Saidalavi Kundupuzhakkal
PhD Scholar
Faculty of Education
Jamia Millia Islamia
New Delhi
saidkp.in@gmail.com

Role of Integrated Education for Promoting Cultural Co-existence in a Pluralistic Society

Pluralistic society refers a society in which citizens can legally and publicly hold multiple competing ethical views and are allowed to choose for themselves what ethical beliefs they wish to hold. The major issues commonly seen in a pluralistic society is ethnicity. This may be in the form of caste disputes, communal conflict, racial discrimination, and linguistic differences. India is characterized by more ethnic and religious groups than the other countries of the world. Education system has a significant role in preclude ethnic conflicts. So, the purpose of this research study is to analyze the role of integrated education for promoting cultural co-existence in a pluralistic society.

Integrated education is a system that has been made to coordinating the students, teachers, staff, facilities, programs and activities combine individuals of different races (caste and tribe) religion, region, and language etc. Integrated education primarily looks for the group integration as well as the value integration in educational settings. It is assumed that integrated education is more suitable in a pluralistic society than segregated education for promoting cultural co-existence and social cohesion.

Key Words: Pluralistic society, Ethnicity, Integrated education, Cultural co-existence, Group integration, and Value integration.

Introduction

Human beings are always aware about the identities of others when they go for an interaction. These identities are race (caste and tribe), religion, region, and language etc. Identity based discrimination and ethnic conflict are the major threats in a pluralistic society all over the world. It seems to be common almost in all the countries, where people are divided into separate ethnic groups such as racial (caste and tribe), religious, regional, and linguistic bases. In Indian scenario, since the independence the growing challenges of ethnic conflict and instability receiving significant attention, because of the cultural diversity.

India is a better example for multicultural pluralistic society. Pluralistic society refers a society in which citizens can legally and publicly hold multiple competing ethical views and are allowed to choose for themselves what ethical beliefs they wish to hold. India is characterized by more ethnic groups than most other countries of the world. Aside from the much noted 2000 odd castes and tribes, there are 8 major religions, 29 state regions and 9 union territories, and 15 odd languages spoken in various dialects.

"The concept of pluralism has been employed to designate the co-existence of different ethnic, religious and ideological groups in a modern society." (Berger and Luckmann, 2010) "It is a situation in which there is competition in the institutional ordering of comprehensive meaning for everyday life." (ibid) The preliminary task of this study is to identify the various socio-cultural issues related to the segregated education system in a pluralistic society.

The major issues commonly seen in a pluralistic society is ethnicity. This may be in the form of caste disputes, communal conflict, racial discrimination, and linguistic differences. Broadly these ethnic clashes are taking places both between and within states. The former are concerned with regional competition and power distribution, while the latter are the result of hostility rooted in racial, religious, and linguistic bases. Most of the violence occurred in the states of Assam, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Odisha, Punjab, Jammu & Kashmir, Kerala, UP and other regions are mainly because of the ethnic and religious conflicts.

Education system has a significant role in preclude ethnic conflicts. So, the purpose of this research study is to analyze the role of integrated education for promoting cultural co-existence in a pluralistic society. Integrated education is more effective to reduce ethnic conflicts and violence when it is imparted taking into account the social and cultural context and the needs of a society. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values and with the universal human values. It should also be globally relevant.

Methodology

The researcher followed Grounded theory as the method for this study. Grounded theory is a qualitative kind of research method. "In this method the research question or sensitizing question should be one that grounded theory can investigate. However, the research question is somewhat dependent on the world view of the researcher. Although the research focus may emerge from a variety of sources, the actual formation of the question arises from the researchers notions about the nature of reality, the relationship between the knower and what can be known, and how best to discover reality. (Annells, 2011)Thus the selection of grounded theory as a method can be viewed as from the basic philosophical belief about inquiry as held by the researcher.

Pluralistic Education

Many people believe that there is a single acceptable way to live, look and behave. The standards for determining what is appropriate derive from the mainstream culture. Anyone who deviates from standards is considered to be inferior. As a result, those who deviate are subjected to discrimination, being denied equal access to institutional opportunities and political rights. Multicultural education is a potential for correcting these distortions and inequities. (Pang, 2001)

Education in a pluralistic society is called multi-cultural education. Multicultural Education is a process of comprehensive school reform and basic education for all students. It challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in school and society and accepts and affirms the pluralism. (Melnick)Baptiste defined multicultural education as "a process of institutionalizing the philosophy of cultural pluralism within the education system." (Baptiste, 1979) According to Gay multi-cultural education is "a set of beliefs and explanations that recognizes and values the importance of ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping life styles, social experiences, personal identities, and educational opportunities of individuals, groups and nations" (Gay, 1995)

Multicultural education may be given in an integrated or segregated form. Segregated education system probably leads to the conflict and violence in a pluralistic society. Integrated education with a secular mode will create the opportunity to understand various believe and customs. So, in this study the researcher focuses on integrated education because it assumed that it will be more applicable for promoting social cohesion in a pluralistic society.

One of the theories of ethnic conflict tells that "the conflict occurs between ethnic groups when they interact more than when they are kept separated." (Douglas Dion, 2001) This theory implies that attempts at desegregation will necessarily be associated with ethnic conflict and violence. In Indian scenario as a multicultural society the desegregation is very large, so the possibility for ethnic violence is also more. Segregation cannot be considered as a better solution for ethnic conflict and it is not practical in India's case especially in this modern era. Besides, someway segregation becomes the cause of ethnic conflict. So it is more relevant to find out a

better solution for this social problem. Education system has a significant role in preclude ethnic conflicts. In case integrated education is the best one.

Integrated Education

Integrated education is a system that has been made to coordinating the students, teachers, staff, facilities, programs and activities combine individuals of different races (caste and tribe) religion, region, and language etc.Integrated education is not an independent concept. It is the integration of both people as well as the value in the educational system. Integrated education can be start from individual level and it can be extended to school, community, national and global levels.

Many countries are practicing integrated education. The concept of integrated schooling was highly effective in Ireland. The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE), a voluntary organization, promotes, develops and supports integrated education in Northern Ireland. This movement promoted integrated education by connecting two communities to provide a balanced education, while allowing the opportunity to understand and respect all cultural and religious backgrounds. They attempted to bring the children, parents and teachers from bothRoman Catholic andProtestant traditions together. The first integrated school in Northern Ireland,Lagan College, was established inBelfast in 1981. In South Africa the first multiracial school named, Waterford Kamhlaba started in 1963 with a direct opposition to the apartheid regime. But the school opened on part of what had been Waterford farm, owned by Irish immigrants, high on a hill overlooking the capital, Mbabane was a great success.

In this study integrated education primarily looks for the group integration as well as the value integration in educational settings. Group integration is the imparting people from various groups in single educational settings. Group integration may be given in the form of multi-caste education, multi-religious education, multi-lingual education, multi-racial education and multiclass education or altogether.Value integration is the inculcation of various socially accepted values in the educational curriculum. Value integration classified as traditional religious value and modern democratic values. In this study threemodels that is moral education, secular and peace education are included.

1. Group Integration

Group integration combines the concept of social integration as well as system integration. "Social integration is an orderly or conflictual relationship between the actors, while system integration is an orderly or conflictual relationship between the parts of social system." (Mouzelis, 1992). "Social integration refers to a person's sense of belonging or attachment to a

community." (Kasarda and Janowitz, 1974) The above given definition is the narrow meaning of the concept of social integration. In the broader sense it a person's belongingness to the entire society. So, in this study the Group integration refers the broader meaning of the concept of social integration. Group integration is the cooperative behavior of people from different ethnic groups and communities in a society. It is a person's sense of belonging or attachment to the entire community or whole society.

In Lockwood's view conflict theories concentrate on problem of social integration. Hebermass applied an internalist perspective to social integration and externalist perspective to system integration to differentiate both concepts. He sees class struggles as pertaining to social integration- given that as he says, they point to a conflictual relationship between actors rather than to functional incompatibilities between institutional subsystems. He linked the modern economy and polity with system integration and remaining institutional sphere with social integration. Marxism combines both system and social integration to social change.

A study conducted in Loss Angeles metropolitan area reveals that social integration into the local community significantly reduce feeling of vulnerability and reduce fear of crime. (Adams and Serpe, 2000) In the examination of ten neighborhoods in Chicago Levin and Salem (1986) show that socially integrated people express lower fear of crime when compared to the less socially integrated. People living in the suburbs are less fearful of crime compare to urban population. The reason is that urbanism is one of the antecedents to social integration. Dealing with individual crime, conflict and violence social integration is relevant. In case of collective crime, conflict and violence system integration or functional integration is important. Following this structural functional perspective the system integration also has role in ethnic conflict.

But the system integration is not an easy task. Without proper understanding among the members of groups, the integration will lead to a direct conflict. So before going for integration process there should develop some mutual understanding among people. The cause of some ethnic conflicts and communal violence happened in India was because of interaction without this mutual understanding. Communal violence in Assam, Odisha and Kerala are examples for this.

Education in the perspective of group integration is classified as multi-caste education, multi-religious education, multi-lingual education, multi-racial education and multiclass education. Multi-caste education should be ensured in caste rigid society. It will help the students from different caste background to understand each other. For ensuring this kind of integration caste based reservation should be promoted at initial stage in educational institutions. Multi-religious education can also be called multi-faith education. It help the child to understand others faith through the education process. Community based reservation will help to ensure the group representation.

Multi-lingual education gives the opportunity to learn in the child's owns language medium rather than an aliened language.Multi-racial education required in a society with multiple races. The concept of multi class education is that integrating students from different economic background in single classroom. Group integration is the primary step of integrated education process. If there is a proper interaction among the various ethnic groups, it will help them to understand the similarities and dissimilarities among the group.

2. Value Integration

Value integration is another prime motive of integrated education. Basically values are innate and inherited by an individual and it has some worthiness. Some values are acquired from environment as the part of socialization process of an individual. Values are usually influenced by the changing philosophical ideologies, cultural and religious perspectives, social, political and geographical conditions.

In modern emerging society, there has been a revolutionary change in the field of values due to many factors in addition to the influence of modern culture, industrialization, modernization, urbanization, globalization and multinationals. Values are the guiding principles, decisive in day to day behaviors as also is critical life situations. Values are a set bring of principles or standards of behavior. Values are regarded desirable, important and held in high esteem by a particular society in which a person lives.

The erosion of moral and spiritual values in modern society is something that has been virtually accepted, and it is rampant in all spheres of activity. To some extent this is true the world over, but it is specially tragic for a country like India, which has from the beginning of its civilization sought to base itself upon certain spiritual and moral values. In fact, is the reason why, despite tremendous upheavals and long centuries of foreign aggression and subjugation, India has retained some vitality and dynamism.

To revoke the threat of this value erosion value education should be enhanced in our educational system. It refers various program of planned educational action aimed at the development of value and character. At the childhood individual physical development is concerned, during adult age intellectual and spiritual values start dominating the corporal values. Therefore the professional enhancement programmers and educational practitioners should be awarded about these things while imparting value education.Integrated education consist the following value aspects of education such as moral, secular and peaceeducation.

Moral education is essential for the development child personality. It can be given in the form of secular and non-secular form. In a pluralistic society moral education should be given in a secular mode. Secular education aim for the harmonious co-existence of various religious ideas, believes, and customs within a social system. According to Bruce "the secularization

paradigm combines an assertion about changes in the nature of religion, and collection of related explanations of those changes." (Bruce, 2010)

The term secularism was misused and misinterpreted in various manners. Secularism neither denies nor affirms the truth of religion. "Secularism postulates that political institutions (social) must be based on the economic and social interests of the entire people without reference to religion, race or sect that all must enjoy equal rights and no privileges or special claims should be allowed for any group on the basis of religion." (Nomani, 1970)

Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment. Peace education is more suitable in a conflict prone society and more required at the time of insurgency. "Peace education is an attempt to respond to problems of conflict and violence on scales ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is about exploring ways of creating more just and sustainable futures". (R.D. Laing.1978) "Peace Education a holistic process that includes the teaching for and about democracy and human rights, nonviolence, social and economic justice, gender equality, environmental sustainability, disarmament, traditional peace practices, international law, and human security". (Global Campaign for Peace Education, Hague 1999)

"Peace education embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. It is based on a philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, cooperation and reverence for the human family and all life on our beautiful planet. Peace education is skill building. It empowers children to find creative and non-destructive ways to settle conflict and to live in harmony with themselves, others, and their world. Peace building is the task of every human being and the challenge of the human family". (Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman. 1988)

The basic concepts embedded in the above definitions are that peace education is a remedial measure to protect children from falling into the ways of violence in society. It aims at the total development of the child. It tries to inculcate higher human and social values in the mind of the child. In essence, it attempts to develop a set of behavioral skills necessary for peaceful living and peace building from which the whole of humanity will benefit.

Conclusion

Ethnic conflict and violence are an internal threat to the nation. In some way it is dangerous than external attacks or wars. Religious based ethnic groups are big challenge to the national unity than all other ethnic groups. Religion itself is not a problem. We should respect all religion and religious practices, because religion is a culture of society. One can observe some similarities as well as differences in all religions. Religion should be a personal choice and an individual freedom too. One should get an opportunity to worship the god according to the wish. Ethnic minded people think that all other community people are in wrong path. This thought is the prime reason for all ethnic issues. These value differences lead to conflict. Conflict arises in

human mind which outbursts in the form of violence. The good and bad are decided by ethnic people through value judgment, which is relative. The ethnic groups are creating hate, fear and enmity among the people. They only wanted their own group development. For this sake they compartmentalize the people.

Integrated education is highly significant in a multicultural ethnic society like India for making social cohesion. Integrated education is the process of acquiring education in an environment that has been made into combine individuals of different communities, castes and races. The researcher concludes that the integrated education is more suitable in a pluralistic society than segregated education for promoting cultural co-existence and social cohesion. The better way of implementation of integrated education should help to reduce ethnic conflict in a multicultural ethnic society.

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