

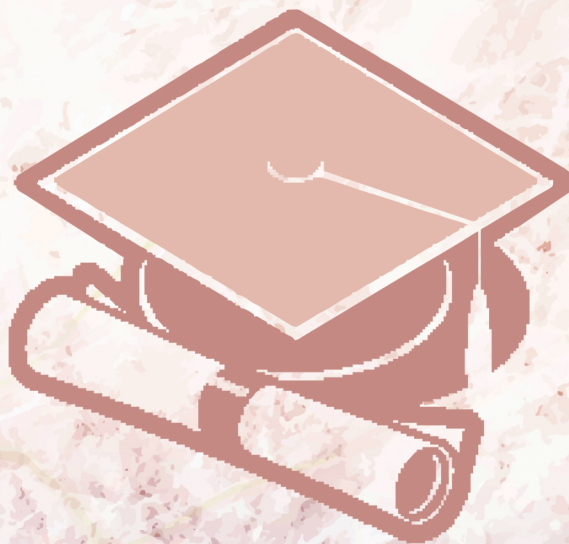
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DEVELOPING AWARENESS ABOUT CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY IN TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM IN ACCORDANCE TO NEP 2020

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Abstract

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 envisions an education system that is equitable, inclusive, and democratic. One of the key pillars of the NEP is the focus on culturally inclusive education. It can be achieved by Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (C.R.P.) vis-a-vis a teaching approach that is sensitive to the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of students. It is based on the belief that all students can learn and succeed when their cultures are valued and respected in the classroom. The significance of raising awareness of C.R.P. in teacher preparation programs is covered in this article. It makes the case that teacher preparation programs ought to provide educators with the information and abilities required to apply C.R.P. in the classroom. The paper also provides some specific suggestions for how teacher training programs can be redesigned to incorporate C.R.P. It also discusses the importance of C.R.P. in achieving the goals of the NEP 2020 with the unforeseen challenges of implementing C.R.P. in the Indian context. The paper concludes by arguing that developing awareness about C.R.P. is essential for creating a more equitable and inclusive Teacher-education system in India.

Keywords: Teacher training curriculum, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (C.R.P), NEP 2020, Inclusive education, Equity in education

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of NEP 2020 and its focus on multiculturalism

The NEP 2020 explicitly states “India is a treasure trove of culture, developed over thousands of years and manifested in the form of arts, works of literature, customs, traditions, linguistic expressions, artifacts, heritage sites, and more.” With numerous indigenous languages and cultural identities, the people of India exhibit cultural diversity more than any other country in the world. The Indian pool of multi-religious, multi-ethnic community has been derived from the ‘tolerance’ and ‘universal acceptance’ through centuries of migration and settling down in the plains and plateaus of the Indian sub-continent, thus making it one of the cultural hotspots in the world. In the purview of these facts, it was evident that the multi-cultural sensitization of the Indian people was much required to acknowledge the numerous, diverse yet culturally enriched anthropology.

The rise of this need was addressed in the 22nd Chapter, of the National Education Policy 2020. Awareness of culture and appreciation of varied cultural identities is a must for the population of a state as multicultural as India. NEP 2020 gives special emphasis on the promotion and preservation of the rich Indian culture. Integration of Indic art, language, and culture in schools has been emphasized in chapter 4 of the NEP and further discussed in the subsequent chapters strengthening the idea of the requirement of the knowledge of multicultural identities in Indian classrooms.

1.2 Culturally responsive pedagogy: Inception and Implication

The term was first made relevant by Gloria Ladson-Billings in the 1990s who defined it as a “pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes” (1994). In another essay titled ‘But That’s Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy’ (1995), she defines it as “a pedagogy of opposition, not unlike critical pedagogy but specifically committed to collective, not merely individual, empowerment.” These suggest a teaching practice that centers around the students’ lived cultural experiences and correlates them to the educational contents to make them competent in understanding and navigating various socio- political and personal avenues. This kind of a pedagogy helps not only in addressing the variety of issues faced by different students in a multicultural classrooms due to their differences by making the content being taught more relevant to each student, but also by validating and making space for their experiences within the classroom and by extension, the curriculum.

According to Ladson-Billings, the three terms introduced by theorists in the 1980s for highlighting a rift between home and school culture, namely ‘culturally appropriate’ (Au and Jordon 1981), ‘culturally congruent’ (Mohatt and Erickson 1981), and ‘culturally compatible’, had undertones of conformity of the minority student culture to the dominant culture. However, she said, the term ‘culturally responsive’ introduced by Cazden and Leggett (1981), and Erickson and Mohatt (1982) on the other hand, “appears to refer to a more dynamic or synergic relationship between home/community culture and school culture.” (Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy 1995). Thus, rather than the teacher simply trying to include or assimilate the minority culture(s) into the dominant one, the teacher actively ‘responds’ and makes space for cultural differences by diversifying their modes of instruction. This may include explaining with culturally relevant examples, including diverse cultural phenomenon into classroom activities, by becoming the learner themselves and encouraging the students to share their understanding and opinions, etc. In doing so, not only will the teacher be able to establish a better rapport with the students themselves, but also create a sense of camaraderie among the students by eliminating cultural isolation or alienation, and fostering an environment of belongingness.

Building further on Irvine’s concept of cultural synchronization (1990), which highlights the central role played by interpersonal relationship between teacher and student, Ladson-

Billings argues that “a next step for positing effective pedagogical practice is a theoretical model that not only addresses student achievements but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools (and other institutions) perpetuates.” This is what she terms as C.R.P. Breaking down the concept further gives three essential components of CRP – Academic Success, Cultural Competence, and Critical Consciousness. She emphasizes that despite all kinds of hardships and push-backs, to be active participants in a democracy, students must hone their skills of literacy, numeracy, and technological, social and political awareness. They must also maintain some cultural integrity and culturally responsive teachers must use their culture and their cultural experiences to help achieve learning goals. However, only these two elements shall not suffice as that will only cater to individual empowerment. According to Ladson-Billings, the students must also develop broader socio-political consciousness to be able to critically analyse various institutions, critique the cultural norms, and challenge the status quo. A C.R.P. then not only helps to better achieve learning goals but also caters to the holistic development of the students. Apart from academic competency, it helps them to cultivate a positive self-image which is firmly grounded in their cultural identities, and also a coherent understanding of various socio-political connotations. This in turn leads them to become individuals that are not only aware but also sensitive to the challenges faced by their peers, colleagues, and others around them.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

- Developing awareness about the importance of C.R.P. in teacher training curriculum.
- Exploring how C.R.P. creates a more equitable and inclusive teacher education system.
- Understanding why C.R.P. is essential for teacher education curriculum to manage multicultural classrooms in the Indian context.
- Highlighting the significance of culturally inclusive pedagogy in achieving the goals of NEP 2020
- Providing specific suggestions for how teacher training curriculum can be redesigned to incorporate C.R.P.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

- Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) “But That’s Just Good Teaching! The Case for Culturally Relevant Pedagogy”, highlights the centrality of C.R.P. in the teaching practices of successful teachers working with African-American students. The paper argues in favour of culturally relevant teaching in addressing the issues faced by students from minority communities in public schools. The author outlines three key criteria of C.R.P.: academic success, cultural competence, and critical consciousness. The paper also finds that effective teachers see through the rifts between educational contexts and the cultural background of the students.

- Amy J Samuels (2018) “Exploring Culturally Responsive Pedagogy: Teachers’ Perspectives on Fostering Equitable and Inclusive Classrooms”, explores the perspectives of in-service teachers about the matter in K-12 set-up. It emphasizes on the teacher’s introspection and critical reflection in creating a learning environment that addresses the different social anxieties and the academic needs of a diverse student body. It argues that it is through self-examination that a teacher can foster an equitable and an inclusive classroom. The article emphasizes the advantages of culturally responsive teaching in building relationships, promoting cross-cultural understanding, and encouraging diverse worldviews. However, the paper also mentions the challenges, including navigating sensitive topics and potential biases. Despite the challenges the paper highlights that through proper teacher preparation and professional development, one can foster C.R.P.
- Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) “Toward a Theory of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy” defines what she constitutes as C.R.P. but also talks about how important it is to implement inclusive instructional practices, and to connect the students’ cultural background to their learning experiences.
- Ting Huang, Jing Zhou, Si Chen & Emerson Barnett (2023) “I’m concerned about actually doing it: The Struggles of Pre-Service Teachers in Becoming Agents Of Change”, sheds light on the challenges faced by pre-service teachers (PTs) when integrating anti-racist pedagogy into their teaching practice within a middle school context. This research addresses critical issues such as PTs’ struggles with their own identities, parental misconceptions about Critical Race Theory, and a lack of support from school leadership. These findings underscore the importance of adequately preparing PTs to navigate these challenges and become effective change agents for social justice in education. The study emphasizes the potential for teacher education programs to provide both theoretical training and practical support, involving various stakeholders like university faculty, cooperative teachers, school leaders, and parents to reform schools and improve education in a manner that benefits all students equally.

2. AWARENESS OF CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY

2.1 Importance of the awareness of Culturally Inclusive Pedagogy in Indian Context *According to John Malcolm Forbes Ludlow, British India, Vol 1, 1858, p62-3*

Except for outcast children who are not a part of the community, the traditional Indian educational system was comprehensive and inclusive. No child is said to be superior in the final branch of learning than the outcasts, who are the exception.

This inclusivity of the Indian Education system was lost during the advent of Muslim invaders plundering the knowledge wealth of the world famous universities of Taxashila, Nalanda, and Vikramshila where thousands of students belonging to different faiths and castes were taught by highly qualified teachers. (Sharma R.N and Sharma R.K.)

During the dark colonial rule the British education was enforced upon the Indians to create a mass of people who were Indian in blood and colour but English in taste, opinion and moral. (Macaulay,1835), further disintegrating the inclusive classroom framework.

Indian diversity post-independence was cohesive due to its rich cultural heritage and strong sense of national integration among its people. There are hundreds of languages spoken in India with distinctive dialects, Indian subcontinent is divided into regions based on culture and language and each region has its own unique customs, traditions, and values. India is characterized by plurality in three religious family laws (Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Parsi), geographical autonomy for many linguistic and tribal groups, and reservations for caste and tribal minorities in legislatures, positions in the government, and educational institutions. (Bajpayee R.2015)

The mission of crafting and culturally inclusive classroom holds immense importance in the understanding of the diverse cultural context of the Indian sub-continent and to align with national unity as envisioned by the National Education Policy.

2.2 Benefits to developing culturally inclusive pedagogy

- 2.2.1. Improved academic achievement:** Studies have shown that students who feel connected to their culture and who are taught in a culturally inclusive environment tend to perform better academically.
- 2.2.2 Increased self-esteem and motivation:** When students feel valued and respected for their culture, they are more likely to have high self-esteem and be motivated to learn.
- 2.2.3 Greater understanding of diversity:** Culturally inclusive pedagogy helps students to develop a better understanding of different cultures and perspectives. This can lead to greater tolerance and acceptance of others.
- 2.2.4 More engaged and active learners:** Culturally inclusive pedagogy can help to create a more engaging and active learning environment. When students feel connected to the material they are learning, they are more likely to be motivated to participate and learn.

2.3 Culturally Inclusive Teacher-Education Curriculum

NEP 2020 suggests bringing numerous reforms in Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) with multidisciplinary approaches by framing four-year integrated courses leading to research and innovations in pedagogy. The development of a new course structure for Teacher Education is a cornerstone for the upcoming decades where the future teachers are going to foster the same in the minds of the young generation. Thus, it is evident that the Teacher Education Programme would need a significant change in the pedagogical aspect to develop a more culturally holistic curriculum.

3. SUGGESTIVE MEASURES TO DEVELOP A CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE PEDAGOGY IN TEACHER TRAINING CURRICULUM

- 3.1 **Integrating Indian culture and values into the curriculum:** This can be done by incorporating examples from Indian history, literature, art, and culture into the curriculum.
- 3.2 **Using culturally relevant teaching methods:** This can involve using different teaching methods that are appropriate for different cultures. For example, some cultures may prefer more collaborative learning environments, while others may prefer more teacher-led instruction.
- 3.3 **Providing opportunities for Trainee:** Teachers to learn about their own culture and the cultures of others: This can be done through field trips, guest speakers, and other activities.
- 3.4 **Creating a safe and supportive learning environment:** Fostering an inviting and respectful learning environment for all students, regardless of their background or culture, involves setting up of such a classroom.
- 3.5 **Seminars and workshops on various cultural markers:** Such events help cultivate a deeper understanding of various cultures, and promote empathy and respect for each other. It also helps in understanding the advantages of inputs rising from different life experiences and perspectives.
- 3.6 **Visit to different schools exhibiting diverse populations:** Such schools can lead by example how to create harmonious and inclusive classroom environments, and motivate teachers to diversify their modes of instruction in their own teaching.
- 3.7 **Pre-service orientation about the traditions of various cultures prevalent in India:** Such an initiative shall help eradicate personal biases and prejudice, and sensitize teachers towards the different challenges faced by students belonging to different cultures.
- 3.8 **Study of the Diverse Global Cultures:** This shall help equip teachers with a broader knowledge base regarding different cultures. This in turn shall help them in understanding different point of views in multicultural classrooms and make their students feel valued.

4. CONCLUSION

Developing culturally inclusive pedagogy is essential for creating a more equitable and inclusive education system in India. By valuing and respecting the diverse cultures of all students, we can create a learning environment where all students can thrive. The world is becoming increasingly interconnected, and students need to be able to work and collaborate with people from different cultures. Culturally inclusive pedagogy can help the Trainee-Teachers develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in teaching students

about different cultures and perspectives, CIP can help to build a more cohesive and united society as a whole. It is important for students to understand and respect each other's cultures, they are more likely to live and work together peacefully. To inculcate and foster this inclusivity in the students the teacher education framework has to be more culturally diverse and responsive. Overall, the development of culturally inclusive pedagogy is an important goal of the NEP 2020. By valuing and respecting the diverse cultures of all students, we can create a more equitable and inclusive education system that will benefit all of India

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