

**MULTICULTURALISM AND OTHER VIEWPOINTS****R. S. Walke**Arts, Commerce and Science College Tukum, Chandrapur  
raviwalke08@gmail.com**ABSTRACT**

*Multiculturalism is best understood neither as a political doctrine with a programmatic content nor a philosophical school with a distinct theory of man's place in the world but as a perspective on or a way of viewing human life. Cultures grow out of conscious and unconscious interactions with each other define their identity in terms of what they take to be their significant other and are at least partially multicultural in their origins and constitution. From a multiculturalist perspective, no political doctrine or ideology can represent the full truth of human life. Each of them—be it liberalism, conservatism, socialism or nationalism—is embedded in a particular, represent a particular vision of the good life and is necessarily narrow and partial. Liberalism, for example, is an inspiring political ideology stressing such great values as human dignity, autonomy, liberty, critical thought and equality. From a multiculturalist perspective the good society cherishes the diversity of and encourages a creative dialogue between its different cultures and their moral visions. This paper focuses on various aspect of multiculturalism which believe in equality, liberty, fraternity and brotherhood.*

**Keywords:** Liberty, Equality, Human Life, Culture, Diversity and Brotherhood

**Introduction**

Cultural diversity is present in human societies for a very long time. In Ancient Greece, there were various small regions with different costumes, traditions, dialects and identities. In the Ottoman Empire, Muslims were the majority, but there were also Christians, Jews, Pagan Arabs and other religious groups. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, societies remain culturally diverse, with most countries having a mixture of individuals from different races, linguistic backgrounds, religious affiliations and so forth. Contemporary political theorists have labelled this phenomenon of the coexistence of different cultures in the same geographical space multiculturalism. That is, one of the meanings of multiculturalism is the coexistence of different cultures.

Tracing historically, India and Europe exhibit specific ways in which diverse cultures have continued to shape the contours of multiculturalism in contemporary times. Since the history of first known—the Harappa-civilization in the Indus River Valley (3000BCE) till the end of British Colonial rule in 1947, numerous empires ruled different parts of India. The Mohenjo-Daro civilization is contemporary to Harappa-civilization. The early empires were the Aryans (2000 BCE), the Mauryan Empire (326 BCE to 200 BCE) and the Gupta Empire (320 CE to 550 CE).

Both India and Europe are multicultural societies characterized by linguistic, religious, ethnic, racial, regional and cultural diversity. However, rooted in their respective histories the nature and content of multiculturalism, the way it is modelled and manifested is quite distinct and both experience cultural conflicts of various types and intensity. It also analyses what actors and factors have played an important role in success and failure of multiculturalism in both societies in contemporary times. Multiculturalism is a social situation in which multiple cultures coexist and influence one another. Cultural diversity is a characteristic of almost all countries and claims of linguistic, ethnic, religious and cultural distinctiveness are becoming sharper, deeper and stronger than ever. The resurgence of mutually exclusive cultural identities created an awareness of the urgent need to deal with the issue of social integration and the management of ethnic, religious, linguistic and cultural diversity through policies which promote the participation of minority groups into the mainstream and ensure their access to the resources of society.

Multiculturalism poses a different set of challenges for India and Europe. Assimilation, integration and enslavement plays very prominent role in multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is constitutionally recognized

by many societies. Thus multiculturalists like Taylor or communitarians like Walzer, clearly do not wish to be perceived as anti-liberal or anti-republican. The term ‘multiculturalism’, however, has not been used only to describe a culturally diverse society, but also to refer to a kind of policy that aims at protecting cultural diversity. Although multiculturalism is a phenomenon with a long history and there have been countries historically that did adopt multicultural policies, like the Ottoman Empire, the systematic study of multiculturalism in philosophy has only flourished in the late twentieth century, when it began to receive special attention, especially from liberal philosophers. The philosophers who initially dedicated more time to the topic were mainly Canadian, but in the 21<sup>st</sup> century it is a widespread topic in contemporary political philosophy. Before multiculturalism became a topic in political philosophy, most literature in this area focused on topics related to the fair redistribution of resources; conversely, the topic of multiculturalism in the realm of political philosophy highlights the idea that cultural identities are also normatively relevant and that policies ought to take these identities into consideration.

It is a term used in both sociology and political philosophy and can be confused with one another. It is an ambiguous term: it can mean a cultural pluralism in which the various ethnic groups collaborate and dialog with one another without having to sacrifice their particular identities. The term multiculturalism includes a number of interrelated concepts such as identity, cultural diversity, plurality, distinctiveness, equality and recognition. Social and political integration touches the level of identity and value. Our identities is constituted both by what we are and are not and whatever else we are, we are not like trees and plants and worms and insects and all the rest of the natural world. Identity and identification are closely related. One identifies with a body of men and women because one shares a common identity with them and one’s identification with them gives that identity a social basis, emotional energy and a measure of stability and objectivity. Multiculturalism on the other hand is a democratic policy

response for coping with cultural and social diversity in society.

It is not a single principle of policy, but an umbrella of highly group-differentiated approaches and each of these approaches is multi-dimensional, incorporating economic, political and cultural elements in a variety of ways. Multiculturalism as a social theory brings together different themes such as cultural diversity, recognition, mutual concern, and peaceful co-existence of many cultures and sub-cultures. The term ‘multicultural’ refers to the fact of cultural diversity the term ‘multiculturalism’ to a normative response to that fact. There is difference between the multicultural and multiculturalism that is shown below.

MULTICULTURAL	MULTICULTURALISM
Multicultural points out visible product of diversity-food, clothes, music, theatre and sometimes specialist occupation.	Multiculturalism points out recognition within national and global boundaries sometimes in relative harmony with each other.
It is a direct response to culture.	It is an indirect response to culture
It is a product of culture	It is a product of social behaviours
It is created	It comes from social learning
All are happy to live which adds variety and colour of lifestyle	Its direct concern is to post-colonial culture where diversity and heterogeneity have been a rule.

Multiculturalism is best understood neither as a political doctrine with a programmatic content nor a philosophical school with a distinct theory of man’s place in the world but as a perspective on or a way of viewing human life. Its central insight are three, each of which is sometimes misinterpreted by its advocate and needs to be carefully reformulated if it is to carry conviction. Firstly, human beings are culturally embedded in the sense that they grow up and live within a culturally structured world and organize their lives and social relations in terms of a culturally derived system of meaning and significance. Secondly, different cultures represent different systems of meaning and visions of the good life.

As Charles Taylor correctly observes, social recognition is central to the individual's identity and self-worth and misrecognition can gravely damage both. This raises the question as to how the demeaned minorities can secure recognition and here Taylor's analysis falters. He seems to take the rather naïve liberal view that the dominant group can be rationally persuaded to change its view of them by intellectual arguments and moral appeals. Misrecognition has both a cultural and a material basis. It therefore can only be countered by undertaking a rigorous critique of the dominant culture and radically restricting the prevailing inequalities of economic and political power. Since the dominant group generally welcomes neither, recognition is not given willingly as a gift or an act of grace. It needs to be fought for and involves a cultural and political contestation and sometimes even violence as Hegel stressed in his analysis of the dialectic of recognition and which Taylor's sanitized version of it ignores.

Multiculturalism is often contrasted with the concept of assimilations and has been described as a 'salad bowl' or 'cultural mosaic' rather than a 'melting pot'. C. James Trotman argues that multiculturalism is valuable because it "uses several disciplines to highlight neglected aspects of our social history, particularly the histories of women and minorities...and promotes respect for the dignity of the lives and voices of the forgotten. By closing gaps, by raising consciousness about the past, multiculturalism tries to restore a sense of wholeness in a postmodern era that fragments human life and thought. Tariq Modood argues that in the early years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, multiculturalism "is most timely and necessary, and ...we need more not less", since it is "the form of integration" that (1) best fits the ideal of egalitarianism (2) has "the best chance of succeeding" in the "post -9/11, post 7/7" world, and (3) has remained "moderate and pragmatic" (33). Bhikhu Parekh counter what he sees as the tendencies to equate multiculturalism with racial minorities 'demanding special rights' and to see it as promoting a 'thinly veiled racism'. Instead, he argue that multiculturalism is in fact "not about minorities" but "is about the proper terms of relationship between different cultural

communities", which means that the standard by which the communities resolves their differences, e.g., "the principles of justice" must not come from only one of the cultures but must come "through an open and equal dialogue between them." (Page nos.34)

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar led the movement of multiculturalism before the independence because he was against the cast system and unequal position of human being. He tried to maintain the equality in every section of society which indicates the concept of multiculturalism. Social reformer like Mahatma Phule, Gadge Maharaj, Savitribai Phule, Saint Kabir, and Shahu Maharaj tried to maintain the equality in the society. Equality is secured because of the only the Constitution of India which is written by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. To maintain the multiculturalism the people should deconstruct the thing that will give more importance to abolish the suppression from the society. Without struggling no one will create his own identity so in the general life struggle is the essential part of life which shows the path of post colonialism. Multiculturalism only possible on the basis of humanity. Race free, cast free, class free and gender free society is not present in reality and when it will come in reality then we can hopeful about the diversified society that means multiculturalism. (RSW)

Multiculturalism encourages a positive focus on human diversity within the context of clients, practitioners and other key factors' complex environments. Social approach to practice has too often ignored the rich and positive diversity among people, assuming that a focus on multiculturalism emphasizes cultural differences in a negative way. This approach brings to mind the Chinese proverb, 'The only way around a situation is through it'. Social way of attempting to go around instead of addressing the issue of multiculturalism may have hampered professional's efforts to develop the more positive and direct understanding of cultural variation. A positive approach is more likely to unite society and to help them manage together the adverse economic, political and social condition presently. Social literature has just begun to identify more positive and strengths-oriented

approaches to diversity and a multicultural perspective. With its emphasis on social welfare and social justice, it is appropriate for this profession to take a leadership role in theory building and advocacy for the development of multicultural perspective. Implicit in these perspectives is the requirement to address social structure that creates and maintains oppressive condition that dehumanizes both the oppressed and those who witness oppression and to promote people resiliency in coping with such conditions. Many of these perspectives also acknowledge and value similarities and differences among people from various racial, ethnic, cultural and religious groups. Multicultural perspectives are inclusive rather than exclusive by viewing the strengths, tradition and contributions of all groups as essential to the development and wellbeing of society.

Multiculturalism is a broad concept and related with society. The social contribution of multiculturalism is that we can unite the society by forgetting the personal issues and problems. People come under one umbrella and share their culture, knowledge, belief, value, language, tradition and create equality which is one of the most important aspects of multiculturalism. Culture is not limited in one specific region but it has national and international values or boundaries. So we can say the world is a global village. Multiculturalism help to inculcate the scientific approach, critical thinking, positive attitude, positive environment, qualitative education, respect for women, moral values, patriotism and mental health in the society. All the thing are possible for the development of society but for all this environment people should be educated not qualified.

### References

1. Barry, P. (2002). *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
2. Bennett, D. (1998). *Multiculturalism State: Rethinking Difference and Identity*. Rutledge Publication, London & New York.
3. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, (2016). *Constitution of India. Upto and Including the 100<sup>th</sup> Amendment*.
4. Goodin, R. (2006). *Liberal Multiculturalism: Perspective and Polyglot*. Goodin, Political theory, Australia.
5. Kymlicka, W. (1995). *Multicultural Citizenship: A Liberal Theory of Minority Rights*, Clarendon Press, oxford.
6. Modood, T. (2007). *Multiculturalism: A Civic Idea*. Polity Press, Cambridge.
7. Palwekar, S., Sitki, H. & Jiang, Q. (2014). *Multiculturalism: Dynamics and Challenges*. Authorspress, New Delhi.
8. Parekh, B. (2000). *Rethinking Multiculturalism: Cultural Diversity and Political theory*, Harvard University press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.
9. Trotman, J.C. (2002). *Multiculturalism: Roots and Realities*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington & Indianapolis.
10. Phillips, A. (1950). *Multiculturalism without Culture*. Princeton University Press, Princeton and Oxford.
11. Storey, J. (2012). *Cultural theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction*. University of Sunderland, Routledge: Taylor & Francis Group, London and New York.