

Knowledge, Identity, and the Quest for Autonomy among the Indigenous People

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Abstract

The post-World War II period was marked by a growing concern over the unification of cultural identity and political boundaries. Modern nation-states sought to incorporate cultural identities with national identities. This also resulted in the resurgence of conflicts between different groups within nation-states [1]. The indigenous people have especially been affected by this. The process of modernization has, in a systematic way, introduced a number of hazards and insecurities. To quote Beck, “along with the growing capacity of technical options grows the incalculability of their growing consequences” [2].

This is reflected in the continuing production of uncertainties and seeks to challenge the supremacy of scientific rationality. Traditional knowledge has gained attention as an alternative form of approach for reorienting the knowledge system. This is detailed in the first part of the paper. The second part of the paper portrays the quest for autonomy through a case study of a human rights organization that is based on ethnic identity.

Keywords

Autonomy, Culture, Identity, Indigenous people, Knowledge.

