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## **ECONOMIC IMPLICATIONS OF SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL TO PARENTS: A RURAL-URBAN PERSPECTIVE**

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### **I. INTRODUCTION**

The introduction of the Senior High School in the Philippines for the first time in 2016, intends to convalesce the learning competence of the high school students. The curriculum was conceived mainly due to the dreadful performance of the Filipino learners in various international benchmarking assessment of competence randomly conducted across the country. With no appropriate intervention, the deplorable results shall continue to denigrate the employability of our graduates especially abroad. The implementation of the SHS curriculum, however, was met with cynical reactions from the public. As the added years entail more expenses for parents, uncertainty began to haunt hundreds of thousands of Filipino families who are already struggling coping with the cost of keeping their children in school.

This paper anchors on the view that the Philippine educational system requires a reform towards quality education for the country to catch up the race for industrialization. K-12 curriculum is adopted as a step to improve quality education – an assumption which is held by policy makers that would be graduates of the SHS are employable or capable for self-employment. The objective of this study is to assess the economic implication of the SHS curriculum upon the parents and the extent of relevance of the graduates to local industries.

This study is based on survey. The research instruments are the sampling method, statistical analysis and library work. The respondents are composed of 127 respondents (115 parent-sample and 12 principal/coordinator/director-sample) were randomly selected using a purposive sampling method from twelve senior high schools in rural area (Municipality of Jolo) and urban center (Zamboanga City). The data were generated via a Five-Point Likert-Type Questionnaire and interview checklist, and analyzed using weighted mean, t- test (independent sample test) and ordinal scale process through SPSS Application.

### **II. The Economic Implications of Senior High School Curriculum to Parents in Rural Area and Urban Center**

#### **Rural Area**

The parent-respondents were randomly selected from six senior high schools in the Municipality of Jolo. Sulu College of Technology-Senior High School, Notre Dame of Jolo College-Senior High School, and Mindanao State University-Sulu Senior High School are under the SUC, and Jolo Agricultural School-Senior High School, Jolo School of Fisheries-Senior high School, and Sulu National High School-Senior High School are under the DepEd. SCT and NDJC are private integrated senior high schools, and the rest are integrated public senior high schools.

The respondents are composed of 59 of which twenty are males and 39 are females. 21 of them are unemployed, ten are in contractual services, eighteen engaged in business/self-employment, one worked in private sector, and nine are government employees. Educationally, they fall under the bracket of high school graduate, earning P5,000-10,000 per month. 39 of their children are enrolled in public schools and twenty in private schools. Thirty of their children are G11 and 29 are G12 of which 43 are registered under Academic Track and sixteen in TVL Track.

A total mean score of 4.42 shown in table 1 confirmed that there are indeed economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents in rural area.

Specifically, the respondents claimed that they are economically affected by the implementation of the curriculum. They asserted that the additional years entails more expenses for both school and non-school-related needs of their children and compels them to spend more for education. They also asserted with a mean score of 4.32 that it makes education costly to them than before. In general, the respondents admitted with a mean score of 4.68 that the added years is a big financial burden to them as parents.

Moreover, the respondents claimed with a mean score of 4.20 that with the curriculum in place, they find it hard to sustain the secondary education of their children. They confirmed that regardless of the grade level and type of school where their children are enrolled at, the curriculum financially affects them all the same. They also claimed that the curriculum increases their educational expenses. With a mean score of 4.63, they asserted that although senior high is free in public school and voucher system is provided in private school, they still have to shoulder other school-related expenses for another two years. As such, it becomes harder for them to manage their income relative to other needs of the rest of the members of their family.

Parents in private schools confirmed with a mean score of 5.20 that the voucher grant of their children is not enough because private school charged high-top tuition fees beyond the voucher amount. They asserted that it has to be increased for them to be less problematic with the senior high education of their children.

The respondents admitted that the effects of the curriculum are related to their income.

They assailed that if their income is good enough, they will certainly be less worried about their senior high expenses. The respondents claimed that they have to minimize their daily personal expenses and that they are struggling to save money due to senior high. They confirmed that their daily expenses had increased and that their personal needs are often set aside because of their senior high expenses. They likewise confirmed that even other household expenses like food, clothing, etc. are often compromised for the same reason. In fact, with a mean score of 4.04, the respondent asserted that they find it hard to support the education of the rest of their children and that fund allotted for other members of their family are often diverted to their senior high expenses.

Table 1. Mean Scores of the Economic Implications of SHS Curriculum to Parents in Rural Area			
<b>S1</b> - 4.84	<b>S8</b> - 4.20	<b>S15</b> - 4.73	<b>S22</b> - 4.34
<b>S2</b> - 4.68	<b>S9</b> - 4.20	<b>S16</b> - 4.53	<b>S23</b> - 3.85
<b>S3</b> - 4.66	<b>S10</b> - 4.44	<b>S17</b> - 4.50	<b>S24</b> - 4.55
<b>S4</b> - 4.70	<b>S11</b> - 4.63	<b>S18</b> - 4.61	<b>S25</b> - 3.81
<b>S5</b> - 4.32	<b>S12</b> - 5.20	<b>S19</b> - 4.04	<b>S26</b> - 4.21
<b>S6</b> - 4.50	<b>S13</b> - 5.25	<b>S20</b> - 4.08	<b>S27</b> - 4.00
<b>S7</b> - 4.20	<b>S14</b> - 4.54	<b>S21</b> - 4.20	<b>S28</b> - 4.00
<b>Total Mean Score = 4.42</b>			

With a mean score of 3.85 the respondents confirmed that due to the curriculum they are currently suffering from financial difficulty. To them, they need to engage in other extra-income generating activity and even consider the need to borrow money to sustain the education of their children. They also claimed that they find it hard to attend to other school needs of the rest of their children. The respondents asserted with a mean score of 4.00 that because of their senior high expenses, they find it difficult to even extend financially aid to their needy relatives and friends and attend to their social obligations regularly.

The parents in rural area appealed for the abolition of the curriculum. They claimed that the curriculum does not make their children ready for actual job, and that their children are showing little interest of studying in senior high. Some parents even claimed that the curriculum prompted students to drop out of school because of the lengthy years students have to endure. They pointed out that the work immersion has to be extended to further expose their children to actual work, and schools, whether public or private, must be fully equipped with teaching-learning materials and work immersion facilities. Otherwise, they should not offer senior high education at all.

The interview sessions with senior high principals/coordinators/directors revealed the following results:

- While all of them considered the curriculum as one of the excellent reforms in education, they also possessed different point of views in terms of its economic implications to parents.
- Some of them claimed that parents are not financially affected because tuition is free in public school and is covered by the voucher program in private school. Most of them, however, confirmed that the implementation of the curriculum is a tremendous burden to parents financially.
- Generally, they assailed that the curriculum is plagued with various imperfections. To them, it needs to undergo extensive review and restructuring. A unified and systematic scheme of assessment has to be instituted and strictly adhere, and monitoring students' progress should be done quarterly. Above all, they unanimously believed that unless all the

support systems are provided, the curriculum will certainly fail to realize its contemplated goals and objectives.

### **Urban Center**

The parent-respondents were selected randomly from six senior high schools in Zamboanga City. Southern City College-Senior High School and Zamboanga State College of Marine Science and Technology-Senior High School are under the SUC, and Zamboanga City High School Main-Senior High School, Don Pablo Lorenzo Memorial High School-Stand Alone Senior High School, Baliwasan Stand Alone-Senior High School, and Talon-Talon National High School-Senior High School are under the DepEd. SCC-SHS is a private integrated senior high school, and BSA-SHS and DPLMHS-SASHS are public stand-alone senior high school. The rest are integrated public senior high schools.

The respondents are composed of 56 of which 21 are males and 27 are females. Thirteen of them are unemployed, thirteen are working in contractual services, eighteen engaged in business/self-employment, two works in private sector, and ten are government employees. Educationally, they belong to the bracket of college level, earning a monthly income of P5,000-10,000. 46 of their children are enrolled in public school and ten are in private school. 27 of their children are G11 and 29 are G12 of which 45 are registered under the Academic Track and eleven in TVL Track.

As indicated by the total mean score of 4.27, there are in fact economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents in urban center.

Specifically, parents in this area ascertained that they are economically affected by the implementation of the curriculum. They claimed that the added years in senior high compels them to spend more for education. To them, it implies more expenses they have to endure for both school and non-school related needs of their children as indicated by their mean score of 4.61. They asserted that it makes education costly to them than ever before. In general, they confirmed with a mean score of 4.48 that the additional years is a big financial burden to them as parents.

The respondents confirmed that the curriculum increases their expenses for education and makes it more difficult for them to sustain the secondary education for their children as attested by their mean score of 3.82. They also claimed that regardless of the grade level and type of school where their children are currently enrolled at, the curriculum financially affects them all the same. They assailed that the curriculum makes them struggling to manage their income in relation to other needs of their family. The respondents also claimed that even though senior high education is free in public school and with voucher program in private school, they still have to bear the burden of spending for other school-related expenses for another two years.

Respondents in private school asserted with a mean score of 4.30 reflected in table 2 that the voucher grant is not enough because private school are charging high-top tuition fees beyond the voucher amount. As such, they appealed that the amount has to be increased for them to be less problematic with the senior high education of their children.

The respondents confirmed that the financial effects of the curriculum have relationship with their income, claiming that if their income is good enough they will certainly be less worried about their senior high expenses. They confirmed that with senior high in effect, they have to minimize their daily personal expenses and find it hard to save money. They also asserted that their daily expenses had increased and find it hard to support the education of the rest of their children as indicated by their mean score of 3.79. In addition, the respondents asserted that other household expenses like food, clothing, etc. are often compromised and fund allotted for other members of their family is often diverted to their senior high expenses.

Table 2. Mean Scores of the Economic Implications of SHS Curriculum to Parents in Urban Center			
<b>S1</b> - 4.66	<b>S8</b> - 4.66	<b>S15</b> - 5.04	<b>S22</b> - 4.45
<b>S2</b> - 4.48	<b>S9</b> - 4.48	<b>S16</b> - 4.57	<b>S23</b> - 3.64
<b>S3</b> - 4.63	<b>S10</b> - 4.04	<b>S17</b> - 4.30	<b>S24</b> - 4.57
<b>S4</b> - 4.61	<b>S11</b> - 4.84	<b>S18</b> - 4.48	<b>S25</b> - 3.70
<b>S5</b> - 4.57	<b>S12</b> - 4.30	<b>S19</b> - 3.79	<b>S26</b> - 3.63
<b>S6</b> - 4.61	<b>S13</b> - 4.80	<b>S20</b> - 3.96	<b>S27</b> - 3.45
<b>S7</b> - 3.82	<b>S14</b> - 4.50	<b>S21</b> - 3.68	<b>S28</b> - 3.36
<b>Total Mean Score = 4.27</b>			

Furthermore, the respondents confirmed that their personal needs are often set aside and that they are currently suffering from financial difficulty due to this curriculum as manifested by their mean score of 3.64. They claimed that they need to engage in extra-income generating endeavor and even see the need to borrow money to sustain the education of their children. This is because they confirmed with a mean score of 3.63 that the curriculum makes it hard for them to attend to other school needs of the rest of their children. In spite of this, the respondents confirmed that they can still manage to extend financial assistance to their needy friends and relatives and attend to their social obligations regularly.

Parents in the urban center are receptive of this curriculum although some of them are appealing for its abolition. In general, they confirmed of being bothered by the volume of school projects and requirements of their children, and that their children are unable to rest due to school activities even during weekends. Parents with children in private school appealed that voucher amount has to be increased, while those in public school appealed that voucher program should be expanded to cover those in the public school. They assailed that the curriculum has to be re-structured, especially with the offering of subjects. The respondents pointed out that most subjects taught in senior high have already been taught in the junior high school and that some subjects taught in college are just duplication of subjects being taught in senior high. As such, they manifested that subjects taught in senior high must be given academic credit in college for the students to save time, energy, and expenses.

The interview sessions with the senior high principals/coordinators/directors of the six selected schools in urban center disclosed the following findings:

- Senior high school officials in the urban center strongly believed that the curriculum boasts the learners' competence and skills.

- While most of them confirmed that parents are immensely affected by the implementation of the curriculum in terms of their financial expenses, some assailed that it is natural that parents have to shoulder the cost of education.
- Most of them asserted that if the government cannot come up with other scheme that can mitigate the economic effects of the curriculum aside from voucher system, parents will be forced to stop sending their children to school.
- All senior high officials confirmed that the curriculum is full flaws and needs to be further studied and restructured. Its implementation has to be closely monitored. Some asserted that standards have be instituted such as mandatory civil service examination for graduating students and national examination of competence for TVL graduating students as one of the requirements for graduation.
- They all believed assailed that unless necessary support systems are provided accordingly and more school buildings are constructed, the curriculum cannot be expected to attain its desired goals.

## **2. Significant Difference of the Economic Implications of Senior High School Curriculum to Parents grouped according to Area Status**

### **Area Status**

The parent-respondents under this group are composed of one hundred fifteen. 59 of them are in the rural area with P5,000-10,000 monthly income, and 56 are in the urban center earning P5,000-10,000 per month.

The .109 probability of chance (sig. 2 tailed) being greater than .05 level of significance indicated that there is no significant difference of the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents clustered according to Area Status. This means that the perceptions of parents in rural area and urban center of the economic implications of said curriculum to them are the same. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted. The grand mean scores of 4.42 and 4.27 respectively attested that the extent/intensity of the implications to parents in both areas is slight.

## **3. The Economic Implications of Senior High School Curriculum to Parents grouped according to (a) Children's Grade Level, and (b) Children's School Type in Rural Area and Urban Center**

### **Rural Area**

#### **a. Children's Grade Level**

The parent-respondents grouped according to Children's Grade Level are composed of 59. Thirty of them; with children enrolled as G11, are earning P1,000-5,000 every month, and 29; with children enrolled as G12, are earning P1,000-5,000 each month.

Given the probability of chance of .088, the data confirmed that there is no significant difference of the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents clustered according to Children's Grade Level in rural area. This entails that the perceptions of parents with children enrolled as G11 and G12 in rural area of the economic implications of said curriculum to them are the same. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted. The total mean scores of 4.42

and 4.26 respectively manifested that the extent/intensity of the implications to parents in both grade levels is slight.

**b. Children's School Type**

The parent-respondents grouped according to Children's School Type are composed of 59. 39 of them; with children enrolled in Public School, are earning P5,000-10,000 each month, and twenty; with children enrolled in Private School, are with P10,000-20,000 monthly income.

Since the probability of chance of .001 being lesser than .05 level of significance, it is confirmed that there is a significant difference of the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents clustered according to Children's School Type in rural area. This means that although the perceptions of the parents with children enrolled in public school and private school in rural area of the economic implications of said curriculum to them are the same, the extent/intensity of its implications differed between them. Therefore, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is rejected. The total mean scores of 4.16 and 4.85 respectively ascertained that while the extent/intensity is slight to parents with child/children enrolled in Public School is slight, it stays moderate to those with child/children enrolled in private school.

**Urban Center**

**a. Children's Grade Level**

The parent-respondents grouped according to Children's Grade Level are composed of 56. 27 of them; with children enrolled as G11, are earning P5,000-10,00 monthly income, and 29; with children enrolled as G12, are earning a monthly income of P5,000-10,000.

The probability of chance of .590 attested that there is no significant difference of the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents clustered according to Children's Grade Level in urban center. This means that the perceptions of parents with children enrolled as G11 and G12 in urban center of the economic implications of said curriculum to them are the same. Thus, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted. The total mean scores of 4.23 and 4.31 confirmed that the extent/intensity of the implications to parents in both grade levels is slight.

**b. Children's School Type**

The parent-respondents grouped according to Children's School Type are composed of 56. 46 of them; with children enrolled in Public School, are earning P5,000-10,000 monthly income, and ten; with children enrolled in Private School, earned P5,000-10,000 every month.

With the probability of chance of .399, the data confirmed that there is no significant difference of the economic implications of SHS curriculum to parents clustered according to Children's School Type in urban center. This implies that the perceptions of the parents with children enrolled in Public School and Private School in urban center of the economic implications of said curriculum to them are the same. Hence, the null hypothesis of no significant difference is accepted. The over total mean scores of 4.22 and 4.34 respectively manifested that the extent/intensity of the implications to parents in both school types is slight.



#### 4. The Senior High School - Associated Factors causing Financial Difficulty to Parents in Rural Area and Urban Center

Whenever an educational reform is conceived, spending for its implementation is anticipated. In like manner, the financial impacts of such reform in terms of educational finances of parents are likewise inevitable. This portion presents the parents' expenses and SHS-Associated Factors that caused them financial difficulty.

##### Rural Area

Table 3 below revealed the pre-determined SHS-Associated Factors causing financial difficulty to parents in rural area. These factors were ranked by the respondents according to the extent/intensity of its impact to them using the ordinal scales of 1<sup>st</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> – i.e. 1<sup>st</sup> being the one they are mostly struggling to cope with.

Factors	Mean Score	Rank
Income	14.64	1 <sup>st</sup>
Tuition Fee (private school)	14.53	2 <sup>nd</sup>
Transportation	13.02	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Miscellaneous Fee	12.99	4 <sup>th</sup>
School Projects and Requirements	12.88	5 <sup>th</sup>
Child's Grade Level	12.03	6 <sup>th</sup>
School Supplies	11.58	7 <sup>th</sup>
Books and Hand-Outs	11.33	8 <sup>th</sup>
School Uniforms	10.97	9 <sup>th</sup>
School Type	10.17	10 <sup>th</sup>
Educational Gadgets	9.35	11 <sup>th</sup>
Child's Strand	9.26	12 <sup>th</sup>
Area Status	8.29	13 <sup>th</sup>
Educational Tours/Field Trips	8.27	14 <sup>th</sup>
Work Immersion Expenses	7.66	15 <sup>th</sup>

In terms of their specific expenses per semester, the respondents claimed that they need to disburse P1,000-5,000 for the daily *baon* of their children that covers snacks and lunch allowances. For transportation, they are spending P500-1,000, while are they shelling-out the same amount for the school projects and

requirements. They are also spending the same amount for the school supplies, and P1,000-5,000 for the books and hand-outs each year. Parents in private schools asserted that they are disbursing P5,000-10,000 for the books and photocopy of hand-outs. The same amount is likewise used for tuition and miscellaneous fees of their children. They also confirmed of spending P500-1,000 for the school uniforms each year.

Generally, parents in rural area asserted with a mean score of 4.87 that they are shelling-out an average amount of P35,000-45,000 every year for the senior high education of their children.

##### Urban Center

Table 4 below exposed the ranking of the pre-determined SHS-Associated Factors causing economic difficulty to parents in urban center.

Table 4. SHS-Associated Factors causing financial difficulty to Parents in Urban Center		
Factors	Mean Score	Rank
Tuition Fee	13.90	1 <sup>st</sup>
Income	12.90	2 <sup>nd</sup>
School Projects and Requirements	11.72	3 <sup>rd</sup>
Miscellaneous Fee	11.69	4 <sup>th</sup>
Educational Gadgets	10.57	5 <sup>th</sup>
School Uniforms	10.56	6 <sup>th</sup>
School Supplies	10.03	7 <sup>th</sup>
Transportation	10.00	8 <sup>th</sup>
Books and Photo Copies of Hand-Outs	9.43	9 <sup>th</sup>
Educational Tours/Field Trips	8.35	10 <sup>th</sup>
Child's School Type	8.11	11 <sup>th</sup>
Child's Strand	5.90	12 <sup>th</sup>
Child's Grade Level	4.99	13 <sup>th</sup>
Area Status	4.89	14 <sup>th</sup>
Work Immersion Expenses	4.80	15 <sup>th</sup>

As to their expenses every semester, parents in urban center claimed that they are shelling-out P1,000-5,000 for the daily *baon* of their children which covers snacks and lunch

allowance. They claimed of disbursing P500-1,000 for the transportation allowance, P1,000-5,000 for school projects and requirements, and P500-1,000 for the school supplies per semester. In addition, the respondents also claimed that they are spending P1,000-5,000 for the school uniforms of their children every year. Parents in private school claimed that they are disbursing P1,000-5,000 for the books and hand-outs and P1,000-5,000 for the tuition and miscellaneous fees each semester.

In general, parents in urban center assailed with a mean score of 5.44 that they are spending an average of amount of P35,000-45,000 for the senior high education of their children every year.

With the in-depth scrutiny of the study findings, the researcher formulated a model as his contribution to this research. Simply known as Cycle of Despondency, this model states: “The Senior High School Curriculum that is designed to ostensibly curtail unemployment and alleviate the burgeoning poverty incidence will only aggrandize the escalation of these social pestilences a bit more – an educational debacle and a perfect ingredient for underdevelopment.” This notion is methodically delineated in the ensuing discussions.

### Flawed Curriculum

SHS is a sub-standard curriculum hastily forged and implemented during Aquino administration in order to meet less resistance from fellow party members who dominated the political system during that period. It is laden with imperfections as indicated by several glitches in its implementation. In a paradox, while it aims to develop students' job skills through work immersion, it is devoid of necessary support system from the government and stakeholders. Above all, the curriculum does not turn students into confident, job-ready, and employable students/graduates.

The curriculum is a replica of the senior high school system of American with only few modifications. Patterning a system after a progressive nation as America - an indication of our never-ending dependency - having its own dynamics and distinct socio-political-economic and natural endowments then transfer that system for mandatory adoption into an under-privileged country with its surrounding limitations and underdevelopment will only result to the waste of limited resources in the latter. As Crisotomo further commented, the K to 12 Program is “flawed, problematic framework which will only worsen the education

crisis unlike what Aquino is promising. It is not a solution to education and employment woes. Instead, it will further worsen and deepen the problems.”

### **Misallocation of Public Resource**

Typically, in a developing society, the ‘social’ cost of education (i.e. the opportunity cost

to society as a whole resulting from the need to finance costly educational expansion at higher levels when these limited funds might be more productively used in other sectors of the economy) increases rapidly as students climb the educational ladder (Todaro,1983:259). Operating under the pretext of constitutional mandate, the new educational system in the country in regard to public school offers free basic education from kindergarten to senior high school which subsequently leads to the rising social costs of education. Table 5 below indicates this trend with senior high in effect.

Table 5. DepEd Five Years Consecutive Annual Budget (Tabulated by the researcher from different sources)		
Fiscal Year	Amount in Billion	Yearly Differential
2014	309.43	-
2015	367.1	57.67
2016	433.38	66.28
2017	543.86	110.48
2018	553.313	9.453

For three consecutive fiscal years starting in 2015 to 2018, DepEd has been receiving the highest budget among national departments. One of the alarming issues in this sense is the tendency towards misallocation of resources. As asserted by Crisostomo, “the government spending for education, as it is, is not enough to meet the shortages at present. The shortages will worsen and we will be faced with greater problems; that tuition rates for tertiary education will further hike as the government’s K to 12 will also mean abandonment for tertiary education.” Public policy begins when the problem is perceived as urgent and gets on the policy agenda. Of the multi-dimensional and interconnected issues in Philippines society, problem identification/prioritization becomes a difficult venture for policy makers. Consequently, as Kingdon (1984) observed, there are many problems in society that are not part of the policy agenda because they have not gotten the attention of the authoritative actors in the government and therefore do not cause any policy response. In addition, policy agenda setting is determined by the everchanging political actors having their own programs and priorities.

When agenda setting fails to identify and place into policy agenda the actual problems, misallocation of resources occurs. Consequently, millions of pesos go to waste, yet the problems linger still. Being an average income nation with ballooning national debts, spending with lesser thinking is a luxury we should not dare to enjoy. Besides, investments made in education at the expense of other

poverty-alleviating programs will also widen the existing gap of income distributions among the population. As Breton (2012) emphasized, the evidence also indicates that human capital is more likely to be the limiting factor in economic development. For instance, while the extension is allegedly for a greater good, it unfortunately shakes the parents' daily budget for another two years.

### **Rising Private Costs of Education and Loss of Opportunity Cost and Benefit**

Parents as the catch basin of the financial impacts of this reform are bound to shoulder the private costs of education. Private costs of education pertain to the out-of-pocket expenses of parents such as *baon*, school uniform, transportation, school projects, etc. These are educational costs that are not reflected in the tuition fees covered by voucher program. Extending the educational cycle by two years entails the exacerbation of its private costs for parents. In particular, parents in both areas need to spend P35,000.00 to P45,000.00 every year for the senior high education of their children. This coincides with the data provided by the Kabataan Party-List Rep. Sarah Elagoin in an article by Janvic Mateo in Philippine Star that, "parents would have to shell-out an additional P100,000.00 to P200,000.00 for a student to finish senior high." These amounts are hard to bear, if not impossible, by many Filipino families who are sunk in economic deprivation.

Just as private costs of education increases, the curriculum robs parents of the child's labor contribution (opportunity cost) to the family. In poor families, children of primary school age are needed to work family farms or at any family income-generating endeavors, usually at the same time they are required to be at school. If a child cannot work because he/she is at school, the family will either suffer a loss of a valuable subsistence output or he be required to hire paid labor to replace the absent child. Either way, it caused financial loss to the family. In any case, there is a real cost to poor family of having an able-bodied child attending school when there is a productive work to be done on the farm. As Todaro (1982:267) explained why: First, the private costs of primary education, especially the "opportunity cost" of a child's labor to poor families, are higher for poor students than for rich students. Second, the expected benefits of primary education are lower for poor students than for rich students. Together, the high costs and lower expected benefits of education for the poor means that a family's rate of return from investment in a child's education is lower for the relatively poor than for the relatively rich.

Another implication of the curriculum to the parents is the loss of potential opportunity benefits bring about by their children. With the old curriculum, students would graduate after four years and can proceed to college and earn degree four years later (for four-year degree program). This gives them the opportunity - by saving two years - to find job with attractive credential. Consequently, they can contribute to family income, lessening the parents' burden daily sustenance and make parents save money they are supposed to spend for two years in senior high.

### **Intensifying Poverty**

Poverty is one of the perennial problems in Philippine society. In 2015, poverty incidence among Filipinos was recorded at 27.6 percent. The subsistence incidence among Filipino families was estimated at 6.2 percent in the first semester of 2018. This is alternatively called as the proportion of Filipino families whose incomes fall below the food threshold. In the same period, the proportion of families who are food poor was recorded at 9.9 percent. Four years later, Under Secretary Berales revealed that the proportion of poor Filipinos is registered at 21.0 percent in the first semester of 2018. Poverty incidence among Filipinos families in the first semester of 2018 was estimated at 16.1 percent. This is defined as the proportion of families whose income is below the poverty line to the total number of families. The poverty incidence among Filipino individuals in the first semester of 2018 was estimated at 21.0 percent. This is referred to as the proportion of the individuals living below the poverty line to the total population.

When this study was launched, 47.4 percent of the parents in rural area do not have fixed monthly income, so as 55.3 percent of those in the urban center. Generally, 54 percent of parent-respondents in both areas only earned P1,000-P5,000 every month. These statistics clearly attest to the fact that economic deprivation is prevalent among families in both areas. Roberto de Vera and Jennifer Aimee Tan disclosed that the private costs of senior high education (excluding tuition fee) for students studying in metro Manila is 4,560 per month. Granting said amount is a bit lower in the City of Zamboanga and more so in the Municipality of Jolo - say only 3,000 each month - parents in both areas still find themselves struggling with their senior high expenses given their monthly earning.

Poverty restricts one's view of the future. Poor children have minimal opportunities. They have less time and resources to discover their passion and interests. Their parents are constantly preoccupied and struggling to satisfying family basic needs. With economic deprivations, what time is there left for parents to guide the children in fixing school home works and projects when they are out the entire day finding ways for daily sustenance? What amount is there left to finance the education of their children for another two years when their income is not even enough for basic daily necessities? As reported in the recent Family Income and Expenditure Survey (FIES) of the NSCRG in 2019, Filipino families prioritize spending are merely for food and other basic necessities. This implies that there are many school-related needs of the students that parents are unable to supply thereby adversely affecting their scholastic performance. More than a few studies divulged that children belonging to poor families tend to perform poorly in the class, sometimes making them an ideal target for bullying by fellow students and in some instances, for hounding by teachers. To avoid becoming the center of inimical attention and the ordeal of being embarrassed every day, absenteeism becomes a routine, and eventually, dropping out of school.

### **Rising Dropout Incidence**

The concern over high school dropouts stems from the importance of having an educated workforce. However, with senior high the acceleration of high school dropout incidence is inevitable. From 2015 to 2016 alone - the time senior high was launched - DepEd accounted 4.8 million out of school high school-age

from. The agency averred that said figure is likely to increase at 11 percent rate for the next five years. The Philippine Business for Education (PBE), an advisory group, also confirmed in 2016 that due to financial reasons, many high-school graduates today cannot proceed to college which contributes to the aggregate of about 15 million out-of-school-youth in the country. Several surveys likewise observed the deterioration in the number of enrollees since it was senior was implemented. In 2018 Batasan Hills High School recorded more than 2,600 Grade 10, but only 89 have enrolled for senior high. The school has a capacity rate of 670 Grade 11. In Lagro High School, of the 1,600 Grade 10 completers, only 500 of the 800 senior high school slots have been filled. The same case was recorded at the Commonwealth High School where only around 330 of 650 slots were filled. The school had over 1,000 Grade 10 completers.

The chance of completing the 13 years basic educational cycle among poor students becomes slimmer due to poverty. AS Ellin (2015) emphasized, whether the government accepts it or not, poor parents, especially in the countryside, would only grumble over the extended education cycle when they can barely send their kids to school, even with the four-year secondary education. Although, there are factors that are not economic-related such as lack of passion for schooling, early marriage, dangerous vices, and the likes, studies showed that economic realities remain the major factor of quitting school. Looking keenly at the larger picture, one cannot help but notice that said non-economic variables were triggered by economic realities. It is nearly impossible for an individual to be passionate for schooling, develop desirable study habit and attain satisfactory academic performance on an empty stomach. Without money for transportation, and for school projects and requirements, schooling is surely not enjoyable.

### **Unemployable Graduates**

One of the curriculum exits of senior high is Employment. But the questions remain: Are they truly employable? Is the labor market ready for them? No less than the Education Undersecretary Tonisito Umali who asserted that employers are concerned about the non-readiness of graduates of K to 12 Program for employment. The Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry's Human Resources Development Foundation, Inc. (PCCI-HRDF) for disclosed that the hesitance of employers to hire fresh graduates may be due to the absence of the necessary skills and trainings that industries need but not yet provided by the current SHS curriculum. Philippine Business for Education (PBE) in 2018 likewise revealed that even most of the senior high school students are ready to work the market is not prepared to receive or employ them. While "the first batch of SHS graduates possess "theoretically" 93 percent of the competencies suitable to the needs of the nation's industries . . . only about 20 percent of the 70 of the country's leading companies across all sectors were inclined to hire senior high graduates." Even if senior high graduates are job-ready, the insufficiency of job offerings for them as posted in Philjobnet.com and JobStreet.com – the two major online job posting sites of the Department of Labor and employment (DOLE) – indicated that the labor market is not prepared to accommodate them.

Employers frequently raise the educational specifications of jobs in reaction to an increase in the supply of better educated workers. And better

educated workers receive the preferred positions within the job structure. As the gap between supply and demand for college graduates continues to increase, competition between them extends to further down in the labor market, leaving those with less education with the wiriest job opportunities. In addition, despite the government's assertion that the economy has become robust and the labor market excellently growing, unemployment problem remains as pervasive as ever. In truth, the country continues to have the highest jobless citizens among the 10-member states of the ASEAN as exposed by the International Labor Organizations (ILO). ILO predicts no improvement in the unemployment rate in 2018, the year when the first batch of senior high school had graduated.

In a nutshell, the country started implementing SHS curriculum in a state beleaguered by ominous learning competence of its graduates, mounting rates of unemployment, rising poverty incidence, and ballooning national debts, only to find itself in the exact same circumstances or shoddier in the coming years - only to find itself stuck in a rancorous Cycle of Despondency. As the former Minister of Education of Upper Volta Joseph Kizerbo averred, "The school in many underdeveloped countries is a reflection and a fruit of the surrounding underdevelopment, from which arises its deficiency, its quantitative and qualitative poverty. But little by little, and there lies the really serious risk, the school in these underdeveloped countries risks becoming in turn a factor of underdevelopment."

## **CONCLUSION**

Continuing reform of the Basic Education System is a steady policy of the government aimed at improving the learning competence of Filipino students from further deterioration. Without educational reform, the declining quality education which the country is facing, can undermine the employability of Filipino graduates both in local and global labor market. While the need to improve quality education through the introduction of the K-12 Basic Education Curriculum but inescapably, the added years are financial burden for the parents. With economic deprivation thriving among Filipino families, this extension will give many parents the second thought to stop sending their children to school which will bring more social problems for the society.

SHS curriculum is unfortunately an ill-planned educational reform hastily implemented to please the vested interest groups which have the hands on the state policy formulation. It is plagued with profuse impediments in its very design of which the school system, parents, and students are feebly left to deal with. Being patterned after America's senior high school system with only few modifications, SHS has little or no chance at all in realizing its desired outcomes. The expected graduates are generally not employable.

Although, education is made free, the longer time of schooling boiled down to more expenses on the part of the parents thereby worsening their economic condition. Being at the receiving end of the economic impacts of senior high, parents are compelled to carry the burden of the inherent costs of its implementation – i.e. costs that are not covered by any government assistance schemes. No matter how it is made accessible for the youth, there are always those who are lagged behind due to economic deprivation. Those with ill-fated

economic status where their children's daily *baon* is a struggle, the added years is the reason why many parents stop sending their children to school.

Parents in both urban and rural areas are financially affected by SHS curriculum regardless of the area they lived in, their children's grade level, and school status. Its implementation increases the educational expenses of the parents. It does not only affect their capability to deal with their senior high expenses, it also bothers their capacity to sustain the school-related needs of the rest of their non-senior high school children. It likewise affects their means to sustain their personal, family, and social needs.

In spite of its profuse flaws, the K-12 Curriculum can still be a forerunner of social transformation and prosperity. There is only a need to balance between the struggle for quality education and the support of the government to the plight of many impoverished parents across the country.

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