

Evolving a Model of Critical Pedagogy to Deconstruct the Hegemonic Culture of the Conventional Teacher Centered Social Studies Classroom

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Abstract

Hegemony is a dominant ideology widely used in the educational field. But its adherents do not seem to be aware of its influence. When I encountered this ideology, I became excited and went back to the experiences I gained while studying social studies at the school level and the experiences I gained while teaching social studies at the school level. I carried out this study by incorporating my own experiences and the experiences of three renowned professors of social studies who have experienced hegemonic culture in their conventional teacher centered classroom. Art-based critical auto-ethnographic research methodology has been adopted in this study. In this research, I identified six different aspects of cultural hegemony that negatively impacted my social studies experiences, namely: traditional teaching methods; curriculum content; teacher domination; competitive assessment; perfectionism; poor classroom environment. Another important aspect of this study is that I have also identified the fundamental aspects of critical pedagogy that I experienced while studying and teaching at school, namely transformative teachers, encouraging students to have a critical voice, using new forms of knowledge, and emphasizing ethics as central. The result of this academic self-study is a far-reaching strategy for transforming the teaching of social studies. This strategy is divided into three steps i.e. before the implementation of the lesson, implementation of the lesson, and reflection. The second step of this strategy is the implementation phase. The implemented step can be divided in five sections such as structured overview and group formation, community contact and critical analysis, open dialogue for active engagement, confronting power and exposing hegemony, and evaluation of the whole process. This vision can be adapted and implemented by innovative teachers who want to enliven their social studies classrooms with more relevant, meaningful and stimulating learning experiences.

Keywords: *Conventional Teacher Centered Teaching; Critical Pedagogy, Hegemonic Cultural, Social Studies; Transformative Teaching Learning*

My journey towards school

I was born in a remote place in a remote district of Nepal. At that time, although there were minimum facilities for school education, there was no facility for quality school education. After joining the school, I found that the classrooms had strict teachers and strict discipline. Lessons had to be done hard and if the assigned homework was not completed, it could be severely punished. The entire process of

teaching learning was based on the process of memorization and reproducing the facts taught. The most of teachers depend on the prescribed textbooks for each grade (Shah, 2020). Memorization and repetition of the content matters rather than understanding, and intellectual transformation of them was the practice. Students devote a greater part of their lives to their studies without understanding the meaning and the context of what they were reading about (College of Education, 1956). The teaching learning activities placed heavy emphasis on the drill, memorizing, and lecturing. In such a method, the child without a photographic mind and unusual memorizing ability could not survive in the system and had to drop out (Shah, 2020). Such type of passive learning rarely leads to active, dynamic, self-directed behavior, or develop responsibility and leadership.

After I received my lower secondary level education from my own village school, I joined a secondary level school far away from my village to get secondary level education. The condition of the school there was also very bad. The number of teachers teaching at the secondary level was very low. These same teachers used to teach all subjects like English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography etc. The teaching learning process adopted by the teachers was also neither interesting to students nor were suited to the maturation level of the students. In the first place, the teacher did not want to take a class, and even when they took class, its quality and content were theoretical and bookish. The theory was never applied in practice. Thus, there was an absence of realistic activities and ‘the teaching learning situation in the schools is rather depressing... Students are encouraged to learn by rote, and assessments are made on the same basis (Shah, 2016). The student was encouraged to learn by rote, schools were without education materials, and even if there were any, they were not placed and used properly.

After completing secondary level, I came to Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal, to get higher education. I joined the campus with the belief that the teaching learning process of higher education will be of qualitative and as per the culture of the scientific pedagogical practices. After completion of my master's degree in education, I was admitted to the Ph. D. After enrolling in the Ph. D. and starting to study, I started familiarizing myself with various disciplines and subjects matters of the educational field. I started studying various aspects of pedagogical practices.

My journey began when I came across two terminologies: hegemonic culture and critical pedagogy while teaching at the master's level. When I became familiar with these two terminologies, I carried out a study on these two notions from a variety of sources after discussions with renowned professors of pedagogy and educationists in Nepal. My foregoing discussion of pedagogical practices also shows that there is ideological dominance of ruling class in all sector of the education. In plain language, there is hegemonic culture in the teaching learning process of school education in Nepal.

Gramsci, a Marxist educator who coined the word, as the source of this remarkable idea of hegemony (Bonner, 2011). The term hegemon is used to identify the actor, group, class or state that exercises hegemonic power or that is responsible for the dissemination of hegemonic ideas. Hegemony refers to dominance of one group over another, often supported by legitimating norms and ideas. In philosophy and sociology, the denotations and connotations of term cultural hegemony derive from the Ancient Greek word Hegemonia, which indicates the leadership and regime of the hegemon. In political sense, hegemony is the geopolitical dominance exercised by an empire, the hegemon that rules the subordinate states of the empire by the threat of intervention, an implied means of power rather than by threat of direct rule-military invasion, occupation, and territorial annexation (King & Casanova, 2021). Cultural hegemony is the dominance of a culturally diverse society by the ruling class who manipulate the culture of that society – the beliefs, explanations, perceptions, values and moral so that the worldview of the ruling class becomes the accepted cultural norms. As the universal dominant ideology, the ruling class worldview misrepresents the social, political and economic status quo as natural, inevitable, and perpetual social conditions that benefit every social class, rather than as artificial social constructs that benefit only ruling class (Shore & Wright, 1997).

As I furthered my reading, I was able to recognise that hegemonies occur in various fields, such as, Sociology, Anthropology (Crehan, 2002) and culture (Merry, 2003; Uzuner, 2009). I was led to understand that it might exist in education to suppress subordinate groups such as students, where they are forced to obey rules without conscious awareness or consent. I am very lucky as my comprehension of the notion was supported by the metaphor for hegemony embodied in "*A story of Labourers told to me by a friend of mine*".

The metaphor of hegemony in the life of the labourers

A long time ago, five labourers workers lived in a village. They lived by working. One day, all five of them did a job together. Because it was not possible to do it alone. All five of them worked very hard. After the completion of the work, they got Nine Rupees as salary. After getting the salary, they faced a big problem. There were five of them and since the salary was Nine rupees, it was very difficult for them to divide the amount equally among all five of them. Because the workers were illiterate and it was not possible to get retail money easily in the village at tht time. After that, they went to the chief of the village and explained their problem. The chief promised to solve the problem of the labourers workers after hearing everything. After that he took the money from the labourers and gave one rupee to each labourers. He kept the remaining four rupees in his pocket. After that laburers went to their respective homes happily as they got the equal amount of money.

As I further reviewed the literature and discovered that critical awareness of the existence of cultural hegemony in the classroom motivates teachers to use critical pedagogy in their classroom. I discovered the definition of McLaren's (1998) during a literature review. According to McLaren (1998), Critical pedagogy is a way of thinking about, negotiating, and transforming the relationship among classroom teaching, the production of knowledge, the institutional structure of the school, and the social and material relations of the wider community, society, and, nation state (McLaren, 1998, p.45). Critical pedagogy is presented in the quotation above among other factors as a way of thinking. The depth in this way of thinking is described by Shor as "Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning.

In McKernan (2013) I read: ...Critical pedagogy is a movement involving relationships of teaching and learning so that students gain a critical self-consciousness and social awareness and take appropriate action against oppressive forces. This idea is central to Freire's notion of "conscientization" or the coming to personal critical consciousness. According to Herbert Marcuse, a major figure in the Frankfurt school, that there could be no qualitative social change, no socialism, is possible without the emergence of a new rationality and sensibility in the individuals themselves: no radical social change without a radical change of the individual agents of change (McKernan, 2013, p.425).

The relationship of learning and teaching more than anything considers the teacher and students relation. Many critical pedagogics in their discussion of this relationship mentions that it should be based on compassion, mutual understanding and common goals. Freire emphasises the importance of "just, serious, humble, and generous relationships" for well-functioning educational practice (Freire, 1998). For me, these notions seemed to be a solution for education to liberate students from an oppressive situation by providing a means for teachers and students to think beyond their 'boxes'.

According to Grundy (1987), the incorporation of critical reflective thinking and critical discourse in the teaching learning process would act as a platform to emancipate students from the dominance of the technical curriculum interest, which underpins the image of the curriculum as a product and the teacher's traditional role as deliverer of curriculum content. Therefore, if students are made to think critically about their situation, students can also identify the relationship between their personal problems and experiences and the social contexts in which they live. Now the relationship between these two concepts has become clear. It is important to easily accept cultural dominance in the classroom (Garcia et al., 2009; Hatcher et al., 2011). Because its existence is natural and it acts to prevent the ability of teachers and students to think critically and innovatively in their lives. The implementation of critical pedagogy is crucial in order to deconstruct hegemonic dimensions of culture (Freire, 2000).

ILAM Vol. 19, Issue 1, August 2023

Reflecting on the various ideas mentioned above, I decided to study the actual notion of hegemonic culture and critical pedagogy based on the various experiences I gained as a student and teacher in Nepal. I formulated the following three research questions to guide my study:

Central research question

How can we use critical teaching to deconstruct the longstanding hegemonic culture in social studies classroom in Nepal?

Research questions

1. How does hegemonic culture manifest in the teaching learning process of social studies at the school level?
2. To what extent have I encountered critical pedagogy in my classrooms?
3. How will I use critical pedagogy to deconstruct hegemonic cultural my future social studies classroom? And
4. To evolve a model of critical pedagogy to counteract hegemonic cultural of the conventional teacher centered classrooms.

The journey setting

I have adopted three contemporary research paradigms such as interpretivism, criticalism and postmodernism in this study (Taylor, 2014). Among the three research paradigms, criticalism expresses the critical voice in an effort to bring about differences in human behavior according to critical social conscience. Similarly, interpretivism focuses on human action and tries to understand the subjective world of people. And, postmodernism challenges society by unsettling the established balance (Rikowski & McLaren, 2002) through its basic principle, 'be suspicious of all grand narratives'. This paradigm advocates plurality of genres and logics, and opens the door to arts-based research methods such as poetry, story-telling, metaphor and imagery (Knowles & Cole, 2008). In this study, based on these three research methods, I designed an arts-based critical autoethnographic inquiry to investigate my own feelings, thoughts, and emotions as I dig out my lived educational experiences (Ellis & Bochner, 2003). This research design has helped me to critically understand the world through the eyes of other people, who have shared their lived experiences with me. This research design entails the integration of an autobiographic impulse and an ethnographic moment which were portrayed as a "self-narrative that critiques the situatedness of self with others in social contexts" (Spry, 2001, p.710).

Methodology

In the present study, two methods namely narrative inquiry and semi-structured interview were used to produce, process and portray the data.

Writing as narrative inquiry

Narrative writing is a method of making the readers experiences the writer's vivid strange situations. Writing self-narratives interweaves the researcher's self with strangers, friends, or acquaintances. Narrative inquiry is very important for understanding yourself and others related to you more deeply and critically. According to **Chang (2008)**, the narrative inquiry is used in various disciplines such as stories, poems, dialogues, memoirs, journals, personal essays and letters. Chang further stated that these methods are suitable for autoethnographic designs as they are written chronologically and comprehensively to represent lives of the persons involved. Chang further stated that these methods are suitable for autoethnographic designs as they are written chronologically and comprehensively to represent lives of the persons involved. I used a self-narrative method to make known my past experiences as a learner during my schooling and as an in-service teacher, which served as the main data sources for this study. I also explored my in-service teaching experience to give a better view of the hegemony and critical pedagogy that I was investigating. I constructed the self-narratives using confessional and impressionistic genres (Van Maanen, 1988).

Semi-structured interviews

Cresswell (2008) defined interviewing as a process of obtaining details of personal information from an interaction between two individuals. Creswell (2008) added that interviews are suitable for participants who are not hesitant to speak. In this study, I selected participants based on their availability and willingness to be interviewed (Cohen et al., 2008). Three renowned professors of social studies were selected as the participants for the present study. Guided by ethical procedures as proposed by Anderson and Arsenault (1998), I conducted semi-structured interviews with my participants to obtain accounts of their experiences related to the issues being investigated. An audio recorder and note pad were used to assist me to record the conversations.

Hegemonic cultural and conventional teacher centered teaching

Six aspects of cultural hegemony were identified in the narrative of my experience as a student while studying at the school level. These are: *traditional teaching methods, curriculum content, teacher domination, competitive assessment, perfectionism, and poor classroom environment*. As a social studies teacher, I also found out hegemonic aspects which had shaped the culture of my in-service teaching experience. I had identified these aspects through in-depth self-reflection and memory recall were triggered by interview conversations. The following narrative

extracts taken from my paper (*Shah, 2008*) exemplify each aspect of hegemony that shaped the prevailing culture of my social studies classrooms.

Conventional teacher centered teaching methods

According to the ontology of the conventional teacher-centered teaching methods, the world and knowledge are fixed. All over the world, at any time, for any person, truth and knowledge are constant. The ontology of teacher-centered teaching assumes that knowledge is objective, fixed, and hierarchical, with the teacher possessing superior knowledge that should be imparted to the students. Accordingly, on the basis of epistemology of the conventional teacher centered teaching, teacher, learned person and great books are the sources of knowledge. Moreover, axiology of the conventional teaching centered teaching considers that knowledge is separate from the human being. It meant that knowledge is fixed and human being cannot construct it. What is understood from this discourse is that the teacher-centered method supports cultural hegemony.

Day by day my social studies class teaching has created a situation of monotony. After each class I find it very difficult to understand what was taught. I can't understand a bit. I ask my friends whether they understood the lesson or not. But they are also experience very difficult to understand the subject matters like me. They also understood the lessons taught in a vague and dim manner. Even those who said they understood the subject matter, did not understand the depth of the content and only memorized it. But few can learn the lessons without deep understanding of the concepts. This is because they are good at memorizing. I realized this while questioning one of my classmates:

Vignette-1

Rajesh: How many regions are there in Nepal? And why is it divided?

Sita: Nepal is divided into 7 provinces and 77 districts. But sir did not tell why it was divided.

Vignette-2

Rajesh: Is there gender discrimination between women and men in the society? Why is it discriminated?

Rita: There is a discrimination between men and women. Sir said that this distinction has existed since ancient times.

Vignette-3

Rajesh: Why reservation or quotas system have been arranged for citizens who are backward from the mainstream of society?

Naresh: In Nepal, reservation has been arranged for indigenous people, tribals and citizens of remote areas. But I don't know why it was done.

Sometimes when I meet my teacher in personally, I find him really unwelcoming. Because he is very busy with administrative work. His behavior makes me not want to meet him again. Years passed without realizing it. Looking at the situation in my

class, it feels like watching television, where the teacher is only active and imparts knowledge while we are passively acquiring knowledge (Shah, 2008).

The conventional teacher-centered teaching method was the first hegemonic aspect that I identified in my social studies classroom teaching. The use of memorization techniques and rote learning made us passive learners. Moreover, due to the lack of facilitation of our conceptual development, we could not learn how to apply knowledge to solve various problems.

Curriculum content

The content incorporated in the curriculum determines what kind of teaching methods will be used. Since the contents of the traditional curriculum are based on memorization and rote learning, the teacher also uses the lecture method in their teaching learning process. This kind of content cannot develop critical thinking in students. Because the major aim of conventional teaching is fulfilled if the students reproduce the prescribed content as it is. It depends on the nature, type, scope and sequence of the subject matter, whether or not creative ability will develop in the students. The content is usually determined by the subject experts through the judgmental method. In this way, while determining the subjects and subject matters, it is not taken into account which subject matters makes the students critical.

Even till the end of one teaching session, we did not get an opportunity to visit the society for a subject like social studies. Many subjects of social studies can easily develop critical skills in students. Only when students critically study topics such as social injustice, caste discrimination, the difference between the rich and the poor in the society itself, they can develop critical consciousness. Most of our social studies subject matters of our curriculum are meant to be memorized inside the classroom. The teacher also teaches these subjects through the lecture method. The teachers take the social studies book in hand and first read the lessons written there and then paraphrase what they have read and try to explain it to the students. Most of the questions in the exam were based on rote learning. Most of us students could not do well even in the final exam of the academic session (Shah, 2008).

Another aspect of the hegemony of the social studies is its content. Our social studies teachers ignore the usefulness of the field trip method of social studies. But their attention is completely focused on the textbook and memorizing what is mentioned there. Because of this, the critical ability could never develop in the students. Actually, our teachers overlooked the importance of nurturing practical activities among the students.

Teacher domination

After the beginning of the academic session, the teaching learning process was started. We were hoping that our teaching learning process would be very interesting when the lessons started. Looking at the teacher's personality, it seemed that he should teach in an interesting way. When the class started, we introduced ourselves. After that, the teacher gave a short introduction and told about the subject matters of social studies that will be taught throughout the year. Then he wrote the title of today's lesson on the blackboard and took the book in his hand. I instructed everyone to watch the first lesson of social studies. He went on reading each line of the first lesson and explaining its meaning and that's how today's lesson ended. Finally, for tomorrow's homework, sir instructed us to read today's lesson at home (Shah, 2008).

Teacher dominance is another aspect of cultural hegemony. Its influence is clearly visible in my social studies classroom as well. Hegemony affected our entire classroom teaching and learning activities. What I realized when I reflected on this experience was that my friends and I had been deprived of our conscious awareness by the power of the teacher. The students did not have the ability to ask and discuss new topics. We had no place in classroom teaching. Even if we did not understand the subject, we had no other option but to remain silent. As a result, our voices were not included in the classroom teaching-learning process. In other words, there was no environment in which we could participate in class teaching.

Competitive assessment

Most of my friends including me are studying in this school. I still have one year left to complete my secondary education. At the end of this academic session, we have to give the final exam of the secondary level and this exam will be a national level exam. After the new academic session started, we came to know that the same teachers who taught social studies in the previous years will be teaching. Therefore, we have to work hard to improve the teaching and learning of our social studies subjects. I also change my study routine to improve my learning. I start discussing topics with classmates who are considered good in social studies and try to learn new topics. However, none of them are able to explain to me what they read in social studies and some friends are reluctant to share what they understand. This year, I have to sit for an important national assessment, so it is more difficult than the previous years. I do not meet my social studies teacher in person because I am disappointed with his attitude. Instead, I continue to search and study about social studies and its various topics even during free time from school and after returning home from school. I try very hard to do well in my monthly and quarterly exams but my results did not improve much. Even in the last national exam of the academic session, I could not improve much. The results of the evaluation made me very disappointed.

Now I decided not to study social science subjects related to social studies in higher education. (Shah, 2008)

It has become common for all students to compete in social studies exams. This kind of competition created so much tension in students that we had to bring more numbers than others anyway. If we did not get good marks in the exam, we would be humiliated in front of everyone, and on the other hand, we would have to be scolded by the teachers. **Hudson (2005)** takes this situation as the hegemony of assessment. It is indisputable that until the students develop the ability to think critically about the subject matters and solve problems, such an assessment system will remain dominant.

Perfectionism

Today, 30 of us were asked to discuss the topic set by the teacher in groups for one period or 45 minutes. The next day, each group presented the topics discussed and concluded in the classroom. During the presentation in the classroom, the students who were wrong about the number of local bodies of the district, their area, and so on were scolded by the teacher. Friends who made more mistakes were made to look at the book and repeat their mistakes three times. What we think is that this kind of practice increases our memory. On the contrary, our teacher never praised my classmates who did very well in the class. Many of my friends did not like this behavior of the teacher, but no one dared to oppose it. (Shah, 2008)

Another aspect that we are going to discuss here is the hegemony of perfectionism. Perfectionism refers to the condition in which teachers expect the best learning outcomes from their students. Teachers expect correct answers to all the questions asked in the exam. When we students did not do very well in the exam, all these students got a bad word from their teacher. This behavior of the teacher made us sad and felt very bad. Most of my friends shared with me that we will never be able to do well in social studies (Garcia et al., 2009; Hatcher et al., 2011). Because of this, every time the social studies class started, an atmosphere of fear, stress and despair was created. It indicates the bad behavior of the teacher even in the small mistakes made by the students. Because of this behavior of the teacher, we were discouraged to learn social studies. In my opinion, mistakes are an integral part of learning process. Making mistakes improves learning and one day complete learning is possible. When we make a mistake, we look at the problem from a different perspective and find a way to solve the problem. According to Rye (2009), mistakes provide a learning experience for us to approach problems more carefully.

Poor environment

Dilapidated building walls, small classroom, benches and desks too hard to sit on, dark classrooms, extremely cold weather, very uncomfortable lessons,

very boring classroom environment and rude behavior of the teacher have made it very difficult to understand the content delivered by the teacher. The teacher is not at all interested in how to develop skills in their students. What I expected was that the social studies lessons would be about my own environment, my own village, my own family and they would be very interesting. But my thoughts were limited to dreams. The classroom environment could never be more interesting. One day I was writing down what the teacher said in my notebook while studying. After I could not hear clearly what the teacher was saying, I asked a close friend about it. After the teacher came to know about the conversation between my friend and me, the teacher came in front of us and shouted sarcastically, "What are you talking about here?" At this time, all the friends were looking at us. This incident made us very ashamed. This incident made us disgusted with the subject matters of social studies. No matter how hard I tried, I could not forget this incident and started hating myself (Shah, 2008).

Poor classroom environment is another hegemonic aspect. Social studies lessons are often very boring. In such a hectic environment, we have not been able to concentrate on reading at all. Moreover, it has developed a tendency of not liking to sit and study in the classroom.

Aspects of critical pedagogy I have experienced

I have discussed various aspects of critical pedagogy in this chapter. From my past experience, I have identified four aspects of critical pedagogy using the same strategy as before to gain information about various aspects of hegemonic culture. These four aspects are: *transformative teachers, encouraging students to have a critical voice, using new forms of knowledge, and emphasizing ethics as central*. The experiences presented in the following paragraphs are the experiences I have gained during my teaching. I included these experiences in my paper (Shah, 2009).

Transformative teachers

One important aspect of critical pedagogy that I have experienced is transformative teachers. In my English and Population subject classes, the teaching methods used by the teachers to teach us new contents and skills, their critical thinking, and innovations in teaching learning reflect that if the teachers want to, they can easily transform the society through the teaching and learning process or educative process. In other words, there is nothing that cannot happen if the teacher wants it. In Population, we have developed our own strategies to learn population contents and events by linking key words and themes. It was a group activity. In this strategy, one member of the group would bring facts and events and another member of the group would make clear those content, facts and events as an expert. This made the contents of population very interesting and enjoyable. Similarly, in English subject,

ILAM Vol. 19, Issue 1, August 2023

we have developed strategies for learning English subjects based on various activities such as songs and games. This made it very easy for the teacher to teach and we learned the subjects happily.

Critical voice

Another aspect of critical pedagogy that I have experienced in my life is the critical voice. Teachers should constantly encourage students for their critical voice. At the secondary level, during our English and Nepali classes, we often conducted dialogue sessions in which everyone was given the opportunity to participate, speak and express their opinions. In this way, to express their thoughts to the friends and reflect on some topics, the friends got a lot of learning opportunities as well as self-esteem was developed. Similarly, on the last Friday of the month, we organized a program to discuss the good teaching and learning activities adopted by the teachers during our teaching learning process. In this discussion, many students discussed some exemplary teaching activities of the teachers and how they benefited from it. Thus, what can be understood from this is that good teaching learning process do not only teach the content to the students, but also develops the curiosity of teaching learning through such activities.

New forms of knowledge

After I got appointed as a teacher, I decided to teach in a different way from our social studies teachers. I wanted to make my social studies class engaging and interesting by using teaching strategies that make teaching learning fun for my social studies students. For this, I started making a plan for effective teaching of social studies. The title of the lesson I was teaching was own district. I decided to teach this topic through discussion method. I determined the title of "Achham District: Possibilities of Development and Challenges". For this, I divided 33 students into two groups and suggested that each group go to their neighborhood and meet politicians, teachers, community leaders and collect information about Achham district. Two days later, the school opened and I conducted a discussion program on the "Achham District: Possibilities of Development and Challenges". The students presented new arguments that were new than the facts in the textbook and that I did not know about. What became clear from the teaching of this lesson is that social studies topics can also be taught effectively using new methods. On the other hand, if the students are directly involved in the teaching and learning process, they will also accept ownership in the learning process and learn effectively.

Teaching ethically

When I was appointed as a teacher in school, I started to apply some new experiment in the teaching learning process. So, I held a meeting with all the social studies teachers in my school. In the meeting, we decided to behave well with the

students we teach, listen to their problems and be ready for solutions in any situation. No matter how badly the students behaved, we reminded them, understood and solved the problem. We all teachers started to treat students humanely. Within a year from the beginning of this work, a great change was seen in the students' behaviours. The respect and trust of the students towards the teacher increased and they started discussing their problems openly with the teacher. Such a change in the students' attitude and behaviour made us very happy. These two examples are congruent with Giroux's advocacy of ethics as central to education.

Transformation of the social studies classroom through critical pedagogy

When I was studying at the secondary level, I was very concerned that the cultural hegemony made me very disempowered, demoralised and depressed. Therefore, even while doing this study, I am critically aware of cultural hegemony. This realization motivated my commitment to resist its powerful hold on my teaching. In addition, it has motivated me to teach my students using the principles of critical pedagogy. The major aim of this study is to transform the conventional social studies teaching learning into a more dynamic and exciting classroom culture. The teaching and learning process should be conducted based on the number of students, the size of the classroom, the nature of the subject matter, and the living conditions of the local residents rather than the model developed by a certain academician. It is necessary to dedicate the teaching and learning process for the intellectual level of the local residents, the education of children and mainly for the establishment of social justice in the society. Therefore, I propose the following teaching model for transformative teaching learning in social studies. While preparing this transformative teaching learning model in social studies, I have conducted in-depth interview with three renowned professors of social studies. First of all, during the interview, there was a discussion about the title of the lesson to be included in the teaching sample. Based on the suggestions of the respondents, *social justice* was chosen as a sample topic. Accordingly, there was also a discussion about how to effectively teach this topic and how to remove the dominance of the teacher that has existed traditionally. Based on this discussion, a total of five phase of implementations were designed to teach this topic, which phases are presented below. Finally, a discussion was held with the respondent regarding how to validate this model.

Step-1: Before the implementation of the lesson

Education is never neutral and it is always political. Actually, the nature of education is based on the nature of social and political. Therefore, the main purpose of education is social transformation. The main goal of critical pedagogy is to eradicate traditional cultural dominance in society or classroom. Therefore, the hegemonic culture in the society can be ended only if the domination of the classroom teacher can be ended through the teaching learning process. The main goal of critical

pedagogy is social transformation. There can be different ways and measures of social transformation. Among those measures, social justice is an important dimension of critical pedagogy. Therefore, social justice is indispensable for the transformation of society. In order to transform the hegemonic culture in the teachers' classrooms, a lesson called *social justice* was chosen from the secondary level social studies. After selecting this lesson, an effort has been made to implement it effectively.

Step-2: Implementation of the lesson

First Phase: Structured overview and group formation

In the next lesson we will study about social justice. In our society, due to various reasons, the economic, social, political, cultural and educational conditions of all people are not the same. This is social inequality. This has created a situation of social injustice in the society. Therefore, social justice is necessary for all societies. Social justice means that all people in the society are equally entitled to economic, political and social rights and opportunities. In particular, social justice is about opening doors of access and opportunity to people in most immediate need. Social justice broadly refers to the fair and compassionate distribution of the results of economic growth.

After the structured overview, all 32 students were divided into four groups and then I talked about the work they had to do. Select your own team leader yourself and then prepare a list of school age children found in your neighborhood. In addition, have in-depth interview with those children and their parents and inquire about the specific reasons why those children do not attend school. Do those children still want to go to school? If they want to attend school, what do they need? After understanding all these things, prepare a report and present it to the next class. After discussing with the students about how to find children in their neighborhood and how to discuss with them and their parents, they were given time to say anything they did not understand. After discussing the things that were not understood, the class ended.

Second Phase: Community contact and critical analysis

In this phase, students engage in critical analysis from community interaction rather than reading. At this stage, the students first go door to door in their neighborhood to find children of school age who have not gone to school. They start this work under the leadership of their respective team leaders. After visiting the children who do not go to school in their neighborhood, now the work of social criticism begins. Children who did not go to school, the main reasons for not going to school are having to do housework during farming, taking care of small children at home,

tending cattle, but it seems that most of the children did not go to school mainly because of financial reasons.

Third Phase: Open dialogue for active engagement

Open dialogue is defined as an approach where both teachers and students contribute significantly to classroom discussion and learning (Edwards-Groves et al., 2013). Importantly, classroom interaction can be considered dialogic when it meets the following criteria: (i) students engage in learning activities with the teacher in small groups or as a whole class; (ii) teachers and students listen to each other and share ideas and construct alternative perspectives; and (iii) teachers plan classroom discussions with specific educational goals in mind (Muhonen et al., 2017). According to Olson et al., (2014), open dialogue values the coexistence of multiple, distinct, and equally valid voices or perspectives. It is a mutual and sustainable dialogue between students and teachers or students themselves. It emphasizes sustainable development and encourages further discussions (Robinson, America & Edwards, 2020). In addition, it aims to conduct meaningful and creative research.

At this stage, a report was presented in the classroom and discussion with teachers and students started. This discussion was very interesting and successful to discover new facts. When the students have a thorough discussion about the information brought from the neighborhood, they find that it has been legislated that education should be free. But the students themselves concluded from the discussion that because the schools still charge fees for various reasons, the children of the poor are not able to study. Apart from the fees charged by the school, it was also concluded that the children of the poor were not able to study in school because they could not purchase various educational materials such as school dress, copies, books, pens, lunches etc. Therefore, it became clear that the poor children did not get justice. It was concluded that even though the state made provision for equal and equitable access to education for all school age children in the law, it is still socially injustice that some children are unable to study due to lack of finances in the society.

Fourth Phase: Confronting power and exposing hegemony

At this stage, students engage in collaborative discussions with school representatives and heads of local bodies. Out-of-school children and their parents, educationists, community leaders, politicians, social activists, heads of other local bodies are invited to this discussion. In the discussion, the prevailing legal provisions of compulsory education and the arrangements therein are studied. After this, the children who do not go to school are harassed by the students about their

ILAM Vol. 19, Issue 1, August 2023

age, class, real economic status, etc. Finally, since most children of this study are of primary school age, it is clear that it is their human right to attend school. Therefore, it is clear that those children have suffered social injustice. In this way, it is social justice for the society to treat everyone equally and respect everyone without discrimination based on any caste, class, sect, color, caste, rich and poor, etc. Although there is a legal provision not to charge fees here, it is wrong to collect fees from students against the law. On the other hand, preventing children of primary school age from entering school is contrary to social justice. Therefore, according to the legal provisions made by the state, the school must enroll children who have reached the age. It was concluded that schools and local bodies are requested to enroll all children who have reached school age.

Fifth Phase: Evaluation of the whole process

The assessment of the students of the teaching method mentioned above is not possible through the paper pencil test. For this, how much can they do in the field of social justice? How many voices can be raised in the cases of widespread social injustice in the society? And they can be evaluated based on how committed they are to those events. Only weeks, months, three months are possible for this. How has their behavior changed in at least one year? How much work did they do? It should be evaluated based on that.

Step-3: Reflection and validation of the transformative teaching model

Teaching is a very difficult task. This requires a proper plan and its effective implementation. The major goal of critical pedagogy is social change and social justice. The society changes only if the people within the society want to and act to change. It is not possible to change the society in the desired direction, speed, shape and type through traditional teaching and learning. Critical teaching method is very important for this. Regarding how to validate this teaching model, it was widely discussed with the respondents. The model prepared by the researcher was improved a lot. After correction and modification, this model was used in the classroom and the weakness in this model was corrected. After the correction of all the weakness, the model was validated with the help of the respondents.

It's difficult to go there from here

I am well aware that it is very difficult to end the powerful cultural hegemony of traditional teacher-centered classrooms and to use critical pedagogy in traditional culture-dominated classrooms. However, I am committed to continuing this work

with dedication to transform the traditional teacher dominated classrooms. I will not give up on this conversion effort. The task of transforming traditional teacher-centered classroom teaching can be like the effort of the sage in the story I mentioned below to bring the scorpion out of the river. However, in this story, it seems impossible for the sage to bring the scorpion out of the water, through the continuous and tireless efforts of the sage, he succeeds in his work. It seems that a lot of effort is needed to improve the teacher-centered traditional classroom teaching. But this is not an impossible task.

Sage and his disciples

It was a long time ago. In a certain place there lived a sage and his disciples. The sage was very majestic, religious and learned. One day early in the morning, he went to bathe in the river with his disciples. After the sage went to bathe in the river, he did not come out of the river for a long time. The disciples who were waiting for their guru by the river, when the guru did not come to the bank, the disciples looked at their guru and saw that the sage was wading in the river. After this the disciples swam and approached the Guru. They saw that the sage was trying to pull a scorpion out of the water and the scorpion was trying to bite the sage. The sage was repeatedly trying to force the scorpion out of the water. After seeing such a scene, the disciples approached the sage and asked:

Disciple: Guru, the scorpion is poisonous, if it bites you, it can even kill you. But sir, why are you trying to save its life by bringing it out of the water? Leave it alone, and let us go out.

Sage: Disciples, every creature in this world has its own duty, responsibility and religion. The religion of scorpions is to bite other creatures and spread poison in their bodies. But my duty, responsibility and religion are exactly the opposite. My duty and responsibility is to protect the lives of all living beings in this world. This scorpion is fulfilling his religion and a sage like me must fulfill my duty, responsibility and religion. Therefore, even if it tries to bite me, I must save the life of this scorpion at any costs.

Sage: And no work is possible without hard work, courage, and perseverance. So, be patient for a moment, disciples, I will surely bring the scorpion out of the water and save its life.”

After talking like this, he again started trying to bring the scorpion out of the water with caution. After this, the sage's disciples also started helping the sage in bringing the scorpion out of the water. Finally, they took the scorpion out of the water and left it in the open places and returned to their hermitage.

I hope that the various aspects of critical pedagogy identified by my study will help teachers who have been teaching social studies for a long time in their teaching. In addition, it will also help teachers to be critically aware of the existence of false

consciousness or the existence of cultural hegemony affecting the teaching and learning process of social studies. More specifically, the existence of cultural hegemony in a country like Nepal based on the traditional teacher-centered teaching method seems to affect teaching and learning. I am committed to ending such traditional hegemonic teaching learning culture and to implement critical pedagogy in social studies.

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