Leading Multi-ethnic Schools: adjustments in concepts and practices for engaging with diversity[i]

The student population across world is increasingly reflective of diverse cultures, religions and ethnicities. This rich diversity may become a challenge for educational leaders, teachers, and policy makers in the absence of an understanding of diverse sources of knowledge people draw on for directing their beliefs and daily practices. This paper explores the multi-ethnic context in Britain with a focus on Muslim students in English secondary schools, and argues for drawing on diverse ethnic knowledge sources to inform and enrich approaches towards managing diversity. It discusses the concept of *Adab* derived from Muslim ethics and philosophy, and debates possible contributions of such conceptual adaptations towards improving educational engagement and performance.

Population diversity is a sociological phenomenon managed by states and societies in different ways at different levels (Bauman, 1997). The radical changes taking place in the world around us are being reflected in the changing demographics in the British schools and elsewhere, posing management challenges to educational leaders, and demanding revisits to concepts and practices. The current emphasis in Britain on 'celebrating/valuing diversity', 'respect for all' and 'widening participation' (HEFCE 2001) are moves forward from policies of assimilation, integration and multiculturalism. However, these notions and approaches are ethnocentric in orientation, and embedded in Western philosophy and values (Dimmock, 2000). These do not acknowledge or incorporate relevant conceptualisations from other cultures and knowledge sources (Shah, 2006b). This imposes limitations on their appropriateness and applicability to multiethnic contexts with implications for both theory and practice, and hinders enrichment of conceptualisations.

This paper explores multi-ethnic context at the secondary school level in England (UK) with a focus on Muslim students, and argues for availing ethnic knowledge sources and conceptualisations to inform the ethnocentric notions and definitions currently appropriated for managing diversity. The specific concept that this paper discusses is *Adab* which has a unique place within Islamic ethics and philosophy. Historically, it has been adapted from pre-Islamic cultures (Azim, 1991), and developed over the times within different traditions of Muslim communities. It broadly embraces the meanings of the term 'respect', but is a more extended and multi-layered concept. As a conceptual tool, *Adab* has proven significance for managing internal diversity of Muslim community on multiple sites including social and educational (Azim, 1991; Rooke, 1998; Shah, 2006a). Its appropriateness for contexts of diversity indicates potential to inform policy and practice in multi-ethnic

schools. In the backdrop of increasing emphasis placed by the British government on valuing and respecting diversity, *Adab* as a conceptual frame could be availed to enrich and develop existing concepts. Second, educating in *Adab* can develop positive attitudes towards diversity. Third, *Adab* as a practice has the potential to contribute to social cohesion in general, and to the learners' self-esteem and affirmative self-constructions in particular, underpinning their educational and social enhancement, as discussed later in this paper.

The paper focuses on one group, loosely defined as 'Muslim students', in English secondary schools. This focus has theoretical and practical relevance. Research indicates that the issues of identity and educational achievement become more complex at secondary school level (Abbas, 2004; Nieto, 2004). According to Piaget (1969), this age phase concurs with the ability to reason, and this reasoning becomes active in shaping and challenging identity constructions, which in the case of young Muslim students, has implications for their achievement (Shah, 2006a). There are 1.6 Million Muslims in Britain, and 33.8% are aged 0-15 years (National Statistics, 2001). Thus, more than five hundred thousand Muslims in Britain fall within the compulsory education age, which is a large student population for investigating and theorising. Second, Muslim students are an interesting 'group' of diverse ethnicities, cultures, and nationalities, offering scope for theoretical complexity, which can be a useful analytical tool for exploring other contexts of diversity. Third, the history and politics of inter-national relations in the post-imperial world (Said, 1978) and the subsequent implications for citizenship have had particular impact on Muslims in the British society, where multiple historical, social, economic, strategic and political factors have added to the complexities of interface on educational sites. Moreover, in the wake of 9/11 and 7/7, emerging competing political discourses have further added to the complicatedness of inter-relations on educational sites with serious implications for Muslim students and their experiences of schooling. Fourth, the level of educational achievement of certain sub-groups of Muslim students - such as Bangladeshi, Pakistani, Somali, Turkish - has been a cause of concern to the respective schools (Abbas, 2004; Archer, 2003; DFES, 2004), drawing attention to issues of performance.

It will be simplistic to assume that the learners' performance/achievement is linked only to teaching/learning activities, abilities, or learning styles. These are highly significant factors *but* within an environment which encourages and facilitates participation for diverse groups of learners. Creating and maintaining such environment are leadership challenge, requiring deeper sociological understanding and sensitivity (Mills, 1992). This paper is an effort to respond to that challenge. It sets out to explain diversity by looking briefly at how 'difference' is constructed, and how the learners' ethnic identities are formulated, debating the impact of these constructions on the learners' self-esteem, and exploring the interplay with educational achievement. The second part discusses the notion of *Adab*, and argues how it can be availed to inform existing concepts and relevant practices, and what contributions it can make to the learners' self-esteem with implications for their performance. The paper is largely conceptual one: it draws on experience of researching in English schools, and engages with wider literature to develop the argument. The intention is to present a concept for debate, suggesting adjustments in concepts and practices for engaging with diversity. However, discussing processes and practices for implementation is beyond the scope of the current paper.

Diversity, Difference and Education

Diversity is associated with 'difference', generally sending signals of un-equality - better or worse than the norm. This not only poses challenge to social justice and fairness in educational institutions, but also impacts on diverse learners' engagement with education. Being marginalised and 'othered' through a discourse of difference generally has negative impact on the performance of ethnic minority students, adding also to the difficulties of educational leaders in managing teaching/learning. An issue with the notion of diversity is how to accommodate difference with equality to liberate the students from experiencing marginalisation. Derrida's work (1988) on 'difference/differance' problematised the concept, and pointed to possibilities of de-constructing difference, highlighting conceptual complexity where difference and equality may not be in oppositional stances. This has similarities to Islamic thought where difference poses a sociological challenge to know, understand and connect:

O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and female and made you into nations and tribes that ye may know each other … (The Quran[ii], 49:13).

Such philosophical shared-ness hints at possibilities of adjustment in theory and practice by addressing broader conceptualisations of diversity. In Islam, acknowledgement of difference/diversity is celebrated (the Quran 5:48; 49:11-13), encouraging 'a wider respect for difference' (Azim, 1991, p. 110). The argument is 'different but equal', which positions equality within diversity to counter any challenges coming from 'difference', though without closing the debate around it (Shah, 1999).

Managing ethnic diversity has been an ever-increasing challenge for theory and practice in the post-Second-World-War Britain, raising issues of inclusion and achievement on educational sites. Modood (2005) asserts that non-whites are 'perceived and treated as racially defined groups of inferiors, outsiders and competitors whose right to be in Britain and to be treated as equal citizens was not fully accepted' (p.??). Diversity (difference!) is not only seen to be problematic on a theoretical level, it is challenging and complex on practice level as well, where regimes of power (Foucault, 1980) may use 'difference' for discrimination and fragmentation. In multiethnic schools, diversity emerges as a problem rather than a complement. The educational processes often put in place for ethnic minority students include emphasis on, for example, inclusion, recognition of diversity of learning styles, language provisions, ethnic minority teachers, community links and others, in the efforts to cater for deficiencies and barriers to achievement. What seems to be lacking here is a framework to engage diversity through positive self-constructions, not just in relation to the white ethnicity but on a wider interethnic level involving diverse groups, to facilitate enhanced engagement of different ethnicities on educational sites and in the wider society.

Identity Constructions in Educational Institutions

The sociological processes related to diversity (Bauman, 1997; Giddens, 1991), from initial exclusionary practices through assimilation, integration and more recent 'celebration', appear to be moving full circle towards minorities' self-exclusion and

'in-group cohesion' (Jost and Major, 2004; Stangor, 2004), especially in the case of Muslim students. The global political developments in recent history, from Palestinian *Intafada* to post 9/11 and 7/7, have further driven Muslims towards a trans-national, super-ordinate Muslim identity (Ahmed, 2003; Hopkins and Hopkins, 2004), under the increased threats of their becoming obvious targets of racism and terrorism.

Identity construction is a complex and dynamic process (Giddens, 1991), influenced by multiple in-group and out-group factors (Shah, 2006a). 'Identities are the names we give to different ways we are positioned by, and position ourselves' (Hall, 1993, p.394). How ethnic identities are constructed, projected or imposed reflects interplay of myriad factors, highlighting the need to develop an understanding of the issues and sociological processes involved in identity constructions, and their impact on students' achievement, as well as the inevitability to negotiate ways of addressing these issues. For example, in the case of Muslim students, the drive towards a super-ordinate Muslim identity has strengthened under the pressure of in-group and out-group forces, and is international in dimensions (Alles, 2003; Djao, 2004; Afridi, 2001; Jacobson, 1998; Hopkins and Hopkins, 2004; Limage, 2000; Tlemçani, 1997; Haddad, 2002; Kepe,l 1997). The impact of these pressures in identity negotiations is reflected to some extent in Kabbani's comments in post-Satanic-Verses scenario:

> 'We were caught between two tyrannies: ... even those who had hardly perceived of themselves as "Muslim" before, except in family ritual or personal reference, were suddenly forced to stand up and be counted as "warriors" for subtlety in either side's position' (2002, p.1).

Self-constructions are influenced by self-perceptions and by how one is perceived by others. Diverse communities are imagined and created by the state and administration for the convenience of policy formation and resource allocation, but as a political performance it can be misplaced essentialism. Diversity is positioned in opposition to dominant national identity, and diverse ethnic identities are constructed as a threat to societal cohesion. Association of ethnicity with negative markers like underachievement, terrorism, and others is another political manipulation of discourses, and in the case of Muslim pupils these can be technologies to locate the blame for under-achievement in ethnicity/race, which may hinder engagement with the real issues affecting students' achievement. Second, it may affect interpersonal

relations in schools among teachers, students and others involved in teaching/learning. Third, it may affect self-perceptions and self-esteem of the learners with implications for their performance.

The perception among the Muslims, particularly among the youth, of being 'targeted' (Ahmed, 2003; Esposito, 2002; Hagopian, 2004) and the processes such as special legislations, police raids, profiling and 'stop and search' practices targeting Muslims have left them feeling insecure and even paranoid, which may discourage educational engagement and social cohesion. The media has added to the complexity of the situation (Ahmed, 1992) through media portrayals of Islam as barbaric, irrational, primitive and sexist; and more recently through implied associations with terrorism. Generalizations from individual examples in the media, or elsewhere, to wider population further lead to misunderstandings and ambiguities affecting out-group perceptions of students' identities and their educational destinations (Abbas, 2006).

Negative stereotyping and misleading assumptions impact on the young learners' aspirations, engagement and motivation (Abbas, 2004; Shah, 2006b). Feagin et al's study of black students links low aspirations and underachievement to the persistent theme that 'the students were denied respect and humanity' (1996, p.viii). Riley and Docking (2004) discuss self-perceptions of disaffected students stating: 'The pupils saw themselves at the bottom of the heap, labelled by teachers as 'thick', 'stupid', not wanted in the school' (p.168); again pointing to the issue of self-esteem and its interplay with performance. Their argument is:

> If schools are to improve student motivation for learning and to reduce behaviour problems and exclusions, there needs to be an effective *dialogue* [original italics] between staff and students about how to achieve a culture of mutual respect, not just one that adheres to rules of conduct. (2004, p.177)

Some major issues that Muslim students are experiencing today include racism, media hostility, association with terrorism, social exclusion, harassment, stereotyping, negative assumptions, religious hatred, and discrimination (Ahmed, 2003; Parekh, 2000; Richardson, 2004; Vertovec, 2002), which impact on their self-perceptions, their schooling and experiences in school (Shah, 2006a). Educational leaders need to develop an organisational culture where minority ethnic learners would feel equal and

valued members of the student community. Research and literature provide evidence that leaders with vision (Fullan, 2003), strong moral convictions (Harris et al, 2003) and personal values (NCSL, 2005) effectively create inclusive culture leading to positive self-images among students and staff from diverse backgrounds, improving ethnic engagement and performance.

Ethnic Achievement

Ethnic achievement is a complex issue, highly politicised and riddled with competing claims and contradictions. Tomlinson (1991) rightly argues that despite volumes of evidence regarding ethnic achievement/under-achievement, it is still hard to draw firm conclusions. The results of research are often used to fuel political debates:

> A variety of explanations has been offered by researchers attempting to discover casual factors behind differential levels of achievement between majority and minority pupils, and between different groups of minority pupils. The explanations have often been guesswork, prejudice, or attempts to support particular theories. (Tomlinson, 1991, p.121)

The association between under-achievement and certain ethnicities, highlighted by statistics and emphasised by literature, is widely perceived as pointing to a link between ethnicity/race and performance/achievement. Many ethnicities perceive these statistics as sending negative signals about ethnic potential, and discriminatory in effect, as it may make people go beyond the evidence to conclude that some groups are inherently superior or inferior to others. Such generalizations not only signal negative perceptions of diversity on sociological level, but also ignore structural and educational issues.

Investigating and theorising ethnic achievement is challenging, as research suggests diverse and even conflicting evidence with regard to gender, socio-economic background, school factor, population mix, region, length of stay in Britain, and many others (Abbas, 2004; 2006; Anwar and Buksh, 2002; Haque and Bell, 2001; Modood, 2003; National Statistics, 2001; OFSTED, 2004). Moreover, Muslims in Britain originate from different countries and cultures, and are ethnically as diverse as Britain itself. Second, research points to 'significant gaps in the collection of data according

to faith (data continues to be collected according to ethnicity), particularly in the key area of education' (Abbas, 2006, p.8; also see Modood, 2004; 2005). For example, research claims that Indian students are by ethnicity high achievers (Abbas, 2006; Birmingham City Council, 2005; National Statistics, 2004; OFSTED, 2004). However, Indians in Britain are composed of three major faith groups - Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus; and this is an example where in the absence of data according to faith, conclusions can be misleading.

Statistics say that one third of the Muslim students leave school without any qualifications (Abbas, 2004; 2006; Anwar and Buksh, 2002; Haque, 2000; National Statistics, 2001). Nevertheless, Muslim students appear to perform better in schools with larger populations of Muslim pupils (Hewer, 2001; NCSL, 2005). Research and statistics highlight that Muslim students perform better in Muslim majority schools even when these are poorly resourced Muslim Faith Schools (Hewer, 2001; Lawson, 2005; Meer, 2007; Parker-Jenkins et al, 2005). Apparently, 'the larger the white component of their school population the poorer their performance and the lower their relative value added' (Johnston et al, 2006, p.24). Does this signify that their performance/achievement is linked with their identity and experiences as Muslims, in main stream schools?

Many studies point to racism in main stream schools as being one of the key causes of low achievement among ethnic minorities (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Troyna, 1991). Home Office report confirms that 'People from Black and minority ethnic communities have experienced and continue to experience racism, discrimination, and disadvantage' (2004, p.4). Abbas claims that in the case of Muslims it is 'direct discrimination, racial hostility and cultural preference (2006, p.17). Another expression of this discrimination is low expectations by teachers of the academic potential of the ethnic minority pupils, which is highlighted by many studies (Abbas, 2004; Gillborn and Youdell, 2002; Haw, 1998) as hampering motivation of these students and their performance:

> … teachers associate Muslim students' problems to culture and fail to identify the structural issue which may affect the children's performance in the class room. (Abbas, 2006, p.18)

Studies of pupil-teacher interaction highlight 'how easily children's self-esteem can be dented by teachers deliberately or unconsciously valuing some pupils more highly than others' (Munn, 1999, p.121). Blair (2002) critiques the tendency to locate the blame for underachievement in students and their communities as it 'overlooks the role of schools as institutions, and teachers and head teachers as leaders, in processes that lead to poor student performance' (p.182). Besides, such associations undermine pupils' self-perceptions, and may lead to 'social reproduction' (Bourdieu 1977). Abbas argues that cultural reproduction in school context is 'the way in which schools in association with other social institutions help to perpetuate social and economic inequalities' (2004, p.17), thus pointing to structural issues to be addressed by school leaders. OFSTED (2004) comments that where a school has strong leadership, high expectations, effective teaching learning strategies and an ethos of respect with a clear approach to racism and bad behaviour, then excellent performance by ethnic minority pupils can be expected, is thought provoking. The question that emerges here is how to create a culture of genuine mutual respect, and a *belief* of being valued as equals, to build an environment conducive to ethnic achievement, and to move towards increased engagement in schooling and wider social cohesion.

Adab: a concept for diversity contexts

Understanding the factors linked with the learners' performance and addressing these is what the learners expect from the schools and from those responsible for leading and managing the schools. This expectation is particularly high in the case of Muslim students because of the discourses surrounding knowledge/teacher status in Islam (Shah 1998; 2006b). In multi-ethnic Britain, there is need for sociological thinking (Bauman, 1992) to explore possible conceptual connections to engage diverse groups and communities, as a 'source of new intellectual and moral energy' (Parekh, 2004). A shared underpinning can guide towards resolving tensions, not by eliminating differences, but by respecting and integrating diverse philosophies and concepts.

O'Brien and Kollock propose that 'Spinning imaginative bridges that span existing, contradictory social forms is a first step towards creating new forms of self and society' (1997, p.480). Abbas argues that bridging 'requires willingness of ethnic minorities to connect with society at large but more importantly, *the willingness of the receiving society to accept other groups* (author's emphasis)' (2004, p.23).

Conceptual adaptations from other cultures would reflect this 'acceptance' from the host community, and inspire a sense of 'belongingness' in ethnic minorities, contributing to spinning such imaginative bridges by linking the 'different' towards creating a more cohesive society.

This paper discusses *Adab* as a concept, drawing attention to the potential of diverse knowledge heritages, and highlights that 'social capital is generated when individuals share and exchange knowledge, norms, values and behaviour that are reinforced by trust and obligation' (Abbas 2004, p.20). The primary meaning of the Arabic root of word *Adab* is 'to invite', or 'to gather together for a banquet', and is associated with hospitality. It is also explained as 'beautiful action', or 'good behaviour'. *Adab* is a concept with many applications and shades of meaning. It has developed in interplay with different philosophies as Muslim conquests and expansion during the early Islam led to contacts with different cultures 'whose intellectual heritages were in time selectively appropriated by Muslims, then refined and further developed' (Azim, 1991, p.111). This integration of diverse intellectual and philosophical legacies contributed to the enrichment of the concept:

> The public discourse of *Adab*, grounded in philosophical and moral language and concerns, represents a significant part of the cosmopolitan heritage of ethics in Islam and reflects efforts to reconcile religiously and scripturally derived values with an intellectually and morally based ethical foundation. (p.114)

Adab designates a wide range of social and ethical virtues, including education, upbringing, high moral principles and knowledge (Rooke, 1998). It developed in response to the needs of an expanding and diverse *Ummah* - the Muslim community (Shah, 2006a). *Adab* is a broad framework for values and behaviour underpinned by equality and 'hospitality', finding its strongest expressions in family, community and educational contexts. However, because of the scope and primary focus of this paper, the discussion will be limited to leadership values with regard to managing diversity.

Research studies emphasise the significance of leadership values in institutional contexts as contributive to 'success' (Bennett and Anderson, 2003; Harris et al, 2003; Hopkins, 2001; NCSL, 2005). A growing recognition of 'meditation on values'

(Greenfield and Ribbins, 1993, p.262) and perception of 'Leadership a Moral art' (Hodgkinson, 1991; Sergiovanni, 1992) in leadership literature recognizes this dimension by arguing that leaders have to take value-positions:

> Notions of caring, justice and ethics are the foundations … The actions of the leader cannot be separated from the value positions held, for understandings of 'right', 'wrong', or even '(not) appropriate', depend upon recognition of individual world views and beliefs. (Goddard, 2003, p.17)

The onus of value choices appears to be upon 'leaders' or those responsible for teaching/leading. Learners are not actively a part of value choices here and the associated responsibility. Within the *Adab* framework, the activity is participative and multi-dimensional, and the responsibility is shared. Furthermore, the values underlying *Adab* are drawn from diverse sources. Its roots and routes are multi-cultural as indicated earlier, and therefore associated values can relate to many ethnic societies, minimising the issue of 'whose values' and 'what values'. The increasing emphasis on values, ethics and moral leadership, and the growing complexity of 'multi-ethnic/cultural' school contexts indicate the perceived need for a conceptual framework complex enough to encompass diversity and shared responsibility, and simple enough to be practicable with a 'set of values' diverse groups could identify with. *Adab*, as a concept entails such set of values. It also provides a framework for harmonization of multiple value-perspectives facilitating interaction, and bonding different stakeholders by engaging sociological imagination (Mills, 1992). *Adab* underpins diverse aspects of relationships, celebrates diversity, supports vulnerability, rejects discrimination (racism!), and promotes innate human dignity. It argues for:

- Understanding equality as located in difference
- Respecting difference
- Positive perceptions of self and others
- Sharing and participation
- Giving happiness

Respect and caring promoted by *Adab* have the potential to influence attitudes and practices in education with implications for inclusion and achievement. Research abounds in examples of effect of school and its environment/culture on how specific

learners construct themselves, and the effect of these constructions on learners' self-perceptions and performance. Talking about 'experience of victimisation and exploitation of ethnic minority people' (Lynch, 1987, p.4), Lynch explores 'prejudiced attitudes which may be detrimental to social and educational equity' (1987, p.3). Bourdieu's (1977) assertion that a psychic sense of one's place leads one to exclude oneself from places from which one is excluded applies to both social and educational. Research confirms that experiences of exclusion have negative effect on students' self-perceptions, motivation and performance (Gillborn and Mirza, 2000; Wright, 1998). Perceptions of non-Whites as 'invisible, incapable, savage, or exotic' (Rakhit, 1998, p.64), and self-perceptions of not being good enough have negative implications for self-respect. Branden (1997) explains self-respect as 'the conviction of our own value', and studies assert that self-respect is an important component of self-esteem influencing performance (Walz and Bleuer, 1992).

People are sensitive to messages about the self (Dweck, 1999, p.143). Dweck argues that the students may lose faith in their ability to succeed due to 'lower expectations, negative self-evaluation, negative emotions and feelings of badness … no matter what inclinations the children come with' (1999, p.107; see also; Abbas, 2004; Gillborn and Youdell, 2002; Nieto, 2004). This also points to the role of teachers and leaders in students' constructions of self. Gillborn (1998) maintains that 'even where teachers are conscientious and committed to equality of opportunity as an ideal, they may nevertheless *act* in ways that unwittingly reproduce familiar racial stereotypes, generate conflict … and perpetuate existing inequalities of opportunities and achievement' (p.35). The impact of how social is experienced extends to educational performance and self-perception. Self esteem is not just an individual psychological construct, but is linked to socio-political context. Nieto (2004) argues that:

> 'students do not simply develop poor self-concepts out of the blue; rather their self-esteem *in terms of schooling* (original emphasis) is the result of policies and practices in schools that respect and affirm some groups while devaluing and rejecting others. Students from culturally dominated groups partially internalize some of the many negative messages to which they are subjected on a daily basis about their culture, ethnic group, class, gender or language' (p.195)

This can be one explanation of why one third of the Muslim students leave school without any qualifications (Abbas, 2004; 2006; Anwar and Buksh, 2002; National Statistics, 2001), and second, why they appear to be gravitating towards and operating within discourses of super-ordinate religious identity and *Ummah*. Is it to cope with powerful discriminatory discourses and 'racial frames of reference' (Donald and Rattansi 1992, p.1), made more intense in the post 9/11 sensibilities, and undermining self-constructions? In such contexts, concepts like *Adab* and associated traditions may help create a 'reverse discourses' (Foucault, 1980) of self-worth leading to positive self-perceptions and educational engagement. The social values propounded by concepts like *Adab* emphasise respect as well as social cohesion. In addition to that, differences are respected and accommodated, with emphasis on enhancing understanding. Diverse cultural capital is welcomed and appreciated as contributing to social capital, perceived both as a cause and outcome of educational achievements.

Conclusion

The current emphasis in British government's policies on 'respect for all' hints at cultural intersections, highlighting the significance of redefining the scope and interpretation of different concepts to develop policies and practices more appropriate to multiethnic contexts. This could counter 'Various mechanisms of social closure which operate to reproduce existing inequalities' (Reay et al, 2001, p.854). Negative identity construction and derogatory expressions are examples of mechanisms of social closure, and these are violations of *Adab*. In case of such violations, the dominant values, practices, assumptions, all may become challenged overtly or covertly, making the educational sites locations for the interplay of competing notions and discourses (Foucault, 1980). *Adab* as a sociological approach proposes to respect diversity, emphasising that everyone has rights and responsibilities in relation to everyone else.

The existing approaches such as inclusion, integration, cultural pluralism, multiculturalism, widening participation and celebrating diversity can become mere catchwords if not underpinned by a genuine belief in human equality and respect for difference. For example, in spite of the policy emphasis on 'respect for all' an international survey of the attitudes of over two thousand fourteen-year-olds to issues of citizenship showed that students in England have relatively less positive attitudes

towards immigrants than in some other countries (Kerr et al, 2002). Around one third of all fourteen-year-olds disagreed with immigrants having rights to speak their own language, to have the same rights as everyone else, and to vote in elections after living in a country for several years. These attitudes are likely to shape young people's interactions with peers from other ethnic groups, particularly those from migrant and refugee communities, thus creating an environment where difference is not respected or treated as equal.

Adab is learnt, theorised and practised in relationship contexts, encompassing educational, professional, social, political, and others. For example, the intense reaction of Muslims to Satanic Verses, or more recently to publication of Mohammed's cartoons in a Danish newspaper, was provoked by violation of *Adab* in a situation of conflict, evident in the way the Prophet Mohammed and Islam were critiqued - it was not primarily a reaction to critique itself but the manner of critique (Abel, 1994, pp.11-22; also see Ruthven, 1991). *Adab* underpins patterns of behaviour for multi-ethnic Muslim community, and by engaging with the community, this frame for behaviour can be extended to include the wider society.

The underlying principles of *Adab* may have particular resonance within an Islamic context but they are not exclusively Islamic. First, as mentioned earlier, historically the concept and the associated principles and traditions developed in interaction with different civilisations, their philosophies, and intellectual legacies, thus drawing from multiple sources. Second, it has served as a powerful tool for bonding a vastly diverse community, with population structures to some extent similar to a multi-ethnic school context. Third, the two arenas of everyday life where *Adab* has been and is still a valued tradition for the Muslims, are education and society. The achievements of Muslims in the field of knowledge during the early history of Islam (Dozy, 1913; Shalaby, 1954) are associated with the strong tradition of *Adab*. This suggests a scope for exploring the applicability of this framework to other diversity contexts. The similarities between the values associated with *Adab* and good practice for managing ethnic diversity emphasise its pertinence for contexts entailing diversity:

- 'Beautiful action' - respecting difference;
- 'Sharing'- awareness of the learners' expectations;

- 'Good manners' - attention to culture-appropriate behaviour/values;
- 'Inviting'- developing inclusive attitudes/practices;
- 'Giving happiness'- providing support and guidance;
- 'Hospitality' - a deeper understanding of concepts such as *Adab*, *honour*, equality, and difference for responding to diversity.

The nearest equivalent to *Adab* in English language can be 'respect'. However, the term 'respect' lacks the depth and scope associated with *Adab*. *Adab* has flexibility and complexity to be relevant for engaging with diversity, and to inform related policy and practice to contribute towards a multicultural Britishness that is sensitive to ethnic difference. The underpinning is to incorporate a respect for persons as individuals and for the collectivities that people have a sense of belonging to (Modood, 2004). One problem with educatio, and social policies and practices lies in the fact that these often claim to be addressing the needs of particular people while taking little account of those people's constructions of self or their cultural capital. Positive identity constructions, educational achievement and social cohesion are interlinked and can be improved by respecting diversity, by enhancing the students' confidence in identity and cultural heritage, and by strengthening the notion of equality in relationships, and it is proposed that these can be facilitated through drawing upon ethnic knowledge sources and concepts. This engagement can offer spaces for convergence of Western and 'non-Western' thought to develop positive social capital.

Recent emphasis on getting to know ethnicities, and on multicultural education (Nieto, 2004; Luciak, 2006) is another indication of the need to deepen 'knowledge and appreciation of different cultures, to reduce prejudices, to facilitate critical awareness of discrimination and inequalities and to foster the debate about diverse culturally based perspectives and practices' (Luciak, 2006, p73). In spite of its claims to be a secular society, British society is perceived as primarily a Western Christian society. Heated debates over allowing Muslim schools in a country where there are more than 4000 Church of England schools is not perceived by ethnic groups as supporting secular claims or even social justice. The signals are reflected not just in the ceremonial trappings but day-to-day practices, sending messages of exclusion and

rejection. Efforts to acknowledge and appreciate other perspectives can counter these signals..

At the national and societal levels, there is an effort to engage with diverse ethnic and faith communities to create links leading to more cohesive communities. The policy emphasis is 'to promote and support ways of bringing together people from different backgrounds in a way that increases understanding and respect' (Home Office, 2004, p.17). The tragic events of 9/11 and 7/7 have further intensified the need to learn more about diversity, specifically about Islam and Muslims, to develop understanding and harmony. This appears to be a point in time when drawing upon diverse philosophies and perspectives might be welcomed, or even actively sought in the interest of educational enhancement and societal well-being.

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ii The Quran is the sacred book of Islam, which is the ultimate authentic religious text, and a major source of religious teachings for the Muslims.