

## Chapter 3. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

### 3.1 EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM IN CAMBODIA

The development of educational system in Cambodia after the independence in 1953 is classified by Mr. Nishino (2009) into the following stages:

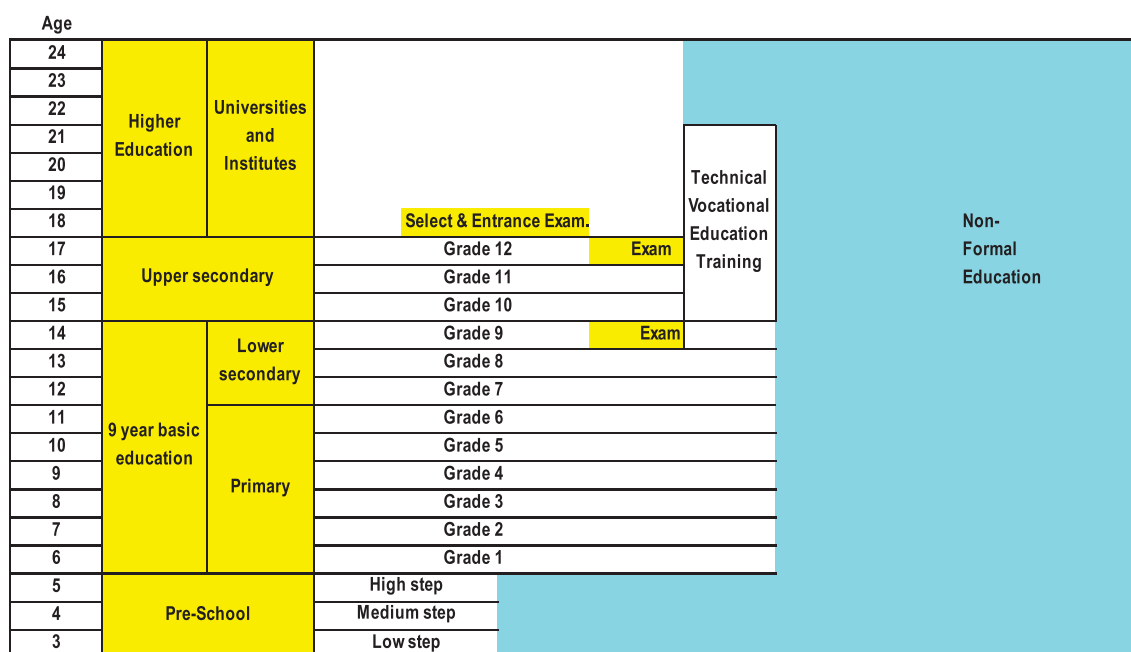
- 1) 1953-1970: Germination of new order of education system emerged from colonial rule by France: School system is 6 years for primary school - 4 years for lower secondary school - 2 years for upper secondary – 1 year for higher.
- 2) 1970-1975: Setback of national school system suffered by the civil war,
- 3) 1975-1979: Demise of national school system by the civil war,
- 4) 1979-1993: Rebuilding national school system
  - a) 1979-1986: 4 years –3 years -3 years
  - b) 1987-1995: 5 years -3 years –3 years
- 5) 1993- present: Reform of education system, 6 years -3 years -3 years school system in 1996

(Reference) : Nishino, Setsuo, *Cambodian Education: Approaching from Diversified Aspects (Gendai Kanbojia kyouiku no syosou)*, Tokyo, Asian Cultures Research Institute, Toyo University, 2009, in Japanese).

Following the period of rehabilitation and reconstruction in the 1980s, education system has been gradually developed from pre-school to post secondary educational levels and offered a variety of vocational and technical training programs. The system began with an optional three-year pre-school education then followed by necessary six-year primary and three-year lower-secondary schooling. The official age for entry into grade 1 is 6 years old, not a few children, however, attended from 7 years old in rural area. The first 9 years of schooling has been officially and constitutionally considered “formal basic education” since 1993. Article 68 of the Constitution, Kingdom of Cambodia, stresses that “the State shall provide free primary and secondary education to all citizens in public schools, and the citizens shall receive education for at least nine years,” as the compulsory education (Dy, Sideth S, *Basic Education Development in Cambodia – Targets and Policies for Quality Improvement.*, 2003).

Although compulsory education system is stipulated in the Constitution, the school attendance rate in lower secondary school is not so high, and the school dropout might not be low in rural area. New School Education Act enacted in 2007 so as to ensure free primary and secondary education (9 years of schooling) to all citizens. Government has been taken to expand school system to accomplish the aim, “Education for All” under the support by the international aids agencies (Nishino, 2009).

Figure 3.1 Education System in Cambodia



Source: National Institute of Statistics, Ministry of Planning, Education 2007.

There are also non-formal education programs, which aim to supplement the formal one, for adults and out-of-school youth. Students who successfully complete nine years of formal basic education can either continue to upper secondary education or take primary vocational training course in the following three years on examination basis. Post-secondary education is composed of technical and vocational colleges from some two to three years in length of study. There are currently four-years of full-time study for most undergraduate courses, except some institutions are still adopting a five-to-seven-year basis, such as pharmacy, dentistry, and medicine programs. Postgraduate studies, mainly master’s degree programs, are prepared in some private and public institutions. The government’s priority objective is to create equal opportunities for school-age children of all parts of the country and all ethnic groups to attend schools so that they will have the chance to complete at least primary education and towards receiving the full nine years of basic education (Dy,2003).

## 3.2 IMPROVEMENT IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

### 3.2.1 Educational Attainment of Population in Cambodia

Educational attainment can be measured for populations defined in several types of limited age. In order to measure educational attainment in Cambodia, three types of populations: population aged 7 years old and over, population aged 15 years old and over, and population aged 25 years and over can be used. The age of 7 years old is normal age completed the first grade of primary school in Cambodia. The age of 15 years old is normal age when lower secondary education commences. And, the age of 25 years is the age when regular school education almost ends.

**Table 3.1 Populations (in any language) in different Ages by Educational Attainment: 2008**

	Total Population	Persons by Educational Attainment						
		None	Primary Not Completed	Primary Completed	Lower Secondary	Secondary/ Diploma	Beyond Secondary	Other
7 & over	11,435,116	2,687,764	4,378,798	2,560,657	1,524,592	144,651	131,821	6,134
15 & over	8,881,890	2,168,738	2,797,215	2,127,092	1,506,002	144,651	131,821	5,705
25 & over	5,893,398	1,753,359	2,017,301	1,143,621	801,007	94,185	78,631	4,771
7 & over	100.0	23.5	38.3	22.4	13.3	1.3	1.2	0.1
15 & over	100.0	24.4	31.5	23.9	17.0	1.6	1.5	0.1
25 & over	100.0	29.8	34.2	19.4	13.6	1.6	1.3	0.1

\* includes number of the persons not reported in literacy and in educational attainment.

Table 3.1 shows educational attainment for three types of populations in the limited ages as of 2008. Observing this table, all of the types of populations in different ages indicate the largest proportion in the group of “primary not completed”, the second largest in the group of “none”, and the third largest in the group of “primary completed” among the the educational attainment groups. Accordingly, it can be said that more than half of population in Cambodia show the level under primary completed.

### 3.2.2 Change of Educational Attainment of the Population aged 25 and over between 1998 and 2008

Table 3.2 shows that persons aged 25 and over improved their educational attainment of population with lower secondary and beyond secondary. The proportion of those who have no educational attainment at all has decreased from 38.1% to 29.8%. Also, the proportion of those who did not complete primary education has decreased from 35.6 % to 34.2%. While, all of the levels including primary, secondary and above have increased the proportions of educational attainment except secondary/diploma.

Accordingly, it can be said that Cambodian educational attainment increased remarkably between 1998 and 2008. However, it should be noted that its levels is still low.

**Table 3.2 Population Aged 25 Years and over by Educational Attainment, 1998 and 2008**

	1998	2008	1998	2008
Population Aged 25 Years and over	4,449,903	5,893,398	100.0	100.0
None (Illiterate & No Education)	1,695,033	1,753,359	38.1	29.8
Primary not Completed	1,581,979	2,017,301	35.6	34.2
Primary	690,401	1,143,621	15.5	19.4
Lower Secondary	329,131	801,007	7.4	13.6
Secondary/Diploma	112,677	94,185	2.5	1.6
Beyond Secondary	21,612	78,631	0.5	1.3

Note: Population aged 25 years and over includes persons who didn't reply literacy status and educational level.

### **3.3 COMPARISON IN EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT AMONG ASEAN COUNTRIES**

Table 3.3 and Figure 3.3 indicate the educational level of population aged 15 and over in ASEAN countries. Cambodia has the lowest proportion of “higher education” among ASEAN countries, while Cambodia has the highest proportion of the proportion with no education due to the historical setting in Cambodia. The educational gender gap is found in every country except the Philippines. The big gender gap of educational level is observed particularly in Cambodia and Lao PDR. Cambodian government should make further efforts to expand access to basic education and to improve equitable access to education between males and females as stated in the Cambodia Millennium Development Goals.

**Table 3.3 Proportion of Population Aged 15 and over by Educational Attainment and Sex in ASEAN Countries, Latest Year**

Sex and Educational Level	Cambodia 2008	Brunei (a) 1991	Indonesia (b) 2005	Lao PDR 2005	Malaysia (c) 2000	Myanmar (d) 1991	Singapore (e) 2000	Philippines 2000	Thailand (f) 2000	Vietnam (d) 1989
<b>Both Sexes</b>										
None	29.8	-	10.2	26.8	15.6	-	-	2.9	6.6	-
Primary not completed	34.2	-	14.3	20.3	-	35.0	-	15.0	2.2	13.2
Primary	19.4	26.7	30.1	25.8	30.4	52.9	42.6	24.5	55.4	73.4
Secondary	15.2	61.0	40.3	19.5	44.2	8.5	45.7	37.8	23.9	11.2
Higher	1.3	12.2	5.1	7.5	7.0	3.5	11.7	17.5	5.7	1.9
<b>Males</b>										
None	19.3	-	7.2	17.3	-	-	-	2.8	4.5	-
Primary not completed	33.0	-	13.3	20.8	-	-	-	16.6	1.9	7.7
Primary	24.3	22.1	29.9	28.5	-	-	39.3	24.5	54.7	76.4
Secondary	21.1	64.8	44.0	23.2	-	-	47.5	37.7	26.8	13.0
Higher	2.2	13.0	5.6	10.2	-	-	13.2	16.4	5.5	2.6
<b>Females</b>										
None	38.6	-	13.2	36.2	-	-	-	3.1	8.6	-
Primary not completed	35.3	-	15.3	19.8	-	-	-	13.4	2.4	18.1
Primary	15.3	31.4	30.2	23.2	-	-	45.8	24.5	56.0	70.7
Secondary	10.2	57.2	36.6	15.9	-	-	44.0	38.0	21.2	9.5
Higher	0.6	11.4	4.6	4.9	-	-	10.2	18.7	5.8	1.3

Note (a) For persons aged 20-59 not attending school. Primary includes Primary and below. (b) For 16 years and over. (c) For 6 years and over, (d) Primary not completed includes less Primary. (e) Primary includes below secondary. (f) Primary not completed includes less Grade 4.

Source: United Nations Statistics Division <http://unstats.un.org/> (for Myanmar, Vietnam and Thailand) and Population Censuses in each country.

(1) General Population census of Cambodia, 2008. (2) Results from the Population Census 2005, Lao PDR. (3) Report on the 1991 Population Census, Negara Brunei Darussalam.

(4) Population and Housing Census of Malaysia 2000. (5) Census of Population 2000, Singapore. (6) 2000 Census of Population and Housing, Philippines.

(7) Results of the 2005 Intercensal Population Survey, Indonesia.

