

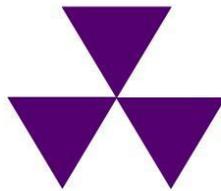
**Evolving from Multicultural to Intercultural Education in the Prospect of  
Sustaining Social Cohesion in the Small Island Developing States:**

**A CASE STUDY OF THE EDUCATION SYSTEM IN MAURITIUS**

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## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to examine the progression of Multicultural to Intercultural Education in the prospect of sustaining social cohesion in one of the Small Island Developing States, namely Mauritius. Multicultural and Intercultural Education are two major educational pedagogies that came into existence in multicultural societies. Both concepts share many characteristics, but their outcomes are different. Both share the suffix, 'culture' which can be defined as a set of customs, beliefs, values and lifestyles shared by a particular group of people. Multicultural education fosters the understanding of the various cultural groups, and Intercultural Education promotes positive interaction between these diverse cultural groups.

The literature review analyzed the emergence and progression of the two pedagogies while focusing on similarities and differences between the two. The purpose of the case study is to explore the implementation of the practices of Multicultural and Intercultural education as part of fostering social cohesion in Mauritius. Qualitative data was collected through interviews and a survey which has been conducted to 300 trainees at the Mauritius Institute of Education to examine and analyze their perceptions of Multicultural and Intercultural Education. The study will enable to gain insight on the teacher-trainees understanding of both pedagogies and how it is incorporated in their training and practices as well as to measure their intercultural competences. A content analysis of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), Teacher Training Program and educational report were also conducted. The results from the research will generate a recommendation for the field of teacher-training which will suggest combining both multicultural and intercultural pedagogies to prepare teachers as the advocate of 'social cohesion' based on the theoretical framework of Allport and Vygotsky.

The research is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the setting of the research and provides an overview of the research methodology. Chapter 2 discusses the body of literature available. Chapter 3 introduces Mauritius as a multicultural society and the emergence of its educational system. Besides this chapter highlights the vulnerabilities of the Small Island Developing States (SIDS) and focuses on the possibilities of implementing Intercultural education in SIDS. Chapter 4 analyses the NCF, the Teacher Training Program and the report on the Situation Analysis of Education for Sustainable Development at School Level and the structured interviews. Chapter 5 presents the empirical data. This chapter attempts to present the data obtained from the survey which was conducted at the M.I.E. Chapter 6 will lead to the

analysis of the data obtained and recommendations will be made in relation to the drawbacks brought to light through the analysis chapter. Finally, a conclusion will be provided at the end of the research.

**Dedicated**

**To**

***Jaleelah and Hamzah***

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## **Lists of Acronyms**

BEC	Bureau d'Education Catholique
COR	Council of Religions of Mauritius
DESD	Decade of Education for Sustainable Development
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
I.E	Intercultural Education
ICJM	Institut Cardinal Jean Margeot
MID	Maurice Ile Durable
M.E	Multicultural Education
M.I.E	Mauritius Institute of Education
MOEHR	Ministry of Education and Human Resources
NCF	National Curriculum Framework
PST	Primary School Teachers
PTT	Primary Teacher Trainees
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SST	Secondary School Teachers
STT	Secondary Teacher Trainees
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organizations
UOM	University of Mauritius
WASP	White Anglo-Saxon Protestant

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## **CHAPTER 1: Introduction**

### **1.1. Introduction**

The process of globalisation has changed the world into an increasingly diversified one. That diversity - in term of cultures, nationalities, faiths and ethnic backgrounds has become a remarkable characteristic of almost all societies around the world, and this diversity has led to the rise of multiculturalism as a key lens through which to understand and address societal problem facing any country. Many countries have introduced multicultural policies to conciliate with the diversity dynamics that the society is experiencing to ensure social cohesion and stability. Social cohesion is an essential foundation for the cohabitation in this multiculturalism era. Durkheim (1893) referred to the social ties that unite a society as the “social solidarity” that bond individuals together. However, violence, social tensions, migration, and the current global economic recession have brought to the forefront a crisis in various social domains. Brigg and Bleiker (2011) have argued that cultural differences are the catalyst for many of the conflicts that beset today`s world. Sen (2006) stressed that due to the illusion of the predominance of a unique identity, conflicts and violence are sustained today.

In other words, some cultural and ethnic groups believe that they are superior compared to others. The dominant group seeks to eliminate the influence of, or force assimilation on, the other ethnic groups. Furthermore, a lack of understanding and mutual respect towards the diverse cultural groups is also a main source of conflicts. Such negative beliefs must be eliminated by promoting diversity. The presence of diversity should be valued and used as a tool to ensure

progression and development in society. Prof Hardy pointed out that “We need to ensure the willingness of members of the society to cooperate with each other to survive and prosper”<sup>1</sup>.

Countries must adopt policies to promote the integration of the diverse ethnic groups rather than forcing an assimilationist policy. In the second decade of the 21st century, the promotion of peaceful relations among groups with cultural differences must be reinforced to deal with the increasing diversity dynamics worldwide. Throughout the course of their daily lives, almost everyone will encounter people from different cultural backgrounds. The education system is seen as an umbrella which can gather all students from diverse ethnic groups. Thus, it is a crucial institution in promoting social cohesion by socializing the young students who represent the future generation of a society. Kantzara(2011) believed that “Education is considered to be contributing to cohesion by socialising and providing students with credentials, cultural and social capital that generally are considered important means for them to participate fully in society” ( p. 39). Equality in the school system is the central concept in promoting social cohesion (Green, Preston &Janmaat,2006). Kantzara (2011) further explained that “According to this perspective, educational systems that promote equality in access to studies and among their students are more likely to preserve current ties” (p. 40).

The school is a system that will provide students the knowledge and skills to develop their social participation. The well-known educational theorist, Dewey (1923), presented school as “cement in the social structure” (p. 513). Social cohesion has been defined as the ‘bond’ or metaphorically as a ‘glue’ that binds people together. Therefore, a system of education for a

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<sup>1</sup>Prof. Hardy was interviewed at Doshisha University on the 13<sup>th</sup> of July 2015. He is the Executive Director for the Centre for trust, peace and social Relations. In 1995, he was a senior leader with the British Council responsible for the Council’s global programme for Intercultural dialogue, youth engagement and global strategic partnerships.

sustainable society should be promoted to consolidate social cohesion. To promote respect for and acceptance of diversity in today`s societies, Intercultural Education is proposed as a powerful mechanism to strengthen social cohesion and peace. Portera (1998, 2008) described it “as the Copernican Revolution in Education. Intercultural education switches the attention of learners from static and stereotypical images of cultures and culture difference to the dynamic perspective of cultures in contact, intercultural relations and intercultural competences” (p. 23). Portera<sup>2</sup> explained that in this time of globalization, complexity, and interdependence, Intercultural Education is the most appropriate and opportune. According to him, Intercultural Education as a revolutionary pedagogical paradigm regards cultures as a dynamic process, in constant evolution and considers life in multicultural societies as resources, as opportunities for personal and collective enrichment and development. Intercultural Education is further defined as an “applied social science promoting the dialogue between cultures and civilizations, as well as supporting the development of democratic, multicultural societies” (Bleszynska,2008, p. 542).

Eventually, Intercultural Education will enhance social cohesion between the different cultural groups. It proposes to facilitate the societal participation of the students by bringing the diverse cultural groups together. This pedagogy enables the students to engage in diverse cultural groups by developing a sense of belonging. Exclusion of a cultural group, which can threaten the social cohesion, will not take place within the context of Intercultural Education. It enables the binding of students from the diverse cultural groups in a meaningful and committed manner in society. Through the sense of belonging to the collective, the heterogeneous students

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<sup>2</sup>Prof A.Portera is one of the leading scholars in Intercultural Education. In May 2015(17-19), the researcher met him at an International Conference which was hosted by the Korean Association for Multicultural Education, Seoul National University, South Korea on the theme ‘Envisioning New possibilities of Multicultural Education’. He personally shared his opinion to the researcher regarding IE.

will form an integral part of the multicultural society. The major concern is how to implement the theoretical contributions of Intercultural Education into practical tools for both educators and students.

Thus, it can be said that one of the major problems the world is currently facing is related to culture. The fact remains that cultural problems are also intertwined at various level with other problems like political, social, economic, and environmental concerns; those cannot be solved at one level or from one angle. However, Education can be one area of action where solutions may emerge over the long term. Education is a powerful tool that can lead to behavioral change, especially in the context of embracing diversity. In this perspective, Intercultural Education can lead to capacity-building to meet the vulnerabilities of the Small Islands and to endorse social cohesion and peaceful coexistence. Intercultural education alone cannot achieve social cohesion, but, it can play an important role to strengthen the social bond in a multicultural society.

## **1.2. Identifying the main research areas: Multicultural and Intercultural Education**

There is a debate that Multicultural and Intercultural Education are only different expressions of the same pedagogy. A quick review of the literature does show that English-speaking countries like the United States of America and Canada tend to use the former expression while continental Europe is the advocate of the latter. Thus, as Palaiologu and Dietz (2012) stated, such a situation creates the impression that both concepts are synonymous. For this research, the two terms will be clearly distinguished to avoid any confusion. James.A.Banks, a leading scholar in the field of Multicultural Education, presented this pedagogy as a concept, movement, and process. According to him, the two core ideas of Multicultural Education are, first, equal access to education for all, irrespective of ethnic, racial, cultural differences, or any other considerations. The second main point is the integration of ‘minorities’ into the mainstream

culture within a liberal vision of society (Banks, 2009). Educational theorists have portrayed Intercultural Education as a dynamic concept, which goes beyond passive coexistence to develop a sustainable way of living together. The significance of the Intercultural Education movement has drawn attention from around the world and among influencing circles. In a recent report about Intercultural education, UNESCO <sup>3</sup> has emphasized the importance of Intercultural Education over Multicultural Education as a vital factor leading to social cohesion and the maintenance of social peace. Because the former, Intercultural Education, is based on a dynamic concept of culture which allows individuals to go beyond passive coexistence, to achieve a developing and sustainable way of living together in multicultural societies through the creation of, respect for, and dialogue between the different cultural groups. Whereas Multicultural Education focuses more on learning about other cultures to promote acceptance or, at the very least, tolerance of different cultures. The progression from Multicultural Education to Intercultural Education was a natural progression since the practices of Multicultural Education were highly criticized. First, Multicultural Education had “a familiar nationalist concern that school practices and knowledge should embody those of the state and only the state regarding language(s), religion, culture, or values”(Coulby:2006, p. 246). Secondly, Multicultural Education did not address societal problems such as racism, and the school programs provided very limited and, to some extent, stereotypical<sup>4</sup> descriptions of the diverse cultures.

Therefore, pedagogically, Intercultural Education and Multicultural education are different on two main counts:

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<sup>3</sup> Intercultural education is proposed by UNESCO (2006) as a response to the challenged offered by the rapid changing world leading to multicultural societies.

<sup>4</sup> Examples: Multicultural Education was limited to some cases to get to know festivities, fairy tales, religions or cuisines of other countries in many European countries.

a) Multicultural education is learning about other cultures while Intercultural education is also, as the prefix 'inter' suggests, about interaction with the other culture.

b) Multicultural education is content-driven as it places emphasis on the 'achievement' of all cultures while focusing on the descriptive and historical accounts (Banks, 2009). On the other hand, Intercultural Education is learner-centered and lay emphasis on sustaining peaceful cohabitation through dialogue among the diverse cultural groups. (Banks, 2009)

Thus, Multicultural Education had primarily focused on the dominant culture and neglected interactions with other cultures. The emergence of Intercultural Education seeks to address the limits of Multicultural Education because Intercultural Education does not mean only teaching and learning about the other cultures. Instead, Intercultural Education is a new pedagogy which incorporates concepts such as discrimination, prejudice, and inequalities and promotes awareness of others' values, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes (Coulby, 2006). Intercultural Education will lead to the acquisition of intercultural competence, competencies which are essential to live and working a diverse society. In fact, in the educational system, intercultural competences will be as important as basic numeracy and literacy (Sondhi, 2009). The components of intercultural competences, including knowledge, skills, and understanding of the diverse cultural groups, is complemented by the values one holds because of one's belonging to a number of social groups, values which are part of one's belonging to a 'given society' (Byram, Nichols & Stevens, 2001, p. 5). Thus, the competences will be a 'fusion' due to the acquaintances with the diverse cultures. As pointed out by Maudarbux (2016), the distinction between Intercultural Education and Multicultural Education is important as it will influence policy makers in their choice of these two pedagogies. He stated that "policy solutions which

aims for integration of minorities and their achievements vary greatly from policies of multilingualism, cultural exchange and social cohesion” (2016, p. 462)

In Mauritius, by and large, Mauritians are tolerant and believe in peaceful co-existence, maintaining peace despite the communal tension in the island. Recently however, the island state seems much more fragile, as sustainable peace is not deeply rooted in the society. In its strategy plan for Education and Human Resources (2008-2020), The Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, announced that Intercultural Education has been initiated under the aegis of the Mauritius Institute for Education (M.I.E). In the case of Mauritius, Intercultural education was the presented as the right choice to strengthen the bonds between the existing diverse cultural groups. The new government policy has led to a new curriculum development, educational pedagogy, and evaluation strategies in the field of Intercultural education.

The Mauritius government has started several initiatives and measures to promote Intercultural Education at the scholastic level, keeping in line with objectives laid down by the United Nations Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN-DESD)<sup>5</sup>. These initiatives are addressing three spheres; educational institutions, teachers training, and national curriculum. The efforts in these three spheres are essential in achieving progressive steps toward building sustainable peace in the society. As such, a series of measures have been undertaken to shift the scholastic system from a multicultural approach to an intercultural approach including national program for training teachers as intercultural catalysts, a comprehensive review of the

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<sup>5</sup> Assessed date 15 July;2015 <http://www.unesco.org/education/tlsf/extras/desd.html?panel=3#themes>  
<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0021/002117/211750e.pdf>

curriculum at Pre-primary, Primary, and Secondary levels in the light of developments worldwide, and to take care of the national needs. Furthermore, a national study had been conducted on the '*Situation Analysis of Education for sustainable Development at School Level in Mauritius*' at schools' level by the Mauritius Institute of Education.

Multicultural Education, also known as the relativistic approach, which was adopted previously in Mauritius, was based primarily on promoting neutrality, tolerance, and accepting the various elements of the multicultural society. It presupposes respect for differences without trying to promote productive exchange and true dialogue between cultures, which are among the main characteristics of the intercultural approach. Hence, it's very crucial to examine if there has been a change from relativistic approach to the intercultural approach following the Government's decision to initiate several intercultural education measures. Despite its importance, it has been reported as a research gap by several scholars (Bunwaree:2002, Asgarally:2005 and Carta:2012). Therefore, this research will be mapping the progression from Multicultural Education to Intercultural Education post-implementation of the new governmental measure pertaining to Intercultural Education. The Mauritian Education System enables a high level of contact between the culturally diversified students. Thus Intercultural Educational can act as a unifying factor between the different cultural groups in Mauritius. The study is primarily focused on the 2005 amendment of the Education Act which sought to make education compulsory until the age of 16. This act is an important point of reference as it represents a key benchmark in the development of the Mauritian Educational System. Prior to 2005 education was compulsory only through the end of the primary school years. Furthermore, the frame of reference for this research will enable the researcher to effectively examine the educational progression from Multicultural Education to Intercultural Education in the educational system.

### **1.3. SIDS as the background of the research**

Small island developing states (SIDS) are built on multicultural pillars. Multiculturalism in the Small Islands is a key building block of the society rather than a result of external changes in the surrounding conditions. In the literature, it has been noted that one of the conceptual problems underlying the definition of SIDS depends on how one chooses to define “smallness.” The most commonly used criterion, in recent years, has been a population of 1.5 million or fewer, referring to 52 islands specifically, which have as commonalities extremely fragile ecosystems, social fabrics, and economic backwardness. In SIDS, people from different continents have migrated and, in the majority of cases, lived for centuries with the island indigenous population, have created natural cross-cultural bridges through marriages, language, and other social immersion mechanisms. Multicultural policies were introduced in the late years of the colonial periods and during the early stages of the independence, to conciliate the diversified society to ensure social cohesion and stability. However, the intrinsic disadvantages of SIDS, namely the environmental, social fragility, and high degree of economic vulnerability have made social cohesion more important than ever to survive in periods of rapid global change. A stable social order is of importance for small states to ensure peace and progression. According to a recent report by Commonwealth Secretariat on Resilience building in Small States (2013) “Evidence suggest that social cohesion in SIDS is generally superior to that found in many larger countries. In the context of resilience, It is important to adopt policies that maintain and even strengthen social cohesion and avoid policies that weaken this attribute of many small states”(p.16). In SIDS, the presence of social cohesion will ensure the preparedness of members of its society to cooperate with each other to face their vulnerabilities and build their resilience.

Mauritius, one of the SIDS, is an island situated in the Indian Ocean and is noteworthy for its extraordinary demographic diversity, as it has been frequently referred to as “The Rainbow Nation.” Despite the zero-net migration rate<sup>6</sup> and the small size of the population<sup>7</sup>, the society has an unexpectedly diversified composition. The diversity of the Mauritian society is multidimensional. The inhabitants are significantly heterogeneous in terms of ethnic, linguistic, and religious dimensions. In terms of the ethnic dimension, the Mauritian society consists of four main ethnic groups: Indo-Mauritians make up around 67% of the population and are the descends of migrants from the Indian subcontinent, who came as indentured labourers mainly during the British and French colonial periods<sup>8</sup>. Afro-Mauritians (Creol) are the descendants’ slaves brought to the island by both French and British to work in the sugar production and now represent around 28% of the population. Sino-Mauritians, around 3% of the population, consist of the Chinese traders who moved to the island for economic reasons during the colonial periods. The remaining 2% are called Franco-Mauritians, and are the descendants of the European sailors, colonial staffs, and colonial landlords. The other dimensions of the Mauritian society are more diversified within each of these groups. For example, the Indo-Mauritian group is divided among several religious groups (Hindus, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Muslims, Christians, Buddhists) and numerous linguist affiliations (Mauritian Kreol, Hindi, Urdu, Arabic, Tamil, Chinese, Telegu, Marathi, French, English)<sup>9</sup>. It is important to note that religion is the main marker of ethnic identity in Mauritius. In Mauritian Population Census, it can be noticed that the distinction

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<sup>6</sup> CIA Factbook, 2014

<sup>7</sup> Around 1.33 million (2014 estimation)

<sup>8</sup> The French controlled the island for almost a decade, from 1715 until the 1810 where the British assumed the control till the independent on 1968.

<sup>9</sup> Mauritius officially acknowledges 9 languages.

between the ethnic groups are not consistent. Two groups are designated on the basis of religion; Hindu and Muslim. One group which consists of both Catholic and Buddhists are classified on the basis of their geographic origin: The Chinese. The fourth category is known as the General Population which consists of people of African Descent (commonly Known as Creol, Franco-Mauritian of French Descent and ‘gens de couleur’ mixed descent). In this situation, Mauritius used religion as the main ethnic marker to differentiate between the ethnic groups; especially, because each ethnic group is strongly affiliated to their respective religion.(Eisenlohr 2006;2008;2011)

Since gaining independence in 1968, Mauritius has benefited from political stability due to its democratic system of election which ensures free elections and peaceful transitions of power. For decades the tiny island, famously known as the ‘*Tiger of the Indian Ocean*,’ has relied on sugar export. However, in recent years Mauritius has diversified its economy. In 2016, Mauritius overtook South Africa to become the African continent’s most competitive economy (World Economic Forum Report 2015/2016)<sup>10</sup>. Through the *Maurice Ile Durable*<sup>11</sup> (MID) project, launched in 2008, Mauritius has showcased his willingness to promote sustainable development. One of the main objectives of MID is to make Mauritius a world model of sustainable development, particularly in the context of SIDS. MID concepts are embedded in a strategic model with five pillars known as the 5E’s (environment, energy, employment, equity, and education). A working group on Education was established in order to transform the current education system into one which fosters education for sustainable development. With the advent

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<sup>10</sup><http://www.africanews.com/2016/10/01/see-africa-s-top-10-economies-in-latest-ranking-of-global-competitiveness-index/> Accessed date: 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016

<sup>11</sup><http://mid.govmu.org/portal/sites/mid/file/final-WG5.pdf> Accessed date: 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015

of Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD), the Government of Mauritius, guided by the MID goals on education, initiated a major curriculum reform across all levels of education. This reform process has led to major changes in the National Curriculum Framework for pre-primary, primary, and secondary education. For the purpose of this research, Mauritius will be used as a case study to map educational reforms regarding Multicultural and Intercultural education.

From the outset, it should be highlighted that this research will focus on and seek to develop best practices towards the integration of intercultural education within SIDS educational systems. There is little discussion within the social science literature on the effects of intercultural education in sustaining social cohesion in SIDS. However, there exists an abundant amount of literature based on intercultural education in multicultural societies aside of SIDS (Coulby,2006;Gundara,2000;Portera,1998), which will provide a framework for this research.

#### **1.4. Statement of the Problem**

Mauritius has been identified as among the most peaceful and stable democracies in the African continent. The Institute for Economics and Growth has rated Mauritius, according to the Global Peace Index (2016) as “the most peaceful African country” in 2016 and 24<sup>th</sup> most peaceful globally. Its success story is based primarily on its good economic performance and on the apparent interracial peace and harmony. The approach to Multiculturalism in Mauritius is illustrated through mutual understanding and respect of differences. Though Hindus represent the majority in Mauritius, all majority and minority ethnic and religious groups share equal rights. Wong and Verkuyten (2015) described this situation as “The social history of Mauritius is such that there is not a mainstream way of life to which minorities are expected or encouraged to adopt” (p. 5).The Hindus currently hold political power, but “Their majority position does not

extend to all spheres of life-for instance, economically Franco-Mauritians are powerful and the press is predominantly owned by those from the General Population group” (Wong &Verkuyten, 2015, p. 5). That is why in Mauritius “it is neither strategic nor viable for Hindus to maintain hegemony through an emphasis on cultural assimilation”(Wong &Verkuyten,2015, p. 5). The process of assimilation of the culture of the majority at school doesn’t exist in the Mauritian system of education. The different cultures coexist peacefully in the island and through this cohabitation of different culture a form of social cohesion known in the Mauritian Kreol<sup>12</sup> as ‘*Lakorite*’ has emerged over time. Wong and Verkuyten explained that the word ‘*Lakorite*’ means “getting along well with others, wherever one lives, whoever one’s neighbors are”(2015, p. 5). It is commonly used by the Mauritians to describe their way of living and dealing with their multicultural society. The social context of Mauritius provides many positive aspects of a multicultural society.

Despite the positive picture of Mauritius presented above, Bunawaree (2002) clearly stated in her research about “Economics, conflicts and interculturality in small island state” that as an expert in the social issues facing the Mauritian society, she believes that “In the process of channeling its energies towards the consolidation of its economy, Mauritius has benefited from the emergence of some form of economic nationalism and has perhaps ignored the need to develop a strong sense of interculturality” (p. 14). The fact that Mauritians concentrated their efforts on the economic success , they have mitigated some of the existing inequalities in the

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<sup>12</sup> The mother tongue in Mauritius is known as Mauritian Kreol. According to the Mauritian census in 2011, 80% of Mauritian identified Kreol as their home language. The majority of the ethnic group shared this language as a common identity. Kreol emerged as a pidgin during the colonial period. But it has now acquired the status of language with a grammar and dictionary. The government promotes Kreol as the national language of the Mauritian.

existing social fabrics. The alarming consequences of this apparent interracial peace are that the island state remains fragile and vulnerable as the sustainable peace is not deeply rooted in the society. Furthermore, the official government slogan of “Unity in Diversity” didn’t seem to help in creating a true sense of unity amongst the diverse groups in the society. On the contrary, it has contributed to present the different cultures in a mosaic structure instead of being integrated into one cohesive society. The Mauritian society is best described as bringing together a “collage of fabrics” versus netting “one colorful fabric.” The challenging risk of multiculturalism on the long societal peace is best stated by Asgarally that “we cannot content ourselves with multiculturalism, because it can become the breeding ground for ethnicism. The risk of multiculturalism is to put people in different boxes and make our overriding vision of society an essentially ethnic-centered one” (2005, p.11).

This risk is not of a theoretical nature, as the nation has witnessed at least two serious social conflicts in approximately thirty years. Early in 1968, just before the accession of Mauritius to independence and in the heat of the political competitions, a serious tension between Muslims and Creol had emerged which led to racial riots. As the country was still under the British authority, British troops had to enforce law and order again. The second serious social conflict was in February of 1999, where the sense of injustice felt after the death in police cell of a popular singer quickly led the country to the brink of an ethnic confrontation between Hindu and Creol<sup>13</sup>. According to the Social fabric Study report (1999), the riots of 1999 bear testimony

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<sup>13</sup> Worth mentioning here is the identity conflict within each ethnic or religious group and the vulnerability of the society. For example, Christians and Muslims are coming from the four ethnic groups. Meaning if Christians or Muslims are involved in conflict it easily can spread out to other lines of the diversity in the society.

to the fact there is an accumulation of frustration and alienation amongst the working class'.(p.23).

The country has witnessed several other ethnic related social unrests;for such reasons as supporting varying sports teams, ethnic scripts printed on bank notes, oriental languages in schools, and the adoption of public holidays, vandalizing religious places among other reasons. The frequency of these incidents had revealed the fragility of the officially adopted slogan of “Unity in Diversity”. There are very few policies to engage the different groups in cultural understanding. In Mauritius, The Ministry of Culture and Arts promote cultural activities<sup>14</sup> by granting the means and facilities to each ethnic group. However, Mauritius Vision 2020<sup>15</sup> report pointed out that “The different cultural centers exist but there are no policies to encourage Mauritians of different groups to interact with the different cultural centers. The latter could have helped towards a better understanding of the ‘other’ but the frameworks in which they operate are too closed” (p.25). Mauritius didn’t create the space to learn and appreciate each other’s’ culture. Instead each culture wants to claim its share.

Therefore, multiculturalism has led directly or indirectly to ‘Ethnic Revivalism,’ which is a real threat to the fundamental foundation of interculturality. As a result, the multiculturalism approach needs to be rethought and the adoption of the new approach of interculturalism seems critical in order to build sustainable societal peace. Many scholars had noticed that the causing roots of this racial tension are not addressed successfully and that the education system had

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<sup>14</sup> Each cultural center of each ethnic group receive financial assistance from the State. The lists of Cultural Center in Mauritius: Africa Cultural Center, Chinese Cultural Center, Islamic Cultural Center, Mahatma Gandhi Institute, Indira Gandhi Center For Indian Culture, Mauritius Telegu Cultural Center Trust, Mauritius Marathi Cultural Center.

<sup>15</sup> The document was accessed at the University of Mauritius

failed to reflect the government policy of “Unity in Diversity.” Bissoondoyal (1991) argued that “No student who goes through the education system has a satisfactory notion of the country. Nor the making of the society, its problems and the development process” (p. 2). Consequently, the education system is producing new generations of Mauritian who are foreigners within their own borders. Therefore, the efforts of building a sustainable social peace are indeed critical. Carta (2012) in her research on community classification and national identity among the students in Mauritius revealed that the majority of students have a communal identity and have built negatives stereotypes towards the other communities. She used the Development Model of Intercultural Sensitivity to measure the ways Mauritian students reacted to cultural differences. One of her recommendations was to introduce students towards Intercultural Education in order to help them in ethnic relation and national inclusion.

In this optic, Intercultural Education can become the vanguard of national unity. Intercultural education can play a predominant role in fostering social cohesion and peace in the society. The major duty of Intercultural Education within the Mauritian context will be to enhance social integration by embodying major aspects of other cultures and to function with them accordingly. Mauritian is a young nation which will celebrates its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2018. As a nation, Mauritians have not been able to sense a strong national identity. Mauritius needs to feel stronger and more together as a nation. The small island must be able to bring down the barriers, the prejudices and change the perceptions for the better. The consolidation of national unity is paramount. A stable and sound social foundation is a prelude to economic success. While applying Intercultural Education within the Mauritian context, the small island can build a strong sense of national inclusion in the new generation of Mauritians.

### **1.5. Significance of the study**

The complex reality of the world today presents a diverse and an interrelated portfolio of challenges for all countries; challenges that include social, economic, ecological, political, and cultural dimensions. While recognizing that while all countries are facing these challenges with different levels of vulnerability, SIDS have a peculiar situation that serves to amplify their economic, environmental, and social vulnerabilities in the face of these challenges. One of the crucial issues to override these vulnerabilities is the building a long-term societal cohesion. One of the best ways to address that is through the educational system. The case of SIDS demonstrates that, while acknowledging the economic and environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS are of fundamental importance, reaffirming the centrality of constructing social cohesion is of vital importance. Intercultural Education is a powerful policy option tool for building resilience that could enable these small states to minimize or withstand the negative magnifying effects of social instability on any of their three vulnerabilities.

The research has stressed the role that education can play to strengthen the social fabrics in SIDS and highlights the main three vulnerabilities that are facing the Small Island Developing States, identified the importance of intercultural education in general, and in SIDS case, presented the potential and challenges of intercultural education in building social cohesion through the education system in Mauritius. This case study has demonstrated several lessons that can be useful in the formulation of future educational strategies for intercultural education that can be implemented in SIDS to achieve sustainable societal peace. Social cohesion can be promoted if, in the education system, the conditions for the development of intercultural competence are created. Relationships developed at school through intercultural education can contribute significantly to cohesion in culturally heterogeneous societies. The role of the teacher

is highlighted in this research because as Baker (1983) stated, “The teacher’s attitude is crucial in harmonious existence in helping students to develop strategies that will prepare them for a harmonious existence in a culturally diverse society” (p. 43).

It is imperative for all educators to learn about students’ cultural differences and to promote the assets each student brings to the classroom. The Mauritian social fabrics are fragile and vulnerable. There is a need to reinforce the national unity on mutual respect and understanding. At school level, if the Ministry of Education wants to foster a culture of tolerance and peace, it is essential that the students are set to know the cultural identity and behavior of the different groups that make up the Mauritian nation.

Hence, this research focuses on and develops the current interest to work towards the integration of intercultural education within SIDS educational system. This research is leading the efforts in addressing the unique correlation between intercultural education and the vulnerable situation of SIDS, and it paves the road for further future research to be enriched in this field.

#### **1.6. Theoretical Framework:**

The research is framed by two main theories, namely the Contact Theory by Allport (1954) and The Social Development Theory by Vygotsky(1978). Eisenhart(1991) describes a theoretical framework as a “structure that guides research by relying on a formal theory, that is, the framework is constructed by using an established, coherent explanation of certain phenomena and relationships” (p. 205).The Contact Theory emerged amid racial segregation in the United States. Allport based this theory on the fact that contact between members of different groups under certain conditions can reduce prejudice and intergroup conflicts. According to this

framework, the key conditions are equal status, intergroup cooperation, common goals and support, and institutional authorities. Table 1<sup>16</sup> further explains the key conditions.

**Table 1: Key Conditions of the Contact Theory**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Example</b>
<b>Equal Status</b>	Members of the contact situation should not have an unequal, hierarchical relationship	Members should not have an employer/employee, or instructor/student relationship.
<b>Cooperation</b>	Members should work together in a non-competitive environment.	Students working together in a group project
<b>Common Goals</b>	Members must rely on each other to achieve their shared desired goal.	Members of a sport team.
<b>Support by Social and Institutional Authorities</b>	There should not be social or institutional authorities that explicitly or implicitly sanction contact, and there should be authorities that support positive contact.	There should not be official laws enforcing segregation

Allport's theory focuses on inter-group tolerance and lessening of prejudice rather than intercultural contact. However, the key conditions and these elements are important in the "development of empathy and mutual understanding necessary for intercultural competence and communication" (Schweisfurth & Qing Gu, 2001, p. 465). In other words, examining the application of contact theory in the school system in a multicultural society can provide the rationale upon which this research will be based. This theoretical framework will enable one to

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<sup>16</sup> <http://tedcandle.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/092Intergroup-contact-theory-explained>

Allport Theory Accessed date: 15 July 2015

critically examine the school system in a multicultural society. The key conditions of Allport's theory will be applied as illustrated in Table 2<sup>17</sup> for the purpose of this research.

**Table 2: Key Conditions of Contact Theory Adapted to the Education System**

<b>Condition</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Application</b>
<b>Equality</b>	Students at school have equal status	Their ethnic, cultural and religious diversity do not influence their status at school
<b>Common Goals</b>	Students have a common goal at school. For example to pass their exam, to complete their assignments	Their ethnic, cultural and religious diversity do not act as a barrier at school to achieve their common goal
<b>Intergroup cooperation</b>	Does the school context encourage cooperation between different ethnic, cultural and religious groups?	Students are encouraged to cooperate together. Their ethnic, cultural and religious diversity don't act as a barrier for intergroup cooperation
<b>Authority support</b>	Is positive intercultural contact encouraged by the teachers in order to ensure social cohesion.	Does the teacher act as intercultural facilitator ?

The research will examine how the intercultural experience at school might enhance social cohesion among future generations. The education system in Mauritius is highly diverse

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<sup>17</sup> The information in Table 2 was gathered from Allport's Theory and reconstructed in a table by the researcher based on the educational context.

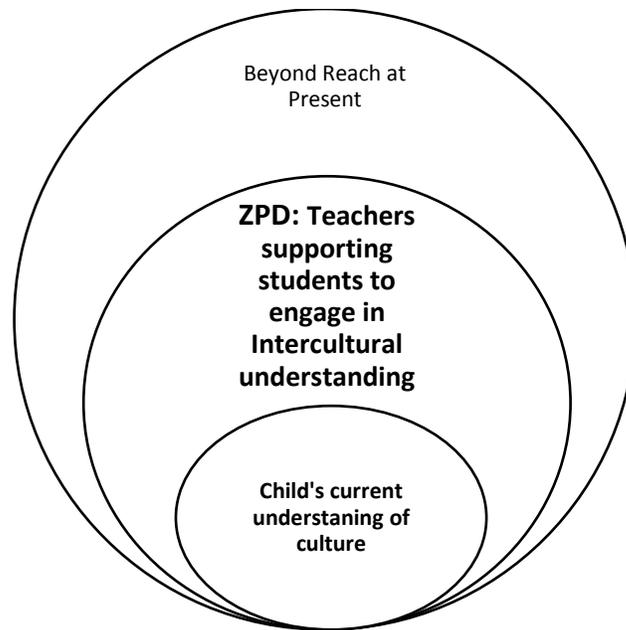
as the teaching, administrative staff, and students are culturally, ethnically, and religiously heterogeneous. Contact in such a situation will be pivotal. There will be extensive encounters and challenges to intercultural mixing within this diverse system in Mauritius.

The second theoretical framework will examine the important role teachers can play in such diverse system. Vygotsky's social development theory is based on the cognitive development in the context of language learning in children. The Vygotskian theory laid emphasis on the major role that social interaction plays in the development of cognition. Vygotsky (1978) stated that "Every function in the child's cultural development appears twice: First, on the social level, and later, on the individual level." (p. 57). Therefore, this social development theory stressed that social learning precedes development; consciousness and cognition are the end product of social behavior. He suggested that the society in which the children grow up will have a major influence on what they think about, how they relate to the information provided, and how that information influences how they experience life. In the context of education, the school is at the core of our society. The influence of the school on the child's life can have a determinant factor in their development after they leave school. The efforts to build an inclusive society must start through educating children from an early age.

A second aspect of Vygotsky's theory is the idea that the potential for cognitive development depends upon the '*Zone of Proximal Development*'(ZPD). Vygostky(1978) explained that the ZPD can be attained when the students engaged in social interaction to develop a range of skills, while at a certain point they will need the guidance of an adult or peer collaboration. He explained "as the distance between the [individual's] actual development level as determined through independent problem solving and the level of potentials development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers"

(1978, p. 86). For this research, the focus of the theoretical framework will be on the ZPD which stresses the importance of the role of teachers. The following question will be raised for the purpose of this research: How can teacher influence social inclusions through the ZPD?

The teacher's role will be to provide meaningful instructional experiences that will enable the student to bridge his or her ZPD. The school systems enable students' exposure to diverse cultures. The question to be asked is how teachers will teach to students about the cultures of others, as the information they choose to give them will shape their outlook on these cultures for the rest of their lives. The teachers, through a proper training in Intercultural Education, will be able to offer a broader perspective to students. Intercultural education will enable the student to be exposed to the presence of difference cultures and to recognize their presence within society. The teachers can then encourage students to be enlightened by the importance and valuable contribution of each cultural group in the society. The teachers will not limit the student's growth by placing boundaries or limits on the ZPD when it comes to learn about other cultural groups. Figure 1 illustrates the role of the teachers in the ZPD.



**Figure 1: ZPD adapted to Intercultural Education**

There are some key tenets of the ZPD and the role of the teacher as an advocate of social inclusion through Intercultural Education:

1. The ZPD is the area of learning in which the teacher will assist the student in developing a higher level of learning. In the ZPD, this can be explained as the difference between what the student can do without assistance and what he or she can do under the guidance of a teacher.
2. The teacher will intervene to assist the students. The students then internalize the instructions and regulate his or her answer or behavior
3. The teacher in the ZPD, as a knowledge person, has a major effect on the students learning. A student will internalize whatever the teacher teaches him or her in the ZPD. That is why it is important the teacher projects the right information in the ZPD. The student's identity formation begins in early life. They will learn about their culture and

the culture of others. It is important that different cultural perspectives are introduced in the general education curriculum; this will enable the students to have knowledge and experiences on other cultural groups. It is through the interaction in the ZPD zone with the teachers that the students will develop a sense of cultural diversity.

The teacher in the ZPD should be in a position to provide information on the various cultural beliefs and practices, as well as to avoid any form of stereotyping or reinforcing the false sense of superiority of the majority culture, which will mislead the students' conception of their relationship with other racial and ethnic groups and denies them the opportunity to benefit from the knowledge, perspectives, and frame of references that can be gained (Banks,1993). The Eurocentric curriculum has negative consequences for students from non-dominate groups, as well as failing to validate their identities, experiences, and perspectives. According to Banks (1993), it further alienates students who are already struggling to survive in a school culture that differs so greatly from their home culture.

In a recent report titled *'Encountering Faiths and Beliefs: the role of Intercultural Education in schools and communities,'* the lead author Tretheway explained that "bad intercultural education can be worse than no intercultural education at all. Our research uncovered examples of poor Intercultural Education that only reinforced stereotypes or which took an unbalance and tokenistic approach" (2015, p. 8). Thus, young students need an approach that will equip them to live in a diverse society rather than just a reactive responsive. The teachers must be in a position to deliver to the students the necessary skills to enable them to successfully navigate and live in our diverse society.

## **1.7. Research Methodology**

### **1.7.1. The Aim and Objectives of the Research.**

The coming section describes the methodology used to collect data. It also includes the limitations and difficulties that arose during the research. The aim of the research is to analyze the educational shift from Multicultural education to Intercultural education with the intention of strengthening social cohesion in societies that are constructed on multicultural pillars, particularly in Mauritius. The objectives are to:

- a) Analyze the progression from Multicultural Education to Intercultural Education in the educational system.
- b) Explore the introduction of Intercultural education as a means to foster social cohesion.
- c) Examine the Mauritian experience in the global context and the global influence into the Mauritian context regarding Multicultural and Intercultural Education.

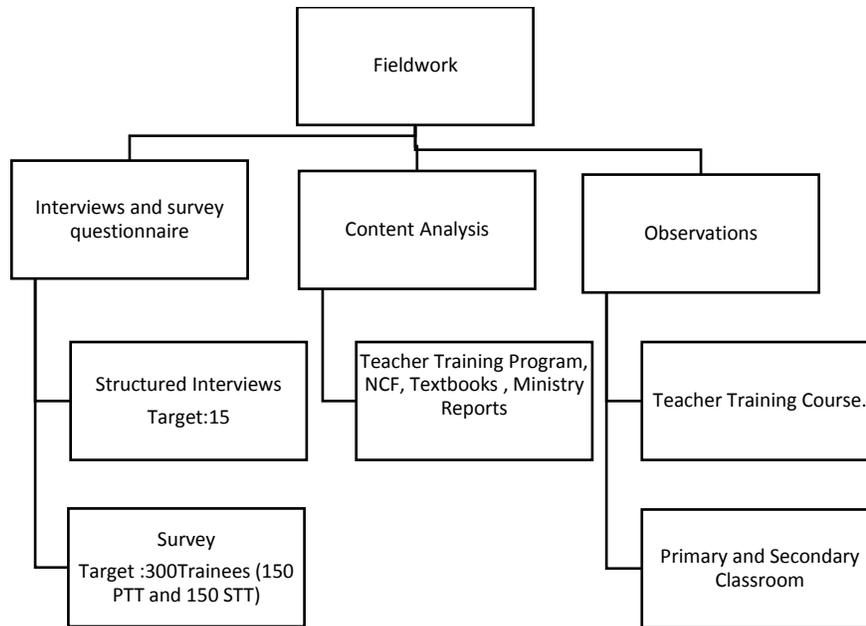
In order to reach the fulfillment of the aim of the research, the following research question is probed: *How can social cohesion be consolidated through the progression from Multicultural Education to Intercultural Education by laying emphasis on the Teacher-Training Program in Mauritius?*

### **1.7.2. Research Strategy**

Methodology, in a systematic manner, is described as “a body of the method, procedures, working concepts employed by a discipline” (Manuta,1998, p. 8). Different methodology is applied for different kinds or approaches to research, but all approaches share the same basic characteristics that they “aim to be planned, cautious, systematic and reliable ways of finding out or deepening understanding” (Blaxter ,2001, p. 5) . Methodological research can be constructed as qualitative, quantitative, or a blending of the two. The methodology for this study will be

using both. The methodology will act as a systematic approach to reach the research objectives. This research will be exploring new grounds in the educational system in Mauritius and there is currently very little information about this research topic. Qualitative research is defined as research that makes use of open-ended interviewing to explore and understand the attitudes, opinions, feelings, and behaviours of individuals or groups. It orientates towards the meaning people attach to social phenomenon. Bryman further described qualitative research as “a research strategy that usually emphasizes words rather than quantification in the collection and analysis of data” (2001, p. 264). It orientates towards the meaning people attach to social phenomenon. In a nutshell, it focuses on words and observations to express reality and attempts to describe people in natural situations.

Furthermore, the present study focuses on the educational shift from Multicultural education to Intercultural education, while focusing on social peace in a multicultural society. Therefore, the link between theory and research is necessary in order to understand, explain, and situate the empirical data of the research within a conceptual framework, and thus sharpen one’s insights on the contemporary world. The relationship between theory and data was exploited in order to demonstrate that the ‘facts’ can speak for themselves and are distinct from the interpretation of researchers. This research adopted an inductive approach. The theoretical framework of this research will be based on the social cultural theory of development by Vygotsky (1978) and the contact theory by Allport(1954).The following figure illustrates the structure of the research strategy applied for the two fieldworks (Sept 2015 and Jan 2017) which were conducted at the Mauritius Institute of Education.



**Figure 2: The Structure of the Fieldwork Conducted for This Research**

### **1.7.3. Research Design**

First, an appropriate research design needs to be developed to yield results that are as objective as possible. This research is designed as a case study which is a “strategy for doing research which involves empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context using multiple sources of evidence” (Robson,1993, p. 146). This research opted for a case study of the Mauritian educational system because focusing on one educational system for a case study will fully suit the needs and resources of the research. It assesses social realities, for example, social cohesion, while enabling one to describe, analyze, and explore the main aspects of the educational system within the context of the research.

### **1.7.4. Research Method**

Research methods can be quantitative or qualitative depending on the research question. This study attempts to utilize both methods as social constructions are sought to be quantified in

addition to being qualitatively interpreted for this research. A series of research methods or techniques were used to collect data. Among the methods identified were survey method, content analysis, observations, statistical analysis, and a review of the literature. The fact that this study is exploring new grounds, namely the potentials of intercultural education in sustaining social cohesion in SIDS, the research method that has been opted will enable to gain deep insight on this research.

#### **1.7.5. Primary Data Assembly: Survey and Structure Interview**

As part of qualitative research, surveys can best be described as groups of people being targeted and questioned. Kerlinger further elaborated saying it “studies large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the populations to discover the relative incidence, distribution, and interrelations of sociological and psychological variables” (1973, p. 410). For the purpose of this research a questionnaire was developed and interviews were undertaken. Questionnaires are a frequently used method in social research as this form of data collection is one of the easiest ways of gathering data on a given subject from a wide variety of people. In addition, the use of a questionnaire in conducting the study is relatively affordable. The main target of the present research is the Mauritian Institute of education. The questionnaire (see Appendix B) was targeted to the teacher-trainees. As surveying the entire population would be difficult because of scheduling and time and space constraints, it is often more suitable to do a sample survey. In order to have a more objective opinion on the research topic both teacher-trainees from primary and secondary sections were targeted. Hence, a total of 300 teacher trainees of different ages, genders, and ethnicities were surveyed

It should be noted that while determining the content and appropriateness of the questions, the respondent’s intellectual capacity, fluency in the language, and information level in relation

to the subject of the research was taken into consideration. Most of the questions provided multiple choices and a few were constructed as open ended with the purpose of giving the respondent an opportunity to express his/her views. Closed-ended questions were given preference over open-ended ones in order to classify the respondents on some stated point of view, as well as to ease survey facilitation and save time. In addition, the principle behind setting closed-end questions was to elicit useful responses from respondents to develop hypothesis which could be quantified and statistically analyzed. However, when the objective was to discover opinions and degrees of knowledge, the open-ended questions were provided. Before the questionnaires were sent to the participants in Mauritius, a pilot study was undertaken in Japan.

A small sample of students on campus from diverse cultural backgrounds was contacted to interact with the questionnaire because they were demographically similar to the targeted sample survey. Indeed, their feedback on the survey instrument enabled clarification and elimination of problems before the full questionnaire survey was carried out. After the survey was collected, SPSS analysis was employed for the data analysis. SPSS, an acronym for Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, is one of the most commonly used quantitative data analysis software packages available. Bryman and Cramer believed that the significant advantage of using a package like SPSS is that it enables researchers to perform quick data analysis and thus helps to save time (2001). It also provides the opportunity “to use more complicated and often more appropriate statistical techniques”(2001, p. 15). A data file was created to compile data from the questionnaires received. Then the available variables were entered into the SPSS window called Data Editor. After inserting the data set, the statistical procedures were done. A full description of the data analysis is provided in Chapter 5.

Due to lack of information on the topic, a further attempt was made to collect primary data to overcome the constraint of existing literature. Interviews are considered a primary source which can provide original data. A total of 15 interviews were carried out with participants from the M.I.E, lecturers from the University of Mauritius who are specialised in education, representative of the Intercultural Section from The Catholic Schools in Mauritius, and members of the Council of Religion. A standardized or structured interview style was opted for rather than unstructured or semi-structured interview mainly because to ensure a standard scale and the ability to then make comparisons. However, during the face to face interviews, there were a few unstructured questions presented to gather further information or to seek clarification on the topic. The structured interview (see Appendix A) was conducted during the first fieldwork visit in September, 2015. Most of the interviews were done face to face while a few interviewees answered the structured interviews questions via mail because of scheduling conflicts. In addition, selected observations were used to gain further spontaneous insights on the research(see Appendix D).

#### **1.7.6. Secondary data collection: Content Analysis and Literature Review**

For the purpose of the research, a content analysis of The National Curriculum Framework for Secondary (2009) and Primary (2008), The Education and Human Resources Strategic plan 2008-2020, the content of the teacher training program at the M.I.E, and the report on a Situation Analysis of Education for Sustainable Development at School Level in Mauritius were analyzed. This type of qualitative research is a good approach to discern the insight, objective, orientation, or approach of the written curriculum content. As part of using content analysis as a quantitative analysis method, the educational materials were thoroughly analyzed according to a set of categories which consisted of topics such as how multicultural or

intercultural education is conveyed and who mentioned these points and to whom and with what effect. During the final analysis only the most suitable words will be 'coded' in order to measure the variables concerned in the research question.

To ensure and develop a comprehensive framework, a sound literature review related to the topic was undertaken and covered the main research areas of this thesis, namely Multicultural and Intercultural Education. Social cohesion will be presented through the lenses of both educational pedagogies

#### **1.7.7. Limitations and difficulties**

A number of limitations and challenges arose while conducting the research. It is prudent to take into account how significant these were to the research. The development of the project took place in Japan for implementation in Mauritius. The only means of communication with the Mauritius Institute of Education was via email and phone. Very often coordination proved difficult because there was no permanent base. The completion or construction of the project was dependent on assistance from the contacts in Mauritius in particular. In September 2015, the first fieldwork in Mauritius was conducted to overcome the above-mentioned difficulties. In Mauritius, it was easier to contact the professors and people who are involved in the Multicultural Education and Intercultural Education project. Dr Putschay was the chief coordinator of the Intercultural Project at the M.I.E. and assisted the researcher in conducting the research at the M.I.E. The target of the structured interviews was 20 teacher trainees at the M.I.E. It was advised to send the structured interview questionnaire to the participants via email because it was exam time at the M.I.E and many were not available for face to face interviews. However, the response rate of the structured interview was very low even with continual reminders. The primary feedback was that they were taken up with exam papers. The researcher was advised to

re-launch the semi-structured interviews for the following fieldwork in January 2017. That particular period is at the beginning of the semester, and the teacher-trainees were available. The second attempt of the structured interviews was a relative success.

An additional limitation should be noted that although the researcher is an experienced educator, studying on educational pedagogy related to social impacts with no previous experience provided particular difficulties, particularly given that this was a pioneering research topic which had never been examined before with no existing template to follow. In other words, no research has been carried out on this topic in Mauritius. Literature examining Mauritius and the link between sociocultural theory and intercultural education are very much limited. This was indeed a challenge because the research is based mostly on primary sources.

Time and financial constraint have been another factor causing limitation. In October 2016, the researcher had to leave the university in Japan due to financial constraint and to complete the research from her home country. As such, the researcher did not have access to university facilities including the main library and was unable to attend seminars which would have helped to advance and enhance the work. Due to time restraints and constraints on the accessibility of information, it was not possible to conduct an exhaustive study of the topic. Also, other qualitative research methods like focus group discussion could not be undertaken. These could have provided an opportunity to discover key details, instant reactions, and varied responses. Lastly, as regards to the impact of the project on the Mauritian society, a few participants refused to answer the questionnaire because it was too sensitive issue in their opinion.

Though full justice could not be done due to the above mentioned difficulties and limitations, it is hoped that the research will be able to reach its aim and objectives and can contribute to and be used for future studies.

## **CHAPTER 2:Literature Review**

### **2.1. Introduction**

This chapter analyses the ongoing debate on Multicultural and Intercultural Education. The first section of this chapter will study the roots and development of Multicultural and Intercultural Education while the second section shows the in-depth relationship between social cohesion and Education. Both Multicultural and Intercultural Education cannot be understood without some basic concepts. The five major concepts will be discussed at the outset including culture, ethnocentrism, cultural relativism, assimilationist, and integration.

### **2.2. Five major concepts in Education**

#### **2.2.1. Culture**

The concept of culture is at the center of multicultural and intercultural education. It is therefore relevant to define this concept and to demonstrate the risks and limits of its utilization. According to Rocher (1968), culture is a collection of common ways of thinking and behaving, and formalized through the fact that it has been learned and transmitted by a collective group. Doutrelous (1990) defined culture as a system of appropriate representations of the human species including the coherence, meaning, and signification given to the real-life experience of the individual and collective. Hofstede (1984) defined culture as “the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one category of people from another” (p. 51). Culture enables one to characterize a group, people, or society through cultural practices or system of representation such as language, religion, political organization, pedagogy, cooking, dress code, or architecture, among others.

However, it is important to note that the essence of culture is not its artifacts, customs, tools, or other tangible cultural elements but instead in how the members of the group use,

interpret, and perceive them. It is important to understand the values, symbols, interpretations, and perspectives attached to each element of someone's group culture. For a teacher to welcome a student from a different culture implies not only the consideration that the student is a bearer of a particular cultural characteristic (for example, language, religion, familial organization, social situation, migration status) but also to situate the student's unique differences and his relation within the school context. Thus, it is essential for a teacher to understand the way a student perceives and interprets his/her culture. It is important in the context of multicultural and intercultural education to guard against all essential definition of the cultural concept.

### **2.2.2. From ethnocentrism to cultural relativism**

Ethnocentrism is an attitude shared by all cultures which consists of perceiving his/her culture of origin as the model for humanity. It means to consider the ways of living and thinking or customs and beliefs of the culture to which we belong as the most important. Ethnocentrism promotes the evaluation and interpretation of other cultures according through the lens of one's native culture and often implies judgmental values concerning individuals from other cultures and whose practices are incomprehensible simply because they are unknown. Regarding ethnocentrism, it is important to distinguish between defensive ethnocentrism and offensive ethnocentrism. Defensive ethnocentrism expresses the desire of a group to preserve the culture of origin, the language, or any other characteristic of the collective history. This type of ethnocentrism is observed in almost all cultural minorities or majorities. For example, a speaker from regional Europe might express a defensive ethnocentrism to safeguard their language against the dominant national or international languages. On the other hand, offensive ethnocentrism is initially linked to colonialism, which considers the values and cultural characteristics of an individual, society, or a country to be not only the most important but to be

adopted, either willingly or by force, by other people or cultures. School books often illustrate the propensity towards offensive ethnocentrism, notably by the geographical map projections or through their presentation of the national histories (Blondin, 1990; Preiswerk & Perrot, 1975).

One of the objectives of multicultural and intercultural education is to counteract such ethnocentric behaviours. Therefore, an opening towards the relativistic culture is necessary to enable intercultural education to take place. Relativistic culture constitutes of analysing and evaluating the expression of different cultures towards their cultural landmark. Relativistic culture demands a certain amount of knowledge of the other culture. However, the radical relativistic culture which consisted of justifying and accepting all the behaviours linked to cultural practices is also not a favourable attitude towards the intercultural approach. In this sense, all the cultures may still be the object of criticism and opposition. For instance, female excision and other similar cultural practice cannot be justified under the pretext of cultural relativism. If scientific knowledge and democratic debate allow the contesting of such cultural practices, then it doesn't make sense to justify it under the name of relativistic culture.

Ultimately multicultural and intercultural education is a link between the recognition and appreciation of cultural diversity but also a necessity to enable individuals to live in dignity and liberty even at the breach with his or her culture of origin or parents.

### **2.2.3. The concept of assimilation, integration and the minority.**

The concept of assimilation is a long history of the social sciences. Park (1939, 1950) has used the concept of assimilation to analyse the relationships between different ethnic groups. He defined assimilation as a movement of disorganisation/re-organisation, and interpretation and fusion through which people acquire the memories, feelings, and attitudes of the other while sharing their own experiences and histories and by integrating into the collective cultural life.

However, recent studies have shown that majority of immigrants assimilate the norms and values of the host country, especially the second and third generations (Todd,1994; Tribalat, 1995). However, in the French sociology, the concept of assimilation has a different meaning compared to that defined by Park and claims that “Assimilation implies the reduction of the specificities of the migrant social, cultural and religious practices” (Tribalat, 1995,p.13)

In other words, assimilation is defined as a forced adhesion of the minority immigrant to the norms of the host country (the dominant society) while their sociocultural values are restricted to their private sphere only. In the processes of assimilation, the acquisition of nationality or citizenship was conceived as high engagement in the host society. Assimilation is a process which will lead a group or an individual belonging to a minority ethnocultural group to adhere strictly to the values and norms of the dominant group. It's an irreversible process resulting in the loss of cultural characteristics of a minority group. In the process of assimilation, the primary condition is the renouncing of the minority's cultural specificities and differences. In other words, the 'other' can be accepted without discrimination but on the condition that he/she abandon his/her culture and to fully and quickly adapt the values and the behaviours of the host society. Assimilation has a negative connotation because assimilation seeks to eradicate the culture for the benefit of the majority. In the assimilation process, acculturation will take place. Acculturation means the norms and the values of another culture will be progressively acquired. Gordon (1964) has used the concept of assimilation to analyze the acculturation of the minority groups in the United States. The minority group has gained the culture characteristics of the dominant group (the values, the language, the behavior, etc.). A lot of ethnic groups have become entirely acculturated to the dominant American culture. Those ethnics group have lost in most of the cases their own ancestral cultures but have still not been able to achieve full social

participation or acceptance in the society. It is possible to become culturally assimilated but to still be socially excluded, isolated or segregated.

Integration is a concept as old as assimilation in the social sciences and refers to the social system. In a work first published in 1897, Durkheim said that a society can be considered as integrated if it is characterized by a high degree of social cohesion. In the educational sphere, the concept of integration was first used in reference to the handicapped, but was then associated with the multicultural and intercultural approach to replace the negative concept of cultural assimilation. Integration has progressively become the central notion of defining educational and social policies towards the immigrant or minority populations as well as the lens through which to analyze the situation in the host society. Integration is to enter a new element, an ethnocultural group in a society or state. The integrated individual changes along with the group which integrates him. The notion of interaction is at the center of this dynamic. The concept of integration admits the difference culture of the minorities groups and the immigrant population. However, the discourse on integration should always be placed in the national historical context. In France, it has been observed that the term integration is sometimes used as assimilation, while in the United States, the current term used is ‘mainstreaming’ which is a term closed to the idea of integration but at the same time possessing an assimilationist connotation.

#### **2.2.4. The system of education as a homogenous culture in the 19<sup>th</sup> century**

The public school was considered to be a homogenous system and a place to reinforce and consolidate nationalism and the formation of a patriotic spirit for future citizens. It was meant to assimilate the different cultures to the national culture of the country. In France, the Bretons have to put aside their language once they entered the French educational system. At the same time, the Native American in Canada or the Australian Aborigine were taken from their

families and placed in boarding school to be educated wholly in English. As a consequence, it can be said that the system of education from the very origin constituted of ethnocentrism towards particular social groups (women, rural populations, socially disadvantage persons, minority cultures, immigrants, etc.). School had the aim to prepare the citizens and enlighten them while emphasizing the dominant political agenda at that time, enforcing the nationalism in the future citizen of the country. The intercultural approach in education questions the role of the school. For a particular group, school is seen as a way for emancipation but also as oppressive by other groups. Since its origin, formal education had shown less respect towards the culture of the minorities and regional groups who had to face cultural alienation and much less towards the indigenous or colonized civilisation. To provide with schooling also meant to convert and to inculcate the values and beliefs that are far being universally shared by the potential learners.

### **2.3. The Roots and Evolution of Multicultural Education**

After describing the five main concepts and the school system, in this section, an analysis of the available literature regarding Multicultural Education will be presented. This section will be divided into two parts: First the emergence and definitions of multicultural education will be discussed, followed by an exploration of the goals and practices of the multicultural approaches. Finally, guidelines for teachers for developing effective multicultural practices in their classroom will be analysed.

Due to the international influence that the United States and Canada have on the social sciences and in particular on Multicultural Education, it seems important to analyze the emergence of multicultural education in North America. Between 1880 and 1920, the high rate of immigration towards the North American continent has provoked the political and educational

assimilation of the newcomers into the dominant culture, a process known as mainstreaming. The United States have adopted an assimilationist approach referred to as the expression 'melting pot.' Even though the country was founded on the immigration-colonisation process, the institutions and the language of the White Anglo-Saxon Protestants have provided the foundations for which the successive waves of immigrants needed to adhere and assimilate. This reference was the culture of WASP. This culture has dominated and still dominates to a large extent the social life, economic, and politics since the birth of the country. This assimilation was widely accepted, and the cultures and the languages of the immigrant or minority ethnics groups were not considered necessary to preserve. This process of assimilation of the different ethnocultural groups remained dominant in the United States until the movement towards scholastic de-segregation, a move which, while not solely responsible for, highlighted the starting point of multiculturalism.

In 1954, the supreme court judgment on the famous case '*Brown v. Board of Education*' stipulated that education based on racial separation was unjust and unequal. This ruling was crucial to the history of education in the United States and opened the door for the desegregation of black American students. However, the sometimes poor performance of these children, who often had no prior formal education, was frequently attributed to the theory of sociocultural handicap. According to this theory, the academic difficulties and weak performances of the middle-class students were due to their lack of sociocultural resources (linguistic deficits, cultural poverty, weakness of intellectual development, etc.). The cultural heritage and experiences of the Black students were never acknowledged, instead, this approach represented a blame placed on the children and their families, and the question was not addressed to the educational institution which was based on segregation and inequality.

The beginning of the 60s was marked by the fulgurate development of the civil rights movement led by the Afro-American community under the direction of Martin Luther King, Jr. In reality, this movement was a long struggle for equality led by the Black Americans. The civil rights movement was aiming at achieving social, political, and educational rights equal to those of the white American populace. This Black resistance movement, the women's' rights movement, and the frequent protestations against the war in Vietnam led to the recognition that the public education system should reflect and valorize the contribution of all cultural groups in the American society. The changing of the laws allowing black Americans access to the same rights as the rest of the population (Civil Right Act) in 1964 had a significant impact on the growing acceptance of the cultural pluralism in educational institutions. While Black Americans were fighting for equal rights, other cultural and social minorities were engaged in the same struggle for equality and recognition of their cultural heritage. The Chicanos (Mexican-Americans who had always lived in America) and the Hispanics (Latin-American immigrants who speak Spanish) have, for example, demand the right to use Spanish in educational institutions after decades of Anglo-Saxon dominance.

Multicultural education is explicitly linked to the civil rights movement in the United States. Many Afro-American researchers and educators have worked together with leaders of the Civil Rights Movement to promote multicultural education. Multicultural Education can be traced back to the civil rights movement of the 1960s in the United States (Banks, 1993). Banks (1981) has situated the beginning of the multicultural education in the action of the Afro-Americans and other minority groups to protest against the discriminatory practice that they were facing in the public institutions. Banks and Banks (2001) define Multicultural Education as “An idea, an educational reform movement, and a process whose primary goal is to change the

structure of educational institutions so that male and female students, exceptional students, and students who are members of diverse racial, ethnic, language, and cultural groups will have an equal chance to achieve academically in school” (p. 1).

Banks (2001) used the words ‘reform movement’ because multicultural education as a concept came into being in the U.S as educational equity for African-American and other students of color in the school systems. Multicultural Education has challenged the Eurocentric and exclusionary education which was particularly onerous for children whose race, ethnicity, language, and social class differ from the majority group. It questioned the notion of white supremacy and paved the way for the quest of educational equity among the other culturally diverse students. In a way, the school as a social system will promote educational equality among the diverse students. In the perspective of Multicultural Education, in the classroom, the assimilation to a dominant culture is rejected, and instead, the diversified learners are given an equal chance to achieve academically.

The teacher training programs designed to meet the needs of these students are worth exploring. Under such models, the teacher will serve as an agent of change, promoting multiculturalism and empowering students to act on it. Smith (2009) claimed that multicultural education would function effectively only if the teachers and administrators are fully equipped. The rapid change in the demographic makeup of the United States has led to a diversified society. Due to an increase in the number of students from diverse backgrounds, there was a need to explore the training of teachers to meet the needs of these diversified students. In the beginning, it was presented as white and black students in the classroom. Very often the white students were the dominant and the black students were in the situation of the minority. With time the American became one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world. Such a

situation has made multicultural education more crucial to respond to such rapid social change. According to the U.S Bureau of Census (2003), over 30% of American school-age children are ethnic minorities. In certain cities, these people of color are more prevalent than the ‘majority’ white Americans.

Furthermore, numerous definitions of multicultural education will be proposed by scholars to face cultural pluralism in the classroom. Bennett (2003) believed that “Multicultural education is an approach to teaching and learning that is based upon democratic values and beliefs and that affirms cultural pluralism within culturally diverse societies in an interdependent world” (p. 14). Gorski (2001) suggested a definition which encompasses the need to include multicultural education in the education curriculum: “Multicultural education is a transformative movement in education that produces critically thinking, socially active members of society. It is not merely a change of curriculum or the addition of activity. It is a movement that calls for new attitudes, new approaches and a new dedication to laying the foundation for the transformation of society” (p. 41).

Nieto (2000) shared a parallel view because she sees multicultural education as a process of school reform which includes all students, the whole curriculum as well as the school organizations. In this line, Sleeter and Grant (1987) also described multicultural education not as one subject but as education itself. It can be said that though these various definitions, the main idea shared by scholars is that Multicultural Education is a process with a transformative approach which should be infused across the curricula and in the school environment into building educational equity and social justice. Furthermore, Rhoads (1995) believed that diversity would have a significant impact on the pedagogy because the diversified students will bring to the classroom their lives, realities, their culture, and their language which can lead to

confusion if the teacher is not prepared to teach diversified learners. In this context, Multicultural Education emerged as a pedagogical strategy to understand the diverse classroom population (Gay, 2000, Grant & Sleeter, 2003; Nieto, 1996)

Canada has been greatly influenced by the United States, but was able to develop its dynamic and particularly of the management of cultural diversity in the francophone province of Quebec. The political policy of the federal government of Canada since 1971 has been based on multiculturalism (Moodley, 1995). The political policy of multiculturalism builds on the fact that Canada is composed of a mosaic formed by diverse ethnic groups united by the two primary official languages, English and French (Beauchesne, 1991). However, for more than 20 years, the racial, ethnic, and cultural questions have occupied a significant place in the discussion on education and equality everywhere in Canada. The Canadian approach to multiculturalism is based on a certain cultural relativism as it theoretically considered all cultures as equally important and having the same weight and quality. Multiculturalism has allowed simultaneously the integration of minority cultures in the work of the teacher and the question of the pertinence of multicultural education in their educational system (Mujawamariya, 2002). However, in practice, the official discourse on multiculturalism seems very vast, which doesn't contribute to making it operational. It appears that there hasn't been any significant progress concerning the educational difficulties of the visible minorities in spite of the promotion of the Multicultural Education (Gerin-lajoie, 2008).

In a contrary approach, the Francophone Quebecers have a skeptical attitude towards federal multiculturalism and feel they shouldn't be categorized as a cultural group like the others (Berthelot, 1990). They want to differentiate clearly from the federal multiculturalism and to bring to light their needs to consolidate and retrieve their national francophone identity which

has been marginalised for a long time by the Anglophones; hence, Quebec has opted, like the European Francophone, for the term interculturalism instead of multiculturalism. The intercultural approach in Quebec is open towards the other cultures while also attaching to and laying emphasis on one main central historical culture, such as the francophone majority. In other words, the minority groups can be considered equal partners if they respect the fundamental values of the host society, primarily through utilizing and respecting the French language as the common language being threatened by the hegemony Anglophone. However, when it comes to a practical example in schools, the intercultural Quebec has not taken concrete actions to differentiate them from the rest of Canada (Alladin, 1992; Gay,1985).

Despite the fact that the roots of multicultural education are from the United States and Canada, the culture of the native American was oriented towards the assimilationist approach. In fact, the culture of the native American was ignored, and many students were taken from their families to face a forced education where they were constantly humiliated and violated (Ellis,1994). The diffusion of multicultural education has only minimised the impact of this cultural genocide and to enable the native American community to have more freedom in the organisation of their schools. As suggested by Banks (1992), the principal objective of multicultural education is an education for freedom. Multicultural education must enable the students to develop their knowledge, the needs, and attitudes necessary for the full participation in the democratic society.

### **2.3.1. Five dimensions of the development of Multicultural Education**

Banks (1993) has placed emphasis on five dimensions of the development of multicultural education, namely:

- a) Content integration: Teachers will include in their teaching examples and content from a variety of cultures.
- b) Knowledge construction process: Teachers will act as a facilitator to the students to understand, investigate, and deconstruct the ways in which knowledge is constructed regarding culture
- c) Prejudice reduction: The focus will be on the students' negative racial assumptions. Teaching methods will be used to change such negative attitudes.
- d) Equity pedagogy: Teachers will ensure that knowledge will reach students from diverse racial, cultural, gender, and social-class groups.
- e) Empowering school culture: The school culture must reflect positive interaction among the staff and students from diverse racial, ethnic, and gender groups.

The five dimensions of Multicultural Education by Banks (1993) have set the theoretical framework for social diversity at the school. He presented Multicultural education as a mode of instruction whose goal is the transformation of the schools and other educational institutions so that students from diverse racial, ethnic, and social-class groups will experience educational equity. Furthermore, to put forward Bank's framework of Multicultural education's dimensions, Gay (2000) and Ladson-Billings (1995) described multicultural education as a culturally responsive pedagogy. Howard (2010) described a culturally responsive pedagogy as a two-sided instruction, including both learners and teachers because this is "an approach that incorporates attributes, characteristics or knowledge from student's cultural background into the instructional strategies and course content to improve educational outcomes" (p. 67). Through the culturally responsive pedagogy found in Multicultural Education, the students will not only reflect on societal inequalities but also take action to diminish those disparities by including knowledge

from their cultural referents. In a way, the culturally responsive pedagogy has emerged as an alternative to the melting pot. The presence of different cultural groups will contribute to the whole American society. Banks (1999) through his analysis has shown the limits of the melting pot in the new cultural pluralism: “The metaphor of the melting pot is no longer functional. We have to switch to either the toss(ed) salad or the stew. It allows us to focus both on the differences in the ingredients while at the same time the beauty of the whole. A good salad does not have a bunch of components that look, taste or have the same texture. The success of the salad depends not only on its looks but also on a lot of other factors including the taste, the freshness of the ingredients, the smells, the textures and the mixture itself” (p. 43).

Here, Banks laid emphasis on the importance of the school as a representative of the diversity of the society. Schools can contribute to making a significant impact on the understanding and respect of diversity. Pattnaik (2003) provided an interesting example of how negative image of a particular ethnic group can affect the belief of the students: “If children frequently observe ethnic conflict among different minority groups in their neighbourhoods, their behaviour in school may mirror that conflict” (p. 207). That is what Nieto (1996) refers to when referring to multicultural education as “antiracist education” which is “a process important for all students” (p. 307). Nieto (2000) has explored the ways individuals, social, political, and educational factors can combine and influence negatively the scholastic journey of students who belong to certain ethnic groups. She has detailed the impact of discrimination, racism, educational politics, socio-economic status, ethnicity, gender, training and expectations of teachers, the language of the students, and the schools’ environment. She has proposed ‘cultural equity’ as the pillar of multicultural education. The term ‘equity’ in education means to grant equal opportunity for all students to develop their knowledge, skills, and potential fully.

Bennett(2003) argued that educational performance cannot be acquired without educational equity. Banks (2007) believed that through equity the student will get the “freedom, abilities and skills to cross ethnic and cultural boundaries to participate in other cultures and groups” (p. 23). Kendal (1983) who shared parallel thoughts with Banks and presented the how the interaction of Multicultural Education in the curriculum will enable students to appreciate, respect and understand diverse cultures:“First, to teach children to respect others’ cultures and values as well their own, second, to help all children learn to function successfully in a multicultural, multiracial society, third, to develop a positive self-concept in those children who are most affected by racism-children of colour, fourth, to help all children experience both their differences as culturally diverse people and their similarities as human beings in positive ways, fifth, to encourage children to experience people of diverse cultures working together as unique parts of a whole community” (p. 23).

However, in the United States, the suburbanization of the last few decades illustrated segregation of schools and the relative failure of the multicultural approaches in education in a destabilization of the different ethnic relations. The residential location is closely tied to education and very often social success, for white Americans, is associated with their place of residence where there are no minorities. To overcome this problem some more financially well off people propose private school to their children, schools that are established in high standard residential areas where the middle and high class (mainly White) reside to presumably stay away from violence, the ghetto, and the sentiment of insecurity. The racial homogeneity of the zone of residence and the location of the schools has led to significant obstacles for the improvement of the placement of the black community within the wider society (Noblet, 1993). Furthermore, redefining Multicultural Education has become imperative due to the drastic changes in the

cultural fabrics and demographics of the United States (Banks,2006b; Irvine, 2003). Research conducted in the United States revealed that between 1979 and 2008, children ages 5-7 who spoke a language other than English at home has increased from 3.8 to 10.9 million, or from 9% to 21% of the population in the age range. (NCES,2009). Further data collected in 2007-2008 showed that 58% of public school teachers of grades 9 through 12 are females with 83.5% identifying as White. Hispanics constituted 6.6% and Blacks 6.9% of all teacher population of public school teacher of grades 9 and 12. (NCES,2010). The availability of teachers with diverse backgrounds to meet the needs of the ever-increasing diversity that these students bring to the classroom will certainly have implications in the teaching and learning process. “Clearly, multiculturalism has significant implications for how we think about and structure pedagogy” (Rhoads, 1995, p. 262).

Professor Nieto (2004) further explained that due to the high presence of multicultural students in the public schools, many educators feel the need to acknowledge and to expand their understanding of multicultural education. In other words, there is an urgent need for the education system to embrace diversity. Smith (2009) asserted that the success or failure of multicultural education depends on the adequate training of teachers and school administrators. In order for learning to occur, it is crucial to understand the learning needs of students from different cultures and to identify how these requirements can be different than the needs of the students from the dominant culture. The teacher training program will play a major role in preparing the future teachers to meet the needs of the schools’ diversified populations. The program must be challenging enough to make the teachers ready to leave their 'comfort zones' and to see outside of their own cultural backgrounds to expand their knowledge and understanding of other cultures (Ball, 2000; Cruz, 1999; Garcia & Willis, 2001; Gay, 2002)

### **2.3.2. The perspectives of Multicultural Education towards social cohesion**

Burnett (1994) divided multicultural education into three categories:

- 1) The content,
- 2) Program centered on the student, and
- 3) Program orientated towards social action.

The primary objective of multicultural education programs focus on introducing into the curriculum elements concerning the cultures of the minority groups present in the class to increase the knowledge that students have of all the groups. The program centers on the students and is specifically targeted to answer the educational needs of minority students. A typical example in this category is the promotion of bilingual education for transition or parallel learning of the original language, or a program which aims at reducing the interethnic tensions in the class. However, in U.S schools, the practice of Multicultural Education has been limited to the application of a bicultural education. Bicultural in this context can be defined as interactions between African-Americans and European-Americans in certain states (within the U.S.) and Hispanics and European-Americans in particular states.

However, though the significance of Multicultural education has been acknowledged, it has been noticed that many educators embrace such pedagogy only in times of needs only or if they feel there is enough time in the school day (Banks & Banks, 2002). Nieto (2000) further limits the shortcomings of the multicultural education to the “colorblindness:” “Many teachers and schools, in an attempt to be color-blind, do not want to acknowledge cultural or racial differences. Although it sounds fair and honest and ethical, the opposite may be true ... color-blindness may result in refusing to accept differences and therefore accepting the dominant culture as the norm” (p. 138). Delpit (1995), Nieto (2000), Banks and Banks (2002), Fuller

(1992), and many other scholars have come to the conclusion that the achievement gap in the system of education is based on the application of a mono-cultural curriculum and the shortcomings of teacher education programs that serve mainly female European Americans. According to a statistical research, Fuller (1992) revealed that the majority of teachers in America are of European origin, are middle-class women, the products of suburbs, and reside in small cities or rural areas. Dilg (1995) believed that the approach of white teachers to multicultural education, mainly the curriculum aspect of multicultural education, would be reflected in their lack of understanding of the other culture. Even though there is an increasing ethnic diversity in the American educational system, many educators still do not understand that multicultural education involves the understanding of various cultures.

Jay (2003) explained that “Despite a tendency to equate ‘Americanness’ with ‘Whiteness’ by individuals both outside and inside the United States, the United States is comprised of many different racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups” (p. 3). The demographics of the United States is reflected in the classroom with growing numbers of students from Mexico, Central and South America, Central and Southeast Asia, Africa, Central and Eastern Europe, and the Middle East. These new components of the society bring both new opportunity and demands. The teachers will need to be trained to act effectively to ensure positive cross-cultural interactions. Very often due to the lack of correct assumptions, an artificial implicit connection to a particular ethnic group can lead to discrimination.

### **2.3.3. Three main concerns regarding Multicultural Education**

This section will discuss the arguments relating to the significance of Multicultural Education, curriculum reform and teacher’s attitude, and some useful teaching guidelines in the field of Multicultural Education. According to Taylor and Miller-Lachman’s (1995) analysis,

some opponents believed that is not enough evidence to prove that multicultural education can have a significant role in a diverse educational system. However, Gay (2004) points out that through multicultural education, students from different cultural groups will be given the opportunity to participate fully in the school system on an equal level, thus enhancing and improving their academic performance. Taylor and Miller-Lachmann(1995) present another argument saying that the biggest problem of multicultural education is that it can lead to the loss of national unity because it focuses on the cultural differences. In other words, by granting to each different cultural group an opportunity to flourish, they will not get the chance to interact, leading to an undue focus on ethnic identity instead of a national identity.

To overcome this gap, Gay (2005) said that new guidelines had been inserted in the Multicultural program to focus on mutual understanding between the different cultures. These new institutional programs will enable the students of various backgrounds to develop a mutual understanding to overcome any stereotyping or prejudices among these diverse groups. Therefore, the students will have a positive relation to the multicultural school. Regarding the need to adapt the multicultural program to the new demand of the multicultural society, Taylor and Miller-Lachmann (1995) shared the same point of view as Gay (2004), that multicultural education will lead to more shared relationships between the different cultural groups. These arguments have led to the conclusion that Multicultural education has a crucial role to play in a multicultural society.

The next important step is understanding how multicultural education can be incorporated into the educational curriculum. Banks (2007) has put forward four approaches to reform the curriculum: the contribution approach, the additive approach, the transformation approach, and the social action approach. Through the contribution approach, the intention is to

include in the curriculum the input of the different ethnic and racial groups in the society. For instance, in America, it's proposed that leading protagonists or heroes like Martin Luther King, Thomas Jefferson, and George Washington must be included in the curriculum, enabling students from different cultures to understand the contribution of different ethnic and racial groups in a country. This approach deconstructs the dominant Euro-centric approach which has long been prevalent in the education system. Through the additive approach, the educational curriculum will be reformed regarding contents, concepts, principles, and different points of view. Practically this will be done by adding different units which present various stories or novels from around the world. At a very early stage, the students will be exposed to and learn to understand, appreciate, and respect other cultures. It can be noted that these two approaches primarily deal with new inputs in the curriculum without affecting the fundamental thoughts and assumptions of the students.

However, the third approach, known as the transformation approach, is when the students are "enabled to view concepts, issues, themes, and problems from several ethnic perspectives and point of view" (Banks & Banks, 2007, p. 253). Banks further explained that this approach would have a significant effect on the students' perception of cultural diversity because the transformational approach enables the students to deconstruct all aspects not only from their own perspectives but also from different angles, which will lead to more understanding among the cultural groups. Finally, through the social approach, students from various cultures, after having deconstructed all the differences and building understanding towards each other, are now ready to participate in the society and play a very decisive role. Regarding the first two approaches, Gay (2004) shared the same point of view as Banks, providing a practical example that "Teachers could demonstrate mathematical concepts such as less than/greater than, percentages,

ratios, and probabilities using ethnic demographics. Young children could consider the ethnical and racial distributions in their classrooms.” (Banks, 2004, p. 32). Through these examples, the educational curriculum will reflect the multicultural society.

The curriculum reform in the area of multicultural education will be useful only if teachers are adequately trained to implement the changes. Teachers play a major role in the implementation stage. Gay (2004) believed that in a diverse classroom, very often the teachers, due to their lack of understanding of an interest in multicultural education, can disturb the learning process of the students of different cultural backgrounds altogether. To enable the teacher to play a useful role in understanding and teaching children of different backgrounds, teachers, as suggested by Taylor and Miller-Lachmaan (1995), must receive training in the field of multicultural education. Due to lack of knowledge in multicultural education, teachers are not necessarily able to handle students of different cultures successfully. One way of enhancing the beliefs, knowledge, and understanding of teachers regarding cultural diversity is the inclusion of multicultural education as a course in the teacher training program. If teachers have an excellent training and believe in multicultural education as a way to enhance the experience of students of different cultural backgrounds in the classroom without facing racism, stereotyping, or prejudice, teaching and learning will be successful. Altogether, multicultural education will unify students of various cultural backgrounds.

Banks has provided guidelines for teachers to incorporate in their teaching with students of different cultural groups. Being an expert in the field, these guidelines are based on real experiments and experiences. First, teachers must have the capability, knowledge, perceptions, attitudes, and abilities to detect racism in the content and context of teaching and learning. Banks points out that teachers must, “observe racism in the statements and behaviours of the

student” (2007, p. 264), and they must be able, in such situations, to teach the students about respect and understanding of different ethnical and cultural groups in society. Banks (2007) further highlighted that teachers also must be very sensitive towards racial issues and attitudes and avoid any statement that could negatively affect any cultural group in the classroom. Teachers can also bring into the classroom environment their own culture to share with the students to build a positive relationship between educators and students. To improve the relationship and create a way to unify the different cultural groups, Banks (2007) proposed that cooperative learning must be used in the classroom. Cooperative learning strategies will bring together students from diverse cultural or ethnical background under one particular lesson or task. Banks (2007) also adds that the classroom should reflect the cultural diversity of the students, for example by displaying posters or calendars of various cultural groups. After a brief discussion of the curriculum reforms based on Banks approaches, the guidelines for the teachers will indeed enable them to deal with the culturally diversified classroom more effectively.

#### **2.4. The management of cultural diversity in the educational system in Europe.**

This section will map the European system of Education regarding Multicultural and Intercultural education. The economic prosperity after the Second World War has led to some European countries has to lead further immigration of workforce. In the beginning, countries from the south of Europe (Italy, Spain, and Portugal) have provided the necessary workforce at very cheap rates. After that, some countries brought workers from Turkey and the Balkans or ex-Asian colonies (India and Pakistan) or Africa (North Africa in the 60s and 70s and more recently from West Africa). In the beginning, immigration was considered to be only an economic movement. But, with the coming of the families, many have questioned the settlement of migrant families and henceforth their children’s education. Therefore, multicultural education

in Europe was initially linked with the accommodation of migrant children with two preoccupations: to prepare the immigrant children to a possible return to their home countries while also transmitting the language of the parents.

The second preoccupation is the integration of the migrants in the host country. Hence, a significant effort has been deployed so that the migrants and their children can quickly master the teaching language of the host country. According to Professor Gundara (2008), in many English-speaking countries, teachers and schools focus on providing second language teaching to immigrant students to absorb them quickly and smoothly into the existing school structures and education systems. The aim was on the acquisition of the second language whereas the first languages, the mother tongue, were considered a problem. The immigrant students needed to suppress their native language and “No consideration was given to the connections between first and second language learning, or the teaching of second language and its role in enabling or disabling access to the school curriculum” (Gundara, 2008, p. 464). The school didn’t place emphasis on building the relationship between the immigrant students and the rest of the student population. However, it is important to highlight that many of the ‘immigrant’ students in countries like Netherlands, France, and Britain were full citizens of these countries after their families had come to settle after de-colonization or through immigration. The fact that the immigrant students couldn’t acquire the second language quickly meant that they lagged behind in their studies, and thus were in need of special education and often sent to special schools. Gundara pointed out that this was an adverse effect of Multicultural education in some societies, that a “few generations of students were, therefore, unable to participate in the fuller life of their new communities after leaving school. In United Nations terms, they were not able to reach

‘their full potential.’ They were consigned to lesser roles during their work lives and began to be considered as a social problem” (2008, p. 465)

In many European societies, Multicultural education has widened the gap between the dominant culture and the minority as this approach in education was used mainly in the acquisition of language. There was no exchange between the different cultures in the case of acquiring a second language, though the use of the mother tongue of the child could have enhanced learning a second language and enabled earlier access to the school curriculum. Gundara (2008) stressed that “These early problem-centered multicultural approaches directed to students of immigrant origin were a double-edged sword: it led to them being labelled as being disadvantaged, and increasingly issues of difference became constructed ‘deficit.’ This resulted in the deepening of the racism of the dominant and majority populations who defined ‘the others’ by their ‘ethnicity’” (p. 464).

The primary focus on multicultural education has been on overcoming linguistic difficulties in schools. However, in this process, the children were given the opportunity to preserve their native languages and cultures to make it possible to return to their home country at any time. Projects like *Auslanderpadagogik* (pedagogy for foreigners) or *pedagogie d'accueil* (pedagogy of reception) with a multicultural approach were initially aimed at finding commonalities and differences on the linguistic, religious, and cultural levels. According to Portera’s (2008) analysis of these projects, over time they have become an increasingly ‘assimilative’ pedagogy. The following table presents the evolution of different pedagogies to address cultural diversity at schools in a few European countries:

**Table 3: Pedagogical Evolution in Europe Regarding Cultural Diversity**

<i>Pedagogical Approach</i>	<i>Country</i>	<i>Time Period</i>
<b>Assimilation</b>	France	1960s-1980s
<b>Segregation</b>	Germany	1960s-1980s
<b>Multiculturalism</b>	UK	1970s-1980s
<b>Interculturalism</b>	Italy	1990s-present

#### **2.4.1 The emergence of Interculturalism and Intercultural Education in Europe**

In an effort to understand the contribution of Intercultural Education in sustaining social cohesion, the development of interculturalism and intercultural education in multicultural societies will be discussed. In this section, examples of how Intercultural education has been initiated and implemented to the benefits of students, schools, and communities will be analyzed. The literature mainly focused on the development of intercultural education in Europe. The European Commission has greatly emphasized the importance of intercultural education in the European Union (EU)<sup>18</sup> countries. In many EU countries including Italy, Spain, Greece, and Portugal, intercultural education is part of the general school organization, and their curriculum does include special provisions for intercultural education

One of the results of globalization is that many societies have become more diverse and dynamic. In today's world, migration for better employment prospects and a better standard of living has increased drastically. Nowadays cities like London, Stockholm, Toronto, New York,

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<sup>18</sup>Interculturalism represents the direction towards which Europe is moving. In 2008, EU proclaimed 'European year for cross-cultural dialogue'

and Amsterdam are becoming increasingly diversified. Thus, multicultural societies have become a complex reality. The new changes in these newly diversified societies are far beyond being adequately addressed by proper multicultural policies, and in this new dynamic society tensions and conflicts are inevitable as many cultures' faiths, values and global forces interact, to use the wording of Professor Cantle (2012), who had been involved in crafting these policies. As the author of a series of reports on Britain's ability to deal with its growing diversity, Cantle further believed that the multicultural policies that governments had been applying are no more appropriate to mediate this new era and are not sufficient enough to promote community cohesion. This is reflected very often in the current political and international context. Cantle(2012) has pointed out that many politicians in Europe, for instance, Former UK Prime Minister Cameron and the Chancellor of Germany, Angel Merkel, have stressed that there is a failure in the practice of multicultural policies in their respective countries.

Many western countries have undergone race-related disturbances, for example the Bradford riots in 2001 in the UK and a series of riots in the suburbs of Paris and other French cities in 2005. The main criticism of multicultural policies is based on the fact that multiculturalism has encouraged the members of different cultures to live separately in parallel communities that have only minimal contact and interaction with one another, generating mutual ignorance and mistrust. Thus, multicultural policies have had limitations. Furthermore, in many countries, such as Great Britain and France, multiculturalism has weakened collective identities and shared values and undermined the national identity and loyalty to the state (Cantle,2012). Intercultural theorists proposed interculturalism as a new approach to overcoming these limitations and taking the issue of societal cohesion into a higher level. Bouchard (2011)

rejected multiculturalism, which was associated with fragmentation of the social cohesion, and proposed the choice of Interculturalism as a middle path and a model of balance and equity.

Cantle (2013) further described interculturalism as a broad program of change in which majority and minority communities think of themselves as dynamic and outward looking, sharing a common objective of growing together and overcoming institutional and relational barriers in the process. Intercultural policies within multicultural societies will enable the promotion of dialogue and exchange between people of different cultures. The fact that diversity tends to lead to segregation and exclusion, interculturalism, as a strategic policy of intervention, will seek to restore social cohesion, trust, and a feeling of belonging (Barrero, 2013). An intercultural program like “community cohesion<sup>19</sup>” has been developed and applied in many cities in Europe to promote trust and understanding in the societies by breaking stereotypes and misconceptions about the “others”. The success and impacts of such programs have been measured based upon attitudinal and behavioral change in the participants or the wider local community. Interculturalism is used as a tool to build and strengthen mutual trust and respect between different groups in the society. Eventually, Interculturalism is implemented as a reaction against social exclusion and as a primary tool for restoring social cohesion.

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<sup>19</sup>The Council of Europe and the European Union have adopted a range of standards and initiatives in order to combat racism and xenophobia and promote intercultural dialogue. Through the Intercultural Cities programme, they are supporting the emergence of local strategies for diversity management that focus on diversity as an opportunity.

Available at:<https://www.coe.int/t/dg4/cultureheritage/culture/Cities/ICCstepbystepAugust2012.pdf>

#### **2.4.2. Infusing Intercultural competence**

Another way to promote Interculturalism is through education. The implementation of intercultural education in the educational system will equip the young generation with the intercultural competence that is required to participate in the respectful intercultural dialogue.

It has been acknowledged that students have a greater capacity to grasp and appreciate certain ideas about interculturality than adults who are often quite rigid in welcoming new challenges to their preconceived ideas. Young students have a better ability to be open minded, to experience different cultures, and they are more curious and willing to learn about the others. For that reason, intercultural education world-wide is focusing on the students and early years of schooling. . Intercultural education is of vital importance in ensuring recognition, tolerance, and especially understanding of other cultures. The young students represent the future of any country.

In his book on “International Perspectives on Intercultural Education”, Cushner (2009) sheds more lights on the characteristics of Intercultural Education, stating “It strives to eliminate prejudice and racism by creating an awareness of the diversity and relative nature of viewpoints and thus a rejection of absolute ethnocentrism; assists people in acquiring the skills needed to interact more efficiently with people different from themselves; and demonstrates that despite the differences that seem to separate people, many similarities do, in fact, exist across groups” (p. 119). The substantial literature on intercultural education can be divided into four groups according to Tupas(2014):a)Intellectual and conceptual roadmaps for Interculturalism (Bleszynska 2008; Gundara 2000; Cantle 2002; Coulby 2006); b) Intercultural incorporation into national curricula (Portera,1998,2005; Tratas, 2010; Tupas 2014); c) Practical road maps for

the classroom (leRoux,2001; Mushi, 2004; Perry, 2011); and d) Intercultural Education and training program (Bennett, 2004; Cusher, 2009; Stephan &Stephan 2013).

The provision of the inclusion of the society through education will combat intolerance, hatred, and discrimination. Sondhi (2009) suggests that interculturalism “implies a different way of reading situations, signs, symbols, and of communicating which we would describe as intercultural literacy” (p. 2). In other words, through intercultural education students will acquire intercultural competence. The acquisition of this competency in a diverse society will become as important as basic numeracy and literacy according to Sondhi(2009).Portera (2014) further defines Intercultural Competence as ‘a set of abilities, knowledge, attitudes and skills, that allow one to appropriately and effectively manage relations with persons of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds’(p159).

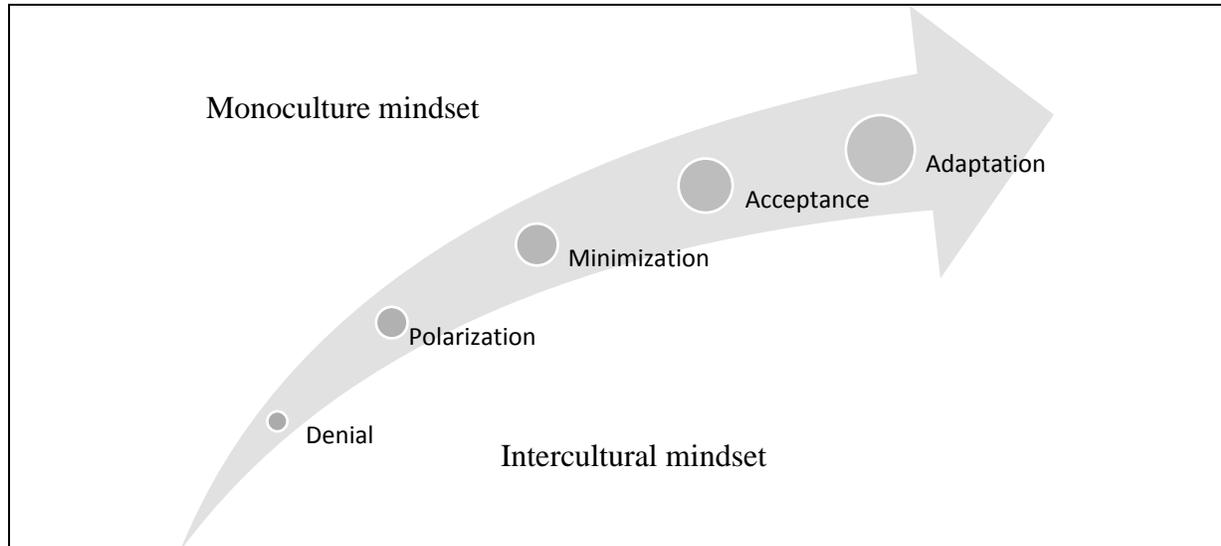
Worldwide, some countries like UK, Italy, Spain, and Greece have responded to problems concerning migration, ethnic nationalism, and minority rights by favoring laws that recognize the existence of minority groups and their contributions to national development. Such steps are reflected in the national education curricula by integrating intercultural education with the aim of ensuring greater social inclusion. Intercultural education is part of the Italian Educational systems. In many schools, scholastic subjects promote intercultural competences. For examples, in order to overcome ethnocentrism approaches during history teaching, the theme of racism and issues of living together among people and analyzing the moments of meeting and collision among people and civilization are taught. Teaching Italian language, the local artistic and musical education gives an occasion to reflect upon the relations between European and extra-European cultures. Across the curriculum, through these subjects, intercultural

competences like understanding, respect and sharing are being infused among the students from diverse cultural backgrounds (Contini&Naturo, 2011).

Intercultural Education will enable the development and implementation of inclusive practice in the education system among students from different cultures. Such practices will favor the promotion and growth of intercultural competence between local and immigrant students. The inclusion of all students will eventually strengthen the social fabrics in the long run. That is why it is believed that intercultural education will eventually reduce tension and latent ethnic conflicts. In intercultural pedagogy, concepts such as identity and culture are considered dynamic where the “otherness” is not considered only a risk but also as a possibility of enrichment ora means to reflect on values, rules, and behavioral standards. Hence intercultural education within a multicultural society intends to foster the social cohesion in the long term.

That is why some researchers like Gundara (2000) have regarded multicultural education as harmful to social inclusion because it is associated with fragmentation of cultures. Intercultural education is proposed as a middle path, a model of interaction and exchange. There is a growing concern to adopt intercultural education in the curriculum in order to develop cultural navigation skills and competencies in students in order to relate to those who are different to themselves and to see `others` as an opportunity rather than a threat. A cohesive society will depend on a model of education that will deconstruct the barriers between cultures to ensure a sense of belonging to be established. Therefore, intercultural education has drawn upon some of the positive elements of multicultural education but is moving a step ahead by promoting interaction at the cultural borderline. Hammer (2012) presented the progression from

the monocultural mindset to the intercultural mindset through the Intercultural Development Continuum (IDC) through the diagram found in Figure 3.



**Figure 3: Intercultural Development Continuum**

The IDC identifies five stages of denial, polarization, minimization, acceptance, and adaptation as the primary stages of intercultural development. Denial and polarization are the main aspects of the monoculture mindset where one culture is viewed to be dominant to the other cultures. Minimization is considered to be the transitional orientation between monocultural and intercultural mindsets. Through the acceptance and adaptation stages, students will move forward from a monoculture mindset to the intercultural mindset. Thus contributing to social cohesion in societies by preventing marginalization, stigmatization, racism, and discriminating attitudes in the society. To address the mounting social exclusion towards the minority culture, there were a few policies which were implemented by the education systems. Among the initiatives developed have been steps to make teacher training more inclusive and incorporate intercultural methods to develop the professional intercultural competences of the teacher. The

teacher was to act as intercultural catalysts in the classroom in order to eradicate social marginalisation in the educational system. However, Gundara (2008) said “much of the work on intercultural education relies on ‘hunches’ and attempts to ‘do good’” (p. 465). In other words, there was no well-established pedagogy for Intercultural education. Nevertheless, research that has been done in European countries and by international bodies such as the European Union, the Council of Europe, OCED, and UNESCO can be used as a starting point in the Intercultural Educational field.

UNESCO and the Council of Europe have been the main pioneers and promoters of the diffusion and the promotion of the intercultural approach in education when it comes to hosting migrant children in the schools. These organizations have published and distributed many reports and studies to promote the integration of children from the minority cultures into the educational system. This organization has been among the leading advocates for the education of the migrants and the training of teachers to cultural diversity. It is pertinent to note that the emergence of the Intercultural approach in Europe finds its origin in some international organisations to valorise diversity at school while the advent of the same approach in the United States came from civil rights advocacy of the black community and other ethnic minorities. This difference in the emergence is reflected in a deeper legitimacy of Multicultural Education in Nord America. However, in most European countries, Intercultural Education originally was initiated to accommodate the migrant students.

### **2.4.3 Multicultural or Intercultural or both**

It is imperative to discuss the differences between the term ‘multicultural’ and ‘intercultural’ and the fact that there is a constant debate in the scientific literature. According to Abdallah-Preteille (1999), there is a consensus in some of the European countries that the

notions of plurality and multiculturalism refer to the description of a situation while the prefix ‘inter’ insists on interaction. “In several countries, and in many English-language books, no sharp distinction is drawn between the concept of multicultural and intercultural education or pedagogy. Sometimes, multicultural education is used as a synonym for the intercultural approach to education, and sometimes the manner in which multicultural education is described makes it clear that multicultural education is quite distinct” (Carl &Portera, 2011, p. 14). Many European authors have highlighted the distinction between multicultural and intercultural. According to Camilleri (2002), the intercultural development takes into consideration the interactions, intercultural cognitive development, and competencies. For the European writers, intercultural education will enable the discovery of mutual relation and dismantling of cultural barriers. Rey (1996) believe that if the prefix ‘inter’ is used in its full meaning, as it signified constant interaction, exchange, reciprocity and solidarity.

According to Asgarally (2005), intercultural education has a double purpose. The first is the link to the prefix ‘inter’ to build social relation, sustain social peace, and to access fundamental rules of the human society. The second is ‘cultural’ to enrich oneself by encountering different cultures. However, as Galisson (1994) pointed out, everyone now talks about interculturalism, but not everyone has seen yet how it will function. As Cuhe (1982) noted, interculturalism is too often considered as a miracle solution which will enable the population to reconcile identity and difference, unity and diversity. But the practices of interculturalism have not yet shown their results.

The European Union has declared Intercultural education as its official policy. Over the last two decades, European countries have developed various responses towards the increasing presence of immigrant students in school. The European Commission and many other

international institutions and organisations have promoted Intercultural education in school for the integration of immigrant students and ethnic minority groups. Almost all EU member countries, excluding only Iceland and Bulgaria, have included cultural diversity and intercultural education in their educational policies (Eurydice,2004). According to Tarozzi (2009), Italy is among the 27 EU countries which have firmly included the intercultural model as a national policy more completely than other European countries.

The Italian educational policy stated that “to choose the intercultural standpoint means not to limit to a mere strategy for immigrant pupil’s integration, nor to special compensatory measures. It says, on the contrary, to assume the diversity as a paradigm of the school identity itself, as an occasion to open up the entire system”. The Italian legislation aims at improving and facilitating cultural relationships in their diversified society. However, in Italy, there has been a significant gap surrounding intercultural education as public policy and school practice. The ineffectiveness of Intercultural education lies in the fact that there is not a clear, conventional frame of reference about how to promote it in practice. The case of Multicultural Education is different. It was through long historical processes that have enabled the implementation of multicultural education in the United States. Multicultural education which emerged in the 1960’s has provided a clear alternative to the monocultural approaches of education. Indeed, multicultural education has opened doors to diversity by moving from such oppressive discourses. Multicultural education flagged its way in the educational systems mainly because the cultural landscape of school has become more visibly rich with racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. However, multicultural education has shown it has limits because it was based primarily on promoting neutrality, tolerance, and acceptance of the various elements of the multicultural society. The practice and philosophy of the multicultural approach have been

fiercely attacked. The main reason was that of its “familiar nationalist concern that school should embody those of the state and only the state regarding language(s), religion(s), culture or values, according to the context”(Coulby, 2006, p. 246). Furthermore, Mullard (1980) argued that multicultural education did not sufficiently address issues of racism and provided only a tokenistic understanding of non-dominant knowledge.

Though Intercultural education is at the center of the primary debate in education and more particularly in the contemporary society, the presence of immigrant students from minority groups have led to new pedagogical and social challenges to the educational institute as well to the teachers.

#### **2.4.4 The State of Intercultural Education Nowadays.**

As a concept Intercultural Education has the ultimate goal to bring intercultural understanding, intercultural coherence and cohesion by bringing diverse groups together in the multicultural societies. However, throughout the literature it has been noticed that Intercultural Education faced three major challenges namely:

- a) Theoretical and conceptual issues
- b) The development of its pedagogy
- c) Policy and practices of Intercultural Education within the educational systems.

The three above spheres are crucial in the actualization of Intercultural Education. Specialists of Intercultural Education are still working on its concrete application in the educational field. The application of Intercultural Education within the European societies must be developed within its context. For example in Britain, Intercultural Education cannot be targeted only to the immigrants and minorities but to the dominant groups as well in order to ensure an inclusive

education. Thus there is an urgent need to further developed Intercultural Education in the three above mentioned domains, root them in their respective local and complex realities.

Furthermore, Gundara (2016) stressed out the importance of training teacher in Intercultural Education “All teachers need to have an understanding of the multiculturalism of societies, and within the broad domains of knowledge and disciplines of what they teach, teachers ought to be educated to teach their subjects in an intercultural manner”(p.4). Thus there is a need to further develop intercultural Education as a component in the teacher training such as exposing teachers to intercultural curricular content. And to further enable them to practice it in their daily teaching and learning at schools.

## **2.5. Education as a tool for Social Cohesion.**

At the onset, it is important to highlight that there is a significant limitation of the available literature on the topic of Intercultural Education and social cohesion. Intercultural Education can be a crucial factor in determining the cohesiveness of a society. While investing in intercultural education, organizations may mitigate social disintegration. Most societies aspire to have social cohesion because a cohesive society is regarded as a better place to live in. Social cohesion is viewed as a concept enforcing togetherness which can be implemented to keep a society united in peace and harmony. In the past and through present day societies are facing social disintegration. Shuayb (2012) pointed out that “the factors often quoted as being responsible for the escalation of these social problems can be classified into four major groups: 1. Economic policies, 2. Globalisation and Multiculturalism, 3. Disenchantment with politics and politicians, and 4. Armed conflicts” (p.12). These factors have affected the social inclusion in many countries.

For the purpose of this research, an attempt will be made to highlight how multiculturalism, if not properly handled, can result in social disintegration. Freire(1997) has pointed out that any effort to consolidate social cohesion must include both differences and equality to develop diverse and multicultural societies that are based on the principle of unity in diversity. This approach is in line with the Council of Europe’s definition of social cohesion: a concept “that includes values and principles which aim to ensure that all citizens, without discrimination and on an equal footing, have access to fundamental social and economic rights”

Throughout the literature, it has been noticed that there are no universally agreed upon definitions of social cohesion. Most definitions include the notions of ‘solidarity’ and ‘togetherness.’ The opposite of social cohesion often refers to social disorder or social disorganization. The term social cohesion has been interchangeably used together with the term ‘community cohesion.’ Cattle (2005) explained that peaceful co-existence of different ethnic groups is at the heart of social cohesion. He described this ‘peaceful co-existence’ as follows: “There is a common vision and a sense of belonging to all communities; the diversity of people’s different backgrounds and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued: those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities; and strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods” (p. 14).

Maxwell (1996) defines “social cohesion as building shared values and communities of interpretation, reducing disparities in wealth and income and generally enabling people to have a sense that they are engaged in a community enterprise, facing shared challenges that they are members of the same community” (p. 19). Green and Janmaat (2011) define social cohesion as “the property by which whole societies, and the individuals within them, are bound together

through the action of specific attitudes, behaviours, rules and institutions which rely on consensus rather than pure coercion” (p. 27). Chan et al. (2006) define it as “state of affairs concerning both the vertical and the horizontal interactions among members of society as characterised by a set of attitudes and norms that include trust, a sense of belonging and willingness to participate and help, as well as their behavioural manifestations (p. 290). The three definitions lay emphasis on the adherence of the community to standard norms and equality to gain more support for an inclusive society. The various definitions seem to agree that social cohesion is a process which ties individuals together, and influences and hinders their behaviour. Yet the question remains on how best to apply this discourse to education.

Kiwan(2008) proposed that to consolidate social cohesion, the effort must be redirected towards the emphasis on the relationship between individuals and groups from different cultural backgrounds. He further explained that social cohesion is largely dependent not only on the citizen-state relationship but also on the good relationships between individuals from different groups (Kiwan, 2008). Intercultural Education will focus on the inter-group relationships so that conflicts do not have the opportunity to arise. Instead, intergroup relations will lead to a deep understanding and mutual respect. At the same time, the vertical relationship between citizens and the states must reflect equal treatment. Kiwan pointed out that in many cases, conflicts and disturbances happen between different communities because some members of the communities felt a perception of injustice and noticed that preferential treatment was allocated to other groups by the state. Kiwan(2008) believed that “These perceptions reflect the quality of trust in this vertical relationship with the state; as such, it is important that great efforts to improve this relationship are made” (p. 32).

Heyneman (2002,2003) has identified four areas through which education can promote social cohesion:

- Curriculum design: which introduces pupils to the main social and legal principals of good citizenship.
- School environment: which reinforces closeness between learners by teaching them the principles of dialogue and respect for others and the appropriate behavior towards one another regardless of differences.
- Equal opportunities: for all learners, as bias or unfairness in the school system, undermine trust in the state and its systems.
- Educational programs: that has the interest and objectives of the various groups that makes up the community in mind, at the same time securing the common ground of citizenship.

In addition to the role of educational institutions in promoting social cohesion, Heyneman highlights the important role of three other organisations:

- Governments departments: regarding ensuring justice, managing conflicts and implementing the general policy of integrity and transparency;
- Social institutions: making every effort to secure the welfare and the happiness of the individual and the group and connecting the community with ethical standards.
- Economic institutions: regarding making efforts to manage companies and ensure a profit by ethical standards and to ensure justice in the hiring and promotion of employees.

Heyneman presents the argument that educational institutions will have a deeper effect on social cohesion as they are responsible for establishing the foundation. If the foundation is well

built, it means that a secure framework has been constructed for the other institutions to promote social cohesion.

The variables that Green (2011) and Chan et al. (2006) adopted to examine social cohesion included a variety of factors such as trust, attitudes toward politicians, cooperation, and willingness to participate. These variables are not oriented towards education. However, Heyneman (2002,2003), who examines the role of education in promoting social cohesion, focuses on the curriculum design, the educational structure, textbooks, the school and classroom environment, relationships within the school, democracy at the school, pedagogies, inclusiveness, and school/community relationship.

### **2.5.1. Achieving Social Cohesion through Education**

There are various approaches that can be applied to education to achieve social cohesion including citizenship education, history education, language, multicultural education, and intercultural education. In many cases, a holistic approach to education for social cohesion is also applied which is across the curriculum and not subject based.

Carrion(2012) presented a case study of one school, La Paz, situated in one of the poorest neighbourhoods in southeastern Spain, on the negative impact of educational exclusion on social cohesion. His article is based on an intensive collection of four years' worth of data and analysis of the case study of La Paz school. The study used 13 communicative daily life stories with students and their families, 13 standardized open-ended interviews with five local administrators, five community members, and three teachers, one communicative focus group with professionals, and five communicative observations in which community participation were observed at a school or community event. The dominant Roma families have low educational

levels, faced high unemployment, and were often involved in drug addiction. The situation at La Paz school was desperate because it was facing the following difficulties:

- a) High dropout rate and high rate of academic failure among children.
  - b) Major conflicts among students who belong to various social groups at the school
  - c) Due to lack of understanding and trust, there were constant disputes between teachers and the families of the students.
- 
- a) Prejudice and discrimination towards the Roma families became part of the school's daily life
  - b) Increased tension between teachers and the Roma families resulted in attacks and physical aggression.
  - c) Teachers demanded to be under police protection.

After constant demand from the school, communities, and families to find a solution to this case of educational exclusion and social disintegration, the government decided to apply an integrated project called Strategies for Inclusion and Social Cohesion in Europe from Education<sup>20</sup> (INCLUD-CED 2006-11), part of the 6th Framework Programme of the EU. INCLUDE-ED has two main objectives: To analyse educational actions that can improve or affect social cohesion and to identify essential elements that can be used to improve educational and social policy.

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<sup>20</sup>INCLUD-ED analyses educational strategies that contribute to overcome inequalities and promote social cohesion, and educational strategies that generate social exclusion, particularly focusing on vulnerable and marginalised groups. Europe needs to identify these strategies that will in turn be used by policy makers, education managers, teachers, students and families, and contribute to shape new policies to meet the Lisbon goals.[http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/84827\\_en.html](http://cordis.europa.eu/project/rcn/84827_en.html) Accessed date: 12 March 2016

First, through the project INCLUDE-ED, an egalitarian dialogue was initiated among the Roma families, community members, researchers, and policymakers. There were many cases of disagreement and resistance to participate, but with time the dialogue was useful and helped to build trust. Together they rethought previous policies, decision, and practices. They came forward with new ideas and actions to be implemented to transform the school into a better environment for the children, teachers, and families. They worked towards a successful educational action of the school and communities partnering to achieve social cohesion. The members of Roma families were also present in the classroom to help teach and to learn to function more smoothly. For example, an illiterate Roman mother who is a respected member of her community participated in an interactive group with the teacher and students. In her presence, the Roma students would behave much better and were focused on their learning activities. As Vygotsky (1978) has pointed out, when children and families learn and develop together this will be an effective way to transform educational and socio-cultural context. In addition, the relationship between the teachers and families has improved significantly. After one year, the academic performance of the students improved drastically, and the level of conflicts decreased. Carrion reported that “the formerly high levels of conflict dropped considerably and almost disappeared”(2012, p. 196). The intercultural relations between the Roma and non-Roma children improved due to dialogue and interactive group work among families and students from different inter-ethnic groups. Maria, a non-Roma mother, expressed her opinion on the new atmosphere at the school:

“Now the children get on better; even outside of the school, they play together...but also between families because we come here and meet Roma people in the school. We also join

people outside, because now Roma people come to the meetings and before they did not. Now we get on well, and it's different”(2012, p. 196-197)

Carrion (2012) has highlighted that “these positive results became the driving force for another transformation that moved beyond the school walls” (p. 196). The positive impact of an inclusive educational institution will eliminate the barriers to social cohesion not only within the schools but also spread to other areas of the society. Furthermore, Carrion said that the same positive dialogic procedures and successful actions “were applied to other areas of society, including employment, health, housing, political participation, and problems in the neighborhood”(2012, p. 197). The community wanted to recreate the successful actions in those areas thus strengthening the social cohesion further.

Through this case study, it is clear that particular educational actions can contribute to social cohesion. The project INCLUDE-ED was applied to one of the most marginalized neighbourhoods in Europe, and had a successful outcome. To conclude we will include part of the report on the case of La Paz school from the Centre for Research on Theories and Practices That Overcome Inequalities (CREA). CREA(2009) said that only one year after the project was implemented, the situation of social exclusion had been almost reversed. Families, along with the children, are collaborating with teachers inside the classroom to improve teaching and learning. Conflicts between the different groups has started to disappear, and mutual understanding and trust have been developed among them

## **2.6.Conclusion**

Multicultural education has provided a clear alternative to monocultural discourses of education. Indeed, multicultural education has opened doors to diversity by moving away from oppressive discourses. Multicultural education paved its way in the educational systems mainly

because the cultural landscape of school has become more visibly rich with racial, ethnic, and religious diversity. However, multicultural education has shown its limits because it was based primarily on promoting neutrality, tolerance, and acceptance of the various elements of the multicultural society. The practice and philosophy behind the multicultural approach were fiercely attacked. Whereas the educational aim of Intercultural education is not only to tolerate the 'other' but also to co-exist in peace, eliminate discrimination, prejudice, inequalities, and increase awareness and empathy towards other's values, feelings, beliefs, and attitudes. A cohesive society will depend on a model of education that will deconstruct the barriers between cultures to ensure a sense of belonging to be established. Therefore, intercultural education has drawn upon some of the positive elements of multicultural education but moves a step ahead by promoting interaction at the cultural borderline. However, the review of literature has also indicated that at the pedagogy level, Intercultural Education needs to be developed further.

## **CHAPTER 3: Mauritius a Small Island Developing State; the Creation of its Multicultural Society and Education System**

### **3.1 Introduction**

In this chapter, Mauritius as a small island developing state (SIDS), will be presented. It is imperative from the outset to have an insight of the main characteristics of SIDS. In this perspective, this chapter will be divided into three main sections. Section one will discuss SIDS and their vulnerabilities. In the second section, the historical development of Mauritius and its education system will be presented. In the last section, the importance of social cohesion and intercultural education in SIDS will be discussed.

### **3.2. Smallness**

This section will highlight the three primary sources of the vulnerabilities of SIDS, namely their economic, environment, and social fabrics. SIDS are vulnerable to harm or damage originating from both internal and external forces that are outside their control. In the vast majority of conceptualizations of SIDS, the economic and environmental vulnerabilities are now primary whereas social factors (including social development) are addressed as secondary considerations (Campling&Rosalie, 2006). However, in this section, the importance of SIDS's social stability will be discussed deeply as it is relevant to this research.

The 52 small islands states are mainly located in two regions, 23 in the Caribbean Ocean and 20 in the Pacific Ocean with the remaining nine scattered across Africa, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, and the South China Sea. Small islands states are described as low-lying coastal countries that generally share similar sustainable development challenges, namely small but growing population with limited resources, remoteness, prone to natural disasters, high dependency on international trade, and a fragile ecosystem. Indeed, the future of Islanders is

insecure due to several factors such as climatic threats, threats of coastal erosion, the economic decline in the world upon which small island states depend, and their dependence resulting from the interconnections of the world. Since the 1970s there has been a remarkable interest in small island developing states. The broad focus of SIDS literature<sup>21</sup> according to Crosslay and Sprague (2013) can be presented in three stages: in the 1970s, the focus was on the socio-economic development (Benedict 1967; Dommen 1980; Jalan 1982; Selwyn 1975; Shand 1980). In the 1980s there is an emerging concern with SIDS geopolitical security (Cohen 1983b; Clarke & Payne 1987; Commonwealth, 1985; Harden 1985). Finally, in the 1990s, the main focus has been on the vulnerability of SIDS economies and environment (Atkins et al., 2000; Biagini & Hoyle 1999; Briguglio 1995; Commonwealth, 2000). However, it was at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED)<sup>22</sup>, where SIDS were recognized as a special case both for their environment and development. This was the beginning of acknowledging the threats faced by SIDS related to current global environmental and development challenges.

### **3.2.1 Economic vulnerabilities**

The economies of SIDS share several common structural characteristics such as small domestic markets with limited scope to exploit economies of scale, a lack of natural resources, high dependency on import of food and fuel, dependence on a very small-scale export products, an incapacity to influence international prices, and an unreliability of supply due to remoteness

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<sup>21</sup>From the outset, it is important to point out that SIDS literature have been promoted by international institutions like UNESCO, UN and Commonwealth Secretariat. Such institutions have brought experts in economic, social, governance and environment field to raise international awareness of SIDS vulnerabilities and their sustainable development needs. There is a limited literature on SIDS which is not part of the above-mentioned institutions. SIDS are extremely reliable on these institutions.

<sup>22</sup>Also known as the Earth Summit, held in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil (3-14 June 1992),

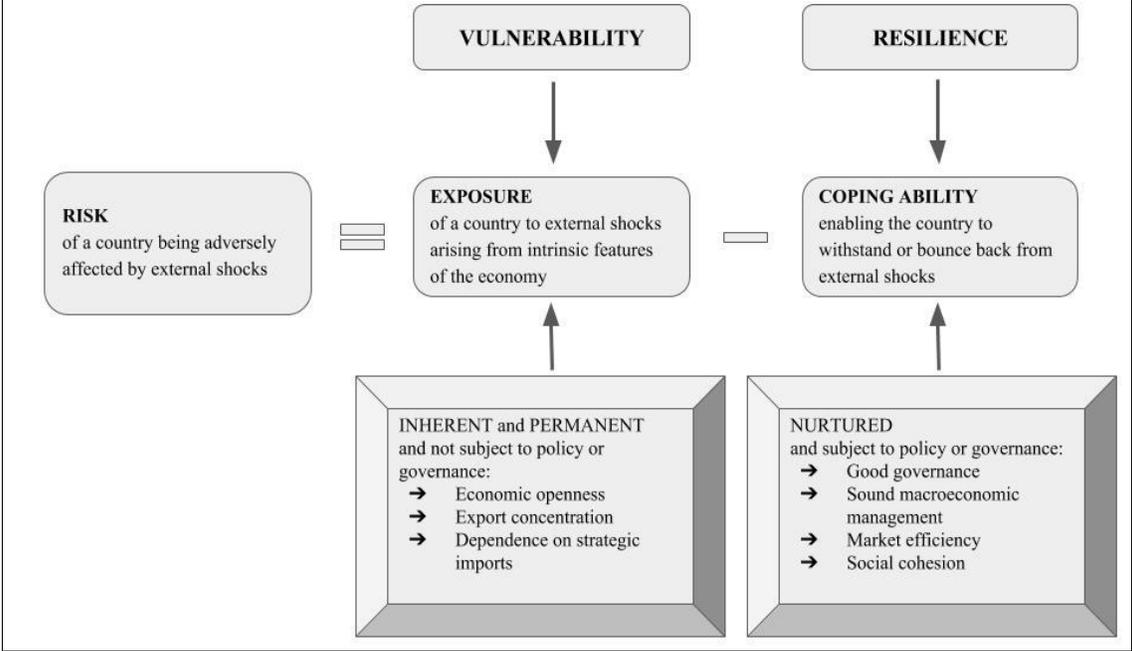
and insularity (Commonwealth Secretariat, 1985). Briguglio<sup>23</sup> (1995) explained that the economic vulnerability of SIDS is profoundly determined by forces outside their authority, mostly because of their economic openness and high reliance on a limited range of exported products. Seychelles, for example, has a non-diversified economy. Its economy is heavily reliant on international trade. It imports around 90% of its population`s and tourist's consumption. Consequently, the island has gone through the negative balance of trade. A report from the National Bank of Seychelles shows that in the ten-year period between 1992–2001, Seychelles had an average annual balance of trade deficit of Seychelles Rupees (SR) 976 million. Therefore, the international fluctuation in the world economic can have drastic adverse effects on a non-diversified economy like Seychelles. Campling and Rosalie (2006) describes this peculiar situation of the economic vulnerabilities of Seychelles by stating that “Like all SIDS, Seychelles is a ‘price-taker’ in the world economy and is thus structurally vulnerable to external shocks and the vagaries of global capitalism” (p. 119).

On the opposite end of the spectrum, a few SIDS such as Singapore have managed to generate high income per capita in spite of its vulnerability. In the related literature, Singapore is referred to as the “Singapore Paradox” (Briguglio, 1995) which indicates a small island state like Singapore can be exposed to economic vulnerabilities but yet manage to attain and maintain a high level of capital. The reason for this is that it is possible for SIDS, under specific conditions, to build up their resilience to improve their ability to cope with vulnerability. Briguglio (2013) has explained through his illustration (shown in Figure 6) how small states, when exposed to

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<sup>23</sup> Prof Briguglio is the leading specialist in the field of SIDS. The researcher met him at an International Conference in Mauritius (2017). He did share his concern regarding the importance of social cohesion in SIDS through an economic perspective.

external shocks can absorb, meet, or bounce back from adverse shocks. For instance, Singapore, through good governance, sound macroeconomic management, market efficiency, and social cohesion has made use of its strategic geographic position within the global trading system to build its resilience.



**Figure 4: Juxtaposing Vulnerability and Resilience in SIDS.**

**3.2.2 Environmental vulnerabilities**

The environmental vulnerability of SIDS acts as a magnifier of their other vulnerabilities. Consequently, the fragile and vulnerable economy of SIDS can be damaged further due to SIDS proneness to natural disasters such as cyclones, volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and earthquakes. Due to its inherent smallness, any of these natural calamities can significantly affect the lives and livelihood of the inhabitants as a whole. The enormous impact of environmental vulnerabilities on all aspects of life in SIDS made it a crucial impeding force against the pursuit towards sustainable development in these vulnerable islands. Furthermore, the relation between

environmental vulnerability and economic growth goes both ways, as the process of economic development in SIDS can affect the environment at a larger scale compared to other countries. The majority of SIDS depend on their coastal zone for tourism and marine related activities. Furthermore, increasing demand for residential housing, tourism, and industrial buildings has led to a drastic depletion of land. Another example is the problem of waste management. Though it is a major problem facing most developing countries, the impact on SIDS is likely to be more severe due to the small size territory of these islands (Briguglio, 2013). One of the major environmental problems facing SIDS, being island states by definition, is the threatening rise of sea level due to global warming. Maldives, for example, located to the west of India and consisting of over 1,100 islands, is considered by experts as the world's lowest-lying nation (Ghina, 2003). On average the islands are only 1.3 meters above sea level. As indicated by Ghina's research, the situation in the country is very alarming. Due to significant beach erosion and its low-lying elevation, a rise of just three feet in sea level would submerge Maldives and make the island uninhabitable. Other island states in the Pacific Ocean, like Kiribati and Tuvalu, are also at risk of disappearing due to rising sea levels.

What makes the environmental vulnerabilities of SIDS result in catastrophic impacts on people's lives is the lack of sufficient disaster mitigation capabilities like hazard forecasting ability, laxity in the enforcement of procedures, and an inefficient insurance system. Once again, Singapore stands out as a distinctive exception among SIDS reflecting its relatively high levels of economic development and infrastructural capabilities (Pelling&Uitto, 2001). After joining the Kyoto Protocol in 2006, Singapore formed the National Climate Change Committee, which focused on five areas: mitigation, public awareness, competency building, vulnerability, and

adaptation. The island has taken initiatives to foster its understanding of climate change and its repercussions. However, the majority of SIDS are not equipped to face disasters.

### **3.2.3 Social vulnerabilities**

The social fabrics of SIDS are characterized by multiculturalism, as the societies are composed of people of different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Researchers like Springer and Roberts(2011) in their paper titled “Partnerships for sustainable development in small states” had noticed that the social structure of the community can be very vulnerable to economic strife, environmental changes, government policies, or internal events and forces. In other words, social stability is not well established in many small islands. Fiji and Solomon Islands have an important lesson to share with other SIDS, as they have gone through problems that threatened their social cohesion due to ethnic or religious affiliation. For example, the violent conflicts in Fiji between indigenous Fijians and Indian migrants and in the Solomon Islands between natives of Guadalcanal and Malaita Islanders have deeply undermined the social cohesion. Such islands have undergone social conflicts or riots, which in turn have negative impacts on productivity and sustainable development in general (Briguglio, 2003). Premdas’s(1993) research based on ethnicity and development in the Fiji Islands has brought to light the negative effect of long term ethnic strife on the economic sector. He highlighted two major points that have cropped up after the ethnic violence:

1. The social development between the different ethnic groups was affected. The social environment was not healthy for integral human development.
2. Ethnic groups, who have lost their family members, were psychologically affected and viewed members of other communities as potential treats. A sense of hatred prevailed in between them.

The negative social impact will have a deeper effect on SIDS compared to most developing countries, due to their inherent vulnerabilities. However, some researchers appear to indicate that social cohesion is stronger in SIDS than in larger countries. Smallness is used as an important variable in analyzing social cohesion. Many small island states don't experience an overt form of conflicts. Streenten (1993) believed that SIDS tend to be more flexible and resilient in the face of conflicts. Whereas Bary (1992) attributed the success of social cohesion in small society due to the concept of '*managed intimacy*.' According to the theory of managed intimacy, smallness results in close proximity that acts positively, as in small islands states, to allow people to learn to get along with others in their daily life. To minimize overt conflicts, they focused on the social mechanism to function without undue stress. For example, people tend to become experts at muting hostility, deferring their views, avoiding a dispute in the interests of stability and compromise and thus managing to live together in a small restricted place. However, in large societies it is easy to take issue with someone you seldom need or never meet again, but to differ with someone in a small society in which you share a long mutual history and expect to go on being involved in countless ways is another matter. These points of views are certainly not shared by all researchers. A Commonwealth Secretariat Advisory(1997) group study revealed that "Community and political security are particularly important for small states, given that dispute and discord can quickly spread throughout society and become magnified into major challenges to social and political order" (p.133).

The 1999 riots in Mauritius were initially seen as a minor protest but it ultimately deteriorated into an ethnic one. At first the protesters were vandalizing public properties like traffic lights and government vehicles. However, progressively, a majority of the Creole community who is at the bottom of the social ladder, joined in to express their exclusion by the

wider Mauritian society. Eventually the situation degenerated into a communal riot between the Creole and Hindus in Mauritius. According to a report<sup>24</sup>, the aftermath of the riot had multiple negative effects on the Mauritian society including several houses being burned, hundreds of shops and stores looted, and buildings damaged. The socio-economic costs of the riot were tremendous, with the estimated cost of damages at over \$50 million.<sup>25</sup>

The 1999 riots have shown how dispute and discord can quickly spread throughout the small island states and become amplified into major conflicts. The small, isolated, dependent, resource-poor economies that are caught in the competitive global world will need to deepen their social inclusion to be in better position to face and address these challenges. That's why in SIDS, social cohesion can act as an essential platform in the efforts toward fighting poverty, reducing inequalities, and marching towards fully inclusive societies, which are all among the key goals of sustainable development. Small island nations need the full membership of all citizens to put hands on their society to shape a collective destiny in order to face their vulnerabilities. Social inclusiveness is the key to building a strong resilience. If SIDS develop a strong, inclusive approach towards the members of their society, it will in return act as a force for social cohesion. It is essential to ensure harmonious interaction among people within a diverse society to ensure their willingness to live and cooperate to build their resilience. Educational policies that ensure inclusion and participation of all citizens can foster and safeguard the social cohesion. The question to be asked is how to promote the cultures of different groups in SIDS, foster the social fabrics, and bring a real interculturality between them.

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<sup>24</sup> Social Fabric Phase II, 1999. The report was accessed by the researcher at the University of Mauritius during her fieldwork

<sup>25</sup> Country Report on Human Rights Practices 2001

And related, in what way should the social fabric be enhanced in order to reduce tension or latent ethnic conflicts. Within the context of social cohesion, Intercultural Education has an important role to play. The ultimate objectives of intercultural education are to build up an inclusive society, where every culture is valued, respected, and seen as having a vital role in contributing to the social structure. Intercultural education can be an efficient tool to enhance sustainable social cohesion.

In the light of the vulnerabilities faced by SIDS, it is clear that they will have to depend on their resources to build their resilience. The most valuable resource that SIDS possess is its human capital. This has caused both researchers and policy makers to draw particular attention to the education and training of the population in accordance with the national goals for sustainable development. Intercultural education can play a significant role in the overall success of this process. As Baccus(2008) explicitly states that "The success of small states, in coping with the economic and social challenges that they are likely to face in the twenty-first century, will, to a large extent, depend on the quality of their human resources" (p. 139). Moreover, if the society in SIDS is well united, believing in "togetherness" rather than "otherness," they will be able to build their resilience together as one nation to face any challenges. Social cohesiveness will play a vital role to ensure social stability and enable social development in the face of the vulnerabilities.

In the context of SIDS, interculturalism will strengthen the existing social fabrics. Multiculturalism in SIDS is well established compared to the limited western exposure to multiculturalism. In the West, society is still undergoing dynamic diversity changes because the door of migration is opened whereas, in the majority of SIDS, the society is well established on multicultural pillars with zero or very little migration. Besides, in SIDS the consolidation of social

cohesion through intercultural education have not been fully exploited. Within the context of sustainable development of small states, Intercultural Education has a fundamental role to play. Education with an intercultural dimension holds a key place in any endeavor to foster the social fabrics and to maintain peace. The figure below illustrates the potential effect of Intercultural Education as an inclusive approach will enhance the social fragility of the society, thus building a strong, resilient community in SIDS.



**Figure 5: The possible effect of Intercultural Education on SIDS**

In the next section, the focus will be on the creation of a small island developing states: Mauritius. It will be interesting to analyse how Mauritius was built on multicultural pillars and how its educational system was established.

**3.3 Mauritius: The creation of a multicultural society**

In this section, the formation of the multicultural society in Mauritius will be presented from a historical perspective as well as the development of the educational system at different time periods and its current structure. Mauritius, which is commonly known as the paradise of the Indian Ocean, promotes the concept that the different communities form an integral part of

the Mauritian nation. It is important to note that the island didn't have any indigenous population. Thus, the Mauritian society was formed based on immigration during the colonial period. According to the Mauritian Constitution, each of these major ethnic groups represents the population of the Island and contributes to the progress of the island by living and working in peace and harmony. In section 11, the Constitution provides for the freedom and rights of all the people. And section 16 stipulates that no one can be discriminated by color, race, creed, or place of origin. Indeed, Mauritius grants equal rights and freedoms to the various ethnic groups. However, as some researchers noted, an important social issue is being undermined and going unnoticed during the focus on economic development, the building of sustainable intercultural bridges amongst all these levels and sublevels of the diversified social structure has been neglected. Sunto and Chitto (2012) indicated that "Our multi-ethnic Mauritius is still a very fragile society as far as the social aspect is concerned. The majority of the population is of opinion that we are facing many difficulties to sustain and consolidate a true Mauritian nation where everyone would put their national identity before the ethnic one" (p. 33).

The island had faced two major riots between different ethnic groups. In this small multicultural society, many cases of minor ethnic tensions have prevailed. The state has intervened in many cases to control the minor tensions and prevent them from escalating into major conflicts. In general, apart from the fore-mentioned sporadic events, the coexistence of the Mauritian community has always been one of tremendous goodwill and amity.

These ethnic groups of different colors are commonly represented in Mauritius as the 'Rainbow Nation.' Each ethnic group shared a rich historical background based on various periods of colonization, slavery, Indian indentured immigration, and Chinese immigration. The main ethnic groups had to share spatial proximity among the diversified culture during the early

stage of immigration. This situation has led to create strong social relationships among them. During the colonial period “they lived together, worked together, protested together, fought together and were imprisoned together under the yoke of the colonial powers of their day”(Maudarbux, 2016, p. 465). The Mauritian community is also deeply submerged in their respective religions. They are reckoned for their religious fervor and strong community spirit. It should be noted that the four ethnic communities do not constitute uniform and equal entities. “These communities are crosscut by a number of societal considerations, namely language, religion, caste, and class” (Maudarbux, 2016, ,p. 466). For example, the Mauritian Muslim community has its own dresscode, food habits, their own ancestral and religious languages, namely Urdu and Arabic, norms, values, and belief system. The same differences apply for the Hindus, Christians, and Chinese. Table 4<sup>26</sup> illustrates the complexity of the Mauritian social fabric.

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<sup>26</sup> The information was accessed from The Mauritius Population Census and the table was constructed by the researcher.

**Table 4: The Density of the Mauritian Fabric**

Group	<b>Hindu 48%</b>	<b>Muslim 17%</b>	<b>General Population 32%</b>	<b>Chinese 3%</b>
By ethnicity	Indo-Mauritian	Indo-Mauritian	Afro-Mauritian Franco-Mauritian Metis (through Mixed marriages)	Sino-Mauritian
By religion	Hindu (79.5%) Tamil (12%) Telegu (5%) Marathi (3.5%)	SunnatJamaat (60%) TawhidJamaat (35%) Shia and Ahmadiyya(5%)	Catholic (80%) Other Christians(20%)- which include Anglicans, Protestants, Adventists, members of the congregation of the Assembly of God.	Predominately Christians A few Buddists(0.2%)
Language	Hindi, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, Bhojpuri, English, French and Creole	Urdu, Bhopuri, Arabic, English, French and Creole	English, French and Creole	Cantonese, Hakka,Fukiense, English, French and Creole

The Table describes the composition of the four major ethnic groups. The term Hindu refers to the followers of Hinduism and any branch of Hinduism like Tamil, Telegu, and Marathi. The term Mauritian Muslim includes all the followers of Islam, the religion. The General Population includes Afro-Mauritian (commonly known in Mauritius as Creole), Franco Mauritian and Metis. This category is mainly followers of the Christian religion. Mauritian of Chinese descent are known as Chinese or *Sino-Mauricien* (if they followed Christianity, they are called in Mauritius *creole sinois*). The composition of the population is a heterogeneous one. It is important to note

that, in Mauritius, some ethnic groups are termed based on their religious beliefs (Hindus and Muslim) and while others are referred to according to their ethnic group (Chinese). And another group is simply put under a category called general population. This is mainly because the Muslim and Hindus shared same ethnicity; in order to differentiate them, a religious marker was used. However, the four major ethnic communities have been living together on the same island sharing the same social and political institutions. In this process, the Mauritians had developed major shared characteristics that have contributed for the peaceful coexistence among them. The three major social relationships that they share are:

- a) Common language: Mauritian Kreol
- b) Common foods(*Briyani, dhallpuri, gateaux piment, mine* etc)
- c) Common dress (Mixed of traditional and western outfits)
- d) Common values: Educational achievement, economic advancement, parliamentary democracy, and good governance (Sunto&Chittoo, 2012).

Despite their differences, the various ethnic groups share all spheres of the government, trade, and industrial sectors. From planters, businessman, and industrialists to distinguished professionals, up to and including the President of the Republic and the Cabinet Ministers. Indeed, their accomplishments and contributions are remarkable in the economic and professional sector. Sunto and Chittoo(2012) explained that “These commonalities have contributed much for the peaceful coexistence of the various ethnic groups. Moreover, the tolerant nature of the population plus their mutual understanding, cooperation and common work ethnics have led Mauritius to gain enormous amount of progress in the last three decades” (p. 34). To a certain extend it can be said that the Mauritian multicultural society is a positive encounter compared to other small islands like Fiji and Solomon Island.

It will be fascinating to comprehend how this small island was populated, bringing together these different ethnic, cultural, and religious groups, as well as exploring the conditions surrounding the establishment of their inter-group relationships. In this coming section, four important periods in the history of colonization in Mauritius will be examined, including the Dutch period, the French Period, the British Period, and Independent Mauritius, along with the historical development of education.

### **3.3.1. The Dutch period (1638-1710)**

The island was first discovered by the Arabs who named it as '*Dina Arobi.*' In 1540, the Portuguese then visited the island. Neither the Arabs nor the Portuguese chose to form settlements on the island. It was in 1638 that the Dutch took the uninhabited island and named it after Prince Maurice Van Nassau. The Dutch established a settlement by bringing a handful of slaves. They started the cultivation of sugarcane, exploited the ebony forests, and introduced deer and domestic animals. In 1710, the Dutch Colony abandoned the Island. During the Dutch period, Education was mainly informal.

### **3.3.2 Isle de France (1715-1810)**

In 1715, the French took possession of Mauritius and in 1722 established the first settlement under the aegis of French East India Company, naming the island '*Isle de France.*' The first stage of the French colonization was not well established and faced difficulties until the 1735 arrival of the French governor, Mahe de Labordonnais, who transformed the little island from a simple stop-over place to a new colony (Selvon, 2005). Under his governorship, he developed the economy of the island based on sugar production and cassava. Port-Louis, now the capital of Mauritius, was established as a naval harbor base and shipbuilding center. Numerous public buildings were constructed, including barracks for the soldiers, part of the House of

Government, and the Chateau de Mon Plaisir, some of which are still standing today. He brought more slaves to do the manual labour for the development of the island. “The population of Mauritius prior to the coming of Labordonnais consisted of some French and about 1,500 slaves-about equal numbers from West Africa, Madagascar, and India. However, Mahe de Labordonnais was to inaugurate the importation of slaves on a bigger scale from the eastern coast of Madagascar and East Africa, together with some free Indian artisans”(Guruvadoo, 1994, p. 15)

As discussed, slaves were brought from different parts of Africa to work the land in Mauritius. This is the origin of the Creole (the descendant of the African slaves) community in Mauritius. When the slaves were brought to the Island, they were forcibly separated from their families and friends. The separations from their country and families have affected their cultural identity through the present day in Mauritius.

The arrival of La Bourdonnais has enabled the French settlers to engage in liberal trade activities. Indeed, in the history of French colonization, he became a well-known figure and a key player in the success of ‘Isle de France’ during the French period. In 1750, Pierre Poivre, one of the most important administrators of the Island, introduced the cultivation of spices such as cinnamon, pepper, and cloves which he brought from his previous travels to the Far East. The famous garden that he has designed and created, Pamplémousses, consisted of many different species of plants. Later, according to Selvon (2005), the governor Decaen, who had been a successful general, ruled the island from 1803 to 1810. The Code Napoleon was introduced in the island following the revolution in France. However, the General Decaen enacted the Code Decaen which consisted of a mixture of the Code Napoleon and the laws from the Colonial Assembly (Selvon, 2005). “For instance, it included the re-establishment of the judicial system

of 1789, the replacement of the elected representative of the municipalities (during the Revolution) by Civil Commissioners chosen from the White colonists by the governor, and many others” (Selvon, 2005, p. 187). The slaves were controlled by a law known as the Code Noir. One French official appointed by the French government in the Island, Bernadin de St. Pierre, argued that under such rules the slaves were undergoing inhumane treatment and punishment. “They were forced to wear an iron collar; they were chained; they were tortured; marooned slaves, when caught, had an ear and the ligament of one thigh cut off, and suffered various other forms of punishment” (Selvon, 2005, p. 138). Indeed, slavery conditions during the French period were very harsh and inhumane. There were several militants during the French revolution that had fought for the abolition of slavery and a mutual agreement among the French Revolutionary governments to abolish slavery in the various French colonies. However, in Isle de France, such abolishment didn’t take place and slavery continues to flourish in the Island (Selvon, 2005).

In the French crown colony of Mauritius, formal education was not present, and it depended on the concern of private individuals (Juggernaut, 1993). However, the French Revolution in 1789 raised the idea of active state participation in education. It was proclaimed at the colonial assembly that the state had to provide its citizens moral and political education. The idea was to provide a standard of education which didn’t discriminate between social classes. The French educational system during the French Revolution was mainly reformed by the French educator Joseph Lakanal (1762-1845). In Isle de France the ‘*Plan Lakanal*’ was adjusted to the needs of the island and implemented with the setting up of ‘*Ecole Centrale*’ as a French institution to provide secondary education for the French elite settlers only. The larger members of the society could access only primary education which was privately run. Therefore, it can be

said that, towards the end of the eighteenth century, the establishment of education started to become the concern of the French administrators in the island. Ramdoyal (1977) supported this viewpoint by saying “It is in vain that one searches the Mauritian Archives for official documents relating to the provision of education before 1779” (p. 31).

The different ethnic groups residing in the colony and different social classes seemed to live in mutual isolation, largely on account of each having its own specific socio-cultural orientation and an unequal economic status. Ramdoyal (1977) further gave a statistical representation of the resident of the island during this period, highlighted in Table 5.

**Table 5: The residents during the French Periods**

Year	White	Free	Coloured Slaves	Total
<b>1767</b>	3,163	587	15,027	18,777
<b>1797</b>	6,237	3,703	49,080	59,020
<b>1807</b>	6,489	5,912	65,367	77,76

The colored slaves formed the majority, but because they didn’t have any rights, access to education was denied to them. Education was mainly in the hands of the white settlers and didn’t have the aim to bring about social change. Reverend Lebrun, a very famous religious personality in the island, initiated free day primary schools to instruct the free slaves. The aim was to provide the newly enfranchised slaves basic religious and academic education to guide them, while at the same time give them the opportunity to be absorbed in the society. The fact was that they were still rejected by the community, especially by their ex-owners; Reverend Lebrun’s work was not appreciated by the white population. “If his work among the free men of color had earned him the hostility and contempt of the French population, his attempts at

instructing the free slaves were met with such violent opposition that even his life was in danger. He was accused of Protestant proselytism and of conspiracy to set the slaves free” (Ramdoyal, 1977, p. 38).

The medium of language at the beginning of the 19th century was the lingua franca, Creole, developed as a result of contact between the French settlers and the slaves. Furthermore, an intermediate colored element was formed in the population, and became very widespread throughout the island. They were the illegitimate offspring of the white elite with the female slaves. By the time the British conquered the island, the language, the occupation, education, and population were very much fragmented.

### **3.3.3The British period (1810-1968)**

In the late 18th century, the Corsair expeditions to Isle de France started to face attack from the British ships blocking the required provisions to the island. Due to the strategic location of the island, the British wanted to conquer the island from the French. During this time period, the Napoleon era, France was involved in several wars and could not provide the resources to combat the British. In August 1810, in a famous battle known as the Battle of Grand-Port, the British conquered part of the island from the French rule. The French could not prevent the British from attacking and landing in other parts of the island. The governor Decaen had to admit defeat and surrendered the island to the British. According to the treaty of capitulation, the French settlers were allowed to keep their land and property and to use the French language and part of the French rules and regulations. But according to Selvon (2005), “The colony and its dependencies were ceded unconditionally with all their public stores” to the British (p. 194). Hence, the French colonist now had limited rights in the island. The British controlled the administrative and military sector of the island.

Under the British rule, the island was reverted to its previous name Mauritius. Toussaint(1974) revealed that at the time of the British conquest, the population of the island constituted of 9% whites (6,227), 10.4% free coloured (7,133), and 80% black slaves (55,422). The island faced two main eras under the British period, the 19th and 20th centuries. The first British governor, Sir Robert Farquhar, promoted agriculture and free trade in the island. The sugar plantations boomed during under the British governorship. Guruvadoo (1994) said “To such extent that in 1826, the United Kingdom granted the Mauritian sugar planters a privileged import duty, a status previously enjoyed by the West Indies” (p. 142). Among all the other British territories, Mauritius was considered to be the main sugar producer. The development of the island flourished with the construction of sugar mills, the replacement of manpower by steam powered machines, and the introduction of a new transport system, the railways. A very important benchmark during the British period was the abolition of slavery. In 1807, the British parliament abolished the slave trade (Addison & Hazareesingh, 1984). During the same period, the free colored population appealed for the elimination of the color bar which was a form of discrimination in the society between the white population and them. As researched by Selvon (2005), the color bar divided the white and the colored population. For example, the colored populace did not have the same right to education and could not attend the most prestigious school in the island, the Royal College. They could not have titles of ‘Mr’ and ‘Mrs’ or be buried in the same cemeteries as whites. The color bar was formally abolished in Mauritius in 1829. Selvon analyzed this situation (2005) and said that “the colored had to wait 19 years for the abolition of the color bar and the slaves a quarter of a century for a law abolishing slavery” (p.195). Governor Farquhar didn’t take into consideration their request to eliminate the color bar and the slave-owners were against the abolition of slavery. However, on the 1st of February 1835,

slavery was officially abolished in Mauritius while offering a heavy compensation of 20 million pounds to the slave-owners for the loss of their slaves. The free slaves were at the beginning not completely free because they needed to spend a few years on the estates as apprentices. Once they obtained their freedom, the majority of the slaves refused to stay on the plantations estates and wanted to leave far from the clutches of the colonists. To gain their living, they worked as fisherman, planters, or by doing manual labor. Nevertheless, due to the high rate of free slaves in the island, not all of them could find gainful employment, and gradually formed a community of extreme poverty and isolation from the society.

Selvon(2005) pointed out that the free slaves who were uprooted from their culture, country of origin, and families didn't receive any resettlement compensation from the British government. After they had been forced into the man-made atrocity of slavery and deprived of most inner human nature and dignity, they were again rejected by the society. It is important to highlight that the Creole community (descendants of slaves) formed an integral part of the Mauritian society. However, many of them are still facing extreme poverty.

#### **3.3.4. The arrival of the Indentured labourers and the Chinese immigrants**

In the 1820s there was growing demand from the planters to recruit new labour to work on their plantations. The Indian indentured labourers played a vital role in the estates as they were considered to be a substitute to the newly free slaves. The immigration of these workers started in 1834 up through 1923. Eventually, the recruitment of the labours was from one of the largest British colonies, India. The labourers in India were in need of work because the situation in India was very tenuous. There was poverty, rebellion, unemployment, and many other factors that made the workers believed that Mauritius could be their new Eldorado. There was a mass immigration of Indian Indentured labourers between 1858 and 1859 because of the high demand

of sugar production in Mauritius (Addison & Hazareesingh, 1984). The indentured labourers belonged to various religious groups including Hindu, Muslim, Tamil, Telegu, and Marathi, but shared a common ethnicity. They came primarily from the same rural districts in eastern Uttar Pradesh and Western Bihar in Northern India. A small minority of free Muslim immigrants came from Gujarat, Kutch, and Surat in Western India (Boswan, 1991). The fact that the Hindus and Muslims share the same ethnicity meant that they also shared some local traditions, such as food, traditional medicines, and music. Thus, with labourers hailing from India, of same ethnicity and living with others in closely intertwined neighbourhoods for decades, Mauritian society had been relatively immune to conflicts for years. It should, however, be stated that the 1947 partition of India did create some distrust between the Hindu and Muslim communities which lead to some gratuitous clichés about Islam in certain minds. The island had to wait until 1968 to note a disruptive and destructive communal riot between the Creoles and Muslims. Thus, the 1968 riot was the first act of violence in which the Muslims were involved. Boswan explained that “the causes appeared to be not so much politics as unemployment and economic uncertainty” (1991, p. 41). Therefore, it can be said that it was not an act of the so-called Muslim ‘fanaticism’ and spontaneous violence. This view is shared by Emrith, who further added that such rare occurrences of violence in the past have had little repercussions on the overall Mauritian society (1994).

When they reached Mauritius, their work conditions as indentured labourers were no better than that of the slaves. Even though they had a protector of immigrants, they were forced to work for long hours in the sugar plantations and were often not given proper medical facilities if they fell ill. They had limited movement in the estate, and if they were caught outside the estate, they were sent to jail. Addison and Hazareesingh estimated that more than 30,000 Indians

were arrested for vagrancy in 1869 (1984). Indian labourers were hired on five-year contracts, and only those who had completed their five years and wanted to renew their contracts were given passes allowing them outside the plantation boundaries. However, due to the difficult work conditions and low wages, many workers didn't renew their contract and preferred to return to India. At the same time, there were a large number of Indians who after their contract, preferred to stay in Mauritius and work on their own. There were a few individuals from the white population, namely Adolphe de Plevitz and Governor Gordon, fighting for the improvement of the conditions of the Indentured laborers. Eventually, in 1872, they succeeded in convincing the British Government to send the Royal Commission to make an investigation on the poor living conditions and treatment of these workers. To improve their situation, the commission recommended the need to provide proper medical care to all workers on each estate.

The Chinese immigrants also played a vital role in Mauritian history. They were recruited in the late 18th century, and their immigration became more substantial in the 19th century. The Chinese were forced to leave their country due to reasons similar to the Indian immigrants namely unemployment, poverty, economic crises, and others. When they reached Mauritius, they were assigned to manage the shops which were located on the sugar plantations. The shops were intended to enable the indentured laborers to purchase their basic necessities. Eventually, the Chinese community was mainly involved in the retail business and in time, became very prosperous and in a better situation to climb the social ladder, while the Indian immigrants depended a lot on their hard work and unity to improve their conditions.

### **3.3.5. The Mauritian political development under British rule.**

Under the British rule in the 19th century, Addison and Hazareesing (1984) noted that a Council of Government mainly composed of a Chief Justice, a chief secretary, a commanding

officer of the Garrison, and a Controller of customs were set under the aegis of the Governor. The political spheres were dominated by the white population only. The other sections of the Mauritian society were not represented and didn't have the right to vote. However, the election in 1886 would change the prospects of the Indian immigrants. The new Governor, Pope-Hennessy, acknowledged that the Indians who were the majority in the society were not represented politically and therefore appointed an Indian as a council member. This paved the way for the political movement of the Indian immigrant. In the late 19th century and at the very beginning of the 20th century many imminent personalities initiated the development of the political history of Mauritius. To raise the political awareness, Manilal Doctor, an Indian Barrister who came to Mauritius in 1907, worked on unity among the Indian immigrants. Another famous personality, Dr. Maurice Cure, the founder of the Labour party fought for the rights of the working class (Addison & Hazareesingh, 1984). The main party achievements at that time were the establishment of trade unions and the legalisation of labour strikes. The working class was encouraged by various leaders such as Emmanuel Anquetil, Basdeo, and Sookdeo Bissondoyal to unite and fight against colonial repression (Addison & Hazareesingh, 1984).

One of the dynamic leaders of the Labour party, Dr. Seewoosagur Ramgoolam, was the one who led the way to Independence. Through his political skills and several campaigns, he managed to mobilize and unify the Indo-community in Mauritius. In 1940, he was elected as a member of the Council. Selvon (2005) further explained how, during the Constitutional Conference of 1965 in London, the Labour Party voiced its intention to obtain the Independence of Mauritius from the British. The British accepted the request on the agreement that the islands of the Chagos group should be granted to the British territories and that all inhabitants would be deported to Mauritius. On 12 March 1968, Mauritius obtained its independence. The Mauritian

political system has maintained the multiparty democratic form in the 49 years since independence, which has brought a degree of political stability (Bowman, 1991). The fact that no single ethnic group can form a majority government without relying on support or an alliance of some sort has provided a golden opportunity for each community, especially minority groups, to be influential in the political process. As Maudarbux explained, “The constitution also guarantees safeguarding the interest of different groups or ‘communities’ through the ‘best loser system’, a mechanism which divides the population into four ‘communities’: Hindu, Muslim, Sino-Mauritian, and General Population” (2016, p.466). The Mauritian democracy elects a government every five years. After a general election, if any of the religious or ethnic communities are under-represented in the national assembly, the electoral commission will appoint eight additional best-losing candidates based on their ethnicity. To appease the fears of the minorities, a ‘Best Loser System’ (BLS) that awards eight seats to underrepresented ethno-cultural communities over and above the 62 seats, are allocated using the British principle of first-past-the poll (Mathur, 1997).

Until now, it should be stated that the Hindu political dominance of the government has shaped the political behaviour of the minority religious groups in Mauritius, especially of the Mauritian Muslims. The Muslims became politically active in order to safeguard the interest of their own community, as they feared that the Hindu domination might lead to the marginalization of the Muslim community. In order to enter the competitive arena of Mauritian politics, the Muslims organized a small political party in the early 1960s. After the independence, Muslims turned their votes towards the new fledging leftist movement, the Mauritian Militant Movement(MMM). Emrith has interpreted this sudden shift as a political evolution of the Mauritian Muslims. They “have displayed a positive shift towards national integration politically

by repudiating sectarian political parties” (1994, p. 374). The Mauritian Muslims opted to participate in national politics and refused to fall into the trap of political organizations based on community or ethnic affiliation. They participated politically in order to safeguard their interests both as Muslims and as Mauritians. Indeed, this constituted a great step in the political moves of Muslims, as, “they have arisen above the narrow parochial communal affiliation in politics” (Emrith, 1994, p. 374).

However, the government, and especially the Muslim MMM members of Parliament that dominated Municipal Councils, were incapable of proactively improving the impoverished life conditions in Muslim neighbourhoods, which have contributed to the feelings of dejection and despondency among much of the Muslim community (Ahnee, 2004). As a result, Muslims have become politically fragmented towards MMM. A good number of Muslims, in order not to be dependent on any politicians, started to turn away from politics and closer to their religion. They did not on any occasion revolt. Hollup clearly said that “The Muslims did not become violent extremists as a result of their powerless position. They adapted a defensive strategy rather than an aggressive one” (1996, p. 9). It should be stated that such political dismay was fertile ground for the Saudi graduate, Cehl Fakeermeeah commonly known as Meeah, to launch his political party, *Hizbullah* (Party of God), in 1991, to give expression to Mauritius’ downtrodden and exploited Muslim minority. Bodi (2002) believed that the emergence of *Hizbullah* gave the Muslims, for the first time since independence, a force to challenge the country’s Hindu-Christian duopoly. It is noted, however, that not everybody in the Muslim community was in favour of the new party. Some opposed his amalgamation of Islam and politics (Bodi, 2002). However, it should be acknowledged that his attempt was a breath of fresh air blowing away the miasma of generations of religious stagnation. The re-islamisation process was launched again

in the Mauritian Muslim society as a result. Meeah's electoral inroads weakened the MMM and as a consequence, he faced a real source of opposition that unleashed against him (Bodi: 2002).

Electoral communalism is commonplace on this volcanic island. Mauritian Muslims have voted tactically, trapped in the middle of these parties and with no centre of gravity of their own. But the constant marginalization of the Muslim minority in the country has led to the emergence of politicization of their Mauritian Muslim identity. Maudarbux further states that "This logic of ethnic group identity and positive discrimination eventually became a fundamental unwritten rule which pervaded the Mauritian public sphere. The choice of candidates for elections, recruitment and promotion in the public sphere, subsidies to clubs and sociocultural organisations and appointment to parastatal bodies all follow the rule of ethnic balance and representation"(2016, p. 466).

The education system underwent major changes during the transition from French medium to English medium. The main school '*L'Ecole Centrale*' was renamed to the Royal College. This particular college had both a primary and a secondary section. And students who had outstanding performance were granted scholarships to continue their studies in England. They were also given administrative job in the island. However, Juggernaut(1993) pointed out that the education system was still in the hands of the white population and school "reproduced the social and economic inequalities within the colony" (p. 119), because the color bar was not yet abolished. Eventually, after the abolishment of the color bar, the free colored boys could attend the Royal College. This was an important benchmark in the provision of equal education to students.

Through the effort of Reverend Lebrun in 1815, the first free primary schools were built in Port Louis and other regions, enabling the children of slaves to be educated. Access to

education for girls was initiated by the Loreto Irish nuns who founded the primary schools for the girls of the colony in 1845. The British imposed a system of Education which was modeled on that of Britain and Anglicization and prioritizes the spread of English language and culture. In 1856, to improve access to education to the wider population, several aided primary schools were established. Ramdoyal (1977) estimated that in 1882, there were 47 government schools with 6,571 children enrolled and 57 grant-in-aid schools with 5,316 children enrolled. The main difficulties faced during the process of educating the Indian population were the medium of instruction and the recruitment of qualified teachers. The Government was solely involved in the recruitment and the salary of the teachers. It has been noted that about 7,000 out of the 60,000 Indian children were attending schools. The Indian immigrant parents were not motivated to send their children to schools, due to their difficult situation; they often preferred the children to join the labor force as early as possible in order to contribute to the family income.

However, new laws pertaining to the Indian workforce would drastically change the outlook of the children, leading to a rise in the attendance of Indians students at school. “In 1908, however, a labor act was passed shifted the age from 10 to 13 years at which minors might enter into a written contract. With the provision and establishment of more schools, and the improving economic condition of the Indians, the way was paved for future advances in Indian education” (Ramdoyal, 1977, p. 89). In 1901, the famous Indian politician, M.K. Gandhi visited Mauritius to create awareness for education as a way to uplift the political and socio-economic life of the Indian immigrants in Mauritius. Many schools were opened to teach Asian languages (referring to the ancestral), the languages of the Indian immigrants, and to promote their culture and religion. Slowly, the Indian immigrants realized that they formed the mainstream of the population and an influential position to voice their opinion and rights against the British rule.

Eventually, the Indian culture was preserved and flourished as they didn't fall into the missionary conversion process of the Christian and Anglican. However, the free slaves, with the fact that they were uprooted from their land, culture, and language, were easily converted to these religions. Further, the Government decided to provide students belonging from any community or social ladder to have free access to the Royal College through scholarships, with the objective of specializing the workforce to meet the needs of the economy. Six scholarships were allocated to boys while four were reserved for girls. Juggarnauth (1993) described how there was competition between different primary schools where several students belonging to any community were competing to obtain these limited scholarships. Access to education was no longer only in the hands of the elites' rich community. It was now opened to children belonging from even the most modest class. According to a report published in 1923, Dr. Barteman, the director of education criticised the level and quality of education in the island. "Schools exist in Mauritius and cannot now be closed, but they were better closed than remain monuments of wasted money and useless energy, where children are looked after, perhaps kept out of mischief, but certainly not educated" (Ramdoyal, 1977, p. 117). Even though the standard and conditions of education left much to be desired, the enrollment increased drastically, showing an effort from the Mauritian society to be educated. The Table below illustrated the rapid growth in the primary schools.

**Table 6: Number of students**

Year	Number of students attending primary schools
<b>1955-56</b>	85,446
<b>1959-60</b>	126,173

The development of schooling in Mauritius in the 20th century enabled the children of the Indian immigrants to access education. The examination of the country's economic and social policy indicates that on the road of progression, the Hindu and Muslim communities faced discrimination by the Franco-Mauritians (Emrith,1994). But later, as Emrith stated, they will gain “ascendancy through merit, perseverance and hard work battling the odds of bigotry and prejudice along the way” (1994, p. 195). Later, their descendants occupied jobs not only in commerce, trade, and industry, but they also in the liberal professions and the civil services. In order to understand their endeavor to obtain better jobs, one has to take into account the awareness of the value of education among the indentured labourers. Over time, parents have worked hard to educate their children, a step that will lead to their social progress.

### **3.3.6. Mauritius: an independent island**

Mauritius is part of the small island developing states and is also a developing country. Like most developing countries, Mauritius had faced various economic challenges. Bunwaree (1999) highlighted that in the post-independent period, the island was confronted with a high level of unemployment, balance deficits, and overpopulation rates. At that particular time, Mauritius economy was based on the mono-crop of the sugar industries. Mauritius reacted to the various challenges by diversifying its economy and introduced the Export Processing Zone

(EPZ). The sudden success of the Mauritian economy gave it the title of the '*Tiger of the Indian Ocean*.' In addition, the tourist industry also flourished and the island has been known as one of the most important high-class destinations in the world. The three main pillars of the Mauritian economy were sugar, textiles(EPZ), and tourism.

However, in time, the two main pillars of the economy, namely the sugar and textile industries, were no longer successful as in the 1980s. The main reason was due to globalization, Mauritius faced competitors like Brazil and had lost its European Market for the exportation of sugar. In 2005, the Multi-Fibre Agreement Act came to an end and Mauritius had to face China's textile industry on the global market. Mauritius had to reorganize its economy to meet the new challenges in this global era. The economy of Mauritius has increased in growth rate though the level of unemployment is still very high. The Mauritian government has to provide an adequate education to its citizens that will fit with the demand of labor, as the island is in need of an educated and competent workforce to respond to the needs of a knowledge-based society.

After independence, Mauritius reflected a multi-ethnic society where each group has its own culture and traditions. Suntoo and Chittoo (2012) described the Muslim community from the Indo ethnic group as having its own particular dress, food, language, norms, values, and beliefs which are different from the Hindus who are also from the Indo ethnic group. Both religions share the same ethnicity but their ways of life are quite different. Multiculturalism flourished in the island without any barriers from the dominant ethnic group.

Before independence, in the 1940s there was a demand for free education. In 1976, Mauritius provided free education to all the Mauritian citizens. At the same time, the government was facing pressure from International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank, and the Structural Adjustment Programme to reduce all social costs, namely the policy of free

education. This push was met with significant resistance, and primary education remained free and in 1982 became compulsory. In 1977, secondary education also became free with tertiary education following in 1988. The Mauritian Educational system has undergone several plans and reforms to promote the quality of education. Parsuramen (2006) said that the White Papers of 1984 were developed to enhance the quality, equality, importance, and cost effectiveness of the system of education. In 1991, the Master Plan for education was based on the principles of Education for All. Furthermore, Mauritius was able to claim that the Master Plan 1991 had raised the GDP of Mauritius and that the country experienced employment growth due to its education and other public social services (Parsuramen 2006). One vital point to stress is that the plan took into consideration the multi-ethnic aspect of the country. The government had taken practical steps to invest in the education sector by providing free compulsory education, free textbooks at primary level, and by offering no-cost tertiary courses. However, in the 1990s, the system of education was still facing many problems. The Ministry of Education drafted a White Paper in 1997 and highlighted the following shortcomings in the education system:

- a.) The presence of inequalities among the different ethnic groups at schools.
- b.) Rat-race competition for the Certificate in Primary Education (CPE)
- c.) The classes were overcrowded
- d.) Lack of teachers
- e.) Teaching was based on chalk and talk

The new plan made a list of recommendations to enhance teacher training, eradicate private tuition system after school hours, include extra-curricular activities, reduce the number of pupils per classroom, and to introduce new subjects such Hinduism and Islamic Studies in the curriculum.

After the independence of Mauritius, the education system has been opened to all ethnic groups and social classes. This system of education provided equal opportunity to all ethnic groups. The actual formal education structure will be discussed as well as a broad view of the reforms which have been undertaken to achieve quality education. The formal education system in Mauritius followed the British model. The four key stages of the school education system are as follows:

- 1.) Pre-primary (ages 1 to 5)
- 2.) Primary (6 levels -std. 1-VI)
- 3.) Secondary (5 levels-Form I-V compulsory)
- 4.) Upper Secondary (2 levels-Form VI-Higher School Certificate)

The structure involves one year in pre-primary, six years in primary, five years in lower secondary and two years in upper secondary. Education is compulsory up to the age of 16. There are a total of 180 schools in Mauritius. Overall the Mauritian education system is in line with *Education for All*. To access the secondary school, students must pass the final exam known as the Certificate of Primary Education (CPE). Students who have failed the CPE for two consecutive years can be admitted to a prevocational secondary stream. The prevocational curriculum enables the students to obtain a certificate which will allow them to secure a job after school while going through a modified curriculum. After three years' of study, students can get an opportunity to join training institutions of manual work, or they can join the workforce.

Mainstream students, following the completion of the lower secondary level, must sit for the Cambridge School Certificate (SC). Students may leave the school after obtaining their SC results to join the workforce or complete the upper secondary level. After completing the two years' upper secondary level, students have to sit for the Cambridge Higher School Certificate

(HSC) examination. The HSC, also referred to as the pre-university qualifications, enable the students to apply for university or to gain a job. The education system has undergone and is currently undergoing major educational reforms.

After understanding the formation of Mauritius as a multiracial, multilingual, and multireligious society and the development of its education system, the next section will discuss the possibilities of implementing Intercultural Education in this small island.

### **3.4. The possibility of implementing Intercultural Education in SIDS**

The last section of this chapter will link the SIDS with Intercultural Education while paying special attention to Mauritius. The focus will be on the position of intercultural education in SIDS's educational system while trying to answer these crucial questions; what are the educational priorities in SIDS? What is the possibility of implementing intercultural education in SIDS? Particular attention will be paid to two cases; Mauritius and Solomon Islands.

Surveying the literature regarding the SIDS and sustainable developments, one can easily identify a gap in the literature regarding the role of education in the sustainable development, particularly in SIDS. Crossley and Sprague (2013) state this fact plainly: "Until recently, very little attention has been placed upon the role that education can play in reaching the goals of global sustainable development in SIDS" (p. 90). One possible reason is that SIDS priorities were more focused on facing environmental threats and achieving economic objectives (Sem, 2007). It has also been noticed that international educational agendas often fail to match up closely with some of SIDS educational priorities. For example, back to the Jomtien era<sup>27</sup>, the key

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<sup>27</sup>In 1990, it was agreed at the World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien, Thailand (5-9 March 1990) to make primary education accessible to all children and to massively reduce illiteracy before the end of the decade

international priority was access to primary education. However, at that time, many small states were already moving ahead to prioritize their tertiary education needs (Crossley&Holmes, 1999). Thus, the global educational agendas are not in many cases reflecting the educational needs of SIDS. SIDS would like to move beyond the international agendas. However, they have difficulty accessing international funds and support for their educational priorities (Crossley&Sprague, 2013). It is crucial that the international agencies and analysts identify the educational priorities in SIDS. Education for sustainable development in SIDS must be in light of their experiences and needs. UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (UN-DESD 2005-2014), which was the most important international benchmark in ESD, did stress the importance of intercultural education in its agenda. However, recent research before even reaching the end of the UN-DESD (Crossley&Sprague, 2013) has argued that in general, the educational priorities in SIDS have not been put into practice. The international community recognizes the exceptional vulnerabilities island societies face, but has failed to translate this recognition into island-specific support. The vulnerability of SIDS to external factors is not disregarded, but the modest element, more specifically that sustaining their social cohesion through intercultural education could help them become more resilient as a strong united nation, are not being made available to these islands.

#### **3.4.1 Can social cohesion be fostered in SIDS through Intercultural Education?**

In the last part of this chapter, an attempt will be made to raise the question: Can social cohesion be fostered in SIDS through Intercultural Education? The rigid educational system in SIDS does not address sufficiently the cultural diversity that is present in the schools. The educational system in most SIDS is more oriented towards competition. In the small interethnic state like Mauritius, their system of education fails to develop a sense of cohesiveness in a truly

multicultural society. In every school, the diverse communities are reflected through the students. The government policy to promote multiculturalism is to offer 'oriental languages' to the students coming from different ethnic groups. In both primary and secondary schools, students can choose to study one of the oriental languages, including Arabic, Hindi, Mandarin, Marathi, Tamil, Telegu, and Urdu. The student's choice of the oriental language will be largely influenced by his or her ethnicity (Moorghen&Domingue,1982). However, schooling has not contributed to strengthening the social cohesion by inculcating students with a certain degree of nationalism as well as an understanding and appreciation of the diversified community. Bunwaree(2002) believed that the Mauritian educational system "accepts people from diverse backgrounds on the same premises; it gives them a chance to rub shoulders, but it has a long way to go in teacher training, devising new curricula and syllabi and most important of all in bridging the gap between intent and reality in order to make interculturality real" (p. 12).

In Mauritius, interculturality among the different ethnic groups has not been given enough attention and instead, there has been a "collage" of cultures that, in many ways, prevented the emergence of social inclusiveness. The alarming consequences of this apparent interracial peace are that Mauritius remains fragile and vulnerable in the long term, especially if the economic position of any of the social fabric shifts, which indicates that a genuinely sustainable peace is not deeply rooted in the society.

Mauritius has the scope to promote interculturality but to do so it requires a new educational policy, which promotes and develops intercultural competence across the curriculum. Eventually the Mauritian government has started several initiatives and measures to promote intercultural education at the scholastic level, in line with the objectives presented by the UN-DESD. These efforts address the three spheres of educational institutions, teachers

training, and the national curriculum. Examining the effectiveness of the efforts in these three spheres is essential in achieving progressive steps toward building sustainable social cohesion in the small island state of Mauritius. Notwithstanding governmental policies to implement intercultural education, the situation in the field may be different. The potentials of intercultural education have not been exploited fully in the educational system. It is still at an initial stage. Further research is required to examine the shift in the students' intercultural understanding and sensitivity after an in-depth implementation of the new measures pertaining to intercultural education. Intercultural education can contribute to promote further active participation in the classroom among the diverse students, which will in turn propagate to active citizenship in the local and global community in the future. The Mauritian educational system has already paved the way to multiculturalism by accepting students from diverse backgrounds and by supporting the spread of each ethnic group's language affiliation. By adopting the intercultural approach in their education system, it can contribute to foster their social cohesion further, thus building a strong, resilient society as a small state.

Compared to Mauritius, Solomon Islands, a former British protectorate in the Pacific, is still struggling to recover from a five-year civil conflict (1999-2003) that have brought it to the verge of collapse. The post-election riots in April 2006 further affected the social stability on the island and peace remains elusive. In addition, the island is facing serious economic and environmental problems. According to the World Bank, the Solomon Islands are one of the poorest countries in the Pacific. This small state is facing successive economic crises including global food, fuel, and financial difficulties. The environment has also deteriorated drastically, as most of the coral reefs surrounding the islands are dead or dying. Added to these crises, major conflicts between the ethnic groups have created social instabilities. The economic,

environmental, and social vulnerabilities have weakened the prosperity and stability of this small island. There is an urgent need to build the resilience and reconstruct this multicultural society to stand as one force against the vulnerabilities. Education can take the number one position in the battle against the vulnerabilities in this small state. In the multiethnic Solomon Islands, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources Development has put forward policies and planning related to peacebuilding and social cohesion. According to a recent report<sup>28</sup>, “Solomon Islands Case Study in education, conflict, and social cohesion,” before the conflicts, a mostly western-curriculum predominated which didn’t inculcate a sense of cohesiveness but instead contributed to create friction between traditional and non-traditional systems and structures. The major obstacles of the western-curriculum are that it didn’t take into consideration the enormous diversity of the island and that each tribe or clan has their own languages, traditional and religious beliefs, laws, and culture. Another major problem is the limited access to relevant quality education across all levels. In particular, for secondary school-aged children, this has led to a largely uneducated and unskilled youth population. Over the last decade, there have been significant gains in education provision, including an increase in primary school enrolment from 60% to 90% of children and an expansion from 27 to over 200 secondary schools. It shows the government willingness to provide access to education.

According to reports, many young people in the Solomon Islands have the motivation and willingness to engage positively in society, but limited education and skills have led to a lack of opportunities to enhance the social cohesion. While government policies, frameworks, and

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<sup>28</sup>Solomon Islands case study in education, conflict and social cohesion was commissioned as part of UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional office’s (EAPRO) contribution towards the 4 year global ‘Peacebuilding, education and Advocacy (PBEA) Programme’(2012-2015)

strategic plans have been elaborated to promote social cohesion interventions, these have not been incorporated or linked explicitly to ministries and departments. In other words, the implementation of policy and the planning for peacebuilding and social cohesion at school level is limited. Many NGOs have initiated short-term projects to enhance the social cohesion in the educational systems, but there is little evidence of long-term strategic approaches. The report pointed out that “The potential to support real social cohesion interventions that empower people and create opportunities to heal past conflicts and open doors for economic and social reform are present, but a concerted effort by the government, parties and communities is needed to work across sectors in a coordinated and transparent way to achieve these goals” (p 15). One of the recommendations of the report is that the educational system should expand access to quality secondary education, and promote quality, relevant education that embraces social cohesion approaches.

The past ethnic conflicts have created immense friction in the society. The diversified Islanders in Solomon face barriers between each tribe. There must be a significant push towards a new approach in their educational system to breach such obstacles. Intercultural education can be implemented to promote understanding and respect between the different ethnic groups. The infusion of intercultural competence can heal past conflicts and bring a sense of understanding, cooperation and respect in the new generation. The distance between the ethnic groups can be improved in the long run, thus sustaining social cohesion. A cohesive society in Solomon Islands will strengthen their resilience. The Solomon Islanders will have to understand and cooperate with each other to face their vulnerabilities, to stop the alarming rate of destruction of their forests and marine life, and to rebuild their economy. Social cohesion is crucial for the survival of the Solomon Islanders

### **3.5. Conclusion**

This chapter was divided into three sections. The first section highlighted the vulnerabilities of SIDS and brought to light the importance of social cohesion in SIDS. The second section clearly outlines the formation of the Mauritian society and the progression of its educational system. The final section reflected the fragility of social cohesion in most of the SIDS. There is a pressing need to implement intercultural education in SIDS. The small island states need to move ahead towards an intercultural approach in their educational system. The different cultural and ethnic groups through their intercultural competence will manage to live together peacefully and build their resilience while facing their vulnerabilities.

## **CHAPTER 4: National Identity, Ethnic Diversity and Social Cohesion in the Mauritian Educational System: Understanding the Sources and Process**

### **4.1. Introduction**

The objectives of this chapter are to examine the following issues in the Mauritian Educational System:

- 1.) To identify the component that is related to Multicultural and Intercultural Education.
- 2.) To identify and analyse the process through which teachers and learners acquire knowledge on existing culture and on building a national cohesion in Mauritius.

This chapter will be divided into three sections. The first part will be a content analysis<sup>29</sup> of educational policies including The National Curriculum Framework for Primary (2007) and Secondary (2009). The content of the teacher training program at the M.I.E will be also analysed. Second, an in-depth analysis of the report on the *Situation Analysis of Education for sustainable Development at School Level in Mauritius* will be done. Finally, the last section will consist of analysing the structured interviews which were conducted during the fieldwork in Mauritius.

### **4.2. The National Curriculum Framework<sup>30</sup> in Mauritius: Its effectiveness on the social cohesion**

To maintain social cohesion has always been an important issue in a society. The Mauritian government has done and is still doing a lot in terms of policies designed to integrate the different ethnic groups in order to alleviate social disintegration. The main resource of Mauritius is its people, therefore is important that its people work together in unity. The small

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<sup>29</sup> A checklist was used to record the necessary information during the content analysis. See Appendix C

<sup>30</sup> The researcher chose to analyze the NCF (Primary and Secondary) because it includes description on each subjects and the Ministry explained in details the values of each subjects.

island of Mauritius is a successful representation of a multicultural society because, to an extent, its people have achieved acceptance and tolerance amongst each other. But the question to be asked is: Has social cohesion amongst the different ethnic groups been achieved truly or still remains an aspiration only? To answer this it is important to consider the presence of racial conflicts in Mauritius. That is why some Mauritius researchers have expressed their belief that multiculturalism in Mauritius is ineffective.

It can be observed that the Mauritian Education System has a close relation with social cohesion by ensuring a space and fairness for all ethnic groups. The Mauritian Education System has succeeded in bringing all ethnic groups under its umbrella to ensure a common education for all. It is believed that social cohesion and education are tied together because all children had to attend compulsory education and thus social integration was unavoidable. Schools can have a crucial impact on ethnic integration with students from different ethnic groups learning in a common place. If the Education system favours social cohesion among the students, the effect will be positive. But if this space is not properly used or the teachers are not favouring a positive interaction between the ethnic groups, this situation can have drastic negative effect on the students' perceptions and behaviours towards each other. When Mauritius gained independence in 1968, it chose to be a multicultural society by granting to each ethnic group a space. It chooses to keep English as an official language in order to have a common language among the different ethnic groups as well as to survive in the global economy. Mauritian kreol is seen as the mother tongue of all the ethnic groups in the Island and French language is widely spread across the island. The Asian languages are kept and maintained as they are seen as the carriers of cultural values. These languages are a link to the ancestral roots of each ethnic group. It is also a way to learn and understand others as well. If an Indo-Mauritian of Hindu faith appreciates

their cultural food, dress code, or practices, he/she will be in a better position to understand why other ethnic groups are attached to their respective cultures.

Mauritius has inherited a British System of education. Its educational system is constantly going through various reforms due to the local and global needs. However, educational policies in Mauritius were always oriented towards achieving the success of the social cohesion. It important to point out that this has an overarching theme across the entire National Curriculum Framework in Mauritius and achieving social cohesion is part of the educational journey of every Mauritian student. In conjunction with social cohesion, schools celebrate significant events like Independent day, Abolition of Slavery Day, The Indentured Labourer day and many other ethnic festivals are celebrated to commemorate key milestone events in the Mauritian history, with the intentions of learning from the past and appreciating ethnic diversity. Overall 10 public holidays are allocated to ethnic/religious festivals. Namely: *Maha Shivaratree, Chinese Spring Festival, Easter, Eid ul Fitr, Divali, Ganesh Chaturthi, Thaipooosam Cavadee, Ugadi, All Saints Day, Christmas*. Besides all Muslim teachers, get 2hours off on Fridays to go the Jumu'a prayer (special Friday prayer). The school principal will always arrange the timetable in a way that on Friday the Muslim teachers received there two hours off. All the students who go to school are aware of all the religious festivals are school holidays. Furthermore, any teachers with accordance to their religious beliefs are allowed to take leave for lesser important religious festivals which are not officially public holidays. These entire festivals and prayers rule teach to the students indirectly how the Mauritian society deals with the different cultural, religion and ethnic groups. They learned informally about the religious ethos. They are not being taught formally in their lessons. For instance: The Muslim teacher will say: 'I will leave early today because of Friday prayer. I won't be available in the

afternoon'. Indirectly, all the students (of different religious or cultural background) are aware there is a special prayer every Friday for the Muslim.

By celebrating such events, the essence of social cohesion is infused into the core curriculum with nation building messages in core subjects like Languages and History to ensure that the curriculum goals are corresponding with national goals. Indeed, the NCF aims to develop the harmony among the diverse ethnic groups at school and moving all Mauritian students towards achieving economic and modernization development, as well as instilling cultural heritage and nation-building.

Compulsory education, which promotes social cohesion in Mauritius, plays a significant role in a student's development and early years, regardless of ethnic group or religion. The Ministry of Education has focused more on implementing policies to promote social cohesion through a holistic approach. In all schools, there is an easy and comfortable mixing of the diverse ethnic groups in classes as well as during recess. The question remains regarding the teachers' understanding of the importance of social cohesion and if they actively insert such essence in their allocated lessons. Such an issue could be analysed in two ways, either the Ministry of education has not stressed enough the importance of social cohesion through education by offering training to the teachers or has failed to implement and provide materials on this topic. The other issue at hand is the teachers and students valuing the importance of social cohesion within the school system. Such observations have brought forward the question of how effective the Ministry of Education is in implementing these policies. An examination of the

primary textbooks<sup>31</sup>, available online via the Ministry of Education, reveals that there is no prevalent sign of ethnic prejudice or stereotype. The portrayals of racial stereotypes are avoided in all the textbooks to avoid any conflicts or offense towards the diverse ethnic groups in the schools. This is very important because Bar (2006) believed that textbooks which contained signs of racial stereotypes can have a negative effect on social cohesion, saying:“Such portrayals act as racial-cum-ethnic markers which stick with students from young, and will contribute to promote racial-stereotypical thoughts from students’(p.60). This situation can lead to conflicts within the school system but also in the long run it will affect the lives of the students when they complete schools. When they will be grown up adults, there relations with the diverse ethnic groups will be conflictual. (p. 34).

All the government schools reflect diversity regarding student attire as well. While all students are required to wear a school uniform; religious signs and symbols are accepted in the school compound. It is very common to see both teachers and the students wearing religious signs when they come to school. For example the Hindu students wear the *'tikka'*(a red dot) on their forehead and red strings bracelets, the Christians students wear the cross symbols, and Muslim students wear the *'hijaab'*<sup>32</sup>. The same is applied to the teachers. Many Hindu teachers wear *sarees* or *chouridar*(traditional Hindu dress), Muslim teachers wear *hijaab* or traditional dress like *shalwar khameez*. Many teachers are dressed in the western style. In general, at the

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<sup>31</sup><http://www.mie.ac.mu/curriculum.html>. The Primary books are available online on the website of the Mauritius Institute of Education.

<sup>32</sup>Maudarbocus (2016:469) pointed out that ‘Rare incidents where girls wearing hijabs have been harassed by some overzealous school rector have always been resolved by negotiations, in many cases by the Minister of Education himself)

school, the students are used to seeing the reflection of culture and religion through their friends and teachers.

Furthermore, food habits are another way to reflect diversity in the school compound. In Mauritius, it is customary for all students to bring a homemade lunch. In all schools, there are canteens where snacks, cakes, fruits, yogurt, and sandwiches are sold. The Ministry strives to ensure that the school canteens respect the food habits of the students. In all schools, vegetarian meals<sup>33</sup> are available and most meat is *halaal*<sup>34</sup>. In very rare cases pork is served at school, though this is very uncommon as neither Muslim nor Hindu students eat swine. During any school celebration or Independence Day food, students are given a packed meal while taking into consideration their food habits based on their religious beliefs. During any teachers' staff celebration, the same condition is applied regarding foods. The teachers and students share the same rights when it comes to their beliefs at school to some level.

#### **4.2.1. The Primary Curriculum Framework(2007)**

The Primary Curriculum Framework (2007)<sup>35</sup> was designed in line with the National Curriculum Framework for the Republic of Mauritius which echoes the overarching national curriculum goal "To promote equity and social justice by providing opportunities for every learner according to his/her needs, interests and potential" (2007, p. 11). The multicultural dimensions are present in the term 'equity' and 'social justice' where the school should provide

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<sup>33</sup> Many Hindu adhere to vegetarianism. Some are vegetarian in their daily life; other only during Hindu fasting days.

<sup>34</sup> Muslims eat meat that has been through the Islamic slaughter. The school will provide for this meat only. And it is commonly known in Mauritius that Muslim eat *halaal*. *Halaal* meat is available in all supermarket. The other communities like Hindu or Christians do not mind to eat *halaal* food. For them, they don't see any different. And they don't mind if the Islamic rule has been applied during the slaughtering. This shows the acceptance of the different communities.

<sup>35</sup>[http://www.ibe.unesco.org/curricula/mauritius/mf\\_prfw\\_2007\\_eng.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/curricula/mauritius/mf_prfw_2007_eng.pdf). Accessed date: 19th March 2015

equal opportunity in a multicultural society to all cultural groups. And the role as a mean to foster unity is also stated “To foster national unity by promoting in the individual understanding of and respect for our multicultural heritage”(2007, p. 11).

In the section on the Asian and Arabic languages<sup>36</sup>, the curriculum framework advocates that that exposure to multilingualism will foster students’ exposure to cultural understanding. “In Mauritius, our strength will continue to reside in the sincere effort to allow multilingualism and pluriculturalism to flourish. The multilingual nature of our society opens a number of windows to look at the wider world. Knowing an additional language is a matter of enrichment, more so when the known languages belong to various and varied cultures” (2007, p. 66). The Asian languages are the ancestral languages of the different ethnic groups. These languages include Hindi, Urdu, Tamil, Telegu, Marathi, and Mandarin. Arabic language is not the ancestral language of the Muslim. It is associated with Islam and is the language of their religion. But due to the demands of the parents and the students, the Ministry of Education has provided for this language at all schools. This also reflects the flexibility and tolerance of the Ministry. The government allocated two languages (Urdu and Arabic) to Muslim students who are a minority group. Each language is taught by teacher from that particular religion. For instance the Hindu language teacher will teach Hindi, the Telegu language teacher will teach Telegu and the Muslim language teacher will teach Arabic or Urdu(depending on the language in which he or she is specialised). In the case of the Muslims, because they have been allocated two languages two language teachers will be recruited from the Muslim community. This kind of situation doesn’t

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<sup>36</sup> All these languages are optional. Whereas English and French are compulsory. Recently Mauritian kreol language has been introduced as a subject.

create any friction in the school system. Other communities don't feel they are being unfairly treated. In the instance that there was a demand for Sanskrit, the religious language for the Hindu, the government would have done the same. Language attribution reflects the understanding, tolerance, and cooperation in the Mauritian Educational system. Besides these languages, all the other subjects are taught by teachers from various religious or ethnic groups. Therefore a Muslim teacher can teach Maths or can teach science. The majority of the religious or ethnic group in the class doesn't influence the recruitment of the teacher based on religion. For example, it's not because the majority of the students are Hindu, the government will recruit teachers that are from that religious group to teach academic subjects like Science, French, English or History.

Furthermore, the Primary Curriculum Framework has taken into consideration a number of changes and issues while designing the curriculum. It has focused on an inclusive and integrated approach of the students. "The social and cultural fabrics are undergoing radical transformations and, as such, our youth need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills and values to ensure social cohesion and national unity"(2007, p. 6).

The government officially uses the terms 'social cohesion' and 'national unity' and links these concepts throughout the educational system. To promote the ethnic diversity and national cohesion, the government proposed a curriculum that will shift from subject-centred to child-centred, from compartmentalized to an integrated approach to teaching and learning. Thus, the school curriculum provides to the Mauritian students the possibility to learn and respect the national values upon which the Mauritian society is built. One of the subjects in the primary curriculum is known as Value-Education. One of the key components include to teach students about Mauritius as a populace with many origins but all united with tolerance and respect of

others' cultural belief and lifestyle (2007, p. 100). History and Geography subjects in the primary level have as a key objective that students will “Develop attitudes of social sensitivity like empathy, tolerance, and understanding the richness of a multicultural society” (2007, p. 113).

One example of practical work for History on the theme of *Our locality* asks students to:

- Identify places of cultural and historical interest and draw a plan.
- Visit places of interest in the locality/region and carry out activities related to the visit
- Write, Draw, Communicate in a variety of way (2007, p. 115)

In the Education Report in Action (2008-2014) by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, the government gave further information regarding the integration of intercultural education in school activities. The former Minister of Education Dr V.Bunwaree said regarding the Intercultural Education project (ICE) that “Educating a multicultural nation in all its diversity is never an easy and stress-free venture but it is also a unique and lifetime experience, especially if the net finality and outcome is to make the system stand out as a model in the world” (2014, p. IV). The government wanted to design a unique system in term of Intercultural Education, which was adapted to the Mauritian context and could be further used as a blueprint in other multicultural countries. Furthermore, the new Minister of Education, Mrs Dookun-Luchoomun, in the recent Educational reform: National Curriculum Framework 2015 also stressed the importance of implementing Intercultural Education as this will help to determine the kind of society we will see evolving, as the ultimate purpose of Intercultural Education is to ensure harmonious coexistence among different cultures.

Through Intercultural education for cultural diversity, the objectives are to develop respect for diversity, promoting teaching which respects diversity of values, knowledge, culture

and tradition. The following is a summary of the Intercultural Education program<sup>37</sup> from the report:

#### Innovative Programme: Intercultural Education

The philosophy behind the Intercultural Education is to enable learners to inculcate a deeper understanding of one another, acceptance of the differences based on ethnicity, religion, race and culture, but also realise that the differences are a catalyst towards sustaining the country in its unflagging pursuit of peace and harmonious co-habitation.

The introduction of Intercultural Education in schools fits in with Jacques Delors' "Learning to Live Together" --which is one of the pillars on which education for the 21st Century has to be based. Actions in the Intercultural Education domain are in line with the New Curriculum Framework that states that the curriculum should develop interpersonal knowledge and skills with a view to strengthening positive attitudes, understanding and sharing of common values and also developing respect for persons and human rights.

Intercultural Education was initiated in 2010 under the aegis of the M.I.E.

The project took the shape of an exhibition and was addressed to all Mauritian pupils of primary schools.

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<sup>37</sup> Appendix F include a copy of the brochure and poster which were distributed to the primary schools regarding Intercultural Education . The objectives of IE laid high emphasis on the positive exposure of students towards diversity. The brochure and poster also reflected the Mauritian multicultural society; both were very colourful. The poster was written in three languages which reflected the multilingual aspects of this small island.

2011 “*Tous parents tous différents – ena enn sel ras, ras dimounn*” was launched as a national competition for Standards IV and V pupils of Mauritian and Rodriguan Primary schools

The children expressed themselves on this issue through different means, such as paintings and drawing, poetry and short stories, theatrical performances, slam and songs.

2013: *Nou Kiltir Nou Rises*

This project aims, inter alia, at creating awareness about the rich cultural diversity in our society, and encourages pupils to artistically demonstrate their understanding of interculturalism and associated concepts like respect, love, peace, etc. They can express themselves through the medium of

- Art (painting and drawing)
- Theatre • Music (Songs and Dance)
- Slam

As at date, 37 schools and 210 pupils have participated in the above project. The project culminates in an “Intercultural Day” projected for the end of the third term annually.

The above described exhibition was the starting point for the national competition “*Tous parents tous différents – ena en selras, ras dimoun*” based on the same theme of intercultural dialogue. Information on the Intercultural Education Project was gathered during the fieldwork in 2015 at the MIE. Mr J.Ramsaha, one of the team members of this project, provided details on the activities in line with the promotion of Intercultural Education during the structured interview session with him. The raw data collected from The Intercultural Education Project has enabled to understand the learner’s interpretation on the concept. The students creatively expressed their

understanding of interculturalism through the following: songs, poems, drama, short stories, drawing, painting and slam. This was addressed to all pupils of Standard IV and V of Mauritian and Rodriguan<sup>38</sup> primary schools. The posters offer a learning experience to be explored by teachers and students and were meant to promote the development of cultural understanding among primary school students and create an awareness of the common human heritage that cuts across cultures and civilizations. The children were then invited to express themselves on that issue through different media, such as paintings and drawing, poetry and short stories, theatre, slam and songs. The competition was held at two levels: zone and national. A cash prize was offered to all winners in each category at both levels. A prize giving ceremony, held on Thursday 29 September 2014, closed the event with a show organised to present the works of the winners in each category. Their aim was to bring to all these young pupils, on a pedagogical basis, an awareness of the need for an intercultural way of living.

However, Ramsaha also shared the feedbacks he gathered before and after the project “Still there was a general feeling that the main objective, which was to raise awareness of cultural diversity and the need for intercultural dialogue, was not achieved. Most of the participant complained about the complexity of the concept of Interculturalism.” Intercultural Education is a new concept for them. The diverse cultures have been cohabitating together at school without going deeper into intercultural understanding. Both students and teachers complained that the information vehicle in the posters were too complex for them to understand. Many participants thought Intercultural Education is about promoting mixed marriage among different cultures due to the theme ‘we are part of the same family’. Ramsaha further added that

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<sup>38</sup>Rodrigues is an autonomous outer island of the Republic of Mauritius in the Indian Ocean

“This led to various misinterpretations by the participants and by the teachers themselves, who had the responsibility to guide their pupils”

For the Intercultural Education Project, primary teachers were selected from 37 schools and were required to attend a short-term training<sup>39</sup> on Intercultural Education. Their training was based on two points:

- 1.) Explaining the concept of Intercultural Education
- 2.) Being an Intercultural Speaker

The focus of the training was on the concept of Intercultural Education and the ability to differentiate between multi and intercultural education. As the Ministry has assigned the role of Intercultural Speaker<sup>40</sup> to the teachers, they will be the ones preparing the students to participate in the Intercultural Education Project and therefore they should be in a position to convey the intercultural concept to the students. Dr Putschay, the team leader of the Intercultural Education Project mentioned that during the short term training, the teachers expressed that they don't have any understanding of Intercultural Education. It was a new concept for them. It was for the first time that the M.I.E organized a formal short term course on Intercultural Education.

There was previously no formal intercultural learning in the National Curriculum Framework for the Primary section. However, there is a holistic approach to social cohesion, through intercultural encounters at the schools and in few subjects, as well as a few innovative projects on Intercultural Education introduced by the Ministry.

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<sup>39</sup> A handout- copy of the teacher training on the Intercultural Education Project has been attached to the Appendix E

<sup>40</sup> The concept of Intercultural Speaker has been used in the context of foreign language teaching. (Byram;1997, Kramsch 1998)

#### **4.2.2. The Secondary Curriculum Framework (2009)**

The National Curriculum framework (2009)-Secondary (NCFS)<sup>41</sup> is a very important framework for the Mauritian Educational System. It was written under the direction of the MIE in close collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Human Resources. It has been stated that the NCFS took into considerations the contextual realities that exist in the Mauritian multicultural society while writing the curriculum. “Secondary school children as well as teachers come from culturally heterogeneous families and social settings and spend a major part of their daily time with each other. As such Mauritius is probably a unique example of social coexistence. Schools have determining roles to play in maintaining mutual respect and understanding, thus promoting a culture of peace and respect”(2009, p. 13).

The Government has acknowledged that the educational system must ensure the social integration of the diversified student body. Thus, at the very beginning of the NCFS, it was stated that the school curriculum will encourage students to understand and respect the cultural tradition and cultural diversity which make up the Mauritian society. The report further elaborated that “It will ensure that the experiences, cultural traditions, histories, and languages of all Mauritian are recognised and valued” (2009, p. 16). Furthermore, the NCFS also laid emphasis on developing the national identity of the student body. The report further elaborated “That the curriculum will place more emphasis on developing a sense of citizenship and belonging while developing awareness of the world and the need to maintain our tradition of peace and coexistence”(2009, p. 16). The government wants to ensure the development of a national identity while also preserving the ethnic diversity of the Mauritian. Therefore, it can be

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<sup>41</sup>[http://www.ibe.unesco.org/curricula/mauritius/mf\\_scfw\\_2009\\_eng.pdf](http://www.ibe.unesco.org/curricula/mauritius/mf_scfw_2009_eng.pdf). Accessed date: 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2015

said that the Mauritian educational system does promote the social inclusion among students. “Students develop awareness of their culture, geographic, historical and economic contexts and acquire the knowledge, skills, and values of social integration and a culture of peace”(2009, p. 17).

In language subjects, such as English and French among others, the report said that the government believed that language can be used as a tool to spread and understand culture. That is why the government has reinforced the development of further skills and competencies in the teaching and learning of Asian languages and Arabic, namely at the secondary level. “Notwithstanding their instrumental value in enabling the acquisition of other forms of knowledge, languages are also tools for thinking and a means of contributing to the cultural development of a society” (2009, p. 21). The students are given the opportunity to enhance their cultural development at the secondary level as well. The government has integrated, apart from the core subjects, other essential knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes across the curriculum. Among the cross curricular domains of learning there are topics such as cultural understanding, peace education, and sustainable development. An example is given of how cultural understanding can be inserted across various subjects by stating “Similarly, intercultural issues can be addressed in social sciences, languages, or even Home Economics classes. Sustainable development and Peace Education will cut across a number of domains and will be integrated through the content as well as the process of teaching and learning” (2009, p. 24).

It is only at the secondary level that religious studies are formally introduced into the curriculum. At the secondary level, for the first three years, all the students have to take nine core

subjects (English, French, Maths, Sciences, Social Studies, Home Economics, Computer Studies, Physical Education, and one Oriental language<sup>42</sup>). All students learn the eight subjects in their respective classrooms, with the exception of oriental language courses which are taught separately<sup>43</sup>. For example, for Hindi language, they will move to the Hindi classroom. In this class, they will greet their teacher in Hindi and the medium of teaching will be Hindi. The different languages are learned in isolation. It is only when there is a school celebration, where very often the cultural richness is brought forward, the whole student body can get the opportunity to hear one student reading a poem or sing a song in Hindi or Arabic or any of the other languages.

After three years of secondary school, there are additional subjects that are presented as options which include Religious Education<sup>44</sup> such as the theoretical study of Hinduism, Islamic Studies, or Bible Knowledge. It has been noted that very few students will opt for religious subjects because students prefer to concentrate on their science, language, or economic subjects. However, because Hindu are the majority, the number of students who opt for Hinduism are higher. For any optional subjects in the secondary school, there is a minimum requirement of at least ten students to enroll or request the course for the Ministry to provide a teacher. Very often the number of students interested in taking a course on Islamic Studies and Bible Knowledge are fewer than ten, therefore the subjects will not be offered that term and the students will have to choose another subject. This situation can be considered quite unfair when one considers that these two religious representatives are minority groups in Mauritius, therefore the number of

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<sup>42</sup>It is optional. Most of the students opt for an Oriental language. Those who don't will be in the non-oriental class. They will have a free period)

<sup>43</sup>The same rule is applied in the primary school.

<sup>44</sup>These subjects are mainly theoretical. There is not practical experiences like for example visit to religious places.

students who will select these subjects are fewer compared to Hinduism. Very often in the government secondary schools, these two subjects are not offered even though there is a demand for them. Again, these subjects are taught by teachers of the same faith and in most of the cases students of the same faith will opt for subject related to their faith. As Maudarbux highlighted “Each group is taught separately and there is no interaction at all between the different faiths and cultures” (2016, p. 472). This situation has led to the compartmentalisation of the different religious groups in the school. There is no formal interaction or teaching regarding religion between the different ethnic groups. For example, in the UK, they have Religious Studies. All the students have the opportunities to learn about the main religions in the world.

Therefore, it can be said that at secondary level, students mainly experience interculturalism through their daily encounters with their teachers and friends. There is a gap in terms of the philosophy and practices of NCFS on social cohesion in the school system.

#### **4.3. The Mauritius Institute of Education: The Teacher Training Program**

The following section will examine the presence of Multicultural and Intercultural Education in the teacher training program at the MIE, which is offered for both primary and secondary teacher trainees. The researcher has done an in-depth desk review of the primary and secondary school modules at the MIE during her fieldwork in September 2015. In order to gain further information about the modules, the subject teachers were contacted at the M.I.E. From the outset, it must be said that at the Institution very often a module or a course can be changed or eliminated depending on the needs of the trainees or the demand of the Ministry of Education in Mauritius. In many cases, teachers who were newly recruited are not aware of the previous courses/modules which have been changed. Thus, it has been difficult to gain further insights on the content analysis in some cases.

It should be noted that since its inception, MIE has been involved in curriculum development for both the primary and secondary levels. In 1988, the national curriculum development was undertaken by a separate department known National Centre for Curriculum Research and Development (NCCRD). However, the MIE has continued to provide for the personnel to be subject matter experts and consultants. The NCCRD has the task to direct national objectives from the Ministry of Education and Human Resources into curriculum specifications. The National Curriculum Framework has to be adopted in the schools. The Mauritius Institute of Education is the major teacher training program in Mauritius which is responsible for teacher training for the pre-primary, primary, and secondary sectors. This institute was established in 1973 by an Act of Parliament, indicating Government willingness to improve the education system from the very early period of independence. Ramdoyal (1973) pointed out that the conception of M.I.E was “to provide facilities and to engage in educational research, curriculum development, and teacher education and thereby to promote the advancement of learning and knowledge in the field of education and in particular, to provide a teacher education responsive to the social, linguistic, administrative, scientific, agricultural, and technological needs of Mauritius”(p. 11).The following are the main function of the MIE:

- a) To act as a catalyst in education system and guide it to meet the needs of the country.
- b) To improve the quality of primary and secondary school teachers by providing adequate pre-service and in-service courses, and with the assistance of the University, to develop suitable methods of certification for teachers, particularly at the secondary level.
- c) To develop, test and evaluate learning materials (including teacher’s manuals and audio-visuals aids) which would incorporate new curriculum content and methods.

- d) To design and incorporate activities which are selected by the Ministry of Education at primary and secondary levels.

The MIE is divided into four main schools:

- a) School of Applied Science with 4 departments.
- b) School of Arts and Humanities, 5 departments
- c) School of Education, 3 departments
- d) School of Science and Mathematics, 2 departments.

All courses for primary teachers are in-service while secondary teachers have the option to attend either pre-service or in-service courses. Only the following courses have been reviewed because they are directly related to the primary and secondary levels:

1. Teachers' diploma (Primary)
2. Teachers' diploma (Secondary)
3. Teachers' Certificate (Primary)
4. Teachers' Certificate (Secondary)
5. Advanced Certificate in Education (Primary)
6. Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE)-Secondary
7. Bachelor of Education (B. Ed)

In 1983, in the 'Teacher Certificate Primary' (TCP) there was a module named 'Environmental studies' (EVS). One of the objectives of this course was to enable teachers to develop respect towards the environment and to have an openness and tolerance vis-à-vis the rich cultural heritage of the island. In the course titled 'Sociology of Education,' there was a section which dealt with the concept of multiculturalism. The module analysed the application of education in a multicultural context within various theoretical frameworks, for example through

the psychology of education and its analysis of the socio-affective, linguistic, moral, and general personality development of the child. Research conducted in 1994 by the MIE for UNESCO showed that multicultural approach is adopted in the teacher training informally in the teaching of various subjects. The research stated that “An analysis of the objectives and content of these various subjects in the training program does not reveal a primary concern for multicultural education” (1994, p. 149). The institute focused more on the academic training of the teachers and the research revealed that “The principal concern in most of those areas that will subsequently be taught is to equip trainees with knowledge about the content and methodology of teaching these subjects in order that they may function effectively” (1994, p. 149).

However, in the TDP programme 2004-2006, there was a specific module named ‘Intercultural and Citizenship Education’. The objectives of this module were to enable the teachers to acquire knowledge on cultural and citizenship issues in Mauritius. It has been noted that this module specifically focused on the vital importance of social cohesion and social stability within a multicultural context. There is an effort towards the strengthening of the social cohesion through the spread of cultural understanding among teachers. A new module, entitled ‘Values and Citizenship,’ has replaced this previous module though the content is quite similar. The Education Studies Department, through the PGCE Programme 1994-1995, was offering a module entitled ‘General Cultural Studies.’ The content of the module offered the teacher-trainees the opportunity to develop multicultural attitudes through the understanding and appreciation of music, literature, history, and philosophy of various cultural traditions. Throughout the teacher training institute, all subject areas and Education studies departments encourage the development of critical thinking among the trainees. That is reflected through the above-mentioned modules, in which trainees were encouraged to critically reflect on their daily

practices and exposure to other cultures. Indeed these can help to develop positive multicultural competences.

Current modules, including ones such as ‘Issues in Education’ and courses like ‘Research Methodology’ in the PGCE programme, will further lead to develop critical thinking attitudes as they encourage teachers to analyse sensitive issues, whether related to academic level or to cultural understanding, in the classroom. In one module, ‘Thinking skills,’ the teacher trainees will learn about different theories and strategies on critical thinking. Such courses will enhance their ability to deal with problems and through objective and scientific methods they will be able to find solutions to problems that may arise in their classroom. If this is examined through a multicultural context, it can be said that the teachers will be well equipped to teach in a diverse classroom environment. They will be open-minded and have more understanding towards the cultural ethnic groups.

It has been noticed that the course leading to a ‘Bachelor of Education’ includes several modules which included the concept of multiculturalism. The following table<sup>45</sup> highlights the modules that have included in a formal way issues pertaining to cultural understanding.

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<sup>45</sup>Information compiled by the researcher

**Table 7: Lists of Modules**

<b>Modules</b>	<b>Components related to ME and IE</b>
Sociolinguistics	With special reference to the Mauritian context, this course considers multiculturalism and language policy.
Philosophical Issues in Education	This course includes some certain aspects of multicultural education and cultural studies.
Social context of teaching and learning.	This course stressed on the importance of pluralism and education for the next millennium.

In 2003, the MIE launched a module titled ‘Values Education’ for secondary school teachers. It was a short-term course, offered for only three weeks. It is important to point out that the course was not part of a major of study at the MIE, but rather developed in response to societal problems manifesting in the behavior among school students; it was noticed that there was a degradation of values. To respond to this issue, MIE felt it was important to empower the teachers who could in turn influence the students. The National Curriculum Framework had already set guidelines for value education at the school level. For this module, approximately 80 teachers from different subject areas attended the course voluntarily with the understanding that they would then integrate values education into their subject areas at school. The main contents of this module were regarding family values, respect of others, and problems resulting from the generation gap and their possible solutions. There is no formal mention of multicultural or intercultural education in the content of this course, and it was run only once. Most probably due to administrative changes or new government educational reforms the project was abandoned.

Regarding the Intercultural Education project which was launched in 2011, it was the M.I.E who was responsible for this project as well. They selected schools from across the island and teachers who were working at the primary level. The teachers who were chosen to

implement the project were given a short-term training on how to undertake the process with the students. They were not given formal training on the pedagogical perspective of Intercultural Education.

Most of the content that has been analysed does not reveal a clear presence of multicultural and intercultural education. Both concepts are expressed in rather broad terms. Furthermore, the Institute doesn't make a clear distinction between the two pedagogies. In a few courses and modules, the multicultural elements appeared clearly and in a more explicit way. However, the main concern of the Institute is to equip the teacher trainees with the knowledge, competences, skills, and methods to teach the various subjects of the curriculum. When the content of the MIE programs is compared with the NCF we can see that there is a gap. The NCF concerns towards strengthening the cultural understanding of heterogeneous students have not been explicitly included in the MIE teacher-training programs. It is important to examine if the content outlines of the few programs at the MIE which deal with the components of ME and IE are translated into practice. It might be possible that the multicultural or intercultural elements become more evident and clear during practical training between the teacher-trainers and teacher-trainees.

#### **4.4. Content Analysis of a Situation Analysis of Education for Sustainable Development at School Level in Mauritius**

The MIE was commissioned and funded by UNESCO Japan to conduct a *Situation Analysis of Education for Sustainable Development at School Level in Mauritius*. The UNESCO / UNDP ESD Survey / Situation Analysis is a study in four main fields including “Climatic Change,” “Environment,” “HIV/AIDS,” and “Intercultural diversity and Intercultural

Understanding” in the context of Education for Sustainable Development in Mauritius. This survey was carried out in line with the goal set up by the UN Decade (2005-2014) of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD) which is the integration of principles, values, and practices of sustainable development into all aspects of education and learning. The study covered situational analysis of Education at pre-primary, primary, and secondary levels while focusing on the curriculum implementation and the teaching and managerial practices in Mauritian schools. One of its main objectives is to recommend guidelines for reorienting existing education programs that will stimulate creative thinking and develop synergies between schools and communities to give rise to a new Mauritian economic model. The final report was submitted to UNESCO by the end of November 2011. The research was carried out by a multidisciplinary team from MIE from July to November 2011 and was submitted to the UNDP Mauritius.

The main project consultant for the section on ‘Cultural Diversity and Intercultural Understanding’ was Dr Putchay<sup>46</sup>. For the purpose of this research, the report on the cultural diversity and intercultural understanding section dealing with primary and secondary teaching staff only will be analysed. The sample included teachers from 30 Primary and 20 Secondary School. The majority of the schools were government schools and a few private and BEC schools were included. Overall 214 primary and 217 secondary school teachers participated. The objective of this study was to identify the presence of Interculturalism in the development of education for sustainable development in the Mauritian educational system. According to

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<sup>46</sup> Fieldwork Sept -Dec 2015. During the fieldwork, the researcher has worked under the guidance of Dr V. Putchay from the MIE. He has guided how to organise the research work and has granted permission to the researcher to use this report in her thesis. This is an unpublished report. The researcher accessed the report in the office of Dr V. Putchay. A desk was assigned to the researcher. The content analysis of this report is supported by an interview which was conducted with DrPutchay , classroom observations and textbooks analysis in a few schools.

Putchay(2016), in the Mauritian curriculum, educational concepts like multicultural and intercultural education are not formally present. However, for the purpose of the research, the researchers have searched for the presence of concepts like multicultural society and cultural diversity on which knowledge of intercultural education can be built and its practices can be developed in the schools. The main emerging questions for this study were:

- a) How far do cultural diversity and intercultural understanding constitute a mainspring for sustainable development in favour of individuals, communities and the Mauritian nation in general?
- b) How far is education helping people to live together peacefully, tolerating and accepting differences amongst cultural and ethnic groups?

For the purpose of this thesis, the content analysis of this report will be structured under two main sections: (i) teaching and learning and (ii) curricula practice. The two main parts will provide information on the teachers' understanding and experience of interculturalism in their respective classrooms. The teachers who participated in this survey are from both primary and secondary levels. All teachers from primary school have attended the teacher training in Mauritius, though this is not true for all teachers in the secondary school. It has only been recently that the government had determined that PGCE is mandatory during the recruiting of secondary teacher. Those who have been grandfathered in may have PGCE from MIE or from other international university or may not have a PGCE at all. It is important to note that some teachers from the secondary may not have attended any teacher training program. The data collected from the report have been re-represented into tables and analysed according to the objective of this research. It is crucial to gain insights on teachers' practical perceptions of the

concepts of ‘multiculturalism,’ ‘cultural diversity,’ and ‘intercultural education.’ In the second part of this analysis we will identify the practices of intercultural education at the school level.

#### **4.4.1. Teaching and Learning**

As previously stated, multicultural and intercultural education is not formally included in the curriculum or teacher training programs. The analysis of the key elements, including ‘multiculturalism,’ ‘cultural diversity,’ and intercultural understanding’ upon which the concept of multicultural and intercultural education are built, will enable us to verify the teachers’ own perceptions. One of the questions from the questionnaire to the teachers was: *‘What school learners are taught about Mauritius as a Multicultural society?’*

**Table 8: What school learners are taught about Mauritius as a multicultural society?**

Response rate:89%	PST%	SST%
<b>Different culture forming one single national culture</b>	87.4	77.9
<b>One major culture and different minor culture</b>	4.2	5.1
<b>Different communities practising their respective cultures in isolation</b>	7.5	14.7
<b>An ignored cultural diversity</b>	0.5	0.5
<b>Different communities living in constant threat with each other</b>	1.9	0.9
<b>Others (A country where each community works for its own benefit, marginalizing other communities to achieve its aim)</b>	0.9	2.3
<b>No response</b>	5.1	2.3

In Mauritius, all different ethnic groups are allowed to practice their religious and cultural beliefs. When students come to school they also bring with them those practices which are respected and promoted. However, at the same time as Mauritians, they will also develop a national culture which is a mix of all the various cultures. This question has enabled the verification of the respondents' notion of multiculturalism and cultural diversity. The majority of the school teachers in both the primary and secondary sectors have a good concept of multiculturalism. From the responses, 87.4% of the Primary Schools Teachers (PST) and 77.9% of the Secondary Schools Teachers (SST) believed that school learners are taught *'that Mauritius as a multicultural society is a country where different cultures form one single national culture'*. In a way, this shows that teachers are in a position to convey the knowledge of national unity and

cultural diversity in Mauritius. During the classroom observation<sup>47</sup> portion of this research, it was noticed that the classroom setting is often oriented towards the practical intercultural sharing at a micro-level to take place. In every class, both primary and secondary, students have the freedom to seat themselves in small heterogeneous groups around small tables. Putschay (2016) commented that: “It offers the possibility for constructive sharing through informal conversations on topics like religious festivals, family and food habits. Pedagogies based on hands-on activities whereby pupils work in groups for creative arts, role play and games is reinforced by this setting. They allow much scope for sharing family customs and customs norms and habits emanating from different cultural backgrounds”.

When it comes to the question *Does the teacher have a proper understanding of cultural diversity in Mauritius?* only 58.8 % of the PST and 35 % of the SST have a good understanding of this concept. The PST responses were higher, which might mean that during their pre-service training at the MIE, they may have been exposed to such concepts. Suffice to say, the respondents who are aware of such key concepts will be better able to guide the learners.

**Table 9: Teachers understanding of cultural diversity**

Teachers perceived understanding of cultural diversity	PST%	SST%
<b>Not at all</b>	2.8	1.8
<b>Moderately</b>	35.5	61.8
<b>Good</b>	58.8	35
<b>No response</b>	2.8	1.8

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<sup>47</sup>The researcher has 10 years of experience in teaching at secondary school level with the Ministry of Education and Human Resources in Mauritius. She is also sharing her own observations in the classroom in Mauritius. Besides she had also done sight visit to classroom in the pre-primary, primary and secondary. An observation questionnaire (Appendix D) was used to record the information

On the other hand, it is very alarming to note that some 35% of the PST and 61.3% of the SST said that they have only a 'moderate understanding' of cultural diversity. This indicates that among some teachers there is a lack of knowledge on this concept and thus the promotion of cultural diversity can be hindered among school learners. The reason might be because the majority of teachers don't have the knowledge to share with the learners or because the teachers are more preoccupied with the completion of the syllabus at the primary and secondary levels. The constraints that teachers might face in the effective promotion of Intercultural Education are lack of materials available on the topic and secondly teachers are more concerned with their subject. During the consultative meeting with Dr Putchay, he said that the teachers who participated at the survey did convey to him three main difficulties in promoting Intercultural Education. The first issue was that they couldn't find enough information about Intercultural Education in textbooks. Second, they didn't have any training on Intercultural education. And finally, due to their heavy workload, they don't have enough space in their scheme of work to incorporate Intercultural Education even though they believe there is a need for it in the education system.

The school system in Mauritian is highly exam-oriented and the teachers have limited time to engage in cultural diversity and intercultural understanding during the delivery of their lessons. When we compared the syllabus of the pre-primary to the primary or secondary sector, it is evident that there is a high presence of intercultural education in the pre-primary. Through a few classroom observations in the pre-primary sector, it has been noticed that many posters, pictures, and collages which are displayed on the walls reflects various aspects of the Mauritian multicultural society. The fact that pre-primary teachers do not have to bear the stress and pressure of examinations means they have the opportunity to concentrate on a cultural diversity

based education as part of their syllabus. For example, students, irrespective of their cultural background, participate and celebrate almost all festivals (*Eid, Divali, Christmas*) which are organised by the culturally diverse teachers. This is a practical way to create awareness of cultural diversity and also a means to appreciate other cultures. However, classroom observations at both the primary and secondary levels have shown that at visual level, the walls of the classroom reflect more academic concerns such as literacy and numeracy. Due to academic concerns, CPE examination for primary level and SC an HSC examinations for the secondary level, teachers teach their respective subject in an academic perspective. Issues pertaining to intercultural awareness are relegated to the background and “are rarely addressed as they are left for special occasions like religious festivals or for English and French essay writings”(Putchay, 2015). Other topics like Respect(50.8% of PST and 26.7%), Justice (34.9% of PST and 20.7% of SST), and Equity (38.4% of PST and 22.1 of SST) also obtained good consideration and are very thoroughly covered in both sectors according to most respondents. This is consistent with the main aim and objectives of intercultural education.

**Table 10: Topics covered by PST at schools**

PST	CD	Respect	Justice	Equity	Poverty	Human Rights	Racism	Religion
<b>Not at all</b>	4.2	1.5	4.1	3.2	2.6	3.1	25.7	7.3
<b>To a small extent</b>	11.0	3.0	7.2	7.4	5.1	11.5	14.8	18.2
<b>Somewhat</b>	30.9	12.6	20	15.3	14.3	21.9	21.3	25.5
<b>Thoroughly</b>	33.0	32.2	33.8	35.8	30.1	30.2	21.9	29.2
<b>V. thoroughly</b>	20.9	50.8	34.9	38.4	48	33.3	16.4	19.8

**Table 11: Topics covered by SST at schools**

SST	CD	Respect	Justice	Equity	Poverty	Human Rights	Racism	Religion
<b>Not at all</b>	14.3	6.5	6.5	7.8	7.8	7.4	21.7	21.7
<b>To a small extent</b>	19.4	8.8	13.4	11.1	12.9	15.2	14.7	16.1
<b>Somewhat</b>	29.5	21.2	23	22.1	20.7	23.5	20.3	19.8
<b>Thoroughly</b>	16.6	26.7	24.9	25.3	24.4	25.3	18.4	17.5
<b>V. thoroughly</b>	8.8	26.7	20.7	22.1	24.4	19.4	12	14.3
<b>No response</b>	11.5	9.2	11.5	11.5	9.7	9.2	12.9	10.6

#### **4.4.2. Curricular practices**

When the teachers were asked about the definitions which their school can adopt for intercultural understanding, it is interesting to note that 75.7% of the PST and 67.7% of the SST choose *'respect for different ideas and lifestyle,'* as shown in Table 12. Indeed 'respect' is a key element in both multicultural and intercultural education. It also reflects the competency of teachers who themselves work in a heterogeneous group. The faculty and staff are composed of different ethnic groups and cultures. They are used to working with and respecting colleagues of different cultural groups. The staffroom arrangement is a reflection of the classroom arrangement. Teachers sit in heterogeneous groups. Teachers as well as students don't group themselves in the school according to their common culture or religious affiliation. That is why at the school level the concept of 'respect' towards other cultures which is an important element

in Intercultural education is highly present. Cases of conflicting relations towards those who belong to other cultural and religious communities at the school level are very rare.

**Table 12: Definitions to be adopted for intercultural understanding**

<b>Response rate 88.2%</b>	<b>PST%</b>	<b>SST%</b>
<b>The ability and willingness to see things from a different cultural perspective</b>	37.4	40.1
<b>The respect for different ideas and lifestyle</b>	75.7%	67.7%
<b>The recognition that your culture is not superior to others</b>	34.6%	38.2%
<b>The exploring and understanding of one's own culture</b>	21	28.1
<b>Working across a variety of cultures</b>	49.1	45.6
<b>No response</b>	6.1	5.5

These data also correspond to the responses of the teachers when asked which topics are closely considered in the promotion of intercultural understanding. A large majority of the PST (84.6%) and SST (79.3%) chose the topic 'Respect.' In both cases, their definition and choice of topic are coherent. And once again, Cultural Diversity (76.6% of PST and 76.5 of SST) and Justice (53.3% of PST and 46.5% of SST) as topics to be inserted in the intercultural education were also selected. Peace as a topic also had a very good response (71.5% and 64.4%). Bearing in mind that Mauritius has been selected many times as the most peaceful country in Africa, the selection of this topic will help to reiterate the importance of peaceful cohabitation in a multicultural island.

**Table 13: Topics to be covered in intercultural education**

Response Rate: 87%	PST%	SST%
<b>Cultural Diversity</b>	76.6	76.5
<b>Respect</b>	84.6	79.3
<b>Justice</b>	53.3	46.5
<b>Equity</b>	61.7	56.2
<b>Peace</b>	71.5	65.4
<b>Human Rights</b>	52.3	62.2
<b>Poverty</b>	20.6	24.4
<b>Racism</b>	22	18
<b>Religious beliefs</b>	57.5	55.8
<b>Other: ethics</b>	0.5	3.2
<b>No response</b>	6.5	3.7

When the teachers were asked ‘*What does your school wish to achieve by promoting awareness of intercultural understanding?*’, 80.4% of the PST and 79.3% of the SST have opted for the answer ‘*achieve a way of living together in peace, justice and respect of rights.*’ The essence of social integration in a multicultural society prevailed in their answers. However, it is alarming to notice that 23.4 % of the PST and 22.1% of SST chose to ‘*put an end to ethnic and religious backgrounds as option.*’ This can be interpreted as weakness in teachers’ understanding and awareness of intercultural understanding. And can also be interpreted that teachers don’t see school as a place to teach about cultural understanding and cohabitation. They want to eradicate the concept of ethnic and religion which form an integral part of the students’ life. Indeed, this

kind of response shows there is a demanding need to train the teachers in intercultural education in order to avoid such conflicts of thought with the students.

**Table 14:What the school can achieve through intercultural understanding?**

<b>Response Rate: 88.6%</b>	<b>PST%</b>	<b>SST%</b>
<b>Achieve a way of living together in peace, justice and respect of rights</b>	80.4	79.3
<b>Make a step further towards a more human globalization</b>	42.1	37.3
<b>Put an end to ethnic and religious backgrounds</b>	23.4	22.1
<b>Make use of the creative synergies of diversity</b>	22	28.1
<b>Produce responsible citizens for a better society</b>	73.8	71.4
<b>Other: Help people think towards only 1 race i.e. human race</b>	0.5	1.4
<b>No response</b>	5.6	3.2

In the questionnaire, there were questions directly related to intercultural education. These questions were inserted by the researchers who conducted this analysis probably in order to see if the teachers were aware of this educational concept. The response to the question ‘*What do you want students at your school to achieve through intercultural education?*’(Table 15) was once again largely oriented towards qualities and competencies which will lead to social inclusiveness of the students. 84.6% of the PST and 79.7% of the SST believed that through intercultural education, schools want students to become tolerant, understanding, compassionate, and caring towards others. And it is interesting to note that many respondents believed that students must learn about values and cultures of others (74.3% of PST and 75.1% of SST). The interchange of cultural understanding is very important in building intercultural education. In

Mauritius, students at the primary level learn about cultural diversity through examples of religious practices. Take for instance the Divali festival, a Hindu religious festivity that celebrates light, victory over darkness and contributes to Intercultural education by highlighting the spiritual value of light for everybody, irrespective of one’s religion, skin colour, etc. At this early age, school has the capacity to build the foundations of intercultural education in the students who will later become multicultural citizens. The multicultural citizen is achieved as a result of the exposure, understanding and influence of the multiple cultures. The multicultural citizen will be able to live cohesively in a multicultural society because he/she has been empowered to accept and understand other cultures.

**Table 15: What you want your students to achieve through intercultural education?**

<b>Response rate: 91%</b>	<b>PST %</b>	<b>SST%</b>
<b>Learning about values and cultures of others</b>	74.3	75.1
<b>Becoming responsible and productive citizens</b>	69.2	65.9
<b>Becoming tolerant, understanding, compassionate and caring towards others</b>	83.6	79.7
<b>Developing skills in resolving conflicts</b>	51.9	50.7
<b>Able to learn about and express their own language and cultural heritage</b>	43.9	41.9
<b>Other: Understand and apply real sense of equity for all</b>	0.5	1.9
<b>No response</b>	1.9	3.2

The teachers were further asked ways through which they feel Intercultural Education in curricula (Table 16) can help to resolve conflicts between cultures. The response is much divided for this question. 93.9% of the PST teachers while only 37.3% of the SST opted for the

answer *'having mutual understanding between cultures.'* The PST responses were in line with the two previous questions. They believe in understanding and exchange between cultures. It is quite alarming that 1.4 % of the SST and 22.1% of the PST said allowing one culture to lead other cultures is one way through which intercultural education will help to resolve conflicts in curricula. This answer is not reflecting the concept of intercultural education. Instead the answer has an assimilationist approach in it. The teachers' responses show there is a lack of knowledge on how to implement intercultural education. Putchay (2016) during the interview session said "Even if such ways of thinking statistically represent a low percentage at this stage of study, it is enough to constitute a serious threat for a society in its endeavour towards intercultural harmony". Furthermore, this response can be related to the belief of 4.2% of PST and 5.1% of SST who said in a multicultural society 'there is one major culture and different minor cultures.' It is quite worrying that within the educational system, there are teachers who have assimilationist tendencies.

**Table 16: How can Intercultural Education solve conflicts among culture?**

<b>Response rate: 89%</b>	<b>PST%</b>	<b>SST%</b>
<b>Allowing one culture to lead other cultures</b>	6.1%	79.3%
<b>Having mutual understanding between cultures</b>	93.9	37.3
<b>Eliminating some cultures</b>	1.4	22.1
<b>Learning through experiences of communalism, racism, xenophobia and religious conflict</b>	61.7	28.1
<b>Ensuing economic justice</b>	62.1	71.4
<b>Other: Putting the equal opportunities Act in play</b>	1.9	1.4
<b>No response</b>	4.7	3.2

The analysis of questions related to Intercultural Education have provided insights on the teaching staff in the classroom. Teachers have an important role to play in the process of Intercultural Education. As pointed out by Payneeandy (2002),“They should also be able to impart certain basic universal values that can contribute to the development of cohesive societies”(p. 41). In order to sustain social cohesion, the teacher training should be reconsidered and renewed according to pedagogical concept that is adapted to the Mauritian context. Teachers in the classroom will be the major actor that can lead to effective change in the students’ perceptions of cultures.

#### **4.4.3. The presence of intercultural Education in school materials:**

After the NCF and the *Situation Analysis of Education for sustainable Development at School Level in Mauritius* reports were analysed, the results were compared to the level that intercultural education is featured in the school materials. Thus, a desk-analysis of textbooks was undertaken against the findings of the teachers and the NCF for both primary and secondary. This will enable further comprehension of the teachers’ answers and the ethos of the NCF.

At the primary level, a few concepts in the current books for French and English languages provide a possibility for the development of intercultural understanding. But, there no explicit information on how the lessons should be conducted while focusing on intercultural education. Most likely, the teachers are not inherently able to extrapolate on the intercultural aspect. Furthermore, a first look at the content in History and Geography show no direct references to intercultural understanding. In most of the textbooks, the focus is only on the main content of the subject area. Therefore, it can be said that at the primary level textbooks address the concept of interculturalism only informally in limited subjects’ lessons. In the secondary textbooks, a few themes are proposed in the French textbooks for Form V, such as ‘religion,’

‘media,’ and ‘social problems,’ can contribute to the development of an intercultural discussion in the classroom. However, the academic objectives of these topics are mainly to prepare students to be able to answer the questions well. The issue at hand is if the teachers will link these topics to Interculturalism. Formally the teachers are not asked to do so. Dr Putschay mentioned that “the philosophy of the National Curriculum framework is to ensure social cohesion and national unity. However, the curriculum doesn’t stress that this can be attained through Intercultural education”. It is left to the teachers to tackle such issues according to their own perceptions. This should be considered as a missing link in the training and development of the teachers. It is important that the teachers are given the proper training on Intercultural Education in order to avoid any case of confusion or the spread of wrong information. It is during the last two years of secondary school for the HSC(Higher School Certificate) preparation that students are given the scope for discussion on themes link to Intercultural Education through specific topic such as heritage, culture, and global identities. Finally, it was only in the textbook of social studies(primary and secondary Form1 level only) that issues pertaining to multiculturalism and interculturalism were addressed, such as individuals and interaction in the society. But in most cases, the textbooks are exam-oriented and the contents are bulky.

The analysis of the survey which was conducted in the primary and secondary schools has highlighted the reality of teaching and learning in the actual classroom. It is clear that for the teachers, Intercultural education is important but they don’t have a proper understanding of the pedagogy. They can’t clearly distinguish between Multicultural and Intercultural education. In their daily teaching, they have limited scope to promote intercultural education due to their bulky syllabi. But overall there seems to be an understanding of key concepts like cultural diversity, respect, and the importance of a multicultural society.

#### 4.5. The Teacher-Trainers' perspectives on Multicultural and Intercultural Education and Social Cohesion.

To gather primary information, structured interviews were done among teacher trainers at three main institutions. Three categories of participants were chosen in order to allow for the triangulation of data. The participants were as follows:

- a) M.I.E Teacher-Trainers (Lecturers)
- b) Lecturers from the Religious Councils of Mauritius- Certificate in Peace and Interfaith Dialogue at the University of Mauritius.
- c) Representative of the Intercultural Department at the '*Institut Cardinal Jean Margeot*'

**Table 17: Number of participants**

Institute	No. of participants
Mauritius Institute of Education (M.I.E)	11
The Council of Religions of Mauritius. (CoR)	2
Institute Cardinal Jean Margeot (ICJM)	1

Before the findings of the interviews are discussed, a brief description of the two main institutions, the Council of Religions and The *Institut of Cardinal Jean Margeot*, will be provided. The Council of Religions<sup>48</sup> (COR) groups various leaders from different religions and aims at building bridges among the multi-religious groups, sustain peace, and promote mutual understanding in Mauritius. Maudarbux (2016) said “In the aftermath of the riots, the Committee

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<sup>48</sup>The five major religions in Mauritius are represented namely: Christian, Hindu, Muslim and Buddhism

of Wise People (which later became the Council of Religions) came into being so as to offer a platform of exchange among leaders of different faiths and to work towards consolidating interfaith collaboration and social harmony” (p. 472). It can be said that following the 1999 riots, the society felt the need to consolidate its social fabrics and they took major steps by uniting the different religious on one platform. The fact that religion was the main marker in Mauritius, the step taken was indeed in the favour of the society. In this perspective, in 2010, the Council of Religions launched a ‘Peace and Interfaith Studies’ part-time course at the University of Mauritius. The course is open to both University students and the public. Mr.Chenganna<sup>49</sup>, the coordinator for the Peace and Interfaith course, explained that though many students from the UOM are interested in the modules, they often cannot attend it because the time schedule clashes with their other core subjects. Therefore, the students for this course are mainly social workers, preachers, and religious practioners. Mr.Chenganna explained that this course will enable students of different faiths to learn about the faiths of other members of the Mauritian society. The course objective is to enable students to have better understanding and appreciation of the religion of others and in that way is in a better position to preach their own religion.

As an illustrative example, if the media is associating Islam with terrorism, the Hindu or Christian preachers will not spread a false image of Islam among their respective followers. They will be able to deconstruct such false amalgamation with Islam because they have a clear understanding of this religion. This will avoid communal tension or negative portrayal of the Muslim community in the island by the other religious group. Mr.Chenganna further added “The

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<sup>49</sup>Mr A.Chenganna is a lecturer in Media and Communication from the Faculty of Social Studies and Humanities, University of Mauritius. He is the coordinator of the Peace and Interfaith Course.

highpoint about this course is that it will inculcate common values in all religion practices in Mauritius, and will aim at promoting such values amidst the Mauritian society at large. It is very important when we are living in a multi-religious society that people try to get out of their self-imposed barriers, to unlearn their misconceptions and to open towards the spiritual culture of their neighbours. This will further enhance the mutual understanding, acceptance, harmony and peace in the island".The course had the essence of leading to social cohesion in the Mauritian society. The Reverend Eddy Cheoung See, who is an active member and the main liaison officer at the COR for the Peace and Interfaith course, explained that the course has been running for the past 6 years and the 3 batches of students who has obtained the certificate have been involved at grass root levels in their respective communities. However, it should be noted that such values and understanding are being exposed at University level. The younger generation at school could also benefit from such a course at the primary and secondary levels.

The *Institut Jean Cardinal Margeot* (IJCM) is affiliated with the Catholic School<sup>50</sup> in Mauritius. It offers various facilities and services including teacher-training, a research centre, and public service to the community. The Institute has six departments, of which one, known as the Intercultural Department, is deeply anchored in the multicultural and multi-religious needs of the students at the Catholic schools. Mrs. Wendy Rose Gujadhur, the chair of the Intercultural Department, firmly believes that students must be exposed to interculturalism at a very young age. Intercultural education has not been introduced formally in the Catholic schools but the Institute has instituted many projects, activities, talks, and class discussion based on Intercultural

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<sup>50</sup> In Mauritius apart the government schools, there is also private schools and faith-based schools which benefits from state funding. The Catholic schools (BEC) have 47 primary and 17 secondary stated funded schools. They cater for around 35000 students across the island.

Education at school level. She believed that the students who get the opportunity to learn about the different cultures and religions in the island will be better prepared to embrace diversity and stand by each other in the Mauritian society.

#### **4.5.1 Discussion of the structured interviews.**

The structured interview was chosen in order to ensure standardization in the questions to allow for comparison of the answers between different participants. In order to probe into deeper questions, in many cases a few unstructured questions were asked. The number of participants from among the M.I.E staff was higher simply because the institution has higher human resources compare to the other two participating organizations. The M.I.E staff have all been involved directly or indirectly in the Intercultural Education project. In the other two institutions only a few members are aware of intercultural education. This justifies the higher participation of the M.I.E members. The structured interview was divided into three parts, namely:

- a) Encountering diversity at work
- b) Infusing intercultural competence through education
- c) Social cohesion in SIDS.

Through the three main sections, the trainers were questioned on the main research areas of this thesis. In order to analyse their answers, the theoretical framework of Allport's contact theory will be used to understand how contact at their work place can lead to intercultural experience.

- a) Encountering diversity at work.

In this section, the main questions focused on their exposure as trainers to diversity. The following questions were raised:

1. Who are the people you mainly face in your work?

2. What kind of diversity have you recognised in your work?

All of the trainers answered that they face diversity in term of ethnicity, cultural, religious, regional, colour, and race. This is through their daily encounters with teacher-trainees at the pre-primary, primary (in-service and pre-service), and secondary (in-service and pre-service) levels. Mr.Chenganna stated that he is mainly exposed to diversity through his university students and Mrs Rose at the school, when she is involved with students regarding the Intercultural Projects. The frequency of contact between different cultural groups at their work place is very high. In the general work environment of the teacher trainers there is also a high deal of contact between the heterogenous staff members of these Institutions. What the trainers are experiencing is broadly representative of the wider Mauritian culture.

Such experience is not contextualized spatially within the institute's environment only because the wider Mauritian society is exposed to diversity in their neighbourhood, the supermarket, beaches, and other public spaces. Mauritian trainees are not colour-blind in their daily life as they themselves they are not coming from monocultural settings. Their experience of diversity will be influential towards their students. The multicultural nature of the working space will have positive effects in the promotion of social cohesion in an informal manner. This may explain why when they were asked *What is especially positive when working with people from diverse cultures*, all of the participants talked about the rich experience of working with students from different backgrounds. They get the opportunity to learn, appreciate, and see things from different and rich perspectives. One lecturer from the M.I.E, who is an Art lecturer, said the diversity presence in her classroom is often reflected in the artwork and it is so beautiful to see this richness. Thus, diversity does not hinder their work; instead they use diversity as an advantage in order for teaching and learning to take place positively.

When they were asked: *What has been challenging or problematic and why?* The answers varied. One participant from M.I.E, who is a lecturer from the applied sciences department, believed that getting different perspectives can be challenging as sometimes it is then difficult to find common grounds in terms of social justice and equity. This is very important, as Allport(1954) firmly believed that one of the conditions of contact should be on the basis of equality. The teachers, when exposed to such diverse cultures, must be in a position to ensure equality among the students. The students must not feel that one culture is given more importance or preferential treatment over another. The teacher has the task to safeguard any kind of inferiority/superiority complexes, stereotyping, or intolerance towards the various cultures. All students should be treated on equal footing when it's come to their cultural background. And most importantly, the teacher who is a carrier of their own culture shouldn't use that culture as a superiority marker. That is why to avoid such situations; one participant from the Home Economics department believes the challenge will be to have the ability to unlearn and to learn. These are two very important points. Teachers might have been exposed to or have built an incorrect conception of other cultures<sup>51</sup>. They shouldn't use this to alienate a culture in their classroom.

The following question will help identify if the teachers have the necessary competence to work in a multicultural environment: *What are the most importance competences (knowledge,*

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<sup>51</sup>There are many cases in for example in American schools where Teachers are openly accusing students of being terrorists just because they belong to the Muslim community.

<http://newyork.cbslocal.com/2016/04/02/texas-student-terrorist-accusation/> Accessed date: 14<sup>th</sup> of Oct 2016

Ahmed Mohamed, a student, who created clock and he showed to his teacher he was accused of bringing a bomb. The fact that he has a Muslim name so he is quickly associated it with terrorism. These are important information that teachers should unlearn and learn about other culture. And they should not felt in the trap of negative portrayal by the media or society.

<http://edition.cnn.com/2015/09/16/us/texas-student-ahmed-muslim-clock-bomb/> Accessed date: 14<sup>th</sup> of Oct 2016

*skills, or attitudes) that are needed for encountering diversity in your work?* Most of the participants stressed the importance of having the following traits, including an open-mind, empathy, curiosity, tolerance, and the willingness to learn from other people. At the same time, they believed it is important to develop mutual respect towards each other. However, the answers to the last question in this section is quite alarming: *How would you evaluate your own competences? How have you developed those competences that are needed in your work?* Most of the teachers replied that they build their competences through their own experiences. This indicates that they have not necessarily gone through any formal training on multicultural or intercultural education. Only Mrs Pottaren, one of the lecturers from the M.I.E, said that her educational background has helped her to develop competences to work in a multicultural environment: *“I am happy with my competences, although there is still room for improvement. I have a Masters in Counselling, I also have a Post Graduate Diploma in Inclusive and Special Education. I have learned to accept people and behave properly and respectfully, not to be judgmental, and to believe that people are empowered beings.”*

The first part of this structured interview has clearly indicated there is a constant contact taking place between different cultural groups of students. The fact that the teacher-trainers valued such diversity means that it can be assumed that they will ensure equal status to all the students in their classroom. And another condition for successful contact to take place is as Allport (1954) stated is known as the ‘Authority Support.’ Eventually, as the teacher trainers are consistently exposed to diversity and, above all, they value such encounters, they will be in a position to encourage positive intercultural contact.

b.) Infusing intercultural competence through education

The second section will focus on the importance of Intercultural Education. The participants were first asked the following question: *What do you understand by Intercultural Education?* Through this question will enable an understanding of the teacher-trainers' awareness of Intercultural Education. All of the participants gave general answers to this question. A few of their answers are presented below:

*'We are all different and let's celebrate this difference'*

*'It takes into consideration the culture of the person. Draws out the strengths and builds learning around that'*

*'Accepting and Adapting to other cultures'*

Their answers indicate that they don't know much about intercultural education as a formal pedagogy. In the first section of the questionnaire, it can be said that the teacher-trainers are very much exposed to interculturalism as a practical approach.

But they are not exposed to the theoretical concepts behind Intercultural Education. This opinion is further sustained when an unstructured question arose during the investigation to get a clearer picture of the opinion of the participants on the difference between Multicultural and Intercultural Education. Most of them couldn't make a distinction. One of the participants from the M.I.E believed that 'Both are related to belonging to diverse cultures. While multicultural education talks about educating people to accept the other culture and live side by side the 'other,' intercultural education teaches us how to live together with the diversity while each keeping their own culture and identity. No appropriation.' Though the participants couldn't distinguish between the two pedagogies strongly in their answers, they all answered positively to

the following question: *Do you think Intercultural Education should be implemented in the curriculum in Mauritius?* And to the question: *What do you want your students to achieve through Intercultural Education?* They all responded that they want their students to be open to other culture and to recognise the value/worth of the cultures of other people and understand how culture can shape a person. The following question: *Intercultural Education can be promoted across the curriculum. Can you give a practical example of how Intercultural Education can be integrated in your subject area?*, has also highlighted the creativity of some of the teacher-trainees. They blended intercultural Education in the Mauritian context in a very creative way. Some of the answers of the participant are presented as follow:

*‘We could study how different culture can influence the type of leadership styles. For example, in some culture, women cannot assume leading role in some sphere. It is male-dominated. It will be interesting to know how to deal in such situation without creating negative stereotyping.’*

*‘Through practical classes during the Home- Economics training-when making a dish we could use Indian spices instead of soya sauce for fried noodles. We can create a fusion in the cooking class or making a coursework on the theme e.g garments of different cultures’*

The richness of the Mauritian culture was reflected in their answers. Surprisingly all of the participants believed that intercultural competence must be inculcated in the education system (*Do you think intercultural competence must be as important as basic numeracy and literacy? Why?*) because according to them, it will sustain social cohesion in the Mauritian society.

c.) Social cohesion in SIDS

In the last section of the structured interview, the participants were asked questions on the importance of social cohesion in SIDS. All the participants agreed that SIDS can use Education as a mean to consolidate its social fabrics. The question was as followed:

*Small Island Developing States (SIDS) have an extremely fragile ecosystem, social fabrics and economic backwardness. Do the features of SIDS make social inclusion more important than ever in order to survive? Do they need a system of education that supports a cohesive society?*

Here are a few examples of the answers from the participants:

*'Yes, given the odds that are against the SIDS, then they need to rely on internal factor in order to thrive and social inclusion is thus important. A cohesive society ensure economic and social stability and progress'*

*'Yes, because most for these island asset is the human capital and if there is no peace and understanding then death will follow-chaos'*

*'Yes, because Education is the way we can touch the life and understanding of so many people and this will be passed on from one person to another'*

All participants believed that Intercultural education can play a major role in sustaining social cohesion in Mauritius. According to them, the education system welcomes pluralist learning, teachers and students from a variety of cultures being positive for interaction and understanding as well as sharing. In situations where there are cases of cultural bias, a culture being left out, or negative media associated with racism in the education system, these can lead to friction among the diverse cultural groups. Thus, there is a need for reinforcement of

intercultural values, sharing of values and attitudes, respect for faith, understanding of others, and empathy in the Mauritian educational system. But many participants said that the main constraints (*What are the constraints that the Mauritian system of education might face in the effective promotion of intercultural education?*) to the application of Intercultural education in the Mauritian system will be time constraints due to heavy syllabus, government policies, and a lack of resources, such as persons who are specialists in Intercultural education. Many participants stressed that if Intercultural Education is done in an amateur way, it can cause more harm than good, leading to a compartmentalisation of the cultures. This is why the Intercultural Education pedagogy should be formally adopted to the Mauritian context and promoted by specialists from this field. And to the final question: *Do you think a teacher has a role to play as advocate of social cohesion? If Yes, please explain why*, all interviewees agreed that they have a fundamental role to play in the education system as advocates of social cohesion. They should be the main showcase of intercultural understanding and acceptance in their daily work.

#### **4.6. Conclusion.**

The content analysis and the discussion of the structured interviews have provided essential information on the Mauritian educational system's perspective on social cohesion and intercultural education. The four main conditions of Contact Theory take place in the Mauritian system. The NCF, as the main authority supporter, has provided equal opportunity to the teachers and students who come from diverse cultures. There is a common goal to achieve social cohesion across the curriculum. Intergroup cooperation is highly promoted among the teachers and students. The diversified teachers and students are valued as an asset in the school system. The Mauritian educational system, with its highly diverse context, set within a multicultural society, can provide ample opportunities for Intercultural education to take place. Though there

is no implicit mention of multicultural and intercultural education, the ethos is well embedded in the education system. This is reflected in the answers of the teachers who participated in the report. The teacher-trainers echoed the same belief during the structured interviews. However, the main constraints on the implementation of Intercultural Education have to do with heavy syllabi and an exam-oriented system. But in general, the teachers cultivate positive responses towards the needs for intercultural education. Thus, the analysis and discussions of this chapter has practical importance. They can be used for the implementation of Intercultural Education in the teacher-training program. The teachers should be the main advocates of social cohesion. They need proper training in Intercultural education. The essence of Intercultural Education shouldn't be simply sprinkled over the teacher training program. Instead a new module entitled Intercultural Education, adopted within the Mauritian context, should be initiated at the teacher training institute.

## **CHAPTER 5: Surveying the Impact of Multiculturalism on the Teacher-Trainees at the Mauritius Institute of Education**

### **5.1.Introduction**

This chapter presents the main empirical findings of the survey conducted in the month of January 2017 and indicates the trends that have emerged. The analysis was structured according to the main three sections of the questionnaire:(i) Daily exposure to Diversity, (ii) Multicultural and Intercultural Education, and (iii) Teaching and Learning. As the three sections will be touching directly or indirectly on concepts including culture, ethnicity, religion, multicultural society, social cohesion, multicultural, and intercultural education it was appropriate to use multiculturalism as the main umbrella for this survey. For the purpose of this research, 150 Primary Teacher Trainees(PTT) and 150 Secondary Teacher Trainees(STT)were targeted. The purpose was to enable to compare between the two groups which will enable to extrapolate further important information regarding the teacher training program.

With reference to the data analysis method outlined in the research methodology chapter, the primary data assembled from the Teacher-Trainees at the Mauritius Institute of Education were analysed. By using statistical procedures like cross tab tables and descriptive statistics, the data obtained was categorized and tabulated<sup>52</sup>. Many responses dealt with, simultaneously, the fact that many questions are a variation of the same theme and the respondents' answers overlapped considerably. Overall, 300 questionnaires were distributed to the teacher-trainees; 150 (PTT) and 150 (STT). The response rate was 100%. A sample copy of the questionnaire is enclosed in the Appendix(B) section.

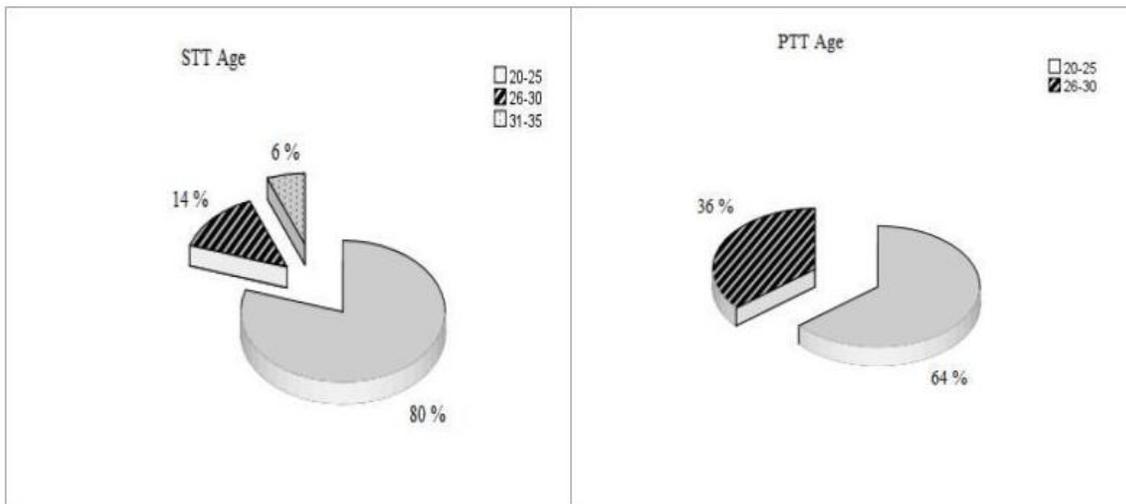
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<sup>52</sup>All the tables and figures were constructed by the researcher by using SPSS Analysis.

## 5.2. Profile of the Respondents

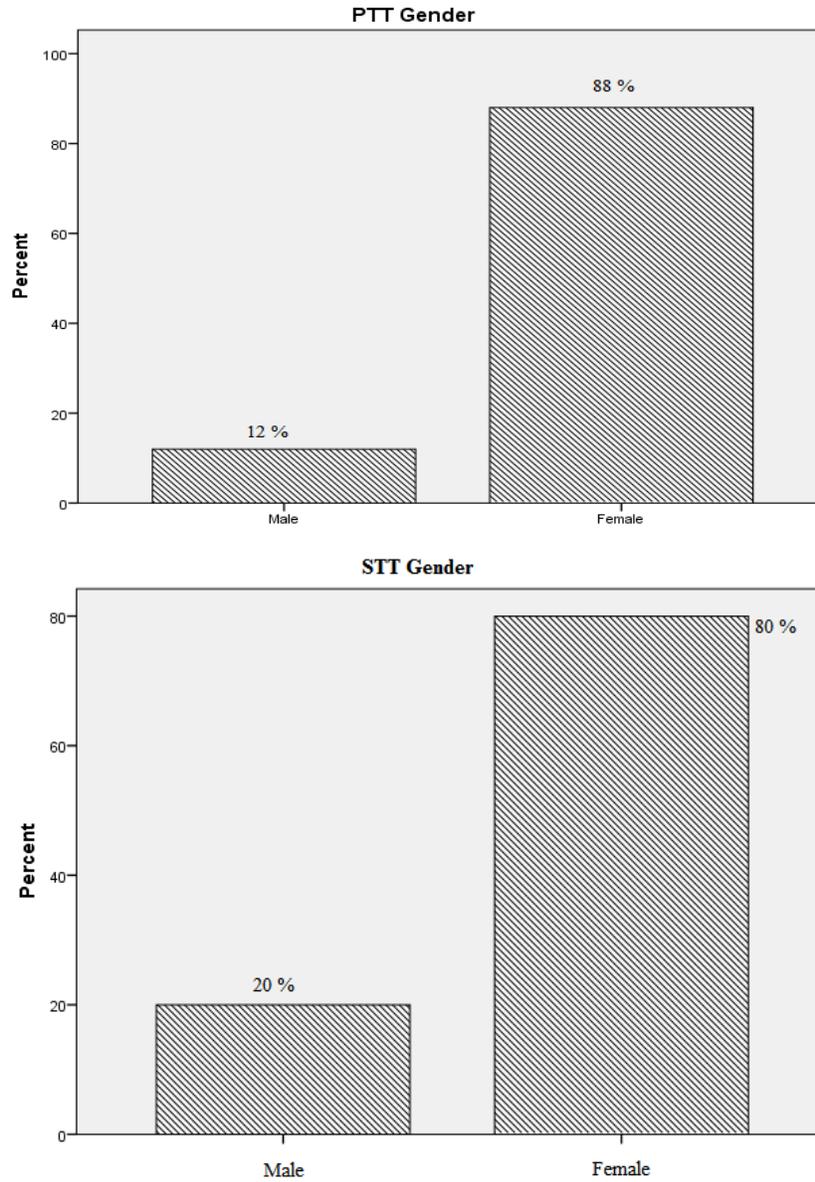
Figure 6 depicts that the large stage group among the PTT respondents is 20-25 at 64%, while the age group 26-30 years represents 30.0%. This indicates that majority of the respondents are from the age group 20-25.

In the STT group, the highest age group is also in the 20-25 range at 80%. 14% are in the age group of 26-30. While a small group of participants (6%) from STT are between 31-35. Both majority of PTT and STT joined the M.I.E after completing their high school.



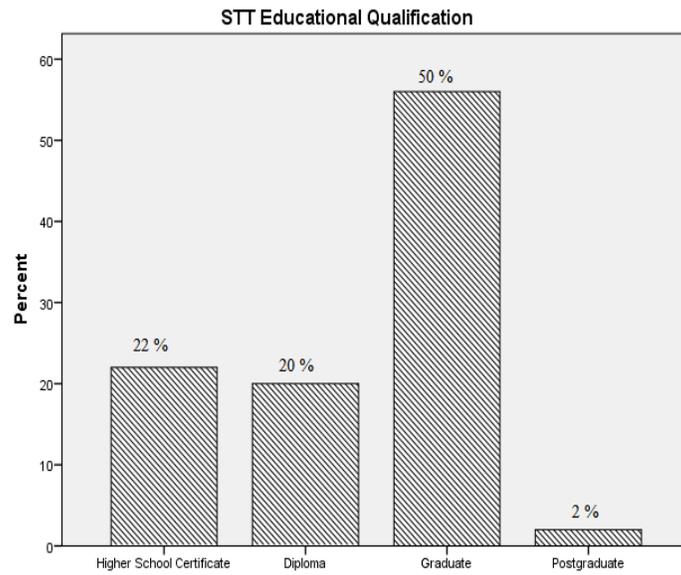
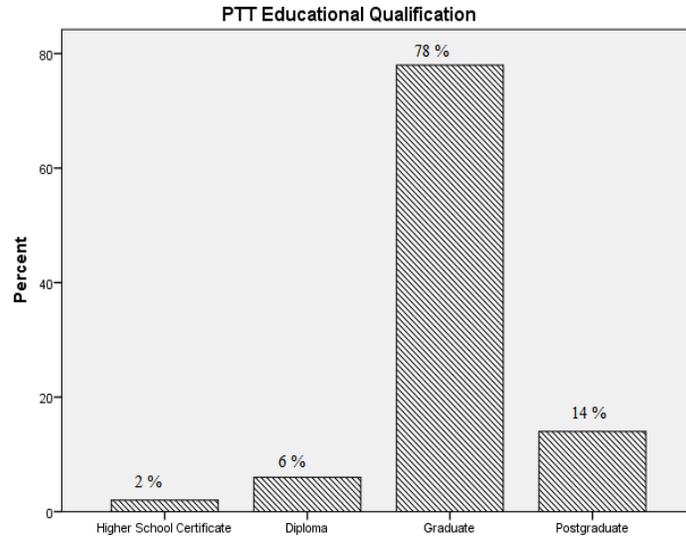
**Figure 6: PTT and STT age group**

As Figure 7 demonstrates, the questionnaires were not equally distributed amongst male and female. A noticeable difference between the two sets of respondents emerged, but this can be largely attributed to that fact that teacher-trainees are generally a female dominated group.



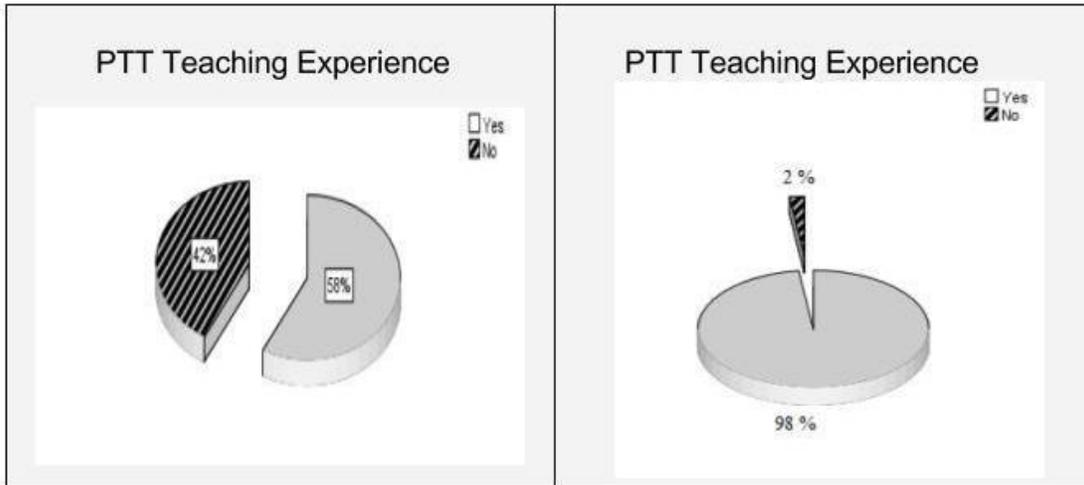
**Figure 7: PTT and STT Gender**

The educational distribution indicated that the majority of the participants for both PTT(78%) and STT (50%) are university graduate.



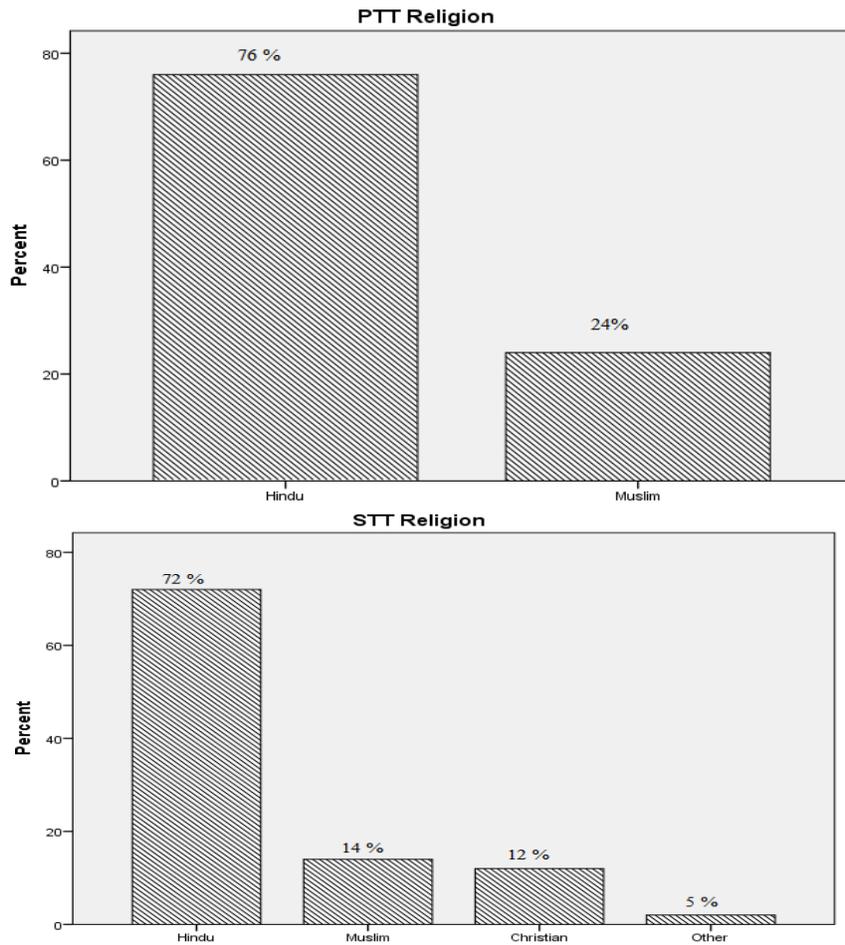
**Figure 8: PTT and STT educational qualification**

The pie chart below in Figure 9, indicates that only 58% of PTT have experienced in teaching and 42% (PTT) have no experience in teaching. PTT are mainly pre-service teachers. The majority of STT (98%) has experienced in teaching.



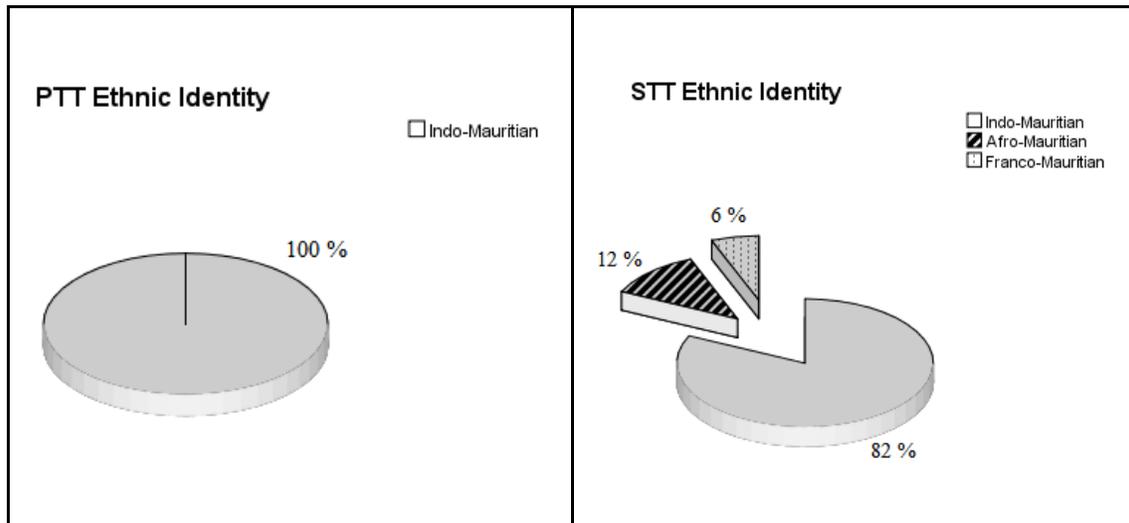
**Figure 9: PTT and STT Teaching Experience**

As can be seen from the distribution of the religious affiliation (Figure 10) of the respondents, 76% are Hindu, while of the remaining respondents 24% are Muslims for PTT. The majority of STT are Hindu (72%). The two minority religious groups in Mauritius namely Muslims and Christians represent 14% and 12% respectively of STT.



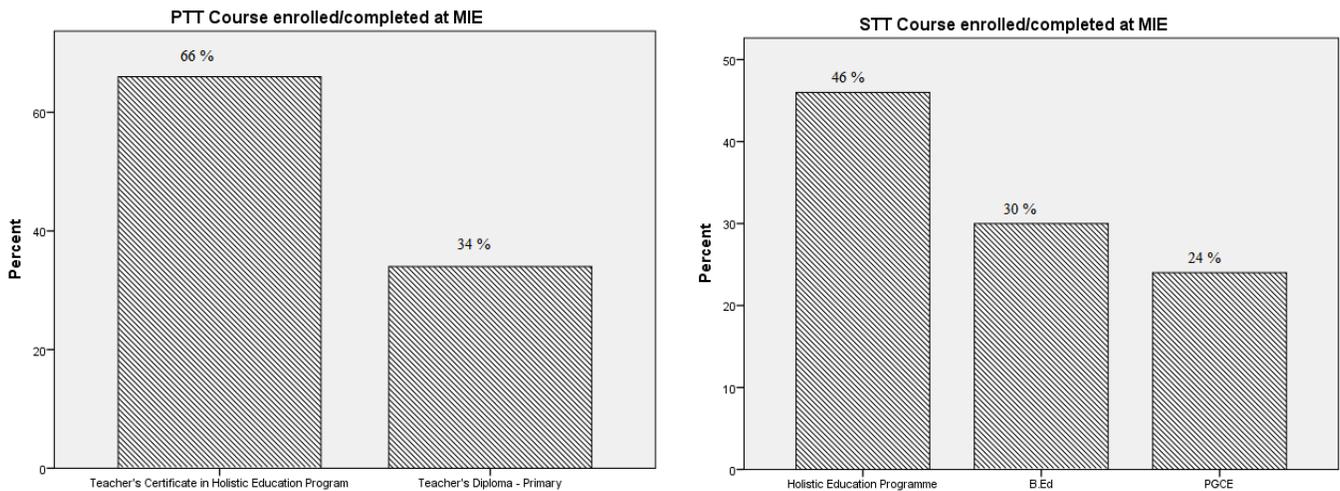
**Figure 10: PTT and STT Religion**

In regards to ethnicity (Figure 11), the majority of the participant for both PTT(100%) and STT(82%) belonged to the Indo-Mauritian ethnicity. Though they are from different religious groups, they share the same ethnic group. 12% of STT are from the Afro-Mauritian ethnic group while 6% are from the Franco-Mauritian.



**Figure 11: PTT and STT Ethnic Identity**

Regarding the courses that the teacher-trainees are enrolled in or have completed at the M.I.E, the majority of PTT (66%) study in the Teacher’s Certificate in Holistic Education Program. And 34% of PTT are studying Teacher’s Diploma-Primary. Whereas 46% of STT are attending the Holistic Education Program 30% are enrolled for the BEd program and 24% are attending the PGCE program.



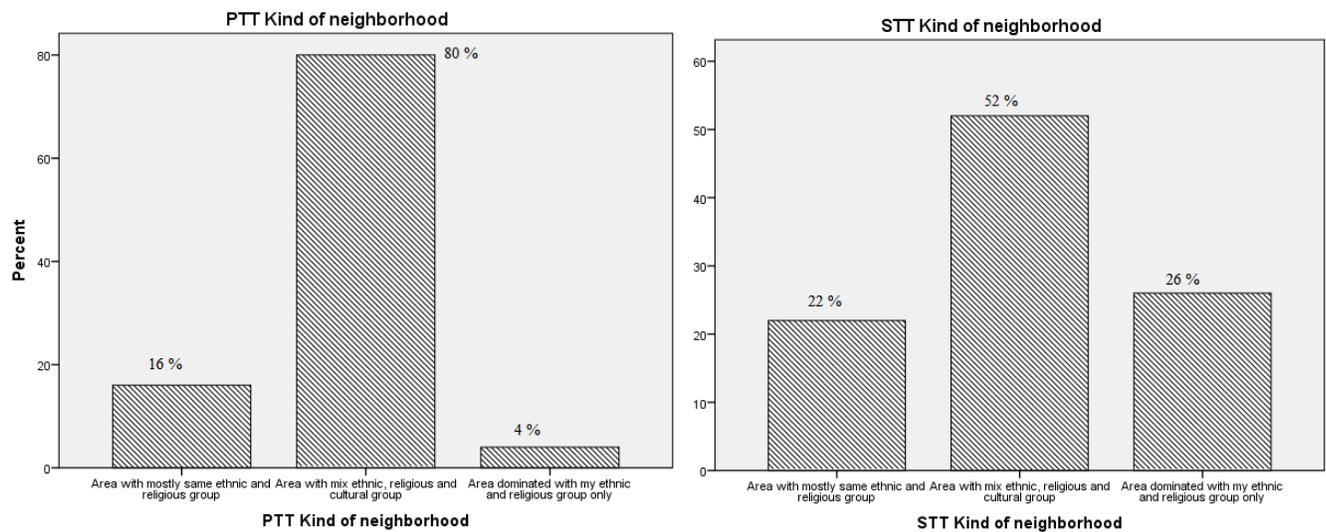
**Figure 12: PTT and STT Courses Enrolled in at M.I.E.**

### 5.3. Daily exposure to Diversity.

Mauritius is a multicultural society, which led the researcher to raise the questions over the crucial effects of such a society on the Teacher-Trainees. Keeping in mind the socio-political, historical, and religious situations in contemporary Mauritius, the daily exposures to diversity were discussed. This section also enables the application of one of the conditions of the contact theory, intergroup cooperation. Teacher-trainees, as citizens of Mauritius, have positive intergroup cooperation with other communities. In this perspective, the teacher-trainees can influence positive intercultural encounters among students from different cultural background.

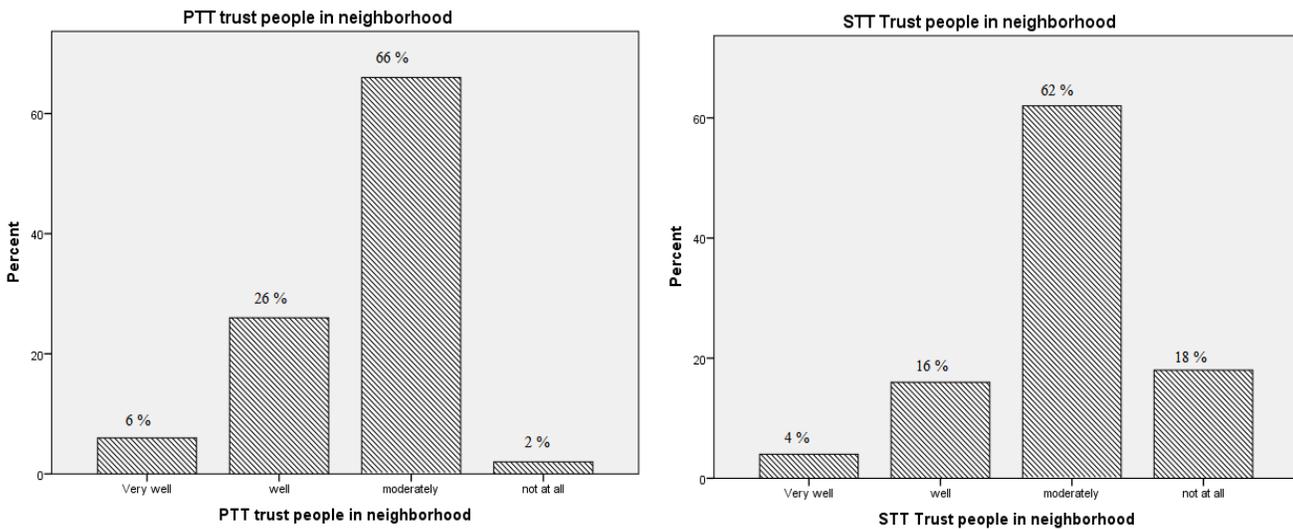
This section of the questionnaire has tried to understand how teachers are positioned to promote the essence of Intercultural Education in schools due to their daily cultural encounters.

Figure 13 indicates that the majority of PTT(80%) prefers to live in an area with mix ethnic, religious and cultural group. 16% of PTT prefers area with mostly same ethnic and religious group and only 4% opted for area dominated with my ethnic and religious group only. The majority of STT prefers to live in area with mix ethnic, religious and cultural group. However, 26% want to live in area which is dominated by their ethnic and religious group and 22% chose areas with mostly same ethnic and religious group.



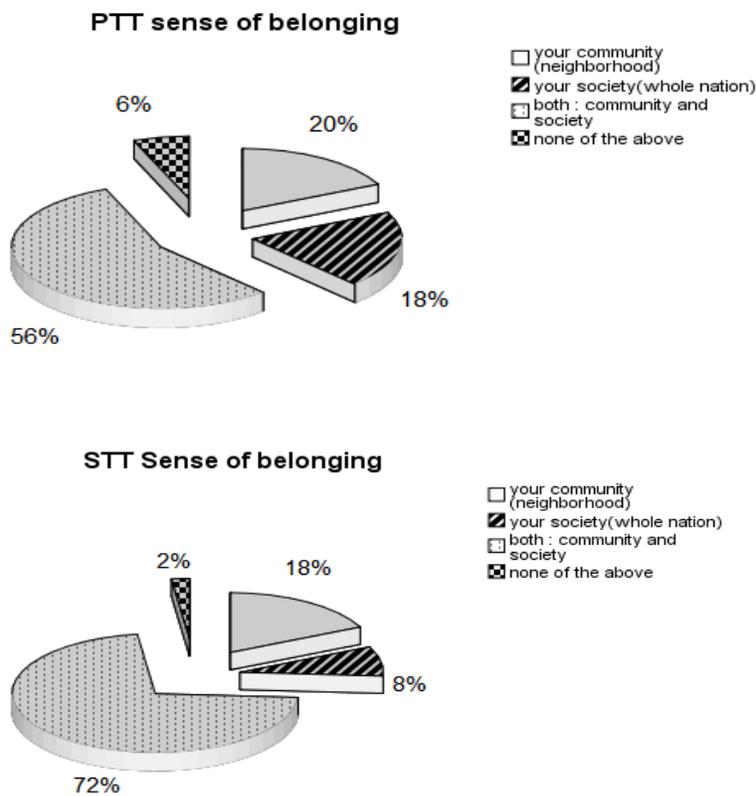
**Figure 13: PTT and STT Neighborhood**

The teacher-trainees did not speak with one voice regarding their level of trust in their neighborhoods. Figure 14 shows that both majority PTT (66%) and STT (62%) opted moderately when they were asked to what extent they trust their neighborhood. Mauritius faces social problems including robbery and cases of violence. This may be a reason the participants have only moderate trust in their neighborhood, though 26 % (PTT) and 16% (STT) said they trust their neighborhood very well.



**Figure 14: PTT and STT Trust in neighborhood**

Figure 15 below shows that both PTT(56%) and STT (72%) have a strong sense of belonging to their community and the society. 20% of PTT opted for the society (whole nation) only. 18% of PTT feel closer to their community (neighborhood) and 6% chose none of the above 18% of STT feel close to their community while 8% chose the whole nation. And 2 % of STT chose none of the above



**Figure 15: PTT and STT Sense of Belonging**

**Table 18: Opinion on Culture**

**PTT Culture**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somehow Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures	4%	0%	16%	32%	48%
I think people from different cultures are narrow-minded	38%	32%	22%	2%	2%
I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures	44%	42%	8%	2%	4%
I don't like to be with people from different cultures	66%	22%	6%	0%	6%
I respect the values of people from different cultures	6%	0%	4%	16%	74%

**STT Culture**

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Somehow Agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures	0%	0%	6%	46%	48%
I think people from different cultures are narrow-minded	38%	52%	4%	6%	0%
I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures	72%	22%	2%	4%	0%
I don't like to be with people from different cultures	88%	10%	2%	0%	0%
I respect the values of people from different cultures	2%	0%	2%	6%	96%

The respondents were asked to rate the statements shown in Table 18. 48% of PTT and 48% STT strongly agreed to the following statement: *'enjoyed interacting with people from different cultures'*. Furthermore, 96% of STT and 74 % of PTT strongly agree with *'respect the values of people from different cultures.'* Their answers reflect their positive relationship with other cultures in Mauritius. That is why they both strongly disagree (PTT 38%) and disagree (STT 52%) that people from other culture are narrow-minded. A strong majority of PTT (66%)

and STT 88% strongly disagreed to the statement: *'I don't like to be with people of different culture'*. However, there was a minority of 6% PTT who strongly agreed.

The participants were also asked about their daily intercultural encounters (Table 19). Multiple answers were provided by the participants. Majority of PTT (33.1%) and STT(34.1%) answered through friendship with other cultures. 25.6 % of PTT and 31.7% of STT experience interculturalism through their daily cuisine. Exposure through multilingualism is another way through which the participants are influenced by other cultures (PTT 20.7% and STT 17.5%). Mauritius being a multicultural society, dressing up in the styles of other cultures is also a way to experience others culture (33.1% PTT and 34.1% STT). 1.7% of PTT answered none of the above.

**Table 19: PTT and STT Intercultural Interaction**

**PTT Intercultural Experience**

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
ptt_intercultural <sup>a</sup>	Influence of other cultures in your cuisine	31	25.6%	62.0%
	Exposure to multilingualism	25	20.7%	50.0%
	Dress up like other cultural groups	20	16.5%	40.0%
	Friendship with other cultural groups	40	33.1%	80.0%
	None of the above	2	1.7%	4.0%
	Other	3	2.5%	6.0%
Total		121	100.0%	242.0%

**SST Intercultural Experiences**

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
intercultural <sup>a</sup>	Influence of other cultures in your cuisine	40	31.7%	80.0%
	Exposure to multilingualism	22	17.5%	44.0%
	Dress up like other cultural groups	21	16.7%	42.0%
	Friendship with other cultural groups	43	34.1%	86.0%
	None of the above	0	0%	0.0%
	Other	0	0%	0.0%
Total		126	100.0%	252.0%

**Table 20: PTT and STT interaction**

PTT Interaction

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
ptt_interaction <sup>a</sup>	Workplace	46	44.2%	92.0%
	neighborhood	27	26.0%	54.0%
	social activity	31	29.8%	62.0%
Total		104	100.0%	208.0%

STT Interaction

		Responses		Percent of Cases
		N	Percent	
stt_interaction <sup>a</sup>	Workplace	44	39.6%	88.0%
	neighborhood	35	31.5%	70.0%
	social activity	32	28.8%	64.0%
Total		111	100.0%	222.0%

To extend the research, the respondents were further asked *where do you interact with other culture, ethnic or religious groups*. The answers indicated that the majority of PTT (44.2%) and STT (39.6%) encounter other cultures at their workplace. The facts that this question was targeting multiple answers, the answers of the respondents were also divided between cultural interaction in the neighbourhood and social activity. But in general, the answers reflected a very high level of interaction with other cultures

In Table 21, both PTT (50.0%) and STT (66%) believed that the most important factor to enhance social cohesion is to create a sense of belonging and to promote trust among the members of the society. 34% of PTT and 16 % of STT felt that working toward the well-being of all members of the society will foster social cohesion.

**Table 21: Factors to enhance social cohesion**

**PTT Factors to enhance social cohesion**

	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2.0	2.0
To work toward the well-being of all themembers of the society	34.0	36.0
To fight exclusion and marginalization	8.0	44.0
To create a sense of belonging and promotes trust among the members of the society	50.0	94.0
To offer its members the opportunity of upward mobility	6.0	100.0
Total	100.0	

**SST Factors to enhance social cohesion**

	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	16.0	16.0
To work toward the well-being of all themembers of the society	16.0	32.0
To fight exclusion and marginalization	16.0	48.0
To create a sense of belonging and promotes trust among the members of the society	66.0	98.0
To offer its members the opportunity of upward mobility	2.0	100.0
Total	100.0	

The research attempts (Table 21) to discover if the respondents think there is any kind of tension in Mauritius. Multiple questions were expected. The majority believed that there are tensions between different religious groups (PTT 54% and STT 84%). It is important to note that religion is the main marker of ethnicity in Mauritius; therefore, these answers are quite relevant

to the Mauritian context. The research continues with measuring the reactions of the respondents to this question; 52% of PTT and 54% of STT believed that there is ethnic tension while a majority of 66% of STT believed there are cultural tensions. Only a small minority of 28% of PTT believed there are cultural tensions.

**Table 22: PTT and STT Tensions in Mauritius**

**PTT Tensions in Mauritius**

	Percentage
Different ethnic groups	52%
Different religious groups	54%
Different cultural groups	28%
None of the above	26%

**SST Tensions in Mauritius**

	Percentage
Different ethnic groups	54%
Different religious groups	84%
Different cultural groups	66%
None of the above	6%

**Table 23: PTT and STT conflicts in Mauritius**

**PTT Conflicts in Mauritius**

	Percentage
Religious conflicts	50%
Cultural conflicts	20%
Ethnic conflicts	38%
None of the above	24%

**STT Conflicts in Mauritius**

	Percentage
Religious conflicts	64%
Cultural conflicts	50%
Ethnic conflicts	46%
None of the above	6%

Table 23 above affirms that the majority of PTT (50%) and STT (64%) believe that Mauritius has witnessed religious conflicts. And 38% of PTT and 46% of STT believed that

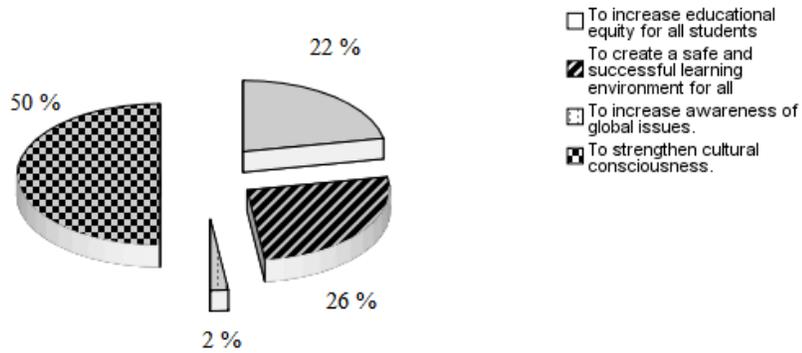
ethnic conflicts took place in Mauritius. Cultural conflicts also arise according to 50% of STT and 38% of PTT.

The first section of this questionnaire has pointed out that the majority of PTT and STT share similar points of view for most of the questions. Furthermore, there is a general feeling among the participants in this study that they have positive cultural encounters in their daily life. Conflicts relationships between other cultural groups are minimal. The teacher-trainees as citizens of Mauritius partake positive relation with other members of the society. During the survey sessions, the majority of the participants revealed that the Mauritian Kreol, the mother tongue of the majority of the Mauritian, is the key unifying factor in the Mauritian cultural setting. The teachers' daily cultural encounters have indicated crucial information on their beliefs, encounters, trust, and relationships with other communities. There is a general agreement among most of the participants that diversity is an integral part of their daily life but at the same time they are also aware that the Mauritian society needs to ensure positive social inclusion.

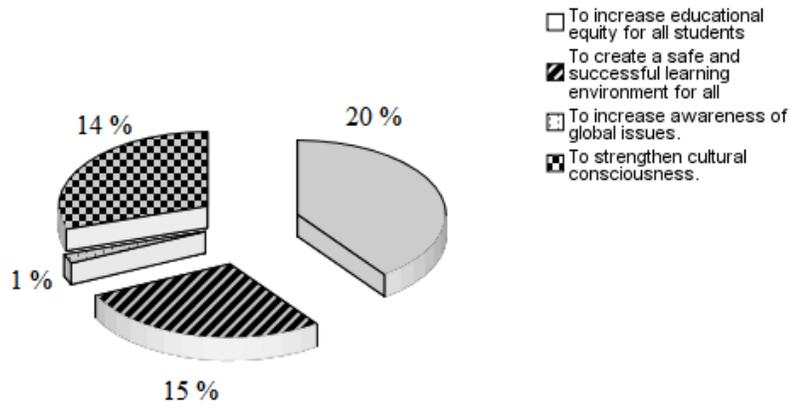
#### **5.4. Multicultural and Intercultural Education**

This section aims at presenting the survey results on the teacher-trainees' understanding of Multicultural and Intercultural Education as a pedagogy at the M.I.E. The questions will be assessing their perception of these educational concepts. The pie-chart below depicts that 20% of PTT and 26% of STT believed that the goal of M.E is to increased educational equity for all students. 15% of PTT and 26% of STT responded to create a safe and successful learning environment for all. 14% of PTT and 50% of STT chose to strengthen cultural consciousness.

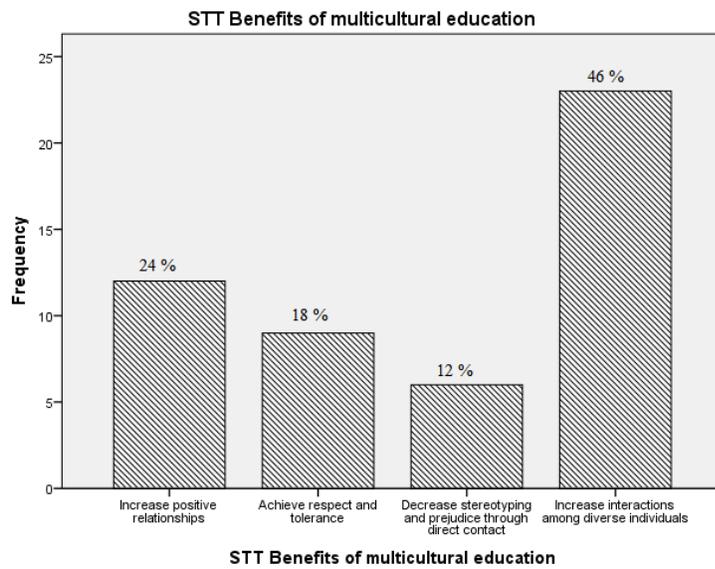
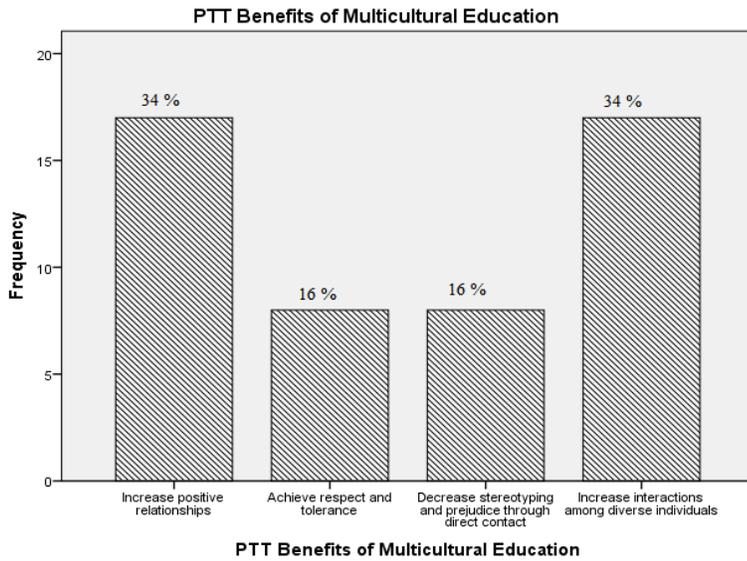
**STT Goal of multicultural education**



**PTT Goal of Multicultural Education**



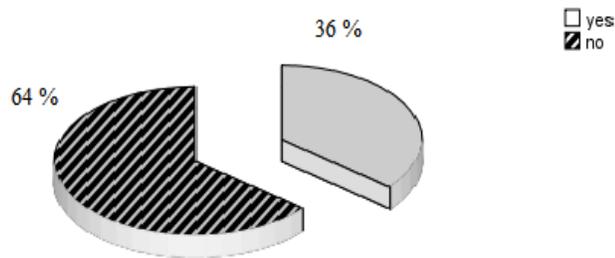
**Figure 16: PTT and STT Goal of Multicultural Education**



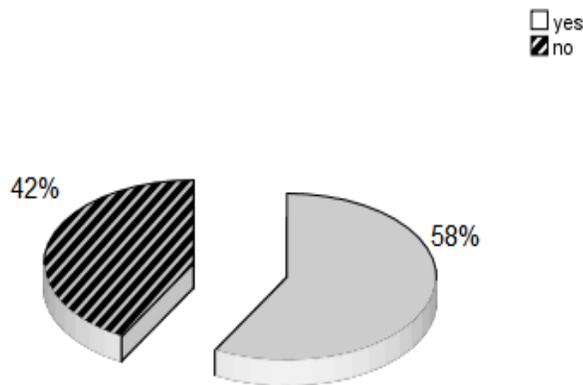
**Figure 17: PTT and STT Benefits of Multicultural Education**

The findings highlighted in Figure 17 demonstrate that the respondents' opinions were slightly split on the issue: 34% of PTT and 46% of STT agree to the statement that the one of the benefits of ME is to increase interactions among diverse individuals. However, 34% of PTT and 24% of STT believed that ME will increase positive relationships.

**PTT Difference between multicultural and intercultural education**

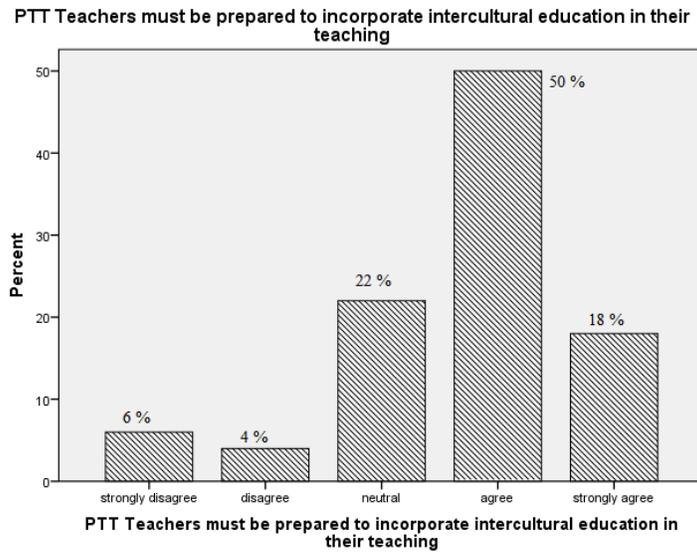


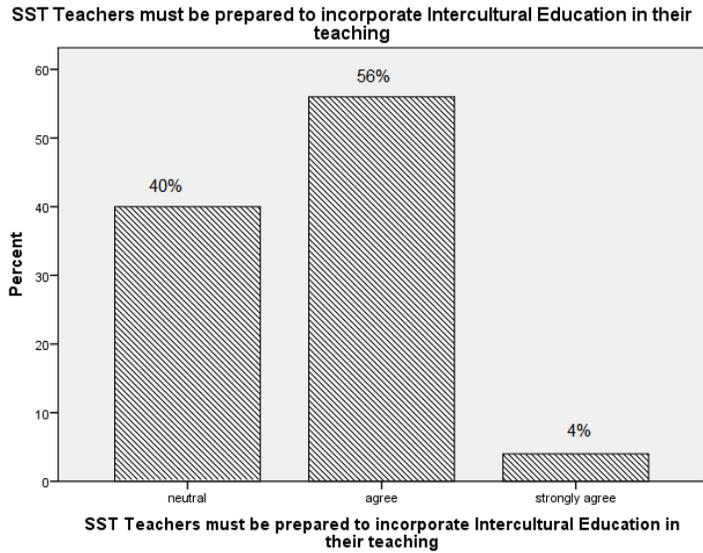
**STT Difference between multicultural and intercultural education**



**Figure 18: PTT and STT difference between Multicultural and Intercultural Education**

Figure 18 illustrates that a majority (64%) of PTT and 42% of STT believe there is no discernable difference between ME and IE. Only 58 % of STT and 36% of PTT stated there is difference between the two pedagogies.

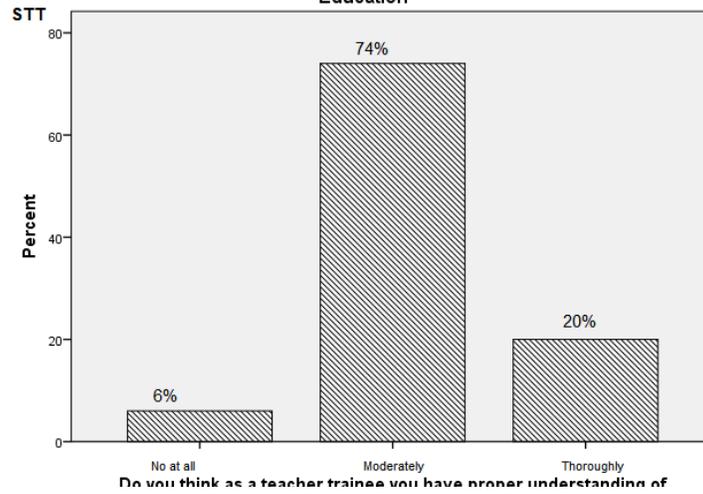




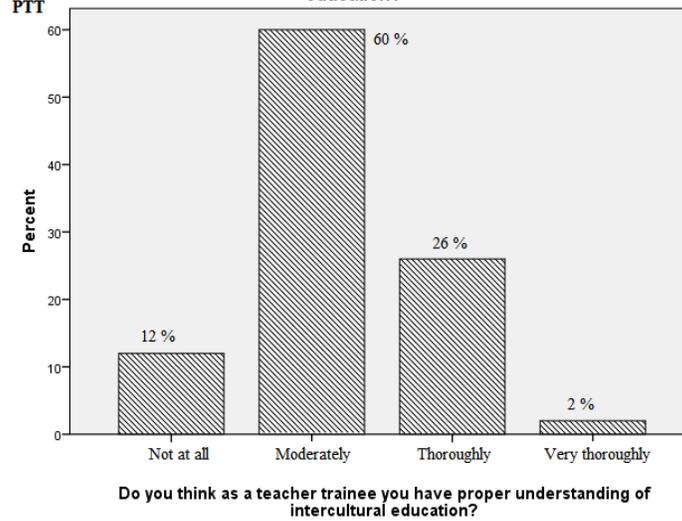
**Figure 19: PTT and STT Teachers must be prepared to incorporate Intercultural Education in their teaching.**

As depicted in Figure 19, the respondents (50% of PTT and 56% of STT) agree that teachers must be prepared to incorporate I.E in their teaching. 18% of PTT and 4% of STT responded strongly agree. 22% of PTT and 40% STT responded neutral.

Do you think as a teacher trainee you have proper understanding of Intercultural Education



Do you think as a teacher trainee you have proper understanding of intercultural education?



**Figure 20: PTT and STT understanding of Intercultural Education**

From Figure 20, 60% of PTT and 74% of STT expressed that, as teacher-trainee, they had a moderate understanding of IE. 26% of PTT and 20% of STT replied thoroughly to this question.

**Table 24: PTT and STT exposure to IE, ME and Social Cohesion**

**PTT Topic Covered**

	<b>Intercultural Education</b>	<b>Multicultural Education</b>	<b>Social Cohesion</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	20%	18%	22%
<b>Very little</b>	26%	28%	24%
<b>Somewhat</b>	32%	26%	24%
<b>Quite often</b>	16%	22%	22%
<b>Very often</b>	6%	6%	8%

**STT Topic Covered**

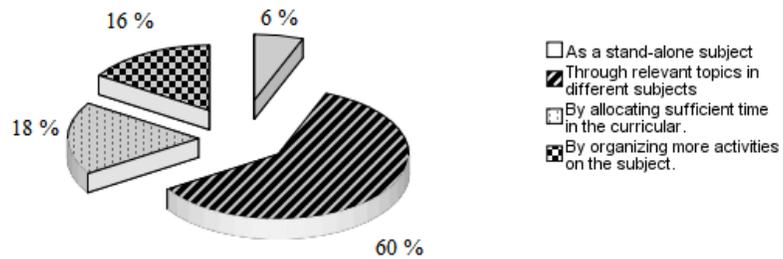
	<b>Intercultural Education</b>	<b>Multicultural Education</b>	<b>Social Cohesion</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	18%	18%	18%
<b>Very little</b>	22%	22%	30%
<b>Somewhat</b>	32%	30%	34%
<b>Quite often</b>	22%	22%	14%
<b>Very often</b>	6%	8%	4%

The research continues with measuring to what level ME, IE, and Social Cohesion are covered in the teacher-training program. Table 24 shows that 32% of PTT and 32 % of STT believed that IE are somewhat covered in their program. 28 % of PTT said very little of ME is incorporated and 30% of STT chose somewhat for ME. It is also interesting to note that 34% of STT and 24% of PTT believed that social cohesion is covered somewhat in their program. The

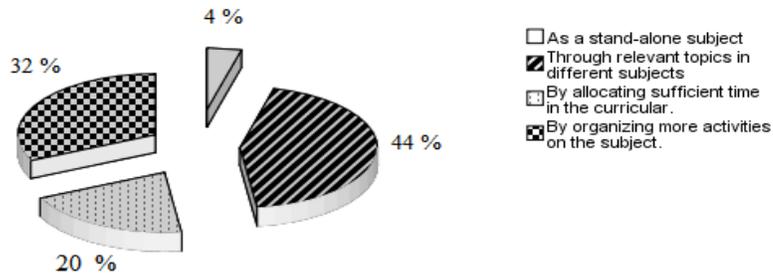
mixed answers of the participants are in accordance to the result of the content analysis of the M.I.E programs.

Through Figure 21, it can be observed that the majority of PTT (60%) and STT (44%) believed that Intercultural Education can be promoted through relevant topics in different subjects. 18% of PTT stated that by allocating sufficient time in the curricular. 32% of STT choose by organizing more activities on the subject.

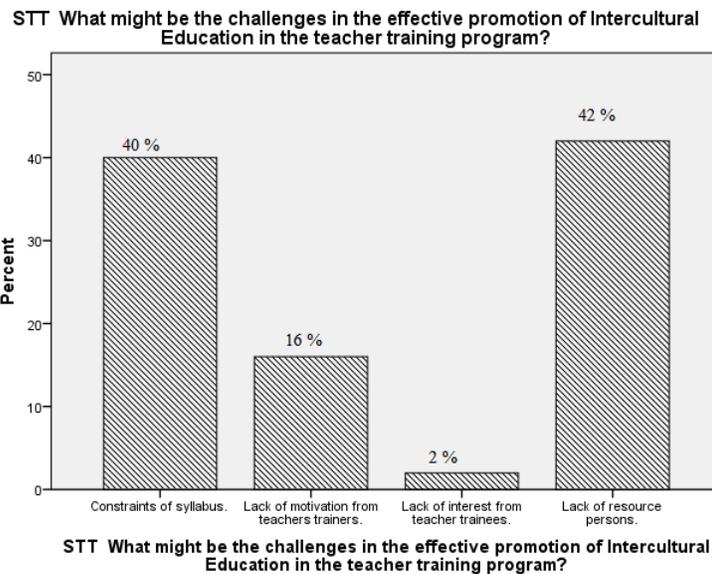
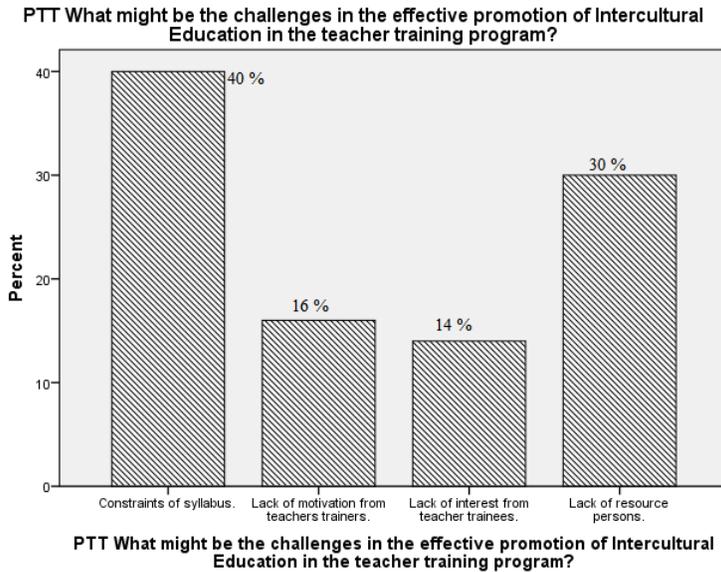
**PTT How according to you, Intercultural Education can be promoted in the teacher training program?**



**STT How according to you, Intercultural Education can be promoted in the teacher training program?**



**Figure 21: PTT and STT: How can IE be promoted in the teacher training program?**



**Figure 22: PTT and STT: Challenges of promoting IE in the teacher training program**

Figure 22 illustrates that 40% of PTT and STT chose ‘constraints of syllabus’ as the major challenge in promoting IE in the program. 42% of STT and 30% of PTT believed that the lack of a resource person will be the major obstacle.

## 5.5. Teaching and Learning

In the last section of the questionnaire, the questions were to assess the level of teaching and learning in a cultural diversified classroom.

**Table 25: PTT and STT as Future Teacher**

**PTT As a future teacher do you think that:**

		Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Students with different ethnic backgrounds may respond to classroom activities differently	10.0	10.0
	Students with different cultural identities may respond to classroom activities differently	18.0	28.0
	Students with different religious beliefs may respond to classroom activities differently	16.0	44.0
	All of the above	56.0	100.0
	Total	100.0	

**STT As a future teacher do you think that:**

		Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Students with different ethnic backgrounds may respond to classroom activities differently	12.0	12.0
	Students with different cultural identities may respond to classroom activities differently	6.0	18.0
	Students with different religious beliefs may respond to classroom activities differently	28.0	46.0
	All of the above	54.0	100.0
	Total	100.0	

The majority of both the PTT (56%) and STT (54%) groups in Table 25 believe that, as a future teacher, students with different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds will respond differently. The student body will be representative of the Mauritian society

**Table 26: PTT and STT professional training at the M.I.E regarding culture**

**PTT Has the professional teacher training course at the M.I.E**

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Made you aware of your own cultural identity	4	8.0	8.0
Made you more aware of cultural diversity in Mauritius	17	34.0	42.0
Made me more aware of the need for cultural diversity in education	14	28.0	70.0
None of the above	15	30.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	

**STT Has the professional teacher training course at the M.I.E**

		Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Made you aware of your own cultural identity	2.0	2.0
	Made you more aware of cultural diversity in Mauritius	24.0	26.0
	Made me more aware of the need for cultural diversity in education	44.0	70.0
	None of the above	30.0	100.0
	Total	100.0	

Table 26 describes whether the professional teacher training course at the M.I.E has enabled the teacher-trainees to be aware of the cultural needs in the school system. 34% of PTT felt that the course has made them more aware of cultural diversity in Mauritius. And 44% of STT said that they are more aware of the need for cultural diversity in education. However, 30% of PTT and 30% of STT chose none of the above.

**Table 27: PTT and STT regarding teaching techniques**

**PTT Has the professional teacher training course at the M.I.E**

	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	6.0	6.0
Presented you with techniques for effectively teaching children whose ethnic background differ from your own.	16.0	22.0
Presented you with techniques for effectively teaching children whose cultural identity differs from your own.	6.0	28.0
Presented you with techniques for effectively teaching children whose religious beliefs differ from your own.	10.0	38.0
Presented you with techniques for teaching children whose ethnic, cultural and religious beliefs differ from your own.	28.0	66.0
None of the above.	34.0	100.0
Total	100.0	

**STT Has the professional teacher training course at the M.I.E**

	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	8.0	8.0
Presented you with techniques for effectively teaching children whose ethnic background differ from your own.	20.0	28.0
Presented you with techniques for effectively teaching children whose cultural identity differs from your own.	10.0	38.0
Presented you with techniques for effectively teaching children whose religious beliefs differ from your own.	20.0	58.0
Presented you with techniques for teaching children whose ethnic, cultural and religious beliefs differ from your own.	42.0	100.0
None of the above.		
Total	100.0	

Table 27 highlights that a large percentage of PTT (40%) and STT (42%) believe the professional teacher training course at the M.I.E has not presented any techniques for teaching children whose ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds differ from their own. In general, the teacher-trainees are receiving their professional development training on different aspects of education but not necessarily on fostering social cohesion through Intercultural Education. That is why teachers observed that they lack guidance on how to integrate ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity into their subjects, classroom, teaching, and learning. In a multicultural island like Mauritius, teaching sensitive issues pertaining to religion, culture, or ethnicity can be very challenging in the classroom. The Training institute doesn't say much on how to approach them.

**Table 28: PTT and STT regarding teaching materials**

**PTT Has the professional teacher training course at the M.I.E**

	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	6.0	6.0
Given you knowledge to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on culturally diversity	16.0	22.0
Given you the knowledge to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on religious diversity	2.0	24.0
Given you knowledge to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on ethnic diversity	14.0	38.0
Given you knowledge to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on ethnic, cultural and religious diversity	28.0	66.0
None	34.0	100.0
Total	100.0	

**STT Has the professional teacher training course at the M.I.E**

	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	4.0	4.0
Given you knowledge to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on culturally diversity		
Given you the knowledge to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on religious diversity	2.0	6.0
Given you knowledge to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on ethnic diversity	2.0	8.0
Given you the knowledge to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on ethnic, cultural and religious diversity	44.0	52.0
None	48.0	100.0
Total	100.0	

Table 28 presented that the majority of PTT (34%) and STT (48%) opted for the answer ‘None’. They believed that the M.I.E has not given them the knowledge to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on ethnic, cultural, and religious diversity. This further justified why Table 29 below indicates that the majority of PTT (60%) and STT (39%) would like to receive more training in ways to teach students with difference cultural backgrounds.

**Table 29: PTT and STT as Teacher-Trainee**

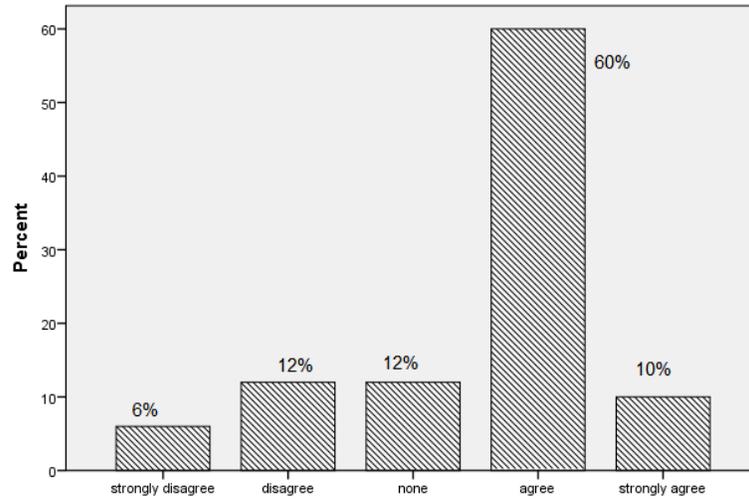
**PTT As a teacher trainee**

	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>To receive more training in ways to teach students with different cultural backgrounds</b>	60%
<b>To receive more training in ways to bring cultures into the classroom</b>	48%
<b>To receive more training in identifying and evaluating culturally diverse materials for use in the classroom</b>	50%
<b>None of the above</b>	2%

**STT As a teacher trainee, I would like**

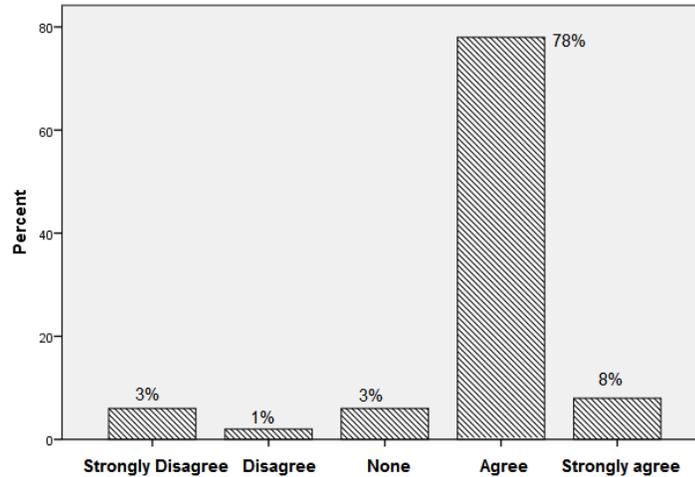
	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>To receive more training in ways to teach students with different cultural backgrounds</b>	39%
<b>To receive more training in ways to bring cultures into the classroom</b>	19%
<b>To receive more training in identifying and evaluating culturally diverse materials for use in the classroom</b>	28%
<b>None of the above</b>	1%

**PTT When I complete my training at the M.I.E, I will be sufficiently prepared to teach students from different cultures**



**When I complete my training at the M.I.E, I will be sufficiently prepared to teach students from different cultures**

**STT When I complete my training at the M.I.E, I will be sufficiently prepared to teach students from different cultures**



**STT When I complete my training at the M.I.E, I will be sufficiently prepared to teach students from different cultures**

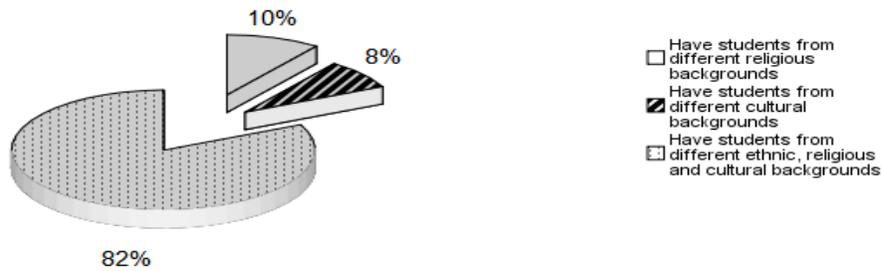
**Figure 23: PTT and STT preparedness to teach students from different cultures**

The bar chart in Figure 23 surprisingly indicates that the majority of PTT (60%) and STT (78%) believed that they will be sufficiently prepared to teach students from different cultures by opting for ‘Agree.’ There is major gap between those who opted for ‘strongly disagree’(PTT 6% and STT 3%). The majority of the teacher-trainees have the confidence to engage with students

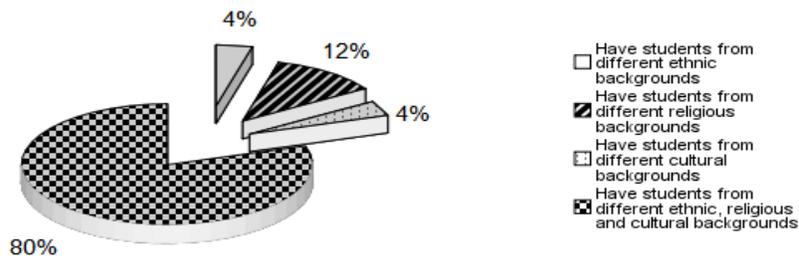
in exploring issues such as cultural diversity. Some teachers may only superficially deal with students from different cultures due to lack of information. Consequently, many teachers may still feel uncomfortable to tackle certain questions related to cultural topics and skip them. This would be a lost opportunity in developing relationships of trust, understanding, and tolerance among the different cultural groups in the classroom, which could have paved the way to more long-term establishment of social cohesion in the Mauritian society. Indeed, the teacher-trainees need more knowledge and methodologies on how to teach such topics.

In Figure 24, both PTT (80%) and STT (82%) are aware that as future teachers they will have students of different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds.

**STT When I become teacher, I will probably**

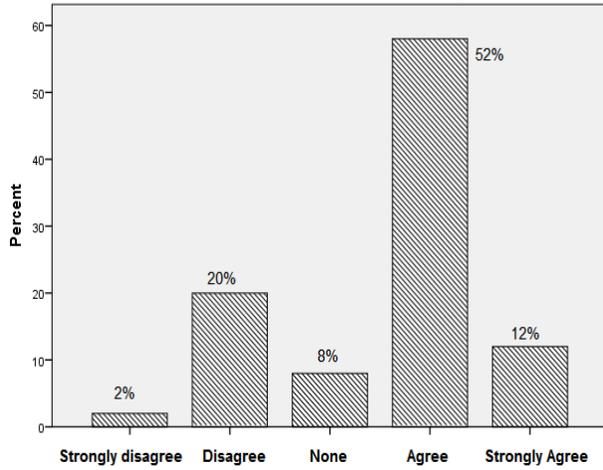


**PTT When I become teacher, I will probably**



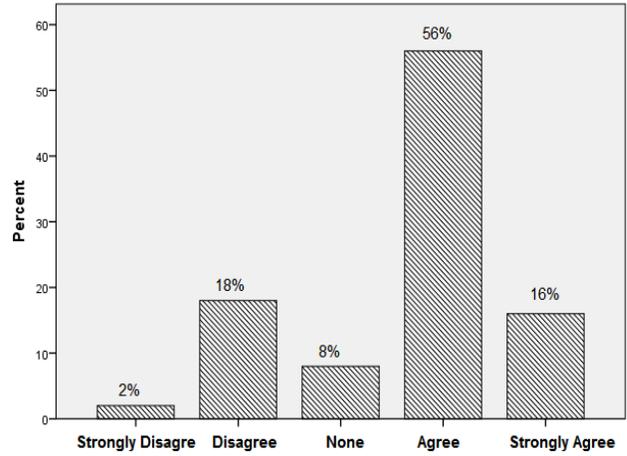
**Figure 24: PTT and STT as Future Teachers**

PTT I believe teaching and learning about different cultures is important but there isn't time to fit it all into the school day



PTT I believe teaching and learning about different cultures is important but there isn't time to fit it all into the school day

STT I believe teaching and learning about different cultures is important but there isn't time to fit it all into the school day

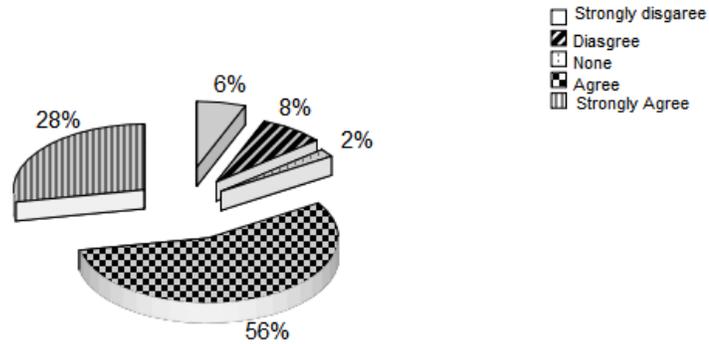


STT I believe teaching and learning about different cultures is important but there isn't time to fit it all into the school day

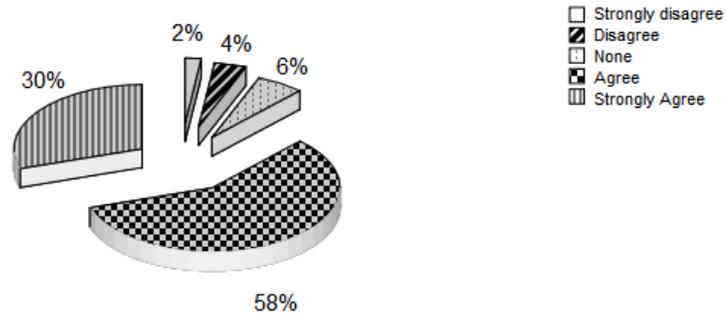
**Figure 25: PTT and STT importance of teaching and learning about different cultures**

The above bar charts in Figure 25 indicate that, as future teachers, they believe that teaching and learning about different cultures is important but that there isn't time to fit it all into the school day. 52% of PTT and 56% of STT agreed to this question

**PTT Teachers are not only responsible for completing the syllabus but they should act as agent of social cohesion towards the student?**



**STT Teachers are not only responsible for completing the syllabus but they should act as agent of social cohesion towards the student?**



**Figure 26: PTT and STT as Agents of Social Cohesion**

The last question in the questionnaire (Figure 26) was to know the opinion of the trainees on this statement ‘Teachers are not only responsible for completing the syllabus but they should

act as agent of social cohesion towards the student. 56% of PTT and 58% of STT agreed to that statement which indicates that they do have an interest to guide students towards social integration at school.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

The findings have brought important insight on the subject of this research. It should be recalled that this research questionnaire was set as a primary means of data collection. Since this is a case study and examines a sample of 300 teacher-trainees, it is important to note that the findings do not represent the experience of the entire teacher population in Mauritius. However, consistent and pertinent information was obtained from the data collected and should be considered for future research in this field.

At this stage, it is reasonable to assert that the teacher-trainees (both from primary and secondary level) seem to have only a limited exposure to Intercultural Education. Though the government has expressed sincere consideration towards Intercultural Education, the implementation stage has come to naught at the M.I.E. The government must not neglect the importance of Intercultural Education in Mauritius. Given the communal tension that exists on the Island, the educational system in Mauritius provides a crucial space in building social relations among the students. In this perspective, the teacher can play key role to lead to positive development of such relationship among the students.

As the analysis so far shows it can be said that the findings are relevant to the research. In the next chapter, alongside discussion on the field of the research, the empirical findings will be tested with the broad hypothetical explanations presented earlier.

## **CHAPTER 6: Recommendation**

### **6.1. Introduction**

The aim of this thesis was to assess the progression from Multicultural to Intercultural Education in the perspective of sustaining social cohesion in the Mauritian Educational System. With the support of the literature review, the survey, structured interviews, content analysis, and observation, this research has argued that Intercultural Education can be used as a strategy for peaceful coexistence in a multicultural society. The importance of Intercultural Education in schools has been examined along with how this pedagogy approach can help students in the Mauritian Educational Context understand cultural otherness and develop cultural enrichment. Intercultural Education in Mauritius will enable students to respect and celebrate diversity, to promote equality and to challenge unfair discrimination. Intercultural Education is an umbrella concept which includes related concepts from Multicultural Education, diversity, and multilingualism. In time of increasing globalisation, the role of Intercultural Education must be to shape interculturally competent citizens. In this chapter, recommendations will be proposed for implementation of Intercultural Education in the teacher-training program using the framework of the social development theory by Vygotsky.

Mauritius does not explicitly use the concept of Multicultural Education in its educational policies. But the essence of Multicultural Education has been present in the Mauritian Education System since its independence; multilingualism, religious studies, and equality among the students irrespective of ethnicity, religious, and culture are present. However, the educational policies on Intercultural Educational are too recent for their impacts to have been fully examined. In order to understand more fully the long-term consequences of Intercultural Education, further research needs to be done. This current research study can be interpreted as a first step towards

understanding the progression from Multicultural Education to Intercultural Education. Part of the curriculum principles for primary education in Mauritius have shown efforts to strengthen social cohesion and national unity through the Intercultural Education Project. The main challenge in Mauritius is the lack of uniform implementation of such principles across the school system.

This research has come to the conclusion that in Mauritius, due to heavy academic workload for students at all school levels, at this stage the most suitable recommendation is for the teachers to go through Intercultural Education Training at the Mauritian Institute of Education. In this perspective, the teacher can play a key role to lead positive intercultural encounters at schools among the students. The interviews and questionnaires with the teacher-trainees has indicated that there is a general feeling that while the teachers receive training on different aspects of education and pedagogy, there is no focus on fostering social cohesion through Intercultural Education. They have a very limited understanding of Intercultural Education. The Mauritius Institute of Education can play a leading role in defusing Intercultural Education. Bash (2016) stressed out that “Teachers as such are not the problem; the problem lies in the way they are trained and educated”(p.4). It is crucial that teachers from multicultural societies have a broad training on the theoretical knowledge and pedagogical skills on Intercultural Education. If not, as Portera ( 2014) pointed out “Teachers can transmit their own prejudices not only through their own comments and behavior, but also by establishing an atmosphere of intolerance and ethnocentrism in the classroom”(p.165). In Mauritius, Multicultural and Intercultural Education have been achieved spontaneously through contact at school and in the multicultural society. But teachers haven’t received a proper course on both pedagogies.

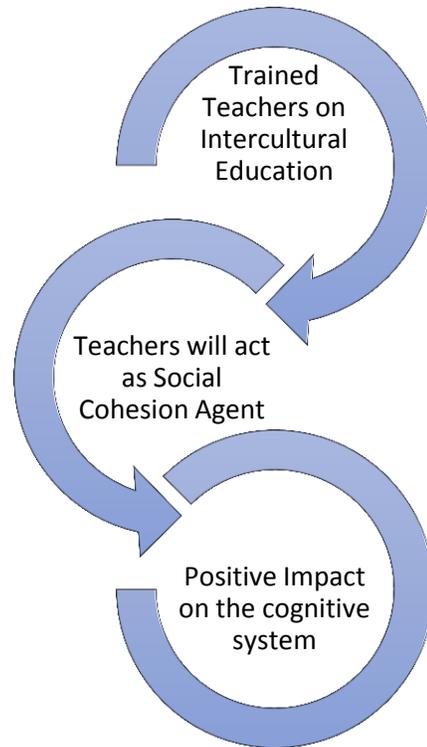
## **6.2. Teachers as Agent of Change: Promoting Intercultural Education in School.**

Policies are not the problem in Mauritius, often the problem lies in their implementation, particularly when policies are not implemented as they were intended or are implemented in only a superficial, surface manner. To enable Intercultural Education to be effective it should form part of the professional training of the teachers in Mauritius. During the consultative meeting with Dr Putschay, he stressed out that “teacher training institutions should be able to empower their own staff so as to strengthen a capacity building for intercultural dialogue”.

The Ministry of Education has made noteworthy pronouncements on the importance of sustaining social cohesion at school level in the educational policies and N.C.F. The education system is built on principles of unity in diversity, peaceful coexistence, and social cohesion. However, the Ministry has omitted to examine how to best equip teachers with the necessary pedagogy skills to manage the culturally diverse students in Mauritius. At policy level, the Ministry has acknowledged that Intercultural Education can enable students to engage in social cohesion. At implementation stage the research has shown that such policy is limited to a few sections only: for example, short projects on Intercultural Education at primary level. However, such projects have had very positive influences among the students who participated.

It is therefore recommended that the Ministry of Education introduces a fully-fledged course on Intercultural Education at the teacher-training level. The module should be designed within the Mauritian context by combining positive points from Multicultural Education and Intercultural Education. The teachers need training on how to use the classroom as a platform to both create intercultural understanding and build competencies. The empirical data has revealed that the majority of the teacher trainees completed their training with very limited exposure to Multicultural or Intercultural issues. The research further revealed that at school level, both

teachers and students work under the constraint of content-heavy syllabi. The recommendation was deferred on the reasoning that it could result in undue pressure on schools to offer Intercultural Education and that the Mauritian education system would not yet be able to support such development because of the lack of preparation at the teacher-training level. The Ministry of Education should design a course on Intercultural Education within the Mauritian societal context. Therefore, grounding the assumption in Vygotsky's social development theory while focusing on the ZPD, this research proposes that the education system should develop teachers as Agents of Social Cohesion. In the ZPD, teachers, after going through the Intercultural module, would be able to provide meaningful instructional experiences that will enable a student to bridge his or her ZPD. The teachers will teach, share, and help students understand the cultures of others. Given that the information the teachers choose to provide the students will shape the students' outlook on these cultures for the rest of their lives, it is crucial that the teachers have undergone the proper training. Intercultural education will enable the student to be exposed to the presence of different cultures and to recognize their presence within society. The cognitive development of the students at the ZPD regarding intercultural understanding will be highlighted by the importance and valuable contribution of each cultural group in the society. The teachers will not limit the student's growth by placing boundaries or limits on the ZPD when it comes to learn about other cultural groups. The focus of the course must be for both primary and secondary teacher-trainees because the cognitive development of child starts from a young age. From an early age students must be introduced to Intercultural Education and should continue until the end of their schooling. Figure 27 illustrates the possible positive impact of trained-teachers in the ZPD on the students' cognitive system.



**Figure 27: Impacts of ZPD Trained Teachers on Students' Cognition**

Students are exposed to diversity at school and in their daily life. Intercultural Education will enable students to further develop as a social being through respecting and cooperating with others, thus contributing to sustain social cohesion in the Mauritian society. It is recommended that the Intercultural Module should include the following components:

Local Level:

- Mauritius as a multicultural society. Legal Rights according to the constitution
- The history of the cohabitation of the different culture, ethnicity and religious
- The impact of cultural/religious conflicts
- The composition of the multicultural school in Mauritius

- The development of social cohesion within the multicultural fabrics. The role of the government at National level, NGO, and Religious Institutions to maintain social integration
- Visits to religious sites and projects on cultural celebrations that include understanding of ritual, cuisine, customs, literature, and cultural histories.

Global level:

- The impact of the Religious/Ethnic/Cultural war
- The impact of the global media and stereotyping of religious/culture and ethnic through media coverage
- Foreign policies regarding ethnic/religious/cultural rights

Pedagogical level:

- Five Dimensions of the development of Multicultural Education.
- Intercultural Education: Development of Intercultural Understanding and competences to foster a sense of coherence for societies
- Development of Intercultural Education within the Mauritian context
- The ZPD by Vygotsky. How teachers can positively affect the cognition of students' development and guide their behaviour in a culturally diverse society?

Teachers should further be guided during their training on how best to infuse intercultural understanding across the curriculum between students of different ethnic, social, and cultural origins in order to foster a sense of coherence and common identity in the Mauritian society. In

this perspective, the following recommendations are suggested to be applied within the classroom:

- a). To create Intercultural groupwork
- b). Encourage intercultural dialogue: raise and guide questions pertaining to religion, ethnicity, and culture.
- c). Use the Mauritian mother tongue: Kreol, shared food habits, and shared dress code as a unifying factor
- d). Use similar beliefs in the four main religions to create a bridge of understanding and sharing between the different religious groups, for example, taking care of the needy, cleanliness, and kindness to parents

The research will formulate the lessons based on the existing school environment and teachers during their training will be going through such lessons. The lessons will not further constraints the syllabus. The idea of Intercultural Education is more prevalent in the social environment. However, there is no common commitment towards learning about other's cultures and to understanding one's own. It is essential to have a willingness to explore various cultural experiences without prejudice. Active learning methods can be recommended for the teaching of Intercultural concepts. Among such methods are service-learning and field trips, as well as pedagogical lessons that can be developed and applied across the curriculum. For example, the Social Studies subject can include a lesson on the following theme:

<b>Lesson 1: History of Racial Conflicts in Mauritius</b>
<b>Goal: To give students an Introduction to the racial conflicts in Mauritius, grounding their study and reflection in the lesson that follow.</b>
<b>Lesson 2: The Benefits of National Festivals on constructing a sustainable nation in Mauritius.</b>
<b>Goal: Do these festivals contribute to foster a sustainable society. Discussion and reflection.</b>

**Figure 28: Intercultural Lesson in the context of social studies**

While living in a multicultural society, it is important to unlearn all the misconceptions. This will enable to ensure intercultural understanding among the various members of the society. Such lessons can be included during the school activity periods.

<b>Unlearn: To unlearn the bias/stereotype on other cultures/religions/ethnicity. And to learn and understand the correct meaning. Examples:</b>
<b>‘ Does wearing of Muslim Hijaab (headcover) oppress woman?’</b>
<b>‘The Creol community are associated with social problems like drug, divorce’</b>
<b>‘Why Hindu worship cows?’ and ‘Does Chinese eat dog?’</b>

**Figure 29: To unlearn stereotype on other cultures/religion/ethnicity**

An important step to ensure social integration is to build a strong national identity. Teachers should be able to develop a common space among the students. The following lesson can be included during the preparation for the national celebration of Independence Day at the school.

<b>Lesson: The celebration of Independence day</b>
<b>The making of Mauritius society: The slaves, indentured labourers and Colonisers</b>
<b>To reflect on the common practices: food habits, dress code and way of living</b>
<b>The Mother tongue: Kreol as a unifying factor</b>

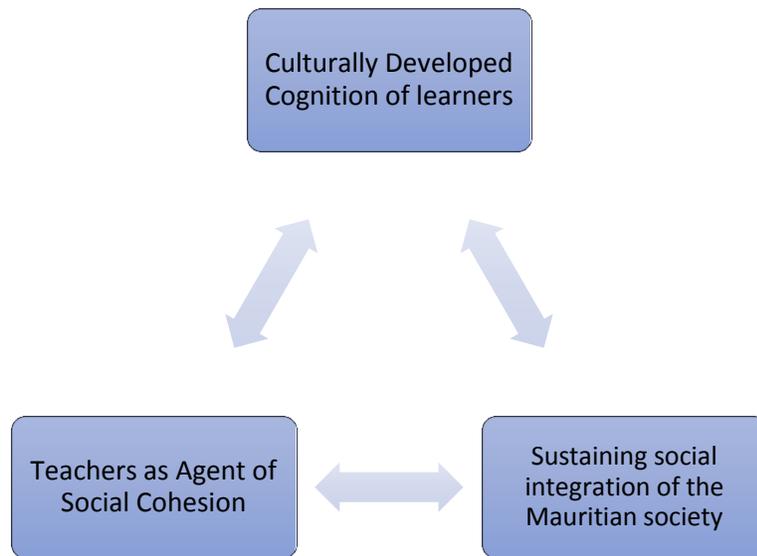
**Figure 30: Developing a common space**

The Mauritian multicultural society need to be reinforced in order to avoid future conflicts. It is important at school level to inculcate the peaceful living in this society. The following lesson can be included in the French and English language classes. Comprehension and Essays can be based on such lessons. Students will be given the opportunity to express their opinions.

<b>Lesson: To live in a multicultural society</b>
<b>How to promote peace, stability and social harmony which are important factors for growth and development?</b>
<b>Dealing with ethnic conflicts.</b>
<b>Religion is the main marker of culture in Mauritius. How can Religion contribute towards tolerance, harmony and peace?</b>
<b>How the misuse of religion can lead to fanaticism and fundamentalism?</b>
<b>How tensions between religious groups can lead to ethnic violence in Mauritius?</b>

### Figure 31: To live in a multicultural society

The expected results that can be forecasting in the long run if the teacher undergo through a training on Intercultural education is illustrated as follows:



### Figure 32: Intercultural Conceptual Results

Figure 32 illustrates that learning in a multicultural environment can be a positive experience for all students. It highlights concretely the diversity of culture and the relationship to the educational realm and, as such, constitutes an important resource for developing intercultural capacities and abilities in all students' cognitive development via the school systems. This is particularly important as diversity in cultures is prominent in Mauritius schools, from primary through secondary to tertiary institutions. These positive interactions will impact students' learning and interpersonal relationships at school level and in the Mauritian society. Vygotsky's ZPD resonates the most with this research. This theory places the teacher in the role of the Agent of Social Cohesion. The teacher will assist the students to understand the essence of diversity. Thus contributing to the cognitive development regarding cultural understanding

The Mauritian national educational goals include the inculcation of national consciousness and unity as well as encouraging the right type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and society. Developing the learner's mind to understanding the world around them, and acquiring the required and appropriate skills that will encourage an all-around development (mentally, physically, and socially) that will foster individual contributions to local and national development are very important.

### **6.3. Mauritius in the global cultural scene.**

In the global cultural scene, Mauritius is much celebrated for the richness of its diverse cultural tradition and heritage. Mauritians has multiple identities namely local, regional, national, ethnic, linguistic and international. Besides all these differences, the Mauritian Education System has been able to cater for all the students in the schools. So far schools have been a place for intercultural encounters and multilingual education where cultural diversity would thrive.

While introducing Intercultural Education in its teacher training program and thus later incorporating it in the classroom, Mauritius will be focusing on intercultural values that cut across all groups and link the Mauritian citizens together in view of forming a better world for the next generations. Mauritius will not only be concentrating on its efforts in using culture as a tool for celebrating the past, instead it will be using culture as a resource to shape the future. In the field of Intercultural Education, Mauritius will be a showcase at the international level; a living embodiment of positive cultural accumulation. Many European countries are still struggling to accept students from diverse cultural background. However, the Mauritian Education system is much far ahead in the field of positive intercultural encounters at the school. By focusing on the pedagogical development of the teachers, Mauritius can share its experience on the global level. Furthermore, the small island can work in collaboration with other countries

at an International level to develop the Intercultural Education course for the future teacher trainees. International bodies who are the main promoters of Intercultural Education for examples EU and UNESCO can assist Mauritius in its endeavour by providing for experts in the field and funding. And among SIDS, Mauritius can be the blueprint in Intercultural Education. By engaging in mutual understanding with other Small Islands regarding the development of Intercultural Education, Mauritius will be sharing the elements that keep its society sturdy together.

#### **6.4 Envisioning new possibilities through Intercultural Education**

The forces of globalisation have pulled down cultural and economic barriers. Besides, it is most opportune to develop global intercultural competences as response to the complex challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Mauritius as a small island to be able to survive in the global age must be able to navigate the various cultures in the world. Intercultural Education will not only play an important role in strengthening social ties among the Mauritian but also to develop intercultural understanding and bridge building across cultures in the world. Teachers should be in a position to disseminate home-grown knowledge and contribute in a significant way to the process of Intercultural Education in the new generation, transmission, application and diffusion while making headway in enhancing social integration.

The promotion of cultural understanding for ensuring a peaceful, just and sustainable world is relevant in the global world. Learners will need to become aware of the current conflicts between cultures and faiths and those of the past, and learn to develop intercultural skills for peace and understanding. Thus the Intercultural education course at the M.I.E should be designed in ways that are relevant to the local intercultural context, while also addressing broader global intercultural issues.

One of the negative effects of globalisation is that it has been a major threat to many cultures, resulting in the loss of languages and cultural heritage. The global dominant culture has brought along its values, products, practices and behaviors in almost every country of the world. Thus, challenging family values, traditional cultures and beliefs. Urgent action is needed to stem cultural identity and heritage. Teachers must be in a position to address to students the process of cultural homogenisation due to globalisation. That is why one of the crucial recommendations is to insert in the Intercultural Education module global intercultural issues.

And as it has been mentioned and explained in the Chapter one, Intercultural Education is learner-centered and lay emphasis on sustaining peaceful cohabitation through dialogue among the diverse cultural groups. Eventually while learners will be exposed to local and global intercultural issues it will generate innovative productive exchange in the long run. The recognition of diversity and intercultural understanding towards all cultures to be expressed equally, extend beyond the local, national or global context will lead to a peaceful and socially cohesive world.

## **6.5 Conclusion**

Mauritius' cultural diversity, which could be a potential source of strength and unity, is instead threatening the peace and unity in the country. Many of the ethnic groups in the country have not been properly blended into a nation. There is a dire need to accord the Mauritian society into one strong nation, to manage the growing conflicts, and eventually eliminate them.

The concept of Intercultural Education is a useful strategy for both stable and unstable situations. It is beneficial to all students irrespective of their skin color or ethnicity. All students must learn how to live and bring their own contributions to their communities in this multicultural era. In the Mauritian multicultural society, Intercultural Education can be used as a

strategic tool to create sustainable peace. This research has shown, through the lens of Allport's theory, that Mauritian students have a high frequency of positive intercultural encounters at school. By implementing Intercultural Education in the school curricula students will be able to be exposed to each other's cultures and religions and can learn to live in harmony despite their differences. Latent conflicts, ethnic or religious misunderstandings, or uprisings can be avoided in the new generations of Mauritian. Intercultural Education will help to shape the development of societal relationships among the students.

In Mauritius the notion of national unity is decreasing and is being replaced by group identities based on ethnicity and religion. This research proposes a sustainable and deep learning of Intercultural Education. To incorporate Intercultural Education as a field of study in the curriculum will help all students acquire the knowledge, attitudes, and skills needed to function in a pluralistic democratic society. Intercultural Education will act as an intervention for ameliorating the effects of the ethno-religious crisis and for improving intercultural competence in Mauritius. In public schools, bits of Multicultural Education have begun to be applied in few subjects, though Intercultural Education is not yet well developed or highly invested in. However, as seen from the results of the research, there are a few strides that have been made to foster integration and intercultural understanding. It is recommended to design an Intercultural Education course for the teacher training program in order for them to be equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources to work with the culturally diverse students.

In the future, in order to further understand the impact of Intercultural Education as a course on the teacher trainees, it would be crucial to examine how their beliefs, attitudes, teaching and learning have evolved over the course.

*“I do not want my house to be walled in on all sides and my windows to be stuffed.  
I want the cultures of all the lands to be blown about my house as freely as possible.  
But I refuse to be blown off my feet by any”*

***Mahatma Gandhi***

## **FINAL CONCLUSION**

The educational system in Mauritius provide a crucial space in transforming and building social relations among students from different cultural, religious and ethnic background. The research was drawn from field data gathered from primary and secondary teacher trainees at the M.I.E, where the Intercultural Education project was operated. This research also draws from individual interviews carried out with lecturers and other stakeholders in Education. Theoretically, this research has adapted The Contact Theory and Vygosky theory to explore the sustainable adaptation of Intercultural Education in the Mauritian Context.

The Mauritian government believed schools are powerful institutions that can foster a sense of coherence, the promotion of cultural diversity, and raise intercultural understanding among students of different ethnic, social, and cultural origins. However, for successful social cohesion to take place in Mauritius, it is crucial that the development, design, and implementation of Intercultural Education be guided within the needs of the Mauritian educational system.

The data collected at the teacher training level, has revealed that the teacher-trainees are exposed at a very limited level to Intercultural Education as pedagogy. It was also noticed through the analysis of the teacher-training program that the presence of Multicultural education was almost inexistent. Most teachers cannot make a clear distinction between Multicultural and Intercultural education. In general, the empirical research has shown that the teacher-trainees have intercultural competences to understand their students only because of their high frequency

exposure to multicultural encounters in their daily life. However, because of this lack of formal training, the teacher-trainees might just be transmitting their own beliefs and convictions regarding other cultures. In Mauritius, the training of the trainees is a prerequisite to ensure the successful implementation of Intercultural education in the educational system. The teacher-trainers who were interviewed strongly believed that the M.I.E should develop a module on Intercultural Education for social cohesion in the Mauritian context.

The success of the Intercultural Education Project in Mauritius was limited because of time constraints and students' content-heavy syllabus. There was limited space in the curriculum to introduce Intercultural Education as a stand-alone subject. Teachers have stressed that they have a primary responsibility to teach the content of the syllabus, and that they tend to limit themselves to the teaching of their respective subjects. However, although limited space is available to include Intercultural Education, they do believe that there is a need for it, either formally or informally. They requested to have training and teaching material on this pedagogy.

In Mauritius, both at the primary and secondary levels, students and teachers are highly exposed to cultural diversity through daily exposure at schools, for example, by participating in the celebration of cultural festivals. They are aware of concepts like living together in peace and harmony. However, they are not exposed to Intercultural Education as guided by the need for social cohesion. The N.C.F for both primary and secondary seeks to provide a framework for the holistic development of each student in term of integration of cohesion, national values, multilingualism, and cultural understanding upon which the Mauritian society is built. However, the textbooks used at the primary and secondary level hardly depict such values. The Intercultural Education project, which is part of the primary N.C.F, was completely alienated from the textbooks. The research has come to the conclusion that Intercultural education as a

subject and pedagogy is not present in the Mauritian classroom and the teacher-training because of the various factors mentioned above.

This research has highlighted that Mauritius as a small island needs to build its resilience in order to face its vulnerabilities. Social cohesion is an important factor to consider while building its resilience. The Mauritian society and its concept of 'Unity in Diversity' remain fragile, as the 1999 riots illustrated how quickly peace and harmony can be disrupted in this small island. The Island will be celebrating fifty years of independence in 2018 and thus, it would be an appropriate time to have a reflection on the consolidation of a sustainable nation. Mauritius must develop the necessary mechanisms for managing conflicts. Intercultural education embedded at the teacher-training level will enable the new generations to be fully embarked in the Mauritian society. They will be charting the way forward for a more inclusive Mauritian society through the development of Intercultural understanding and competences during their educational journey. They will be the new generation of Mauritians that will lead the 'rainbow nation' and a new model of social cohesion in Mauritius that will be peppered in the future.

This research proposed that at this phase in Mauritius the following recommendation should be considered in order to promote Intercultural Education in the educational system. First, the M.I.E must develop a module on the Intercultural education within the Mauritian context. The module must further facilitate and encourage open dialogue and communication on cultural, religious, and ethnic issues. This level of teaching and learning at the teacher training institute will enable to facilitate the teachers to be prepared to work in a multicultural setting. Teachers should be further empowered through specific teacher training practices. For example, by including visits to religious sites and projects on cultural celebrations that includes

understanding of ritual, cuisine, customs, literature, and cultural histories. Moreover, in order to achieve this objective, teachers should be supported by the appropriate reading materials and provided guidelines concerning the teaching and learning process of Intercultural Education in the classroom. It is further recommended to insert global intercultural issues in the Intercultural Education Course and to developed exchange with surrounding Small Islands. Mauritius should engage with EU and UNESCO who are the main advocators of Intercultural in order to gain support and fund to develop the above mentioned course.

To a certain extent, Mauritius has been able to successfully accommodate the ethnic diversity of its population through different mechanisms, including political conventions, educational provisions, and symbolic gestures like '*Lakorite*' that have contributed to building a sense of belonging among the different groups. The examination of the existing management of cultural diversity in Mauritius can contribute to charting a better future with the introduction of Intercultural Education at the teacher training level. Cultural diversity is work in progress which requires societies to adapt and adopt new processes. That is why Mauritius should examine the inclusion of new mechanisms like Intercultural Education to ensure a better cultural cohabitation.

Mauritius has witnessed the birth of a new nation following its independence and the coming together of disparate groups and population. Mauritius as a Small Island has often been recognized and celebrated for its approach to diversity and the ability of its ethnic groups to co-exist peacefully. However, this research has revealed that the Mauritian multicultural model needs to be reinforced and developed further through its educational system for long-term, systemic sustainability of social cohesion and harmony to take place.

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## Appendix A: Structured Interview

“Evolving from Multicultural Education to Intercultural Education in the prospect of sustaining social cohesion in Small Island Developing States”

A Case Study of The Education System in Mauritius

By

JabeenSoobratty

Ph.D Student, The Graduate School of Global Studies

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Japan

- Aim

The research ultimately aims to strengthen the social cohesion in societies that are constructed on multicultural pillars, particularly in SIDS through integrating Intercultural Education into the national educational system.

- Structured Interview

This structured interview is part of this research. All the questions provide you an opportunity to express your view. I would be very grateful if you could kindly answer the questions. This research is dependable on assistance from Mauritius in particular, so your opinion will indeed be very useful.

**Personal Profile:**

<b>Profession</b>	
<b>Department/field</b>	

### A. Encountering cultural diversity at work:

1. What kind of cultural diversity you have recognised in your work?

.....  
.....

2. What is especially positive when working with people from diverse culture?

.....  
.....  
.....

3. What has been challenging or problematic and why?

.....  
.....  
.....

4. What are the most importance competences (knowledge, skills, or attitudes) that are needed for encountering diversity in your work?

.....  
.....  
.....

5. How have you developed those competences that are needed in your work?

.....  
.....

**B. Infusing Intercultural Competence through Education**

6. What do you understand by Intercultural Education?

.....  
.....  
.....

10. Do you think Intercultural Education as a pedagogy should be implemented in the teacher training program Mauritius?

.....  
.....  
.....

11. What do you want your students to achieve through Intercultural Education?

.....  
.....  
.....

12. Intercultural education can be promoted across the curriculum. Can you give a practical example of how Intercultural Education can be integrated in your subject area?

.....  
.....  
.....

**C. Social Cohesion in SIDS**

13. How do you think intercultural education can play an important role in sustaining social cohesion in Mauritius?

.....  
.....  
.....

14. What are the constraints that the Mauritian system of education might face in the effective promotion of intercultural education?

.....  
.....  
.....

15. Do you think a teacher has a role to play as advocate of social cohesion? If Yes. Please explain why

.....  
.....

*Thank you for answering this questionnaire. Have you any comments that you would like to make about it or this research*

## Appendix B: Questionnaire (Survey)

Evolving from Multicultural to Intercultural Education in the prospect of sustaining social cohesion in Small Island Developing States.

A case study of the Mauritian educational system

By

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Dear Participant,

This questionnaire is part of my research. Most of the questions require ticking the most appropriate box; a few provide you an opportunity to express your view or to give multiple answers. I would be very grateful if you could kindly complete and return it to the person who gave it to you. Be assured that all your responses will be kept confidential and are for statistical use only

Questionnaire:

### A. Personal Profile:

1. Age

.....

2. Gender

Male  Female

3. Educational Qualification

Higher School Certificate(HSC)

Diploma

Graduate

- Postgraduate
- Other Qualification (Please specify).....

4. Do you have a teaching experience?

- Yes
- No

5. Religion

- Hindu
- Muslim
- Christian
- Chinese
- Other (Please specify).....

6. Ethnic Identity:

- Indo-Mauritian
- Sino-Mauritian
- Afro-Mauritian
- Franco-Mauritian

7. Which course are you enrolled at the M.I.E? How many years/months you have completed?

.....

**B. Daily exposure to diversity**

8. What kind of neighborhood to you prefer to live?

- Area with mostly same ethnic and religious group.
- Area with mix ethnic, religious and cultural group.
- Area dominated with my ethnic and religious group only.
- Area dominated with my religious group only

9. To what extent do you trust people in your neighborhood?

- Very well.
- Well
- Moderately
- Not at all

10. Do you have a sense of belonging to your

- Your community (neighborhood)
- Your society (whole nation)
- Both: Community and Society
- None of the above

11. How do you rate the following statements ?

(1-Strongly disagree, 2-Disagree, 3-Somehow Agree, 4-Agree, 5 –Strongly Agree)

I enjoy interacting with people from different cultures					
I think people from different cultures are narrow-minded					
I find it very hard to talk in front of people from different cultures					
I don't like to be with people from different cultures					
I respect the values of people from different cultures					

12. What kind of intercultural experience do you encounter in your daily life? (Multiple answers)

- Influence of other cultures in your cuisine
- Exposure to multilingualism
- Dress up like other cultural groups
- Friendship with other cultural groups
- None of the above
- If other, please specify.....

13. Where do you interact with other ethnic, cultural or religious group? (Multiple answers)

- Workplace
- Neighborhood
- Social activity
- None of the above

14. What is the most important factor to enhance social cohesion in the Mauritian multicultural society?

- To work toward the well-being of all the members of the society
- To fight exclusion and marginalization.
- To create a sense of belonging and promotes trust among all the members of the society
- To offer its members the opportunity of upward mobility

15. What are the barriers to enhance social cohesion in Mauritius?

.....

16. Do you think there are any tensions in Mauritius between: (Multiple answers)

- Different ethnic groups
- Different religious group
- Different cultural group
- None of the above

17. What kind of conflicts has taken place in Mauritius?

- Religious conflicts
- Cultural conflicts
- Ethnic conflicts
- None of the above

### **C. Multicultural and Intercultural Education**

18. What is the goal of Multicultural Education?

- To increase educational equity for all students
- To create a safe and successful learning environment for all
- To increase awareness of global issues.

To strengthen cultural consciousness.

19. What are the benefits of Multicultural Education?

- Increase positive relationships
- Achieve respect and tolerance
- Decrease stereotyping and prejudice through direct contact
- Increase interactions among diverse individuals

20. Is there a difference between Multicultural and Intercultural education?

- Yes
- No

21. If yes to question 20, can you give one example how the two pedagogical concepts are different?

.....  
.....

22. "Teachers must be prepared to incorporate Intercultural Education in their teaching." Do you...

- strongly disagree    disagree    neutral    agree    strongly agree

23. Do you think as a teacher trainee you have proper understanding of Intercultural Education:

- Not at all
- Moderately
- Thoroughly
- Very thoroughly

24. Have the following topic been covered in your teacher training program?

(1-Not at all, 2-Very little, 3-Somewhat, 4-Quite often, 5-Very often)

	1	2	3	4	5
--	---	---	---	---	---

Intercultural Education					
Multicultural Education					
Social cohesion in a multicultural society					

25. How according to you, Intercultural Education can be promoted in the teacher training program?

- As a stand-alone subject.
- Through relevant topics in different subjects.
- By allocating sufficient time in the curricular.
- By organizing more activities on the subject.

26. What might be the challenges in the effective promotion of Intercultural Education in the teacher training program?

- Constraints of syllabus.
- Lack of motivation from teachers trainers.
- Lack of interest from teacher trainees.
- Lack of resource persons.

**D. Teaching and Learning:**

27. As a future teacher do you think that:

- Students with different ethnic backgrounds may respond to classroom activities differently
- Students with different cultural identities may respond to classroom activities differently
- Students with different religious beliefs may respond to classroom activities differently
- All of the above

28. Has the professional teacher training course at the M.I.E

- Made you aware of your own cultural identity

- Made you more aware of cultural diversity in Mauritius
- Made me more aware of the need for cultural diversity in education
- None of the above

29. Has the professional teacher training course at the M.I.E

- Presented you with techniques for effectively teaching children whose ethnic background differ from your own.
- Presented you with techniques for effectively teaching children whose cultural identity differs from your own.
- Presented you with techniques for effectively teaching children whose religious beliefs differ from your own.
- Presented you with techniques for effectively teaching children whose ethnic, cultural and religious beliefs differ from your own.
- None of the above.

30. Has the professional teacher training course

- Given you the knowledge to be able to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on culturally diversity
- Given you the knowledge to be able to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on religious diversity
- Given you the knowledge to be able to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on ethnic diversity
- Given you the knowledge to be able to locate and evaluate teaching materials for school that are based on ethnic, cultural and religious diversity
- None of the above.

31. As a teacher trainee, I would like (Multiple answers)

- To receive more training in ways to teach students with different cultural backgrounds
- To receive more training in ways to bring cultures into the classroom
- To receive more training in identifying and evaluating culturally diverse materials for use in the classroom

None of the above.

32. When I complete my training at the M.I.E, I will be sufficiently prepared to teach students from different cultures

Strongly disagree  Disagree  None  Agree  Strongly Agree

33. When I become teacher, I will probably

Have students from different ethnic backgrounds

Have students from different religious backgrounds

Have students from different cultural backgrounds

Have students from different ethnic, religious and cultural backgrounds

34. I believe teaching and learning about different cultures is important but there isn't time to fit it all into the school day

Strongly disagree  Disagree  None  Agree  Strongly Agree

35. Teachers are not only responsible for completing the syllabus but they should act as agent of social cohesion towards the student?

Strongly disagree  Disagree  None  Agree  Strongly Agree

**Thank you for answering this questionnaire. Have you any comments that you would like to make about it or anything else to do with my research?**

### Appendix C: Checklist for Desk Analysis

Theme: Multicultural and Intercultural Education, Small Island Developing States, Multicultural Society.

Name of the document: (National Curriculum Framework/ Textbook/Syllabus/Report)

Level:

Subject:

<i>Concept Addressed</i>	<i>Section/Chapter // Modules</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Analysis</i>

### Appendix D: Checklist for Classroom Observations

School and Class Visited:.....

Subject Teaching Observed:.....

Aspects	Characteristics	Comments (observed)
Class	Seating Arrangement  Resources Displayed	
Resources Used	Prescribed Textbooks  Out of school resources/ School projects	
Teaching Methodology	Groupwork, Problem Solving, Role playing	
Cultural Contacts	Educator- Educator  Learner- Learner	

## Appendix E: Intercultural Education Project

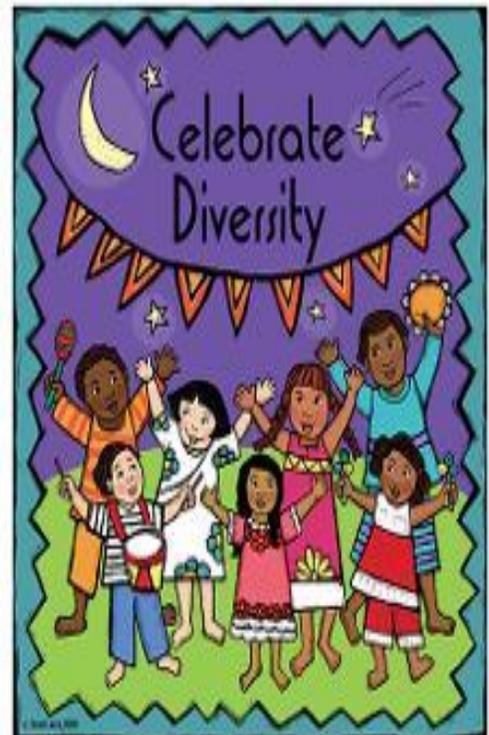
This is a copy of the handout which was given to the Teachers during the Intercultural Education Project training at the M.I.E:

### What is intercultural education?

At its core, intercultural education has two focal points:

It is education which respects, celebrates and sensitizes the normality of diversity in all areas of human life. It sensitizes the learner to the idea that humans have naturally developed a range of different ways of life, customs and worldviews, and that this breadth of human life enriches all of us.

It is education, which promotes equality and human rights, challenges unfair discrimination, and promotes the values upon which equality is built. Intercultural education is a synthesis of the learning from multicultural and anti-racist education approaches that were commonly used internationally from the 1960s to the 1990s.



The history of Mauritius is such that it has always experienced ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity. This can be seen, for example through the way we dress, eat or in the way we communicate among us.

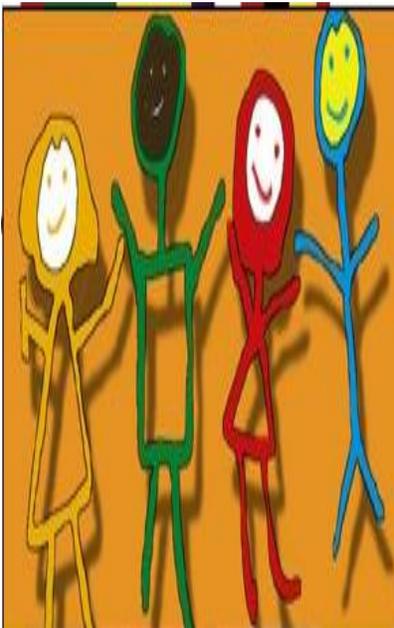
Different words like 'multicultural' and 'intercultural' have been used to describe the changes that have been happening in the Mauritian society. Both these terms describe a situation where there is more than one culture in a country. While the term 'multiculturalism' is sometimes used to describe a society in which different cultures live side by side without much interaction, the term 'interculturalism' expresses a belief that we all become personally enriched by coming in contact with and experiencing other cultures, and that people of different cultures can and should be able to engage with each other and learn from each other.

Although we belong to different ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic groups, we all live on the same planet, we are all actors of the same history, and we share the quality of human beings.

In order to be able to live TOGETHER, we need to get to know and respect our neighbours, to make the distance between "us" and "the others" shorter.

## The Intercultural Speaker

The intercultural speaker' (Kramsch, 1998:16-31) is someone who has a knowledge of their own culture and other cultures; someone who is able to discover and interact with people of other social contexts even those for which they have not been prepared. Not only is the intercultural speaker aware of his/her own identity



and culture but s/he is also aware of how s/he is perceived by others. Furthermore, the intercultural speaker can establish a relationship between their own and other cultures, can mediate and account for difference, accept it and become sympathetic to it.

The intercultural speaker eventually becomes autonomous in the process of discovering other identities and groups. This process can take place at any age (pupils, teachers, researchers), and highlight its constant evolution in the process of adapting their competence as intercultural speakers in a changing world. The ability to communicate with people reduces the fear of 'otherness'. Our own language provides us with identity. It gives us support and a feeling of belonging. Linguistic diversity allows us to see the world from different angles".

Jaeger (2001) enumerates the elements that make an intercultural speaker:

- Mediation: as the intercultural speaker negotiates understanding between individuals or groups of different cultural backgrounds;
- Learning: as he/she constantly acquires knowledge while interacting with native speakers and with unfamiliar cultural contexts, consequently gaining autonomy during this process;
- (Self)-reflection: by observing and understanding data including the perception of the self and the attitude towards his/her own culture.

The intercultural speaker has an active role when players in intercultural communication learn "to see, accept and respect each other as equal although different beings.

Knowledge about the practices or systems of meaning of other cultures is essential for the individual's cultural understanding of self and their own identity. The intercultural speaker is also someone who "crosses frontiers". He serves as a mediator between two or more cultural identifications. During the cross-crossing of identities, he has to negotiate between his own identifications and those of the other.

## Appendix F: Brochure and Poster for IE

### Objectives of Intercultural Education

A class of pupils is a society and a community in miniature. In order to meet the needs of this learning community we need to be aware of its diversity which stems from different student learning styles and the diversity of the social and cultural groups they belong to.

Interculturalism is defined as the existence and equitable interaction of diverse cultures and the possibility of generating shared cultural expressions through dialogue and mutual respect.

In order to meet the general objectives of intercultural education it is important to:

- Recognise the fact that we have a diverse population with different characteristics that we accept, understand and respect as unique and rich cultural traits of our society.
- Develop the capacity to critically assess our stereotypes and prejudices in relation to others so as to minimise and eliminate them.
- Encourage communication and cooperation among members of various social and cultural groups at school level.
- Ensure that each child has equal opportunities to develop their aptitudes within the school context.
- Find ways to integrate intercultural issues across the curriculum throughout the year, not just on special days or celebrations.

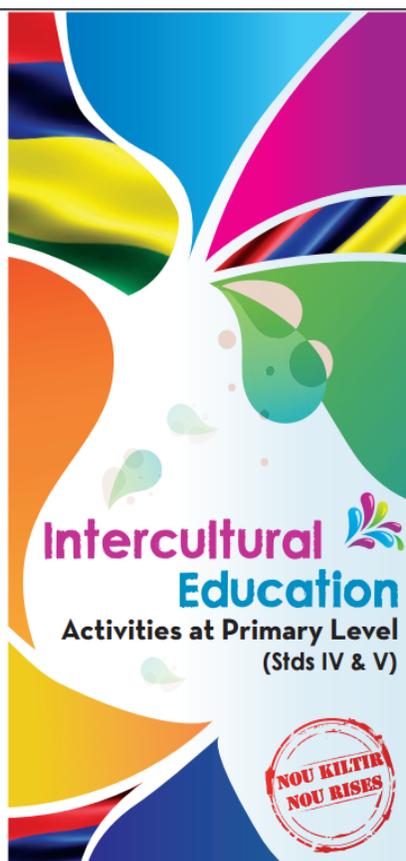
### Guidelines for participation

Participation is open to all primary schools of Mauritius and Rodrigues.

The project consists of three categories:

- I. **Art:** Paintings & Drawings
- II. **Theatre:** Drama
- III. **Music:** Slams, Songs & Dance

- Each school will choose and submit **one entry per category**.
- All entries should be accompanied by a duly filled participation form and sent to the Mauritius Institution of Education (c/o Mr R. Saraye, Assistant Registrar) in a sealed envelope with the category written on the top left hand corner.
- Each entry should be an original work to be carried out under the school's supervision.
- Each entry should be relevant to the theme: "Intercultural".
- Each entry will be assessed on the basis of: originality, creativity, relevance, clarity, presentation and expression.
- Each entry will be assessed by a jury panel whose decision will be final.
- The Mauritius Institute of Education/Ministry of Education reserves the right to use/adapt/reproduce the materials submitted.
- **Deadline for submission 1st week of July 2013**



**We have shared values.**  
 Nous avons des valeurs en commun.  
 Nou ena bane valer komün.

**Nous apprenons des autres.**  
 Nous apran avèk lezot.  
 We learn from others.

**Nou respektje diversite.**  
 We respect diversity.  
 Nous respectons la diversité.

**Nous faisons la promotion de l'égalité.**  
 We promote equality.  
 Nou promouvojr egalite.

**Nou tou en mem fami.**  
 We are part of the same family.  
 Nous appartenons à une même famille.

**We understand the necessity of solidarity.**  
 Nous comprenons l'importance de la solidarité.  
 Nou compran l'importans solidarite.

**Intercultural Education**  
 activities at Primary Level  
 (Stds IV & V)

**NOU KILTIR NOU RISES**