

URGENCY OF REFORMING TEACHER EDUCATION FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

Vijay F. Dhamane, Ph. D.

Associate Professor, Tilak College of Education, Pune- 411030 Maharashtra (India)

vijay.dhamane25@gmail.com

Abstract

This research study is an attempt to explore some of the issues on the experiences of student teachers during their educational journey from different cultural background which shows urgency of reforming teacher education for multicultural education. The major objectives of the study were To find out experiences of student teacher due to cultural diversity during School life and Teacher training program and to express the need of Multicultural Education in Teacher Education. The population was the pre-service teachers undergoing teacher training for the secondary level in the Colleges of Education in Maharashtra state. From this, a sample of fifty two student teachers was obtained by purposive sample method. Survey was conducted to study this problem.

With the help of data collected in the qualitative form, the researcher analyzed data and concluded that, there is cultural diversity on the basis of colour, religion, caste, language and region. Though our constitution promotes this diversity for integrity, the student teachers have negative experiences in the formal education system. Teachers and the peers also biased on the basis of colour, caste and religion. The students are dominated and discriminated by the peer and teachers too! On the basis of this conclusion, study suggests that the curriculum needs to be reformed with inclusion of curriculum theory and historical inquiry so that bias in textbooks, media, and other educational materials can be detected easily by educators, students, and other stakeholders.

Keywords: Multicultural education, Student teachers, Teacher education, Cultural diversity.



Scholarly Research Journal's is licensed Based on a work at www.srjis.com

1 INTRODUCTION

Schools are the formal institutes which reflect the society. As our constitution gave us an equal opportunity in education, every student must have an equal opportunity to achieve to her or his full potential, every student must be prepared to competently participate in an increasingly intercultural society. Teacher must be prepared to effectively facilitate learning for every individual student from different or equal cultural background. So education must become more fully student centered and inclusive of the voices and experiences of the students. This research study focuses on the experiences of student teachers during their educational journey from different cultural background.

1.1 Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education that holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings and discriminatory practices in education. It is grounded in ideals of social justice, education equality and dedication to facilitating education experiences in which all students reach their full potential as learners and as socially aware and active beings, locally, nationally and globally. ME acknowledges that schools are essentials to laying the foundation for transformation of society and elimination of oppression and injustice – Paul Gorski (2000)

Multicultural Education is a philosophical concept built on the ideas of freedom, justice, equality, equity and human dignity as acknowledged in various documents, such as U.S. declaration of Independence, constitutions of S.A. and U.S. and Universal declaration by Human Rights adopted by the United Nations.

- It affirms our need to prepare students for their responsibilities in an interdependent world.
- It recognizes the role of schools can play in developing the attitude and values necessary for democratic society.
- It values cultural differences and affirms the pluralism that students, their communities and teachers reflect.
- It challenges all forms of discrimination in schools, colleges and society through the promotion of democratic principles of social justice.

Indian culture is diversified by the region, religion, language and class. There are diverse schools in India. To sustain the society locally and globally its Teachers responsibility to treat the student in multicultural manner. The teacher should be prepared for that. So its new need to introduce Multicultural Education in teacher education program.

1.2 Need of Multicultural education:

Multicultural education can improve mastery of reading, writing, and mathematical skills; subject matter content; and intellectual process skills such as problem solving, critical thinking, and conflict resolution by providing content and techniques that are more meaningful to the lives and frames of reference of ethnically different students. Using ethnic materials, experiences, and examples as the contexts for teaching, practicing, and demonstrating mastery of academic and subject matter skills increases the appeal of the tools

of instruction, heightens the practical relevance of the skills to be learned, and improves students' time on task. This combination of conditions leads to greater focused efforts, task persistence, skill mastery, and academic achievement.

(Cazden, John, & Hymes, 1985; Garcia, 1982; Boggs, Watson Gregeo, & McMillen, 1985)

At school education and teacher education level Multicultural education and environment for Multicultural education is too important to inculcate the values among the students. This will develop Ethnic and Cultural Literacy

For Personal Development Multicultural education is very needful in the age of knowledge, science and technology. It will be helpful for

2 REVIEW:

- Ilknur Tarman, Bulent Tarman studied on Developing effective multicultural practices : A case study of exploring a teacher's understanding and practices (The journal of International social Research Vol-4 Issue – 17)

Under the most culturally diverse background of U.S.A., researchers conducted case study, in which they found that the teachers appeared to have very positive understanding multicultural education and preferred ant biased multicultural education approach.

- James A. Banks, University of Washington (Review of research in Education, 1993- JSTOR) Published by American Education Research Association Multicultural Education : Historical Development, Dimensions and practice. Sleeter and Grant (1987) identified five approaches to multicultural education. They mentioned that focus on the education of people of color is only common element among many different definition of multicultural education.

A major goal of multicultural education, as stated by specialists in the field, is to reform the school and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic and social class groups will experience educational equality.

3 NEED OF THE STUDY:

Being Teacher Educator, to study the present scenario of cultural diversity in education and integrate this diversity in education, especially in teacher education, it is necessary to study.

Teacher must be prepared to effectively facilitate learning for every individual from different or equal cultural background To provide multicultural facilities to the learners through curriculum it is necessary to study

4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS STUDY:

- This study focuses on the experience of student Teachers in their education w.r.t multicultural components. This give the pictures of the present scenario. This will be the guideline to decide the strategies for multicultural Education in Tr. Education.
- To sensitize the teacher community about the experiences of student teacher, this will help us to integrate as a multicultural education in teacher education program.

5 OBJECTIVES

- 1) To find out experiences of student teacher due to cultural diversity during school life.
- 2) To find out experiences of student teacher due to cultural diversity during Teacher training program.
- 3) To express the need of Multicultural Education in. Teacher Education.

6 METHODOLOGY:

6.1 Method of the Research

To find out experiences of student teacher due to cultural diversity during school life and during teacher training program the survey method was used.

6.2 Population and Sample

The population was the pre-service teachers undergoing teacher training for the secondary level in the Colleges of Education in Maharashtra state.

The purposive sampling technique was followed for the selection of College while incidental method was used for the selection of the student teachers. The demographic information of sample is given in the table.

Table 1 Groups of the pre-service teachers in the sample

Sr. No.	Group	Sub sample	N	Total
1	Gender	Male	40	52
		Female	12	
2	Religion	Hindu	38	52
		Other than Hindu	14	
3	Category	Open	32	52
		Reservation	20	
4	Language	Marathi	28	52
		Non Marathi	24	
5	Region	Rural	10	52
		Urban	42	
6	Region	Maharashtra	42	52
		Non- Maharashtra	10	

6.3 Data collection tool

- **Questionnaire**

The questionnaire consisted of demographic information i.e. Religion, Caste, Language and Region. Twenty open ended questions based on the experiences of student teachers regarding multicultural aspect.

- **Interview schedule**

It was designed to know the detailed experiences by peer and teachers about diverse culture and traditions.

7 SCOPE, LIMITATIONS AND DELIMITATIONS

7.1 Scope

In this study the researcher intends to find the experiences about Multicultural Education of the pre-service teachers. Thus it is related to the towards experiences and expectation about Multicultural Education of the pre-service teachers from Colleges of Education.

7.2 Limitation

The conclusions of the study are dependent on the responses given by the pre-service teachers to the questionnaire and interview schedule.

7.3 Delimitations

The study has been delimited to the following aspects

1. The college affiliated to the Pune University, Pune was considered for this study.
2. This study was delimited to the pre-service teachers sample drawn from one college of Education only.
3. This work was delimited to experiences and expectations about of pre-service teachers' about Multicultural Education at school and teacher education college level.
4. The questionnaire and interview schedule were developed by the researchers.

8 PROCEDURE

The questionnaire was administered on the pre-service teachers from college of education from Pune city. Since all the questions were open ended, the sufficient time was given. Thus the responses were collected.

The interviews of five student teachers were conducted as per the objectives.

9 DATA ANALYSIS

The data collected through questionnaire were in the qualitative form, It were analyzed in the qualitative manner. The responses were scrutinized as per the objectives .The responses were grouped and the findings were obtained. Data from the interview were analyzed as per the objectives.

The experiences of student teachers were collected and combined findings were obtained.

10 FINDINGS

To find the experiences of student teachers during their educational journey about diverse factors, we surveyed the fifty two student teachers through questionnaire and conducted an interview of five student teachers.

On the basis of responses given, we analyzed by qualitative way. The findings are as follows.

- 1) On the basis of skin colour, the experience was asked; student teachers mentioned their positive as well as negative experiences. Due to fair colour, they were treated well by their peer as well as the teachers, always healthy responses by others. Learning environment became very positive.

The students with Indian black / unfair colour, felt very sad due to discrimination in selection of extracurricular activities, never selected for the same, Some were judged by colour in interviews & the oral exams. Sometimes they experienced the dominance of the fair colour students. Some student said that color doesn't matter in education.

- 2) During the training period the some student teachers felt very comfort due to fair color because of good co-operation by peer, school children during lesson, some mentioned that fair color became identity. This experiences boasted their confidence in all.

Due to black color, maximum student teachers felt low confidence, low self esteem, insecure. They experienced discrimination due to color thought the year. Students who were interviewed said that 'Beauty still matters instead of Brain.'

- 3) At school level, on the basis of caste, some student teachers get educationally benefited by the scholarships form government. This supported them to come into mainstream of education.

Some open category students mentioned that, due to social reservation they were suffered; they missed the opportunities in education. Many reserve category

students responded that due to low caste, friendship broken, teacher treated biased. Peers commented on caste, neglected in the society.

- 4) When the student teachers were asked their experiences on the basis of caste, they were very open to answer.

During teacher training program, On the basis of caste, student teachers experienced that friends do not compare caste; the peer groups are formed accordingly. Some felt a caste-political environment, which is supportive for multicultural education.

Social reservation and the facilities given by the Government, results in the discrimination in the minds of the student teachers. Many open category student teachers felt that due to reservation policy, they get affected. Friendship is formed according to caste, open (Brahmin) category student teachers are dominated.

Some students do not have any experience due to their caste during their education life.

- 5) On the basis of religion, before the training period, student teachers who enjoyed academically with other religion, tried to inculcate values as learnt through, different religion get educationally benefited.

Some student Teachers mentioned that, they were treated biased by the teacher due to religion, negative experiences by the peers, schools based on the religion only so suffered. Students from minority class felt some individual problems.

- 6) During training program, many student teachers were interested to mention some good experiences on the basis of religion. They got opportunity to present their religion through college programs. They met different cultural student and made lot of friends from other religion. It helps to create a good environment for Integrity and multicultural education.

Some student teachers, especially from Muslim community were suffered from peer and teachers. Due to religious gap, peer student teacher didn't share Tiffin! not involved in religious activities.

- 7) On the basis of language (Mother tongue) the experiences of student teachers before training were asked, some mentioned that, due to diverged and multilingual culture, confidence automatically boosted; that helps for wide friend circle and benefited to improve vocabulary.

Many students felt language barriers so they were not adjusted in peer group also.

- 8) During training program, many student teacher benefited by bilingual experience, but students from English language were suffered due to lecture in Marathi language. The student teacher from Marathi language as a mother tongue felt language barrier which became into less exposure, not adjusted in group. It results in less confidence to express !

Language matters in the inclusion Integrate for multicultural education.

- 9) Student teachers form urban area got lot of educational facilities during their school and college education. They were aware much more due to urban region.
- 10) While interview, some student teachers mentioned that, during their school & college life learning resources were not available in the rural part; also not aware of further education system. Due to students from different region, some were got benefited to understand the culture, to improve personality.

11 CONCLUSIONS:

Based on the responses through questionnaire and interview, student teachers were very open regarding their experiences, they expected anti-bias education which is nothing but multicultural education.

- There is cultural diversity on the basis of colour, religion, caste, language and region. Though our constitution promotes this diversity for integrity, the student teachers have negative experiences in the formal education system. Teachers and the peers also biased on the basis of colour, caste and religion. The students are dominated and discriminated by the peer and teachers too!
- Still we are having the problems of caste and religion in education at some extent. This is a major obstacle for the promotion of multicultural education in Teacher Education. To promote multicultural education in schools and society we should have competent teachers who should have the approach of the same. To prepare such competent teachers its becomes our urgent need to promote multicultural education in Teacher Education program.
- Student- Teachers having personal experiences with diversity, along with the opportunity for appropriate processing of these experiences, may be critical to their developing greater multicultural awareness and sensitivity.

- The curriculum needs to be reformed with inclusion of curriculum theory and historical inquiry so that bias in textbooks, media, and other educational materials can be detected easily by educators, students, and other stakeholders.
- Equity pedagogy aims at achieving fair and equal educational opportunities for all of the children, including socio-economically disadvantaged and ethnic minorities in the micro cultures. It attempts to transform the total school and college environment, especially the hidden curriculum that is expressed in student teacher expectations.

11 IMPLICATION AND SUGGESTIONS:

It is essential to diversify, faculty and staff, providing mentoring support.

A paradigm shift is required to meet the challenges of implementing multicultural education in teacher preparation program.

Teacher Education program must enable prospective teachers to understand their own insecurities, biases and prejudices.

Multicultural Education is an urgent need as results will produce healthy classroom environments for minority students or deprived class.

Teacher Education institutions should teach teacher to be aware about cultural, racial and ethnic differences.

REFERENCES

- Bulter, J., & Schmitz, B. (1992). *Ethnic students, women's studies, and multiculturalism. Change, 37-41.*
- Chisholm, I. M. (1994). *Preparing teachers for multicultural classrooms. The Journal of Education Issues of Language Minority Students, 14, 43-68.*
- Contreras, A.R. (1988). *Multicultural attitudes and knowledge of education students at Indiana university. A paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New Orleans.*
- Davies, R. & Ferguson, J. (1997). *Teachers' views of the role of initial teacher education in developing their professionalism. Journal of Education for Teaching, 23(1), 39-57.*
- Dottin, E. S. (1984). *Enhancing multicultural perspectives in teacher education through the foundations of education. Teacher Education Quarterly, 2 (2), 46-52.*
- Ladson-Billing, G. (1999). *Preparing teachers for Diversity. In L. Darling-Hammond & G. Sykes (Eds.), Teaching as the learning profession (pp. 86-123). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.*
- Olstad, R. G., Foster, C. D., & Wyman, R. M. (1983). *Multicultural education for preservice teachers. Integrated Education, 21, 137-139.*
- Hui-Min Chou (2007), *Multicultural Teacher Education: Toward a Culturally Responsible Pedagogy, Essays in Education Volume 21, Summer 2007 pp.139-162*
- Patadia Harsha and Thomas Michael (2002), *Multicultural Aspects of Mathematics Teacher Education Programmes, Mathematics Teacher Education and Development, 2002, Vol. 4, 56-66*
- Pai Pushpa (2007), *Multilingualism, Multiculturalism and Education: Case Study of Mumbai City , Essays in Education Volume 21, Summer 2007*
- Zeichner, K.M. (1993, February). *Educating teachers for cultural diversity (NCRTL special report). East Lansing, MI: National Center for Research on Teacher Learning. (ERIC Document Reproduction No. ED 359 167)*