SUB–CULTURAL VARIATION, ETHNIC IDENTITY AND NATIONAL INTEGRATION IN PAKISTAN

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Teaching young people to believe in the goal of a better society for all people of cultural backgrounds in as essential part of education, and should be an essential part of the continucus powerful "Societal Curriculum" too.

Social divisiveness based on regional cultures and economic groupings has provided evident existence of diversity in our communities, nation and world. We cannot wish away diversity. Instead we have to try to understand the cultural influences in the lives of individuals and communities, and support the realizations of educational gains that could result from these diversities, and, above all, encourage citizens in our society to achieve intercultural competence, self-acceptance, acceptance of one's own culture, and acceptance of other cultures. In this way we should implant in our children the universal Islamic conceptions of righteousness, human dignity, law and order, and popular government. For explanations of national behaviours in any society we have to deal with the natural human experiences, the natural cultural divisions, and the enduring socio-cultural systems associated with change, participating in inter active inter communicating human systems in certain defined settings.

The term "Culture" was not invented accidently. In nineteenth century anthropologists casting around for a term to cover all of human customs fixed upon this term. From anthropology this term spread to other social sciences, so that such collateral students of human behaviour as the psychologists and sociologists use it today in this sense.[1]

Culture in its broadest sense is the totality of man's learned, accumulated experience, which is socially transmitted or more briefly behaviour acquired through social learning. This seems simple and matter of fact enough. However, as discovered by Kroeber and Kluchon,[2] there are over one hundred and sixty different descriptions of the term "Culture" by anthropologists and others. The earliest definition of culture was given by Taylor,[3] which describes culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals laws, customs and any other habits and capabilities required by man as a member of society.

Keesing[4] concieves of culture as "a system of competence shared in its broad design and deeper principles, varying between individuals in its specifices, an individuals' theory of what his fellows know, believe. and mean." People who share the same public culture, the same theory of a cultural code and the same cultural understandings form cultural groups. However, the anthropoligical studies of the cultures of various groups will not provide us with the nature of ethnicity of that group. Usually people who identify with groups on the basis of race, language, religion, and national origin are called ethnic groups. National societies having common core culture have group diversities based upon commonness of traits related to hereditary and environmental influences. These traits may be physical, behavioural, emotional or socio-economic. Ethnic background leads only to a tendency toward having any particular physical or behavioural trait, a likelihood that is greater in one group than in another. Thus we find many national societies divided into linguo-ethnic, religio-ethnic, and ethno-class groups. Unfortunately upto the 50's, the constitution of ethno-groups, and the nature of boundaries between them was not crrespondingly investigated. During and after 60's many anthropologists such as Barth (1969), Cohen (1979) Hannerz (1974) and Vincent (1970-1978) used enthnicity in an anthropoligical sense with due empnasis on the struggle of groups for power and privilege, and a never ending compitition for resources in educational, economic and socio-political arena of a society. As such it is more a socio-political phenomena than a cultural one.[5] As suggested by Cohen,[6] we have to investigate the "interaction" between various cultural groups operating, within common social contexts, to find out about the unconcious or concious use of ethnicity by that group.

Similarly Ross, points out that ethnicity involves the mobilization of resources for the purpose of preserving the political system to allocate public goods for the benefit of the members of a self-differentiating collectivity.[7] Like ethnicity identity has both unconscious and concious elements. Some theories about the formation of indetity say we are born with our essentially personality directions. others say almost every thing is learned from how important people in our lives react to us.

Erick Erickson whose interest is in individual development defines the term identity with a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity. According to him group background factors are important in the total scheme of personal identity. Personal growth and communal change, as well as, the identity crises in individual life and contemporary crises in historical development could not be seperated, because the two help to define each other.[8]

Social Psychologist Lewin is emphatically certain of the importance of groups in people's lives, and how many groups every individual is a part of. According to Lewin, an individual can be loyal to all the groups without being thrown into a

constant state of uncertainity. Not the belonging to any groups is the cause of the difficulty, but an uncertainity of belongingness. Until a person is sure enough about that identity, sure of the ground on which he/she stands, he/she will remain confused and unable to deal with others.[9]

One result of the confusion as we can now predict from the above two theories is that agressiveness about oneself and great uncertainities in reletionships with others would result if the groups to which an individual belongs are still in different stages of questioning their own ethnic, economic or social identities. We can now utilize the theoretical understanding of ethnicity as a socio-political phenomena and the interdependence between power relationship, social-forces, and symbolic actions (cultural identity) in this paper to analyze the socio-economic and group relationship situation in Pakistan.

Pakistan came into being as a sovereign Muslim State in 1947. All the groups of Muslims in the Sub-Contenent irrespective of their linguastic, geographic, economic and sectarian boundaries joined together to create this Islamic State, However, many years after independence we came to know that we have failed to generate unity among the Sub-national groups, and that some people are loosing their identities in the unified way observed during the collective struggle against Hindu domination. Why this crisis occured in the lives of our people, and why we failed in the promotion of national integration, is the question that could be answered by having as investigation of the national economic and social context. The factors which have strenthened the feelings of ethnic group identities in place of national identity can very easily be identified by educators, socio-analysts, and parents - change agents in a society.

Pakistan created as a regional Muslim State is associated with horizontical and vertical group differences including a variety of overlapping, competing and inter-related socio-cultural sub-systems. The religious order of Islam, organically related to the social order which it has created was never practiced fully in the newly established state. Majority of the people got associated with class, geographic and linguastic boundaries developing their own group's view of the nation based on their own experiences in the newly established State. The symbolically important features of ethnic sub national identity including language, dress, physique, work habits and externally identifying bahavioural patterns of some of the groups have called attention to subcultural differences, and helped bind one group together against another. In dealings with each other cultural symbols are used and ethnic sub-national identities are emphasized. Thus, enthnicity in Pakistan has become a tool used by members of an ethnic group or by others in dealing with them.

The nation wide phenomena of various ethnic groups struggling for power and priviledge has been intensified by the processes of urbanization. In towns and cities we find persons from various linguastic provinces forced to interact in competition for resources. This has given rise to two contradictory processes, on the one hand, a lessening of cultural differences and on the other hand a conscious efforts by some groups to emphasize and even exaggerate their differences.

To understand fully the sentiments and positions of various ethnic groups in Pakistan we have to refer to the work of Cohen. In his view ethnicity in modern society is the outcome of intensive interaction between different culture groups, and the result of intensive struggle between groups over new strategic positions of power within the structure of new society. In many places the possibilities of capturing these new sources of power have been different so that very often the merging cleavages have been on ethnic lines. As a result of this struggle, many ethnic groups mobilise their forces and search for ways in which they can organise themselves politically, so as to conduct their struggle more effectively.[10] We can now very well determine the effects of ethnicity on national economic and social scene and have to develop methods to lessen these effects. However, the whole process of loosing identities by some groups in the unified way and gaining of sub-national group identities could be considered much more the creation of an emotional phase rather than a planned program.

In addition to all the policies and plans for economic uplift of left behind groups, creation of a just social order is very much needed in Pakistan to achieve an integration based on more than numerical formulas. Our schools, universities and other agencies offer places to generate change; in information, selfconcepts, concrete skills and linguastic group attitudes that we need for new "Pakistani"; people who could understand sub-national ethnic groups, their historical background the causes of identity crises in this nation, economic benefits, needs, and share of exposure to education and social change.

National integration in Pakistan could be promoted through education too. We have to help our youth not to avoid or deny group differences, and hide their self-made identities inside the in group shells. But to accept the differences, understand and appreciate them, and create a new pluralism leading to solidarity of this nation. This can be accomplished by introducing ethnic dimension in our curriculm.

Ethnic studies have their value in different strategies and approaches, with the common goal to redeem the feelings of alienation and hopelessness. They promise the infusion of the feelings that the socio-economic or cultural differences do not mean superiority or inferiority of any group in the society.

In Pakistan where majority of our people belong to the same religious and social code of life, there are only linguastic behavioural and social class differences among various sub-national groups. The sub continent from 500 B.C., onward has witnessed the invasions and conquests by many outsiders. Due to the contact with foreign rulers, traders, scholars and settelers, different languages dialects, social customs and behavioural patterns flourished at different regional levels. These differences became the ground for group indentities which are still satisfying the personal and social needs of our people. The development and recognition of ethnic group identities, and the socio-cultural differences among the groups does not mean that we will help our youth not to think in terms of their national identity. National identity is developed only where differences in socio-cultural context are accepted with the help of historical explanation, ethnic awarness is developed, and knowledge about specific problems of out groups is gained. All this will result in the better promotion of human relations, leading to an inter related whole of the nation.

The program of ethnic studies can be organized in many ways, having their values in different strategies and approaches, with which they grow in curricular set up. However one thing is definite and already decided upon by the educators, and that is the inter-relatedness of all the approaches to achieve the common goal i.e. to redeem the feelings of alienation and promote national intergration.

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