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INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/17586
DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/17586>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

EXPLORING ADMINISTRATIVE ISSUES OF PRINCIPALS IN HIGHER EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF GOVERNMENT AND PRIVATE COLLEGES IN NAGALAND

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Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 25 July 2023

Final Accepted: 27 August 2023

Published: September 2023

Key words:-

Higher Education, Administrative
Issues, Nagaland, Government Colleges,
Private Colleges, Educational
Leadership

Abstract

The educational framework of higher education in Nagaland, India, encompasses both Government and Private colleges of higher learning, with each institution serving as a crucial component of the state's educational infrastructure. This abstract presents a comprehensive examination of a comparative study that seeks to investigate the administrative issues encountered by Principals in Government and Private colleges in Nagaland. The research study utilizes a descriptive cum normative survey approach, incorporating surveys as data collection methods to gather information from Principals. This study aims to gain insights into the distinct challenges and possible solutions within the area of higher educational management in Nagaland by analysing and contrasting the administrative issues faced in both types of college management. The anticipated outcomes of this study are expected to provide valuable insights for policymakers, Principals, and stakeholders, thereby improving the overall quality of higher education within the state.

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Introduction:-

Nagaland, located in northeastern India, is home to a number of Government and Private degree-granting colleges that contribute to higher education. Notwithstanding their considerable importance in influencing the course of Nagaland's future, these colleges encounter a range of administrative complexities. The objective of this study is to investigate the administrative issues encountered by college Principals in Government and Private colleges in Nagaland.

Higher Education Landscape in Nagaland: A Diverse Framework

The educational landscape of Nagaland encompasses both Government-funded and privately managed degree colleges. These educational establishments collectively provide opportunities for higher education to the young population of the state. The presence of a diverse blend of factors contributes to the emergence of unique administrative dynamics within the higher education sector of Nagaland.

On May 1, 1983, the Department of Higher and Technical Education was established. Prior to this, it was a component of the former Department of Education, which included all of the major wings of education. Technical Education was further separated from Higher Education on October 1, 2004, then was remerged with Higher Education in 2009, however it continues to function separately at the Directorate level. The Department is in charge

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of developing the state's general policy on higher education. It works with the Ministry of Education (previously the Ministry of Human Resource Development), Department of Higher Education. The Department is also responsible with long-term planning and policy formation for collegiate education, which requires coordination and consultation with the College Grants Commission, Nagaland College, and other colleges throughout the country. Higher education aims to cultivate the spirit of national integration, international understanding, and social responsibility, in addition to fostering scientific temper, instilling innovative and creative thought in students, etc.

Administratively, the higher education department in Nagaland encounters a multitude of challenges. Government-funded educational colleges often face challenges pertaining to the distribution of resources, the improvement of infrastructure, and the complexities of bureaucratic processes. In contrast, Private colleges of higher education face challenges pertaining to their financial viability, the recruitment of faculty members, and the need to adapt to changing educational frameworks. These particulars have an impact not only on individual colleges of higher education but also on the wider educational environment.

Principal as the head of the College:

The role of Principals in colleges is of utmost importance (Bossert, S. T., et al, 1982) as they are responsible for effectively managing these colleges (Tan, L., 2007) overseeing various aspects such as administration, academics, and social matters. They are in charge of coordinating stakeholder expectations, faculty expectations, and student expectations. As the head of the college, the Principal plays a vital role in providing strong leadership and guidance to faculty, employees, and students. The Principal is responsible for establishing priorities that correspond with the college's mission and objectives. Within the culturally diverse context of Nagaland, Principals fulfil the dual role of not only being educational leaders but also acting as guardians of community values, traditions, and aspirations.

Rationale of the Study:

The primary objective of this study is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the administrative issues encountered by college Principals in the state of Nagaland. The dynamics of higher education in Nagaland shows a complex nature, characterised by the intricate relationship of multiple factors. This study utilizes a comparative approach to examine the administrative complexities within the higher education system of Nagaland. The objective of this study is to draw attention to the distinct challenges and possible solutions that emerge from the contrasting administrative contexts of Government and Private college Principals. This approach presents a perspective on the administrative environment and provides valuable insights that can facilitate cooperation and promote creativity.

Objectives of the Study:

The objectives of the present study are:

1. To identify the key administrative issues faced by Principals at Nagaland's Government degree colleges.
2. To identify the key administrative issues faced by Principals at Nagaland's Private degree colleges.
3. To compare and contrast the administrative issues that Principals encounter in both Government and Private colleges.

Research Questions:

1. What are the primary administrative issues that Principals encounter at Nagaland's Government degree colleges?
2. What are the primary administrative issues that Principals encounter at Nagaland's Private degree colleges?
3. How do the administrative issues experienced by Principals at Nagaland's Government degree colleges compare to those faced by Principals in Private degree colleges?

Delimitations of the Study:

The present study has been delimited to:

1. Principals of the degree colleges in Nagaland.
2. Thirty Colleges (11 Government Colleges and 19 Private Colleges) out of the 65 Colleges that are affiliated to Nagaland University. (Annual Administrative Report 2019-2020 of the Department of Higher education, Nagaland)
3. Nine districts of the state of Nagaland i.e, Dimapur, Kohima, Mokokchung, Wokha, Tuensang, Zunheboto, Longleng, Kiphire and Phek where the colleges under study are located.

Methodology:-

i. Research Method

The researcher employed a descriptive cum normative survey. The research design employed was cross-sectional and the methodology was qualitative in nature. It incorporated the descriptive approaches to identify and describe administrative challenges and evaluate the effectiveness of existing administrative norms in addressing these challenges, respectively.

ii. Population and sample of the study

In the present study, the Principals of Degree colleges in Nagaland is the population of the study. Random sampling technique was adopted to select a representative sample from the population of Principals of the sixty-five-degree colleges in Nagaland. The researcher selected a sample of 30 colleges. The selected sample consisted of 30 Principals from the same group of colleges, which included 11 colleges from Kohima, 8 from Dimapur, 1 from Wokha, 4 from Mokokchung, 2 from Tuensang, 1 from Zunheboto, 1 from Kiphire, 1 from Longleng, and 1 from Phek.

Tools Used:

The study made use of tool developed specifically for the research objectives. The questionnaire included open-ended questions that were tailored to the specific objectives of the study. The researcher administered these questionnaires directly to the sample of respondents selected for the study.

Data Collection:

Primary data was collected using the questionnaires personally administered by researcher with relevant information for the purpose of study was explained to the respondents. The Principals were asked to identify and describe the administrative challenges they confront in their current positions. The use of open-ended questions encouraged the participants to elaborate on these issues.

Data Analysis:

Qualitative methods were used to analyse the collected descriptive data. Principals' descriptions of administrative issues were subjected to thematic analysis as described by Braun and Clark (2006) in an effort to identify recurring themes and patterns. To ensure the credibility of the qualitative research, open-ended questions were used to allow Principals to provide detailed and insightful responses, ensuring a thorough knowledge of their experiences and opinions.

Interpretation and Analysis:

The responses of the thirty Principals are given in Table 1.1. The responses have been given by Principals from 11 Government Colleges and 19 Private Colleges.

Table 1.1: Administrative issues faced by the Principals.

Principals	Gender	Management	Administrative Issues	Theme
Principal-1	F	GOVT	i. Unable to achieve targets as designed due to Govt procedures. ii. Lack of clear understanding at the Government level of needs/requirements of teacher education. iii. Financial Constraints.	Government Procedures
Principal-2	M	GOVT	i. Sometimes delegating tasks and responsibilities to staff makes it difficult to hold them accountable for their activities. Often face problems in ensuring that everyone is fulfilling their obligations effectively without proper monitoring and feedback mechanisms. ii. Keep cordial relationship with all the staff.	Accountability Challenges, Communication
Principal-3	M	GOVT	i. Acquiring required funds for running	Funding,

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> and development of the college. ii. Shortage of faculty and staff. iii. Remote location and poor communication facilities. 	Faculty Shortage, Remote Location
Principal-4	F	GOVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Getting all the teaching staff to work with a sense of communication, responsibilities and sincerity. ii. To help teaching and non-teaching staff to maintain accountability. Keeping the students under disciplined rules of the college. 	Communication, Accountability, Discipline
Principal-5	M	GOVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Land issue and encroachment is a long standing and continuous problem. ii. UGC Grand-in-aid pending problems for last many years. iii. Lack of government fund for infrastructure development as desired. 	Land Issue, UGC Grant-in-aid, Infrastructure Funding
Principal -7	M	GOVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Absenteeism of ministerial staff. ii. Excess casual leave availment by both teachers and non-teaching staff. iii. Transportation problem for students. 	Absenteeism, Casual Leaves, Transportation
Principal -6	M	GOVT	The new ideas and ventures which I often initiate, encounters opposition from staff who exhibit a reluctance towards change or possess a strong affinity towards established methodologies.	Resistance to change
Principal -8	F	GOVT	Lack of knowledge of official procedure.	Official Procedures
Principal -9	M	GOVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Poor communication between administrative departments. ii. Inconsistent decision implementation. 	Communication, Decision Implementation
Principal -10	M	GOVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Rigidity in curriculum design and implementation. ii. Resistance to diverse perspectives and innovative ideas. 	Curriculum Design, Resistanceto Innovation,
Principal -11	M	GOVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Resources are mismanaged and misallocated, resulting in inefficiencies. ii. Encounter hostility while attempting to micromanage. iii. Excessive paperwork and documentation requirements. 	Resource Mismanagement, Authority Conflict, Excessive Paperwork
Principal -12	M	PVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Negativity. ii. Incoherence. iii. Lack of communication between authorities and staff 	Negativity, Incoherence, Lack of Communication
Principal -13	F	PVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Punctuality. ii. Too many social and religious obligations so local and non-local teachers are on leave several times. iii. Sea of correspondents to reply like to UGC, Higher education, Nagaland University etc. 	Punctuality, Leave Obligations, Correspondence
Principal -14	M	PVT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Communication. ii. Delay of processing. iii. Record maintenance 	Communication, Processing Delay, Record Maintenance

Principal - 15	M	PVT	i. Managing of Human resources. ii. Financial concerns. iii. Infrastructure maintenance.	Human Resource Management, Financial Concerns, Infrastructure
Principal - 16	M	PVT	i. Lack of clear vision and direction. ii. Lack of faculty/staff participation.	Lack of Vision, Low Faculty Participation
Principal - 17	M	PVT	i. Managing the faculty and staff. ii. Proper maintenance of files and records. iii. Time taking for the staff to finish their job	Faculty and Staff Management, File and Record Maintenance, Time Management
Principal - 18	F	PVT	i. Age difference between Principal and teachers. ii. Disciplining the students.	Age Difference, Student Discipline
Principal - 19	M	PVT	i. The staff relies too much on my presence and decision-making which often leads to difficulties when I am absent or unable to provide guidance. ii. We wish to have a full-fledged campus.	Dependency, Expansion Goals
Principal - 20	M	PVT	i. Limited resources for development. ii. Lack of Human resource management.	Limited Resources, HR Management
Principal - 21	M	PVT	i. Irregular staff. ii. Stepmotherly treatment of my college by the Department and Government. iii. Too many opinions and arguments from the faculty.	Irregular Staff, Treatment by Authorities, Faculty Opinions
Principal - 22	M	PVT	i. Low attendance of the students. ii. Decision making problem because too much freedom to faculty.	Low Student Attendance, Faculty Freedom
Principal - 23	M	PVT	i. Students' attendance. ii. Teachers' low attendance. iii. Low attendance of non-teaching staff	Student and Staff Attendance
Principal - 24	M	PVT	i. Low students, teacher and staff attendance. ii. Less resources for infrastructural development. Over powered by college board and chairman	Low Attendance, Infrastructure Resources, Board Influence
Principal - 25	F	PVT	i. Lack of proper infrastructure. ii. Insufficient man-power for library, office and menial staff. iii. Non-receipt of information from the college on time	Infrastructure, Insufficient Manpower, Delayed Information
Principal - 26	F	PVT	i. Non implementation of rules and regulations. ii. Changing or bringing new rules to an already established system.	Rules Implementation, Changes in Established System
Principal - 27	M	PVT	i. Financial problem. ii. Decline in enrolment of students. Poor infrastructure.	Financial Problem, Enrollment Decline, Poor Infrastructure
Principal - 28	M	PVT	i. Less opportunity for developing college infrastructure. ii. Financial constrain.	Infrastructure Development, Financial Constraints
Principal -	F	PVT	i. Overreliance on rules and regulations	Rules Over Practical

29			over practical considerations.	Considerations,
Principal - 30	M	PVT	i. Maintaining proper discipline among faculty and students throughout the academic session. ii. Poor punctuality. iii. Teachers less participation in social activities.	Discipline, Punctuality, Social Participation

Interpretation:

a) Administrative issues faced by Principals from Government Colleges:

Two linked themes were highlighted: Government procedures and financial restrictions. Principal-1 mentioned the college's inability to meet expectations due to Government procedures, while also emphasising the college's budgetary limits. These comments highlighted the difficulties that Principals encountered when negotiating Government procedures and managing financial resources. Principal-2 highlighted the difficulty in keeping personnel accountable for their actions. Principal-3 discussed the difficulties in obtaining finances for the college's operation and development, as well as the shortage of teachers and personnel. These statements emphasised the difficulties that Principals encountered in acquiring funds and managing the college's human resources. Principal-3 also acknowledged the difficulties created by the remote location and inadequate communication facilities. Another major issue that emerged from the study was accountability. Principal-4 emphasised the importance of instilling in all teaching staff a feeling of communication, responsibility, and honesty. The responses mentioned discipline too. Principal-4 also emphasised the importance of maintaining strict norms for pupils. Two interconnected themes emerge from the document: land disputes and University Grants Commission (UGC) grant-in-aid. Principal-5 emphasised the long-standing issue of land encroachment, as well as the unresolved issues with UGC grant-in-aid. These statements demonstrated the difficulties Principals confront in negotiating land concerns and obtaining UGC financing. Another key topic that came up was infrastructure finance. Principal-5 emphasised a lack of Government funds for infrastructure development. These statements emphasised the difficulties Principals confront in acquiring financing for infrastructure development and the influence this has on the overall quality of the college. Principal-6 acknowledged the staff's reluctance to new ideas and enterprises. This quotation emphasises the difficulties that Principals encounter while implementing change and dealing with staff resistance. Principal-7 emphasised the transportation issue for pupils. These comments highlighted the difficulties that Principals confront when operating colleges in remote places in Nagaland, as well as the impact this has on student transportation. Principal-7 addressed ministerial staff absenteeism as well as excessive casual leave used by both teachers and non-teaching personnel. This quotation emphasised the difficulties Principals confront in regulating absenteeism and guaranteeing worker attendance on a regular basis. Principal-8 cited a lack of understanding of official procedures, whereas Principal-9 emphasised inadequate communication between administrative departments and inconsistent decision execution. These statements highlighted the difficulties that Principals encountered when navigating formal procedures and ensuring effective decision-making. These statements reflected the difficulties Principals confront in fostering effective communication throughout the college. The responses highlighted a theme of resistance to innovation. Principal-10 highlights rigidity in curriculum design and implementation, as well as a lack of openness to new perspectives and ideas. This comment emphasised the difficulties that Principals encounter while implementing new ideas and activities in the college. The analysis raised three connected themes: resource mismanagement, authority conflict, and excessive paperwork. Principal-11 addressed mismanagement and resource misallocation, as well as resentment encountered while attempting to micromanage. This phrase also emphasised the burdensome documentation and paperwork needs. These statements highlighted the difficulties that Principals encountered in managing resources, resolving conflicts, and dealing with administrative obligations.

b) Administrative issues faced by Principals from Private Colleges:

Three interconnected themes emerged from the analysis: negativity, incoherence, and a lack of communication. Principals 12 and 13 both stressed negativity and incoherence, while Principal 14 emphasized lack of communication between authority and personnel. These comments highlighted the difficulties that Principals confront in managing staff relationships and ensuring appropriate communication. Principal-13 noted punctuality concerns as well as teachers' frequent absences due to social and religious obligations. This comment underlined the difficulties that Principals have when it comes to regulating punctuality and leave policy. Principal-14 of a Private college, emphasised the significance of communication, the processing delay, and the necessity of maintaining accurate records. This comment exemplified the difficulties that Principals have in handling administrative chores

and maintaining accurate record-keeping. Principal-15 discussed the difficulties of managing human resources, as well as financial constraints and infrastructure maintenance. This phrase emphasised the difficulties that Principals have in managing people and resources. Principal-16 highlighted a lack of clear vision and direction, as well as poor teacher and staff participation. These statements highlighted the difficulties that Principals have in providing leadership and encouraging faculty engagement. Principal-17 of a Private college, described the difficulties of managing faculty and staff, keeping files and records, and assuring assignment completion on schedule. Principal-18, a Principal at a Private college, discussed the age disparity between herself and the teachers, as well as the need to discipline students. These statements highlighted the difficulties that Principals confront in handling generational disparities and maintaining student discipline. Principal-19 emphasised the Principal's reliance and the objective of creating a full-fledged campus. These comments highlighted the difficulties that Principals have in managing infrastructure, financing, and meeting expansion goals. Principal-20 cited a lack of development resources as well as a lack of human resource management. These statements demonstrated the difficulties that Principals encounter while managing resources and human capital. Principal-21 of a Private college, raised the issue of irregular staff and the department's and Government's treatment of his college. He also lamented the presence of too many faculty perspectives and disputes. Principal-24 emphasised the college board's and chairman's power. These comments highlighted the difficulties that administrators confront in managing relationships with authorities, addressing faculty concerns, and dealing with outside pressures. Principal-23 highlighted low student attendance as well as low teacher and non-teaching staff attendance. Principal-22 emphasised faculty freedom as a decision-making difficulty. These statements highlighted the difficulties Principals confront in regulating attendance and ensuring teacher participation. Principal-25, a Principal at a Private college, highlighted a lack of suitable infrastructure, insufficient staffing for the library, office, and non-teaching employees, and the university's delayed delivery of information. Principal-26 emphasised the failure to enforce rules and regulations. These statements highlighted the difficulties that Principals have in managing manpower, information flow, and enforcing rules. Two interconnected topics emerged from the document: financial difficulties and enrollment drop. Principal-27 discussed the college's financial concerns as well as the fall in student enrollment. A theme that emerges from the study is the preference for rules over practical considerations. Principal-29 mentioned a tendency to prioritise rules and procedures over practical considerations. This comment emphasised the difficulties that Principals have in combining regulations and reality in college administration. Principal-28 addressed both the restricted opportunity for constructing college infrastructure and the financial restrictions. Principal-30 discussed the difficulty of maintaining discipline among faculty and students, as well as teachers' poor punctuality and minimal involvement in social activities. These comments showed the difficulties that Principals encountered in regulating discipline, timelines, and cultivating a feeling of community among faculty.

Discussion:-

The comparative analysis of administrative concerns faced by Principals in Private and Government colleges in Nagaland shed light on the state's diverse higher education environment. Several parallels and differences arose when comparing the administrative difficulties faced by Principals in Private and Government colleges. Both Private and Government colleges suffered funding and financial limits (Principal-5, Principal-27, Principal-29). This finding aligned with the findings of (Heller, D. E. ,2001) and (Wise, D. ,2015). A lack of funding had an impact on a variety of factors, including facility growth, teacher shortages, and general college management. Furthermore, both Private and Government Principals faced communication and coordination challenges (Principal-9, Principal-14). Inconsistent decision implementation and insufficient communication across administrative departments hindered the colleges' smooth operation.

However, there were significant differences between Private and Government colleges. Government college Principals frequently faced issues connected to Government procedures and regulations (Principal-1, Principal-7). The bureaucratic nature of Government colleges hindered the achievement of goals and the college's overall growth. Principals of Private colleges, on the other hand, faced difficulty in applying rules and regulations and making adjustments to a previously established system (Principal-28). This finding aligned with that of (Bai, H., et al., 2019). In Private Colleges, too much reliance on rules and regulations hindered the practical considerations required for good management.

Suggestions and Recommendations:-

In light of the various administrative issues identified in Private and Government colleges in Nagaland, the following suggestions describes strategies for addressing the challenges encountered by Principals in both types of colleges.

- Nagaland's colleges should implement effective human resource management practises such as succession planning, delegation of duties, and faculty and staff training programmes. These colleges can lessen their reliance on human leaders in this way, ensuring a smooth transition of leadership in the absence of Principals. This method improves college administration stability and continuity.
- In curriculum design, Private institutions in Nagaland should strike a balance between compliance with regulations and creativity. Encouraging openness to change and flexibility in educational practises while adhering to necessary requirements will develop institutional innovation and adaptability.
- Mentorship programmes should be implemented to address the age imbalance between Principals and teachers in Nagaland Colleges. These programmes promote knowledge sharing and collaboration among senior and junior faculty members, using the assets of both generations and facilitating the smooth transfer of experience and skills.
- Nagaland's colleges must build excellent communication channels between administration and faculty members. Regular meetings, feedback mechanisms, and open-door policies can aid in the prevention of misunderstandings and the promotion of a healthy working environment, hence increasing overall productivity.
- Nagaland's Government colleges should work with relevant Government bodies to streamline bureaucratic processes. Regular communication and coordinated efforts can help to streamline administrative operations and eliminate financing and decision-making delays.
- Nagaland's colleges should collaborate with educational authorities to promote innovative approaches and different perspectives in education. This collaborative endeavour has the potential to improve educational quality and relevance in the state.
- It is critical for both Private and Government colleges in Nagaland to develop comprehensive long-term financial plans with diversified financing sources and allocation procedures. This strategy promotes financial stability and long-term development.
- Government colleges should prioritise staff and student attendance. Mentorship programmes, attendance incentives, and transportation assistance can all be useful techniques for increasing attendance and so improving the learning environment.
- Nagaland's colleges should build effective attendance tracking systems and enforce attendance standards to address employee attendance difficulties. Recognising and rewarding both teaching and non-teaching staff for punctuality and engagement can help to inspire employees and boost overall efficiency.

Conclusion:-

This research has provided an analysis of the administrative difficulties encountered by Principals in Nagaland's Government and Private colleges, shedding light on the complex challenges affecting the state's higher education landscape. Concerns regarding inadequate infrastructure, human resource management, financial shortage, regulatory burdens, and communication disruptions were some issues that had been identified in Private colleges. In contrast, Government colleges faced bureaucratic obstacles, curriculum rigidity, financial constraints, and attendance-related issues.

The extensive assessment of administrative issues faced by Principals in Nagaland's Private and Government colleges highlighted the state's educational landscape's complexity. These findings not only shed light on the specific difficulties confronting educational leaders, but also highlighted the significance of personalising solutions to each institution's unique circumstances. One evident conclusion from this study was that a general approach to administrative problem solving was ineffective. Private colleges' concerns, including resource restrictions and regulatory issues, required focused interventions that prioritise financial stability, adaptability, communication and a balanced approach to rules and regulations. Government colleges, on the other hand, required techniques for navigating bureaucratic challenges, improving financial resource management, communication, accountability and promoting flexibility in curriculum creation. It gave evidence-based insights into the complexities of managing educational institutions in Nagaland, laying the groundwork for informed decisions and effective initiatives. Finally, the important relevance of this research resides in its ability to contribute to Nagaland's educational system's development. The state can better equip its colleges to provide quality education and contribute to the development of its students by addressing these administrative difficulties head on with personalised and context-specific

solutions. This research is a valuable resource for stakeholders seeking evidence-based strategies to enhance the administrative structure of higher education in Nagaland, thereby contributing to the state's future through education.

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