

Non-State Education Governance: Legitimacy, Accountability, and Social Impact in Post-Coup Myanmar

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Abstract

Myanmar's education system has faced profound loss since the 2021 military coup, forcing school closures, student dropout, teacher loss due to the civil disobedience movement, and a lack of public trust in government education. In order to allow youth to continue their education, locally-led initiatives such as ethnic education, online learning platforms, and grassroots education networks have emerged. While existing studies have explored educational access and resources' challenges, there were limited studies on how these alternative systems demonstrate accountability, provide educational outcomes, and have a measurable social impact.

To address this gap, this study examines the evolving governance of alternative education in post-coup Myanmar, applying the accountability and social impact measurement mechanisms. The research questions include how non-state education providers measure education outcomes, how they validate educational legitimacy in the absence of formal state recognition, and what social impacts are as a result from the non-state education services? The data will be collected and analysed through a practitioner-informed qualitative study and data from community-based educational groups.

This paper argues that alternative education systems in Myanmar are not only emergency responses but also emerging forms of governance and political recognition. Education is not only a public service but also a fundamental aspect where political leaders negotiate governance practices and legitimacy. Therefore, this study feeds a new outlook on educational challenges to social accountability and impact, and contributes to Myanmar Studies by highlighting how education acts as a social movement, resilience, and future state reconstruction in Myanmar.

The findings offer implications for policymakers, educators, and activists on how accountability is undertaken and the extent of social impact by the non-state education actors, and how education acts as a space of governance-making and political imagination, revealing how communities in Myanmar continue to construct futures from below amid ongoing political transition.