

Indigenous education policy in Malaysia: a discussion of normalization in schooling

ABSTRACT

This paper argues that Malaysian education systems which have a mainstream orientation and very little consideration is given to the educational requirements, cultural context and also languages of Indigenous peoples (Orang Asli). This has indirectly impacted the educational outcomes for Orang Asli students with limited acknowledgment of the rights of Indigenous people in the education system. Therefore, it is important for educators to address educational disadvantage and the rights of Orang Asli in schools because it can contribute to social justice and hinder the learning process and education outcomes. This paper adopts Michel Foucault's notion of power, knowledge and normalization in explaining and understanding the issues in aspects of language, culture and pedagogy in schools. In this paper, I focus on normalization issues in education policy for Indigenous peoples which has impacted on the academic performance of Orang Asli students. Lastly, this paper provides analysis of the current practices and policy of Indigenous education that can contribute to improving the current policy and ensuring justice for all students. These issues remain important in improving equity and self-determination among Orang Asli and ensuring social justice for Orang Asli in Malaysia.

Keyword: Indigenous education policy; Orang Asli; Normalization; Rights; Self-determination