

Multiculturalism in Canada

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Abstract:

Multiculturalism is one of the dominant features of Canadian society. Canada has a unique history, important elements of which are an indigenous population, a British and French colonial past, and recent extensive immigration of people from many countries and cultures. This has resulted in one of the most ethnically diverse population in the world. Each cultural group has its own considerable cultural diversity as a result of history, regional differences, and internal and external population movements, as well as variations related to key factors such as class, gender and urban and rural environments.

Key Words: Multiculturalism, indigenous, immigration, ethnical, diversity

Concept of Multiculturalism

The presence of or support for the presence of several distinct cultural or ethnic groups within a society is generally referred to as multiculturalism. It is a situation in which all the different cultural or racial groups in a society have equal rights and opportunities, and none is ignored or regarded as unimportant. In a multicultural society, there is not an official cultural that every person must be a part of. Instead all cultures are respected as much as each other.

A multicultural society can result when people from many different countries migrate to one place, or an empire conquers many countries. This society would be composed of people from different ethnic background and cultures living and working together.

Multiculturalism in Canada

Throughout Canada's state history, the struggle to find balance and recognition of French and English was a huge issue and in the 1960's, this pushed to recognize Canada as a bicultural country. Multiculturalism was term introduced to Canada as an alternative to biculturalism in attempt to create a more inclusive culture, rather than continuing to distinguish English and French cultures as two opposing entities.

Multiculturalism was officially adopted by government during 1970s and 1980s The Canadian federal government has been described as the instigator of Multiculturalism an as ideology because of its public emphasis on the social importance of immigration Multiculturalism is a description of the many different religious traditions and cultural influences that in their unity and co-existence results in a unique Canadian cultural mosaic The nation consists of people from a multitude of racial, religious and cultural backgrounds and is open to cultural pluralism. With the arrival of British explorers in the 18th century, the gold rushers-of the 19th century, and the settlement of the west in the late 19th and early 20th century, Canada became one of the worlds' main immigrants-receiving societies. The 2011 census of Canada recorded more than 200 ethnic origins, including Canadians.

In many ways a contested concept, Multiculturalism is used in at least three senses to refer to a society that is characterized by ethnic or cultural heterogeneity; to refer to an ideal of equality and mutual respect among a population's ethnic or cultural groups; and to refer to policies implemented by the federal government in 1971 and subsequently by number of provinces.

Multiculturalism As a Sociological Fact of Canadian Life

In 2020, Canada has an estimated population of 37.74 million, which ranks 39th in the world. Canada is the world's second largest country by total area and the largest North American country. Canada's most recent census was conducted in 2016. The population density is among the lowest in the world, mostly because a great deal of the country to the north is virtually inhabited. 32.3% of Canadian considers their ethnic origin to be Canadian. Other major groups are English 18.3%, Scottish (13.9%), French (13.6%) and Chinese (5.1%) Nearly 22% of the population is now foreign born, and about 60% of new immigrants come from Asia, particularly China and India. Canada also resettles over one in ten of the world's refugees. Canadian history of settlement and colonization has resulted in a multicultural society made of three founding peoples-Indigenous, French and British and of many other racial and ethnic groups.

The Indigenous people include first nations (status and non status Indians), Metis and Inuit. Cree, Iroquois and Algonquin are other types of Indigenous people. According to 2016 census, Indigenous people in Canada totaled 4.9%. They speak Canadian English and Canadian French languages. They follow Christianity (mainly Roman Catholicism and Anglican) traditional indigenous beliefs, Inuit religion mythologies of indigenous people of Americans.

French and British colonizer begun arriving in the early 16th century. Canadian's population was chiefly British (60%) and French (30%). At the turn of the 20th century, immigrants from other European countries were allowed entry into Canada. In 2016 census, 250 different ethnic origins or ancestries were reported in Canada. The most common reported ancestries were Canadian, English, Scottish, French and Irish, followed by German, Chinese, Italians, First Nations (from India), Ukrainian, Dutch and Polish. The data also reveals that 21.9% of the populations was born outside

Canada. Approximately 41% of the Canadian are of either the first or the second generation, In fact, relative to its size, Canada is the largest importer of human capital in the group of seven. In 2016, the largest number of immigrants was from Asia, representing 48.1% of the population born abroad. The visible minority population that is , the non white population, excluding the indigenous population accounted for 22.3% of the total population.

Linguistic diversity is also at the core of Canadian Multiculturalism. English and French are the official languages of Canada. In 2016, 56% of Canadians reported that English was their first language and 20.6% reported that French was their first language. The only other language in Canada that is the mother tongue of more than a million people is Chinese. Although there are 11 aboriginal languages, only a few spoken by enough people to ensure that they are safe from extinction. The immigrant languages spoken most often at home were Mandarin, Cantonese, Punjabi, Spanish, Tagalog and Arabic. The indigenous languages spoken by the largest number of people were Cree languages, Inuktitut, Ojibway, Ojicree, Dene and Innu.

Religion in Canada encompasses a wide range of groups and beliefs. Virtually every major world religion, faith, or denomination has a significant number of members in Canada, including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism. As in some other countries, religion in Canada has been declining as more people are identifying themselves as religiously unaffiliated. Data on religious belief is only collected in every other census. According to 2011 household survey, 67% of Canadians were Christian, 24% had no religion, and 3.2% were Muslims. Majority of the Muslims in Canada follow Sunni Islam, and minority of them follow Shia Islam and Ahmadiyya Islam. Other major religious groups were Jewish (1%), Buddhist (1.1%) and Hindu (1.5%) and Sikhs (1.4%) However Canada has no official religion and support for religious pluralism and freedom of religion is an important part of Canada's Political Culture.

Multiculturalism As A Public Policy In Canada

The Government of Canada, under Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau declared in 1971 that Canada would adopt a multicultural policy. The government of Canada would recognize and respect its society including its diversity in language, customs, religions and so on. In 1982 Multiculturalism was recognized by section 27 of the Canadian charter of Rights and Freedom. Canada became the first Country in the World to adopt Multiculturalism as an official policy. Now Government of Canada officially recognizes the value dignity of Canadians of all the races and ethnic groups, all languages and all religions. This Policy of Multiculturalism was based on the recommendations of the Royal commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism appointed in 1963 to examine the state of Bilingualism and Biculturalism in Canada and to work towards developing an equal partnership between the British and French elements within the Country.

The Canadian Multiculturalism act was introduced during the progressive conservative government of Brian Mulroney and received Royal Assent on July 21, 1988. Result of Multiculturalism act was that federal funds began to be distributed to ethnic groups to help them preserve their Cultures,

Main Provision of The Multiculturalism Act

The 1988 Canadian Multiculturalism act affirms the policy of the government to assure that every Canadians receives equal treatment by the government which respects and celebrates diversity

The act in general recognizes;

- Canada's multicultural heritage and that heritage must be protected.
- The rights of indigenous Peoples.
- English and French remains the only official languages, however other languages may be used.

- Social equality within society and under the law regardless of race, Color, ancestry national or ethnic origin, creed or religion .
 - Minorities rights to enjoy their culture
- Section 3 (1) of the act states it is hereby declared to be policy of the-
1. Governments of the Canada, to recognize and Promote the understanding that Multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural Heritage.
 2. To recognize and promote the understanding that Multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristics of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resources in the shaping of Canada's future.

In order to maintain a balance between cultural distinctiveness and equality, the act specifies the right of all to identify with the cultural heritage of their choice, yet retain full equitable participations in the shaping of all aspects of Canadian Society. It also focuses on the eradication of racism and the removal of discriminatory barriers as ways to fulfill Canada's human rights Commitments. The act acknowledges Multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristics of Canadian Society with an integral role in the decision making process by the federal government.

The act recognize the need to increase minority participations in Canada's major institutions by bringing diversity into these institutions as a natural, normal, and positive component of decision making, resource allocation and the setting of priorities. This act also makes the government accountable to both parliament and the public for insuring compliance with its promises by requiring annual reports. A Multiculturalism secretariat was established to support the government in implementing improved delivery of government services in federal Institutions. With this in mind, on November 13, 2002, the liberal government of Prime Minister Jean Chretien designated, by Royal proclamation, June 27 of each year as Canadian Multiculturalism day.

Charter of Rights and Freedoms

This Charter of 1982 is part of Canada's Constitution. The charter protects every Canadian's right to be treated equally under the law. The charter guarantees broad equality rights and other fundamental rights such as the freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and freedom of religion. The charter also protects the rights of all Canadians from infringements by laws, policies or actions of governments, including authorities such as the police. Section 15 of the charter states that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to equal protection and equal benefit of law without discrimination and in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.

Broadcasting Act

Broadcasting act of 1991 assert that Canadian broadcasting system should reflect the diversity of cultures in the country. The Canadian radio- television and telecommunications commission (CRTC) is the government body which enforces the Broadcasting Act. The CRTC revised its ethnic broadcasting policy in 1999 to go into the details on the conditions of the distribution of ethnic and multilingual programming. CRTC has assured that the Canadian broadcasting system must, through its programming and employment opportunities, recognize the special place of aboriginal people with in Canadian society. According to the act 60% of programming on a Channel, whether on the radio or television, has to be considered ethnic in order to be approved for the license under this policy.

Provincial and Territorial Multiculturalism Policies

All the provincial governments have adopted some form of multicultural policy. At present, 6 out of 10 provinces- British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Quebec, and Nova Scotia have enacted multiculturalism legislation. These States have also created multiculturalism Advisory Council that report to the Minister responsible for multiculturalism.

New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island has also created such type of advisory councils. In Alberta, the Alberta Human Rights Commission performs the role of multiculturalism advisory council. In Nova Scotia, the legislation is implemented by both advisory council and cabinet committee. Ontario has an official multi cultural policy and the ministry of citizenship and immigration is responsible for promoting social inclusion, civic and community engagement and recognition. Territorial governments do not have multiculturalism policies, but they have Human Right Acts that prohibit discrimination based on race, color, and ancestry , ethnic origin, place of origin, Creed or religion.

Conclusion

Multiculturalism means the diversity of the racial and cultural mix, the need for tolerance and accepting one another as fellow Canadians. By globalization and ever increasing movements of people from one country to another, the challenge of appreciating and accommodating cultural differences has become a Universal Experience, so the government policy would be sensitive to the needs of both long time residents and newly arrived with the greatest success. Canada's future depends on the commitments of all its citizens to a unified Canadian identity. Therefore multiculturalism in Canada become a significant issue and it has a deep root in the society.

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