

Accommodation of ethnic diversity in schools

Education



Canada has a large number of immigrants thus made them the most diverse nation in the world (Burstein 2004), people was sharing their own culture and experiences to others, the country's society encompasses variety of ethnicity and culture. Tensions between natives and immigrants emerging in different institutions, tensions are evident in values, beliefs, traditions and behaviors portray by individual. School is an institution where people socialize and learn different disciplines that will make up their own personality.

In a multicultural society, discrimination is always present; development of one person will be affected. In this paper, we will understand the diversity of Canada by examining studies and surveys done by the government. The author also emphasized the diversity in school, what are the impacts of diversity in school and conflict situations happening in school? How can administrators and teachers handle diversity in school? Are they providing good assistance for the development of every student? What are the roles and responsibilities that the government possesses in the issue of diversity?

What are the government policies and measures implementing in the whole country? Despite the fact that schools was managing development of one person as well as the government exerts effort in creating and implementing policies, still the dream of unity in diversity is hard to attain. According to Canadian Heritage (2004), Multiculturalism refers to the varied and complex ethno-demographic make-up of Canada. It refers to what we might call several key identity " markers" like ethnicity, race, and religion (p. 2).

Studies conducted by the Canadian government presented that Canadian society is multicultural and the diversity of Canada expected to increase every year, however the government willingly enforce policies, programs and

services to provide the needs of the growing population (p. 27). Canadian multiculturalism can be interpreted in different ways such as descriptive interpretation based on sociological facts; prescriptive interpretation as ideology and political perspective as policy; and interpretation of intergroup dynamics as process (Dewing & Leman 2006).

Canada's multicultural society composed of immigrants from the United States, European countries, Africa, South America and Caribbean, Asia and Middle East, with different religions such as Roman Catholicism, Protestantism and Non-Christian religions like Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism (p. 6). Among those immigrants, the Asians and Europeans are the largest occupants in Canada; who are also responsible for emergence of non-Christian religions and formation of English as Canada's first language.

Opportunities for job, language and climate are the reasons why immigrants prefer to occupy the city of Montreal, Vancouver and Toronto wherein expansion of the visible minority population (explores both ethnic origin and ethnic identity in relation to place of birth, religion, language and population group) has been high in these cities (p. 8).

Language diversity in Canada correlates to the different ethnicity, English serves as first language brought by British people (59. 1% of the total number of population), second is French at 22. 9% and others languages that has been raised to 18% from 1996 to 2001, these languages are Chinese, Italian, German, Punjabi and Spanish (Dewing & Leman 2006). English became the first language of Canada; historically 60% of the people during 1971 are British, for the period of incipient phase, when gradual progress

toward acceptance of ethnicity in Canada emerged, this is also the point in time when people build Canadian political, economic and social institutions.

Political institutions created and implemented innovative ethno cultural policy, in which throughout the years the government will assist cultural groups to foster their ethnic identity, to eliminate barriers for their full involvement in the society and to support immigrants in obtaining the official language of Canada. In the present time, private institutions come out where large number of discrimination incidents among immigrants happens. Diversity and competition two words to describe society, skills and knowledge acquired since childhood will help them achieve goals.

Schools were handling a big role in every society where people explore their potentials and build necessary skills in order to reach success in their academics for professional success in the future, and to become responsible citizens. Preparation allows student to meet challenges in life and adjust to the demands of our diverse society, We can see and study the impact of diversity in schools through different theories like the interaction of the individual with peers or groups, citizenship and ethnic identity, students' goals and opportunities last one is the support given to every students (Harvard University 2002).

Educational institutions are central in shaping the nation with diverse culture and language for the millions of people residing in the country, in school, students learn to critically think and understand issues concerning society where they live in through exposure to different disciplines. The process of socialization occurs in school wherein people engage in peers and groups

whom they can share ideals and culture, and most importantly a place where cultural influences takes place.

Students ages 15 and above feel uncomfortable because of ethnicity, culture, race, language, religion, these aspects possibly result to lost of individual's ethnical identities however respect others culture is the best virtue to show in order to socialize while keeping his/her own heritage and beliefs (Canadian Heritage 2004). Studies said that students learn to deal with people who are different, learning others culture will help them understand others behavior, through their differences people can see clearly the problems and perhaps work together to fix them.

People engage in school because they have goals in life, wanted to become ready in facing challenges in their chosen profession. It is good to experience cultural differences and problems while still in school because the situations within any business institutions are much critical than in school. The school administrators create policies in order to address the need for accommodating diversity, policies and practices performed by administrators and teachers are essential in managing variety of behaviors for promoting good educational environment.

School administrators and government officials believe that there is always a need to change something in order to "bring it into line", policies should base on goals and objectives of the society and in general prioritize formation of harmonious relationship between individual and society despite of their cultural differences. Evaluation should be done first before creating policies, detect practical problems that does not conform to appropriate

social progress however existing policies should also be examined whether or not it is still appropriate or there is already a need for adjustments.

The idea of adjustment seems directly applicable to a social situation in which there is the institution and individual who must adjust to the society. In a society composed of individual, everyone considered as socialized person; he is somewhat an extrovert eagerly participating in the diverse community and committed to help the community to progress. A person conforms to conventional morality and motives presented in the community where he socializes and participates (Mills 1959).

According to Harvard University (2002), to accommodate diversity in schools, teachers reported that there are ways to take advantage of the multicultural school in learning process, i. e. teachers freely discuss racial and cultural differences in their social studies classes, and this is a sign that the teachers are taking advantage of an important learning opportunity in a multiracial school. There is a significant difference in the educational experience for many students and added something for almost all students through introducing their own culture and beliefs.

It is important to school to understand how they help and support the preparation of students to live and work among people different from them while having balance personal, leisure, community, and learner, family and work roles; roles will give one person a sense of identity and belongingness, the role of individual in the community should not be eliminated in the course of development (National Career Development 2008).

School should help students to realize the importance of interacting with people of different cultures and become conscious of their development as a person, in this assistance given by the schools students become flexible and competent in a diverse environment setting thus they can also live in a very diverse or less diverse community, if the person is flexible, people that he will be working with in the future will become comfortable in his presence.

Teachers should be keen in rendering assistance because experience will contribute in the formation of personality and skills; it shows that school is a place where abilities and skills are developed. Students prepare for college and somehow do everything in order to be qualified in a good college or university, however not all of high school students have opportunities. Teachers and administrators know the difference between going to college and how to go to college.

Going to college means the student know that he is graduating and aware of the importance of college in the life of one person, while how to go to college means the capacity of individual to pass admission procedures before getting in the preferred college. It does not mean that there is a need to become genius however every student must reach their full potentials; thus will serve as their training for facing difficult situations and challenges with confidence and integrity.

Personal competencies and values that individuals should manage for their career throughout their life, planning without management is nothing, students have to become responsible in their actions for observing and monitoring future plans, training to become responsible and competent

individual is a good thing to be able to face challenges like diversity (National Career Development 2008).

Schools have big responsibility on preparing students to college, develop positive interpersonal skills including respect for diversity; interpersonal skills are important in the professional life; individual needs to deal with other person regardless of their status in life.

Furthermore, the school should also make a strong practical training for every students regardless of cultural differences to pass entrance examinations and become admitted to practical skills program, this is employment-oriented with the purpose of preparing students for diverse work opportunities; those who will enroll in practical skills training will easily find jobs or even part-time to finance studies to reach their aspirations.

Students should be able to identify informal and formal groups and describe the function of those groups which they belong to strengthen their identity, comparison of two different ethnicity and culture is not healthy for one person rather students should learn to respect differences and accept people who they are. Schools should develop students to become supportive to diversity because the basic foundation of society is its people and the basic unit of change is its people (Henderson 1994).

Students should feel well prepared for performing as adults in a very diverse community, report their school experiences have increased their level of understanding of points of view different from their own and enhanced their understanding of the background of other groups, they should report how they feel to work in job settings with people who are different from

themselves, and further report their school experiences will help them work with, and better understand people from racial and ethnic groups different from their own.

Students should report positive support and encouragement from their teachers, both generally and specific to their higher education aspirations (Harvard University 2002). “ While the globalization of communications and politics may complicate the context in which discussions over religious minorities emerge, there is still an important role to be played by Canadian institutions, politicians, citizens groups and individuals in respecting the rights and sensitivities of “ the other” (Abu-Laban 2007).

The roles of Canadian government in the issue of diversity are essential to the development of public and private institutions; their policies should cover national policies implemented by the government in their goal to accommodate diversity caused by emergence of immigrants possessing culture and behavior different to Canadian natives (Sears 2008). I. e. schools and universities prepare school year schedule that includes accommodation of non-Christian holidays; for Muslim students who wear hats may be exempted in no-wearing-hats policy in school; restrictions in food may take into consideration by managers.

Canadian government focuses on four areas such as fighting racism and discrimination occurring most especially in institutions; making Canadian institutions reflects of diversity somehow can prevent discrimination ; promoting shared citizenship; and cross-cultural understanding through learning of different cultures while preserving ones own identity (Vasta 2007).

Feedback from the people and further studies is important when developing policies/programs, to be able to identify gaps and conflicts that need to be resolved (Hill 2008). Problems of diversity in Canada should be addressed by the government like ignorance, the concept foreign is associated with diversity and hostility to diversity and accommodation (Sears 2008).

Ignorance of some people is a big problem faced by the government, there are difficulties in teaching people who does not aware of what is happening around him, the training provided by schools for individuals' success in accommodating diversity is an important measures. The country is diverse if the composition includes of different types of people, Americans, Asians, Latinos, Arabs or Europeans sharing, working in a particular task and living together in one society, immigrants considered as foreigners born in different country however residing in Canada as a citizen.

Ways of accommodating different culture and people in Canada are deeply rooted in their history, from establishing political and social institutions influenced by their first settlers British and French people, the question how we relate to immigrants as citizens and part of a society, this situation in Canada are unavoidable and that each of us required to adapt in this situation in order to promote peace and harmony (Abu-Laban 2008).

The multiculturalism policy have been developed and influenced services by providing it based on values, such as human rights, equal opportunity, and the respect of diversity, this principle is fundamental in the process of uniting Canadians (Vasta 2007). This multiculturalism principle should embrace by all citizens not only by immigrants; there are approaches for accommodating

diversity in Canada such as passive, pragmatic and principled accommodation (Sears 2008).

A person tends to accept something if this will not cost him too much, if the action that one person will do might avoid a fight or conflict, and if these things/actions will respond norms and principles. Mutual accommodation involves the adaptation of the inserted group to existing conditions, as well as a change in the structure of the larger society and a redefinition of its criteria of cohesion (Cited in Baubock & Vasta, 2007).

Mutual accommodation not just encouraging people to respect others identity however they should engage or absorb others culture, so different cultural and civic values, have to be put to the analysis through discussion. Multiculturalism can embrace the whole society through its national identity; however multiculturalism can challenge the homogeneous national identity. Multiculturalism is not opposing to, but rather is a reformer of national identity (Cited in Modood & Vasta 2007).

Multicultural identities are a good thing; however they need a structure and support of that will include culture and tradition which will give perception to a national identity. Political and Educational institutions should go hand in hand, however government who enforces policies and law should be consistent in their will to attain unity despite of challenges brought by diversity. The success of attaining peace and order in a diverse society is in the hands of every individual, working together and improving their one's own ability and understanding of the country where they live in.