

Name : Temsukala
Supervisor : Prof. Azra Razzack.
Centre : Dr. K. R Narayanan Centre for Dalits and Minorities Studies
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi.
Title : Education and Identity in Nagaland: An Interpretation of the Emergence of Naga Society in Modern Times

Study of education and identity is an effective tool in interpretation of the emergence of Naga society in modern times. Nagaland has been going through serious political, social and cultural crises after British colonial power left India. After 1947, the Naga Hills were integrated in the new Indian state. Subsequently, in 1963 Nagaland gained statehood. When Nagas initially encountered historical processes such as modernity, Christianity, civil state and Indian nationalism it became important for the people to define the Naga identity as an ethnic political movement for self-determination. The Nagas claim that they are historically, racially, culturally, and religiously different from the rest of the Indians. The educated Naga intelligentsia believed their culture is unique, rich, and great, attached to much acclaimed values of ancestral inherent qualities. The study investigates how education is perceived as a primary factor in preserving the distinct Naga identity.

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To look how education and political discourse have dealt with the issue of identity in Nagaland.
- To undertake a critical evaluation on the Nagaland education policies, investigate education scenario and discusses its influence in Naga identity formation.
- Examine school curriculum and analyse Nagaland elementary social science textbook focusing on certain portion of the syllabus and text that has been prepared to impart knowledge on the importance of ethnic roots, language and tribal lifestyles.
- To analyse some selected speeches and statement of political leaders on the issue of education and identity in Nagaland.
- Analyse community voices as represented by religious leaders, parents, students, and teachers.

Findings:

- Modern education and colonialism ushered a new era to the Nagas, leading to identity transition. The advent of Christianity shaped the core Naga identity as it brought a paradigm shift to the Naga traditional identity.
- There is a tendency of assimilation of Naga identity into the dominant mainstream national identity. Integration of Naga identity with mainstream Indian invoked the question of cultural assimilation.
- Course curriculum at all the stages of education must be suitable and contextual to the indigenous learner and must not be an imposed pattern of education. The present education is too theoretical, lacking aptitude and techniques but not job-oriented or employable. This limitation is contributing to the increase of educated unemployed among the Nagas. Educational institutions of the state need to re-orient their style and syllabus to match with the demands of the employment market.
- The Communitisation policy has strengthened the Social capital which is an inherent characteristic of the Naga identity. The Communitisation policy of elementary education has brought a far-reaching change to the education landscape in Nagaland.
- While there are diverse voices in the political discourse, one can identify that political discourse is more accommodative of diversity as compared to the education discourse. Political discourse perceived education as a major force for accomplishing the agenda of creation of Naga identity, and to be used as an instrument for unification on the line of national integration agenda and promote assimilation into mainstream culture and society.
- The elementary Social Science textbook of Nagaland is not free from the influence of mainstream education. While a vast space is dedicated to diverse culture of India only a sparse space has been given to Naga identity.
- Government failed to formulate an adequate policy on mother tongue education. People who advocated the benefits of learning in the mother tongue would hardly send their children to schools in mother tongue medium instructions.
- Community voices reflect the core problems facing public education. They are: poverty, inadequate resources, tribalism and the misuse of financial sources.
- Despite resilient display of solidarity to the ethnic identity, there are evident diminishing trends in the Naga society in the modern times.