

Education of Ethnic Minorities in Contemporary China

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This paper first discusses the essential issues related to the current situation of minority education in contemporary China. In order to combine the interests of ethnic minorities for their cultural heritage and the interests of national development and integration, “pluralist-unity” framework has been employed as a comprehensive model in using and teaching languages in schools in China, and a dual educational system in the aspect of ethnicity has been established in the minority regions since the 1950s. The paper has also examined seven problems existing in the minority education system in China during the past decades, including the shortage of qualified minority teachers, uneven quality of translated textbooks in minority languages, lack of local knowledge taught in schools, inadequate connection between ethnic schools and ordinary schools in some areas, and other problems. Some new issues have also been identified since the reforms of economic system and formation of labor markets have been done in the 1980s, which may influence the minority education systems in China. All these newly-identified issues indicate that education of ethnic minorities has been a complicated issue and it is necessary to design a system in accordance with actual situation by region and group and adjust it according to the changes in society over time.