



Re/defining the Settler-colonial Ideologies/definitions to Safeguard the Bayung Rai Cultures, Language, and Identity in Nepal

Bali Rai

Royal Roads University, Canada

Abstract

Indigenous peoples of Nepal, known as Indigenous groups or nationalities, underwent oppression, repression, and domination, experiencing enormous harm to their cultures, languages, and lands. The settler-colonial people (also known as Indo-Aryans) as rulers coerced colonial ideologies to suppress Indigenous peoples and exterminate their Identity in Nepal. The confiscation of Indigenous traditional lands, restrictions on speaking Indigenous languages and celebrating cultures, and expulsion from the political mainstream are a few examples to name. This paper focuses on the Bayung Rai people, underpinning the lingual and cultural adverse impacts and raises two research questions: (a) How did the Khas-Aryans impose dominant ideologies to erase the Indigenous Bayung Rai cultures and language in Nepal? and (b) How did Khas-Aryans' political hegemony dominate the Bayung Rai Identity? The exploration of these questions aims to redefine colonial ideologies from the Bayung perspectives as resistance against oppression and hence to reinvigorate the Bayung Rai Identity. This research exploits decolonial perspectives to investigate different forms of colonial systemic and epistemic violence, dismantling the colonial set-ups. It therefore applies Tribal Critical theory to critically scrutinise the colonial behaviours and employs decoloniality as methodology to examine the historical contexts, i.e., prohibiting or demeaning Bayung cultures and erasing Bayung toponyms in their traditional lands. It also utilises the narrative inquiry to encompass intergenerational experiences or stories of domination and hatred. Thematic analysis is performed to thoroughly analyse the primary data obtained from free conversation and the secondary data from existing literature. This research thus contributes to the Indigenous and academic communities by: (a) investigating the settler-colonial domination and oppression of the Bayung people, including other Indigenous peoples; (b) safeguarding the Indigenous Identity through knowledge creation; and (c) helping the Indigenous Peoples and the dominant group (settler) for respectful reconciliation, leading to Indigenisation.

Keywords: settler-colonial, tribal critical theory, narrative inquiry, thematic analysis, indigenisation