

EDUCATION AND MULTICULTURALISM

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ABSTRACT

While thinking of how the value of multiculturalism can be translated into a social reality or how should cultures be protected and preserved, Multiculturalists have mostly emphasized on giving institutional protection to cultural minorities in the form of groups differentiated rights and privileges. We argue in this paper that a fuller realization of the value of multiculturalism would require us to move beyond legal and institutional framework and begin to talk of more stable and reliable foundations for a truly multicultural society. multicultural education, with its emphasis on changing people's attitude, serves as a strong foundation of a democratic society—one in which cultural diversity is not just respected or tolerated but actually celebrated and seen as adding to overall flourishing of life. This paper then seeks to present an outline of what we refer as multicultural education.

Before analyzing why societies need to realize the value of multiculturalism to enrich learning experience and what kind of institutional framework can support help realizing that, it is important to make some preliminary remarks about the nature of multiculturalism itself. First of all, it is important to understand that multiculturalism should be conceived both in terms of a value as well as a fact. As a fact, multiculturalism is evident in the multiplicity of cultures in our society. There are multiple cultures in our country that are given recognition by our society and have received legal recognition as well in the form of constitutional protection to the minority cultures. Article 29 and 30 of Indian constitution, for instance, grants cultural and religious minorities rights to establish cultural and educational institutions to preserve their cultures. Multiplicity of cultures is a fact; and this can also be demonstrated by the larger philosophical argument about diversity of human condition. The view that diversity is an essential condition of human existence, and difference thus remains an unavoidable, is advocated by thinkers like Charles Taylor and henna Arendt. This view entails profound implications on the theories of defending multiculturalism.

If we agree with the proposition that multiculturalism is a fact of every society, we can then move a step ahead and make a case for multiculturalism as a democratic value.

KEYWORDS: Multiculturalism, Society, Education