

The significance of Islamic and Hindu primary schools fully subsidized by Dutch government

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Abstract : After World War Second the Netherlands has accepted lots of immigrants from old Dutch colonies and from Mediterranean countries mainly because of economic reason. They were obliged to settle down and their younger generation was growing up there in opposition to their will and to governmental expectation. They became ethnic minorities in social position. Dutch government has therefore carried out several educational policies such as mother tongue /mother cultural education and educational priority policy in order to provide their children remedial education and to give them an equal opportunity since late 1970s. In addition to these policies, intercultural education policy which is expected to promote mutual understanding between both majority and minority children and to fight against discrimination at individual level was introduced in 1985. These educational policies are based on so-called 'cultural pluralist policy' which provide minorities such an equal opportunity as majorities and make them possible to participate individually into the society.

In 1988 Islamic primary schools and Hindu primary schools were set up for the first time in Dutch history. They are fully supported by governmental subsidies like neutral and other denominational primary schools. Muslim and Hindi form two large groups among immigrants. The requirement for their own denominational school were accepted by the government based on Dutch Constitution. The number of their schools has been increasing rapidly. Since then, big controversy has been introduced among politicians or researchers. Because, on the one hand, it seemed to contradict against educational policies mentioned above and on the other hand it seemed to integrate ethnic minorities institutionally. In this paper, the social characters of Muslim and Hindi and the process how they had set up their own schools are reviewed in the first and second chapter respectively. In the third chapter actual situation of these schools are mentioned. Finally, based on these facts, the meaning of existence of Islamic and Hindu primary schools is considered from the view point of social integration.

Considering the school atmosphere and achievement of children, these schools play an important role to let immigrant participate into Dutch society. Therefore it appears that the existence of laws which are applicable not only to majority but also to minority is very important.