MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN TEXTBOOKS OF IRAN'S PRIMARY EDUCATION

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Abstract: The purpose of present research is to study multicultural education in the content of textbooks of primary education in Iran. This research has been qualitative and has used qualitative content analysis method with conventional (inductive) approach. Purposive sampling method was used. The sample consisted of Persian (Farsi), social studies and Heaven gifts textbooks of all grades of primary education. Here, analysis measure is content and image, and context measure is textbook. In this research, 9 categories were extracted including the history and identity of ethnoses, the introduction of different cultures, introduction of cultural heritage, introducing celebrities, reflection of dressing style of ethnoses, introducing and paying attention to the languages of Iranian ethnoses, religious pluralism, introduction of celebrations, festivals and religious rituals of the ethnoses, and cultural traditions of ethnoses. Qualitative content analysis of textbooks showed that only the trace of dominant culture is in textbooks. The education system seeks the implementation of a cultural assimilation model that leads to the destruction of languages and cultures of the Iranian ethnoses.

Keywords - Textbooks, Primary Education, Multicultural Education.

I. INTRODUCTION

Multicultural education began in the 1960s and 1970s as a study field in US. Banks was one of the pioneers of multicultural education and was one the first multicultural education scholars who tried to study schools as social systems in a multicultural environment. He expresses his views on multicultural education in the idea of educational equality (Sadeghi, 2010). According to Banks, all aspects of the school (educational systems, teacher's attitudes, assessment methods, educational materials and teaching methods) should change to create a multicultural school environment (Mackroney & Bolandhematan, 2014). One of the main purposes of multicultural curriculum that protects ethnic and racial differences in curriculum is to help all learners to enjoy equitable knowledge and skills and to have effective performance in a diverse society with ethnic groups in the ground of interactions and communications with other members of the society (Banks & Banks, 2013).

Multicultural education includes training policies and practices to meet the educational needs of diverse student groups with a goal to flourishing cultural diversity and social equality (Maatta, 2008), provide equal educational opportunities for learners of different ethnic and social groups, improve dialogue between different student groups (Varol, Erbas & Unlu, 2014), understand and appreciate cultural differences and similarities (Swartout, 2005) and seeks all students to have academic success and prepare all young people to become democratic citizens of a pluralist society(Gay,2003).

Ghosh(2004) points out that, ideally, multiculturalism and multicultural education policy promote equality, respect for human rights, and harmony and tolerance among diverse groups regardless of their languages, religions, cultures, or ethnicity in a pluralistic society. (Ali & Bagley, 2013).Paying attention to the intercultural sensitivities of the ethnoses can provide the ground of cultural empathy, sympathy and convergence and social acceptance among the ethnoses as one of the most reliable ways of achieving solidarity and social consensus in the multi- ethnic society of Iran. Iran has been the habitat of various ethnic, racial, linguistic and religious groups throughout the history. According to Parekh's definition (2008), a society in which several cultures can coexist is a multicultural society, thus Iran is a multicultural society (Sadeghi, 2012). Basically, in a multicultural society, there are different voices that all of them need to be addressed and provides conditions for the growth, development and peaceful coexistence among different cultural groups and ethnoses, and this is achieved by multicultural education highway. On the other hand, different researches have shown that the multicultural education status has not been satisfactory in Iran and attention to its categories has been inadequate (Mohammadi, Kamal Kharazi, Kazemifard & Poorkarim, 2016). In this research, the main question is that what is the status of multicultural education in the textbooks of elementary school?

II. METHODOLOGY

In this research, the method of research is qualitative content analysis method. To conduct a qualitative content analysis of textbooks, first the research question was determined on the basis of studying multicultural education in the content of textbooks. In the second step, the sample was selected via purposive sampling based on the selection of textbooks of Persian (Farsi), social studies and Heaven gifts in six grades of primary education. In the third step, content analysis approach was selected. In this research, the conventional (inductive) content

analysis approach was selected. In the fourth step, coding procedure was designed, and for each textbook, separate tables were drawn into five columns (page number, educational grade, semantic expression, sub category and category). In the fifth step, the coding procedure was applied to the text of textbooks, and the text of the books was repeatedly reviewed for new insight. This process continued until the concepts were extracted and called. Subsequently, concepts were called as categories based on differences and similarities between them. In the sixth step, to determine the validity of the qualitative content analysis method with a deductive approach, the review was conducted in two stages, one after 10-50% of the categories were completed and the other at the end of the work, and at the final stage, the results of the encryption process were analyzed.

III. RESEARCH FINDINGS

In this research 9 categories were extracted from qualitative content analysis of textbooks that some of these categories were common among the books.

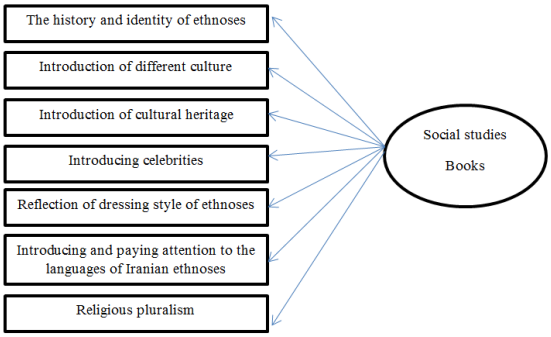

Figure1. Categories of multicultural education in textbooks of social studies.

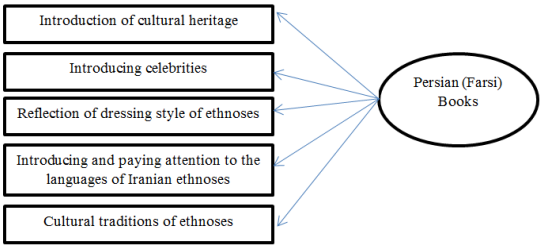

Figure2. Categories of multicultural education in textbooks of Persian (Farsi).

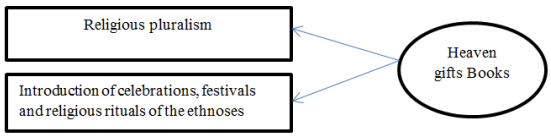

Figure3. Categories of multicultural education in textbooks of Heaven gifts.

CONCLUSIONS

Content analysis of textbooks of primary education showed that little attention has been paid to the cultural, ethnic, linguistic and religious diversity and generally multicultural education. In the content of textbooks such as social studies, Aryan ethnos and its ethnic origin were addressed in the form of there ethnoses of Maad, Pars and Part, and the ethnos of Pars have been more praised. Among the different cities of Iran, the geographical location of the four cities of Hamadan, Kermanshah, Shiraz and Isfahan has been considered. In the vast land of Iran, many ancient, historical and civilizational monuments can be considered and recognized, however textbooks have not paid much attention to these categories, and have emphasized civilizational monuments that are religious aspect. The introduced celebrities in the textbooks in the literary, scientific and political fields are regarded as national celebrities, and are considered as one of the symbols of national identity, but there has been no mention of the celebrities of Iranian cultures, and in this aspect, textbooks have adopted silent policy. With regard to the dressing of Iranian ethnoses, it can be said that examples of Iranians dressing in ancient times are referred more in the form of picture. In the case of various Iranian ethnoses, examples of ethnic and local dressing are presented in the form of picture. Different ethnic groups in Iran have different languages and dialects that have been neglected, and this can provide the ground of language destruction, which is one of the most important components of the culture. In relation to religious pluralism, it can be said that social studies books have introduced two religions of Zoroastrianism and Islam. Zoroastrian religion was Iranian religion in ancient times, and the religion of Islam is the current religion of the Iranian people. No mention has been made in relation to various religions in Iran, and no reference has been made to other religious minorities in Iran.

In Persian (Farsi) books, the presentation of multicultural education has also been very weak, and out of a total of six Persian books, five categories have been extracted: introducing and paying attention to mother tongue, introducing celebrities, reflection of dressing style of ethnoses, cultural traditions of ethnoses, and the introduction of cultural heritage. In relation to the category of introducing and paying attention to mother tongue, formal language was introduced and analyzed as national language of Iranian people. In one of the Persian lessons, Turkish language has been mentioned in part. The introduced celebrities in the textbooks are mostly national celebrities rather ethnic celebrities. Ethnic and contemporary celebrities have not been addresses in textbooks. The dressing style of ethnoses is decoratively presented in the form of map, and the cultural traditional of the ethnoses are marginalized. The national celebrations of Nowruz and Mab'as (the

appointment of a prophet), which are the symbol of national unity, are introduced. Cultural heritage has not a pleasant situation in Persian textbooks. Content analysis of the textbooks of Heaven gifts presented two categories i.e. religious pluralism and the introduction of celebrations, festivals and religious rituals of the ethnoses. In the first category, religious pluralism introduced the religious tradition of Shiism and Sunni, the Prophet's family among the followers of two Shiite and Sunni religions, innocent Imams and Sunni Imams. The four categories of the introduction of the Heaven prophets, the introduction of the celebrities of the great religions, the introduction of eternal women and the introduction of the holy Books are jointly mentioned in these textbooks, and, of course, have been considered separately.Regarding celebrations, festivals and religious rituals of the ethnoses, it can be said that the introduced religious festivals of Shiite in the books of Heaven gifts include the Prophet's birth, the birth of twelfth Imam, Eid al-Adha, Eid al-Fitr and Eid Al-Ghadeer. But the births of prophet, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha have been noted as the festivals of Sunni. This implies that the birth day of prophet, Eid al-Fitr and Eid al-Adha are considered as religious festivals in the religious culture of the Sunni. However, in relation to religions minorities, even their own religious cultures have not been introduced and most of the lessons of Heaven gifts book offered to religious minorities have been derived from the Islamic Education Book. Of course, the lessons have been chosen that are lacking multicultural theme.

In the area of educational planning and policy-making, there is a need for accurate curriculum compilation to provide a framework for multicultural education and respecting different cultures and promoting multicultural knowledge and literacy among the students of various cultural and ethnic minorities. On the other hand, in order to achieve the conditions in the education system in which all cultures and ethnoses feel to be respected, we have no choice but to use the leverage to change and reform the educational system. The axial point that should be considered more than ever in the educational system and to be at the center of these changes is undoubtedly curriculum.

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