

Curriculum Development and Education Officers in/about**Culturally Responsive Pedagogy****Santosh Gautam*** PhD Scholar, TU**Saroj G. C.†**

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Abstract

This paper tries to excavate the perceptions, experiences and non/cooperation of curriculum development officers and district education officers in culturally non/responsive pedagogical approaches of private schools in Nepal. This paper tries to decontextualize and culturally non responsive education cannot address the pedagogical and socio cultural requirements of the learners and multicultural societies. This research is oriented to fundamental traits of interpretivism, criticalism and postmodernism so that the varying and complicated features of culture and culturally responsive pedagogy would be met. Therefore, it would be a heuristics of multi-paradigmatic research. In this paper I have explored the views, experiences and perceptions of responsible government officials working in curriculum designing and implementation in making our educational endeavors culturally responsive. I have tried to delve into 'world of duty' to reveal how result oriented they are. Shifting of responsibilities and lack of professionalism has been found to be the major stumbling blocks.

Key words: Pedagogical Approaches, Local Needs/national Priorities, Mentoring, De/contextualization of curriculum.

Anecdote 1: "Examples reflect the names, cultures, works, and technologies of the people living in different ecological belts."

Today is the 13th of August. I am visiting Curriculum Development Center in order to understand the perceptions of the curriculum development officers about culturally responsive pedagogy. As I start late from Lalitpur I reach CDC office at about 2pm. However I find the Director of CDC at his duty station. I, first of all, introduce myself to him and explain about my purpose of visit. He says that he can talk with me not more than 10 minutes as he has to attend a prescheduled program and asks me to send him questions by mail or to visit him any other day. I think that sending questions can be one way to explore his ideas and at the same time I think that it may be worthwhile to have a discussion with some other officers at CDC. After my request he asks the helper over there to take me to the cabin of Mr. Sharma one of the under secretaries of CDC. When I reach his cabin I find him busy with a lady in managing some documents. However I introduce myself to him and explain my purpose of visit and also make it clear to him that the director of the office asked me to request him for the interview. In the beginning I think that he may try to escape making some pretention but to my surprise I find him ready for the interview. He asks me to wait until his business is over and when the lady goes out he becomes ready for the talk. I again introduce myself to him and make my purpose of visit clear. I initiate the

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conversation asking him how the curriculum addresses the needs of cultural diversity existing in our society. Answering to my query he says that the structure of the curriculum has been designed in such a way that it can address the needs of multicultural students. He further adds,

20% of the curriculum can be incorporated according to the jurisdiction of the concerned subject teacher. We don't instruct the teachers to add any specific content but suggest the teachers to include the content according to the local situation, culture, local use of technology, beliefs, values and the needs of the local level. Even the contents in the curriculum incorporate the topics related to diverse cultures and also the examples of hill, terai and mountain regions. The examples reflect the names, cultures, work, and technology of the people living in different ecological belts. If you see the text books of different subjects and levels you will find these contents.

**....my research
method/s....**

In and out, out and in
I find my being
Me in you, you in me
I endeavor to see

I try some ways
Amazed I am, every way
leads to more ways
From one angle I try to
match
Complexities of life I fail to
catch

I try to observe how I see
Want to see what I observe
I endeavor to know how I
understand
Wish to understand what I

It appears to me that he is ready to throw light on what right things related to promote the practice of culturally responsive pedagogy have been done by the people working in Curriculum Development Center. I have never thought of incorporating such an amount of local content in the curriculum nor have I found my colleagues doing so. I then ask him how the curriculum addresses the needs to wipe out the negative stereotypical images of marginalized communities existing in the minds of the children of mainstream culture. He responds, "Different cultural issues creating conflict in the society like untouchability, and other cultural and religious, linguistic, technological issues have been included in the curriculum with a view to wiping out these negatives and stereotypical images. Previously the content and examples in text books were not diversified but now the content has been designed in such a way." I feel that as an employee at the curriculum development center he is trying to advocate that curriculum development center has been working to address the socio cultural educational needs of the multicultural society. However my subjectivity doesn't let me fully agree with what he says. One of my respondents Ms. Revolt bitterly comments on our education system stating that it has not been able to wipe out the cultural and religious inequalities existing in the society. She insists that it is deeply rooted even in the minds of educated people. Mr. Sharma continues responding to my question

Now I think there is no place to question the curriculum in the matter of inclusiveness. From the perspective of management also the government has made the policy to involve the people of different cultures in educational field. I am speaking as a person working at the policy level. At the public level



also I have not heard any such complains. Also we make revisions of the curriculum as per the comments from the public and the emerging needs of the society. On the regular basis also we revise the curriculum in every five years. "

I find him turning blind eyes towards the drawbacks of our curriculum. For me the curriculum and its effective implementation has a crucial role in bringing about a timely change in our social situation but according to my experience there is the existence of social evils like untouchability, situation of poverty, ethnic hierarchy etc, in our society and they have depicted its drawbacks. Then I try to dig out his perception regarding the link between our pedagogical approaches and traditional cultural occupational skills of different ethnic communities. Addressing my query he says, "Curriculum has given space to the traditional occupational skills. This presents problems in classroom practices. We have tried to address the cultural skills of people existing in the community. In the new curriculum we have included Occupation Business and Technology as a new subject and its main objective is to promote such skills. However the significance and effectiveness of the subject depends upon cultural orientation of the teachers and their expertise." Then I asked him, "How does the curriculum facilitate two way border crossing of the students so as to ensure their adoptability in the school? How does the curriculum facilitate it? He answers, "It depends on the teachers or schools. Policy doesn't discriminate. There may be some weakness in the dealing of certain teachers. Teachers are always expected to support the students from different marginalized communities to keep pace with others in the class. "In my understanding the culturally responsive teacher facilitates the border crossing of students by identifying the knowledge resources of their homes and by building bridges between home and school for more successful teaching and learning (Gonzalez et al., 2004).

I further bring out the issue of the students from marginalized communities. I tell him that the minority students feel discriminated in the dealings of the school authority and teachers and their interests are not effectively nurtured. While asking this question I am motivated by what Banks (2013) has said about the curriculum that "their histories, struggles, contribution, and possibilities be reflected in textbooks and in the school curriculum" (Banks, 2013, p. 74). Then I raise the I issue that some Christian students complained about getting punished in some schools for not being present in the programs scheduled on Saturday and that they have important prayer every Saturday which they don't like to avoid. Then and ask him, "Why hasn't the curriculum been able to remove the discrimination existing in the classes?" He answers, "There is no discrimination from the curriculum level however there may be some problems in the dealings of some individual teachers with minority students. The culture developed in years cannot be easily removed from the minds of people. Teachers need to be trained well. NCD trains the teachers. They have the responsibility to train the teachers." However I feel that critical reflection can help the teachers to reduce their personal biases thereby facilitating their teaching. According to Banks (2007), "Reflective self-analysis requires teachers to identify, examine, and reflect upon their attitudes towards different ethnic, racial, gender, and social class groups" (p. 99). For that we ought to be aware of the assumptions that lead us in certain directions instead of others; however, this task is not that easy as it can disrupt our own imagination of who we ourselves are (Schick, 2010). With his every additional answer I start viewing him more and more as an advocate of curriculum development center.

Then I raise the issue of the resources available with the students. I tell him that the students have lived experience of their culture and have access to different resources and ask him, "How are their

resources utilized in the classes and how does the curriculum address it?" He answers, "Now our documents say that teachers are only the facilitators and our methods are focused on making the students active. I don't see problems in policy and document level. It may be in practice level, in attitude or understanding of the teachers. We have designed project works for students in our teaching approaches. Our text books and activities have been designed in that way." When asked about whether they have designed similar approaches for all or have provisioned differentiated pedagogy he says, "We have designed differentiated pedagogical approaches for different categories of students. We don't have problem in documents. If teaching will go on as per the provision of curriculum it will surely address the learning needs of students." However according to my experience it is an exaggeration of the merits of curriculum.

Then I proceed towards the issues of curriculum formation and ask him about the nature of curriculum development body. Answering to my query he says, "Yes sir. Curriculum developing body is inclusive. The body comprises of the experts of different fields and we ensure the involvement of the experts of different linguistic, religious, ethnic or cultural communities". I find some helpers of the office reminding of the meeting to be held, I too find that my major concerns have been addressed and then I thank him for his valuable time and depart from there.

I feel that Mr. Sharma was guided by a sense of responsibility. It seems to me that he was trying to prove that he and his colleagues were shouldering responsibilities with high efficiency or the curriculum is suitable for addressing the individual and social needs. I found him quite alert to advocate that they have

Revisiting my understanding of research

My research journey has taught me that it is not a process of looking for meanings out there as researcher is, in one way or the other, one among the participants possessing many shared features with them. Hence I have been aware that my lens of inquiry turns towards myself also as a member of culture sharing group. I also feel that this lens of inquiry and the journey throughout the research process are helping me to revisit my teaching approaches and my research understandings. Though I have attempted to make my teaching child centered after I understood about it I didn't seriously feel the need to design my approaches according to the cultural diversity of my place. Now I have started sensing the need to closely associate my teaching with the culture of students. Also I feel that the series of interactions with the participants have made them understand my issue of inquiry to some extent.

I have started questioning and revisiting my understanding of 'researcher'. I used to think that the researchers have to objectively make meaning of the issues and depict the reality as it is. However I have come to understand that there is nothing objective and all meanings are subjective human creations and meaning conceiving can take place at any stage of professional or research journey and that is also subject to change with the passage of time. Now I have formed my view that every research has transformative ideology because for me understanding of any issue is an initiation of change. I believe that change may begin with conceptualization and realization of the issue under inquiry and have also felt that participants of the research also realize the need to change along with the research process.

tried their level best to give enough space to the culture, needs and requirements of the people of different ethnicities. However he confessed that there can be weaknesses in delivery. He stated that the delivery depends upon individual teachers and their training, knowledge, orientation, assumption and culture affects the way they take curriculum and deliver it. He also stated that there is limited person power at CDC and it does not have any district level offices and hence it is difficult to see if curriculum has been followed as it has been designed and in the matter of culturally responsive pedagogy also same thing

applies. According to him the objectives and vision of the curriculum may not be realized or understood by the people at the implementation level and I too feel that due to the lack of training on culturally responsive pedagogy teachers may not be able to bring about coordination among curriculum, students' cultural context and social, national and international situation.

Meaning Theme 1: Accountability of Officers at the Responsible Posts

Are the people at the responsible posts 'responsible' in true sense of the term? Are they responsible just to be at the duty station on time and work as demanded by the higher authorities or do they judge everything critically and develop some vision and substantial working plan for the future? I view teaching as a sensitive sector demanding a serious realization of duty, responsibility and accountability of the stakeholders. I think that the people involved in different sectors and fields of education whether it is curriculum development or policy formulation and implementation or monitoring and evaluation all need to consider seriously the growth and development of students having diverse features. I believe that we need to respond to cultural diversity from policy to practice levels and it cannot be done well if we just shift the responsibilities on others and just try to share the fruits.

On the other hand I have come to know that we, the people, directly or indirectly involved in education are more or less responsible to bring about a desired change in our students and , thereby, in our society. Due to the lack of capacity to feel the delicacy or sensitiveness of any educational issues, problems or discourses we may not be able to resolve the issues or transform ourselves. Hence it appears to me that the matter of responding to cultural diversity existing in the society and in the classrooms is to be taken seriously and responsibly by all educational actors in and outside the scene. I have learnt from my experience that shifting of the responsibility and holding others only accountable contribute to degrade the outcomes of our policies and plans whether it is in national level or individual level.

I also feel that their failure to have a critical perspective on these issues may be because of the loyalty of the state mechanisms, agencies and public officers towards the dominant ideologies of the state and their failure to view the plans, policies and working procedures of the state critically. At the same time the views of other respondents show that there exists a gap between what they say and what the practices are.

Meaning Theme 2: Consideration over Cultural Diversity while Developing Curriculum

According to Mr. Sharma cultural diversity of our country and different features of various cultural groups are taken into consideration while developing the curriculum. He tried to make me realize that curriculum, on the one hand, addresses the learning needs of the diverse cultural communities and prepares required person power for the nation and on the other hand it prepares the students for decent life in the society. For me curriculum has to be designed in such a way that it can facilitate physical, mental, emotional and social growth of students and it needs to focus on the socio economic and cultural needs of the society. Teachers can dig out various aspects of the lives of students outside the school environment and can “use these tools to connect concepts and skills in the curriculum with what student know, care about or find interesting.” (Grant & Sleeter, 2011, p. 147). It has been found that there is undue generalization of cultural characteristics like relationship models, ways of parenting, linguistic orientation

and the ways of expressing ideas (Bloom,2009; Gutierrez & Rogoff, 2003). So I have come to understand that if curriculum incorporates the features and specialties of different cultural groups it can boost up the morale of students and can make all the students feel ownership over the curriculum thereby creating an environment of equity and justice and this environment can train the students for life with mutual cooperation and harmony. As stated by Mr. Sharma and Mr. Know the curriculum development center has given the right of including 20% of the curriculum to the teachers. However according to some of my participants like Revolt neither the curriculum is inclusive nor are the practices in the school. She feels discriminated from the policy to the practice level.

Anecdote 2: Education has not increased our love towards our nationality and culture

Everlasting Interview

During the interview I found the distinction between the interviewer and the interviewee getting blurred. I have understood interview as an endeavor to dig out information as well as a process of exchanging and sharing ideas and feelings and learning and raising awareness. As a researcher cum teacher and student researching on teaching I feel that my 'self' continuously moves to the position of the researcher and the researched. Does the interview end, then? Won't my questioning self and answering self remain in continuous interaction throughout my teaching and learning journey?

Today there is Nepal Bandha. Banda is announced by some of the political parties to pressurize the government to address the rights of all the cultures in constitution and to reshuffle the province demarcation. After the visit to curriculum development center I felt the need to study the perceptions, views and experiences of the people working at the District Education Office. I visit the office thinking that the some officers of district Education Office would be present there. When I see no one at the gate of the office I think I would meet no one in the office but fortunately only one Assistant District Education Officer, Mr. Know is there and he becomes ready to respond to my queries. I initiate the conversation asking him whether he thinks our education is culturally responsive. He answers,

Our society has diverse cultures and education has to give culture and society related education and as we have not been able to give such education we are lagging behind .May be we have not been able to carry on our educational efforts connecting education with the society and such education cannot wipe out the misunderstandings and resolve the conflicts of the society. Our land, culture and traditions need to be addressed by our education. Our education should tie up with the society but we have been lagging in this matter.

I analyze his views with a proverb, 'Easier said than done'. I feel that he also has a share of failures and success of the educational efforts of his area. When he talks about our failure to wipe out the misunderstandings and wrong concepts of the society through our educational attempts the arrow of critique turns towards himself as well. However I continue the discussion asking him how education system addresses our cultural diversity. He replies, " Our societies are multicultural and the cultures have been tied up with each other. Brahmins worship at Moulou. It is a culture of Limbus and the Limbus put Tika during Dashain. This way the cultures have been integrated. Our curriculum has to be designed accordingly. Similarly the culture of Rais has been adopted by the



Brahmins and the culture of Brahmins has been adopted by Rais. There are mixed settlements." After a pause he continues, "In the past we didn't know Chhat festivals but now many people of hilly region are in terai and people of terai are in hilly region. The people from hill also accept Chhat Mai as their Goddess like the people of terai and the women of terai celebrate Teej like the women of Hilly region. If we can orient and teach the students accordingly they understand, accept and respect each other and will have love towards our own culture."

Then I try to explore how culturally responsive is the curriculum. He answers, "Curriculum has tried to address the diversity. It has tried to introduce different cultures and has tried to teach the students that we are the people of multicultural societies and need to respect each other and to be united "I then question him," How have the private schools made their made their education culturally responsive?" Some of the private schools have tried to give this message. For example during Chhat they organize the program of Chhat, during Tihar and Dashain they organize programs related to the festival and give the message. However it is quite less in public schools. I have found that many of the reputed private schools of the valley have organized such programs. For example they ask the students to prepare Yamari at the schools. Schools collect certain sum of money and organize the program of preparing it and distributing it to the students."

Then I connect the discussion to the issue of the attempt of the curriculum to contextualize it by letting the teachers 20% of the curriculum as per the socio cultural needs of the locality. He responds, "Schools have not used 20% of their own local curriculum in teaching learning process. This is one of the most difficult tasks. We separated 20% as local curriculum but the schools have not followed it. The curriculum also provisioned local language but almost all of the schools taught English as local language and it could not address our culture. We could not divert schools towards that direction. Private schools do not use local curriculum but stick to the text." I then ask him, " How have our pedagogical approaches, our curriculum worked to wipe out the preconceived notions about caste, discrimination among the castes and the practices like untouchability?" He answers,

It depends upon the cultural schooling of people. The concept of untouchability has been deeply seated in our minds. It cannot be wiped out by the curriculum but we need to remove this social concept. the society has inculcated the such conservative ideas in the minds of people and the existing rules, practical use of curriculum and social discourse has to wipe out such unscientific practices. The deeply rooted culture cannot be uprooted at once and if curriculum addresses these things gradually these concepts can be removed. It is not uprooted all of a sudden. the new generation can be oriented to remove such blind beliefs.

With this view I find him possessing some level of analytical perspective on educational practices of schools and their relation with our life. He himself says that he has already worked for more than 20 years as school inspector and his experience is reflected by what he answers. Then I relate the discussion towards classroom delivery and bring the issue of our traditional teacher centered pedagogy which is not culturally responsive. He responds,

We ask and train the teachers to follow group work for teaching. Now we call it competency based learning. In this we expect the student to be active and competent in learning. We deliver

the same thing during training. But only the teachers of new generation are active and they apply new methods. Some teachers were appointed in 2035 and they do not like to change. They think that with such teaching they have educated so many students why should they take tension to follow new teaching methods. But even among the old generation teachers also some are active.

I continue digging out the issue asking him about his understanding of the practices of critical pedagogy being adopted by the teachers. He answers, "We gave a dense training of critical thinking to the teachers, however, it was not need based but was imposed. The teachers couldn't internalize it. NCD and NGOs have given such training. During the training the teachers are found to be very eager to apply the learning in teaching but when they go to the class they are found to be as they were in the past." He insists, "If applied well critical teaching empowers the students well. However the training that is given to the teachers has not reached all the teachers. Also there is lack of resources in our schools" He adds, ". Critical thinking makes students aware of their situation. We have failed to teach the teachers about well. A teacher who passed SLC with 32% marks 35 years ago has not been able to go with the times. We have thought to do new things now. A short term training cannot make the teacher capable, academic course is needed for them." I then ask him, "What about mini researches sir? How are the students involved in such knowledge generating activities?" He answers,

We never introduced research in our education system in the past except for the thesis in masters' level. At other places there is no research. We give action research training to the teachers but we also do not have the concept of research. A teacher who has not read and understood research cannot carry put research effectively. We train the teachers for research. Speaking frankly I train the teachers but I also do not know what is research. Our trainers have not understood that but they have been training the teachers.

I then ask him to express his perception about group work practiced in the schools. He answers, "In some schools groups works are practiced. Project works are given to the students. However there is no differentiated pedagogy. It is at zero level. We have basket concept. People at the curriculum may claim that they have done it but at the implementation level it is very weak. I have not practiced it". He continues, "It may be at the content level but typically we have not been able to take the teachers to this level. Schools give project works and such works have been given by both public and private schools. Competency based curriculum has tried to address these needs but we have not been able to teach our teachers well."

However I feel that knowingly or unknowingly we differentiate our teaching. For example we apply various approaches for varying level of students for the sake of the academic growth. In project works also we sometimes give varying topics to the students according to their level of knowledge on the topic. Hence I hardly agree with his view that the practice of differentiated pedagogy is at zero level. Also his confession about conducting trainings on research without having any concept about research reveals our level of expertise and our ethical standard.

I, then, ask him, "Has anything been done to raise the awareness of the family members?" He answers, "Some efforts have been made to raise the awareness level of the family members. We have the concept to train the families but we have limited resources. Only the active parents can get orientation. It

is needed more for the *dalits, janajati* or marginalized parents but it is limited within the active members of the society and the needy ones do not get.

I explore about the way co curricular activities address the cultural diversity of the class He answers,

There is Focus in English programs for co curricular activities. They are not more focused on other cultures. People have understood English as culture and believe that it can facilitate people to go abroad. Even the activists of local languages send the children for better English. Education has not been able to defend our culture from the encroachment of the western culture. We talk a lot about it but promote western education and culture in practice. We need to explore our cultural features and need to add it in the knowledge world. We need to create and produce our knowledge and make others learn it.

I keep delving into the issue and now I ask about their monitoring of culturally responsive educational practices of schools. He answers, " I know different cultural programs are organized in the schools. We are invited there in the programs. We observe and distribute prizes but we don't question if any schools have not done such things. But I find that they run the programs incorporating the cultural programs of the people in the community. They have tried to incorporate all." I continue questioning, "How do our pedagogical approaches support in the promoting our traditional occupational skills?" He answers,

Pedagogy has to addresses our occupations. But the cultural communities have not been able to develop their occupations as per the needs of the modernized societies. They have not been able to promote their occupation. They do not get chance to update their skills. If such people are provided with modern skills they wouldn't be displaced but because of lack of promotion of such skills some of them have been displaced from the occupation. They feel that their occupations have been seized by others but they have not been able to promote it. Now new subject Occupation Business and Technology has tried to address these issues. It introduces different occupations and makes students aware about promoting these skills. Our education has not been able to enhance our love towards our work, locality or culture.

Finally I ask him, "How has our education been able to conserve our culture?" He answers, "Our education has not been able to increase love towards our nationality and culture. It has increased the fascination of our children towards the western culture. We admit our children in boarding schools so that they will have good English and can easily go abroad." Finally I thank him for his time and answers he gave and depart from his office.



Extending the Anecdote

Teaching as liberation

Is education for transformation? Does it unshackle the chains of slavery, oppression, domination and discrimination? Can teaching wipe out false consciousness and enable the students of marginal communities to keep pace with others? Can it really empower them for life with dignity? I have found these issues being raised many a time by the people closely associated with or observing teaching. For me education should empower the students of diverse background to have an inward look towards themselves in the context of broader cultural milieu. During the journey of this research I have come to realize that the teaching that cannot make students sense the hidden ideologies, social hierarchies and interplay of power in the society can't connect education with life and culture. And this, I believe, creates gulf between education and life and thereby diminishes the

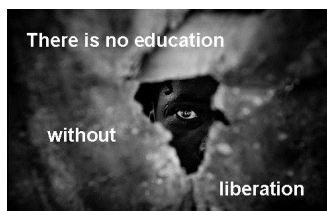
Criticizing self/other?

After the discussion with Mr. Know a question has started haunting me. Does his position allow him to criticize the educational practices closely connected with his position? If education officers say that the visit the schools or attend school programs merely as invitees then who are responsible to correct the pedagogical approaches of the schools and the teachers working there? On the one hand our country has already decided to make every organ and sector of the state inclusive (Government of Nepal, 2007) and on the other hand



I see that our societies and our classrooms have multicultural members. If the responsible members of the government agencies take part in school's educational activities as invitees and don't adopt serious measures to correct them won't the failures be reflected as underachievement of the students? In such context how can our educational endeavors respond to cultural needs of our societies? I sensed a lack of responsibility of our educational mechanisms in the attempt to achieve the educational objectives. In this context a thought recurrently enters in/to my mind. If no one is to blame for our failures or if everyone can escape by shifting the blame of failure on others performance is not going to be as desired. I know that the persons working directly with the students are the teachers but I feel that they need to be reinforced, motivated and monitored and also that they need to be provided with required resources.

I have felt that the gap between education and life has been a major issue of our educational system. From my experience as a student and as a teacher I have come to know that our traditional education system has not been able to address the socio economic requirements of the people of diverse cultural backgrounds. As stated by Mr. Know our educational endeavors have been inclined towards preparing our students for an easy access to foreign countries, not towards enhancing their love of our nationality and culture. This, I believe, cannot address the needs of cultural diversity of our country but just increases the fascination of the younger generation towards western culture. I have experienced that there is encroachment upon our culture in different names. In this



regard, as expressed by the respondents, I too feel that our education system has not been able to connect itself with life or to enrich our life, on the contrary, it has hybridized our identity.

My next concern is related to critical pedagogy. If the teachers are not well trained about critical pedagogy I feel that they may not be able to develop critical capacities in the students. For me critical pedagogy empowers the students to discover themselves in the multicultural society and makes them capable of defining their existence in the context of local national and international cultural forces and hierarchies of different powers and their complex interactions. The socially constructed differences caused due to the interaction of various types of power are questioned by critical pedagogy (McLaren, 1995). In my understanding it has an emancipatory or liberating interest and works towards the creation of just societies and disruption of social hierarchies, challenging the status quo and wiping out false consciousness are its objectives. Shouldn't education work in these areas as well in order to empower and promote the condition of discriminated and marginalized communities? Can our education be culturally responsive without these aspects? How can the social injustice against different ethnic and cultural communities be wiped out without critical approach? This has made me internalize that critical pedagogy is an integral part of culturally responsive pedagogy.

Meaning Theme 1: Education and Training for Teachers

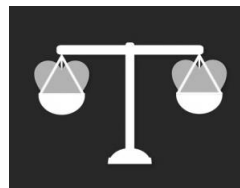
As stated by Mr. Sharma and Mr. Know the teachers are not well trained and educated to implement modern methods in education and try to follow traditional teacher centered pedagogy because they feel it to be their comfort zone. According to Mr. Know even if they are trained, in the training hall they seem to be ready move heaven and earth to bring about a change in education but in the classrooms they are the same as they were in the past. I too feel that different professional development trainings have been regularly organized to enhance the expertise of teachers in dealing with the students from diverse backgrounds but it is not reflected in their classroom practices. According to Ladson Billings (2001), it is necessary that the teachers first internalize the idea of culture and how cultures influence the ways students learn. Regarding teacher student relationship Grant and Sleeter (2011) state "strengthened teacher-student relationships lead to better student engagement in the classroom which in turn leads to higher achievement." (p. 95). I also accept what Mr. know says about the low qualification of teachers, a long gap in education and lack of training to update their education acquired through traditional approaches. For me dealing with the students of different cultural backgrounds and enabling them to grow academically making them realize their potentials require understanding about their strengths and weaknesses and adoption of student centered culturally responsive approaches. If the cultures of reference of the teachers are different from that of the students they find it difficult to implement culturally relevant pedagogy or to work as culturally responsive teachers (Hyland, 2009; Young, 2010). However it has been found that the existing programs of teacher education have not been proved to be so effective to tackle the challenges that appear in societies with people from diverse cultural backgrounds (Nieto, 2013). Hence I feel that regular trainings, upgrading of qualification, updating of modern educational developments are required

Meaning Theme 2: Officers' Involvement in Schools' Programs

My experience says that the personnel of District Education Office attend the programs organized at the schools just as invitees and usually do not suggest them to follow any approaches. Mr. Know too expressed the same sort of view. He said that the schools organize different programs for the holistic development of the students and many such programs include different cultural matters of the people of diverse cultural backgrounds. According to him they try to reflect the culture of different local communities. However my experience says that the schools organize such programs and ask the students to take part but all cannot make the students internalize the essence of various cultures. I have found that the students take part but many of them do not understand what they are doing.

Meaning Theme 3: Critical Pedagogy

I feel that students of diverse cultural backgrounds need critical education so that they can be aware and informed about their situation in the socio economic and political situation of the country. Moreover the cultural differences seen in the society are found to be depicted in a stereotypical manner by the education system and that they are immutable and fragmentary and not changeable (New London Group, 1996).



I believe that until and unless the students from marginalized cultures see the hidden ideologies behind the curriculum, view the hierarchies in the society and the interplay of different explicit and implicit forces, and understand the causes of their marginalization, there cannot be equality and they cannot be emancipated. “Sociopolitical consciousness is the ability to take learning beyond the confines of the classroom using school knowledge and skills to identify, analyze, and solve real-world problems” (Ladson-Billings, 2014, p. 75). Normally people believe that some activities and connections are the parts of what schools and society are supposed to be, and cannot understand how recurrent and easy following of such activities and connections, how the situation to practice them repeatedly leads towards the continuation of the domineering and unfair existing situation of schools and societies. (Kumashiro, 2002b). This reality demands critical pedagogy. Mr. Know too stated that trainings on critical theory and research were conducted for the teachers but he doubted his own and his colleagues' level of knowledge about research. He frankly confessed the lack of understanding about research because of their traditional schooling. He said that trainings are conducted but they are rarely reflected in classroom practices. I also feel that it is necessary that the teachers internalize the ways curriculums and course books have not represented the minority group(s) well in various subjects (Ladson-Billings, 2009) and make amicable interventions.

I also sense the same bitter reality from my teaching experience. Also my research journey has taught me that critical pedagogy is the part and parcel of culturally responsive pedagogy because it envisions the liberation of suppressed cultures.

The government officials working in the education sector are found to be advocating the government policies. They seem to work as government instruments to implement the policies of the government without any critical analysis of the policies. I found a lack of critical reflexivity, motivation and

willpower on the part of the government officials to bring about a significant change in our pedagogical approaches. It has been found that there is the tendency of shifting of responsibility and holding others accountable for low productivity and failure among the government officials. They are not found to have played their effective roles in supporting the schools to adopt the pedagogical approaches addressing the learning needs of students from diverse sociocultural backgrounds. I sensed a lack of serious concern in them about the fruitfulness or productivity of the efforts directed towards addressing the learning needs of students from diverse cultural backgrounds. I felt that they understood their duty in the sense of 'work for work's sake' without seriously thinking about the outcomes or the impacts of the duty.

Emergence 1: Non/Shift towards Transformative Pedagogy from Transmissionist Pedagogy

From the above anecdotes it has been understood that the necessity of change from traditional transmissionist pedagogy to transformative pedagogy has been felt but the shift of approach has not taken place effectively. I, as a teacher, and my participants support child centered culturally responsive approaches that facilitate the learning of students from diverse cultural backgrounds but we really struggle to leave our traditional ground. However some changes have been experienced and perceived in my own and other teachers' way of delivery. I explored that the teachers don't like to claim themselves as traditional teachers and have realized the importance of culture sensitive teaching but still there is not enough pacing towards this direction. Curriculum officers design the curriculum incorporating different aspects of culturally diverse population living in the country. I have sensed a lack of sincere concern towards significant change in the persons at responsible government posts. Shifting of responsibility and blaming others for the failure of any programs have been the impediments for the success of the programs. I have come to understand that until and unless the people at the policy and the implementation level internalize the policies and have real concerns about the desired results they cannot be productive. Same is the case with culturally responsive pedagogy in our private schools.

The traditional lecture is based on the transmissionist learning model



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Emergence 2: Non/ Interconnectedness of the Anecdotes

I now feel that every anecdote has a separate and distinct existence, a different life as the respondents have their own lives, experiences, situatedness or positionality and accordingly have their own perceptions about different issues. When I bring each of these anecdotes in front of me and observe them deeply I find a miniature world, a chunk of culture and a reflection of life there. Every anecdote is a complete work in itself, a depiction, a revealing, a narration and a delving. I find that each anecdote has a unique existence, a standing of its own and meanings of its own. For me my delving into every anecdote is an immersion into a different world. I also find the anecdote inextricably linked to each other contributing to meanings and beauty of the research. I find various threads running from one anecdote to another and connecting them. This makes me accept that they are alone and at the same time they are

together. When I compare our life with the life of various parts of my research I find them claiming individuality and also accepting to be the parts of a whole, as we do. In other words they are individual researches but it cannot be denied that they are the integral components of a whole research work.

Emergence 3: Un/Truths

The respondents are the real world people but now they have become characters of the text. Issues and situations are taken from the real world but in the text they seem to be fictionalized. For me every entity of the world that we assume as truth is a text and every text is the reflection of the world. My traditional learning experience has taught me that fictional world is unreal and imaginary and is different from the real world. In other words the world of the text represented untruth/s for me and I had the



concept that truth exist out there in the world. I also thought that the work of the any researcher was to find out that truth. However now my concept has changed. Now I assume that truths and untruths are merely our mental constructs and they may change according to the change of our positionality changing with time and situations. So now I believe in the blurring of the rigid distinctions between truths and untruths because time, situation and context sometimes make something true and at other times make it untrue. I also feel that a lens may make me see something in some way and different lens may make it look different to me.

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