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Abstract

Multicultural education is a basic education for all students that permeates all areas of schooling towards social justice, critical approaches to learning, it challenges and rejects racism and other forms of discrimination in schools, colleges, higher education institutions, society, etc. It accepts and affirms differences in race, ethnicity, religion, language, gender, and other differences that students, communities, and teachers encompass. The present study focuses on theory and practice in multicultural education as it belongs to the preparation of teachers and also taken care on the ongoing role and issues of multicultural education and also teachers' perceptions of multicultural education and various approaches to multicultural pedagogy and curriculum are explored. The present study highlights towards the balanced courses by preparing all teachers to teach culturally diverse students which are essential to supporting teachers' awareness, knowledge, skill, etc. in providing equal education for all 21st century students.

Keywords: *Education, Multiculturalism, Perceptions, Preparation, Teachers*

Introduction

Multicultural education is an idea, concept, process, and an educational reform movement that assumes and nations diversity which should be reflected in education system and the ideas were developed to help teachers to promote democracy while responding to the many issues created by rapidly changing demographics of their respective students. It was created to provide teachers with a platform for working with diverse school populations and achieving justice within societies marked by inequalities based on language, gender, socioeconomic status, religion, etc. (Banks, 2004). The emergence of multiple and overlapping identities involving ethnicity, gender, religion, and transnationalism has further complicated the concept of diversity and multicultural education, and effected how teachers address the needs of children from a widening cultural spectrum (Banks, 2004; Kymlicka, 1995). Teachers must realize the differences among their students and integrate diversity education into the entire curriculum to implement multicultural

education successfully. Challenges in multicultural education is that of providing a fair education for students with the purpose of achieving social justice (Gordon, 1999). Educators must know the cultural characteristics of their students in diverse cultures before teaching minority students and he/she must also have adequate skills to enable them to integrate the students' different cultures into classroom experiences. Sue, Arredondo, and McDavis, (1992) argue that multicultural competence requires the development of understanding, awareness, knowledge, skills, etc. Training is a very important factor in helping educators recognize the effects of cultural and racial diversity on students, it also prepares teachers to use this diversity as a classroom resource influencing their teaching practices and new teachers must become multiculturalism's advocates, more prepared to achieve equity and social justice in their classrooms. The present study is to focus teachers' perceptions of multicultural education and the effectiveness of professional training programs in multicultural education, also illustrates teachers' perceptions of multicultural education and the role of professional preparation in teaching culturally diverse students at all levels. Through adequate preparation, teachers' perspectives towards multiculturalism can change, and through the acceptance of their students' diversity, he/she may also feel confident and encouraged to incorporate more multicultural experiences into respective classrooms. Researchers emphasize that the professional preparation process can increase teachers' awareness of the impact of cultural differences, and to bring children's different cultures into the classroom, influencing their teaching strategies (Garmon, 2004; Gay, 2005). Multicultural perspectives should prepare teachers to critically reflect on the power and privileges of dominant culture, their own place within these systems, and to deconstruct them to create social equality through teaching practice. Teachers and students should explore social inequalities and critically examine what is meant by democracy and how to achieve it and must stop working towards building a common culture and begin teaching the value of multiple identities and multiple perspectives (McLaren, 1999). Ukpokodu (2003) defines teaching as a paradigm in which teachers and students consciously engage in the construction of knowledge, critique the various forms of inequities and injustices embedded in the educational system, and strive to gain the empowerment needed to engage in culturally responsive and responsible practice. 21st century teachers must be afforded opportunities to become aware of and question their personal perspectives regarding social, philosophical, and cultural norms in order to develop the skills and mindset to work with and teach future students from diverse socioeconomic, racial, gender, language, cultural backgrounds, etc.

Objectives of the Study

- ❖ To know about multicultural education.
- ❖ To explore goals of multicultural education.
- ❖ To study teachers' perceptions and role towards multicultural education.

Methodology

The present study is mainly established on secondary data which are gathered from renowned research articles, journals, position papers, etc. and are all related to “Multicultural Education Towards Teachers' Attitudes and Preparation”.

Literature Review

The historical roots of multicultural education grew out a struggle for political power, freedom, and economic integration during the civil rights movement of the 1960's. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, women's rights groups advocated for this educational reform and called for learning institutions to provide educational opportunities and employ people of colour, thereby providing minority children with role models. During the late 1960s and 1970s, helped to determine multicultural education's earliest idealization (Gay, 1994). Banks (1989) defined multiculturalism as a philosophical position and movement that deems that the gender, ethnic, racial, and cultural diversity of a pluralistic society should be reflected in all of the institutionalized structures of educational institutions, including the staff, the norms, the values, the curriculum, the student body, etc. This philosophical concept was the foundation of his idea of multicultural education, with the goal that all children should have an equal opportunity for education, regardless of the social class, race, gender, language, etc. Multicultural education was the means and the end by which this philosophical concept could be realized (Banks, 1989). By the late 1980s, emerging scholars such as Carl Grant, Geneva Gay, Christine Sleeter and Sonia Nieto provided a great foundation for early multicultural education. Today, multicultural education advocates confirm the goals of multicultural education are to build relationships, enhance understanding, support self-concepts, develop multicultural climates of schools, and perfect curricula that encourage multicultural awareness (Banks, 2001; Banks, 2004). Cultural diversity is viewed as a resource in the schooling enterprise which can, in turn, help teachers to understand and accept differences, creating a safe and unified environment within the school (Wham et al., 19

Goals of Multicultural Education

- ❖ To develop and foster a democratic and just society
- ❖ To improve academic achievement of all students
- ❖ To help the students to develop the knowledge, attitudes, skills, etc. needed to function within their own and other micro cultures, and within global community
- ❖ To foster opportunities to gain cultural competency
- ❖ To contribute students with cultural, ethnic, language alternatives, etc.
- ❖ It is about all people and also for all people
- ❖ It allows everyone to be open minded
- ❖ It enables a classroom to celebrate various cultural events together
- ❖ To combat racism, sexism, and all forms of prejudice and discrimination
- ❖ To increase critical thinking skills
- ❖ To enable teachers and educators to give value to the differences in prior knowledge, experiences of learners from diverse background and familiarity with students' histories of diverse cultures
- ❖ To reduce pain caused by unnecessary racial or ethnic prejudice
- ❖ To impart all students with the best skills, attitude, knowledge, etc.
- ❖ To integrate and place mutual respect for difference and safe environment
- ❖ To expand boundaries and share
- ❖ To reach everyone effectively

Teachers' Perceptions and Role Towards Multicultural Education

Teachers' perceptions and their trends regarding culturally diverse students in the classroom are an important element in educating, motivating, and making a difference in education among students irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, language, religion, etc. (Le Roux, 2001). Barry and Lechner (1995) finds that students have close cultural diversity in the classrooms and new teachers were undecided as to how well their education program had prepared them to instruct students with different religious backgrounds and cultural from their own, or communicate with the families of these students. Pohan (1996) study finds a significant relationship between prospective teachers' personal beliefs and their professional beliefs. Students who bring strong biases and negative stereotypes about diverse groups are less likely to develop the types of professional beliefs and behaviours most consistent with multicultural sensitivity and responsiveness, also personal and professional beliefs are significantly related to

students' cross-cultural experiences. Fueyo and Bechtol (1999) study reveals that, teachers who do not value bilingualism not only have lower expectations of linguistically diverse students in terms of achievement, but often discourage these students from using their primary language for academic purposes. The research further states that teachers, who negatively perceive ethnic minorities, have also shown differential and biased treatment of students based on stereotypes of gender differences and students' last names. The study emphasizes that teachers must be aware of cultural sensitivity through engaging in the critical and continual process of examining their personal biases, prejudices and perceptions that affect students' learning experiences. Martines' (2005) study concerns teachers' ability to discuss their culturally diverse students in the context of the consultation process, as well as their perception of cultural issues and level of multicultural understanding. Aydin and Tonbuloglu (2014) study find that the most emphasized values are democracy and justice as well as tolerance, peace and respect and that these are reinforced through multicultural education also, cultural richness as the necessary ability to consider and value individual differences and the study recommends making multicultural education a necessity so that equal rights and opportunities will be shared among all groups and people in society's structure. Wallace (2001) points out 90% of teachers are not prepared in teaching culturally diverse students effectively and teachers should learn more about multicultural education and different aspects of diversity in order to acquire the appropriate awareness, knowledge and skills that support their understanding and teaching strategies in the classrooms (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sleeter, 2005; Gorski, 2009; Krummel, 2013). Teachers' preparation programs help preservice teachers to implement the approaches of multiculturalism into a school curriculum as well as find a way to move their students toward a critical philosophical framework for a just and democratic society (Gorski, 2009). Sharma (2005) suggests teacher preparation programs incorporating a balance of multicultural theory and practices are more comprehensive. Ladson-Billings (1994) argues that teacher education curriculum must develop both a theoretical and practical connection between the academic success of culturally diverse students and the relevance of culture itself and recommends diversity education be integrated into every aspect of teacher training curriculum, and opportunities to apply and experience planned as part of teacher training. Also, suggests that colleges/universities with teacher education programs should appropriately train education faculty in cultural diversity for the purpose of teaching students about cultural sensitivity. Sleeter (2005) indicate that there are limited amounts of multicultural-related teacher preparation given

in a crisis for schools with students of poverty and racial diversity. However, well-designed teacher prep curriculum is needed for all races of preservice education students and recommends preservice teachers become involved in their students' communities. Also, suggests that multicultural teacher training should be a motivating factor in using classroom strategies, not offered as deficiency models and partnerships between universities and schools might offer support for teachers in strengthening their knowledge regarding multicultural curricula. Sharma (2005) indicate that universities and districts are not preparing teachers with a comprehensive, multicultural perspective. Gorski (2009) analyses approaches to multicultural teacher education that is teaching the other, teaching with tolerance and cultural sensitivity, teaching with multicultural competence and teaching in socio-political context. Krummel (2013) indicates that preservice teachers are fearful of engaging in discussions about race and recommends ongoing training, support, and feedback for teachers of culturally different students and the services teachers provide for their 21st century students.

Conclusion, Discussion and Summary

Multicultural education is an education that provides equal educational opportunities to all students regardless of socioeconomic status like gender, ethnic, racial, cultural backgrounds, etc. and is dedicated to reducing prejudice and celebrating the rich diversity of any nation life. It creates more globally aware citizens, develops cultural competency in all students, decreases societal racism and prejudice and finally enhances academic performance for all learners. A multicultural curriculum focusses on a school curriculum that addresses the needs and backgrounds of all students regardless of their cultural identity and includes the cultural perspectives of people who are previously been silent/marginalized. Teachers' perceptions about teaching culturally diverse students can help educational researchers recognize the effectiveness of all training programs which should prepare teachers to work more effectively with culturally diverse students and to better understand 21st century society. The present study suggests that teachers do not have enough knowledge, experience, and awareness to teach different minority groups (Pohan, 1996; Fueyo & Bechtol, 1999; Martines, 2005). Encouragement of teachers to participate in multicultural training programs prepare he/she to create a more equal, more democratic and a more just educational system as well as develop their level of understanding and awareness in teaching culturally diverse students (Aydin & Tonbuloglu, 2014). Teachers' education programs are not providing enough training for preservice teachers to teach effectively in multicultural classrooms. More credit courses in multicultural education, and the inclusion of

multicultural topics within other courses in the curriculum must be there and educate teachers about the need for multiculturalism, the theory and practice of multiculturalism, and pedagogical methods in the classroom (Ladson-Billings, 1994; Sharma, 2005). University courses in multiculturalism designed to prepare teachers with personal awareness and pragmatic skills, but they have not provided them with the key principles of multicultural education, such as critical consciousness and a commitment to educational equity (Gorski, 2009). Krummel (2013) suggests that teachers should be provided with ongoing professional development to support their teaching practices in culturally diverse classrooms. Professional preparation for multicultural training teacher education programs is essential, universities and educational institutions need to provide teachers with practice in critical multicultural education in order to help them effectively incorporate cultural diversity into the curriculum and school environment. Syllabi for school and teacher education courses on multicultural education and related topics must be restructured to allow teachers to practice authentic multicultural education and curriculum for teachers should include an understanding of the relative strengths and weaknesses of the philosophical frameworks and specific multicultural models, and help teachers to see themselves as change agents within and outside school. Teachers must be knowledgeable about the topic of multiculturalism and discuss their beliefs, enhance their awareness of multicultural education, and explore appropriate pedagogy for all students. Multicultural education is a very important and necessary concept and teachers need to understand multiculturalism in order to provide equal education for all students and many teachers feel they need more training in multicultural education because of the diversity of their classrooms. However, they seem to be uncertain about the specific values of multicultural education and are not sure how to implement the principles of multicultural education effectively and their professional preparation to teach culturally diverse students would help teacher education programs prepare student teachers to work more effectively with culturally diverse students. All teacher-training programs should reflect upon ways to integrate diversity across program settings, provide coursework and training opportunities to help teachers to apply innovative strategies, and link multicultural theory to practice in their own teaching and it is important as well to understand how students and parents view the curriculum at schools. Well-developed multicultural training is essential for teachers' awareness, preparedness, and attitudes regarding multicultural education and the students they will effectively teach. Therefore, it is necessary to intentionally plan and support this process so that teachers are prepared both personally and professionally to work with students from cultural

and racial backgrounds different from their own and will provide teachers models to think about and discuss regarding cultural diversity. in school environments that promote equality in school and out.

Educational Implications and Suggestions

- ❖ Teachers must unite classrooms with activities both inside and outside.
- ❖ The teaching material and approaches of teachers should be modified to recognize the students' cultures and to gain students' trust.
- ❖ Topics and discussions based on tolerance and respect must be focused.
- ❖ They should influence, inspire and affect the lives of the all-multicultural learners.
- ❖ They have to disown their own self-identity of culture to fit into the multicultural classroom which they handle.
- ❖ They must have the knowledge about the various cultures and the aspects which unite all students.
- ❖ They should be very updated and knowledgeable.
- ❖ They should be aware of the practices and beliefs of the cultures of all students.
- ❖ They should be a person who is empathetic, to understand the perspective of the learner in their class.
- ❖ They should be culture sensitive, and they don't hurt any learner's feelings.
- ❖ They should be flexible in thought and should have an open mind.
- ❖ They should embrace the glistening positivity of each culture and rarely mind the negatives.
- ❖ They should be a role-model, in respecting and embracing the multicultural aspects.
- ❖ They should be a person of integrity and truthful to their words, eventually they will gain the trust of the learner, which is one of the highest virtues of a teacher.
- ❖ They act as a bridge to connect all the learners who are culturally different.

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