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A Framework for Critical Pedagogy: Lessons from Selected Teachers Working in Higher Education Institutions[#]

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Abstract

This paper is an attempt to develop a framework for classroom-based critical pedagogy for higher education institutions. Five teachers working in higher education institutions, who were perceived as the best teachers by students, form the sample for the study. Based on the observations of the classroom teachings, an attempt has been made to extract the critical pedagogical practices in the pedagogical practices of these teachers. Collaborative social research approach was used for data analysis in which data was analysed to create the codes and categories of data through line-by-line inductive coding. The four cross case themes derived in the analysis are Equitable Opportunities, Presentation of Multiple Perspectives through Teaching, Expanding Learning beyond the Classroom which have Implications in Their Contexts, and Critical Methods in Teaching.

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Introduction

The Global Education Monitoring Report (2017) has highlighted the high stake tests and the rampant private tuition system as the two important evils of Indian education system. In fact the private tuition system is a by-product of the pressure created by the high stake tests, and in turn it become another reason for additional pressure. The soft violence unleashed by the examination centric education system at the cost of skills necessary for a critically conscious generation will be a catastrophe for the future generation. As per the national crime bureau statistics, 6.7 per cent of total suicides happen in India are by students. Failure in examinations has claimed 2630 suicides in the year 2015 alone (NCRB, Accidental Deaths & Suicides in India, 2015). High stake test has become a panoptic surveillance system (Foucault, 1991) that regulates the students in higher education system. These tests were performing a neoliberal responsibility of converting a subjective phenomenon to measurable scores so as to commodify them for market friendliness. The neoliberal force behind the commodification of education (Shumar, 1997; Clark, 1998; Slaughter & Leslie, 1999; Bok, 2003; Slaughter & Rhoades, 2004; Naidoo & Jamieson, 2005) has been pushing 'teaching executives' to work on targets fixed for them. The targets are fixed in the form of completion of syllabus, fund attraction, publication etc. Converting teachers into teaching executives by fixing business model targets has made classrooms a grave yard of criticism and creativity. A new breed of pedagogies (I would like to call them as 'decorative pedagogies') are gaining momentum in the classrooms of Indian higher education institutions. These decorative pedagogies often work with attractive wrappers of technology and activities that entertain students. Growing public support for such shallow pedagogic approaches has converted classrooms to laboratory for deepening false consciousness among students. They promote conformity and obedience overlooking critique and creativity. Student community is thus defied to realise the way they are shaped to acquiesce or rather to accept control and oppression joyfully. Conscientisation (Freire, 1993) is a far distant dream for younger generations in Indian higher education institutions. Slipping in to pessimism is of new excuse! The system ought to propel forward in search of pedagogies that equip critically conscious generation to make use of its demographic dividends for an egalitarian society.

The Main Argument

To cross the barren pedagogic terrains in higher education institutions, a revolt is needed in Indian classrooms. Paulo Freire is a solace and it is high time to anchor upon his pedagogic ideas. Freire offers a trajectory that can be well used by a country like India, with high socio economic inequality and cultural diversity, to progressive educational process and goals. He is not much heard in India so is the use of his ideas in Indian education system. Freire provides a base upon which a pedagogy of hope can be build up in Indian classrooms. The first argument of this paper is that Freire's ideas of teaching, popularly known as critical pedagogy, is latent in the teaching of some excellent teachers, who practice it without knowing the theoretical background it. Hence critical pedagogy is latent in Indian classrooms through the practices of some best teachers in higher education institutions. Being a student of teacher education my realisation of this latency in many such great teachers whom I come across gives a ray of hope for a silent revolution in classrooms. Identification of those

teachers who knowingly or unknowingly practice critical pedagogical practice can offer insights for developing a model for the best use of teachers who are not acquitted with such practices. Hence the second argument of the paper is drawn from the assumption that identification of the critical pedagogical practices of teachers can be used for building a broad framework of critical pedagogy in higher education classroom. These two arguments were the base for the research questions framed for the study. Before progressing to research questions of the project it is imperative to have clarity about what I mean by 'critical pedagogy' in this project.

Defining Critical Pedagogy

Critical pedagogy, as an approach to teaching, emanated from the writings and thoughts of Paulo Freire (1958, 1967, 2004), one of the world's most renowned progressive educationalists of modern times. Freire was profoundly influenced by critical theory proposed by Frankfurt school of social sciences (Freedman 2007). Drawing from critical theory and other radical philosophies he proposed a teaching approach that helps students to question and challenge the forces that dominate a system and there by the subjects of that system. All such systems are designed by few and followed by a large number of people who are less powerful compared to the designers. Beyond the legitimate practices that ensure domination and control of the few over the others, a handful of beliefs and customs supplement the control and domination of the powerful. According to Ira Shor (1992), "Habits of thought, reading, writing, and speaking which go beneath surface meaning, first impressions, dominant myths, official pronouncements, traditional clichés, received wisdom, and mere opinions, to understand the deep meaning, root causes, social context, ideology, and personal consequences of any action, event, object, process, organisation, experience, text, subject matter, policy, mass media, or discourse."

Critical pedagogy became popular across the world through the translations of the works of Freire during the 1970s. Earlier the approach of teaching proposed by Freire was labelled as Radical Pedagogy. The later debates on radical pedagogy convinced Freire that the term 'radical' makes the approach too challenging. This made him to substitute the term 'radical' with 'critical.' Initially critical pedagogy was used as a strategy to teach second and first language as part of the literacy movements among the working class in Brazil. Critical pedagogy was thus intended towards the empowerment of working class through literacy programmes. Critical pedagogy has grown considerably from its early targets and sprawl across the issues of class, race, gender and any other areas where oppression and exploitation is continued using hard and soft power.

Educational institutions and classrooms as a site of exploitation and rigid hegemonic structures make the application of critical pedagogy in education a vitally important task. Critical pedagogy is a democratic approach in teaching and learning to transform the oppressive structures in society (Darder, Baltodano and Torres 2003; Freire 1973, 1974; Shor 1987). The basic premise of critical pedagogy is that education system is a tool of the powerful to maintain the status quo and reproduce the existing exploitive social system (Apple 1990; Mayo 1999; McLaren 2003). The way in which the classrooms saw the seeds of reproducing the existing unequal society is domination through consent (Allman 1988; Forgacs 2000; Mayo 1999). Students are acquiesced to accept the domination excreted on them manifold dimensions including the authority of teacher, official knowledge and other

practices of the classrooms and the institutions. Unless the students identify the oppression imposed up on them they will not be progressing to praxis. Critical consciousness helps students to understand the oppressive forces that limit their freedom to choose a vocation of their own and humanize them. It is wary to expect the critical consciousness to happen accidentally! It doesn't mean that the classrooms of higher education institutions in India are void of attempts for conscientisation of students. Such attempts are tacit in the pedagogical practices of some teachers. Such tacit pedagogical practices have to be extracted to help the professional community of teachers working in higher education institutions to benefit from it. Such an extraction would definitely help to develop a framework far more generalisable across various academic subjects.

Research Questions

The research question posed was: How do selected teachers practise critical pedagogical tasks in their classroom? In answering this question through case study, I hoped to be able to generate a framework for how teachers can utilise critical pedagogical practices in their classroom.

Conceptual Framework

In developing a conceptual framework for classroom based critical pedagogy for the higher education institutions I used principles of Freire (1990), Ball (2000), Apple (1993) and Giroux & McLaren (1994). The thorough analysis of the principles of critical pedagogy tacit in the works of these scholars helped me to flush out four themes. Initially a list of twenty broad themes were prepared, which were later reduced to four major themes. The reduction in to four themes was done by categorising similar themes of the authors. This process truncated the twenty broad themes in to four themes. The four themes thus identified are: Providing Equitable Opportunities for all students to learn through integrating multiple sources of information and from their personal experiences; Presenting Multiple Perspectives of the content through their teaching; Encouraging students to expand Learning Beyond the classroom which have implications in their context; and Using critical methods in teaching. The above four themes were used as an initial framework to check its substantiality through line-by-line inductive coding (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Methodology in Brief

The present study focused on five teachers working in higher education institutions whose teaching was observed for a specified period of time. A vigorous procedure was followed to select sample for the study. Detailed explanation of the selection procedure is given below.

Step 1: As a first step a list of teachers were prepared through academic nomination similar to the community nomination proposed by Foster (1991). In this process I requested for nomination of teachers working in higher education institutions from academics whom I met during various academic programmes. I asked them to suggest the names of outstanding teachers working in higher education institutions. The teachers' criteria for outstanding teachers included high turnout in classroom, students consulting teacher

outside the classroom, interest expressed by students towards teachers, patient and pacific behaviours and scholarliness. A list of thirty two teachers was prepared through this process. The list of teachers consisted of a cross section of various disciplines, locales, gender, etc.

Step 2: Details of listed teachers were collected. The details include: institution in which they work, their subject, area of interest, research contributions, experience, phone numbers and email addresses of their colleagues and some of their students were also collected.

Step 3: After collecting the basic essential details, available publications of the teachers in this list was collected. Treating their research papers and books as the index of their critical approach, a further screening was done to make a shortlist. Since the list of teachers was heterogeneous, a group of experts in all those subjects also was identified to appraise the publications of the listed teachers. The experts were asked to explore the books for the critical approach of the teachers manifested through their publications. In addition to the reading of the expert, I tried to understand the available publications of all the thirty two teachers. Based on the experience of the experts twenty teachers were removed from the list. The list comprise of only twelve teachers after this process.

Step 4: This step involved contacting the students of all the twelve teachers in the shortlist. This is to understand the approach of the shortlisted teachers in providing democratic environment in the classroom. Informal but structured interview were used for collecting information about the teachers. Informal interviews are for avoiding any difficulty among the students to comment freely about their teachers. It was planned to interview at least ten students of each teacher. But this could not be accomplished due to difficulty in reaching out to students. The key question asked to students was about the teaching of the teacher. The questions asked to students were listed below:

- 1) The equity of the teacher in the classroom and outside classroom interactions with the students;
- 2) Presentation and promotion of diversified ideas and interpretations of the academic content in the classroom;
- 3) Encouragement given to students to be critical about the knowledge presented by the teacher and the content in the syllabus;
- 4) Specificity and suitability of the teaching strategies used by the teacher in the classroom, and;
- 5) Democratic behaviour of teacher inside and outside the classroom towards the students and others in the institute were asked.
- 6) These five criteria were considered as the index of 'high quality teaching' or 'good teaching' (Lightfoot 1983). Further the present study's goal is to develop an initial framework of classroom based critical pedagogy, these improvised criterions of Lightfoot (1983) helped the investigator to focus the work and to facilitate the development of the framework. The key reason for the like of the students towards that teacher also was asked.

Step 5: Based on these telephonic interviews with the students it was finally decided to drop seven teachers from the list. The selection thus done was cross checked by the opinions of the colleagues of the teachers through informal talks. These informal talks were done telephonically. All the five teachers thus retained in the list were very impressive to students, highly democratic in their behaviour and helped students to achieve high in their

academic achievements. These five teachers formed final sample for the study. Names of the teachers used in this paper are pseudo to hide their identity.

Observation of the selected teachers was done to identify the presence of the themes mentioned above. Ten hours observation was done for each teacher. Interview was done to collect details about their philosophy of teaching, the impediments they faced in the implementation of critical pedagogical practices in classroom and to clarify the doubts, if any, about the activities they have provided in the classroom. Subject to the technical support, the observations and interviews were recorded. Collaborative social research approach was used for data analysis in which data was analysed to create codes and categories of data through line-by-line inductive coding (Miles & Huberman, 1984).

Findings and Discussions

The findings of the study are classified according to the themes derived in the qualitative data analysis. The major cross case themes identified through analysis constitute the framework proposed for the study. The five teachers selected for the study, in spite of differences in their subjects, provided Equitable Opportunities, Presented Multiple Perspectives through Teaching, Expanded Learning beyond the Classroom Which Have Implications in Their Contexts, and used Critical Methods in Teaching. The cross case themes thus derived are presented in the subsequent section with evidences sited in the classrooms during data collection. The four themes identified are discussed below.

Equitable Opportunities

In the present study, based on the classroom observations, it is found that the selected teachers' pay serious and meticulous attention to equity in a diverse classroom. Based on the analysis the notion of equity as visible in the data collected can be defined as: promoting diversity, individual attention to students in and outside the classroom, promoting opportunity for everyone in the classroom.

Promoting diversity in classroom involve respecting the knowledge dispositions of the students and treating the cultural background of the students as a resource for the classroom. It is observed that the all the teachers, participated in this study, before starting their classes invariably verify the students' knowledge about the subject that they wanted to teach. Shankar, a teacher who was observed as part of study, wanted to check the previous knowledge among the students as a basic step for introducing his new topics in every classroom. He checks it among all the students without limiting it to one or two students.

As Shankar checks the previous knowledge and information of students directly, Madhavi does the same process with a bit of probing and in a challenging manner. Through the retrospective opportunity provided to the students, Madhavi wanted to build her teaching on the basement of previous knowledge. In that process she gave space for students' differential understanding as an unavoidable element. James and Prakash too have emphasised upon starting from what is known by the students to open their scaffolding process. Such attempts of testing previous knowledge and ensure the 'cultural way' of what a student knows about a particular topic is what is discussed as "Resource Pedagogies" by Paris (2012). Gutiérrez, Baquedano-Lopez & Tejeda (1999) reiterated the importance of exploring students culturally rooted knowledge as a resource for the teacher to build up

the knowledge base among the students. Gutiérrez (2008), in her recent work, commented that "curriculum and its pedagogy are grounded in the historical and current particulars of students' everyday lives, while at the same time oriented toward an imagined possible future." The approach of the students that respect and promote diversity in classroom is an excellent testimony of the equitable opportunities provided by the students in classrooms. But it doesn't mean that attention to only diversity satisfies equitable opportunities in a classroom. The diversities should be identified as strength and it should be promoted by identifying its specific nature in the individual. The ability of a teacher to address individual differences is crucial factors that determine successfulness of both teacher and learner in the classroom. Subhadra wanted to know the language and subject background of the students in a largely heterogeneous classroom. She asks students:

Is environment at all an issue in this classroom? Is there any further? Yes, there is. Okay, one more thing I am asking, you have come from different subjects right. Where have you come from? [Bangla] you? [Economics] you? [English] you? [Geography] you? [Political science] you? [Sanskrit].....

In continuation to this initial enquiry about the subject background of the students she continues in the middle of the class:

Every one of you have done your Master Degree. Already studied that we must not dirty our environment, we should keep it clean etc. So if you know all these, what is the need to introduce this particular paper in your B.Ed. course? Is it required?

Student: When we in future, will face our classroom situations, from that perspective, this has been included in our B.Ed. courses.

Teacher: But you already have the knowledge right! You have said it very well that how it will help.

Student: But whatever we learnt of Environment studies, with that the classroom environment studies isn't really matching.

Teacher: Okay, you are right. Anyone else? Who wants to add something?

Student: In this professional course, we are taught 'how to learn'. In that case, compared to what we previously learnt, this can be more effective where in future we go to school for teaching.

Teacher: Okay, anyone else? Yes, you want to say anything.....

Using strategies that probe the student's impression about the logic of learning a particular course, she makes the students to express their attitude towards learning the subjects. The differences in attitude are important factors. In this process she has identified some students with poor interest, and makes serious attempts to engage them with some special questions and assignments. James on the other hand uses a different approach to address the individual differences in the classroom. He noticed a difficulty of a student to understand the content taught, brings in some example that best fit to the background of the student.

For example being a resident of Kottayam you can buy residence in another country, subject to the law prevailing in that country. You can buy property in Nepal likewise a Nepal citizen can come and buy property in India. Also he can move around. Also in some cases they can apply for positions, gov.jobs etc. For example Mahatma Gandhi University is located at Kottayam. There are a number of Nepal citizens working as s security staffs. Most of them are recruited on a contract basis.

By citing an example and that too by linking to a case that is well known to a particular student is not a casual way of teaching, instead a very deliberate attempt from the teacher. James would have used an example which is familiar to James quoting from a text that he has come across. Instead James harbour on a very concrete example for the student that links to a place from where the student hail. Madhavi used a different technique. She used questions as a penetrating tool to test the student's level of understanding. She throws questions to students continuously to capture their level of understanding about the issue discussed in the classroom. The questions of Madhavi are tools to understand how deep a student has analysed a particular issue at detail. She uses the same strategy with other students whenever she feels that student's understandings are constricted and inclined to a particular aspect of the issue.

Exploring the backgrounds of the students including family, cultural and socio-economic factors (Breen & Jonsson, 2005) and tailoring teaching methods that fit to them is a very important strategy of effective teachers. The serious limitation of the issue of handling students' differences is that there are no readymade strategies for that. Instead, individual difference is an art which has to be designed in contexts that demands it.

It is not very easy to limit the individual differences to the limited number of issues like subject background, local example, attitudes and level of understanding. The individual differences are specificity of contexts and individuals involved in the process of teaching and learning. The skill of the teachers participated in the study has proved that they are competent to handle the differences in its varied forms and structures.

Another means of equitable opportunity observed is the willingness of the teachers to provide opportunity for everyone a chance to perform in a way they need. Providing opportunity for every student in the classroom is a hard task in the institutionalised education system. The main constraints for teachers in this regard are the pressure for syllabus coverage, time frame and the suitability of the educational activity to the examination system. In spite of all these constraints it was observed that these teachers consider providing opportunity for the students as an inevitable part of their teaching. Subhadra, after throwing a question to the students, looks at each and every students to check whether they want to say something about the question. She promoted the comments of the students by continuously prompting them and makes sure that no one is denied a chance to speak in the classroom.

A similar style is followed by Madhavi in her teaching approach in the classroom. She continuously prompt students by keenly observing them whether any student wanted to add anything to the discussion in the classroom.

What is seen in Madhavi's approach is that she is not only providing opportunity to those who wanted an opportunity to express opinion, instead a deliberate attempt is taken to suspend the various obstructing factors that hinder the students interest for utilising an

opportunity. Shankar also is so particular that every student has something to contribute in the classroom activities.

The commitment for the teachers to provide opportunity for all the students to engage is a very significant commonality among the teachers participated in the study. They provide opportunity for the students to be able to reach a wide range of resources (Tezcan 1997; Aktey 2006) in the classroom in the form of discussions, debates and other forms of engaging classes. Equality as access, participation and results (Brookover and Lezotte 1981) goes well with the teachings of those participated in the present study.

The findings of the study has shown that promoting diversity, individual attention to students in and outside the classroom and promoting opportunity for everyone in the classroom are the key to equitable opportunity in the classroom. Teachers participated in the study accepted the cultural capital of the students through affirmations (Gay, 2000). These teachers not only provided opportunity for the students at the same time promoted them by understanding individual tastes. Classrooms are very important place from where the students learn democratic behaviour through educational activities (Cruickshank, Jenkins & Metcalf, 2003 as cited in Köse, 2009). The equitable opportunity provided by the selected teachers in the classroom gave not only content in the syllabus but also depicts a picture of democratic atmosphere in the classroom, the relationship of education and democracy and the basic conditions needed for the existence of a democratic classrooms (Anderson, 1998; Angell, 1991; Apple & Beane, 2007; Edwards, 2010; Eikenberry, 2009; Glesson, 2011; Grandmont, 2002; Kesici, 2008; Millei, 2011; Pearl & Knight, 1999; Pryor, 2004; Riley, 2011). The common emphasises of these teachers underscore the importance of equitable opportunity as a road to democracy and social justice, the basic tenants of Critical Pedagogy.

Presenting Multiple Perspectives through Teaching

The content available in the syllabus is not a neutral assemblage of knowledge. Instead they are emanated from perspectives of the people who belong to manifold contexts. As Street (1995) argued, there is not one literacy, but multiple literacies, and this is true with presentation of content by the teachers. Every individual teacher will have their own perspectives about the content that they teach. The perspectives of teachers have great role in crafting the design of education (de Corte, 1990, 2003; Merrill, 2002; van Merriënboer & Paas, 2003; Vermunt, 2003). While dealing with the syllabus and curriculum, teachers will have to struggle for presenting content/text neutrally, as every content is political in its nature. The teachers involved in the present study overcome this puzzle by presenting multiple perspectives about the content and at the same time promoting diverse perspectives from the students. The teachers participated in the study did not stick on to any one meaning or definition of a concept, instead they presented multiple perspectives and motivated students to develop their own perspectives about the content. While teaching about a content in his syllabus Shankar give this example which exposed multiple contexts of a same issue to the students:

Teacher: for example, we say Namaste in India but in Japan they just bend their head. If you match the body shape and ask, are they like us? they are not, but in higher level they are! what is that? Respecting each other, but if you don't find that in America, in America you could sit in front of person like cross legs but in Kerala do you sit so? no because, we don't have that notion. I am not against it. I would say sit comfortably. If you sit in the classroom in a same position according to theory of evolution, it is wrong because we are grown from monkey and apes. How do they sit, do they sit like very steadily? They sit comfortably. If you go out and you don't sit like this at all, you sit comfortably. You can be relaxed, you sit different postures never like very steadily it is very natural that when we are comfortable with each other we sit in whatever shapes we want. So what I am saying is a difference only in culture.

The teacher is trying to compare the cultural way of greeting in India and in some other countries. The attempt is to present multiple ways of greeting and to convince the students about the importance and value of one's own. A similar approach is adopted by Subhadra while she leads a discussion on gender as reflected in writings of different writers in Bangla language. She critically presents the way gender is presented in the literature and point it out to students.

Through this the teacher is trying to raise the level of understanding of the students from the level fixed by the syllabus through multiple perspectives. It was observed that the students become very much enthused by such multiple perspectives presented to them in the classroom. Mr Prakash also brings in alternative perspectives about teaching to a group of students. He presents two perspectives of teaching to the students and prompting them to discuss about it in the classroom.

Teacher: So, teaching can be defined from two perspectives. One perspective is from the teacher's point of view. It involves knowledge transferring, transforming thing you are the main. Another way of defining teaching is from the learner's point of view. This mainly involves development of certain skills. Making them better human beings. So, outcome-based education in larger perspective what they try to define to define teaching is learners point of view. That means teaching is facilitating learning that comprise everything. Whatever things a teacher does in the class it will help facilitating learning that is called teaching. So teacher has to be careful about word and action that he/she does a class room, we have to be always vigil to check our self whether it is facilitating learning. When we say facilitating learning there must be an intended learning. Something must be learned in a topic in a class, in a unit in a syllabus. There is something to be learned and teacher must be aware of that what is to be learned.

By presenting more than one, these teachers emphasised the importance of going beyond the content presented in the syllabus. There is a very serious attempt from the part of these teachers to plan such multiple contents and integrate it in to their teaching. These teachers find it as a valuable method and they consistently used it in their teaching. The students in the classroom also enjoyed being exposed to multiple perspectives about the content taught to them. This goes well with the critical pedagogy and the basic target of developing cortical consciousness among the students. According to Jones' (2006) "multiple

perspectives allow teachers to create a bridge to powerful critical literacy learning in their classrooms." Getting exposed to multiple perspectives makes students critically conscious about multiple voices. It also enable them to see how things get changed while seeing an issue through a different stand point.

Expanding Learning beyond the Classroom which have Implications in Their Contexts

All the teachers participated in the study belongs to public institutions. The syllabus and requirements assigned to them within the time frame. The content available in the syllabus is the official knowledge (Apple, 1993) that is authenticated by the institution. The knowledge thus issued is the legitimate knowledge that all the five teachers are supposed to transmit through their teaching. The teachers participated in the study designed classes to meet the university mandated curricular aim. But the observation and the interaction with the teachers proved that they have kept the university mandated curriculum only as a minimum requirement. In addition to this minimum requirement, they have designed their own curricular objective mainly directed towards the applicability of knowledge in the local contexts of the students. Through this tacit self-made curricular design these teachers outgrow the syllabus and classroom in a traditional classroom.

Ms Madhavi brings in resource materials that are not given in the syllabus or mandated by the syllabus. Instead she brings in an article which she deems it to be important for the students to read and understand it. For teaching the interaction between politics and caste, she circulates an article among the students and requested them to go through it in advance. A similar strategy is followed by Ms Subhadra. She conveys students that if one can read newspaper every day the content that they have to learn in the class can be well covered.

Advocating the newspaper and materials other than the books suggested by the syllabus and also the guidebooks and other reading materials prevalent as per convention, the teacher take learning beyond the classroom and link it with a broader world outside the classroom. Mr Prakash does the same in a slightly different way. When he discuss about teaching and pedagogy with a group of students, he expands the notion of 'teaching' through a group discussion and define it in a contextually relevant manner.

Teacher: So teaching can be defined from two perspectives. One perspective is from the teacher's point of view. In this perspective you have said that knowledge transferring, transforming thing you are key to teaching. Another way of defining teaching is from the learner's point of view. It involve developing skills, making better human beings etc. So outcome based education in larger perspective what they try to define to define teaching is learners point of view. That means teaching is facilitating learning that comprise everything. Whatever things a teacher does in the class if it helps facilitating learning that is called teaching.

Such a definition of teaching has emerged from the classroom in a group discussion. The definition of teaching as available in the reference book and syllabus would be different from the idea emerged from the classroom. Through this process, students get an opportunity to explore the content and its relation with their lived realities and develop an understanding of their own.

All the instances discussed here have expanded the learning process beyond the syllabus and conventional practices that restrict univocal idea. Providing them materials from outside classroom and encouraging them to learn environmental science from the local vernaculars are stretching out learning from the narrow walls of classrooms. So is the strategy of helping students to define a content based on their own experiences. Such classes draw from the context of the students and utilise the experiences of the students as an effective element for promoting learning. Teachings that relate the content matter with real world situations are best examples of contextualised teaching and learning (Berns & Erickson 2001). Paving the contextual background in teaching and learning by expanding learning beyond classroom can motivate many students more effectively than conventional classroom pedagogies (Baker *et al* 2009; Perin & Hare 2010).

There have been serious research initiatives to develop standards and frameworks for the integration of context with teaching learning process and to identify its benefits (Grubb & Kraskouskas, 1992; Grubb, 1995; Grubb & Badway, 1999). The contextualisation and expansion of learning beyond classroom by these teachers were not done after knowing the growing importance of such method among the pedagogic researchers. What motivated them is their philosophy of teaching that motivates them to make the process of teaching more meaningful to students and for themselves.

Critical Methods in Teaching

The methods used by the teachers involved in the study are focussed on promoting critical thinking among them. They presented multiple perspectives, asked questions, promoted discussions on it, analysed meanings and promoted argument on various issues. These five teachers identified that conventional methods like lectures are insufficient for promoting critical thinking among the teachers (Zemelman, Daniels, & Hyde, 2005). It was noticed that the methods used by these teachers include questioning, motivation for critically approaching the knowledge, dialogue and its focus on social justice and relating knowledge to one's own context and many other healthy practices that are critical pedagogical in nature.

The questions were taken from the life experiences of the students so that they can enthusiastically involve in responding to it. Questions gradually grow in to the content to be taught and present opportunity for the students to think critically about certain issues.

All the classes observed, equipped their students to be active and critical towards the knowledge presented by the teacher. These classes go against the authoritarian classrooms (Shor, 1992) where students are passive and trained to be conformist and obedient members of the society. Also the classes through the discussions and active participation students ensured by the teacher combat the idea of 'individualism' as the rout to success and upward social mobility (Apple 1990; Bowles and Gintis 1976). These critical pedagogical classrooms are perfect examples that resist the reproduction of knowledge in an unequal society, instead it provide path for a counter hegemonic action through empowering students to think, critique and engage in group discussions. These classrooms address the need for a change in the realm of teaching and learning through new practices, values, morality and a culture that critique and negotiate the hegemonic (McLaren 2003; Shor 1992) systems in classroom teaching learning process.

Conclusion

The above analysis helps in developing a framework of classroom based critical pedagogy with four major themes. The four cross case themes are Equitable Opportunities, Presentation of Multiple Perspectives through Teaching, Expanding Learning beyond the Classroom Which Have Implications in Their Contexts, and Critical Methods in Teaching. These four themes are the borders of the framework which can vary according to the contexts of the classroom. A wide variety of component constitutes classroom-based practice of critical pedagogy. A comprehensive listing of these components is impossible as the context of the classrooms varies across time and space.

The framework proposed here is not a rigid one demanding strict adherence to all the four themes discussed above. They are just cornerstones to be used by the teachers to anchor their pedagogical strategies based on critical pedagogy. It does not mean that the practice of all the four themes is compulsorily mandated to label a class as critical pedagogical classroom. Depending upon the contextual demands, teachers can incorporate these four pillars or use them independently in their pedagogical strategies. Absence of one theme or presence of a strategy which is not mentioned in the theme will not suspend the practice and existence of the classroom based critical pedagogy as proposed by the framework in this study. Hence the four themes mentioned above are complementary to each other and additively makes a strong critical pedagogical practice in the teaching process. Also, the themes and labels given to them in the framework is arbitrary. Depending on the context the themes may get added with new elements making it adaptive to the new situations. This provision gives freedom for teachers to practice the classroom based critical pedagogy in a way that best fit to their contextual demands.

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