

Multicultural Education: Finding Educational Explanations for the Present Crisis in Sri Lanka

Chandralal D

Department of International Communication, Okinawa University

chandralal@okinawa-u.ac.jp

Post-Independence Sri Lanka has suffered increasingly from shortfalls and frustrations, but there seem to be no clear, immediate paths for solving these problems.

The purpose of this paper is to identify the educational issues inherent in the present education system in Sri Lanka and to propose a model for what makes a country sustainable and a citizenry enlightened.

I will begin my paper by providing an operational definition of multiculturalism as a basis for understanding the changes coming to our society.

The means of information gathering consist of observation and documentation analysis. I depend on a comparative methodology for analyzing the data.

My observations have compelled me to take a critical attitude toward our educational practices. One of the basic assumptions I make is that the education in post-Independence Sri Lanka has reinforced existing community inequalities by emphasizing an academically oriented/examination-oriented school ethos. Our absolute focus on examination preparation and meritocracy has proved not effective in bringing out students' potential for the benefit of society.

I will prove that expanding educational opportunities and the investment by public funds make less of a contribution to the country while overtly fostering politically biased and anti-social sentiments. Following the human capital theory and education approaches, I will argue that the results of the education system for socioeconomic development are quite poor relative to the investments made in the Post-Kannangara era of Sri Lanka. Looking from social transformation theories, it is also evident that policy makers, administrators and teachers have been reluctant to go beyond top-down education and attempt to engage students in participatory processes that deliver more than basic skills. I will show how multicultural education and global citizenship education can play key roles in combatting social ills prevalent in our society.

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