ROLE OF INTERCULTURAL EDUCATION IN PROMOTING WORLD PEACE

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Abstract: The present paper is a study on the role of inter-cultural education in promoting world peace. There are numerous cultural practices in the world and their presence makes the beauty of the world civilization. However, the lack of strong inter-relationship among cultures has given bone of contention among the various groups of people. The peace of the world has been disturbed, affecting the development of the world, the benefic relations among people and their visions for a united human family. There is need to promote better understanding among the peoples, there is the need to promote intercultural understanding around the world. With better intercultural communication which may be provided by intercultural education, peace could be promoted in the world. The present paper analyzes the role of intercultural education in promoting world peace. Numerous suggestions have also been put forward for promoting world peace through intercultural education around the world.

Keywords: *clash of civilizations, intercultural education, globalization, migration, world peace*

Introduction

Intercultural education is one of the important emerging approaches to bring unity among people of different cultural backgrounds. This approach can be used to bring unity at the local, national and international levels. The present paper has taken intercultural education in international perspective or at the macro level. This macro level study can be used both at the national and local levels, with modifications as per the requirement. Seeing intercultural education at the international level is due to our fast moving world where the various cultures of the world have come nearer and nearer to each other. Time and space are losing relevance due to the development of highly sophisticated communication and transportation technologies. According to the definition of OECD (1993), globalization is understood as "the phenomenon by which markets and production in different countries are becoming increasingly interdependent due to the dynamics of trade in goods and services and the flows of capital and technology." (*apud* Al-Rodhan, 2006: 9)

The comings of various cultures have given rise to many problems and prospects. The prospects are the integration of the economies and the creation of bigger borderless market and unhindered exploitation of the resources of countries. The creation of borderless employment is another phenomenon related to globalization. The migration of millions of people from one corner of the world to another has sustained many economies with required human resources. As per the data of the United Nations, Department of Economic and Social Affairs, "In 2013, the number of international migrants worldwide reached 232 million, an increase of 57 million, or 33 per cent, compared to 2000. Most international migrants reside in the developed regions (59 per cent). Europe hosts the largest number of international migrants (72 million), followed by Asia (71 million) and Northern America (53 million). (United Nations, 2013)

The migration of people has also created problems for the people living in another cultural set up. The problem of adjustment with the people of other cultures, the rhetoric of

'nationalist' in the conservative political set up, the loss of identity in society and the competition with other people based on cultural identity, all these have led to the appearance of different types of confrontation among people. Many countries of Europe, such as Germany, France, or Denmark are witnessing various confrontations among their communities.

The confrontations among the people of various countries have been approached from many perspectives. Scholars like Huntington have seen this in the light of the 'clash of civilizations or cultures.' According to Huntington "The issues on which countries divided along civilizational lines included: universality versus cultural relativism with respect to human rights; the relative priority of economic and social rights including the right to development versus political and civil rights; political conditionality with respect to economic assistance." (Huntington, 1996: 198) Some other scholars have seen the confrontation in the context of political hegemony, while others have seen the confrontation in terms of market and resources rivalry, or in the context of religion.

This paper has taken culture as a main source of confrontation among people and has discussed the role of intercultural education in lessening this confrontation in order to promote worldwide peace.

Intercultural education "involves educational policies and practices by which the members of different cultures, whether in majority or minority positions, learn to interact constructively with each other. As a minimum, intercultural education requires majorities to learn about the minorities and their cultural and traditions while minorities must similarly learn about other minorities in the same society as well as about the majorities." (Eide, 1999: 23)

Intercultural education is important for the world peace when the world is moving very fast in the direction of an economic, social, political, and cultural integration. The cultural variation represents an important cause in the confrontation of people at local, national and international levels. At the local level, around the world, there can be identified confrontations among people, such as the violence in many European countries on the line of race, religion etc. At the national level, many countries are facing the problem of confrontation of people within the country, such as the situation in the Arab world. At the international level, there are many confrontations going on, particularly due the intervention of the western countries in the affairs of other nations. There are numerous incidents of reaction and confrontation between the migrants and the citizens of the countries and, in such cases, violence is eminent and is a threat to world peace.

The paper has studied the role of intercultural education in solving the problems of confrontation to bring peace in the world.

Question of Study:
The following questions have been raised to understand the role of intercultural education in promoting world peace.

I.   Which cultural approach can ensure peace in the world - a single cultural approach or a multicultural one?

II.   How can intercultural education promote world peace?

III.   What can be done to promote world peace through intercultural education?

Relevance of study

Peace is important for the development of the world since it ensures the economic activities, political participation, social interaction and cultural integration among the people; it ensures a better relation among the people and nations. On the basis of the study, it has been found that those areas which maintain peace have registered high growth and development, while those areas where peace has not been maintained, registered low growth rate and development. As per the report of the World Bank "The death, destruction, and delayed development due to conflict are bad for the conflict affected countries, and their impact spills over both regionally and globally. A country making development advances, such as Tanzania, loses an estimated 0.7 percent of GDP every year for each neighbor in conflict."[7] Refugees and internally displaced persons have increased threefold in the last 30 years.[8] Nearly 75 percent of the world's refugees are hosted by neighboring countries. (World Development Report, 2011: 5)

There are many causes of confrontation among the people. These causes may be economic, political, social and cultural.

The present paper has taken the multidimensional approach of culture to understand the causes of confrontation among the people around the world. Globalization has given rise to the migration of the people from one corner of the world to another, along with their cultures, technologies, economic means and institutional perceptions. Immigrants' different cultural backgrounds have created the problem of adjustment, preservance and dominance, which led to manifold forms of confrontation among the people.

The interference of major powers in various parts of the world has also created the problem of confrontation, particularly caused by the Western interference in the Muslim world. The people of the Muslim world have taken military intervention to check terrorism as political intervention and cultural invasion on Islamic cultures and civilization. This has given a wrong impression to the people of Muslim world against the western world.

The changing geo-political condition of many regions in the world and their new status as emerging countries constitutes another cause of confrontation. The deliberate attempt by some emerging powers to demonstrate their own cultural hegemony and thus countering the influence of other cultures in their own countries has created misunderstanding and has determined mistrust and a negative approach towards each other. This can be seen in the case of American-Chinese, American-Russian, American-Muslim world, American-Iranian, Israel-Arab relations.

In such conditions, there is the necessity for a better understanding among the people of different cultures, for the initiation of discussion and dialogue to understand each other. Intercultural education can help in understanding different cultures by providing basic knowledge of each other's cultures.

In the light of the existent confrontation among people, the present paper will help to lessen this situation by explaining the role of intercultural education in promoting peace. According to Eide, intercultural education "requires the development of respect, mutual tolerance and co-operation. Respect and tolerance must be based on common recognition of

general human rights as the basic framework which is applicable to all and which must be respected by all whether in a majority or minority position." (Eide, 1999: 23)

Methodology of study

The present study is based on descriptive and analytical methods. The basic assumption about the paper is that it has taken a multidimensional approach to 'culture' as a main source of confrontation among the people around the world. Another assumption is that culture must be considered in its 'dynamic' nature, changing with the passage of time when interacting with other societal factors; therefore it is neither an exclusive phenomenon nor a stagnant.

Discussion on the question

The questions which have been raised above need explanation in order to understand the role of intercultural education in promoting world peace.

Single Culture or Multicultural Approach

One of the main reasons of confrontation among the people around the world is the trend of domination by one group of people over another group of people in political, cultural, social and economic terms. There may be many reasons for the efforts of domination. In the present time, some groups of people may see the various trends like globalization, democracy, or modernization of the world with suspicion, interpreting them as the means of domination of a particular group over the world. They see democracy as a political domination; modernization – a way to westernize the society by the adoption of the western values only; globalization - to dominate and change the economy and culture of the world. According to Water (2001) "Globalization is the direct consequence of the expansion of European culture across the planet via settlement, colonization and cultural replication. It is also bound up intrinsically with the pattern of capitalist development as it has ramified through political and cultural arenas. However, it does not imply that every corner of the planet must become Westernized and capitalist but rather that every set of social arrangements must establish its position in relation to the capitalist West - to use Robertson's term, it must relativize itself." (Water, 2001: 6). These are the reasons why many regions of the world have been engulfed in violence, particularly Muslim countries. These regions are not conceiving these trends as a natural process of development but a projected process of development of the world by a particular group or countries.

There are some regions where the people have accepted the trends of modernization, democratization and globalization as natural process of development, regions that are relatively calm and peaceful. They are trying to adjust their own society, culture, economy and polity to the line of the new trends. As a result they have not reacted against the trends and are relatively more peaceful than other reacting nations. According to the survey of EOS GALLUP EUROPE (2004) the acceptance of globalization among the European countries is as follows: "Netherlands 78%, Ireland 71%, Germany 71%, Italy 67%, France 63%, United Kingdom 60%, Sweden 58%, Austria 52%, Spain 51% and Greece 47%." (European Commission, 2004).

On the other hand, there are many regions where people neither have interacted nor allow interacting with the new trends of the world. They want their own culture, tradition, society, economy and polity to remain a model for them. They are neither reacting nor assimilating, but working on the principle of 'isolation'.

In the light of above discussion there are two ways to approach people of the world. One approach is 'homogenization' to dominate the world with forceful application of the trends, particularly in case of culture. In this approach, there is no place for other models of culture, economy, society and polity. As a result, all those people who disagree with the disappearance of their own models will stand against this trend. The case of Muslim countries is one such example, where trends of modernity have been checked by orthodoxy and violence is going on uninterruptedly. The Chinese opposition to modernity is based on cultural ground as well, while Japan has modernized but not at the cost of its culture. According to another approach to the dominant culture, a model is made 'perfect' without any forceful emulation. Individuals follow it seeking perfecting themselves and becoming more advanced. In this case, there is less chance of confrontation among people, since culture does not become a source of contention but a source of inspiration.

The second approach is not to dominate but collaborate with the others, to ensure the world peace. This is called 'heterogeneity', which can be useful in a multi-cultural society. In this approach all the cultures of the world should be considered important in their own regions and need to survive and flourish. This approach requires a better understanding among the people of different cultural backgrounds, while people of one culture should be familiar with the cultures of the others as well. In the present time, due to globalization, this is a fast emerging trend in many regions of the world. However, while in some countries it is successful with integration and assimilation, in others it is posing problems since the dominant tendency is one of 'separation' and 'isolation'.

Intercultural education for World Peace

In a world where globalization is in full swing and country after country turns into a multicultural society, intercultural education becomes very important since it can be the promoter of mutual understanding among people belonging to different cultural backgrounds. According to Portera (2008) "The intercultural education approach represents the most appropriate response to the challenges of globalization and complexity. It offers a means to gain a complete and thorough understanding of the concepts of democracy and pluralism, as well as different customs, traditions, faiths and values." (Portera, 2008: 488).

Intercultural education can help every model of culture to bring peace and unity. In the case of a single culture approach, intercultural education can provide the pros and cons of eliminating other cultures. This can present a better study of other cultures as it is stated that "Intercultural education represents a key factor for efficient interaction and quality coexistence of members who culturally differ. Therefore, intercultural education plays a special role in pluralistic societies." (Becirovic, 2012: 139)

In the case of 'domination through perfection', intercultural education can present the various aspects of cultures in a comparative way to provide a better understanding of each culture. Intercultural education not only gives the point of differences among cultures but also

the point of collaboration. In the present time, due to globalization, there has been created a lot of misunderstanding among the people of different cultural regions, a situation that has given sharp reaction and violence in the world. Many scholars have also strengthened this sort of thinking of confrontation among the people. Huntington's thesis, "Clash of Civilizations and the remaking of world order" states that "The Islamic challenge is manifest in the pervasive cultural, social and political resurgence of Islam in the Muslim world and the accompanying rejection of western values and institutions. The Asian Challenge is manifest in all the East Asian civilizations-Sinic, Japanese, Buddhist and Muslim-and emphasizes their cultural differences from the west and, at times, the commonalities they share, often identified with Confucianism. Both Asian and Muslim stress the superiority of their cultures to western culture." (Huntington, 1996: 102). The Islamic countries are reacting to modernity and other trends due to considering all these trends as "Western Projects", not accepting them as a process of advancement and development. As a result, they are reacting sharply and consider them deliberate attempts to interfere in the internal matters of the Muslim world. At this point intercultural education can help to understand the stages of cultural development and remove the misunderstanding among the people.

Cultures need to collaborate in order to ensure peace at a global level. For this to happen, people need to know the various aspects of cultures e.g. nature, key elements, and aspirations of the cultures. Intercultural education can provide the basis of cultures to collaborate with each other and thus a wider understanding and respect among the people. Through broad curriculum and methodology, intercultural education can produce broad minded individuals who would be ready to work for the unity among the people of different cultures to ensure the world peace.

In the present time, the causes of clashes among the people are disrespect, inequality, superiority complex, pseudo nationalism etc. People of one culture may consider other cultures inferior, uncivilized, or uncultured. As a result, the people of those other cultures react sharply and make the cause of unrest in the region and world. Intercultural education can remove misconceptions and provide better ground of interaction among the people by presenting the importance of various cultures in their own set up and perspectives. The guidelines of UNESCO declare that "Education shall be directed to the full development of human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups, and shall further develop the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace." (UNESCO, 8)

In many parts of the world, the process of globalization has created misunderstanding and determined facing many challenges in the integration of economies, polities, societies and cultures. The resistance due to misunderstanding is turning globalization into confrontation, particularly at the cultural level. This confrontation needs to be minimized, and this can be done through the understanding of the point of views of various cultures. Intercultural education can provide the solution of confrontation.

Many countries of the world, particularly the western countries, are turning into multicultural societies. As a result these countries are facing problems of adjustment in the new set up. The local and national cultures are changing which does not suit the old age

traditions and customs in which the people of these countries were used to live. As a result, the confrontations between the 'migrated' and the 'host' are on rise in many European countries. The confrontations are affecting the economic, social and cultural advancement of these countries, the solution being the understanding of the cultural background of the 'migrated' by the 'host' and vice versa. Intercultural education can provide the common cultural ground for peaceful co-existence to both host and migrated and lessen the confrontation for world peace.

What can be done?

To ensure the peace of the world one needs to adopt new approaches towards the countries, people and regions of the world. A single culture approach to dominate the world can be successful by means of power, but it cannot be durable. The Roman and Islamic civilizations tried to do so in the past but failed and as a result, the empire they built declined due to reaction of the people of other cultures. In the present times there is need to see the resistance of the people around the world in this context as well.

There is the need to understand the importance of variation in culture, society, polity and economy around the world. The regions of the world are different from each other; therefore, the resources, the economic systems, political systems and cultures are equally different. There is the need to understand that variation, particularly of culture. The variation in cultures could imply a bigger demand for different goods and services, which might be against the interests of a particular group of people, as such groups want the monopolization of markets of particular goods and services which they are producing. This group of people is unable to meet the demand for so many things demanded by various cultures. So, instead of enlarging their production for various good and services, they are trying to change the cultures of the world to meet their economic interests. This sort of thinking is also a source of confrontation among the people. There is the need that the importance of every culture should be understood in context of various peoples, regions and nations.

There is the need to produce a class of people who believe and work for the unity of the people around the world. The curriculum of schools, colleges and universities should be given due importance for intercultural education among the students who later on could advance the cause of humanity irrespective of creed, colour, culture, religion etc.

Intercultural education can promote the peace in the world by providing better understanding and diffuse the tensions among the communities and nations. The need of time is to give due importance to all cultures in their own areas and among the people. This would solve the problems arising due to multiculturalism of many nations where, due to suppression or negligence of one culture, hatred and confrontation among the people are created. The case of Europe which is receiving a large number of migrated people from various cultural backgrounds is an example where in recent time many anti-immigrant movements have been launched. These movements should see the necessities of their nations from the point of view of economy, polity and society.

Europe is right now standing at a crossroad. The population, which is essential for a better economic development, is falling. To sustain the economies of many countries, there is the necessity of robust population policies to enlarge the population by the citizens of the

nation or allow the migration of the people from other cultures. In the first case, the population of Europe can have hegemony of their own cultural life but in the case of migration, Europe has to accept the multicultural society which has its own problems and prospects and with which Europe is not entirely familiar. In the case of the migration of people, Europe has to deal with the migrated people on the large scale, through intercultural education.

Conclusion

The development and advancement of the world and the people need peace, which can be ensured through lessening the confrontation among people on the basis of race, religion, region, language, culture etc. The present world is moving very fast in economic, social, political and cultural affairs. Globalization has brought both opportunities and challenges for the nations around the world, while the constant movement of the people has given rise to multicultural societies. The expansion of a borderless economy has created the problem of unemployment, poverty, inequality etc. Due to these challenges particularly the migration of people has given rise to confrontation among the people and in many places the violence is on rise, which is not good for the peace of the world, on which rests the development of the world.

There is the need to bring the confrontations among people at such a level where there would be no threat to the world peace. For this, misunderstandings among people on many levels must be reduced or ended. Intercultural education can play an important role in removing misunderstandings among the people and bringing them to collaborate with each other to ensure the peace and development of the world. Intercultural education needs time to be taught in schools, colleges, universities, societies, working places; policy making bodies and persons running governmental and non-governmental organizations must also be the promoters of such an educational endeavour. There is no doubt that intercultural education can ensure peace in the world; the main condition for that is that the people should be sincere to spread intercultural education in the world in order to meet the challenges posed by the socio-economic and cultural trends.

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