

Establishment of the Concept of Multicultural Education and Institutionalization in South Korea

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Abstract: *The purpose of this study is to analyze how the concept of multicultural education was established in Korea and examine if the concept is being validly legalized and institutionally realized in education. For this, we compared the conceptual elements of multicultural education being settled down in Korea with those of foreign countries, and based on it, we investigated how multicultural education is being reproduced in various legislations.*

In Korea, due to the advent of multicultural society caused by increase of immigrants, the establishment of multicultural policies and enactment of statutes, multicultural education has become more important. However, although the concept of multicultural education of Korea is similar to that of the western society, Korea has focused on assimilation. Thus, in order for multicultural education to be established in schools and society, it is very important to examine how multicultural education is being institutionalized in related legislations. To this end, this study performed theoretical research for establishing the concepts in both pedagogical and juristic perspectives.

As a result of the analysis, it turned out that multicultural education was institutionalized being divided into education for immigrants' social adaptation, support for children with immigration background on right for learning and multicultural education for general students and general members of community. However, it could be found that, multicultural education is lacking for general people and all students. Regarding the purpose of education, it was indicated that while 'social integration' having 'nationalization' as the premise is being focused, people's understanding of multicultural society and guaranteeing cultural diversity of immigrants are not sufficient. Based on the study results, as the developmental direction of multicultural education in Korea, an emphasis on immigrants' human rights and cultural diversity, and the paradigm shift to multicultural education embracing all students and citizens were suggested as alternatives.

Keyword: *Multicultural Education, Multicultural Society, Immigrants, Cultural Diversity, Immigrant Children, Multicultural Education Related Legislation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Korean society, a shift to a rapid multicultural society taking place with a continuous increase of immigrants. The number of foreigners residing in Korea exceeded 1.26 million in 2010 and increased to 1.8 million in 2014. This is 3.5% of the total population (Ministry of Justice, 2014). Also, elementary, middle and high school students from multicultural families are 67,806, which takes up 1.07% of the total students (6,333,617) (Ministry of Education, 2014).

In an era when the width and depth of movement and exchange between cultural groups are deepening, it is expected that the proportion of multicultural members of Korean society will continue to increase. Like this, in a multicultural society in which various races, people and cultures exist, multicultural education is important in that it helps overcome prejudices against multiculturalism and that it promotes the opportunities for communication and coexistence between one's own culture and other cultures (Kang, Gu-jin, 2008). In addition, multicultural education proposes a major educational challenge of 'cultivation of citizenship' by which one can

coexist and cooperate with community members with different races, languages, cultures and religions in a multicultural society (Mo, Kyeong-hwan and Lim, Jeong-su, 2011). For Korean society to aim at a true multicultural society instead of staying as a simple multi-racial and multicultural society, it is necessary to concretize the systems and policies in a direction of systematizing multicultural education (Gu, Jeong-hwa and Park, Seon-woong, 2011).

A full discussion on multiculturalism in Korean society appeared around 2006. The Ministry of Government Affairs and Home Affairs judged that Korean society entered into a multicultural society as the number of foreigners residing in Korea exceeded 1% of the total foreigners in 2006, and it took the social integration of foreigners as an important task. In order to get ready for a shift to a multicultural society and the resulting problems, various multicultural policies led by the government began to be implemented, and the maintenance of statutes and systems to support them has been promoted (Park, Sang-jun, 2009; Lee, Jong-yun, 2010).

The discussion about multicultural education in Korea prioritized education for the adaptation of rapidly increasing migrant children to Korea, so it had a strong characteristic of approaches from the dimensions of education and welfare. Systems and policies related to multiculturalism, too, strongly, reflected the perspective of welfare, and accordingly, in the meaning and application of multicultural education, prejudices of minority education for 'immigrants' appeared, as well.

However, if discussions of multicultural education are limited to education and welfare of minorities or foreigners' social adaptation in a multicultural society, it is difficult to implement the original meaning of multicultural education normally. Especially, if the legal systems cannot implement the original meaning and policy of multicultural education, there is a risk that multicultural

education policies and programs do not operate systematically. In this case, multicultural education is at risk so that it loses its original goals and directions and cannot contribute to immigrants' social integration. Thus, it is necessary to look into what contents the related statutes affecting multicultural education directly and indirectly contain and what contents should be included so as to implement true multicultural education.

Thus, this study will first, organize the significance of multicultural education for scholars and extract the elements of the institutionalization of multicultural education. Second, based on this, it will evaluate whether the multicultural education systems in the multicultural education-related statutes implemented its objectives and contents properly. Third, it will propose directions in which the statutes on multicultural education should improve in the future.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUNDS

2.1. Significance of Multicultural Education

Multicultural education is defined in the dictionary and expressive meanings as education of various cultures, one to make students understand various types of culture, or that for cultural diversity (Kim, Yong-Sin, 2008). More specifically, multicultural education is also, defined as learning of various races, cultures, gender, classes and groups in a country (Atwood, ed. 1991; quoted from Kim, Yong-Sin, 2008).

In South Korea, the concept of multicultural education began to attract attention from the academic world as its concept and content, started from the west since 2000, were positively accepted. Kim, Seon-mi (2000) said that multicultural education refers to an emphasis of the necessity of education of various cultures for the right understanding of their own culture by citizens in a multicultural society and right

knowledge, values and attitude towards different cultures, and Park, Hyeong-min (2004) defines multicultural education as a sort of social movement contributing to building a society in which various minorities residing in a society can enjoy their cultural rights from Banks and Grant's perspective. Citing Banks's theory, Choi, Yeong-dal (2007) wrote, "Multicultural education is a continuous process to change the structure of education so that students with various cultural differences achieve equal opportunity in schools and aims at an ideal goal of preparing a turning point for creating a healthier and new culture by achieving social integration." Choi, Chung-ok et al., (2009) write that multicultural education is a reform movement focusing on reforming school curricula and educational systems so as to provide students in various classes, races and national groups with equal opportunity of education. Citing Banks and Bennet's definition of multicultural education, Mo, Kyeong-hwan (2009) defined multicultural education as "one providing students with various classes, races, nations and groups with equal opportunity of education by reforming curricula and educational systems, challenging all types of inequality in school and society by pursuing principles of social justice, and trying to maximize all students' intellectual, personal and social potentialities."

To sum up the scholars' discussions above, multicultural education has the following contents: (i) The base of various races, nations and cultures; (ii) Opposition to all kinds of discrimination including racial discrimination, educational inequality and phenomena of prejudice; (iii) Education of pursuing democracy, pluralism and personal and social development; and (iv) Pursuit of change in teaching and learning method, transformational movement and school reform.

Like this, the concept of multicultural education appearing in accommodating Western multicultural education is not just multicultural

education for minorities, but that in its original meaning for all students and the society. However, in South Korea, many regard it, especially, as education for compensation of immigrants, adaptation education or welfare program (Kim, Min-Hwan, 2010). Accordingly, in the current Korean society, most multicultural education is focused on education for minorities' adaptation and education for understanding minorities, which is criticized. Lee, Gwan-seong (2007) points out that South Korean multicultural education has been provided from an aspect of allowing immigrants' adaptation to Korean society and that Korean education has been indifferent to education to understand immigrants' cultures and overcome multicultural prejudices. Along with multicultural education for protecting minorities, multicultural education inducing changes in majorities' awareness is very necessary.

Thus, multicultural education should have the following two characters by its original meaning. One is a direction to allow majorities of a society to understand and embrace the minority culture and the other is a direction to allow minorities to establish and secure their social adaptation, identity and human rights (Lee, So-yeon, 2007). The opinion that argued that multicultural education should gradually develop from education for minorities' adaptation to that for all, by dividing the types of Korean multicultural education into education for minorities' adaptation, that for their identities, that for their communities, that for understanding them for majorities and that for all, also, can be said to be in the same context (Yang, Yeong-ja, 2008).

2.2 Elements of the Concept of Multicultural Education

Although there are various scholars' opinions about the core elements determining the concept of multicultural education as mentioned above, the authors will suggest the core elements of the

concept of multicultural education in South Korea as follows:

First, securing the right to education of migrant children and support for their social adaptation. This appears in the aspect of preventing the phenomenon of migrant children's educational alienation. Most multicultural members form the poor strata in Korean society, and accordingly, migrant children suffer from inequality in the provision of educational opportunity and the phenomenon of educational alienation. These may act as a factor decreasing individuals' quality of life and deteriorating the development of the society and the country (Na, Dal-suk, 2009). In addition, migrant children suffer from bullying, learning deficits and school maladaptation because of their maladaptation to the cultures and systems of Korean society and differences in accent, skin color and culture at school. The number of migrant children who do not go to school due to this maladaptation is increasing (Kim, Hyeon-deok, 2007). Like this, education for migrant children has a concept limiting multicultural education in the original meaning to the dimension of welfare, but it is a concept essentially required as South Korea is entering a multicultural society.

Second, education for a prohibition on discrimination by race, nation and culture, democracy and pluralist educational reform. This is education for a prohibition on discrimination so that all ordinary students do not have prejudices against other races, nations and cultures, which appears as a multicultural understanding education for the promotion of multicultural sensitivity in all students and further, general members of the society. Multicultural understanding education aims at wiping out prejudices against other cultures and creating a harmonious society through the understanding of various cultures existing in a specific society (Kim, Yeon-gweon, 2007). Especially, it has been pointed out that policies for multicultural education at school have

a lack of multicultural educational philosophy, biased support for children from international marriage families and a lack of multicultural education of general students (Hwang, Gab-jin, 2010). In other words, now, in multicultural education of migrant children, the multicultural understanding education of general students and teachers should be emphasized.

3. REVIEW OF STATUTES RELATED TO KOREAN MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

In South Korean society, with an increase of multicultural members, multicultural education-related statutes have been legislated and revised. Currently, in Korea, multicultural education-related statutes do not exist as a single law of the multicultural education act, but the contents of multicultural education exist partly in individual statutes. In addition, multicultural education is carried out according to statutes supervised by each ministry based on human rights and the right to education appearing in the Constitution and international laws.

3.1. Education for Immigrants' Social Adaptation

Article 11 of the Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea provides that the state and local government may support for basic refinement and knowledge necessary for foreigners' living in Republic of Korea, provide them with information and counseling, etc. Article 12 provides Korean language education for international marriage immigrants, education of the systems and cultures of Korea, nursery care and education support for the children of international marriage immigrants and medical support, more in detail

Also, Clause 1, Article 6 of the Multicultural Families Support Act provides that the state and local government may provide basic information necessary for international marriage immigrants' living in Korea and that they may provide necessary supports for social adaptation

education, vocational education and training, and Korean language education for the improvement of communication ability.

Article 11 in the Enforcement Decree of the Multicultural Families Support Act provides that education in accordance with Clause 1, Article 6 may be carried out systematically and gradually, considering international marriage immigrants' nationality, learning ability and other educational conditions (Clause 2) and that, in order to promote international marriage immigrants' employment and entrepreneurship, vocational education and training may be carried out considering capacity and aptitude (Clause 3).

Special support is provided for children with an immigration background. Clause 2, Article 10 of the Multicultural Families Support Act provides that plans for educational support should be prepared, so that the children, multicultural family members can adapt themselves to school life, and the superintendent of education may support for extracurricular or after-school education programs, etc.

Clause 3, Article 10 of the Multicultural Families Support Act provides that the state and local government may make efforts to support nursery care and education for the children in multicultural families before entering elementary school and that for their language development, they may provide necessary support of Korean language education for the promotion of their language ability and textbooks and learning for mother tongue education of their fathers or mothers, who are international marriage immigrants. Also, Article 18 of the Juvenile Welfare Support Act provides that the state and local government should prepare and carry out necessary policies such as counseling and education for the enhancement of social adaptation and learning ability of the youth without a migration background.

Like above, in the statutes, the support and education on the dimension of social adaptation of

foreigners, immigrants or migrant children have been inevitable choices with the advent of a multicultural society in Korea. Concerning these systems, there is a criticism that multicultural education is limited to the concept of social adaptation education of minorities, which remains at the perspective of assimilation. However, supports such as Korean language education and social adaptation education focused on rapidly increasing foreign immigrant women could not but be essential in their early settlement in Korean society.

3.2 Support for Children with Immigration Background on Right for Learning

Korea's Constitution provides values significant for education, such as dignity and value as a human being (Article 10), equality before the law (Article 11) and the right to education (Article 31). In addition, Article 2 of Convention on the Right of the Child (CRC) to which Korea subscribed specifies that the countries directly involved should 'respect and secure all children's rights without any discrimination of any kind, such as race, skin color, sex, language and religion, and Article 28 provides that children's education should be carried out in a way which provides equal opportunities. Such values function as education for a prohibition on discrimination of children with immigration background indirectly in multicultural education.

Clause 1, Article 10 of the Multicultural Families Support Act provides that the state and local government should not discriminate the children, multicultural family members in providing nursery care and education, and Article 22 of the Enforcement Decree of the Infant Care Act provides infants, of all children of multicultural families in accordance with Article 2-1 of the Multicultural Families Support Act, as the recipients of free nursery care, so that the preschoolers of multicultural families are not discriminated in nursery care. Pre-school education has a great impact on school education

later, so good nursery care during this period is considered very important.

In the past, in Korea, documents through which the legal status of sojourn could be confirmed were required when migrant children would enroll in schools (Article 19 of the Enforcement Decree of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act). However, in 2003, this was revised, and migrant children can transfer and enter elementary school without having to prove the fact of their registration as legal aliens, just by proving that they are residing in Korea. Thus, an action was taken so that the right to education of children would not be infringed due to their parent's illegal residency. Also, Article 75 of Enforcement Decree of the same Act, too, provides that middle school students should be provided the right for learning without having to prove their legal status to Korea.

3.3 Multicultural Education for General Students and General Members of Community

Article 13 of the Multicultural Families Support Act provides that the state and local government may carry out education of the public officials employed in tasks related to support of multicultural families for the promotion of understanding multicultural families and the enhancement of their expertise. Education of the related public officials is a special provision appearing only in the Multicultural Families Support Act, which leaves much to be desired as the subject was limited to the related public officials. However, this provision has a character of coercing the education, so it is difficult to apply to the general public extensively. Also, the public officials in charge of duties regarding immigrants needed an immediate multicultural education, so it had a strong character of legal coercion.

As for multicultural education of general students or members of the society, the Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea indirectly provides that the state and local government

should make the necessary efforts to allow multicultural understanding and respect of the general public. Also, Article 5 of the Multicultural Families Support Act provides the following, more specifically. In other words, the state and local government should prevent social discrimination and prejudices against multicultural families, carry out multicultural understanding education, so that the members of the society can accept and respect cultural diversity, and take necessary actions like public relations (Clause 1), and the Minister of Education and the Superintendent of Education should establish and enforce policies for the execution of education helping students understand multicultural families at schools (Clause 2).

Based on this, in Korean elementary and middle school curricula, the topic of multicultural education was included as a cross-curriculum since 2007, and the 2009 revised national curriculum, too, emphasized a multicultural curriculum. The multicultural curriculum means a program to embrace and share cultures with people from different cultural backgrounds, make them understand Korean culture correctly and allow Koreans to have open and receptive attitudes towards the cultures of other countries (Park, Eun-jong, 2010).

4. Limitations and Plans for Improvements

4.1 Substantial Guarantee of Immigrants' Right for Learning and Social Adaptation

Multicultural-related statutes should guarantee immigrants' learning opportunities and substantiate Korean language education. Especially, they should allow education for immigrants in their initial settlement process, and also, they should provide education or textbooks in various languages in the education. Consequently, they stop at declarative clauses, due to the issue of educational cost, but efforts should be made to accomplish this actually. In addition, among all immigrants, the education of immigrant

workers is necessary. Immigrant workers take up a high proportion of Korea, but are excluded from the subjects of the policies. Since most immigrant workers do not receive any education and cannot protect their interests independently, on the dimension of human rights, education of them is required.

Also, multicultural education-related statutes need to expand the coverage. Current legislation of Korea limits the range of the subject of the direct support for education to international marriage families and legal immigrants of all immigrants. It is primarily limited to international marriage families and children with Korean nationality. This is because Multicultural Families Support Act uses a concept of 'multicultural family' instead of that of 'immigrants,' and the Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea, also, limits beneficiaries of the policies to foreigners married to Korean nationals. However, it is necessary to expand the subjects of the policies from international marriage families to immigrants for the enhancement of the protection of human rights.

4.2. From Multicultural Education in a Narrow Sense to That in a Broad Sense

Most contents of multicultural education in the related statutes appear as support for migrant children's right for learning and education for their social adaptation. This is an aspect of welfare for the support and protection of minorities, which are relatively limited to the concept of multicultural education in a narrow sense. Multicultural education in this sense was required essentially at the time when Korea entered a multicultural society with the number of immigrants of about 1%, and it was definitely a very inevitable policy at the time of an early multicultural society. However, now, when the number of immigrants is continuously increasing and social integration in a multicultural society is required, only with this multicultural education in a narrow sense, it is insufficient to promote the

multicultural citizenship or multicultural competence the community members should have in the multicultural society.

In order to overcome this point, the Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea and Multicultural Families Support Act suggest the expansion of multicultural education in the name of multicultural society understanding education. However, considering the fact that it is impossible to coerce this obligatory burden on community members and the original property of education, it leaves much to be desired since they remain as instructional provisions. Accordingly, in that most provisions in the decrees related to multiculturalism still define multicultural education as concepts of support for minorities and education for their adaptation to society and that the citizens, also, tend to accept that, it can be said that there is a gap between the original meaning of multicultural education and the legal systems.

Of course, as mentioned above, support and education on this dimension of social adaptation were inevitably necessary with the rapid advent of a multicultural society in Korea. However, originally, multicultural education is for the coexistence of diversity, in which it is important to accept 'multiple cultures' and 'cultural diversity' and prevent the existing members of the society from having prejudices against multiculturalism. Thus, now, it should shift from multicultural education for adaptation to Korean society to that in a broad sense, which allows the existing members to have open awareness of various cultures a multicultural society.

4.3. From Immigrants-centered Multicultural Education to That for the General Public

The direct subjects of multicultural education should not be limited to migrant children, but expanded to 'all' students and the general public, in order to be true to the essence of multicultural education. Multicultural education only for migrant children cannot be considered a true

multicultural education, and in order to implement substantial multicultural education, it should expand to multicultural education for ordinary students, teachers, relevant public officials and the general public.

At this point, the elements of the contents that the multicultural education for all students or the general public should emphasize may include education of a prohibition on discrimination, education for multicultural human rights and education for cultural diversity. Regarding the education for a prohibition on discrimination, the prohibition on discrimination of immigrants may be important in a multicultural society, but what are important are not limited to this. Gender, race, ethnicity, nationality, region, national origin, disability and hierarchy, etc., to which importance has been attached in the existing human rights education should be dealt with as the reasons for the prohibition on discrimination. Multicultural human rights education can be considered a special concept to increase the promotion of immigrants' human rights in the circumstances in Korea beyond the general education for a prohibition on discrimination. In addition, cultural diversity education is a cultural competence education to promote the understanding of other cultures in a multicultural society where various cultures coexist and cultivate a respectful attitude, which can promote diversity in Korean society (Korean Culture and Arts Foundation, 2013).

4.4 From State-sponsored Multicultural Education to Citizens-centered One

In Korean society, multicultural education has been carried out by the government. Especially, to the extent that it is called 'state-sponsored multiculturalism' (Kim, Hee-jeong, 2007), government policies have strong influences in Korean society. Generally, the roles of the central government departments, local governments and civic groups that can be considered participants related to the policies have been set up differently.

The central departments focus on the roles in designing and changing the directions or purposes, which can be considered the fundamental framework of the policies; the local governments carry out and execute substantial policies closely related to a few cultural groups; and civic groups develop or request new policies through continuous development of agendas in the areas in which is difficult for the central government or local governments to politically intervene or participate (Yun, Chang-guk, 2009). However, Korea's multicultural education has a limitation that the details and directions of the policies mostly are determined by the central departments. From now, a shift from the government policies-centered multicultural education to citizens-centered multicultural education is required.

5. Conclusion

In multicultural societies, multicultural education emphasizing the coexistence and recognition of differences becomes more important. As South Korea is entering a multicultural society, multicultural education has been emphasized. However, in Korea, policies have been implemented without sufficient discussions about the concept of multicultural education, so there has been confusion regarding what multicultural education is.

Originally, multicultural education is an extensive concept with meanings, including races, cultures, languages, societies, classes, gender and disabilities (Sleeter & Grant, 2007), while multicultural education in Korea has been considered in a narrow sense mainly limited to immigrants. However, now, in Korean society, a change in the recognition of multicultural education is necessary: i.e. It is not limited to education of immigrants, but it is necessary both for immigrants and the general public.

Till now, South Korea has carried out multicultural policies and education led by the

government. Multicultural education-related statutes are closely related to multicultural policies. The contents and directions of multicultural education appearing in the related statutes have great impacts on multicultural education in the actual schools and general immigrants, so the decrees should reflect the right multicultural education.

In Korea's multicultural education-related statutes have the strongest aspects of securing migrant children's right for learning and social adaptation. Multicultural understanding education of students and general members of the society can be found partly in the Act on the Treatment of Foreigners in Korea and the Multicultural Families Support Act. However, multicultural education for all cannot be carried out just with the subjects and contents defined in most decrees yet, and in Korean society, it would be difficult for multicultural education to escape from the recognition as 'education for immigrants' and 'education for immigrants to adapt themselves to Korean society.' Therefore, direction harmonized with the original meaning of multicultural education should be emphasized, and multicultural education-related statutes and systems should reflect this perspective.

Thus, this study proposed directions of improvements, such as substantial guarantee of immigrants' right for learning and social adaptation, support of the concept of multicultural education for minorities and shift of multicultural education from a narrow sense of minorities' social adaptation to a broad sense allowing the existing members to have an open mind for various cultures in a multicultural society, expansion of the subjects of multicultural education from immigrants of international marriage families to all immigrants and the general public and citizens-centered multicultural education led by the central government.

This study inquired into the contents in the statutes related to multicultural education, so it has a limitation that it did not look into how multicultural education appears in the programs of the actual policies based on the statutes. It will be necessary to examine how multicultural education is institutionalized in the actual policies as well as the statutes in the future studies. Hopefully, the directions of improvement suggested in this study will become a system that can reflect true multicultural education in Korean society.

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