

**RESPONSIVENESS TO MULTI-CULTURALISM: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF
STUDENTS AND TEACHERS ON THE BASIS OF SCHOOL TYPE**

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Abstract

India is a multi-cultural, multi-religious, multilingual country. Cultural values, customs and traditions make India unique amongst the nations of the world. It is vital to have awareness about various cultures. The world is facing numerous problems such as dissension and intolerance, destruction of the natural environment, wars and poverty, the role of culture particularly in education, cannot be over emphasized. It is now widely recognized that the integration of cultural heritage with the curriculum will make the young aware of the multicultural and pluralistic perspectives. The main purpose of the investigation was to study and compare the level of multi- culturalism awareness of secondary school students of three education boards. The sample comprised of secondary schools. Stratified random sampling technique was used for the selection of standard VIII students from each school. Total sample of students and teachers were 600 from all three educational boards – SSC, CBSE & ICSE. Multi- Culturalism Awareness Test for students was prepared by the researcher. The findings of the study showed that (a) Majority of the students (about three-fourth) belonging to all the three education boards, viz., SSC, CBSE and ICSE, demonstrates a moderate level of Multi-Culturalism awareness. (b) Majority of the teachers (about four-fifth) belonging to all the three education boards, viz., SSC, CBSE and ICSE, demonstrates a moderate level of Multi-Culturalism Awareness .The Multi- Culturalism Awareness Test mean score of students of the ICSE board was the highest followed by CBSE board and SSC board in that order. The findings implied that curriculum of the school board influenced Multi-Culturalism Awareness of students and hence schools affiliated to the SSC board need to modify their curriculum in order to enhance the Multi- Culturalism Awareness of students for a more peaceful society.

Keywords: *Multi-Culturalism Awareness Test (MCAT), Secondary School Certificate (SSC), Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).*

Introduction

“Unity in diversity” is not a cliché but a global concept where the differences in racial profiles, nationalities, physical attributes, castes, creed, cultural and religious practices, etc. are to be celebrated rather than become a reason for conflict. Scholars and leaders all over the world have spoken and written how these differences enrich the civilizations. Diversities exist within the

nations too and as Jimmy Carter, former President of the USA remarked, “We are of course a nation of differences. Those differences don’t make us weak. They’re the source of our strength”. Diversity and pluralism define the soul of India. People from different faiths have lived together for centuries.

Tolerance and intolerance may be fashionable but are poor substitutes for respect and understanding of cultures we may not be familiar with. India defines “unity in diversity” in its entirety with richness and variety extending across her natural resources like medicines and herbs, precious metals and gems, forests and rivers and her people of all colours, castes, languages, religions inhabiting different regions with variegated customs, food and festivals.

There are a large number of ancient cultures prevailing and being practiced even today. From times immemorial, diverse races migrated peacefully into India via land and sea routes for trade and settled here. In course of time they got absorbed in India’s social life. Others came after facing persecution in the lands of their origin and found acceptance because of the central message of “one”-ness” given by the sages and Rishis of the rich expanse called Bharatvarsha-Ekamsatya, viprabahudhavadanti”. India’s ancient civilizations accepted the different hues and colours even as the incoming civilizations assimilated the local culture and yet preserving their unique tenets leading to what may be called today Idea of India.

Need of the Study

India is known for its treasure of ancient wisdom and rich heritage. Sometimes social stratification divides the nation and it is religion leading to riots and mayhem. Loss of precious life and property are the loss for the nation especially the youth, women and children. The flares are not because of differences but due to lack of understanding and instigated by the vested interests. Nations and people are closely knit together. No nation can live in isolation and it is difficult to live apart. Unity in diversity defines India’s identity and her destiny. This unity in diversity needs to be emphasized and celebrated every day. It's essential for the youth to become rightful claimants of prosperity in peace. Therefore it's important for the students to make them realize the importance of culture and its understanding. Not many studies have been conducted in the areas of cultural awareness.

Rationale of the Study

It is interesting to learn about different cultures and possess knowledge of multi-culturalism that stimulates the mind and helps to learn new ways to approach problems. Cultural knowledge expands thinking and information. Cultural knowledge enables learning and develops mental capacities. Many of the problems faced in the world are due to misunderstandings. Learning

about or awareness of others' culture answers questions such as – Does awareness of another culture, enable one to understand why others do the things they do? Cultural knowledge develops sympathy with others. Cultural heritage adds new dimension to one's life. Different culture makes individual tolerant towards others, and not berate them because of their differences. There are realities which are not pleasant; laughter and tears, festivals and mourning, successes and failures and even quarrels. In these realities, lies the future of our children and their children not for any one caste or religion but unity in diversity for all.

The major focus of this paper is to compare the awareness of multi-culturalism on the basis of school types. The curriculum of various boards differs from each other. The syllabi of these boards emphasize aspects of social, historical and cultural nuances differentially. These could in turn influence students' and teachers' awareness of multi-culturalism awareness. This forms the basis of the present study which attempts to compare multi-culturalism awareness of students and teachers teaching in schools affiliated to SSC, CBSE and ICSE boards.

Concept of Multi- Culturalism Awareness

A culture is the way of life of a group of people. Explicitly or implicitly, it teaches its members how to organize their experience. Multi- Culturalism Awareness is the appreciation of the history, values, experiences, and lifestyles of diverse groups. Multi- Culturalism Awareness is understands and appreciate the similarities and differences in the customs, values and beliefs of one's own culture and the cultures of others. Understanding other cultures benefits both the individual and the nation. It multiplies access to practices, ideas and makes people contribute positively towards the society. It helps to understand ourselves more deeply with citizens who are culturally literate.

It is the responsibility of the schools to impart shared information on culture. It rejects education, which leads to indoctrination and which fails to see empowerment. A culturally aware person can bring about change in social reforms. It involves education which covers shared information and also provide in-depth exploration of individual text or specific areas of knowledge. Finally he says that shared information of literate adults is incomplete though it may be extensive but limited.

Review of related Literature

Scott Eugene Hovater (2007) conducted a study on developing cultural awareness: A Grounded Theory study of pre-service teachers' field experiences in Taiwan. This study explores whether pre-service teachers experiences in one teaching abroad program in Taiwan has helped to foster

cultural awareness. A grounded theory methodology was used in order to establish a theory of becoming culturally aware as perceived by the pre-service teachers themselves. Primary data came from focus groups and interviews with secondary data from classroom observations, and student evaluations. All of the pre-service teachers taught English for eight weeks in local Taiwanese schools and lived with Taiwanese families. Common experiences that led the pre-service teachers to perceive of themselves as becoming culturally aware emerged from the data. Initial reactions to being immersed in a culture foreign to them were negative. Feelings of being different, sensing vulnerability, and being unable to communicate effectively emerged. Participants developed frustration, questioned their effectiveness as instructors and felt a lack of support from the program directors. Excessive tiredness due to an influx of new stimuli and a strong desire to hold on to something familiar also emerged. From this initial period of frustration, participants described having more empathy towards their students in Taiwan and students in general. A further common experience was an increase in pedagogical creativity as the pre-service teachers adapted their lessons to fit the needs of their Taiwanese students. A theory for how these experiences interplay to lead to cultural awareness for pre-service teachers was developed. Colleges of education should continue to encourage pre-service teachers to participate in teaching (study) abroad programs, especially if they require immersion. Priority should be given to sending pre-service teachers to cultures that are vastly different than their own.

Sohmer Evans Collins (2009) conducted a study on cultural diversity awareness of elementary school teachers in Georgia classrooms. This study determined the extent of cultural diversity awareness of in-service elementary teachers in Georgia classrooms. The study also determined if different levels of cultural awareness existed between teacher groups in relation to their race/ethnicity, gender, level of education, number of years teaching experience, level of education, and exposure to or experience with multicultural education training. A group of 305 certified, in-service elementary school teachers completed the Cultural Diversity Awareness Inventory, which assessed their beliefs about cultural diversity in five domains: general cultural awareness, culturally diverse families, cross-cultural communication, assessment, and creating a multicultural environment. Results indicated that elementary, in-service teachers are most culturally aware in domain one, general cultural awareness; they are least culturally aware in domain four, assessment. There was not a significant difference between teachers' extent of cultural diversity awareness in the five domains in regards to race, gender, level of education, years teaching experience, and exposure to or experience with multicultural education training.

In-service, elementary teachers in Georgia, who are primarily mono-cultural, realize that the children they serve have cultures different from their own. Teachers understand the importance of identifying the ethnic groups of their students and their families, and they are comfortable in settings with people who exhibit values different from their own. Additionally, in-service, elementary teachers in Georgia classrooms believe in creating a multicultural learning environment in which family views are included in program planning, and they believe in making accommodations for different cultures and learning styles.

Wang J. (2013) conducted a study on research on cultural knowledge and awareness in education. The study throws light on how to develop the cultural knowledge of teachers and how to improve the students cultural awareness. It is very important in culture teaching in our country. In order that students acquire cultural competence culture teaching in foreign language teaching must have many things to do. This article puts forward the ways of developing the teachers' knowledge of second culture and the ways of improving the students' cultural awareness.

Shivani S. Shah (2015) conducted a study on perception & cultural awareness of International College Students about India: A Cross-cultural Study. Cultures provide different ways of interpreting and decoding the environment and the world. Perception is the sensory experience of the world we live in. Emerging trend of cultural exchange programs shows rise in participation of college students in cross-cultural programs. Short exposure programs have shown positive effects on students in the areas of cultural awareness and cross cultural familiarity. This study identified the perception of college students about India based on seven parameters. Subsequently, the study also attempted to explore nine parameters to understand awareness of international college students about India. An organization hosting a student exchange program was identified and data collection was conducted in two phases with a sample of 40 international college students who were part of a cross cultural internship to India for two months. The result of perception study had a mixed response. The cultural awareness study result shows that the program failed in providing proper exposure to the participants.

Jamellah Whipps-Johnson (2016) conducted a study on teachers' awareness of cultural diversity and academic achievement in ninth grade academies and senior high schools. Personalization and responsive learning environments are essential to improving academic achievement in high schools, and particularly for ninth graders. A monocultural teaching force paired with a racially and culturally diverse student population necessitates an examination of teachers' awareness of

cultural diversity particularly in the high school setting where inequities exist. This nonexperimental, quantitative study of teachers' awareness of cultural diversity and academic achievement in ninth grade academies and senior high schools included high school teachers from eight high schools in Mississippi. Descriptive statistics indicated that ninth grade academy teachers and senior high school teachers had similar levels of cultural diversity awareness. Both groups of teachers perceived that academic achievement growth remained the same over two years, and ninth grade academy teachers reported the dropout rate had decreased over two years. An analysis of archival SATP data revealed that the Black/White achievement gap was more prevalent in the participating ninth grade academies compared to ninth graders statewide. However, the gap between poor and affluent students was more prevalent among ninth graders statewide compared to students in the participating ninth grade academies. The results indicated that there was no significant relationship between teachers' awareness of cultural diversity and perceived academic achievement growth or perceived persistence in school as measured by perceived dropout rates. No statistically significant differences were found between ninth grade academy teachers' awareness of cultural diversity and senior high school teachers' awareness of cultural diversity

Elizabeth Hughes Fong et al (2017) conducted a study on developing the cultural awareness skills of behavior analysts. All individuals are a part of at least one culture. These cultural contingencies shape behavior, behavior that may or may not be acceptable or familiar to behavior analysts from another culture. To better serve individuals, assessments and interventions should be selected with a consideration of cultural factors, including cultural preferences and norms. The purpose of this paper is to provide suggestions to serve as a starting point for developing behavior analysts' cultural awareness skills. We present strategies for understanding behavior analysts' personal cultural values and contingencies and those of their clients, integrating cultural awareness practices into service delivery, supervision, and professional development, and becoming culturally aware in everyday practice.

Aim of the Study

1. To ascertain and compare the level of Multi-Culturalism Awareness of secondary school students and teachers belonging to different education boards.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study the level of Multi-Culturalism Awareness of secondary school students from SSC, CBSE and ICSE Boards

2. To study the level of Multi-Culturalism Awareness of secondary school teachers from SSC, CBSE and ICSE Boards.
3. To compare the level of Multi-Culturalism Awareness of secondary school students of SSC, CBSE and ICSE Boards.
4. To compare the level of Multi-Culturalism Awareness of secondary school teachers of SSC, CBSE and ICSE Boards.

Null Hypotheses of the Study

H₀1 - There is no significant difference in the level of Multi-Culturalism Awareness of secondary school students from SSC, CBSE and ICSE boards.

H₀2 - There is no significant difference in the level of Multi-Culturalism Awareness of secondary school teachers from SSC, CBSE and ICSE boards.

Operational Definitions

1. **Multi-Culturalism Awareness:** It refers to the knowledge and understanding of various cultural aspects. Multi-Culturalism awareness measured by the score obtained by the student and teachers on Multi-Culturalism Awareness Test prepared by the researcher.
2. **Secondary Schools:** It refers to Secondary schools that are recognised institutions that provide formal education from VIII to X standard, as per their affiliation to different education boards, viz. – SSC, CBSE and ICSE.

Scope of the Study:

The study included data from students and teachers of secondary schools. The study included data from secondary schools of SSC, CBSE and ICSE Education Boards. The study included students of only VIII standard of three education boards. The study included data from English medium secondary schools. The study included data from secondary schools of South Mumbai only and not from other areas of Mumbai. The study included data from secondary schools of co-education type only and not from single-sex schools. The study does not include any secondary schools of regional media of instruction. The study does not include data from primary and higher secondary schools.

Sampling Technique

A three -stage sampling process was adopted for the present study. At, the first stage, the various secondary co-educational schools with English as the medium of instruction of South Mumbai affiliated to various education boards were identified viz. SSC, CBSE and ICSE. At the second stage, three schools were randomly selected from each of these education boards through lottery

method. At the third stage, random selection of VIII standard students and teachers within each school was done.

Table 1: shows the sample size included in the study.

Table 1 : Total Sample Size					
Boards	Schools	Students		Teachers	
		N	%	N	%
SSC	04	300	50	35	35
CBSE	03	200	33.33	30	30
ICSE	03	100	16.67	35	35
Total	10	600	100	100	

Tools for Data Collection:

The researcher prepared a tool for data collection:

1. Multi-Culturalism Awareness Test (MCAT) – in two forms:
 - a. For students and
 - b. For teachers

Reliability and Validity of Multi-Culturalism Awareness Test (MCAT):

For the present study, the researcher established the face validity, content validity and item analysis of the MCAT tool.

After administering the tool the response were quantified and the scores on each item were arranged in a descending order. This was allowed by counting off 27% of the scores high on Cultural Awareness test for students and teachers and 27% low on Cultural Awareness test for students and teachers.

Only those items were selected which had a discrimination index of 0.20 or above and the items with a discrimination index of less than 0.20 were rejected. Thus, after carrying out the face validity, Content validity, and Item analysis, the tool was finalized. The final tool contained 30 items for MCAT – Students and 25 items for MCAT - Teachers.

Scoring Pattern:

For the purpose of the present study, a two-point scale has been adopted for the responses to be given on each item. The two-point scale is as follows: 0 Mark – For an incorrect response, 1 Mark- For a correct response

Multi-Culturalism Awareness Test (MCAT) (for students) – (prepared by Researcher)

The final form of MCAT for Students consisted of 30 multiple-choice questions of one mark each. Each question had four options out of which only one answer is correct. The minimum and maximum possible obtainable scores on this test were zero and thirty respectively.

Example – Which of these is a holy book of Sikh religion? a. Bible b. Granth Sahib c. Quran d. Gita

Multi-Culturalism Awareness Test (MCAT) (for teachers) (prepared by Researcher)

The final form of CAT for Teachers had 25 questions in two parts-The first part consisted of twenty questions of one mark each and The second part consisted of five questions of ‘answer in one sentence’ of two marks each. The minimum and maximum possible obtainable scores on this test were zero and thirty respectively. Example- As a baby, the great prophet who was found in a basket floating down the River Nile is _____. Other example - What are the five pillars of Islam ?

Techniques of Data Analysis

The present study involves the following statistical techniques for the testing of null hypotheses:

1. **ANOVA** – ANOVA is used to compare the Multi-Culturalism Awareness of all the three boards of the students and the teachers.
2. **t – test** – The t–test is used to compare the Multi-Culturalism Awareness Test scores of all the three boards of both – the students and the teachers.

Results and Discussion of the Study

1. Multi-Culturalism Awareness of Students

Table 2 shows the classification of the scores of the Multi-Culturalism Awareness (MCA) of the samples of secondary school students of the three education boards – SSC, CBSE, ICSE and the total sample of students. Here, the classification of the MCA scores is done in five groups, namely, $M-3\sigma$, $M-2\sigma$, $M\pm 1\sigma$, $M+2\sigma$ and $M+3\sigma$ with ratings as Very Low, Low, Moderate, High and Very High respectively.

Table 2: Classification of MCA Scores of Students

Rating	Class	% of SSC Students	Class	% of CBSE Students	Class	% of ICSE Students
Very Low	8 - 11	0	13 - 15	3	15 - 17	1
Low	12 - 15	19	16 - 18	13	18 - 19	7

Moderate	16 - 23	69	19 - 24	73	20 - 26	77
High	24 - 26	12	25 - 27	11	27 - 29	15
Very High	27 - 30	0	28 - 30	0	30 - 31	0
	(M = 19.07 σ = 3.59)	N = 300	(M = 21.44 σ = 2.69)	N = 200	(M = 3.13 σ = 2.73)	N = 100

Table 2 shows that a large majority of students from all the three school types have a moderate Multi-Culturalism Awareness i.e. 69%, 73% and 77% from SSC, CBSE and ICSE schools respectively.

Figures 1 to 3 show the level of Multi-Culturalism Awareness of students from SSC, CBSE and ICSE schools

Classification of MCA Scores of SSC Students

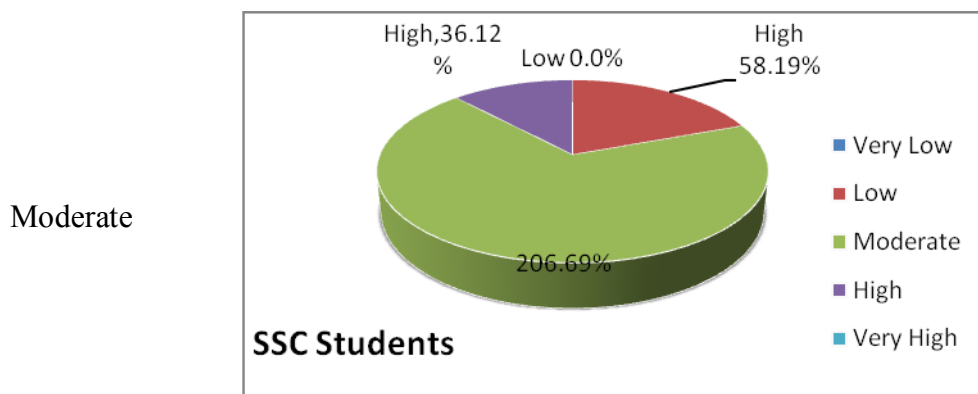


Figure 1

Classification of MCA Scores of CBSE Students

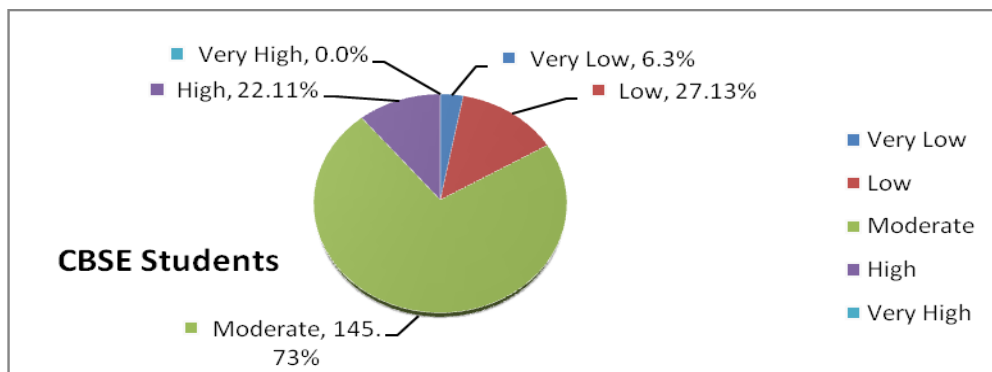


Figure 2

Classification of MCA Scores of ICSE Students

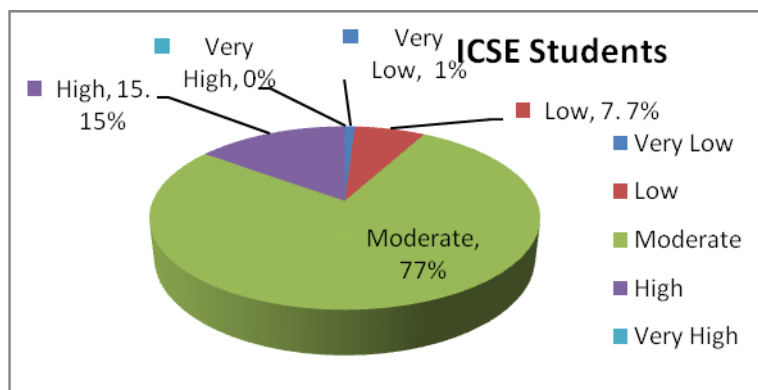


Figure 3

2. MCA of Teachers

Tables 3 shows the classification of the scores of the Multi-Culturalism Awareness (MCA) of the samples of secondary school teachers of the three education boards, namely, SSC, CBSE and ICSE.

Table 2 : Classification of MCA Scores of Teachers

Rating	Class	% of SSC Teachers	Class	% of CBSE Teachers	Class	% of ICSE Teachers
Very Low	11 -- 13	0	14 - 15	0	16 - 17	0
Low	14 - 16	17	16 - 18	13	18 - 20	17
Moderate	17 - 22	72	19 - 24	70	21 - 25	66
High	23 - 25	11	25 - 26	17	26 - 28	17
Very High	26 - 28	0	27 - 29	0	29 - 30	0
	(M = 9.43 σ = 2.69)	N = 35	(M = 21.40 σ = 2.51)	N = 30	(M = 23 σ = 2.40)	N = 35

Table 3 shows that a large majority of students from all the three school types have a moderate Multi-Culturalism Awareness, i.e. 72%, 70% and 66% from SSC, CBSE and ICSE schools respectively.

Figures 4 to 6 show the level of Multi-Culturalism Awareness of teachers from SSC, CBSE and ICSE schools.

Classification of MCA Scores of SSC Teachers

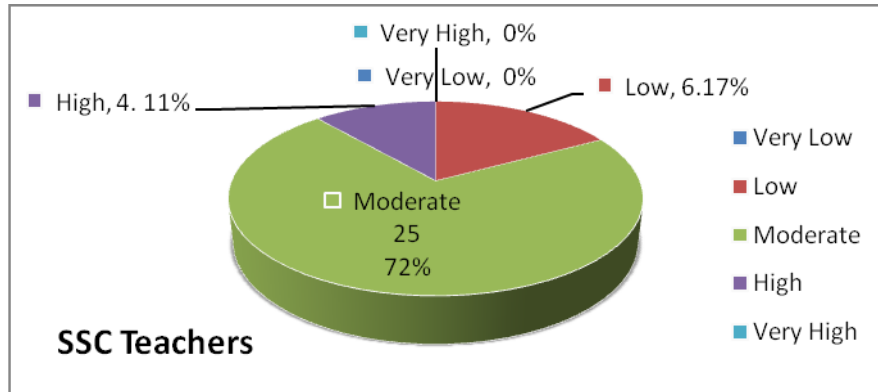


Figure 4

Classification of MCA Scores of CBSE Teachers

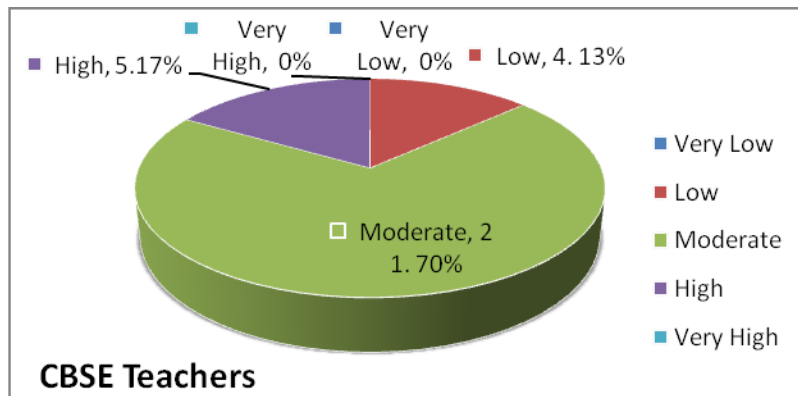


Figure 5

Classification of MCA Scores of ICSE Teachers

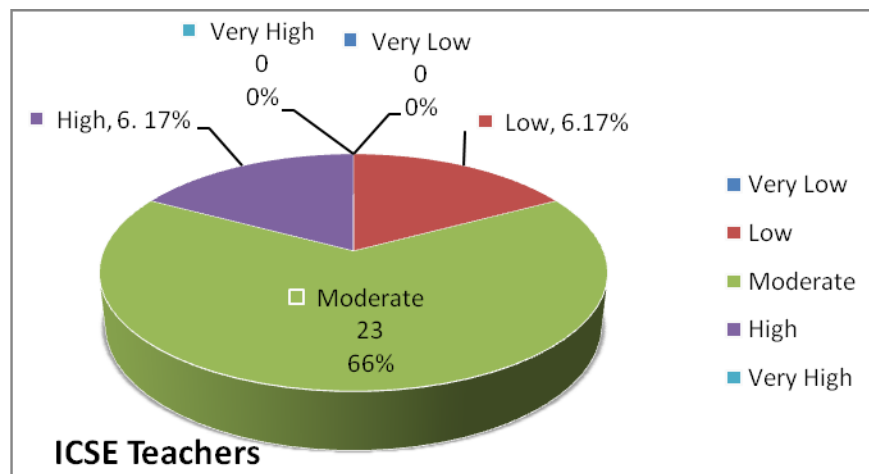


Figure 6

3. Comparison of Students' Multi-Culturalism Awareness by School Types

This comparison was done using the statistical technique of ANOVA. It was found that $F = 80.73$ ($P < 0.0001$) was significant with students from ICSE schools having the highest Multi-Culturalism Awareness followed by CBSE and SSC in that order.

4. Comparison of Teachers' Multi-Culturalism Awareness by School Types

This comparison was done using the statistical technique of ANOVA. It was found that $F = 11.39$ ($P < 0.001$) was significant with teachers from ICSE schools having the highest Multi-Culturalism Awareness followed by CBSE and SSC in that order.

Conclusions of the Present Study

1. Majority of the students (about three-fourth) belonging to all the three education boards, viz., SSC, CBSE and ICSE, demonstrates a moderate level of Multi-Culturalism awareness.
2. Majority of the teachers (about four-fifth) belonging to all the three education boards, viz., SSC, CBSE and ICSE, demonstrates a moderate level of Multi-Culturalism awareness.
3. The Multi-Culturalism Awareness Test mean score of students of the ICSE board is the highest followed by CBSE and SSC boards in that order.
4. The Multi-Culturalism Awareness Test mean score of teachers of the ICSE board is the highest followed by CBSE and SSC boards in that order.

Discussion of the Study

The findings of the present study are corroborated by the findings of Rohaty Mohd. Majzub, et al. (2011), who found that the majority of pre-school teachers have high level of cultural awareness in both homogenous and heterogeneous classes (3.77 and 3.64). Further, Joshi (2007) also found that the perceptions of the respondents from the Persian Gulf-based Indian schools have been endeavoring their best to provide value-based education to their students. They try to provide a broad-based education system and not necessarily only Indian values all the time. It also seems that these schools strive to achieve all-around development of their students in order to build and inculcate in them the desired educational and cultural values to be better citizens.

Moreover, it is possible that the curriculum of ICSE board is more international in nature and thus incorporates multiculturalism in its content and processes. Hence, students and teachers from ICSE schools are found to have a higher multiculturalism awareness as compared to students and teachers from CBSE and SSC schools.

Implications of the Study

Due to the impact of westernization, students of Indian schools are unable to remember / recall their culture and cultural values and thus this research intends to help curriculum framer to frame the curriculum according to areas where students show less awareness. It will also help the teachers to know where their students are lacking in cultural awareness. Accordingly, the teacher will frame her teaching-learning curricular activities as well as co-curricular activities, which will help students to keep themselves update about their culture. The study throws light on the level and differences in the Cultural awareness amongst the school teachers and students with respect to the three education boards. The study throws light on the cultural activities of secondary schools of South Mumbai. The findings of the study will help the schools of the three education boards to know the level of the Cultural awareness possessed by their students and teachers. The findings of the study will help the schools to strengthen their cultural education activities.

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