

## Multicultural Education: Concept, Emergence and Dimensions

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### Abstract

*Multicultural education is emerging perceptible in today's education. Most of the educator and tutors need to aware how to treat the culture diversity of students in the teaching learning process. This cultural phenomenon basically influences on in building school structure and curricula implementation in school. This multicultural perspective emerged during the 1960s and more influential till now. It has cleared that this emerging concept needs to address for ensuring the equity in education of students. For this, Banks provided the five dimensions viz. content integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy and an empowering school culture and social structure to address the cultural diversity of people in education.*

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**Key words:** *Multicultural education, multiethnic education, equity pedagogy, prejudice reduction.*

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### Introduction

Multicultural education is an idea, an approach to school reform and movement for equity, social justice and democracy. A major goal of multicultural education is to restructure schools so that all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes and skills needed to function in an ethnically and racially diverse nation and world. Multicultural education seeks to ensure educational equity for members of diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and socio economic groups and facilitate their participants as critical and reflective citizens in an inclusive national civic culture. Multicultural education is an idea stating that all students regardless of the group to which they belong such as those related to gender, ethnicity, race, culture, language, social class, religion should experience educational equity in the schools (Banks, 2009). Multicultural education is also a reform movement design to bring about a transformation of the school so that students from both genders and ethnic group will have an equal chance to experience school success (Banks, 2009). Multicultural education as adopting a culturally responsive pedagogy with trained instructors facilitating it. Multicultural education is at least three things; an idea or concept, an educational reform movement, and a process (Banks, 2009). Multicultural education incorporates the idea that all students – regardless of their gender, sexual orientation, and ethnic, racial or cultural characteristics should have equal opportunities to learn in school. Multicultural education involves changes in the total school or educational environment, it is not limited to curricular changes (Banks; 2015, Banks, and Banks, 2004). Multicultural education

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must be viewed as an ongoing process, not as something that we 'do' and thereby solve the problems that are the target of multicultural educational reform. Multicultural education involves changes in the total school or educational environment; it is not limited to curricular changes (Banks, 2015; Banks and Banks, 2004).

### **Emergence of multicultural education.**

The historical roots of multicultural education lie in the civil rights movement (1960s) of various historically oppressed groups. In the late 1960s and early 1970s the women rights movement joined this push for education reform (Banks, 2015) Civil rights movement and women rights movement helps to emerged multicultural education and these two movements challenged to reform the social evil and social class. After these social events ethnic groups raise the opposition of historically oppressed course content and social action.

In the United States as well as in other western nations such as the United Kingdom, Canada, Australia, France, and the Netherlands, the emergence of multicultural education has been a gradual and evolutionary process (Banks, 2006). According to Banks, 2006 there are four phases of emergence of multicultural education; these phases are phase I mono-ethnic course, phase ii multiethnic studies course, phase iii multiethnic education phase iv multicultural education.

### **Phase I: mono – ethnic courses**

When the black civil rights movement began in the mid – 1960s in the United States, Africans and Americans and other ethnic group demanded that the schools and other institutions respond more adequately to their need and aspirations. These institutions responded by establishing courses on specific ethnic groups such as African American history and literature and Mexican American history and literature. This phase in the development of multicultural education can be considered phase i. The assumptions of mono ethnic course was that only a member of an ethnic group should teach a course on that group, and a focus on white racism and on how whites have oppressed ethnic groups of color (Banks, 2006).

### **Phase ii: multiethnic studies courses**

As more and more ethnic groups in the united states, including white ethnic groups such as Jewish Americans and polish Americans, began to demand separate courses and the inclusion of their histories and culture in the curriculum, schools and colleges began to offer multiethnic studies courses that focus on several ethnic culture and view the experiences of ethnic groups from comparative perspectives. Ethnic minority music course and the history and culture of minorities in the United States are taught from comparative perspectives. During this phase ethnic studies courses became more global, conceptual, and scholarly. There are two basic assumptions of multiethnic studies courses are that ethnic groups have had both similar and different experiences in the United

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States and that a comparative study of ethnic cultures can result and useful concepts, generalizations, and theories (Banks, 2006).

### **Phase iii: multiethnic education**

In this phase educators began to realize that ethnic studies were necessary but not sufficient to bring about effective educational reform and equity. Educators began to call for a more broadly conceptualized kind of educational reform, with a focus on the total school environment. Educators began to view the total school as the unit of change, and not just any variable within the educational environment, such as materials or teaching strategies. This more broadly conceptualized reform movement became known as multiethnic education, which emerged as phase iii in the development of multi diversity education.

### **Phase IV multicultural education**

This phase is the broader reform movement phase of multicultural education (Banks and Banks, 2004). In this phase multicultural education became the preferred concept in many educational institutions and the standards published by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher education (NCATE) (2004) require teacher education institutions to implement components, courses and programs in multicultural education. The NCATE multicultural standards first published as a part of the council's general standards in 1977. NCATE now requires it's member institutions to use performance based standards, of which multicultural standards are an integral part (National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education, 2004).

### **The dimensions of multicultural education.**

Multicultural education is a broad concept with several different and important dimensions (Banks, 2004). The dimensions are ;(1) content integration, (2) the knowledge construction process, (3) prejudice reduction, and (4) equity pedagogy and (5) an empowering school culture and social structure.

### **Content integration**

Content integration deals with the extent to which teacher use example and content from a variety of cultures and groups to illustrate key concepts, principles, generalizations and themes in their subject area or discipline. It is the integration of ethnic and cultural content in the teaching learning process in the classroom. Content is the backbone of teaching learning process so the teacher should be integrate the content in variety of ethnic and cultural groups of people's values, norms and culture should be provide by the teaching learning process. Multicultural education addresses the multicultural content in the educational process and curriculum. So the teacher applies the content integration approach to the teaching learning process.

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### **The knowledge construction process**

The knowledge construction process describes teaching activities that helps students to understand, investigate and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions frames of references perspectives and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed (Banks, 1996). According to this dimension students should become knowledge producer not merely the consumers. The knowledge construction process relates to the extent to which teachers helps students to understand, investigate and determine how the implicit cultural assumptions, frames of references, perspective and biases within a discipline influence the ways in which knowledge is constructed with it. When the knowledge construction process implanted in the classroom teachers help students to understand how knowledge is created and how it is influenced by the racial, ethnic and social class positions of individuals and groups (Banks, 2006).

### **Prejudice reduction**

Prejudice reduction describes lessons and activities teachers use to help students develop positive attitude toward different racial, ethnic and cultural groups. Research indicates that children come to school with many negative attitudes toward and misconceptions about different racial and ethnic groups (Aboud, 2009, Levy and Killen, 2008). Research also indicates that lessons, units and teaching materials that include context about different racial and ethnic groups can help students if certain conditions exist in the teaching situation (Banks, 2015). This dimension focuses on the characteristics of student's racial attitudes and how they can be modified by teaching methods and materials (Banks, 2006). The prejudice reduction dimensions of multicultural education seeks to help students develop positive and democratic racial attitudes. It also helps students to understand how ethnic identity is influenced by the context of schooling and the attitudes and beliefs of dominant social groups.

### **Equity pedagogy**

Equity pedagogy exists when teachers modify their teaching in ways that will facilitate the academic achievement of students from diverse racial, cultural, gender and social class groups (Banks, and Banks, 2015). According to this dimensions teacher plan their lessons using various instructional strategies that are beneficial to diverse culture. Equity pedagogy as teaching strategies and classrooms environment that help students from diverse racial, ethnic and cultural groups attain the knowledge skills and attitudes. Equity pedagogy is teaching practices focused on whom we teach, what we teach, and how we teach. Equity pedagogy is an approach to education in which teachers develop teaching strategies and cultivate classroom environment that better support as students, especially those who have been disadvantaged in school and the outside society,(Banks and Banks, 1995)

### **An empowering school culture and social structure**

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This dimension of multicultural education involves restructuring the culture and organization of the school so that students from diverse racial, ethnic and gender groups will experience equality and equal status. The implementation of this dimension requires that the total environment of the school be reformed including the attitudes, beliefs and action of teachers and administrators the curriculum and course of study assessment and testing procedure and the styles and strategies used by teachers.

### Conclusions

Multicultural education addresses the voices of people's diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and socio economic status through the education. It also ensures the educational equity and social justice in education. It needs to transform our teaching learning activities from the mono ethnic course to multicultural education where take the diversity is an opportunity rather than burden task for instructional activities. The five dimensions such as content integration, knowledge construction process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy and empowering school culture and social structure need to consider while conducting teaching learning activities in the classroom.

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