

Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Thailand is a majority Buddhist country composed of various ethnic groups, Thais, Chinese, Malays, Indonesians, Indians, Burmese, Laotians, Cambodians and tribal groups. A majority of them are nowadays nearly assimilated into Thai society except Muslims who are distinct in terms of religion, language and culture. Surin (1982) has pointed out that culturally Muslims of southern Thailand belong to Malay world.

Muslims constitute the largest religious minority in Thailand. The estimated number of Muslim population in Thailand varies from source to source. At present their number is still controversial, ranging from 2 to more than 5 million (Sauwani,1988; Muhammad Abdul Kadir,1986). A majority of Muslims live in the southern border provinces, namely, Yala, Pattani, Narathiwat and Satun. The rest are scattered throughout the country.

Southern border provinces refer to the southernmost provinces bordering on Malaysia. Literally they do not include Pattani as a province in southern border provinces of Thailand though Pattani has its long history of independence. However, Pattani is one of the main provinces in southern border provinces of Thailand.

Historically, southern border provinces, formerly known as Pattani, were influenced by Hinduism, Buddhism and local religions. They later embraced Islam

(Ibrahim, 1985). As the result of the importance of education in Islam, its flourishing here later on led to the establishment of educational and religious institutions.

The development of the Islamic private school

Historically, a *pondok* was among the first educational institutions founded in the region. It was considered a distinguished institution which played a major role both in education and religion. Thus, the *pondok* gained an intensive respect from the Muslim communities in southern border provinces of Thailand. Accordingly, almost all Muslims in the past preferred sending their children to *pondoks* rather than to government schools which were more standard. Since Muslim parents preferred sending their children to *pondoks*, *pondoks* became a dominant Muslim educational institution prevailing in this region.

Retrospectively, it was said that the first *pondok* of Thailand was founded in Sena, sub-district of Pattani province (Abdullah, 1997:29; The Office of National Educational Committee, 1965). However, another source argued that the first *pondok* was founded around the years of 1624 in Talok Manok, sub-district of Narathiwat province (Abdul Haleem, 1994). This evidence somehow showed that the oldest *pondok* was founded before the year of 1899. This evidence contradicted the information indicated by the Center of Educational Development for Region Two which stated that the oldest *pondok* in the southern provinces was founded since 1899 (Kannika, 1984).

Most of *pondoks* in the past were regarded as sacred institutions set up by *Tok Guru* with the assistance of Muslims for the benefit of Muslim youths seeking religious education. The *pondoks* had been dominant and scattered every where in the southern border provinces since its establishment and had brought about changes into Muslim society as Surin (1982:186) asserted that:

“... the *pondoks* serve as the agents of change, both on the cultural and religious levels in the sense that the process of religious purification is always going on and change is inevitable in a society where elements of animistic belief are prevalent and must be eliminated.”

Moreover, the *pondok* was among the institutions in the southern border provinces which was vital for the survival of the Malay language. This was regarded by Muslim intellectuals as a means of understanding Islam (Saynee, 1983).

Despite *pondok*'s sacredness, academically its educational system was looked upon as unsystematic. Its curriculum was not well written and its graduation depended upon the sole judgment of the *Tok Guru* (Prakit, 1973).

The *pondok* could not offer academic courses and its students had no opportunity to be exposed to modern knowledge and disciplines. They could not use Thai language as a means of national assimilation policy. Therefore, the *pondok* was viewed as not being helpful in raising awareness of Thai nationality (Prakit, 1973).

Additionally, there were various reports which stated the negative impressions about the *pondoks*. These were due to several reasons as follows:

1. *Pondok*'s students were more versed in religious knowledge rather than other disciplines. This was seen as an imbalance in the government's eyes especially in terms of modern development.
2. Previously education offered in *pondoks* could not serve the spirit of Thai nationalism for national integration.
3. *Pondok*'s students knew little Thai language which could not help them to meet the requirement of the government assimilation policy which involves a command of Thai language.
4. *Pondok* products could not help the government to enhance the national economy. On the other hand, it brought negative effects on political and economic development at the national level (Educational Region Two, 1969).

All the above reasons threatened the assimilation efforts of the ruling authority in their effort to educate Muslims in the Thai language and prevented them from learning too much of their own language, Malay language (Kannika, 1984).

In fact, the *pondoks* were watched closely but no action was taken since the ruling authority was aware that unreasonable intrusion might bring about unexpected negative effects. An alternative effort taken was the establishment of government schools in close proximity of Buddhist temples, as traditionally practiced by ancient Thai people (Rung, 1968).

Soon after government schools were established, big campaigns were undertaken to persuade Muslims to study in these schools, but Muslim parents preferred sending their children to study in the *pondoks* since these were the symbol of Islam

while Buddhist temple in which government schools were situated was the symbol of Buddhism (Nopadon, 1970).

This uncompromised parallelism between the *pondoks* and the government school (Wat school) made Muslim more reluctant to send their children to government schools. On the other hand, they preferred sending their children to *pondoks*. This was the main reason why a number of students in the government school was reduced rapidly. In 1905, there were only 119 students studying in government schools in the Pattani region. Though the government tried to establish their schools in other regions, the number of students was very little and later these schools had to be closed down (Nopadon, 1970). Muslims were blamed on the above situation as not giving priority to Thai education and the government school. In fact, the government had overlooked their mistakes of providing education in the Buddhist temple, in as much as providing education in the temple was religiously and culturally sensitive to all Muslims.

Pondok's situation became worse when the government had to close down their schools since Muslim parents had deliberately refused to send their children to study there. Then there was a proposal to close down the number of *pondoks*. This incident happened in 1910, but Thailand Minister of Education did not accept this attempt. He proposed that the *pondoks* should be supported if they were able to teach Thai language. He was of the opinion that it would be better if Muslims were aware of the importance of education. His opinion showed that the existence of *pondok* was acceptable; however, Muslims had to be encouraged to study Thai language (Nopadon, 1970).

The failure to convince Muslims to study in the government schools prevented Muslims to speak Thai language. Hence another step taken was to introduce the study of the Thai language in Muslim schools. Though the ruling authority had forced the teaching of the Thai language by sending their teachers as well as other teaching materials, the results were far from the satisfactory and this program was later cancelled (Kannika, 1984). These failures later on led to the government's intrusion in taking efforts to transform the *pondok* into private schools.

In 2504 /1961, the Office of Educational Region Two, with the agreement of the Ministry of Education, declared the *Pondok* Educational Improvement Program (Khanit Khaimuk, Akhom Chaikaew, Suwimol Kaewkaew, Anan Chitchamnong, Yusoh Taleh,1990). The program aimed at persuading the *pondoks* to voluntarily register under the government scheme in order to get a financial support and assistance. This attempt was to convince and persuade the *pondoks* to add academic subjects in its curriculum by using Thai language as the medium of instruction. The voluntarily duration of registration was valid between 1961-62 and resulted in 197 *pondoks* in Region Two registered and agreed to participate in the government's improvement program (Khanit et al.,1990). However, *pondok* owners did not expect the involvement of the government in their curriculum development since they believed that academic subjects introduced in the *pondok* were based on Buddhism rather than Islam. This was the main reason why the Buddhist dimension of the modern-secular curriculum introduced in *pondoks* between 1965-71 was not accepted and it brought about negative reactions

from Muslim which resulted in 109 *pondoks* being closed down in protesting against the government's interference (Khachatphai, 1976).

Roles of Educational Region Two in developing the curriculum for Islamic Private Schools

Education is very meaningful to the country since it is used as the medium of national integration. The people in southern border provinces are different from the majority of people in Thailand religiously, culturally, the nature of education offered in this region had to be unique and different from national education. Therefore the organizing of education applicable in this region had to conform to their belief and culture.

It becomes increasingly evident that the local-based curriculum is desired in such a situation. To make sure that the education organized in this region conformed to the national policy of education, the establishment of the government body looking after the educational organization in this region was very essential. As a result, The Office of Educational Region Two was founded.

Educational Region Two was a government body which had been assigned to supervise, help and promote all schools in four southern border provinces including Islamic private schools. In the meantime, this body had played a major role as a link between government and the Islamic private schools.

Since the government was convinced that the people of southern border provinces could not speak Thai, the communication between the government and people

of southern border provinces was frequently misinterpreted, or sometimes miscommunicated. This was because Islamic private schools did not teach Thai language. The central government viewed that, as Thai citizens, people in the southern border provinces had to be able to speak Thai.

Thus, the prerequisite tasks of Educational Region Two were to introduce Thai language instruction program to Islamic private schools. This effort was accepted with caution by Islamic private schools as well as the Muslim communities in the southern border provinces. The introduction of Thai subject in Islamic private schools had been in consultation with Muslim leaders and was followed by sending government teachers and giving monetary support to Islamic private schools.

In 2504, the first written curriculum of the Islamic private schools was developed and issued through mutual cooperation between Educational Region Two and Islamic private schools. Then Curriculum of Religious Studies 2513/1970, Curriculum of Religious Studies 2517/1974, Curriculum of Religious Studies 2523/1980, Integrated Curriculum 2535/1992, and Curriculum of Religious Studies 2540/1996 were published respectively.

Numerous textbooks, teaching aids and other teaching materials had been produced to contribute to the above curricula. Though Educational Region Two with the support from the government had spent a tremendous budget to develop each curriculum for Islamic private schools, the above curricula were not fully implemented in Islamic private schools. Only few parts of the above curricula were implemented. It was due to several reasons.

Firstly, these curricula were partially accepted by the central government, namely, those who finished their highest class and received the certificate of 3 *Thanawi* could not enter the university in Thailand. Only those who got the certificate of M.6 were deserved to join the university entrance. This incident made the Islamic private schools reluctant to use the curriculum developed by Educational Region Two. They preferred the curriculum that was recognized by the university in Middle East countries. They, therefore, developed their own curriculum and sent to Middle East universities for recognition. The recognized curriculum by the Middle East universities would be implemented in Islamic private schools.

Secondly, those who were sent to develop the curriculum for Islamic private schools were among those who were able to speak Thai. *Tok Guru* who was not able to speak Thai could not join this curriculum project and activities while most of *Tok Guru* were widely respected by Muslim societies as well as Islamic private schools.

Currently, Educational Region Two are working very hard to develop a curriculum for Islamic private school since its function under the Office of Educational Region Two will be invalid after the official announcement of The National Education Act 2542/1999 in 2002. However, if the above problems are not resolved, new curriculum proposed by Educational Region Two will be partially accepted as previously practiced by Islamic private schools.

The Establishment of the Office of Local District Educational Region

The Office of Local District Educational Region will be the government agent established after the promulgation of The National Education Act 2542/1999 in 2002. The establishment of this office is an attempt towards educational decentralization. This office will provide opportunities for local participation in carrying out education as expected by the National Education Act 2542/1999 to enable a community sharing in making a major curriculum decision for developing a possible local-based curriculum.

The Office of Local District Educational Region will become the chief agent responsible for education offered in its region as compared in the past, several offices had been assigned to be responsible for organizing and promoting education. These bodies were the Educational Region Two, the Provincial Education Office, the District Education Office and the Municipal Council.

After the promulgation of the National Education Act 2542/1999, all the above offices will be united into one office called the Office of Local District Educational Region. This office will play a vital role in making the national policy of education to become a reality and workable as desired by the National Education Act 2542/1999.

Local District Educational Region is a district-based rather to a province-based as Educational region Two which previously was responsible for organizing and promoting education in four southern border provinces. The province-based body was large enough to carry on its tasks and responsibilities. The establishment of a district-based organization is reasonable and workable.

The research about the possibility to establish a local district educational region had suggested that the requirements for the establishment of the local district educational region were as follows:

1. Its population were between 150,000 – 200,000.
2. A district whose educational institutions were more than 100.

According to the above requirements, there will be 295 Local District Educational Region in Thailand. As a result, 12 Local District Educational Region will be established in four southern border provinces, namely, 3 in Yala, 3 in Naratiwat, 4 in Pattani and 2 in Satun.

Curriculum changes in Islamic private schools

On June 14, 1966, the government had forbidden the setting up of new *pondoks*, and the existing *pondoks* had to register within 6 months (Prakit,1973). Soon after official registration, *pondoks* were designated as Private School for Islamic Education and later on became Islamic Private School as it is currently.

All Islamic private schools are required to teach academic or modern subjects along with religious subjects. In the beginning, only Thai Language and Social Studies subjects were offered together with religious subjects. Then a full academic curriculum was introduced. In other words, Islamic private schools had two systems of education with two different curricula implemented simultaneously known as dual education. The philosophies behind the above two curricula were explicitly different and contradictory. Students have to follow both curricula, the curriculum of religious or Islamic studies

and the curriculum of academic studies, in order to fulfill the school's graduation requirements. The curriculum of religious studies offers only traditional subjects while curriculum of academic studies offers only modern subjects.

The Curriculum of religious studies is derived from three sources:

1. Individual school.
2. *Ijtihad al-Madaris* (Islamic Private School Union).
3. The Office of Educational Region Two. This curriculum is endorsed by the Office of Educational Region Two and approved by the Ministry of Education (Hasan,1990).

The Curriculum of religious studies are divided into three levels:

1. Elementary level (*Ibtidai*).
2. Middle level (*Mutawassit*).
3. Secondary level (*Thanawi*).

As far as the religious studies curriculum is concerned, it has been reformed and developed from time to time starting from unwritten curriculum to the Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2504/1961, the Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2513/1970, the Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2517/1974, the Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2523/1980, the Integrated Curriculum 2535/1992 and the Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2540/1996 respectively. Currently, only the Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2523/1980, the Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2540/1996 and the Integrated Curriculum 2535/1992 are implemented in Islamic private schools. Details of these curricula are as follows:

Figure 1, The Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2504/1961

| Subjects | Hours/week |
|---------------------|------------|
| Religious subjects | 27 |
| Thai language | 4 |
| Vocational subjects | 4 |
| Total | 35 |

Ibtidai 4 years, Mutawassit 3 years, Thanawi 2 years

Source: The Ministry of Education, Bangkok 2504/1961

The Curriculum of Religious Studies 2504/1961 required all students to fulfill the requirements of 4 years in the elementary level, 3 years in the middle level and 2 years in the secondary level (see figure 1).

The Curriculum of Religious Studies 2513/1970 required all students to fulfill the requirements of 4 years in the elementary level, 3 years in the middle level and 2 years in the secondary level (see figure 2).

The Curriculum of Religious Studies 2517/1974 required all students to fulfill the requirements of 4 years in the elementary level, 3 years in the middle level.

The Curriculum of Religious Studies 2523/1980 required all students to fulfill the requirements of 4 years in the elementary level, 3 years in the middle level and 3 years in the secondary level (see figure 3-5).

Figure 2, The Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2513/1970, Elementary level

| Subject | Period /Week /Year | | | |
|----------------------------|--------------------|------|------|------|
| | Ib 1 | Ib 2 | Ib 3 | Ib 4 |
| 1. Languages | | | | |
| 1.1 Writting | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 1.2 Reading | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 1.3 Hand-writting | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 1.4 Composition | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 1.5 Conversation | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 1.6 Grammar | - | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 2. Religion | | | | |
| 2.1 Islamic Theology | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.2 Islamic Jurisprudence | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 2.3 Ethics | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2.4 Prophetic Traditions | - | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.5 Islamic History | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2.6 Quranic Interpretation | - | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.7 Al-Quran | 5 | 3 | 3 | 3 |
| Total | 25 | 25 | 25 | 25 |

Ib = *Ibtidai*

Source: The Ministry of Education, Bangkok, 1970

Figure 3, The Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2523/1980, Elementary level

| Subject | Period /Week /Year | | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------|--------|
| | Ib 1 | Ib 2 | Ib 3 | Ib 4 |
| 1. Religion | | | | |
| 1.1 Holy Quran | 5 or 8 | 5 or 8 | 4 or 7 | 4 or 7 |
| 1.2 Religious activities | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 1.3 Islamic Theology | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 1.4 Islamic Jurisprudence | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2. Languages | | | | |
| 2.1 Arabic Language | | | | |
| 2.1.1 Grammar | - | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.1.2 Morphology | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2.1.3 Reading Comprehension | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.1.4 Dictation | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| 2.1.5 Composition | - | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2.1.6 Conversation | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.1.7 Hand-writing | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2.1.8 Literature | - | - | 1 | 1 |
| 2.2 Malay Language or Holy Quran | 3 or - | 3 or - | 3 or - | 3 or - |
| 3. Social Studies | | | | |
| 3.1 Islamic History | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 3.2 Ethics | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 30 | 30 |

Ib = *Ibtidai*

Source: The Ministry of Education, Bangkok, 1981

Figure 4, The Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2523/1980, Middle level

| Subject | Period /Week /Year | | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--------|--------|
| | M 1 | M 2 | M 3 |
| 1. Religion | | | |
| 1.1 Holy Quran | 2 or 5 | 2 or 5 | 2 or 5 |
| 1.2 Quranic Commentary | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 1.3 Prophetic Tradition | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 1.4 Islamic Theology | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 1.5 Islamic Jurisprudence | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 1.6 Inheritance | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2. Languages | | | |
| 2.1 Arabic Language | | | |
| 2.1.1 Grammar | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| 2.1.2 Reading Comprehension | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.1.3 Rhetoric | - | 1 | 1 |
| 2.1.4 Dictation | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2.1.5 Composition | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.1.6 Conversation | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 2.1.7 Hand-writing | 1 | - | - |
| 2.1.8 Literature | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2.2 Malay Language or Holy Quran | 3 or 0 | 3 or 0 | 3 or 0 |
| 3. Social Studies | - | | 3 or - |
| 3.3 Islamic History | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 3.4 Ethics | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 30 | 30 | 30 |

M = *Mutawassit*

Source: The Ministry of Education, Bangkok, 1981

Figure 5, The Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2523/1980, Secondary level

| Subjects | Period /Week /Year | | | | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------|--------|-------|------|------|
| | TH 1 | | TH 1 | | TH 1 | |
| | com | op | com | op | Com | op |
| 1. Religion | 4 or 2 | - | 4 or 2 | - | 4or2 | - |
| 1.1 Holy Quran | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | - |
| 1.2 Prophetic Tradition | 2 | 6 | 2 | 8 | 2 | 7 |
| 1.3 Islamic Jurisprudence | 1 | 3 | - | 4 | - | 5 |
| 1.4 Philosophy | | | | | | |
| 2. Languages | 6 | 10 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 10 |
| 2.1 Arabic Language | - | 2 | - | 2 | - | 2 |
| 2.2 Malay Language | - | 2 | - | 2 | - | 2 |
| 2.3 English | 2 | 5 | 2 | 8 | 3 | 8 |
| 3. Social Studies | | | | | | |
| Total | 17/15 | 13/15 | 14/12 | 16/18 | 14/1 | 16/7 |
| | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 3 | 0 |

Source : The Ministry of Education, Bangkok, 1981

As for the Integrated Curriculum 2535/1992 required all students to fulfill the requirements of 3 years in the under secondary level, 3 years in the secondary level (see figure 6).

Figure 6, The Integrated Curriculum 2535/1992

| Subjects | Period / Week | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------|----|----|-----|----|----|----|----|----|
| | M1 | | | M 2 | | | M3 | | |
| | co | | op | co | | op | co | | op |
| | C | E | | C | E | | C | E | |
| 1. Language | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Thai Language | 4 | - | | 4 | - | | 4 | - | |
| 1.2 Foreign Language | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | |
| 2. Science – Mathematics | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Science | 3 | - | | 3 | - | | 3 | - | |
| 2.2 Mathematics | 3 | - | | 3 | - | | 3 | - | |
| 3. Social Studies | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 2 | | 3 | 2 | |
| 4. Personal Behavioral Development | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 Physical and Health Education | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 2 | |
| 4.2 Arts Education | 1 | - | 10 | 1 | - | 10 | 1 | - | 13 |
| 5. Vocational Education | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.1 Vocational subjects | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.2 Professional subjects | - | 2 | | - | 2 | | - | 2 | |
| 6. Religion | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | |
| 6.1 Religion | 12 | - | | 12 | - | | 12 | - | |
| 6.2 Basic Arabic Language | 4 | - | | 4 | - | | 4 | - | |
| 6.3 Arabic Grammar | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | |
| 6.4 Local Language | 2 | - | | 2 | - | | - | - | |
| Total | 32 | 6 | 10 | 32 | 6 | 10 | 29 | 6 | 13 |
| | | 48 | | | 48 | | | 48 | |

| Activities | | | |
|--|----|----|----|
| 1. Activities in accordance with the Ministry of Education concerning the activities in the institution under the Ministry of Education. | | | |
| 1.1 Boy Scout, Girl-Guide or Useful Purpose Activities | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 1.2 Other activities | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2. Religious activities | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| 3. Counselling activities or problem solving or teaching-learning improvement activities | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 4. Student's free activities | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| | 6 | 6 | 6 |
| Total | 54 | 54 | 54 |

Co = compulsory, E = elective, C = core, Op = optional

Source: The Ministry of education, Bangkok, 1992

As far as the Integrated Curriculum 2535/1992 is concerned, it is seldom used nowadays. The Integrated Curriculum 2535/1992 is the first attempt to integrate religious subjects and academic subject into one curriculum. However, this curriculum appears to have several drawbacks, some of which are as follows:

1. Religious students cannot follow this curriculum smoothly due to the fact that they have little knowledge about academic education. According to this curriculum, all students must study twenty credit hours of modern subjects;

2. It is said that such a curriculum affected the cumulative grade point average of students, namely, those who are good at traditional subjects but not good at academic subjects, their academic achievement will be negatively affected by the academic subjects or vice versa. This will result in low cumulative grade point average;
3. Those students who finish P.6 (grade 6) from the government school and have little knowledge about Islam find it very difficult to follow this curriculum because they have very little knowledge about traditional subjects;
4. It is worse for those who finished M.3 (grade 9) from the government school. It is too tough for them to follow this curriculum because they must study 18 credit hours of religious subjects.

Due to the above reasons, some Islamic private schools have changed their curriculum from the Integrated Curriculum 2535/1992 to the Curriculum of Religious Studies 2540/1997.

According to the Curriculum of Religious Studies 2540/1997, all students must fulfill these requirements, 4 years in the elementary level, 3 years in the middle level and 3 years in the secondary level.

Figure 7. The Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2540/1997, Elementary level

| Subjects | | | | periods | week | Sem. | | | |
|----------------------|------|-----|---------------|---------|------|---------------|------|-----|---------------|
| | | Ib1 | | | Ib2 | | | Ib3 | |
| | Com | | | Com | | | Com | | |
| | Core | Op | E | Core | Op | E | Core | Op | E |
| 1. Religious | 11 | - | not less than | 11 | - | Not less than | 11 | - | Not less than |
| 2. Languages | | | | | | | | | |
| Arabic | 4 | - | 2 | 4 | - | 2 | 4 | - | 2 |
| Malay | 2 | - | | 2 | - | | 2 | - | |
| Foreign Languages | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | |
| 3. Social Studies | - | 3 | | - | 3 | | - | 3 | |
| Rel. activities | 17 | 3 | 2 | 17 | 3 | 2 | 17 | 3 | 2 |
| | | 22 | | | 22 | | | 22 | |
| | | 2 | | | 2 | | | 2 | |
| Total(not less than) | | 24 | | | 24 | | | 24 | |

Rel.= religious, Sem.= semester

Source : The Ministry of Education, 2540/1997

Figure 8. The Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2540/1997, Middle level

| Subjects | | | | periods | week | Sem. | | | |
|----------------------|------|-----|------|---------|------|------|------|-----|------|
| | | Ib1 | | | Ib2 | | | Ib3 | |
| | Com | | | Com | | | Com | | |
| | Core | Op | E | Core | Op | E | Core | Op | E |
| 1. Religious | 10 | - | not | 10 | - | not | 10 | - | not |
| 2. Languages | | | less | | | less | | | less |
| Arabic | 4 | - | than | 4 | - | than | 4 | - | than |
| Malay | 2 | - | 3 | 2 | - | 3 | 2 | - | 3 |
| Foreign | | | | | | | | | |
| Languages | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | |
| 3. Social | - | 3 | | - | 3 | | - | 3 | |
| Studies | | | | | | | | | |
| Religious | 16 | 3 | 3 | 16 | 3 | 3 | 16 | 3 | 3 |
| activities | | 22 | | | 22 | | | 22 | |
| | | 2 | | | 2 | | | 2 | |
| Total(not less than) | | 24 | | | 24 | | | 24 | |

Source : The Ministry of Education, 2540/1997

Currently, only the Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2523/1980, the Integrated Curriculum 2535/1992 and the Curriculum of Islamic Studies 2540/1997 are implemented in Islamic private schools. However, after the promulgation of the National Education Act 2542/1999, all these curricula will be revised and reconstructed

Besides the curriculum of religious studies, the curriculum of academic studies is also implemented along side the curriculum of religious studies. The curriculum of academic studies is divided into 4 categories as follows:

1. The Curriculum of Post Elementary Education
2. The Curriculum of Adult Education Level 3-4
3. The Curriculum of Secondary Education 2521/1978 (amd. in 2533/1990)
4. The Curriculum of Upper Secondary Education 2524/1981 (amd. in 2533/1990)

The Curriculum of Secondary Education 2521/1979 (amd. in 2533/1990) and the Curriculum of Upper Secondary Education 2524/1982 (amd. in 2533/1990), details are shown in figure 6 and 7. These are implemented simultaneously with the curriculum of religious studies. These two national curricula become invalid after the official announcement of The National Educational Act 2542/1999 in 2002. The announcement of this Act is an effort taken towards educational reform.

As far as the Curriculum of Adult Education is concerned, it was implemented in Islamic private schools at time when the *pondok* was transformed into Islamic private school, and it is not longer used.

Figure 9, The Curriculum of Secondary Education 2521/1978 (amd. 2533/1990)

| Subjects | M.1 | | | M.2 | | | M. 3 | | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|----|----|-----|----|----|------|----|----|
| | com | | op | com | | op | com | | op |
| | C | E | | C | E | | C | E | |
| 1. Languages | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Thai Language | 4 | - | | 4 | - | | 4 | - | |
| 1.2 Foreign Languages | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | |
| 2. Science- Mathematics | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Science | 3 | - | | 3 | - | | 3 | - | |
| 2.2 Mathematics | 3 | - | | 3 | - | | - | - | |
| 3. Social Studies | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 2 | | 2 | 2 | |
| 4. Personal Development | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 Health and Physical Education | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 2 | | 1 | 2 | |
| | 1 | - | | 1 | - | | 1 | - | |
| 4.2 Art Education | | | 10 | | | 10 | | | 13 |
| 5. Vocational Education | | | | | | | | | |
| 5.1 Vocational | - | 2 | | - | 2 | | - | 2 | |
| 5.2 Professional | - | - | | - | - | | - | - | |
| Total | 14 | 6 | 10 | 14 | 6 | 10 | 11 | 6 | 13 |
| | | 30 | | | 30 | | | 30 | |

| Activities | | | |
|--|----|----|----|
| 1. Activities in accordance with the Ministry of Education concerning the activities in the institution under the Ministry of Education. | | | |
| 1.1 Boy Scout, Girl-Guide or Useful Purpose Activities | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 1.2 Other activities. | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 2. Counselling activities or problem solving or teaching-learning improvement activities. | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| 3. Student's free activities. | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Total | 35 | 35 | 35 |

Com = compulsory, E = elective, C = core, Op = optional

Source: The Ministry of Education, Bangkok, 1992

The curricula of both religious and academic studies are implemented in the Islamic private school simultaneously. The curriculum of religious studies is usually used in the morning while the curriculum of academic studies in the afternoon or vice versa. Religious students will follow only the curriculum of religious studies while academic students will follow two curricula, the curriculum of religious studies and the curriculum of academic studies.

Figure 10, The Curriculum of Upper Secondary Education 2524/1981

| | | | |
|--|-----|----|--|
| | | | M. 4 - 6 (Grade 10-12) |
| | | | Credit hours |
| Subjects | Com | | Optional |
| | C | E | |
| 1. Thai Language | 6 | - | Select other subjects at least 45 credit hours (all Buddhist students must choose a Buddhist subject in each semester for three years) |
| 2. Social Studies | 6 | - | |
| 3. Health and Physical Education | 3 | 3 | |
| 4. Science | - | 6 | |
| 5. Vocational education | - | 6 | |
| 6. Mathematics | - | - | |
| 7. Foreign Language | - | - | |
| 8. Art | - | - | |
| 9. Professional | - | - | |
| | 15 | 15 | |
| Total credit hours | 30 | | |
| Activities | | | |
| 1. Activities in accordance with the Ministry of Education concerning activities in the institution under the Ministry of Education. | | | |
| 2. Counseling activities, and or problem solving activities, and or teaching-learning activities. | | | |
| 3. Student's free activities. | | | |

Source: The Ministry of Education, Bangkok, 2534/1991

Curriculum of basic education

The promulgation of the National Education Act 2542/1999 has reformed education system in Thailand. Basic education is the 3-3-3-3 system comprising six years for primary education which is divided into two stages, P.1-3 and P.4-6, and three years for lower secondary education, and three more years for upper secondary education. Upper secondary education is divided into two streams, namely, academic and vocational streams. The academic stream focuses on preparing students for universities while the vocational stream caters for the skilled labor market.

When the National Educational Act of 2542/1999 is carried out into practice throughout Thailand from 20 August 2002 onwards, 12 years of basic education is offered for all Thai citizens free for tuition fees for nine years, starting from P.1 (Grade 1) to M.3 (Grade 9). These are compulsory for all children.

In order for organized education corresponded with the National Education Act of 2542/1999, new curriculum is urgently needed. In addition to the above reasons, several researches undertaken by the Ministry of Education findings showed that the current curricula implemented nowadays could not correspond to local needs. Secondly, curricula of mathematics, sciences, and technology are unable to make Thailand to become a leading country in terms of mathematics, sciences, and technology. Thirdly, the implementation of the current curricula is not able to make Thai citizen skillful in management and ways of life in facing social and economic situations that are rapidly changing. Lastly, learning foreign languages; especially English language, is inadequate

to make learners able to use English in communicating, seeking and delving into other knowledge and disciplines.

The curriculum of basic education, which will be constructed in accordance with the National Education Act of 2542/1999, should be undertaken as such that local needs are fulfilled. The curriculum should give emphasis on the knowledge, morality, learning process, and the integration of the following:

1. Knowledge about oneself and the relationship between one self and the society as well as knowledge about the historical development of the Thai society and matters related to politics and democratic system of government under a constitutional monarchy.
2. Scientific and technological knowledge and skills
3. Knowledge about religions, arts, cultures, sports and Thai wisdom.
4. Knowledge and skills in mathematics and languages.
5. Knowledge and skills in pursuing one's career and capacity of leading a happy life

(The National Education Act of 2542/1999, Sec.23).

In organizing the learning process stated in the National Educational Act of 2542/1999, Sec. 24 which indicates that:

In organizing the learning process, educational institutions and agencies concerned shall:

1. Provide substance and arrange activities in line with the learners' interest and aptitudes, bearing in mind individual differences;
2. Provide training in thinking process, management, how to face various situations and application of knowledge for obviating and solving problems;
3. Organize activities for learners to draw from an authentic experience; drill in practical work for a complete mastery; enable learners to

- think critically and acquire a reading habit and a continuous thirst for knowledge;
4. Achieve, in all subjects, a balanced integration of subject matter, integrity, values and desirable attributes;
 5. Enable instructors to create the ambiance, environment, instructional media and facilities for learners to learn and be an all-round person, able to benefit from research as part of the learning process. In so doing, both learners and teachers may learn together from different types of teaching-learning media and other sources of knowledge;
 6. Enable individuals to learn at all times and in all places. Co-operation with parents, guardians and all parties concerned in the community shall be sought to develop the learners jointly in accordance with their potentialities.

The curriculum of a basic education aims at full development of the Thai people in all aspects: physical and mental health, intellect, knowledge, morality integrity and a desirable way of life so as to be able to live with others happily (The National Educational Act of 2542/1999, Sec.6).

Basic education institutions will be responsible for prescribing a curriculum substance relating to the needs of the community and the society, local wisdom and attributes of desirable members of the family, community, society and nation (The National Educational Act of 2542/1999, Sec.27, pgph. 2).

The substance of the curriculum will aim at human development with a desirable balance regarding knowledge, critical thinking, capacity, virtue and social responsibility (The National Educational Act of 2542/1999, Sec.28, pgph. 2).

The subject areas of the curriculum of basic education are as follows:

1. Thai Language.
2. Mathematics.
3. Sciences.

4. Society Religion and Culture.
5. Health and Physical Education.
6. Arts.
7. Vocational Education and Technology.
8. Foreign Languages.

Figure 11, The Curriculum of Basic Education

| Subject areas | Period 1 P.1-3 | Period 2 P.4-6 | Period 3 M.1-3 | Period 4 M.4-6 |
|---|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Thai Language. 2. Mathematics. 3. Sciences. 4. Society Religion and Culture. 5. Health and Physical Education. 6. Arts. 7. Vocation and Technology. 8. Foreign Languages. | } 50 % | } 50 % | | |
| Activities for student development | | | | |
| Total | | | 1,200 h/y | 1,200 h/y |

H = hour, Y = year,

Sources: the Ministry of Education, 2002

Educational reform movement

In fact, proposals for educational reform in Thailand have been initiated since the reign of King Rama V of Thailand. The reform proposal, brought about educational reform policies, was proposed since there were problems needed to be solved and it also indicated that the previous reform did not remove all problems. In fact, Thailand has attempted several times to reform the education system in response to the rapid changes of social and economic situations. However, this attempt is far from success due to unstable domestic politics and other threats that threaten the national education. The current educational reform movement in Thailand is due to the following shortcomings:

1. Educational organization in Thailand is highly centralized. The Ministry of Education is always delegated as the administrative authority. Educational organization is controlled centrally by the government since the ultimate responsibilities and power to develop the curriculum and the allocation of the budget resides with the central government.
2. There is no administrative unity.
3. Long administrative hierarchy. The current decision made by the educational institutions is very slow. It is caused by a long administrative hierarchy. Even though various decisions have been made by the central education office. They sometimes take long time to be implemented. Central office sometime has to go to the regional office to the provincial and district offices before reaching the school.

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4. Lack of institutional freedom and independence. Sometimes, it lacks of institutional sharing in making some major decisions which are usually made by the central authority.
5. Few local participation in organizing the Thai Education. Contents of education provided lacks of relevancy between the in-school education and out-of-school life as all educators have realized that the contents taught in most classrooms are not relevant to the lives of the learners. School administration tends to manage their institutions in accordance with their own policies.
6. Educational plan is vague.
7. Personal administration system has often been under the influence of political power.
8. The importance of the higher bureaucracy is more emphasized rather than learners (Rung,1998).

Due to the above reasons, Thai education has been left behind both in terms of quality and quantity when we compared our education with that of other countries in Southeast Asian region which started their reform a little bit later than that of Thailand (Rung, 1996).

To overcome the above shortcomings of Thai education, the need for educational reform is very urgent. As a result, the National Education Act 2542/1999 towards educational reform was proposed and approved by Thai Parliament in 1999.

The National Education Act 2542/1999 is among the major efforts undertaken by the ruling authority as the national agenda to develop education in order to prepare

Thai citizens for the new millennium but the Thai education failed to prepare their population to face the challenges of this era. The current reform movement is an attempt to review the former roles of education played throughout the century so that education in accordance with this Act will fulfill the needs of individuals, societies and the nation.

The key areas of the reform are as follows:

1. There will be unity in the educational policy and decentralization of the educational management.
2. The reform will relate to the reform of learning.
3. Quality and standard assurance is needed for all schools.
4. Teaching profession will be emphasized.
5. Technology and innovation are very important in education.

The essential features of the National educational Act of 2542/1999 are as follows:

1. Ensuring access to basic education for all.
2. Reforming curriculum and learning process.
3. Encouraging participation and partnership in education.
4. Restructuring of educational administrative structure.
5. Enhancing educational standards and quality assurance.
6. Reforming teachers, faculty staff and educational personnel.
7. Mobilizing of resources and investment for education.
8. Utilization of technology for education (Rung,nd:1).

Some of the above features, items number 4, 6, and 7 need enactment of related law before these can be carried out into practice before august 19, 2002.

The promulgation of the National Education Act 2542/1999, at the initial stage was to enhance the status of Thai education in structural reform. Some regard this reform as an educational revolution since this reform movement will bring about drastic

changes in education, including Thailand educational system. A curriculum, the heart of education, cannot be avoided from its impacts especially on education below the tertiary level. The current structure of the school system, 6-3-3 will be revised and changed. According to this act, education is divided into two levels, basic education (Grade 1-12) and tertiary education (university level). Currently education before tertiary education is chiefly under the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, whereas the higher education is under the responsibility of the Ministry of University Affairs.

Educational administration in Thailand is divided into three levels, namely, central or national level, regional level and local level. At present, educational administration of this country looks highly centralized. The bodies at the local level do not assume strong roles, thus leaving the national bodies to play the dominant role. The proposal of the National Education Act is an effort to enhance the status of local bodies thus making them stronger as mentioned in the National Education Act 1999, Sec. 41 inter alia that local bodies are entitled to organize their own education in conformity with the local needs; therefore, local sharing in making a major curriculum decision is desirable (the National Education Act 2542/1992, 1993). The examination system is also relatively decentralized. Examination papers are developed and administered by each school.

As far as curriculum is concerned, a new curriculum can be designed in such a way that local needs are incorporated into the curriculum and local participation is a prerequisite as mentioned in the National Education act 1992, Sections 7, 8 and 9 (National education Act, 1999). In the past, curriculum development was practiced at

the regional and national levels. It was meant that only needs of certain people were incorporated into the curriculum. This is among the main reasons why the previous curriculum failed to meet the needs of students, teachers, parents, society and country. This failure was caused by several reasons. Firstly, the curriculum implemented was developed at the regional and national levels. Local needs were overlooked and not incorporated into the curriculum. Secondly, there is less participation from the community. Thirdly, education offered is not in line with the local ways of life (Rung, 1998).

The Curriculum implemented in Islamic private schools cannot be avoided from the above deficiency. When the National Education Act 2542/1999 is officially declared in 2002 the curriculum of all Islamic private schools has to be revised and a new curriculum has to be designed. Thus, Islamic private schools start their curriculum development though they have no experts. The curriculum development followed the traditional ways and basic tasks of curriculum development were ignored. Accordingly, local-based curriculum developed by Islamic private schools may not be a good one and as it fails to meet the local needs.

Rationale of the study

Islamic private schools are dominant Muslim educational institutions prevailing in southern border provinces of Thailand. To ensure that Islamic private schools offer education in line with the national education policy, the Office of Educational Region Two has been assigned to develop a curriculum, especially for the curriculum of

religious studies that will be implemented in Islamic private schools. This curriculum will be used along with the national curriculum compulsory for all schools in Thailand.

In line with the above assignment, curriculum developed by Educational Region Two is not widely accepted by Islamic private schools. National curriculum is also accepted with reluctance. Islamic private schools have demanded a new curriculum developed through their own efforts but it cannot comply with their demands.

Currently, Islamic private schools demand a curriculum developed by the individual school or its own group since it is believed that such a curriculum will fulfill the real needs of their localities.

Though the promulgation of the National Education Act 2542/1999 has created increased awareness on the significance of the local-based curriculum developed by the Islamic private schools themselves, generally there are no experts in Islamic private schools who could develop the local-based curriculum academically. They do not even know what initial steps they should take. Due to the importance of the local-based curriculum, guidelines for this curriculum are urgently needed in the current situation.

Statement of the problem

The central-based curriculum developed at the national level was not able to meet all the local needs, especially, a locality that was holding different belief, culture and language as in the southern border provinces of Thailand. Hence, developing the local-based curriculum to meet local needs was the main problem of this study.

Previously, participation from Islamic private schools in developing the local-based curriculum was very limited and modification of the National curriculum to be in line with the local needs could not be done easily. However, after the promulgation of the National Education Act 2542/1999, opportunities would be offered to Islamic private schools to design their own curriculum. Since there are no curriculum experts in Islamic private schools who are able to develop the curriculum academically, Islamic private schools do not know what initial step they should take. The guidelines for designing their curriculum are very much sought on this matter.

How and who would develop the guidelines is still questionable. The researcher took the initial steps to develop the guidelines for constructing a local-based curriculum and these guidelines were proposed to Islamic private schools in Southern Thailand.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to develop guidelines for constructing the local - based curriculum applicable to Islamic private schools. The Delphi technique was applied to achieve a consensus among a panel of educational experts regarding the proposed guidelines for constructing local-based curriculum.

Research objectives

The general objectives of this study were as follows

1. To identify opportunities that the National Education Act 2542/1999 have provided for constructing the local-based curriculum.

2. To develop the guidelines for constructing the local-based curriculum which will fulfill the local needs.
3. To study the experts' responses on the guidelines for constructing the local-based curriculum.
4. To determine the real educational needs needed to be incorporated into the new curriculum of the Islamic private schools.

Research questions

To meet all the requirements of the study, the following questions were inquired into properly and clearly:

1. How far did the National Educational Act 2542/1999 provide opportunities to design the local-based curriculum?
2. How far did the current curricula suit the local needs?
3. What were the educational needs essential to the guidelines for constructing the local-based curriculum?
4. What were the responses of experts towards the proposed guidelines for constructing the local-based curriculum?

Significance of the study

Thailand National Education Act 2542/1999 is an attempt towards educational decentralization throughout the country and this Act will bring about educational reform with a wide-range outcome.

Inevitably, Islamic private schools had been affected by this reform which resulted in the revision and reconstruction of the curricula. Therefore, there is an urgent need to develop new curricula for the year 2002. There are currently no experts in these institutions and the *Ijtihad al-Madaris* who can deal with the curriculum development.

As it stands at present, The Islamic private schools are in a very tough situation because they have to plan and design their own curriculum without the experts and subject specialists. They have no knowledge what initial steps they should take to start their curriculum development process.

Thus, this study was very significant in that it provided guidelines that could help Islamic private schools to find their starting point and also helped them in making their decision in reformulating goals, selecting and organizing contents and experiences.

Findings of this study provided some contributions in the area of curriculum development that was beneficial to Islamic private schools to arrive at the proper decision-making in constructing their own curriculum.

Conceptual framework

Tyler theory of curriculum development was adapted to develop the guidelines for constructing the local-based curriculum. Whilst Delphi technique was used to find out the responses of experts towards the tentative guidelines for constructing the local-based curriculum.

Figure 12, A summary of the analysis

| Context | Sources of data | Methodology/ Statistic used | R.Q | Decision |
|--|---|---|-----|--|
| 1. National Education Act/ curriculum | National Education Act of 1999/ Current curriculum | A documentary review | 1 | How far the National Education Act provides the opportunity to design the local-based curriculum. |
| 2. people involved in school | Teachers Administrative staff | Needs assessment/ Frequency, Percentage | 2-3 | 1. How far the current curricula suit local needs 2. To determine what needs are to be addressed in new curriculum. |
| 3. Experts | Educational experts | Delphi techniques/ mode, median, semi-interquartile range, Wilcoxon matched-pairs signed-ranks test | 4 | To achieve the experts' consensus on guidelines for constructing the local-based curriculum |

RQ = Research question

Limitations of the study

The limitations of this study were as follows:

1. This study was focused to answer the first key question of Tyler's model of curriculum development.

2. This study was confined to Islamic private school 15(1) in Educational Region Two, Thailand.
3. Only three provinces were selected, namely, Yala, Pattani and Satun.
4. The final analysis was achieved by applying the Delphi technique.
5. This study focused on the curriculum of Islamic private schools.
6. Only internal factors were studied.

Definitions

Southern border provinces of Thailand: four provinces located in southern Thailand, namely, Yala, Pattani, Naratiwat and Satun.

Pondok: the traditional Islamic school which offers only religious education. Its classes usually take place at the Tok Guru's house, *Musalla* or a mosque. This institution is considered both a religious and educational institution.

Islamic private school: a private school which offers both traditional and modern education and it is owned by Muslim.

Islamic private school 15 (1): Islamic private schools whose standard is recognized by the ruling authority. Such schools are divided into three categories, namely, (1) schools that are forty percent subsidized by the government; (2) schools that are sixty percent subsidized; and (3) schools that are one hundred percent subsidized.

Islamic private school 15 (2): Islamic private school the standard of which is lower than that of the government.

Educational Region Two: a government educational body which is responsible for providing education in four provinces, namely, Yala, Pattani, Naratiwat and Satun.

Tok Guru: a religious teacher or a Muslim scholar.

Ijtihad al-Madaris: Islamic Private School Association.

Curriculum guides: a curriculum product which contains details on topics to be taught predetermined learning outcomes and suggestions for instructional strategies.

Curriculum development: creation of new or revised programs of study for the purpose of school improvement.

Curriculum design: a particular shape, framework or pattern of learning opportunities.

Guidelines for designing the curriculum: guidelines for formulating objectives, selecting of contents and organization of contents.

Academic student: the students who follow two curricula, the curriculum of academic studies and the curriculum of religious studies.

Religious student: the students who follow only the curriculum of religious studies.

Basic Education: education provided before the level of higher education.

Educational standards: specifications of educational characteristics, quality desired and standard required of all educational institutions.

Large school: refers to a large school whose students are more than 500.

Integrated curriculum: refers to a curriculum in which both religious and academic subjects are offered simultaneously.

Separated curriculum: refers to a curriculum in which religious and academic subjects are in different curriculum.

Curriculum of religious studies: will be used synonymously with curriculum of Islamic studies.

Proposed guidelines: Guidelines proposed by the researcher.

Academic subject: only modern subjects no religious subjects are included.

Religious subject: traditional religious subjects.