

# The Colonial Educational Policy for Indigeous Malays and Vietnamese People – A Comparative Research

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**Abstract:-**After controlling the social and political situation in Malay peninsula and Indochinese peninsula, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, both the British and French colonial governments paid attention to convert the traditional education in these communities. In British Malaya, the colonial government applied a separate educational policy toward communities of native Malays, Chinese, and Indians. Meanwhile, in the French Indochina, the colonial government implemented educational reforms consistently for all communities, including Vietnamese, Laotian, Khmer, and other minorities. However, within this article, we only focus on the British colonial government's educational policy towards the indigenous Malay community as well as education reforms of the French colonial government towards the Vietnamese community. On that basis, the article draws the similarities and differences between these two education policies. To do this research, we used the historical analysis method and comparative research method based on relevant historical sources.

**Keywords:-** British Malaya, French Indochina, English Colonial Government, Education, Indigenous Malay Community, Vietnamese People.

## I. INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, after gaining full control of the Malay peninsula<sup>1</sup>, the British colonial government applied "ethnic isolation" as the key element to carry out their "divide and rule" strategy. This policy changed British Malaya from a relatively ethnically homogeneous society into a pluralistic society with fierce conflicts between indigenous and immigrant communities (Chinese and Indians)<sup>2</sup>. During

the British Malaya period, there was almost no interaction among the Chinese, Indians, and Malay communities. They lived separately in their permanent residences and preserved their traditional cultures. Therefore, when the colonial economy had strong changes and the demand for human resources in the socio-political fields increased, its impact on Malay, Chinese, and Indians communities was not the same. As a result, depending on each community, the British colonial government would apply the appropriate educational policy. For native Malays, the "dual education" system was implemented with an "elite" education program for the aristocracy and a "rural-oriented" education program for the majority of the population. Meanwhile, in the Vietnamese community in French Indochina, the colonial government also carried out major educational reforms to replace the Vietnamese traditional education with the Western secular and modern education. The main aim of these reforms was to educate multi-disciplinary human resources who could serve in the colonial government and contribute to expand the French culture.

Linking many fragments of historical events, we will examine the educational policy that the British colonial government applied to the Malay aristocracy and to the common people from the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. On that basis, we will analyze the development of indigenous schools for local Malays under the impacts of this policy. In addition, through a logical analysis of valuable resources, this article will provide the highlights of the French educational policy for Vietnamese people (in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries). Using the comparison method, we will draw out the similarities and differences in the educational policies of these two colonial powers to the indigenous Malay community and the Vietnamese people.

<sup>1</sup> In 1826, the English government integrated three settlements in Penang, Malacca, and Singapore into their colonial system and established a common administrative unit with the name of Straits Settlements (SS). Then, through agreements which were signed individually with Malay states, in July 1, 1896, Federated Malay States (FMS) was established officially.

<sup>2</sup> At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Malaya society was quite homogenous with about 90% of the population being Malay. But from around the middle of the nineteenth century, due to the need to expand economic and political control and increasing demand for human resources to supply tin mines and rubber plantations, the British colonial government encouraged mass migration from China and India. The influx of Chinese into mining areas began around 1830 and became a "flood" around 1850. (D.G.E. Hall, 1964)

## II. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

➤ *From the British educational policy for indigenous Malays (during the second part of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the first part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)*

The first person with the idea of a new education policy for indigenous people was Thomas Stamford Raffles (1781-1826). According to Raffles's opinion, the aim of the British colonial education was to maintain the pace of trade, to ensure the benefits of trade, and to avoid its evil effects (Hough, 1969). Moreover, he thought that the modern education institutions would create a path of entry into Malay society, starting with the ruling elites (Hough, 1969). Accordingly, Raffles wanted to establish a colonial educational system which included the following features: Firstly, educating the sons of indigenous families with high status in society and others with less status. Secondly, facilitating the teaching of indigenous languages to officials of the East India Company. Thirdly, gathering scattered sources of literature and traditional culture as an effective way to introduce Malay law, customs, and habits to everyone (Raffles, 1819). However, after his death, his ideas were not inherited and fully implemented in reality.

Until 1870, colonial educational policy basically maintained the traditional religious education<sup>3</sup>. With the efforts of the colonial government in educational reform, the Isemonger Committee (1869) and the Woolley Committee (1870) were established respectively to assess the educational situation of the British colonial states on the Malay peninsula. From the proposals of the Woolley Committee, in 1872, A.M. Skinner was appointed as the first educational Inspector in the Straits Settlements. With his efforts, Skinner made a very important contribution to the educational reform policy of the British colonial government on the peninsula. For indigenous education, Skinner built new schools based on maintaining the traditional Qur'an classes (Hamzah, 1991). This initially showed that the colonial government's new policy was directed toward a transformation rather than a complete abolition of the traditional education system.

By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when the FMS was established, the colonial administration system was gradually strengthened and the promulgation of a unified educational policy became more necessary. In 1899, the Education Code was born which created the basis and motivation for significant changes in the educational policy of the British colonial government. Accordingly, along with the expansion

of English schools, the colonial government also established indigenous Malay, Chinese, and Indian schools which existed separately. In particular, for Malays, the British implemented a "dual education" system to "maintain pre-existing social inequalities, as well as to engender new social cleavages" (O'Brien, 1980). According to this system, an "elite" education program would be applied for the aristocracy and a "rural-oriented" education program for the common Malays.

The application of the "dual education" system showed the colonial government's deep understanding of the traditional Malay culture and social structure. Before the British era, the Sultan had been in power absolutely in the Malay society with royalty and theocracy united. Under the Sultan, the aristocracy was divided into two groups: the first group had a certain position as heir to the throne; the second group had distant relatives with the royal family and they often served in the government system. Owing to power, taxes and other forms of revenues, the Malay aristocracy wanted to maintain their privileges. At the local level, the head of each region was a ruler along with the councils of the village heads. These rulers took control of a territory near the river mouth or other strategic sections of the river. This allowed them to expand their military and commercial power, sometimes overwhelming the Sultan's power. Under the ruler was the village heads (penghulu) who played an important role in creating the connection between the ruler and his subjects (Stevenson, 1975). Such a political system has been maintained for centuries in the Malay society. Therefore, the British colonial government desired through the application of the "elite" education program to attract the support of the Malay aristocracy which helped them to control the majority of Malay civilians.

Initially, most Malay nobles were indifferent to Western education; however, some sultans had realized the benefits of learning according to the system of English education. They discovered that the acceptance of British education would be an effective way for royal descendants to achieve high positions in the colonial administrative system. Sultan Idris of Perak state was a pioneer who embraced this educational system. He asked for support from the British government to establish an English school in Kuala Kangsa - the capital of Perak (in 1888). Also, Sultan Muda of Selangor wanted the British government to help him to open a school for princes (Raja) in Selangor (in 1890). This trend happened continuously in other states. On August 14, 1893, the Victoria Academy (an English school) was established by the government in Kuala Lumpur to create a professional learning environment for Malay aristocratic teenagers.

Although, the "dual education" policy only focused on teaching the basic knowledge at the beginning levels according to the views of Frank Swettenham, who was the Governor of SS and the Commander-in-Chief of FMS from 1901 to 1903<sup>4</sup>. However, due to the need for indigenous

<sup>3</sup> While the Malay community took part in the Qur'an classes, the Chinese continued to establish self-taught classes using their ethnic languages. The British colonial government invested only marginally to set up English schools which trained the clerical class to serve in the colonial administrative system. Western-style missionary schools were protected and received support from the government with the function of training office officials and low-level employees in the government system as well as providing manpower to British commercial firms (especially in Singapore). Therefore, in the program in mission schools, it still included some necessary secular subjects and English.

<sup>4</sup> The British education policy should only focus on placating the Malay aristocracy and providing with the lowest level of education to the Malay common people. Moreover, he thought that increasing career opportunities in the Civil

human resources, education at this stage also witnessed the formation of indigenous schools at a higher level with the establishment of the first boarding school in 1905 in Kuala Kangsar - the royal capital of Perak state. In 1909, it was renamed Malay College - M.C. With his progressive educational perspective, R.J.Wilkinson who was appointed the School Inspector General in FMS, allowed outstanding students from different classes in Malay society to study at M.C. However, after R.J.Wilkinson left the Ministry of Education in 1906, the selection of M.C focused entirely on the sons of aristocratic families or royal families. The main purpose of this change was to provide a high quality education for Sultans and Malay nobles which was similar to English public education. It was necessary to prepare for their participation in the colonial administration system (Watson, 2012). According to statistics, from 1910 to 1921, all graduates from M.C had been recruited into the Malay Administrative Service. Moreover, many graduates from M.C participated in political life and became leaders or Sultans after the Malay independence. Thus, it can be said that M.C was not only the exclusive university in Malay education, but it also contributed significantly to creating a relatively peaceful political environment and an elegant nationalism which was almost unique in Southeast Asia (Tilman, 1968).

Contrary to elite education for the Malay aristocracy, the goal of education for Malay common people was to curb their intellectual and economic development, thereby preventing their political awareness (Ly, 2011). Pre-British period, the Malays were educated through the class of learning Qur'an in their villages and they did not have any opportunity to study at higher educational level or to be in contact with modern education. Therefore, initially, when establishing educational programs for the common Malays, the colonial government emphasized the informal learning in the learner's family with their parents or others. For example, a boy could learn to fish, to repair nets, to tend buffalo or to build a house, and a girl could learn to cook, to sew, to cultivate vegetables and rice, or to tend domestic animals (O'Brien, 1980). With the expansion of the British power on the Malay peninsula, the colonial government started to be concerned about the indigenous community. This led to the appearance of Malay indigenous schools after the educational reform policy by the colonial government in the mid-nineteenth century on the basis of religious classes in Malay villages.

➤ *The establishment and development of the indigenous school system in the British Malaya*

The first Malay school was established in 1855 in Gelugur, Penang and then due to the increase in the number of students, indigenous schools at Telok Belanga and Kampung Glam (Singapore) were founded (Ministry of Education, 2008). From the 1860s, numerous indigenous schools continued to appear in the western and southern states of the British Malaya.

The main language used in the Malay schools was Bahasa Melayu. However, after the educational reform of Skinner, Latin letters began to be taught in parallel with Jawi which was created from the Malay language based on Arabic writing. The purpose of this policy was to create a good educational environment for Malay children to study in English in the future (Mehmet, 2010). Finally, after a long period of using bilingualism, with the reason that the simultaneous use of two types of writing would create a burden for the students, Jawi was excluded from the curriculum.

Unlike English schools, most of the Malay native schools were built in remote areas and equipments for teaching were poor. According to the new educational policy, the education program was implemented for 4 years and religious education was separated from teaching knowledge. If Malay students wanted to study at higher levels, they must attend special English language conversion classes, which were called "Remove Class" for two years. However, according to Swettenham's view, indiscriminate teaching of English was very dangerous because it could make Malays feel discontented with studying for a manual occupation (Stevenson, 1975). Therefore, it was difficult for native students to overcome these conversion classes to take part in English schools.

As with English schools, Malay schools also faced difficulties in attracting the participation of indigenous people. Although Malay schools provided completely free textbooks for students and taught in the Malay language itself, these new schools did not receive a positive response from the community. They were "indifferent, doubtful or resentful because of their fear of giving up their faith, about the costs, the inconvenience, and the loss of income from their sons" (Watson, 2012). In particular, religion was still the main reason which made Malays refuse a new education model because they feared that their children would be tempted to renounce Islam and followed the English religion" (Roff, 1967). To gradually eliminate this psychological barrier, in 1872, A. M. Skinner decided to put the Qur'an into the curriculum. Accordingly, the compulsory subjects would be taught in the morning and the afternoon was the time for studying the Qur'an. Although Skinner admitted that: "there was not any educational progress until the teaching of the Qur'an was separated from the curriculum", he also understood that this was a practical solution that the colonial British government was forced to adopt in order to attract to more Malays in the new educational type. Although this change contributed to fostering belief for Malays, the secular nature of the education in indigenous schools did not convince them. Clearly, the Muslim cultural and social environment in the countryside had prevented Malay people from accessing Western education. On the other hand, they had to spend too much time with agricultural activities, so they were less interested in these indigenous schools. It is the reason why while the educational situation in SS improved significantly, in the states of FMS, Malays were still indifferent to this new type of school.

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Service was necessary, but it should only be for Malays who had a good background

The "forced education" policy which was implemented in the 1890s and 1900s, was a measure to increase the proportion of children attending school. Accordingly, Malay parents were required to send their children to the local schools, otherwise they would be fined a certain amount of money. The role of the village chief was to convince Malays about the benefits of attending new schools. The results were quite satisfactory. By the end of the nineteenth century, there were about 130 Malay indigenous schools in FMS, and by the beginning of the 20th century, the number increased to 171, and by 1920 there were 400 schools with 20,319 students. Even some of the least developed states in UMS like Kedah and Johor had 129 schools with 9,000 students. By 1920, in British Malaya, there were 757 Malay indigenous schools with 46,000 students between the ages of 5 and 15, accounting for about 12% of the total Malay population (Roff, 1967).

The increase of indigenous schools led to a shortage of local teachers. Therefore, in 1878, Telok Belanga Training College and Taiping Malay Training College, which were the first two primary teacher training schools for Malays, were established. But the Telok Belanga school only operated for 17 years and was closed in 1895. Then, the colonial government continued to establish other primary teacher training schools such as Malacca Malay Training College (1900); Matang Malay Training College (1913), Sultan Idris Training College (1922), and Malay Girls Training College (1935).

Thus, in rural areas, the traditional Qur'an classes had been transformed into indigenous Malay schools. In these new schools, the direct instructors were not the same religious leaders or scholars as it had in the past. Moreover, religious education was separate from the main curriculum and was taught separately in the afternoon. With the dominance of secular content in the curriculum, Malay schools had actually turned into secular educational institutions under the control of the British colonial government.

#### *French education policies towards Vietnamese people (the first half part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)*

For a long time, Vietnamese feudal dynasties applied a model of Confucian education to select central and local mandarins who were educated to serve the royal apparatus and develop the culture of the country in the spirit of Confucianism<sup>5</sup>. Besides, teaching of Buddhism and private education still existed and contributed to improve the intellectual level of Vietnamese people.

After invading the south of Vietnam (1862), the French government started implementing the new educational policy in this land by building a system of interpreter schools, where the French trained a team of native people who could use French language working in the colonial government. In order to promote local education in Nam Ky (Cochinchina),

<sup>5</sup> Confucian education in Vietnam from the 11th century to the early twentieth century has trained 2897 Ph.Ds of high quality, effectively serving the feudal state and developing national culture.

from 1874 to 1879, the French colonial government issued two educational regulations, including: Regulations for Nam Ky education (1874) and Regulation of teacher ranks in the Nam Ky Educational Department (1879). In particular, according to the Regulation in 1874, all private schools only operated when the colonial government allowed and the public education program was divided into two levels: Primary and Secondary education (Phan, 2006).

Although the French government had an interest in developing education in Nam Ky, the results were quite limited. After 25 years, the French government did not replace the Chinese characters with Vietnamese scripts and the French language. "*They failed a step in spreading "European civilization" when they thought it was easy and simple*" (Phan, 2006). This reason explained why the French were cautious when organizing education in Bac Ky (Tonkin) and Trung Ky (Annam), especially in two educational reforms at a later stage.

From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the French colonial government started to conduct their colonial exploitation. And it was the time when Governor General Paul Beau implemented the first educational reform in 1906. The goal of this reform was to build a colonial education system that blended the French education with the indigenous education.

The first educational reform (1906) was carried out by the Governor-General of Indochina - Paul Beau (and later perfected by Governor-General Klobukowsky and Governor-General Albert Sarraut), with the desire to build an education which was harmonious between French elements and indigenous ones. Under decisions of the Council for the Development of Indigenous Education in Indochina (Conseil de perfectionnement de l'Enseignement indigène en Indochine)<sup>6</sup> and the Council for the improvement of indigenous education in Tonkin (Comité local de perfectionnement de l'Enseignement indigène)<sup>7</sup>, the content of the 1906 educational reform of the French colonial government would be to bring Confucian schools into the public school system under the control of the Indochina Directorate of Public Instruction (Direction de l'Instruction Publique de l'Indochine)<sup>8</sup>, and to transfer Confucian schools to French - Vietnam schools. In addition, Governor-General

<sup>6</sup>The Council for the Development of Indigenous Education in Indochina (Conseil de perfectionnement de l'Enseignement indigène en Indochine) was established in August 3, 1906.

<sup>7</sup>the Council for the improvement of indigenous education in Tonkin (Comité local de perfectionnement de l'Enseignement indigène) was established in May 16, 1906.

<sup>8</sup>The Indochina Directorate of Public Instruction (Direction de l'Instruction Publique de l'Indochine) was established in June 20, 1905. Its responsibility included:

- Developing educational programs, teaching methods and coordinating with the Directors of Educational Departments to propose the most suitable educational plan;
- Submitting proposals to the Governor-General to improve educational performance;
- Proposing a plan to build new schools or educational institutions.



Paul Beau also issued a Decree regulating the composition of the Council for the Improvement of Indigenous Education in Cochinchina (August 26, 1906) and the Local Education Service in Annam (October 30, 1906). On that basis, the French government in turn issued decrees to establish committees in charge of this education reform. Accordingly, in the educational system and the examination system of Tonkin, Annam and Cochinchina, Chinese characters gradually was not erased and it would be replaced by French characters. Moreover, Western sciences such as Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, and Natural History were taught in the curriculum. Especially, the French colonial government was also concerned about educating the Vietnamese women as it did in France at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Under the reform program, female students had the right to study at French-Vietnamese schools. In some provinces, girls' schools would be built from elementary to primary and junior college levels. The first French-Vietnamese girls' school was built in Nam Dinh province and was the girl's primary school in Bac Ky. Following that, different girls' schools were founded in Hanoi city, in Ha Dong city (1910), and in Hue city (1917). After graduating from the Primary College, if they wanted to continue studying, the girls could enrol in the Bao Ho High School and study with local boys.

Along with the consolidation and expansion of the general education system, on May 16, 1906, Governor-General Paul Beau established the Indochina University "to spread scientific knowledge and methods of Europeans in the Far East" (National Archives Center I, 2016). According to the Decree, Indochina University consisted of 5 members, including: College of Law, College of Practical Science, College of Medicine, College of Construction, and College of Arts.

The educational reform in 1906 led to the transformation of Vietnamese education both in the Confucian and French-Vietnamese educational systems. For Confucian education, the colonial government cut down a part of its curriculum and added it to the latest contents of Western science. As a result, the new Confucian education was founded with three levels: Preschool, Primary school, and Secondary School, which belonged to the public system controlled by the French colonial government through Nha hoc chinh (Ministry of Education). For French-Vietnamese education, the biggest achievement in this educational reform was the establishment of the Indochina University, the girl's school, and the vocational school. With the goal of the converting indigenous schools into French-Vietnamese schools, the French colonial government focused on reorganizing indigenous schools and bringing them into the public education system under control of the Nha hoc chinh (Indochina Directorate of Public Instruction). According to statistics, until 1913, the total number of French-Vietnamese schools in Tonkin were 51 with more than 6,000 students. In Annam in 1913, there were 23 French-Vietnamese schools with less than 1000 pupils. In Cochinchina, in 1913, the number of French-Vietnamese schools was 737 with more than 43,000 students, accounting for more than 90% of the total number of French-Vietnamese schools in Vietnam (Tran, 2012). As a result, through the establishment of the

French-Vietnamese education system, Western education was introduced deeper into the traditional Confucian education and creating favorable conditions for transforming this traditional education into modern education.

Although the French actively changed the traditional Vietnamese education, the quality of education after the first educational reform did not meet the requirements which was set by Governor-General Paul Beau. In French - Vietnamese primary schools, first year students studied 14 subjects in French out of 20 subjects which was the same as the primary level in France. Because of many difficulties in terms of teachers, textbooks, and facilities, so the quality and efficiency of education could not be high (Phan, 2006). Due to inadequate investment, the facilities of the schools were poor and the program was also sketchy and temporary. Besides, the Vietnamese script and the French language were not familiar to Vietnamese people. Therefore, if they wanted to pass the examinations in their village, they had to spend a lot of time studying for them. In addition, teachers were not educated regularly and textbooks were insufficient. The above limitations of the first education reform became the main reason to promote the second education reform in 1917. The goal of the second educational reform was to overcome the limitations in the first reform, to eliminate the traditional education program completely, and then build a French education system in the Vietnamese community.

The second educational reform was carried out by Governor-General Albert Sarraut. He proposed a full educational program in French Indochina in general and in the Vietnamese community in particular through the issuance of the set of General Regulations of Public Instruction in Indochina<sup>9</sup> ("Règlement general de l'Instruction publique en Indochine) in 1917. This official education law included rules about educational administration agency, the school system, the program, the teachers, the way of assessment, exams, and school inspections. For the first time in Vietnamese history, Confucian education was closed and a new education system was established. Learners began to have new thoughts in the process of studying natural sciences, progressive thought flows, and world civilizations. In addition, Albert Sarraut also paid attention to opening a number of vocational schools to train Vietnamese professionals for a number of different economic disciplines including: mechanical schools in Hanoi city, Hai Phong city, Nam Dinh city, and Hue city; Agricultural schools in Tuyen Quang province, the Hanoi

<sup>9</sup>General Regulations of Public Instruction in Indochina ("Règlement general de l'Instruction publique en Indochine) included three enactments:

Article 1. General Regulations of Public Instruction in Indochina took effect from March 15, 1818.

Article 2. To annul all previous decrees and decisions of the local government relating to the way of organizing major academic institutions in Indochina.

Article 3. The Deputy Governor-General of Indochina, the Director of the Finance Department, the local leaders and the Chief Inspector General were responsible for the implementation of this Decree.(National Archives Center I, 2016)

Agriculture College, and Ben cat Agriculture school in Cochinchina. A number of research institutions were also established for the purpose of enhancing colonial exploitation such as: Department of Geology, Department of Forest Protection, and Department of Animal Health, etc. However, although, the colonial government had invested in building new schools, the education system fell into an imbalance when the French focused only on primary education and this new education was inaccessible to the majority of the Vietnamese people. This situation required further reforms under the Governor-General of Indochina by Merlin and Varenne (1924 - 1930).

After Merlin became the Governor-General of Indochina in 1923, he advocated the development of "horizontal education" which focused on the primary level and expanded education in the village. According to Decree on September 18, 1924, the Vietnamese language was used to teach the first three levels at primary schools (National Archives Center I, 2016). After finishing three years in the primary level, if the Vietnamese learners wanted to continue studying at a higher level, they got the Native Elementary Certificate (Certificat d'Études élémentaires indigènes) which accepted their French language skills. Thus, though French language was not a compulsory subject, it was a necessary condition for Vietnamese students to finish at Primary level. Therefore, in order to help Vietnamese students to overcome this challenge, Governor-General Alexandre Varenne issued a Decree to establish the middle course 1st year (cours moyen 1<sup>ère</sup> année) as a transition class between the elementary and the middle course 2nd year to facilitate students to improve the French language skills. Dissatisfied with Merlin's reforms, Varenne made adjustments to a number of educational contents to develop more schools in the countryside and villages. According to Decree (December 27, 1926), a new type of public school was established and its name was the Village Primary School. Besides, the villages were required to open new schools and their funding was provided by local people. The village could hire teachers to teach at the school, but these teachers had to have a French-Vietnamese Primary Degree. In order to motivate students to study in these schools, the colonial government issued reformed conventions, which had a clause requiring villages to deduct money from the public fund to subsidize poor students, buy books for students and reward good students.

Thus, from Paul Bert to Paul Beau, Klobukowsky, Albert Sarraut, Merlin and Varenne, a French-Vietnamese education had been gradually established in the Vietnamese community. The reforms and adjustments to the Vietnamese educational system derived from the need for human resources and the development of colonial society. Secular and modern factors of the new education played an foundation role to lead to the birth of modern education in Vietnam.

❖ *Comparing the educational policy of the British colonial government for Malay people and the educational policy of the French colonial government for Vietnamese people*

➤ *Similarities*

First, the transition from traditional education to modern education was a popular trend in many Western European countries in the nineteenth century. This trend was also reflected in British and French educational reforms in colonial Malaysia and French Indochina. Both the British and the French established a new education in the Western model to replace the traditional religious education that had existed for a long time in these two colonies. It was a fundamental and comprehensive transformation from traditional education to modern education in British Malaya and French Indochina. The modern trend of this new education was expressed specifically through the content, the curriculum, and the teaching staff of the new education system. The education systems were built completely with different educational levels which were controlled, managed and supervised by the colonial governments. The content and curriculum with many secular subjects showed comprehensively in accordance with the new development requirements of colonial societies. Especially, the colonial governments were interested in the development of careers and educating women.

Second, the British and French colonial governments decided to conduct educational reforms focusing on the majority of the population in colonial societies, including: Malay people in the British Malaya and Vietnamese people in the French Indochina. A new education system was built based on the structure of a traditional indigenous society. In particular, the purpose of these reform policies was to create a new class of society who were nurtured in Western culture and they would become a "bridge" between the colonial authorities and the majority of local people in villages. Most of the content of the colonial education program included basic knowledge at the elementary level and facilitated to spread of the idea of peaceful cooperation between the colonies and the state.

Third, although there were many limitations, the educational reforms were carried out by the British and French colonial authorities to promote of the educational progress in British Malaya and French Indochina. In particular, the indigenous Malay and Vietnamese communities had the opportunity to access a new and modern education which did not only provide scientific knowledge, it also contributed to form political and national awareness for local people.

➤ *Differences*

Firstly, if comparing the two educational reform policies, it can be seen that the model that the French colonial government implemented in the Vietnamese society was quite consistent because all Vietnamese students were taught in the same language and in the same curriculum. Furthermore, if Vietnamese students wanted to improve their knowledge, they could study at higher levels. Meanwhile, in British Malaya, the British colonial government implemented two

separate educational systems, one for the Malay aristocracy and one for the Malay common people. While the education policy of the Malays tended to limit higher education for common people, the aristocratic students had opportunities to study advanced knowledge in English schools. Therefore, if Vietnamese students could choose many different careers after graduation, Malay students faced a lot of difficulties to continue studying. As a result, most of them returned to their villages and worked the same traditional careers as their ancestors.

Secondly, in the curriculum, the French colonial government focused on teaching French and considered it an effective tool to help the Vietnamese people to accept French knowledge and culture. Therefore, French became a compulsory subject at all educational levels. By contrast, the British colonial government tried to limit Malay exposure to English. Therefore, in order to get into English schools, Malay students had to overcome many challenges and complete an English training program in two years in specialized classes (Remove Class).

Thirdly, while the British colonial government's education policy for indigenous peoples focused on converting traditional Qur'an classes in villages to local Malay schools, in the Vietnamese society, the French colonial government carried out two educational reforms to eliminate Confucian education. Therefore, in Malay schools, students would study the compulsory subjects in the morning and in the afternoon would be the time to study the Qur'an. Meanwhile, the Confucian factors were gradually pushed out of the Vietnamese student's curriculum and replaced by a new system which was deeply influenced by the French education.

Finally, educational reforms by the French colonial government contributed to the formation of a team of Vietnamese intellectuals who could gain Western scientific knowledge, but they failed to build the education system for the majority of Vietnamese people. The curriculum was too heavy, focused on achievement, concentrated examinations, and it was not suitable for the Vietnamese common people. Meanwhile, although the educational policies of the British colonial government in British Malaya were not implemented equally between the ruling class and the class commoners, it created an opportunity for Malay civilians to study in new schools. A basic curriculum which focused on agricultural skills, was suitable for the Malay common people.

### III. CONCLUSION

With the aim of turning education into a support tool for colonial exploitation, the British and French authorities restructured the Malayan and Vietnamese educational system according to their own models. Therefore, the presence of the British and French contributed to transform the traditional educational background which was strongly influenced by religious education. It was also a basic feature of the colonial-era Southeast Asian education when traditional education was replaced by the modern and secular education to meet the development of colonial societies.

During the secularization of education in the Malay and Vietnamese communities, both the British and the French created a flexible educational program on the basis of developing the traditional structure of colonial societies. In British Malaya, Qu'ran was still taught in local schools in the afternoon. Meanwhile, the French colonial government, after many reforms, had to accept the Vietnamese script for teaching in all levels of the new educational system.

Meanwhile, the educational reform of the French colonial government had both positive and negative impacts on the Vietnamese society. The education reform of the French colonial government in French Cochinchina had some similarities with the education policy of the British colonial government, but in general, it still had some differences. These differences are still reflected in the modern education systems of Malaysia and Vietnam. In Malaysia, a flexible and diverse educational policy that applied to each community, brought many choices for each student. In contrast, the Vietnamese education policy tended to build a general curriculum, which was academic and applied to all classes and ethnic groups in society. Each system has its advantages and disadvantages. However, the education policies in the colonial period is a typical example for the Vietnamese government to learn in building a modern education model which is suitable to the current social situation.

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