Social Sector Decentralization: The Case of Thailand
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Chapter 1

Evolution of Decentralization:
Documents and Literature Review

A. Administrative Structure of Thailand

In Thailand, the transfer of planning, decisionmaking and administrative authority from the central government to the local administrative units, local government, or nongovernment organizations to a certain degree may have begun over forty years ago when the Municipal Act of 1953 was adopted. The country has six types of local self-government (LSG), namely, Changwat (provincial) Administrative Organizations (CAOs), municipalities, sanitary districts, Tambon (subdistrict) Administrative Organizations (TAOs), Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) and Pattaya City. These six types of LSG are briefly described below.

1. Changwat Administrative Organization

The changwat administrative organization is the provincial unit of local self-government. It was created by the Changwat Government Act of 1955 to provide government services to all inhabitants who are not within the geographical jurisdiction of a municipality, a sanitary district, or a TAO. The CAO has two major components: the elected changwat assembly, which acts as a legislative body, and the provincial governor, who acts as its chief executive. The main function of the changwat assembly is to meet annually to pass an annual budget and to audit the previous year's expenditures. Since the CAO's budget comes from provincial revenues, which are usually quite small, it is supplemented by grants and loans from the central government through the Department of Local Administration. The CAO may also receive assistance under the Accelerated Rural Development (ARD) programme involving public work projects in the province. The projects are administered by the Office of ARD within the Ministry of Interior. The governor is responsible for presentation of the budget and implementation of the assembly's adopted programmes.

2. Municipality

The municipality is the most important form of local government in Thailand. It is incorporated to provide large urban areas with limited self-government. Established by the Municipal Act of 1953, municipalities are divided into three classes on the basis of their population, revenue capabilities, and ability to provide services. They are: (1) city municipality; (2) town municipality; and (3) tambon municipality. City municipalities must have at least 50,000 inhabitants and an average population density of 3,000 per square kilometers, plus adequate revenues to support limited governmental activities. Town municipalities must have at least 10,000 people with the same population density as city municipalities, and necessary financial resources (or be the seat of the provincial government). Tambon municipalities may be established if the Ministry of Interior is convinced that the area's local problems and future development can best be met by the application of a municipal form of government. The establishment of tambon municipalities, therefore, does not require adequate local financial resources to support their assigned functions as they are supported by the central government's grants-in-aid.

Each municipality is composed of an elected municipal council and a municipal executive board. The council is the legislative body of the municipality like the changwat assembly. It reviews and
approves the annual budget and passes municipal ordinances (consistent with central government laws). Members of the council are elected from citizens within its incorporated area with a term of five years. The number of members varies according to the municipality class: 24 members for a city, 18 for a town, and 12 for a tambon.

The municipal executive board acts as an executive body to administer all municipal functions. The council consists of a president, called the mayor, and two or four additional deputy mayors depending on the class of municipality. They are all elected from the members of the council and appointed by the governor of the province. The board has two main functions: to determine policies and present appropriate ordinances and recommendations to the council, and to supervise the operations of the municipality and its employees. Each municipality has a municipal clerk (city manager), possibly aided by one or two deputy municipal clerks, to administer its activities which are handled through a number of specific divisions. The number of divisions is determined by its class and total annual revenues.

3. Sanitary Districts

The sanitary district is perhaps the oldest form of local government in Thailand. It is a quasiurban local government jurisdiction, established by the order of the Ministry of Interior, where there is a concentration of population and an expectation of revenue that might support limited governmental activities, but not large enough to finance a small municipality. There are specific conditions for application of sanitary districts under the Municipal Act of 1953: (a) its size must be between one and four square kilometers; (b) it must have about 100 commercial stores; and (c) a population of about 1,500. In practice, the most important factors are population density and potential revenue.

4. Tambon Administrative Organization

The tambon administrative organization is the smallest form of local government. It was first established by the Tambon Authorities Act of 1956, revised in 1968. The organization has as its legislative body a council composed of the Kamnan and all village headmen, plus one elected member from each village. Since its boundary is identical with that of a subdistrict, the kamnan acts as the chairman of the organization's council. They perform duties in accordance with laws and regulations issued by the Ministry of Interior. Their expenditures are financed through appropriations from the Department of Local Administration under the budget of the provincial council and from the Department of Community Development through its rural programme budget. Since its inception in 1956, the tambon administrative organizations have had limited financial resources and organizational capability. They have to depend heavily on grants-in-aid which are usually small from the central government. Most of them are unable to perform all their assigned duties.

5. Bangkok Metropolitan Authority (BMA)

The Bangkok Metropolitan Authority is a special form of local self-government, created by the National Executive Council Order No. 355 of 1972, and later revised by the Bangkok Metropolitan Act of 1975. The BMA was established by merging all local self-government within the Bangkok and Thonburi boundaries into one government entity with its own unique organization and functions different from municipalities. The BMA government is made up of the BMA assembly and the governor. The BMA assembly acts like a legislative body, to review and supervise all administrative duties of the governor and his staff, and to propose and pass city ordinances. Members of the BMA assembly are elected by its citizens for a fouryear term.
The governor is the chief executive for the BMA administration with assistance from four deputy governors appointed by the governor. The governor is elected by popular vote of Bangkok constituents with a fouryear term. The operations of the BMA activities are, however, supervised by a permanent clerk (chief clerk), who is the highest official among the BMA officers. Under the permanent clerk are 12 bureaus, each with a director and having different functions ranging from planning to city police.

6. Pattaya City

Pattaya City is also a special form of local self-government. It is a chartered city created by the Pattaya City Act of 1978 in the image of city management in the United States. The city itself was developed from the Pattaya sanitary district. But the rapid growth of the district as a major tourist attraction made the sanitary district type of local government incapable of handling local problems and urban development. Hence, Pattaya City was established with greater independence and flexibility of functions and authorities to the local people.

Pattaya City's administration comprises the Pattaya City council and the chief clerk. The council acts as a legislative body and the chief clerk as the chief executive. There is no governor, but a lord mayor, who is also the president of the city council. The president is elected from council members of whom 17 members are elected and eight appointed by the Ministry of Interior. Both types of members have a fouryear term. The council's major activities are to oversee planning and policy implementations for city development and to pass city ordinances which are not in conflict with national laws.

The public administration of Thailand is divided into three branches: the executive branch represented by the council of ministers; the legislative branch represented by the parliament with an elected house of representatives and an appointed senate; and the judicial branch represented by the courts of justice. The executive branch is divided into three levels: central, provincial, and local administrations. It can be seen that there are two types of local government. One is local government administration by the central government and the other is local self-government. The local government administration, which is divided into provinces and subdivided into districts and, further, into townships and villages, fits into the concept of "deconcentration". Thus, the provincial administration is a deconcentrated unit of the Ministry of Interior, which is further divided into lower levels of districts and subdistricts. Each of these deconcentrated units is headed by a professional civil servant appointed directly by the Ministry of Interior. In addition, there are a number of administrative offices of other central government ministries set up in provinces and districts to oversee and administer their programmes and projects.

Parallel to the local government administration is the local self-government, which is close to the decentralized form of government. There are altogether six types of local self-government units in Thailand, described above. These government entities are created with their legal status decreed by the national parliament. They have a specific administrative organization and functions to perform. They are empowered with limited fiscal authority, which is to some extent outside the direct control of the central government. They are also independent in making certain decisions within their legal boundaries. This form of local government is seemingly a devolution type of decentralization.

The administrative relationship between the central government, exercised mainly through the Ministry of Interior, and local selfgovernments, is very close financially and legally. The central government exercises a great deal of control over all administrative forms of local selfgovernments. Apart from financial dependence on grants and subsidies, the local government bodies are also subject to the central appointment of representatives to supervise their operations and policies. For example,
the governor is delegated with supervisory powers over municipalities and Changwat administrative organizations; district officers chair the sanitary district committees; and kamnan chair the tambon councils.

Although the local selfgovernments are creations of law that grant them statutory authority to raise certain local revenues and make expenditures, the authority is subject to rules and regulations issued by the Ministry of Interior governing their functional responsibilities, revenue raising, financial practices, budgeting, asset management, and procurement of goods and services.

B. Evolution of Government Policies on Decentralization

Despite the tendency to emphasize "deconcentration" rather than "decentralization", attempts to decentralize public, social, and economic services are not lacking. These are evidenced in the policies stated in either the fiveyear economic and social development plan or in the form of the policy statement presented to the parliament by the newlyformed government. These two types of policy statement are not so different in substance but rather on emphasis.

1. The Third Social and Economic Development Plan (19721976)

"Improvement of social justice" was one of the six major categories of overall strategies of the Third Plan; the objectives of which were to provide social services to the public in a more equitable manner and to reduce the differences in the standard of living among various regions and among different classes of people in the urban area. Important measures included: improvement of the standard of living of the urban population; improvement of the standard of living of the rural people; and manpower and employment development. Two measures which may be considered as relevant to decentralization under the improvement of the standard living of the rural population category were the expansion of community development program to cover the whole country and more autonomy to local authorities (NESDBm 1973).

2. The Fourth Economic and Social Development Plan (19771981)

One of the five major objectives of the Fourth Plan was the reduction of income disparities through the adoption of measures to improve income distribution and raise the living standard of target groups such as farmers, laborers, and others with low income. Various measures to spread the fruits of development as well as social services to people in the rural area to the greater extent were adopted. Consequently, the Fourth Plan contained three chapters on decentralization. The objective of the decentralized urban development strategies was to decentralize the growth from the Bangkok Metropolitan area by developing urban centers in other regions outside Bangkok to help check the flow of migration into Bangkok. The emphasis on decentralization of basic infrastructure (community infrastructure and economic infrastructure) was placed on the decentralization of social services, the policy was the delivery of social services to the rural population with the ultimate aim of eliminating the gap between the social services provided in urban and rural areas. In educational development, one of the policies and guidelines stated in the plan was "the system of education administration will be modified so that there is more autonomy in policy matters concerning education in the central, region and local areas" (NESDB, 1977). In public health development, the policy emphasis was on provision of health services such as medical care and treatment, disease prevention, and health programs for all sectors of the general public, particularly in rural areas. One of the measures adopted in the public health development plan was the decentralization of public health management which stated:
"Executive power will be more and more decentralized to provincial administration. This will include planning, implementation, decisionmaking, budget allocation and personnel, control. This should enable provincial administrators to make their own decision in solving local problems with more flexibility. Adequate assistance will be provided to the provincial administration so that it can carry out its functions as stipulated by the law.

Operation plans at the provincial and community level will be prepared and these plans will take into account local conditions and national development policies. Improvements will be made in the supervision and reporting system at various levels. Health workers of various categories will be trained and the private sector such as private colleges will be encouraged to participate in the training of certain types of personnel which are still in short supply such as nurses and nurseaids," (NESDB, 1977).

In the social welfare development plan, only target groups of the plan such as children and young people, the elderly, handicapped and deprived people were identified. Decentralization was not specified as one of the guidelines and measures for implementation of the plan.


Beginning with the Fifth Plan, major objectives of the development plans have been to create and maintain the balance between economic and social development, to distribute prosperity throughout provincial regions, to establish social justice, and to alleviate rural poverty. Measures adopted to attain the above objectives have been several development programs such as population, social, and cultural development, development of urban and specific areas; and the rural development program. Decentralization of social services is mentioned in the work plans for adjusting the role of the government and promoting public participation. Guidelines specified the need to adjust the government's role from that of sole provider and administrator of social service activities to that of supporter of private sector, community, and individuals, and to catalyze participation by the people, especially at the community and family levels, to prevent and solve social problems and encourage self-reliance in the long run.

4. The Government's Policy Statement

The policy statements of the present government, delivered to the Parliament on 21 October 1992, covers nine areas from political and public administration policy to national security, foreign affairs, economic and social policies. Decentralization of the administrative authority is one of the 15 measures under the political and public administration policy. It states:

"To conform to the principle of self-government, the government will decentralize the administrative authority to localities by having administrators of local governments at all levels elected by the people and by increasing the role and authority of the local governments in the formulation of development policies, the management of natural resources and environment. The government will also promote the status of the local public organizations at tambon level by making them juristic entities and local government bodies in order to enable them to be more flexible and more efficient in solving problems at tambon level." (Siam archives, October 1992).
In the area of social policy which covers education, religion and culture, health, consumer protection, workers, children and women, and sports, statements on decentralization of the administrative authority of the subareas were made. In education:

"To decentralize more administrative authority on education from the central government to the regions and to educational institutes by clearly defining the scope of responsibility, allowing education institutes more options in implementing policy as well as providing support to individuals and organizations in the community to participate in the administration of community's educational activities through the committee on education," (Siam Archives, November 1992).

In health:

"To decentralize administrative authority from the central government to the regions by establishing the regional health offices responsible for implementing curative, promotive, and preventive health programs appropriate to problems and needs of the communities," (Siam Archives, November 1992).

The measure adopted by the government to implement the above policy on decentralization is the establishment of an ad hoc committee or working group to study or to draft the necessary bills. The "Tambon Bill" which was unanimously supported by the House of Representatives on 3 November 1993 was seen as a breakthrough in self-government at the grass root level. An adoption of the bill at the first reading for further scrutiny by a 42man special House committee is also considered a "historical event" because "similar bills have been introduced in Parliament over the past 20 years but were never approved. A few times they were "killed" by a disbanding of Parliament by military coups," (Bangkok Post, 4 November 1993). The Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Bill was finally passed by the House of Representatives on 9 November 1994 and officially took effect on 2 March 1995 which was 90 days after its publication in the Royal Gazette Under the Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act 1994, there are two levels of tambon administration the tambon council and the tambon administration organization. A tambon council, with the status of a juristic entity, is chaired by the kamnan (chief) of the tambon (which comprises a number of village). Other members of the council are the village chiefs of all villages, tambon medic, and one elected member from each village. The council is responsible for the development of the tambon. It is dutybound to provide basic necessities such as water for consumption and agriculture; protect and maintain natural resources and the environment; and, improve the welfare of women, children, youth and elderly as well as the handicapped. Its income is allocated from the provincial administration organization (PAO), the council's own income from management of properties and public utilities, and the government's subsidy from the annual budget. The tambon council is mandated to prepare its own expenditure plan. It is eligible to enter into legal contracts, own properties acquired from its operations, and recruit its personnel without seeking approval from the provincial administration organization as before. However, the tambon council is not empowered to collect taxes as the provincial administration organization will be responsible for this and allocating part of the income from taxes to the tambon councils.

A tambon council with an average income of not less than 150,000 baht per year for three consecutive years is entitled to become a tambon administration organization (TAO). A TAO is governed by a council in which members are the kamnan, village chiefs, the tambon medic and 2 elected members from each village under the tambon. It is responsible for the tambon development in the economic, social and cultural fields. It is responsible for providing land and water communication routes, garbage and waste disposal, public health care, and public disaster prevention and relief operations. It
also provides water for consumption and agriculture and undertakes commercial ventures as approved
by the TAO council. The TAO's income is drawn from various kinds of taxes. It is also empowered to
generate income from the tambon's natural resources such as ores, petroleum, forest and bird nests.
There is a TAO committee comprising of the kamnan, not more than two village chief and not more
than four elected members of the TAO to carry out projects under the TAO's development plan. There
are also tambon officials to handle administrative duties. Moreover, the TAO is empowered to issue
tambon ordinances to facilitate its administration. It is noted that once a tambon council becomes a
TAO it is longer under the jurisdiction of the provincial administration organization (PAO). Of 6,781
tambon councils in existence, 618 became TAOs from 30 March 1995, according to the Tambon
Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act 1994. After election of TAO council members
in May 1995, the process of selfadministration of 618 rural communities began. The extent to which
these local administrative organizations function with the full participation of the people remains to be
seen.

The progress made in an effort to decentralize the administrative authority on education is
documented as "the Council of Social Affairs Minister yesterday approved in principle a bill to
decentralize the country's education administration and management," (The Nation, 13 September
1994). According to Article 6 of the draft bill which states "for the purpose of directing, administering
and managing educational affairs, the Ministry of Education and its departments will decentralize,
delegate, or transfer the authority to administer and manage both the technical and general
administrative aspects of education, including personnel, budget and finance administrative to all
educational institutes under its jurisdiction with a view to making it congruent with the education
program of the National Economic and Social Development Plan and the Education, Religion and
Culture Development Plan of the Ministry of Education. If it is not possible to decentralize, delegate,
delegate to the Changwat (province) Education Committee, Amphoe (district) Education Committee or other official
units under the Ministry of Education, as the case may be," (A draft Bill to Decentralize the Ministry
of Education's Administration and Management, no date). The draft bill is probably the output of a
working group chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education (Daily News, 25
October 1993). Since the parliament was dissolved on 19 May 1985, the draft bill did not have a
chance to be reviewed and screened by the parliament. It depends on the newlyformed coalition
government to consider if it is still interested to pursue the matter of decentralization of social services
further.

Responsibilities and functions for provision of social welfare services to the under privileged groups
of population including children, youth, women, the elderly and the disabled are entrusted to the
Department of Social Welfare, Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare. The Office of Social Welfare in
each province acts as the field operating office of the Department. In short, it implies the
deconcentration of functions and responsibilities, not decentralization. It should also be noted that
decentralization of social welfare services was not included in the policy statement of the newly-

As may be seen from the political and administrative policy formulated by the new government,
decentralization of the administrative authority to localities is one of the eight policy measures of the
political and administrative policy area. The policy measures included:
1. Decentralize more public functions which are concerned with daily life to local government units with a view to enabling local people's participation in administration and problem solving. Promote, support and cooperate with local government units in solving problems with consequences and effects on nation's development such as traffic or environment problems;

2. Distribute more revenue to local government units step by step to enable them to administer their functions efficiently. Amend laws and regulations with a view to providing local government units more independence, flexibility, and effectiveness in budget management to cope with the increased income;

3. Hold elections of local administrators at all levels, recognizing the kamnan (a town headman) and puyaiban (a village headman) have the role in linking provincial and local administration to create solidarity among the people;

4. Allow local government units to have more independence in formulating local policies and authority in the formulation of policies on administration, development, and management of natural resources; environment, and town planning; and

5. Support local government units at all levels in carrying out their authorized functions with a view to enabling them to respond to the public needs more efficiently and effectively," (Matichon, July 1995).

The fiscal and monetary policy measure formulated by the government to assist in the attainment of objective of decentralization of the administrative authority is "[to] decentralize fiscal authority to local government units to enable them to have revenue in an appropriate and adequate proportion for effective administration of their own affairs." Also at the first meeting of the Council of Economic Ministers on 21 August 1995, one of the measures included in the economic package proposed by Prime Minister Banharn Silpaarcha was "the Government must decentralize authority to allow local communities to manage local natural resources and decentralization of the fiscal authority." (Bangkok, August 1995.

In education, the policy statement was:

"Support the decentralization of education by increasing the role of local government units in managing and administering education at the level and by type which are appropriate and congruent with local conditions and way of life," (Matichon, July 1995).

C. Relevant Literature on Decentralization

Almost all writings on decentralization in Thailand to date tend to focus on transferring of administrative authority of the central government mainly through the Ministry of Interior. At the central government level, there are 15 ministries including the Office of the Prime Minister. Ministries which are mostly responsible for public social services are Education; Interior; Labour and Social Welfare; and Public Health. While these ministries are located in Bangkok, most of them also have offices in provinces and districts, maintained by their staff and financed by their central budgets, to oversee their assigned responsibilities in the respective areas. The provincial administration is under the Ministry of Interior. There are 75 provinces (changwat); each province is headed by a governor, one or two deputy governors, and an assistant governor. A province is divided into several districts,
each of which is administered by a chief district officer, also assisted by a number of assistants. Below the districts are two subunits; township (*tambon*) and villages (*mooban*). Each township is headed by a town headman (*kamnan*) and every village, by a village headman (*puyaiban*). As the top official, the governor oversees general government affairs in the province; provincial and district officials from other ministries are also responsible to the governor. However, the governor does not have any direct administrative control over those officials. They are required to report to their central departments in Bangkok, from which their funds are allocated.

As seen from the discussion on local self-governments, all types of local self-government, except the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration are either under the direct responsibility or intermediate supervisory responsibility of the Ministry of Interior through its appointed officials: governors, district officers, municipal (city) clerks and others. Attempts to amend the law requiring all members of the local administration organization at all levels in every province to be directly elected by local inhabitants have never succeeded. The last one was the proposed Articles 198 and 199 of the Constitutional Amendments Bill which had been rejected by the previous parliament (the one being disbanded on 19 May 1985). However, to achieve decentralization of all public services, it is necessary to change the existing relevant acts or to draft new relevant bills such as a draft bill to Decentralize the Ministry of Education's Administration and Management. Consequently, most literature on decentralization are either in the form of articles or background papers presented at a meeting or seminar. Kooparatan (1993) proposed in his paper entitled, "Decentralization of Authority on Education: From Concept to Practice," the planned change encompassing mobilization of local participation of one of six major recommended activities. Wamananda (1994) proposed in his article entitled, "Directions for Operations to Attain Health for All by the Year 2000" that decentralization of authority to the community and local people should be the first among the four important issues to achieve the goal of Health for All. From the discussion on the status of decentralization in Thailand, it may be seen that a stride in the provision of legal framework for decentralization of administrative authority has been made. As yet, no single public sector has actual experience in local authorities' implementation of activities.
Chapter 2

Study Methodology

A. Research Objectives*

The general objectives of this research are twofold:

1. to review the variety of decentralization policies and programs that have been introduced in selected countries in the region; and

2. to evolve training and operational guidelines for the effective implementation of decentralized programs.

Specifically, the objectives are to:

1. assess differentials in perceptions of decentralization and its implementation at the central and local levels and their effects on the performance of local government units;

2. review the roles and responsibilities of the central government, relevant ministries, local government units (provincial, municipal, and village) as well as nongovernment organizations in the planning and implementation of programs;

3. determine the extent and nature of structural linkages in program implementation;

4. assess the variabilities in mechanisms for goal setting and implementation in the three social sectors (education, health, and welfare) in urban and rural areas;

5. examine the various forms of support to programs and ways by which the local government units mobilize and extend them;

6. assess the extent to which the bureaucratic culture affects the decentralization process;

7. evolve indicators for evaluation of processes and outcomes from the providers' perspective; and

8. examine the prospect of improving effectiveness of decentralized schemes through a multisectoral approach that utilizes an optimum mix of bottomup and topbottom planning.

* Research objectives and the theoretical construct are from Dr. Trinidad S. Osteria Regional Coordinator Regional Research Framework of Social Sector Decentralization in Selected Countries in the Asian Region: An Analysis of Process and Outcomes Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. For the sake of clarity and full understanding, they are presented in full although some specific objectives and a number of variables are not covered by the country study.
B. The Theoretical Construct

Two theoretical frameworks have been developed to guide the implementation of the project. In drawing these frames, the objective is to enable the research teams to examine the structure and processes of decentralization in the social sectors (health, education, and welfare) as they address the issues of equity, empowerment, and popular participation and to ascertain how their components affect the welfare function. To guide future policy and program planning in decentralization, the findings from this research need to be presented in a form that gives an overall strategic perspective and specific suggestions for program operations. Thus, the two frameworks are sufficiently comprehensive and detailed to allow both types of results to be generated. It can be seen that there is a need to match the desired scope of decentralization to its feasible scope. The desired scope implies the presence of regional and administrative capacity of leaders, adequate political support, as well as financial and technical support and a supportive environment. These are the requisites for the planning and implementation of decentralized social programs that entail the design, establishment of implementation guidelines, mobilization of resources, creation of coordination and administrative linkages, as well as monitoring and evaluation. The adequate conduct of these activities can lead to the achievement of the goals of equity, accessibility to services, capability building, empowerment and participation. The interaction of the major factors affects the performance of decentralized programs leading to desired impacts. Under the subheading of environmental conditions are economic background of the area bureaucratic culture, policymaking procedures local power structures, and explicitness of laws and regulations. The environmental factors interact with interorganizational relationships, resources, and characteristics of actors involved in program decentralization to elicit the impact required. Interorganizational relationships subsume clarity and consistency of objectives, roles, planning effectiveness, interorganizational communications, and effectiveness of linkages. The Resource subheading includes support of leadership, adequacy and control of resources, and costs. The personnel's capability is assessed in terms of technical and managerial skills, capacity to coordinate activities, elicit support from others, linkages with beneficiaries, and quality of local leadership.

C. Methodology of the Study

Three separate study phases, described below, were implemented in the Thailand country study.

1. The review and analysis of government documents and materials, papers, articles including newspapers articles and news items pertaining to decentralization policies and programs were conducted. Results of this phase of the study were presented in Chapter 1 of this report.

2. The survey of key informants was conducted by two methods of data collection: an in depth interview and the focus group discussion. In-depth interviews were personally conducted by the project researcher who has more than 10 years of experience in the collection of qualitative data. When the focus group discussions were conducted, the researcher was assisted by two or three well trained research assistants. In so far as possible, the Thai survey of key informants tried to follow the type of key informants
suggested by the Regional Coordinator in the "Mechanism for Project Implementation". Altogether, 45 key informants were interviewed with the following types of key informants and methods of interview:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of Key Informants</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Method of Interview</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Governor</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>In-depth Interview(ll)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District Chief Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Municipal/City Mayor</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Leader (rural only)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Secretary for Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst. Pennant Secretary for Health</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer of the Regional Health Office</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deputy Permanent Secretary for Education</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>In-depth Interview(ll)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proincial Chief Education Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asst. Provincial Chief Education Officer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director(Principal), District Secondary School</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>I-I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director (Principal), Municipal Primary School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal, Community Primary School</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Permanent Secretary for Labor and Social Welfare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspector, Department of Social Welfare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officer, Provincial Labor and Social Welfare Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chief, Provincial Labor and Social Welfare Office</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Director/Chief of the Regional Office of Non governmental Organizations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Village Leader</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2 sessions of focus group discussion (FGD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural village People</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3 sessions of FGD</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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In addition to the above, views of 8 speakers participating in the debate entitled, "Is it Feasible to Decentralize Thailand Health System" organized by Chulalongkorn University were tape recorded and analyzed. The 8 speakers were comprised of one political scientist, two economists, one journalist specialized in environment and health, two medical experts and two directors of community hospital in two provinces.
Data collection instruments as developed by the Regional Coordinator, namely Form IIA: Questionnaire (Central, Regional, Provincial, Municipal, Village), and Form IIB: Beneficiaries were modified. Since the focus group discussion was the method used for collecting data from beneficiaries, the questionnaire served as guidelines for the focus group discussion.

3. The case study in decentralization of health and family planning services of the non-governmental organization in the rural areas of one of the Southern provinces was conducted. Although it is highly desirable that case studies in social services (including health) of both public and private sectors in urban and rural areas should be conducted, it was not feasible due to lack of such cases. Decentralization may be due partly to the fact that the location of the project is over one thousand kilometers from the Association Headquarters and partly to the need for community participation. In addition to the content analysis of the Association's written materials, supplemented by an in-depth interview of the Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director of the Association, two types of interview schedules were used to collect the data. One was used for interviewing members of the Coordination Committee of Community-based FP/FLE to the Southern Population. Another schedule was used for interviewing religious leaders, volunteers and housewives in the communities. Eleven Coordination Committee members and 50 religious leader volunteers and housewives were interviewed.

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Chapter 3

Perception of Social Sector Decentralization

As discussed in Chapter 1, the process of decentralization of administrative authority to a limited extent may have begun nearly half a century ago. At present, the country has about 7,976 local self-government units comprising 75 changwat (provincial) administrative organizations (CAOs), 138 municipalities, 980 sanitary districts, 6,781 tambon (subdistrict) administrative organizations (TAOs) and 2 special local self-government units (Bangkok Metropolitan Authority and Pattaya City). The Tambon Council and Tambon Administrative Organization Act 1994 which became effective in March 1995 had provided the local self-government units of 618 rural communities more responsibility, authority, control and accountability for local administration and the management of social and economic affairs of the communities. Therefore, what will be presented are perceptions of key informants who are concerned with decentralized policies and programs at all levels.

Key informants were classified into 4 types as follows:

1. Officials of the central or provincial governments who have been responsible for formulation, administration, and monitoring of sectoral policies and programs at the ministerial, departmental, and provincial levels. Included in this category are the provincial governor and district officer since they are appointed official of the Ministry of Interior.

2. Elected officials of the local self-government units.

3. Officials of NGOs.

4. Rural villagers for beneficiaries of the decentralized programs.

A. PERCEPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE AUTHORITY

Depending on the background and experience and, to a large extent, the knowledge and understanding of decentralization of the respondents, perceptions on decentralization of administrative authority vary. Only the appointed officials of the provincial government or elected officials of municipality understood the meaning of decentralization and its implications.

For appointed officials with administrative background and experience, decentralization of authority is probably perceived as a threat. Being appointed by their superiors at either the Department of Local Administration or the Office of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Interior of the central government to head provincial administrative units in the province or district, they are accountable to heads of their respective departments in Bangkok. Such observation is also made in a number of administrative offices of other ministries (education, labor and social welfare, etc.) set up in the provinces and districts to oversee and administer their programs and projects. Another reason for these appointed professional civil servants, especially those at the Ministry of Interior, to look upon decentralization of administrative authority as a threat is the concern of losing fringe benefits and privileges associated with the authority delegated by the central government. In addition to the delegated supervisory powers over municipalities, and changwat administrative organizations, the governor is also
the chief executive of the changwat administrative organization—a position remunerated by a certain amount of honorarium and access to an expense account. A district chief officer is also the chair of the sanitary committee, a position enjoying similar benefits and privileges as those of the governor. When asked by the researcher about his perception on decentralization of administrative authority, a district chief officer sidestepped the issue by stating:

- "In decentralizing authority to local communities, what should be done first is to educate and develop the grass roots to think rationally and instill discipline. From my experience in working with the people for a relatively long period, public agencies and public officials should treat the inhabitants equally. A good example of which is the compensation to the people affected by the dam construction. If the people in one dam are compensated more than people in other dams, people in the other dam sites will return and demand more compensation. This will cause trouble for the local administrative officials who sometime have to deal with the mobs without any support from their superiors or the public agencies concerned..."

For an appointed official with a high academic qualification and a relatively long working experience in community development, decentralization was viewed as the central government reducing its role in the administration of local government." As a head of the province, a governor is appointed by the Ministry of Interior. In principle and by virtue of law, all other ministries' provincial offices are under the supervision of a governor. In practice and in reality, a governor is delegated limited functions and responsibilities in personnel and finance administration. The governor does not have direct administrative control over officials of other ministries. They are administratively required to report to central departments in Bangkok, from which their appointment promotion and transfer emanate, and their budget allocated. For example, a governor is an ex officio Chairperson of the Provincial Teacher Civil Service Commission. His duty is confined to implementing the decisions made by either the National or Provincial Civil Service Commission by signing relevant documents such as a regulation, an announcement, and an instruction. Partly due to the reasons mentioned and partly due to his educational background and work experience, a governor who was interviewed did not perceive the decentralization of administrative authority or management of social and welfare services as a threat. He agreed with the proposal that local administrative chief at all levels (governor, district chief officer, subdistrict headman, village headman, mayor) or a local administrative team be elected by local inhabitants. His only reservation was that it has to be gradually implemented, when the province concerned is ready which can be determined by a referendum. According to him, the immediate step which the government should take is to provide opportunities for people to think and decide. Every cultural, economic, political and social projects or program has to be conceived, decided upon, executed and controlled by the grass roots.

For elected officials of the local self-governments, like mayors, decentralization is perceived as a kind of magic lamp. They hope or expect that decentralization with financial and/or administrative autonomy will enhance their capability to solve many or all local problems. One mayor went as far as saying "if local problems could be adequately dealt with locally, it may not be necessary for mobs in the provinces to march to Bangkok to see the Prime Minister." One mayor was of the opinion that despite limitations, be it legal, financial or administrative, local politicians could still get around if a person studies rules and procedures seriously. Mayors and deputy mayors are elected by local inhabitants of incorporated urban areas. Concerns expressed by urban local politicians are restrictions in finance and personnel administration. The financial capabilities of the local self-governments are still limited by
their revenue bases and collection efficiency. A municipal clerk and his deputy are appointed by the Department of Local Administration of the Ministry of Interior and required to report to appropriate hierarchy within the Ministry of Interior. A substantial proportion of personnel are also recruited, appointed and paid by the Department of Local Administration in Bangkok. According to one mayor and concurred with by another mayor:

- "The government has not decentralized to the extent that it should be. How can we expect 50 members of the Council of Ministers to look after the welfare of over 50 million people and perform functions as well as assuming responsibilities over an area of approximately 500,000 square kilometers. We can not expect our congressmen in the House of Representatives to do the job either because they belong to the legislative branch. Our town municipality covers an area of 20 square kilometers, yet a team of 3 members of the municipal executive board assisted by a large number of appointed officials could not fulfill various functions adequately...

One of the major problems is the inadequacy of financial resources. The subsidy which we receive from the government in the form of general grants is only 100 bahts per head, and the specific grants we received for the current fiscal year is only 600,000 bahts. Although we have no conflicts with appointed officials, I am of the opinion that our municipality is overstaffed. ...I think that the governor should also be directly elected by local inhabitants. The election should be held gradually, meaning in a province where its inhabitants feel ready and willing to participate in provincial affairs democratically. In this case, the province must have full autonomy."

Despite hopes and enthusiasm of national elites on the prospect of decentralization when the Tambon Council and Tambon Administration Act took effect in March 1995, rural village leaders seem not to have adequate knowledge, experience, and interest in local self-administration. At a seminar organized for 1,270 Local Administration Department officials including provincial governors, vice governors, district officers and their assistants, Prime Minister Chuan Leekpai, who since July 2, 1995 became the exPremier, observed "today (1 March 1995) marks the milestone in the history of the country's local administration." He stressed the need for the local administrative organizations to work with the full participation of the people. Government representatives, be they provincial governors, districts officers or their assistants, will have to give the local administrators advice and support on various matters. He stated "I would like to ask all of you to give them advice and assistance so they can work effectively, but not to control them as in the past.... This change is a major event in history. It is not an experiment because administrative affairs are not things to be put on trial. We must be serious and work toward the goal of seeing greater public participation (Bangkok Post, 2 March 1995)."

Results of indepth interviews of 2 rural village leaders and 2 sessions of focus group discussion of 11 village leaders in northeastern and central regions indicate that they are not interested in and are not aware that the government has the policy of decentralization through the subdistrict council. They would be pleased if more funds will be allocated to support projects in their subdistricts. They do not fully understand the implications of more authority, especially responsibilities and accountability. What had been discussed at the focus group sessions concentrated mostly on how the projects are initiated, formulated, prioritized at the subdistrict council meetings. Most of interviewees and participants of focus group discussions were elected subdistrict and village headmen who were ex officio members of subdistrict councils. Most of the projects submitted by them were based on suggestions made by district officers or community development workers. Members of one of the subdistrict
councils stated that the council still has to rely on primary school teacher in the subdistrict to work as secretary of the meeting and prepare minutes. A number of village leaders expressed hope that with technical assistance and advice from district officers, they would eventually be able to handle all the subdistrict affairs by themselves.

Similarly, results of the 3 focus group discussions of 11 rural villagers comprised of 5 housewives and 6 members of village committees indicate that they were not aware of the opportunity for local selfadministration. The housewives stated that the major objective of their grouping was to initiate and implement income generating projects. They always asked community development officials in their area to support occupational training of one kind or another. However, when asked by community development officials to write the project proposal, giving details on activities and budgeting, they did not know how to do it. They had no idea what the functions of subdistrict council were. They, however, indicated their willingness to participate in the subdistrict council's meetings especially when the meeting consider their activities. Members of the village committees were not more knowledgeable than the housewives on decentralization, functions, and responsibility of the local organizations such as subdistrict council or village committee. Some elected members of the council even stated that they personally were not interested in community affairs.

Results of the discussion with rural villagers or expected beneficiaries of social services showed that they will accept or ask for services which they want from respective offices. For example, they are aware that the government is providing a grant to the elderly at the rate of 200 bahts per month. For minor ailment or vaccination, they will go to the nearby tambon (subdistrict) health center for services, mostly at no cost or nominal cost.

**B. PERCEPTION ON DECENTRALIZATION OF SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS**

Social service providers at all levels (policy, administration and implementation) were interviewed indepth.

**Labor and Social Welfare Services**

The policy maker and top administrator of public labor and social welfare services was wholeheartedly supportive of decentralization in the provision of services by encouraging local people and communities to participate in the provision of social welfare services. His perception on decentralization may be, however, considered as a variant of the generally understood meaning of decentralization. It is the delegation of responsibility to communities. According to him:

- "Consequences of demographic, social and economic change or development are that society is more complex; having diverse problems with greater magnitude and so on. Moreover, people are receiving more information, comprehensively and indepth. It may not be possible for any agency to be able to respond adequately to the needs of the people. For example, we have about 6 or 7 homes for the elderly which are able to accommodate about 10,000 elderly persons but there are about one million elderly persons wanting to live in these homes. One of the solutions is to decentralize the provision of services for the elderly by encouraging community participation in setting up community welfare centers". A qualified center will receive the subsidy to the amount of over 10 thousand bahts per year. The public social welfare workers will then take turns in providing technical assistance and counseling. The elderly poor is also entitled to receive a welfare grant in the amount of 200 bahts per month. The
elderly can then live with the family in the community. The same method and principle can be applied to the disabled people and other disadvantaged people".

In the provision of labor and social welfare services in the provinces, he planned to emulate the administration of the Ministry of Public Health, namely, all offices which provide labor and social welfare services in the provinces will be put under one command and report directly to the provincial governor with coordination and technical supervision of the office of the permanent secretary. Resistance comes mostly from lower ranking officials who are accustomed to reporting to their respective departments in Bangkok.

The permanent secretary's perception is not shared by one of the interviewees who is one of the 10 public welfare inspectors of the Department of Public Welfare. One of the main functions of this department is to provide assistance to disadvantaged groups such as the disabled, the destitute, the elderly, the hill tribe people and those affected by disasters. One of the major duties of a public welfare inspector is to supervise, One of the major duties of a public welfare inspector is to supervise, monitor and follow-up the activities in the province on behalf of or as assigned by the director general. The department was established over 50 years ago and was formerly one of the largest departments within the Ministry of Interior with over 10,000 staff members and the provincial public welfare office in every province. Although one of the departments of the Ministry of Interior, its provincial offices still have to report and be accountable to the department in Bangkok. Like all other departments of other ministries which have provincial offices under the provincial government/administration, a limited extent of decentralization is authorized to the provincial governor. When asked about his view on decentralization, the response given was that if the policy makers and top administrators want to implement the policy of decentralization by transferring responsibility, authority, control and accountability to the newly established office of the provincial labor and social welfare, solutions on how to reorganize the existing units and deal with existing personnel have to be found. According to this interviewee:

- "As I said, decentralization has both potential benefits and problems. Decentralization involves men, money and functions. When the Permanent Secretary for Labor and Public Welfare was the director general of the Department of Public Welfare, he used to experiment with decentralization by delegating authority on personnel of the provincial public welfare office to the provincial governor. A provincial governor was granted authority on personnel of all positions except the provincial chief public welfare officer. This has created a lot of conflicts when the decisions on salary increase, promotion, and transfer of personnel are made. The province has no experience in the recruitment of personnel which by nature of public welfare work requires specific qualifications, skills and aptitude. Another aspect which has to be taken into account when the decentralization of authority is made through the governor to chief of the provincial labor and social welfare office is the selection of personnel to this position. While officials of the Department of Public Welfare occupy a relatively high level in the position classification (PC) system of public civil service because it was established over 50 years ago, officials of other departments within the ministry occupy lower PC levels. How can a lower PC level person command or supervise a person with higher PC level? In our Department of Public Welfare, we still have a number of offices in the provinces such as the Tribal Research Institute, Chiangmai, headed by a person with high PC level reporting directly to the director general in Bangkok. Also a number of units such as the selfhelp land settlement centers report directly to the concerned division in Bangkok. If the
administrative procedures and ways and means to solve various problems as I mentioned above could be found, it is all right to implement the decentralization policy and plan."

Views expressed by a public welfare inspector was, to a certain extent, corroborated by one chief of the provincial labor and social welfare office. According to this official, the objective of setting up the provincial labor and social welfare office in the province is to decentralize authority by having the Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare's representative in the provincial government implementing policy, plans and program on social and labor welfare by coordinating with other agencies. In reality, every labor and social welfare matters has to be submined through the provincial governor which causes a great deal of delay, resulting in nondecentralization. Another problem perceived by this official is that it is difficult and problematic for a chief of this office to command and supervise the work of officers of the old department who sometimes occupy the higher PC levels. He would like to see a post of vicegovernor for labor and social welfare instead.

A chief of the provincial labor protection and welfare office was not happy with the prospect of reducing the status of his office to a unit within the provincial labor and social welfare office. He thinks that the present arrangement of decentralizing authority through the provincial governor is satisfactory. He prefers a status quo rather than a new arrangement affecting his current authority and status.

From different perspectives on decentralization of labor and social welfare services, none except that of the permanent secretary, is concerned with an attempt to improve service delivery to the people.

**Health Services**

The ministry of public health is probably the only ministry in the Thai government system where almost all functions for administration and provision of preventive, promotive and curative services in the provinces are technically supervised and coordinated by the office of the permanent secretary through the provincial governor. When interviewed, the permanent secretary stated that in so far as possible and practicable, decentralization has been implemented both at the central and provincial levels. At the central level, transfer of responsibility, authority, control and accountability for appropriate specific functions to all deputy permanent secretaries, department directorgenerals, health inspectorgenerals and assistant secretaries has been done. A provincial chief medical officer (PCMO) is granted full authority in the management of health services in the province. A PCMO is also granted authority to coordinate the work of regional offices of all technical departments located in the province. In fact, the 12 health inspectorgenerals, assisted by 2 assistant permanent secretaries, are in some way considered as the permanent secretary for health services of each region. For the purpose of health administration, Thailand is divided into 12 health regions. Each region covers about 58 provinces. Each health inspectorgeneral has authority on all health management functions of the region in which she/he is in charge. One example of decentralization of authority is that the administrative personnel at all levels, from chief of a tambon (subdistrict) health center to PCMO and the provincial governor, is given authority to approve the disbursement of extra budgetary funds from 100,000 to 20,000,000 bahts. Similarly, the PCMO and the provincial governor are authorized to manage the budget on procurement of health equipment and supplies.
The permanent secretary's perception on decentralization of health services was corroborated by one of his assistants. This assistant, however, has a slightly different opinion from his supervisor. He considers the assignment of authority to 12 health inspectorgenerals a delegation of authority not decentralization. According to this interviewee:

- "Our practice of decentralization is to put all health related activities under the supervision of the provincial chief medical officer (PCMO). Ours is different from that the Ministry of Education's concept on decentralization. People there want to make each school a juristic body to perform different functions legally. Our method of decentralization is to gradually increase accountability of the PCMO. Such practice has been adopted since 1964. For example, each hospital is granted authority to manage its extra-budgetary revenue. In my view, it is rather the delegation or assignment of duties to the health inspectorgenerals rather than the decentralization of authority. In fact, there is no formal organizational structure at the regional level to implement the functions. The province has been our unit of administration. In my view, to treat a province as a unit of administration where all health related functions of the Ministry of Public Health must be under the responsibility of a PCMO is good and should be maintained."

According to two health officer who been assigned to work at two regional health centers, the center has no official status with its legally specified duties, responsibilities, budget and personnel. It is an internal informal structure in the form of a committee called the Committee for Coordination of Health Development for the Health Region (number)." The committee is comprised by a health inspectorgeneral as the chairperson, PCMO of all provinces in the region and chiefs of all regional technical offices located in the region as members. A PCMO of the province where the committee is located serves as the secretary of the committee. The committee's secretary is assisted by a small secretariat of 45 staff members. One of the major objectives of the regional center is to implement specific policies and programs designated or specified by the office of the permanent secretary such as the Health for All. The center is allocated a certain amount of budget, depending on the assignments made. Problems faced by personnel of the regional centers is that while they are working for the regional center, they are still under the administrative supervision of the PCMO in their respective provinces who decide on their salary increase and promotion. Staff members of the regional center have to be competent administratively and technically to be able to coordinate and be accepted by their colleagues in other health offices.

Decentralization of health services was not perceived to be beneficial by a number of participants at the debate entitled "It is Feasible to Decentralization Thailand Health System?" A professor of economics at one university was of the opinion that is too early to think about decentralization of health services. We have to educate the people to be aware of their rights as well as responsibilities first. He stated: "It depends on the ability of each community to develop and mobilize resources, especially health human resources because it is extremely difficult to do so even at the national level."

A health expert from the Ministry of Public Health advocated that health service provision should be decentralized to community. Communities should be supported to be able to assume duties and responsibilities. "In my opinion, the services performed by the communities are more economical." The health expert's perception, however, was not shared by an economist from the national planning agency. According to this economist, bottom up planning depends very much on the vision at the local levels which is now lacking. A
development plan is nothing more than a combination of projects. If decentralized, the budget, personnel and general management will have no standard. "If planning is left to the local level, we won't have any standard on food and drug."

A journalist specialist in health and environment was of the view that the public sector does not allow participation of private sector resulting in more concentration of activities and power. A health system should be open. According to him, "decentralization of administrative authority is the distribution of power". The directors of the two communities were of the opinion that despite attempts to decentralize health administrative authority, the system is still not flexible enough to cope with the changing situations. In communities where their hospital are located, while AIDS is endemic, more budget is still allocated for family planning and iodine deficiency eradication activities.

Interviews of two directors of Thai regional offices of nongovernmental organizations involved in health and family planning services showed that as far as their organizations are concerned, it is the delegation of duties and responsibilities rather than decentralization that matters. Programs and projects are developed by the central office. The regional office is responsible for program implementation. The regional office is allowed to operate under some restrictions imposed by the central office in all matters, be it finance, personnel, or general administration. As far as the two interviewees were concerned, they are satisfied with the present arrangement because with decentralization or none, they are able to work for the benefit of the people.

**Education Services**

In the period of rapid technological progress, if decentralization of education administration and management is not made, it may not be possible to solve local problems adequately and timely. The view seemed to be shared by those who are working on different positions in the province. For the school administrators, recruitment of personnel and procurement of supplies and equipment done by the central administration have caused them a lot of problems. For the administrators of provincial and district education services, the fact that each level or type of education, such as primary, secondary and vocational, has its own district or provincial commission is a source of confusion and causes a delay in the decision making. They all concur that in each district and each province, there should be only one education commission comprised of personnel from primary, secondary, vocational, teacher training and nonformal education sectors including representatives of departments of religious and cultural affairs. For decentralization to be effective and workable, full transfer of authority to the provincial body to administer and manage not only education services but also budget, personnel, and finance must be made. Majority of them support the idea of having the local people or people from private sector to participate in the administration of education services. They are concerned that local people with low level of education and lacking of appropriate experience will not be vocal and could be easily dominated by the public officials in the commission.

For the high level administrator at the Ministry of Education in Bangkok, each of 14 departments in the Ministry has already decentralized limited authorities to its offices located in the province. Since every department has its own practice and standard, what the ministry is trying to achieve is the unified standard procedures by drafting a bill for decentralization of education services. Each "education unit" will have a juristic person having the legal authority to perform all administrative and management functions. Although the bill was
approved by the Council of Social Affairs Ministers in May 1995, it still has to be approved by the parliament. The dissolution of the parliament rendered the draft bill null and void. The Ministry of Education has to restart the process. The present government policy state that it will decentralize authority in education to local government units.

Thus, decentralization of education services as perceived by officials of the Ministry of Education seems to concentrate on how to make the local education units more independent administratively rather than how to respond and serve the local people and communities better.