

Thesis Title: People's Participation in Educational
Management in Thai Society : Perspectives,
Problems and Prospects

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Abstract

People's participation in educational management in Thai society is an idealistic concept based on the belief that through it human potentials can best be maximized and their needs best fulfilled while state-run education yields maximum benefits to bureaucracy and the private sector.

However, almost 2 decades have passed. The state policy on people's participation in educational management, though adopted by successive governments, has not almost absolutely yielded any concrete result. Investigating the reasons behind indicated some explanations.

Primarily, the state has not been very serious or sincere. Although certain education models and approaches have been developed in the past 2 decades apparently allowing people's participation, in

essence the real power controlling education has always been concentrated at the center. Overtime, this centralized nature of power has caused both the state and its officials and the people in general to feel that it's simply impossible or very unlikely for the common people to organize and run their own education simply because they have not got potentials to do so. Finally, this investigation found that most of those initiating and pushing for the realization/implementation of this concept belonged to the middle class but were siding with the common people. Most practitioners and bureaucrats/technocrats had no faith in the idealistic concept. And if they had to do something about it, they did not know where to begin and how. The people themselves when accorded opportunities to practice it met with great difficulties.

Therefore, future education must be based on the principle of people's participation. They must be able to determine educational models, contents and methods which are congruent with their and their community needs and problems. State role must be reduced to that of supporting rather than controlling. The people themselves must be aware and confident of their potential to do the job. They must realize state-centered education is far from being responsive to their needs and problems. Thus, this common, people's consciousness must be furred using a number of approaches, i.e., political democratization, decentralization of power, condemnation of social injustice, making the mass media tool for educational and concept dissemination campaign, setting up people's, bureaucrats', and students organizations, etc.,

coordinated by a central body such as people's assembly. This body serves as a forum wherein information and people's education needs and problems get heard and spread to other social institutions and finally to the people themselves. At the same time, the technocrats must take advantage of any available conditions, join hands and organize. As far as the state is concerned, it must relinquish its grip on power and decentralize it directly to the people in every aspect in order to enable them to organize their own education.

In conclusion, for this great concept to become a reality and in addition to serious state attempt to decentralize power the people themselves must, of great priority, realize their own power and potential and push themselves to participate more both in education and society.