



Short Communication

Role of Education in National Integration

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Abstract

National integration plays an important role for a healthy nation. After independence, India is facing difficulty in nation building and national integration. To solve this Secondary Education Commission suggests education system to contribute to the development of habits, attitude and qualities of character. Role of school teachers and educational institutes in securing National Integration is very important.

Keywords: Casteism, community, national integration, region, unity in diversity, economic prosperity.

Introduction

The National Integration Conference (1961) defined, Nationalism or national integration is a psychological and educational process involving the development of a feeling of unity, solidarity and cohesion in the hearts of people, a sense of economic citizenship, a feeling of loyalty to the nation. Kothari Commission (1964-66), defined, National integration includes a conference in nation's future, a continuous rise in the standard of feeling of values and duties, a good and impartial administrative system and mutual understanding. Mahatma Gandhi said, We have to produce a society of those who profess different religions, but they live like brothers. This statement of Gandhiji has the essence of national integration in India¹.

National Integration Day is initiated in India to honour the birth anniversary of Indira Gandhi, India's first female Prime Minister, and her efforts in promoting peace, unity and love among the diverse Indian population. It is celebrated on 19th November.

National integration aims to foster a sense of unity and oneness among the diverse communities within a country. It promotes mutual respect, understanding, and acceptance among people from various areas, religions². National integration aims to eliminate discrimination and prejudice based on ethnicity, language, or religion. The ultimate goal is to build a cohesive and harmonious nation where all citizens feel a sense of belonging and participate actively in the country's progress. By promoting national integration, a country can achieve social stability, peace, and inclusive development for all its citizens³.

Role of Education in National Integration

Education holds great importance as it shapes our perspectives and ideas. India has been fortunate to have exceptional educationalists both before and after independence. School

teachers play a crucial role in influencing young minds in the country. Over time, historical figures and iconic slogans have become ingrained in our collective consciousness. The NCERT syllabus, developed with the support of renowned scholars, has played a significant role in shaping India's identity⁴. Prominent universities like Delhi University, Jamia Millia Islamia, and Osmania University attract students from various regions, fostering a pan-Indian mindset that transcends cultural and ethnic barriers. However, enrollment in higher education institutions still needs to be higher in India, with only 12-13 percent of the population having access compared to other countries. Further education often leads students to relocate across the country, encouraging them to think beyond their localities, castes, and religious affiliations⁵.

The factors of difference in religion and cultures as well as not knowing the culture and sensitivities of the groups strengthened prejudice among the ethnic groups. Other than that the educational system which was separated as a result of British colonial policy also obstructed the unity and integration in the community. Efforts are being made through private universities and government initiatives to make higher education more accessible and popular. An inclusive education system has helped people from diverse cultural and marginalized backgrounds align with the national mainstream⁶. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru believed that providing the right education to everyone could be the primary solution to various societal challenges. Involving students in community service projects, cultural exchanges, and collaborative initiatives, teachers foster cross-cultural understanding and unity. These experiences allow students to connect with peers from diverse backgrounds, promoting a sense of shared identity and belonging⁷.

Education plays a crucial role in promoting national integration, fostering a sense of unity and belonging among diverse groups within a country. Here are several key ways in which education

contributes to national integration: i. Promoting Social Cohesion, ii. Fostering National Identity, iii. Reducing Socioeconomic Inequalities, iv. Promoting National Language, v. Encouraging Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving, vi. Instilling Ethical and Moral Values, vii. Supporting Cultural Exchange and Understanding, viii. Creating a Shared Vision for the Future.

Role of teachers in national integration

A Teacher can play constructive and creative role through the curriculum she teaches. The teacher should narrate to their students, the stories of great heroes of the nation who sacrificed their lives for the unity and integrity of the nation. They should not discriminate the students on the basis of caste, color, language, religion and region⁸.

Examples of Educational Practices Promoting National Integration:

i. Inclusive Curriculum: Incorporating diverse perspectives and histories in the curriculum to reflect the multicultural nature of the nation. ii. Language Education: Promoting bilingual or multilingual education to ensure proficiency in both the national language and regional languages. iii. Civic Education: Teaching students about democratic principles, human rights, and civic responsibilities to foster active and responsible citizenship. iv. Cultural Events and Celebrations: Organizing cultural events, festivals, and celebrations in schools to promote understanding and appreciation of different cultures. v. Community Service Programs: Encouraging students to participate in community service and volunteer activities to build empathy and social responsibility.

Conclusion

In conclusion, education is a powerful tool for achieving national integration. It nurtures informed, empathetic, and united citizens who contribute to the harmonious development of their nation. Investing in inclusive and comprehensive education systems is imperative for building a cohesive and integrated society. Education for National Integration is a must for national

unity. In securing National Integration the role of school teachers and educational institutes is very important. So education should be organized and educational programs be structured which teach the essential unity in the diversity of national life, and which try to inculcate in children the qualities of communal harmony and human fellow-feelings for greater interest of the nation. The main motive of national integration in India is to build the nation within the nation. National integration has played a key role in the development of nations. One can find a sense of strong national integration in any developed nation. A strong sense of national integration is the need of hour to change the status of our nation from developing to developed nation.

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