



A Study Of Awareness About Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Among Teachers In Higher Education Institutions

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Abstract: India's rich cultural diversity is also seen in educational institutions. Culturally Responsive Pedagogy (CRP) is important to develop an inclusive learning culture that considers students' cultural identities. The present research explores the awareness of CRP among teachers at higher education level in terms of their knowledge, cultural diversity attitudes, and teaching practices. A mixed-methods design was used for study. The results indicate that although most of teachers acknowledge the influence of cultural backgrounds on student learning, only few agree that cultural diversity should be explicitly incorporated into teaching. Additionally, 85% of teachers find it difficult to recognize culturally responsive teaching strategies, and almost all the teachers specify the necessity for professional development workshops on managing culturally diverse classrooms. Large class sizes, insufficient pre-service training, and time were cited as barriers to the implementation of CRP.

Index Terms - Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Higher Education, Teacher Awareness, Cultural Diversity.

1. Introduction

India is known for its diverse culture. This diversity blended together creates a unique set up in our society. The diversity is also observed in the educational set up also. Moreover, as world has become a borderless place, people from various countries and cultures also settled in various parts of the world and even in the Indian continent. Thus, the classrooms consist of students from different cultural backgrounds, including different ethnicities, nationalities, religions, and languages. This creates a diverse learning environment in the classroom. It's essential for the students to respect each other's cultures. Each student has his/her unique viewpoint based on the cultural background he/she belongs to. The teacher needs to consider this aspect while teaching to the students.

The culture is central to learning. It plays a role not only in communicating and receiving information, but also in shaping the thinking process of groups and individuals. One of the primary ideas behind culturally responsive pedagogy is to create learning environments that allows students to utilize cultural elements and other recognizable knowledge that they are familiar with to learn new content and information in order to enhance their schooling experience and academic success.

Students build knowledge based on their own prior knowledge, including their culture and language. Culturally responsive pedagogy has emerged as a crucial framework for nurturing an inclusive and equitable learning environment. Culturally responsive pedagogy is a teaching method which recognizes and values students' cultural backgrounds, languages, and cultural experiences. It creates a supportive learning environment that helps students achieve their goals. It involves recognizing students' cultural identities, incorporating diverse perspectives into the curriculum. It also focuses on adopting teaching methods that

respect and value cultural differences. It is interesting to find out the awareness about culturally responsive pedagogy among teachers at higher education level.

Culturally responsive pedagogy comprises three dimensions: institutional, personal, and instructional. The institutional dimension reflects the administration policies and values. The personal dimension refers to the cognitive and emotional processes teachers must engage in to become culturally responsive. The instructional dimension includes materials, strategies, and activities that form the basis of instruction. All three dimensions significantly interact in the teaching and learning process and are critical to understanding the effectiveness of culturally responsive pedagogy. Teachers must prepare students to participate meaningfully and responsibly not only in the classroom but also in society. The more use of students' experiences, familiar practices in instruction, opportunities to think differently, the greater the feeling of inclusion and the higher the probability of success in life.

2. Objectives:

- To study the awareness of Culturally Responsive Pedagogy among the teachers at higher education level
- To study attitude of teachers at higher education level towards Cultural Diversity in the classroom
- To study use of Instructional Practices, catering to diversity in the classroom by teachers at higher education level

3. Need of study:

Higher Education Institutions play a crucial role in shaping future citizens. Howard Gardner mentioned "The biggest mistake of past centuries in teaching has been to treat all children as if they were variants of the same individual and thus to feel justified in teaching them all the same subjects in the same way." The education system needs to keep this in mind while conducting teaching learning activities.

As classrooms consists of students from varied linguistic, ethnic, and socio-cultural backgrounds, it is essential for teachers to recognize and integrate culturally relevant teaching strategies. Many students from marginalized communities face challenges in higher education. Culturally responsive teaching will definitely bridge the gaps by making learning more accessible and relevant. In today's global scenario, it has become essential to equip students with adequate exposure to be citizens of the future.

Teachers have the unique power to impact the lives of their learners. The thoughtful, inclusive instruction has positive effects on students that last for life time. By employing culturally responsive teaching strategies teachers step towards enacting meaningful change in education. It is essential to study the awareness about culturally responsive pedagogy among the teachers in higher education.

4. Research Methodology:

For the present study mixed method was used the researcher. A rating scale was distributed among teachers in higher education institutions to assess their awareness about culturally responsive pedagogy. The researcher also interviewed the teachers teaching in the higher education institutions

5. Tool:

For this study the researcher has developed a rating scale to study the attitude of teachers towards culturally responsive pedagogy.

6. Sample:

The researcher used purposive sampling technique. The researcher selected 40 teachers in higher education institutions as sample for the study. The higher education institutions located in Mumbai and Pune were selected for the study.

7. Findings and Analysis:

Awareness about Culturally Responsive Pedagogy:

Most of the teachers were not aware of Culturally Responsive pedagogy. They have not come across this concept in their teaching career. The teachers also felt that in this pedagogy the teachers need to provide information about the various cultures in the Indian society. 98% teachers were of the opinion that this pedagogy is only related to History subject and cannot be applied to teach other subjects

Classroom environment:

Most of the teachers agreed that the classroom have culturally diverse students. The 73% teachers are also aware that the cultural background of the students have impact on the learning of the students. The teachers showed their concern in understanding the classroom environment culturally. But teachers are not aware how to consider this aspect while teaching to students.

Teaching strategies:

The eligibility criteria to be teacher at the higher education level is clearing NET or SET examination in the subject opted for master's level. These teachers do not undertake any pre- service training course. Thus, most of the teachers have not come across the concept of culturally responsive pedagogy. 35% of teachers believe that students' cultural backgrounds should be integrated into teaching and learning. The teaching strategies used in the classrooms are lecturing, case study, discussion etc. But the teachers are not able to identify culturally relevant teaching strategies. 85% teachers feel that it is difficult to search examples, case studies, or materials that reflect diverse cultural perspectives.

Professional Development:

Though in-service training programs are attended by the teachers, none of them have attended program related to culturally responsive pedagogy. 98% of the teachers feel that the workshops orienting about techniques of handling culturally diverse classrooms need to be organized.

Challenge in front of the teachers:

The classroom strength at higher education level is very high. Thus, all the teachers feel it's difficult to know each student personally. There are students who do not participate in the classroom discussion. The students also do not share about their family, culture in the classroom. Therefore, it becomes difficult for the teachers to understand details in cultural diversity in the classroom.

The time constrain to complete the syllabus makes it difficult for 75% teachers to think about cultural diversity in the classroom. 90% teachers feel that this pedagogy can be applied only in History subject.

8. Importance of study:

The study on "Awareness about Culturally Responsive Pedagogy Among Teachers in Higher Education Institutions" is significant in the context of modern education. In the borderless world, classrooms are becoming increasingly diverse. Thus, it is essential for teachers to adopt teaching methods that cater to students from different cultural backgrounds. The study highlights the need for inclusive teaching approach which recognizes and respects cultural differences. This study also identifies the gaps in teacher preparedness. It provides recommendations for professional development programs to enhance culturally responsive teaching practices.

9. Conclusion

Culturally responsive pedagogy plays a vital role in creating an inclusive learning environment. The challenges related to utilization of culturally responsive pedagogy need to be addressed. In the era of globalization and increasing cross-cultural interactions, globally universities are emphasizing on diversity, equity, and inclusion. This study also supports the development of teaching strategies aligning with the global trends in the field of education.

10. References

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