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REVIEWER'S REPORT

Manuscript No.: IJAR-56927

Title: Rethinking Multicultural Education Beyond Cultural Celebrations: Pedagogical Barriers in Indian Schools.

Recommendation:

Accept as it is

Accept after minor revision.....

Accept after major revision

Do not accept (*Reasons below*)

Rating	Excel.	Good	Fair	Poor
Originality		√		
Techn. Quality			√	
Clarity		√		
Significance	√			

Reviewer's ID: JPR- 212

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Detailed Reviewer's Report

Summary of the Paper:

This review paper addresses a critical and timely issue: the superficial implementation of multicultural education in Indian schools, where it is often reduced to celebrating festivals or food fairs. Grounded in Banks' (2010) dimensions of multicultural education and Ladson-Billings' (1995) culturally relevant pedagogy, the paper identifies key pedagogical barriers (e.g., superficial understanding, limited curriculum representation, inadequate teacher preparation, syllabus pressure, and structural assessment biases). The author connects these challenges to the vision of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and argues for a transformative, rather than tokenistic, approach to multicultural education to foster equity and inclusion, particularly for Socio-Economically Disadvantaged Groups (SEDGs).

Overall Assessment:

This paper addresses a highly significant and under-researched area within the Indian educational context. Its strength lies in its clear conceptual grounding and the identification of practical barriers that resonate with on-the-ground realities. However, the paper has notable weaknesses in its technical quality, specifically regarding its methodology as a "review paper," the depth of critical analysis, and the originality of its conclusions. While the topic is important, the paper currently reads more as a well-structured position paper or a literature summary than a rigorous, critical review. **Therefore, I recommend "Accept after major revision."**

Strengths:

- Relevance and Significance:** The paper addresses a crucial gap in Indian education. The focus on moving beyond "cultural celebrations" and linking the discussion to NEP 2020 is highly relevant and timely.
- Strong Conceptual Framework:** The use of Banks' five dimensions and Ladson-Billings' three pillars (academic success, cultural competence, critical consciousness) provides a robust and appropriate theoretical lens.
- Clear Identification of Barriers:** The five pedagogical barriers (e.g., syllabus pressure, teacher preparation) are clearly articulated and practically grounded, making the paper useful for practitioners and policymakers.

Major Weaknesses & Required Revisions:

- Methodological Clarity (Critical):** The paper is described as a "review paper," but it lacks a clear methodology. How were the sources selected? What were the inclusion/exclusion criteria? Was it a systematic review, a narrative review, or a conceptual review? Without this, the paper risks being seen as a selective or biased summary.

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- **Required Action:** The author must add a dedicated "Methods" or "Review Approach" section. This should specify the type of review, databases searched (e.g., ERIC, Google Scholar, Shodhganga), keywords used (e.g., "multicultural education India," "culturally relevant pedagogy," "NEP 2020"), and the timeframe of literature considered. This will significantly improve technical quality.
- 2. **Limited Critical Analysis (Major):** The paper largely presents the theories of Banks and Ladson-Billings and then lists barriers found in other literature (e.g., Nieto, Gay, Vavrus). There is limited *critical synthesis* or original argument. For example:
 - Do Banks' or Ladson-Billings' frameworks face any critiques or limitations when applied to the *specific* Indian context (e.g., caste-based diversity, linguistic multiplicity, rural-urban divide)? The paper does not address this.
 - The barriers are listed but not analyzed for how they interact or which is most primary. Does teacher preparation failure cause superficial understanding, or is it the syllabus pressure?
 - **Required Action:** The author should add a section (e.g., "Discussion" or "Critical Analysis of Barriers") that moves beyond listing. Discuss the *relationships* between barriers. Critically apply the frameworks to India's unique social structure (caste, tribe, religion, region) rather than treating them as universal templates.
- 3. **Originality of Conclusion:** The conclusion ("meaningful multicultural education is central to building a democratic and inclusive school environment") is valid but not novel. It largely restates the premise of the paper.
 - **Required Action:** The conclusion should offer more specific, actionable, or even provocative implications for the Indian context. For example: "While NEP 2020 advocates for regional languages, this paper's analysis suggests that without dismantling English-medium prestige hierarchies, structural assessment bias will persist." Or, propose a *small set* of concrete, implementable recommendations for teacher training institutes or curriculum developers in India.
- 4. **Minor Issues:**
 - **Reference Formatting:** References 7 and 8 both list Nieto (2002 and 2010) but the in-text citation for Nieto (2002) is correct. However, reference #8 has an extra "8." at the beginning and an incomplete publisher location. Please standardize all references to the journal's required style.
 - **Self-Citation:** The paper does not cite the author's own work (which is fine), but ensure that all key Indian scholars on multiculturalism or NEP (e.g., positions by Krishna Kumar, Rohit Dhankar, or others) are considered, not just Western scholars. Adding 1-2 Indian voices would enhance contextual relevance.

Specific Questions for the Author:

- How do the pedagogical barriers differ between government schools (with more SEDG students) and private schools in India?
- The paper mentions "structural biases in assessment." Can you provide a concrete example from an Indian standardized exam (e.g., CBSE or state board) that illustrates this bias?

Decision: Accept after major revision provided the above issues are adequately addressed, particularly the methodological clarity and critical analysis