and scientific subjects. By 1976, the university conferred 241 B.A. and 106 B.Sc. degrees. Year-by-year graduation statistics also reflect this trend. In 1968, Mandalay University awarded 218 B.A. degrees and 201 B.Sc. degrees. This number rose in 1969, with 310 B.A. and 305 B.Sc. degrees being conferred.[[111]](#footnote-111)

The Revolutionary Council government made political science a compulsory subject but failed to equip university students with sufficient knowledge in the field. The government's education policy, which prioritized science, brought about significant changes at both the matriculation level and within universities and colleges. During the colonial period, arts subjects were more commonly studied than science subjects. Similarly, prior to the Revolutionary Council era, the number of arts graduates at Mandalay University of Arts and Science exceeded that of science graduates.[[112]](#footnote-112) In 1970, the number of science graduates gradually increased under the new university education system, as students increasingly specialized in science subjects to improve their job prospects. While the Revolutionary Council's education policy aimed to produce intellectuals and technicians to support the construction of socialism in Burma, the overall growth in the number of graduates remained slow, except at the University of Technology during the 1961–72 academic years. During this period, Yangon and Mandalay Universities of Arts and Sciences produced a total of 14,179 graduates. However, many faced significant challenges in securing employment.[[113]](#footnote-113) In response to this issue, a committee was established in 1970 to find jobs for approximately 3,000 unemployed graduates who had registered with employment offices. Despite these efforts, only about 1,200 graduates were successfully employed, highlighting the persistent problem of educated unemployment.[[114]](#footnote-114)

Graduates from the University of Arts and Sciences faced considerable challenges in securing suitable employment. The table below illustrates the percentage of students enrolled in graduate courses by subject at the University of Arts and Sciences during the Revolutionary Council era, which was notably low.[[115]](#footnote-115)

**Table ( 6 ) List of Graduates from Mandalay University of Arts and Sciences (1970–1973)**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Year of Conferment | Bachelor of Arts | Bachelor of Science | Master of Arts | Master of Science |
| 21 February 1970 | 353 | 619 | 9 | 2 |
| 20 November 1970 | 368 | 716 | 13 | 1 |
| 20 November 1971 | 317 | 913 | 6 | 7 |
| 25 November 1972 | 390 | 1026 | 4 | 11 |
| 3 November 1973 | 312 | 962 | 7 | 7 |

Source: Tin Win, 1978, 72

**Departments related to higher education**

The Myanmar Historical Commission, established in 1955, was reorganized as the Department of National History Research under the Ministry of Culture following the implementation of the new Myanmar administrative system in 1972. On December 27, 1984, the Department of National History Research was transferred to the Ministry of Education. In 1953, the Revolutionary Council established the Union of Burma Literature Compilation and Translation Commission. The commission comprised notable figures such as university Vice-Chancellors, the Director of the Department of Culture, the Director of the Policy Department of the Information Department, the Director of the Cultural Palace, the Editor-in-Chief of the Translation Department, and professors from Yangon University specializing in English, Burmese, and Pali. The Translation Commission was tasked with several key responsibilities, including the production of a government-standard Burmese dictionary, the formulation of a standardized writing system, the compilation of necessary texts for translation from primary to university levels, the development of reference books and periodicals, the creation of a standardized vocabulary, and the publication of translated works. In 1971, the Revolutionary Council enacted the Burmese Language Commission Law, which established the Burmese Language Committee as a separate department under the Ministry of Education. The committee's primary responsibilities included the compilation of a Burmese dictionary and the publication of Burmese grammar books. Between 1978 and 1980, the committee successfully published a five-volume summary of the Burmese dictionary, compiled foundational Burmese grammar texts, and prepared a wax copy of a comprehensive Burmese grammar book.[[116]](#footnote-116)

The library is the most essential facility for the research activities of the Department of Higher Education. Following the establishment of the New System University in 1964, the former Yangon University Library was restructured as the University Central Library and placed under the Ministry of Education, Department of Higher Education. Its primary objective is to support the educational, research, and knowledge enrichment needs of universities and colleges. At the time of its transformation, the University Central Library was the largest library in Myanmar, housing approximately 60,000 books. It also coordinates the activities of libraries within university and college departments and maintains collections of books related to Southeast Asian countries, rare books, and pamphlets. Additionally, the library played a pivotal role in leading the postgraduate library diploma course.[[117]](#footnote-117) Library classes were also conducted during the long summer vacations. The first librarian of the University Central Library was U Thein Han. Upon his retirement, U Thaw Kaung succeeded him as librarian. Although the University Central Library oversees the operations of university libraries, there remains a significant need for reliable reference materials and well-trained staff in the libraries of universities and colleges located in State's areas.[[118]](#footnote-118) The central library of universities, managed by qualified librarians, has successfully accumulated an extensive collection of reference books across various subjects. However, universities and colleges in regional areas face significant challenges, including a lack of reliable reference materials and adequately trained library staff. Other key departments include the University Press, the University Translation and Publishing Department, the Scientific Equipment Factory, and the Graduate Department of Applied Geology.[[119]](#footnote-119)

The government sought to establish a vocational education system; however, it prioritized science over a comprehensive core curriculum. Enrollment in medical and technical colleges was restricted. In universities and colleges of arts and sciences, the number of students majoring in science exceeded those majoring in the arts. Despite the emphasis on science in higher education, universities and colleges faced a lack of modern, well-equipped science laboratories. As the student population in science departments grew, a single instructor often delivered lectures to large groups of students.[[120]](#footnote-120)

**Table ( 7 ) List of Myanmar University Graduates from 1962 to 1975**

**(1961-62 to 1973-74)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | University /  College | Opening | 1961-62 | 1968-69 | 1969-70 | 1970-71 | 1971-72 | 1972-73 | 1973-74 |
| 1 | Universities of Arts and Sciences | 2 | 2414 | 3374 | 4052 | 3926 | 4890 | 5327 | 5664 |
| 2 | Postgraduate Medical Courses | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 43 |
| 3 | College of Medicine | 2 | 164 | 260 | 320 | 329 | 461 | 477 | 467 |
| 4 | University of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine | 1 | 1 | 16 | 10 | 30 | 47 | 51 | 70 |
| 5 | University of Technology | 1 | 112 | 232 | 310 | 468 | 758 | 752 | 1756 |
| 6 | University of Agriculture | 1 | 59 | 47 | 149 | 149 | 499 | 499 | 520 |
| 7 | University of Dentistry | 1 | - | 17 | 10 | 27 | 205 | 205 | 186 |
| 8 | University of Economics | 1 | - | 412 | 464 | 431 | 633 | 338 | 431 |
| 9 | University of Education | 1 | 562 | 435 | 552 | 707 | 46 | 49 | 37 |

**Table ( 8 ) Number of papers read at Myanmar Research Seminars**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Subjects | 1966 | 1967 | 1968 | 1969 | 1970 | 1971 | Total |
| Agricultural Science | **29** | **28** | **25** | **25** | **27** | **39** | **173** |
| Biological Science | **18** | **23** | **22** | **33** | **30** | **18** | **144** |
| Marine Science | **-** | **-** | **12** | **20** | **2** | **19** | **76** |
| Forestry Science | **20** | **20** | **21** | **22** | **15** | **14** | **112** |
| Earth Science | **27** | **24** | **18** | **19** | **23** | **21** | **132** |
| Mechanical Science | **22** | **16** | **17** | **12** | **18** | **25** | **110** |
| Chemistry | **22** | **22** | **22** | **17** | **23** | **13** | **119** |
| Engineering | **21** | **22** | **14** | **18** | **19** | **21** | **115** |
| Mathematics Physics | **26** | **26** | **31** | **29** | **35** | **70** | **217** |
| Medicine | **51** | **32** | **46** | **43** | **40** | **43** | **255** |
| Social Science | **22** | **30** | **25** | **22** | **24** | **26** | **149** |
| Language and Literature | **20** | **18** | **18** | **18** | **18** | **18** | **110** |

**(1966-1971)**

**Review**

The University of Yangon functioned as an autonomous institution in the realm of university and higher education from 1920 to 1962. However, the 1960s and 1970s were marked by instability in educational policies and ineffective management, primarily due to the lack of clear administrative direction during the Revolutionary Council era. During this period, the number of university students increased significantly as institutions prioritized quantity over quality in their enrollment policies. Under the new University Education Law, the Central Council of Universities was granted the authority to appoint teaching and administrative staff as well as to oversee examination activities. Mandalay College was upgraded to become an affiliated college of the University of Yangon. Simultaneously, the adoption of the Burmese language as the medium of instruction led to significant changes in the education system. The abolition of the college system allowed for the establishment of specialized universities, including those focusing on medicine, technology, and agriculture. Previously, the faculties of medicine and engineering, which had been part of the University of Yangon and Mandalay, were separated and reconstituted as independent institutions. The socialist era produced a generation of professionals, including factory managers, engineers, agriculturalists, and economists, who contributed to various sectors such as business, public administration, and social work. Nevertheless, graduates from the University of Arts and Sciences faced challenges in securing suitable employment. For instance, of 3,000 graduates, only 1,200 were recruited as government employees, while the remainder were registered with the Labor Office. Employment opportunities for university graduates were limited due to stringent central control and inefficient management within government ministries. During this period, the management of universities and colleges was centralized under government control, and research—an essential component of higher education—was also regulated by the state. Additionally, the Revolutionary Council government established regional colleges to expand access to education. Despite these challenges, the University of Yangon, once regarded as one of the premier universities in Asia, continues to symbolize higher education in Myanmar.

**CHAPTER THREE**

**VOCATIONAL EDUCATION**

The British colonial education system also established vocational schools, including technical schools. In 1871, a teacher training college was opened in Yangon to produce qualified teachers. In 1881, the British government formed the Myanmar Education Syndicate to oversee Burmese education. The Syndicate was responsible for organizing and supervising government examinations within the subsidized system, as well as promoting fields such as medicine, engineering, law, and the arts. In 1885, the British introduced various specialized schools, including Myaytaing (surveying) schools, industrial schools, forestry schools, medical schools, weaving schools, and agricultural schools. The Education Syndicate also managed examinations for professions such as law (bar examinations), surveying, teacher training, forestry, and public health. As part of educational reforms in 1964, Yangon University was renamed Yangon University of Arts and Science, and Mandalay University was renamed Mandalay University of Arts and Science. Additionally, separate vocational universities were established, including Rangoon (Yangon) Institute of Technology (RIT), the University of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Medicine, the University of Agriculture, the University of Economics, and the University of Education.[[121]](#footnote-121) Furthermore, other vocational schools, education schools, and specialized institutions were also opened to support vocational and professional training.

1. Insein Government Industrial Training School

2. Nawman Teacher Training Schools and Primary Teacher Training Courses

3. Pyinmana Forest School

4. Bagan Lacquerware Training School

5. Amarapura Saungda Weaving School

6. Shwebo Myaytaing (Surveying) High School

7. Government Medical Training School (Yangon)

8. Insein Government Veterinary Training School

9. Deaf and hard of hearing school

10. Aided schools for the blind

11. Commercial training schools (typewriter, handwriting, sales, accounting) etc. were established.[[122]](#footnote-122)

The Teacher Training Institute was established in Yangon in 1947, staffed with a principal, lecturers, assistant lecturers, and 19 teachers. A total of 151 participants enrolled in the one-year primary teacher training course, while 111 participants joined the two-year secondary teacher training course. Initially, the minimum qualification for the primary teacher training course was the ninth grade, but this was later lowered to the seventh standard. Additionally, the duration of the primary teacher training course was extended from one year to two years. Following independence, the government expanded public schools at different periods. As an interim measure, an Emergency Teachership Two-Month Training Program was introduced in October and November. This program was later extended to Mandalay, Mawlamyine, and Meiktila.[[123]](#footnote-123) Since 1953, the duration of the teacher training course has been reduced from two years to one year, and teacher training programs have continued accordingly. Simultaneously, in addition to primary and secondary teacher training courses, arrangements were made to introduce special teacher training programs and to provide a one-year primary teacher training course for teachers who had completed emergency training. The special teacher training courses offered within the primary and secondary teacher training programs included English, general science, agriculture, industrial arts, physical education, and art. In 1962, as part of the four-year plan implemented by the Revolutionary Council of the Union of Burma, the expansion of government schools necessitated a corresponding expansion of teacher training programs. The Teacher Training Institute provided training up to the secondary teacher training level, while the Teacher Training School focused on training for the primary teacher level.[[124]](#footnote-124)

The 1964 General Education Seminar was held over six days, from October 19 to 24, 1964, at Mandalay University Campus, Mandalay, during the Revolutionary Council government. The primary objective of the seminar was to develop a socialist education system aligned with the Burmese socialist path and to explore ideas and methods for constructing a new education system that would support both education and livelihood by replacing the existing system. The theme of the seminar was “Towards a New Socialist Education System.” Participants included teachers and education representatives from primary, secondary, and high schools across various districts. The seminar was presided over by Colonel Hla Han, the Minister of Education, alongside education representatives from each district. Discussions focused on curriculum development, teacher quality, examination system reforms, and the effective implementation of education development projects.[[125]](#footnote-125) The main discussions focused on the implementation of the new basic education system, education management, the establishment of school libraries, the provision of school furniture, the preparation and publication of textbooks, and the development of courses to enhance teacher training institutions.[[126]](#footnote-126) Additionally, the expansion of teacher training schools and the training of teachers were key topics, with the following points addressed:[[127]](#footnote-127)

1. Classification of Teachers – How many types of teachers should be designated?
2. Qualification Standards – Defining qualifications based on teacher categories.
3. Selection Process for Qualified Teachers
4. Criteria for selecting primary teacher candidates.
5. Criteria for selecting secondary teacher candidates.
6. Curriculum Design for Teacher Training Courses
7. Enhancement of Teacher Quality
8. Programs for Teacher Development – Initiatives to improve teacher quality, promote teacher appreciation, and uphold professional integrity.

Since October 1964, universities and colleges have undergone reorganization, and the former General Education Department was transformed into a vocational education institution known as the University of Education. In the same year, the five-year B.Ed (New System) course was introduced, allowing individuals who had completed the Upper Secondary Level (A) to enroll. Teachers play a crucial role in advancing educational improvement initiatives. The successful development of basic education depends on the ability to teach students in alignment with evolving educational policies, objectives, curricula, and syllabi.[[128]](#footnote-128) During the Revolutionary Council era, significant educational reforms were implemented, leading to changes in teacher training programs.[[129]](#footnote-129) In 1966, under the provisions of the Basic Education Law, a Teacher Training Supervision Committee was established to oversee and evaluate teacher training programs and to provide recommendations to the Basic Education Council.

**Table( 9 ) Expansion of teacher education**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Middle** | | | **Primary** | | |
|  | **School** | **Teacher** | **Student** | **School** | **Teacher** | **Student** |
| 1961-1962 | 2 | 78 | 676 | 5 | 55 | 2033 |
| 1971-1972 | 3 | 120 | 600 | 11 | 160 | 4200 |

According to Section 7 of Chapter 4 of the Basic Education Act of 1966, a Teacher Training Supervisory Board was established, consisting of nine members. The duties and responsibilities of the Teacher Training Supervisory Board include:[[130]](#footnote-130)

1. Ensuring compliance with the policies set by the Basic Education Council and the regulations established under the Basic Education Act.
2. Carrying out the duties and responsibilities outlined in paragraphs (a), (b), (2), (3), and (4) in coordination with the Basic Education Standards, Curriculum and Textbook Committee, and the Examination Committee, as necessary.
3. Advising the Basic Education Council periodically on matters related to the opening and closing of teacher training schools, the availability of qualified teacher trainers, and the enhancement of teaching quality.
4. Supervising improvements in teaching standards at teacher training schools, including modernization efforts, the provision of adequate teaching aids, the training of trainees to develop and produce such aids, and the facilitation of research by teacher training instructors.
5. Establishing small inspection teams to conduct periodic evaluations of teacher training schools and provide recommendations for improvement.

In the Primary School Teacher (Ordinary) Course, instruction was provided in primary-level teaching methods, including Burmese, basic mathematics, social studies (geography, history, civics), basic general science, handicrafts (for boys), and music. Additionally, practical subjects such as physical education, art, and school gardening (agriculture) were included in the curriculum. In the Middle School Teacher (Special) Courses, teachers were trained in English, science, agriculture, industry, home science, physical education, and art.[[131]](#footnote-131)

In 1967, Teacher Training Schools implementing the new basic education system and the Union Nationalities Development Institute were established to support the development of ethnic groups. During the Revolutionary Council era, the University of Education, Teacher Training Institutes, and the Union Nationalities Development Institute were established as teacher training institutions.[[132]](#footnote-132) Since the 1968–69 academic year, new curriculum and syllabus have been introduced in teacher training institutes and schools.[[133]](#footnote-133) Under the new curriculum, special emphasis has been placed on integrating academic and practical teaching in teacher training institutes and schools. In the morning, students receive instruction in physical activities and educational practical development subjects on a rotational basis, while in the evening, they engage in educational practical development activities. Additionally, basic military education and physical education are taught together. The one-year primary teacher training course includes the following subjects:

1. Educational Psychology and Learning Theory

2. School administration subject and educational activities

3. Burmese Language

4. Arithmetic

5. National History

6. Geography

7. Basic Science

8. Environmental Studies

9. Political Science

10. Art, Physical Education, Music, Agriculture, Industrial Arts (aka Domestic Science)

In the two-year middle teacher training course, in addition to the aforementioned subjects, English, arithmetic, geometry, and algebra are also included.[[134]](#footnote-134) Examinations conducted in teacher training institutes and schools were initially internal school assessments. However, in the 1968–69 academic year, the practice of setting and exchanging examination questions among schools was replaced by an external examination system, which was fully implemented in the 1970–71 academic year.[[135]](#footnote-135) The specific objectives and responsibilities of teacher training institutions were formally established in the 1970–71 academic year. To enhance the quality of basic education, the enrollment of teacher training students was increased, and new teacher training schools were opened. Additionally, examination results were published based on the qualifications of teacher training institutes, with scores systematically ranked according to the number of points obtained.[[136]](#footnote-136) During the Revolutionary Council era, the University of Education offered various educational programs, including the BA in Education (BA. Ed), Diploma in Education, Bachelor of Education (BEd) under both the old and new systems, Master of Education, and correspondence courses. The BA. Ed, Diploma in Education, and BEd (old system) were initially offered during the period when the institution operated as the Faculty of Education and continued to be available after its transformation into the University of Education. Students who passed the middle school teacher examination in the 1970–71 academic year were permitted to enroll directly in the second year of the BEd program. Additionally, Master of Education courses were introduced to further enhance teacher training and educational development.[[137]](#footnote-137) Admission to the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program at the University of Education from the middle level began in the 1970–71 academic year, while enrollment in the primary and middle teacher training courses commenced in the 1971–72 academic year.[[138]](#footnote-138)

In the 1971–72 academic year, Myanmar's Basic Education Act stipulated that a high school diploma was the minimum qualification required for training as a primary school teacher. Additionally, individuals who had completed the primary school level were eligible to progress to the middle school level. The key reforms aimed at expanding teacher education included:[[139]](#footnote-139)

1.Revising the curriculum and syllabus

2. Developing student handbooks

3. Modifying the examination system

4. Enhancing the intellectual development of lecturers

5. Promoting academic excellence among lecturers

6. Conducting research on teaching methodologies

7. Establishing educational transition programs

In the 1974–75 academic year, the Revolutionary Council government's policy of making primary education free and compulsory led to a significant increase in student enrollment in basic education. With a sufficient number of qualified teachers available, the Ministry of Education expanded teacher training programs by increasing trainee admissions and establishing additional teacher training schools. The expansion efforts are illustrated in the tables below.[[140]](#footnote-140)

**Table (10) Admission Requirements for the One-Year Primary Teacher Training Course**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Workplace** | **Outside** | **Total** |
| 1966-67 | 650 | 250 | 900 |
| 1967-68 | - | 1050 | 1050 |
| 1968-69 | - | 1700 | 1700 |
| 1969-70 | - | 2500 | 2500 |
| 1970-71 | 1025 | 3000 | 4025 |

**Table (11) Admission Requirements for the Two-Year Middle Teacher Training Course**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Workplace** | **Outside** | **Total** |
| 1966-67 | 750 | 750 | 1500 |
| 1967-68 | - | 600 | 600 |
| 1968-69 | - | 1350 | 1350 |
| 1969-70 | - | 650 | 650 |

**Table (12) Establishment of Teacher Training Schools**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **Year** | **Township** |
| 1 | 1962 | Taunggyi |
| 2 | 1964 | Sagaing, Ywathit Gyi |
| 3 | 1965 | Theikone |
| 4 | 1966 | Mawlamyine |
| 5 | 1967 | Taungoo |
| 6 | 1968 | Sagaing and Pyay |
| 7 | 1969 | Myaung Mya and Yangon |
| 8 | 1970 | Bogalay |

To enhance the quality of teacher education, seminars, workshops, and the establishment of management boards were conducted, along with the formulation of school goals and activities. Additionally, significant developments in the teacher education sector were observed during the administration of the Revolutionary Council. Education seminars included discussions on teacher education, the establishment of a teacher education supervision committee, and the formulation of teacher education objectives.[[141]](#footnote-141)

The Revolutionary Council government designated the cooperative system as the second pillar in the establishment of a socialist economic system. Given that Myanmar's economy was primarily based on agriculture, the Revolutionary Council prioritized the formation of rural cooperatives as part of its cooperative reorganization efforts. Agricultural and multi-industry cooperatives were established to protect farmers from exploitation by landlords and moneylenders while also seeking to improve their socio-economic status. Furthermore, the Revolutionary Council initiated the drafting and implementation of cooperative plans aimed at launching production cooperatives, consumer cooperatives, and savings and credit cooperatives.[[142]](#footnote-142)

**Cooperative educational activities**

To provide qualified personnel for the Cooperative Department and Cooperative Societies and to enhance their understanding of cooperative principles, a temporary Cooperative Training School was established in Yangon under the management of the Cooperative Department. The AFPFL operated the People’s Peace Central Council Cooperative School three times a year and conducted annual examinations beginning in August. Additionally, the Government Cooperative Department administered Cooperative Examinations in March and August, allowing not only Cooperative Department employees but also interested individuals from outside the department to participate. The Cooperative Department examinations were categorized into three levels:[[143]](#footnote-143)

1. Audit Course
2. Supervisor Course
3. Primary Course

As of March 1956, the number of successful candidates in each category was as follows:

1. Audit Course: 865
2. Supervisor Course: 2,047
3. Primary Course: 94

To systematically implement and deliver cooperative education in accordance with the Cooperative Five-Year Plan, the State Cooperative Training School was established in October 1951.[[144]](#footnote-144) In the same year, the Myanmar Cooperative Magazine was launched, and various publications, including cooperative magazines, public economic journals, educational materials, and translated books and documents, were compiled and disseminated. Additionally, cooperative education initiatives were promoted through radio, film, and theater broadcasts.[[145]](#footnote-145) As part of efforts to align cooperative education with the Cooperative Five-Year Plan, 14 district cooperative organizations were consolidated in February 1952 to form the Union Wholesale Cooperative Federation. Consequently, the Union Wholesale Cooperative Federation established district cooperative training schools to support subordinate district cooperative organizations across Myanmar.[[146]](#footnote-146) The State Cooperative Training School categorized training officers into two groups. Cooperative education was delivered through two primary methods:

1. Instruction provided by principals and lecturers of the Cooperative Training School, incorporating both theoretical and practical components.
2. Instruction delivered by foreign cooperative education experts, supported by the State Cooperative School, its principals and lecturers, and senior officials from the Cooperative Department.

The first course at the State Cooperative Training School was launched in 1956, enrolling 54 administrators, accountants, secretaries, and other personnel from district-level cooperative associations across Myanmar. The second type of course was conducted four times in 1955 following the implementation of the Five-Year Plan, with 77 cooperative assistants and township cooperative officers participating. Furthermore, nine graduates from the first course were sent to India and Srilanka,while eight graduates from the second course were sent to Indonesia and Japan to gain practical experience in cooperative education.[[147]](#footnote-147) In 1955–56, the Cooperative Joint Commissioner oversaw the training courses. Similarly, three-week training programs were conducted in 16 districts. In 1958–59 and 1959–60, cooperative training courses were expanded nationwide, with the following number of trainees 5231.

As part of the Five-Year Plan, cooperative education was introduced as a subject in secondary schools, and economic cooperative education became a popular matriculation subject. To ensure the systematic teaching of economic cooperative education, the Cooperative Department organized training courses for teachers during school holidays. Additionally, the Cooperative Education Department oversaw the teaching of economic cooperative education and practical skills in matriculation schools in Yangon, Myaungmya, and Sagaing. Furthermore, officers who had graduated from Myanmar’s cooperative schools were sent to cooperative training institutions in Lambaré, Britain, and Kandy, Srilanka, to gain practical knowledge and enhance cooperative development.[[148]](#footnote-148)

Under the new education system of the Union of Myanmar, vocational education has been expanded and made accessible to students who have completed the middle school and upper school levels of basic education. The Revolutionary Council government has also provided significant support for various forms of vocational education, including industrial education.[[149]](#footnote-149) A seminar on industrial and vocational education was held in December 1963 under the leadership of the Revolutionary Council Education Officer. Based on the discussions, industrial and vocational schools in Mandalay and Insein were established under the supervision of the Industrial and Vocational Education Directorate. Admission requirements included a minimum of a high school diploma, and applicants had to be no older than 20 years of age.[[150]](#footnote-150) The Basic Education Law, enacted in 1966, incorporated vocational education tailored to the construction and maintenance needs of a socialist society, emphasizing science as a priority for enhancing productivity and vocational training.[[151]](#footnote-151) In 1968, an extension was opened in Kalaw, and plans were underway to establish additional industrial and vocational schools in Pyay, Mawlamyine, and Chauk by 1971. Previously, the Insein Institute of Technology admitted only 200 students per year, while the Mandalay Institute of Technology admitted 100. However, enrollment was later expanded to 300 students in Insein, 200 in Mandalay, and 150 in Kalaw, bringing the total annual intake to 650 students.[[152]](#footnote-152) In 1972, the Department of Vocational Education was established with the objective of producing skilled workers and experts.[[153]](#footnote-153) In 1974, the Revolutionary Council government reorganized the Department of Industrial and Vocational Education into the Department of Industrial, Agricultural, and Vocational Education. The functions of the department include:[[154]](#footnote-154)

1. To train experts and skilled workers for the development of industries.
2. To cultivate professionals proficient in modern technologies for the agricultural and livestock sectors.
3. To expand vocational education in alignment with the political, economic, and social systems of the Union of Myanmar.
4. To develop a skilled workforce instilled with a sense of patriotism.

The Revolutionary Council government established three primary objectives to support livelihoods:[[155]](#footnote-155)

1. Introducing pre-vocational education at various levels of basic education.
2. Developing vocational pathways and providing training for individuals who choose not to continue their education or are unable to do so.
3. Reforming higher education training programs to align with the country's needs.

Industrial education focuses on training skilled workers and engineers who operate from the ground up in factories and workshops. In industrial enterprises, the recommended ratio between engineers and skilled workers should be 1:4:20 or 1:5:25.[[156]](#footnote-156) In the current context, the number of graduates in industrial sciences and students completing training from industrial schools indicates a significant demand for skilled professionals. Moreover, due to the shortage of such professionals, various factories increasingly rely on graduates from industrial training schools. The ratio of industrial science graduates to industrial school graduates is presented in the table below.

In developing countries, the number of skilled workers exceeds the number of graduates in the industrial sector, while the number of skilled workers is also greater than the number of unskilled workers. In developed countries, however, the number of skilled workers surpasses both the number of graduates and unskilled workers. This discrepancy arises because, as science and technology advance, certain tasks previously performed by skilled workers can now be automated through machinery.

**Industry in developing countries**

Graduates

Industrial technicians

Skilled workers and other workers

**Industry in developed countries**

The subjects taught at the School of Industrial Engineering are:

* 1. Civil and Structural Engineering
  2. Electrical Engineering
  3. Mechanical Engineering
  4. Mechanical Engineering (Design)
  5. Electrical Engineering (Communications) and
  6. Mining Engineering.

The course duration is three years and the courses in Mechanical Engineering (Design) and Mining Engineering are taught at Insein Industrial Engineering.[[157]](#footnote-157)

**Technical high schools**

In 1962, there was only one technical high school; however, there are now six schools: two in Yangon, one in Mandalay, one in Pyin Oo Lwin, one in Taunggyi, and one in Mawlamyine. The number of students has also increased from 300 to 1,200.[[158]](#footnote-158) A technical high school was established in Yangon, where students could continue their studies at the Technical Institute after completing their practical training. The following training programs are offered at technical high schools:

1. Radio training
2. Electrical wiring training
3. Construction training
4. Forging and welding training
5. Diesel engine training
6. Automobile training
7. Welding training
8. Sheet metal training

The training period is three years, and the marks obtained in the second year are used to determine eligibility for continuing studies and entering the Technical Institute in the third year. Additionally, practical training is provided for students who struggle academically, enabling them to pursue employment in factories.[[159]](#footnote-159)

**Industrial training schools**

Industrial training schools were established in Yangon, Mandalay, and Aung San with the aim of providing vocational training to students who had completed primary school but were unable to continue their education for various reasons. The training period lasted three years, and students between the ages of 15 and 20 who had passed primary school were eligible to attend. The subjects taught included:

1. Radio training
2. Electrical wiring training
3. Forging and welding training
4. Vehicle maintenance training
5. Welding training
6. Construction training

Given the demand for industrial farm mechanics, a specialized industrial mechanic course was offered every three months, with a capacity of 100 students. The duration of the industrial farm mechanic training was six months, followed by a six-month work period.

**Crafts training school**

The vocational training school was originally located in Yangon. However, due to inadequate facilities and its distance from students' residences, it was relocated to Aung San in 1963. The school aimed to provide short-term vocational training in handicrafts. Young individuals between the ages of 14 and 20 were eligible to enroll, and the curriculum included the following subjects:

1. Rattan and Bamboo Crafts
2. Wood Crafts
3. Metal Crafts
4. Bookbinding
5. Leatherworking

**Evening engineering course**

Evening engineering courses are offered at the Industrial High School in Yangon, specifically designed for young individuals seeking to enter the workforce while continuing their education. The program has a duration of three years, with an additional one-year preparatory course for students who meet the admission requirements. The curriculum includes the following subjects:[[160]](#footnote-160)

1. Electrical Engineering
2. Mechanical Engineering
3. Structural Engineering

The primary objective of these evening courses is to enhance the quality of workers by equipping them with industrial skills relevant to their professions.[[161]](#footnote-161) The qualifications required for admission include the following:

1. Citizenship of the Union of Myanmar
2. Employment in an industrial sector within a government department or corporation
3. Sponsorship from a government department
4. Completion of secondary education
5. Successful completion of the school entrance qualification examination

Upon completion, students receive certificates in Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, or Electrical Engineering. While the training aimed to improve workforce skills, enrollment was restricted to government employees, limiting access for those outside the public sector.[[162]](#footnote-162) Previously, Yangon had only one evening engineering course. However, the number of programs has since expanded to include one evening industrial science course, two evening engineering courses, and five evening vocational courses.[[163]](#footnote-163)

During the Revolutionary Council government, significant efforts were made to establish industrial science schools, industrial high schools, and other vocational education programs to enhance industrial education. As an initial step, one industrial high school was established in each state and division.[[164]](#footnote-164) Following the promulgation of the Basic Education Act of 1966, the Department of Industry, Agriculture, and Vocational Education was created under the Ministry of Education. Under this department, the following institutions were established:

1. Government Industrial Science Institute
2. State Agricultural Institute
3. Agricultural High School
4. Commercial School
5. Machine Repair and Maintenance School
6. Handicraft School
7. Home Economics School
8. Fishery School

The Weaving Training School was initially placed under the Department of Industry, Agriculture, and Vocational Education. However, in 1982, its administration was transferred to the Ministry of Cooperatives.[[165]](#footnote-165)

**Agricultural Sciences and Schools**

The primary industry of the Union of Burma is agriculture. The University of Agriculture and Livestock, under the Department of Industrial Agriculture and Vocational Education, was originally established in 1924 as an agricultural college and research institute within the main building of Mandalay University. Initially, it offered a three-year diploma course. However, in 1938, the agricultural college became affiliated with the University of Yangon. Students who successfully completed the science course at the University of Yangon were eligible for admission to the agricultural college, where they could obtain a B.Sc. (Sericulture) upon completing a two-year program. In the 1954–55 academic year, the two-year program was extended to three years, offering degrees in both B.Sc. (Agriculture) and B.Sc. (Sericulture). Recognizing agriculture as a vocational discipline, the Revolutionary Council government established the Agricultural College and School in Pyinmana after 1962. In the 1961–62 academic year, 81 students were admitted. Prior to the Revolutionary Council's rise to power in 1962, Agricultural and Livestock High Schools had already been established in Myaungmya, Myittha, Shwebo, and Thaekone. These institutions have since been expanded as follows:

1. Shwebo (upgraded from middle school to high school)
2. Thaekone (upgraded from middle school to high school)
3. Taungoo
4. Nam Sam
5. Myitkyina
6. Lon Pi (Falam District, Chin State)
7. Hpa-An

Before the Revolutionary Council era, these schools could accommodate approximately 100 students. However, their capacity has since expanded to accommodate up to 900 students annually.[[166]](#footnote-166) In 1967, the program was further extended to Thaton. By the 1970–71 academic year, enrollment had increased to 200 students. In 1973, the institution was relocated from Mandalay University to its current site near the Pyinmana River. In 1974, the Agricultural College was placed under the administration of the University of Yangon and became the Faculty of Agriculture. Additionally, students who have completed the ninth grade can enroll in agricultural high schools without taking an entrance examination. Under the Department of Industrial Agriculture and Vocational Education, the following schools are also accessible to individuals with basic literacy skills:[[167]](#footnote-167)

1. Mechanical and Maintenance School
2. Handicraft School
3. Fish Farming Training School
4. Home Industry Training School

**Business schools**

Established in 1969, the Commercial School is open to individuals who have completed either the (A) or (B) level of the Basic Education High School. Its objectives are as follows:[[168]](#footnote-168)

1. To provide vocational education within a short period.
2. To offer vocational training for individuals unable to pursue university education due to various circumstances, enabling them to earn a livelihood.
3. To develop a skilled workforce that contributes to increased national productivity.

Courses in accounting, clerical work, bookkeeping, and Burmese and English typewriting are offered. The program duration is nine months, consisting of six months of theoretical instruction followed by three months of practical training. Since the establishment of these courses during the Revolutionary Council period, approximately 400 students have enrolled annually.[[169]](#footnote-169)

Another institution under the Vocational Education Department is the School of Domestic Chores. Its objectives are as follows:

1. To provide vocational training in sewing and cooking, enabling individuals from low-income backgrounds to earn a livelihood in a short period.
2. To develop skilled professionals essential for the establishment of industries.
3. To expand vocational education in alignment with the political, economic, and social objectives of the Union of Burma.
4. To cultivate professionals who are committed to fulfilling national responsibilities.

The Domestic Chores School offers courses in sewing women's and children's clothing, coat making, traditional Burmese cuisine, jam production, and the preparation of a variety of sweet and savory dishes.[[170]](#footnote-170)

The Machine Repair and Maintenance Schools offered the following courses:

1. Home Electrical Appliance Repair
2. Office Equipment Repair
3. Watch Repair
4. Mechanical Repair
5. Sewing Machine and Lock Repair
6. Bicycle Repair

Additionally, Handicraft Schools were established during the Revolutionary Council period, offering courses in:

1. Tailoring
2. Hairdressing
3. Home Electrical Appliance Repair
4. Rattan and Bamboo Weaving
5. Hardwood Weaving

Fish farming courses were also introduced in Kadonkan and Kyaukphyu townships, covering subjects such as fish farming, general fishing techniques, and shrimp fishing.

**Science high schools**

In the 1961-62 academic year, only 13 government high schools offered physics and chemistry courses. However, in accordance with the education policy that prioritized science education, the standard of science instruction was significantly enhanced. As a result, by the 1969-70 academic year, the number of schools offering science courses had increased to 436, as outlined below.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **Science high schools** | **Remark** |
| 1961-62 | 13 | All states and territories combined. |
| 1962-63 | 13 |
| 1963-64 | 13 |
| 1964-65 | 70 |
| 1965-66 | 140 |
| 1966-67 | 240 |
| 1967-68 | 377 |
| 1968-69 | 412 |
| 1969-70 | 436 |

To enhance the quality of high school science education, refresher courses for science teachers were conducted during the summer holidays with the support of universities in Yangon, Mandalay, Pathein, Mawlamyine, Maungdaw, and Taunggyi. In the first year of the program, training focused on physics and ninth-grade biology teaching methods, along with practical lessons. In the second year, instruction covered chemistry and tenth-grade biology teaching methods.[[171]](#footnote-171)

**Table (13) Summer refresher courses**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Course Name** | **Year** | **Number of participants** |
| Science Refresher Course | 1967 | 622 |
| Science Refresher Course | 1968 | 622 |
| Geology Refresher Course | 1968 | 50 |
| Science Refresher Course | 1969 | 750 |
| Science Refresher Course | 1970 | 750 |

**Surveying School**

The Myanmar National Land Survey Office building was established before World War II as a facility under the Survey of India’s military survey unit. It is situated on See Khone Street in Pyin Oo Lwin.The Myanmar National Land Survey School was initially established in Kamayut, Yangon, under the administration of the Department of Posts and Land Records.It was known as the Special Survey School and also provided agricultural officer training courses.Later, graduates of the training school took the lead in establishing a land survey school in each district, where they provided education in land surveying techniques. Each district land survey school accepted 30 trainees for instruction. As vacancies in the Posts and Land Records Department began to decrease, training courses were offered only in five districts—Mawlamyine, Kyaukse, Shwebo, Minbu, and Pyay—in 1922. During World War II, the Advanced Land Survey Course and the Theodolite Survey Course were first introduced at the Shwebo Special Survey School. Between 1948 and 1967, the written exams for the Basic Land Survey Course were administered by the Myanmar Examination Board, while the oral and practical exams were conducted by the respective District Secretary. Since 1968, the Survey School has been responsible for conducting land survey examinations, overseeing the Training Department and Survey Division No. 1 under the Department of Survey, Ministry of Forestry. The training courses offered at the Myanmar National Land Survey School include:

1. Land Survey Officer Course

2. Advanced Land Survey Course

3. Basic Land Survey Course

4. Theodolite Course[[172]](#footnote-172)

**Myanmar Forestry Schools**

The Myanmar Forestry School was established in 1898 in Tharyawaddy, Bago Division. It was later relocated to Pyinmana, Mandalay Division, then to Insein, Yangon, and finally to its current location in Pyin Oo Lwin. The Pyinmana Forestry School was structured into senior and junior classes, with instruction conducted in English. It offered a comprehensive curriculum that included both theoretical and practical training. Due to its high standard of education, the school was entrusted with training two forestry trainees from Thailand each year. The objectives of the Forestry School are as follows:[[173]](#footnote-173)

1. To produce experts capable of contributing to the country's forestry sector.
2. To cultivate dedicated employees who fulfill their responsibilities and serve the public with commitment.
3. To lead and coordinate social, economic, and rural development projects initiated by the state, ensuring their success through public cooperation.
4. To develop competent employees who actively participate in the implementation of national economic initiatives.

**Myanmar Weaving School**

Weaving has been one of Myanmar’s traditional crafts, passed down through generations since the feudal era. The first weaving school was established in Amarapura in 1910 by the Chief Justice of Upper Burma, Mr. Saung Da.[[174]](#footnote-174) Since 1914, the Saung Da Weaving School has offered the following courses:[[175]](#footnote-175)

1. Six-month course in shuttle weaving
2. One-year course in lower shuttle weaving
3. One-year course in upper shuttle weaving
4. Two-year teacher training course
5. One-year course in traditional Burmese shuttle weaving
6. Two-year course in textile weaving
7. Two-year course in factory machine weaving
8. One-year specialized course for factory workers
9. Diploma course in vocational training in collaboration with local colleges
10. Six-month course in traditional shuttle weaving
11. Three-month course in basic gold and silver embroidery
12. One-and-a-half-year course in textile craftsmanship

In 1952–53, Japanese-made looms (Harada, Herano, Suzuki) were installed and expanded at the Songda Weaving School. The institution not only provides instruction in traditional Burmese handloom weaving but also offers training in machine weaving techniques.[[176]](#footnote-176) The school operates with four departmental looms, 16 looms provided by the United Nations, and the expertise of 31 instructors, including Japanese machine weaving specialists, Japanese textile experts, and Indian floral designers. The curriculum consists of five courses covering eight subjects, with approximately 150 students enrolling annually. Currently, the school operates under the Ministry of Cooperatives, Department of Small Industries, and has been renamed the Songda Weaving and Vocational Training Institute.[[177]](#footnote-177) At present, it offers three courses and seven subjects. In addition to the Songda Weaving and Vocational Training Institute, there are 14 other weaving schools across Myanmar, comprising eight higher-level weaving schools and five basic weaving schools. The Songda Weaving and Vocational Training Institute is located in Amarapura, while the eight higher weaving schools are situated in Monywa, Pakokku, Meiktila, Taunggyi, Falam, Mudon, Shwetaung, and Sittwe. The five basic weaving schools are located in Kyaukme, Mindat, Loikaw, Myitkyina, and Hpa-an. The primary objectives of establishing these weaving schools are as follows:[[178]](#footnote-178)

1. To preserve and promote traditional Burmese weaving skills.
2. To support the development of small, family-owned businesses.
3. To enhance household income.
4. To provide vocational training opportunities for young women.
5. To cultivate skilled weaving professionals for state-owned, cooperative, and private textile and garment industries.

**Review**

During the Revolutionary Council period, vocational education—including industrial, agricultural, and vocational training—was a relatively successful sector. Educational institutions, such as industrial schools, agricultural colleges, and medical institutes, which had been established during the AFPFL government, were further expanded under the Revolutionary Council. Industrial high schools were opened across states and regions, while the Industrial Science Institute was separated from the main departments of Yangon and Mandalay universities and reconstituted as an independent university. Under the socialist system, the economy was predominantly state-owned, with a limited private sector. As a result, employment opportunities for industrial science graduates were constrained. In the field of teacher training, initiatives ranged from primary to secondary teacher training, culminating in the Bachelor of Education (B.Ed.) program at the University of Education. To familiarize teachers with the new basic education curriculum, refresher courses for middle and high school teachers were conducted during the summer. Additionally, the Ministry of Education published monthly educational magazines and articles to promote pedagogical development, disseminate knowledge of international educational reforms, modernize teaching methodologies, and broaden general awareness. Between 1978 and 1979, Teacher Training Colleges in Pathein, Pakokku, and Hlegu were expanded, while the Teacher Training College in Mawlamyine was upgraded. Graduates of the Songda Weaving School found employment in state-owned, cooperative, and private textile factories, with some establishing their own weaving enterprises. These graduates have since become skilled weaving experts and entrepreneurs. For young individuals facing challenges in continuing their education, vocational training provided crucial support in securing livelihoods. Domestic industries, including the textile sector, contributed significantly to the national economy by benefiting both domestic and foreign enterprises. Moreover, such industries attracted foreign tourists and generated valuable foreign income.

**CONCLUSION**

The history of education during the Revolutionary Council period (1962-1974) represents a significant chapter in Myanmar's educational development. This era was characterized by sweeping reforms aimed at aligning the education system with socialist principles, increasing accessibility, and promoting national identity. However, despite ambitious policies, several challenges hindered their full realization. The impact of these reforms continues to shape Myanmar’s education system today.

Basic Education

The Revolutionary Council placed strong emphasis on basic education as a means of fostering socialist ideals and ensuring mass literacy. Efforts were made to expand primary and secondary education, with new schools established in rural areas to reduce the urban-rural educational divide. The curriculum was restructured to incorporate socialist ideology, civic education, and national history, aiming to instill patriotism and socialist values among young students. The government also introduced policies to make education more accessible, including the abolition of school fees and the provision of free textbooks.

Despite these efforts, several challenges emerged. The rapid expansion of schools strained resources, resulting in inadequate facilities, a shortage of trained teachers, and overcrowded classrooms. The emphasis on political indoctrination sometimes overshadowed the focus on critical thinking and academic rigor. Additionally, the centralized control over education limited pedagogical innovation and discouraged intellectual diversity. Although literacy rates improved, the overall quality of education remained a concern.

Higher Education

Higher education during the Revolutionary Council period underwent major transformations in structure and governance. Universities were nationalized, and their administration was centralized under the government’s direct control. The curriculum was modified to align with socialist ideology, with an emphasis on technical and applied sciences that would support national development. Political education became a mandatory component of higher education, and student activism was suppressed to maintain ideological conformity.

One of the key challenges faced by the higher education sector was the decline in academic freedom. Professors and scholars were restricted in their research, with limitations imposed on foreign collaborations and access to international academic resources. This led to a stagnation in intellectual development and scientific progress. Moreover, the lack of adequate funding and modernization efforts resulted in outdated facilities, further hindering the quality of higher education.

Vocational Education

Recognizing the need for a skilled workforce to support industrial and agricultural development, the Revolutionary Council promoted vocational education. Technical and vocational training institutions were established to equip students with practical skills in engineering, agriculture, and industrial trades. These institutions aimed to produce graduates who could contribute directly to national economic growth.

However, vocational education faced persistent challenges, including inadequate funding, outdated training equipment, and a lack of experienced instructors. Many students and parents also viewed vocational training as inferior to academic education, leading to lower enrollment rates. Additionally, the limited availability of employment opportunities for vocational graduates weakened the effectiveness of these programs.

Future Prospects

The legacy of the Revolutionary Council’s educational policies continues to influence Myanmar’s education system. While the period saw an expansion of educational access, the emphasis on political indoctrination and centralized control created long-term challenges in academic freedom and curriculum flexibility. In the future, Myanmar must focus on addressing these historical shortcomings to build a more robust and inclusive education system.

Reforms should prioritize the modernization of infrastructure, teacher training, and curriculum diversification to meet contemporary global standards. Greater investment in higher education and research is essential to revitalize academic excellence and encourage innovation. Additionally, vocational education must be strengthened by improving its perception, aligning training programs with market demands, and fostering stronger partnerships with industries.

Overall, while the Revolutionary Council period marked a transformative phase in Myanmar’s education system, its long-term impact reveals both progress and limitations. Future educational policies must build on past experiences, integrating lessons learned to create an education system that fosters critical thinking, economic development, and global competitiveness.

# **APPENDICES**

**Appendix (A)**

**Roster of University Entrance Examination Candidates and Successful Passers**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **High School Students** | **Successful Passers** | **percentage** |
| 1961-62 | 65059 | 3131 | 5 |
| 1962-63 | 82182 | 3660 | 4 |
| 1963-64 | 88046 | 5884 | 6 |
| 1964-65 | 90439 | 7893 | 10 |
| 1965-66 | 125214 | 10711 | 9 |
| 1966-67 | 149646 | 16324 | 10 |
| 1967-68 | 97658 | 26219 | 27 |
| 1968-69 | 107467 | 23493 | 22 |
| 1969-70 | 133278 | 29004 | 22 |

**Appendix (B)**

**Status of Literacy in Meikhtila Pilot District**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Townships** | **village tract** | **Total Villages** | **Total Camps** | **Population aged**  **15 to 55 years** | **Illiterate population between 15 and 55 years** | | | **Number of literates between 15 and 55 years** | | | **Volunteers** |
| **Male** | **Female** | **Total** | **Male** | **Female** | **Total** |  |
| Meikhtila | 59 | 435 | 387 | 126817 | 1498 | 22559 | 24057 | 1437 | 21961 | 23390 | 1548 |
| Mahlaing | 53 | 261 | 341 | 77187 | 1415 | 16579 | 17994 | 1388 | 16173 | 17561 | 2569 |
| Tharsi | 81 | 238 | 256 | 77240 | 3647 | 22869 | 26516 | 3447 | 22216 | 25663 | 1548 |
| Wundwin | 69 | 219 | 187 | 87014 | 1673 | 18493 | 20166 | 1490 | 17534 | 19024 | 2017 |
| Total | 262 | 1153 | 1171 | 368258 | 8233 | 800500 | 88733 | 7762 | 77884 | 85638 | 7682 |

**Appendix (C)**

*Luyeechon* demographics (194-1973)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Times** | **Year** | **Basic schools** | **Mathematics** | **Industrial School Science** | **Teacher education** | **College University** | **Total** |
| 1 | 1964 | 254 | - | - | - | - | 204 |
| 2 | 1965 | 245 | - | 1 | - | 50 | 296 |
| 3 | 1966 | 207 | 11 | 9 | 6 | 65 | 300 |
| 4 | 1967 | 204 | 13 | 13 | 6 | 65 | 307 |
| 5 | 1968 | 206 | 7 | 13 | 8 | 65 | 305 |
| 6 | 1969 | 203 | 12 | 19 | 7 | 63 | 319 |
| 7 | 1970 | 209 | 15 | 14 | 7 | 62 | 322 |
| 8 | 1971 | 207 | 15 | 13 | 8 | 64 | 324 |
| 9 | 1972 | 206 | 4 | 13 | 8 | 66 | 311 |
| 10 | 1973 | 208 | 5 | 14 | 8 | 60 | 309 |

Source: Thaung Htut, 2000, 230

**Appendix (D)**

**Postgraduate Degrees Earned by Teachers of Arts Subjects, Categorized by Subject**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | University  College Name | Total  strength | Types of postgraduate degrees | | | | |
| Master  Domestic | Master  Abroad | PhD  Abroad | Total | Percentage |
| 1 | University of Arts and Sciences |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Geography | 118 | 28 | 5 | 2 | 35 | 29.66 |
|  | History | 120 | 40 | 5 | 2 | 47 | 39.17 |
|  | Psychology | 37 | 16 | 3 | 3 | 24 | 64.86 |
|  | Philosophy | 70 | 20 | 3 | 1 | 24 | 34.29 |
|  | Law | 28 | - | 7 | 1 | 8 | 28.57 |
|  | Anthropology | 14 | 8 | 1 | - | 9 | 64.29 |
| 2 | Economics | 171 | 16 | 19 | 10 | 45 | 26.32 |
| 3 | University of Education | 66 | 13 | 6 | 8 | 27 | 40.91 |
| Total | | 624 | 141 | 49 | 27 | 219 | 35.10 |

Source: Tin Tin Moe, 2017, 117

**Appendix (E)**

**List of Students in the Higher Education Sector Under the Ministry of Education During the Academic Years 1962 to 1974**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Academic Years | Students |
| 1962-1963 | 16843 |
| 1963-1964 | 16613 |
| 1964-1965 | 20587 |
| 1965-1966 | 26095 |
| 1966-1967 | 30516 |
| 1967-1968 | 33725 |
| 1968-1969 | 40139 |
| 1969-1970 | 45876 |
| 1970-1971 | 51074 |
| 1971-1972 | 52809 |
| 1972-1973 | 51811 |
| 1973-1974 | 53602 |

**Appendix (F)**

**List of graduates (1962 to 1974)**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| No. | Year | Diploma | First  Degree | Honour  class | M.Philo | MA | M.Res | Ph.D | Total |
| 1 | 1962 | 256 | 591 | 16 |  |  |  |  | 863 |
| 2 | 1963 | 281 | 1889 | 69 |  | 19 |  |  | 2258 |
| 3 | 1964 | 185 | 1415 | 1554 |  | 14 |  |  | 3168 |
| 4 | 1965 | 210 | 2156 | 80 |  | 16 |  |  | 2462 |
| 5 | 1966 | 259 | 2625 | 144 |  | 23 |  |  | 3051 |
| 6 | 1967 | 364 | 3295 |  |  | 13 |  |  | 3672 |
| 7 | 1968 | 359 | 5300 |  |  | 4 |  |  | 5663 |
| 8 | 1969 | 407 | 4611 |  |  | 46 |  |  | 5064 |
| 9 | 1970 | 370 | 6512 |  |  | 49 |  |  | 6931 |
| 10 | 1971 | 171 | 6919 |  |  | 40 |  |  | 7130 |
| 11 | 1972 | 167 | 9625 |  |  | 60 |  |  | 9852 |
| 12 | 1973 | 150 | 9881 |  |  | 98 |  |  | 10129 |
| 13 | 1974 | 569 | 11207 |  |  | 142 |  |  | 11918 |

**Appendix (G)**

**Number of students in universities**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Universities** | **1961-62** | **1962-63** | **1963-64** | **1964-65** | **1965-66** | **1966-67** | **1967-68** | **1968-69** | **1969-70** | **1970-71** |
| Medical Universities | 1414 | 1501 | 1674 | 2351 | 2543 | 2791 | 2939 | 3062 | 3394 | 3632 |
| Agricultural Universities | 66 | 68 | 90 | 197 | 363 | 519 | 665 | 808 | 939 | 960 |
| Industrial Universities | 604 | 675 | 665 | 1513 | 1866 | 2234 | 2565 | 2969 | 3217 | 3525 |
| Veterinary  Universities | 30 | 30 | 40 | 92 | 152 | 202 | 255 | 328 | 475 | 551 |
| Economics Universities | - | - | - | 1634 | 1877 | 1964 | 1987 | 2425 | 3025 | 3512 |
| Education Universities | 1060 | 1164 | 779 | 1350 | 1685 | 1061 | 1785 | 1982 | 2045 | 2740 |
| Colleges of Dentistry | - | - | - | 40 | 88 | 142 | 103 | 228 | 253 | 287 |

**Appendix (H)**

**The ratio of graduates with a Diploma in Engineering Technology (AGTI) to those from technical schools**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Year** | **B.Sc**  **(Engineer)** | **Graduates from 2 technical schools** | **Graduates from 2 technical schools** | **Remark** |
| 1956-57 | 72 | 93 | 58 | Should-have type |
| 1957-58 | 60 | 185 | 113 | 20:350: 1750 |
| 1958-59 | 107 | 156 | 99 |  |
| 1959-60 | 121 | 123 | 114 | 102:600:3000 |
| 1960-61 | 121 | 137 | 141 |  |
| 1961-62 | 110 | 133 | 124 | Since approximately 100 B.A.s are awarded each year, the total should be 100:500:2,500. |

Source: Tin Tin Moe, p. 138

**Appendix (I)**

**The ratio of graduates with a Diploma in Engineering Technology (AGTI) to those from technical schools**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **No.** | **School** | **Applicant** | **Entrance exam**  **Number of students** | **Successfully passed the entrance exam and was selected** |
| **1** | Insein GTI | 1952 | 1362 | 204 |
| **2** | Mandalay GTI | 806 | 542 | 112 |
| **3** | Yangon Natmauk THS | 1109 | 865 | 308 |
| **4** | Industrial Training School (Yangon) | 432 | 412 | 134 |
| **5** | Industrial Vocational Training School | 632 | 614 | 101 |
| **6** | Handicraft Vocational Training School | 161 | 88 | 75 |
| **7** | Evening Engineering Course | 374 | 368 | 159 |
| **8** | Pyinmana Agricultural Institute | 1400 | 960 | 50 |
| **9** | Agricultural High School (Myaung Mya) | 106 | 97 | 50 |
| **10** | Agricultural High School (Myit Than) | 126 | 126 | 50 |
| **11** | Agricultural Middle School (Thaekone) | 49 | 49 | 49 |
| **12** | Agricultural Middle School (Shwebo) | 90 | 90 | 50 |

Source: Tin Tin Moe, p. 139

**Appendix (J)**

**Saungda Primary Weaving Schools and Higher Weaving Schools**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **School location** | **School Level** | **Year of opening** | **Remark** |
| Kyaukme | Basic | 1954 |  |
| Lweikaw | Basic | 1951 |  |
| Hpa-an | Basic | 1957 | It was started by skilled weavers in 1947. |
| Myitkyina | Basic | 1955 | It was started in 1948 with funds from Kachin men and women. It was opened as a district weaving school in September 1955. |
| Mintat | Basic | 1951 |  |
| Sittwe | Advanced | 1946 | 1948 Basic, 1968 High School |
| Pakokku | Advanced | 1951 | 1951 Basic, 1968 High School |
| Falam | Advanced | 1954 | 1954 to 1991 Basic, 1992 High School |
| Monywa | Advanced | 1954 | 1954 Basic, 1968 High School |
| Meikthila | Advanced | 1951 | 1961-62 High School |
| Mudon | Advanced | 1947 |  |
| Shwe Taung | Advanced | 1948 | 1948 District Government Weaving School, 1968 High School |
| Taunggyi | Advanced | 1954 | 1954 Elementary, 1968 High School |

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