

**MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION: A COMPARATIVE  
STUDY OF INDIA AND CANADA**

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**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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## Certificate

Certified that the dissertation entitled **Multicultural Education: A Comparative Study of India and Canada**, submitted by **Dipak Kumar Gupta**, is in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy** of this University. This dissertation has not been submitted for any other degree of this University, or any other University and is his own work.

We recommend that this dissertation may be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

**Prof. S.C. Ghosh**  
Chairperson

**Prof. Karuna Chanana**  
Supervisor

*to my parents*

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On the occasion of the completion of this work I take upon the opportunity to record my gratitude to persons who have been of immense help to me at various stages.

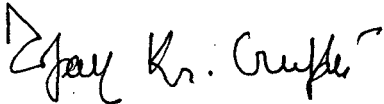
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Dipak Kumar Gupta

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# **INTRODUCTION**

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Every culture attempts to perpetuate itself through deliberate transmission of what is considered the most worthwhile knowledge, belief, skills, behaviour and attitudes. This deliberate transmission of culture is called education. Durkheim (1922) saw the major function of education as the transmission of society's norms and values. In simple non-literate societies, education is not organized as a separate activity; it is provided by the family, the kin group and the society as a whole through participation in their everyday routines of living. In more developed societies, formal education acquires greater importance and most cultural transmission takes place within the confines of specially arranged institutions.

However, education in plural societies differs from ethnically homogenous contexts in so far as it assumes the additional task of socializing for national cohesion or alternatively separatism (Moodley, 1992:14). Young (1990) views the role of education in a socially and culturally diverse society not only as enculturative but also as acculturative. This means that in such types of society a majority of the students learn their own culture (enculturation) and children belonging to minority group attempt to grasp a new and different i.e., dominant culture (acculturation).

But the acculturative function of education in culturally diverse western societies has come under attack from the minority ethnic groups who think that the underlying ideology behind this process is assimilationist. Since the 1960s, the western countries have witnessed Civil Rights movement, anti-racist movements and ethnic revitalization movements which have forced these nations to review their assimilationist educational policies. As a result, the western nations have done a number of experiments in the field of education which are known as 'intercultural education, multi-cultural education, anti-racist education etc.

This chapter provides a brief history of development of multicultural education in western nations. The chapter begins with a definition of ethnicity and a description of the factors responsible for the emergence of ethnic revival movements. The relationship between the socio-cultural background of students and their educational achievement has also been discussed. It also discusses assimilationist ideology and cultural pluralism approach.

The focus on issues of cultural diversity has increased in intensity over the recent years as there has been an emergence of ethnic revival movements in virtually all parts of the world. The term 'cultural diversity' denotes the



presence within one geographical area of a number of different cultural dimensions: linguistic, credal, racial etc. (Lynch, Modgil and Modgil, 1992:8).

Almost all countries whether in Asia or Europe, have either witnessed or have been witnessing ethnic revival movements, ethnic conflict, and Civil Rights Movements. In some cases these have led to the disintegration of nation-states as in the case of Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia. The societies of Western Europe and North America have been facing problems arising out of cultural diversity. These have been compounded by the arrival of a large numbers of new immigrants in the post-war period. That influx and consequent demographic change have thrust a new concept of cultural pluralism and forced these societies to re-examine their fundamental cultural values and assumptions.

Even those countries which have achieved their independence only in recent years, are not free from problems originating from ethnic revival movements. A number of countries in Africa and Asia including India can be cited as examples. Even apparently homogenous religious societies are by no means free from the conflicts arising out of political, ethnic, linguistic and other forms of cultural diversity.

Prior to the emergence of ethnic revival movements, the nations characterized by ethnic, racial and cultural diversity were dominated by assimilationist ideology. A major goal of these movements was to change social, political, economic and educational institutions to make them more representative. The rise and popularity of ethnicity is now a firmly established fact of modern society as is evident from the emergence of ethnic revival movements. In response to ethnic revival movements cultural pluralism approach has emerged as an alternative to the assimilationist theory. Cultural pluralism is a process of compromise characterized by mutual appreciation and respect between two or more ethnic groups. While the liberal assimilationist ideology considered ethnic attachments and ethnicity as inconsistent with modernization and technological culture, the cultural pluralists gave importance to ethnicity and hence there was an emergence of consciousness of ethnicity in the western nations.

### **The Rise of Ethnicity**

Brass (1991:18) says that there are three ways of defining ethnic groups: in terms of objective attributes, with reference to subjective feelings and in relation to behaviour. An objective definition assumes that though no specific attribute is invariably associated with all ethnic categories, there must be some distinguishing cultural

features that clearly separates one group of people from another. Oommen (1990:10) says that the crucial attribute of an ethnic is shared culture. He further says that ethnics are a people who share a common history tradition, language and life style. However, ethnicity is not a single trait or a rigid category. Rather, it is a complex of interrelated factors such as nationality, language, cultural traditions and values, racial characteristics (e.g., skin colour), religion, socio-economic status, and educational level (Young, 1990:169). Thus an ethnic group is a group of people within a larger society that is socially distinguished or set apart by others on the basis of racial and/or cultural characteristics, such as religion, language and tradition.

However, there is a distinction between race and ethnicity. The word race connotes biological or genetic purity or exclusiveness. But ethnic group denotes socio-cultural and sometimes biocultural distinctions among groups. An ethnic group is not a race, if we take race in the anthropological sense as a group of people with common physical characteristics (Francis quoted from Punekar, 1974). Thus the concept of ethnicity has always been associated with small groups. It was believed by social scientists that the consciousness of ethnicity, ethnic attachments are prevalent only in small societies. It was

believed that attachments to ethnic and cultural groups will not be of any importance in modern industrial society. Sociologists have always been interested in the theme of evolution from small face-to-face communities or *Gemeinschaft*, to large complex and impersonal societies, or *Gesellschaft*. It was assumed that in this process ethnic identity and ethnicity will be abolished. This perspective dominated early social theory from Saint Simon and Comte to Spencer and Durkheim and was later revived by British Anthropologists and American Functionalists from Radcliffe-Brown to Parsons. With it of course went the belief that ethnicity was a thing of the past (Smith 1986:153). Flors and Elliott (1992:49) express similar opinion in saying that "it was thought that after coming into contact with the forces of modernisation -mass education, mass -communication and mass consumerism - ethnic differences and ethnic affiliation will be things of past."

But predictions of the decline of ethnicity have been inaccurate. Ethnicity has become a major theme in social sciences. Throughout the world there has been an increasing awareness of ethnicity. Ethnic minorities are experiencing nothing short of a remarkable resurgence as a social force to be reckoned with. The rise and popularity of ethnicity is now a firmly established fact of modern society. Ethnic

revival movements have become a common feature of modern societies.

Banks (1986:4) has traced the emergence of ethnic revitalization movements to the democratic ideology of the western nations. According to him, when the ethnic revitalization movements emerged in the 1960s, the western nations were characterized by tremendous ethnic, cultural and racial diversity. These nations were dominated by an assimilationist ideology. A major goal of these nations was to create a nation-state dominated by one culture - the Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic. Cultural assimilation is a process in which persons of diverse ethnic and racial backgrounds come to interact free of constraints, in the life of the larger community. It is a one way process through which members of an ethnic group give up their original culture and are absorbed into the core culture which predominates in the host society (Bennett, 1990:86). Park and Burgess (1921: 735) define assimilation as a process of interpretation and fusion in which persons and groups acquire the memories, sentiments and attitudes of other person or groups, and by sharing their experiences and history are incorporated with them in common cultural life. It is a one way process by which members of an ethnic group give up their original culture and are absorbed into the core culture, that predominates in the host society.

Cultural assimilation theory has been a strong theme throughout the history of the western countries. But since the 1960s cultural assimilation theory has been criticized by social scientist and ethnic groups. Cultural pluralism has emerged as an alternative to the assimilationist theory in the recent past.

#### **Assimilationsist Ideology Vs. Cultural Pluralism**

The assimilationist ideology that dominated the western nations was based upon a liberal ideology which believes that in order for this kind of equitable, modernized society to emerge and blossom, individuals must be freed of their ethnic and cultural attachments (Banks, 1986:3). Liberals are critical of traditionalism on the ground that it promotes inequality, racial and ethnic awareness and ethnic stratification. Thus assimilation of ethnic groups in western nations has been viewed by social scientists as a proper and inevitable goal. Not only social scientists and policy makers, but ethnic groups and leaders also accepted assimilation as the main goal because of the powerful economic and political incentives involved. Thus there has been a tendency among ethnic groups in the western nations to assimilation because of the strong appeal of social and economic mobility. The desire to attain social and economic mobility motivated many citizens of the western nations to

renounce their ethnic cultures and traditionalism. Liberal assimilationist ideology proved quite successful in the U.S.A., Canada, Australia and other western nations where divergent ethnic groups were unified by an overarching set of ideals and ethos shared by them.

The liberal assimilationist ideology has been quite predominant in the U.S.A.. For a long time. The melting pot ideology meant a fusion of various elements into a new homogenized whole. It was believed that all the cultural and ethnic groups will interact with each other which will result into the emergence of a new culture which will draw its elements from all the cultures and not only from the predominant culture. The underlying assumption behind this ideology was that all the cultural and ethnic groups will have equal share in this process and a minority of ethnic groups will not necessarily have to adapt to dominant culture. However, in practice this has to a major extent resulted in an adaptation of all other groups to the predominant Anglo-Saxon Culture (Oudenhaven and Willimsen, 1989).

Liberal assimilationist ideology went virtually unchallenged for quite a long time in the western nations. But since the 1960s these nations are facing problems related to ethnic and cultural pluralism. And now, the

'melting - pot theory' stands discredited as other ethnic groups (other than white Anglo-Saxons) have rejected it because of its assimilationist ideology.

Banks (1956:4) is of the opinion that the gross discrepancy between ideals and the reality of western democratic nations and the rising expectations of victimised racial and ethnic groups have created ethnic protests and racial movements. The ideology of western democratic societies is egalitarian maintaining implying thereby that the major goal of the state is to protect human rights and promote equality and the structural inclusion of all racial, ethnic and cultural groups in the fabric of society. Thus, the western nations created expectations and goals for excluded ethnic groups but in practice it was impossible for these groups to attain them. Rising expectations outpaced the improvements within the social, economic and political systems. Racism, discrimination and structural exclusion experienced by ethnic groups served as vehicles of political mobilization. As a result there was an emergence of ethnic revitalization movements in the western nations. These movements were triggered by the Civil Rights movements led by blacks in the United States. The movement begun by American blacks echoed throughout the world.

The scope and intensity of the ethnic protest movements



during the 1960s and 1970s revealed that the liberal ideology that dominated western nations had serious shortcomings. This forced the leaders of the western nations to review the liberal assimilationist ideology. In recent years, the theory of cultural pluralism has emerged as an alternative to the melting pot theory. The concept of cultural pluralism was developed in the early twentieth century by democratic philosopher Kallen (1924) who wrote that each ethnic group had the right to retain its own heritage. In a culturally pluralistic society, members of different ethnic groups are permitted to retain many of their cultural ways as long as they conform to those practices deemed necessary for the survival of the society as a whole. The concept of pluralism, thus, has emerged as a respectable alternative to the theory of assimilation (Singh, 1990:22).

Cultural pluralism has direct implications for the educational system. This is being reflected in the diversity of backgrounds of students in different educational institutions. Student diversity includes a number of different dimensions: ethnicity, language, race, religion, class and gender. Educational institutions have taken steps to reflect ethnic diversity and promote equality. An educational system like an other institution of a society does not exist in a vacuum but is interlinked with other

institutions of the society. So any change in society is bound to affect educational institutions. That is why the nature and scope of education have changed in recent years, largely, in response to demographic political and social pressures. It is argued that unless educational system is restructured in accordance with the increasing student diversity, the very purpose of education, which is to develop human potential and equality of opportunity, will be defeated.

#### **Culture and Education**

In this context we may refer to Pierre Bourdieu, Raymond Boudon, Basil Bernstein, among others, who have emphasized that there is a close relationship between educational achievement of a student and his social and cultural background. According to them unless the differences in the cultural backgrounds of students are taken into account, education, instead of promoting equality, will only reproduce the culture of the dominant class.

Bourdieu (1977:87) refers to the dominant culture as 'Cultural Capital' which can be translated through the educational system into wealth and power. He says that the educational process of differential elimination according to social class (leading at every moment, to a determinate

distribution of competences within the various categories of survivors) is the product of the continuous action of the factors which define the positions of the different classes with regard to the school system, i.e., cultural capital and class ethos; and on the other hand, because these factors are converted and cashed at every stage of the school career, into a particular constellation of relay factors, different in structure for each category considered (social class or sex). Thus middle-class students have higher success rates than working class students because middle-class subculture is closer to the dominant culture. Thus social inequality is reproduced in the educational system and as a result is legitimated. Boudon (1973) also maintains that there is a close relationship between social class and educational attainment. He says that differences in values and attitudes between social classes produce inequality of educational opportunity. He argues that inequality of educational opportunity is produced by a 'two-component process'. The first component 'primary stratification' involves subcultural differences between social classes which are produced by the stratification system. According to him the secondary effects of stratification are probably more important. The secondary effects stem simply from a person's actual position in the class-structure, hence Boudon uses the term positional theory to describe his

explanation. He maintains that even if there were no subcultural differences between classes, the very fact that people start at different positions in the class system will produce inequality of educational opportunity. He finds that when the influences of primary effects (subcultural differences) are removed, though class differences in educational attainment are noticeably reduced, they still remain very high. Bernstein (1974: 150) uses differences in speech codes to account in part for differences in educational attainment. He says that formal education is conducted in terms of an elaborated code. This places the working class child at a disadvantage because he is limited to the restricted code'. Where children are limited to a restricted code, primarily because of the sub-culture and role-systems of the family, community and work, we can expect a major problem of educability whose source lies not so much in the genetic code but in the culturally determined communication code.

It is against this background that the need for multicultural education may be understood. The major goal of multicultural education is the development of the intellectual, social and personal growth (Bennett, 1990) Multicultural education helps to create such an atmosphere in educational institutions as would enable all the students

to develop their potential.

### **What is Multicultural Education**

Defining multicultural education is not an easy task. A leading Austrian critic, Brian Bullivant, has claimed, "There is no agreed body of ideas about multicultural education or the philosophy of multiculturalism; instead there is a very confused number of definitions and competing ideas about these very important issues" (Fleras & Elliott, 1992: 187).

However, it can be said that multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning that is based upon diverse values and beliefs, and seeks to foster cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies. Bennett (1990:3) says that a comprehensive definition of multicultural education includes the following four dimension of multicultural education: the movement., the curriculum approach, the process of becoming and the commitment.

1. The movement is towards achieving equality of educational opportunity and equity.
2. The curriculum approach develops knowledge and understanding about cultural differences.
3. The process is one whereby a person develops competence in multiple ways of perceiving, evaluating, believing

4. The commitment is to combat racism and other forms of discrimination through the development of appropriate attitudes and skills.

Fleras and Elliott (1992:184) define multicultural education in the following terms. Multicultural education encompasses a variety of policies, programmes and practices that entail the management of diversity within the school setting. It includes processes associated with the formation of a healthy identity, cultural preservation, intercultural sensitivity, awareness of racism, and cross-cultural communication. James Banks (1992:90) maintains that "multicultural education is largely a way of viewing reality and way of thinking and not just content about various cultures and groups.

Thus, it may be stated that multicultural education entails some degree of responsiveness to the presence of student diversity within the school environment. This is because the educational systems committed to provide equal opportunity for all will take account of the cultural reality of all learners (Burke, 1984:8). Multicultural education was part of the reform movements of the 1960s, in both Europe and America. The first educational programmes that talked about cultural diversity were the outcomes of the civil rights movement of the 1960, and 1970s (Banks, 1993).

Much of the response to ethnic protest took place in the schools and universities, in part because these institutions included a range of constituencies (including ethnic groups) and in part because they were seen as powerful symbols and bastions of the status that had participated in the oppression of ethnic groups. They were consequently viewed as potentially powerful vehicles that could play a pivotal role in their liberation (Banks and Lynch, 1986). According to Banks, multicultural education was part of the reform movements of the 1960s in both Europe and America. Grinter (1992), while supporting Banks' argument, says that it was a pragmatic movement, dedicated in the UK to removing such obstacles to Black students operating effectively in the education system due to lack of language facility and an ethnocentric curriculum.

Thus the ideology of cultural assimilation which prevailed within the school system of the Western nations before 1960s was replaced by the ideology of multiculturalism, largely in response to the ethnic revitalization movements. The nature and scope of education have also changed in recent years in response to demographic, political and social pressures. The monolithic focus of the past has been replaced by a formal acceptance of diversity as a legitimate component of the educational system. The effect of this ideological shift has appeared

in a variety of domains including text-books, teachers, resource personnel, curricula, supervisors and administrators. Reforms in areas such as these have emboldened educational institutions to combat racism, overcome discriminatory barriers, foster an appreciation for ethnocultural diversity, improve intercultural understanding and communication and enforce the equality of minority students.

Besides ethnic revitalization movements, there are other factors also which have contributed to the development of multicultural education. The need for academic excellence and equality is one of them. It has been felt that educational excellence in our schools cannot be achieved without educational equality. Equality in education means equal opportunity for all students to develop to their fullest potential. Potentials may differ and at times equality requires different treatment according to different background. Multicultural education helps in the development of the intellectual, social and personal growth of all students to their highest potential.

The realization by the educators all over the world that the learning style of a student is determined to a large extent by his culture has also contributed to the growth of multicultural education. It is nearly impossible



to understand how people learn without knowing how they perceive things or what meanings they give to their perceptual experiences and how these experiences in turn affect their styles of thinking. Culture plays a crucial role in determining what meanings people assign to their experiences, the contents of what is learned as well as how learning occurs (Young). Successive researches have demonstrated beyond doubt that family, class and education form an important relationship (Craft, 1970: 3)

Bennett (1990:158) identifies five cultural factors that appear to have an effect on learning style. One is the socialization process. The more control a society exercises over its children the more field independent they become. A second factor is socio-cultural tightness. The more the established social structures exert pressure to conform, the more field dependent are its people. Third is the factor of ecological adaptation. In some societies survival depends upon keen observations of the environment. These environment produces people with highly developed perceptual skills. A fourth factor is biological effect, particularly nutrition and physical development. Finally, language, exerts an independent influence on learning style.

Thus, the above mentioned factors have led to the emergence of multicultural education. Gradually, multicultural education has become quite popular and a

number of countries, particularly Western countries, have adopted the policy of multiculturalism as well as multicultural education.

The USA experienced a series of events related to race relations during the 50s and 60s that deeply influenced American society and the education of its ethnic groups. Educators responded by establishing specialized ethnic studies and programmes that focused on specific ethnic groups. These programmes became known as inter-group or intercultural education.

However, because of the hurried and superficial ways in which many of the reforms were implemented during the 1960s and 1970s, they often failed to become institutionalized within schools and colleges (Fyfe and Figueroa, 1993). Educators began to realize that incorporating ethnic content into the curriculum was necessary but not sufficient to help ethnic minority youths to experience educational equality. Consequently, ethnic studies evolved into a larger educational movement that included the teaching of ethnic content as well as changes in aspects of the school environment. This movement became known as multicultural education.



Educational policies in the UK have adapted to ethnic diversity in several ways. The initial response to cultural diversity was to emphasize assimilation. A more recent approach, however, has been to recognize, accept and celebrate cultural differences. The movement towards a greater understanding and recognition of and respect for ethnic minority cultures continued during the 1970s. This deeper and more widespread sensitivity to diversity was progressively reflected in educational practice and came to be termed as multicultural education.

With the formal adoption of multiculturalism in November 1978 as its official ideology of pluralism, after years of assimilationist and integrationist policies towards immigrants, the Australian Liberal Party launched Australia into a path already followed by several other western societies. It also endorsed multicultural education.

Other western countries like France, Sweden, the Netherlands, Switzerland also have adopted policies of multicultural education. Thus multicultural education which was part of the Civil Rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s became popular in the course of time. In addition to ethnic revitalization movements other factors like the issue of academic excellence, democratic ideals etc. have contributed to the growth of multicultural education

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throughout the world. Canada, too, could not remain isolated from the developments that were taking place in the realm of education largely in response to ethnic revival movements. Canadian government introduced the policy of multiculturalism which paved the way for the emergence of multicultural education in Canada. Today, a number of policies and programmes are being implemented by Canadian Government to encourage the spread of multicultural education. We will discuss these policies and programmes in the next chapter.

#### **Purpose of the Study**

India and Canada are similar in a number of respects. Both are plural societies and both have had regional movements based on ethnic, religious and linguistic differences. Canada and India have some common experiences in the course of their economic development also. For instance regional imbalances and unequal economic growth have generated a lot of discontent in both countries.

Hence, the comparative study of the education systems of the two countries will prove immensely useful in finding ways to improve our education system in an effective manner. Holmes (1984) identified the aims and purposes of the comparative education as both theoretical - to improve our understandings of education as such, and in particular our

own national problems in education - and practical - it should help administrators to reform their schools more effectively and efficiently.

Through its concentration upon problems, themes and topics, common to a number of societies, comparative educational study offers an alternative focus for analysis and interpretation of difficulties within the educational context in one country. Against this backdrop the importance of present study can be understood.

#### **The Research Problem**

This research will make a comparative study of the educational system of India and Canada. Let us briefly discuss the social structure and educational systems of both the countries so that we may have an idea of what we are going to deal with in subsequent chapters.

Canada has always been an ethnically culturally and linguistically diverse society. But in the 20th century the diversity in Canadian society has increased due to large scale immigration. Prior to European contact native people constituted 50 percent of the total population. Then immigration of the French, German, Dutch started. After 1967 a significant number of non-white people were permitted

to settle in Canada. BY 1971 they constituted 25.3 percent of overall population.

India also has been a country characterized by cultural, linguistic and ethnic diversity. The diversity, a basic feature of Indian society runs through various religions, castes, tribes, languages social customs etc.

Though Canada has long prided itself on being a mosaic of different cultures and ethnic groups the assumption of the dominant British group was that the immigrants admitted to the country would and should estimate with the British group (Mallea and Young, 1984)

In Indian context also some social scientists, for example, Oommen (1990:66) argues that there is an effort to create a cultural mainstream constituted by the Hindi speaking populace reducing the numerous collectivities of the periphery to the status of marginals.

Ethnic groups and their leaders in Canada accepted assimilation as it involved powerful political and economic incentives. But in the 1960s with the emergence of the Civil Rights Movement in the U.S.A and other European countries there was an awakening of ethnic consciousness in Canada also. It led to the emergence of ethnic revival movements. In response to the ethnic movements in Canada,

the federal government of Canada, set up the Royal Commission on Linguism and Culturalism in 1963 to recommend steps to develop the Canadian confederation in order to taking into account the contribution made by other ethnic groups to the cultural enrichment of Canada.

In October 1971, the federal government proclaimed a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework (English and French). In 1988, the Canadian government introduced Canadian Multiculturalism Act thereby proclaiming the policy of multiculturalism as an official policy.

Keeping in view the diversity of Indian society, Constitution makers have laid down several provisions in the Indian Constitution. The Indian Constitution recognized eighteen major languages for official purpose. It enjoins upon the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother-tongue at the primary stage of education to children belonging to linguistic minority groups (Article 350 (A)). The linguistic problem of India is much more complex. The official list does not reflect the linguistic diversity of Indian society in a faithful manner. The issue of official language has been a perennial source of controversy in India.

In Canada, issues of culture led to the shift in control of education at confederation from the national to

the provincial arena to allow the greatest freedom of expression of differences. However, there is no single model of multiculturalism in Canada and alternative programmes in multicultural education have been established. Various educational institutions at the level of higher education have multicultural or ethnic studies programme.

In India although multicultural education has not been adopted several provisions have been made by the Government to take care of the needs of all cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups. The government has followed a policy of positive discrimination, i.e. reservation for traditionally oppressed and backward classes and provided them with a number of incentives. Education in India has been put in the concurrent list of the Indian Constitution so that the states might formulate their educational programmes, curriculae etc. in accordance with the needs and socio-cultural backgrounds of people.

Thus, it can be seen that India and Canada share some similarities in respect of their social structures. However, there is no denying the fact that they are different in a numbers of respects as well. We will compare social structures and the education systems of both the countries in a detailed manner in subsequent chapters. Its



main purpose will be to find out whether multicultural education, which is being implemented in Canada has any relevance for Indian context.

### **Conceptual Framework**

An understanding of multicultural education cannot be considered apart from the dynamics of education in general. "Educational concerns revolve largely around the absorption of youth into the political, social and economic field from daily routine to pedagogical styles and culminating with decision making at the top. The content and organization of education are geared to facilitate the cultural indoctrination and social control of students through schooling, in other words, the reproduction of ideological and social order is realized without much public fanfare (Fleras and Elliott, 1992:188). Consciously or not, however, the educational system ends up perpetuating the social status quo and prevailing power distributions (Apple, 1979). As a part of the superstructure, the educational system is ultimately shaped by the infrastructure.

The notion of social reproduction imposes a set of constraints regarding the potential of multicultural education. Multicultural education suggests reform of existing institutions rather than a revolutionary change in the structure of society. Thus, the evaluation of the

impacts of multicultural education has to be done within this framework.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is multicultural education as understood in the Canadian context?
2. Keeping in view their multicultural social reality what policies, programmes and strategies have been enunciated in the two countries?
3. How have educational policies in both the countries conceptualized pluralistic reality?

### **Methodology**

It is an exploratory study which will mainly be based on review of literature. Publications of the ministry of education, census etc. will be used.

The research design which will be used in this study has been suggested by Bereday (1984). The first stage involves the collection of information about both the systems in order to gain a breadth of perception about education systems. The second stage encompasses interpretation and evaluation of the previously described systems. The third stage entails looking closely at similarities and differences in the data analyzed in the

second stage. By means of simultaneous comparison, conclusion are drawn.

### **Plan of the Study**

The entire study has been divided into four chapters. First chapter is introductory in nature, which in addition to giving the idea about research objectives, methodology, etc. has dealt with the concepts of multiculturalism, multicultural education and ethnicity. The second chapter will focus on social structure, education system and multicultural education in Canada. In the third chapter, Indian social structure and education system will be discussed. The policies and programmes enunciated by Indian government will also be reviewed in this chapter. In the fourth and concluding chapter there will be comparison of educational systems, policies and programmes of both the countries.

# **MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN CANADA**

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As mentioned earlier Canada has always been an ethnically, culturally and linguistically diverse society. But in the 20th century, the diversity in Canadian society has increased greatly due to largescale immigration. The cultural diversity has direct implications for the educational system. Education in a culturally diverse society is different from education in a homogenous society in its functions and forms. Over the years, in response to cultural diversity, Canadian policy-makers have initiated a number of educational programmes, policies and strategies. This chapter begins with the description of different dimensions or diversity in Canadian society. The educational policies, programmes and strategies which Canadian government has enunciated in response to cultural diversity will also be evaluated and examined in this chapter. An effort will be made to review language policies also, as language is as important part of the learning process.

Diversity, which has been basic feature of Canadian society, has been described by different scholars in different ways. Burnet (1984:18) believes that Canada has always been an ethnically heterogeneous society. Even before contact with Europeans, the 250,000 to 300,000 inhabitants of what is now Canada constituted about 50 societies belonging to a dozen linguistic groups. Katz (1974:21) says

that although Canada is officially a bilingual and bicultural society based on the fact that the English and French were two founding peoples, it is in reality a multicultural society. Roberts and Clifton (1990:121) also draw attention to the diversity of Canadian society. According to them any review of the statistics on self-reported ethnic group membership makes it clear that Canada is a multi ethnic society. This evident ethnic pluralism is a feature that Canada shares with other nations and one that distinguishes Canada as a modern society.

Other writers like Dreidger (1978:9) and Porter (1965) have drawn the analogy of mosaic to describe the diversity of Canadian society. Dreidger says that the analogy of the mosaic to describe the Canadian plural society is useful in answering three questions: How are the tiles in the mosaic distributed? Do the tiles all have equal influence, or do some dominate others because of their size or because of the way in which they cluster in the total design, and what would be missing if they no longer remained distinctive?

It is widely believed that Canada is likely to become increasingly diverse due to recent influx of refugees and immigrants from countries outside of Europe. Demographic trends increasingly push in the direction of enhancing the pluralist nature of the country (McAndrew, 1991;

Tepper, 1989, Elliott, 1992). The ethnically and culturally diverse country is also becoming a multiracial society with the liberalization of discriminatory immigration policies in 1962 and the subsequent increase of immigration from third world countries. Thus it has been agreed upon generally by social scientists that Canada is not only a multicultural but also multilingual, multiracial and multiethnic country.

In a country as large as Canada, regional variation is as important as it is inevitable. Dreidger (1978) proposes a detailed regional analysis of the linguistic and cultural realities in Canada in which he distinguishes six main regions. They are the Upper Canada: Anglophones and multiculturalism; the Northlands: multilingualism and multiculturalism (Native Peoples); the West: Anglophones and multiculturalism; the Maritimes: Anglophones and Anglo-culturalism; and New Brunswick; bilingualism and biculturalism.

From a sociological viewpoint, the heterogeneity associated with the various kinds of pluralism creates an organizational problem that can be identified as the conflict between assimilation and pluralism. The government of Canada has endeavoured to resolve this dilemma by adopting the policy of multiculturalism. The emergence of multiculturalism as a formal instrument for managing

diversity is widely recognised as Canada's outstanding contribution to the field of race and ethnic relations. It has been praised as a bold and unprecedented move in many ways, resting on the yet unproved assumption that national unity and social cohesion can be moulded by integrating differences into a societal framework instead of denying them (Fleras and Elliott, 1992;2). The Canadian policy of multiculturalism had implications for education also.

The major social and political consequences of the new demographic reality have made it necessary to promote multicultural education. The educational institutions responding to demographic, political and social pressures were forced to change the nature and scope of education. As a result of this the policy of multicultural education was introduced in Canada. Various provinces have introduced a number of multicultural educational policies and programmes. These multicultural educational policies, programmes and provisions will be discussed later in this chapter. First we present a demographic overview of racial and ethnic diversity in Canada.

#### **Population Composition**

One of the most typical characteristics of Canadian society is that it is an ethnic mosaic which varies with territoriality: i.e, the diversity of ethnic groups is



rather unevenly dispersed throughout the nation. In a very real sense, then, the social structure of Canada is partially founded on ethnocultural cohesion within the various groups and the varying forms of ethnic social organisation that exist among the groups (Herberg, 1989:87).

Even before contact with Europeans Canada was a country characterized by diversity. Thereafter immigration of the French, German, Dutch, Ukrainians started. After world war II immigration resumed with an influx of Italian, German, British, Dutch and the Polish people. During the 60's Canada had a booming economy and hence it needed immigrants to meet the needs of the complex, industrialised and urbanized society. After 1967 a significant number of non-white people were permitted to settle in Canada. By 1971 they constituted 25.3 percent of overall population and were referred to as 'the third force' (Mallea and Young, 1984).

Palmer (1984) has divided the history of immigration in four phases-

1. The settlement period and the predominance of Anglo-conformity. During 1867 - 1920:-The proportion of people of other than the British, the French and the native in Canada remained small until nearly the turn of the century. The first main wave of immigration took place between 1896 and 1914. Between 1901 and 1911 Canada's

population rocketed by 43 per cent and percentage of immigrants in the country as a whole topped 22 per cent. During this period the emphasis was on Anglo-conformity. A major national goal was to create a nation-state in which one culture i.e. the Anglo-Saxon was dominant. The diverse ethnic and cultural groups were expected to forsake their original cultures to maintain the cultural hegemony of existing dominant groups.

2. The 1920 and the emergence of melting pot idea:- The 1920 brought second wave of non-British and non-French immigrants to Canada. The proportion of the Canadian population, not of the British or the French origin rose to more than 18 per cent by 1931. This period saw the emergence of melting pot approach. It was believed that all the cultural groups will interact with each other and a new culture will emerge which will draw its elements from all the cultural systems.
3. The 1930s:-Immigration was severely cut back during the depression of the 1930s. During this period there was great discrimination against non-Anglo Saxons.
4. After 1945: The emergence of Multiculturalism:- World War II period and early post-war period was a transitional time with respect to attitudes towards immigration and ethnicity. By 1961, 26 per cent of the Canadian population was of other than British or French origin.

The diversity of ethnic groups in Canada is rather unevenly dispersed throughout the nation which can be explained through differences in settlement patterns (Hiller, 1991:17)

The following table shows the percentage composition of the population for specified ethnic groups in Canada: 1986

**Table I**

	FRENCH	GERMAN	ITALIAN	EAST ABORIGINAL	ASIAN	BRITISH
Canada	26.7	8.1	3.3	6.2	2.3	40.7
New Foundland	6.5	1.1	.2	.3	1.6	86.8
Prince Edward Island	19.0	3.2	.3	.6	.9	72.6
Nova Scotia	15.3	8.3	.8	1.5	1.3	67.3
New Brunswick	38.4	3.1	.4	.6	1.1	53.2
Quebec	78.8	1.0	2.9	1.3	1.2	9.6
Ontario	12.9	8.3	5.8	6.4	1.5	52.2
Manitoba	11.8	15.0	1.2	17.6	6.9	41.2
Saskatchewan	9.3	22.5	0.5	15.6	6.2	41.5
Alberta	9.8	16.0	1.7	12.6	3.5	45.7
British Columbia	8.3	11.4	2.6	7.9	3.5	50.4
Yuken	10.7	10.5	1.0	7.4	15.6	45.4
N.W.Territories	8.2	5.7	0.8	3.8	49.8	27.3

Source: Hiller (1991:8)

## **Language**

Language may be one of the indicators of the diversity of any country. Kehoe (1984:7) has drawn attention to the linguistic diversity of Canadian Society. According to him population by mother tongue figures are accepted as a powerful indicator of cultural diversity and there are over 75 different languages spoken as a first language in Canada.

There are approximately half a million each of German and Italian speaking people. Three hundred thousand speak Ukrainian and a quarter of a million have Chinese as their mothertongue. There are many other language groups in Canada. However, federal government has adopted a policy of biligualism. In October 1971, the federal government of Canada proclaimed a policy of multi culturalism within a bilingual framework (English and French). Thus English and French have been declared official languages for federal purposes in all respects. The federal policy of bilingualism was meant to reaffirm to francophones, located in Quebec and elsewhere, that they were not second class citizens (Hiller, 1991:191). But the policy of bligualism failed to solve the problems arising out of linguistic diversity especially the French-English conflict which is most prominent in Quebec. The following table shows linguistic diversity in different Canadian provinces.

Table II

Percentage Composition of Language First Learned in  
Childhood (Mothertongue) and Language Most  
often spoken at Home by Province, 1986

	ENGLISH		FRENCH		OTHERS	
	Mother- tongue	Home Language	Mother- tongue	Home- Language	Mother- tongue	Home Language
Canada	62.1	68.9	25.1	24.0	12.8	7.0
New Foundland	98.8	99.2	0.5	0.4	0.8	0.4
Prince Edward Island	94.1	96.8	4.7	2.9	1.2	6.4
Nova Scotia	93.8	96.0	4.1	2.9	2.1	2.1
New Brunswick	65.3	68.1	33.5	31.3	1.3	0.6
Quebec	10.4	12.3	82.8	82.8	6.8	4.9
Ontario	78.0	86.6	5.3	3.8	16.7	9.6
Manitoba	73.4	87.2	4.9	2.8	21.8	9.9
Saskatchewan	81.9	93.8	2.3	0.9	15.7	5.3
Alberta	82.3	92.0	2.4	1.1	15.3	6.9
British Columbia	82.1	91.4	1.6	0.6	16.3	8.0
Yuken	89.1	97.0	2.6	1.2	8.3	1.8
NW Territories	55.3	66.2	2.7	1.5	42.0	32.8

Source: Hiller, (1991:20).

In the last two decades, language issues have come to be considered as particularly important in Canadian society. Far beyond their uses as means of communication, languages

have become important symbols of different groups and of their relative positions and oppositions. In recent years, researchers and practitioners have studied and often stressed the importance of language in education. Linguistic abilities and performances may hinder or further the academic progress and social adjustments of students in schools.

In response to these factors linguistic legislation has been passed at both the federal and provincial levels; protective and promoting measures have been implemented for French and for many of the non official languages. Many of these laws and measures deal with the educational sphere. We will review these policies, laws and measures later in this chapter.

### **The Emergence of Multiculturalism**

The word multiculturalism emerged in Canada to counter the word biculturalism as used in terms of reference of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism (1963)" and quickly acquired currency.

In October, 1971 the federal government of Canada proclaimed a policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework (English and French).

Mazurek and Kach (1990:134) have divided the evolution of multicultural policy into three phases -

- 1) World War II proved to be a watershed in the struggle for ethnic minority rights - not just in Canada but internationally.
- 2) Canada's assimilationist ideology by the middle of the 20th century had failed.
- 3) Quiet revolution in Quebec.

The impetus for Canada's multicultural policy, according to them lay in the negative response of immigrant ethnic minorities to the mandate of the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the 1960s. Its intent was to encourage the retention of characteristic cultural features by those groups that desired to do so and to encourage the sharing of these cultural features with other members of the larger Canadian Society. The policy was based upon assumption that an individual who is to be open in ethnic attitudes and have respect for other groups must have confidence in his or her own cultural foundations. In essence the policy asserted that although there are two official languages in Canada, there is no official culture, nor does any ethnic group take precedence over any other (Samuda, Berry and Laferriere, 1984). Multiculturalism as official policy was adopted in response to the challenges posed by the influx of ethnically and racially diverse migrants into Canada (Fleras and Elliott, 1992).

Since the 1960s, Canadian government has passed a number of laws in favour of its policy of multiculturalism. Since 1971, five provinces have announced similar policies. In 1988 the Canadian government introduced Canadian Multiculturalism Act thereby proclaiming multiculturalism as an official policy. The policies of multiculturalism adopted by federal as well as various provincial governments had a far reaching import on Canadian education system.

#### **Emergence of Multicultural Education**

As has been already mentioned that Canada has been a country characterized by ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity from the beginning. If the conception of a multiethnic or multicultural Canada is accepted, it would seem to follow that the public schools of nation ought to reflect this cultural pluralism. Such conclusion follows from the assumption that the publicly supported school systems have to reflect the educational objectives of the entire community, not just the dominant groups (Wilson, 1984:65).

The problem of multicultural society like Canada arises out of the need to strike an appropriate balance between the educational goals of the ethnic minority groups, on the one hand, and those of the larger society, on the other. Since the majority and the minority groups may not agree about the



national purpose of education, and may have divergent interests relative to the social or ethnic stratification in the society, there are conflicting visions of the role that school plays in either reproducing or transforming ethnic/religious/racial inequalities (McAndrew, 1991:130). The well intended policies may foster greater social inequality or lead to increased control by the state over minority groups. The failure of assimilationist schools to achieve equality of access and of outcomes for minority children is the source of a new ideology of multiculturalism.

Because of Canada's federal system of government, each province is responsible for its own educational matters. The responsibility for education in Canada rests with the provincial governments, a responsibility clearly stated in section 93 of the Constitution. The single most important reason for making education a provincial matter was the presence of two nations, lower and upper Canada. Lower Canada (the province of Quebec) overwhelmingly French and Roman Catholic, would never have consented to confederation if their schools were to be removed from provincial control. The plan for confederation would have been impossible unless each province was allowed to retain control of education within its borders (Giles and Proudfoot, 1990: 99).

Prior to the emergence of multicultural education Canadian schools were dominated by assimilationist ideology. The Canadian education system had been actively promoting the norms of the dominant culture, that is Anglo-saxon. The expectation had been that the prevailing cultural and linguistic environment in which learning takes place will, by a process of cultural osmosis, result in assimilation or at least in a measure of accommodation (Burke, 1984). This assimilationist ideology had been advocated in the name of equality. But the assimilationist ideology has been unsuccessful in achieving its objectives. The failure of the assimilationist schools to achieve equality of access and results for minority children has been well documented and is the source of a new ideology of multiculturalism in the schools that consider pluralism as a sine qua non for equality (McAndrew 1991: 131).

The effect of this ideological shift has appeared in a variety of domains including textbooks, teachers, resource, personnel, curricula etc. The assimilationist ideology of education has been replaced by a formal acceptance of diversity as a legitimate component of the educational system. Issues of culture led to the shift in control of education from the national to the provincial arena to allow the greatest freedom of expression of differences. Because of regional linguistic and religious diversity, a variety of

curricular programs and school systems are given public support (Wotherspoon, 1987:4).

However, there is no single model of multicultural education in Canada and alternative programmes in multicultural education have been established. Response of schools to multiculturalism indicate a shift from the earlier assimilationist approach to a greater acceptance of cultural pluralism. The main difference in multicultural policy is between an ethnocultural support service orientation (Ontario and Nova Scotia) and a language based view of multicultural education (Saskatchewan, Alberta and Manitoba) (Moodley, 1986). Courses in multiculturalism are offered to in-service teachers and administrative staff. Curriculum materials are scrutinized for bias and stereotyping.

There are three major types or forms of multicultural education that have most commonly been implemented in Canada (McLeod, 1984:31).

### **Approaches to Multicultural Education**

One type of multicultural education has been the ethnic-specific. This type of ethnocultural education can be said to be precursor of the policy of multiculturalism. Ethnic groups established private schools based on their heritage as a defense mechanism against

assimilation. Part time schools have been the most common instrument for cultural survival. Operating after public school hours and on weekends, these schools teach language and cultural courses in such languages as Chinese, Portuguese, Italian and German.

Ethnic-specific forms of multilateral education have achieved some important purposes. They have increased the sense of identity and security of children belonging to ethnic groups and helped them to bridge the gaps that have existed between their ethnic communities and in larger society. They have enabled many children to cope with both the ethnic culture of their families and community and the cultures beyond (Young, 1979, quoted from McLeod, 1984).

A second major type of multicultural education is problem-oriented. This approach consists of those programmes which are developed to answer specific perceived needs or demands associated with schooling and the assimilation as integration of people of diverse backgrounds. The most common examples of this approach are English as a second language or a second dialect course and compensatory programmes for the disadvantaged.

The next critical aspect of the School ESL (English as a second language) programmes is that they are assimilative, not integrative. They are assimilative in that the stress is

on English as a substitute for the mother-tongue. The increased immigration of people from English-speaking countries whose dialect is quite different from Canadian dialects necessitated the establishment of English as a second dialect (ESD) course. Pre-school programmes were designed for "disadvantaged" children. The fundamental idea was to establish institutional care in order to supplement the disadvantage of environment of the child.

Another form of problem-oriented multicultural education is the anti-discrimination programme. It is usually crisis-connected. Violence, name calling, stereotyping, and other forms of prejudice manifest in the society are countered through crash programmes or units of sensitisation that are made part of the school curriculum. These programmes are often short term and intermittent.

The cultural/intercultural is third major type of multicultural education. The focus is upon developing capabilities that will enable people to live in a pluralistic society, producing individuals who will be capable of transcending the boundaries of their own ethnic cultures. In contrast to problem oriented multicultural education, the cultural/inter cultural-oriented approach is not crisis based, but grounded in a realistic appraisal of the nature of Canadian society.

It is a broad approach to multicultural education and is based upon the fundamentals of the policy of multiculturalism. Although official languages are stressed by the schools, at the same they provide for the instruction in, or the learning of other languages. The cultural intercultural form of multicultural education also provides recognition of other aspects of multiculturalism. Ethnocultural groups view public institutions as supportive of their familiar and ethnic cultures. The school does not ignore the ethnic culture and assists the children to maintain and develop positive self-concepts which play an important role in the process of learning. From an early age, children can learn positive attitudes that will enable them to transcend the boundaries of their ethno-cultural heritages. The cultural/intercultural approach to multicultural education also gives scope for the development of sound concepts of human and Civil rights.

Gibson (1976) found that, depending on the philosophy, programme design, and content, five different models could be identified.

These include the following:

1. Programmes labeled as "benevolent multiculturalism" are aimed at compensating for the disparity between the culture of the school and the home environment.

Compensatory education is based on the principle of Anglo-conformity and is directed at the so-called "culturally deprived" (Reissman, 1976; Banks, 1977).

2. Multiethnic studies, which give encouragement to the study of different cultures are widely accepted by some as the fostering of intercultural understanding (Baptiste, 1977; Grant 1977).
3. Cultural pluralism, in which both the culture of the host society and that of the new comer group are emphasised, increases the power of minority groups and decreases the chances of cultural assimilation (Gibson, 1976, Grant, 1977).
4. Biculturalism gives recognition to the fact that the language and way of the life of school and home/community are different but are worthwhile.
5. Multicultural education as a normal human experience extends the schooling and the curriculum to include all the formal and informal life learning experiences.

The lack of consensus as to the philosophy of multicultural education has led to variations also in the statement of objectives for existing programmes. That is why there is no single model of multicultural education in Canada and alternative programmes in multicultural education

have been established. There are a number of different models of multicultural education which are working in different provinces of Canada. Before reviewing these educational policies and programmes, there will be a brief discussion on the language policy of Canada. As has been already mentioned in this chapter language plays a crucial role in the process of learning. Schools have also been concerned, particularly in the last decade, with the role of language as one of the main symbols, promoters, and maintainers of ethnicity, since language is often a major part of the culture of one group and gives access to different world views, literature and folklore (Samuda, Berry and Laferriere, 1984: 169). Language issues have become an important part of multicultural education and hence any discussion about multicultural education without analysis of language policy will be far from being complete.

#### **Language Policies And Rights in Canada**

Canada is internationally respected and sometimes envied for its language policies. The most important of these is official bilingualism, but heritage languages are also important to this assessment (Majhanovich and Ray, 1991:76). In 1969, the Canadian government introduced the Official Languages Act. The Act declared that English and French were official languages in Canada, thus requiring all



federal institutions to provide services in both official languages in the federal bilingual districts and wherever there was sufficient demand for bilingual service. The Official Languages Act of 1969 was based on the principles outlined in the Bilingualism and Biculturalism Commission of Linguistic Duality and the Equality of the Founding Peoples (the English and the French). The Federal policy of bilingualism was meant to reaffirm to Francophones, located in Quebec and elsewhere, that they were not second class citizens (Hiller, 1991:191).

The next important step in the field of language policy was taken by the federal government in 1982. It announced the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms as part of the 1982 patriation of the Constitution. Sections 16 to 23 enshrined English and French in the Constitution as official languages of Canada. Section 23(1) and (2) state that:

Citizens of Canada (a) whose first language learned and still understood is of the English or French linguistic minority of the province where they reside, or (b) who have received their primary education in Canada in English or French and reside in a province where the language in which they received that instruction is the language of the English or French linguistic minority population of the province or of whom any child has received or is receiving primary or secondary school instruction in English or French in Canada, have the right to have all their children receive primary and secondary school instruction in the same language.

The province of Quebec, concerned with the preservation of French did not react favourably to the policy of bilingualism and biculturalism. Hence in August 1977 the Parti Quebecois government enacted the Bill 101, a law that exceeded the scope of the liberals bill 22 (Kahn, 1922:96). Through Bill 101 the Quebec government made efforts to upgrade the French Language by making it the language of work, education and law. This law declared Quebec to be a unilingual French province.

This act desired that unless immigrants had started school in English in Quebec or unless older brothers or sisters had been educated in English in Quebec, parents were required to provide their children education in French. Thus by this Act the freedom of "choice to give one's children's education in French, English, both or one in combination with a heritage language was abolished.

Bill 101 also restricted the right to education in English for children from other provinces. It caused resentment among English Canadians who considered it as the provincial government's interference in their educational system. Finally, in 1984, the Supreme Court of Canada ruled that article 23 of the Charter of Rights and Freedoms limited Bill 101's power to regulate the language of instruction. Article 23 guaranteed that families could send

their children to English or French public schools, provided one parent had attended school in Canada.

As it became clear that the Official Languages Act of 1969 was not entirely consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, a new Official Languages Act was passed in 1988 which strengthened certain features of the former Act. The most important feature of the 1988 Act is that its preamble and certain other statements reaffirm the Constitutional principle of Canada as a country with two official languages, both having equal status, and undertake the commitment to support the development of the English speaking and French speaking minorities.

After discussing the language policies of Canada, we will analyse the policies of multicultural education that exist in different provinces of Canada.

The implementation of the policy of multiculturalism in the field of education rests for constitutional reasons with the provinces. Consequently the results vary from province to province. Some provinces, such as Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario, have embraced multiculturalism and taken steps to put the policy into practice. Others, such as New Brunswick and Nova Scotia, officially support multiculturalism, but the curriculum guides and handbooks offer little concrete evidence of such. McLeod (1984:39)

says that the lack of provincial policies is a serious deficiency because the responsibility for overall policy in Canadian education is vested in the provincial government and legislatures.

### **Multicultural Education in Canadian Provinces**

#### **(1) Ontario**

The emergence of multiculturalism as a major component of educational issues reflects the importance that ethnicity has acquired in Ontario, where in 1986, 23.2 per cent of the population were born outside the province (OMC, 1988 b), 44.5 percent were of "ethnic origin" (OMC, 1988C) and 17.7 percent had a mother tongue that was neither French nor English (OMC, 1988 d) (McAndrew, 1991: 135).

The province of Ontario had adopted multicultural education in response to the new demographic reality which had major social and political consequences. Among other factors one is the aggressiveness of the majority group toward visible minorities. This majority group had accepted the immigration of white group in the 1950s. The intolerant attitude of the majority group toward minority groups has led to a number of incidents of racism. The emergence of the ethnic or racial groups as a cohesive group is also another factor.

An awareness of these new trends made it necessary for the Ontario government to adopt a policy of multiculturalism in 1977. The Ontario policy, which resembles the federal initiative, states that "multiculturalism is one of the essential characteristics of the Ontario society and all policies in Ontario must reflect that reality (Davis, 1977). This conception of multiculturalism implies equality of persons and groups, access to and participation in governmental services and institutions, maintenance of heritage languages and cultures.

The Ontario Ministry of Education has promoted an educational multicultural policy, largely in response to new ethnic dynamics, which has mainly two objectives. These are to foster integration of the minority student and respect for pluralism in the school system. The province of Ontario has outlined its concern for multicultural education in a document of "special populations in Education" (Ontario Ministry of Education, 1979). In order to provide equality of educational opportunity, the Ministry encourages English as a second language (ESL) programmes and other compensatory measures. It also advocates school sensitivity to cultural differences and emphasises the need of providing school curriculum and textbooks that are culturally and racially bias free to make them relevant to students coming from a variety of ethnic backgrounds (Wilson, 1984:71).

In spite of the fact that education in Ontario is decentralized, the Ministry of Education has published major curriculum guidelines. The policy and programmes adopted by Ontario also include schemes for continuous evaluation of existing curriculum resources and textbooks, inservice professional development, resource materials for classroom etc. consideration for racial and religious minorities, and general citizenship education. The ministry of Education has created a section "specifically responsible for Francophone education with specific officers whose main responsibility is multicultural education. For the education of native people, though a federal responsibility, the province of Ontario has taken certain steps which include the provision for special membership of Native people on local boards of education, development of curriculum resources regarding native people (McLeod, 1984:41).

Integrative programmes and even school sensitivity to cultural and pluralism is advocated as the official policy in Ontario racial without much opposition, but "the aspect of the Ontario policy and programming that engendered the greatest controversy was the implementation of the heritage language programme, which provides for the teaching of languages other than English and French on an extended school day or after school hours (Amphlett, 1978; Shamai,

1985). The Heritage Language Programme came into being through Memorandum 46 of the Ontario Ministry of Education.

The programme was seen to be the responsibility of school boards, which were completely free to establish it. The effectiveness of the programme depended upon the collaboration between the schools and ethnic communities.

#### **Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba**

These three Prairie provinces have adopted multicultural education policy which gives more importance to linguistic and cultural maintenance programmes. This approach to multicultural education in three provinces is due to the prominence of the deep-rooted European ethnic groups that constitute the majority of the population in some Prairie communities. These three provinces, with legislature provisions and government policies that provide for languages other than English and French as languages of instruction, have maintained a more linguistic view of multicultural education.

Of the prairie provinces, Alberta has the lowest proportion of its population with a mother tongue neither English nor French (15.3 percent) and Manitoba has the highest (21.8 percent). This diversity of ethnic origin and language has forced the governments in the prairies to be

sensitive to the needs of heritage languages (Majhanovich and Ray, 1991: 87).

Alberta has a very well-developed policy on schools offering languages in addition to English and French. The province supports Ukrainian, Jewish and German bilingual schools, in which the regular programmes are taught in English for about half of the teaching hours and the remainder is devoted to studies of the heritage culture in the heritage languages (Mallea, 1984). Wilson (1984:72) also maintains that one province that has made tremendous strides in multicultural education is Alberta. Besides curricular innovations, especially at the elementary school level, advances in non-official language instruction have been considerable.

In 1974 the Saskatchewan multicultural Act was passed to encourage multiculturalism in the province and to provide assistance to individuals and groups to increase opportunities available to them to learn about the nature of the cultural heritages of other multicultural groups in the province. Saskatchewan's legislature also amended section 209 of its school Act to permit a language other than English to be used as a language of instruction.



### **Nova Scotia**

Nova Scotia differs from other provinces in the sense that while other provinces have maintained a linguistic view of multicultural education, it has stressed inter-cultural education. This decision reflects the presence of a deep rooted Black community and where educational and racial Segregation existed until the 1950s in some areas (D'Oyley, 1978). In Nova Scotia "a broad cultural/intercultural thrust was adopted based upon ethnocultural awareness, equality of opportunity and equality of access, teacher sensitivity, curriculum reform, and the development of support services, programmes, materials and resources (McLeod, 1984: 42). In order to implement this policy, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union (NSTU) has started a multiculturalism In-Service workshop in cooperation with the Ethnic Services Division of the Department of Education. Fifty teachers from different areas of the province will be trained to handle sensitivity workshops, to use techniques for implementing multi-culturalism and to disseminate information about multicultural education resources (McCreath, 1980).

### **British Columbia**

In February 1979,, the British Columbia government established an Ad Hoc Committee on Multiculturalism in Education with the purpose of defining a policy and devising the methods of implementation of such a policy.

In this province efforts towards multiculturalism consist of ESL (Teaching English as a Second Language) Programmes and the teaching of non-official languages. Currently, multiculturalism in education in British Columbia seems to be seen as an appropriate way to fight racism. Instruction in non official languages is spreading in British Columbia.

### **Quebec**

The case of Quebec is too complex. Quebec has a population which is 78.8 per cent French and 9.6 per cent English. Quebec is 88.2 Percent Catholic. When it comes to the language most frequently used at home, 82.8 percent use French and 12.3 percent use English in Quebec (Hiller, 1991:180).

While rejecting the Canadian policy of multiculturalism, in 1978 the Quebec government adopted a modified version of multiculturalism which stressed both the value of cultural diversity and the necessity of sharing cultural differences in a common society through a common medium, the French language. Since the appearance of the white paper on cultural Development in 1978 the Quebec government has shown an increased awareness of the cultural diversity of that province (Laurin, 1978).

Since the 1960s, Quebec Ministry of Education has established special programmes fostering linguistic integration in the French schools and supporting the PELO (Programme d' Enseignement des Langues d' Origine, i.e, Heritage Language Program) in the regular school curriculum (Lessard and McAndrew, 1986). The Ministry has also encouraged the maintenance of heritage languages and cultures by unique subsidies of upto 100 per cent of costs in ethnic private schools that meet the province's requirements for curriculum and language of instruction. Inter-cultural communication and education is now emerging as one of the main issues in Quebec schools and society and government studies have stressed its importance.

The individual school boards have also played an important role in the implementation of policies of multicultural education. McLeod (1984) gives examples of two school boards - the Winnipeg School Division No.1 and the Toronto Board of Education. The importance of the school boards lies in the fact that they provide additional direction, establish policy priorities at the local level, and determine funding allocations. The Winnipeg School Division No.1 adopted a policy to encourage multicultural enrichment programmes , to promote immigrant education and to maintain liaison with the various ethnic communities. A Committee on Multicultural Education was constructed in

March 1980 to establish goals and objectives. A draft report of the Committee set out that the schools should "create units, programs and courses on many facets of multiculturalism.

Beginning in 1972, the Toronto Board of Education sponsored a series of studies and issued a series of reports that culminated with a final report on multicultural education in March 1976. The Toronto Board proceeded to implement a list of recommendations and changes that identified three main areas of concern: language education, system sensitivity and school community relations.

Thus, the school boards in Canada in the past ten years have given greater attention to multicultural concerns. The greatest successes in multicultural education have occurred where the school staffs have collectively examined their educational goals, objectives and programmes in the light of the diversity in Canadian society (McLeod, 1984:44).

### **Conclusions**

Multiculturalism, as a concept and in practice, has grown in scope and depth in the past ten years in Canada. The multicultural ideology grew from a political compromise aimed at appeasing the conflicting aims of various groups. In order to achieve this the ideology stated that it is

possible to resolve the "pluralistic dilemma" by favouring at the same time unity, diversity and equality in Canadian society.

In the educational field, federal multicultural policy has influenced a variety of provincial 'multicultural education policies. However, there is still a lot of ambiguity surrounding the policy of multiculturalism which is reflected in the divergent stresses that each province places upon integration, maintenance, or intercultural measures in defining multicultural education. Enthusiasm for multicultural education expanded throughout the 1970s. Critics and supporters alike are "locked in debate over the nature and merits of multiculturalism when applied to the field of education (Bullivant, 1981). There is consensus about certain aspects of multicultural education. These are staff development, a multicultural component and a reduction of bias in textbooks. Yet there is widespread disagreement about proposals for heritage language education, response to racial incidents, and employment equity for racial minorities (Ghosh and Ray, 1987).

Edwards (1984) criticizes cultural pluralism on the ground that in the movement for cultural pluralism there is a peculiarly static emphasis. The feeling seems to be that once some balance has been achieved, once old injustices are

redressed, and once the ethnic populations have been unmelted, a stable position will result.

For equal concern is a somewhat restrictive view of culture as the cornerstone for multicultural education. The concept of culture is a complex and elusive social phenomenon, but multicultural education takes into account a very limited definition of culture.

The government's insistence that multiculturalism can be pursued in a bilingual framework necessitates that either English in Quebec or French in the other provinces be offered in schools as so-called second languages. There is strong opposition to English in Francophone Quebec and anglophone Canadians resent the official status of French as a Second national language. In this squabble, other languages have been grossly neglected and have no official status. (Dorotich and Stephen, 1984:97). Some critics have expressed concern that the multiculturalism policy could be "a strategy of containment of the other ethnic groups (Isajiw, 1981:320). It is a fact that ethnic stratification greatly affects social stratification in Canada. Natives and recent immigrants (particularly of non-anglophone) usually rank at the bottom of the scale, whereas most of the upper portions of the ranking system are occupied by the white Anglo-Saxon People. Some critics of multiculturalism like

Porter (1965) see multiculturalism as a policy designed to legitimate the preservation of the status quo.

Over the last two decades, there have been a number of changes in Canadian society, Among the most important changes have been: Quebec's political self assertion (especially in linguistic and cultural matters): the passage of the Official Languages Act (1969); the federal government's declaration of its policy of multiculturalism within a bilingual framework, the growth of the alternative and community based school movements. (Mallea, 1984:85).

The impact of these developments has been impressive. Instruction in their mother tongue is slowly becoming available for the indigenous peoples. In at least three provinces, Native groups have established their own local boards of education. In several provinces bilingual schools have been established for the francophone minorities.

Thus, we can say that multicultural educational policies have proved to be successful in certain respects, but in other respects they have not produced required results. However, as we have already mentioned that the notion of social reproduction imposes a set of constraints over the potential of multicultural education. This factor alone should warn us against any excessive expectations

regarding the potential of multicultural education to accelerate change.

Before reviewing multicultural educational policies one should keep in mind that multiculturalism as a policy is of recent origin only. Within such a short span of time it cannot be expected from multicultural education that it will alter radically the policy of uniformity and conformity advocated by public schooling for last several decades. Multicultural education should be judged by its successes not by its failures, though these must be recognised. Measured by the increased attention to human relations, group development, language teaching, teacher awareness and sensitivity, administration adjustments, student interests and concerns, and community involvement, there have been successes (McLeod, 1984:46).



**SOCIO-CULTURAL AND LINGUISTIC  
DIVERSITY: ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR  
INDIAN EDUCATION SYSTEM**

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This chapter will analyze the role of education in bringing about social change in the Indian context. While describing the various dimensions of the diversity of Indian society, an effort will be made to examine how the Indian educational system has been influenced and shaped by them? The measures, which government has taken to protect and promote the cultural and educational rights of different groups will also be reviewed in terms of its conceptualization and impact.

India is the seventh largest and the second most populous nation of the world occupying 2.4 percent of the total world area. It contains about 15.0 percent of the world's population living in a variety of social, economic, geographical and ecological conditions. It has a long history spanning over five thousand years of human habitation. During this long period several waves of immigrants, representing different ethnic strains and linguistic families, have merged into its population to contribute to its diversity, richness and vitality. (Dube, 1990). It has a cultural heritage handed down by the immigrant Aryans from across the Himalayas, the native Dravidians and the invading civilizations (Ahuja, 1993). Its social economic and cultural diversities are also reflected in rural, urban and semi urban areas.

Several different levels of social evolution co-exist in contemporary India: primitive hunters and food gatherers; shifting cultivators who use digging sticks and hoes (not ploughs and draft cattle): nomads of different types (breeders of goats, sheep, and cattle; itinerant traders; and artisans and craftsman); settled agriculturalists who use the plough for cultivation; artisans and landed as well as aristocracies of ancient lineage (Dube, 1990). Most of the major religions of the world Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Buddhism are professed here. In addition, there is a bewildering variety of cults and sects with different orientations in belief and ritual. In the process of its evaluation, Indian society has acquired a composite culture, characterized by stable patterns of pluralism. The diversity, a basic feature of Indian society runs through various religions, castes, tribes, languages, social customs cultural and sub-cultural beliefs, political philosophers. To quote Oommen (1990) "India is at once a multi-national and poly-ethnic nation state; it is a conglomeration of many societies co-existing under same policy.

### **Languages**

Language is a very important source of diversity in Indian society. It contributes to collective identities and even to conflicts. Singh (1992) says that India has been

treated as a linguistic area. Our languages belonging to the different language families have developed from different sources which have interacted closely in the course of their development, not only in terms of locating or borrowing of words, but also in terms of adaptation of structures through the process of linguistic convergence. Though the constitution of India has recognized eighteen major languages, this is an official list for official purpose. It does not reflect the linguistic diversity of Indian society in a faithful manner.

According to Sharma (1992 :2) "India is a multi-lingual nation and has a large numbers of mother tongues. Even if one were to confine attention to languages which constitute the mother tongue of more than one and a half million each, the 1971 census lists 22 such languages which account for 93 percent of total population of 548 million". In fact, all the major languages have regional and dialectical variations, which according to Singh (1992), number 325 as against the 1961 census list of 1652 languages: Dube (1990) says that this situation is further confused when 227 mother tongues are recognized.

According to Oommen, (1990: 5) four language families are found in the Indian Union: Indo-Aryan languages spoken by nearly 73, Dravidian languages spoken by about 25,

Austro-Asiatic languages spoken by about 1.5 per cent of population. The number of the communities speaking the languages belonging to these families are as follows: Indo-Aryan (2549) Dravidian (1032), Tibeto-Burman (175), Austro-Asiatic (44), Indo-Iranian (5), Andamanese (4), Other language families (15) and unclassified languages (25).

Thus, the recognition of only 18 languages by the constitution has left many languages to face the danger of extinction without proper official support. A number of languages including tribal languages, and dialects have been ignored by policy makers resulting in the death of these languages. Oommen (1990: 59) is of the view that there are a number of factors which have contributed towards giving constitutional recognition to some languages while ignoring the others. The more important of these factors are the size of the speech community, the level of its development as indicated by graphemical status, and religious associations of the language and the geopolitical importance of the speech community. Thus a substantial number of Indians lose their linguistic-cultural identity. This applies not only to the numerous tribal languages but also to several languages. Thus a number of languages which are the mother tongues of a vast peasantry are treated as mere dialects of Hindi. Some of these languages are Bhojpuri, Magadhi, Maithili, Rajasthani, Chhatisgarhi. Dube also

agrees with Oommen when he says that Tribal languages cannot be dismissed as dialects; many of them have a growing literature and at least one has invented a script. (Dube, 1990:28)

To sum up, it can be concluded that the linguistic diversity of Indian society is stupendous and the realization of this fact has prompted the leadership of independent India to pursue a policy of multilingualism. The following Table shows to some extent, the linguistic diversity of Indian society.

Distribution of languages/dialects based on the number of speakers: 1971 census (no. of languages =105)

**Table 1**

No. of languages and dialects	No. of speakers
46	10,000-50,000
16	50,000-100,000
11	100,001-500,000
6	2,500,001-10,00,000
11	10,00,001-and above

Source: Oommen (1990:133)

## Religions

Though India has no state religion, yet the state guarantees the freedom of practising all religious faiths. In the words of Oommen (1990) the religious pluralism, an important ingredient of cultural pluralism, of India is well known and ancient. These are eight major religious communities in India. These are: Hinduism (practiced, according to 1991 census figures, by 697.4 million people including Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes or 82.6 percent of country's total population), Islam (practiced by 95.8 million people as 11.35 percent of the country's population, Sikhism, (practiced by 16.5 million or 1.96 percent of the total population), Buddhism (practiced by 5.9 million people or 0.71 percent of the total population), Christianity (practiced by 20.5 million people or 2.45 percent of the total population) and others (practiced by 3.5 million or 0.3 percent of the total population).

It is interesting to know that till 1911, a religious category designated as 'primitive' appeared in the Indian census classification. After 1911, the term used was tribal religion which accounted for 3.09 percent in 1921 and 2.36 percent in 1931. But in 1951, free India's first census was taken and the category of tribal religion was abolished. As it stands today, the tribes constitute around 7 percent of

India's total population. Many of them have been assimilated into Hindu society, while sizable groups have converted into the world religions Hinduism, Islam, Christianity and Buddhism.

### **Castes**

Caste system has been a unique phenomenon of Indian and particularly, Hindu society. "Hindu society is divided into groups, known as castes, with varying degrees of respectability and circles of social intercourse (Ghurye, 1993:1). The Indian caste system exhibits the following characteristics (1) segmentary division of society (2) Hierarchy (3) Restrictions on feeding and social intercourse (4) Civil and religious disabilities and privileges of the different sections (5) Lack of unrestricted choice of occupation and (6) Restrictions on marriage.

One of the axial principles of the caste system is the maintenance of purity in daily living. Different kinds of standards are set for assessment of purity. Thus among some groups particular occupations are considered to be impure and some occupations are rated to be pure. Besides, occupation, the idea of purity determines the type of food the caste of the people who cook food and such other considerations that vary from place to place and group to group.



That there are about 3,000 castes in the country (Ahuja, 1993). The castes are linked with four varnas (Brahmins, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra) for determining the status in ritual hierarchy. Many people confuse caste with Varna. The interchangeability of these terms has created confusion in the sociological analysis of the institution of caste. Referring to this conceptual confusion, Dube (1958:vi) writes that the analytical short cuts often blur the distinction between them (that is terms like varna, caste and sub-caste), and the resulting portrayal of the social system does not remain useful for the purposes of meaningful comparison.

In the Rigveda (4000 B.C.), there is a description of the division of society into three orders: Brahma (priests), Kshatriya (warriors) and vis (common people). There is no mention of the fourth order, that is Shudras, though there is a reference to groups despised by the Aryans like Ayogya, chandal and Nishad etc. These four orders ultimately become four varnas. In the process of development of castes, they came to be associated with varnas, and the hierarchy of the castes and the mobility of a caste came to be stated in varna terms. Srinivas (1962:69) suggests that the importance of the Varna system consists in that it furnishes on all India frame into which the jatis, occupying the lower rungs, have throughout tried to raise their status by

ranking over the customs and rituals of the top jatis. Caste is tied to locality but varna functions on all India basis.

### **Tribes**

Majumdar (1990:259) has defined the tribe as a social group with territorial affiliation, endogamous with no specialization of functions, ruled by tribal officers, hereditary or otherwise, united in language as dialect, recognizing social distance with other castes or tribes, without any social oblique attaching to them, as it does in caste system following tribal traditions, beliefs and customs, illiberal of naturalization of ideas from alien sources, above all conscious of a homogeneity of ethnic and territorial integration.

The total tribal population in India is 52.03 million (1991 census) which comes to 7.8 percent of the country's tribal population. In all there are 427 Scheduled Tribes in India. The total number of tribal communities, nevertheless, is estimated to be 642, several among whom have now either become extinct or been merged with other communities. (Danda, 1990:1)

The important tribes are: Santhal, Bhils, Meenas, Gonds, Mundas, Nagas, Khasis, Oraons and Hos. There are

five states and five states and union territories where tribes constitute 70 to 95 percent of the total population of the state/territory. These are Mizoram, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh and Tripura.

The tribes in the North Eastern hill states are different from their counterparts in Central India as they have not been subjected to much poverty and oppression. Due to great efforts made by missionaries, these tribes have had the opportunity to receive education. Unlike the tribes in Central India in north-eastern region tribals have been in majority and hence they have been largely unaffected by oppression of untouchability.

The above mentioned dimensions of diversity show beyond doubt that India is a multicultural, multilingual and multiethnic country. Education in plural country has to take into accounts the cultural needs and backgrounds of all sections of society to make education accessible. Education in a hierarchical society like that of India, acquires more significance as it is viewed by the social scientists and political leaders as an important instrument of social change to make a more egalitarian society. In order to eliminate the disadvantages suffered by certain sections of society due to hierarchial nature of Indian society,

education was viewed as an instrument of social change (Chanana, 1993:69)

### **Education as an Instrument of Social Change**

There are three or four positions usually taken with regard to education and social change: (i) that education is for itself and has nothing to do with social change; (ii) that education is determined completely by social factors, and has, therefore, no role in social change, at most, it follows social change; (iii) education is an autonomous, or relatively autonomous factor and, therefore, can and does induce social change; and (iv) the position that educational change and social change must take place simultaneously (Kamat, 1985:4)

Education can help the process of social change as a necessary and vitally important collateral factor. it can help to stimulate, accelerate and work out that process by disseminating and cultivating knowledge, information, skill and values appropriate to the changing socio-economic and political structure.

In the Indian context also social scientist, politicians educationists and educational planners considered education as a very important instrument of social change. This initial enthusiasm about education as

an important input in economic growth provided a justification for the massive expansion of education together with a large allocation of funds. Education was supposed to be the main instrument of change in the social sphere as well.

For instance, the Third Five Year Plan document (1961-62) of the Indian Planning Commission described education as "the important single factor in achieving rapid economic development and technological progress and in creating a social order founded on the values of freedom, social justice and equal opportunity". The Report of the Education Commission (1964-66) titled Education and National Development made even stronger assertion that for achieving "change on a grand scale.....there is one instrument, and one instrument only, that can be used: EDUCATION. Subsequent official documents, such as the Five Year Plans, reports of various education commissions and committees, appointed in the post-independence period have generally reflected this thinking.

The making of Constitution for independent India was a challenging task because many socio-economic goals had to be defined and concretized to take the country forward on the road towards social modernisation. The framers of the Indian constitution were clear that their task was to frame

a constitution for a society which was characterized by plurality and had within it a number of ethnic groups based on race, religion, language and caste. They not only recognized this diversity but also wanted to retain it as is clear from the provision of cultural religious and educational rights and special safeguards for minorities and some backward sections of the Indian population.

### **Relevant Constitutional Provisions**

India had inherited all the contradictions of a colonial economy. Within underdeveloped India there developed a few pockets of developed areas due to colonial economic policy. Besides, uneven economic development, hierarchical structure of Indian society had led to the formation of a social structure which was highly inegalitarian in nature. Let us review the different dimensions of inequality and its implications for education system.

Raza (1993:4) also talks of colonial legacy. He is of the view that the British economic policy during colonial period led to the emergence of a pattern of development which was in accordance with the nature of general developmental process in colonial India which was characterized by emergence of metropolitan nodes of development within the vast hinterland of underdevelopment.

This was the system which India inherited at the time of Independence - a system which was inequitous, distorted, dysfunctional and enclavized. The contemporary syndrome of inequity is the outcome of such a gifted system.

During colonial rule some castes and communities achieved a few new social advantages because they benefited from formal education. During the colonial period a new social stratification based on education, income and occupation emerged. For the first time during the colonial period education was dissociated from the caste hierarchy. In pre-colonial period education was the prerogative of only twice born upper caste Hindus in general and brahmins in particular. The British started new education system in India and education was no longer an exclusive privilege of upper castes. Education was made secular and available to all sections of society.

However, it would be unfair to hold that education brought about a radical change in social structure of India. Rather education in India itself was influenced by social stratification. The gains of the education were confined to a small section of people, who by virtue of their education enhanced their economic, potential occupational advancement, political power and social status. A number of case-studies undertaken by sociologists confirm this conclusion.

Basu (1974) has showed that there was a close connection between membership of new educated class and high castes. Of all high castes the number of educated Brahmins was disproportionately high . Seal (1971) has studied three provinces of British India, Bombay, Calcutta and Madras and has come to the conclusion that in all three presidencies the upper castes had a dominance in higher education and administration. They had taken maximum advantages of the new education introduced by the British.

Mishra (1978) has analyzed why the growth of universal education was hampered resulting into its being confined to upper classes only. Singh (1988) has shown the continuity of new elites with the traditional elites. The rise of the political elite coincided in India with the growth of a westernized middle class. It emerged as a result of the expansion of higher education among the upper castes.

Thus there studies show that education in pre-independence India was a monopoly of upper castes and class only. Lower castes had been denied the education due to traditional hierarchical nature of society which demanded that people belonging to lower rungs of caste hierarchy be involved with traditional occupations only. For historical reasons, minorities had also been lagging behind the



majority population in terms of getting education and thereby improving their status. After independence, Indian government took the responsibility of ameliorating the lot of the depressed section of society and for this a number of provisions were laid down in the Indian Constitution protecting and promoting the educational culture and religions rights of these groups. It also introduced policy of protective and positive discrimination to enable the Scheduled castes and Scheduled tribes, minorities and women to enhance their socio-economic status and compete with better off section of society. There constitutional provisions and other legal measures are discussed in following paragraphs.

Part III of the constitution deals with Fundamental Rights and assures to all citizens that no discrimination will be permitted on grounds of religion, race, caste, sex or place of birth (Article 15). This acquires significance because the Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribes have been discriminated against on grounds of religion, role and place of birth. Article 16 assures equality of opportunity to all in matters of employment with government while article 17 abolishes untouchability. Article 29 secures to every minority the right to have a district language, script or culture of its own and to conserve the same and lays down further that no citizen shall be denied admission into any

educational institution maintained by the state or receiving aid out of state funds. Article 30 guarantees to all minorities, whether based on religion or language, to have the right to establish and administer educational institutions of their choice. Article 46 lays down that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the scheduled castes and the scheduled tribes. Article 15(4) states that notwithstanding Article 15 and 21(2), the state may make special provisions for enhancement of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Article 335 assures that the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes will be given special attention while filling in posts in the government services. Article 350(A) enjoins upon the state to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to linguistic minority group.

By granting autonomy in cultural and educational spheres, it was hoped that the minorities would preserve their way of life and contribute in their own way to the prosperity and development of the country toward its political unity.

Keeping in view the diversity of Indian society, constitution makers have put education in the concurrent

list of the constitution so that the states might formulate their educational programmes and curricula etc. in accordance with the needs and socio-cultural background of people.

Thus Independent India explicitly and clearly adopted the principle of promoting social equality through preferential treatment or positive discrimination. Preferences are of three basic types: first, there are reservations, which allot or facilitate access to valued positions or resources. Second, there are programmes involving expenditure. Third, there are special protections to the weaker sections from being exploited and victimized (Gallanter, 1992:186).

#### **Protective Discrimination and Education**

Under the constitutional provisions the Union Ministry of education issued a circular whereby it provided reservation for scheduled castes and scheduled tribes in admission to educational institutions. Fifteen percent seats are reserved for scheduled castes and 7.5 percent seats are reserved for scheduled tribes.

In addition to reservation the government has introduced a wide variety of special provisions designed to mete out special or preferential treatment, or grant

concessions to the weaker sections, including the scheduled castes, the scheduled tribes and the other backward class. These policies and programmes designed to promote the interests of the weaker sections or the historically disadvantageous groups are also indicated by some other terms, such as positive discrimination and reservation policy.

The most crucial and perhaps the basic assumption underlying "positive discrimination" was to provide social and economic justice to certain sections of our society which had so far been suffering from social stigma and disabilities (Ahmad, 1986:58). An important underlying implication of this policy was that education would be an important avenue for providing improved and better life chances (ibid, p.59).

It had been expected by policy makers that education will equip the scheduled castes to overcome their caste-defined confinement to low status occupations by promoting occupational mobility among them and improving their standard of living. Educational institutions are expected to function as melting pots for caste differences and to facilitate the cultural integration of the scheduled castes with upper caste Hindus (Jayaram, 1986:89).

Thus education has been considered as an important vehicle for the amelioration of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes and hence an elaborate programme of scholarships, hostel facilities, and reservation in admission to educational institutions has been formulated.

How far has the programme of protective discrimination and other incentives been successful in realizing its objectives has to be analysed. The impact of these policies can be evaluated in terms of participation of scheduled castes, scheduled tribes minorities and women in education.

#### **Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Education**

A major concern of education policy has been the fulfillment of constitutional guarantees and the identification of groups who are eligible for the state sponsored benefits. The major emphasis has been on removing disparities between the scheduled castes/tribes and non-scheduled castes/tribes. The special promotional efforts have undoubtedly facilitated the educational progress of the SC/ST over last four decades. But comparing it to the general population we find that the SC/ST still lag behind considerably in literacy.

1981 census shows difference in literacy rates between scheduled castes/tribes and rest of the population. The

literacy rates of the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes are 21.38 and 16.35 percent respectively. While the literacy rate of the non SC/ST population is 41.30 percent. Thus compared to the rest of the population the literacy rate of scheduled caste and scheduled tribe population is dismally low, especially when one considers that Indian Government has enunciated a variety of educational policies, programmes and other constitutional measures to improve the educational status of these sections. Even in 1991, this gap between literacy rate of SC/ST population and that of the rest of the population remains quite wide.

Following table clearly shows that the disparity between literacy rates of scheduled caste/tribes and rest of the population has been constant if not increasing over a period of thirty years.

**Table 2**

Year	ST	SC	Non SC/ST
1961	8.57	10.27	27.86
1971	11.30	14.67	33.80
1981	16.35	21.38	41.30
1991	29.60	N.A.	52.11

As on 30th September 1988, a total of 279,720 scheduled caste and 69,189 scheduled tribe students had enrolled in higher education constituting 7.3 and 1.8 percent of total enrollment respectively. (Chanana, 1993, p.80).

Further, in 1988-89 the proportion of scheduled caste students to total enrollment in different faculties varies from 9.87 percent in arts, humanities etc. to 2.91 percent in research. The enrollment of scheduled tribes students is almost insignificant and varies from 2.79 percent in arts and humanities etc. to 0.60 percent of students undertaking research (Chanana, p.80). (See table 3 on next page).

The problem of dropout among SC and ST students is very acute. Of the 77 percent of the children who dropout a large percentage are girls and those belonging to the scheduled castes and scheduled tribes (Ghosh and Zachariah, 1987: 15). NCERT survey (1965) shows that the dropout rate among the scheduled castes was three times higher than that of upper caste children.

Karlekar (1983 : 216) says that leaving school is the result of a combination of both visible and invisible factors. Poor children drop out of school for the obvious reason of having to contribute to the family economy; but equally important are the invisible factors which alienate a

Table 3

Proportion of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled  
Tribe Students in Higher Education  
(numbers and percentages by faculty)

(All Levels)

Faculty	SC All students	ST All students	SC Women	ST Women
Arts	163,212 (9.87)	46,117 (2.79)	35,294 (2.13)	13,252 (0.80)
Science	42,215 (4.55)	5,916 (0.98)	11,914 (0.67)	1,388 (0.14)
Commerce	47,150 (5.71)	10,193 (0.80)	6,915 (1.61)	1,463 (0.19)
Teacher's	6,979 (7.67)	1,944 (2.14)	2,196 (2.41)	588 (0.65)
Medicine	7,170 (8.94)	2,101 (2.62)	2,529 (3.15)	526 (0.66)
Engg./Tech.	12,080 (5.88)	2,711 (1.32)	797 (0.39)	526 (0.80)
Research (all faculties)	914 (2.91)	187 (0.60)	182 (0.60)	60 (0.19)

Source: Chanana (1993:80).

child from the dominant middle class school culture. The tendency to leave the system is often encouraged by parents who may have initially wanted their children to be educated but subsequently find it more productive to put them to work.



Thus inspite of the incentives and constitutional provisions the disparity between scheduled castes/tribes and non scheduled castes/tribes continue to exist. Not only is the share of scheduled castes in higher education is dismally low but there has been a progressive decrease in the share of enrollment in professional courses. (IPA report Patriot 21, February, 1987)

Women's Education: The beginning of modern education for women in India can be traced to the schools started by christian missionaries in the early years of the last century. But the modern education for women in India did not register much progress in the beginning.

The situation improved somewhat in post-independence period. A considerable amount of thinking has gone into the question of women's education in India during the post-47 period. A number of committees and commission have emphasized the importance of women's education. The education of women at various levels has expanded more rapidly but is still far from satisfactory. The disparities between male-female participation rate at all levels of education and the rural urban differentials, though lessened, persist.

"Data regarding the education of women reveals that the rate of dropout is higher for female students as compared to

their male counterparts. (Sharma and Sujata, 1992 : 8). The lot of scheduled tribe women is worst. Thus while women of both groups fare badly in comparison to scheduled caste and scheduled tribe men, then scheduled tribe women are more handicapped. (Chanana, 1993 : 81)

**Table 4**  
**Trends in the progress of female literacy**

Year	Males	Females	Gap between Male    Female	Literate Female per 100 literates
1901	1.19	0.08	1.11	6.72
1911	1.36	0.13	1.23	9.56
1921	1.57	0.22	1.35	14.01
1931	2.23	0.38	1.85	17.04
1941	-	-	-	-
1951	4.63	1.39	3.24	30.02
1961	7.79	2.76	3.24	35.43
1971	11.20	4.94	6.26	44.11
1981	15.88	7.92	7.96	49.87

Source: (Sharma and Sujata, 1992 : 8)

Such low level of literacy among women means that majority of them are denied the opportunity to get educated. Raza (1990 : 399) ascribes this to the fact that the

instruments of social policy evolved in this direction have not been able to fulfill the expectations. For various reasons including poverty of masses, rigid social values etc. Chanana (1990 : 90) is also of the opinion that "educational policies and programmes relating to women cannot be formulated without reference to gender ideology and its social parameters.

Thus we find that female education is subject to certain overriding social constraints. The entire question of the education of girls in rural or urban area, in schools or in colleges, is related to whether parents consider it worth their while to educate the daughters.

Due to interrelationship of socio-cultural and economic factors difference in literacy rate between male female population in India shows no sign of reduction male - female differential in literacy rates were 26.65 in 1981 and 25.01 percent in 1991 (Statement 18, 1991 Census).

### **Conclusions**

To sum up it can be said that notwithstanding some distinct improvement in educational states of the scheduled castes, scheduled tribes women and minorities disparities between these sections and the rest of the population have continued to exist, as has been borne out by data. The

participation of the depressed sections of the society in the educational process is alarmingly and dismally low, which does not speak good of Indian education system. The education system of India remains elitist and urban - oriented.

India has now two parallel societies with the minimum possible communication. These are the English-speaking/ knowing urban elite and non - English knowing rural people.

The participation of minorities like Muslims in education is also very low. This fact has been proved by a number of studies made by Kamat, Chanana, Khan etc. Unfortunately, census does not speak anything about religious community wise literacy level. But these studies at least provide a picture of educational trend among Muslims.

In a hierarchical society such as India, education has always been the exclusive domain of a small class of people. In India upper castes, particularly Brahmins had the monopoly over education and only rarely a person belonging to lower castes used to get education. After the British came to India, this situation changed, though only on theoretical level. A microscopic minority became the beneficiary of formal education and enjoyed the rank, status

and wealth that followed (Basu, 1974; Seal, 1971; Mishra, 1978; Singh, 1989). Thus ancient Brahminical values were replaced by the modern educated middle class values and the formal school system acted as the transmitting agent for these values (Pattanayak, 1981:67).

The concept of 'dominant culture' by Bourdieu (1990), is applicable to Indian context. Karlekar (1983: 230) says that in India, where the definition of a dominant culture is far less simple, Bourdieu's theory is nonetheless significant. She gives the example of public schools and other private elite schools which lay stress on certain types of extracurricular activities. These activities, which are considered essential for the overall development and success, have little relevance for the large bulk of the school going population in India. Kumar (1989) has analysed the educational text books and materials and has shown that they reflect the values and perspective of the dominant group. This dominant group enjoys the power of labelling and hence they label some sections of society as backward, uncivilized etc. The knowledge distributed by the texts reflect the power dynamics of society. Those enjoying power over other will get a larger share of curricular representation and the groups that lack power may either get only token representative or none at all.

A survey of NCERT books (Nischal, 1976) reveals similar findings. In these books, male child appears in a greater number of stories and is seen more often in positive roles than are girls. Thus education system fosters inequalities among boys and girls by perpetuating patriarchal middle class value through its curricula. The manifestation of a dominant culture institutionalized in school syllabi produces alienation among students belonging to depressed classes.

Pattanayak (1981) points out that there is no doubt that language is a major factor in dropout and stagnation. To a great extent the higher rate of illiteracy can also be attributed to the acceptance of one dominant language as the medium of instruction. This process leaves thousands of children illiterate in their mother tongue and fosters low achievement levels in the dominant language itself.

Instruction in the mother tongue helps in the search for self-affirmation and establishes group identity. Considering these facts Indian constitution directs the states to provide adequate facilities for instruction in the mother tongue at the primary stage of education to linguistic minority group. The concept of using a dominant language as a medium of instruction has forced the children belonging to minority groups (linguistic) to receive

education in language other than mother tongues. Oommen (1990) has cited the examples of tribal languages which have been ignored by Indian policy makers as is borne out by the fact that Indian constitution has recognised only eighteen major languages, thereby leaving many languages to perish. Result is that tribal children have to adopt the dominant regional language for education which put them at disadvantage.

On the other hand, the middle class children because of his familiarity with formal language are in an advantageous position and find little difficulty in following middle class teacher and the middle class oriented text books. Thus in India, where students come not only from varying socio-economic but also linguistic and regional backgrounds, the relevance of Bernstein's theory, which has been discussed in Chapter I, is apparent.

Bernstein distinguishes two forms of speech pattern which he terms the 'elaborated code' and the 'restricted code'. In general, members of the working class are limited to the use of restricted code whereas members of the middle class use both codes. Formal education is conducted in terms of an elaborated code. This places the working class child at a disadvantageous position because he is limited to the restricted code. On the other hand a middle class student

because of this familiarity with the elaborated code is in an advantageous position.

Thus it is evident from the above discussion that the educational policies conceptualized by Indian government have failed to reflect the complete socio-cultural diversity of Indian society. They reflect mainstream middle class values thereby alienating students belonging to lower classes and minorities from educational process.

The Indian government, aware of these shortcomings, has tried to remove them as is evident from the National Policy on Education (1986). The New Policy lays emphasis on the removal of disparities and to equalize educational opportunities by attending to the specific needs of those who have been denied equality so far.

National Policy on Education (1986) suggested that a Standing Committee of the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) under the Chairmanship of Minister of Human Resources Development may be constituted to monitor and review implementation of all educational programmes for SC/ST and other Backward Sections at the Central Level. Under this provision the Rammurti Committee was instituted in 1990. It made a number of suggestions which included the



scheme of remedial coaching on a phased basis. A strategy to enrich learning environment and the Socio-economic conditions in the tribal regions as distinct from mere remedial coaching should be evolved and brought under implementation. According to a suggestion made by the committee, the curriculum of the educational backward should include the History and Sociology of the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and other backward sections of the society (Aggarwal, 1992: 146). It also advocates for the inclusion of the rich diversity of the tribal cultural identities in the core curriculum.

Thus, the educational policies have tried to incorporate the cultural heritage of the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and other backward class. But the impact of these policies are yet to be seen.

## **SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

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In the first chapter, a brief history of development of multiculturalism has been provided. Tracing the history of multiculturalism at a global level, particularly in the Western nations, we have come across factors which are responsible for the genesis of ethnicity as an important social force. The emergence of ethnic revival movements, Civil Rights Movement, anti-racist movement, were the factors leading to the rise of multiculturalism. The spread of democratic ideals and values also made it imperative for the political leaders, social scientists and policy makers to take into account the socio-cultural diversity of population before enunciating any policy which might have an impact on a large number of people.

Due to these factors the theory of melting pot or assimilationist ideology remained no longer a favourite approach to cultural pluralism or diversity. Instead, cultural pluralism emerged as an alternative which soon caught the fancy of social scientists. The realization that there is a close relationship between socio-cultural background of a student and his academic performance was one of the most important factors that led to the emergence of multicultural education.

The second chapter presents the various dimensions of diversity in Canadian society and examines its implications

for Canadian education. The different approaches to and various models of multicultural education practised by Canadian provinces have also been examined. An effort has been made to review language policies adopted by Canada since language is an integral element of culture and has an impact on the learning process. In terms of conceptualization and impact of the policies, it has been found that multicultural educational policies suffer from a number of serious handicaps. But this is not to deny that they have made an impact on over all education system of Canada and have forced Canadian schools to review their assimilationist approach. It was realized that schools should incorporate the cultures of different groups so that students coming from diverse backgrounds could identify with the school culture.

In the third chapter, sources of diversity, a basic feature of Indian society have been discussed. This chapter further explores whether the Indian government and policy makers have been successful in conceptualizing educational policies taking into account the diversities or not. These policies have been evaluated to find out the extent to which they have been successful in achieving their aims and objectives.

On the basis of analysis made in these three chapters, a comparison of educational policies and programmes of both the countries has been undertaken. In order to facilitate a comparative assessment a number of assumptions have also been made.

First, multiculturalism is a reality in both the countries. The governments have recognized the multiethnic composition of their populations and promised active support for what might be called 'Unity in Diversity'. Second, cultural difference in both the countries are not seen as a divisive force, but as a means of achieving social cohesion. Third, both countries have formulated policies which aim beyond cultural pluralism, in the sense of mere co-existence of diverse ethnic groups, acceptance of differences in lifestyles, and tolerance. Rather, multiculturalism or cultural pluralism entails an extensive interaction among different groups of society. Finally, endorsement of policy of cultural pluralism by the government and other public institutions is expected to lead to change in attitudes and behaviour of individuals and, ultimately, to overcoming discrimination, stereotyping, and ethnocentrism.

Canada is mainly a land of immigrants. Her native peoples, namely the Indians, Metis and Inuits (Eskimos) comprise only 1.4 per cent of the total population of about

24.5 million. The last three centuries have witnessed various immigration waves. The diversity in Canadian society has increased greatly due to largescale immigration. India, too, has been a country characterised by diversity. The diversity of Indian society is represented by different ethnic strains and linguistic families, which contribute to its diversity, richness and vitality.

The constitutions of both the countries recognize the socio-cultural and linguistic diversity and have laid down several provisions to protect and promote the diversity. The Canadian government set up the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism in the 1960s which did not receive encouraging response from immigrant ethnic groups. In 1988, the Canadian government introduced 'Canadian Multiculturalism Act' thereby proclaiming multiculturalism as an official policy which sought to promote cultural diversity. Indian constitution has also sought to protect the cultural and educational rights of minority and depressed groups through various laws. These laws and provisions have been dealt with in detailed manner in second chapter.

Being a multilingual society, India has always faced the problem arising out of linguistic diversity. India has been encountering the problem of link language. The Indian

State has sought to resolve this problem by declaring Hindi as an official language (Article 343). But English will continue as an associate official language of the Union for an indefinite period under the Official Language Act 1963. Canada also has asserted that there are two official languages for federal purposes at all levels. These two languages are English and French. English and French were declared official languages by the Official Language Act of 1969 which was based on the principles outlined in the Bilingual and Biculturalism Commission of linguistic duality and the equality of the founding peoples.

The Indian Constitution has recognized eighteen major languages. But there are a number of important languages which have not been accorded official recognition. Thus a substantial number of Indians lose their linguistic cultural identity, while others whose mother tongue belongs to one of the official languages define and reinforce their identity in linguistic-cultural terms. This applies not only to the numerous tribal languages, but also to several non-tribal languages e.g. Bhojpuri, Maithili, Rajasthani etc. These languages are treated as mere dialects of Hindi, in order to project Hindi speakers as the biggest speech community and to legitimize it as the national language.

There are a number of factors which have contributed towards giving constitutional recognition to some languages while ignoring the others. The political expediencies have played an important role in the recognition of some languages. The other important factors are the size of the speech community, the level of its development, historical and religious associations of the language and the geo-political importance of the speech community (Oommen, 1990: 61).

The neglect of tribal languages can be gauged from another fact, namely, the reorganization of Indian states on linguistic basis in 1956. No state was formed on the basis of tribal language. The tribal states which were formed subsequently in northeast India had a basis of tribal and not linguistic identity. Linguistic reorganization of states had another disastrous impact on the linguistic-cultural identity of the tribals in South-Central India. It led to the vivisection of several tribal groups among different states. This has led to the cultural and linguistic assimilation of several tribal groups in a particular state. Two tribal languages, Santhali and Kurux can be cited as examples here in support of our argument. The linguistic recognition of the states has left the Kurux speech community divided between four states. As a result of this, the Oraons, whose language was Kurux, came



to be linguistically dominated by Hindi in Bihar and Madhya Pradesh, Bengali in West Bengal and Oriya in Orissa. Similarly, the Santhals got distributed into several states and Santhali is written in Roman, Bengali, Oriya and Devnagari.

In Canada, several provinces have initiated policies to promote heritage language and culture. In addition to that, several compensatory courses, e.g., ESL (English as a second language) and ESD (English as a second dialect) have been introduced in some provinces for children from immigrant groups. The instruction in and the teaching of non-official languages is spreading in Canada. Some provinces, such as Saskatchewan, have amended their school Act to permit a language other than English to be used as a language of instruction.

In India also the importance of the regional language has been increasing. All the states gradually have adopted a regional language as their official language. Indian Constitution gives full freedom to the states to choose any language used in the region as their official language. Despite the limited effect of the formal declaration regarding the adoption of regional language as official language in the states, the fact remains that the use of regional language for official transactions is growing. At

the same, time regional language as the medium of instruction is also increasingly replacing English (Gupta, 1970: 195).

Here a parallel between Canadian and Indian language policies can be drawn. There has been an intense language rivalry between English and French in Canada. There is a strong opposition to English in Francophone Quebec. In the same way the declaration of French as the second official language has been disliked by the English speaking Canadians. In this rivalry, other languages have been grossly neglected and have been denied official status. The declaration of Hindi as an official language has engendered more intense language rivalry than unity. Oommen (1990: 59) criticizes the policy of promoting Hindi as the national language, as it involves the processes of exclusivism and expansionism, manufacturing outsiders and insiders in the socio-cultural context.

In the wake of the anti-Hindi protest, a number of mother-tongues have been subjected to neglect leading to their death. Difference between regional language and mother tongues has been comfortably ignored by the state governments in order to make regional language a strong bulwork against the expansion of Hindi. Even Hindi, as we have seen earlier, has been declared as an official language

by ignoring other languages prevalent in the north Indian region. Thus, the conflict between Hindi and other regional languages represents only a tip of the iceberg of linguistic complexity of India.

Instruction in the mother tongue helps in the search for self-affirmation, establishes group identity, satisfies the national urge for cultural rootedness and avoids fanaticism (Pattanayak, 1981). Thus teaching through the mother tongue and teaching certain skills of the mother tongue may be academically advantageous. Considering this factor, Indian constitution directs the states to provide instruction to children belonging to linguistic minority groups at the primary stage of education in Hindi (Article 350 A). But, as several tribal languages and other languages like Maithili, Magadhi, Bhojpuri, Rajasthani, have been treated only as dialects; the children belonging to these linguistic groups are forced to "receive primary education in foreign languages that is languages other than their mother tongues (Oommen, 1990).

To solve the problem of linguistic complexity 'three language formula' had been formulated in 1957. In 1957, the Central Advisory Board of Education (CABE) examined the language problem in relation to the national needs and the

constitutional requirements and suggested 'three language formula'. The three language formula was reviewed by the Chief Ministers in 1961. They concluded that the child should study at school stage (i) the regional language (ii) Hindi in non-Hindi area and any other Indian language in Hindi area (3) English or any other modern European language. Thus in the three language formula, the question of mother tongue has been left unanswered and the regional language, instead, has been recommended.

The three language formula could never be implemented in its original form in the South Indian States. In some north Indian States this formula was followed in a distorted form. Sanskrit was adopted as the third language, in addition to Hindi and English, which did not serve the purpose it was supposed to.

However, in 1952 the Secondary Education Commission had recommended following measures for study at secondary stage (i) mother tongue (ii) Regional language (iii) the link language, i.e. Hindi. (iv) One classical language - Sanskrit, Pali, Prakrit, Arabic and Persian.

The Indian state, in order to retain and promote the diversity of Indian society has undertaken a variety of programmes. The difference between India and Canada, in

this context, lies in the fact that while the Indian Constitution provides reservations for the depressed sections like the Scheduled Castes, the Scheduled Tribes and other backward classes to ameliorate their condition and improve their socio-economic status. The policy of reservation extends not only to admission to educational institutions but also to representation in government services, parliament, state legislatures etc.

The Canadian state has not adopted any policy of reservation for any group of society. A number of programmes have been run by federal agencies in Canada to facilitate the minority groups to improve their position. Some of these programmes include the establishment of bilingual schools, native language and heritage programmes.

The reservation policy in India has been politically motivated. It has become a tool in the hands of state to secure the vote banks and it is never bothered about the outcome of reservation policy. By providing equality of access, it was assumed by the policy makers that it will lead to equality of outcomes which has been proved inaccurate. It ignores the fact that the very fact that 'the people start at different positions in the class-system will produce inequality of educational opportunity' (Boudon, 1973). Boudon in his 'positional theory' argues that

differences in values and attitudes between social classes produce inequality of educational opportunity.

Kumar (1991: 106) argues that a great number of the problems associated with the policy of reservation in India have originated from the assumption that an unjust social order can be treated as a market. The state's reservation policy can only equip certain individuals better for facing the competitive scene of the market. But this policy does not change the scene itself.

He further says that in order to evaluate the success of the reservation policy, the representation of different social groups at different levels of the education system and the job market is measured. He refers to this as outcomes extrinsic to educational experience. In this process 'Criteria intrinsic to education system' are ignored. This criterion include the treatment of children from the lower strata by teachers in actual pedagogical settings. Another criterion would be the share of symbols representing the lower strata in the curriculum of schools and colleges (Kumar, 1989). A Survey of NCERT books (Nischol, 1976) reveals that the books perpetuate patriarchal middle class values. Another study made by Omprakash (1986) shows how the students coming from socially disadvantaged homes face the problem of discrimination in

their academic, social and financial standing. It is because the students belonging to these groups get admission to elite institutions but the socio-cultural background of these students does not match with that of institutions.

To sum up, multicultural education as practised in Canada has got its share of strengths and weaknesses. Its weaknesses include limited and static concept of culture, emphasis on only two languages, English and French. Multicultural education is also viewed by some Canadian Sociologists (Porter, 1965) as an instrument to legitimize the preservation of existing social structure.

Despite these weaknesses and lacunae, multicultural education has led to a number of encouraging results also. Indigenous people in Canada have now access to education in their mother tongue. Several bilingual schools have been established in some provinces. It has also encouraged the educationists and policy makers to be sensitive to cultural differences while formulating policies.

The Indian educational policies also have made impressive success in over all educational development. It has helped the traditionally oppressed sections of Indian society to improve their status by facilitating their access to education. But microlevel experiments and programmes have not been introduced.

To conclude, it may be stated that education as an institution does not exist in a vacuum. It is moulded and shaped by other social institutions. Multicultural education is also dependent on other socio-economic institutions. Education, in any form, does not advocate radical change, rather it helps in reforming the existing social institutions. In the words of Karlekar (1983: 235) the aim is not to reject all educational reform as unfeasible but merely to assess what it can achieve within a given social framework. So any assessment of the educational policies of a country has to be made within this framework.



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