
THE FILIPINO MUSLIMS AND HIGHER EDUCATION

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Islam is not just a religion to a Muslim. It is also a way of life. It emphasizes the universal brotherhood of Muslims who are all governed by the *Quran* and the *Hadiths*, sayings and practices of Prophet Mohammed, peace be upon him. They are obligated to care for the needy, comfort the sick, and aid the distressed. This obligation transcends beyond nationality, race and color.

The Muslims are enjoined to explore the frontier of knowledge and make new discoveries that benefit mankind. There are more than 900 verses in the *Quran* that urge them to think, ponder and explore the mysteries of nature. To pursue higher education is not only consistent to the teaching of Islam but it will accord them the opportunity to meaningfully participate in nation-building.

The role the Filipino Muslims has to play in national development is highly dependent on education. In the Philippines, success in life has been invariably equated with the level of education one has acquired and the kind of job he has. It is extremely difficult to be appointed to a high position in the government or private sector without a bachelor's degree. Education often controls social mobility. Its acquisition is a must for those who want to improve their lot and to effectively participate in the affairs of the government.

This article discusses in general the Muslims and their education. It stresses the problems that are frustrating the efforts to acquire quality higher education. It identifies problems hindering the operations of the universities and deals with the educational programs of a proposed university system in the Muslim areas.

MUSLIMS AND THEIR EDUCATION

The Filipino Muslims owed their Islam religion and knowledge in Arabic language to the Middle East countries. However, the Muslim custom, art, music and other aspects of their cultures have been influenced by the neighboring countries of Brunei, Indonesia and Malaysia. They are historically concentrated in Southern Philippines, particularly in Central, Western, and Southern Mindanao; Palawan, and the Sulu Archipelago. They are found in the thirteen cultural-linguistic groups, namely: Maranao, Iranun, Maguindanaon, Tausug, Samal, Badjao, Jama Mapun, Palawan, Molbog, Kalibugan, Yakan, Karaga, and Sangil. Each group occupies a distinct territory. The three largest groups are the Maranaos, Maguindanaons and Tausugs.

Their view on the pursuit of material gains is generally different from that of the rest of the Filipinos. The Muslims are taught to divide his time into three parts and use them for service to God, for himself and to support his family, and to help the needy and distressed. In a materialistic society, that is often misconstrued to mean that a Muslim is lazy and incapable to exploit his time to the hilt to attain material success. A true believer of Islam does not strictly conform with the standard norms prevailing in a dog-eat-dog society.

The Maranaos are lake-oriented people who are primarily fishermen, farmers and traders; however, geographic isolation has led to their divergent orientations. The Maranaos lived in the areas adjacent to Lake Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte. They are oriented towards the lake environment. In contrast, the Iranuns are spread along the shores of Illana Bay and oriented towards the sea.

The Tausugs are sea-oriented people. They are basically fishermen, navigators and traders. They are scattered in the Sulu Archipelago consisting of the Provinces of Sulu and Tawi-Tawi. The Maguindanaos are land-oriented. They are agriculturists, fishermen and traders. They are concentrated land-tillers in the broad Pulangi River Valley in the Provinces of Maguindanao, Sultan Kudarat, Cotabato and South Cotabato.

The Palawanis live in southwestern and eastern of the Province of Palawan. The Molbogs, Jama Mapuns, Samals, and Badjaos are dispersed in the Sulu Archipelago. The Kalibugans are

found in the Provinces of Zamboanga del Sur and del Norte. The Yakans are consolidated in Basilan Island, the Karagas in Davao Oriental and the Sangils in Sarangani Island.

There is no common dialect that can be understood by all Muslim groups. Each group has its own dialect. Often the names of a group and its dialect are the same. Some dialects are so closely related as to be mutually intelligible. Examples of these are the dialects of the Badjaos, Samals and Jama Mapuns which are closely related. The Maranao, Iranun and Maguindanao dialects are spoken by about 60% of the Muslims. Besides the local dialects, there are members of all cultural groups who have studied the Arabic language for religious purposes.

Spanish Colonization and American Occupation

Under Spanish colonial rule the Muslims were denied access to western education. Public education was focused in pro-Spanish areas like the City of Manila in Luzon and the Cities of Cebu and Iloilo in the Visayas. Originally, the schools in those areas catered to the educational needs of the "peninsulares" and the "insulares," Spaniards born in Spain and the Philippines, respectively. The "indios," native Filipinos, were allowed to attend school only if their parents were rich enough to meet the education costs. Meanwhile, the Muslims pursued their education at the "pandita" schools where boys were taught Islam, reading the passages of the Quran and Arabic writing.

The Americans realized that the Muslims in the South were culturally different from the Christians in the North. Unless the former got equal opportunity in public education, their long and painful isolation from the rest of the country could perpetuate internal strife and dissension. The Americans pursued a policy to make the Muslims useful to the nation by giving them the same educational opportunities available to the Christians.

The first public schools were established in 1906 in Cotabato, Lanao, Sulu and Zamboanga under the Charter of the Moro Province, despite the uncertain political atmosphere. Initially, the education was primarily for pacification, with English as the medium of instruction and modelled after the American public school system.

Both military men and private citizens worked among the Muslims to establish schools for them.

Muslim parents reluctantly sent their sons to school. As their children they passed they were relieved to discover that, despite their exposure to American schools, the children were not alienated from their culture. For the most part, the Americans respected their tribal customs and religious beliefs. Moreover, Christianity was not taught in school. It became clear to them that the public school system of the Americans did not pose a threat to their religious and cultural life.

The gradual progress of the public school system gained momentum in Mindanao with the introduction of college education. A college was established in Zamboanga to train Christians and Muslims as teachers. The Muslims were expected to provide encouragement to potential teachers in their communities. The Americans even provided the Muslims with scholarship grants to study in Manila. They eventually became the first group of Muslim teachers.

Education of Muslims in the 1950's and 1960's

In the late 1950's, there were a number of state and private colleges in Mindanao training students for various professions. Unfortunately, only two state colleges existed in the Muslim provinces: an agricultural college in Cotabato and a teacher's college in Zamboanga. Due to a limited choice of courses and the far distances of the colleges from the rest of the Muslim areas, the majority of the Muslims were precluded to pursue higher education. The rich Muslims sent their children to urban centers of Cebu City and Manila, but very few of them could afford such a venture. Even the government-supported students needed extra money from their parents to meet the high cost of the urban standard of living. These were confounded by the inadequate school facilities and lack of qualified teachers in the secondary and elementary schools which made the Muslim high school graduates ill-prepared for college work. These were the major deterrents to the educational advancement of the Muslims.

The government first recognized the problems of the education and social development of the Muslim in the 1950's. The concentration of educational institutions in Luzon had further

widened the literacy gap between the Muslims and Christians. In addition, the poor quality of instruction in schools in the Muslim areas made integration through education a difficult objective to reach. This was expounded by the Muslim leaders in their complaints which were repeatedly and publicly lodged before the Philippine Congress. Several programs were implemented as active responses to the need to restructure the Philippine society and improve the economy of Mindanao in view of the isolation of the Muslims from the social, economic and political activities of the rest of the country.

In the 1950's, the problems of the Muslims were formidable and their future was bleak. Their standard of living, income per capita, and employment and literacy rates were among the lowest in the country. Some of the factors that caused the problems were the following: lack of professional and vocational skills, limited employment opportunities, poor health and sanitation services, a dearth of qualified public teachers, inadequate educational facilities, disparity in educational advantages between them and the rest of country, and, above all, the lack of rapport between them and the Christians.

The opportunities for jobs were rare because very few Muslims had skills needed for employment. In the 1960 census, only 188 graduates of four-year courses were from among the Maranaos in Lanao del Sur and Marawi City. The employment situation was similar or worse for the Tausugs and the Maguindanaons. The Maranaos had the greatest number of college graduates among Muslims at that time. Furthermore, the industrial firms were not accessible to them because they were located in far places. They were in Davao, Misamis Oriental and Zamboanga areas which were under "Christian" control.

The participation of the Muslims in the national affairs of the government was almost nil. By 1965, there were less than ten Muslims in the top echelon of the legislative and executive branches of government, although about 5% of the population were Muslims at the time.

MSU and Other State Universities

The government established in 1961 Mindanao State University (MSU) in Marawi City. It was a part of an overall program

to provide the Mindanao, Sulu and Palawan regions with accessible educational opportunities for all. It functions in two capacities: (a) fulfilling its commitments to the solutions of local and regional problems and needs as a non-metropolitan state university, and (b) operating as a high quality institution of higher learning. Being a non-metropolitan state university, it reflects the commitments of the government in its curricula, both in the formal and non-formal aspects. A number of programs were specifically designed to solve country-side problems. Other programs were set up to supplement and complement those offered at universities in urban areas. Being an institution of higher learning it also offers academic programs of national and international importance.

The decades of the 1950's and 1970's were marked by challenges and crises. The government accelerated the implementation of its industrialization plan for Northern Mindanao and increased its interest in developing the vast marine resources of the Sulu Archipelago. The unrest in the Muslim areas started in 1968 in an armed conflict between a Christian group, the "Ilagas," and two Muslim groups, the "Blackshirts" and the "Barracudas." It escalated into a full-blown secessionist armed confrontation between the Moro National Liberation Front and the government in 1972. The crisis was so serious that it threatened the existence of Mindanao State University. During the period from July 4, 1975 to June 26, 1976 the President of the Philippines changed the president of the university three times, a record unprecedented in the history of higher education.

The government responded to the challenges by (a) upgrading in the 1970's the agricultural college in Kabacan, Cotabato in Central Mindanao and the teacher's college in Zamboanga in Western Mindanao to the University of Southern Mindanao (USM) and Western Mindanao State University (WMSU), respectively; and (b) establishing six external collegiate and research units of MSU in all four political regions in Southern Philippines. The MSU external units are (a) MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology in the northern side of Mindanao, (b) MSU-Tawi-Tawi College of Technology and Oceanography in the western tip of Southern Philippines, (c) MSU-Maguindanao in the heart of Central Mindanao, (d) MSU Sulu Development and Technical College in the capital town of the Sulu Archipelago, (e) MSU-General Santos Unit in the southern periphery

of Mindanao, and (f) MSU-Institute of Research and Fisheries Development in the northern edge of Mindanao.

The government created also the central Mindanao University in Valencia, Bukidnon in Eastern Mindanao and the University of Southern Philippines in Davao City in Southern Mindanao. There are now two universities in each Muslim and Christian regions. MSU has external units in both regions. The rationale behind the creation of the universities and the external MSU units were: (a) the national concern of industrializing Northern Mindanao and exploiting the vast marine resources of the Sulu Archipelago, (b) a research breakthrough in aquaculture which triggered a strong interest in the discipline in the country and (c) the need to provide the Maranaos, Maguindanaos and Tausugs on the one hand and the Muslims and Christians on the other hand with equal number of academic institutions so that they would have equal access to higher education. The state universities in Mindanao are shown in Figure 1.

The universities in the Muslim areas seek to stimulate, plan and help implement social and economic development programs in their areas of influence. They offer a wide range of degree and non-degree programs. Some of the degree programs are addressed to national and international concerns. Others are aimed at providing education in the different professions and training skills needed in the social and economic development of Southern Philippines. They are also directed to help facilitate the integration of the cultural minorities, particularly the Muslims, into the national body politic. The non-degree programs are intended for the students who failed to pass the National College Entrance Examinations.

The research activities of Mindanao State University range from the study of indigenous cultures to topics in engineering, agriculture and fisheries. The extension services programs address themselves to segments of society not involved in formal education. They include conducting seminars, transfer of technology to end users, and providing skills to out-of-school youth, farmers and rebel returnees, to name a few. They also offer scholarship and financial aid grants to a great number of Muslim students who cannot afford to go to college. The scholarship grants encourage superior performance and help those who are financially disadvantaged but deserving students.

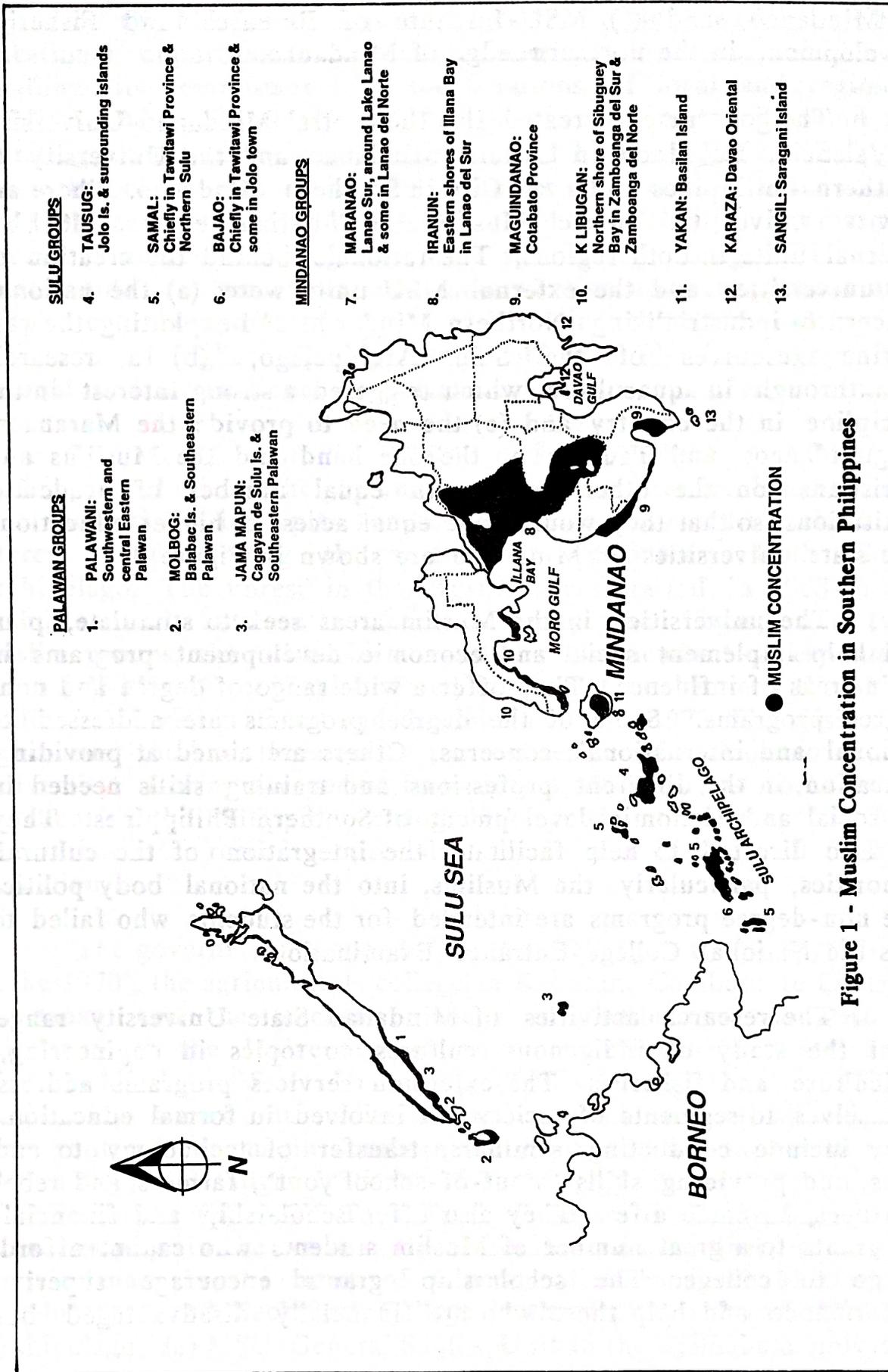


Figure 1 - Muslim Concentration in Southern Philippines

Source: Muslim Filipinos - Heritage and Horizon by Peter Gordon Gowing

They also assist the "madrasah" schools in their literacy programs. Islamic education and teaching of Arabic language are primarily provided by "madrasah" schools. Its functions are to preserve, strengthen and transmit Islamic identity and cultural heritage. Its graduates, however, lack the necessary preparations to go to college.

There was an unprecedented proliferation of state colleges in the Muslim province in the 1970's and 1980's. Almost all of them were high schools converted to colleges. Every Muslim province now has at least one state college. Their creation is viewed more as a political accommodation. It can hardly be justified on educational grounds because they are operating in the midst of the universities. Two colleges are in Lanao del Sur in spite of the massive operation of MSU, one of them being in Marawi City where the main campus of MSU is located; a state college in Sulu is adjacent to the MSU external unit; the one in Tawi-Tawi is a few kilometers from an MSU unit and a college in Maguindanao is several kilometers from the MSU unit in the province.

The operations of the state colleges are severely hampered by the lack of qualified college teachers, the upgrading their high school teachers to college faculty members, and the lack of funds to convert their facilities to college standards and implement quality college programs. Some of them are still operating as high schools, yet they have college status. The sad thing is they are producing college graduates that can hardly match the quality of graduates of the universities.

In spite of the efforts to improve the welfare of the Muslims, still they remain economically and educationally behind the Christians. Their standards of economic well-being, namely, income per capita, employment and literacy levels, are near the bottom of the economic and educational ladders. In the 1980 census, the literacy rates in Central and Western Mindanao were 65% while the national average was 83%. The income per capita of Central Mindanao and Western Mindanao were 88% and 92.7% of the national income per capita, respectively. Central Mindanao has the lowest income per capita in the country. It was obvious that there was a wide disparity in the levels of development between the Muslims and Christians. The former still lagged behind. To achieve a real national integration, the

educational, economic and social developments of the Muslim areas must be accelerated.

PROBLEMS HINDERING OPERATIONS OF THE UNIVERSITIES

The quest for quality higher education is fraught with the rigors of more than three centuries of warfare against the Spaniards and Americans, aspirates of the two decades of the secessionist struggle against the government, and vicissitudes of the economic difficulties that are plaguing the country. They are translated to concrete problems that are frustrating the efforts to achieve academic excellence. The problems are peace and order, attracting and retaining qualified academicians, inadequate funding of programs, continuous institutional improvements, and trend towards mediocrity.

Peace and Order in Southern Philippines

The persisting problem of peace and order will continue to baffle the operations and impede the growths of the universities. It imposes restriction in the instruction, research and extension programs, particularly in unsafe areas. It aggravates the difficulty of attracting highly qualified personnel. Even those who are already in the universities may leave in the face of brighter and more peaceful opportunities elsewhere. The unstable peace and order conditions and the threat of kidnapping of faculty members and students make international and local agencies reluctant to have joint ventures with the universities and would-be university donors hesitant to make donations.

A good academic program can only survive if the peace and order problem is solved. A stable peace and order situation is a must condition for an effective implementation of good academic programs.

Attraction and Retention of Qualified Academic Personnel

The problem of peace and order, the general lack of good facilities, and the relative isolation of the universities from the mainstream of national, social and intellectual life make it difficult to attract and retain highly qualified academicians. The excessive teaching load and inadequacy of opportunities to do research and attend academic conferences contribute to the deterioration of their

enthusiasm. The chronic delay of their promotions dampens their morale and interest in the work. The inadequate library and laboratory facilities kill their initiatives.

Their low morale, lack of initiative, faltering interest, and moribund enthusiasm contrive to make them seek peaceful and greener opportunities elsewhere.

Inadequate Funding of Programs

The expansion of the programs of the universities is not matched by appropriate funding. They have to compete against more than seventy state universities and colleges for their yearly budgets. They can only get funds enough to sustain some of the programs. The problem is confounded by the rampant practice of diverting funds from the academic programs to administrative activities. Other programs have inadequate funding which often lead to the deterioration of academic facilities, not enough books for faculty members and students in the libraries, improperly maintained laboratories, and inadequate laboratory supplies necessary in teaching basic sciences.

The sad state of affair prevailing in the universities hardly speak of quality education.

Continuous Institutional Improvements

The universities have been hamstrung by certain weaknesses in their organizational structure and system of decision-making. There is a need to share work responsibilities, for strength monitoring and feedback mechanism and to improve the reward system. Some heads of the universities and external units of MSU have been developing academic programs which duplicated those offered by others. This is a costly undertaking because it often leads to wastage of resources and unhealthy competition among them.

They are also redefining their and their subordinates' powers, functions and responsibilities. This practice results in duplication of duties and wastage of resources. Furthermore, it brings about the employment of people who are not qualified or are not interested to perform their functions. It also breeds overstaffing in some areas and understaffing in others. Moreover, in some cases the distribution of

rewards in the administrative staff is not clearly defined. This often creates an abuse of the reward system favoring the administrative sector over the academic staff. This in turn produces enmity between the academic and administrative staff.

Academic excellence cannot be expected to flourish in an atmosphere of enmity where duplication of programs and wastage of resources are abounding.

Trend Towards Mediocrity

The strain of the proliferation of the state colleges and the rapid expansion of non-degree and high school programs of at least one of the universities are taking their toll on the quality of collegiate teaching and research outputs. The funds that could be used by the universities for good programs is siphoned off to the colleges. High percentages of the budgets of the colleges are used to defray the administrative staff salaries and overhead expenses. They also produce graduates who can hardly match the quality of the graduates of the universities. If providing quality higher education to the Muslims can be likened to the search for food by an army of ants, the indiscriminate proliferation of state colleges is similar to drowning the ants in a basin of honey.

The expansion of the non-degree and high school programs provide little time for faculty members to undertake research activities because they are overloaded teaching non-degree programs. Also, much funds is diverted to the secondary education programs. The diverted funds can be used in university programs that are seriously affected by lack of funds. If nothing is done to remedy the situation, mediocre higher education programs may result.

UNIVERSITY SYSTEM

The quest for providing quality higher education to the Muslims will remain an elusive dream if the universities will continue their individual and independent efforts in providing higher education. At best this practice will produce marginal results. Only a concerted effort within the framework of a system approach can be expected to have more tangible outcomes.

In the context, it is proposed that all universities and state colleges in the Muslim areas be consolidated into a university system and their programs be divided into three groups, namely: higher education, vocational and non-degree, and secondary programs. It is recommended that (a) the secondary programs be handled by a Muslim Education Bureau, a proposed new office of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports for the Muslim Autonomous region; (b) the vocational and non-degree programs be entrusted to an office under the auspices of the Manpower and Youth Council of the Department of Labor and Employment; and (c) the higher education programs be implemented by the university system for the Muslim autonomous region.

The university system will have campuses in strategic areas. At least one campus will be established in each of the Maranao, Maguindanaon and Tausug areas. Each campus will concentrate its resources in developing itself as a center of academic excellence in one or two disciplines which principally determine its character and trusts. Example of these disciplines are: (a) the campuses in the Sulu Archipelago excel in marine sciences, including oceanography and aqua-business, (b) Maguindanaon provinces pursue top-notch programs in agriculture and agribusiness, (c) the Zamboanga area concentrates in developing outstanding education program, and (d) the Maranao territory focuses on excellent Islamic Studies, Arabic language and engineering programs.

To fulfill these objectives the university system will offer a wide range of degree, research and extension services programs that are aimed at (a) making the university system a respectable member of the international academic community, (b) providing education in the different professions needed in the social, economic and technological development of Southern Philippines in particular and the country as a whole, (c) enhancing national unity, (d) forecasting future needs and changes, and planning and helping implement strategies to meet them, and (e) searching new appropriate technologies and helping the society to adapt them.

The realization of the objectives gives tangible benefits to the university and its faculty, administration staff and graduates, and the Muslims. The benefits make it easier for (a) the university to attain high rank in the pecking order of universities, (b) its professors to conduct research works and participate in national and

international academic conferences, (c) its administration to secure more funds and support to the university programs through academic linkages and tie-up programs, (d) its graduates to get jobs, and (e) the Muslims to acquire quality higher education.

More importantly, the *best academician* in Southern Philippines will be appointed as the founding president of the university system. He will have a demonstrated competence and proven abilities to guide the university to achieve its missions. A second-rate president stifles the realization of the missions; a mediocre one suffocates it.

One cannot embark at providing quality higher education without providing programs that will alleviate the endemic problems prevailing in the universities in the Muslim areas. Some of the programs are: restructuring the university system, academizing of the administrative sector, institutionalizing checks and balances, creating a program for integrating human values, improving institutional linkages, developing production and other business ventures, system-wide planning, monitoring, and evaluation, continuing a program of self-evaluation and goal-setting, and playing a more active role in national and regional development. The realization of the programs will go a long way in attaining the objectives of the university system.

Restructuring the University System

The university system will be restructured and developed into a fully grown supra-regional and non-metropolitan university system. As a supra-regional university, its clientele will be the entire population of Mindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi, Basilan and Palawan regions. As a non-metropolitan university it will offer programs of regional, national, and international importance as well as complementing those offered by metropolitan universities. Some of the programs will have special accent on the cultural minorities, particularly the Muslims, whom it must seek to integrate into the mainstream of the national body politic.

Academization of the Administrative Sector

In order to make sure that the administrative sector will be sympathetic to and supportive of the academic goals of the

university, it is necessary that the heads and responsible officers of all administrative offices be academically-oriented if not academicians themselves. This will certainly avoid the unhealthy competition and rivalry between the academic and administrative sectors.

Institutionalization of Checks and Balances

In order to provide an additional system of checks and balances on top of the existing system endemic to the universities, the various important sectors of the university system will be allowed to organize freely and to be represented in important decision-making bodies of the university, including the executive and academic planning committees and the Governing Council of the university, although in some instances these representatives may only be given an observer's status without voting power. The procedure will directly link the decision-making bodies to the clientele, thereby improving the feedback mechanism between the university and its constituents. Among the groups which may be allowed to have representations are the faculty, students, administrative staff and alumni.

A Program for Integrative Human Values

In line with the purpose of integrating the Muslims and other cultural minorities into the national body politic, and university must consciously adopt policies which seek to enhance this goal. For example, it must train for leadership positions brilliant and morally upright Muslims and other cultural minorities who shall serve as opinion leaders of their communities and whom the young among them can identify as their examples to emulate.

Improving Institutional Linkages

The university will strengthen its ties not only with local institutions but, more importantly, with international institutions as well, particularly those located in the Middle Eastern countries. The cultural traditions of its surrounding communities present the university with an opportunity, unique among Philippine universities of natural amity and rapport with the Middle Eastern countries. The potential of increased international contacts to generate new funds is only one argument for a good university linkage program.

The vast money outlays which can be absorbed by linkage arrangements is great. The value of a good aggressive linkage program can hardly be overemphasized. Also important are the diverse opportunities afforded by tie-up institutions. Professorial and student exchanges, research and scholarship grants, equipment and material supports are the usual arrangements between institutions engaged in mutually supportive linkages.

Development of Production and Other Business Ventures

In response to the call of the national government for all agencies to cut back their expenses and to continuously relay their resources, the university will embark on production of crops and other products which may earn incomes for the university. For examples, the Colleges of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries will each be encouraged to invest in plantations and other crops as well as in fishpond and fry-production. In addition, the Colleges of Business Administration and the Hotel and Restaurant Management will be encouraged to set up their respective business ventures which will not only earn them incomes but also provide actual in-service training and practical experiences to their students.

System-wide Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation

In order to effectively monitor, control, regulate and supervise the entire university system, as well as create meaningful programs and projects in response to the changing needs of the client communities, there is a need to create a control data bank not only about the campuses, programs, policies and personnel of the university system but also about the client communities. Inputs in the data bank are to come not only from the constituents or employees of the university but also from reliable representatives of the client communities. Uniform data collection will be conducted in all units of the system and the data will be integrated at every significant level: unit, campus, sector, and system so that there is a mini-data bank at every such level. Such a data bank system will enable management at various levels to make fast and effective decisions and recommendations.

A Continuing Program of Self-Evaluation and Goal-Setting

The true essence of development lies not only in the increasing capability to generate and make appropriate use of new resources but, more importantly, in the proper determination of goals in the future. For the university system, therefore, to assume leadership in society as an agent of desirable social change, it must continuously re-examine the goals of society and government and in consideration of the changing needs, temper, and attitudes of the people, it must also reorient its goals, objectives, policies, and programs. It must always attempt to make all its endeavors relevant to the needs of the society.

More Active Role in National and Regional Development

The university shall maintain a position of being the institution primarily mandated to provide the required skilled manpower and technical know-how for the development of the Muslim areas and to expedite the integration of the various cultural minorities, particularly the Muslims, into the national body politic. It must offer quality tertiary education, search for new appropriate technologies, and disseminate such technologies through its community service programs. Furthermore, it must take a more active role in forecasting future needs and planning and implementing programs designed to meet such needs. Above all, it must strive to develop its campuses into centers of academic excellence.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

There is still a wide disparity in the level of education development between the Muslims and the rest of the Filipinos, in spite of the efforts to improve the lots of the Muslims. The Muslims are educationally lagging behind the cultural majority. It is concluded that the Muslims cannot effectively participate in the national affairs of the government as long as the wide educational disparity exists. It is further concluded that the gap will be eventually eliminated by accelerating the rate of education, economic and social developments in the Muslim areas.

In the ultimate analysis, it is up to the Muslims to make use and take advantage of the programs of the government to obtain quality higher education. Their journey to be educationally at par with the cultural majority is long and arduous and it is on a rough and rugged road. The Muslims, therefore, must be steadfast in their quest for quality higher education.

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