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RESEARCH ARTICLE

ETHNICITY: A CONTINUUM ON EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

This paper seeks to develop a clearer understanding of the role of education in the formation of ethnicity. The basic meaning of the term 'ethnicity' is that it gives a distinct identity to a community and distinguishes one community or an individual from another. It has been found that ethnic consciousness or ethnic identity has been in increase even in the most developed countries of the World. Ethnic strife and conflict is the topic of the day everywhere. Education being one of the most potent components of development it can be considered that it does play a very distinguishing role in the formation of ethnic identity. Therefore, in this paper an evaluative study has been made to know how and in what ways the education is helping in building up the ethnic awareness amongst the people. This study raises two questions. (1 How did the educational initiatives undertaken by the Governmental and non-governmental agencies helped in enhancing social integration and social mobility of the ethnic minority groups? (2) What impact did educational (both negative and positive side of education) initiatives had on the ethnic minority groups?

Key words: Ethnicity; Ethnic conflict; Ethnic consciousness; Education.

INTRODUCTION

The social scientists, anthropologists, researchers as well as other people believe that the members of human groups have an "innate" propensity to distinguish between insiders and outsiders. If this is indeed the case, ethnicity can be conceived of as being nearly as universal a characteristic of humanity as gender and age - unlike phenomena like nationhood and nationalism, which have been so conceptualized in the academic community as to concern the modern world only (Anderson 1991, Gellner 1983). Marx and Engels (1970) (1880) held, probably correctly, that sex, age and the insider outsider distinction were universal criteria of differentiation. If, on the other hand, ethnicity as we conceptualize it can be shown to be a product of a particular kind of society, it can of course not be regarded as a historical and universal phenomenon.

Here ethnicity has been mainly studied in the perspective of education. It has been hypothesized that education leads to ethnic consciousness of an individual or a group. This has been reflected in a study made on the educational system of Hong Kong City. The ethnic minority groups are in particular, most of the Pakistani and Nepali are already third generation. Yet as the interviews concluded, they do not have a feeling of being integrated into Hong Kong society. Tertiary university education seems far away for them. The ideal of 'education functions as a tool to enhance social mobility' does not seem to apply to these ethnic minorities. Their presence in local universities is virtually invisible; in contrast, participation in low paid job market is distinctively obvious. Education is a basic human right and has been recognized as such since the 1948 adoption of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. Since then, numerous human rights treaties have reaffirmed this right and have supported entitlement to free, compulsory primary education for all children. In 1990, the Education for All (EFA) commitment was launched to ensure that by 2015 all children, particularly girls, those in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, have access to and complete, free and compulsory primary education of good quality. Adult education for Aboriginal people in some ways is no different from the education of any dispossessed group. It provides the means to social, cultural and economic survival - all of which are inextricably woven together. When Aboriginal people are allowed to identify their learning needs, as opposed to them being identified by others, they seem to fall into at least three distinct areas:

- Basic education - those programs that can help access to further education and employment and help people live better lives in their communities: literacy and numeracy, health programs, family skills;
- Political education - the skills required to work within political structures in order to improve matters for Aboriginal people: lobbying, negotiating, meeting procedures, activist skills;
- Community development - to make local communities more self-sufficient and efficient: enterprise development, obtaining and using capital, administration and book-keeping (Foley, 1987)

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It is believed that Aboriginality will end up as a quaint folkloric activity with little or no real meaning, disappearing in much the same way as the cultures of many indigenous groups around the world faced with the inexorable onslaught of western, capitalist values. Should education perpetuate this disappearance by continuing to bring Aborigines into the mainstream which will inevitably corrode traditional values and culture or should there be separate but equal systems that will encourage diversity? For example, the recent emphasis on Aboriginal languages in Australia is in part a means to reconstruct Aboriginality for those people for whom it is at risk. A recent study (Riley-Mundine and Roberts, 1990) indicated that in 1989 there were some 91 separate Aboriginal languages being supported around Australia. From political view, Bernstein stated that education is a reflection of 'the distribution of power and the principles of social control' can be observed when a society selects, classifies, distributes, transmits and evaluates the educational knowledge that considered being public. For example, decision makers would select the contents of curriculum so that all the students will learn the same knowledge, social norms and value and will have similar thought. Consequently, through the mass education, everyone will have something in common and it may enhance social stability.

Next, language becomes important since it also has political implication, for instance, unity by common language. Language, syllabus, subjects knowledge are deliberately chosen to cultivate citizenship in a specific society, social cohesion and to integrate people of different cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds in society. In another word, education is to create social stability, which is in the best interest of the authority. Especially, language is a very important mechanism in transmission of knowledge. What language to be used as for medium of instruction and official language, this certainly carries political meanings. Potts (2003, p- 190) opined that language used in schools has specific purpose – political unity. In Tibet, Chinese authority allowed Tibetan to be the medium of instruction in 1980s but replaced it with Chinese in 1990s. It is because the Chinese authority fears that encouraging Tibetan-medium schools will heighten Tibetan nationalist feelings and demands for more autonomy from China.

Secondly, education in sociological view, Dye (2008, p-125) opined that education was to create social cohesion by teaching or providing values, aspiration and a sense of identity to less fortunate members of society, to resolve and even to prevent racial conflict by inspiring people respect for diversity. More importantly, education is also to enable every individual to achieve their goals in life. In other word, it is to make upward social mobility possible for every student. According to Haveman and Smeeding (2006, p-129), "Higher education is expected to promote the goal of social mobility and to make it possible for anyone with ability and motivation to succeed." For instance, a poor student can be prosperous through hard work and effort. The authors stated that President George W. Bush is one of the many who considers education as a primary force for economic and social mobility in the United States. Finally, education is also widely accepted as the major key to make labour force more productive, skillful, healthy and competitive. To eliminate unemployment rate by teaching various job skills; to lift people from poverty by teaching to enhance their full potential. Scholars conclude that the most recommended 'solution' to the problems today in society lies at very basic foundation - better schooling. In brief, in this era of globalization, education institutions are also perceived as not just the place for educating people but also as the socializing agents. Students from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds get together, establish friendships and learn to respect diversities through interactions at least in ideal intention.

As stated above, function of education is not just to teach people how to read and write but also is to enable all the individuals to achieve their goal in life. In addition, it functions as a tool to enhance social integration and social mobility. However, this ideal is not reflected in the reality. It is assumed that education is inevitably a force for good. While the provision of good quality education can be a stabilizing factor, Kenneth Bush and Diana Saltarelli (2000) show how educational systems can be manipulated to drive a wedge between people, rather than drawing them closer together. In short, education reflects the society around it. The attitudes that flourish beyond the school walls will, inevitably, filter into the classroom. The report begins by describing the nature of today's armed conflicts, with virtually every conflict of recent years fought within, rather than between, nations. It examines the growing importance of 'ethnicity' in conflicts, as clearly seen in recent tragedies such as Rwanda, Kosovo and Chechnya.

The destructive side of education are the uneven distribution of education to create or preserve privilege, the use of education as a weapon of cultural repression, and the production or doctoring of textbooks to promote intolerance. And the constructive side goes beyond the provision of education for peace programmes, reflecting the cumulative benefits of the provision of good quality education. These include the conflict-dampening impact of educational opportunity, the promotion of linguistic tolerance, the nurturing of ethnic tolerance, and the 'disarming' of history. While Bush and Saltarelli (2000) recognize the value of peace education, they stress that it is only one of many educational measures needed in the midst of ethnic hatred. Curriculum packages that promote tolerance will have little impact if they are delivered within educational structures that are fundamentally intolerant. Peace education cannot succeed without measures to tackle the destructive educational practices that fuel hostility, and should be seen as one part of a wider peacebuilding education approach. Ethnicity itself is often asserted to be a key contributor to 'ethnic conflict'. However, it is increasingly evident that "ethnicity neither causes conflict, nor in many cases does it accurately describe it. Rather ethnicity/identity is increasingly mobilized and politicized in contemporary violent conflicts" (Bush, 1997). Education on its own cannot be expected to manage or resolve identity-based violent conflicts, just as diplomatic and peacekeeping initiatives on their own cannot be expected to resolve militarized conflict in the absence of complementary political, economic and social initiatives. Any solution to violent conflict will be sustainable only if it is developed and supported by both governmental and nongovernmental factors within violence-affected societies in ways that are consistent with the fundamental and universal principles of human rights as education transmits language, culture, moral values and

social organization, leading to a particular identity and often has a strong political role. It is understood to rest on two distinct foundations:

_ the *formal structures* of schooling (a teacher who teaches and a student who learns)

_ the *informal and non-formal structures* of learning – involving the acquisition of ideas, values, beliefs and opinions outside educational institutions, whether in streets, fields, religious settings or the home. Informal education is learning that occurs without being specifically planned and structured. Examples might be socialization, learning how to behave in a family or learning a trade from a parent. Non-formal education is planned and organized, offering specific learning environments and opportunities.

Formal education is often viewed as a neutral or technical process of information dissemination set within a given societal context. As the author and critic Neil Postman has said,"… public education does not serve a public. It creates a public. The question is, what kind of public does it create? A conglomerate of self-indulgent consumers? Angry, soulless, directionless masses? Indifferent, confused citizens? Or a public imbued with confidence, a sense of purpose, a respect for learning and tolerance?" (Postman 1996, p.18). However, within the context of ethnic conflict, the importance of developing a better understanding of this dynamic is underscored by the finding by Padilla, Ruiz and Brand (1974) that ethnic attitudes are formed early, and that once positive or negative prejudices are formed, they tend to increase with time. Early socialization experiences are, therefore, critical in the formation of ethnic attitudes. There are many components that make up these experiences for each child. In the broadest sense, Riegel (1976) argues that socio-cultural attitudes and identities are a function of the interaction of historical socio-cultural milieu, individual factors and the physical environment.

Together, these are understood to form unique patterns of development for each generation, each ethnic group and each individual. Innumerable historical cases can be identified where ethnic groups – and more broadly, social groups – have been denied access to educational resources and, therefore, excluded from full participation in the economic and social life of a country. Such obstacles have both an immediate and longer-term impact on the socio-economic status of the "affected groups", because education has increasingly become a highly valued commodity It also shows how the powers of the state can become "ethnicized," that is, used to advance the interests of one group at the expense of others, as happened when the Serbian authorities reduced the number of places in secondary schools reserved for Albanians in Kosovo. In ethnically stratified societies, privileged ethnic groups usually attain higher average educational levels than members of subordinate ethnic groups. Several factors underlie this pattern. First, educational attainment is enhanced by a privileged background, and students from advantaged ethnic origins benefit from the educational, occupational and economic attainments of their parents. Second, dominant social groups use the educational system to secure their privilege across generations. Third, dominant ethnic groups may control the political processes by which school systems are funded and structured and are able to promote those schools attended by their children or their own educational districts. As a result of these factors, students from advantaged social origins do better in school and obtain more schooling which, in turn, enables them to obtain more desirable occupations (Shavit Yossi, 1990). A sensitive handling of linguistic issues can also contribute to the building and maintenance of peaceful relations within and between different ethnic groups. In Senegal, for example, where there are 15 different linguistic groups and where Islamic and Christian populations have long co-existed peacefully, no civil wars have occurred since independence from France in the 1960s (Stavenhagen,1996). Many governments have now recognized the importance of making school a less alien place for ethnic minority children. One solution is to use their mother tongue in the classroom, at least in the early grades.

Also improving their chances of learning mother tongue and instructions given in mother tongue, helps children to be proud of the language they have used from birth and reinforces their self-esteem, sense of identity and sense of belonging. It also prevents language loss; hence literacy in their first language precedes literacy in the second. Moreover, acquisition and development of the first language assists in the successful acquisition of the second (dominant, national or majority language), which means that first language enhances and does not detract from the learning of a second language. While teaching a national language in schools is part of nation-building, there is no evidence that teaching of minority languages necessarily diminishes a sense of political unity. In fact, compelling smaller groups to accept the linguistic dominance of the majority is a major cause of ethnic tensions and political instability. There are costs involved, including developing learning materials and training teachers in bilingual education approaches, and some countries feel that bilingual education is simply not 'cost-effective'. But these costs should be weighed against the price society pays for high dropout and repetition rates in schools where such language programmes do not exist. In conflict-prone areas, insensitivity to the cultural and linguistic needs of ethnic minority groups has been shown to have a very high price indeed.

Conceptualization of Ethnicity

The word 'ethnicity' is of modern origin. In America it appears to have been used for the first time in Yankee city Series, the first volume of which was published in 1941. The early uses of 'ethnicity' are found in W. Lloyd Warner and Paul S. Lunt's 'The Social Life of a Modern Community' (1941). Warner used 'ethnicity' in the sense of a trait that 'separates' the individual from some classes and identifies him with others. His ambiguous attitude towards Yankee as an ethnic group reflects the ambiguity of the Greek noun ethnos (nation, people), which was used to refer to people in general, but also to 'others'. Philip Gleason's essay in the Harvard Encyclopaedia of American Ethnic Groups (1980) and his 'Americans All: Ethnicity, Ideology and American Identity in the Era of World war II' (1980), conceptualized the ethnic as 'a prototypically American figure, not because of any distinctiveness of cultural heritage but for exactly the opposite reason, because the ethnic exhibited an extreme degree the "character structure" produced by the American experience of change, mobility and loss of contact with the past'. In the United States, "ethnics" came to be used around the Second

World War as a general term referring to Jews, Italians, Irish and other people considered inferior to the dominant group of largely British descent. Since the 1960s, ethnic groups and ethnicity became very common although, as Ronald Cohen (1978) has remarked, that few of them bother to define the term. In everyday language, the word ethnicity still has a sphere of "minority issues" and "race relations", but in social anthropology, it refers to aspects of relationships between groups which consider themselves, and are regarded by others, as being culturally distinctive. Although it is true that "the discourse concerning ethnicity tends to concern itself with sub national units or minorities of some kind or another" (Chapman *et al*., 1989), majorities and dominant peoples are no less "ethnic" than minorities. According to Devalle (1992), "Ethnicity should be seen as a historical phenomenon, subordinated to existing class and centre-periphery contradictions, and as an element operating in cultural dialectics".

R.A. Schermerhorn (1976) has given the following definition of ethnic groups in 'Interethnic Relations: An Essay in Sociological Theory', together with E.K. Francis (1970, 1978): in Comparative Ethnic Relations: A Framework for Theory and Research' An ethnic group is …. A collectivity within a larger society having real or accepted common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their people hood. Examples of such symbolic elements are: Kinship patterns, physical contiguity (as in localism or sectionalism), religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliation, nationality, or any combination of these. A necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among members of the group. Glazer and Moynihan (1975) point out that it made its first appearance only in 1972 in the Oxford Dictionary. Ethnicity derived from the Greek word 'ethos' ordinarily refers to nation, people, caste, tribe and such others.

Ethnic, according to Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1967) relates to the gentiles or nations not converted to Christianity; community of physical and mental traits possessed by the members of a group as a product of their common heredity and cultural traditions; or indicates the racial, linguistic and cultural ties of people with specific groups or exotic primitive culture. Ethnicity therefore stands for the ethnic quality or affiliations of a group bearing different meanings in varied situational contexts. Members of an ethnic group may distinguish themselves on the basis of their certain common physical-cultural characteristics as well as over periods of time and specific situations, nature and composition of the state. Ethnicity also assumes different meaning depending on where the accent is placed as well as on the basis of the fact whether positive, neutral, or negative connotation is assigned to it as in the case of Russia, USA and India (Danda, 1993). While expressing an urgent need in understanding the concept having cross-national perspectives in view, Danda (1993) broadly refers ethnicity to the dynamic process of interest alliance based on the manifest expression of adaptive strategy for fulfillment of the aspirations of individuals and groups involved in forming interest alliance. Ethnicity relates to consciousness of kind among the members of an ethnic formation: it also relates to the ideology of perception of collectivities as moral communities rather than as abettors of the coercive power of the state (Roy Burman, 1992:33). Ethnicity is the sense of ethnic identity. It is an accurate appreciation of ethnic identity. Ethnic identity is the root from where ethnicity arises, which manifests in both intra and interethnic interaction (Kurane, 1999:11). According to Kothari, (ef.Das 1994:23), Ethnicity is expressed in a variety of ways: assertion of cultures, communal upsurges, revival of religion, movements of marginalized people, region and nationalism…. as a creative and regenerative force is also the opening to a human future.

Danda (opcit p. 71) observes that in India only such problems that involve the tribal are generally designated as ethnicity related problems. Pathy(_) however points out that there is no scientific treatment of the concept of tribe and whatever superficial nature is attributed to it is not subscribed to by the overwhelming majority of the Scheduled Tribes of India. Common name, descent, territory, language, culture and so forth seem to be not quite sufficient when it comes to deal with the tribes. Pathy refers to Riggs (1988 p 4) who argues that though they possess ascriptive properties, as they are not part of a larger society, they cannot be treated as ethnic groups, and "only when or to the degree they nest interactively in a larger context" can give them the status. Pathy criticizes this approach. In his words, "As other social collectivities do not have to pass the criterion, it means perpetuation of the myth of tribal isolation in intellectual circles. Among the Scheduled tribes of India such non-interacting communities would be rare. "While Pathy has certainly made his point, B.K. Roy Burman says, it would be correct to speak of tribe as an ethnic group of a special type.

Regarding the difference between ethnic groups and tribes, it is said that "an ethnic group is a collectivity within a larger society having a real and protective common ancestry, memories of shared historical past and cultural forces on one or more symbolic elements defined as the epitome of their people hood. Examples of such symbolic elements are kinship patterns, physical contiguity (as in localism and sectionalism) religious affiliation, language or dialect forms, tribal affiliations, nationality, and phenomenal features, or any combination of these. A necessary accompaniment is some consciousness of kind among members of the group." (Sollors: 1996:xii). In the words Roy Burman (1994:67) any hereditary groups with shared values, lifestyle, exclusive symbol of identity, and consciousness of kind can be considered as one. An ethnic group shares many features with tribal organization, but all ethnic groups are not tribes. Generally, a tribal community has historical association or prerogatives in respect of some productive resources. An ethnic group may or may not have such prerogatives. Besides, while tribal societies are relatively closed societies, all ethnic groups may not be closed societies to the same extent. Ethnicity may be defined as an affiliation or identification with an ethnic group. On the one hand, ethnicity is subjective since it is the product of the human mind and human sentiments. It is a matter of identification or a sense of belonging to a particular ethnic group (Yetman 1991,2). On the other hand, ethnicity is objective because it must be based on some objective characteristics and is constructed by social forces and power relations. It is to a large extent independent of individual's desires. On balance, ethnicity is the outcome of subjective perceptions based on some objective characteristics such as

physical attributes, presumed ancestry, culture or national origin. The terms ethnicity and ethnic group are often used interchangeably. In actuality, although the two terms are closely related, there is a sharp demarcation dividing them. While ethnic group is a social group based on ancestry, culture or national origin, ethnicity refers to affiliation or identification with an ethnic group. Ethnicity is essentially an identity that reflects the cultural experiences and feelings of a particular group. (Linda Waimarie Nikora, 1995). According to Spoonley (1993) an ethnic group may have a real or supposed common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, a distinctive shared culture, a collective name, a sense of solidarity and an association with a specific territory.

An ethnic conflict or ethnic war is a war between ethnic groups often as a result of ethnic nationalism. The causes of ethnic conflict are debated by political scientists and sociologists which may be grouped into three schools of thought: Primordialism, Constructionism and Instrumentalism. Three arguments are at the heart of the primordialist's school of thought. First, ethnicity is an ascribed identity or assigned status, something inherited from one's ancestors. For example, if one's ancestors are Chinese, then he is also Chinese because he inherits physical and cultural characteristics from your forebears. Ethnicity is a very deeply rooted, primal bond to one's ancestral bloodline. Second, as an important corollary of ascribed identity, ethnic boundaries, which demarcate, who is a member of an ethnic group and who is not, are fixed or immutable. Ethnicity is static. If you are born Chinese, you will be forever Chinese, and you can't change your membership to another group.

Finally, common ancestry determines ethnicity. In other words, people belong to an ethnic group because members of that group all share common biological and cultural origins. "primordialist" is used to characterize this school of thought because it stresses the role of primordial factors, such as lineage and cultural ties, in determining ethnicity. Within the primordialist framework, there are at least two variant views. The sociobiological perspective represented by Pierre Van Den Berghe emphasizes the importance of a sociobiological factor – Kinship – in determining ethnicity. Van Den Berghe (1981) argued that ethnicity is an extension of Kinship. Ethnic affiliation originates from membership in a nuclear family, then an extended family, and finally the ethnic group. Ethnic identity develops and persists due to common ancestral bonds of group members. An implication of this view is that ethnicity will never perish because kinship always exists. A second current of primordialism is the culturalist perspective, which underscores the importance of a common culture in the determination of ethnic group membership. According to third view, a common culture (e.g., a common language, a common religion) determines the genesis and tenacity of ethnic identity even in the absence of common ancestors. For instance, Hispanic identity is determined by a shared language, Spanish, rather than by people's shared ancestry. Different racial groups of people originating from the same country can form an ethnic group and develop a common ethnic identity even though they have no common biological bonds. Grasping the sentimental or psychological origins of ethnicity, the primordial's school provides a reasonable explanation for the rise and tenacity of ethnic attachment. However, primordial's contains several drawbacks. First, this perspective cannot explain why ethnic membership or identities of individuals and groups change. Second, it cannot fully account for why new ethnic identities, such as Asian American, emerge among biologically and culturally diverse groups, and why ethnic identities wane and disappear. Third it tends to overlook the larger historical and structural conditions that construct/deconstruct reinforce/ undermine ethnic loyalties. Finally, it neglects the economic and political interests closely associated with ethnic sentiment and practice (Glazer and Moynihar, 1963; Greenberg, 1980). The primordial's school was the dominant way of thinking until the 1970s, and many people are still accustomed to this way of thinking today. Starting in the 1970s, the Constructionist school began to ascend. Constructionists have advanced three major arguments: First, ethnicity is a socially constructed identity, something that is created. The emphasis of this school on the social construction of ethnicity breeds the label of "Constructionist" School. Second, as an extension of constructed identity, ethnic boundaries are flexible or changeable. Ethnicity is dynamic. Lastly, ethnic affiliation or identification is determined or constructed by society. Ethnicity is a reaction to changing social environment.

William Yancey (1976) proposed an "emergent ethnicity" perspective. They downplayed the effect of cultural heritage and viewed ethnicity as an "emergent phenomenon" created by structural conditions. Focusing on the experience of Italian, Jewish, and Polish immigrants in America around the turn of this century, Yancey and his associates maintained that the formation, crystallization, and the development of ethnic communities, cultures and identities were shaped by structural conditions closely associated with the industrialization process in the host society and the positions of ethnic groups within it. Specifically, the industrialization process led to the creations or expansions of certain industries (e.g., the garment industry, steel industry, construction industry) and occupations associated with these industries, immigrant groups with different occupational skills moved into different industries and occupations at different times, leading to occupational concentration of ethnic groups with similar lifestyles, class interests, work relationships; because of the transportation conditions at that time, immigrants working in the same industry and occupation tended to live in the same area, resulting in residential concentration; common occupations and residence led to the use of the same institutions and services, such as churches, schools, and financial institutions. All of these structural conditions resulted in the formation and development of Italian, Jewish and Polish ethnic communities, ethnic cultures and ethnic identities by reinforcing the maintenance of kinship and friendship networks (Yancey *et al*., 1976, 392). According to this view, ethnicity emerges as a response to structural changes in society. On the other hand, quite a few studies (e.g., Alba 1990; Bakalian 1993; Kivisto 1989; Waters 1990) show that although ethnic boundaries among the white population are weakening due to intermarriage, language loss, religious conversion, or declining participation, White Americans increasingly identify with their group of origin. Some argue that social change since the 1960s and shifting societal emphasis from assimilation into the Anglo culture to ethnic distinctiveness have resulted in resurgent ethnicity among Whites. On the other hand, Gans (1979) contended that ethnic revival among whites is nothing more than 'symbolic ethnicity', or symbolic allegiance to, love

for and the pride in the culture and tradition of the immigrant generation and the country of origin, without having to be incorporated in everyday behavior. In other words, symbolic ethnicity is "feeling ethnic" rather than being ethnic.

The more recent social constructionist perspective explicitly emphasizes the social construction of ethnicity and race and the dynamic process of ethnic/racial formation. For example, Werner Sollors (1989) suggested the notion of "the invention of ethnicity". Challenging the primordial's assumption that ethnicity is an irrational form of cultural attachment, Sollars argue that ethnic identity is embedded in tradition, which is created, sustained and refashioned by people. Joane Nagel (1994,1996) contended that ethnicity is socially constructed and reconstructed by internal forces (i.e., actions taken by ethnic groups themselves such as negotiation, redefinitions, and reconstruction of ethnic boundaries) and external forces (i.e., social, economic, and political processes and outsiders), and that ethnicity is a dynamic, constantly changing property of individual identity and group organization. Focusing on the centrality of race, Michael Omi and Howard Winant (1994) demonstrated how the meanings and categories of race both shape and are shaped by the political seekers. The Constructionist school pinpoints the centrality of social construction in ethnic formation and retention; it highlights historical and structural forces that create and sustain ethnicity; and it better explains the volatility of ethnicity. Nevertheless, the constructionist school tends to ignore the ancestral basis of ethnicity and deemphasize the limitation of social construction. Like the Primordialist school, it also pays insufficient attention to the role of political and economic interest in the construction of ethnicity.

The instrumentalist school views ethnicity as an instrument or strategic tool for gaining resources. Hence, the "instrumentalist" tag is affixed to this school. According to this theoretical framework, people become ethnic and remain ethnic when their ethnicity yields significant returns to them. In other words, ethnicity exists and persists because it is useful. The functional advantages of ethnicity range from "the moral and material support provided by ethnic networks to political gains made through ethnic bloc voting" (Portes and bach:1985, 24). To Nathan Glazer and Daniel Moynihan (1975), who are among the pioneers of this school, ethnicity is not simply a mix of affective sentiments, but like class and nationality it is also a means of political mobilization for advancing group interests. Ethnic groups are also interest groups. The most extreme version of instrumentalism attributes the acquisition and retention of ethnic membership or identity solely to the motivation of wanting to obtain comparative advantage. For example, Orlando Patterson (1975,348) asserted that 'The strength, scope, viability, and basis of ethnic identity are determined by, and are used to serve, the economic and general class interests of individuals". Hence, interests are the sole determinant of the ethnic identity, and ethnic affiliation tends to be transient and situational as the benefits of ethnicity shift. A more moderate variant of instrumentalism combines advantages of ethnicity with effective ties. For instance, Daniel Bell (1975, 169) stated that "Ethnicity has become more salient because it can combine an interest with an effective tie". Cohen (1969) suggested that cultural homogeneity of people facilitates their effective organization as an interest group and boosts ethnic solidarity and identity. Another recent formulation of instrumentalism is rational choice theory (Banton 1983; Hechter 1986, 1987; Hechter et.al 1982). As a social theory, rational choice theory assumes that people act to promote their socioeconomic positions by minimizing the costs of, and maximizing the potential benefits of, their actions. As an application to ethnic identity, rational choice theory maintains that ethnic affiliation is based on the rational calculation of the costs and benefits of ethnic association. For the advocates of Rational Choice theory, ethnicity is an option. People choose one ethnicity over another or avoid association with an ethnic group because of the utility or the cost of such affiliation. Some people favor an ethnic affiliation because it is beneficial, while other people hide or deny an ethnic identity because it will bring disadvantages.

Fourth main position could be described as the social constructivist view. Drawing inspiration from all three "classic" perspectives outlined, but defending a reflexive position, representatives of this view more explicitly and frequently more viciously dissociate ethnicity from "race" and "culture", often focusing on the ways in which ethnic identities and boundaries are historically arbitrary and the constructs of members of an élite looking for political power and/or material gain - or the construct of a dominating group seeking to intimidate dominated groups by imposing ethnic labels on them. Each in their way, Eugeen Roosens (1989) and the editors of the ASA monograph History and Ethnicity (Chapman *et al.*, 1989) represent such a strategy, which stresses the importance of the "native's point of view" in the development of ethnic identities. Their views are perhaps truly "subjectivist" (unlike Barth's, which combines subjective and objective factors) since they regard ethnic groups as possible, but not necessary products of creative endeavors under particular historical circumstances. In their view, culturalist explanations of ethnicity are as invalid as racist explanations of social race, since ethnic identity formation involves the more or less haphazard appropriation of and over communication of alleged cultural traits. The degree to which societal factors are granted explanatory power within this exploratory matrix varies; Benedict Anderson, for example, could clearly be seen as a constructivist, although he insists on the necessity of objective, enabling technological forces for ethnic (or national) identities to appear.

The final approach to ethnicity studies to be mentioned here, could be described as the historical one. This view has emerged as a component of the general increased interest in historical analysis in anthropology, which began when the Marxist and so-called neo-Marxist currents were in fashion and which has continued up to this day. Within the neo-Marxist framework, it has been argued that the development of Capitalism produces the construction for the rise of ethnic self-consciousness and accelerates parochial loyalties (Smith 1979:21-37). Some others have located ethnicity as an integral part of the uneven development of Capitalism. In 1908, an American playwright, Israel Zangwill, wrote Broadway hit called The Melting Pot. He emphasized that ethnic groups, owing to their distinctive historical experiences, their cultures and skills, the times of their arrival and the economic situation they met, developed distinctive economic, political and cultural patterns. As the old culture fell away – and it did rapidly enough – a new one, shaped by the distinctive

experiences of life in America, was formed and a new identity was created. Italian-Americans might share precious little with Italians in Italy, but in America they were a distinctive group that maintained itself, was identifiable, and gave something to those who were identified with it, just as it also gave burdens that those in the group had to bear.

Just as ethnicity and occupation overlap, so do ethnicity and religion. For some time, it seemed as if new identities based on religion were taking over from ethnic identities. This was the hypotheses of Will Herberg. The Jews remained Jews, with a subtle shift from an ethnic identification in the first and second generation to more of a religious identification in the third; the Irish became evermore Catholic in their self-image, and so did the Italians. Only for Negroes did racial identity seem clearly for more significant than religion. In Beyond the Melting Pot, we argued that religion and race seemed to be taking over from ethnicity. Yet in the last few years, the role of religion as a primary identity for Americans has weakened. Particularly in the case of Catholics, confusion and uncertainty have entered what was only a few years ago a very firm and clear identity.

Ethnicity and Education

The idea of the large nation-state, grouping people together within geographic boundaries, does not seem to work anymore. People seem to identify more with those sharing a common culture or holding similar values. In the Information Age -- an era defined by knowledge workers -- nothing will be as important as education. Yet today's educational system is a creature of the Industrial Age, a factory system for mass-producing minds. There are deep and enduring differences between various ethnic groups, in their educational achievement and in the broader cultural characteristics in which these differences are rooted. One of the best documented is that of the American Jews, who since the turn of the century – that is, a period about midway between the onset of heavy East European immigration in the early 1880's and it's end in the early 1920's – have shown a remarkable and disproportionate degree of educational achievement. For example, by the turn of the century East European Jews already dominated the free city college of New York, to which entrance was obtained at that time only by formal educational achievement. Jewish children almost uniformly did well in schools. Jews, at a later stage, dominated lists of winners of New York state scholarships.

Perhaps even more striking is the achievement of the Japanese Americans. The contrast between these two immigrant groups could not be greater. The pre- immigrant experience of one is urban and small town, the other peasant and agricultural. One defined itself as a priest people, and placed a high value on formal study of religious classics; the other defined itself as a peasantry of inferior status. In this country, one group settled in New York and other large cities, the other in the California countryside. One showed early evidence of educational achievement and the other was defined as an educational problem. But by 1950, Japanese Americans were already the best-educated racial group in the State of California.

On the other side, certain ethnic groups have done poorly educationally – the case of the Italian Americans has been studied in some detail by Leonard Covello. One thing it means – and one reason why these differences have been studied – is that it leads us to suspect there must be differences in areas other than educational achievement. If large number of Jews and Japanese Americans go to college, then we might be interested in knowing why this phenomenon arises, what factors in family structure, value teaching, disciplinary practices, goals set before children, the role of voluntary organizations, and so on and we might learn about the group. These educational differences help support the argument that there are significant cultural differences among groups. And in order to support the argument of the importance of cultural differences it is important to examine groups that have received no particular support from the general American environment (who have indeed been subjected to various degrees of discrimination, prejudice and persecution such as the Japanese and the Jews) because then the argument as to distinctive cultural reasons for high educational achievement becomes all the more powerful.

But some scholars have raised the question whether these differences are cultural differences or are they genetic, racial differences? Two such valuable works as Mark Zborowski's 'Life Is with People' and Leonard Covello's 'The Social Background of the Italo-American Schoolchild' assumes that cultural differences with no relation to genetic factors can be taken as sufficient explanation. Beyond the racial explanation, and the "liberal" social and cultural explanation, there lies yet another possibility – the economic and political explanation, which is perhaps best called "radical". This would argue that the genetic differences are nonexistent or irrelevant, that the cultural differences are epiphenomenal, that only political and economic differences (in wealth, power and status) lead to the differences among ethnic groups – and that these can be changed. Obviously educational achievement can be seen in variety of ways, and one will judge the ethnic differences that seem to be related to it differently as one judge's educational achievement. For example, directly through new types of curricular materials, teaching approaches, changing school environments and administrative patterns, by going into the home, working with parents, working with children, and so on. It is possible to take the position that differences in the levels of ethnic achievement will crumble under the impact of such changes in education, if the changes are sufficiently extensive and sustained.

Ethnicity is a matter of definition and self-definition, and much of the future of race relations in the city and the country depends on what designations and definitions we use. For just as a "nigger" can be made by treating him like a "nigger" and calling him a "nigger" just as black can be made by educating him to a new, proud, black image – and this education is carried on in words and images, so can racists be made, by calling them racists and treating them like racists. Gough Whitlam (1999) says that no country is better qualified than Australia to play an educative role on the problems of ethnicity. Yet the truth is that Australia's diplomacy and, indeed, its society are diminished because Australia's leaders, diplomats, educators and opinion-formers embrace automatically the North Atlantic perspective and reduce almost entirely the full range of knowledge and tradition available within Australia itself. As a member to the Australian Parliament, he devoted an immense part of his time

and effort preparing programs of Federal financial assistance to schools in order to eliminate the prejudices and tensions between Protestants and Catholics. He points out that "the question, known in Australia as the "State aid issue", had disfigured Australian society and retarded Australian education for more than a century. In so far as it represented the ancient conflict between the Anglo-Saxon ascendancy and the Irish Catholics, the dispute was more ethnic than educational".

He further finds that the deficiencies in Australia's systems of education and communications are leading to new misunderstandings and tensions. For many years, Australians have been arguing about the diversity and responsibility of the Australian media. The post-war diversity of the Australian people has, in no way, been matched by a diversity of the sources used by the Australian media. They have a strong ethnic press. It is largely ignored by the mainstream media and by the politicians, except for election purposes. Throughout the 90s, there has been a steady bias in the media against Orthodox Christian countries because the sources used by the media in Australia operate from each side of the North Atlantic. Since the break-up of the old Yugoslavia, tensions have increased in Australia along racial and religious lines, but at least not in schools. In many orthodox families in Australia, there was a surge of grievances against the systems of education and communication which they feel has let them down in the country of their adoption.

He opines that, education is essential if ethnicity is to be understood, if it is to be not merely tolerated but to be recognized as a source of enrichment in ethnically diverse societies like Australia. Education about ethnicity involves not least an understanding of history, not as propaganda or myth, but in its complex and often cruel reality (ibid, 1999). Multicultural education has been defined in various ways by various authors. According to some, multicultural education is a shift in curriculum, perhaps as simple as adding new and diverse materials and perspectives to be more inclusive of traditionally underrepresented groups. Others talk about classroom climate issues or teaching styles that serve certain groups while presenting barriers for others. Others focus on institutional and systemic issues such as tracking, standardized testing, or funding discrepancies. Some insists on the way how education serves to maintain the status quo -- foundations such as white supremacy, capitalism, global socioeconomic situations, and exploitation.

Paul Gorski (2000) has given a working definition of the term multicultural education. According to him, "multicultural education is a progressive approach for transforming education that holistically critiques and addresses current shortcomings, failings, and discriminatory practices in education. It is grounded in ideals of social justice, education equity, and a dedication to facilitating educational experiences in which all students reaches their full potential as learners and as socially aware and active beings, locally, nationally, and globally". The underlying goal of multicultural education is to affect social change. The pathway toward this goal incorporates three strands of transformation (ibid, 2000). He has suggested two important aims for the students who he thinks as an active participant in all the affairs of the society. He feels that every student must be prepared to competently participate in an increasingly intercultural society and teachers must be prepared to effectively facilitate learning for every individual student, no matter how culturally similar or different from her- or himself. According to J.A. Banks' (1988,p.43), "Every child comes to school with an ethnic identity whether these identifications are conscious or unconscious. This identification must be recognized and respected by the teacher. The point here is to acknowledge differences rather than ignore them. It is equally critical that the children recognize and appreciate their own ethnicity and learn to appreciate those of the other children in the class. This recognition of individual ethnic identities is the beginning point----. It is the basic building block in the learning process which requires knowing where the child is relative to him/herself and the content to be addressed. This ethnic identification is a continual point of focus throughout the education process and is the basis for developing the next level of identification which is a national identification". He has tries to focus on the point that the individual identity as an ethnic entity is actually the basis for the national identity. Children who have developed both a strong ethnic and national identity can better develop a global identification which in turn makes them better citizens of the world community.

But, here we find that the author has discussed about the identifications on a hierarchical basis, first recognizing the ethnic identity, then the national and finally the global. It is important to point out that the individual identities are not static but continually evolving and so it is important for the curriculum to emphasize all three types of identities as learning progresses. Gordon and Roberts, Report of social studies syllabus review and development committee, (1991) points out that multicultural education relates to education and instruction designed for the cultures of several different races in an educational system. This approach to teaching and learning is based upon consensus building, respect, and fostering cultural pluralism within racial societies. Multicultural education acknowledges and incorporates positive racial idiosyncrasies into classroom atmospheres. The following excerpts are taken from Paul Gorski (1995), a University of Virginia Doctoral student during a case study interview said that "the idea of political correctness with the black race astounds me. I found it extremely interesting that some blacks in our class prefer to be called African American. In all of my classes...I have felt like I was stepping on egg shells as to not offend the blacks in my class.

I am honestly glad it is not that big of an issue to my fellow classmates--it promotes a more comfortable, genuine environment for me to be totally honest and carefree". From the above experience of the author we find that benefits to multicultural education can help to eliminate the crux of stereotyping, prejudice, racism, and bigotry. The writer agrees with Hilliard and Pine (1990), "if Americans are to embrace diversity, the conscious and unconscious expressions of racism (sexism) within our society must be identified and done away with". Multicultural education is the potential catalyst to bring all races together in harmony. According to some views, if one wants to alienate and further fragment the communication and rapport between ethnic groups, implement multicultural education. As stated by Bennett (1995), "to dwell on cultural differences is to foster negative prejudices and

stereotypes, and that is human nature to view those who are different as inferior" (Ibid, p. 29). Thus, multicultural education will enhance feelings of being atypical. Schools in America may see multicultural education as a way to "color blind" their students to differences.

Ethnicity is breaking up many nations. If one looks at the former Soviet Union, India, Yugoslavia, and Ethiopia, all countries are in some type of crisis. Over time, multicultural education may have unplanned for and undesired consequences. For example, multicultural education rejects the historic American goals of assimilation and integration of ethnic cultures into the majority culture. Hence, the perception may result that America is a country of distinct ethnic groups, as opposed to a more traditional view of the country that involves individuals making decisions for the good of the order (Schlesinger, 1991). John Strahinich (2000) points out that in education, one of the most threatened reforms is bilingual education, perhaps the most widely misunderstood–and misrepresented–new educational program. According to its most severe critics, bilingual education encourages students not to learn English; fosters a separatist mentality among minorities that could lead to severe linguistic cultural problems, like those presently dividing Quebec and Canada; and could force many Americans to learn foreign languages (eg. Spanish in states like New Mexico and Florida). But in fact, none of these accusations is supported by a shred of evidence.

By the mid-seventies, however, as ethnic identity became a powerful new ideology, the bilingual movement acquired more momentum. But as bilingual programs grew, and as they increasingly emphasized maintenance of an ethnic heritage rather than transition into mainstream American life, opposition to them mounted. The critics believe that bilingual education actually interferes with integration. For all these reasons, the bilingual movement now has its back against the wall. A dozen states still have no provision for educating language minorities, while six others (Alabama, Arkansas, Delaware, Nebraska, North Carolina and West Virginia) have actually passed legislation prohibiting bilingual instruction of any kind (Chris Bagley, 1984, p..8-12). Only in the 1950s did Canada develop an ideology of race and ethnic relations which was distinctly different from that of the white, Protestant English speaking group, which had dominated the Empire for a century. Change took place because of new patterns of migration; the assertion of power by migrant
groups from Southern and Eastern Europe and Ireland; and through the assertion of Francophone consciousness. Today Canada in its multicultural policies is a dramatically changed society, unique in its policies which coincide with (but which have not created) a society in which racism's impact seem, on the face of thing, less dramatic than in many other ethnically mixed societies. Educational institutions in Canada, as the servants of the economy, generally socialize ethnic minorities, without overt discrimination, to undertake successful roles in a free enterprise system. Such a process of selection through careful immigration, education, socialization, and training for successful participation in a capitalist society has served the needs of the selected immigrants well, but it is not in an absolute sense fair or unbiased. Jonathan Kaplan (2000) has defined an ethnic group as a set of people who consciously share certain characteristics such as religion, origin, culture or language, and are linked by common interests and some form of social participation. Members of such a group share an ethnic identity, or awareness of a distinctive origin and way of life.

Different societies respond to the existence of ethnic identities in different ways, and social trends may also vary over time. In addition, ethnic minorities differ in their desire and ability to maintain a distinct identity within the host society. Often, ethnic traditions are adapted to the majority culture. Shaped by developments within the host society, contact with the society of origin and the interaction between the two, ethnic identity can evolve and adapt itself to new circumstances (ibid, 2000). The author has described the ethnic situation in Israeli society, which absorbed large numbers of Jewish immigrants who brought with them much of their culture and heritage. In so far as these immigrant groups came from various geographical locations, spoke different languages, possessed diverse cultural values and maintained separate organizational frameworks, they resembled the phenomenon of ethnic groups. The author says that the nature of ethnicity in Israel is somewhat unique. While "edot" maintain distinct cultural traditions and organizational frameworks, there is a much greater degree of commonality and unity among the various sections of the Israeli Jewish population than in other immigrant societies. Although it is possible to identify dozens and perhaps even hundreds of Jewish "edot" in Israel, the notion of ethnic identity is associated primarily with immigrant groups from the Middle East and North Africa.

He further points out that a stronger sense of ethnic identity developed among Oriental Jews due to the more limited effects of westernization in their communities, their feelings of deprivation and discrimination engendered by the process of absorption during the 1950s, the lingering socio-economic gap and the connection of ethnicity with politics. The continuing socio-economic gap led to violent outbreaks in the Moroccan populated Wadi Salib quarter of Haifa in July 1959 and to demonstrations by Oriental Jews who formed the Israeli Black Panthers in Jerusalem during the early 1970s. In the following years, head start programs, integration in the schools alongside special classes for educationally disadvantaged students, leadership programs, Project Renewal (which built up the infrastructure of disadvantaged neighborhoods through the cooperation of local residents with diasporas Jewish communities), assistance to residents of Development Towns, government housing assistance for young couples, research into the history and culture of Oriental Jewish communities as well as an increased role of Oriental Jews in politics, led to a considerable narrowing of the socio-economic gap. No less important was the increasing social acceptance of Oriental Jews among young Israelis as evidenced by "mixed" Oriental-Ashkenazi marriages. In 1968-69, 17.4% of all first marriages in Israel were mixed, and this figure rose to 20.3% in 1980. By the 1990s, roughly a quarter of all new marriages were mixed. The author has given a general educational background of the Jews and the Israelis in order to analyze his point of view. By the 90's, Ashkenazi Jews still received more schooling on the average than did Orientals. Even today, Oriental Jews still have a much lower rate of university education. Only 16.5% of native born Oriental Jews as compared with 56.0% of Ashkenazi Sabras have received a college education. The gap in school attendance has narrowed: in 1981-82 the percentage

of Oriental youth aged 14-17 that attended school was 79.2% compared with 84.2% of children from Ashkenazi families. It appears however, that Oriental children often receive a lower quality of education, probably because many lived in poorer neighborhoods and settlements that offer less educational enrichment. In short, one can state that the socio-economic gap, although narrower in certain areas, continues to exist, especially in education. This is both the result of socio-economic disparities, and a major cause for their perpetuation. We see, ethnicity research in Israel from 1988 shows that ethnic identity is not felt by most Israelis as a matter of great importance. The majority believe that education, urban renewal and mixed marriages will resolve the socio-economic disparities. Few endorse affirmative action in universities or top posts, and even less advocate more radical measures such as immigration limitation. Outside the family unit and the realm of folklore, there seems to be little legitimacy accorded to ethnic distinctiveness of Jews in Israel. Sociologists and Socio-Anthropologists also argue that the need of social security, which in the true senses needs to be fulfilled by the State but has failed to do so, is sought via ethnic solidarities. It is also that regionalism emerges as a powerful social force during the period of transition when the people are subjected to great tensions and insecurities due to the phenomenon of the uneven spread of development and due to 'spread effects' of development concentrated in some region and its 'backwash effects' concentrated in other regions (Joshi, P.C, 1983).

In this context, the incisive remarks of Rajni Kothari, is worth nothing. On the relationship between ethnicity and State, he writes- When each community or caste or religious group interprets its insecurity as a result of the privileges of a competing group gained through favours and patronage from the State, the resulting conflict and violence does not aim at fighting another community but rather fighting the State, which is presumed to be dominated by or be preferential to the other community. The other community is perceived as a surrogate State. And about ethnicity and development, he writes- The more rapid the development of a region, the more modernized its infrastructure, the ethnic identities seem to deepen, and ethnic conflicts seem to intensify. Ethnicity becomes ground for reassessing the cultural, economic and political impacts of developmentalism. Language plays an important role in the formation of an ethnic identity of a group. It provides a bond of unity among its speakers and defines a line of separation marking off one speech community from another.

By language demands we refer to publicly expressed demands on the political authorities made by organized groups claiming to represent categoric ethnic collectivities based on language loyalties. During the period of British colonial rule, the nationalist demand for freedom was associated with a demand for the replacement of the colonial language of administration by a national language as a unifying symbol of nationalism. The regionalization of language demands represented a move to bring together segmental social groups such as tribes, castes, dialectal speech groups, and religious community within the relatively wider unity of regional communities defined by linguistic affinity and closure. Systematic attempts proceeded in different parts of India along with the development of the still wider nationalist movement. This sometimes led to convergence but relatively often this created a tension and conflict between them. In general, however, language demands of these minorities are usually directed to securing facilities of instruction in their own languages at various levels of education, with a special emphasis on the school level. Usually, these demands are advocated by organized associations and most often one target of these associations is the state administration. Since they claim a small part of the respective state's resources, it has not been difficult to reach a negotiated settlement. These groups tend to make demands only when social mobilization offers competitive opportunities and values. In this sense language demands are a function of economic, social and political development. Where there are no local religious elites and relatively few socially mobilized people are produced from the local language group, a gradual process of assimilation to the language and culture of the dominant group will take place. An alternative situation also favorable to assimilation and decline in ethnic identity occurs when differential modernization so favors a minority ethnic group that it chooses to assimilate to the language and culture of the ruling ethnic group. However, such a process of assimilation may not save an ethnic group from being the target of the next to rise as education and industrialization penetrate more deeply into the society. The assimilated group may remain distinguishable enough by cultural or religious markers – even when its members do not choose to use such markers to build communal consciousness – fir it to be singled out as a scapegoat for the next group to rise and thereby serve as an instrument for building communal solidarity in the newly aspirant group.

Conclusions

Ethnicity is under attack with the tightening grip of modernization. It is true that we are becoming increasingly interdependent in economic and cultural terms, that there is increase awareness that we are 'one world' facing common ecological, political and security problems. Yet this very process of globalization, the very rapidity of the dissolution of the known world, creates a perverse effect. People reach out to the habitual, to the communities where they find familiar faces, voices, sounds, smells, tastes and places. Confronted by the pace of globalization they often need ethnicity more not less. Confused by post-modernity, relativism and the deconstruction of their known world, they reaffirm what they believe to be true at a more local level and education plays an important role in this venture. Ethnicity and ethnic differences have arisen due to many reasons. One of these is through various kinds of coerced migration. Colonial and mercantile powers often brought different peoples to new settings for work on their plantations or to further their commercial interests: for example, ten million African slaves were transshipped across the Atlantic. These patterns of involuntary migration led to complex, often three-way, interactions as indigenous people faced outsiders, who faced other outsiders, who all faced representatives of the colonial powers. The next is phonotypical appearances. Quite often peoples look rather different to one another. In popular language they are white, brown, black or yellow, dark or light skinned, Nordic, Mediterranean, Latin American or Asian – Looking. There are real limits to the manipulative use of identity changes. It is relatively easy to change one's religion or one's clothes. It is less easy to change one's accent, manner and language.

While the term ethnic is old, ethnicity is relatively new. The ethnic terminology was practically imposed on the researchers by the changes that had taken place in the international scene after World War II.: the end of the colonial order and the emergence of the so-called 'Third World' in international politics. It is meaningful to talk of ethnicity only where groups of different ethnic origin have been brought into interaction within some common social context. Ethnic identity formation too is a function of the interplay of internal and external variables as these operates within a given social environment. Ethnic identity, no more than ego-identity, is neither given nor innate; the way in which it is generated is always a psychological process (Erikson,1958). But, reality depicts to us a picture which shows that this psychological process have formed due to the effect of other factors such as social, economic and educational. "Any comprehensive understanding of ethnic minorities and processes of their development can only be feasible not simply within the minority contexts but especially with reference to the dominant communities coexisting within as given politico-economic and cultural region". (Pathy, J, 1988)

Theorists of both Marxism and modernism have predicted that as a society becomes industrialized and modernized, ethnicity will fade and eventually die out. Likewise, assimilationists and advocates of the "melting pot" theory have envisaged a withering of ethnic identification as a result of ethnic assimilation and amalgamation. However, none of these presumptions has materialized. On the contrary, the importance of ethnicity has been on the ascendance at every point of time. Ethnicity affects the opportunities of members of different ethnic groups in schools, jobs, income, housing, poverty, crime and politics. Throughout the world, there is no sign that ethnicity is vanishing. In reality, the importance of ethnicity is even on the rise. As we have seen in the past ten years or so, the broad "Soviet" identity failed to override ethnic divisions in the former Soviet Union; ethnic division has torn Yugoslavia apart and led to the ongoing war in Bosnia; ethnic strife and separation have continued in Northern Ireland, Quebec, and other European countries; Israeli-Palestinian conflict has lingered on despite the peace-making process; ethnic collision between majority Hindus and minority Muslims and Sikhs in India has intensified; ethnic fighting between ruling Sinhalese and minority Tamils has killed eight Thousand and forced more than 200,000 Tamils into refugee camps; in South Africa, racial tension remains despite the abolition of apartheid; and in Rwanda, ethnic warfare between the majority Hutu and minority Tutsi erupted in 1994. Not only has conflict along the ethnic lines remained a constant Global theme, but it has intensified in many parts of the world.

For long sociologists had assumed that ethnicity would disappear with modernization and industrialization, the Gemeinschaft (intimate community) would give way to Gesellschaft (impersonal society): a movement from ethnic type affiliations based in irrational, kin like bonds between people to affiliations based on the rational principle of mutual interest and social need. Within this epistemological foundation, melting pot theories of assimilation thrived. It is then assumed that technological progress, democratization of politics, expansion of education and media communication would eventually wipe out ethnic assertions. In contrast to this transient and dependent nature of ethnicity, Max Weber seems to have cast some doubt upon this line of reasoning, and argued that ethnicity, at times, helps to share political-economic patterns and makes them assume particular directions and styles. It is also said that as people need a sense of belonging somewhere which provides them with a great deal of strength to sustain themselves against the various pressures that occur in everyday modern life, ethnic identities become the source of strength.

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