Pluralism and Educational Institutions of India: An Overview

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Abstract-The existence of many races, languages and religions together can be termed as pluralism driven from the word plural and suggests plurality, diversity, and variety due to which it (pluralism) can be applied in different contexts (i.e. economic, cultural, political, etc.) the meanings are multiplied when related to different aspects of society. Moreover, education plays a vital role in society where an individual is a member of that society. Hence, the educational system of any society is concerned with society structure. Therefore, relationship between educational system and society is mutual; sometimes the society influences changes in educational system and at other times the educational system influences changes in the society. In this connection the paper attempts to explore the effects of pluralism within higher education institutions of India. As education is a center of knowledge creating, delivering, and learning for society. For the development of nation it is must. Education institutions (EI) could boost the efficiency, effectiveness, and quality of work with well-structured knowledge management system. Besides this, the present study also aims to explore the factors which helped in the development of pluralism and main features of pluralism.

Introduction

The existence of diverse and competing interests as the basis for a democratic equilibrium, is considered crucial for the possibility of individuals to obtain goals can be termed as pluralism which represents not only a consequence of the complexity of our social systems, a descriptive principle to better understand modern institutions and agents, but also a normative principle of

democracy in the sense of a combination between diversities (Dahl, 1989; Bobbie, 1991; Crespi & Segatori, 1996). Although conceptually it (Pluralism) refers to a condition in which many cultures coexist within a society and maintain their cultural differences. It can be defined as a state of society in which members of diverse ethnic, racial, religious, or social groups maintain and develop their traditional culture or special interest within the confines of a common civilization (Webster dictionary, 2015). Since, in pluralism more than one basic substance or principle is accepted, it could refer to more than mere a society; say, system of government, or organization that has different groups that keep their identities while existing with other groups or a more dominant group. This means that, rather than just one group, subgroup, or culture dictating how things go, it recognizes a larger number of competing interest groups that share the power and resources. Pluralism serves as a model of democracy, where different groups can voice their opinions and ideas. These meanings equate pluralism with such concepts as multi-culturalism, relativism, discrimination, inclusionism and so on (Longley & Kiberd, D. 2001). Meanwhile, In a deep sense pluralism has much to do with the highest function assigned to education as such: in the light of the current era of identity (Taylor, 1992; Honnett, 1992) in which all social institutions appear to deserve respect just because they are offering entitlements and provisions in order to reinforce individual selves, schools and no-schooling education agents are invested with the task of cultivating individuals self consciousness, and identity in general (Cerulo, 1997). Currently, one of the greatest challenges for the educational system is the rise of pluralism, caused by the fragmentation of the cultural frame upon which socialization has been founded since the dawn of late modernity (Featherstone et al., 1995; Di Maggio 1997). Given that pluralism is a core-value of education, the aim should be to understand and translate a pluralized educational demand into an effective and equal supply, involving both the public and the private sector Colombo (2013). Besides this, according Barbano (1999), there is a "decreasing" pluralism and an "increasing" pluralism: both recognized by social actors and social scientists.

Types of Pluralism

Cultural pluralism exists when groups have not acculturated and each maintains its own identity. The groups might speak different languages, practice different religions, and have different value systems. The groups are part of the same society and might even live in adjacent areas, but in some ways, they live in different worlds. A culturally pluralistic group is committed to a way of life organized around farming, and they maintain a culture and an institutional life that is. For example, the group separate from the dominant culture (Hostetler, 1980; Kephart & Zellner, 1994; Kraybill & Bowman, 2001). The second type of pluralism exists when a group has acculturated but not integrated that has adopted the Anglo American culture but does not have full and equal access to the institutions of the larger society. In this situation, called structural pluralism, cultural differences are minimal, but the groups occupy different locations in the social structure. The groups may speak with the same accent, eat the same food, pursue the same goals, and subscribe to the same values, but they may also maintain separate organizational systems, including different churches, clubs, schools, and neighborhoods. Under structural pluralism, groups practice a common culture but do so in different places and with minimal interaction across group boundaries (Healey & Brien, 2014). A third type of pluralism is exemplified by a group that has had some material success (measured by wealth or income, for example) but has not adopted values and norms of others. For example, some immigrants can survive and occasionally prosper economically without acculturating much. Two different situations can be used to illustrate this pattern. An enclave minority group establishes its own neighborhood and relies on a set of interconnected businesses, each of which is usually small in scope, for its economic survival. Some of these businesses serve the group, whereas others serve the larger society. A similar pattern of adjustment, the middleman minority group, also relies on

small shops and retail firms, but the businesses are more dispersed throughout a large area rather than concentrated in a specific locale (Ports & Manning, 1986).The economic success of enclave and middleman minorities is partly due to the strong ties of cooperation and mutual aid within their groups. The ties are based, in turn, on cultural bonds that would weaken if acculturation took place (Bonacich & Modell, 1980; Kitano & Daniels, 2001). The situation of enclave and middleman minorities, integration without acculturation, can be considered either a type of pluralism (emphasizing the absence of acculturation) or a type of assimilation (emphasizing a high level of economic equality). Keep in mind that assimilation and pluralism are not opposites but can occur in a variety of combinations. It is best to think of acculturation, integration, and the other stages of assimilation (or pluralism) as independent processes (Assimilation and Pluralism 2015). Meanwhile, the university in India needs to foster five kinds of pluralism: in the student body, in the teaching faculty, of disciplines, of approaches within a discipline and of funding sources. Although the fostering of these varieties of pluralism has to face formidable challenges from the countervailing forces of parochialism and populism. These forces need to be resisted, and our universities renewed, by making them plural in all senses of the term (Economic and political weekly, 2007).

Theories, Main Features and Factors of Pluralism

Citizens have different values, attitudes, opinions and somehow these differences must live together. Pluralism signals a theorized preference for multiplicity over unicity and for diversity over uniformity (McLennan, 1995). It is no wonder that many political scientists after the Second World War defined pluralism as the process of group conflict and compromise (Gunnel, 1996). While as, it is problematic due to the lack of agreement on what constitutes pluralist theory. Meanwhile Jordan (1990) assumes that pluralism has been an under-explicit theory; an evolving or (less flatteringly) a mutating theory; an inconsistent theory. Sociological discussions of pluralism often begin with a consideration of the work of Horace Kallen. In articles published in the Nation magazine in 1915, Kallen argued that people should not have to surrender their culture and traditions to become full participants in American society. He rejected the Anglo-conformist, assimilationist model and contended that the existence of separate ethnic groups, even with separate cultures, religions, and languages, was consistent with democracy and other core American values. Kallen believed that integration and equality were possible without extensive acculturation and that American society could be a federation of diverse groups, a mosaic of harmonious and interdependent cultures and peoples (Kallen, 1915; Abrahamson, 1980; Gleason, 1980). An effective starting point for this analysis can be found in Held's models of democracy. The roots of pluralism, however, date back to the works of great political philosophers such Locke, Madison and de Tocqeville. Infact due to the complex nature of society, pluralism rejected the theories of Marxism and Elitism as too simplistic. Moreover, Smith (1990) states that it is possible to pull together the various strands to define the basic features of pluralism which includes:

Needs of an individual
The individuals have different needs concerning with their live-hood and also with the inner development of their personality. For meeting these necessities an individual is impelled as well as compelled to live in the society.

Individual owes allegiance to other associations as well
An individual considers moral responsibility to follow the good rules and principles in accordance with which various associations function.

Law is not the command

According to the pluralists, laws can be better obeyed if they are based on morality, customs and public opinion.

Law is obeyed because of its utility
 Law is obeyed not due to fear of punishment but because of its utility.

Opposed to absolutism of the state
Pluralists gave more importance to the rights and liberties of the associations.

Besides these, state should not be restricted to its functions, should always been bowing before the social institutions, should not be divided on federal system, pluralists are in favour of decentralization and not in favour of abolishing the state etc. can be listed among the main features of pluralism (Puri,2005).

Factors which Helped in the Development of Pluralism

Contribution of individualists
 According to pluralists individuals should be given maximum liberty

Aim of the state should be welfare of the masses
There should be co-operation between the state and other associations.

Gradual development of internationalism
In the modern age no state is self-sufficient. Every state should obey international law. This view has also encouraged pluralism.

Law is not a command of state, influence of the medieval guild thinkers etc. can be the other factors (Bonney & Trim, 2007).

Pluralism in Society

In context of a society, pluralism can be seen in various aspects. It could be religious pluralism, cultural pluralism, linguistic pluralism or ethic pluralism or could be a combination of more than one kind. Pluralism recognizes diverse groups and seeks to provide a mechanism in which no one group dominates the state and in which interests of all groups are reasonably taken care of. Thus pluralism can be said to be a diffusion of power among many special-interest groups, prevents any one group from gaining control of the government and using it to oppress the people. A pluralist society has many groups such as women, men, racial, ethnic groups as well as broad categories as the rich, middle class and poor (Gill born-1995). Apart from this it (Pluralism) has been the main feature of Indian society. However, with the rapid economic development, the diversification of Indian society is currently facing impacts and challenges. Thus most important challenges and impacts are caused by the social disintegration created by the economic growth. Therefore, these problems cannot disappear with the high economic growth (Yang, 2017). Meanwhile, traditionally, India has been perceived as a source of fulfillment – material, sensuous and spiritual, consisting primarily of an agrarian society, the social design of which emphasized self-sufficiency, contentment and operational autonomy for each village. The religion-philosophic ethos, centered around self-realization as the main purpose, allowed one to surrender oneself without any feelings of guilt or fear of punishment (Frazier 2009).A sizeable segment of the contemporary Indian society, seems to have distanced itself from the religion-philosophic ethos, the awareness of the social design, and the understanding of the heritage of the past. Influenced by the alien technological ethos, the parents and the educational institutions emphasize the acquisition of high grade techno-informative knowledge alone.

Pluralism in Education

Education is a fundamental right that should be maintained at all times, even in the most difficult circumstances. This is not simply an ideological statement. Where education is maintained in the midst of conflict it may provide an important mechanism for the protection of children against abuse. Education is an essential tool for human development and eradication of poverty. Children rarely get a second chance at education. Where the opportunity of education has been lost due to conflict, it is not just a loss to the individual, but a loss of social capital and the capacity of a society to recover from the conflict. Education can be part of the problem as well as part of the solution. Policies and practice at all levels within the education system need to be analyzed in terms of their potential to aggravate or ameliorate conflict (Smith & Vaux, 2003). Although a normal society has a basic set of institutional arrangements through which it meets its basic and derived needs. These include family systems, education, law, religion and economic organization. Smith argues that in the case of the Caribbean there is no single society in this sense at all. There would seem at first to be several different societies each with its own institutional set (Malinowski, 1939). In addition to this, education is providing experience for students, teachers, counselors and the community to nurture and practice pluralistic thought. The philosophy of pluralism is not restricted to the "purist" educational environment but is being extended to encompass teacher in-service training and community-based involvement and input. Teachers and the community at large are acquiring an awareness of pluralism through subtle methods of dialog and participation. Schools are expediting the implementation of pluralism through activities, workshops, courses, and small groups (ERIC, 1992). Besides this, innovative programs which have turned to opening the lines of communication to the community have produced remarkable results (VanSciver, 1989). Meanwhile, in the elementary school, teachers can help celebrate diversity and develop group respect with their students. To develop the idea of pluralism, children can create a classroom quilt to which each student contributes a square that is designed to represent his or her ethnic background; plant a small farm or garden project to allow children to experience the planning and cooperation required with each other, the earth and nature in planting their crops, harvesting and reaping the benefits or sharing the failures together (Mack, 1988). Apart from this, Group counseling has a particular impact in the high school setting. Any town: A Human Relations Experience (McWhirter, Paluch, & Ohm, 1988) outlines a group experience for high school students to promote direct, intergroup contact and increased racial tolerance among students. Furthermore, one of the most active environments in reacting to pluralism has been the college campus. These campuses have developed training programs to diminish prejudicial attitudes and to promote unlearning racism. These efforts by universities help to bridge the gap for minority students. Most of these programs develop their ideas through a workshop or brief training program (Lasenza &Trout, 1990). Infact, the design and implementation of diversity planning are most effectively undertaken as an integral part of overall institutional planning rather than as independent processes (Stewart, 1991.

Pluralism in Educational Institutions of India

The task of building an enlightened, strong and prosperous nation rests on the shoulders of its children who are to be cherished, nurtured and developed with tenderness and care. Education has always played this important role and has thereby emerged as a natural characteristic of human societies. It has contributed to the shaping of the destinies of societies in all the phases of their development and has it never ceased to develop. It has been the torch bearer of humanity's most noble ideals. In this sense, as an agent for social change, education necessarily reflects its main ethos, aspirations and concerns (Harijan, 1933). India had an advanced system of education and the world's first universities which presented a consummate example of education based on philosophy and religion and at the same time stressed the study of mathematics, history,

astronomy, maritime and even the laws of economics and public administration. Meanwhile, the history of Indian education shows that encouraged by her great tradition of diversity, tolerance and humanism, various cultural and religious groups established their own educational institutions to suit their specific requirements. While some of these were of religious nature, the others imparted some kind of vocational education. The religious institutions provided for the development of the whole individual — body, mind and spirit, infusion of a spirit of piety and religiousness, formation of character, development of personality, inculcation of respect for civic and social duties, production of social efficiency, and preservation and spread of national culture. As per the British Documents, even the early nineteenth century India had an extensive education system, free from caste and religious discrimination, and almost all the villages had schools (Gottlob – 2011) besides this, it was Sri Aurobindo who first of all, in the year 1910, visualized *A National System of Education*. Its main emphasis was on the nature and power of the human mind, the nature of simultaneous and successive teaching and the training of mental and logical faculty. Gandhiji's *Buniyadi Taleem* (Basic Education) as envisaged in the Wardha Scheme was another powerful indigenous model rooted firmly in the Indian soil. The curriculum developed under this scheme aimed at the total development of the child, reflecting the Gandhian philosophy of education, i.e., the development of Body, Mind and Spirit. The fact that India could not implement it as a national curriculum indicated the magnitude and complexity of the problems involved in changing the established structure of education and the existing pattern of curriculum (Sautman, 2006). On the other side in any case, in the Indian context what C. P. Snow called the 'two cultures'—the humanistic and the scientific—always had an uneasy relationship. Almost from the beginnings of modern education, Indian men were brought up to believe that the 'arts' were inferior to the 'sciences'. Indian Institutes of Technology also contributed to the further moving apart of the two cultures. The plural ambitions of the Indian university have also been severely tested by a now rampant populism. There is continuous pressure towards the equalization of resources, so that the public pie is shared equally by institutions good and bad, old and new. Institutions that were intended to be small and select are urged to let in more and more students, regardless of whether they can maintain standards while doing so. Where institutions of excellence should serve as a benchmark towards which others can aspire, they are instead asked to come down to the level of the lowest. In this manner, policies conducted in the name of democracy and egalitarianism serve only to degrade the education system as a whole (Ramachandra,2012) However the rising property prices have inhibited the growth of university pluralism in another respect; by making it very hard for Indians to study or teach in parts of India far from their own. In about 1940, a modest apartment could be rented in Mumbai at about 20% of a professor's salary; by about 1970 this figure might have jumped to 50%. Now it must be close to, or even in excess of, 100%. What this means is that the pool of available teachers has steadily shrunk; it now contains only those who have homes in the city itself. On the other hand, writing in 1968, the sociologist Edward Shils singled out student unrest as a major threat to the proper functioning of universities in India. Shills observed that Indian students had been restive in the 1930s and 1940s as well, but that this had found a focus and a constructive outlet through the independence movement. In the 1960s, however, student protest was directionless; it was, in fact, a form of juvenile delinquency.

Discussion and Conclusion

When pluralism prevails in a society, no group dominates. Rather as each group pursues its own interests, other groups that are pursuing theirs, balances it. To attain their goals, groups must negotiate with one another and make compromises. This minimizes conflict. These groups have political muscle to flex at the polls; politicians try to design policies that please as many groups as they can. This makes the political system responsive to the people and no one-group rules. Thus unity and diversity are the two states of the society and pluralism is the mechanism through

which unity amidst diversity is achieved. Although in the cultural sphere, major changes have been introduced by legislation which seeks to abolish social inequalities and exploitation handed down by tradition and accord all democratic rights and constitutional privileges to all the members of society. Meanwhile, it is widely accepted that education, adequate in quality and scale, is the most powerful instrument for achieving goals of action and establishing social cohesion. Some of the important national goals are: secularism, democracy, equality, liberty, fraternity, justice, national integration and patriotism. It should also develop in the child a respect for human rights as well as duties remain underprivileged.

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