

**Teaching and
Learning Progress
of Free, Basic
Educational
Organizations after
the Military Coup**



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Sandar Moe Myint, Zar Ni Soe

Introduction

In Myanmar, basic education has been implemented by the Ministry of Education and monastic schools are also giving a great help for children from remote and under-privileged families to get equal access to Education. The education system in Myanmar can be divided into 3 levels, which are “Primary level” (Age: 6 – 9 years old), “Lower secondary or middle level” (Age: 10 – 14 years old) and “Upper secondary or high level” (Age: 15-16 years old). There are about 81% of 6 to 10 years old primary schoolers but the number of dropouts increases at ages of 10-19. However, according to the 2014 national census, the attendance rate of 17-year-olds decreased to 30 percent.

The 2015 UNICEF survey showed that 1 out of 5 children in Myanmar lost their right to education due to their families’ financial problems. Moreover, lack of quality in education services, limited relevancy and inadequate infrastructures and resources, etcetera is still challenging the education system of Myanmar. For this reason, the National League of Democracy (NLD), during its term of government, focused on reforming the education sector which is much less developed than other countries and about 8.4% of the national government budget was used for education in 2020 September. Just when the education system of Myanmar was on the brink of progress, the military coup conducted by the Junta on 1st February, 2021 caused destruction not only on education but also on every aspect of the country’s development.

“Education is a necessity for development and wealth of one’s country.”

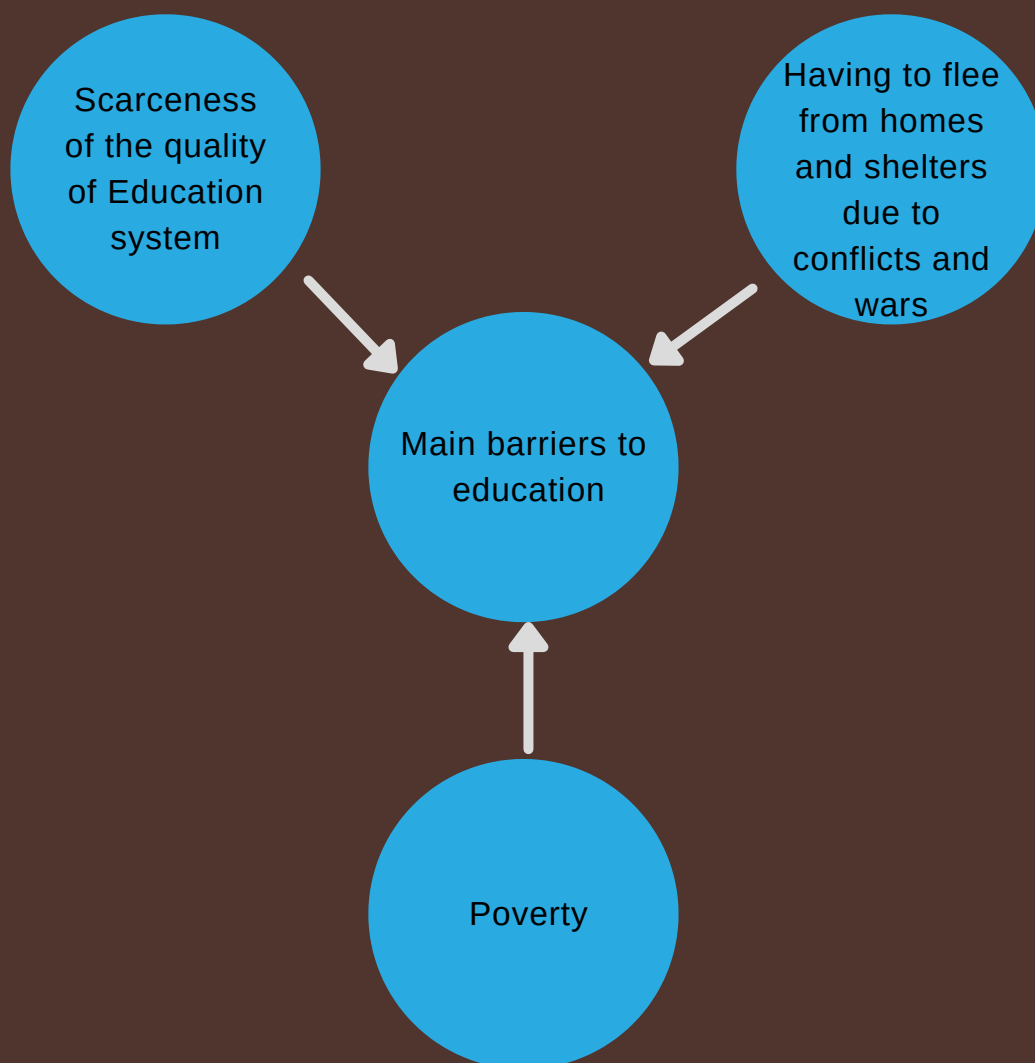
There have been nationwide protests, riots and Civil Disobedience Movement of civil servants including the educational workers since the military coup.

Furthermore, to demonstrate their opposition to the coup, the slogan **“Don’t Go to School but Ditch School”** was spread among citizens to urge students to not attend the universities, colleges and basic education schools that are opened by the State Administration Council (SAC).



Teachers who took part in the Civil Disobedience Movement have been threatened and indicted by section 505(A) of the penal code to force them back to work and over 125,000 teachers were dismissed according to the report from the National Teachers Association. Since long ago, there was an imbalance in the quantity of teachers and students and the above circumstances have now led to the limitations of the number of qualified teachers that can cause more challenges to the future of Myanmar’s education system.

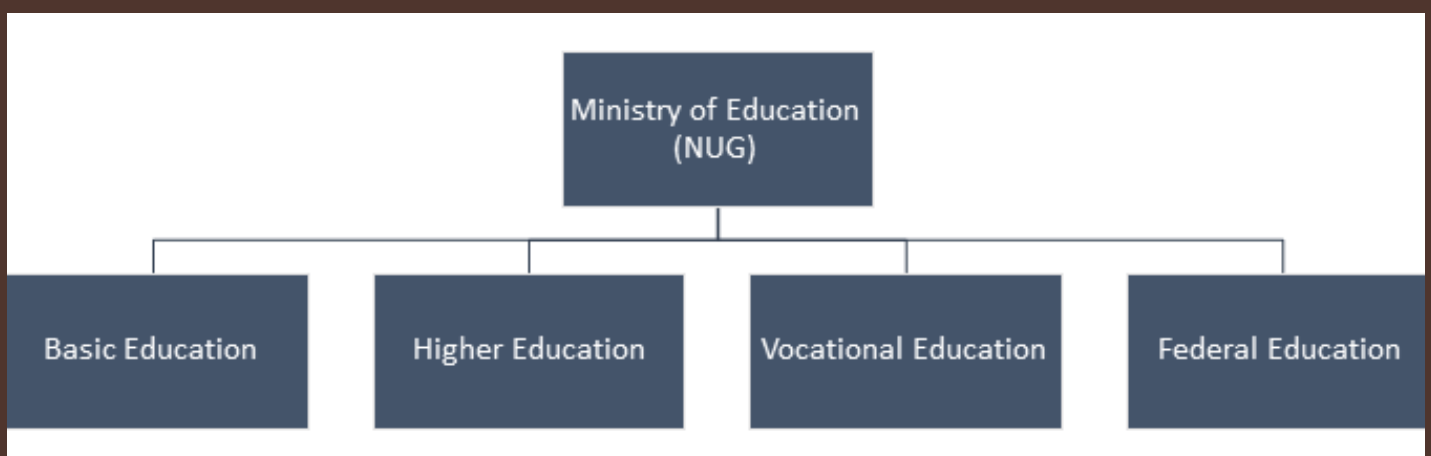
In addition, only one-fourth of the students enrolled for their classes even though the SAC reopened the Basic Education Schools despite the political instabilities. There is a saying in Myanmar that goes “Attend the classes regularly and the lessons will not be difficult.” but the reality is far from it. In some parts of the country, conflicts and wars have been occurring for quite a long time which leads to daily increase of the numbers of students who have to flee from their homes and shelters for their safety and lose their educational rights to learn.



In addition to the above conditions, the Covid -19 pandemic causes more complications for the students to continue their education. Due to these situations, numerous non-government basic educational organizations have arisen on the Internet to alternately provide education to the students.

Action Plans of the Nation Unity Government (NUG)

The National Unity Government (NUG) has introduced a home-based learning system to help students continue their education during these states of affairs. This home-based learning system is not about students studying and taking exams to finish the academic year but about giving them a chance to learn at home, in the interim, and as an aid for when the schools reopen. One can easily watch, learn and get a hang of lessons of his/her respective grade and subjects from the Moodle platform of the Ministry of Education, for free of charge. These lesson video files can also be accessed easily from each grades' Facebook pages without entering Moodle. These instruction video files, package lesson files are also planned to reach the students from areas without internet access via file transferring, offline radio programs, DVDs, memory sticks, mobile and tablet applications and textbooks. The lesson plans are arranged to reach the learning goals that are compatible with home-based learning for both the new curriculum (KG, G1, G2, G3, G4, G5, G6, G7, G10) and old curriculum (G8, G9, G11 metric). One can get a hold of the lessons by studying an average of one to three hours a day and excel the lessons by repeating.



Source: NUG's Ministry of Education website

Action Plans of other Organizations

These are 3 of the many free organizations that are educating basic students free of charge; Zee Kwat Academy, Free Online Educational Institution Myanmar (FOEIM) and Youth to Leaders Free Online Education. These organizations are currently providing lessons to students from Grade- 1 to Grade- 12. University and college students are mainly recruited to get some work experience and over 2000 volunteers and youths are volunteering currently. More than 400 students are taught by Zee Kwet Academy, about 19,000 students by Free Online Educational Institution Myanmar and Youth to Leaders Academy has about 250 students.

| Free basic educational organizations | Estimated number of students |
|---|------------------------------|
| Zee Kwat Academy | About 400 |
| Free Online Educational Institution Myanmar (FOEIM) | About 19,000 |
| Youth to Leaders Academy | About 250 |

The above organizations are mainly providing their teaching via popular online platforms such as Zoom, Viber, Google Meet and Google Classroom. Zoom and Google Meet are used for teaching and Google Classroom and Viber are used for the students to communicate with teachers and ask questions concerning the lessons, to submit homework and to exchange information. The organizations based their lesson plans on the basic educational curriculums of the government. There are at least 4 classes on every weekday. Extra-curricular activities such as Music Club, Debate Club, English Club, Science & Technology Club are also available for the students on the weekends. Tests and exams are held every 2 or 3 months and the report cards of students are sent to their parents for further discussions.

Zee Kwat Academy

| | 10:00 am - 10:45 am | 11:00 am - 11:45 am | | 1:00 pm - 1:45 pm | 2:00 pm - 2:45 pm |
|----------------|-------------------------|---------------------|-------|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Class C | | | | | |
| Monday | Math I | Science | BREAK | English | Maths II |
| Tuesday | Maths I | Science | BREAK | English | Geography |
| Wednesday | Maths II | Science | BREAK | English | Myanmar |
| Thursday | Myanmar | - | BREAK | Maths I | Geography |
| Friday | CS(10:00 am - 11:30 am) | | | | |
| | | | | | |
| Class D | | | | | |
| Monday | Science | Maths I | BREAK | Science | English |
| Tuesday | Geography | Myanmar | BREAK | Maths II | English |
| Wednesday | Myanmar | Maths I | BREAK | Maths I | English |
| Thursday | Geography | Science | BREAK | Maths II | Experiential Learning |
| Friday | CS(10:00 am - 11:30 am) | | | | |

Source: Zee Kwat Academy's Facebook page

Obstacles and Challenges

After all, students are required to use either a computer, smartphone or tablet in order to learn considering that only online platforms are used for education. Moreover, availability of stable internet connection and electricity are also necessary. Students should be able to use the respective online platform efficiently for the teaching and learning to be effective. While the tech-savvy students face no trouble using the online platforms, young students who are not familiar with technology will need a parent or someone with the understanding of technology to assist them through the classes.

Findings

- Most of the students joining the classes have the basic requirements but unfortunately, students who do not have the basic needs and are inexperienced in technology are still far away from getting their education.
- Furthermore, the number of students is also limited due to lack of resources, insufficiency of teachers and availability of budget for technology.
- Online classes are also used internationally during the times of COVID- 19 and led by the government which is more effective and well-planned but in Myanmar, there are more hardships and liabilities as the non-government organizations are taking charge of it.

Nevertheless, these free educational organizations are still a great helping hand for students to continue their education.

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