

Envisioning the transformative education in Post-coup Burma through Community Learning Centres (CLCs): Case Study of Padauk Classroom

Myat Moe Kywe

Abstract

Burma's education system has long been shaped by a centralized and rote-learning style that systematically limits critical thinking, creativity and independent inquiry of both students and teachers. For the military regime in Burma since 1962, education has always been seen as a threat to their power since critically engaged students have historically been in the frontline of resistance.

When the 2021 military coup disrupted access to formal education, it accelerated the emergence of community-based learning initiatives across the country (No, 2025). These initiatives have become important educational spaces that challenge the long-established rote instruction that reinforces compliance and obedience. These emerging education spaces do not just respond to disrupted education; rather, they contribute to and imagine the transformation of education in Burma. While current literature emphasizes the problematic of Burmese education and pines for reform, this paper imagines the future of Burma's education in a vastly new technological age. Adapting to this new reality, a transformational education prepares educators and students, alike, to engage AI, advanced technology, and future-oriented learning. Short of building this robust capacity, students and educators risk being objectified by AI, militarist oppression, and a culture of rote instruction.

Drawing on critical pedagogy (Freire, 1970), critical digital literacy (Kontostavlou & Katsiampoura, 2025), and Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) (Kretzmann & McKnight, 1993), this paper argues how educational transformation can emerge through strengthening Community Learning Centers (CLCs) as a bottom-up approach. Padauk is a middle-out-actor that prioritizes partnership with CLCs and provides digital literacy training for students, educational technology capacity-building workshops for educators, and learning infrastructures for CLCs. Overall, this paper critiques and challenges typical top-down approaches to educational reform.