

**2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience:  
Analysis on Development and  
Achievement of Compulsory Elementary  
Education after the Korean War**

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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION,  
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2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience:  
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after the Korean War**

2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience  
Analysis on Development and Achievement  
of Compulsory Elementary Education after the Korean War

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2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience

# Analysis on Development and Achievement of Compulsory Elementary Education after the Korean War



# Preface

The study of Korea's economic and social transformation offers a unique opportunity to better understand the factors that drive development. Within one generation, Korea had transformed itself from a poor agrarian society to a modern industrial nation, a feat never seen before. What makes Korea's experience so unique is that its rapid economic development was relatively broad-based, meaning that the fruits of Korea's rapid growth were shared by many. The challenge of course is unlocking the secrets behind Korea's rapid and broad-based development, which can offer invaluable insights and lessons and knowledge that can be shared with the rest of the international community.

Recognizing this, the Korean Ministry of Strategy and Finance (MOSF) and the Korea Development Institute (KDI) launched the Knowledge Sharing Program (KSP) in 2004 to share Korea's development experience and to assist its developing country partners. The body of work presented in this volume is part of a greater initiative launched in 2007 to systematically research and document Korea's development experience and to deliver standardized content as case studies. The goal of this undertaking is to offer a deeper and wider understanding of Korea's development experience with the hope that Korea's past can offer lessons for developing countries in search of sustainable and broad-based development. This is a continuation of a multi-year undertaking to study and document Korea's development experience, and it builds on the 20 case studies completed in 2010. Here, we present 40 new studies that explore various development-oriented themes such as industrialization, energy, human capital development, government administration, Information and Communication Technology (ICT), agricultural development, land development and environment.

In presenting these new studies, I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those involved in this great undertaking. It was through their hard work and commitment that made this possible. Foremost, I would like to thank the Ministry of Strategy and Finance for their encouragement and full support of this project. I especially would like to thank the KSP Executive Committee, composed of related ministries/departments, and the various Korean research institutes, for their involvement and the invaluable role they played in bringing this project together. I would also like to thank all the former public officials and senior practitioners for lending their time and keen insights and expertise in preparation of the case studies.

Indeed, the successful completion of the case studies was made possible by the dedication of the researchers from the public sector and academia involved in conducting the studies, which I believe will go a long way in advancing knowledge on not only Korea's own development but also development in general. Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to Professor Joon-Kyung Kim for his stewardship of this enterprise, and to his team including Professor Jin Park at the KDI School of Public Policy and Management, for their hard work and dedication in successfully managing and completing this project.

As always, the views and opinions expressed by the authors in the body of work presented here do not necessary represent those of KDI School of Public Policy and Management.

**May 2012**

**Oh-Seok Hyun**

**President**

**KDI School of Public Policy and Management**



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## Summary

One of the most important and urgent educational policies after the establishment of the Korean government was implementation of compulsory elementary education stipulated in the Constitution and Education Act. Although the Korean government intended to implement a 6-year compulsory education system as stated in the supplementary provision of Article 16 of the Constitution starting June 1, 1950, the measure was foiled due to the outbreak of the Korean War, which erupted only 24 days after that day. With the launch of an educational autonomy system in June 1952, however, the Korean government resumed its plan to enforce compulsory education. Since then, the Ministry of Education established a 6-year Plan for Compulsory Elementary Education. Measures were actively promoted with an aim to achieve 100 percent student enrollment of school-age children.

There had been many trials and errors in the process of legalization and implementation of compulsory elementary education system which aimed at 100 percent enrollment and free education. In fact, the enrollment rate of elementary school students significantly dropped during the Korean War, compared to the time of the government's establishment. Given that, the date of June 1950 was the starting point of implementing compulsory education system for form's sake. In other words, the elementary school enrollment rate was 74.8% at the time of establishment of the Korean government but it reduced to 69.8% in 1951 when the war was in full swing. In this respect, it can be said that compulsory education in Korea was finally back on track in the post-Korean War restructuring period after the war ended in 1954.

The 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan, which was implemented in 1954, was designed to increase the enrollment rate of all school-age children to 96%, to build more classrooms and to secure educational finance necessary in implementing this plan by 1959. As a result, the number of students enrolled far exceeded the expected goal as the number of students enrolled significantly increased from 2,678,978 to 3,558,142 in 1959, outperforming a 0.4% increase from the previous goal of 96%.

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In addition, the government set a goal of increasing the number of elementary schools to 4,614 by 1959. It failed to achieve the target number; the actual number by that time was 4,574. Therefore, the government had to defer the implementation of Enforcement Decree of the Education Act enacted in April 1952, which stipulated that the number of elementary school classrooms should be no more than 6 per grade and the average number of students per classroom should not exceed 60. These negative circumstances eventually led to chronic Korean education problems of overcrowded classes and overly-large schools where the number of students exceeds certain criteria.

The 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan can be evaluated as one of the most successful achievement in the education reform in the modern Korean history when viewed from the perspective of achieving the enrollment rate goal. The remarkable increase in the student enrollment rate was the results of the improved public awareness on the importance of education and active pursuit of the compulsory education improvement policy. However, it also left room for criticism on its poor education environment since it failed to expand educational finance to cover the explosive demand for education. It also failed to establish a system to nurture excellent teachers as well as a reasonable collaboration policy between primary schools and other higher educational institutes.

The post-war Korean education could expand quantitatively based on the following reasons:

First, one of the most important reasons is the establishment of a free democratic nation, the Republic of Korea. The adoption of a free democratic system based on individuals' freedom, responsibility, creativity and competition stimulated people's motivation to facilitate their own development to the maximum level.

Second, the public believed that education was the only means that could guarantee survival. As Koreans had endured numerous social ups and downs, including collapse of the traditional society, Japanese colonial rule and liberation, the outbreak of the Korean War and destruction left by the war, they witnessed the collapse of people with vested interest and resorted to education-will-cure-all idea. Korean parents believed and still believe that education is necessary for better jobs and better positions in the society. This conventional thinking propelled the social attitude to value academic background and eventually led to an education-centered society.

Third, the government put priority on education after liberation, and Korea had education leaders who could independently establish and pursue the national educational policy. The personnel involved in the Korean Education Council, the Education Committee and the Education and Management Bureau under the U.S. military government had sufficient experiences and insights over the development of education and the nation. In particular, the 6-year plan for completion of the compulsory elementary education was a farsighted excellent decision despite poor national financial conditions.



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Based on the basic education established by the time of the Korean War, Korean education is currently approaching toward universalization of higher education beyond universalization of elementary and secondary education. Given that its quantitative development has reached full capacity, now it is the time for Korean education to focus on enhancement of its educational quality.

Korea's education system and education policy and administration have government-led centralized characteristics. Korea has maintained a centralized system with regard to legalization of teacher training and employment, enactment and operation of the national curriculum and government-published textbook system. These features have effectively worked in securing the quality of education and equal access to education, along with rapid expansion of educational opportunities, by enhancing the effectiveness of school system and standardizing the contents of education.

Korea had to adopt the low-cost approach to achieve the plan for compulsory elementary education. It was inevitable under the dismal conditions of the time.

Korea's unit cost of education was far below than that of other countries with similar income levels. The reasons were the facts that the government could minimize the costs for construction, operation and maintenance of educational facilities by utilizing high number of students per class, operating at least a double or triple-shift system, and attracting a large-scale school to the utmost.

Concerning the supply of teachers, the government could significantly reduce the costs for teacher training by operating temporary teacher training institutes which had a relatively shorter training period and were less expensive than normal teacher training institutions. Moreover, Korean culture in which teaching positions are traditionally respected and maintain relatively high status served as a critical factor to secure teachers at low salary.

As discussed in the "Low-cost approach," Korea's education can be said to put priority on the expansion of educational opportunities for elementary education, rather than focusing on degradation of education quality due to the multi-shift system, overcrowded classes and overly-large schools.

From Korea's historical and social perspectives in which the education zeal and expectation is markedly higher than other countries, the policy, prioritizing expansion of educational opportunities, were indispensable and appropriate.

Even though all education costs needed for education were minimized in order to put priority on the quantitative expansion of educational opportunities, the scale of education finances required was large. For Korea, which was one of the poorest countries in the world at that time, it was difficult to meet all required educational finances with the national treasury. Thus, support from foreign countries and private sector was all the more necessary.

With regard to the budget required for school operation, contributions of the private sector centering on parents support was outstanding. The parent support system, which

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continued to exist in the name of parent support in the early period of state foundation, was institutionalized as “Teacher-Parent Association” after the Korean War; it greatly contributed to school operation. Although the contributions from these parent support systems varied by period, the amount reached as much as 75% of an estimated school income in 1958.

The followings are added proposals concerning Korea’s completion of compulsory elementary education after the war.

First, it should operate a transparent student selection and admission system and give motivation to students. In the case of underdeveloped countries, lack of transparency in student selection for admission to secondary education and widespread political connections after graduation serve as a tumbling block to offer motivation for study. In contrast, Korea’s general transparent student selection system and open competition in the job market eventually raised students’ motivation for learning. A transparent operation of selection system in a society is crucial to give motivation for study to students and parents.

Second, there should be various educational opportunities for school drop-outs or those who quit school. Korea had a low advancement rate to the middle school right after the war, and there were many elementary school graduates who had to give up on advancement to higher schools due to difficult financial situations. The Korean government established and operated various programs in an effort to motivate them for study. The cases in points are broadcasting middle and high school, higher civic schools, the school qualification examination system, etc.

Third, Korean education has achieved remarkable success but still has some tasks to be resolved. Both the success and problems were stemmed from the education development process we have chosen. When providing Korea’s experience in the development of compulsory elementary education, the following items should be carefully discussed:

- (1) Diversification challenges within the educational universalization
- (2) Harmony between the centralized education operation and schools
- (3) Relationships and role sharing among the central government, local government and schools

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after the Korean War

# Chapter 1

## Background of Compulsory Elementary Education

1. Overview of Compulsory Elementary Education in Korea
2. Korean War and Elementary Education
3. Goal of Elementary Education after the War

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# Background of Compulsory Elementary Education

## 1. Overview of Compulsory Elementary Education in Korea

### 1.1 National Development and Status of Elementary Education

For the past 6 decades since the Korean War in 1950, Korea has risen from ashes of war to achievement of an unprecedented success in the modern world history. Underwent dramatic changes from one of the world's poorest nations to a thriving democracy and economic powerhouse, Korea has now become a country that hosts the G20 Summit and provides support to the developing countries as a member of the OECD/DAC. Korea has grown from a traditional agrarian country to a trade powerhouse through the so-called “modern compressed growth” in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century. From the perspective of economic society structure, it has undergone modern industrialization and emerged as a “global leader” spearheading the advent of digital informatization and knowledge-based society. During this period, Korea has succeeded in escaping from the trap of hunger and diseases facing most developing countries. The standard of living and quality of Korean life has markedly enhanced to the extent that the country is now spreading its culture around the world with the trend called “dynamic Korea,” or “shinhallyu.”

Korea's remarkable development can be attributable to its establishment and effective implementation of the national development strategy in consideration of its specific situations. Korea's education and educational policies are highly credited for contributing to the success. Through educational development, Korea has realized universalization and equalization of education opportunities in a relatively short period of time, and could foster and supply human resources necessary for the economic growth in a timely manner (Sang-jin Lee, 2008).

Korea has experienced expansion of school education in all stages of schools: elementary school education in the 1950s, secondary school education in the 1960s and

1970s and higher education in the 1980s. The quantitative expansion in education since the 2000s is shifting toward the enhancement of qualitative aspects of education. In fact, Korea consistently ranks the highest, along with Finland, in the OECD's Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), and has been recognized as one of the most successful cases in educational reform in the world. Korea's educational success actually stems from its successful achievement in compulsory elementary education in the post-war period in the 1950s.

Since its establishment of the Korean government, Korea has achieved a remarkable development in education for the past 6 decades. The main driving forces of Korean education lie in quantitative growth and qualitative improvement. What is noteworthy of quantitative development of Korean education is not only the size and speed of the growth but also the procedure of outstanding achievement. Although Korea intended to realize compulsory elementary education at the national level shortly after the establishment of the Korean government, the education plan was suspended due to the outbreak of the Korean War and later resumed as a process of post-war education reconstruction amidst the poor educational environment and lack of school facilities.

After that, the size of investment in education was significantly cut back due to the enormous amount of military expenses arising from the military conflict between the south and north, but the opportunities for education continued to expand. Until the completion of compulsory elementary education in the early 1970s, parents took major responsibilities of financing their children's education. In addition, the burden of educational expenditures spent to provide post-middle school education largely fell on the private educational foundations and parents. Since 1985, Korea has clarified its provision of 9 years of free compulsory education in its Constitution and the nationwide free and compulsory education up to middle school was completed in the 2000s.

The achievement of the national education system established for the past 6 decades can be summed up as rapid distribution of quality education when considering phenomenal aspects. However, the unprecedented educational expansion and outstanding performance in academic ability at the basic education level also prompted problems such as excessive expenditures in private education, unlimited competition, inequality of opportunities and gap in educational levels. Despite such limits in its education system, Korean education could develop in both quantitative and qualitative aspects because the nation and the people made a concerted effort to establish a quality education system (Ministry of Education, 1998).

Such educational characteristics have succeeded even in the face of numerous difficulties both at home and abroad. Korea accumulated its potential growth in education in the transformation process from traditional to modern education and achieved educational development after regaining its sovereignty by preserving its potential even under Japan's 35 years of colonial rule. Now, the possibility of development in Korean education will further expand in terms of equality, excellence, and effectiveness that can help manage education in both quantitative and qualitative aspects (Ministry of Education, 1998).

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Now, Korea should contribute to the development of developing countries by sharing its experience in compulsory elementary education. In particular, many countries that need to establish the basic educational infrastructure due to conflicts or natural disasters are paying keen attention to Korea's experience in educational development. In order to understand Korea's successful compulsory elementary education policy in the post war era, a simultaneous approach to both internal educational factors (by period and area) and external educational factors is needed. In other words, it is necessary to pay attention to Korea's process to implement compulsory elementary education during the war as well as before and after the war, and to analyze the dynamic relationships between educational development and social, political, and economic development. In doing so, we can produce outstanding patterns and trends, and examine the achievements and features of Korea's post-war elementary education implementation policies and the limitations and future works based on them.

#### Box 1-1 | Post-conflict Education Rebuilding Project

Recently, the international society is paying great attention to the political consideration on postwar educational reconstruction. The postwar rebuilding in education has become an imminent issue from the perspective of restoring peace and promoting human rights. The situations requiring educational reconstruction are mainly divided into three categories: natural disasters, extreme political and social chaos, and military conflict (Arnhold et al., 1998: 9). First, the countries hit by the recent natural disasters include Ethiopia and Bangladesh. For these countries, school reconstruction and restoration and recruiting school teachers are among the most important political tasks. The countries that fall into the second category include countries in East Europe such as Poland and South Africa which have experienced dramatic political and social changes. These countries focus on educational reform such as providing fair educational opportunities and reforming on educational contents. Third, the countries experienced military conflicts in the Balkan region, Africa and East Timor are dedicated to "revive" and "reform" education, along with establishing educational infrastructure for long-term educational development as part of the national reconstruction project.

## Box 1-2 | Basic Education and Universal Elementary Education

In the international society, school education is largely divided into 3 steps: elementary, secondary, and higher education. Elementary education is the most basic level. Thus, elementary education is the basic education provided to children aged 5 to 12. During this period, children learn fundamental knowledge, functions, and attitudes necessary for a productive civic life in the future. Reflecting this principle, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory” (Article 26, Paragraph 1). This means that elementary education should be equally accessible to all. In this regard, the concept of education is based on open education provided by the government for free, namely, Universal Primary Education.

Meanwhile, the concept of “Basic Education” has been widely used since the Jomtien Declaration on Education for All in 1990. However, the concept of basic education is not identical with that of elementary education. In general, basic education includes not only elementary education but also compulsory secondary education and adult literacy education, and implies a broader scope than elementary education since it covers some stages of pre-school education or secondary education depending on the country. Therefore, from the perspective of international educational cooperation (Education ODA), basic education often deviates from the educational areas like “Fast Track Initiative (FTI)” that has a comprehensive meaning to include universal primary education and turns into a political issue like a measure to strengthen “ODA transparency.”

## 2. Korean War and Elementary Education

### 2.1 Change in Elementary Education after Liberation from the Japanese Colonial Rule

There had been consistent educational effort to eradicate the Japanese colonial regime since the liberation in 1945. “Hongik-Ingan (humanitarianism)” philosophy was adopted as a guiding educational principle to clear away the remnants of the Japanese colonialism. Various educational activities were developed and promoted through “New Education Movement” based on the spirit of democracy. However, the education system under the U.S. military government for three years after the liberation had a transitional nature given that it was not based on the national identity but was initiated by the U.S. military government in Korea. In this regard, it can be said that Korea’s independent educational system was implemented after the Korean government was officially established in August 15, 1948.

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### 2.1.1 Educational Reform under the U.S. Military Government and Changes in Elementary Education

Right after the liberation, Koreans formed independent organizations nationwide to replace the Japanese colonial institutions including schools with new systems. The Committee for the Preparation of Korean Independence (CPKI) and other local autonomy organizations assumed functions of the government until the U.S. military occupation forces arrived in Korea in mid-September 1945. Those autonomy activities were initiated by groups of intellectuals and scholars formed right after the liberation. The autonomy committee, Chosun academy of science and other institutes that were organized to replace the established education systems such as Kyungsung (Keijo) Imperial University and other schools founded during the Japanese occupation period had significant impact on educational reform aimed at eliminating the vestiges of the colonial education system. Formed since August 16, 1945, these organizations planned education reform and put it into action. The education committee members of the academy of science established the “Temporary Education Manual” and delivered it to the Education and Management Bureau of the U.S. military government. This manual was designed to declare basic educational measures to clear away the colonial education system and suggest a plan to reform the curricula of elementary, secondary education, and teacher-training institutes (Ki-seok Kim et al., 1996).

The starting point of such efforts was to publish and distribute textbooks such as “Hangeul Cheotgeoleum (first step to learning Korean)” “Gukeo Dokbon (Korean reading book)” and “Guksa (history).” The U.S. military government founded the Korean education committee and education deliberation committee, consisting of leading members of the Korean society at the time to establish the education system of the newly independent state in preparation of the establishment of the Korean government. As a result of these activities, the education measure based on the educational philosophy of Hongik-Ingan and the 6-3-3-4 education system was introduced. Then, schools developed a new education movement in pursuit of democratic education and made efforts to remove the remnants of the Japanese colonialism (Ung-sun Hong, 1979: 67).

In addition, the U.S. military government promoted a nationwide campaign to “abolish adult illiteracy.” As a result, it succeeded in reducing the adult illiteracy rate from 77% in 1945 to 42% by the time of the establishment of the Korean government in 1948. It also established civil education schools as a short-term educational institute to provide adults with opportunities for education (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964: 21). The illiteracy abolition policy was accelerated by the completion of compulsory elementary education after the Korean government was established. <Table 1-1> indicates the changes in Korean adult literacy rates for 30 years after the liberation.



**Table 1-1 | Changes in Korean Adult Literacy for the Past 30 Years**

Year		1945	1948	1960	1966	1977
Illiteracy (%)	Males			15.8	6.9	5.3
	Females			39.8	22.2	17.8
	Total	78	42	27.9	14.7	11.6

Source: N. McGinn, D. Snodgrass, YB Kim, SB Kim & QY Kim, 1980. *Education and Development in Korea*, p.48.; Byeong-seon Gwak, 2008. Requoted through the material.

Note: The material in 1948 was not included in the original quotation materials, but Byeong-seon Gwak used it in his study (2008) through the introduction of Cheon-seok Oh's materials (1964).

One of the most important tasks for education reform under the U.S. military government was to realize compulsory elementary education and to reform the education system in order to establish a general education system. The needs to implement compulsory elementary education were consistently raised by Koreans from the colonial period. Therefore, the development process for compulsory education after liberation won warm response from the public as well as teachers. The Education and Management Bureau of the U.S. military government allocated 68% of educational finance of 1946 to elementary education in order to implement compulsory elementary education. Korean public's desire for compulsory elementary education was substantial to the extent that 38.6% of educational finance was contributed by Korean parents in June 1947 (Gil-sang Lee, 2007). Nonetheless, educational finance was insufficient to supply teachers and classrooms to cover the rapidly expanding school-age children.

### **2.1.2 Core Issues over Compulsory Elementary Education in the Korean War**

The Korean government succeeded the education reform of the U.S. military government related to its drive to implement compulsory elementary education. Despite difficult situations, it developed the basic strategies and master plan to provide compulsory and free elementary education. As a result, the compulsory education implementation plan based on the principle of 100% enrollment and free of charge was announced on June 1, 1950, just before the outbreak of the Korean War. Aimed at eliminating educational contents established under Japanese imperialism at the primary education level, curricula at elementary, secondary education and time allocation for subjects were determined and the syllabus by subject was enacted (Ministry of Education, 1998).

One of the most urgent matters in the operation of curriculum was the publication of textbooks and teacher nourishment. Given the poor educational finance and lack of textbook specialists at that time, it was difficult to compile all textbooks at the governmental level. In consideration of such situation, the government decided to publish Korean and history

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textbooks first. Also, it built more teacher-training institutes to produce elementary school teachers. Colleges of education and affiliated temporary teacher-training institutes were established to nurture secondary school teachers. Moreover, the government established teacher-training institutes by inviting American education specialists along with technical aid from the U.S. for retraining of on-site teachers at the chalkface. Teacher training and education were conducted according to the progressive educational theory (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964).

Meanwhile, the “New Education Movement” intended to develop a curriculum and teaching methods based on the progressive educational theory of the United States. Although the American-style idea used to determine the curriculum and teaching models and evaluation took a long time to be applied to the educational arena, it activated educational research and provided opportunities for the American education to have consistent influence on the development of the Korean education (Korean National Commission for UNESCO, 2004).

## 2.2 Practice of Democratic Education and Principle of Compulsory Elementary Education

### 2.2.1 Principle of Hongik-Ingan and Elementary Education

Article 1, Paragraph 1 of the Korean Education Law established in 1948 stipulates that “The purpose of education is to enable every citizen to lead a life worthy of human and to contribute to the development of a democratic country and realization of an ideal of human co-prosperity by ensuring cultivation of character and developing abilities for independent life and necessary qualities as a democratic citizen under the ideal of Hongik-Ingan.” according to this, the Korean education ideology is based on the principle of “Hongik-Ingan (humanitarianism).”

Cheon-seok Oh defined the education ideology as the “fundamental principle controlling the entire educational activities.” In other words, it can be expressed as a “basic educational philosophy” or “supreme education concept.” According to him, the education ideology has 6 following features (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964): (1) comprehensiveness that can consistently explain all educational activities, (2) universality that can be applied to the entire educational activities, (3) fundamentality that serves as the basis of all educational activities, (4) consistency that can integrate the contents of educational values, (5) durability that can be applied by transcending time and space, and (6) positiveness that implies the value system that should be actively pursued.

### Box 1-3 | Review on Korea's Education Ideology of 'Hongik Ingan'

The 'Korean Committee on Educational Planning' was established as an educational advisory body under the United States Military Government in Korea in 1945. On November 23, 1945, the U.S. military government convened the 1<sup>st</sup> general meeting of the committee to eliminate the remnants of the Japanese colonial education and set the educational direction and system to establish a democratic society. With the plenary meeting which invited about 100 authorities in the educational and academic circles, the 'Korean Committee on Educational Planning' started its official activities.

The national committee established 10 subcommittees to implement its activities. In particular, the main responsibility of the 1st subcommittee was to discuss educational objectives and ideology to promote reconstruction of Korean education. In this regard, the 1<sup>st</sup> subcommittee suggested 'Hongik Ingan,' which is the legendary national philosophy of the nation's founder Dangun, as the basic education philosophy that comprehensively reflects the ideology of democracy and nationalism. It stressed 'Hongik Ingan' as the most ideal concept of education that properly reflects the ideal of democracy and nationalism for which Korea pursues.

Baek Nak-jun defined the meaning of 'Hongik Ingan' as follows as he suggested the concept as the education ideology of Korea (Oh Cheon-seok, 1964):

*The philosophy of 'Hongik Ingan' can be translated into widely benefiting the humanity. When it comes to education, the most important element is to do good to others. (...) Receiving education that helps people develop knowledge, virtue, physical strength, and humanity according to the theories of modern education is essential to become integrated and well-rounded individuals.*

In other words, the meaning of 'Hongik Ingan' is to 'benefit the society without doing harm to others as a human being' and it was understood as 'being connected to the ideal of humanism and humanitarianism.' However, the process of establishing 'Hongik Ingan' as the education ideology did not work smoothly. Above all, critics raised questions about the non-scientific aspects of the origin. They argued that the concept heavily relied on the myth of Dangun, the founder of Gojoseon, the first kingdom of Korea, as described in the Heritage of the Three States. Also, the very fact that it was reliant on the mythic perception was remote from the reality. Oh Cheon-seok argued that the concept of 'Hongik Ingan' is abstract and mythical, and thus it should be replaced with more realistic and specific words (Oh Cheon-seok, 1964). Meanwhile, Baek Nam-un argued that the connotation of 'Hongik Ingan' was an exact copy of a Japanese ideology which represented the world to be under the rule of the Japanese emperor (Ministry of Education, 1998).

However, many experts at that time argued that 'Hogik Ingan' could fully serve as the education ideology of Korea if the ideal was desirable and reflected the ideal of Korean nationality. The legitimacy was said to be lied in finding the origin of Korean education.

As a result, 'Hongik Ingan' was adopted as the basic philosophy of Korean education at the meeting of the 1st subcommittee and the general meeting of the Korean Committee on Educational Planning despite some critics' objections. It served as the ideological foundation of the education law enacted after the establishment of the Korean government; it now has completely settled as the basic philosophy of Korean education. Our present education can be traced back to approximately 5,000 years in history that originated from the founding of Korea's first kingdom of Gojoseon based on the philosophy of 'Hongik Ingan.' Thus, it could successfully spread the concept of 'nationality and democracy' as the ultimate ideology of Korean education.

### 2.2.2 Elementary Education and the New Democratic Education Ideology

Since then, the Korean government's most fundamental goal was to establish a democratic country and the basic direction of its education reform was based on the democratic education ideology (Yeong-woo Kim, 1995). "10 Years of Korean Education" describes the domestic education leaders' understanding on education in connection with the desire for democratic education at that time (Publication committee of 10 Years of Korean Education, 1959):

*The Korean education had to break away from the three old systems. The first system was autocracy. Korea had to escape from the totalitarian system that ideologically and systematically belonged to the old era. What we desired was to establish a democratic country, thus we couldn't stand to inherit the system derived from the opposite ideology.*

*The second old system we had to break away was the Japanese colonial era system. As long as Korea regained its sovereignty from Japan, we had no reasons to follow the Japanese system. We had to abolish all systems established under Japanese imperialism and needed to establish our own system in line with our cultural tradition and founding philosophy.*

*Third, Korean education needed to be free from the old era's educational notion and reality. Although the educational theory developed from the Renaissance period and psychology, which was actively studied since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century have made great strides in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, our education remained the same old way until the liberation. We had to escape from the outdated old system and establish a new educational system in line with the new era.*

As suggested above, the old systems that the Syng-man Rhee government wanted to abolish were autocracy, the Japanese education system, namely, colonial education, and the old-fashioned feudalistic educational thought. The manifestation of the desire to abolish old systems and advance into a new system suitable for our cultural tradition and founding principles was democratic education. Therefore, it can be said that the ideology of democratic education reflected the Korean public's aspiration for education reform to break away from the colonial educational legacy and feudalistic old-fashioned education.

### 2.2.3 Korean War and Changes in Elementary Education Ideology

#### *a. 'Ilminjuui' Education Ideology and a New State Building Project*

After the establishment of the Korean government, the Ministry of Education pursued an educational policy focusing on internally establishing democracy and externally unifying the land and ideas divided into democracy and communism. The first minister of education Ho-sang Ahn (Aug 3, 1948-May 3, 1950) stressed “democratic nationalistic education” and “Ilminjuui (one nation principle) ideology” based on the founding principle of Hongik-Ingan.

The education policy of the early Korean government suggested integration of the national spirit, strengthening of anti-communist spirit and “one skill per one person” education. In particular, the “Ilminjuui” advocated by Ahn was to provide democratic nationalistic education based on uni-nationalism. In this sense, what “Ilminjuui” emphasized can be summed up as “restoration of the national identity”. The ideological stability and strengthening of anti-communist regime that were one of the most important educational goals, were pursued in this context (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964).

According to Ahn, “Ilminjuui” was our indigenous democracy based on the emphasis on human beings and personality unlike western capitalism or communism. It implied that nationalism and democracy serve mutual objectives and methods to establish national democracy and democratic nationalism and eventually result in the establishment of the national identity of the Korean people. This is so-called “nationalism consisting of humanism and democracy,” and he suggested five principles to achieve it (Ministry of Education, 1988).

1. One-people principle of right people, namely university students
2. One-people principle of unity of people
3. One-people principle of cosmopolitanism
4. One-people principle of egalitarianism
5. One-people principle of people-oriented approach

He tried to emphasize that the people, the nation, politics, and culture are not separable (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964). Therefore, “Ilminjuui” was the education ideology, emphasizing the establishment of “national sovereignty” and representing the traditional Korean education which pursued nationalistic democracy. However, the Action Plan based on the

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“Ilminjuui” education ideology came to a standstill due to the outbreak of the Korean War, which continued for three years. The Korean War somehow acted as a proper element for the state rebuilding project by establishing an international mutual-assistance system such as the ROK-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty (1953) as a result of the war (namely, armistice). In fact, it is considered that the government-centered education reconstruction project was activated after the armistice in 1953 when the actual nation was formed.

*b. Korean War and Education Ideology for State-Rebuilding: Land, Culture and Human*

Amid the military, political, economic, social, and cultural turbulence caused by the tragic war among the Korean people, education also underwent enormous hardship. This situation resulted in the establishment of wartime education system to respond to the educational crisis. Then education minister Nak-jun Baek emphasized four major educational doctrines such as the importance of personality education (morality education), encouragement of technical training (one skill per one person), implementation of defense education, and thorough knowledge-based education (Publication Committee of 10 Years of Korean Education, 1959). This was a “new ideology movement for state-reconstruction” from ashes of the war. The “one skill per one person” education stressed under the name of technical training was in line with the context. These education policies were based on the founding principle of “Hongik-Ingan”; the ideal role models for humanity were expressed as “self-supported man,” “free man,” and “peaceful man.” The “Education Outlines” in connection with the education policies were described as follows (Ministry of Education, 1980):

*First, personality education was emphasized to enhance elegance and dignity required for the people of the independent democratic country. We put priority on democratic human education that can be adopted by the new democratic social system to facilitate the end of ideological conflict and chaos after the establishment of the Korean government.*

*Second, technical training was encouraged throughout school education to enhance vocational technology through education in consideration of the urgency for revival of the national economy. Especially, as a concrete action plan of technical training, we conducted vocational education through “one skill per one person” education so as to ensure every student acquires more than one skill.*

*Third, defense education was provided to prevent communist aggression and protect the land before and after the Korean War.*

*Fourth, we made efforts to maintain and enhance basic education based on accurate knowledge-based education in order to overcome the reduction of leaderships caused by superficial imitation of new education methods and mass employment of teachers.*

In particular, the emphasis on morality education was intended to correct the moral hazard of the Korean ethics discipline in the aftermath of the war. The government intended to restore the war-stricken country, to establish the national culture and to develop human resources for state-rebuilding through moral education. The government stressed the importance of morality education as it presented “human restoration” as a prerequisite for restoration of the land, culture, and education (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964).

These education policies of Nak-jun Baek led to “wartime education,” “state-founding education” and “independence education” advocated by the 3<sup>rd</sup> education minister Beop-rin Kim. These principles were based on the idea that education circles should be prepared for readiness during the war. At the same time, they intended to raise public awareness on state-rebuilding, encourage the spirit required for national restoration, eliminate the chronic toadying attitude and obsequious ideas, and pursue construction of the independent culture based on national creativity. In this regard, the education ideology based on “democracy” and “nationalism” was consistently highlighted throughout the periods under the U.S. military government after the liberation, after the establishment of the Korean government, and during the war; “Hongik-Ingan” was the essence of these principles.

### **3. Goal of Elementary Education after the War**

#### **3.1 Changes in Elementary Education Ideology after the War**

##### **3.1.1 End of the War and New Elementary Education**

The 3-year war devastated the land, and education encountered difficult tasks of revival of the national spirit and educational reorganization and reconstruction to achieve economic revival. In response to the demand of the times, nationalistic education, morality education and production education (or science technology education) were stressed (Yeong-woo Kim, 1990).

These situations were reflected on the postwar education policy. The fourth education minister, Seon-geun Lee put importance on promoting anti-communist democratic education, enhancing educational quality, and seeking everyday life culture. The fifth education minister Gyu-nam Choi put priority on the improvement of the quality of education, normalization of school education, and promotion of morality education. The sixth minister Jae-yu Choi stressed the importance of education on the national spirit and liberal democratic spirit; improvement of education quality; active promotion of compulsory education and science and technology education; facilitation of the development of refined national culture; and enhancement of moral education (Ministry of Education, 1998). These education policies slightly differed from each other but basically concurred in terms of moral education, production education, and science and technology education.

In particular, these periods are recorded as times of significant changes in Korean education due to the visit of “American education delegation” which began since September

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1952. The Korean War left severe destruction in all areas including politics, economy, culture, and society and education was also greatly affected by the loss of human resources and materials as well as ideological damage. In this respect, the arrival of the education delegation from the United States had a significant impact on Korean education (Beommo Jeong, 1993). These periods experienced activated academic movement to introduce scientific education research beyond the simple educational enlightenment. The Central Education Research Center that had great influences on Korean education was established around this time (Ministry of Education, 1998).

Meanwhile, the U.S. education delegation visited Korea in September 1952 and held lectures for Korean teachers gathered from nationwide to revive the research spirit for new education. In addition, the UNESCO-UNKRA Educational Planning Mission to Korea highlighted the necessity of educational research. The visit of the U.S. education delegation and its activities facilitated the establishment of the Central Education Research Center (Korean National Commission for UNESCO, 2004: 28).

### **3.1.2 New Educational Changes in the Korean War**

The measure of the Education System Subdivision Committee, which suggested a new education system in the late 1940s after the liberation, erupted conflicts and dispute in the decision-making process. In particular, some critical educators argued that the new education system was the result of indiscriminately accepting the 6-3-3-4 system of the capitalist U.S. due to the demand from the U.S. military government. On the contrary, the Chosun Education Deliberation Council rebutted that the selection of the 6-3-3-4 system had nothing to do with imitation of the American system or pressure from the U.S. military government. The decision was based on objective comparison among other educational systems (Ministry of Education, 1988).



Figure 1-1 | Education System According to the Education Act in 1949

Age					Grade
26					21
25	Graduate school				20
24					19
23					18
22					17
21	University				16
20					15
19	Junior college	Teachers' college		14	
18				13	
17	High school		Education school	Advanced technical school	12
16					11
15	Middle school		Technical school	Higher civil education school	10
14					9
13	Elementary school				8
12					7
11					6
10					5
9					4
8					3
7					2
6					1
5	Kindergarten				

Amid the controversy surrounding the education system, the 3-year governance of the U.S. military government ended, and the Republic of Korea was established on August 15, 1948. The Korean government pursued to establish a new education system in accordance with Article 16 of the Constitution, stating that the education system shall be determined by law. In the enactment of education law after the establishment of the government, regulation on the education system can be regarded as a compromise of the system implemented under the U.S. military government in consideration of the situations at that time. The principles of the government-initiated education system intended to ensure individual citizens show their capacity at the maximum level, provide equal opportunity for education, promote distribution of education and improvement, establish a system that is suitable for specific situations of the country, and meet the international education levels.

However, the education system revised on March 10, 1950, exposed several problems for elementary and secondary education. Moreover, the emergency situation arising from the war required a wartime education system. In order to revise and supplement the existing education system, the education law pertaining to the education system was revised on March 20, 1951, according No. 175 of the law. The subjects to revision included the years required for completing the course of study at middle school, entrance requirements for high school

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and teachers' college, the years required for completing the course of study at junior college, and entrance requirements for junior college and university (Ministry of Education, 1988).

This system was an appropriate education system in wartime and was designed to maximize the efficiency of the existing 6-3-3-4 system. The national education nature based on the effectiveness of this system served as a foundation for education reform of the wartime education system and post-war education restoration in the 1950s. The education system reform, stemmed from the 2<sup>nd</sup> revision of education law in 1951, was a single ladder system and established democratic education principles that guaranteed equal opportunities for education. It also promoted student development by dividing the secondary education stage into a former and a latter part and achieved the international education standards with the entire education system spanning 16 years. However, this system could not avoid criticism since it nearly neglected the education system compilation for social education and the humanities-centered education system undermined vocational education. Moreover, it maintained education schools to foster elementary school teachers at the high school level, so it is considered to be inappropriate from the perspective of age or expertise (Ministry of Education, 1998).

### 3.2 New Changes in Compulsory Elementary Education after the War

One of the most urgent and important policies after the establishment of the government was to implement compulsory education stipulated in the Constitution and Education Law. Although the Korean government intended to implement the 6-year compulsory elementary education system stated in the supplementary provision of Article 16 of the Constitution starting June 1, 1950, the measure was foiled due to the outbreak of the Korean War, which erupted only 24 days after that day. With the launch of the educational autonomy system in June 1952, however, the Korean government resumed its plan to enforce compulsory education. Since then, the Ministry of Education established a 6-year Plan for Compulsory Elementary Education and actively promoted the measure with an aim to achieve 100 percent student enrollment of school-age children (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964).

However, there had been many trials and errors in the process of legalization and implementation of compulsory elementary education system which aimed at 100 percent enrollment and free education. In fact, the enrollment rate of elementary school students significantly dropped during the Korean War, compared to the time of the government establishment. Given that, the date of June 1950 was just the starting point of implementing compulsory education system for the form's sake. In other words, the elementary school enrollment rate was 74.8% at the time of establishing the Korean government, but it reduced to 69.8% in 1951 when the war was in full swing. In this respect, it can be said that compulsory education in Korea was finally back on track in the post-Korean War restructuring period after the war ended in 1954 (Hye-yeong Lee et al., 1998).

The 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan, which was implemented in 1954, was designed to increase the enrollment rate of all school-age children to 96%, to build more

classrooms and to secure educational finance necessary in implementing this plan by 1959. As a result of these efforts, the number of students enrolled far exceeded the expected goal according to the implementation of the 6-year plan. As seen in the following <Table 1-2>, the number of student enrollment significantly increased from 2,678,978 in the first year of the plan to 3,558,142 in 1959, outperforming a 0.4% increase from the previous goal of 96%.

**Table 1-2 | Changes in School-age Children by Year (1954-1959)**

Year	Number of school-age children	Number of enrolled children	Ratio
1954	3,246,364	2,678,978	82.5
1955	3,289,865	2,947,436	89.5
1956	3,333,949	2,997,813	89.9
1957	3,480,225	3,170,891	91.1
1958	3,583,427	3,315,989	92.5
1959	3,799,690	3,558,142	96.4

Source: Ministry of Education, 40 Years of Korean Education, 1988, Quoted from 153 page.

Despite the sharp increase in the number of enrolled students, the capacity to accommodate the enrolled children was insufficient. In particular, building school facilities and classrooms failed to meet the goal. According to the 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan, the planned number of classrooms for the first year of the plan was 5,924, but only 457 classrooms were built. Likewise, the intended number of newly built classrooms for the second year in 1957 was only 2,923 and failed to achieve its goal of 6,269. The lack of financial resources essential for facility expansion was the reason for poor performance results. Considering the fact that the enrollment rate far exceeded the target, this lack of school facilities resulted in the production of over-crowded classrooms (Jong-jae Lee, 2008).

In addition, the government set the goal of increasing the number of elementary schools to 4,614 in 1959, but it failed to achieve the target number with the actual number being only 4,574. Therefore, the government had to defer the implementation of the Regulation for Education Act enacted in April 1952, which stipulated that the number of elementary school classrooms should be no more than 6 per grade and the average number of students per classroom should not exceed 60 (Ministry of Education, 1980). This poor situation eventually led to chronic Korean education problems of over-crowded classes and overly-large schools where the number of students exceeds certain criteria.

However, the 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan can be evaluated as one of the most successful achievements in the education reform in the modern Korean history

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when viewed from the perspective of the enrollment rate goal. The remarkable increase in the student enrollment rate was the results of improved public awareness on the importance of education and active pursuit of the compulsory education improvement policy in a quantitative way. However, it also left room for criticism on poor education environment since it failed to expand educational finance to cover the explosive demand for education. It also failed to establish a system to nurture excellent teachers as well as a reasonable collaboration policy between primary schools and other higher educational institutes.

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## Chapter 2

### Establishing Framework of Compulsory Elementary Education

1. Groundwork to Promote Compulsory Elementary Education
2. Envision and Application of Compulsory Education Plan

# Establishing Framework of Compulsory Elementary Education

## 1. Groundwork to Promote Compulsory Elementary Education

### 1.1 Development of Literacy-centered Compulsory Elementary Education

#### 1.1.1 Strategy to Expand Opportunity for Elementary Education

On February 21, 1946, the U.S. military government unveiled a plan to implement compulsory elementary education in Korea. The main contents of the plan were to send 4 million school-age children between 1946 and 1951 with the budget of 6.6 billion won. However, this plan was only partially successful due to lack of financial resources. Nevertheless, the number of children enrolled in elementary schools rose from 1,366,024 in 1945 to 2,666,913 in 1948 when the official Korean government was established due to education fever of parents, voluntary Korean-led education reform, etc. (Ministry of Education, 1998).

**Table 2-1** | Number of Schools, Students and Teachers after Korea's Liberation (1945)

Classification	No. of schools	No. of students	No. of teachers
Total	3,183	1,471,949	24,923
Kindergarten	165	13,534	485
Elementary	2,834	1,366,024	19,729
Secondary (Middle, high school)	165	84,572	3,219
Higher education	19	7,819	1,490

Source: Jong-cheol Kim (1965). Theory and Practice of Educational Administration. Seoul: Kyohak Publishing Co., p.41.

In fact, Korea's first compulsory education was supposed to be implemented starting from June 1, 1950, but the efforts came to a deadlock due to the outbreak of the Korean War. After the war ended, the government introduced the 6-year Plan for Compulsory Elementary Education in 1954. It strived to secure education finance necessary to pursue education reform to increase the enrollment rate to 96% and to construct more classrooms between 1954 and 1959. <Table 2-2> shows the classroom construction plan according to the 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan. As suggested in the Table, the number of classrooms to be constructed was 5,924 in 1954, 6,569 in 1956, and 5,654 in 1959 according to the plan.

**Table 2-2 | Classroom Construction Plan According to the 6-Year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan (1954-1959)**

Classification Year	No. of normal classrooms				No. of special classrooms			Total no. of classrooms to be built
	No. of needed classrooms	No. of existing classrooms	No. of insufficient classrooms	No. of planned classrooms	No. of needed classrooms	No. of insufficient classrooms	No. of planned classrooms	
1 <sup>st</sup> Year (1954)	42,803	22,607	20,196	5,924	3,479	3,497		5,924
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year (1955)	45,164	28,531	16,633	5,929	3,709	3,079		5,929
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year (1956)	48,165	34,460	13,705	6,569	3,929	3,929		6,569
4 <sup>th</sup> Year (1957)	50,866	41,029	9,837	6,269	4,140	4,140		6,269
5 <sup>th</sup> Year (1958)	53,349	47,298	6,051	6,051	4,370	4,370		6,051
6 <sup>th</sup> Year (1959)	54,470	53,349	1,121	1,131	4,523	4,533	4,523	5,654

Source: Ministry of Education (1988). 40 Years of Korean Education, p.152.

As a result of the 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan, the children enrollment rate outperformed the goal by 0.4% to reach 96.4% in 1959. Yet, unlike the sharp increase in the enrollment of school-age children, the classroom construction plan failed to achieve its goal. As a result, the shortage of classrooms led to poor educational circumstances with the number of students per classroom far exceeding the target of 60 students per classroom and lack of teachers. Despite such poor educational surroundings, the government strengthened the universal compulsory elementary education policy by operating coercive institutional apparatus.

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## 1.1.2 Strengthening Public Awareness and Practice of Democratic Education

The enactment of the Education Act and establishment of the 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan in the 1950s significantly contributed to quantitative growth as well as qualitative development of elementary and secondary education. The completion of compulsory elementary education enabled to achieve the goal of complete enrollment and free education. The education reform movement pursued by the transitional government following the 4-19 revolution and the Second Republic of Korea produced huge benefits to qualitative improvement in education.

The educational development came to a deadlock in the 1950s as a result of the Korean War. Despite such devastating situations, Korean education, through the Wartime Education Special Measure Guideline announced in 1951, played an important role in overcoming the hardships brought by the war and rebuilding of the state (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964; Ministry of Education, 1988). Even during wartime, the educational authorities reorganized the middle and high school curriculum to ensure education improvement. In addition, education reconstruction after the war was pursued in various areas, such as restoration of education facilities, fostering and reallocation of teachers, expansion of compulsory education stated in the Education Act, strengthening of vocational & technical education, and strengthening of the educational autonomy system.

In particular, the 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan was belatedly renewed to be implemented in 1954 due to the war. However, the elementary school attendance rate increased to 96% in 1959. Moreover, a course of study changed from a summarized program of instruction to subject-centered curriculum, and anti-communist education and moral education were emphasized in consideration of the social circumstances at that time. In a nutshell, the educational features of the 1950s can be described as a period when Koreans strived to achieve qualitative development of the education by expanding national basic education (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989).

## 1.2 Promotion of Compulsory Elementary Education through preparing for the Framework Act on Education

### 1.2.1 Enhancement of Autonomy through establishing Education Law System

One of the most urgent tasks after the establishment of the government in 1948 was the enactment of the Education Act which set the basic policy of education and operational principles. In other words, establishing the Framework Act on Education in accordance with the founding philosophy was urgent. In Article 1 of the Education Act promulgated in 1949 according to No. 86 of the law, Korea reaffirmed the motto of “Hongik-Ingan” as the guiding principle of Korean education. This Education Act consisted of 10 chapters, 177 articles and additional clauses. The legislation of the Education Act enforced disciplines of the new education system.



The Constitution of Korea declares that all citizens have an equal right to receive education corresponding to their abilities, and elementary education is compulsory and free of charge. In order to legalize compulsory education, the Ministry of Education established the 6-year plan to complete elementary compulsory education. The enforcement of compulsory education went into effect on June 1, 1950. Concerning subjects and time allocations for each subject at elementary schools, students received 18-20 hours per week of civic, Korean language, history, geography, natural science, music, and physical education, and later handwriting, arts& crafts, cooking, sewing, and practical arts were added (Ung-seon Hong, 1991; Ministry of Education, 1988).

The secondary education administration in the 1950s changed several times with regard to the entrance examination at the middle school level. The Guidelines for Time Allocation in Curriculum was publicized in 1954, and consequently the curriculum was unveiled in 1955. The features of the curriculum included creation of morality subject and offering flexibility for schools by allowing them to set maximum and minimum hours in the annual class hours per grade. In addition, military education was offered to students at the high school level from 1954. Seoul Education Committee held a students' guidance counseling in 1958, which was an unprecedented measure (Ministry of Education, 1998).

### 1.2.2 Educational Measure during the Korean War

The 2<sup>nd</sup> Education Minister Nak-jun Baek implemented educational measures according to national and social demands in order to lead South Korea to victory in the Korean War. To that end, he established three major education policies to foster “self-supported man,” “free man,” and “peaceful man” and stressed ① knowledge-centered education, ② technical training, ③ morality education and ④ international education (Publication Committee of 10 Years of Korean Education, 1959). Besides, he also provided a radio program for schools, reorganized the Reserve Officers' Training Corps (ROTC), revised the school years required to complete the course of study at secondary education, revised the greening movement, and established Science Education Committee by an Education Ministry ordinance No. 14 in March 1951. In June 1951, “one skill per one person” outline was unveiled, and a relevant committee was organized to promote technical training at secondary education levels (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964).

In February 1952, the education authorities announced “guidelines of special wartime measures for education” in the midst of the war to resume school education suspended due to the conflict. The main points of the guidelines included ① encouraging the enrollment of refugee students, ② installing temporary classrooms and school facilities, ③ accommodating North Korean students who fled for refuge, ④ opening schools in major big cities, and ⑤ establishing wartime joint colleges (Ministry of Education, 1998).

On October 30, 1952, the 3<sup>rd</sup> education minister Beop-rin Kim declared three education policies such as “wartime education,” “sate-founding education,” and “independence

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education” in an effort to establish the foundation for state-rebuilding through restoration of devastated school facilities and normalization of education. “Wartime education” was intended to strengthen national defense through education. “State-founding education” stressed instruction on four major principles such as freedom, equality, cooperation, and fairness, and “independence education” promoted organization of cultural aspects and development of cultural projects.

In addition, “wartime education” made various efforts to improve education (Ministry of Education, 1998). To do this, the ministry revamped the secondary school systems; came up with solutions for educational problems caused by the war, including flexibility in students’ residing conditions and lack of unity in lessons and illicit entrance at secondary schools; the School Curriculum Committee was established to research and improve the curriculum based on basic education principles and methods; and the curriculum was revamped (Kyeong-cheol Huh, 2008). Finally, in April 30, 1951, the Ministry of Education standardized the teaching of Chinese characters for primary school students, namely 300 characters for 4<sup>th</sup> graders, 300 characters for 5<sup>th</sup> graders, and 400 characters for 6<sup>th</sup> graders (Publication Committee of 10 Years of Korean Education, 1959).

### 1.2.3 Post-war Educational Restoration Measures

The post-war educational rehabilitation focused on the reconstruction of education policies. In particular, one of the most urgently required education policies were the implementation of compulsory elementary education and the improvement and stabilization of education contents. To resolve the problems facing elementary and secondary education, the ministry highlighted ① students’ return to school, ② ideology education, ③ private educational institute (“hagwon”) purification movement, ④ military education, ⑤ productive technical training, and ⑥ curriculum establishment and high quality educational contents.

First, in realizing the education policy based on anti-communist spirit, the ministry established a democratic education system and created democratic human relationships. With this regard, it focused on school democratization, establishment of educational autonomy to ensure educational neutralization, elevation of the public morality, and promotion of a sound social ethos.

Second, it established a scientific education policy and strengthened guidance administration to improve the quality of education. In addition, it rejected the centralized authoritarian administration, revamped curriculum and improved science & technical and vocational education.

Third, the ministry created a creative culture, guaranteed the freedom of democratic cultural activities, and reformed cultural administration in order to enhance the public culture.

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## 1.3 Establishment and Practice of Support System for the Compulsory Elementary Education Plan

### 1.3.1. Practice of Elementary Education through the Establishment of Learning Encouragement System

The concept of learning encouragement was newly introduced from the United States as Korea regained its independence from the Japanese colonial rule on August 15. Thus, Korea's new concept of learning encouragement changed from "supervision, inspection, order, and censorship" to "guidance, advice, support, and participation." However, the administration system for learning encouragement was still inadequate after the establishment of the government. In fact, there was no independent department that was in charge of senior school supervisors when the Ministry of Education was reorganized into 5 bureaus, 1 office, and 22 divisions in November 1948. The school supervisors consisting of 4~7 persons worked in affiliation with the Secretariat or Planning Office (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989; Ministry of Education, 1998).

Meanwhile, the local administration organizations of learning encouragement were unified as Educational & Social Bureau according to the organization reform in 1949. Yet, since only one school supervisor was allocated to one county ("gun"), it was difficult for them to provide good educational guidance and advisory activities while focusing on teaching staffs and implementation of a new education system. As the bureaucratic system was organized, the role of school supervisors and installation of the relevant office emerged as hot issues.

### 1.3.2 Changes in the Learning Encouragement Support System after the War

The learning encouragement policy according to "wartime education" became important educational support in the early 1950s due to the Korean War. In particular, the learning encouragement system was introduced to enhance professionalism in the process of restructuring school education after the war ended. In 1957, the government drastically increased the number of supervisors by appointing entrusted supervisors and had a huge impact on education reform for democratic education (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989).

Meanwhile, a self-governing local education system was introduced as a result of the local general election on April 24, 1952, and consequently education committees were established at city and county levels in June. The newly established local educational committee had an independent administrative system and had school inspectors or supervisors under educational superintendents at city or county levels (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964). During this period, the government focused on the establishment and instruction of supervisory policy; school inspection; operation of supervisory member system; designation and guidance of research schools; encouragement of education research; and installation of research centers through the central government's policy. In addition, the central government earnestly pursued supervisory activities through various forms such as in-service training and publication.

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## **2. Envision and Application of Compulsory Education Plan**

### **2.1 Elementary School Curriculum under the Japanese Colonial Rule**

#### **2.1.1 Curriculum During the Period of Military Rule (1910-1919)**

According to the primary school regulations that was promulgated in October 1911, curriculum subjects for the primary school education were Morality, National Language (Japanese), Korean and Chinese Languages, Arithmetic, Natural Science, Singing, Gymnastics, Drawing, Handicraft, Sewing and Needlework, Basic Agriculture, and Basic Commerce. When the primary school curricular was established, we have to pay attention to the following two factors. First, the previous subject like “National Language and Chinese” was changed into “Korean and Chinese Languages,” indicating that people were forced to call Japanese the national language, instead of Korean. Second, the previous curricula had “Geography and History” subject although the class hours of the subject were not specified; it was totally eliminated in the 1911 primary school curricula.

Noticeable features of the curricula of this period are as follows. First, the school hours of Japanese language by grade remarkably increased to 10 hours per week from the previous 6 hours per week. Second, the weekly school hours of Korean and Chinese Languages subject decreased from 10 to 6. Third, total class hours per week reduced from 28 to 30 hours to 26 or 27 hours.

#### **2.1.2 Curriculum During the Period of Cultural Rule (1919-1931)**

Since the March 1<sup>st</sup> Independence Movement in 1919, the Japanese government came up with a cultural rule to pacify Koreans under the slogan of impartiality and equal favor, promising equal treatment of Koreans and Japanese. In November 1920, the Japanese Government revised partial Ordinance on Chosun Education and primary school regulations. Under the principle to revise the Korean education system equal to that of Japan, the Japanese government extended school years for primary schools from 4 to 6 and newly established the Japanese History and Geography subjects according to the revised primary school regulations.

#### **2.1.3 Curriculum During the Period of Cultural Genocide (1931-1945)**

After waging the Sino-Japanese War in 1937 following the Manchurian Incident in 1931, Japan attempted to utilize Korea as its logistic base to conquer the Asian Continent. Under the plan, the Japanese government introduced three major doctrines of Chosun Education, stressing clarification of the notion of the nation’s political system, namely the emperor system in Japan, equal position between Korea and Japan, and training to serve the Japanese emperor in order to reform the Korean education system and contents. In March 1938, it revised and promulgated the third Ordinance on Chosun Education

which was designed to integrate teacher training courses in Japanese and Korean schools to realize its assimilation policy. At that time, there were numerous primary schools with 4 years of school years. But, they were not elevated to elementary schools with 6 years of school years under the pretext of financial reasons.

What should be noticed in the curriculum presented by the newly promulgated elementary school regulations is that the subject of Korean Language was degraded to an elective subject. Thus, Korean Language subject was allowed to be either taught or abolished from 1938. Given that the principals at most elementary schools were Japanese, it can be assumed that Korean language education started to be forbidden at that time.

The following Table indicates the curriculum subjects and class hours revised in 1938. The class hours of elective subjects doubled compared to the previous ones, and the class hours of Korean Language were further reduced. In addition, Korean Language as an elective subject could be opted out depending on the principal's decision.

**Table 2-3 | Curricula and Class Hours of Elementary School with 6 Years of Education System**

	Morality	Japanese	Korean	Arithmetic	History	Geography	Natural Science	Vocation	Drawing	Singing	Gymnastics	Housekeeping & Sewing	Handicraft	Total
1 <sup>st</sup> Grader	2	10	4	5							4		1	26
2 <sup>nd</sup> Grader	2	12	3	5							4		1	27
3 <sup>rd</sup> Grader	2	12	3	6					1	1	3		1	29
4 <sup>th</sup> Grader	2	12	2	6			2	Mail 2 Femail 1	1	1	Mail 3 Femail 2	3	1	Mail 32 Femail 34
5 <sup>th</sup> Grader	2	9	2	4	2	2	2	Mail 3 Femail 1	Mail 2 Femail 1	1	Mail 3 Femail 2	4	1	Mail 32 Femail 34
6 <sup>th</sup> Grader	2	9	2	4	2	2	2	Mail 3 Femail 1	Mail 2 Femail 1		Mail 3 Femail 2	4	1	Mail 34 Femail 34

- Note: 1. The subject of Drawing can be provided a class per week at 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade level.  
 2. Handicraft cannot be provided to elementary students who study the Industry over 4<sup>th</sup> grader level.  
 3. Practical Training course can be additionally offered through a consultation among teachers besides class hours of regular subjects.

Source: 「Elementary School Curriculum Guideline」, March 15, 1938

The Japanese government changed the title of primary schools into citizens' school according to the Ordinance of Citizens' Schools promulgated in 1941, in the attempt to strengthen its colonial education. The following two factors are noticeable in the curriculum of Citizens' Schools. First, the subject of Korean Language was completely abolished. Second, several subjects were integrated into one subject. For instance, subjects of Morality, Japanese, History, and Geography were united into the subject of "Citizen," and subjects of Arithmetics and Natural Science into "Math& Natural Science," Gymnastics and Dancing into "Physical Training," Music, Calligraphy, Drawing, Handicraft, Housekeeping, and Sewing into "Art," and Agriculture, Industry, Commerce, and Fisheries into "Vocation."

As indicated above, the elementary school education during the Japanese Occupation Period focused on Japanese language and Morality education. On the other hand, the curriculum and elementary school education led by the U.S. military government in the wake of the nation's liberation in the 1950s stressed Korean language, Health, and Civic Subjects. Korean education after the establishment of the Korean government can be interpreted as applying the curriculum under the Japanese colonial rule in its form while adopting contents suitable for the new democratic system.

## 2.2 Establishment and Development of the Elementary Education Curriculum

### 2.2.1 Syllabus-centered Curriculum in the Korean War

The 10-year period, from right after the liberation in 1945 until the proclamation of the curriculum decree by the Education Ministry ordinance No. 4 in August 1, 1955, is referred to as the "period of a summarized program of instruction" (Ministry of Education, 1998; Jong-jae Lee et al., 2010). This period can be further subdivided into the "period of the U.S. forces ruling," the "period of state-building," and the "period of the Korean War." In fact, this period lacked a properly unified curriculum at the national level. Since it is difficult to suggest a representative system for this period, only a temporarily enacted system during the Korean War as well as during the U.S. military force occupation will be covered in the following.

**Table 2-4 |** Elementary School Subjects and Annual School Hours under the U.S. Military Government\* (Sep. 1946)

Grade Subject	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
Korean	360	360	360	360	320	320
Social life	160	160	160	160	Male 240 Female 200	Male 240 Female 200
Natural science	-	-	-	160	160	160
Arithmetic	160	160	200	200	200	200

Grade Subject	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
Health	200	200	200	200	200	200
Music	80	80	80	80	80	80
Arts	160	160	160	160	Male 160 Female 120	Male 160 Female 120
Home life	-	-	-	-	Female 80	Female 80
Total	1,120 (28)	1,120 (28)	1,200 (30)	1,360 (34)	1,360 (34)	1,360 (34)

Source: Ung-seon Hong (1979). Curriculum Guideline, p.70.

Note: Annual school hours were calculated based on an academic year of 40 weeks. Thus, in the case of Korean language, total 360 annual school hours account for 9 hours a week (1 class hour = 40 minutes)

For instance, <Table 2-4> represents the curriculum determined by the School Curriculum Committee, which consisted of approximately 100 personages, and was adopted by the Education and Management Bureau of the U.S. military government in November 1946. According to the Table, 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> graders at elementary school received an average of 28 hours classes per week (1 class hour = 40 min.), 3<sup>rd</sup> graders 30 hours classes per week and 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders 34 hours classes per week, and subjects consisted of Korean, Social Life, Natural Science, Arithmetic, Health, Music, Arts, and Home Life. Among the subjects, Home life was taught to 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grader female students for 2 hours classes per week, and Social Life and Arts were taught to them one class hour less than those of male students (Ministry of Education, 1998; Ung-seon Hong, 1991; Kyeong-cheol Huh, 2008).

This curriculum changed to the one suggested in <Table 2-5> during the Korean War. One of the distinctive features of this system was that the total number of class hours per grade was shorter than before. If we convert the numbers in the Table into hours classes per week, 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> graders received an average of 18 class hours per week, 3<sup>rd</sup> graders 20 hours per week, 4<sup>th</sup> graders 24 hours per week, and 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> graders 27-28 hours per week. There were a few changes except subjects such as “Social Life” and “Natural Science” being unified, and the subject title of “Heath” changed to “Physical Education& Health.” As the total class hours per week were reduced, the class hours by subject were naturally shortened. For example, in the case of Korean, the previous curriculum allocated 9 hours classes per week for 1<sup>st</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> graders, but during the war it was reduced to 7 hours.

**Table 2-5 | Subjects and Annual School Hours after Wartime Textbook Publication**

Grade subject	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
Korean	245	245	245	245	245	245
Social life	140	140	175	Male 175	Male 210	Male 210
Natural science				Female 140	Female 140	Female 140
Arithmetic	140	140	175	175	175	175
Physical education	35	35	35	35	35	35
Music	35	35	35	35	35	35
Arts	35	35	35	35	Male 105 Female 70	Male 105 Female 70
Home life	-	-	-	-	Female 70	Female 70
Total	630	630	700	840	Male 945 Female 980	Male 945 Female 980

Source: Jong-gyu Ham (1984). A Study on Curriculum Changes in Korean Education, p.221.

Note: This Table is compiled by calculating an academic year as 35 weeks

### 2.2.2 Post-war Subject-centered Curriculum

As previously mentioned, the curriculum as seen in <Table 2-5> was continuously used until the early 1954. However, the Ministry of Education implemented the curriculum revision since 1952, when the government moved to Busan and formed the “School Curriculum Study Committee.” This committee compiled the “guidelines on curriculum time allocation for elementary, secondary and college of education” through 29 rounds of discussion and declared it by the Education Ministry ordinance No. 35 in April 20, 1954. It served as the basic principle for subject time allocation and curriculum at each school levels (Ministry of Education, 1998; Kyeong-cheol Huh, 2008).

In 1955, when the government moved back to Seoul, the joint educational committee, consisting of 115 persons from the “School Curriculum Study Committee” and “Advisory Board on Course of Study,” established a curriculum by subject at each school level through 26 general meetings and several sub-committee meetings. It was declared by the Education Ministry ordinance No. 44 on August 1, 1955. This curriculum sustained for about a decade, and this period is called the first curriculum period. This first curriculum period is the period when the curriculum was established by the government for the first time since the establishment of the Republic of Korea (Ministry of Education, 1988).



**Table 2-6 | 1<sup>st</sup> Elementary School Curriculum Guidelines**

Grade Subject	1 <sup>st</sup>	2 <sup>nd</sup>	3 <sup>rd</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup>	5 <sup>th</sup>	6 <sup>th</sup>
Korean	25-30% (240-290min.)	25-30% (250-300min)	27-20% (290-220min)	20-23% (220-260min.)	20-18% (240-220min.)	20-18% (250-220min.)
Arithmetic	10-15% (100-140min.)	10-15% (100-150min)	12-15% (130-160min)	15-10% (170-110min.)	15-10% (180-120min.)	15-10% (190-120min.)
Social life	10-15% (100-140min.)	10-15% (100-150min)	15-12% (160-130min)	15-12% (170-130min.)	15-12% (180-140min.)	15-12% (190-150min.)
Natural science	10-8% (100-80min.)	10-8% (100-80min.)	10-15% (110-160min)	13-10% (140-110min.)	10-15% (120-180min.)	10-15% (120-190min.)
Health	18-12% (170-120min.)	15-10% (150-120min)	15-10% (160-110min)	10-12% (110-130min.)	10-12% (120-140min.)	10-12% (120-150min.)
Music	12-10% (120-100min.)	15-10% (150-100min)	8-10% (190-110min)	8-5% (90-60min.)	8-5% (100-60min.)	8-5% (100-60min.)
Arts	10-8% (100-80min.)	10-8% (100-80min.)	8-10% (90-110min.)	7-10% (80-110min.)	10-8% (120-100min.)	10-8% (120-100min.)
Practical education	-	-	-	7-10% (80-110min.)	7-10% (80-110min.)	7-10% (90-130min.)
Special class	5-2% (50-20min.)	5-2% (50-20min.)	5-8% (50-80min.)	5-8% (60-100min.)	5-10% (60-120min.)	5-10% (60-120min.)
Total	100% (960min.)	100% (1,000min.)	100% (1,080min.)	100% (1,120min.)	100% (1,200min.)	100% (1,240min.)
Total annual class hr	840hr (24)	875hr (25)	945hr (27)	980hr (28)	1,050hr (30)	1,085hr (31)

Source: Ministry of Education (1986). *General Outlines on Curriculum (1946-1981)*, p.11.

<Table 2-6> indicates the curriculum of elementary education during the 1<sup>st</sup> curriculum period. According to the curriculum, school education contents could be largely divided into 8 main subjects (Korean, Arithmetic, Social Life, Science, Health, Music, Arts and Practical Education) and an extra-curricular special class. Compared to the period of a summarized program of instruction, “Science” subject was separated from “Social Education”. “Practical Education” subject, which was taught to students over 4<sup>th</sup> grade for 2-3 hours classes per week, was newly introduced in place of “Home Life.” In addition, the special class was formally included in the curriculum Table. This extra-curricular special class was offered to 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> graders for 1 class hour per week, 3<sup>rd</sup> graders for 1-2hr, 4<sup>th</sup> graders for 1.5-2.5hr, and 5-6 graders for 2.5-3hr.

### Box 2-1 | Health Education in the Korean War

Health education in the international society was aimed at creating a safe, healthy, comprehensive, and equally invested education environment. This UNESCO spirit and the progressive education movement of the U.S. took interest in constructing a health environment to nurture both the healthy body and mind in school life. Korea earnestly pursued health education, focusing on the vaccination of infectious diseases through school education since the U.S. military government was set up in 1945. With this, a new health education system combining schools with local health centers was established.

According to people who attended elementary school after the war ended in the 1950s, the school health education was offered in combination with personal hygiene and sanitation education, infectious disease prevention education, and physical education. Especially important activities were vaccination for preventing infectious diseases, hygiene inspection and health education, which were jointly conducted by the army, schools, and public health centers. Since there were no specific physical education facilities and equipment, physical education was focused on plays and games. However, physical education activities were performed in earnest by the late 1950s when the 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan was successfully completed. In addition, vaccinations for infectious diseases such as cholera, typhoid, and dysentery along with prevention education on smallpox, polio, and tuberculosis were provided during spring and fall. By that time, school infirmaries began to operate around large cities, and home room teachers and nurse teachers were in charge of health education.

## 2.3 Changes in Elementary Students' Advancement to Secondary Education

### 2.3.1 Admission Management System for Enrollment to Secondary Education

The entrance examination system for middle school was implemented under the responsibility of the principal of a relevant school until the 1950s. Applications were formed based on middle school entrance test results and academic reports at elementary school. The entrance test system to select applicants through test performance results independently conducted by each middle school and academic reports at elementary school was called the “school management system.” In fact, this system was not much different from that during Japanese imperialism. Although all other elements and factors related to the education system were changing toward the U.S. style-centered system than the Japanese education system, the entrance examination system was an exception. Policy makers put priority on other issues and failed to properly respond to it.

Entrance examinations were conducted twice a year. In urban cities where middle schools were clustered, students were allowed to take exams once in the first semester and once in

the second semester. In rural areas, entrance exams were conducted in the first semester of the year under the guideline of each principal. The reason for taking the exams twice a year was to prevent the loss of talented human resources from personal and national viewpoints. However, some raised concerns that providing students with two chances would attribute to the concentration of applicants on prestigious schools (Ministry of Education, 1998).

The entrance screening based on academic results at elementary school and middle school entrance test results in the early school management system underwent several changes as time went by. First, the academic scores at elementary school were eliminated from screening factors due to lack of fairness and accuracy in the evaluation. Instead, recommendation letters from principals of elementary schools, oral test, and physical exam were included. Then, results of the entrance examination offered at each middle school became the only factor to determine the admission of applicants. The test subjects included Korean, Mathematics, and others, and all questions were given in an essay or short-answer form (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989; Ministry of Education, 1998). During the school management system period, when principals controlled the entrance examination system, screening was conducted with various factors such as examination, elementary school record, IQ test, and physical checkup. There was fierce competition among students to be enrolled in middle school since only a small number of applicants were admitted. This was the result occurred in the process of accepting the U.S. democratic system and education method, influenced by the education reform pursued by the U.S. military government.

### **2.3.2 Unified National Entrance Examination System in the Korean War**

Given schools, students and teachers had to move frequently from place to place due to the war, it was impossible to conduct the entrance examination based on the previous school management system. The unified national entrance examination system was created to resolve this conflict. The newly introduced system was designed to prevent confusion involving the entrance examination during the war and to provide students with equal opportunities for taking the test so as to ensure fair selection among applicants. The outstanding feature of the system was that senior students were made to take the same entrance test provided by the state; their admissions were determined by test results. This system could be considered as the first pool system for middle school entrance examination or various national examinations created after the 5.16 military coup (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989; Byeong-seon Gwak, 2008).

The Ministry of Education described the reasons for implementing the unified national entrance examination system as follows (Publication Committee of 10 Years of Korean Education, 1959). First, it could be conducted prior to the school reform since the examination and selection processes were separated. Also, since it was implemented by region, both students who were forced to move from their residential areas and local students could be placed on an equal footing. Second, the examination could be more realistic and objective in considering the differences in the study progress among schools provided by the state.

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Moreover, test result records were given to one per person, which could mitigate competition among students by eliminating dual applications. In addition, given that the test records were valid for one year nationwide, it was not influenced by changes in residential areas due to the war. It could also prevent confusion in selecting students by separating refugee students from local students in order to separately select refugee students and entrust them to local middle schools. Third, test results were disclosed by city or county levels, and thus it could prevent illicit admission (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964; Ministry of Education, 1988).

The 1<sup>st</sup> unified national entrance examination was conducted in the entire claimed areas in South Korea on July 31, 1951. Refugee students took the test in elementary school in their refuge areas. After receiving the test results, students could apply to middle schools in the first half. If rejected, they could apply once more in the latter half of the year. Schools selected students in the order of merit from a pool of candidates created by adding 10% to the admission quota. Then they underwent interviews and physical check-up for screening. Since students knew their test results, some took a “wait-and-see” approach in submitting their application until all facts were in (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989). Given that they would be admitted to middle schools far from where they were after the war ended, they were commissioned to nearby middle schools until the war ended and the region was recaptured (Ministry of Education, 1988).

From 1952, middle school principals selected students from a pool of candidates created by adding less than 50% of the student number to the admission quota in the order of merit. Then, students had to take written tests, physical check-up, and interviews as part of the screening process. Examination questions were created from a question pool, consisting of subjects including Korean, Arithmetic, Social Life, Natural Science, Health, Music, and Practical Education which were studied in the 2<sup>nd</sup> semester of 6<sup>th</sup> grade at the elementary school level. Tests were scored out of 200 and questions were taken to objectively evaluate students’ thinking, expression, judgment capacities within the range of subjects and avoiding applied questions. Physical check-ups were conducted to see whether candidates had physical difficulties in learning. Interviews were taken to compare candidates with mentioned items on school register. Principals selected final enrollers in the order of merit by combining test results from the unified entrance test with the written test, after excluding those who were found having difficulties in studying as the results of interviews and physical check-ups (Ministry of Education 1998).

The unified national entrance examination system, which was inevitably introduced on a war footing, received mixed responses. Some argued that the system effectively prevented confusion caused by the war such as inconsistency in the study progress and changes in students’ residential areas. Moreover, the system deemed to eliminate the possibility of illicit and unfair admission to realize equal opportunity for education and mitigated fierce competition involving the entrance examination (Ministry of Education, 1988). On the other hand, it had several problems. First, although the purpose of the system was to abolish the entrance tests independently provided by each school, some prestigious schools had to conduct the entrance

test again due to overcrowded applicants. Second, it aggravated competition among students due to the exposure of a gap among schools which eventually led to greater burden for parents and students. Third, most schools except some prestigious schools had to experience shortage of applicants, causing even students who failed the unified national entrance examination to get admission tickets. Thus, the system failed to achieve its intended effects.

This unified national entrance examination system continued for three years until 1953. The 51<sup>st</sup> Central Education Committee decided to abolish the system in May 27, 1953. But, the system can be considered as a standard for government-centered student selection management and entrance examination system from the perspective that it paved the foundation for the government to efficiently control the student selection method even under national emergency situations. The education policies for entrance examination later on were generalized to be offered by the government.

### **2.3.3 Revival of School Management System after the War**

The unified national entrance examination system caused controversy over its existence as the war ended. Some said it should be continued since its advantages in maintaining fairness in the entrance examination for middle schools. The main advocate was the Ministry of Education. On the contrary, some criticized its illegality and undemocratic aspects based on the provision of the enforcement ordinance of Education Act that entrusted the right to select enrollers of middle schools with principals of middle schools, and demanded to return to the previous school management system. One of the representative forces in the latter was secondary education circles.

Amidst this controversy, President Syng-man Rhee made a Presidential Instruction to “offer freedom of selection of students in admission to schools over middle school levels” in February 18, 1954. With this measure, the entrance examination system for middle school based on the unified national examination system was returned to the school management system. The main sources of the admission screening of middle school were the test scores centering on elementary school record and written test results. Meanwhile, a number of middle schools utilized the elementary school record as the main source for screening, because the Ministry of Education encouraged the selection of students based on school records without entrance examinations in an attempt to mitigate excessive competition in entrance examination-centered education (Cheon-seok Oh, 1964).

In 1956, the Ministry of Education selected more than 2 male and female middle schools by city and province and ordered them to conduct admission screening without an entrance examination. Then, the ministry allowed schools to apply the correlation regression line to elementary school records if the admission quota was surpassed. The elementary school performance records were recommended to be more than 30% of the total scores for admission. Middle schools were allowed to set the conversion criteria for the five-step grade. In addition, evaluations for behavior and extra-curricular activities were

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recommended to be used as a reference for selecting regulations. Schools with a shortage of applicants were allowed to select students only by physical check-ups and interviews (Ministry of Education, 1980).

In 1957, in an attempt to promote normalization of elementary school education and curb private education, the ministry allowed schools to select between admission screening without examination and the entrance examination under permission of the city and provincial governments. The educational authorities in each region argued that the national entrance exam should be able to properly, fairly, and accurately assess students' capacity learned from elementary education. The examination was conducted by a written examination and a practical test. The written exam was offered to students by standardizing the styles of writing, predicates and types used in the textbooks of all subjects for 6<sup>th</sup> graders at elementary school. The practical tests were designed to evaluate basic functions that were supposed to be trained for 6 years of elementary school centering on subjects such as health, music, and arts (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989).

The introduction of the combined evaluation method (elementary school record and entrance examination results) after abolishing the unified national entrance examination system produced some expected effects. With the return of the school management system for admission, the principles of the entrance examination system could be said to change its focus from the securement of fairness in selection to reduction in students' burden as well as the normalization of elementary school education (Ministry of Education, 1998).

After all, the enrollment system to secondary school education indicates that the bottle-neck phenomenon in competitive selection was gradually shifting. Competition for entrance examination for middle school was fierce during the 1950s and 1960s. Increased educational opportunities and a sharp rise in the enrollment rate in elementary school after the liberation produced a bottle-neck phenomenon. This phenomenon was created by the dramatic increase in the elementary educational population and could not be resolved without expanding the absorption capacity in middle school levels. Competition for admission tests, which were intensified in the advancement stage to middle school, was resolved by the implementation of the equalization policy through admission screening without examination for middle school since 1969. It indicated not only changes in the admission screening system but also the rise in Korea's average education standard and the universalization of the enrollment for middle school.

## 2.4 Student Life of the Then Elementary Schools following Outbreak of the Korean War

(The content of this chapter is a summary of personal interviews for this research) The interviewee was born in 1946, the following year after the liberation of Korea from the Japanese rule. He attended an elementary school between in 1952 when the Korean War was at its height and in 1958 when the country was engaged in the post-war reconstruction.

## Box 2-2 | Student Life of the Then Elementary Schools

### 1) General Features of Then Elementary Schools

The Korean War broke out when P was at the age of 5. He witnessed the horror of the war as he and his family failed to escape Seoul due to destruction of the Han River Bridge and remained in Seoul occupied by North Korean soldiers. He said the memories are still vivid in his mind. During January 4 Retreat in 1951, he moved to Munkyeong where his mother's family lived and entered an elementary school in the countryside on April 1 in 1952. He attended the school until fifth grade and was transferred to another school in an urban area on March 1, 1957. He attended the second largest school in the area until he graduated elementary school.

Back then, the entrance to elementary school was not mandatory, but enrollment of school age children would have been recommended by the government since the war came to a lull. P came to attend elementary school along with his brother although he did not reach school age. At first, he was not serious about studying but managed to adapt himself to the new surroundings to proceed to the next grade. The situations at that time were difficult to make enrollment to elementary school mandatory. Rather, teachers had to visit houses to ask for parents to send their children to school.

The school building where P attended was a thatched-house whose walls were destroyed by bombing. There were no desks or chairs at the school, and the chalkboard was handmade by teachers. The quality of chalks was so poor that they were hardly used. Notebooks made from recycled paper were yellowish and coarse. Pencils were hard to use and easily broke so that children used to moisten the pencil lead with their lips and press down hard when they wrote, which often resulted in tearing sheets of paper. He could study at a newly built classroom for the first time when he was a 4th grader. There were still no desks or chairs, and the only teaching equipment was an organ.

The followings are P's record. When I was a third or fourth grader, around the time the school term ended, my class teacher wrote and taught a traditional three-verse Korean poem everyday for almost a month on the chalkboard. Students were allowed to go home if they memorized the poem. I could learn many poems by heart thanks to the teacher, and it benefited my lifelong learning and life. Even after transferring to a large school in the city when I was a 6th grader, I experienced no hardship in adapting to the curriculum. Rather, I had to compete with students about my age. I could win a prize at a race on the field day.

I had to travel 2 to 3 km to attend school, which took about 30 to 40 minutes along ridges between fields after crossing two small streams. I had to either skip school or go around a mountain to get there when streams overflowed during rainy seasons.

Meanwhile, school assemblies were held only for special occasions at the early days of enrollment. Back then, a class was composed of students from two grades. For example, a teacher taught the first graders, gave them an assignment and then taught

the forth graders. There were about 10 to 15 students in one class, and the number of the total students up to fifth graders never surpassed 100. The school was closed.

## 2) School Curriculum and School Events

There were no standardized scholastic aptitude tests; simple tests to check homework were conducted. After transferred to an urban school where a class consisted of about 60 students, I had to prepare for an entrance test for middle school and did a lot of homework.

One of the school events I remember is the fall field day and graduation ceremony. Students exercised and prepared for the event for about a month after school. The fall field day was like a village feast and festival. On the graduation day, students shed tears as they sang the graduation song to the accompaniment of the organ. The scenes from these events are still vivid in my memory. During the graduation ceremony, honor student prizes and certificates for students who haven't miss a day of school were offered to students, along with prizes of notebooks and pencils. Later, by the time when I graduated from elementary school, the prize changed to a Korean language dictionary.

There were no regular meals provided by school, but students sometimes received powdered milk and army hardtack. Elementary schools in urban areas were said to receive "C Ration," some military canned foods, but they were not delivered to rural areas.

Physical education classes were provided according to the curriculum, but there were no healthcare activities. There were no public bathrooms at that time. In winter, students had to take a bath in group by creating a makeshift fitting room, and they received free parasiticide in fall (Back then, since human feces were often used as a fertilizer, many students were infected by parasites).

I cannot remember the exact amount of tuition, but I remember that many students were pressed for the payment of monthly tuition (tuition + school supporting fees) due to difficult family circumstances. Although parent-teacher association was held at early days of enrollment, the participation of parents was low. One of the major events when parents gathered together was the fall field day and graduation ceremony. My parents never visited school except when I had to transfer to another school. In fact, there was no need to. Since parents' participation was low and most of them received no formal education, some wealthy people in the town exerted their influences in operating school.

Lastly, I think one of the urgent things to be improved in elementary education when looking back is the poor school facilities and environment. However, given that the situations were in the wake of the war, it seems to be a miracle that elementary education could be offered then. It is meaningless to compare the elementary education from current perspectives.



2011 Modularization of Korea's Development Experience  
Analysis on Development and Achievement  
of Compulsory Elementary Education  
after the Korean War

## Chapter 3

### Analysis on Achievements of Compulsory Education

1. Building Educational Infrastructure thru Compulsory Education
2. Compulsory Elementary Education and Growth of the Korean Economy

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# Analysis on Achievements of Compulsory Education

## 1. Building Educational Infrastructure thru Compulsory Education

### 1.1 Education Legal System Before and After the Korean War

The Constitution is the basic source of all education laws and regulations in Korea. In this sense, Korea celebrates more than 50 years of history in education law, since it had enacted the education law based on the constitution which underwent 9 revisions to date. The laws and regulations established under the U.S. military government before the establishment of the Republic of Korea had significant influences on the education law promulgated on December 31, 1949. They contained information including education objectives, policy, education system, and local education autonomy, which served as the foundation for the framework of the education law (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989).

#### 1.1.1 Education Law and Regulations in the Formative Period

As the basis for fundamental rights of the people and national governance, the Constitution was enacted and promulgated on July 17, 1948. Article 16 of the Constitution stipulated that every citizen has an equal right to receive education according to his or her own capacity and elementary education is compulsory for all children. Independence, professionalism, and political impartiality of education and the autonomy of institutions of higher learning are guaranteed under the conditions as prescribed by law. Fundamental matters pertaining to the educational system, including schools and lifelong education, administration, finance, and the status of teachers are determined by law. The Constitutional clauses on education were already stated as “duty of education” in Charter of the Constitution by the Korean Provisional Government (1919. 4. 11), “guarantee of the equal right to receive education through public education expenditures” in Principles of the National Foundation

(1941. 11. 25), and “right to demand school attendance” in the Korean Provisional Charter of the Constitution (1944. 4. 22).

Therefore, it can be said that all these fundamental spirits were reflected in the Constitution. Under the Government Organization Act (1948. 7. 17), the Ministry of Education was established and the establishment of Seoul National University Act was promulgated on August 12, 1946. At the same time, Act on installation of school districts and Act on financing and accounting of public school were promulgated (Ministry of Education, 1980; Lee Jong-jae et al., 2010).

Later, the Education Law was enacted on December 31, 1949. Consisting of 11 chapters and 177 articles, this law came to be assumed as the original sources of the Korean education system. However, establishment of the education system was postponed due to the Korean War, and the enforcement decree of the Education Law was finally declared in April 1952. Also, the education autonomy system, which was stipulated in the Education Law, was established on June 4, 1952 as local government councils were created on the same day.

### **1.1.2 Education Legal System after the War**

In the restoration process after the war, the education policy greatly depended on private schools under the *laissez-faire* policy as the country put much energy into restoration of damaged education facilities. As a result, the number of schools at each level increased in the mid 1950s, and a number of universities were established. In 1955, the “decree on standards for the establishment of university” was declared and the “decree on standards for the establishment of middle school, high school, college education” was promulgated in 1959. The Act on standard for the establishment of elementary school was belatedly enacted in the 1960s.

Meanwhile, the Education Act and the Compulsory Education Subsidy Act were promulgated on August 28, 1958, in an attempt to secure financial resources necessary to build school facilities and to implement the 6-year Plan for completion of compulsory education, which were different from the Education Tax Act enacted in 1981 (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989). A more innovative measure in arranging the education system came with the Provisional Act on Education (1961. 9. 1) enacted and promulgated after the 5.16 Military Coup. The main contents of the laws include installation of an advisory committee for education reconstruction, merger of schools and departments for school rearrangement, readjustment of the number of classes and students, adoption of the merit-based evaluation system when hiring college faculty or the establishment of junior college, ban on labor movement and collective bargaining of teachers and reduction of teacher retirement age by 5 years, and introduction of the national examination system for a university degree. Yet, these government-led education reform measures failed to achieve significant success. The following legislations for school education reform included the decree on provisional measures concerning admission of middle school, high school, and college,

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the decree on qualification for a bachelor's degree, the decree on standard for school facility establishment, the decree on standard of kindergarten facility establishment, and the decree on discipline of private school teacher.

### **1.1.3 Regulations related to the Completion of Compulsory Elementary Education**

The Education Law promulgated in 1949 emerged as a basic source of the education system in Korea. It consisted of 11 chapters and 177 articles covering a vast amount of education-related issues including general rules, education district and committee, education tax and subsidy, teacher, education institutors, class, department and subjects, textbook, school supervision, scholarship, punishment, and additional clauses. The law had undergone 38 revisions as of March 8, 1997, including the deletion of chapter 2-3 (article 15-72) with the establishment of the Act on local education autonomy (1991. 3. 8). It served the basis for the Framework Act on Education, the Act on Elementary & Secondary Education, and the Act on Higher Education, which were promulgated on November 18, 1997 (Ministry of Education, 1998).

The chronicle evolutions of the Education Law can be stated as follows in accordance with the category in the history of Education Law (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989). The formative period focused on revising the number of school years and subsidy. The duration of school years for high school was raised from 2-3 years to 3 years. The number of school years for teachers' college was lengthened to three years, and the junior college system was established (50. 3. 10). In addition, the number of school years for middle school was reduced from 4 years to 3 years (50. 3. 20), and the government subsidy for compulsory education was provided (1951. 12. 1). Meanwhile, the academic year at each school level, after the war ended, was changed from March 1 to the end of February in the following year (61. 8. 12). School districts were abolished by an emergency measure under the military government (62. 1. 6).

Public Educational Officials Act was introduced on April 18, 1953, and the contents included qualifications, appointment, salary, study and training, status guarantee, and discipline. Since it had many provisions that could be applied to private school teachers, it can be considered as the most fundamental law with regard to educational personnel.

In addition, the provisions related to local education financing and operation were included in the education law promulgated in 1949, in order to secure financial resources for elementary education. The national tax return system designed to support local education was introduced by establishing the Provisional Act on Land Revenue Tax (1951. 9. 25). More active legal regulations intended to secure financial resources for education came with the Education Tax Act enacted on August 28, 1958 and the Compulsory Education Subsidy Act was established on December 29, 1958. The Education Tax Act contributed to securing educational finance by integrating the existing house tax and special tax. Then, the

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Compulsory Education Subsidy Act was established to appropriate the amount of financial shortage and the amount of financial demand as a grant for equal financing in the government budget. The pegged rates were adjusted in the revisions in 1966 and 1968.

## **1.2 Improvement of Teacher Policy and Compulsory Elementary Education**

### **1.2.1 Changes in Teacher Training System**

To establish a new education policy and realize the goal in the settlement period for democratic education, there was an urgent need to nurture and secure teachers for elementary education. To that end, the military government reorganized 10 existing teachers' colleges to establish colleges of education exclusively for elementary school teachers. The government made efforts to meet the demand for teachers by expanding such institutions by 6 in 1946, 1 in 1947, and 1 in 1951. However, the demand for teachers rose sharply after the liberation as the enrolment of school-age children dramatically increased. To resolve the shortage of elementary school teachers, the government operated temporary elementary teacher training schools affiliated with colleges of education. After the situation gradually improved, temporary teacher training schools were abolished by 1958, and elementary teacher training institutions were unified into colleges of education. During this period, the government had to place most of its efforts in developing external educational factors. Especially, the government focused on striving for quantitative expansion of teacher training education and system arrangement, rather than focusing on internal factors (Ministry of Education, 1980).

Along with these efforts, the government tried to extend and improve the status of normal schools to junior college since the mid 1950s. As a result, the Provisional Act on Education was promulgated in September 1961, and 2-year colleges of education were institutionalized. In this regard, 10 colleges of education were established in 1962, and the number increased to 16 in 1975.

### **1.2.2 Teacher Qualification and Establishment of the Teacher Employment System**

In May 1948, the government unveiled the teacher qualification standards and issued certificates for elementary, middle, and high school teachers for the first time in the country. The establishment of the Public Educational Officials Act in 1953 laid the foundation for the teacher qualification system. The government declared the decree of qualification examination for public educational officials which contained specific items related to the types of examination, eligible candidates, and effects of the certificates. To be specific, the qualification tests were divided into issuance of the national certificates without or with examinations. In addition, the valid term of the certificates was set for 10 years, and those

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who wanted to extend the validity were made to take training education designated by the Minister of Education within the valid term. However, this system was degenerated due to the absence of initiative and administrative support to allow the certificate holders remain their validity until they retire, along with the establishment of the Public Educational Officials Act in 1963 (Ministry of Education 1998).

In the meantime, the government couldn't afford to set strict standards for teacher employment during the U.S. military government due to lack of teachers. Therefore, people who finished secondary education were able to become elementary school teachers without undergoing a specific screening process or test. Although there had been 18 teacher training schools for elementary education nationwide by 1950, the government had to establish temporary teacher training institutes to meet the rising demand for teachers. According to the "Provisional Act on Special Cases Concerning Education" in 1961, the college of education system was institutionalized, and a total of 16 colleges of education were in operation in 1976. All graduates of education colleges were conferred certificates for elementary school teachers without any examination, and they were automatically hired as elementary school teachers after graduation.

### **1.2.3 Changes in Teacher Compensation System**

Preferential provisions concerning salary of public educational officials were reflected in the Public Educational Officials Act promulgated on April 18, 1948. On December 18, 1954, the Public Educational Officials Remuneration Regulations was operated in separation from the Public Officials Remuneration Regulations. The teacher salary system prior to 1966 had multiple compensation systems (5-tier system) that differentiated the salary of elementary and secondary school teachers even though they were in the same salary class. This system caused complaints from teachers due to salary gaps among schools and emerged as a demoralizing factor, especially for those on elementary school. To resolve this problem, the government introduced the Public Educational Officials Remuneration Regulations in January 1966 in order to unify the compensation systems which provided elementary and secondary school teachers with the same salary if they were in the same salary class. It introduced the salary schedule reckoning from a certain date to differentiate the base salary of elementary and secondary school teachers. However, according to this differential pay system, elementary and secondary school teachers with equal academic background and career had to receive a different salary. Thus, this system has been criticized to run counter to the purpose of the single salary system (Ministry of Education, 1998).

**Table 3-1 | Development of the Public Educational Officials' Salary System**

Classification	Contents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Temporary public official salary standards (Jun. 1949–Nov. 1949)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ First regulation concerning teacher salary</li> <li>○ Designed to collectively apply to all public officials, contained basic items relating to salary table, promotion period between salary class, payment date, various allowance, benefits, etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 3-tier system with salary limit by position (Dec 1949–Sep. 1950)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Remuneration standards of officials in special government service (President, Vice President, Prime Minister, Cabinet Member, etc.), judge, secretarial and general service officials, including stipulated remuneration standards of teachers</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 5-tier system with salary limit by position (Oct. 1950–Nov. 1954)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ School system changed from 3-tier to 5-tier system (elementary school, middle school, high school, junior college and university)</li> <li>○ Accordingly, salary table of public educational officials changed to 5-tier system</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Single system with the same max salary (Dec. 1954–Feb. 1962)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ With establishment and promulgation of the Public Educational Officials Remuneration Regulations, the salary system for public educational officials was separated from public officials salary criteria to have an independent system</li> <li>○ Establishment of this regulation resulted in substantial revision in teacher salary system</li> </ul>

**Table 3-2 | Changes in Education Officials' Allowance**

Classification	Contents
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allowance payment based on Public Officials Remuneration Regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The Public Officials Remuneration Regulations enacted in Nov. 1949 stated specific matters concerning allowance. It was applied to teachers and the entire public officials</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Allowance payment based on Public Educational Officials Act and Public Educational Officials Remuneration Regulations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ From 1953, the types of allowance included health allowance, long-service allowance, childbirth allowance, teaching materials allowance</li> <li>○ In December, 1954, year-end bonus, overtime pay, night-work allowance, special area allowance, hazard allowance, family allowance were paid according to the Public Officials Remuneration Regulations</li> </ul>

To realize the single salary system by removing differences in the salary of elementary and secondary school teachers, the government maintained a salary gap based on academic background of teachers, while applying the same salary criteria of secondary school teachers to elementary school teachers who had equal academic background and career.

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## 1.3 Educational Administrative System to support Compulsory Elementary Education

### 1.3.1 Development of the Central Educational Administrative System

After the establishment of the government in 1948, the government tried to establish a democratic education system in earnest through various measures, especially by organizing the educational law system that reflected the administration governing according to the law. The government operated all educational activities based on the laws established by the parliament and various decrees, including the presidential decree and ministerial decree. These efforts were made to comply with public opinions and reflected legitimacy and representativeness in operating the educational administration (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989).

Right after establishing the government, the government reorganized the Ministry of Education by establishing 5 Bureaus of General, Higher, Science, Culture, and Textbook Compilation under the Minister and Vice Minister of Education-there was a separate secretary's office. Since then, the organization of the Ministry of Education has undergone several changes to promote administrative convenience. In particular, the Ministry reformed its organization by maximizing its functions centered on the Education Bureau and Administrative Bureau after the 5·16 military government. The Planning Management Office and Education Supervision Office were established to strengthen the planning system and supervision functions. Later, the function-oriented organization was changed to organization by fields from the Bureau level and reformed a mixed-type organization by adding functional organization as subcategories (Ministry of Education, 1989).

### 1.3.2 Local Education Autonomy System and Compulsory Elementary Education

The education autonomy system started its negotiation under the U.S. military government right after the liberation and was materialized with the establishment of the Education Act in 1949. However, it was delayed due to social disorder and the outbreak of the Korean War. The establishment of the Enforcement Decree of Education Act in 1952 paved the way of education autonomy by city and county level.

The education policy under the U.S. military government adopted the local education autonomy system based on decentralization. Ordinance No. 216 (Act on Installation of School District), No. 217 and No. 218 of the U.S. Military Government Ordinance which were promulgated on August 12, 1948, laid the foundation to independently decouple educational administration from internal administration. Although these laws were not implemented due to the establishment of the Korean government, their principles were reflected in the Education Act in 1949 and served as the basis for the implementation of the education autonomy system in the County level in 1952.



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The main contents related to the local education autonomy of the Education Act proclaimed on Dec. 31, 1949 were as follows (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989; Jong-jae Lee et al., 2010).

*a. Scope*

The local autonomy was implemented at the county and city (including Special City) level. A county should establish a school district independent from the local government and create a Board of Education as a decision-making organ, while a special city or general city was allowed to establish a City Board of Education as a collegiate executive organ.

*b. Characteristics of the Board of Education*

The Board of Educations, existed in each province, city and county, were different by nature. First, the provincial board of education was a deliberative body and functioned as an advisory organ for the governor and the provincial council was a legislative body. Second, the city board of education was a collegiate executive institute, and the city council served as the final legislative body. Third, the county board of education was an independent legislative body from general administration.

*c. Selection and Qualification of Board Members*

The selection methods for members of the board of education differed from each other by the administrative level. First, the board for the special city or a general city consisted of 11 members, namely 10 members selected by the relevant city council and the mayor as the chair of the board. The terms of education board were 4 years, and one half of the members were newly selected once every other year.

Second, the provincial board consisted of members selected by each school district and city level board of education within the province and three members appointed by the governor. The chairman was selected among the members, and the term was a single-term of 2 years.

Third, the board of a district consisted of members selected by each Eup or Myeon council. Their qualification conditions were not specified by the law. However, the city board of education members were prohibited from having concurrent positions with the local council member, parliamentary member, the public official, or local public official.

*d. Characteristics of Education Superintendent*

Regulations on education superintendent were different from each other by the administrative unit. An education superintendent of a district was as executive body which was allowed to establish regulations concerning issues related to the authority within the scope of the law and the ordinance. The education superintendent of a city or special city had no such power since the board of education was the executive body. There was no education superintendent at the provincial level.

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### *e. Selection and Qualification of Education Superintendent*

The education superintendent of a school district should be a person who had a qualification set by the Public Educational Officials Act and was appointed by the President through the governor and the Minister of Education upon recommendation of the board of education of a school district. The education superintendent of a special city was appointed by the President through the Minister of Education, and the education superintendent of a city was appointed by the President through the governor and the Minister of Education. The education autonomy at that time was the education autonomy system at the city and county level. The main characteristics of the system were that the education superintendent was prohibited to hold another position of the education board member. The system was officially launched on June 4, 1952 and the education autonomy system was launched on October 2, 1952 in the northern areas of the Han River, including Seoul.

The local education autonomy system, however, drew criticism from the internal and external educational circles. Criticism from the external areas came mainly from government officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs and was represented as campaigns (which occurred three times in 1953, 1955 and 1957) to abolish the education autonomy system. On the other hand, the main point of the internal criticism was that the autonomy system should be reformed or strengthened (Ministry of Education, 1998).

Nevertheless, all functions of the board of education were stopped, and the education autonomy was suspended according to the No. 4 Article 2 of the order to dissolve the council from the Military Revolutionary Committee established on May 16, 1961.

## **1.4 Education Financial Policy and Compulsory Elementary Education**

### **1.4.1 Education Financial Policy after the Establishment of the Government**

The establishment of the government in 1948 and promulgation of the Education Act in 1949 (No. 86 of the law on Dec. 31, 1949) laid the foundation for the education system of the country. The basic policy related to education financing after the establishment of the government was clearly represented in the Education Act and the Enforcement Decree of the Education Act. In other words, major education financial policies were described in the Education Subsidy in Chapter 3 of the Education Act and the Education Tax and the Subsidy in Chapter 2 of the Enforcement Decree of the Education Act. The related revisions on education financing of the Education Act and the Enforcement Decree of the Education Act until the 5·16 military coup were made in only two cases: one was the revision of the Education Act in 1951 (No. 228 of the law on Dec. 1, 1951) and the other was the revision of the Enforcement Decree of the Education Act in 1953 (No. 787 of the Presidential Decree on Apr. 24, 1953).

Basic policies of the education financing included in the Education Act were mainly divided into (1) the policy on imposing education tax and special assessment; (2) the policy related to the government and provincial (special city) subsidy; (3) the policy related to student charge and; (4) the policy concerning the income of the board of education of a city (special city) or school district. According to Article 68 of the Education Act, school districts, cities, and special cities were allowed to impose education tax in order to maintain and operate elementary schools or the equivalent schools in the relevant administrative unit. Matters concerning education tax should be separately set by law. Article 69 of the law stated that school districts, cities, and special cities shall levy special assessment according to the law if necessary. The policy concerning education tax and special assessment were kept intact until the 5·16 military coup. The education financing policies included Additional Money to House Rate, Special Additional Money, Type 1 Land Income Tax Refund, Education Tax, and Compulsory Education Subsidy Act (Jong-jae Lee, 2008; Jong-jae Lee et al., 2010).

Policies concerning the government and provincial (special city) subsidy included (1) national treasury for teacher salary at each school level; (2) national treasury for shortage of education expenditures of school districts, city, the special city or provinces; and (3) national treasury for private schools. In other words, Article 70 of the Education Act stipulated that the national treasury shall provide the entire salary of elementary school teachers and half of the salary of secondary school teachers at public schools. In addition, Article 71 of the Education Act stated that the national treasury shall support each school district, city, special city, or province with expenditures for education excluding teacher salary at each school level. In addition, according to Article 71 Provision 3 of the Education Act, the national treasury could provide subsidy for private schools. Matters concerning state subsidy were made to be in charge of the Minister of Education according to Article 72 of the Education Act (National Assembly Research Service, 1959).

*a. Additional Money to House Rate and Special Additional Money*

According to the provisions of Article 68 and 69 of the Education Act, additional money to house rate and special additional money were the first fees collected in securing financial resources for education after the government was established. Article 46 of the Local Tax Act (No. 84 of the law on Dec. 22, 1949) enacted and promulgated in 1949 stated that a school district, city, or special city shall impose additional money to house rate and special additional money to secure finance for compulsory elementary education as local tax.

Additional money to house rate was imposed simultaneously with house tax to the tax payment obligator, and the amount of additional money to house rate should not have exceeded 1 won per levy index of the house tax (according to Article 46 Provision 2 of the same act). Special additional money was supposed to separately set subjects and should not have exceeded the amount of additional money to house rate (Provision 3 of the same article). But, if the government tried to impose tax in excess of the regulated amount, the government was required to obtain approval from the Minister of Home Affairs and

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the Minister of Finance (Provision 4 of the same article). Furthermore, according to the regulations of Articles 36 and 37 of the Enforcement Decree of the Local Tax Act enacted in 1950 (No. 297 of the Presidential Decree on Mar. 27, 1950), special additional money was imposed within the limit of the amount of expenses necessary for special imposition. Some tax payment obligators in the low bottom brackets were exempted from this tax obligation for the purpose of controlling citizens' taxable capacity. The nature of special additional money was to secure financial resources needed to construct, expand, or repair school facilities, rather than to secure financing for general education.

The tax obligation amounts of additional money to house rate and special additional money were decided by the board of education of a city (special city) or school district pursuant to Article 27 and 37 of the Education Act. Concerning the collection, Eup and Myeon had to collect taxes and pay this to the school district according to Articles 1 and 48 of the Local Tax Act. School districts were supposed to grant 10/100 of the received amount as a handling charge to the relevant Eup or Myeon. This regulation applied identically to each board of education of city (special city).

As described above, regardless of the type of households-farming or non-farming-additional money to house rate and special additional money had to be paid in cash. Yet, with the establishment of the Provisional Act on Land Income Tax in 1951 (No. 220 of the law on Sep. 25, 1951), additional money to house rate and special additional money were included in the Land Income Tax. This was a kind of tax collected from farming houses, and farmers were allowed to get a refund of the equivalent amount of tax payment. In addition, additional money to house rate and special additional money, which had been imposed to non-farming houses, were abolished as the Education Tax Act was introduced in 1958 (No. 496 of the law on Aug. 28, 1958).

#### *b. Land Income Tax Refund*

The intention of the Provisional Act on Land Income Tax established in 1951 (No. 220 of the law on Sep. 25, 1951) was to control the instable national economy caused by the war. In order to prevent inflation and contribute to grain the policy, this was pursued in the form of integrating taxation on land income through payment in goods (Article 1 of the same act). The types of land income tax were divided into type 1 and type 2. Type 1 Land Income Tax was imposed on revenues of farmland, and Article 50 of the same act prohibited taxation of additional money to house rate and special additional money for land revenues which were subject to the Type 1 Land Income Tax. Article 49 of the same act stipulated that the board of education of city (special city) or school district should receive direct refund payment of the amount of money equivalent to those of the additional money to house rate and special additional money from the Minister of Education.

The refund rate rose from 64/1000 of the collected amount in 1951, to 142/1000 in 1952, to 182/1000 in 1954 until the Type 1 Land Income Tax Refund system was abolished in 1961 when the 5·16 military coup occurred.

### *c. Establishment of Education Tax Act*

Since the two sides signed the cease fire on July 27, 1953, people's living was gradually stabilized and the 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan was established as part of measures to promote the development of compulsory elementary education. As the 6-year plan focused on the restoration of damaged school facilities due to the war, the financial demand for compulsory education rose sharply.

Meanwhile, the tax amount of additional money to house rate and special additional money which were the financial resources for compulsory education fell far short of the amount necessary for compulsory education—only about 50% of the tax amount was collected. Moreover, as the elementary school teachers' salary supported by the national treasury was drastically cut due to the reduced budget, the parent-teacher association had to collect PTA fees in the name of teacher welfare cost (Jong-jae Lee et al., 2010). However, the collection of PTA fees were in contradiction to the national education policy since it ran counter to the compulsory education policy and received fierce criticism from the society.

In order to resolve this situation, the government attempted to carry out a fundamental reform in the education tax system by unifying additional money to house rate and special additional money into "education tax." This took the form of imposing and collecting tax as an independent tax levied on the nation to secure financial resources for compulsory elementary education.

The government's effort to establish the Education Tax Act continued since 1953, but the implementation was delayed as the government failed to reach a consensus on the tax system, imposition, and collection methods. In 1958, the Education Tax Act (No. 496 of the law on Aug. 28, 1958) was enacted, and the main features of the act included that (1) it was intended to secure financing for compulsory education; (2) it was an independent tax and objective tax that guaranteed the independence of education financing; and (3) it was made to be imposed and collected by the city (special city) education board or school districts.

Article 1 of the Education Tax Act stipulated that "the purpose of this act is to secure the source of revenue required in expanding the education budget in order to improve the quality of compulsory education." According to Article 9 of the same act, the education tax consisted of the type 1 national tax and the type 2 local tax. In addition, the existing local taxes such as additional money to house rate and special additional money were prohibited with the implementation of the Education Tax Act according to Article 2 of the supplementary provision of the same act. Article 4 of the supplementary provision of the same act prohibited collecting any money from elementary school students or their parents.

### *d. Establishment of Compulsory Education Subsidy Act*

The Compulsory Education Subsidy Act (No. 514 of the law on Dec. 29, 1958) was enacted in late 1958 and started to be implemented from January 1, 1959. Article 1 of the act stipulated that "the purpose of the act is to establish regional finances for compulsory education of school districts (including the special city or city education boards) by granting

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subsidies to school districts whose amount of the standard financial revenue is short of the amount of the standard financial demand, and thereby to secure smooth operation of compulsory education.” Intended to strike the regional balance on educational finance between urban and rural areas, the content of the Compulsory Education Subsidy Act were as follows.

The subsidy was composed of general grant and special grant. The total amount of general grant should be calculated as {the total amount of standard financial demand of city (or special city) education board or school district of the year} – {the total amount of standard financial revenue}, while the total amount of special grant be {(the total standard financial demand of the year) – (basic pay including allowance)} × (30/100).

Special subsidy was granted to the city (or special city) education board or school district in the following cases: (1) where there is special financial demand or a decrease of financial revenue due to a disaster; (2) where there is underestimate or overestimate of the standard financial demand (3) where there is a special pending demand for local education which is impossible to meet by the method of computing the amount of standard financial demand.

The standard amount of financial demand referred to the that calculated by the amount of standard financial demand prescribed by the Presidential Decree to estimate the financial demand of the city (special city) board of education or school district. The standard amount of financial revenue referred to the amount calculated by the following computing methods, to estimate the financial revenue related to compulsory education of the city (special city) board of education or school district. According to Article 17 of the same act, calculation of the standard financial revenue was made by adding the following items: (1) the education tax revenue of the local tax amount equivalent to 70/100 of the education tax rate; (2) the refund payment equivalent to 300/1000 of the national education tax amount; (3) the refund payment equivalent to 182/1000 of the type 1 land income tax amount; (4) the refund payment equivalent to 50/100 of the admission tax to be collected of the year; and (5) other expected revenue amounts of the city (special city) board of education or school district.

This grant system was supplemented after the 5·16 military coup and was the basis of the current system.

### **1.4.2 Management of Education Financing for Compulsory Elementary Education**

After the establishment of the government, the education budget was executed within the government’s budget. The process of budget preparation, deliberation, and execution also became institutionalized. The weight of compulsory education expenditures was 62~80% of the total education budget, and this rose to about 81% in 1959. This increase indicates that the Ministry of Education’s priority was to implement compulsory education. In particular, various measures to implement compulsory elementary education were introduced since the 1950s, which included expanding school facilities, recruiting more teachers, providing free textbooks and feeding of school children.

**Table 3-3 | Changes in Educational Budget (1948-59)**

(Unit: Million KRW)

Year	Government budget (A)	Education budget (B)	B/A (%)	Education expenses and compulsory education expenses				
				Education expenses (C)	C/B (%)	Compulsory education expenses (D)	D/B (%)	D/C (%)
1948	19.6	1.7	8.9	1.5	89.9	1.2	69.4	73.2
1949	91.1	10.4	11.4	9.4	66.5	7.3	71.6	78.1
1950	242.9	13.8	5.7	12.6	91.8	10.2	74.0	70.6
1951	617.8	16.0	2.6	15.2	95.3	10.8	68.0	71.3
1952	2,150.7	42.8	2.0	40.5	94.5	27.0	63.1	66.8
1953	6,068.3	159.3	2.6	152.1	95.5	100.0	62.8	65.7
1954	14,239.1	597.2	4.2	575.1	96.3	382.8	64.1	66.6
1955	28,143.9	2,633.3	9.3	2,543.2	96.8	1,959.1	74.4	66.6
1956	28,143.9	2,633.3	9.3	2,543.2	96.8	1,959.1	74.4	77.0
1957	35,003.4	3,283.1	9.4	3,126.4	97.9	2,616.7	79.7	81.3
1958	41,096.9	4,458.0	10.8	4,355.7	97.3	3,477.2	80.0	80.2
1959	40,002.3	5,986.3	14.9	5,876.2	98.2	4,813.9	80.4	81.9

Note: Education expenses = education budget-(education headquarter + academic.arts institutes)

On the other hand, most of the education finances depended on beneficiary charges, given the gradual expansion of secondary education and the increase in financial demand. Particularly, the rate of the education budget within the government budget was significantly lowered to 2% during the Korean War, showing that most of the education expenses relied on parental support.

At that time, the budget had to run secondary education relied heavily on parent contributions, and especially the teacher-parent association and public donation contributed significantly to education finances. Parent contributions were more important for college education finances. It can be assumed that schools, whether be the national, public, or private schools, were mostly funded by contributions from students and parents. In particular, the situation got more serious in the case of private schools. In this sense, it can be said that college education financing was sustained by the user-pays principle.



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## 2. Compulsory Elementary Education and Growth of the Korean Economy

### 2.1 Development of Elementary Education and Economic Growth

One of the most important standards in estimating and comparing a nation's development is the economic growth indicator. However, since Amartya Sen (A. Sen, 2001) suggested the Human Development Index centering on human capabilities in the UN, the importance of developing social cultural areas including education has been emphasized. Korea's situation which had to pursue economic as well as social development after the Korea War in the process of completion of compulsory elementary education can be presented as a typical case of national development. Most of all, the importance of the relationship between education and economic growth in the stage of establishing compulsory elementary education cannot be overemphasized. With this regard, we will review the relationship between basic education and economic development, and identify the connection between Korea's economic policy and basic education from the period of the birth of the nation to the completion of compulsory elementary education.

First, we have to consider the relationship between education, especially basic education, and economic growth. In fact, many countries pay keen attention to education, no less than economic growth. However, most of the countries fail to provide a clear answer to the question of whether interest in education can be directly related to economic growth. Although some countries recognize the connection, there is no definite answer to the question of whether how the relationship can be explained. Education and economic growth are inseparable. What is clear, at least is that they share a common stage of development and correlation within the institutional framework of a nation. In general, education is considered to have contributed to the quantitative and qualitative expansion of economic growth in a manner of influencing the labor output. To prove this argument, a wide variety of models have been developed to evaluate education's economic growth effects (Lucas, 1988; Barro, 1989; Mankiw, Romer, & Weil, 1992).

In a nutshell, the way of approach to educational investment and educational finances from the government level directly affects economic development. The question is, how investment in basic education, rather than in general education, is related to economic development. When the World Bank (1995) raised the issue of concerning elementary education's effects on economic growth, it mentioned that Korea's compulsory elementary education contributed to economic development in the 1950s to the 1980s by 54%. This figure indicates that elementary education after the Korean War played a greater role in advancing the country's economy than any other social policy or institutional support. There is a limitation in the World Bank's study since its materials hadn't been validated as other studies or similar cases of other countries. Nevertheless, the study clearly suggested that basic education was indispensable to economic growth.

In an attempt to understand contributions of basic education to economic development, it is meaningful to identify the relationship between the Korean basic education, especially



compulsory elementary education, and the economic development in the period of the post-war economic growth. Hee-yeong Hwang, Yeong-hwa Kim and Seong-sang Yu (2010) suggest the correlation as follows.

First, they questioned how the education policy was related to the industrialization policy which served as the foundation of economic development. Most of all, the government at that time pursued industrialization strategies based on the expansion of gradual educational opportunities, education investment, and the allocation policy. Although there were differences in manpower capacity required for industrialization by period, nurturing talented human resources needed for each economic development stage through the education system was an important policy for a labor-intensive industrial country. The education development policy with an order of elementary, secondary, and higher education enabled the country to overcome the limit associated with lack of resources. The education investment prioritizing elementary education was an appropriate political intervention to enhance the return on educational investment. In addition, the government's efforts to secure skilled manpower at the secondary education level and human resources for research and development (R&D); to enhance the administrative efficiency through minimization of unit education cost; and to induce the participation of the private sector to take over some of the burden of parents' education expenses and ensure qualitative improvement and quantitative expansion of educational opportunity are recognized as effective factors in achieving the rapid educational expansion despite the country's low public education expenses.

Second, how did basic education centering on elementary education contribute to economic development? This report concerning the issue finds the answer from (1) the rapid universalization of elementary education; (2) a low drop-out rate and completion of quality basic education; (3) the women's high basic education completion rate; (4) the rapid illiteracy eradication; and (5) the effective operation of the national curriculum. We believe that these factors played a crucial role in laying the foundation for the country to rise from ashes to achieve the remarkable economic development after the liberation and the Korean War. In fact, Korea's homogenous population and monolingualism, high education zeal, the aid from the international society, and independent development can be considered as important success factors for the societal development and growth. These factors, at the same time, served as factors to bring the aforementioned educational achievements. Most of all, the achievement of school education cannot pay no attention to the fact that elementary school education strengthened the national identity after emerging from the Japanese colonial rule and enabled the country to express the concerted will to overcome hardships even in the midst of ideological conflicts.

It is a miracle for the country to lay a social and political institutional foundation for economic growth in only 15 years after the liberation although it suffered from ideological disputes ("Korean War") for three years. This would not have been possible without the government's policy faced with lack of natural resources to pursue labor-intensive industrialization based on talented human resources. Above all, the government's effective

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measures to support elementary education and induce participation from the private sector to secure the supply of manpower required for the initial industrialization have contributed greatly to Korea's current educational development.

## 2.2 Role of Compulsory Elementary Education for the Economic Growth

The national division after the liberation paralyzed economic activities by blocking mutual cooperation and distributions of goods among manufacturing facilities in the north and south, which were abnormally arranged during the Japanese colonial era. The political disorder made it difficult to stabilize the economy and facilitate industrial development, and it caused lack of materials and inflation. With establishment of the government, the Korean economy began to stabilize between 1948 and 1949. The farmland reform in 1950 brought fundamental changes in the previous unfair structure in agricultural production between landowners and tenants, and it laid the foundation for social stability.

### 2.2.1 Economy and Education in the Korean War

Korea, at the time of the birth of the country, had to suffer from threats and challenges posed by leftists from inside and communists from the north. The Korean War was more than a civil war that featured an international war as the U.S.-led democratic countries actively responded under the name of the U.N. to the communist's attempt to communize the Korean Peninsula. The war left an enormous number of casualties and property damages, leaving nearly 2 million people such as South Korean soldiers, U.N. forces, and civilians dead.

As the result of the war, the mutual distrust and antagonism between the north and south got deepened, and the anti-communist spirit was strengthened. The then President Syngman Rhee released anticommunist prisoners of war in the face of ceasefire and signed an agreement on the Korea-U.S. military alliance right after the ceasefire. The social upheaval and the Korean War in the wake of establishment of the government destroyed Korea's industrial infrastructures and degenerated economic development, which led to negative growth for two years in 1951 and 1952.

One of the important policies pursued by the government in terms of economy was the farmland reform for farmers who accounted for 70 percent of the population. The Farmland Reform Act was passed in 1950, and farmlands were distributed to farmers between March and May in the same year. The rapid implementation of the farmland reform was the result of President Rhee's plan and preparation for the measure from 1949. The reform contributed significantly to Korea's political, economic, and social development and resulted in political stability (Modern History of Korea, 146). Although North Korea implemented free land distribution, it was only distribution of the right of cultivation as the North Korean government owned the land. On the other hand, the farmland reform of

South Korea distributed the right of ownership and was not free. The farmland reform built trust for the government and stimulated farmers' will for production to help farmers serve as main agents of economic activities. It paved the way for free democracy and market economy to grow in the country (Modern History of Korea, 146).

The Korean War set back the nation's economy. The property damage was estimated to reach over 3 billion dollars (KOB, "Korean National Income," 1965; 4, Yeong-deok Lee, Shin-bok Kim, Sang-ju Lee, 1976, 215), and production level dropped sharply due to the casualties of about 2 million people. The war inflation increased massive money circulation and price hike by 18 folds within only three years. During the war, the real GNP decreased to 15.1% in 1950 and to 6.1% in 1951.

### 2.2.2 Economic Situation after the Korean War

The whole nation focused on restoration and rehabilitation of the country in the wake of the war. Then, Korea was one of the poorest countries in the world, and 70 percent of its populations were farmers in the late 1950s. Although they had won their lands as a result of farmland reform, most of them were petty farmers with less than 1 ha of land. Agricultural production became stagnated due to the delayed restoration of damaged infrastructures and the lack of fertilizer. The GNP per capita remained below U.S. 100 dollars until the early 1960s. Due to the inflow of the refugee population, high population growth and low productivity, the basic cost of living comprised a large portion of the private consumption expense. Korea's Engel's coefficient, which measures the percentage of a household's food consumption to total spending, stood at 0.61 in 1954. The nation's economic stability and revival relied heavily on economic aid. A total of more than 2 billion dollars in foreign aid were delivered to the Korean government between 1953 and 1960. Despite the government's efforts to invest in and the expansion of social infrastructure, finances were insufficient, and a collective will to pursue a long-term economic development was absent. The industrial infrastructure was weak, and the aid reduction policy of the United States in 1958 hit the Korean economy.

The period between 1954 and the early 1960s can be viewed as a period focusing on economic restoration and development. The government strived to rebuild the economy from the ashes of the war. The efforts resulted in changes in the backward industrial structure based on agriculture, fishery, and forestry. This was possible because the government markedly expanded the weight of manufacturing centering on the industry of daily necessities. In 1954, the added value of the mining and manufacturing industry rose to 7.6%, a level similar to that prior to the war. It increased an average of 14.7% between 1954 and 1957, and the level reached at 10.3% in 1957 (BOK, "Korean National Income," 1965;4, Yeong-deok Lee, Shin-bok Kim, Sang-ju Lee, 1976, 220).

During this period, there was difference in opinions between the Korean government, which focused on industrial development, and the U.S. government, which assisted the economic revival of Korea through economic aid. In other words, the U.S. government

wanted the Korean government to give up on the industrialization policy and import industrial products from foreign countries, while exporting its farm products. The President Rhee government refused to accept this measure and pursued industrialization. The center of attention of industrialization was consumer goods. The government focused on import replacing industrialization to substitute imported industrial goods with domestic products (Modern History of Korea, 166). Use of domestic products was encouraged as the national policy.

The government also made efforts to invest in production goods industry and the social infrastructure. Although it was difficult to expand the infrastructure due to the financial limit caused by passive cooperation of foreign aid agencies, the government began to construct factories of the key industry such as cement, sheet glass, steel, and fertilizer. The following <Table 3-4> indicates the changes in the nation's economic development centering on the GNP per capita.

**Table 3-4 | Changes in Per Capita Gross National Products**

(Unit: KRW or USD, Increase rate %)

Year	Total economic output (1 billion KRW)		Population projection (1,000)	Per capita GNP		
	Current price	at 1970 price		at 1970 constant price	Increase rate	USD
1954	66.88	890.18	20,239	43,983	-	70
1955	116.06	938.24	20,823	45,057	2.44	66
1956	152.44	942.21	2,1424	43,979	-2.40	66
1957	197.78	1,104.44	22,677	44,734	1.71	73.7
1958	207.19	1,067.15	23,331	45,739	2.24	81.3
1959	221.00	1,108.33	24,003	46,174	0.95	82.5
1960	246.34	1,129.72	24,695	45,746	-0.93	80.8
1961	297.08	1,184.48	25,498	46,453	1.54	83.3
1962	348.89	1,220.98	26,231	46,547	0.20	86.6

Source: Bank of Korea, Economic Statistics Yearbook 1975, (Yeong-deok Lee, Shin-bok Kim, Sang-ju Lee, 1976,230 requoted)

<Table 3-4> shows how low Korea's economic level had sunk at that time. The per capita GNP remained below 100 dollars until 1960. Although it was difficult to accurately measure the per capita GNP at the time of liberation in 1945, Lee et al. estimated it to be around 60 dollars based on the table (BOK, "Korean National Income," 1965; 4, Yeong-deok Lee, Shin-bok Kim, Sang-ju Lee, 1976,229).

Another important factor was that the per capita GNP had consistently risen between 1954 and 1960. The rates fell into negative territory in some years between 1956 and 1960, which was believed to be caused by the population growth rate exceeding the economic growth rate. Korea's economy remained stagnant between 1945 and 1960 as it underwent the paralysis period after the liberation, the destruction period during the Korean War and the restoration period of the post-war.

<Table 3-5> shows major indicators of the Korean economic growth between 1939 and 1975. It represents changes in the economic trends from 1939 when the country was under Japanese imperialism. What is noteworthy is that the mining& manufacturing and social overhead capital& service sectors exhibited remarkable growth compared to the agriculture, forestry, and fishery, in terms of the growth rate by industry. The weight of the agriculture, forestry, and fishery industry gradually reduced in terms of the industrial structure, while that of the mining& manufacturing and social overhead capital& service sectors increased. It can be understood that rapid industrialization after the 1960s was ignited by the formation of the industrial structure.

**Table 3-5 | Major Index of Korean Economic Growth (1939-1975)**

(Unit: %)

	1939/40-1953	1954-1961	1962-1975
Growth rate by year			
Population	2.12	2.64	2.11
Per capita GNP	-0.87 <sup>a</sup>	1.58	7.51
GNP	1.11 <sup>a</sup>	4.34	9.78
Agriculture, forestry& fishery	1.88 <sup>a</sup>	3.42	4.75
Mining& manufacturing	-1.67	11.94	17.57
Social overhead capital	-	8.18	15.88
Service	-	3.35	6.85
GNP composition <sup>b</sup>			
Agriculture, forestry& fishery	47.3	40.2	25.7
Mining& manufacturing	10.0	15.2	29.1
Social overhead capital& service	42.7	44.6	45.2

Source: BOK, National Income in Korea, 1975 (Seoul); BOK, Economic statistics Yearbook 1975 (Seoul); and Kim and Roemer. (N. McGinn, D. Snodgrass, YB Kim, SB Kim, QY Kim 1980. Education and Development in Korea, 106 requoted)

a: Growth rates of net value of commodity-products for the Republic of Korea.

b: Calculation based on the last year of the relevant period

### 2.2.3 Economic Implications on the Practice of Post-war Compulsory Elementary Education

During the period between 1945 and 1960, Korea faced a series of ups and downs in political, economic, and social aspects. Nevertheless, Korea's education had continuously expanded in its quantitative terms. The social disorder and destruction caused by the terrible war couldn't stop educational growth. Perhaps, the adversity outside education stimulated the public interest in and fever for education. In particular, given that Korea suffered extreme poverty after the ceasefire from 1953 to 1960 and had to prioritize restoration, Korea's achievement in compulsory elementary education during this period was quite meaningful.

The education between 1945 and 1960 can be divided into three stages: the establishment of education system (1945-1952); the establishment of the curriculum (1945-1954); and promotion of the 6-year plan for compulsory elementary education (1954-1960). In the history of education, a notable change was made during the wartime education period. This was the revision of the Education Law in 1952 which led to the separation of secondary education into 3 years of middle school education and 3 years of high school education.

**Table 3-6 |** Changes in the Proportion of Educational Budget to GNP and Government Budget (1948-1975)

	Education budget (million KRW)		Ratio of education budget (%)	
	Current price	at 1970 constant price	to government budget	to GNP
1948	2	n.a.	8.0	n.a.
1951	15	n.a.	2.5	n.a.
1954	575	7,668	4.0	0.9
1957	3,217	16,495	9.2	1.6
1960	6,237	28,611	14.9	2.5
1963	10,523	28,596	13.8	2.2
1966	24,346	40,510	17.2	2.4
1969	57,301	66,091	15.5	2.8
1972	116,577	91,289	16.4	3.0
1975	199,776	90,642	15.5	2.2

Source: Yung-bong Kim (1976). "Education and Economic Growth," Working Paper 7605, Korea Development Institute, p.29; McGinn, D. Snodgrass, YB Kim, SB Kim, & QY Kim (1980). Education and Development in Korea, p.16, requoted.

Note: Deflated by GNP deflators.

Right after the ceasefire, the government actively pursued the 6-year plan for compulsory elementary education which was recommended by the Education Council under the U.S. military government. The education budget to the government budget stood at 8.9%, and the compulsory education budget to education budget was 69.4% in 1948. Each expanded to 15.2% and 80.9%, respectively, in 1960, showing how eager the government was to focus on the education budget and compulsory education. <Table 3-6> shows the rates of the education budget to the government budget and to GNP, which were presented by an overseas journal analyzing Korea's education and development. According to the table, the weight of education budget to GNP rose gradually since 1954 and reached 2.5% in 1960.

Investment in the compulsory education fee-centered education resulted in the hike of enrollment of elementary school students; the enrollment rate of 54% at the time of liberation increased to 95.3% in 1960, a year after the completion of the 6-year plan. The number of students increased by more than 2.5 folds compared to the number right after the liberation. The quantitative expansion of elementary and secondary education caused qualitative degradation of education, but the expanding speed was not reduced until universalization of basic education was achieved. One notable development of the Korean education between 1945 and 1960 was the realization of universalization of elementary education, the very foundation of basic education.

Korea's educational development was pointed out by overseas studies. Harbison and Myers carried out research on the human resource development status of 75 countries in the world and announced the results based on the economics principle of Adam Smith and Alfred Marshall. They indicated that "the most valuable of all capital is what is invested in human beings" in 1964. Harbison and Myers constructed a simple composite index of HRD by taking the arithmetic total of GNP per capita; percentage of the active population engaged in agricultural occupation; the number of teachers per 10,000 population, the number of scientists per 10,000 population, the number of physicians per 10,000 population; the enrolment rates of elementary, middle, and high schools; percentage of students enrolled in scientific and technical faculties; and percentage of students enrolled in the faculties of humanities, fine arts, and law; percentage of public education fee against national income; percentage of the estimated population aged five to fourteen inclusive; etc. Based on the composite index of HRD, they classified countries into (1) under-developed, (2) partially developed, (3) semi-advanced, and (4) advanced. Korea fell into the semi-advanced category. According to their analysis, Korea ranked 27<sup>th</sup> from the bottom in terms of per capita GNP, and 23<sup>th</sup> from the top in human resource development; Korea had a higher HRD level compared to its economic status. Based on the standards in 1960, countries with per capita GNP of about 90 dollars had 22% of the enrollment rate of children aged 5 to 14, while that of Korea was 59%. What is special about Korea's case is that it made high investment in human capital. So Korea was recognized as a semi-developed country although it belonged to the underdeveloped country group in terms of economy.

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### 2.2.4 Strategies to Support Developing Countries' Elementary School Education

Mexico and India have provided elite-centered education policies for national development. On the other hand, Korea gradually expanded its investment from elementary school education to secondary education to college education. For instance, Mexico's investment in education as a percentage of its GDP was higher than that of Korea, but it began to prioritize higher education since the 1960s and increased investment in elementary school education in the 1990s.

Korea's better performance results in education development indexes such as enrollment rates in each education level, equality in income distribution and social and economic development compared to Mexico shows that Korea made good choices. Investment in education should be made from a long-term perspective spanning several decades, and education externality is higher in the lower education levels. Thus, Mexico's choice to foster only elites or to emphasize the interest of hierarchy seemed inappropriate. Indian students' recent ranking near the bottom on PISA, a global test of learning standards, appears to be related to its social structure consisting of a few elites and most underprivileged. Hence, implementing compulsory elementary education is one of the most important measures to advance a nation.

### 2.3 Analysis on Compulsory Elementary Education Support from Advanced Donor Countries

In general, the ideology to restore education can be understood as education to prevent war (education for peace). In this regard, education for international understanding is to support intellectual and moral education to prevent war and contribute to world peace. From the perspective of rehabilitation, the international community may suggest "education for development" as part of functions of establishing regulations, sharing information, exchanging human resources, and providing technical and financial support in the education field. Also, Korea has an experience to receive financial resources for education in order to narrow the gap between wealthy and poor countries through educational cooperation and to improve individuals' quality of life.

After the Korean War in 1950, key allies including UNESCO and the U.S. helped to restore Korea's education through emergency aid from the international community. The Korean education delegation led by the then Minister Nak-jun Back attended the 6<sup>th</sup> UNESCO General Conference, held in Paris, 1951. Emergency funding was asked for educational restoration of Korea, and the Conference approved and passed the resolution. In addition, the United Nations Korean Reconstruction Agency (UNKRA) was launched to help Korea's revival and rehabilitation according to the resolution of the U.N. General Assembly in 1950. Its major activities included providing food aid and restoring facilities for industry, transportation, communication, medicine, and education industry. 34 U.N.



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member countries and 5 non-member countries provided Korea with 148.5 million dollars in aid through UNKRA.

According to the resolution of the 5<sup>th</sup> UNESCO General Conference held in Florence, Italy, 1950, Korea joined the UNESCO as the 55<sup>th</sup> member on June 14 but shortly after, the Korean War broke out on June 25. As Korea was engulfed with the war, the 23<sup>rd</sup> Session of the Executive Board of UNESCO in 1950 and the resolution on emergency aid of the 6<sup>th</sup> UNESCO General Conference greatly contributed to the restoration of Korea's education. In particular, the support for the establishment of textbook printing facilities and education restoration and support activities carried out by UNESCO in collaboration with UNKRA are recognized as representative activities conducted by the U.N. and UNESCO for Korea's educational development (Woo-jin Cho, 2008).

In this respect, this report intends to review restoration activities of UNESCO in the wake of the war. It aims to understand a recipient country's positions in getting educational support from the international community and to consider how we should approach the international development cooperation project in the education sector. The followings are descriptions of major education activities conducted by UNESCO in the 1950s during Korea's war and post-war reconstruction period (Korean National Commission for UNESCO, 2004; Woo-jin Cho, 2008).

First, there was textbook publication support. Most of all, UNESCO resolved to take up the bill for establishing textbook printing facilities for elementary education and providing emergency educational funding in 1951. It significantly contributed to the normalization of elementary education. UNESCO provided 100,000 dollars and UNKRA 140,000 dollars in aid to establish a state-of-the-art publishing facility (Daehan-Mungyo Publishing Co.) in 1954, which enabled to distribute state textbooks to elementary school students at a timely manner. The name of the facility was changed to the National Textbook Publishing Co., and later was acquired by the Daehan Textbook Publishing Co. in 1998. This textbook publication support served as an exemplary role model of literacy education. UNESCO actively pursued basic education since its creation, and simultaneously laid the foundation for the establishment of compulsory elementary education through the implementation of the Karachi Plan in the 1960s.

Second, there was an expert dispatch activity for education plan establishment. UNESCO sent the UNESCO-UNKRA Educational Planning Mission, consisting of 6 professionals led by Dr. Donald Cottrell in 1952 in an attempt to investigate Korea's education conditions. A report was compiled which included 108 items for the restoration of Korean education and was submitted to the Korean government. This report provided a meaningful guideline for Korea's education restoration.

Third, the Korean Foreign Language Institute was installed. According to the recommendation report on Korea's education restoration by the UNESCO-UNKRA Educational Planning Mission, the Ministry of Education and the UNESCO-UNKRA signed an agreement to install a foreign language institute. The Korean Foreign Language Institute

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was created in Seoul National University for Koreans who wanted to go and study abroad. The institute was first operated by UNESCO, transferred to the government, and is now the Seoul National University Language Education Institute. This activity established the foundation for the country to participate in international exchanges in the field of education, science, and culture at the higher education level. It also paved the way for the Korean National Commission for UNESCO to run various academic conferences and programs for Korea's foreign language education in cooperation with domestic education institutes.

Fourth, the Korean Fundamental Education Center was established in Suwon. The center was established in 1954 in accordance with the recommendation of the UNESCO-UNKRA Education Planning Mission and contributed to fostering Korea's rural leadership. This was the result of materialization of fundamental education for rural area development which received a warm response from the international community after it was introduced by UNESCO in the 1950s. The Korean Fundamental Education Centre was established in the Suwon campus of Seoul National University with support of 300,000 dollars from UNESCO. It was opened in November 1956 and produced 19 1<sup>st</sup> graduates in March 1958. The institute was transferred to the Ministry of Education after the completion of the UNKRA project in 1959, and the name was changed to the Rural Leaders Training Center under the Ministry of Agriculture. It was later merged into the Rural Development Administration-affiliated organization, ran for the purpose of training agricultural public officials, and was changed to the Agricultural Training Center, according to the government reshuffle of the Ministry of Public Administration and Security in January 1999.

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## Chapter 4

### Improvement Tasks of Compulsory Elementary Education

1. Quantitative Achievement and Tasks of Elementary Education
2. Follow-ups for Quality Management of Elementary Education

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# Improvement Tasks of Compulsory Elementary Education

## 1. Quantitative Achievement and Tasks of Elementary Education

### 1.1 Education Fever and Conformity of the Education Policy

The period between in 1945 and 1960 was one of the most dismal economic periods. Although there had been many efforts to restore the economy with help from foreign aid after the liberation followed by the Korean War, Korea was an underdeveloped country with its per capita income being only 60 dollars to 90 dollars.

Despite such difficult conditions, Korea's education continued to thrive. The modern curricula aimed at fostering democratic citizens were introduced in line with international educational trends, and schools even during the wartime continued to provide education for pupils in makeshift classrooms. After the end of the war, the government implemented the 6-year plan for compulsory elementary education and established universal compulsory education in the 1960s. Secondary education also expanded. In urban cities, overcrowded classrooms and schools with two or three-shift system (double or triple-shift system) were introduced (Byeong-seon Kwak, 2008; Sang-jin Lee, 2008).

How could education development come before economic growth? Numerous foreign studies were conducted to find the answers. Some argue that Korea's main success factors for educational development are its traditional Confucian respect for scholars, social attitude to value one's educational background, relatively high cost-efficiency of educational investment, low education expenses, and parent's high education fever.

**Table 4-1 | Education Policy Priority between Pres. Syng-man Rhee and Pres. Chung-hee Park**

Policy priority	Pres. Rhee		Pres. Park	
	%	Rank	%	Rank
National defense and spiritual armament	36.7	1	20.0	2
Quality of education	21.1	2	10.0	6
Individual development	15.8	3	16.7	3
Socio-economic development	10.5	4.5	26.7	1
Administrative improvement	10.5	4.5	13.3	4.5
Cultural development	5.3	6	13.3	4.5

Source: Jin-eun Kim. *Analyses of The National Planning Process*, p.108. (Byeong-seon Kwak, 2008, requested in a presentation source at the Korean Educational Development Institute).

What is noteworthy among the arguments is that the President Rhee government paid keen interest in education. Namely, the Rhee government had advocated building the state based on education and strived to advance education, including pursuing compulsory elementary education. This argument was supported by another study. <Table 4-1> shows the priority in national affairs put by the President Rhee government and President Chung-hee Park. Both presidents paid significant attention to education. The comparison between the two presidents, however, indicates that President Rhee's gave second priority on education, followed by national defense, while President Park put the last priority on education.

With this regard, Byeong-seon Kwak suggested that post-war Korean education could quantitatively expand based on the following reasons (Byeong-seon Kwak, 2008).

First, one of the most important reasons is the establishment of a free democratic nation, the Republic of Korea. The adoption of the free democratic system based on individuals' freedom, responsibility, creativity, and competition stimulated the people's motivation to facilitate their own development to the maximum level.

Second, the public believed that only education could guarantee survival. As Koreans had endured numerous social ups and downs, including the collapse of the traditional society, Japanese colonial rule and the liberation, the outbreak of the Korean War and the destruction left by the war, they witnessed the collapse of the people with vested interest and resorted to the education-will-cure-all idea. Korean parents believed and still believe that education is necessary for better jobs and better positions in the society. This conventional thinking propelled the social attitude to value academic background and eventually led to the education-centered society.

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Third, Korea, after liberation, had education leaders who could independently establish and pursue the national educational policy, and the government put priority on education. The personnel involved in the Korean Education Council, the Education Committee, and the Education and Management Bureau under the U.S. military government had sufficient experiences and insights over the development of education and the nation. In particular, the 6-year plan for the completion of compulsory elementary education was a farsighted excellent decision despite the poor national financial conditions.

Based on basic education established by the time of the Korean War, today Korean education is approaching toward universalization of higher education beyond universalization of elementary and secondary education. Given that its quantitative development has reached full capacity, it is now the time for Korean education to focus on the enhancement of educational quality.

## 1.2 Expansion and Modernization of School Facilities

Korean elementary education is expected to continue to develop both quantitatively and qualitatively. The expansion and modernization of school facilities are indicators of quantitative as well as qualitative development because the quality of physical environment of schools is directly related to educational quality. For this reason, the Korean government has endeavored to improve elementary and secondary school facilities on the back of the country's increased national power. These efforts will continue.

The followings are tasks and the direction that should be addressed to ensure further educational improvement. First, we need to completely end the double-shift school system which still remains in some areas, reduce the number of students per classroom, and expand school facilities to resolve lack of school facilities in newly developed residential areas. Second, we should diversify and modernize school facilities and equipment to ensure quality education, including open education and a customized curriculum. Third, we need to improve school facilities to enhance the working environment of teachers. Fourth, there should be more efforts to improve education informatization conditions. Based on educational projects led by the current government, we can assume that these efforts to improve the school environment will continue in the future.

## 2. Follow-ups for Quality Management of Elementary Education

### 2.1 Development of Compulsory Elementary Education through Readjustment of the Education Law System

Major characteristics of Korean education, which were unveiled in the organization process of the education law system to implement compulsory elementary education, can be analyzed as follows.

First, the provisions related to elementary education of the Constitution have been revised nine times so far, and the areas concerning the right related to education and responsibility have been further specified. The contents on education's independence, political neutrality, professionalism, and autonomy materialized fundamental principles of the Education Act. They contain core elements that serve the basis of creation, judgment, and interpretation of the Education Act. In addition, the declaration of the education system run by law and the Constitutional guarantee by expanding it to the level of educational finances and teachers' status can be understood as a measure to strengthen publicness of the educational system as well as to break away from the Japanese education administrative system resorting to too many decrees.

Second, strengthening of the legislative function of the administration led a number of educational laws to be enacted as presidential decrees or ministerial decrees according to the administrative order. Increase in the administrative legislation could be somewhat advantageous in pursuing an effective policy. However, if the principle of reservation of parliamentary power was violated due to comprehensive delegation, it could be problematic.

Third, the Korean education law system has changed from provider-oriented to recipient-oriented, from government-centered to people-centered, and from teacher-oriented law to student-oriented law (Jong-cheol Kim, 1989). Compared to the existing method for system guarantee based on the establishment of laws, the measure to mitigate education regulations, which was suggested as a task for education reform, was more meaningful. This tendency can be confirmed by the fact that the right of learners is stressed in the education framework act.

Fourth, changes of the Korean education law system have been closely related to the process of political changes and thus exhibited risks of education's attribution to politics. Especially, given that these measures nullified the effects of the current laws, they can negatively affect stability of the Education Act. For example, readjustment of various laws during the Korean War and the influence of various education reform-related advisory agencies established by the presidential decree can have harmful impact on the principle of the education system guaranteed by law and the securement of democratic legitimacy.

## 2.2 Development of Compulsory Elementary Education through the Improvement of Education Finance

Education finance under the U.S. military government resorted to the Local Tax Act and the land tax ordinance was established to secure education financing. The operation of education finance was greatly dependent on the aid from the United States and parents' support. At that time, most budget of the Ministry of Education was spent on elementary education. The basic policies on education finances after the establishment of the government were divided into (1) the policy on education tax and special additional money; (2) the policy on special grant by the national treasury and province (special city); (3)

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the policy on student collection money; and (4) the policy on incomes of the city (special city education board) or education district. During the 1<sup>st</sup> Republic Period, the weight of compulsory education expenses were 62-80%, and most secondary and higher education were dependent on the burden from the beneficiary (Ministry of Education, 1998).

Thus, Korea's compulsory elementary education in the 1950s can be considered as semi-government compulsory education. The government provided school facilities and equipment through the national budget, and parents supported education through high education zeal. In this respect, Korea's compulsory elementary education was not exactly free but was implemented by transferring the burden of education expenses to parents and local communities. With this regard, Korea's experience can offer some important implications to developing countries which pursue compulsory elementary education as they reel from the aftermath of disasters or conflicts.

### 2.3 Fostering Education Autonomy System and the Development of Compulsory Elementary Education

In retrospect, 60 years of the education autonomy system history of Korea after the establishment of the government was the process of providing an answer to questions of how and who would be given to exercise the right to run the local education system. From the perspective of an operational subject, the central and local governments or a general administrative agency and an educational administrative agency can be in opposition. Also, from the perspective of operational methods, the principle of management by professionals and the principle of democratic control by general citizens can be in contrary to each other. These opposite methods are divided in theory, but most countries have conciliatory measures in reality. It is not easy to find compromises from extreme opposites between the central government and the local government, the general administrative agencies and the educational administrative agencies, and professional management and democratic control.

During the birth and practice periods of the education autonomy system, the local council was established to retain appropriate balance between the central government and the local government. The regional education committee maintained cooperation with general administrative agencies although it was separated from general agencies in principle. Moreover, the principle of democratic control was added to professional management by selecting members of the board of education mainly from the local council. The education autonomy system in this period can find its implication from its attempts on experimental operations.

The periods of suspension and trials can be characterized by the centralized authoritarian rule, subordination of education administration to general administration, and lack of democratic control device; it implies that the implementation of education autonomy was in effect suspended. Thus, educational characteristics were lopsided in extremes rather than maintaining a balance during these periods.



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## Chapter 5

### Implication for Developing Countries

1. Summary on the Development of Compulsory Elementary Education
2. Success Factors of Korea's Compulsory Elementary Education
3. Achievement Features of Compulsory Elementary Education

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# Implication for Developing Countries

## 1. Summary on the Development of Compulsory Elementary Education

The Republic of Korea was established by the general election and authorized by the UN within the southern area in 1948. The government pursued two tasks on the preferential basis: establishing a new school system and expanding the accommodation capacity for 6-year compulsory elementary education.

The U.S. military government adopted the school system framed by the Korean Committee on Education (KCE) as Korea's school system. "Hongik-Ingan," which means a person dedicated to benefit all humanity, was adopted as the guiding principle of Korean education. At that time, the government set three principles as fundamental requirements for Korea's education system. The first was "access to education," meaning that all citizens should be allowed to enroll in schools. The second principle was "relevance," in which all students should be provided with proper opportunities for education. The third was to establish a system that could be internationally acceptable in accordance with the international trends and standards. Based on these educational principles, the school system was established, and the Education Act was enacted in 1950 (Jong-jae Lee, 2008; Ministry of Education, 1998).

With regard to this, the government set 6 principles concerning the school system as follows (Jong-jae Lee, 2008).

*First, the 6-year elementary education shall be free and compulsory.*

*Second, secondary education shall be divided into middle school and high school in order to reduce drop-outs and enhance educational suitability.*

*Third, secondary education shall be operated on a single track. However, high school education can have different tracks to allow students to transfer to another track at one's wish. Also, it should establish a general system for college entrance along with a vocational system for vocational training education at the high school level.*

*Fourth, there shall be numerous educational organizations with different functions and education periods at the higher education level in order to satisfy diverse educational needs.*

*Fifth, teacher training for elementary education and secondary education shall be divided for teachers' training. Training of elementary teachers should be implemented in high school level education schools and secondary teachers in colleges.*

*Sixth, education institutes would be established to supplement adult education. Civic schools should be established to support elementary and secondary education.*

Korea still retains the 6-3-3-4 school ladder system. This single track system has been maintained as the backbone of the school education system for the past 60 years. It has undergone only partial revisions for supplementary development of the system. The major change is that the quality of education institutes for training elementary school teachers was elevated from high school level to college level and later to university level. Also, the higher education institutes were divided into colleges and universities, and adult education institutes were abolished as educational opportunities were expanded gradually (Ministry of Education, 1998).

85% of school facilities were destroyed during the war. Thus, a “wartime special measure” was conducted to open schools in reclaimed areas, and a wartime associated university was established. After the ceasefire in 1953, the government strived to establish and implement the 6-year Compulsory Elementary Education Improvement Plan in order to enhance the elementary education enrollment rate. This 6-year plan laid the foundation for development of Korean education (Jong-jae Lee, 2008).

## **2. Success Factors of Korea's Compulsory Elementary Education**

### **2.1 Student Accommodation through Maximum Use of Education Facilities and Overcrowded Classrooms**

One basic condition for educating school-age children is the classroom. Education is simply not feasible without classrooms. The Korean economy in the 1950s struggled at below 80 dollars per capita, being one of the world's poorest countries. Under these circumstances, ensuring school facilities to cater to every student was not a possibility.

The double-shift school system combined with overcrowded classrooms was then introduced. Following the Education Act to make basic education free and mandatory, the number of students could only increase; the average class size had to grow to reflect these new numbers. Some schools ran even double or triple-shift systems. As in <Table 5-1>, more than 80% of all classes were operating on at least a double-shift system.

**Table 5-1 | Elementary School Classroom Formation of Seoul in the 1950s**

Year Formation	1957		1958		1959	
	No. of schools	Ratio	No. of schools	Ratio	No. of schools	Ratio
Single-shift	17	19	29	22	14	15
Double-shift	58	63	69	75	63	65
Triple-shift	16	17	3	3	19	20
Quadruple-shift	1	1	-	-	-	
Total	92	100	92	100	96	100

According to the enforcement decree of Education Act at that time, the number of elementary school classrooms was supposed to be less than 6 per grade, and the maximum number of students per class should not exceed 60. The reason for setting a high number of students per class was that the teaching-learning method was based on lecture and learning by rote. This system was maintained because of students' respect for teachers, along with the culture of order and discipline in school.

However, the introduction of the double-shift system failed to reduce the number of students per class. In general, the number of students per class was about 70 to 80. In cities, there were reports that some classes had more than 90 students. An elementary school in Seoul was reported to have a total of 120 classes with more than 8,000 students.

To accommodate overflowing students, playgrounds were filled with make-shift classrooms, which resembled a huge beehive rather than a school.

## 2.2 Supply of Teachers

### 2.2.1 Establishment of Education Personnel Standards

Since only 42% of elementary school teachers (33% of secondary education teachers) had teaching licenses at the end of 1952, the government was in urgent need to establish a standard for education personnel and strengthen measures on teachers' supply, training, and treatment. In April, 1953, the Public Educational Officials Act was enacted and promulgated to set standards on teacher qualifications, employment, pay, training and term, status guarantee, and discipline. The enactment of relevant laws resulted in the improvement in educational quality.

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## 2.2.2 Teacher Training

There were a total of 18 education schools for elementary school teachers right after the war. These schools constituted the main axis of fostering elementary education teachers. However, it was impossible to supply the rising demand for teachers with these institutes alone. Thus, the government established temporary teacher training institutes in affiliation with these schools. These temporary institutes were abolished in 1958, and teacher training was consolidated and executively provided by education schools.

Temporary teacher training programs were shorter in terms, and the tuition was relatively cheaper than regular institutes. This was possible because of the teaching-learning method which was one of the most common and widely used teaching methods. In other words, the class consisted of a lecture or learning by rote, so the demand for professional teacher training was relatively low.

## 2.2.3 Teacher Treatment

The government made efforts to provide teachers with better treatment by doubling teachers' salary and offering health allowance in 1957. However, the entire salaries of teachers dependent on the national treasury fell far short to make ends meet. To resolve this situation, teacher-parents associations collected tuition from students to support teacher welfare.

## 2.3 Curriculum and Textbook policy

Other political factors to facilitate the universalization of elementary education were the national curriculum system and the government-published textbook system-the central government established and unified the curriculum and compiled, manufactured, and distributed textbooks to students. These state-centered systems significantly contributed to maintaining the quality of education and rapidly expanding educational opportunities.

The national curriculum procedures started with the deliberation in March 1953, followed by notification on the curriculum based on allocated time for each subject in April 1954 and the establishment and announcement of all curricula for elementary education in August 1955. Accordingly, government-published elementary school textbooks were published under a 4-year plan from 1955 to 1958.

**Table 5-2 | Changes in the Curriculum**

Year	Contents
1955	Korean, Arithmetic, Social Life, Natural Science (24 types for 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> graders), Fine Arts (6 types for 1 <sup>st</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> graders)
1956	Korean, Arithmetic, Social Life, Natural Science (24 types for 4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> graders), Practical Life (4 types for 4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> graders)
1957	Music (3 types for 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> graders), Morals (6 types for 1 <sup>st</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> graders)
1958	Music (3 types for 4 <sup>th</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> graders)

Despite severe lack of materials after the war, massive textbook publication was achieved thanks to the introduction of the state-of-the-art publishing facilities through the agreement between the government, UNKRA, and Daehan-Mungyo Publishing Co. (founded on July 15, 1952), consisted of the corporation of private schools and the foreign aid from UNKRA and UNESCO. The national curriculum system, along with the government-published textbook system enabled to distribute textbooks at low cost. It facilitated rapid universalization of elementary education.

## 2.4 Expansion of School Facilities

The operation of double-shift or triple-shift system and overcrowded classrooms was only possible when there were appropriate education facilities such as classrooms. It was difficult for the government to accommodate an increasing number of students under the dismal economic conditions. The expansion of school facilities at that time had to be heavily resorted to school support and foreign aid.

School supporting organizations in the 1950s provided more than 70% of school expenses to newly establish or restore 3,057 classes out of 7,899 totally destroyed classes (39%) and 563 classes out of 8,162 semi-destroyed classes (7%). The 5 years of foreign support (for example, CRIK, UNKRA, ICA, and AFAK) following the end of the war also greatly contributed to the expansion of school facilities. Studies show that 3,914 classes out of 7,899 totally destroyed classes (50%) and 950 classes out of 8,162 semi-destroyed classes (12%) were newly established or restored by foreign organizations.

## 2.5 Securement of Educational Finances

### 2.5.1 Government's Efforts

The weight of education budget to GNP and the educational budget to the government budget were gradually increased since 1954 after the war. The ratio of compulsory elementary education expenses of education budget was over 60%, and it rose to 80%

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after 1957. In addition, the Education Tax Act and the Compulsory Education Subsidy Act were enacted to secure educational finances needed for compulsory education in 1958. Although the education budget ratio to the government budget was below 10% between 1953 and 1957, the ratio gradually increased after the law was promulgated and accounted for 15% in 1959.

The Compulsory Education Subsidy Act was enacted in December 1958 to disclose the regional gap on compulsory elementary education conditions and secure financial resources for compulsory education. The grants consisted of general grant and special grant, which were designed to offer financial resources for elementary education to school district or local governments suffering from lack of resources.

### **2.5.2 Parental Support**

With the establishment of the 6-year Compulsory Education Improvement Plan, the financial demand for implementation rose rapidly. The government couldn't afford to cover all education expenses with national treasury as the government budget fell short of 30% of the required budget for elementary education. Therefore, more than 70% of education expenses for classroom construction and teacher welfare benefits were supported by parents. Teacher-parent associations at elementary schools began to collect tuition fees from students and parents as the teacher salary level provided by the government failed to make ends meet. The government institutionalized the teacher-parent association activities by enacting regulations on operation and supervision of the association in early 1953.

## **2.6 Effective Use of Foreign Aid**

### **2.6.1 Creating Education Infrastructure and School Facilities**

The government took measures to effectively use foreign aid to expand school facilities. Through various foreign aid institutes for 5 years between 1953 and 1957, 3,914 classes out of 7,899 totally destroyed classes (50%) 950 classes out of 8,162 semi-destroyed classes (12%) were newly constructed or restored. Moreover, the latest textbook publishing facilities were installed based on aid from UNKRA and UNESCO.

### **2.6.2 Teacher Training and Education Enhancement Consulting**

The technical aids that Korea received from foreign countries concerning education can be largely divided into two: the education mission activities from September 1952 to June 1955; and the activity of a professor team from George Peabody University between 1956 and 1962.

Concerning the education mission activities, the first delegation consisting of 7 people visited Korea with support of the U.S. Department of State and UNKRA for 10 months between September 1952 and June 1953. Their activities mainly focused on the daily

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living-centered curriculum campaign. They provided guidelines and recommendations on the democratic education administration and the improvement of learning instructions. Approximately 700 teachers participated in the training, and teaching methods and theory were introduced through a workshop.

The second mission team consisting of 6 people performed its activities for 10 months between September 1953 and June 1954 with support of the Unitarian Service Committee of the United States and Korea-U.S. Foundation. Its expenses were paid by UNKRA. They conducted a training research council for teachers centering on education philosophy, curriculum, and improvement of learning instruction.

The third delegation consisting of 13 people was organized by the International Committee for Education with support of Korea-U.S. Foundation based on the agreement of UNKRA. They visited Korea for 10 months between September 1954 and June 1955. As they had deep understanding on Korean education based on reports from previous teams, they helped to establish instruction programs and teaching materials. They provided education policy makers with in-depth information about various research and solutions related to the needs of education projects.

The delegation's guidelines and advice on the Korean education system are considered to have a significant impact on Korea's education development.

From October 1956 to 1962, the professor team from George Peabody University of Education visited Korea with support of ICA. They provided assistance and technical aid to improve teacher training and re-education methods. In particular, they provided material aid on training education for elementary school teachers and offered guidelines on theory and practices. Their activities influenced the elevation of existing education schools to colleges of education in 1962, supported the research work of the Central Education Institute which had been operated since 1952, and stressed the importance of kindergarten education.

### 3. Achievement Features of Compulsory Elementary Education

#### 3.1 Central Government's Leading Role

Korea's education system, the education policy, and administration have government-led centralized characteristics. Korea has maintained a centralized system with regard to the legalization of teacher training and employment, enactment and operation of the national curriculum, and government-published textbook system. These features have effectively worked in securing the quality of education and equal access to education, along with rapid expansion of educational opportunities by enhancing the effectiveness of the school system and standardizing the contents of education.



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## 3.2 Low-cost Approach

Korea had to adopt the low-cost approach to achieve its plan for compulsory elementary education. It was inevitable under the dismal conditions of the time.

Korea's unit cost of education was far below than that of other countries with similar income levels. The government could minimize costs for construction, operation, and maintenance of educational facilities by utilizing high number of students per class, operating at least a double or triple-shift system, and attracting a large-scale school to the utmost.

Concerning the supply of teachers, the government could significantly reduce the costs for teacher training by operating temporary teacher training institutes, which had a relatively shorter training period and were less expensive compared to normal teacher training institutions. Moreover, the Korean culture, in which teaching positions are traditionally respected and a relatively high status is maintained, served as a critical factor to secure teachers at low salary.

The low-cost approach was conducive to maintain the high efficiency structure of education finances based on the effective operation of the school system; it maximized the effects of educational investment with limited educational budgets.

## 3.3 Priority on Quantitative Expansion

There was an inevitable trade-off relationship between the quantitative growth and the qualitative development of education. Since more opportunities of education had to be provided to children with limited financial resources, the education quality had to be lowered.

As discussed in the "Low-cost approach," Korea's education can be said to put priority on the expansion of educational opportunities for elementary education, rather than to focus on the degradation of education quality due to the multi-shift system, overcrowded classes, and overly-large schools.

From Korea's historical and social perspectives in which the education zeal and expectation is markedly higher than other countries, the policy prioritizing expansion of educational opportunities were indispensable and appropriate.

## 3.4 Securing the Participation of Private Finances

Even though all education costs needed for education were minimized in order to put priority on the quantitative expansion of educational opportunities, the scale of required education finances was large. For Korea, which was one of the poorest countries in the world, it was difficult to meet all required educational finances with the national treasury. Thus, support from foreign countries and the private sector was all the more necessary.

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With regard to the budget required for school operation, contributions of the private sector centering on parents support was outstanding. The parent support system, which continued to exist in the name of parent support in the early period of state foundation, was institutionalized as “Teacher-Parent Association” after the Korean War and greatly contributed to school operation. Although contributions from these parent support systems varied by period, the amount reached as much as 75% of an estimated school income in 1958.

### 3.5 Other Proposals: Providing Education Experiences applicable to the Situations of Developing Countries

The followings are added proposals concerning Korea’s completion of compulsory elementary education after the war.

First, it should operate a transparent student selection and admission system and give motivation to students. In case of underdeveloped countries, lack of transparency in student selection for admission to secondary education and widespread political connections after graduation serve as a tumbling block to offer the motivation to study. In contrast, Korea’s general transparent student selection system and open competition in the job market eventually raised students’ motivation for learning. A transparent operation of the selection system in a society is crucial in giving motivation to study to both students and parents.

Second, there should be various educational opportunities for school drop-outs or those who quit school. Korea had a low advancement rate to middle school right after the war, and there were many elementary school graduates who had to give up on advancing to the higher level due to difficult financial situations. The Korean government established and operated various programs in an effort to motivate them to study. The cases in points are broadcasting middle and high school, higher civic schools, the school qualification examination system, etc.

Third, Korean education has achieved remarkable success but still has some tasks that need to be resolved. Both success and problems were stemmed from the education development process. When providing Korea’s experience in the development of compulsory elementary education, the following items should be carefully discussed.

- (1) Diversification challenges within the educational universalization
- (2) Harmony between the centralized education operation and schools
- (3) Relationships and role sharing among the central government, local government, and schools

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