

# Study of Rural Education among the Jino Ethnic Group: Resources, Expectations, and Gender Equality

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## Abstract

Rural education in ethnic minority areas faces multifaceted challenges, and this study takes the Jino as a case study, revealing through field research the impact of the Jino's history, natural resources, agriculture, and other factors on gender equality in education and educational expectations. The Jino's history of a gathering and hunting society and a more homogeneous industrial structure have led to a lack of gender division of labour, shared labour between men and women, and an emphasis on emotional and family life, resulting in equal opportunities for men and women to receive education and a focus on well-being, but scarce educational resources continue to limit the development of Jino students.

## Keywords

**Ethnic group; Gender concepts; Educational expectations.**

## 1. Background of the Study

According to Banks, an American ethnic education scholar, one of the main reasons for the low academic performance of ethnic minority students is the lack of a reasonable ethnic education model, which they have been receiving from the dominant culture. Some of the ethnic minority people who live in more closed environments have little interaction with the Han nationality, and the school children do not know how to hear Chinese and are unfamiliar with the culture of Han nationality. In contrast, China's formal education system uses the Chinese language as the information carrier, and the content of the nationally standardized teaching materials used in most regions is set against the background of Han culture in the interior. A portion of ethnic minority children suffer from language barriers and cultural divisions in the learning process, struggle to learn, lack interest in learning, and then develop an aversion to learning, or even drop out of school of their own accord or skip school.

In terms of related research, the article *Decline of Families and the Dilemma of Rural Students: A Field Survey of Rural Teachers' Teaching and Home Visiting Lives* demonstrates, through the teaching and home visiting lives of rural teacher Mr G, the decline of rural families and the weakening of the family education function, which leads to the educational dilemma faced by rural students. *A Comparison of Bilingual Education between American Indians and China's Yi ethnic group* compares the bilingual education policies of American Indians and China's Yi ethnic group, and explores the differences in the minority language policies of the two countries and the effects of their educational practices. *Research on Family Influencing Factors on Gender Inequality in Rural Education: A Study on the Influence of Family Economic Condition and Parents' Education Level on Gender Inequality in Rural Education by Analyzing survey data*, Pointing Out that Economic Condition is the key factor. *Reflections on Equity in Rural Education in Ethnic Areas* takes Xiangxi Autonomous Prefecture, Hunan Province as an example, analyses the phenomenon of inequity in rural education in ethnic areas and its causes, and puts forward countermeasures such as improving the conditions for schooling and increasing investment in education.

## 2. Factors Affecting the Development of Rural Education for Ethnic Minorities

At present, rural education in ethnic minority areas faces challenges in many aspects. From the language perspective, for example, there is multilingual coexistence in multi-ethnic cohabitating areas such as Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture, where the language of instruction does not match the students' mother tongue, which increases the difficulty of learning. Ethnic minority students may encounter language barriers in school learning, which directly affects their academic performance and motivation.

In addition, perceptions are also one of the major constraints to the development of education in ethnic minority villages. Although the government has implemented a series of policies to promote education for all, traditional attitudes are still deeply rooted. For example, some families in ethnic minority areas still regard education as a secondary task and focus more on agricultural production and family affairs. Education is still conducted mainly on the basis of exams, and most students go home to work after primary education, so that much of what they learn in school is not useful, and they become low-capacity labourers who are not as good at planting as their fathers, as good at carrying burdens as their younger sisters, and as good at running the household as their sister-in-laws.

In addition, gender stereotypes in rural areas also affect the development of education. Although the Government has implemented a series of policies to ensure equal rights to education for men and women, in some remote areas, girls' access to education is limited to a certain extent by traditional attitudes. In order to address these problems, the Government and relevant organizations have taken a series of measures. For example, they have strengthened investment in education in ethnic minority areas and stepped up publicity to promote a change in educational attitudes. However, given the limited economic conditions of their families, village parents decide whether or not to invest in a girl's education mainly on the basis of her academic performance and whether her future education will be conducive to obtaining a stable job. Girls need to work several times as hard as boys to prove that they are "worthy" of their parents' investment in their education. Girls with poor academic performance leave school early, but this situation do not apply to boys.

## 3. Education of the Kino People: Resources, Expectations, Gender Equality

### 3.1. Gender Concepts based on History and Natural Resources

Located in the central part of the Xishuangbanna Dai Autonomous Prefecture in Yunnan Province, Kinoshan is the main settlement of the Kino people. The Kino language name for this area is "Kino Lok" or "Kino Eta," meaning "the region where the Kino people live" or "Kino Mountain." Before liberation, educational activities of the Kino people naturally evolved alongside concrete activities such as production, daily life, and celebrations. Education was integrated into other activities as an environmental education, focusing mainly on the social history, customs, religious beliefs, moral ethics, and various production skills of the ethnic group. The purpose of education was to socialize young people, that is, to embrace the traditional culture of the ethnic group and adapt to the social life of the ethnic group. With the attention of various levels of government, the local ethnic education industry has flourished in recent years, with a 100% enrollment rate for eligible children, as well as measures such as "two exemptions and one subsidy," "nutritious meal program," and "living allowance for students from ethnic minorities with a small population." However, due to the short time of direct transition to socialist society, the habits from the hunting and gathering era have directly shaped the social life pattern of the Kino people.

The "ji" in "Jino" stands for paternal uncle, and the "no" means following behind, literally translating to "people following behind the paternal uncle." This emphasizes the role of the paternal uncle in their civilization. They belong to the direct passing ethnic group, meaning they directly transitioned from primitive society through several social forms to socialist society. "Princess Ama Nyorba" is the sun goddess who, tired of the boring and wealthy life in the court, wanted to vacation on Earth. She took a magical fairy soil with her and left the palace flying towards Earth. When she was close to the ground, she scattered a few grains of fairy soil into the vast ocean, instantly creating the land where she could land. After landing, to make her vacation environment more beautiful, she threw out another piece of fairy soil, and thousands of plants sprouted up like mushrooms after the rain. Two days later, to ease her loneliness, she made various animals like chickens, ducks, and cows out of the earth. Later, in ancient times, the earth was flooded, but only a kind brother and sister, Mahei and Maniu, followed Princess Ama Nyorba's instructions and hid in a drum made of cowhide. After drifting in the flood for seven days and nights, they landed on Jino Mountain, emerging from the drum, and thereafter they multiplied and lived there, from which the ancestors of the Jino tribe originated. The mythological template of "brother and sister creating the world" and the "flood" can be seen in various ethnic groups. Therefore, the Jino tribe now uses the sun as their totem, which holds special significance for them.

In the early days, the female members of the Kino tribe played a crucial role in the hunting and gathering civilization as they were the main labor force. This was because the hunting activities of the males were highly unpredictable, and the primary source of food for the family depended on the gathering done by the women. In this context, unlike in many ancient Han villages, the Kino tribe did not develop significant gender-based division of labor or patriarchal dominance. There was little difference in the division of labor between Kino men and women.

On April 21, 2019, Yunnan Province declared that the Drung, De'ang, and Kino tribes – three ethnic minorities who transitioned directly from primitive society to socialist society – had become the first among their kind to achieve complete poverty alleviation as a whole, bidding a historic farewell to absolute poverty. However, the agricultural practices of the Kino tribe remain relatively extensive even today, with animal husbandry and forestry representing weak industries. The advantageous resources of the mountainous areas have not been fully utilized, there is still a lack of industrialization in the modern sense, and only basic processing of agricultural products and the development of the tertiary sector are just beginning. It still largely relies on the natural economy of the mountains and forests.

Therefore, the Kino people do not have the concept of "favoring males over females". Men and women are treated equally, and adult males and adult females work together, do activities like tapping rubber, beekeeping, farming together, while children are taken care of by the elderly or themselves. In Kino villages, it is not common to see men working outside while women stay at home, firstly because of concerns for their wives and secondly because wives fear husbands cheating. The Kino people value relationships greatly, considering them more important than anything else. Furthermore, they do not have the concept of working fixed hours; they work based on their mood, doing tasks whenever they feel like.

In contrast, in modern society, especially urban women consider their partner's financial strength, social status, while men consider their partner's appearance, ability to educate children, and so on.

### **3.2. The Education Expectation of Conformity the Nature**

In modern society, there is a phenomenon where parents make every effort, even going into debt, to fulfill their educational aspirations for their children. The purpose of "going to school and studying" for children in rural areas is not only to increase knowledge but more importantly to provide a pathway for changing their identity from "rural people" to "city

dwellers." Rural education is oriented towards urban areas, highly detached from local social and cultural contexts, thus making it challenging to cultivate talents, provide knowledge, and technical resources for rural social and cultural development.

The expectations of the Kino people in the village regarding work and education are significantly different from the outside world. During an interview with a female coffee shop employee on the farm, Interviewee A. Interviewee A expressed a strong interest in coffee but had no opportunity to pursue it. By chance, she learned that the farm was recruiting baristas and decided to apply. This job was not easy for her to obtain, but she greatly enjoys it. Firstly, it is close to home, allowing her to be with her family while pursuing her passion. Secondly, in the past few years, she felt physically and mentally exhausted from working in the farm, tapping rubber, picking tea, and helping children with homework, with no expectations for the future. Since starting work at the coffee shop, she has experienced improvements in her mental and physical well-being. Interviewee A mentioned that the main reason for choosing this job was the opportunity to be with her family and their support. Material possessions are not very important to her; the most important thing is the level of happiness, being together as a family, without the concept of wealth and poverty. Subsequently, Interviewee B and C were interviewed. They mentioned that the village's income is mainly from tapping rubber, picking tea, and growing fruits. They sell their rubber, tea leaves, and fruits at designated places in exchange for money. They believe that the level of economic income depends on the villagers themselves – if they are in a good mood or willing to work, the income is higher; if they are not willing to work or lazy, the income is lower.

### 3.3. Lack of Language Resources

The Jino have their own special language called Yule, which is their national language. But now they use Southwest Mandarin as their main dialect, and their daily conversations can be basically understood by the Han nationality, while the children there can still speak the local dialect. I went on to interview an old primary school teacher. According to interviewee D, it is difficult for Kino children to learn the Chinese because the children are exposed to the Kino dialect first, and many of their parents' Mandarin is not standard. They even need to use the Kino dialect in language classes to aid in their learning. Interviewee D said that the current children are generally poor in English, firstly, there are no good educational resources and secondly, most of the parents do not know English, so they cannot tutor their children. Interviewee E is the father of a 7 year old child, according to him, his child's English is very poor. The kid now has no interest in English, and he won't even bring home the English homework assigned by the school. The father can't teach the son himself because of his limited ability, and there is no tuition institution, only in the town, which is too far away for them to let his child go to the city for tuition, and there is no solution for him at the present time.

## 4. Summary

Sukhomlinsky advocated harmonious education, he took the student's life happiness, spiritual enrichment as the starting point and ending point of education, and repeatedly told the sincere: there is one thing is any syllabus and textbooks, any teaching methods and teaching methods have not made provisions for, which is the child's happiness and spiritual life. The question of the value orientation of education is essentially a question of who education is for, why it is for, how it is to be carried out, and what kind of results are to be obtained. Quality education is the way forward for modern education. If the focus is only on mastery of knowledge and improving the score of the promotion rate, education will become a source of hindrance for students to obtain a good social life in the future.

Currently, there is no obvious gender inequality in the concept of education among the Jino people, and families also pay more attention to emotional relationships. However, with the

economic and social development and the change of livelihood based on mountain and forest agriculture, the Jinuo villages are in line with the external economic system, and will inevitably be affected by the outside world's values, which include the objectification of women, the division of male and female occupations and families in the concept of gender, and in the concept of further education, which includes using scores as a single In terms of the concept of further education, it includes the use of marks as a single evaluation indicator, and the migration from land and agriculture to the cities.

In addition, it is necessary to provide more educational resources to the rural areas of ethnic minorities. An important reason for the lack of educational resources is the instability of the teaching force and the serious brain drain. Most teachers, believing that the region is backward and has no development prospects, choose to leave their jobs soon after joining. At the same time, some rural towns and villages are not sufficiently attractive to new teachers because of their remote location and hot climate. The phenomenon of "difficulty in replenishing" new teachers is common in the ethnic areas of Yunnan Province, and in most high schools there is also a serious aging of teachers, an irrational structure of the teaching force, a general lack of music, physical education, art, English and information technology teachers, and a chronic shortage of "bilingual" teachers and "bilingual" teachers. What's more, the chronic shortage of "bilingual" and "dual-teacher" teachers should not be overlooked too.

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