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THE ROLE OF FOLKLORE IN CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

**A thesis submitted in part fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

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ABSTRACT

Folklore is embedded in the cultural scape of a community and is evolving to be a crucial element in emerging forms of pedagogic strategy. It is considered to be a pedagogical tool which passes on information and wisdom of human experience from generation to generation and thus helps in transmitting social values and environmental knowledge through both verbal and material modes. From an anthropological point of view, cultural transmission is intricately linked up with the pedagogic process which is also seen in the classroom as classrooms are the major sites of cultural transmission.

The present study was postulated to explore the philosophical and theoretical issues involved with the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy. The study was conducted with an attempt to understand how folklore, mostly considered to be from the realm of non-institutional pedagogy can become a part in both non-institutionalised and institutionalised learning.

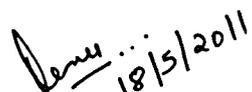
Six schools in the greater Tezpur area in Assam, which is a culturally diverse location, were chosen as the field to interface and explore the theoretical paradigm evolved during the course of the study and its efficacy and relevance in practice. Data from the field was collected by making use of questionnaire, observation, formal and informal interaction with the students and teachers. The observation included reactions, verbal responses, facial expression, gestures and cues between the teacher and taught and also amongst the peer group both within and outside the classroom.

The primary contribution of this study to the pedagogic process is that the use of culture serves very important tool for making effective and interesting learning. The research concluded by reviewing the trajectory that the research had taken and by relating the findings of the research with the initial objectives.

DECLARATION

I, Renu, do hereby solemnly declare that my thesis entitled **The Role of Folklore in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy** or any part thereof, was not submitted by me for any research degree to Tezpur University or to any other University or Institution.

I, therefore submit this thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in the Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University.


(RENU)

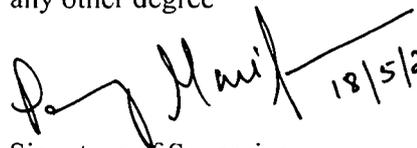


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This is to certify that the thesis entitled The Role of Folklore In Culturally Relevant Pedagogy submitted to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences Tezpur University in part fulfillment for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Cultural Studies is a record of research work carried out by Ms Renu under my supervision and guidance.

All help received by her from various sources have been duly acknowledged

No part of this thesis has been submitted elsewhere for award of any other degree

 18/5/2011

Signature of Supervisor:

Designation: Associate Professor

School: Humanities and Social Sciences

Department: Cultural Studies

PREFACE

When I look back, I realise that my journey towards this thesis and topic had started long ago, in my childhood. My first touch with life was the lullaby sung to put me to sleep. As my cognitive faculties developed I learnt to speak my first language and gradually I found myself believing in the values of honesty, integrity of Ram, Krishna and Guru Nanak. Similarly, I found myself believing in the value of truth as the ultimate aim worthy of realisation and then I got sent to a formal school.

The one most significant difference I noticed was the different cultural backgrounds of peers' inter-se and the teachers. The impact that had on their approach to teaching and relating not only to the group as a whole but also with each student at the individual level was discernible. I found myself wondering and questioning that why teaching of the same subject by same set of teachers from the same books have different impacts on each student in learning and responding beyond a point? However, I could never understand the why aspect.

After my professional training in Education from Panjab University, I moved from my native place Ludhiana to Delhi for pursuing Masters in Social Work. The University of Delhi gave me ample opportunities to interact on national and also international level. Cultural Plurality was seen within the Capital of India in general and in the Department of Social Work in particular, which helped me to understand and gauge diverse cultures. As I continued with my educational process and came across different set of learner groups I observed the same pattern at all levels of teaching and learning.

After marriage, being a member of the armed forces family, it further helped me to explore more into culturally diverse environments. Packing

and unpacking after every two years and widely traveling from U.P., Assam, West Bengal, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Jammu, Ladakh gave me innumerable occasions and chances to get to know the multicultural environment. Interactions with our friends and kids' friends and their parents also provided a view to different customs, food, festivals and other culture specific behaviour.

Along with taking care of my two daughters and also fulfilling the responsibilities as a member of a family in the armed forces, I made use of my interest while interacting and organising social activities and found a lot of diversity in recipes, folk songs, dances and also celebrated many rituals and festivals together. I also gained academically during this period and completed my Masters in Literature from Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar University, Agra

In January 2008, my husband got posted to Tezpur and we moved to Tezpur on a three year plus posting unlike the normal one and half to two year tenure. In an informal discussion with my husband's friend, Dr. Rajiv Doley I got introduced to Department of Cultural Studies, Tezpur University. This was an absolute God sent opportunity in terms of availability of a Department of Cultural Studies in one of the top universities of the country, a reputed faculty and an ever so encouraging Vice Chancellor. Finally, I got myself admitted as a Ph.D student in August 2008.

With my previous education and experience as a teacher and as a member of armed forces, my responses to the diversity of cultures and its impact on the teaching learning process, at the individual level as well as a group helped in the formulation of my initial hypothesis. This understanding was further cemented during my course work in the discipline of cultural studies. Through various out station field work trips into the interior and far flung areas of Assam and Arunachal

Pradesh, interactions and discussions with faculty members and through the formal course study, I was initiated into the methodological intricacies of my area of interest. The opportunity to explore the Role of Folklore in Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, topic for my thesis, came as an opportunity that has helped me explore the domain of folklore in my quest to find an answer to questions that had been formulated over the years.

My research experience is presented in this thesis which has been structured into five chapters:

Chapter I Introduction: The introductory chapter reviews available literature in the area and generates a theoretical paradigm against which the research work was carried forward. It states the aim and the scope of the work.

Chapter II Folklore and Pedagogy: The second chapter explores the relationship of folklore with pedagogy as it has evolved across time in diverse locales of the world against the background of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Chapter III Folklore and Pedagogy: The Indian Traditions: - The third chapter is a study of the role and status of folklore in the Indian pedagogic tradition and how it has evolved over the years. It focuses attention on Gandhi and Tagore's models of culturally relevant pedagogy.

Chapter IV Theory and Practice: An Interface: The fourth chapter is an interface with the theoretical paradigm evolved from the study with field experience and is an exploration of the possible contours that pedagogic strategies can take in a real life situation.

Chapter V Conclusion- The final chapter concludes the study by reviewing the trajectory that the research had taken and by relating the findings of the research with the initial objectives.

In conclusion, I would share that the results of my research have left me excited and there are many findings and data which could not be accommodated within the premises of this work, but, which I hope will point out to a continuous engagement with the domain of culture and pedagogy.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

A 'small step' taken in my quest to get answers to my queries would not have become a 'giant leap' in terms of completing my research work without the whole hearted support of my guide. I owe a lot to Dr. Parag Moni Sarma, my Supervisor and thank him from the core of my heart for removing so many cobwebs from my mind and equipping me with the essential insight required for the endeavour undertaken. I am indebted to him for the direction shown ever so subtly to keep my mind engaged. When I felt at my wits end, he would open a door for my mind to explore. I am thankful to Dr. Sarma for helping me traverse this journey from darkness to light. I fall short of words to express my gratitude for the enabling help without which I would have lost myself in the maze of mystery that I launched to unravel.

I am truly indebted to the Vice Chancellor of Tezpur University, Professor Mihir Kanti Choudhuri, who gave me an opportunity to pursue my dreams. His guidance, unflinching support and constant checking of progress through regular interactions acted as a source of motivation.

I pay sincere thanks to Professor Pradip Jyoti Mahanta, Head, Department of Cultural Studies for providing a conducive environment in the department for the research work. I also thank Professor Sunil Kumar Dutta, Dean, all members of DRC (Departmental Research Committee) and faculty members of department of Cultural Studies for providing critical view points during my progress seminars. Their suggestions were very helpful for the study to move in a right direction. I pay a special gratitude to Late Mr Parmesh Dutta, Assistant Professor, Department of Cultural Studies, who had taught me the brass-tacks of field work which helped me in understanding the field work

methodology. An intelligent, talented, humble and humane individual, he not only motivated me through his kind words of praise but also blessed and congratulated me in advance for my successful research the day I had achieved highest grades in my course work.

I extend my sincere thanks to all the Principals, students and the teachers of the schools selected for their support to help me complete my study.

I remain indebted to the library facilities and e- resources provided by Tezpur University and all other libraries I visited, which was a great help and support and I hope I have done enough to justify the same.

I am also thankful to Professor K.C. Baral, Director, EFLU Shillong campus and Dr. Kishore Bhattacharya, Head, Department of Folklore Research, Gauhati University for guiding and providing me insight in my initial phase of research.

I also thank the entire faculty and staff of the department of Cultural Studies and my fellow research scholars for their friendship during our journey together. I have enjoyed my experience all the more because of these individuals.

My heart goes out to my mother-in-law, not because it is fashionable so to say, but for her soothing love and support that egged me on to continue my quest. She, inspite of her poor health and personal tragedies moved to Tezpur for one year to take care of familial responsibilities to ensure the pace of my work was not hampered.

I remain thankful to my mother and father who gave me that environment at the very threshold where my mind could learn to think freely.

I cannot thank my husband enough who has unconditionally made my educational process a reality after my marriage. I cannot express in words the debt of gratitude that I owe to him for his loving support and encouragement throughout this entire process.

I will fail if I do not express my thanks to all my family members, who constantly encouraged me through their regular phone calls and made me feel closer to their hearts. I owe special compliments to my cute daughters who constantly encouraged me and appreciated my endeavour in my tryst with education providing me the necessary excitement to fuel my journey. I would also like to express my gratitude to my sister and sister-in-law, who as family members and as members of academic fraternity have given me their advice, care and emotional support in the most difficult moments. Thanks to all of them I have the satisfaction of having 'My Family', a feeling, without which it would have been well nigh impossible to have the state of mind required to roll over the thoughts necessary to deal with a topic like the present one.

Last but not the least I thank all my friends, not only for their motivation and encouragement but also for believing in me.

Finally, I dedicate this work to the memories of my loving Father-in-law and Brother-in-law, who left this world during the course of my research, and who were the cornerstones of familial support. They would have been very pleased as they had started believing and referring to me as 'Dr. Renu', the day I had admitted myself for Ph.D.

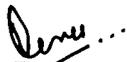

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As the study of culture, a phenomenon that is socially rather than genetically constructed and transmitted, anthropology assumes flexible individuals capable of teaching and learning. Learning and teaching are fundamental, implicitly or explicitly, to human adaptation, socialization, culture change, and, at the broadest level, the production and reproduction of culture and society (Pelissier 1991:75).

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ETYMOLOGY TO CULTURE AND PEDAGOGY

Culture is inclusive of all those things about man which are more than just biological, organic and purely psychological. Culture exists through man and thus culture assumes society and it is thus “at one and the same time the totality of products of social men and a tremendous force affecting all human beings, socially and individually (Kroeber 1948: 09). For Kroeber, Anthropology is the study concerned most directly with culture and therefore with man and culture. It does tend to see ‘society’, perhaps too narrowly as being little more than an aspect of culture, much as reciprocally many sociologists take for granted that when they understand society they also understand and interpret culture (ibid: 848-49). Edward B. Tylor’s 1871 definition of culture takes a more comprehensive approach when he says that:

Culture or civilization...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Monaghan and Just 2000: 36).

Taylor's focus in his definition on knowledge and belief as acquired- that is, learned- by members of a social group, as well as his sense that these constitute an integral system, continues to inform what culture is. In a similar vein, Lowie calls it "the whole of social tradition", where the transmission of traditional knowledge and customs is seen to be central to the evolution of culture:

In the scientific sense 'culture' does not mean unusual refinement or education, but the whole of social tradition...Passing from one social group to another, we at once discover differences that cannot be due to anything but social convention (Lowie 1934: 03).

In 1930, Franz Boas had put forward his idea of culture as that which:

...embraces all the manifestations of social behaviour of a community, the reactions of the individual as affected by the habits of the group in which he lives, and the product of human activities as determined by these habits (Monaghan and Just 2000: 37)

All these statements use the term "social" or "society" but in an attributive or qualifying sense. Thus, according to Monaghan and Just:

...where Tylor saw 'culture' as an accumulation of human accomplishment, Boas described a 'Kulturbrille', a set of "cultural glasses" that each of us wears, lenses that provide us with a means for perceiving the world around us, for interpreting the meaning of our social lives, and framing action in them" (ibid: 38).

From an anthropological point of view, cultural transmission is intricately linked up with the pedagogic process, and the common meeting ground of anthropology and education is the concern with the transmission of the "social heritage from one generation to another and with the process by which transmission is achieved" (Eggan 1957: 247). It is perhaps inevitable that the understanding of culture is often

attempted in terms of pedagogy and Culture itself is often defined in essentially educational terms as “the shared products of human learning”. Culture is a conceptual abstraction that helps us to analyse individual human behaviour that is shared among groups (Singleton 1971: 03).

Culture, from the earliest academic postulations, is thus linked up with this anthropological perspective. Anthropology started with the objective of studying the human as a whole and a biological organism and later progressed to interpret the human as a creator and carrier of culture (Eggan 1957:248). Discipline like anthropology has always perceived culture as a repository of pedagogic values that are transmitted from generation to generation. Anthropologist like Spindler feels that education is a cultural process. According to him all learning is culturally influenced and affected and it becomes very essential to find out what extent the teacher’s cultural background is similar or antagonistic to backgrounds represented by students and what means of communication are opened or closed (Brameld and Sullivan 1961:72).

TOWARDS A CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

Thus, culture emerges to be of paramount importance in the devising of pedagogic strategies for effective teaching learning process. Kathy Hall and Patricia Murphy, in the introduction to a book they had edited, make some very crucial observations on pedagogy from a socio-cultural view point:

From a socio-cultural perspective, pedagogy is crucially concerned with what is salient to people as they engage in activity and develop competence in the practice in question. It takes account of two phenomena and their dynamic relationship: a) the social order as reflected in, for example, policy and its associated cultural beliefs and assumptions; and b) the experienced world, as reflected in both the enactment

and the experience of the policy, including the beliefs, underlying the approaches used in its enactment and the beliefs mediating how it is experienced...culture is contested term in research but in a socio-cultural perspective, culture is generally thought of as emerging as people interact and engage in activity together. It is not simply a product of practice; rather it is ways of being in practice. The routines, reifications, values and concerns that people make meaning of in an education or work setting are part of culture, and a sociocultural perspective on pedagogy would direct us to attend to those routines and practices for they give insights into how to support learning and transform identities (Hall and Murphy 2008: ix-x).

This is a reopening in contemporary times of an age old debate as to the true significance of the term pedagogy. In 1986, David Lusted, in a crucial observation for the present study, had pointed out to the inadequacy of the understanding of the term pedagogy, which he finds to be 'under defined' where teachers take pedagogy as merely teaching styles, the procedure of maintaining and securing classroom control for learning, basically "a cosmetic bandage on the hard body of classroom contact" (Lusted 1986: 02). For him, pedagogy is a 'process', continuously evolving, by entering into newer configurations, where cultures play important roles in determining the variables of the transactive domain of a pedagogic situation. Both the teachers and students come from varying cultural hinterland and the meeting place, the formal classroom or the informal corridors, are veritable churning pots of emerging cultural forms, where process cannot be a prescriptive or definitive mode, but liminal and adhoc, depending on exigencies of situations:

...as a concept it draws attention to the *process* through which knowledge is produced. Pedagogy addresses the 'how' questions involved not only in the transmission or reproduction

of knowledge but also in its production .How one teaches is therefore of central interest, but, through the prism of pedagogy, it becomes inseparable from what is being taught and, crucially, how one learns. In this perspective, to bring the issue of pedagogy in from the cold and onto the central stage of cultural production is to open up for questioning areas of enquiry generally repressed by conventional assumptions . as prevalent in critical as in dominant practices, about theory production and teaching and about the nature of knowledge and learning (ibid: 02-03).

Knowledge and learning are related and deeply embedded in the cultural practices of a community or society. Education too is concerned with the production and transmission of culture and for more than a decade, anthropologists have examined ways of teaching that can relate better and match with cultural hinterland of the home and community of the learners which Au and Jordan had termed as “culturally appropriate” strategies (Ladson-Billings 1995: 466). Culturally relevant pedagogy has been described by researchers like Gay, Howard, and Ladson-Billing, as an effective means of meeting the academic and social needs of culturally diverse students (Howard 2003: 196). According to Gloria Ladson culturally relevant pedagogy is pedagogy that not only addresses student achievement but also help them to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives (Ladson-Billings 1995:469). Culturally relevant teachers utilise the culture of their students for effective learning. A teacher can utilise students’ interest of music, a familiar and comfortable zone for them, in teaching the figurative, literal and technical aspects of poetry like rhyme scheme and alliteration. While the students are comfortable with their music, the teacher can use it as a subtle bridge to narrow the gap between the wider

cultural text in which the learners are embedded and the pedagogic text, the prescriptive tool in the hand of the teacher:

Culturally relevant teaching is designed not merely to *fit* the school culture to the students' culture but also to use student culture as the basis for helping students understand themselves and others, structure social interactions, and conceptualize knowledge (ibid 1992: 314).

ROLE OF FOLKLORE IN CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

Folklore is embedded in the cultural scape of a community and is evolving to be a crucial element in emerging forms of pedagogic strategy. In the transition of societies from the oral to the written, a vast repertoire of culturally relevant knowledge has been relegated to the margins by the scripted forms, which heavily incorporated repertoire of knowledge that belonged to those who had brought the script or structure of formal academia. In the primitive-civilised binary ushered in by formal structures of institutionalised pedagogy, folklore inevitably got clubbed with the primitive, and the immediacy of familiar cultural forms became relegated to the 'informal', 'familial', 'rustic and unsophisticated'. As Cati Coe points out:

One reason for this lack of attention is that folklore and schools are seen as polar opposites on the scale of traditional to modern: while folklore stands for the unofficial, the informal, and the past, schools call to mind the bureaucratic processes of the state and the progress of the nation (Coe 2000: 20).

In the quest to uphold the merit of the familiar, familial and the informal, a refocusing on folklore can perhaps be an appropriate pedagogic strategy; however this should not be seen as a challenge to formal structures of institutionalised learning, but rather "negotiating the

juncture between non-institutional cultural knowledge, or folklore, and institutionalised power and knowledge”, which presents:

an opportunity for folklorists to build on theoretical approaches developed in multicultural education, as well as to contribute practical and theoretical approaches relevant to central concerns of multicultural educators, especially restructuring institutional practices and fostering students’ development as active participants in society (Hamer 2000: 47).

Cati Coe, in her essay “The Education of the Folk: Peasant Schools and Folklore Scholarship”, gives us an important outline between the interface between folklore and formal pedagogy in diverse locations of Scandinavian countries like Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The Folk High School Movement was founded in Scandinavia by the collective efforts of the peasants and the intellectuals. Peasants wanted to get educated and intellectuals too believed that they should get educated as some wanted them to be educated to be political leaders, some wanted them to improve their agricultural skills and few were interested in “awakening young people to the spirit of the people” (Coe 2000: 27). These folk high schools were initially opened for everyone and all keeping in mind to unite all social classes, however the schools ultimately had only peasants’ sons as students in these schools. The “elite” in Scandinavia usually were teaching their children at home and in ‘Latin Schools’. Thus the division between the two, Peasants and Elites, were seen clearly. Folk high schools emphasised on the use of folklore, history, and mythology and the stress was on orality and narratives, community eating and living. Mother tongue was used as the medium of instruction and teaching in the schools. N.F.S.Grundtvig is considered as the founder of the folk high school movement. He emphasised on the oral word and spoken words as he believed that

“teaching would be oral: stimulating lectures would animate and awaken the students to the Spirit of the people” (ibid: 29). In Denmark, some schools were opened by peasants and some were opened by intellectuals influenced by Grundtvig.

William Bascom in a crucial observation had identified Folklore to be a common factor across cultures. Folklore is involved in a reciprocal relationship with religious, social, political and economic institutions of a society and is important in transmission of culture specific values from one generation to another. Folklore is that body of oral tradition which has been handed over from one generation to another. As a part of a living traditions and customs, Folklore can be analysed in terms of form and functions and in terms of interrelations with other aspects of culture (Bascom 1953:284-286).

Even though anthropologists did recognise the importance of folklore as an educational tool for the transmission of cultural traditions, values and histories from one generation to another, yet, attention was given more on analysis than on its educational role in society by using folklore as source of historical data to determine basic values and world views and to explain cultural traits or customs (Bonney 1985:265). Anthropologists include in culture all the customs, traditions, and institutions of people, together with their products and techniques of production. Thus, folk genres like folktale or proverb is clearly a part of relevant culture. Folklore is a pedagogical tool which passes on information and wisdom of human experience from generation to generation and folklore has been transmitting social values and environmental knowledge through both verbal and material modes.

Another important area of exploration is the relationship between Folklore and pedagogy is the aspect of methods. The transmission of folk forms follows certain methods and procedures that are effective,

and these can be adopted in contemporary situations as well. Barbara Morgan-Fleming makes an apparently innocuous declaration that “Classrooms are oral places” (Morgan-Fleming 1999: 273). Yet, this is crucial in adopting folklore methods profitably in a contemporary situation:

Children talk as they play with one another, ask questions of their teacher, take part in oral classroom performances such as the book report or show and tell, or in playground-centered genre such as jump rope rhymes, taunting, joking, and confiding life’s truths learned so far. One important function of schooling is the connection of the child’s oral world to the literate world of past knowledge and narrative. In making such a connection, thought and written text are certainly important, but a classroom in which print and thought existed without the mediation of the spoken word would appear strange to most educators (ibid: 273).

Morgan-Flemings make a case for performance centered folklore in the classroom, which will redeem the classroom from the ‘literary paradigm’ of studying folk and oral forms in transcribed text, which negate the multi media approach of performative forms in favour of the sole media of the scripted text. In an equally important observation, Sylvia Grider declares that ‘Folklorists are compulsive teachers’:

The act of teaching is the connection between the formulaic classroom exercise and the age-old processes of tradition. In both instances, the precious materials that provide essential cultural continuity are transmitted from the masters to the neophytes, from one generation to the next, in what we hope will be an unbroken chain but which, in reality, is only a frayed and tangled thread (Grider 1995: 179).

Grider feels that the teaching learning complements each other. In the teaching learning process the teacher is “half of the equation” and the

other important and “essential half is the learner” and thus the “thread of tradition breaks entirely when the teacher, that is, the bearer of tradition, no longer has anyone to teach or an eager learner has no one to learn from” (ibid). According to Lynne Hamer, analysis of published materials from the Folk Arts in Education/Folk arts in School (FAIE) movement, reveals some reiterative themes “valuing nonprofessional artistry, instilling local pride, challenging the dominance of elite and popular culture, acknowledging, “indigenous teachers,” and promoting collaborative action (Hamer 2000: 44).

THEORETICAL PARADIGM FOR THE WORK

Cultural Studies as a discipline is interrogating methods and theories of pedagogy as is being applied in institutions worldwide. This engagement perhaps stem from what Foucault had termed as the production of docile citizens through the hegemony of institutional conditioning where culture assumed critical importance. For Foucault, power and knowledge are not embedded in social structure. Power is a process, a matter of exchange. Knowledge is always a form of power. He viewed that knowledge can be gained from power by producing it:

... power produces knowledge; that power and knowledge directly imply one another; that there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations. These ‘power-knowledge relations’ are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications of power- knowledge and their historical transformations (Foucault 1991: 27-28).

Foucault has been a prominent interrogator of disciplinary character of modern institutions. Institutions like schools, like prisons, produce what Foucault called “docile bodies”:

Many disciplinary methods had long been in existence- in monasteries, armies, workshops. But in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the disciplines became general formulas of domination. They were different from slavery because they were not based on a relation of appropriation of bodies...although they involved obedience to others ... A ‘political anatomy’, which was also a ‘mechanics of power’, was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile bodies’ (ibid: 137-138).

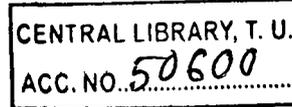
From the early 1970s, culture was being analysed through the concept ‘hegemony’, a word associated with Gramsci. Antonio Gramsci feels that all cultural practices ranging from art, literature, and education influence and exert ‘hegemonic’ influence on a given society. It involves, as generally assumed, not coercion, but consent on the part of the dominated. Ruling groups maintain their power through a process of negotiation with subordinate groups. The subordinates are more willing to go along with their oppression when they have been part of the ‘negotiation’ of control (Lewis 2003: 31). As has been remarked:

Hegemony’ is a *temporary* settlement and series of alliance between social groups that is won and not given. Further it needs to be constantly re-won and renegotiated. Thus culture becomes a terrain of conflict and struggle over meanings. Consequently hegemony is not a static entity. It is marked by a series of changing discourses and practices intrinsically bound up with social power (Barker 2006: 82).

Pedagogy is intricately linked up with this process of negotiation and realignment of power equations. In erstwhile colonial locations like India and elsewhere, this negotiation continues well into the post-colonial times, where new agencies of power inherit and infiltrate colonial paradigms, and a new round of political and cultural marginalisation and accommodation is set in motion. As Dennis L. Carlson points out, the apparently liberal take on contemporary 'multicultural education' suffers from a number of "discursive blockages" by ignoring this fact:

It has treated identity in a reified manner rather than as socially and historically constructed; it has treated prejudicial beliefs as merely individual psychological phenomena rather than as implicated in power relations that privilege some and disempower others; and it has integrated multicultural education within dominant pedagogical practices in the school rather than link it with a critical pedagogy based on dialogue and constructivist conceptions of knowledge and identity. In these ways, multicultural education has participated in educational practices that continue to define and locate various "others" at the margins of power (Carlson 1995: 408)

Due cognizance to plurality and the redemption of a multicultural agenda from the agenda of containment of dissent can be attempted by perhaps accommodating folklore (content) and the folkloric (method) into a decentred pedagogic practice. According to Hamer, the study of folklore can be made into a "potentially powerful tool for promoting institutional change" which is justified by the citation of Peggy Bulger's assertion that the folk process can be a direct "counter to the educational theory and practice..." of the contemporary times (Hamer 2000: 46). The potentially damaging confrontation between "the individualistic anti-authoritarianism of folklore" and the formal structures of schooling

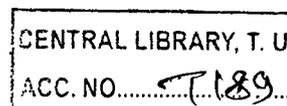


can be resolved and contained by directing attention to an “understanding and venerating non institutional cultural diversity rather than on challenging the authority of the institution...” (ibid: 47).

These ideas can be seen as a throw back to some of the earliest postulations in Cultural Studies. According to Richard Hoggart, the celebration of old high culture could fit alongside an evocation of the culture of his youth because both stood apart from contemporary commercial popular culture which was threatening both. His *Uses of Literacy* (1958) advocated a ‘bottom-up’ conception of culture: culture that is segmentary, specific and deriving from the symbolic and everyday practices of lower-level community (Lewis 2003: 128). Raymond William’s most important lesson for educators is the deep and continuous emphasis he placed upon culture as both a constitutive element of society, and as a potential for social transformation. He refused to divorce culture from other concerns. For him culture cannot be understood in isolation from the social ground from which it springs, or from the reciprocal effects it has upon the social environment.

In an attempt to understand the world, young learners are susceptible to categories that is imposed upon them and which enables them to come to terms with their condition and situation in life. So success or the lack of it can be very easily ascribed to the socio-cultural mooring and superiority/inferiority of one’s way of life. Althusser had pointed out that individuals can be sucked into ideology very easily because it helps them make sense of the world, to enter the ‘symbolic order’ and ascribe power to themselves. Individuals identify themselves because they see themselves pictured as strong and independent. So ideology provides false or imaginary resolution (During 1994: 06).

Folklore as a discursive ideological formation is more rooted and immediate that affords learner with a familiar ground to reach out to the



unfamiliar. It is definitely not a nostalgic regression into the past or romantic cultural revivalism, two of the most common charges that can be anticipated. It is trying to accommodate newer narratives into existing familiar narratives, for learners not only learn by tracing out affinities but also by comprehending variations, diversions and differences, cornerstones of a democratic plural pedagogy, where folklore perhaps can play a valuable role.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Folklore is increasingly coming under the ambit of critical pedagogy and Judith E. Haut in her article “Folklore in the Classroom: 19th –Century Roots, 20th –Century Perspectives” describes folklore as being implicit in issues relating to public relations in a pedagogic ambience (Haut 1991: 65-73). The folklorist and non-folklorist divide often creates confusion in classrooms, and the author explores the relationship between folklore, public relations and pedagogy. The author reflects on the public opinion on the 19th century roots of folklore as a discipline. One aspect of Folklore as a native language category is seen as that ‘folklore is an inheritance of others but not of ourselves’. Haut has illustrated the article with the students’ views on ‘folklore’ and then by inferring those concepts and using the students’ concepts in the classroom in pedagogic practices and made the experience of learning a participative event yielding positive results. In the words of Haut “*Folklore*, as a discipline, may have a public relations problem, but it is one that can be resolved in the classroom” (ibid: 70).

Sylvia Grider in “Passed Down from Generation to Generation: Folklore and Teaching” considers teaching as intrinsic to the transmission of folklore genres. In the words of Grider:

We as teachers of folklore are in the enviable position of presiding over the subject matter that our students already know. That is the essence of what folklore is, the shared

culture that our students already have. We do not have to start each semester or quarter at ground zero, as do our colleagues in the hard sciences or abstract disciplines. Our role as teachers essentially is to organize and make sense of what our students already know, putting them in a position to integrate experiences from their own lives and pasts into the larger concept of our shared humanity (Grider 1995: 184).

Betty Bosma in “Fairy Tales, Fables, Legends, and Myths: Using Folk Literature in Your Classroom” highlights the importance of folk literature for children in a classroom situation by relating it to expressive domain of language usage as well as the universal appeals that at times make meaning easy across cultural divides (Bosma 1992: 01-14). Adrienne Lanier Seward in “Folklore and Liberal Learning” drew merit from the folkloric method because of its stress on “local knowledge or insiderness...exploring alternative perspectives, theories, and practices most suitable for de-centering traditional boundaries and sites of authority” (Seward 1996: 30-34).

In Suchismita Sen’s article on “Tagore’s Lokashahitya: The Oral Tradition in Bengali Children’s Rhymes”, the important point raised was that the children’s rhymes are the product of mental state. The article includes a translation of “*Chhelebhulano Chharha*”, an essay on Bengali children’s rhymes by Tagore, where he claims that the composition process of rhymes is connected with word association (Sen 1996: 01-47). “Folktales and Education: Role of Bhutanese Folktales in Value Transmission” by Dorji Penjore shows the role of Bhutanese oral tradition in educating children and highlights and discusses the functions of these folktales which are embedded with multilayered meanings of great moral and social importance (Penjore 2005: 47-73). Tyrone C. Howard in article “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Ingredients for Critical Teacher Reflection” offers critical reflection as a prelude to

create culturally relevant strategies and outlines theoretical and practical considerations for critical reflection and culturally relevant teaching for teacher education (Howard 2003: 195-202).

Kathryn Hu-pei Au, in article "Participation Structures in a Reading Lesson with Hawaiian Children: Analysis of a Culturally Appropriate Instructional Event" in the study of Hawaiian children for reading lesson in the classroom showed that the reading achievement was increased by using talk story, a major speech event in Hawaiian culture. This reading lesson is an example of a culturally appropriate context for learning, which is comfortable both for the teacher and students and also helped in increasing academic achievement (Au 1980: 91-115).

Merridy Malin in "What Is a Good Teacher? Anglo and Aboriginal Australian Views", compared and documented an Aboriginal teacher's panel, an Aboriginal parent's panel and an Anglo teacher's panel on perceptions of good teaching, where panels viewed videotape of a Yup'ik Eskimo teacher, an Anglo Australian teacher and an Aboriginal Australian teacher. Many issues emerged like:

Should all teachers, regardless of ethnicity, be expected to teach according to an established western/industrial culture model of communicating, relating, and valuing? Is it appropriate for a teacher to speak to her or his class in a non-standard dialect of English...Is the "Aboriginal way" of teaching that was highlighted in this study as effective in conveying curriculum as the "western way"? How can the isolation that some teachers from ethnic minority groups feel be minimized? This study points to a possible clash in perceptions of what constitutes good and appropriate teaching between Aboriginal parents and teachers and Anglo Australian educators (Malin 1994: 112-113).

In the study it was highlighted that many Aboriginal parents and teachers feel that Aboriginal teachers can communicate better with Aboriginal students as they understand the needs of the students and thus operate as positive role models.

Jerry Lipka too in “ Toward a Culturally Based Pedagogy: A Case of One Yup’ik Eskimo Teacher” in a case study of one Yup’ik Eskimo teacher highlighted the importance of adapting social interactions, knowledge and values towards the minority culture as one possible way for improving schooling and thus highlighted the importance of culturally based pedagogy (Lipka 1991: 203-223). In a later article, “Language, Power and Pedagogy: Whose School Is It?” Lipka describes a collaborative project which was supposedly about the language of instruction, English and/or Yup’ik but the project could not take off because of the issues of power and ideology and “this conflict reflected a deeper ongoing internal struggle between community members of Manokotak, and, in fact, the larger indigenous community about resolving dilemmas of being modern and tribal” (ibid 1994: 71).

The interface between folklore and pedagogy has antecedents in educational anthropology. Greenman in “Anthropology Applied to Education” in the book *Applied Anthropology Domains of Application* edited by Satish Kedia and John Van Willigen wrote “Educational anthropologists seek to understand education within its cultural contexts” (Greenman 2005: 263). Historically, Educational anthropology has been viewed as an applied field. The historical roots of anthropology and education date from the late nineteenth century when anthropology emerged as a science. The important reason for the long history of anthropological interest in education is the process of professionalisation which required the establishment and promotion of the discipline as a legitimate and needed new area of scientific teaching

within institutions of higher education. By late 1800, a few anthropologists were concerned with the practice of education outside the academy. It was at that time the potential contributions of anthropology to pedagogy, the school curriculum and an understanding of the culture of childhood were recognised for the first time (Eddy 1985: 83-84). Maria Montessori, a professor of anthropology at the University of Rome also believed in relating and connecting anthropology and education by developing the concept of *pedagogical anthropology* focusing on pedagogy and cultural influence. For Montessori, pedagogy involves the science of teaching and thus by drawing from the contextual learning of children in their cultural milieu, she developed the Montessori Method. In this she proposed teaching through modeling and using planned interactive environments to foster learning by exploration and imitation. (Greenman 2005: 266).

AIM OF THE STUDY

The present research has been postulated primarily to explore and accomplish the philosophical and theoretical issues involved with the notion of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. The study has tried to understand the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy as it is practiced in the West and how such strategies entered India during the colonial period and its subsequent post-colonial changes and mutations in India and other locations of the world. It also explores the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy as applicable in Indian social, cultural and pedagogic environment and the role of Indian thinkers like Gandhi and Tagore, in the fostering of such an idea. The study also tries to contextualise the role and applicability of folklore in the overall pedagogic environment by directing attention to specific case studies in a selected field, which will be indicative of the dynamics of the understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy in the culturally plural Indian context. Finally, the

study will conclude with an attempt to understand how folklore, mostly considered to be from the realm of non-institutional pedagogy can become a part in both non-institutionalised and institutionalised learning environment.

METHODOLOGY

Locating Secondary Sources

The methodology has been broadly divided into two parts. The first part deals with the collection and selection of materials relevant to the study. Various libraries were visited for the collection of secondary sources. The study was carried out by visiting the Libraries at Tezpur University, NEHU Shillong, JNU Delhi, CIE Delhi, NCERT Delhi and Gargi College Delhi. Invaluable secondary material was also accessed through the Tezpur University E-resources portal.

Locating Primary Sources

Rationale and selection of the field

Tezpur is an important town of Assam and is located on the banks of river Brahmaputra. The centrally situated Sonitpur District of Assam, comprise of some five thousands kilometer of variegated landscapes along the mighty Brahmaputra up to the picturesque foothills of Arunachal Pradesh, it is the ancient seat of culture, mythology and Romance and is located one hundred and eighty kilometers North East of Guwahati. It has one of the country's largest and oldest military garrison and Air force station. The defence establishments have personnel posted from almost all parts of the Nation and mostly are staying with their families.

Greater Tezpur is essentially a culturally plural place with the population consisting of the followers of the major religions like Hinduism, Islam and Christianity drawn from different linguistic groups like Assamese,

Bengali, Bodo,¹ Marwaris², Adivasis³, Nepali⁴, Mising⁵ and Hindi. However, another important consideration in the selection of the field was the presence of a considerable number of teachers and students drawn from other parts of the country that would provide a vibrant ambience of cultural negotiation and accommodation. Such a cultural ambience was found in the Kendriya Vidyalayas (Central Schools) and Army Schools, where a large number of teachers come from North and South India and students from varied cultural backgrounds, both from the local populace as well as transferable defence services and central government employees study together. Most of the wards of the defence services personnel are studying in Army and Kendriya Vidyalayas. Keeping these criteria in consideration, the following schools were selected for the study:

Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 1, Tezpur, Sonitpur district

Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 2, Tezpur, Sonitpur district

Kendriya Vidyalaya, Lokra, Sonitpur district

Kendriya Vidyalaya, Misa, Nagaon district

Army Public School Tezpur, Sonitpur district

Assam Rifles School, Lokra

These being the prominent CBSE affiliated schools in the greater Tezpur area, admissions are open to personnel of Para military forces, Central Government employees and civilians. This makes these schools vibrant

¹ The Bodos are an ethnic and linguistic community of Assam belongs to the Tibeto-Burman sub family within the Sino-Tibetan family of languages

² Marwaris or Rajasthan people are Indo-Aryan ethnic group, who have migrated to Assam and are amongst the most prominent businessmen of the state

³ Adivasis are heterogeneous ethnic and tribal groups and are thought to be the aboriginal population of India. Mostly working in the Tea Gardens of Assam, they are also known as Tea Tribes in Assam

⁴ Nepalis are scattered all over Assam and other North Eastern states as well. In Assam there is a large concentration of Nepalese in the district of Sonitpur

⁵ Misings are Indo-Mongoloid group of people. Next to Boros, they are the largest Scheduled Tribe in the state of Assam

multicultural locations, with the students in these schools belonging to different states and cultures.

Data Collection and Processing

Secondary sources

The historical evolution of the notion of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy, in Western, Indian and other locations, was understood with the help of important essays and books and the writings of important scholars in the field. Important theoretical postulations related to the chosen area of research were accessed through secondary sources which enabled the formulation of a theoretical overview and the operational parameters of the work. Models of field study applied in diverse locations for similar research projects were studied to get an idea as to the field methodology to be applied for the carrying out of the present research.

Primary sources

Data from the field was collected by observation and formal and informal interaction with the students and the teachers. The field work was initiated by handing out a questionnaire to the teachers of the selected schools, to elicit academic and cultural profile. The schools were visited frequently in 2009 and 2010. The field work was initiated on the 3rd of July 2009 and the last visits to the schools were during the month of December 2010. The formal interview helped in getting the basic information about the school, teachers and the students. Informal interviews and informal discussions helped in facilitating two way communications and allowed the interviewees and the researcher to find out more details and discussion on the issues which were not originally thought of. The observation in the class room and outside the classroom helped the researcher to examine the interactions between the teacher and taught and also among the peer group. Pedagogical methods and strategies were critically observed by the researcher. The observation

included the reactions, verbal responses, facial expression and also the gestures and cues.

The researcher had to face the problems like lack of access and denials. In one of the school the researcher was not allowed to sit and observe the classes as the Principal of the school felt that it would disturb the teaching in the class; however most of the schools were very cooperative and allowed the researcher to pursue the work in their schools. The researcher's previous experience as a teacher also helped her in a subtle manner as the teachers identified and associated with her easily and that made the work of the researcher easy to collect data. This also helped the researcher to establish rapport easily with the students.

Classes were observed as a non participant observer and field notes were taken through informal interaction with the students and the teachers. Many questions of the interviews were also derived from the observation of the classroom lessons and through informal observation. The data collected and the observations found in the field were interfaced with the theory and were analysed.

RELEVANCE OF THE STUDY

The study of pedagogic practices and strategies as embedded within a definite cultural context is of great relevance in the ambit of the discipline of Cultural Studies, as one interrogates theories and practices in a contemporary plural ambience. It is but a natural corollary to the directions taken by the exploration of relationship between culture, pedagogy and emergence of systems and structures. Cultural Studies thus as a discipline interrogates how pedagogic strategies connives with political ideology in generating what Foucault calls 'conforming or docile citizens'. Issues of pedagogy and culture had been inseparable for centuries as the main aim of learning is the transmission of culture from generation to generation:

In the last decade of the twentieth and early years of the twenty first centuries, the larger domains of the humanities and the social science have witnessed a definitive churning and have produced a feeling of rapid shifts and changes. At one level, the student critiques of some of the disciplines – including English studies, anthropology, history and political science – that have emerged within the epistemological space provided by these disciplines themselves have happened through the last century and continued well into the present...The presence of cultural studies in the Indian academia foregrounds a number of issues that could be taken up for an understanding of discipline formation itself. In a post colony like ours, the question of the derivative-ness and the influence of an outside , code named ‘the west’, is one that most political ideologies – be it Marxism or (*sic*) Feminism – or be it disciplines – ranging from English studies to social anthropology – had to address (Radhakrishnan 2008 :02).

Cultural and folkloric aspects need more attention in the present day pedagogy. Thus the research that is linked to the theory and practice making folklore’s role, a specific focus of investigation can contribute significantly in understanding both theoretical and practical aspects of folklore and culturally relevant pedagogy. The research by investigating the theoretical parameters explores their applicability in the classroom and also examines Folklore as a distinctive part of culturally relevant pedagogy.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The study is limited in the sense that the scope of field work is limited to only one larger cultural location. Thus the findings are indicative of the contemporary pedagogic scene in the state of Assam and cannot be said to be definitive and applicable to all locations. Moreover, philosophical

and theoretical concerns of scholars and philosophers other than the ones considered for the study, remains outside the purview of the research. Thus, one can say that the present study is an exploration of possible contours in the emerging dialogue of culturally relevant pedagogy, and points out to future possibilities.

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CHAPTER II

FOLKLORE AND PEDAGOGY

Folklore in general does involve a degree of nostalgia, but it can also provide us with a basis for understanding our society as a whole. Just as a marine biologist can investigate a whole ocean from a single drop of water ... Studying the traditions of children enables us to recognize the shared experiences of the human condition. (Grider 1980: 161).

Folklore is considered as traditional as school is modern and contemporary. It is regarded as a largely informal way of knowledge transmission. However, A. K. Ramanujan viewed it otherwise and mentioned folklore as “formal”, which makes its forms more visible and discernible (Ramanujan 1989: 259). It was also been seen that folklore and pedagogy were correlated as educationists and folklorists shared many common ideas in nineteenth century Europe (Coe 2000: 20). William Westerman in “Folk Schools, Popular Education, and Pedagogy of Community Action” opined that pedagogy becomes revolutionary not through mere content but also through methods and an engaged communication process and understanding of the folk is central to an effective pedagogical process. Engaged communication involves the equality in teacher student relationship, where both can participate freely and openly. Folk schools originated in Denmark, starting with the pedagogic intent of education for rural people but later on took the shape of a revolutionary pedagogy in Highlanders School of the United States (Westerman 2009: 541-561). The Danish Folk School was the idea of Lutheran Minister N.F.S. Grundtvig, who as a student of Norse mythology, developed pedagogic strategies based on the students’

actions, questions and their daily life activities to inculcate amongst the peasants the idea of a cultural and linguistic identity. He thought of one remedy, which "was a form of popular education not just for elites but for the peasants as well" as Grundtvig believed that "academic life tends peculiarly to lead bookish men into false paths unless it is continuously corrected by an education that comes out of the life and the work of the people" (ibid: 542). By the mid 1920s, these schools became examples of success and about thirty percent of the rural population of Denmark attended folk schools. The curriculum included instruction through and of the Danish language and involved an understanding of daily lived realities and social conditions. These were accomplished through the observation of real life situations and collection of data through field work. Thus pedagogy was combined with the actual lives of the people and lot of time was spent in the fields to develop better manual, agricultural, and domestic skills. No books were used and the stress was on oral learning. K. E. Bugge mentions that Grundtvig's theory involved three factors "arises from life", "is living" and "aims at life" (ibid: 543) Thus, in such pedagogic strategies, knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another and is related to everyday life activities. Grundtvig's views were also reflected by Leo Tolstoy, who also felt that, "home conditions...the village games...are the chief foundations of all education" (ibid). This folk school movement became successful and many political and economic changes like the development of agricultural cooperatives, land reforms and democratic participation were seen during the late nineteenth century in Denmark.

American educators got influenced and were impressed with this folk schools model and visited Denmark. Such efforts were initiated by educators like Olive Dame Campbell who wrote a book in 1928 and also

started a school after her husband's name as 'John C. Campbell Folk School' in the Appalachians:

[The] folk movement in the mountains...seeks the recognition and preservation of all that is native and fine...We would like to have the people recognize the worth and beauty displace the inferior music that of their songs; we would like to have the singing of these songs encouraged in all the mountain schools and centers; we would like have them displace the inferior music that is now being sung there...The people have already begun to be somewhat ashamed of their songs; they need to have them appreciated by outsiders...(Whisnant 1995: 103).

However this concept was spread more widely in United States by Myles Horton. By spending a year in Denmark in 1931, Horton found that Danish folk schools were very close to the community. Horton wrote about the Danish Folk schools and Grundtvig's thoughts and energy as something "which enabled him to strike out, almost single handed, against the economic and spiritual poverty that enslaved the people" Horton initially named his school as "The Southern Mountains School" in North Carolina but later changed it to "The Highlander School". There was a change in the development of folk schools from Denmark to United States, where Horton "introduced into his concept of folk school the express purpose of effecting political change in the region. This signified a switch in the development of folk schools". Highlander thus strove to be more revolutionary as this school trained students and trainees on labour organising and building unions (Westerman 2009: 545). Highlander's curricular pedagogy had three main developmental factors - the first was idea of experiential education and the emphasis was given on agricultural fieldwork, cooperative economics and participation in the organising of labour. Second was cultivation of leadership as one of the strong and innovative elements. The third was

the incorporation of cultural activities, use of crafts and handicrafts. His first wife Zilphia Johnson Horton had a major role in incorporating cultural activities in the school. "It was at Highlander that "We Shall Overcome" was adapted by her in 1946 to become the anthem of an embryonic political movement; she adapted the words, slowed down the tempo, and provided accordion accompaniment" (ibid: 547). Thus it is seen that both schools started the education for rural adults to educate them basic skills and participatory democracy. Similarly Paulo Freire too developed pedagogy of educational relationships, where the "student's life becomes part of the curriculum" (ibid: 548). It is interesting to note here that Horton and Freire agree on the "dialogic and dialectic nature of true education, where the teacher learns from the students, and that "believing in the people, but not in a naïve way," which according to Freire is "necessary" (ibid: 554). Westerman while comparing the folk schools and Freire remarks that in both, the educational philosophy was based where:

The participants were largely from peasants and rural classes. Educational praxis was experiential. Understanding of social reality. .synonymous words were used to describe the overall education: folk/Volk in the Germanic – speaking countries, and *popular* in the Romance – speaking ones...importance of language as an essential tool in the process of emancipation: ...the concept of orality was central to the work of Grundtvig and his followers, Horton and Freire...being able to formulate and give voice to one's own thoughts and sentiments (ibid: 555).

Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, the Swiss educationist who outlined his model of education in his book *Wie Gertrud Ihre Kinder lehrt (How Gertrude Teaches Her Children)*, observed that the mother- child bond was important for the understanding of folk pedagogy. The relationship

between them as teacher and taught in an environment of simultaneous active engagement with daily chores was interesting as to the way such transmission of knowledge occurred (Coe 2000: 23-24). Friedrich Froebel, another educationist, the founder of kindergarten movement also felt that the mother- child relationship as the basis of all moral and social values in the child. He published songs and games which were based on the traditional culture of peasant mothers:

Froebel and Pestalozzi did not collect folklore and are not considered to be part of the history of our discipline. Yet they clearly based their educational philosophies and practices on their idealistic and sentimentalized view of how knowledge was transmitted within a peasant environment. They interacted and influenced people in our intellectual lines of descent and were simultaneously influenced by them (ibid: 25).

Froebel had two fundamental aims in his mind while planning the activities and materials of the Kindergarten which seemed “to be the seed thoughts” and they are – his conception of “mind as activity” and the child as a creative being and the pedagogy as a process of development in harmony “with nature, man, and God” (Hill 1908: 132) He believed that the children can best learn through play and he called these play materials as “gifts” and the activities as “occupations” and the occupations ranged from “clay work, wood carving, paper folding, parquetry, painting, interlacing, buttons, and perforating” and thus the play methods through the use of gifts and occupations help in “natural, unified development of the child” (Tari 1989: 116-117). The credo behind all such strategies “should be matched to children’s readiness to learn” (ibid: 115) for an effective transmission of learning and a pleasing environment that makes it possible.

John Dewey too believed that education begins at birth and an individual is a social individual and social factor cannot be eliminated (Dewey

1897:77-80). David R. Olson and Jerome S. Bruner in "Folk Psychology and Folk Pedagogy" mentions "Teaching and learning are no longer to be seen as two activities, causally linked - one knows X because one was taught X - but rather as one special form of sharing or coming to share beliefs, goals, and intentions - in a word, as a culture" (Olson and Bruner 1998: 10). They exemplify 'folk pedagogy' as a visible facet of everyday life:

Watch any mother, any teacher, even any baby – sitter with a child and you will be struck at how much of what they do is guided by notions of what children's minds are like and how one may help them learn, even though they may not be able to verbalize their pedagogical principles. Furthermore, as we shall see, the differences between mothers, like those between teachers, arise from their different assumptions about the minds of these children. Their folk pedagogy, we shall argue, reflects their folk psychology (ibid).

HUMANISING PEDAGOGY THROUGH FOLKLORE

Bruner in his book *The Culture of Education* in the chapter "Folk Pedagogy" stressed on the role of teacher where he believes that as a 'pedagogical theorist' one would take folk theories into consideration and would like to "compete with, replace, or otherwise modify the folk theories that already guide both teachers and pupils". He meant by this that teaching is more or less determined by the previous notions, theories and implicit assumptions about the assumptions how children learn (Bruner 1996: 46). He further mentions "once we recognize that a teacher's conception of a learner shapes the instruction he or she employs, then equipping teachers (or parents) with the best available theory of the child's mind becomes crucial" (ibid: 48-49). Jerome Bruner talks about the approach to the nature of mind as "culturalism", which "takes its inspiration from the evolutionary fact that mind could

not exist save for culture” (ibid: 03). For him culture is very important and it “shapes the minds of individuals” where:

... individual expression inheres in *meaning making*, assigning meanings to things in different settings on particular occasions. Meaning making involves situation encounters with the world in their appropriate cultural contexts in order to know “what they are about” Although meanings are “in the mind,” they have their origins and their significance in the culture in which they are created. It is culture that provides the tools for organizing and understanding our worlds in communicable ways (ibid).

Culturalism, thus shows that the culture forms the working of mind and so in this way learning and thinking are always “situated” in a cultural setting (ibid: 04). This is an interesting theory of mind which is useful to education as it is “much more outside-in” as Bruner mentions:

Without specification of resources and settings required, a theory of mind is all “inside- out” and of limited applicability to education. It becomes interesting only when it becomes more “outside-in,” indicating the kind of world needed to make it possible to use mind (or heart!) effectively...Culturalism is much more outside-in (ibid: 09).

It is not possible to understand mental activities without taking into account the cultural settings and resources. Bruner feels that each culture has its own theories of folk pedagogy on “why people behave the way they do” (Nsamenang et al. 2008: 51). Resources as Bruner feels not only include ‘instrumental resources’ like ‘mental tools’ (Bruner 1996: 08), required for a young mind to operate effectively but folk implements or toys that bridges school with the learners’ cultural hinterland and freedom from prescriptive and time bound learning that gives cognizance to cultural and personal diversities and differences. In this way Bruner believes that such approaches treat education not to be:

...an island, but part of the continent of culture...Culturalism's task is a double one. On the "macro" side, it looks at the culture as a system of values, rights, exchanges, obligations, opportunities, power. On the "micro" side, it examines how the demands of a cultural system affect those who must operate within it...it is much concerned with intersubjectivity-how humans come to know "each other's minds" (ibid: 11-12).

Thus Bruner believed that by an active engagement with cultural forms, learning and imagining are facilitated. He identified four dominant models of learners' minds as models of mind and models of folk pedagogy, which are embedded in the cultural settings and these are:

1. Seeing children as imitative learners
2. Seeing children as learning from didactic exposure
3. Seeing children as thinkers
4. Seeing children as knowledgeable (ibid: 53-63):

The first model is following the adult by imitating and is the "basis of apprenticeship, leading the novice into the skilled ways of the expert" and the expert here in this pass on the skill through practice and as Bruner says:

An underlying assumption is that the less skilled can be taught by showing, and that they have the ability to learn through imitation. Another assumption in this process is that modeling and imitating make possible the accumulation of culturally relevant knowledge, even the transmission of culture from one generation to the next (ibid: 54).

The second model, seeing children as learning from didactic exposure. The acquisition of propositional knowledge, this model is seen as the traditional way of teaching, where teacher is regarded as knowledgeable and the student is supposed to be totally unaware. This kind of pedagogy is one way and is not "mutual dialogue", as Bruner mentions:

What is to be learned by the pupil is conceived as “in” the minds of teachers as well as in the books, maps, art, computer database, or wherever. Knowledge is simply to be “looked up” or “listened to” It is an explicit canon or corpus – a representation of the what-is-known. Procedural knowledge, knowing how to, is assumed to follow automatically from knowing certain propositions about facts, theories, and the like: “the square of the hypotenuse of a right triangle is equal to the squares of the other two sides” (ibid: 55).

This is similar to Paulo Freire’s ‘banking concept’ where he feels that the expert believes in actively depositing knowledge into the minds of the docile students who are presumed to know nothing:

Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiqués and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the “banking” concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits (Freire 1996: 53).

The idea of banking education symbolises the oppressive relations that characterise schooling which can also be compared to other structures of power and inequality in culture. Thus the oppressors are the ones who have power and considered to be superior and active and the oppressed are the passive. As Freire rightly feels that the education should be the practice of freedom rather than the practice of domination (ibid: 62). Paulo Freire analyses the teacher–student relationship in and outside school fundamentally as “narrative” in character, where the teacher –“a narrative subject” and the students as “listening objects” (Freire 2009: 52). Narration leads the children to memorise the narrated contents. Here it is shown that students are like depositors or containers who fill

themselves with the facts and reproduce when required. In this the teacher controls knowledge and the students are just the recipients and the teacher is presumed to know everything and the learner is totally unaware.

The third model sees children as thinkers: The development of intersubjective interchange is the model which believed that the children can understand and it is not one sided pedagogical model as Bruner feels:

Such a pedagogy of mutuality presumes that all human minds are capable of holding beliefs and ideas which, through discussion and interaction, can be moved toward some shared frame of reference. Both child and adult have points of view, and each is encouraged to recognize the other's though may not agree. They must come to recognize that differing views may be based on recognizable reasons and these reasons provide the basis for adjudicating rival beliefs (Bruner 1996: 56-57).

Bruner in this model projects that pedagogy is not through imitation or didactic instruction but it is through the "discourse, collaboration, and negotiation." He further says that "knowledge is what is shared within discourse, within a "textual" community" (ibid: 57). Children in this model of pedagogy are regarded as thinkers who are capable of reasoning like adults. Here interaction between the teacher and the taught is highlighted and the model suggests in helping the students to interpret and understand and not just believe in factual knowledge, rather this is actually a model of mutual understanding (ibid). Freire too believed in the dialogical method. For him dialogue is the first step in education as he mentions:

Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to name the world. Hence, dialogue cannot

occur between those who want to name the world and those who do not wish this naming – between those who deny others the right to speak their word and those whose right to speak has been denied them (Freire 1996: 69).

Thus through this approach both the teacher and the taught learn from each other and they become jointly responsible for the process of learning. Freire too like Bruner believed in interaction and communication as “without dialogue there is no communication, and without communication there can be no true education” (ibid: 73-74). He emphasised on the dialogical relationship between the teachers and taught where both learn from each other. This approach does not believe in depositing of ideas and knowledge on the learners. Intersubjectivity in Bruner’s model refers to “common understanding” which implies the child’s ability to “read other minds” and this starts with the infancy period in the family and is seen beginning with the mother child relationship, where both the mother and the child share joint attention on the common things. In these model children organise their learning, remembering, guessing and thinking. The “child’s own folk psychology becomes the object of study” and this explores the child’s own framework to understand better (Bruner 1996: 57-58).

The fourth and last perspective on folk pedagogy is seeing children as knowledgeable: The management of objective knowledge, states that “cultures preserve past reliable knowledge”, and that:

...teaching should help children grasp the distinction between personal knowledge, on the one side, and “what is taken to be known” by the culture, on the other. But they must not only grasp this distinction, but also understand its basis, as it were, in the history of knowledge (ibid: 61).

Learning is clearly related to the larger social world and pedagogical strategies is intrinsic in the transmission of folklore genres as

repositories of knowledge because “knowledge cannot be simply an abstract thought” but a “living document” (Dei 2010: 80). George J. Sefa Dei viewed that theory and practice cannot be separated and the “key to human survival is the ability of society to pass knowledge down through generations by cultural transmission” (ibid). Mahendra Kumar Mishra remarks that “Folklore is a stock of knowledge created by the community”. This knowledge is very useful in a pedagogical way and “Folklore as a body of community knowledge and a mode of communication contributes much towards creating a culturally responsive curriculum” (Mishra 2009: 03). Pierre R. Dasen too believed that knowledge is gained through “informal education”. the title he gave as he believed that “traditional education” sounds past education and the education which is not being practiced, but by informal education he did not mean unstructured and haphazard education (Dasen 2008: 25-26). He too agrees with Bruner on the views that:

.. schooling is only one small part of how a culture inducts the young into its canonical ways. .education is not *just* about conventional school matters like curriculum or standards or testing. What we resolve to do in school only make sense when considered in the broader context of what the society intends to accomplish through its educational investment in the young (Bruner 1996: ix)

Dasen in his article has mentioned different studies on the impact of informal education:

Informal education is embedded in daily life, with teachers being relatives, but the responsibility for learning lies with the learners, their motivation stemming from the social contribution they are able to make and their participation in the adult community of practice. Observation and imitation are the main learning processes, and demonstration (without verbal exchange or questioning) the pre-dominant teaching

procedure. The maintenance of continuity and traditions is the primary goal of informal education (Dasen 2008: 27)

In one of the study in his article by Greenfield and Lave, three types of learning processes – trial and error, shaping and scaffolding were explained, where according to Piaget, trial and error process should lead to the “conceptual knowledge”. In shaping, the teacher plays the major role as the learner’s response is controlled and problem is organised in small steps as to avoid the errors and also correct responses are awarded. In scaffolding, the adult provides the support to the inexperienced or “novice” by intervention and at times even by taking over when some steps appear difficult to the learner. In this, the learner is helped in the beginning and then eventually the learner takes over independently. Thus it is “an instructional process which always involves social interaction. It illustrates Vygotsky’s concept of a ‘zone of proximal development’” (ibid: 27-28). Jean Piaget, Swiss psychologist developed an explanation of the development of thinking from infancy to adulthood. He proposed a theory of cognitive development through an orderly sequence of four stages of sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational and these stages are generally associated with specific age (Woolfolk 2004: 31). Lev Semenovich Vygotsky, Russian psychologist was a major proponent of “sociocultural theory”. He believed that “human activities take place in cultural settings and cannot be understood apart from these settings” (ibid: 45). He was of the view that cognitive developments takes place through the interaction and conversation with the more able member of the culture, who act as guide and teacher so that the child is not alone in discovering. Similar concept of adult assistance was called ‘scaffolding’ by Jerome Bruner (ibid: 50). Zone of proximal development is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what the child can do with help and thus is the area where the child cannot solve problem

independently but can be successful with adult guidance (ibid: 52). These can be seen in comparison to the formal education. Indigenous education in Africa is very much prevalent even today. It has been hypothesised that “the most profound and most utilizable cultural learnings for most Africans, including the erudite, occur outside school, within African family traditions and peer cultures” (Nsamenang et al. 2008: 51). This has been discussed in ethno theories of developmental learning in the Western Grassfields of Cameroon of Africa, where “children’s social worlds constitute a prerequisite condition for understanding their development” (ibid: 52). Learning is embedded in the culture as knowledge and skills can be acquired through participating learning at home or at society and in Grassfields of Cameroon education is embedded on family traditions, everyday routine and in all social activities as every culture have its “own folk curriculum of how children can become competent members” (ibid: 53-56):

Learning and role-taking are organized to conform to the stages of life...the extended family, along with neighbours and peers, is the primary sociological garden in which cultural knowledge and responsibility training, sprout and flourish or is stifled.. as the first educators ..parents are the source of primary knowledge and cognitive skills (ibid: 58).

The philosophical systems of indigenous knowledge system are also about social and moral conducts and these are conveyed in societal modes of thought through folklore “to regulate and guide individual and collective human action, thought, and behaviour” (Dei 2010: 80). Ramesh C. Mishra conducted studies on tribal children of India and came to similar inference, in the fact “that the abilities, which are functionally salient in the cultural life of a group, are highly developed and competently displayed in test situations by individuals who

negotiate their life in particular culture” (Mishra 2008: 154). Thus it is more important how to teach rather what is being taught:

Formal education, particularly schooling, should be seen as one specific form of cultural transmission, often lacking in cultural appropriateness; this problem could no doubt be lessened by searching for ways to bring schooling more in line with informal education (Dasen 2008: 43).

For this kind of pedagogic approach, folklore plays a crucial role as it expresses itself through culture. Folklore “... is born in culture’s womb. And, because of this, the study of culture cannot be fruitful and perfect without the study of its folklore” (Islam 1985: 14).

BEYOND ETHNOCENTRISM TO A FOLK PEDAGOGY

According to John Monaghan and Peter Just, Culture was the lens that helped to place in proper perspectives one’s experience of the world. Culture, thus becomes a part, rather an integral part, of us naturally. For Malinowski:

Culture is the integral whole consisting of implements and consumers’ goods, of constitutional charters for the various social groupings, of human ideas and crafts, beliefs and customs. Whether we consider a very simple or primitive culture or an extremely complex and developed one, we are confronted by a vast apparatus, partly material, partly human, and partly spiritual, by which man is able to cope with the concrete, specific problems that face him (Monaghan and Just 2000: 39).

Everyone, everywhere, tends to believe that there is only one best way to do things and to view the world- his or her own. According to Che Mahzan Ahmad:

In a modern Enlightenment discourse, the term prejudice has a distinctively pejorative connotation. In *Truth and Method*, Gadamer suggested that prejudices were just ‘pre-

understanding', not as an unfounded judgment... Gadamer refers prejudices as *vorurteil*. The *vorurteil* provides anticipation for a new meaning. Here, what is new is seen in the light of the known past of familiarity. Gadamer mentioned that to be aware of one's own *vorurteil* is a part of newness creation whereby one is able to assert the truth against one's own fore-meanings. In this perspective, understanding requires the engagement of one's own biases (Ahmad 2009: 37).

The field of education is no exception in the prevalence of ethnocentrism. Everyone, everywhere, tends to believe that there is only one best way to do things and to view the world- his or her own:

It is well acknowledged that classroom discourse, the 'micro-culture', embodies and reflects the macro- culture just as much as education in general embodies and reflects social and cultural meanings. The seemingly 'innocent' classroom instructions transmit cultural meanings of what it is to be a child/student, how children/students develop, and what it means to learn (Zhao 2007: 02-03).

According to Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka, this ethnocentric bias can lead to the danger of our understanding of the "discourse practices of other cultures ...if we view them through the prism of our own culture- specific practices and concepts" (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1997: 231). Melanie Davenport describes the situation in United States, where in the curriculum, dominant values are reflected and all students adapt to the dominant culture:

Multicultural education today is often perceived as controversial because it is in fact a needed challenge to the hegemony of white European American culture in the U.S. school system. To create a more pluralistic society and correct the structural inequalities which perpetuate racism and other forms of discrimination, it is crucial to change the educational

system which reproduces these problems. To transform a society, the educational system must be transformed, which is necessarily a domestic issue (Davenport 2000, 367)

It is essential to overcome the problem of ethnocentric bias, which can be a great obstacle in our understanding of the discourse practices of other cultures. To avoid this, it is very important to introduce the approach of folklore in pedagogy. This would definitely help the students to know themselves properly and also help in analysing the similarities and differences as students cannot be considered in isolation. There should be bridge between home and school life. This kind of education as Gloria Ladson Billings termed as “culturally relevant pedagogy”. Culturally relevant pedagogy draws on students’ home culture as a mechanism for helping them achieve success in school. It is basically using student’s culture as a basis of learning. In her study of *teachers of culturally diverse students*, she described how some teachers did not stick to traditional approaches of pedagogy, their own pedagogical approaches motivated and encouraged learning. They capitalise on the students’ home and prior culture and knowledge as a bridge to learn and adapt new content and skills:

Culturally relevant pedagogy rests mainly on three criteria, (a) Students must experience academic success, (b) they must develop and or maintain cultural competence and (c) they must develop a critical consciousness through which they challenge the status quo of the current social order (Ladson-Billing 1995 160).

Pedagogy will become culturally relevant when the adequate mutual respect is given to different cultures. James A. Banks describes multicultural education for this and the five dimensions of multicultural education for effective implementation in the schools. The five dimensions are “content integration, the knowledge construction

process, prejudice reduction, equity pedagogy, and an empowering school culture and social structure” (Banks and Banks 1995: 152). Rachel A. Grant and Lewis Asimeng-Boahene in the article “Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Citizenship Education: Using African Proverbs as Tools for Teaching in Urban Schools” dwelled on the culturally responsive pedagogy with the “African proverb as frames for teaching African American students to become engaged local and global citizens” (Grant and Asimeng-Boahene 2006: 17). Proverbs in Africa have powerful impact on their life and thus could be described “as socially constructed systems of meanings and understanding, and philosophy that frame African living, values, world-view, and belief systems” (ibid: 20). African proverbs as they have given examples serve many important pedagogical aspects for children in the school education. Proverbs like:

Stolen things bring misfortune (Kenya).

Whenever a person breaks a stick in the forest, let him consider what it would feel like, if it were himself that was broken (Nigeria) (ibid: 21).

Through such proverbs students can be educated and also be given understanding about the African way of living that shows them “to be good family members and good citizens” (ibid: 22). Proverbs related to health and good eating habits promote hygiene and manners amongst the learners:

Health is the body of prosperity.

The doctor cannot drink the medicine for the patient

There is no medicine as acute as good food (ibid).

The Role of Language in Folk Pedagogy

Language is also an important aspect of culturally relevant pedagogy and the role of folk speech is important in such an approach. Dell Hymes emphasised that a “competent speaker calls for much more than grammatical knowledge” rather it is to be believed that it is important to

know “how to speak in culturally appropriate ways to different people about different things in different settings” (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1997: 232). Idiomatic compatibility is of utmost importance for effective communication in a learning environment. taking recourse to a register that is informal and draws upon local variations of words and phrases. can act as a bridge between the language used within the family and larger community, which is a largely informal environment and the language used in text books, a pre dominantly formal register. There are different speech styles, which are culture specific as Goddard and Wierzbicka have mentioned about “variation in discourse styles” in five unrelated cultures of Japanese, Malay, Polish, Yankunytjatjara. Ewe (Goddard and Wierzbicka 1997: 231-257). For this, language is often the medium through which different discourses are conveyed. In Hawaii, at the end of the nineteenth century, the Hawaiian people were almost forced to an English language environment as the medium of instruction in schools was only English. The use of Hawaiian was legally prohibited in schools and administrative offices and also imposed the view that English would bring that kind of prosperity that Hawaiian language and culture could not. (Okazaki and Jennifer 2009: 11). If the indigenous children are taught through the medium of a language that is not their own language, then as Tove Skutnabb-Kangas mentions, it will not only “... prevents access to education” but “also be seen as language genocide” (Skutnabb-Kangas 2009: 04). Hawaiians was submerged in an English language environment where the use of their own language was detriment to their survival and their psyche:

The disappearance of the indigenous language was not only a matter of the “free market economy” but was beaten out of the people, both literally and figuratively. Indigenous language holders were prohibited from passing down their language to the next generation..this completely overlooks the socio-

historical causality of assimilation that prevented the transmission of the Hawaiian language (Okazaki and Jennifer 2009: 11).

When Hawai'i became the 50th state of the United States in 1959, the colonisation was furthered. Then in 1978, Hawai'i State Constitutional Convention put forth the proposal for teaching of the Hawaiian language, history and culture in all public schools and also proposed for the recognition of Hawaiian as an official language along with the English. The proposal was later implemented and this was seen as Hawaiian revitalisation movement (ibid: 11-12). Such situations are not alien to India, particularly the North East, where struggle for recognition of ethnic languages as medium of instructions goes on, and revival of cultural behaviour and artifacts is often seen as a deliverance from the oppressive restriction of legitimate cultural expressions.

Latin American government in 1960s started developing educational programmes for indigenous people and over the period the models were modified but in all the models, prominent place was given to the indigenous languages. First model was executed during 1960s and 1970s. In this, indigenous language was used in the first few years of schooling to facilitate learning to the colonial languages that means Spanish or Portuguese. Many projects were developed based on this model. This phase was termed as "Transitional Bilingual Education". Second model was developed during 1970s and 1980s, when indigenous groups demanded an up gradation and more access of the indigenous languages in the school. In this model, reading and writing were taught in the indigenous languages and Spanish was taught as a second language. This period was termed as "Maintenance Bilingual Education". The third phase was of "Bilingual and Bicultural Education", the third model was developed during 1980s to recognise both the culture and the language of the indigenous people, and this was

the first attempt to integrate indigenous culture in the curriculum. It was felt that the most of the efforts in this model was of the superficial aspect. Fourth model was developed during 1990s and is still continuing, which is “Intercultural and Bilingual Education (IBE)” (Gajardo et al. 2008: 200-202). In this they described that the culture is dynamic:

.. this model promotes an education rooted in the culture of reference of the learners, but open to elements and knowledge from other cultural horizons...on a pedagogical level, this model emphasizes the need to go beyond a purely linguistic level and to adapt the curricula, taking into account the indigenous skills and knowledge...the idea is to reinforce the indigenous languages and cultures as well as to create a new paradigm that would include both indigenous and Western knowledge (ibid: 202-203).

Susane J. Paréz states about Peru's indigenous education as Peru being a multilingual and multiethnic country has forty two living indigenous languages, Spanish, and several immigrant languages but formal education plays a central role in the promotion of a Spanish-only policy (Perez 2009: 14). Though, in 1970, indigenous organisations contributed actively by claiming their right to an education based on their own language and culture and the first National policy on bilingual education stated that “bilingual education should be offered to children with an indigenous mother tongue or were incipient bilinguals in an indigenous language and Spanish” (ibid:15). This educational model is widely known as IBE (Intercultural Bilingual Education) and by 2000, this model was in use in seventeen Latin American countries (ibid: 14).

In Nepal too, as Iina Nurmela mentions in her article on “The Story of Elders in Mother Tongue Education in Nepal Built upon notes from my field journal” (Nurmela 2009: 21-23) that under Multilingual Education Program (MLE), which is a part of the Education for All (EFA), a

program jointly funded by the governments of Nepal and Finland, started in January 2007, where it is very interesting to see the role of community elders (Indigenous Knowledge (IK) holders) who were invited for story telling sessions:

Inviting the IK holders...was not only to show how local content/knowledges and language can be quickly and easily introduced in formal schooling in any community and connect the non- Nepali speaking children and the Nepali speaking teacher. It is also a celebration of the oral traditions that form the basis of the culture and traditions of most non- Nepali speaking peoples in Nepal. There is no reason why formal education could not embrace teaching methodologies that are derived from and respect the oral traditions of the community. Non Nepali speaking children will feel comfortable being taught in culturally appropriate ways and giving a place to oral traditions in the sphere of formal schooling will reinforce their value (Nurmiela 2009: 22).

The Program had definitely shown the way to all non- Nepali speaking children and teachers that everyone can learn in their own language and can feel comfortable coming to school with their own culture and background (ibid). In this way it can rightly be said:

Folklore is an ideal tool for bridging the gap between language and culture in the classroom. By using folk and popular materials to illustrate or expand...students' attention can be drawn to broader cultural issues, including values, worldview, history, and even literature (Magliocco 1992: 451).

Pedagogy as Performance

It is interesting to note that most of the teaching in a classroom environment involves elements of performance on the part of both the students and the teachers. The improvisation in oral speech and the rhythm and style of the teacher in the classroom has great impact on the

children. If a teacher is reciting a poem in the classroom without any rhythm and modulation in the speech, the learning may not be interesting. Pedagogy thus is seen as performance in the classroom:

The classroom, with teachers and students engaged in the processes of education establishes culture. It becomes a practical place; a site in which diverse beings come together in order to engage and negotiate knowledge, systems of understanding, and ways of being, seeing, knowing, and doing. This negotiation occurs through social performance; engaged practices of relations and interrelations (Alexander, Anderson and Gailegos 2005: 03).

They describe the act of teaching as a “performance event, as well as being a performative event- the difference and link is that teaching is “doing”, but it is also the repetitive act of doing that manifests its existential and practical presence”(ibid: 04). As Elyse Lamm Pineau mentions:

The claim that teaching is a performance is at once self-evident and oxymoronic. In casual conversation, the statement inevitably brings smiles of amused, if rueful, recognition from colleagues who have struggled to script the “well-wrought lecture”, hold the attention of a critical audience, improvise a participatory exercise, or dramatically land on a key point during the last seconds of a fifty-minute period. As a colloquial expression, the performance metaphor is readily acknowledged by seasoned educators who recognize that effective teaching often relies upon “theatrical” techniques of rehearsal, scripting, improvisation, characterization, timing, stage presence, and critical reviews (Pineau 2005: 15).

The classroom pedagogy is actually considered as performance, where the teacher plays various roles as actor, speaker, director and the children too interact in the classroom setting. While teaching and

narrating stories the teller uses different tricks, creates suspense, brings modulation in the speech to make the process of pedagogy interesting. Folklore can add to overall enrichment and efficacy of pedagogic transmission:

Within the traditional study of language and literature, the word "culture" has often been used to designate the products and processes of the "Great Tradition" -- the artistic and literary traditions of the European upper and middle classes. However, under the influence of the post-modernists, the definition of culture is changing, and the burgeoning field of Cultural Studies now includes aspects of popular culture such as popular literature and fashion. This approach to the definition of culture is in fact much closer to that long held by folklorists and ethnologists. To an ethnologist, culture comprises nearly every learned aspect of human behavior, from what is considered edible to gender roles to complex political systems. Within this intricate web, the folklorist is interested in those aspects of culture which are creative, expressive, and are transmitted informally, through oral tradition or by imitation, for example. The word "folklore" has been used to mean "the culture of the common people," and while this is partly true, much folklore is very broadly distributed across class lines (Magliocco 1992: 452).

Alice S. Horning in her article explains the teacher as performer in the class by narrating an incident about her teacher who while explaining the Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, enacted the act by replacing the act of eating cucumber suddenly to pickle eating in the classroom, in a dramatic manner making the class to imagine the situation in the act (Horning 1979: 185). She remarks that:

The analogy between teaching and performance may provide criteria to meet the need for more precise and constructive

teaching evaluation.. it is important to note that the analogy is imperfect and does not precisely match teaching to any particular kind of performance, such as singing or acting. .the analogy applies much more generally or indirectly to all types of performance (ibid: 186).

Teaching in the classroom involves lot of activities however it is also believed by Horning that “teaching as performance is not only a matter of form. It is a matter of contents, too” (ibid: 190). The stories told are not simply reporting or explaining rather are performances in a dramatic manner depicting events in a way involving the listeners and the teller and as Michael Owen Jones mentions that “a story , for example . is not a “text”, as in literature ...it is the entire performance” (Jones 1994: 02). Richard Bauman in his book titled *Verbal Art as Performance* developed this idea of verbal art as performance “based upon understanding of performance as a mode of speaking” (Bauman 1984: 03). The term performance has:

...has been used to convey a dual sense of *artistic* action- the doing of folklore- and artistic *event* – the performance situation, involving performer, art form, audience, and setting – both of which are basic to the developing performance approach (ibid: 04).

He further mentions that performance as treated as communication or “as a mode of spoken verbal communication consists in the assumption of responsibility to an audience for a display of communicative competence” (ibid: 11). This ability of communication depends on the “knowledge and ability to speak in socially appropriate ways” (ibid). Similarly, the teacher while communicating needs to keep this aspect in mind to make the performative act of teaching interesting and educative. It is basically the “display of competence” (ibid: 13).

NARRATING CULTURE INTO PEDAGOGY THROUGH FOLKLORE

Nadine McFadden feels that folktales are a “finger print of history” because through folktales customs, settings and origins of tradition can be found out. Folktales can contribute to “mutual cultural understanding” (McFadden 1991: 1097) In 1948, Conference of Churches at Oxford defined education to be:

the process by which the community seeks to open its life to all the individuals within it and enable them to take their part in it. It attempts to pass on to them its culture, including the standards by which it would have them live. Where that culture is regarded as final, the attempt is made to impose it on the younger minds. Where it is viewed as a stage in development, younger minds are trained both to receive it and to criticize and improve upon it (Majasan 1969 41)

J.A Majasan viewed that the above definition gives education a broader outlook in which it is believed that education is not only confined to the institutional learning rather values the training and learning of the youth in school less societies because folklore is the most appropriate instrument to educate and train youth to respect culture and still operate comfortably with keen dynamism as citizens of a technological age. It explains the common rules and teaches the etiquette of the society and thus it helps and directs the young to be able to acquire effectively with varying conditions of life (ibid). Folklore can be seen to be integral for non institutional learning environment, where modes of traditional culturally compatible transmission of life skills can be adapted to transmit contemporary learning by liberating it from the confines of the strictly institutional model Folktales are popular in all the cultures. In Yorubaland, they are so popular that story narrating is tabooed during the day so as to make children do their other normal duties. It is said that anyone telling or listening to tales during the day will have a stunted

growth. The similarity is found in Indian society also where in different cultures it is tabooed to tell stories as in Punjabi folklore, it is said that if the story is narrated during day time then uncles and friends forget the route to their homes and would not find the way to get back. Most folktales are for entertainment but sometimes also have historical significance. They are mostly told to improve morals among children. Mostly folktales related to children are connected with discipline in order to make them form good habits. Such stories are short and depict how disobedient children suffer severely because of disobedience. There are tales explaining why the sky is so far away, why tortoise has a rough shell and such why stories which not only answer children's queries but also make them attentive to many things and phenomena which they probably had not noticed. In a way, folktales have the effect of creating interest and knowledge about established customs and practices which also give insight to their own world of culture and folklore (ibid: 48-49). These folktales also emphasise on social norms. They are found quite interesting and mostly are used in primary and elementary classes. However, teachers and professors can also make use of these folktales in explaining literary concepts and aspects of language. Sabina Magliocco firmly believed that "teaching language is to teach about the culture in which language is spoken" and ascertained "folklore is an ideal tool for bridging the gap between language and culture in the classroom" (Magliocco 1992: 451). Folk and popular materials can be used to illustrate or expand on grammatical points and with the help of these children's attention can be drawn to various cultural issues like- values, history and literature. When using folklore in classroom as Jill P. May finds that folklore helps in understanding that "how literature evolved from oral traditions" and students may find similarities in the plots and themes of several stories but the language style and characterisation may

vary greatly. This will be able to identify that to study oral language and diction; there is no one best method to orally deliver a message rather speaking depends upon regional tones and phrases to convey a mood (May 1980: 148-149). According to Cliff Goddard and Anna Wierzbicka, explaining and interpreting such “culture-specific speaking” is the task of “discourse and culture” studies:

It is a task which can be approached from many different directions, using many different methods, but most scholars agree that it goes beyond merely describing speech patterns in behavioural terms. The greater challenge is to show the links between particular way of speaking and the culture of the people involved...can come from many sources, including...observations of child-raising practices, the proverbs and common sayings of the culture, semantic analysis of cultural key words, and wider cultural analysis(Goddard and Wierzbicka 1997 231).

Many stories are told in a very simple manner and use simple repetitive verse and in addition there is a great sense of rhythm in them. Poetic prose evokes a mood and imagination and sets a scene (May 1980: 151). Folktales may contribute many words and phrases to speech and literature. Oral tales are very good means which can be utilised with young students to make them compare the fascination of many events with the contemporary stories. The comparisons between the early stories like *Snow White* and *Three little Pigs* where the endings deal with the punishment of the evil persons to the contemporary stories of wife beatings and violent murders. They can analytically compare that people in contemporary times are also fascinated with brutal nature. However, in most of the violent tales, innocents are saved and the messages conveyed through these tales are generally positive (ibid: 150) Myths in India have always been very popular and are used very frequently in day

to day etc. In different folksongs, myths there are descriptions about the origin of universe, agriculture, wildlife, trees and other living objects on earth (Ramachandran 2003: 35). Myths about valid knowledge like the origin of universe have no place in contemporary education. The linkage of folklore and institutionalised education is missing in the present times. As in the words of K. Kumar:

The distribution of opportunities for learning in a society is an important factor influencing both how 'worth' of a certain kind of knowledge is perceived or weighed and how knowledge that is regarded as worthy of being taught will be represented in educational materials. We can take for granted that the knowledge produced and possessed by groups whose access to education is poor will not be regarded as worthy of being taught in schools (Kumar 1997: 17).

The accessibility of folklore in daily life and wide diffusion of folklore is one of the reasons to introduce this in the classroom. The student encounters folklore in daily life much more than the products of literary and academic culture, since folklore is widely distributed and has analogues in many cultures like proverbs, folktales are found nearly everywhere. The usage of folklore is very common and most of the students can identify with it easily (Magliocco 1992: 454). Children who have an appreciation for traditional and folk literature is generally able to enjoy modern narrative more completely and the traditional binaries of folklore being opposed to or a substitute for dominant cultures can be countered. As Gramsci points out, folklore:

should not be thought of as an oddity or an eccentricity or as a picturesque element, but as something that is to be taken seriously and earnestly," because it illustrates a "conception of the world and of life" (ibid 1992: 453).

Thus, Folklore has always been a nascent player in pedagogic transmission and played its part in developing and inculcating values and customs. The folklore which through proverbs, fables, folktales, myths is the source of local cultural resource knowledge “offers specific pedagogic, instructional, and communicative enhancements to learning outcomes for youth in contemporary school setting” (Dei 2010: 81). The imperative now is to enlarge its scope and bring contemporary areas of knowledge pursuit under its ambit, where folklore emerges from being contents in traditional narratives to a methodological paradigm that can accommodate diverse and newer areas of knowledge pursuit and transmission.

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CHAPTER III

FOLKLORE AND PEDAGOGY: THE INDIAN TRADITION

In India, Panchatantra tales are said to have been collected and used for educating children in our country...symbolic function of animal tales and cultural attitudes that they uphold seem not to have changed... the heroes of popular culture such as Donald Duck and Spiderman seem to be extension of traditional symbolism and conform to the models of the animal tale in which this symbolism finds expression....shows that in this symbolic act, through the medium of inversion ,through the combination of the familiar and the slightly unfamiliar....taught to recognize certain basic truths of life and existence...perhaps the impossible was made possible, at least temporarily (Handoo 2000: 126).

It is viewed that in Indian contexts Panchatantra can be considered as an important text on pedagogy. The pedagogical strategy in Panchatantra, as elucidated by Vishnu Sharma, “is notable for its consideration of dialogue as a necessary condition of learning in a world of multiple conversations”. He recognises the pedagogical strategy that the “freedom to pursue one’s own method of teaching depends on the type of material one uses for instruction” (Baral 2006: 482-483). Folklore in India had always been very important in developing values. Lakshminath Bezbaroa’s *Sadhu Katha* is a collection of folktales that depicts Assamese culture and he also points out the pedagogic importance through folk tales:

The meaning of *sadhu katha* is righteous narration or the sayings of wise and the saintly, a fact recognized by the

Assamese since the long past. This makes it clear that these tales were used by the wise and the aged to spread the knowledge of righteousness and the values of a moral and honest life (Goswami 2009: 39-40).

Folklore plays very important role in pedagogy. It exists in the society and transmits as the pulse of the people:

The elements of folklore are social products they are created, retained and transmitted by the folk and as such folklore is the mirror of the people- not dead like a piece of glass, but a living one. Folklore is embedded in the form of aesthetic expression and its creator or creators are part of the society that exists today, existed in the past and will exist in future...Folklore may be the creation of an individual or a group, but in the ultimate analysis, a creation becomes folklore, only when, through a test of time, it is accepted by the folk, or a society. Finally, folklore is the wealth of the society (Islam 1985: 383-384).

Folklore is seen as a repository of pedagogic values that are transferred and transmitted from generation to generation. The two great Indian epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* also included and carried folklore in Indian society in the form of folk beliefs and traditions through legends, mythology and also in the form of moral and religious teachings (Orr 1977: 32). The legends, tales and traditions within these epics are the repository of time tested pedagogical and moral values.

INDIAN PEDAGOGIC STRUCTURE: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

Indian philosophy had influenced the entire gamut of the cultural fabric of ancient India. Religious and social values were intricately linked up with pedagogic traditions. Ancient Indian Education aimed at the realisation of supreme knowledge. Religion or Dharma was thus to help the individual realise enlightenment and thus the education was not merely earning

livelihood “but this was one of the objectives since earning a livelihood was a necessity which brought one in keeping with dharma”(Wijesinghe 1987: 238). Vedas are very important in Indian philosophy and the roots of most of the philosophical systems can be traced in the Vedas. Vedanta philosophy emphasises that the ultimate and absolute truth is the self, which is one with Brahman, the Supreme Soul and “all phenomena in the universe arise from Brahman (i.e. the self) and have no other truth to reveal than this self” (ibid: 237). The aim of ancient Indian education was to realise spiritual enlightenment. This kind of pedagogy did not have specific courses of study. The Upanishads described three steps of education which were basically oral, and they were *sravana*, *manana* and *nidi-dhyasana*. *Sravana* means listening to texts as they were spoken by the teacher. Listening to the rendition of the teacher and reflecting on the topic was *manana*. Beyond reflection was the meditative state *nididhyasana* which helped in realising and attaining the truth of knowledge. This was taken as the highest stage in the pedagogic process (Saksena 1975: 79-80).

There were three types of institutions for providing this kind of education and they were named as *gurukula*, *parishad* and *sammelan*. In *gurukula* system of education, there was very close relationship with the teacher and the student and the teacher or guru served as a model for the student. The student, apart from acquiring knowledge of the scriptures that involved pronunciation, phonology and grammar, also helped in the household chores of the *gurukula* (hermitage) and thus the training was also given to the pupil in self sustenance and dignity of labour. After twelve years of study in *brahmacharya ashram* (celibate hermitage), in the state of ascetic celibacy, the students pay formal offering to the teacher which is the *gurudakshina* (offering to the *guru*, i.e. the teacher) which is not a fee, but a mark of gratitude towards the teacher (ibid: 80-82).

The institute called *parishad* (academies) was an institute “where students belonging to the higher order of learning gathered and sought further enlightenment through discussions and talks” (ibid: 82). Apart from the *parishads*, several scholars at times were invited by some kings for discussions and debates, where many scholars used to share their knowledge. The main objective of ancient Indian education was the “spiritual and philosophical advancement” and:

...it was thought to be essential to aim at the internal progress of the students. One of the main features of such a system of education was the deep spiritual relationship between the pupil and the preceptor... pupil received education by dwelling in the house of his preceptor (ibid: 83).

In between 600 and 500 BC, Mahavira and Buddha, two great Indian seers, evolved pedagogic traditions of far reaching effect in India. During the Buddhist period, organised educational institutions like monastic schools came into existence. Buddhist education was not influenced by caste system and status of individual was determined by his merit and not by the caste or family status. Buddha was against the caste system that had become rigid in the Hindu way of life, and so monastic institutes were “neither sectarian in their outlook nor purely theological in their course of study” (ibid: 86) and Buddhist education can be said to be the precursor of the system of university education that stressed on professional and industrial education. The most notable examples of these were Nalanda and Takshashila as the latter was one of the most renowned in the field of medical education in the country and produced many prominent teachers (ibid: 83-87). With the establishment of Muslim rule in India in 10th century A.D., the mosques became the centre of learning. *Maktabs* and *Madarsahs* were established as educational institutions. The former as primary schools and the latter was a school or college of higher learning (ibid: 88).

By the end of eighteenth century, British Colonial rule was firmly established in India and it played a major role in the evolution of the modern pedagogy in Colonial India, the tenor of which was set by the now famous/infamous Macaulay's minutes in the fourth decade of the nineteenth century. Macaulay's Minutes in education has been condemned for disregarding Indian tradition and culture. Thomas Babington Macaulay's "Minute on Education," was written in 1835 for Lord William Bentinck, governor general of British India in the formation of British educational policy in India. According to this educational policy, Indians would study not only English language but the instruction in all courses at the college level should be given through the medium of the English language. All Indian students must learn a foreign language prior to begin a career in higher education. Macaulay believed and insisted that use of English language in all Indian higher education would inevitably promote Indian loyalty to British rule:

I feel... that it is impossible for us, with our limited means, to attempt to educate the body of the people. We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern - a class of persons Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to ... convey knowledge to the great mass of the population (Cutts 1953: 825).

The colonial education is always linked to Macaulay's minutes but another important milestone in the same area was Sir Charles Wood's Education Despatch of 1854 which included provision of provincial education department, government and voluntary schools and universities based on western models. The salient features of this structure were the strong bureaucratic hold in all spheres, including the structure of syllabi, the contents of textbooks and teachers training. The

whole system aimed at “acculturating Indian children and youth in European attitudes and perceptions” (Kumar 1997: 26). English language was used as a means of this acculturation and it was thus clear that that “it was never the intention of the British to establish a popular state system of schooling across India” (Whitehead 2003: 05). Indigenous schools were required to conform to the syllabi and textbooks to get the government grants-in-aid (Kumar 1997: 26). Education thus reinforced a colonial based culture of pedagogy:

Colonial pedagogy outlasted colonial rule; in independent India, curriculum continues to be textbook-bound. While the system of education has expanded enormously since Independence, it has not been able to shed colonial policies of prescription of textbooks and examination (Kumar 1997: 39).

Post Independent Dialogues

After independence, various phases and stages of development in the field of education have taken place and the stress was on cultural relevance and rootedness of education in India. India tried to remodel the system of education in the national interest. Many committees and commissions were set up after independence for bringing about changes in the system. Even as early as 1900, the Indian National Congress initiated debate on national education by emphasising on technical and vocational training and in 1920 Congress established indigenous schools and colleges and boycotted colonial schools. However, this failed “as the rewards of British-style education were so great that the boycott was largely ignored” (Lall 2005: 02). India’s first Prime Minister, Nehru visualised India as a secular democracy and aimed at “...the entrenchment of the pluralist/ secularist perspective in the minds of Indian people” (ibid). Thus Kothari commission (1964-66) was set up to formulate a coherent education policy to bring out Nehru’s vision for India. Scientific productivity and modern outlook were the major

educational aims of this commission. National government wanted to develop a system in the nation on emphasising the basic values “that would satisfy the cherished traditions of Indian nation and also meet the needs, interests and aspirations of the changing society” (Begulia 2004: 08) as education is a social process that helps in transmitting cherished modes of life to the next generations. The need was felt to refurbish the education system and thus Indian Education Commission was appointed in 1965 under the chairmanship of Dr. S. Kothari, Chairman, University Grants Commission, which gave its report to the Union Education Minister in 1966. It stated, “The most important and urgent reform needed in education is to transform it, to endeavour to relate it to the life, needs and aspirations of the people and thereby make it a powerful instrument of social , economic and cultural transformation necessary for realisation of the national goal” (Begulia 2004: 10). Thus the notion of a culturally relevant pedagogy was intrinsic to the recommendations of the Kothari Commission. In 1986, The National Policy on Education, which was a more elaborate and comprehensive than the 1968 one elaborated the concept of what it called the National System of Education and stated, “The concept of a National System of Education implies that, up to a given level, all students, irrespective of caste, creed, location or sex, have access to education of a comparable quality” (Dev 2005: 13). The concept of a national curricular framework with a common core as a basis for developing the National System of Education, thus, became a part of the National Policy on Education (ibid). In India ideological perspectives affected the curriculum contents and pedagogical strategies. With the change of political reigns, curriculum contents also changed. In 2000/01, the NCERT issued a National Curriculum Framework for school education under the slogan of ‘Indianize, nationalize and spiritualize’, which was largely derided as

an attempt at pushing through right wing agendas in national Policies of education (Lall 2005: 05).

However, in National Curriculum Framework, 2005 (NCF) the focus is on what and how teaching should be done in the schools and the attempt is made on culture related pedagogy, and mother tongue was perceived as the link between the larger cultural hinterland and the overt pedagogical structure:

...that the mother tongue is a crucial conduit, that social, economic and ethnic backgrounds are important for enabling children to construct their own knowledge...there is a continuing recognition that societal learning is an asset and that formal curriculum will be greatly enriched by integrating with that. There is a celebration of plurality and an understanding that within a broad framework plural approaches would lead to enhanced creativity (Pal 2008: iii).

The importance of a familiar culture and social and familial environment is increasingly gaining importance in the scheme of the Indian policy makers:

Education is not a physical thing that can be delivered through post or through a teacher. Fertile and robust education is always created, rooted in the physical and cultural soil of the child, and nourished through interaction with parents, teachers, fellow students and the community.. there is mutuality to the genuine construction of knowledge. In this transaction the teacher also learns if the child is not forced to remain passive. Since children usually perceive and observe more than grown-ups, their potential role as knowledge creators need to be appreciated (ibid: iii- iv).

In a recent report of the Committee of Central Advisory Board Of Education (CABE), integration of Culture in School Curriculum finds a prominent place:

Our school education relies almost exclusively on predetermined sets of 'competencies' to be acquired through rote memorization, thereby denying our children opportunities to exercise their innate thinking capabilities and individual creativity. Our classroom pedagogy *deprives* children opportunities to learn in a collaborative, reflective manner that would have at least helped them acquire basic social skills. We are bothered about the declining awareness among our children about their own cultural backgrounds... (National Book Trust 2010: 127).

FOLKLORE IN CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

Colonial pedagogy was perceived by many Indian thinkers as a disjunction between the realities of life and instructions in the schools. Both Gandhi and Tagore had revolted against the purely literary education introduced in India by the British system, which not only isolated the educated few from the masses but also was of no practical use to the Indians. They not only criticised the pedagogical ways and methods but also presented alternative paradigms relevant to Indian culture and learners. Tagore made use of traditional folklore of Bengal as the method of knowledge communication in his project of rural construction at Sriniketan in 1921 (Ray et al. 2005: 94-102). The project was started by Tagore to make villagers independent and self-reliant by making use of their resources and thus helped them to understand and make use of their own cultural traditions. Tagore utilised the information which the rural people had about their own folklore and culture for preparing a plan for rural upliftment (ibid: 94). He was a firm believer in the merit of indigenous knowledge and that in fields like agriculture, "there cannot be real improvement ... unless we adopt collective and co-operative farming on scientific lines" (ibid. 96) The project in Sriniketan basically stressed on the research on categories of indigenous

knowledge, training on such knowledge and finally the effective dissemination through culturally appropriate modes of communication, like various verbal and performative folkloric forms: The objectives of Tagore's plan were to integrate the classroom with the field and to exploit the knowledge and experience from such an integrative approach for the overall development of the rural mass. This include sanitation and health, better methods of growing crops and vegetables, encouragement in the production of folk art and craft. Tagore encouraged the students of Sriniketan to collect information through folklore, "gathering information on poems, songs, folklore, ruins of temples, old manuscripts, village festivals, religious scriptures, methods of cultivation" (ibid: 96). To achieve such an integrative approach to learning, it was important to work in a cooperative manner. He established various formal and non formal educational schools like night schools, *Siksha Satra* (educational monastery), *Siksha Charcha* (educational collegiums). Only theoretical knowledge unless shared and communicated is of no use:

Subjective knowledge becomes complete only when learning is brought down from the realm of abstraction to the world of concrete experience. To disseminate knowledge Tagore not only laid emphasis on seminar, library, research and training but also on fairs and festivals, recreation and village organization (ibid. 98).

Tagore believed that folklore and traditional culture "would be able to plough back our stored knowledge into the soil of mass mind" through "folk education and folk entertainment", and thus organised:

...functions like *jatra*. (an open-air opera performance), *kirtan* (act of singing the names of God), *kathakatha* (act of narration of scriptural and mythological stories), etc, and organized

different festivals to celebrate various seasons, e.g.,
varshamangal to celebrate rainy season (ibid: 98).

Festivals are often repositories of indigenous knowledge systems. One good example is the *Bihu* of Assam, one of the most popular and important festivals in India. It “deals with the practices related to cultivating the land and raising livestock” (Barua 2009: 213). The festival has three cycles of *Bihu* in a year. The beginning of the new year and the crop-planting season is associated with the *Bohag Bihu* (mid April). *Magh Bihu* is held in winters at the end of the planting season. Folksongs of the *Bihu* are generally an extensive description of seasonal activities. *Bohag Bihu* is the spring time festival and is held in pre-monsoon period and so is the reason for the festivity. Next is the *Kati Bihu*, held in middle of agricultural cycle (October-November), the time when the food resources are on the lower side because the crop is not ready, so the festival is in low spirit and during this period *tulsi* (basil, *Ocimum sanctum*) is planted and flares *mashals* (torches) are lit in the fields in order to obtain good crop of rice (ibid: 215-216). It is interesting to note that these open flares attract insects and pests to their doom, which otherwise would have infested the crops that will ripen in a few months time. *Magh Bihu* marks the end of the agricultural cycle, post harvest season is associated closely with fire ceremony that “consists of burning temple like structure made of bamboo, straw and dried banana leaves in the empty harvested paddy fields. Offerings of food are made to the god of fire” (ibid: 216). In *Bihu* special attention is also given to the cattle and even in the folk songs the reference of birds and wild animals along with the plants and fowls are found, thus highlighting that “the recreation of landscape and its flora and fauna in the words of the songs has its basis in ecology, as well as in history and geography” (ibid: 218).

Similarly, the Oram children of Orissa, acquire their initial ideas of the agriculture cycle through the festival of *Saharai*. This agricultural festival is observed by worshipping their cattle. In the contemporary MLE (Multilingual Education) programme in Orissa, teachers included this festival for effective pedagogy by discussing and learning about the festivals from the elders of the community which include stories, riddles, songs, proverbs and myths associated with the *Saharai* festival (Mishra 2009 : 65).

Tagore's model was however, not an outright rejection of all western things. He wanted to bring about a harmony between the West and the East. But this was possible through the medium of one's own language and culture. According to him, language was an important part of culturally relevant pedagogy and one's own mother tongue provided easy access to the external world and helps a learner to negotiate new experiences and knowledge. Thus, it not only helps them in understanding about their own culture but also facilitate learning about other cultures. *Viswa-Bharti* was opened with this purpose of integrating the best that both the East and West had to provide and to foster a mutual understanding and respect between cultures (Mani 1995: 160). Tagore delineates the advantages of learning through one's own language:

It was because we were taught in our language that our mind quickened, learning should as far as possible follow the process of eating. When the taste begins from the first bite the stomach is awakened to its function before it is loaded, so that its digestive juices get full play. Nothing like this happens when the Bengali boy is taught in English (ibid: 187).

Further on mentioning the difficulties learning through foreign language he mentioned:

The first bite bids fair to wrench loose the both rows of teeth – like a veritable earthquake in the mouth! And by the time he discovers that the morsel is not of the genus stone, but a digestible bonbon, half his allotted span of life is over. While one is choking and spluttering over the spelling and grammar, the inside remains starved, and when at length the taste is felt, the appetite has vanished (ibid: 188).

Tagore thus refused to divest culture from pedagogy and emphasised on the benefits of the immediacy of one's familiar world:

Communication of life can only be through a living agency. And culture, which is the life of mind, can only be imparted through man to man. Book – learning or scriptural texts may merely make us pedants. They are static and quantitative; they accumulate and are hoarded up under strict guards. Culture grows and moves and multiplies itself in life (ibid: 221).

He highlighted the importance of traditions and the past and wanted Indians to bank upon their own cultural aspects and on this he remarked:

There are some who are insularly modern, who believe that the past is the bankrupt time, leaving no assets for us but only a legacy of debts. They refuse to believe that the army that is marching forward can be fed from the rear. It is well to remind them that the great ages of renaissance in history were those when men suddenly discovered the seeds of thought in the granary of the past...the unfortunate people who have lost the harvest of their past have lost their present age. They have missed their seeds for cultivation and go begging for their bare livelihood (ibid: 222).

Tagore's method, was thus, not based on rejection, but acceptance, and his model was a syncretic one that acknowledges merit where it lies. He probably was the first Indian educationist of the twentieth century to try and exploit fully the resources of folk culture and art for the

advancement of learning, which generally Indian schools, under the colonial dispensation, had tended to ignore and thereby bring in a re-rapprochement of education with folk culture (ibid: 239).

Tagore did not distrust a culture because of its foreign origin. At the same time he did not want Indians to imitate the West, be their bookish knowledge or the infrastructural aspect. He refused to believe that the good education is only given in bigger and attractive buildings; rather he felt that the highest education may be obtained in a humble environment.

Tagore mentioned:

We in the East have had to arrive at our own solution of the problem of life. We have, as far as possible, made our food and clothing unburdensome; and this our very climate has taught us to do. We require openings in the walls more than the walls themselves. Light and air have more to do with our wearing apparel than the weavers' loom. The sun makes for us the heat-producing factors which elsewhere are required from food stuffs. All these natural advantages have moulded our life to a particular shape which I cannot believe it will be profitable to ignore in the case of our education (ibid: 190).

He felt that the ancient Indian education of the *Gurukul* system was best suited for the Indian context. This kind of education was characterised by its unique simplicity, naturalness and the usefulness of that education which were the result of close and intimate relationship and contact between the teacher, the student and the larger ecology.

Bindu Ramachandran has shown through her article "The Ecological References in the Folksongs of the Kurichiyar Tribe of Kerala" the relationship of the tribal communities in India and the ecosystem (Ramachandran 2003: 35). Worshipping trees in India is a tradition since ancient times. K.D. Upadhyaya in "Indian Botanical Folklore" mentions:

Our ancient culture has flourished in the midst of dense forests and on the banks of rivers...These secluded places were the centres of all our cultural activities- i.e. religious, moral and educational...from very ancient times, the trees and plants were regarded as animate beings and to harm them was considered a great sacrilege (Upadhyaya 1964: 15).

It has been found since ancient times that trees like *Pipal* or the *bo* (*Ficus religiosa*), the *Banyan* (*Ficus benghalensis*), *Neem* (*Azadirachta indica*), *Bel* (*Aegle marmelos*), the *Bamboo* (*Dendrocalamus strictus*), *Anvala* (*Phyllanthus emblica*), *Tulasi* (*Ocimum sanctum*), *Gudahul* or *shoe flower* (*Hibiscus rosasinensis*), *Lotus flower*, *Suryamukhi* or *Sunflower* (*Helianthus annus*) are considered sacred in Indian folklore and are worshipped (Upadhyaya 1964: 18-30). Folk beliefs consider these trees and plants sacred and now even the science has proved the medicinal and ecological values of these plants. The environmental education is the topic for discussion in today's world where the stress is on the saving and respecting the plants and trees which folklore had been teaching through the ages.

A mode of education that was closer to the nature and the learners' cultural environment was the guiding principle in the setting up of Santiniketan by Tagore, where he dreamt of reaching an integration between life and its environment in a mutually enriching relationship facilitated by a culturally relevant pedagogic structure. The ideal of *Tapovan* (nature idyll) was the guiding principle behind Tagore's initiatives at Santiniketan. Behind the façade of a traditional Indian hermitage, Tagore brought in the elements of modern education that would facilitate the physical, intellectual and spiritual development of the learners. His pedagogic paradigm was based on the experience of the child that emphasised on the sub-conscious working of the mind, which was more instinctive and primal than the conscious conditioning that the

mind was subjected to by pedagogic strategies divorced from the learners' cultural environment.

This importance on the learners mind was the guiding tenet of his *Siksha- Satra* experiment in rural education, where all teaching was done in the learners' first language through a proper correlation with life practices and diverse livelihood choices. Field work through participation was used to educate the students and related field work to pedagogy. The students learnt agricultural knowledge through gardening by growing vegetables and then gained knowledge in arithmetic by marketing the agricultural products. The field visits, personal interactions with neighbouring villagers helped students to understand and relate geography with livelihood. These field trips were very valuable as it helped a learner to identify his vocation and ability, and went a long way in positive subject formation by helping one to understand fully one's individual interest, likes and dislikes. By doing ground work, students get the first hand information about the people, their history, irrigational techniques and the living conditions of the population. With the help and guidance of the teacher the learners get to know the detailed description of the plants, animals, stones, soil and weather conditions. Thus it can help students to relate practical knowledge to the course content. The students by using gardening, weaving and by looking after household duties did not neglect the cultural side of their education and had great scope for creative self-expression:

The Siksha-Satra accords an important place to crafts of economic value and also to fine arts. Tagore considered aesthetic culture, as a medium of self-expression and as a source of inner happiness, to be of immense value in the education of children. The students are encouraged, after having had the opportunity of learning and appreciating the

arts and music, to pass on their feeling for the aesthetic to their village home and thus add a richer quality to rural life (Mani 1995: 177).

As Krishnamurti points out that the right kind of education should be based on the “understanding of one self” (Krishnamurti 2008: 17), which should help the individual to “experience the integrated process of life” (ibid: 21). As he mentions:

Ideals and blue prints for a perfect Utopia will never bring about the radical change of heart...Ideals cannot change our present values: they can be changed only by the right kind of education, which is to foster the understanding of what *is*. When we are working together for an ideal, for the future, we shape individuals according to our conception of that future; we are not concerned with human beings at all, but with our idea of what they should be. The what *should be* becomes far more important to us than what *is*, namely the individual with his complexities. If we begin to understand the individual directly instead of looking at him through the screen of what we think he should be, then we are concerned with what *is*. Then we no longer want to transform the individual into something else; our only concern is to help him to understand himself, and in this there is no personal motive or gain (ibid: 21-22).

The Role of Folklore in Gandhian Pedagogy

Mahatma Gandhi too believed in a practical scheme of education which is also culturally congruent as he too believed in self sufficient education. He took initiative in 1937 to make an independent scheme of national education and he held an All India National Education Conference at Wardha and discussed the scheme of Basic Education or Wardha Scheme (Jayapalan 2005: 17). Before this in 1904 and 1910, Gandhi started two productive schools, Phoenix Farm and Tolstoy Farm

in South Africa after the famous Russian intellectual, Count Leo Tolstoy. These had resemblance with Tagore's Viswa- Bharati.

His basic education plan basically was "essentially socialization plan, introducing a new element in the culture of Indian schools" (Kumar 2005: 121). Apart from literary education, he also stressed on the importance of physical culture of the children. Students were supposed to do all kinds of work from cooking to scavenging. They were close to nature and trees around. The main importance was attached to culture of the heart and physical health and vocational training. Teachers and students work together and thus the students' continuously learn from their teachers that negated the divide between diktats and practice. Gandhi believed that the true text book for the student is the teacher (Gandhi 1948: 407-412). Gandhi's proposal for 'basic education' is of far reaching consequence in the evolution of the theoretical premises for pedagogic practices in independent India. According to Gandhi, fundamentals of Basic Education are:

- All education to be true must be self-supporting, that is to say, in the end it will pay its expenses excepting the capital which will remain intact.
- In it the cunning of the hand will be utilized even up to the final stage, that is to say, hands of the pupils will be skilfully working at some industry for some period during the day.
- All education must be imparted through the medium of the provincial language.
- In this there is no room for giving sectional religious training. Fundamental universal ethics will have full scope.
- This education, whether it is confined to children or adults, male or female, will find its way to the home of the pupils

- Since millions of students receiving this education will consider themselves as of the whole of India, they must learn an inter-provincial language (Gandhi 2001: 189).

Gandhi felt that schools should be epitomes of virtues and reflect all that is best in Indian social life. Schools should help children to develop the essence of the right thinking individual and prepare them for life. Gandhi felt that culturally irrelevant texts books and course contents only help in alienating children from society and render them strangers in their own country. Gandhi's famous definition of education is:

By education I mean all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man- body, mind and spirit. Literacy is not the end of education nor even the beginning. It is only one of the means whereby man and woman can be educated. Literacy in itself is no education. I would therefore begin the child's education by teaching it a useful handicraft and enabling it to produce from the moment it begins its training. I hold that the highest development of the mind and the soul is possible under such a system of education (Gandhi 2001: 186).

Gandhi's concept of *Nai Talim* (new training) was integral to his notion of basic education and training in handicraft was an important aspect of his model, as he felt that local crafts immediately connected the younger generation to the regeneration of the local economy, eco-system, society, culture and the prevailing mores of physical culture. However, it goes beyond the much proclaimed training in crafts.

Basic Education aimed at the learners' active involvement with their prevalent social and cultural condition that would lead to an ethics of productive engagement as a way of emancipation from drudgery and exploitation:

His educational philosophy was closely related to his seminal concerns about the removal of tyranny and unfreedom: *Gram Swaraj*, local self-reliance, bread-labour, the need to arrest the

various forms of alienation individuals and communities faced under conditions of haphazard colonial Industrialization (Sethi 2007: 07).

His model of education finds echo in contemporary concerns articulated in the field of child psychology for reforming and organising the system of education. According to Kumar, these implications can be listed in the following manner:

- the child's immediate milieu must serve as a resource for the re-discovery of accepted knowledge;
- children must have the freedom to create their own models of knowledge about the world;
- learning must provide for opportunities for children to be physically active; and
- Classroom activities must resonate and extend the child's life at home and in its surroundings (Kumar 1997: 97).

Gandhi's proposal of introducing local crafts and productive skills in the school was basically an idea functionally to relate the school with the local milieu, whereas symbolic implication was to give substantial place to the "oppressed groups of Indian society" (ibid: 10-11). Gandhi then thought of education system to revive village economy life in India by relating it to education. He believed that child's intellect and heart should be trained along with hands so as to make education connected with and centred on the child's social and cultural environment (Mani 1995: 52-53). Gandhi did not believe in education of mere acquisition of information rather he felt that the fruits of knowledge must be shared together by everyone. He viewed that sound education must be rooted in the culture and life of the soil and if it is to be so rooted then there must be continuity in the social and cultural aspects of life:

The greatest evil of the present educational method, in itself evidence of deeper defects, is that it has broken up the

continuity of our existence. All sound education is meant to fit one generation to take up the burden of the previous and to keep up the life of the community without breach or disaster. The burden of social life is continuous and if at any stage one generation gets completely out of touch with the efforts of its predecessors or in any case gets ashamed of itself or its culture, it is lost (ibid: 19-20).

Folklore, Pedagogy and the Indian paradigm

The linkages between folklore and pedagogy in India have its serious academic antecedents in the philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore, who wanted to move towards a naturalist creed in the teaching learning process. Tagore was inclined towards what can be termed as an ecological pedagogy with deep roots in both natural and cultural environment. For Tagore, folk forms like lullabies and oral tradition in the form of poetry, like *Chhelebhulano Chharha* (rhymes for pacifying children) are crucial in connecting a child to its cultural hinterland. These rhymes are recited by mothers for their children in various situations and the poems vary in emotions generally depending on varying social conditions (Sen and Tagore 1996: 02). These poems depict the cultural and social influence working on a child's life during the formative years. Tagore made a pioneering effort to awaken the people to the richness of their cultural and social inheritance during a crucial period in the Nation's history, when "a two- sided process of acculturation, with representatives of Indian culture and European culture expanding and enriching their knowledge of each other" (ibid: 03). This was at a time when "folklore and folk beliefs were viewed as superstitions, as faulty ideas that society needed to discard". For Tagore this was dangerous, as it would lead to a drastic devaluation of self esteem and a total surrender to the emerging forces of colonial modernity. Tagore was a cultural pragmatist that sought a balance

between deep rooted traditional knowledge and emergent forms that stressed on the rational and the scientific. Tagore was instrumental in channelling “much of the nationalistic fervor of his countrymen into appreciation for the older folk and epic traditions” as he was very much aware about “multiform quality of folklore” as he recognised this as the “verbal creation of the society” (ibid: 03) that points out to basic conception of the world and society beyond the empirical and rational. He found folk forms relevant in the sense that it was a bridge between the world and the “community experience in the composition process” (ibid: 34). Tagore’s emphasis on “spontaneity” is an important element of creativity in oral traditions as he distinguishes the organised thought process and the random and spontaneous thoughts of folk forms:

Rhymes, like children, are born naturally of the human mind.

This claim is a significant one. Disconnected reflections on the outside world drift regularly across our minds without any conscious effort. They take on different shapes and forms, effortlessly jumping from one subject to another. Just as dust, pollen, smells, noises, leaves, and drops of moisture float aimlessly in the world around us, colors, smells, sounds, fantasies, scattered thoughts, snatches of conversation, and discarded fragments of experience wander randomly through our minds. When we concentrate our thoughts on a particular topic, however, these excess murmurs cease, these thoughts fly away, these fantasies shatter, and our mind and imagination start flowing in a single stream (ibid: 39).

Thus, through folklore, he aimed at the freedom from all bounded experiences of learning. He believed in complete freedom that leads to the joy of learning – learning by exploring and inquisitiveness, creativity and fantasy. Folklore, if used as a medium of pedagogy through folksongs and poems make learning natural and congruent to the

learners. Changes of seasons, important calendar events like festivals of spring, rain, or autumn are all reflected in the folklore and thus learners draw inspiration directly from their own folk- literature and popular traditions rooted in lived experiences, and also learn about agriculture and geography. Tagore believes in removing all fetters in the learning process, and reposes his faith on the child's experience, as expressed in *Lokashahitya* (Folk literature):

If one thinks about it, one realizes that there is nothing as old as a child. Adults have been deeply influenced by time, place, and culture, but the child has remained the same for the last hundred thousand years. Eternal and unchanging, the child is born every day among us in human form, yet he remains just as fresh, sweet, and innocent as on the first day. The reason that child remain so universally pure and clean is that they are Nature's creations; adults, in contrast, are to a great extent the product of their own doings. Rhymes, like children, are born naturally of the human mind (Sen and Tagore 1996: 06).

Folklore flows naturally and is thus natural and complements the child and facilitates learning in a natural environment. Tagore in Santiniketan tried to preserve the indigenous culture and also did not reject the best in Western culture so that the best of West can be combined with the East (Mani 1995: 151). Freedom to choose and think was the most important feature in his conception of effective pedagogy.

Indian thinkers continue to reflect much of Tagore's concern well into the twentieth century. Jiddu Krishnamurti, an Indian thinker of eminence of the contemporary times, talks about the importance of the ecological imagination:

Education is not just to pass examinations, take a degree...but also be able to listen to the birds, to see the sky, to see the extraordinary beauty of a tree, and the shape of the hills, and to

feel with them, to be really, directly in touch with them
(Krishnamurti 2006: 08).

Freedom was equally important for Gandhi, who saw education as a liberating agency, 'education that liberates' was the motto of the Gujarat Vidyapeeth founded by Gandhi in 1920. Freedom was the key to Gandhi, and he considered that learning to be worthless, if it did not infuse courage and dispel fear from one's mind. He wanted students to shed fear and become courageous and by freedom in education he might have meant spiritual liberation:

The ancient aphorism, Education is that which liberates, is as true today as it was before. Education here does not mean mere spiritual knowledge nor does liberation signify only spiritual liberation after death. Knowledge includes all training that is useful for the service of mankind and liberation means freedom from all manner of servitude even in the present life. Servitude is of two kinds: slavery to domination from outside and to one's own artificial needs. The knowledge acquired in the pursuit of this ideal alone constitutes true study (Mani1995:15).

Krishnamurti, on the same lines feels that the learning is effective when there is no fear as "fear is what prevents the flowering of the mind" (Krishnamurti 2006: 40). Courage and freedom are very important aspects in education. Schools, like society reflect the inter-group relations and include cultural and structural content. Pedagogy and curriculum content should encourage reflection on culture and society, thereby relating pedagogy to the cultural aspects. Freedom of thought and speech forms the basis for critical thinking, which can be achieved if there is no fear in the minds of the learners.

The present education system develop fear in the minds of the learner in the form of competition, exams, marks and grades and the students who

use their deposited account properly are so considered to be good and successful students. It is revealing to note that most faculty members treat curriculum the way bankers treat investments. This kind of “conventional education makes independent thinking extremely difficult” as “conformity leads to mediocrity” (Krishnamurti 2008: 09):

Life is a well of deep waters. One can come to it with small buckets and draw only a little water, or one can come with large vessels, drawing plentiful waters that will nourish and sustain. While one is young is the time to investigate, to experiment with every thing. The school should help its young people to discover their vocations and responsibilities, and not merely cram their minds with facts and technical knowledge; it should be the soil in which they can grow without fear, happily and integrally. To educate a child is to help him to understand freedom and integration. To have freedom there must be order, which virtue alone can give; and integration can take place only when there is great simplicity (ibid: 45).

This is also reflected in Freire’s idea that one cannot have a revolution unless education becomes a practice of freedom.

Gandhi’s education scheme also aimed at creating a harmonious society through the freedom from divisions in the society between the ‘haves’ and ‘have -nots’ and was “a technique for awakening the inherent strength in the common man, not for his own redemption only but for that of mankind as a whole and for putting each individual in charge of his own destiny” (Mani 1995: 63). Thus ‘freedom’ has emerged as a key concept for Indian pedagogic paradigm, and continues to influence much of contemporary thinking in the area:

...the key to any curricular planning or pedagogic practice is freedom. Although unbridled freedom of any kind is not favored, freedom remains a necessary condition for allowing autonomy to stakeholders within a system. India has a tradition

of valorizing academic freedom, but this tradition has not been critiqued and recontextualized because of colonial intervention and other factors... Such an imperative is implicated in the very objective of education to give voice to the voiceless, enfranchise to the marginalized, and enable learners to set themselves free from the discursive struggle (Baral 2006: 482).

A falling back on ideas articulated by Gandhi and Tagore, and its moderation against the background of present social and cultural reality, and reinventing a culturally relevant pedagogy for the present times, where people's expressive behaviour and traditional inheritance will guide the formulation of strategies and contents is increasingly emerging as a focal point of debate in Indian academia. Krishna Kumar in his book *What's Worth Teaching* reflects the above mentioned concerns. He feels that curriculum framing is associated with the sensitivity and the perception and the vision of a particular kind of society. He mentions about two routes : the first route is deciding the worth what we want to teach in view of the learner and the second consists of determining the worth in terms of the intrinsic values of what we want to teach. Route one is the learner's view point and second route is concerning the value of knowledge (Kumar 1997: 02-07).

Authority or power of the pedagogic content, method or practices was intrinsic to colonial education. In a post Independent epoch, power from above should give way to a socio-cultural dialogue. Krishna Kumar feels that pedagogic formulations should be treated as an act of deliberation where "curriculum deliberation is a social dialogue" and the "wider its reach, the stronger its grasp of the social conditions in which education is to function" (ibid: 14). Education should thus prepare the individual for his place in society so that he should be able to find happiness. Education should make a child into a balanced adult who should have the skills and capabilities to move out freely from his native surroundings:

The right kind of education consists in understanding the child as he is without imposing upon him an ideal of what we think he should be. To enclose him in the framework of an ideal is to encourage him to conform, which breeds fear and produces in him a constant conflict between what he is and what he should be; and all inward conflicts have their outward manifestations in society (Krishnamurti 2008: 26).

Indian society is culturally plural and traditional indigenous knowledge in the form of folklore as a body of community knowledge can contribute a lot towards creating a culturally responsive curriculum for children in different socio-cultural contexts (Mishra 2009: 03), where learners can actively learn from each other in a culturally interactive milieu:

No educational system can, of course, be wholly detached from its specific cultural milieu. If it is a lively and self-critical system, it can, however, become receptive to other cultures and endeavour to broaden its perimeters. Instead of resenting and ignoring diversity, it can welcome it and encourage its children to enter into the spirit of and appreciate other cultures, religions, ways of life (Parekh 1986: 26).

Local knowledge, if connected with the formal education can help children to understand the roots and values of their and other cultural aspects. The latest National Curriculum Framework 2005 proposes to connect knowledge to life outside the school as one of the five guiding principles for curriculum development (NCERT 2008: viii). National Curriculum Framework opens with a quotation from Rabindranath Tagore's essay, *Civilisation and Progress*, which is about childhood:

When I was a child I had the freedom to make my own toys out of trifles and create my own games from imagination. In my happiness my playmates had their full share, in fact the complete enjoyment of my games depended upon their taking

part in them. One day, in this paradise of our childhood, entered a temptation from the market world of the adult. A toy bought from an English shop was given to one of our companions; it was perfect, big and wonderfully life-like. He became proud of the toy and less mindful of the game; he kept that expensive thing carefully away from us, glorying in his exclusive possession of it, feeling himself superior to his playmates whose toys were cheap. I am sure if he could have used the modern language of history he would have said that he was more civilised than ourselves to the extent of his owning that ridiculously perfect toy. One thing he failed to realise in his excitement – a fact which at the moment seemed to him insignificant – that this temptation obscured something a great deal more perfect than his toy, the revelation of the perfect child. The toy merely expressed his wealth, but not the child's creative spirit, not the child's generous joy in his play, his open invitation to all who were his compeers to his play-world (ibid: xix).

Chapter 2 of NCF on 'Learning and Knowledge' envisages the importance of oral and craft traditions as the "oral lore and traditions of craft are a unique intellectual property, varied and sophisticated, preserved by innumerable groups in our society" (ibid: 27). The inclusion of these would help the learners which could enrich them and the society. The NCF further mentions about the local knowledge and its importance to the environment for better learning and knowledge as the aim of "knowledge is to connect with the world". It also mentions that India is very rich in traditional knowledge, which is passed on from one generation to the next- like naming and categorising plants, ways of harvesting and storing water or practicing sustainable agriculture, which can be in contrast to the school education on those issues. For these, teachers can help children to study local traditions and their practical

ecological knowledge as compared to the school approach (ibid: 30 - 32).

The tangible dimension of folklore comes through items of material culture and can provide the opportunity to use them as educational props for a culturally relevant pedagogic environment. Gandhi believed in the relationship of classroom and the community. Education to him is contextual and can be best imparted when theory and practice are combined; craft centered productive work relates the practical learning of the student to the environment. Handicrafts help in better understanding of nature and environment because pedagogy is much broader than mere schooling. Society demands education, which is designed in relation to the needs of the community and the individual. He emphasised on learning by doing because he did not believe in bookish knowledge and felt that the child learns more from his own activity than from repeated instruction in the class room. Gandhi viewed his *charkha* (spinning wheel) as the symbol of nation's prosperity:

I...claim for the Charkha the honour of being able to solve the problem of economic distress in a most natural, simple, inexpensive and businesslike manner. The Charkha, therefore, is not only useless...but it is a useful and indispensable article for every home. It is the symbol of nation's prosperity and, therefore, freedom. It is a symbol of not of commercial war but of commercial peace...I may deserve the curse of posterity for many mistakes of omission and commission, but I am confident of earning its blessings for suggesting a revival of the Charkha. I stake my all on it. For every revolution of the wheel spins peace, good-will and love (Gandhi 2001: 114).

However, Gandhi's view has also invited strong derision, whereby he was perceived to be anti progress and anti modern. Gandhi's *charkha*, an important item of material culture for Gandhi, and one that teaches the

students to be self-sufficient, also doubles up for many as a symbol of India's backwardness. Mulk Raj Anand, a famous Indian Novelist, in his *On Education* commented that Gandhian model of *Basic Education* would turn "good little minds" into "morons" who would "vegetate within the limits of their self-sufficient communities":

The dream of perfecting good little minds on the basis of Khadi and non-violence, so that these morons vegetate within the limits of their self-sufficient communities, is not only impossible in an India where every village is already inundated with cheap machine-made goods produced by foreign and indigenous capitalists, but is likely to bring about the very opposite of all those qualities which the Mahatma seeks to create in the average Indian (Kumar 2005: 189).

The Dialectics of the *Charkha* and the Microscope

The antithesis of Gandhi's *charkha* was often seen as the microscope, of which Nehru was seen as the votary. Nehru's dream of civilisation was based on science and industrialisation, where microscope symbolised a modern, industrial economy and a society controlled by a state whose legitimacy extended to its cultural projections. *Charkha* on the other hand symbolised the main challenge for Indian society and its pedagogy, whose primary aim was the enhancing the stamina and power of the oppressed masses. Gandhi represented *Charkha* as an instrument to free individuals from capitalist exploitation,

The spinning wheel (*charkha*), for Mahatma Gandhi was not just a tool of political emancipation but it was a metaphor of 'ancient work ethics' and the goal of the 'swaraj' (self-rule) in Gandhian framework had to be mediated in and through the 'daily life'. For him, 'it is in the daily life where dharma and practicality come together' and, spinning wheel was the realisation of this possibility (Jha 2004: 3114)

In Gandhian discourse *Charkha* was a part of a vibrant Indian material culture that serves as a weapon against the foreign production of goods and was also a symbol of pedagogical aspect. Gandhi used the notion of culturally relevant and congruent pedagogy as an alternative to the British education when he advocated the inclusion of traditional practical and cottage skills such as weaving and agriculture.

From a contemporary pedagogical perspective *charkha* and microscope can be symbols of a secular epistemology for schools, where the possibility to learn from one's own actions or experience exists, rather than the word of someone in authority. According to Nehru, such a secular epistemology is in fact desirable:

It is well recognized now that a child's education should be intimately associated with some craft or manual activity. The mind is stimulated thereby and there is a co-ordination between the activities of the mind and the hands. So also the mind of a growing boy or girl is stimulated by the machine. It grows under the machine's impact (under proper conditions, of course, and not as an exploited and unhappy worker in a factory) and opens out new horizons. Simple scientific experiments, peeps into the microscope, and an explanation of the ordinary phenomena of nature bring excitement in their train, an understanding of some of life's processes, and a desire to experiment and find out instead of relying on set phrases and old formulac. Self-confidence and the co-operative spirit grow, and frustration, arising out of the miasma of the past, lessens. A civilization based on ever-changing and advancing mechanical techniques leads to this. Such a civilization is a marked change, a jump almost from the older type, and is intimately connected with modern industrialization (Nehru 1977: 409).

Though Nehru advocated for modernisation, he always had the liking for folklore and folkways. He felt that the folkways had the “virility and zest” of tribal culture and found them “disciplined and much more democratic than most other Indians” (Vidyarthi 1987: 96-97). Nehru’s ideas flowed from a pragmatic attitude and in *The Discovery of India* he mediates the big versus small debate:

...even the enthusiastic advocates for cottage and small - scale industries recognize that big- scale industry is, to a certain extent, necessary and inevitable; only they would like to limit it as far as possible. Superficially then the question becomes one of emphasis and adjustment of the two forms of production and economy. It can hardly be challenged that, in the context of the modern world, no country can be politically and economically independent, even within the framework of international interdependence, unless it is highly industrialized and has developed its power resources to the utmost. Nor can it achieve or maintain high standards of living and liquidate poverty without the aid of modern technology in almost every sphere of life (Nehru 1977: 407).

The seeds of a realisation of a true multi-cultural credo in contemporary Indian pedagogy are perhaps intrinsic to the view of Gandhi, Tagore or Krishnamurti, where the aim is to encourage mutual respect amongst different cultural group of a plural India and encourage aspiration for greater heights from the vantage of being entranced in one’s own cultural and social milieu. The attempt is to:

... release a child from the confines of the ethnocentric straitjacket and to awaken him to the existence of other cultures, societies and ways of life and thought. It is intended to de -condition the child as much as possible in order that he can go out into the world as free from biases and prejudices as possible and able and willing to explore its rich diversity.

Multi-cultural education is therefore an education in freedom – freedom *from* inherited biases and narrow feelings and sentiments, as well as freedom *to* explore other cultures and perspectives and make one's own choices in full awareness of available and practicable alternatives. Multi – cultural education is therefore not a departure from, nor incompatible with, but a further refinement of, the liberal idea of education. It does not cut off a child from his own culture; rather it enables him to enrich, refine and take a broader view of it without losing his roots in it. The inspiring principal of multicultural education then is to sensitize the child to the inherent plurality of the world – the plurality of systems, beliefs, ways of life, cultures, modes of analyzing familiar experiences, ways of looking at historical events and so on (Parekh 1986: 26-27).

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CHAPTER IV

THEORY AND PRACTICE: AN INTERFACE

It is interesting to note that much of the theoretical concerns articulated by important Indian thinkers of both the past and the present have *influenced experiments in pedagogy in the country*. Two community based programmes in the state of Orissa, “Multilingual Education” and “*Srujan*” tried to provide culturally relevant education as “community involvement is the prerequisite in multilingual education and the cluster approach (Srujan) to the tribal education in which a host of child-friendly activities are implemented to make learning meaningful” (Mishra 2009: 62). In Multilingual Education (MLE) programme, the child through the mother tongue expresses and explores the community knowledge and then the experiential knowledge is connected with the new knowledge of the wider world:

The MLE programme provides a platform for community participation in the implementation of mother tongue- based multilingual education in Orissa...The action took off from discussions held in a workshop in which community members and the MLE teachers had participated. This is a significant departure from the manner in which the state- driven uniform curriculum is prepared (ibid: 63).

The programme was initiated through discussions with the community members, teachers. The general apprehension expressed by the community was that their culture was under duress and its continued survival at stake. Their expectation from education was that it would help in the regeneration of their cultural values and ideals. Learning for them was primarily through the collective lived experience of the people

and folk based forms and institutions like fairs, festivals, and narrative forms like tales and legends would all go a long way in the sustenance and revival of their traditional values and languages. A series of workshops in the villages amongst the community members were held to generate a school curriculum with relevant cultural themes (ibid: 64). Many riddles related to natural sciences and mathematics was incorporated as riddles present “visual metaphors that represent the wit and intelligence in indigenous knowledge” (ibid: 68).

The *Srujun* Programme in Orissa is based on the cluster approach to tribal education. A cluster consists of ten to twelve schools and ten to twelve clusters constitute a block. The *Srujun* programmed attached great value to the indigenous knowledge of the communities involved and children learnt through the stories, traditional games, art and craft, and nature study. The basic idea underlying the programmes was the notion of the community as the creator of knowledge (ibid: 68). This programme was introduced in Orissa in 2007-08 and it has been prepared on the guidelines drawn “from various sources like American Folklore Centers, NCF 2005, and international Story Telling Association” (ibid: 70).

Similarly, Heritage Assam and UNICEF is running a joint project on reviving the art of story telling for the purpose of developing Assamese language skills amongst the children of plantation workers in the tea gardens of Assam. The project is based on the organisation of story telling competitions. Santanoo Tamuly, who is the president of Heritage Assam, an NGO headquartered in the city of Jorhat, Assam, mentioned that this project was envisaged when it was observed that the languages of the children of the tea gardens were different from Assamese children and the children were finding it difficult in learning subjects that were being primarily taught in the Assamese language, the medium of

instruction for most schools in tea gardens of the Brahmaputra valley in Assam (Bhattacharyya 2010:05). In the project, workshops are held after identifying the young story tellers who are fluent in Assamese as well as the first language of the learners. Santanoo Tamuly mentions that:

As there is no school offering education in their mother tongue, these children were faced with a language disadvantage arising from differences in the languages of home and school. With few teachers having bilingual abilities, the children mostly lost interest in the subjects and this may be the prime reason for the large number of school drop outs from this community...It is against this background that an initiative on story telling was conceptualised and implemented in 20 identified locations to develop the Assamese language skills and desired levels of listening, speaking and comprehension through systematic story telling sessions (ibid).

The findings of the session were great. As the parameters of the session were concentration, conversation and participation seventy percent of the students went up from C to A in all the parameters after thirteen sessions of story telling by the trained tellers. The stories were selected from *Buri Air Xadhu* (Grandmother's Tales) and *Panchatantra* stories. Thus, it can be seen here that folklore can serve as important learning props to help children to gain academically as well as connect to the wider cultural milieu. It not only makes learning interesting and participative but also helps in improving basic skills like conversation communication:

The tales and songs, myths and legends, riddles and proverbs along with folktales, all in the oral tradition, take children back to lived lives and hence help them understand their world better. This whole physical and intellectual creation of the community, shared across generations and perpetuated by

tradition, is what is called community knowledge (Mishra 2009: 61).

Curriculum based on Community knowledge can be perceived as a way out from hegemonic imposition by powerful state machineries, and appropriative discourses aimed at mainstreaming, and which see cultural differences as a threat. This is an apprehension expressed by champions of a culturally plural curriculum in India:

...following the culturally-dominant curriculum and aim at mainstreaming all tribal children in the dominant state language and culture. Till now we don't have any evidence that the tribal community or the tribal teachers have their share in curriculum development. Even the teachers from tribal communities do not use tribal languages in the classroom for the comprehension of the tribal children (ibid: 58).

Article 350(A) of the Constitution of India states that state shall impart education to the linguistic minority children through their mother tongue at the primary stage and later this has also been reinforced through NCF 2005, where it is mentioned that children come to the school with “two or three languages already in place at the oral- aural level” and languages are “the medium through which most knowledge is constructed” and it is very important to “recognise the inbuilt linguistic potential” because “languages get socio-culturally constructed and change in our day-to- day interactions” (NCERT 2008: 36-37).

The National Curriculum Framework document is exhaustive and put emphasis on various aspects of pedagogic formulations and its implementation, with a special stress on the “language potentials of children, language education and knowledge creation. At the same time, it has also been labelled as being “quite evasive” and “deceptively challenging document” (Shrimali 2005: 41). As Anubhuti Maurya points out:

A cursory reading of this curriculum framework can not fail to impress the reader. All the correct concerns have been voiced – inequalities based on gender, caste and class; the immense burden upon students that makes learning a joyless activity; acceptance of a multiplicity of cultures and languages that make India etc...there is a great divide between the kind of education system that exists on the ground and the kind visualized in this document and there is no bridge over this divide (Maurya 2005: 59, 63).

Thus, it is felt that an interface between the different dimensions of pedagogic formulations expressed by different thinkers and the practical world of pedagogy in action would be an endeavour that would help in the understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy as it is envisaged and practiced in contemporary India. North East India, with its plural socio-cultural fabric, provides a challenging site for such an exploration.

NEGOTIATING CULTURAL PLURALITY IN THE SELECTED SCHOOLS

In the schools selected for the study, cultural plurality amongst both students and teachers is a marked feature as most of them hail from different cultural entities of the state of Assam and geographical locations of India. In Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs) the teachers belong to different parts of the country and in Army Public School there are there are eighteen teachers who are wives of defence personnel and rest of the teachers and employees are from the local populace which is again a culturally plural society. Local students are also drawn mostly from in and around Tezpur and its suburbs, which is culturally a very varied space. Thus, the schools are steeped in cultural diversity, and ideally provides a vibrant atmosphere of inter cultural exchanges, both informally and in formal school occasions. It is interesting to note that the plural culture ambience generates its own group dynamics in the schools; it is not uncommon to find students changing languages in the course of a

single conversation in an informal environment. Thus Hindi, Assamese and English are used alternately, thereby proving that learners are being influenced by each other's language. It is also not uncommon to find students exchanging tiffin, thereby experimenting with food from various cultures. Food is a very important and complex marker of group dynamics in the schools, as groups are generated based on the choice of foods, especially over the choice of vegetarian and non vegetarian foods. While, quite often, children experiment on the sly by tasting foods that are 'forbidden' at home, it is also observed that some children are scandalised by others who do not conform to normative food behaviour. Since the schools selected for the study are all day schools, it is important to note that children go back to the normative cultures of their home and family every afternoon after school is over, and thus would present findings that would be markedly different from boarding schools. Thus, there is a constant movement between group dynamics generated at schools and familial norms at home. In these schools, which have a pronounced presence of personnel from the defence services and local bureaucracy, it is not uncommon to find group dynamics generated as per the status of the parents in the official hierarchy. Thus morals of the parents also influence the opinions of the children, and it is not uncommon to find a group of children deriding another group who are the sons and daughters of 'party going parents' or 'meat eating families' and vice versa. Thus, cultural and ethnic prejudices are both transgressed and reinforced, depending on case specific instances in a culturally plural ambience at schools. It is often found that exposure to cultural narratives from diverse cultural groups over a sustained period of time enables a learner to form individual opinions and imbibe liberal values that are secular and mutually accommodative, and which can transcend the prejudices practiced at

home. Folklore is an important prop, whereby children partake of mutual narratives and material culture, in forming an understanding of each other.

INFERENCES FROM THE FIELD

Negotiating Cultural Difference through Food lore

The case of Monica, a young girl from the south Indian state of Karnataka, is interesting in the sense that it shows the value of associating familiar items of food and the culture narrative around it as effective pedagogic tool that can awaken the interest of learners to other culture as well as help them overcome difficulties. Monica was admitted to standard I in May 2010. Monica, who was six plus was different from other students. She could not speak and hear. She suffered from partial hearing and total speech disability. On a particular occasion, the class had a lesson on 'Food' and the teacher was teaching through 'Learning by Sharing by discovering facts'. There were thirty two students present out of forty students. Before taking the class, the teacher explained to the researcher that she would be teaching 'Food' through 'active learning', the pedagogic strategy they follow in primary classes to make classroom learning 'interesting'. Since it was raining that day, the teacher would not take them out and make them eat in the lawns, which is otherwise an outdoor activity. The teacher made one triangle on the board and wrote vitamins on the lowest base. Proteins were written upper to this, then carbohydrates and Fats, at the apex. Then the teacher enquired about the fruits and vegetables brought by the students, and explained Vitamins by relating it to those familiar items of food. The students opened their tiffin boxes and those who had brought food rich in Vitamins started shouting and announcing their goodies. Then the teacher moved on to Proteins and same question was asked as to who all had brought *dal* (pulses), *Chane* (grams), egg, fish. In carbohydrates, many had brought *chapattis* (whole wheat bread), *dosa*, *idli* (rice based steamed and fried

items popular in the southern states of India)) rice. Next, she described about fats. Then finally, she asked the children to explain each other about their tiffins. There was lot of excitement in the class. All this while, Monica was looking around and was trying to observe everything very curiously, then another student asked her to open the tiffin through the actions and finally the co-student opened tiffin for her. She looked at the student very happily and started eating her tiffin. The seating arrangement of the classroom was circular and there were eight tables and the students were sitting around the tables. When the researcher and the teacher were discussing, one student came to his teacher and asked the name of the dish which his friend had brought. The teacher called his friend and asked him to tell the name, it was *peetha* (traditional Assamese rice cakes with fillings). Then the teacher announced that everyone will tell their friends the name of the dishes which they have brought. Monica was giving the impression of 'feeling good' and was showing keen interest. The teacher explained:

I think Monica does not understand much and I too feel that I am not qualified to deal with her perfectly; however as per her parents she is happy to come to the school and happy being in the schools. Other students too like interacting with her in their own way. I generally do not interfere and check when they interact with her. She is not gaining much academically but behaviour is seen to be changing according to her parents. Even I have observed that "she feels good" sitting with the children of her age.

The teacher, who was also the Head Mistress of the primary section, feels that Monica remains very happy in the school and is very creative in art and drawing. She also looks interested and inquisitive. If she does not understand anything she would come near the teacher, would touch the teacher, and would show the teacher about the written thing in her

copy and the teacher would try to explain it in her own way. It is very interesting to note here that the teachers have not got any special training to teach differently abled children but was using her own strategies. It was interesting to note that this teacher explained the food items by using maximum verbal words and other teacher(in the second class) explained body parts with actions and the girl was 'looking attentive' in both the classes.

For the topic Food in the classroom, the teacher explained this sharing of lunch and named this as 'community lunch', where they not only gain information regarding the theory of the chapter about food but they get to know the different dishes of different culture. This class was related to learning by experience. It was observed that most of the children were more interested in eating and sharing, they were not interested in knowing the names of the dishes except Rohan, the son of an army man from the state of Uttar Pradesh in North India, who came and asked about '*peetha*'. This boy was looking older than other students and teacher mentioned that he was age wise, the senior most boy in the class. It is interesting to note that *peetha* is a traditional Assamese food mostly linked up with the harvesting festival of Bihu, and is an important part of traditional material culture as well as food habit. As a result of Rohan's inquisitiveness, the whole class came to know about the traditional relevance of *peetha*, and the fact that it is also prepared and eaten outside the festive occasion. The discussion finally led to a much wider understanding of the relation between food and culture. As food is one of the folkways and this kind of "community lunch" means relating pedagogy and food through folklore. Sabina Magliocco had discussed the merit of relating foodways with geography in her class of Italian-American students. Recipes are representative of both climatic and social conditions and apart from cultural diversity, geographical features

can be very well elucidated through food and food habits (Magliocco 1992:455).

Food lore, cultural prejudices and teenage binding

Lunch and tiffin sharing amongst the senior sections is a practice which the students enjoy during the break time in the absence of the teacher. It was observed regularly during the field work that amongst the students of standard IX, 'food' served as peer bonding device and mode for the mutual exploration of familial and cultural environment. As the researcher was not known to the students, it was easy to observe the group dynamics of the students without inhibiting them; the researcher could have come across as a parent of some other student or an outsider. A group of about twenty five students of this class generally sit together to eat their tiffins during lunch break. The composition of the group consists of local students of Assamese, Bengalis, tribals and the students from Northern India from U.P, Bihar and Punjab. Out of them six to seven students were vegetarian and others were all Non- Vegetarians. It was interesting to note that as an unwritten law, the children were not seen eating their own tiffins and would dig into tit bits brought by other students. Out of vegetarians, there were couple of students in whose homes, cooking non- vegetarian food was a taboo but they were found relishing non- vegetarian delicacies brought by their friends. While interacting with the students of this group, they shared an interesting anecdote with the researcher. Parents of two students met during a Parent-Teacher Meeting and got talking while waiting their turn to come. After their detailed introduction, one of the parents told the other about this great concept of sharing the tiffins with others and as to how her daughter used to relish the tiffin brought by her son. However, to the researcher's utter disbelief the parent instead of taking this into the right stride went home and admonished her son for sharing food with others,

which as per the parents was totally against their culture. On further interaction and observation the researcher realised that the children had continued to share tiffins in spite of being educated about the ‘cultural values’ at home, and considered such values as ‘old- fashioned’ and ‘vague’ custom. Interesting lore on food was also shared by the students, as to why certain foods were detrimental or certain food beneficial. The students learnt about interesting facts on food habit from each other, and many students expressed a keen desire to know each others culinary range. Initial prejudices and at times horror gives away to inquisition and curiosity. One good example is the Assamese preparation of ‘*khar*’, an alkali food prepared in a true folk way, by burning dried banana leaves and trunks, and distilling pure water through a container with residual ash. It is popularly believed that it is beneficial for a host of ailments if combined with food. Folklore about bamboo shoots, a delicacy in North East India, abounds, and how it adds to the value of preparation made of pork or beef. Students were able to overcome initial stigmas associated with ‘forbidden’ and ‘alien’ foods and understand that difference in food habit is natural and legitimate, and no one habit is superior to the other. However, it is interesting to note that good natured banter on each others food habit continues to circulate amongst the students, with the vegetarians often called the ‘*ghas-phus walas*’ (Hindi slang meaning grass and shrub eaters) and the non vegetarians called the ‘*gosht walas*’ (flesh eaters).

Folk Narratives, Cultural Interaction and Effective Learning

Folk narratives are an effective pedagogical tool that can supplement regular methods and also awaken the curiosity of the learners. Children love hearing stories and discussing them. They get so involved with the overall structure and language of the stories that students start using vernacular idioms, thereby also imbibing features of a third language,

and associating vocabulary to context clues. They enthusiastically share similar stories from their own cultures. Their new knowledge is constantly reinforced by carrying the mutual narrative transaction beyond the formal learning time and space to informal time and space.

During the course of field investigation, it was found that story telling is in practice in primary sections. One teacher, who was basically substituting a regular teacher, adopted a more informal approach in the class, which not only came across as interesting to both the taught and the teacher, but also a very effective mode of dealing with young learners. She narrated a story named 'Cinderella' to primary students. The teacher being a native of Assam, asked local students about the Assamese version of the same story and went on to present this folktale through group discussion. There was lot of excitement, especially among the local students when *Tejimala* (an Assamese variant of the Cinderella theme), a folk tale of Assam was narrated with lot of enthusiasm. Other students of the class also participated in the discussion. The teacher helped the students to evaluate the structural similarities and differences between the two versions of the same story. However she stressed more on the similarities.

The students from Assam found it easier to connect with their own folk tales and also it gave an insight to fellow friends' culture by way of discussions in the classrooms. Through folktales children can experience other cultures and understand the diversity of cultures around the world. The positive effect of the use of folklore in the above example clearly points out to the potential efficacy of the method. Perhaps the teacher hit upon the method accidentally and it perhaps had nothing to do with her professional training; but in an informal situation, like a substitute class, a teacher has more opportunity to improvise. Folktales appeal to the mind and heart and generally fascinate the students and they love

hearing them, reading them, and discussing them. They enthusiastically share similar stories from their own cultures. Their knowledge increases their vocabulary not only from the books but from effecting language use outside the classroom. At the same time, it reinforces positive values and shows how such values are held sacrosanct across cultures. Folktales throughout the world share common need for love, hope, security and possess same feelings like happiness, anger, pride and loneliness:

The universal use of humor provides funny and exciting tales, such as the animal tricksters and the silly but resourceful folk hero like the Russian Ivan, English Jack, and German Hans. At the same time, the reader becomes sensitive to the differences between cultures. The folk stories show how different peoples respond differently to emotional and environmental conditions (Bosma 1992: 04).

Folktales when shared together help in understanding and respect towards other cultures. They can help children to develop analytic abilities as in most of the tales they show and use problem solving structure. The folk tale generally begins with a problem and slowly and gradually the problem is solved in the end. This problem solving plot structure can be used as the pedagogical strategy by the teachers. (Bosma 1992: 06). Some folk stories are witty and humorous and they depict human nature and behaviour. Folktales thus appeal more to children and they are all in one and include “proverbs, poetry, riddles, rhymes, ballads, beliefs, customs, festivals, songs, superstition, drama and dance” (McFadden 1991:1097). Folk tales sharpens the mind of the children as they increase the imaginative capacity of a child and listening to folktales not only help in gauging the culture but also help in connecting the folklore world to the real world that they would face as adults. This is how they understand and link these two worlds which

help them in “their interactions with man, animals, physical world and spirits” (Penjore 2005: 54). These wisdoms are time tested and passed on from generations to generations through many years of interaction and experience with the real world and so children are exposed to knowledge through these tales. Folktale narration is the “replication of what elders are experiencing” in the outer world, thus preparing children to face the life portrayed in stories as adults (ibid: 55).

According to A.K. Ramanujan, Indian stories for small children convey different messages. He mentions the story of “Sister Crow and Sister Sparrow”. The story is as follows:

Sister Crow and Sister Sparrow are friends. Crow has a house of cow dung, Sparrow one of stone. A big rainstorm washes away Crow’s house, so she goes to Sparrow and knocks on her door.

Because she is feeding her children, Sparrow makes Crow wait at first. When Crow knocks again, Sparrow is feeding her husband. When Crow knocks a third time, Sparrow is putting her children to bed. Finally, she lets Crow in and offers her several places to sleep. Crow chooses to sleep on the chickpea sack.

All night long, she munches on chickpeas and makes a *katum-katum* noise. Whenever Sparrow asks her what the noise is, Crow says, “nothing really. Remember you gave me a betelnut? I’m biting on it.” By morning she has eaten all the chickpeas in the sack. She cannot control her bowels, so she fills the sack with her excrement before she leaves.

Sparrow’s children go there in the morning to eat some peas and muck their hands with what Crow has left.

Sparrow is angry. She invites Crow again to visit, and when she is about to sit down, puts a hot iron spatula under her and

brands her behind. Crow flees, crying Ka! Ka! in pain
(Ramanujan 1989: 256).

Children find this story very funny but at the same time the story is about toilet training, as he says “the typical audience for this kind of story consists of children who are just being toilet trained” (ibid: 257). These tales can be told informally and generally speak about all those things “what cannot be usually spoken” (ibid: 258). Thus this not only provides humour to children but also is indirect instructions and education to them.

It is interesting to note that more and more folk narratives are being incorporated into the school curriculum. However, its effective use depends a lot on the attitude of the teacher, and for a folk narrative to be effective, the teachers should also be imaginative, interactive and at times go beyond the text to link up the prescribed narrative with those outside the text in the familiar familial and social environment. During the course of fieldwork, a teacher was teaching a lesson called the “The Scholar’s Mother Tongue”, which is an adaptation from the familiar ‘Akbar and Birbal’ repertoire of Indian folktales, that narrates humorous anecdotes on the Mughal emperor Akbar and his Hindu courtier Birbal. The narratives usually end with a moral like those in *Aesop’s Tales*. This folk narrative is from the text book *Marigold* prescribed for standard IV students by the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT):

A learned Pundit once visited the court of Akbar. He told the King and his courtiers that he had mastery over many different languages. The Pundit could speak many languages fluently. He was so fluent that no one could find out what his mother tongue was. He challenged everybody at the court to name his mother tongue. When everyone failed, the challenge was taken up by Birbal. That night, Birbal went quietly to the Pundit’s

room when he was asleep. He whispered into the Pundit's ear and tickled it with a feather. The Pundit, half awake, cried out suddenly and shouted out words in his mother tongue. Birbal came to the court the next day and told everyone that the Pundit's mother tongue was Telugu. The Pundit was surprised and accepted the truth. King Akbar then asked Birbal, "How did you find the truth?" Birbal answered, "In times of difficulty, a person speaks only in his mother tongue." He also told the King how he had gone to the Pundit's room at night to find out the truth (NCERT 2007: 118-119).

The teacher asked the students to read the above mentioned story one by one and he kept on correcting students' pronunciation and explained few words in Hindi. He made all the students to read the story in this period. The next day he continued with the written exercises of asking questions like- Who came to Akbar's court?, What did he claim to know?, How did he challenge everybody?. All these questions were written in the exercise given at the end of the chapter. There was another column of exercise of Let's Talk, where the questions were as what is your mother tongue? Tell the class a joke in your mother tongue; do you know any other language? Do you know a joke in English? Tell your friends. The teachers skipped this column and continued with ticking the right answer from the blanks and match the columns. The next column was of word building, where again the assignment was on making a class dictionary with words from the story and to find suitable words for them in their mother tongue, to be spoken aloud and then from these words make the sentences with those words in class dictionary. This again was skipped by the teacher. It was found from the students that these types of columns are generally not covered in the classroom as these questions do not come in the exams. Thus it is clear that ineffective and disinterested pedagogic approach on the part of the

teachers often defeats the very purpose of introducing such humorous folk narrative. It is disheartening to note that the sections which would have linked up the text with the social and linguistic environment of the learners, and promoted an effective cultural dialogue amongst the students are skipped. The teacher's rationale that such approaches or exercises are not relevant for examination points out the failure of some of the teachers to come out of the confines of a learning mode directly linked with the reward mode, which is often seen in terms of grades or marks. Such example abounds, and the researcher came across many such instances during the course of field investigation.

Prejudice and Pedagogy

In another interesting instance from the field, a group of students from class I were given blank sheets and the teacher asked them to draw their favourite food item. Soon they all got busy; some were peeping in others' sheets and others were busy drawing their favourite fruit, vegetables and other food items. After a while students were called one by one by the teacher to submit their sheets. Mostly children had drawn mango, apple, carrot and cake. The teacher was polite to everyone and was responding encouragingly to those with familiar food items. One girl got up and went up to the teacher very excitedly and showed her drawing. The teacher looked confused and asked, "What is this"? The girl replied that it was "kali daal", her favourite dish. She had drawn a bowl and coloured it brown and had put black dots in that. The girl was from north India, where this dish made of a particular kind of pulse, is very popular. But the teacher, who was from south India, and perhaps unfamiliar with the food item depicted, did not find the drawing worth putting in her academic record file and politely commented, "O.K. fine! You take another sheet and go and draw a mango or an apple on it". It

could also be that the child's sketch did not fulfill the teacher's expectation of a 'favourite' food item that can be sketched by a student. Whatever be the reason, it is clear that the teacher's lack of sensitivity, in spite of her mild manners, reflected a lack of knowledge about the child's cultural conditioning and a curbing, even if unintentionally, the child's imagination and creative abilities. Similar incidents have been narrated by Hector Sueyo in his "Educational Biography of an Arakmbut", where he narrates that when he was

... only seven years old, the teacher called me to the blackboard to draw an apple and divide it into four pieces. I drew a papaya like those I knew from my father's garden. The teacher thought I was making a fool of her and slapped me on the back of the head. I didn't want to go back after that (Sueyo 2003: 193).

Teacher's perception and assumption about children and their activities at times can hamper their growth. This was an example which not only deals with micro aspects but also touches the macro issues of culturally relevant pedagogy. When a child enters the formal education system through schooling, it is important to know that she has been already educated in the family too. The child brings along with her own cultural moorings from her home. Within culture, one includes all the customs, traditions, beliefs and form of behaviour which is acquired through learning and which is patterned in conformity with certain approved norms. In a culturally plural society, it is very important to understand the cultural differences as different students from different cultural backgrounds inherit their cultural knowledge and values. Guoping Zhao mentions this as "what is actually delivered in student's real life in the classroom is the outcome of the deeply embedded cultural assumptions" (Zhao 2007: 04). Some of the above examples depict the cultural incongruence between the teacher and the student. The teacher has her

own cultural conditioning which serves as the ideological basis from within which she approaches the teaching learning experience. The teachers who are trained to be alive to cultural variation and by nature less prejudiced are more effective because they base their decisions on students' needs rather than their own cultural and moral beliefs (Maczynski et al.2000: 355).

At times teacher's pre conceived opinions about particular students can also affect the pedagogical process. It is very important for a teacher to be aware of the culture specific body gestures and verbal behaviour. In an important example from the field, a teacher called out the name of a particular student to which the students response was "*haan sir*" (yes sir), a common response in Bihar, Haryana and the Punjab, but also considered crude and informal in parts of Uttar Pradesh, and often used as a rebuke directed to a younger person. The teacher rebuked the student and started considering the student as "*ill-mannered and disrespectful*" towards the teachers. But on further enquiry, it was found that the student was from a place, where in their culture, they call everyone as "*tum*" (the lowest 'you' in the formal Hindi honorific hierarchy, but also a term of endearment and closeness in certain social situation) and answer in "*haan*" to all, irrespective of age or status. Often the verbal behaviour and gestures of students are misconstrued by teachers and lead to formation of strong opinions on the manners and behaviour of a particular student. It is seen that "teachers frequently treat their beliefs as knowledge and the teachers' beliefs about subject matter powerfully affect their teaching in the same way as the relationship between subject-matter knowledge and pedagogy" (Ellison 2006 :134). Teachers also "interpret experiences through the filters of their existing knowledge and beliefs" (ibid).

It is inevitable that effective teaching is bound up with the subjective orientation of the teacher, and in the following case, the positive role of an effective teacher is highlighted. A Hindi teacher was explaining grammatical terms to a group of twenty four students of class X. While explaining *Sankar Shabd* (hybrid words) and other word formation concepts, he also discussed the *Muhavare*, (Proverbs), *Vilom Shabd* (Antonyms) with lot of examples. The class was very interactive. He asked students to speak in Hindi about English proverbs as well asked local students to identify similar variants in Assamese language. The classroom was in total dialogue and the students were interacting informally and the teacher and the students also used examples from Bollywood movies. Thus, English and local variants of proverbs like ‘*Jo garajte hain, voh baraste nahin*’ (Thundering clouds seldom rains) were enthusiastically discussed by the learners and idiomatic equivalents in Hindi and Assamese were identified. The English equivalent mostly mentioned was ‘Barking dogs seldom bites’ and amongst the Assamese equivalent, the interesting variant was ‘*Mukhe tom tom, dingeli puthi*’ (the loudmouth is like the fish with the elongated neck). Another interesting Hindi proverb was ‘*Ab pachtaiye kya hot, jab chiriya chug gayee khet*’ (it is no point regretting after the birds have pecked away at grains). The most common English equivalent was ‘No use crying over spilt milk’ and the Assamese variant most commonly agreed upon was ‘*Sur gole buddhi, barusun gole japi*’ (Ideas after the theft, umbrellas after the rain). It is interesting to note that *japi* in Assamese does not mean umbrella and is from the realm of folk culture and would roughly mean a indigenous straw hat. A very important cultural symbol, non Assamese learner also gains the knowledge of such culture specific items. The teacher made the learning experience interesting and innovative, thereby increasing the efficacy of the whole process. As

Tagore had mentioned in his '*Siksha*' (Education), it is the teacher who matters the most:

... we must come to the inevitable conclusion that education can be imparted only by a teacher and not wholly by a method. Man can learn better from a man. Just as a water tank can be filled only with water and fire can be kindled with fire, life can be inspired with life (Mukherjee 1970: 76).

The enthusiasm and involvement with teaching is indeed very important, and no one can deny the validity of the age old truism that teaching is a calling rather than a profession. The love for one's profession is a very important aspect in the makeup of a teacher, and a teacher has to instinctively reach out to the students. Krishnamurti feels that "only love can bring about the understanding of another. Where there is love there is instantaneous communion with the other, on the same level and at the same time" (Krishnamurti 2008: 24) as love for students, teaching and profession help in making the pedagogical process interesting and meaningful both for the teacher and the student. This aspect is directly linked to an effective teaching learning process.

Gendering the Classroom

While interacting and observing this aspect in the field, it was observed that a few teachers, in this case all male, in the primary sections (PRT) are not very comfortable with their primary teacher (PRT) status. Few of them are highly qualified and are working as PRT teachers not out of choice but out of compulsion. The teachers opted for this government job for the time being and are trying for PGT category through the qualifying evaluative process and other competitive tests. While talking to them one of the teachers accepted the fact that though he has "adjusted to his destiny to be a teacher", he is not happy with his present status of a PRT. It is generally observed that the low self esteem is seen especially in male primary teachers. It is interesting to note that behind

such attitudes are age old social and cultural conditioning of gender roles, whereby primary teaching is seen as the natural domain of the women teachers and higher classes at the secondary and senior secondary level as the natural domain of the male teachers. Such prejudices and idea of social hierarchy often acts as hindrance for a male teacher to develop affinity and professional dedication for the job he is supposed to do. On the other hand women teachers have also internalised such social hierarchy generated by age old patriarchal structure, and often subscribe to such viewpoints. Teachers of primary classes, quite a few of them women, feel that there should be women teachers for the lower primary classes as the students of these classes have to be looked after in a different way, which male teachers are not very adept at. It is seen that the students of class I and II often join school for the first time. They undergo lot of emotional and physical changes. According to one male teacher:

Ladies can handle all these problems easily as sometimes the child needs to go to the toilet and the children come and ask to tie their laces, their bags have to be opened and shut and all these things are the ladies' jobs so, they should be given these classes we cannot handle all these things. However we should be given only IV and V classes.

Even the head mistresses of primary sections of two schools too felt that male teachers generally lack interest in younger children and they are not as "soft" at heart as the lady teachers are. According to one of them:

From my twenty three years of teaching experience and out of which from the last nine years as head mistress by now I have observed that the lady teachers are much better than male teachers and we try to select very special teachers for class I and II. For me special teachers are those who have lot of patience to deal with the children of this age group and who

are by nature loving and who actually enjoy teaching the children of class I. In class I even the experience does not matter but what matters is how much you love teaching because children are only looking for acceptance and love for them in this class. The teacher should be motherly towards the children.

Head Mistress of the other school was also of the same opinion as she said, “lady teachers are “soft- hearted” and can handle children of junior classes very well; so preference are given to them for junior classes”. They both were also of the opinion that if the class is given to the teachers who are disinterested, the teaching learning process gets affected. Similar opinion was also articulated by a male teacher:

As I am involved in my own studies for other competitive tests, I do feel that I do not pay attention to my teaching job as PRT teacher as I feel that for teaching lower classes I do not have to prepare, however if I am given higher classes I would enjoy more because I do not feel satisfied teaching junior classes. More over that status of PGT is always higher in the school and we as PRT teachers are always made to realize that we are inferior to them which further demotivate.

Gloria Ladson Billings in her study had shown similarity and differences in the approaches of the teachers whose methods came across as culturally relevant pedagogy. She mentions that love for their profession was the most striking feature in the teachers who effectively mediated the teaching learning process; “both Ann Lewis and Julia Devereaux are proud to be teachers. They see their work as worthwhile and gratifying” (Ladson Billings 1992: 317):

All of the teachers identified strongly with teaching. They were not ashamed or embarrassed about their professions...The teachers saw themselves as a part of the community and teaching as a way to give back to the

community. They encouraged their students to do the same. They believed that their work was artistry, not a technical task that could be accomplished in a recipe-like fashion. Fundamental to their beliefs about teaching was that all of the students could and must succeed (ibid 1995: 163).

It is imperative that a teacher should emerge from the confines of cultural prejudices and gender stereotypes to graduate into an effective teacher, and folklore can play a crucial role in such reorientation of the pedagogic process.

The Folk idiom and Effective Teaching

According to Mahendra Kumar Mishra, riddles and other common idiomatic usages can be used for even basic mathematical instruction to young learners:

One hundred legs and seventy two eyes
 How many hens and how many elephants
 (22 hens and 14 elephants)
 Can you say?
 Wife and husband have twenty two ears
 (Ravana and Mandodari) (Mishra 2009: 68).

The above riddles are deep rooted in Indian Culture. The first one is related to Indian forest and rural life. Since the childhood children are exposed to life around them which include flora and fauna. Most of the rural occupation is agricultural and farming. If the pedagogy is related to their community knowledge, the learning is easier and effective. The second riddle is picked up from one the great Indian epic *Ramayana*. Legends in these epics serve as the vehicles from which local history and social norms are passed from generation to the next generation. These traditional stories are meant basically to instruct both young and old persons in India. Indian children are exposed to the epics *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* through multiple modes. Earlier it was through the

tales at home and now through comics and cartoon networks. Ravana, who is the villain in *Ramayana*, is supposed to have ten faces and Mandodari is his wife. That's how wife and husband together have twenty two ears.

Sabina Magliocco too privileges proverbs and riddles as effective pedagogical tools as they are used in daily conversation and are integrated into the everyday speech of the learners. Proverbs and riddles can be used in the introductory levels of language instruction. Sabina Magliocco considers them as “one of the most useful genres in gauging what folklorists call “worldview”-the popular attitudes towards certain subjects”:

I type the proverbs on a ditto sheet and let the students try to figure them out, offering suggestions and help when appropriate. We talk about similar proverbs in English, and then we discuss the values reflected in the proverbs; for instance, notice how many Italian proverbs have to do with wine. What do they communicate about Italian attitudes towards drinking, and how do these differ from American attitudes...These attitudes, reflected in proverbial folk wisdom, communicate important differences in the two worldviews and provide a good starting point for a discussion on cultural values (Magliocco 1992: 456).

Joyce Penfield and Mary Duru through their essay suggest “how the metaphorical and quotative nature of proverbs contributes to the process of child development in daily interaction in oral societies” (Penfield and Duru 1988: 119). Proverbs serve as the tool of both cognitive and social development along with the aspect of communication in children of African societies. Here Joyce Penfield and Mary Duru argued that “abstract thought is developed in a folk society with a strong oral tradition is through the metaphorical language of proverbs” (ibid: 127).

This metaphorical way helps in understanding the abstract thoughts and norms of the society in a “natural, culturally relevant interactional context”. Proverbs help in developing the faculties of reasoning and thought development among the children through culturally relevant use of language. This type of development is spontaneous and informal. Thus it becomes important to realise the cultural strengths and the styles of the children’s “social nature of speech and thought implicit in the use of proverbs” and utilise these aspects in the teaching learning process (ibid). There are many proverbs which are similar in different cultures and many directly contradict one another illustrate the multivocality of folk wisdom. Proverbs and Riddles also have metaphoric nature can also used in pedagogy. They are interesting ways of teaching. Proverb with its related forms of maxim and traditional metaphor helps in unlocking the world of imaginary writing (Hood 1967: 971). Hood used proverbs for teaching literature to her students. The students were asked to collect different proverbs and then through the collection of these proverbs they were made aware of the grammatical and literary approaches. Hood described these proverbs as the “seeds of literature”:

I can say that my classes worked with keen interest...Certainly they had acquired some philosophical, stylistic, and linguistic concepts basic to an appreciation of works of the imagination; they had also mastered a precise vocabulary around which to organize their responses to literature...they accumulated a store of cultural treasures, minds full of “lucky sixpences” (Hood 1967: 975).

Riddles and proverbs are didactic in the sense that they are inclined to teach and also morally instructive. Most of the times they are used with the tales to increase the knowledge. Riddles are generally stated in the form of questions to which listeners are supposed to guess the answers. Riddles help in improving vocabulary and in training of the mind of the

children. Riddles have educational value and on the basis of their educative value Majasan divided them into five categories. They are:

- Riddles that increase children vocabulary for example in Yoruba riddles there are words which are long and difficult, through riddles children not only understand these words but also learn to pronounce those words.
- Riddles help in increasing general knowledge as they help children in storming their brains and develop the analytic power by trying to solve those riddles.
- Riddles help in improving the memory. Riddles refer to the social norms and habits of particular culture. The children not only learn from the traditional habits of the culture but also train the memory to put the riddle in a particular order.
- Riddles that reflect culture like who is that drinks with the king? The Fly. Who is that goes past the king's house without greeting the king? The Torrent. Such riddles show the respect Yoruba have for their king and that is why children are also educated in the similar manner.
- Riddles that are for relaxation. Riddles are narrated and asked generally in the evenings in the relaxed atmosphere. This is also like a source for entertainment and to have informal communication. This is also a way of using tabooed words (Majasan 1969: 50-51).

Proverbs in Yorubaland are mainly used by adults and adolescents. Adults generally use proverbs when they have to scold the younger generation or used as an advice. Proverbs in Yoruba serve three main functions in education. They are of literary significance, are considered as the storehouse of ancient wisdom and they help in putting restraint on the younger generation and help them to develop self control (ibid: 52-53). T. J. Farr too stressed on the importance of proverbs and riddles in language development and on its literary significance. As T. J. Farr remarked on the using folksongs in the classroom for educational point

of view as they can be used in the classroom for tunes and texts. Popular songs can be used to illustrate grammatical points. Folk songs and ballads have special and specific qualities of composition and sentiment and “their simplicity and directness, their treatment of heroic themes, and their strange repetitions and refrains appeal to students and help them understand and appreciate artistic literature” (Farr 1940: 261).

In the above illustrations, the cultural and social requirement of the children was kept in mind and a relevant approach implemented that made it culturally sensitive. Culturally relevant pedagogy is a mode where a teacher:

...must acknowledge how deficit-based notions of diverse students continue to permeate traditional school thinking, practices, and placement, and critique their own thoughts and practices to ensure they do not reinforce prejudice behavior. Second, culturally relevant pedagogy recognizes the explicit connection between culture and learning, and sees students’ cultural capital as an asset and not a detriment to their school success (Howard 2003:198)

Howard believed that critical reflection is a personal and challenging look at one’s own identity and is a process of improving practices, rethinking philosophies and becoming effective teachers (ibid :201).

Community Knowledge and Culturally Relevant Pedagogy

In the following case in a Class VIII situation, the teacher was taking a class in Social Studies on agricultural practices. The teacher did not consult the text book through out the class. English was the medium of instruction; however the teacher was encouraging the students to speak in the language they were comfortable with and most of the students were replying in Hindi. There were twenty nine students in the class room. The teacher hailed from the state of Uttar Pradesh of India. The students were very attentive and were participating actively in the

classroom. The classroom atmosphere was very informal. The students were answering and participating without being asked by the teacher. The teacher covered the topics like types of farming, major crops of India, and geographical conditions required for different crop seasons. The pedagogic strategy was 'inter-textual' in the sense that he related the topics with similar topics in the Science text book from the previous year. The teacher discussed the agricultural crops of different states and one of the local student mentioned about the Bamboo plants in Assam. The discussion took off from this point in the class as one of the student commented that this particular crop is not used for eating, and then the teacher started asking about the uses of the bamboo plant. Students who were not locals were actually amazed when they got to know as how the particular plant is being used not only for garden furniture, (that is only what students from outside Assam knew about), but for textiles, medicines, for food, and also for jewellery. The class was a real example to believe that the students do carry the knowledge from the community and that:

The local environment is thus a natural learning resource, which must be privileged when making choices regarding what should be included, what concrete examples should be cited in planning for their transaction in the classroom...Inclusion of the local context in classroom transaction would imply a serious attempt by the teacher to make choices in a manner that is pedagogically imaginative and ethically sound. When children living in Kerala are introduced to the habitat of the desert in Rajasthan, the descriptions must be rich and detailed so that they can get a feel of the natural world there... The local environment consists not only of the physical and natural world but also the socio- cultural world. All children have a voice at home, and it is essential for the school to ensure that their voices to be heard in the classroom as well. Communities

also have rich cultural resources: local stories, songs, jokes and riddles, and art, all of which can enrich language and knowledge in schools. They also have rich oral histories. By imposing silence we stifle children (NCERT 2008: 31-32).

The class had more or less followed the above mentioned pedagogic practice in the class room. The environment of the classroom was very casual and students were comfortable at the conversational level with the teacher and they could openly and frankly put forth their views in front of the teacher and the class without hesitation. Later on, discussion with the teacher found that the teacher had not only covered the topics of science but also touched the aspects of class X syllabus. As the teacher had two continuous periods in the class, he utilised the substitute period very effectively. The teacher also mentioned that he had consulted and read very thoroughly NCF (National Curriculum Framework) guidelines for his tests (the tests were conducted for teachers and Principals of Kendriya Vidyalayas in 2009 to evaluate the knowledge of teachers and Principals regarding NCF content). He was of the opinion that though initially he found it a “pain” to study for the test, yet later he found it quite “useful and apt”. The teacher was culturally relevant in his own way, as the classroom style was not very formal. The local students felt a sense of pride in mentioning their rich cultural heritage and at the same time the other children also gained the knowledge not only from the textual and fixed perspective, but a living and active context, that inculcated an awareness and sense of respect towards the ‘cultural other’. The students were found to be keenly enquiring about ‘*Sunga Shaul*’ (rice cakes baked in the bamboo tubes), which also made them aware of the cultural space and time when such traditional delicacies are prepared. They could also infer that climatic conditions and agricultural crops and eating habits all are interrelated. It may be inferred from the above example that the cultural diversity and plurality definitely help in

enriching the cross cultural knowledge. The students were animated in this class and the teacher helped in keeping the relations between him and his “students fluid and equitable” and also encouraged the students “to act as teachers, and they, themselves, often functioned as learners in the classroom”. This kind of fluidity in relationship thus extended beyond the classroom into the community as the students learn “collaboratively, teach each other, and be responsible for each other’s learning” (Ladson–Billings 1995: 163).

Community knowledge in the different forms provides information and an understanding of not only a particular community, but when shared together in the classroom, help other children also to understand the rich community based knowledge. Ladson Billings in her study has also shown that community knowledge can enhance competence. One of her teacher Gertrude Winston, involved parents of the children so that the “students could learn from each other’s parents and affirm cultural knowledge” (Ladson Billings 1995: 161). She invited baker, carpenter, professional player, nurse, and church musician to enrich the learning process:

All of Winston’s guests were parents or relatives of her students. She did not “import” role models with whom the students did not have firsthand experience. She was deliberate in reinforcing that the parents were a knowledgeable and capable resource. Her students came to understand the constructed nature of things such as “art,” “excellence,” and “knowledge.” They also learned that what they had and where they came from was of value (*ibid*).

Thus, it is clear that folklore genres not only help teachers to understand the cultural diversity of the students, but also helps in finding new ways of effective teaching and learning. As Elizabeth Radin Simons mentions:

Normally in school the teacher is the source of knowledge, but I wanted to reverse this. As much as possible, I wanted the content to come from student memories and from interviews with friends and family. I wanted it to come from the lives of the students so that they, not me, would be the experts. I would learn about their folklore from them (Simons 1985: 32).

A teacher, in the true nature of a folklorist can also draw meaningfully on the knowledge base that the students bring from an informal knowledge environment to a formal learning environment, the school and the class. Instead of the formal pedagogic process be one of erasure of the 'irrational' and the 'informal', it can double up as a reinforcement of what already exist within a learner, and how that can be effectively marshaled into mutually enriching and socially relevant experience:

...as participant-observers- as a "student" to a community member who "teaches" them what he or she knows by employing traditional pedagogic methods such as story telling, singing, or other forms of dramatic performance...If we approach the educational institution as another community setting, instructors may employ teaching methods learned from community models in their classroom, thereby engaging another form of applied folklore as pedagogy (Shuldiner 1998: 192).

Thus the pedagogy should be, as Gerald V. Mohatt terms it "built on relationships" as *kinship teaching*, where "all parts are related and taught in context" (Mohatt 1994: 177).

One of the most oft repeated insinuations against the role of folklore in pedagogy is that it reinforces irrational and unscientific through genres like origin myths and legends. However, such apparently irrational and unscientific genres can be used as what can be termed as contrapuntal pedagogic devices where by the evolutionary process of human

knowledge and the gradual grounding of natural phenomena in to a rational and empirical epistemology can be highlighted:

The child is the result of both the past and the present and is therefore already conditioned. If we transmit our background to the child, we perpetuate both his and our own conditioning. There is radical transformation only when we understand our own conditioning and are free of it. To discuss what should be the right kind of education while we ourselves are conditioned is utterly futile (Krishnamurti 2008: 27-28).

The merit of the imaginative and the negotiative where by our ancestors had learnt to come to terms with their ecological and environmental milieu that is so intrinsic to folk narratives can only enrich the mental vistas of the learner.

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CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The present research work was postulated to explore the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy, its theoretical evolution and practices in the western academia as well as in the Indian context. Basically the study was an interrogation of how such a concept of culturally relevant pedagogy can be grounded in the practices and philosophy of pedagogy as it has evolved in the Indian context. The study was focussed on the role that folklore can play in the postulation and practices of culturally relevant pedagogy in a plural socio-cultural pedagogic environment. Schools in the greater Tezpur area in Assam, which is a culturally diverse location, were chosen as the field to interface and explore the theoretical paradigm evolved during the course of the study and its efficacy and relevance in practice.

Culturally relevant pedagogy has its antecedents in Anthropology which tries to define knowledge and belief as it existed in a given social environment as something that was acquired by members of a particular social group. It is believed that culture evolves through the transmission of traditional knowledge and customs. The notion of cultural transmission is central to what can be termed as the earliest postulation of a pedagogic process. Inevitably, understanding of culture is often understood in terms of learning and acquiring of certain livelihood and life style traits. For a discipline like Anthropology, culture is thus a repository of pedagogic values transmitted across generations.

Culture as a context is of crucial importance in formulating strategies for an effective teaching- learning process; for pedagogy is determined by

the social order as reflected in cultural beliefs and assumptions and the lived world which sees the enactment of such beliefs and assumptions (See Ch.I.Pg.3-4). Against such a backdrop it is important that pedagogy is understood in a more holistic way that goes beyond the understanding of it being mere teaching styles and effecting control over classroom and learning environment. Instead, pedagogy is a continuously evolving process where there is a vibrant interface of cultural inputs brought in by teachers and students within a given learning environment, often a space where new cultural forms emerge out of an interactive cultural milieu. Thus, culturally relevant pedagogy should evolve means and strategies of meeting the academic and social needs of a culturally diverse learning environment. Folklore is deeply embedded in the cultural repertoire of a community and can be of crucial importance in the formulation of a culturally relevant pedagogy. Such postulations should go beyond the oral-written or institutional and non- institutional binaries. The merit of the familiar and informal, that is integral to folklore, can enrich and infuse the pedagogic process. This will help in negotiating the non institutional cultural repertoire that a learner or a teacher brings into a formal learning environment where institutionalised discipline and control operates.

- The relationship between folklore and pedagogy has evolved in diverse locations across the globe and is an example of people-pedagogy partnership. The folk high school movement in Denmark was an attempt to bridge the gap between the elites with access to formal structures of education and the folk, mainly the peasants, who acquire information and knowledge through non institutional modes like folklore and other community activities. The structure of folkloric transmission can afford us with important clues as to effective methods and procedures in the teaching learning interaction. Like folk forms, the formal classroom

environment is essentially an oral environment (See Ch. I. Pg. 09). The connecting of the 'literary paradigm' of the formal classroom with the oral ambience of folkloric transmission would loosen the bindings of a strict 'scripted' mode. From the vantage of discipline like Cultural Studies, it is interesting to interrogate evolving paradigms of culturally relevant pedagogy. The Foucauldian concept of 'docile citizens' being a product of institutional pedagogy provides an interesting insight where power is inflicted through a continuous process of pedagogic conditioning through the subordination and production of conforming and consenting citizens. This leads to Antonio Gramsci's idea that consent on the part of the dominated is produced by elaborate and complex process of social and cultural engineering that involves negotiation and imposition (See Ch.I Pg. 11-12). The pedagogic process is deeply implicated in the production of docile citizens through a voluntary acceptance of the hegemonic structures imposed from above. In post-colonial societies like India, such cultural negotiation facilitated by educational structures and processes continues well into the present times. The notion of the nation rides roughshod over cultural differences and traits in engineering a seamless and non variegated learning environment. The contemporary quest for decentralising authoritarian and hegemonic social and cultural structures can perhaps be attempted by accommodating the 'individualistic anti-authoritarianism of folklore' and folk process can counter hegemonic educational theories and practices (See Ch. I Pg. 12-13). This would conform to Richard Hoggart's 'bottom-up' conception of culture, where culture is seen as emerging from the symbolic and everyday practices of the 'lived' process of life. According to Raymond Williams culture has to be understood in terms of the cause and effect relationship within a given social environment (See Ch. I Pg. 13-14).

Incorporating of folklore into the overall pedagogic strategy would require a mindset that transcends the traditional-contemporary and informal-formal binaries. Such a divide does not have historical and methodological validation and scholars like A.K. Ramanujan find modes of folkloric transmission rooted in 'formal structures'. William Westerman's opinion that innovation in pedagogy is not achieved only through content but also through methods and it is here that folklore can provide forms of 'engaged' communication, where there is an open and free interactive pedagogic milieu (See Ch. II Pg. 30-31). The success of folk schools in Denmark in the 1920s point out to a successful combination of life experiences of the common people and the academic mooring of formal schooling structures. Such examples were sought to be replicated in different locations, especially in the United States, where it evolved to include experiential education whereby agricultural field work, cooperative economics and organising of labour were incorporated into the curriculum. This was further reinforced with the incorporation of cultural activities like handicrafts and skills in other material culture.

The basic emphasis was to make the learner's life an integral part of the pedagogic process. The family in itself is an important site and mother-child transaction was implicit in the process of folk pedagogy (See Ch. II Pg.34-35). Each cultural context generates its own folklore and the inclusion of folklore in the pedagogic environment is not a falling back on overarching alternative paradigms, but humanising and liberating the formal structures of learning with a more humane interface. The secret is to give cognizance to cultural and personal diversities where education is not an insulated and autonomous structure but part of the larger interactive domain that has immediacy and comprehensibility. The role of teacher is crucial as a teacher is continuously innovating and

discovering the cultural repertoire that a learner brings into the pedagogic environment. Jerome Bruner's models of folk pedagogy are embedded in a given cultural setting which not only sees children as learners but also as thinkers and knowledgeable subjectivities (See Ch. II Pg. 37-38). The learner's mind is not a 'tabula rasa', a vault where knowledge can be deposited by the teacher for later retrieval and use, but a space where the joy of learning through the practice of freedom is encouraged and inculcated. Learning is effective through a collaborative effort between the teacher and the learner which is basically an act of negotiation between the knowledge and information that the teacher brings into the learning environment and the student's incoming knowledge repertoire. It is not a process of unlearning what the community and family teaches, but a reinforcement of such incoming knowledge. Thus, dialogue is a prime process and requisite in such a notion of pedagogy. Culturally relevant pedagogy believes that reliable knowledge is best preserved in extant forms of culture.

Folklore would perhaps be instrumental in encouraging dialogues in the pedagogic process, where by the negative fallout of narrow ethnocentric moorings of the pedagogic process is mediated and a plural mindset facilitated amongst the learners. The imperative is to break down the narrow prison of ones own cultural lenses. Education is also the ability to acknowledge differences, the fact that varying modes of life practices is perhaps not only legitimate but also desirable. Thus, pedagogy is also unlearning prejudices imbibed through a history of ethnocentric biases. Folklore serves as the bridge between home and school and it is seen that the most effective teachers in a culturally diverse contexts are the ones that move beyond traditional approaches of pedagogy and capitalise on the students' home and community knowledge as a mode to learn and adopt new skills and contents (See Ch. II Pg. 46-47). Key to

the basic notion of culturally relevant pedagogy is the mutual respect given to different cultures which can be fostered in the plural ambience of a culturally diverse learning site, very often the school. Successful examples of such an approach are cited where African proverbs are used effectively in validating a sense of being amongst African American students. Such proverbs are age old coinages with world view and values generated by a relevant cultural context to which the learners could immediately relate. The enduring values of such proverbs is the changed socio- cultural context of the United States instill in the learners a sense that certain values are beyond time and space.

Folk speech is another important component of folklore, which when successfully integrated into the learning process, can give valuable lessons in idiomatic propriety and relevance; in short, teach the learners to speak a culturally relevant language. Informal speech registers at the community and family environment is steeped in the colloquial which strives on the association of the local and the immediate with language. The introduction of such colloquial but idiomatic speech into the learning environment would democratise the formal register of institutional learning and inflect it with a colloquial understanding that would help a student to relate what he reads to his immediate environment. One has to give cognizance to the fact that speech styles are culture specific and instruction in an alien language or language register only end up in preventing meaningful access to education. Thus in the North East of India, which is marked by the existence of numerous languages and dialogues, incorporation of the local and colloquial variation of language in the formal academic environment of schools can go a long way in facilitating effective access to the knowledge (See Ch. II Pg. 49-51).

Folklore also can be integrated well with the notion of pedagogy as performance. Teaching can draw upon the improvisation and innovation which is so integral to oral speech, where the act of teaching is both a performance event and a performative event, where a learner should be free to improvise and innovate upon the teacher's performance. Thus, incorporating features of performance in renditions of narratives like stories, historical events and verse forms will add value to the pedagogic experience. The folklorist's mode is always interested with the creative, expressive and that which is transmitted informally through oral traditional modes. Folk forms like myths and legends can be used to enhance the learner's 'sense of history' because folk genres nurture clues to history and myths and legends that draw on and evolve around historical events. They can help a teacher to posit not only an alternative perspective on history but also how history matters in the everyday life of the people. Folk narratives are also useful in arousing curiosity of learners regarding natural phenomena and create interest in young minds to go beyond a docile acceptance of 'scientific facts' transmitted in the formal classroom to a more interactive inquisitive exploration. Then the final analysis would help a learner to differentiate between cultural narrative and scientific facts. Genres like folktale also help in instilling on the young minds faith on the consequences of one's actions and justness of life.

This notion of justice and fair play is intrinsic to the Panchatantra which is believed to have been narratives used for educating children in ancient India. The symbolic functions within these tales are age old cultural and social values and 'basic truths of life and existence'. Dialogue was an important mode of pedagogy and the merit of multiple conversations was inherent to the use of Panchatantra as pedagogic tool. In the Indian context, folklore is seen as a repository of pedagogic values and is often

a vehicle 'to spread the knowledge of righteousness and an honest life' (See Ch. III Pg. 66). Ancient Indian tradition of pedagogy had the religious and moral as an inevitable ancillary. More spiritual than material, the quest here was for supreme knowledge and dharma and the righteous path was the way of acquiring it. The Vedanta philosophy of ancient India laid great emphasis on the self, which, is the source of all human phenomena including truth and knowledge. Ancient pedagogy was basically oral, where listening, reflecting and meditation were three steps that led one to the enlightened state. Remarkably devoid of a structured edifice, the institution around which such pursuit of knowledge revolved was the *Gurukul*, where the teacher, through his own practices was an example to be emulated by the learners. Along with spiritual quest, basic life skills were also imparted to the learners. Dialogue was an important feature of higher order learning in the *Parishad*.

Far reaching changes were observed in 600 and 500 B C when Buddhist tradition of pedagogy established monastic schools which was beyond a caste hierarchy and liberated educational institution from sectarian and the exclusively theological framework. With the advent of Islamic rulers' formal structures like *Maktabs*, *Madarsahs* came up (See Ch. III. Pg. 67-69). However, it was the advent of the British Colonial rule towards the end of eighteenth century that brought in epochal changes, the ramifications of which continue well into the present times. English emerged as the language of the educated elite.

After independence, the colonial model went through a series of modifications to conform to the national interest of a newly independent India. Towards the end of the twentieth century, the concept of a national system of education for all Indians beyond the barriers of caste, creed and sex, crystallised into the nascent idea of National Curriculum

of Framework (NCF). It was in the NCF that the idea of culturally relevant pedagogy found importance and the role of mother tongue/ first language instruction was thought to be the bridge between the cultural hinterland of the learner and the pedagogic structure through which such aims could be fulfilled. Great importance was given to learning in an ambience of familiar cultural, social and familial environment. Thus, the disruption that colonial pedagogy had ushered in was sought to be mitigated by such a policy of culturally relevant pedagogy (See Ch. III. Pg. 70-73).

Rejection of the colonial model has its antecedents in the ideas and philosophies of Gandhi and Tagore. They had found the overt emphasis on a literary model to be unsuitable for the country where knowledge had been transmitted through much more informal modes for ages. Tagore fell back on the folklore of Bengal as an important method of knowledge communication in his pedagogic experimentations, notably projects on rural construction at Sriniketan, where he wanted to make the villagers independent and self-reliant by exploiting traditional resource bases and traditional methods. He was perhaps the earliest Indian who championed the cause of indigenous knowledge system, where by the formal classroom was sought to be integrated with the field in various areas like sanitation and health, agricultural practices and profitable use of material culture (See Ch. III Pg. 74-75). From the purely subjective basis, whereby individual skills and excellence were privileged, Tagore's model laid emphasis on the community and the collective. He privileged folklore and traditional culture as a repository of stored knowledge in the mass mind which needs to be profitably ploughed back for the upliftment of the society.

This was the traditional aspect that Tagore tried to harmonise with western structures of knowledge and education. For him the best that the

west had to provide could only be profitably acquired in ones own language because it is the easiest gateway to an unfamiliar world and facilitate the negotiation between new experiences of knowledge with the traditional modes of knowledge and learning (See Ch. III. Pg.74-76). Viswa-Bharti was Tagore's attempt at synthesising the best that his own cultural hinterland had to offer and the relevant knowledge that the West could give. His model rejected the merely mimetic but aimed at a synthesis that acknowledge strengths and lacunae, merits and drawbacks of both the traditions (See Ch. III. Pg. 77-78).

The incorporation of folk forms into the overall pedagogic paradigm is also important from the contemporary perspective because of its close relationship with what can be termed as the ecological imagination of the expressive forms of the tribal people in India. Nature is an integral part of folk beliefs and there are narratives in the traditions of a person that not only celebrate flora and fauna but also have pedagogic values for its preservation. Even Tagore's idea of Tapovan, that was a guiding principle behind his initiative at Santiniketan, had the aim of going back to nature. Field work was central to Tagore's conception of pedagogy where not only knowledge about plants, animals and environment were imparted but livelihood avenues around such resources were also promoted (See Ch. III Pg. 79-81).

Tagore's idea found close echo in Gandhi's notion of Basic Education, where he tried to supplement literary education with an active physical culture that would teach the learners not only the dignity of labour but also the value of self-sustenance. In the true Gurukul tradition, Gandhi conceives the teacher as the real text-book and basic education should promote expertise of the hand, the value of mother tongue, inter cultural exchange through the learning of languages and most importantly education that is not confined to the formal realms of learning but finds

its way to the domestic sphere of the learners also. It is very interesting to note that for Gandhi true education is self supporting in the sense that it will generate the resource to sustain the process. Influences of Gandhi's ideas continue well into the present times and it is considered as validation of culturally relevant pedagogy. Folklore finds a prominent mention in the works of both Gandhi and Tagore; for Tagore, it was an important mode of connecting a child to its large cultural reservoir and at a time when folklore and folk beliefs were viewed as superstitions, Tagore championed the cause of folklore as deliverance from the tentacles of emerging colonial modernity in India and sought for a moderation between emergent forms with its scientific bias and traditional knowledge with its socio cultural relevance. Folklore, the 'verbal creation of a society' was essential in the understanding of basic conception of the world and life in a given community and folk forms were the community's response to the process of social and cultural evolution and civilisation. Folklore provided the key out of all bounded experience of learning and inculcated into the learning process the joy of creation and imagination (See Ch. III. Pg. 83-87). This links up Tagore with Gandhi. Gandhi also considered freedom as the key to worthwhile learning; where learning is a liberating agency that infuses courage in the student's minds, for beyond fear is the triumph of real learning (See Ch. III. Pg. 88-90).

The value of folklore continues well into the present times and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 stresses the importance of oral lore and tradition of material culture as important national assets that are preserved by large number of communities in India. According to NCF, no formal structure of knowledge acquisition can ignore such traditions and repositories of knowledge. Even Nehru, the architect of the vision of a modern industrial India, found in folkways the essential

‘virility and zest’ and democratic ethos that can stand up as a model to an emerging India. What is now considered plural and multicultural was in fact an integral part of the ideas of important Indian thinkers like Tagore, Gandhi and Krishnamurti and the relevance of their pronouncement continue to influence the pedagogic process till the present times (See Ch. III Pg.91-97).

Various programmes in both the government and non government sectors have been in the forefront to provide culturally relevant education with active cooperation and collaboration of the community. In two relatively successful community based programmes in Orissa, learning was made interactive and relevant through an interface of paradigms in culturally relevant pedagogy and grass root action research. In a programme on Multilingual Education (MLE), the community was involved in the complete process, from its initiation to execution. It was interesting to observe that there was a wide spread apprehension as to the survival of the people’s culture under the onslaught of the influence of the modern living. Their expectation out of education was clearly a regeneration and revival of their age old cultural practices. The whole curriculum was designed with the help of the stakeholders through a series of workshops where folk based forms like fairs, festivals, tales and legends were incorporated. Similarly, in a programme introduced in 2007 in Orissa, named the *Srujun* programme, great importance was laid on the indigenous knowledge of the community. It involved primary modes of transmitting instruction and knowledge and consisted stories, games, art and craft and ecological knowledge that were entrenched in the traditions of the community itself. The *Srujun* programme functions from a belief that the community is a very important creator of knowledge. In Assam, an organisation named ‘Heritage Assam’ with the help of UNICEF is

inculcating language skills among disadvantaged children of the tea plantation by reviving the art of traditional story telling (See Ch. IV Pg. 102-105). Such approaches are in the vanguard of redeeming the curriculum from the trap of 'mainstreaming' that tries to obliterate cultural differences, perceived as a threat to national well being. Champions of a culturally plural curriculum would like to involve communities and teachers belonging to such communities in shaping and designing an effective pedagogic structure for children mostly from the tribal and underprivileged sections in adding value and relevance to the whole process. Though it is felt there are many lacunae in the formulation of NCF, it also has to be acknowledged as an evolving paradigm that would take time to respond to the multiplicity of people, culture and problems in a country like India.

The merit and the limitations of such an evolving paradigm of pedagogy in India was experienced when philosophies, ideas and formulations on culturally relevant pedagogy was sought to be understood and analysed in a field situation in Assam. Six schools were selected for conducting fieldwork that would reveal the efficacy and the fallacy of the present pedagogic structure in place. It is important to note that all the schools selected for the study were affiliated to the Central Board for Secondary Education (CBSE) and followed a uniform curriculum at the theoretical and conceptual level. Thus, the plurality flowed from the widely variant local referential points. The socio cultural locations of the schools were sufficiently varied and diverse and the schools themselves were marked for cultural diversity amongst both the students and the teachers. There was a medley of culture and language and the finding of the field emerged from an interface of attitude on parts of both teachers and students to important cultural markers like food, dress, social and community practices and the larger cultural context. Food lore emerged

as a very important area of cultural contact and exchange amongst the students. As food is intricately related to different occasions and events, narrative around cultural specific events emerged through the conversation amidst the students. However, it is also interesting to note that cultural prejudices were very strongly manifested in the attitudes towards the food habits of different cultural groups and emerged as a very strong device of cultural othering. It was interesting to note during the field work that many students overcame initial prejudices and engaged in a vibrant exchange of each other's cultural specific food habits.

It was also found that quite a few teachers effectively used folk narratives to reinforce the textual narratives, where the students could relate to the text in the book from the vantage of their cultural texts. Lessons on hygiene and good social practices were more effectively conveyed through such narratives. One of the most difficult conditions to negotiate in the classroom is the cultural incongruence between teachers and students. The ideological conditionings of the teachers play a great role in their attitude towards the learners. Teachers who have been properly trained and exposed to cultural variation were found to be less prejudiced and more effective. Gender plays a very important in determining the dynamics of pedagogy. Teachers' motivation is often determined by preconceived gender roles constructed culturally. Social prejudices and ideas of pedagogic hierarchy act as a major hindrance for some male teachers in performing their roles effectively. It is often felt that women can handle the problems of young learners more appropriately (See Ch. IV Pg. 122-125).

The study used theoretical insights to identify the pedagogic practices which are ideologically motivated and how these practices are practiced in the classroom. Social relationship in the classroom, be it between the

teacher and taught, or amongst students or between a particular school and the community at large, are critical factors in culturally relevant pedagogy. The effective social relations create healthy conditions for effective and lively learning. The study also took into account difference in the pedagogic discourse and practices adopted by different teachers. The findings have shown that the teachers who allow the students to share their knowledge in the classroom not only help other students to gain from the whole process but also achieve a self validation in terms of both professional status and competence. The teachers, on the other hand, who consider the students' mind as a *tabula rasa*, expect the students to adjust their understanding on their terms and not from the vantage of the learner's competence and input capabilities. The teacher should be a guide that takes the students from the realm of the known to the unknown and not someone who throws the learners into the deep end of the unknown. When there is mutual sharing of cultural knowledge, then there is a co-creation of knowledge where the learners do not leave their subjectivity outside the school gate. Heterogeneity of cultures is healthy for both students and teachers. Existence of both local and the others, a cultural mix of people, is definitely better than a mono-cultural learning environment. Thus, it is clear that culture serves as a very important tool for effective and interesting learning; more so when students and teachers of diverse cultures learn together and develop a mutual respect for cultures while being consistent to the value of their own culture. When formal structures of learning is related to the students' day to day life, the whole process, which otherwise seemed to be tough, becomes much easier.

The ideologies and the various aspects of pedagogical issues have been dealt in detail in National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005. The teachers of Kendriya Vidyalayas had to pass the written tests to

understand the written guidelines and principles written in the document. It was seen while interacting with the teachers of Kendriya Vidyalayas that they were generally aware of the 'theoretical aspects'. However, variations have been seen amongst them and it has been seen that the teachers who had 'studied' well for the test do apply to theory to practice. It was also found that the teachers do try to implement the guidelines and the principles of the NCF 2005, and teachers who had understood the theoretical concepts found it easier to apply it in practice (See Ch. IV Pg. 129-132).

Folklore, in its variegated dimensions, can thus clearly add value to the pedagogic process and at the same time mediate traditions and modernity in an effective manner. Culturally relevant pedagogy, with a focus on folklore, can go a long way in reconciling post colonial societies like India to its lot of hybridity by accommodating apparently contra indicator dynamics of tradition and modernity, and bring alive vividly to the learners that life and learning is an unending process of negotiation.

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APPENDIX I

INDICATIVE CULTURAL PROFILES OF TEACHERS /INFORMANTS

Name	Age/ Sex	Marital Status	Educational Qualifications/Place	Designation/Tchg Experience	Places Served	Cultural Profile
Mridusmita B. Sakia	41/F	Married	B.Ed., M.Sc. Biotechnology, Gauhati University.	PRT/18 years(Head Mistress)	Yol (Himachal), Guwahati, Tezpur.	From Guwahati, Assam. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assamese, Hindi, English and Bengali.
Albina Topuno	52/F	Married	M.A., B.Ed. Himachal/ Gauhati University.	TGT/19 years	Silchar, Gauhati and Tezpur.	From Assam, Mother Tongue- Munda. Familiar with Hindi, Assamese, Bengali and English.
N.D. Samanta	29/M	Unmarried	B.Ed., M.A. Geography. N.C.C.- C Certificate holder	PGT/ 4 years	Kanpur, Lucknow,Srinagar, Tezpur	From West Bengal. Mother Tongue- Bengali. Familiar with Bengali, English, Hindi.
S. Adhikary	47/M	Married	B.Sc(Calcutta Univ), B.Ed. (North Eastern Hill Univ)	TGT/22years	Garohills, Meghalaya, Shahdol(M.P.), Kokrajhar, Lokra, Tezpur	From West Bengal. Mother Tongue- Bangla. Familiar with Bengali, Assamese, Hindi and English. Inter cultural marriage, married to Bodo from plain tribes.
Ashish Kumar	27/ M	Not known	M.A Hindi(Kanpur) M.Ed(M.J.P.Rohilkhand Univ. Bareilly)	PGT/04 Years	Kota and Tezpur	From Uttar Pradesh. Mother tongue- Hindi(Kannauji) Familiar with Hindi and English.
Kumud Ranjan	29/M	Unmarried	M.A. B.Ed.(Patna Univ.)	PGT/02 Years	Tezpur	From Bihar. Mother tongue- Hindi, Familiar with Hindi and English.

Vikrant Kumar	30/M	Married	M.Sc. Maths (H.P.Univ. Shimla), B.Ed (Jammu Univ.), Jammu, Course in Computer Applications	TGT/06Years 3years in State Govt. School in H.P. & 3 years in K.V.	Shimla, Bhopal, Tezpur	From Himachal Pradesh. Mother tongue- Himachali. Familiar with Himachali, Hindi, Punjabi and English
Maniraj Bharti	31/M	Married	M.A. English(T.M.Bhagalpur Univ., Bhagalpur), M.Ed., NET(JRF)in Education(2009)	PGT/04 Years	Bhagalpur, Tezpur	From Bhagalpur. Mother tongue- Hindi(Angika). Familiar with Hindi and English.
Kamal Chandra Borah	50/M	Married	B.A. , B.T., Tezpur (Guwahati Univ.)	TGT/24 Years	Tezpur, Missamari, Lokra	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assamese, Hindi and English
Yugaraja Jagadeesh	28/M	Not Known	M.Sc Micro-biology (Nagarjuna Univ)	PGT/05 Years	Andhra Pradesh, Tezpur	From Tamilnadu. Mother tongue- Tamil. Familiar with English, Telgu, Tamil and Hindi.
Lilian Tham	35/F	Married	B.A. B.Ed ((Guwahati Univ.)	PRT/08 Years)	Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram, Agartala	From Lokra(Sonitpur, Assam). Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi, Assamese, Nepali, Bengali, Adivasi, Nagamis and English.
Rajkumari Dayanidhi	32/F	Married	M.Sc Botany(Cotton College, Guwahati), B.Ed(Imphal, Manipur).	PRT/07 Years. 5 years in Private school and 2 years in KV.	Tezpur	From Imphal, Manipur. Mother tongue- Manipuri. Familiar with English, Hindi and Manipuri
Albina Topno	52/F	Married	M.A. Hindi(H.P. Univ.), B.Ed (Guwahati Univ)	TGT/19 Years	Silchar, Guwahati, Tezpur	From Assam. Mother tongue- Munda. Familiar with Hindi, English, Assamese and Bengali
Manomati Brahma Adhikary	49/F	Married	B.A.(NEHU, Shillong)B.Ed (Guwahati Univ)	TGT/25 Years	Kokrajhar, Missamari, Tezpur	From Assam. Mother tongue- Bodo.Familiar with Bodo, Assamese, Bengali, English and Hindi. Marriage is inter cultural.

Bhupen Das	42/M	Married	M.A. English(Gauhati Univ), B.Ed.(Utkal Univ)	TGT/18 Years	Rupa(Arunachal Pradesh), Lokra, Missamari, Borgolai, Guwahati, Tezpur.	From Assam. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assamese, Oriya, Bengali, Hindi and English. Inter cultural marriage, married to Muslim
Veena. K.M.	36/F	Married to Defence Personnel	M.A. Clinical Psychology, M.Sc. Conselling and Psychotherapy, Diploma in Conselling Skills	Counsellor/02 Years	Pune, Tezpur	From Bangalore. Mother tongue- Kannada. Familiar with Kannada, Hindi and English.
Navjot Kaur Seihra	41/F	Married	M.A. English , B.Ed.(Panjab Univ, Chandigarh)	PRT/03 Years	Chandigarh, Patiala, Assam	From Chandigarh, Mother tongue- Punjabi. Familiar with Hindi, English and Punjabi
Meenakshi Gautam	39/ F	Married to Defence Personnel	M.Sc. Organic Chemistry (Delhi Univ, Delhi), B.Ed(Annamali Univ)	PGT/11 Years	Ghaziabad, Bhatinda, Delhi, Tezpur	From Uttar Pradesh. Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with English and Hindi
S. sampath Lakshmi	29/F	Married to Defence Personnel	B.Sc Applied Sciences(Bharathiar Univ.), B.Ed. (Army Institute of Higher Education, Pathankot)	TGT/ 01 Year	Secunderabad, Udhampur, Tezpur	From Tamilnadu. Mother tongue- Tamil. Familiar with Tamil, English, Kannada, Telugu and Hindi. Inter cultural marriage, married to Delhite.
Rajpati Dahiya	40/ F	Married to Defence Personnel	B.Sc. M.Ed(M.D. Univ, Rohtak)	TGT/13 Years	Jodhpur, Tezpur	From Rohtak, Haryana. Mother tongue- Haryanivi. Familiar with Hindi, English and Sanskrit
Sayeeda Banu	31/F	Married	B.Sc, B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ)	PRT/07 Years	Tezpur	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi, English and Assamese
Reena Sahu	27/F	Unmarried	B.A., B.ed.(Gauhati Univ), M.A. Hindi (IGNOU)	TGT/ 05 Years	Tezpur	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Bengali. Familiar with English, Hindi, Assamese.
G. Nandini	37/F	Married to Defence Personnel	M.Sc., B.Ed. (Osmania Univ.),	PRT/03 Years	Nasirabaad, Pune, Akhnoor, Tezpur	From Secunderabad. Mother tongue- Telugu. Familiar with English, Hindi and Telugu.

Nirbani Baruah	58/F	Unmarried	B.A. B.Ed. (Guwahati Univ.), Diploma in B. Lib	PRT/#0 Years	Tezpur	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assamese, Bengali, Hindi and English
Shabnam Sabherwal	40/F	Married to Defence Personnel	B.A., B.Ed. (Punjab Univ)	PRT/ 09 Years	Delhi, Secunderabad, Chandigarh, Tezpur	From Punjab. Mother tongue- Punjabi. Familiar with English, hindi and Punjabi
Eva Barman	27/F	Unmarried	B.A. B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ)	TGT/03 years	Missamari, Tezpur	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assamese, Nepali, Bengali, Hindi and English. Inter- cultural marriage of parents, Nepali and Assamese.
Shailly Singh	37/F	Married to Defence Personnel	M.Sc (Pune Univ), B.Ed. (Goa Univ.)	PRT/04 Years	Goa, Mhow, Rangia, Tezpur	From Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh. Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Bhojpuri, Marathi, Bengali, Hindi and English.
Anamika Das	24/ F	Unmarried	B. A. B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ), Sangeet Visharad (Kathak)	PRT/ 02 Years	Tezpur	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assamese, English and Hindi
Rachna Vyas	38/ F	Married to Defence Personnel	M.Com, B.Ed. (HNB Garhwal Univ.), NIIT (PG in System Management)	PRT/ 05 Years	Dehradun, West Bengal, Tezpur	From Dehradun. Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi and English.
Bineeta Sakia	30/F	Married	M.A. B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ.)	PGT/03Years	Mizoram, Tezpur	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Hindi, English and Assamese.
Sandhya	36/F	Married to Defence Personnel	M.Sc. Statistics, B.Ed.(Punjabi Univ., Patiala)	PRT/First Experience	Serving in Tezpur	From Bhopal. Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi and English. Inter cultural marriage in the family- Rajput and Marathi

Mandira Acharya	58/F	Married	B.A.(Gauhati Univ.), B.Ed. (NEHU, Shillong)	PRT(Head Mistress)/39 Years	Missamari, Lokra, Tezpur	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Bengali. Familiar with English, Hindi, Bengali and Assamese.
Amit Kumar Hota	24/M	Not Known	B.A., B.Ed.(Raipur)	PRT/05 Years	Banjeepur(Chhattisgarh), Tezpur	From Raipur(Chhattisgarh). Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi and English.
Tanushree Paul	33/F	Married	M.Sc, B.Ed. (Dibrugarh Univ.)	PRT/09 Years	Dinjan, Missamari, Silchar, Tezpur	From Assam. Mother tongue- Bengali. Familiar with Bengali, Assamese, English and Hindi.
Amarjit Kour	52/F	Married	B.Sc. Home Science(Assam Agricultural Univ.), B.Ed.(Tezpur, Gauhati Univ.)	PRT/20 Years	Guwahati, Tezpur	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Punjabi. Familiar with Punjabi, English, hindi and Assamese.
Sanjeev Kumar Kushwaha	30/M	Not Known	MCA (Madhya Pradesh)	PGT/04 Years	Jodhpur, Tezpur	From Gwalior(Madhya Pradesh). Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi and English
Bedabyara Bhoi	29/M	Not Known	M.A. History (Sambalpur Univ.), B.Ed. (Sambalpur)	PGT/03 Years	Lakshadweep, Tezpur	From Bargarh (Orissa). Mother tongue- Oriya. Familiar with Oriya, English, Hindi, Bengali and Assamese.
Satish Kumar Singh	30/M	Not Known	M.A. Hindi (Allahabad Univ.), B.Ed.(V.B.S. Purvanchal Univ. Jaunpur, U.P.)	TGT/06 Years	Rampur, Pratapgarh(U.P.), Tezpur	From Allahabad(U.P.). Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi, English, Sanskrit, Urdu.
Ranjula Goswami	50/F	Married	B.A., B.Ed.(Gauhati Univ.)	PRT/26 Years	Kathmandu, Tezpur.	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assamese, English, Hindi and Bengali. Inter cultural marriage in the family.

Guruaribam Dayabati Devi	36/F	Not Known	B.Sc. (Univ. of Mysore)M.Sc. Plant Science (Lucknow Univ.), B.Ed. , M.Ed. (Manipur Univ.)	PRT/12 Years	Manipur, Tezpur	From Manipur. Mother tongue- Manipuri. Familiar with Manipuri, English and Hindi.
Indrani Barua	45/F	Married	B.A. B.Ed. (Tezpur)	PRT/21 Years	Tezpur	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with English, Hindi, Assamese and Bengali.
Geeta Rai	53/F	Married	M.A., B.Ed (Avadh Univ. Faizabad)	PRT/23 Years	Pratpgarh(U.P.), New Delhi, Assam	From Uttar Pradesh. Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi and English. Inter cultural marriage in the family- U.Pite and Bengali
Saranya Janakar	25/ F	Married	B.sc.(Avinashilingam Univ.), MCA (Bharathiar Univ.), HDCA	PRT/First experience(07 Months)	Tezpur	From Tamilnadu. Mother tongue- Kannada. Familiar with Kannada, Tamil, English and Malayalam
Rumki Devi	30/F	Married	B.A. B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ.)	PRT/06 Years	Tezpur	From Calcutta. Mother tongue- Bengali. Familiar with Hindi, English, Bengali and Assamese.
Pinjumoni Saikia	30/F	Married	B.A.B.Ed.(Gauhati Univ.)	PRT/02 Years	Missamari, Tezpur	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with English, Hindi and Assamese.
Silbina Nag	48/F	Married	M.A. B.Ed (Gauhati Univ.)	PRT/25 Years (Head Mistress)	Assam- Tezpur, Missamari, Bangalore	From Dholailbil(Assam). Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assamese, Hindi, English, Munda.
Mary Kerketta	38/F	Not Known	B.A. B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ.)	TGT/15 Years	Guwahati, Tezpur, Dibrugarh	From Jharkhand. Mother tongue- Munda. Familiar with Munda, Santhali, Nepali, Hindi and English. Inter cultural marriage in the family, Munda and Khasi.

Sarfaraz Alam	30/F	Not Known	B.Sc. (Purvanchal Univ. Jaunpur, U.P.), M.Sc. Maths (Allahabad Univ.), B.Ed. (Gorakhpur Univ.)	PGT/02 Years	Barwani(Madhya Pradesh), Lokra	From Ballia(UttarPradesh). Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi, English and Urdu.
Leena Changkakoti	30/F	Not Known	B.A. B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ.)	PRT/05 Years	Missamari, Lokra	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Hindi, English and Assamese.
Bandana Borah	31/F	Married	B.A. B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ.)	PRT/03 Years	Missamari, Lokra	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Hindi, English and Assamese.
Jatan Kumar Sunar	31/M	Married	B.A. B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ.) Visharad in Hindi.	PRT/05 Years	Lokra, Dirang (Arunachal Pradesh), Tenga Valley(Arunachal Pradesh), Chardwar	From Lokra. Mother tongue- Nepali. Familiar with Hindi, English, Hindi and Assamese.
Shikha Sangma	29/F	Not Known	B.A., B.Ed. (Dibrugarh Univ.)	TGT/06 Years	Chabua, Lokra	From Assam. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with English, Hindi and Assamese.
Sharad Kant Sharma	48/M	Married	M.A. M.Phil.Hindi (Allahabad), B.Ed.(Rohailkhand Univ. Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh)	PGT/23 Years	Manipur, Uttarakhand, Bareilly(UttarPradesh), Dadar and Nagar Haveli, Lokra.	From Bareilly (Uttar Pradesh). Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi, Sanskrit and English.
Navanita Neog	26/F	Not Known	M.A. History, B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ.)	PGT/First Experience	Lokra	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assamese, Hindi, English And Bengali
Sanjay Kumar Chhetri	38/M	Married	B.Sc. B.Ed(Univ. of Jodhpur, Rajasthan)	PRT/14 Years	Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Assam.	From Lokra. Mother tongue- Nepali. Familiar with Hindi, English and Assamese.
Virendra Kumar	27/M	Not Known	M.Sc. Physics, B.Ed.(Avadh Univ. Faizabad) NCC	TGT/03 Years	Lokra	From Lucknow(Uttar Pradesh). Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi and English.

Lizy Baruah	33/F	Married	M.A. B.Ed. (Gauhati Univ.)	PGT/05 Years	Tezpur, Lokra	From Tezpur. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with English, Hindi and Assamese.
Ashima Rishi	35/F	Married to Defence Personnel	B.Sc. Home Sc.(Delhi Univ.), B.Ed. (ICFAI, Hydrabad).	PRT/04 Years	Mamun Cantt., Lokra	From Jammu. Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi, English, Punjabi and Dogri.
Md. Amir Hasan	47/M	Married	B.Sc.(Bhagalpur Univ.), B.T. (Gauhati Univ.)	TGT/23 Years	Zunheboto (Nagaland), Agartala (Tripura), Seiling(Mizoram), Khonsa(Arunachal Pradesh), Somsai (Manipur), Zakhama(Nagaland); Lokra(Assam).	From Bhagalpur(Bihar). Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi, Urdu, English, Arabic, Persian.
Manuwara Begum	47/F	Married	B.A.(Tezpur)	PRT/25 Years	Agartala, ukhrul, Lairochine, Mokokchung, Chardwar, Lokra.	From Lokra. Mother tongue- Bengali. Familiar with Hindi, English, Assamese, Bengali, Bhopuri.
Moniknachan Sarma	52/F	Married	B.A. (Gauhati Univ.)	TGT/13 years	Tezpur, Lokra	From Assam. Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with English, hindi and Assamese.
Radha R. Nair	52/F	Married	M.A. Economics.(Univ. of Kerala), B.Ed. (Tripura Univ.)	TGT/25 Years	Zhuneboto(Nagaland), Agartala (Tripura), Dimapur, Shillong, Shamsak, Laitkor, Lokra.	From Kerala. Mother tongue- Malayalam. Familiar with Malayalam, English and Hindi.
Vinod Chhetri	25/M	Not Known	B.A.(Tezpur , Gauhati Univ.)	PRT/First Experience(01 Year 02 months)	Lokra	From Lokra(Assam). Mother tongue- Nepali. Familiar with Hindi, Nepali, Assamese and English.

Preeti Jeena	24/F	Unmarried	B.Sc., B.Ed.(Gauhati Univ.)	TGT/03 Years	Balipara, Chardwar, Lokra	From Uttarakhand. Mother tongue- Kumauni. Familiar with Hindi, English, Assamese, Nepali. Kumauni.
Manorama Pradhan	24/F	Unmarried	B.A.	PRT/ First Experience	Lokra	From Lokra. Mother tongue- Nepali. Familiar with Nepali, English, Hindi and Assamese.
Prem Pal Singh	28/M	Unmarried	M.Sc Chemistry(M.P.B.U.Madhya Pradesh Bhoj Open Univ., Bhopal), B.Ed.(Dr. B.R.A.U., Agra)	PRT/03 Years	Agra (in N. C. College for 01 year), Misa Cantt.	From Agra. Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi and English.
Mukteshwar Singh	33/M	Married	M.A. Geography (Gorakhpur Univ.), B.Ed(Deen Dayal Upadhaya Univ.)	TGT/08 Years	Bangalore, Misa(Nagaon, Assam)	From Deoria (uttar Pradesh). Mother tongue- Bhojpuri. Familiar with Bhojpuri, Hindi and English
Ramesh Kumar Meena	34/M	Married	B.A., B.P.Ed.(Kota Univ.)	TGT(Physical Ed.)/03 Years	Porbander (Gujrat), Misa Cantt.	From Rajasthan. Mother tongue- Marwari. Familiar with Hindi and English. Inter cultural marriage in the family.
Devender Kumar Sunkria	26/M	Not Known	B.E. (Computer science & Engineering)	PGT/03 Years	Tenga Valley(Arunachal Pradesh), Misa Cantt.	From Nasirabad(Ajmer, Rajasthan). Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi and English.
Ng. Sarjubala	34/F	Married	M.Sc.(Panjab Univ., Chandigarh), B.Ed.(Manipur Univ.)	PGT/08 Years	Kohima, Ludhian(Punjab), Kalaikunda(West Bengal), Imphal, Nagaon(Assam)	From Manipur. Mother tongue- Manipuri. Familiar with Manipuri, Hindi and English.
Ram	28/M	Unmarried	M.Sc. Physics, B.Ed. (HNBGU, Srinagar Garwal)	PGT/02 Years (First Experience)	Misa Cantt.	From Gazipur(Uttar Pradesh). Mother tongue- Bhojpuri. Familiar with Hindi and English.

Anurag Pandey	33/M	Married	M.A. Hindi(Lucknow Univ.), B.Ed.(Rohilkhand Univ.)	PGT/07 Years	Karbianglong, Chandigarh, Misa Cantt.	From Lucknow. Mother tongue- Hindi. Inter cultural marriage, wife is from Punjabi Community.
Dharmendra Kumar Tiwari	30/M	Not Known	M.A. Maths (Kanpur Univ.), B.Ed. (Avadh Univ. Faizabad, Uttar Pradesh).	PRT/05 Years(03 Years in private in U.P.)	U.P., Missa Cantt.	From Uttar Pradesh. Mother tongue- Hindi. Familiar with Hindi and English.
Manideepa Bora	48/F	Married	B.A., B.Ed.(NEHU,Shillong)	PRT(Officiating Head Mistress)/26 Years	Shillong, Tezpur, Nagaon	From Nagaon(Assam). Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assames, hindi, English and Bengali.
Mithu Borthakur	26/F	Unmarried	M.A. (Tezpur Univ.), B.Ed.(Nagaon, Assam)	Spoken English /02 Years	Nagaon, Jagiroad, Misa	From Nagaon(Assam). Mother tongue- Assamese. Familiar with Assamese, Hindi and English.
Trishna Rajak	29/F	Not Known	B.A., B.Ed.(Gauhati Univ.)	PRT/04 Years	Nagaon, Missa Cantt.	From Nagaon(Assam). Mother tongue- Assamese.

APPENDIX II

QUESTIONNAIRE

Personal Information of the Teachers

- 1) Name of the School:
- 2) Name (Full Name):
- 3) Sex:
- 4) Age:
- 5) Educational Qualification:
 - a) Schooling(Board/Place):
 - b) Degrees(Bachelor/ University):
 - c) B.Ed:
 - d) Post Graduation:
 - e) Any Other Qualification:
- 6) Cultural Background:
 - a) Place you belong to :
 - b) Mother Tongue:
 - c) How many languages you know, mention:
 - d) Inter cultural marriages, if any, in the family? (You can volunteer the identity of the cultures involved)
- 7) Teaching Experience:
 - a) Total No. of Years:
 - b) Places Served:
- 8) PRT/TGT/PGT (Tick)
- 9) If, Class Teacher (mention class and section):
- 10) Subjects Taught and presently teaching:
- 11) Duration in the present School:

APPENDIX III

NAMES, LOCATION AND STRENGTH OF THE SELECTED SCHOOLS

Tezpur is the district headquarters of the Sonitpur district of Assam which is home for various ethnic communities of the region. For the study, four Kendriya Vidyalayas, one Army school and one Assam Rifles School were selected. All these schools are affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education at New Delhi. Army Public School and Kendriya Vidyalaya (KV) No. 1 are located at Solmara, part of the military cantonment at Tezpur about twelve kilometers from the business hub of the Tezpur town. About fifteen kilometers from Tezpur, KV 2 is located at the Air force station at Goroimari. Kendriya Vidyalaya, Lokra and Assam Rifles School, Lokra are situated thirty kilometers away from Tezpur at Lokra.

Kendriya Vidyalaya, Misa Cantt., Misa is located in Misa. Misa is in district Nagaon and is about forty kilometers west from Tezpur on road NH-37, and is about ten kilometers west from Kaliabor bridge on road NH-37. This school is located inside the Army Cantonment of Misa. The general area is approximately fifty kilometers short of the world famous Kaziranga National Park (KNP), which is famous for its one- horned rhinoceros.

Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs)

KVs are run by KVS (Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan) and most of the teachers are permanent in nature. Since these teachers are centrally selected as per the rules and selection criteria, they are on all India posting belonging to different state and cultural affiliation.

Army Schools are also run by AWES (Army Welfare Education Scheme). Bulk of the teachers are not permanent in nature and out of them, many teachers are the wives of defence personnel, who belong to various ethnicity and cultural affiliation.

Assam Rifles Schools are autonomous bodies and do not function under any specific society, however all communication regarding school activities are through CBSE.

THE STRENGTH OF THE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS
(AS ON SEPT /OCT. END 2010)

Name of School	Total Strength of Students	Total Strength of Teachers	Permanent Teachers/ Regular/Part time Teachers/Contractual Teachers
KVNo.1 Tezpur	1365	55	40/15
KVNo.2 Tezpur	1406	57	50/7
KV Lokra	857	43	33/10
KV Misa	450	24	2/22
ArmyPublic School Tezpur	1128	50	4/46
Assam Rifles School Lokra	540	21	6/15

All schools are from Class I to Class XII except Assam Rifles School, Which is from Nursery to class X. Teachers who have been employed on permanent basis get transferred to other locations where schools are run by the Assam Rifles generally after every three years. Army Public School has a trained Counsellor, where as other schools do not have Counsellor.

APPENDIX IV

ADMISSION CRITERIA TO THE SCHOOLS AND SELECTION PROCESS OF TEACHERS

Admission Criteria to the Schools

For Army Public School

Army Public School follows the admission rules according to AWES (Army Welfare Education Society). According to AWES 20% Civilians are authorised admission to all classes and 80% seats are for defence personnel wards. The inflow of the students are seen throughout the year as the admission to the defence personnel' children are not denied. These schools follow CBSE syllabus to maintain the continuity for the students from different states.

For Assam Rifles School

There are no specific admission criteria for this school. The admission is open to all however preference is given to Assam Rifles. As the school is affiliated to CBSE Board, all correspondence is through CBSE. Presently, there is no specific body of rules common to all Assam Rifles schools, thus each school and the running of the school is autonomous and the unit to which the school belongs to automatically becomes responsible for the functioning of the school. This particular school is from Nursery to class X. The admission is through the admission test.

For Kendriya Vidyalayas (KVs)

In KVs there are seven criteria for admission and the categories of parents are as follows:

- Transferable Central Government Employee including Ex Servicemen.
- Non transferable Central Government Employee including Ex Servicemen.
- Transferable and non transferable employees of Autonomous Body/ Public Sector Undertakings Institutes of higher learning of the Government of India.
- Transferable State Government Employees.
- Non Transferable Employees of State Government.
- Transferable and Non transferable employees of Autonomous Body/ Public Sector undertakings Institutes of higher learning of State Government.
- General Category.

These are the criteria for admission to KVs and children from one KV to another are not denied admission on the basis of transference and the students are migrated to

another school and so the students' inflow to the school is seen throughout the year. This is also obvious from the above category that children are admitted to the schools like KV are from all parts of the country. The general category includes children from local population and thus local students are taken according to the vacancy and the priority of the category.

Selection Criteria for teachers

Kendriya Vidyalayas follow central selection system for appointing and Army Schools also have CSB (Central Selection Board) and LSB (Local Selection Board) system for recruitment. Army Public School Tezpur, and Assam Rifles School and Kendriya Vidyalayas also appoint part time/contractual teachers through their local interview boards. In all the schools other than permanent categories other teachers are either on the part time basis or on contractual basis.

APPENDIX V

FEE STRUCTURES OF SCHOOLS AS PER SESSION 2010-2011

Kendriya Vidyalayas

Admission Fee: Rs, 25

For Class I to VIII: No tuition fee.

Vidyalaya Vikas Nidhi (VVN) (for Classes I to X): Rs. 240 per month.

Computer Fund (III to X): Rs 50 per month.

Tuition Fee (IX, X): 200 per month.

Tuition Fee (XI, XII for Commerce and Humanities): 300 per month.

Tuition Fee (XI, XII for Science): 400 per month.

However in KVs Tuition fee is exempted for SC, ST, Girls and children of the staff members. Single girl child is exempted from full fee.

Assam Rifles School

This school has four categories for fee ; Officers, JCOs (Junior Commanding Officers), ORs (Other Ranks), Civilians and the fee structure is as follows for the session 2010=2011:

Class	Officers			JCOs			ORs			Civilians		
	VVN	CF	Total	VVN	CF	Total	VVN	CF	Total	VVN	CF	Total
Nursery to UKG	250	-	250	225	-	225	200	-	200	250	-	250
I to V	225	75	300	200	75	275	175	75	250	225	75	300
VI to VIII	250	100	350	225	100	325	200	100	300	250	100	350
IX to X	275	125	400	250	125	375	225	125	350	275	125	400

Security Money (Refundable and only for Civilians): 500

Admission Fee: 300

Annual Fee: 300

Army Public School

Fee Structure of the school is as per different categories like Officers/Defence Civilians equivalent to Officers, JCO/Defence Civilians equivalent to JCO Rank, OR/Defence Civilian equivalent to OR Rank and Civilian. The colour of Fee Slips is also according to the categories. Yellow slips for Officers, Blue for JCOs , Pink for Ors and Green for Civilians.

Annual /Monthly Fee as per the session 2010-2011**Officers /Defence Civilian equivalent to officers**

	Class I – V	Class VI – VIII	Class IX - X
Annual (One time)	1275	1075	1075
VSK (Vidyarthi Suraksha Kavach)	80	80	80
Tuition Fee	840	960	960
Pupil Fund	75	75	75
Computer Fee	60	60	60
Science Lab	-	-	50

One time fee (At the time of new Admission)

Registration fee	300
Admission fee	1200
Security deposit (Refundable)	6000

Civilian

	Class I-V	Class VI – VIII	Class IX - X
Annual (One time)	2075	1725	1725
VSK	80	80	80
Tuition Fee	1080	1200	1200
Pupil Fund	125	125	125
Science Lab	-	-	75

One time fee (At the time of new Admission)

Registration fee	300
Admission fee	5000
Security deposit (Refundable)	9000

JCO (Junior Commanding Officer) / Defence Civilian equivalent to JCO rank

	Class I- V	Class VI –VIII	Class IX- X
Annual (One time)	1075	925	925
VSK	80	80	80
Tuition Fee	720	840	840
Pupil Fund	75	75	75
Computer Fee	60	60	60
Science Lab	-	-	50

One time fee (At the time of new Admission)

Registration fee 300

Admission fee 600

Security deposit (Refundable) 4000

OR (Other Ranks) / Defence Civilian equivalent to OR rank

	Class I –V	Class VI –VIII	Class IX- X
Annual (One time)	900	775	775
VSK	80	80	80
Tuition Fee	600	720	720
Pupil Fund	75	75	75
Computer Fee	60	60	60
Science Lab	-	-	50

One time fee (At the time of new Admission)

Registration fee 300

Admission fee 400

Security deposit (Refundable) 3000