

THIRD WORLD COUNTRY: PHILIPPINE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN THE PRE-PANDEMIC PERIOD

by:

Bikki Mae R. Caballas

Teacher Aide Balon Elementary School

Some say the world is round, some believe it is flat. But in geopolitics, the world is divided into three parts. First, second, and third world specifically. Three worlds, one planet. Many often use the term "Third World" by substituting for developing nations or poor countries in worst scenarios. In contrast, wealthier countries and nations are described as "First World", the elites. The Communist Soviet Union and its Eastern European Satellites consisted of the "Second World". These three worlds model of geopolitics arose in the mid-20th century as a way of mapping the various players in the Cold War.

Education plays a vital role in almost every part of the world. Today, Philippines remains to be a third world country. Our country has always had a commitment to improving education access for all for many years. Recently, the Philippines underwent a major overhaul its education system, turning the basic education into a K-12 program to bring it closer with the education systems of other Asian countries. Philippine education system is handled by three agencies according to their different levels: the Department of Education (DepEd) is responsible for basic education, the Commission on Higher Education (CHED) oversees tertiary and graduate education, and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) manages the technical-vocational courses.

Previously, Philippines had 10-year basic education program. After adapting the K-12 program which covers 13 years of education starting from kindergarten to Grade 12, lessons are now taught in the student's mother tongue or in the language local to the area.

The K-12 also established a parallel education system known as Alternative Learning System (ALS) for substituting conventional education. This system allows out-of-school youth and remote communities' students to attend and finish formal basic education. Meanwhile, Junior High School (JHS) covers grades 7-10 and Senior High School (SHS) covers grades 11-12. Senior high school students get to choose to specialize in either academic or vocational track. To further assist the students, the Department of Education offers assessments to help them identify their strengths and interests. The SHS curriculum bridges the gap of school and work. The inclusion of students in a workplace helps them prepare in a real-life situation.

After completing senior high school program, students have an option either to continue a working career or to pursue tertiary education. Typically, tertiary education takes four or five years. It can also take up to eight years for some courses such as law and medicine. Most universities follow a semestral pattern. Those who finished bachelor's degree can continue to a post-graduate education allowing them to master their chosen field. Completing a technical and vocational course is also offered to those Filipino students who wish to enhance their existing skills and continue a career in various industries right after graduating in senior high school.

Learners must not take learning for granted. The fact that education is a main human right, students shall understand that by having it yields impacts on any other human rights we have. Also, public schools and universities in our country are mostly and often free. In the most trying times and in sudden changes, having access to education elevates an individual and the country as well.

References:

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