

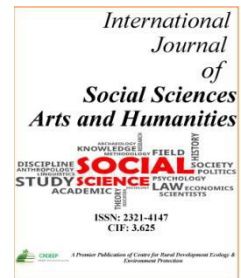
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**International Journal of Social Sciences Arts & Humanities (ISSN: 2321-4147)(CIF: 3.625)**  
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**Review Paper****Multicultural Education and Philosophical Underpinnings**Toseef Bari Khan<sup>1\*</sup> and Dr. Akanksha Singh<sup>2</sup><sup>1</sup>Research Scholar, Department of Education, University of Allahabad, Allahabad, India.<sup>2</sup>Assistant Professor, Department of Education, University of Allahabad, Allahabad, India.**ARTICLE INFORMATION****Corresponding Author:**

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Underpinnings**ABSTRACT**

*Multiculturalism is the co-existence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in diverse customary behaviors, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles. Present paper is an attempt to understand the philosophical underpinning behind the term diversity, inclusion and multiculturalism and how they are similar and dissimilar from each other in context of educational setting.*

**Introduction**

According to the National education policy (2020) "the promotion of Indian arts and culture is important not only for the nation but also for the individual. Cultural awareness and expression are among the major competencies considered important to develop in children, in order to provide them with a sense of identity, belongingness as well as an appreciation of other cultures and identities. It is through the development of a strong sense and knowledge of their cultural history, arts, languages and traditions that children can build a positive cultural identity and self-esteem."

UNESCO guidelines of intercultural education (2006) emphasizes the need for the multicultural composition of classrooms as "it needs to concern the learning environment as a whole, as well as other dimensions of educational processes, such as school life and decision making, teacher education, and training, curricula, languages of instruction, teaching methods, and student interactions, and learning materials. This can be done through the inclusion of multiple perspectives and voices."

**Objectives**

- To understand the multiculturalism in educational setting.
- To differentiate the related terms diversity, Inclusion and multiculturalism in educational setting.

Literature review and philosophical analysis were used for achieving the above objectives.

**Multiculturalism in educational Setting**

According to Banks (2004), multicultural education is a broad concept with several different dimensions. The dimensions of multicultural education are

- Content integration
- Knowledge construction process
- Prejudice reduction
- Equity pedagogy
- Empowering school culture and social structure.

**Content Integration**

Content integration is the first dimension given by Banks that deal with the infusion of ethnic and multicultural content into the curriculum. Teachers should use examples and content from diverse cultural groups to illustrate concepts, principles, and theories in

their subject. Possibilities of the integration of ethnic and cultural content are more in language and social science subjects than in others. In the arts and music, teachers and educators have many opportunities to use diverse ethnic and multicultural content to illustrate concepts, themes, and principles. Opportunities for the integration of multicultural content in math and science subjects also exist but these are not as much as they are in social sciences, the language, arts, and music.

### **The Knowledge Construction Process**

The knowledge construction process relates to the extent to which teachers help students to understand, investigate, and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of reference, perspectives, and biases within a discipline influence how knowledge is constructed within it (Banks, 1996).

#### *Prejudice reduction*

The prejudice reduction dimension gives an idea to teachers and educators for developing positive attitudes toward different cultural groups by using multicultural teaching content and activities. Many types of researches indicate that students come to school with many negative attitudes and perceptions and misconceptions about different ethnic and cultural groups (Aboud, 2009; Stephan & Vogt, 2004). Inclusion of content about different ethnic and cultural groups in teaching strategies, lessons and units helps the students to develop more positive attitudes and perceptions towards diverse cultures (Bigler, 1999; Stephan & Vogt).

#### *Equity Pedagogy*

Teachers can analyze their teaching methods and procedures to determine the extent to which they reflect multicultural issues and concerns. When the teachers modify their teaching styles according to their diverse classroom that facilitates the academic achievement of the students comes from the diverse cultural background is called as equity pedagogy. This includes a variety of teaching styles and approaches that are consistent with the wide range of learning styles within various cultural and ethnic groups. (Cohen & Lotan, 2004; Slavin, 2001).

#### *An Empowering School Culture and Social Structure*

Empowering school culture and social structure include the environment and culture of the schools that inculcate gender, racial, and social equity among students. The culture and social structure of the school must be evaluated by all members of the institution's staff. Now the question arises how multiculturalism is different from some related concepts.

### **Diversity, Inclusion and Multiculturalism**

**Diversity** is the real or perceived differences between individuals. This can include race, gender, sexual orientation, size, cultural background, and much more. Dimensions of diversity are culture, race, ethnicity, gender, age, social class, religion, spirituality, abilities or disabilities. Commonly used in the sense of individual difference among students.

**Multiculturalism** is a term that is similar to diversity, but it can be described as the presence of various cultural groups within a certain location such as a nation or state.(Beauchum,2020)Here it is interesting to focus upon that power and privilege in historical context also plays an important role.

**Inclusion** can be defined as equal access to opportunities and resources and active, ongoing and intentional efforts with diversity. Inclusiveness means society in which all individuals are included in every way. The fundamental principal of inclusive school as proposed in the Salamanca statement is that all students should learn together. School should accommodate all students regardless of their physical, intellectual, social, emotional, linguistic or other conditions. According to constitution of India everyone has the right to equality of status and of opportunity. After 86th amendment to the constitution of India it is mandatory for the government to provide free and compulsory education to all children of the age of 6-14 years where 'all' includes children with disabilities also. Inclusive education is very broad concept and it denies all kind of discrimination. For a progressive society denial of discrimination is very necessary.

Inclusion is broader term whereas multiculturalism focuses on cultural diversity of the students. Both want to impart minimum discrimination on any kind of prejudices or stereotypes. Here it is important to mention that many times cultural environment influence inclusion. Although, the government tries to reduce it by various laws and policies. How society deals with cultural diversity and coexists peacefully is focus of multiculturalism.

According to Banks and Banks (2007), multiculturalism is a philosophical position and movement assuming that the gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of the institutionalized structures of educational institutions, including the staff, the norms and values, the curriculum, and the student's body.

Salili and Hoosain (2001) suggest three assumptions of multicultural education reflecting multicultural philosophy: The first is that cultural diversity is a positive and enriching experience that helps people to learn and accept each other's cultures and become better and more fulfilled human beings. It is the responsibility of multicultural education programs to reflect the diverse culture in the curriculum. The second assumption is that multicultural education is not only for minorities but is for all groups. All groups benefited from learning and understanding cultural differences. According to Parekh's assumption, multicultural education should be provided

in all schools including the schools with higher minority student populations. The third assumption is the realization that 'teaching is a cross-cultural encounter'. Students and teachers have diverse cultural backgrounds, values, customs, perceptions, and prejudices.

## Conclusion

Culture cannot exist without continual transmission and enrichment through education and organized education often aims to achieve this very purpose. (UNESCO) Education plays major role in social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Multicultural education encourages communication among different cultures. Acceptance of diversity, appreciating cultural pluralism and taking care of special educational needs all go hand in hand. Multicultural education focuses on cultural understanding and definitely a culturally responsive teacher can work better for inclusive society. Inclusion and multicultural education both aims to empower our future generations for friendly acceptance and existence.

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