



CRITICAL PEDAGOGY IN THE 21st CENTURY: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES

Aishorya Bharati¹, Dr. Nisanth PM²

¹ Research Scholar, Department of Education, Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh

² Assistant Professor, Department of Education, Rajiv Gandhi University, Arunachal Pradesh

Email: aishoryabharati@gmail.com¹, nisanth.m@rgu.ac.in²

ABSTRACT

A pedagogical approach known as "critical pedagogy" encourages instructors to support students as they analyse systems of authority and opportunities that are based on "critical theory," which involves becoming conscious of and challenging the status quo in society. Through critical pedagogy, instructors motivate pupils to explore and confront social and familial injustices by drawing on their own enlightenment. The current social structure is still battling against social evil, injustice, and equality. Worker exploitation, disdain for those from other sociocultural backgrounds, mob lynching, and a decline in values all serve as stark examples of how the educational system has failed to instil civilization in society. Although we may have advanced materialistically, a progressive mentality has not yet been attained. As a result, critical pedagogy practise in the twenty-first century becomes pertinent. Critical pedagogical strategies are challenging to put into practise in regular classroom settings. Developing measures to ensure these obstacles begins with an understanding of some of these barriers and how they appear in higher education institutions. Thus, this paper discusses the challenges that could occur while attempting to employ critical pedagogy. This paper also discusses the possibilities of using critical pedagogy in the classroom for the benefit of the students.

Keywords: Critical Pedagogy, Challenges, Possibilities

1. Introduction

Education is a crucial factor in the progress of civilisation. It is cardinal in the development of family, society, nation and the world as a whole. Thus, the process of education has been changed and evolved in structure since ages to suit the needs of the present time. The 21st century education system clearly emphasizes on educational phenomena which strive for development of critical thinking among the learners. This is important so as to address the various issues prevalent in the society and to come up with innovative ideas to bring reforms concerning the present values and norms. Thus, creating knowledge and enhancing student critical thinking capability are central to contemporary notions of schooling (Uddin, 2019).

The **National Policy on Education (NEP-2020)** has mandated for evolving of pedagogy to make education more experiential, holistic, integrated, inquiry- driven, discovery-oriented, learner-centred, discussion-based, analysis-based and flexible. It has also recommended for curriculum's content be pared down in each subject to its core essentials, to create room for critical thinking and the implications of the above mentioned ways of learning and teaching. The content has to focus on key concepts, ideas, applications, and problem-solving (**pp. 3-12**). Critical Pedagogy is one such pedagogy which endeavours to make education more experiential, inquiry-driven, discovery-oriented, problem based, and analysis based.

Critical pedagogy is an educational approach that seeks to empower learners to critically examine and challenge the social and cultural conventions, and take transformational action for social justice (**Panthi, 2023 as cited in Freire, 1996**). A critical pedagogy would include a variety of sources of knowledge, place a greater focus on group discussions and discourse, and promote student-generated questions to serve as a basis for further investigation and, eventually, the search for their transformative role in society. Such a learning environment teaches students to evaluate topics and problems from all aspects, recognise numerous points of view, and generate their own opinions and potential solutions for the various situations they experience in their daily lives and in society. The goal of critical pedagogy is to help students become cognizant of the conditions that exist in their own lives and in society, and to equip them with the abilities, information, and resources they need to plan and effect change. Critical pedagogy is the practise of such a method of teaching in the classroom that aims to teach the subject material in a way that enables the students to go beyond the surface meaning, thereby making them understand the ideology, effect, and causes behind a particular phenomenon and to build an unbiased opinions for overcoming social evils. Critical Pedagogy aims at formulation of such educational practices which would contribute towards shaping a democratic structure with an anti-oppressive social vision in the classroom and society as a whole (**Kareepadath, 2018**).

A philosophy of education known as "critical pedagogy" was developed in the 1960s and 1970s in response to the shortcomings and repressive methods of conventional educational institutions (**Kincheloe, 2008**). Critical Pedagogy can be traced back to the era of Plato and Socrates. These two thinkers acknowledged the significance of dialogue for human interaction and for education (**Guilherme, 2017**). **Plato (1940)** in the book '**Republic**', was challenged by his teacher Socrates to think critically on educational, social and philosophical issues. And this initiative led to the cornerstone of Critical Pedagogy.

The writings of Brazilian philosopher and educator Paulo Freire, however, were what really sparked the development of critical pedagogy as a theory and a separate area of study in the 1960s and 1970s. In the '**Pedagogy of the Oppressed**', **Freire (1970)** argued about the banking-based foundations of the then-current educational system, which viewed instructors as knowledge depositors who put information into the students' receptive brains. He was vehemently opposed to any educational strategy that discouraged students from exercising critical thought. In order to change society, he therefore aimed to offer a workable educational alternative based on discussion, dialogue, problem based method of learning and critical

thinking. In '*Pedagogy of the Oppressed*', Freire (1970) turned the ideas and ideals of critical theory into a critical pedagogy so that teachers can implement the philosophy into their classrooms.

2. Review of related literature

A number of researches has been conducted in the area of critical pedagogy. The studies have highlighted the positive outcome of using critical pedagogy in the classroom. Uddin (2019) in his paper provides a few examples of how several teachers use critical strategies in the classroom and how these teaching methods affect student thinking and learning positively. The paper also argues that classroom teachers should employ critical pedagogy in classroom. Kaufman (2017) in his paper on critical contemplative pedagogy emphasized on the synthesis of critical pedagogy and contemplative pedagogy as a new approach for educating the learners. The paper highlights on five dimensions of Critical Contemplative Pedagogy as a way to explain what is meant by this hybrid approach and the need for adopting this approach. Kaufman and Fobes (2008) in their paper has focussed on both challenges and potential solutions for learners, teachers and institutions of higher education. The paper highlights on some of these obstacles and how they manifest in institutions of higher learning goes a long way in devising strategies to assuage their deleterious effects.

3. Objectives of the study

1. To look into the significance of critical pedagogy in 21st century.
2. To look into the challenges that the teachers may face, while implementing Critical Pedagogical approach in the classroom.
3. To look into the possibilities of using Critical pedagogy effectively in the classroom.

4. Critical Pedagogy in 21st century: Need of implementation

Modern education system attempts to develop students' critical thinking skills so they may bring about the required social improvements. Education may play a crucial part in society's transformation by creating a space in the classroom where students can examine and analyse the society they live in. It seeks to identify those people who can act as change agents and transform the society. The use of Critical Pedagogy in the classroom makes it feasible for Education to fulfil this goal. Thus, critical pedagogy implementation in the classroom is essential for producing such members of society.

India ranked 72nd out of 73 countries in the Programme for International Students Assessment (PISA) test conducted by Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) in 2009. This exam is designed to determine if students can apply their knowledge from primary and secondary schooling to specific challenges in the real world. India, a country noted for its wealth of natural resources, may move closer to being a developed country provided it also has excellent human resources. As a result, learning in the classroom should not just be about memorising information but also about assisting students in the development of their cognitive and life skills.

The National Curriculum Framework, 2005 (NCF, 2005) has also placed a strong emphasis on critical pedagogy since it will provide students the chance to consider problems from a political, social, economic, and moral standpoint. It entails the acceptance of multiple views on social issues and a commitment to

democratic form of interaction. A critical framework enables learners to view societal issues from many angles and comprehend how they relate to their own lives. Learners can critically think on topics relating to human rights, caste, religion, and gender to identify how these concerns are connected to their everyday lives and how many types of inequality compound and are perpetuated. By fostering and recognising diverse viewpoints and encouraging open dialogue, critical pedagogy enhances group decision-making.

The **NEP-2020** has placed a strong emphasis on teaching students how to learn in addition to learn. In order to create people who are capable of rational thought and action, possess a scientific temperament, and who will contribute to the development of an equitable, inclusive, and plural society. Therefore, the practise of critical pedagogy in our educational system is essential for the implementation and fulfilment of the **NEP, 2020** recommendations listed above.

The need of implementing critical pedagogy in the 21st century is more than merely helping students become change agents. Additionally, it aids in the growth of several skills, values and also contributes to improvement of learners academic performance. **Jayalekshmi (2012)** in her study revealed that Critical Pedagogy is effective in enhancement of social and emotional skills, retention level and academic achievement among the learners. Integrating theoretical and practical aspect of critical pedagogy would help in improving the learning skills, democratic attitude and academic achievement of the learners (**Singh, 2015**). **Thomas (2018)** in his study found that learners find the tools and approach of critical pedagogy interesting and engaging one. Critical pedagogic approach is effective in improving the critical thinking, mediavistic competency and value preferences (**Kaliyadan, 2014**). **Manoj (2018)** revealed that pedagogical changes are inevitable for tribal learners. This pedagogy would give strength and motivation to the marginalised to voice their opinions and bring out their grievances with confidence.

With the discussion above, it is clear that use of critical pedagogy in the 21st century may be highly beneficial for bringing out quality education.

5. Challenges of using Critical Pedagogy in the classroom

The use of Critical Pedagogy in the classroom may present certain challenges. Here's an overview of some of these challenges.

Lack of Teacher Training

One challenge is the lack of teacher preparation and training in critical pedagogy. Many educators may lack the knowledge and abilities needed to successfully apply critical pedagogy in their classrooms because they were not exposed to it during their pre-service training. (**Panthi, 2023 as cited in Kubota, 2017**).

Resistance of the education system

Another significant challenge in implementing critical pedagogy is the school's reluctance to undergo change. The conventional education system is firmly based on the banking model of education, which perceives students as passive absorbers of knowledge (**Freire, 1970**). Even in the present day, numerous schools adhere to a conventional teaching style. Introducing critical pedagogy in the classroom necessitates a substantial transformation in the role of both educators and learners, a task that may be challenging to accomplish (**Panthi, 2023, as cited in Giroux, 2011**).

Extensive curriculum:

Teachers are hesitant to utilise various pedagogical techniques to ensure that pupils fully comprehend a topic since the syllabus for school subjects is so extensive. Teachers are always under pressure to finish the course on time and get the students ready for the exam, which prevents them from connecting the lessons they are teaching to the world beyond the classroom.

Crowded classroom:

Most schools do not maintain the ideal student-teacher ratio. This is yet another difficulty that educator faces and limits their ability to try out various educational approaches while educating students. When the classroom is packed, it becomes difficult on the part of the learners to use techniques of Dialogue, Group discussion, and so forth which is the core of the Critical Pedagogical approach.

Recovering student voices:

Helping students adjust to new learning experiences is one of the major challenges that teachers must overcome. The students show resistance while engaging in critical inquiry and to question the status quo or may resist changing their own beliefs and assumptions on issues (Panthi, 2023). Many students are more comfortable with note taking practices and banking the concepts as discussed by teachers in the class. Thus, recuperating student's voice in the class is another important challenge faced by the teachers implementing Critical pedagogy in the classroom.

Content of the school subject:

The content of the school subject also plays a crucial role in the execution of Critical Pedagogy. In many books, the information is delivered exclusively in the form of notes, leaving little room for the readers' critical thought. This will only imprint the facts, opinions and the thoughts of the author in the minds of the learners. Instead, the book should be broken up into distinct portions so that the learner's ability to recall, interpret, analyse, and think creatively may be emphasised. This will help in building of true knowledge among the learners.

Assessment:

Critical pedagogy seeks to promote dialogue and encourage students to bring desired changes to their world. The application of this approach raises important questions for the teachers about how to assess such goals in the context of substantive course content. These problems are difficult to fix and does turn into another challenge in front of the teachers for implementing critical pedagogy in the classroom.

Institutional pressure:

Teachers are under constant pressure to adhere to institutional norms. The use of critical pedagogy is challenged because institutional policies and practices rarely takes into consideration of teacher demands in determination of classroom size, classroom arrangements, and support facilities for educational activities, thus challenging the application of critical pedagogy in the classroom.

6. Possibilities of using Critical Pedagogy in the classroom

The implementation of critical pedagogy in schools might be sometimes challenging given the situations around. However, there are some effective ways and conditions, the fulfilment of which can help in implementation of critical pedagogy in the classroom.

Form a bond with students

It is vital for the implementation of critical pedagogy in the classroom, that teachers respect the diverse views and opinions of the learners. The teacher may provide such opportunities to learners which would enable students to link knowledge of the curriculum content with the concrete reality of their lives. In order for students to feel comfortable sharing their thoughts and beliefs in the classroom it is crucial that a link be established between the two parties as the practise of Critical Pedagogy necessitates conversation between the professors and students.

Acquisition of skills and knowledge to use Critical Pedagogy:

The use of critical pedagogy demands that the teacher be competent in terms of content expertise, the capacity to consider a problem from various angles, knowledge of the use of critical pedagogy, significance of the use of critical pedagogy, skills of using the pedagogy while taking into account the learners' maturity level, socioeconomic background, and societal needs, skills of encouraging students to participate in class without hesitation, and skills of classroom management.

Language not to be a barrier:

Students in the school are in the process of learning and language development will gradually take place as one moves ahead in their life. So, when asked to share their thoughts in class, they shouldn't be pushed to use a certain language. Forcing learners to express themselves in a foreign language will create an unwanted stress, thereby restricting them to be vocal about their thoughts and ideas. The learners' ability to think critically will progressively disappear due to their fear of speaking in front of others, and as a result, they will start to tilt towards the banking of concepts put forwarded by others.

Address micro aggressions and other types of bias:

It is apparent that certain students may make remarks that are stereotype- and micro-aggressive in character owing to their socioeconomic background. Teachers in such a situation should be aware of preconceptions, take care not to reinforce them, and engage in intervention techniques that may be applied when micro aggressions happen in the classroom.

Altering the climate of the classroom:

Modifying the classroom arrangement can make it more suitable to the application of critical pedagogy in the classroom. The desks could be arranged in a semicircle or circle, with the students seated in rows facing the teachers. This enables better conversation in the classroom. This will facilitate the transition from a lecture-based class to a discussion-based class where students may exercise critical thinking and come to their own conclusions.

Using of variety of evaluation techniques.

Not everyone is a good speaker. Lack of effective speaking ability does not imply poor thinking ability. While some students are good at communicating their views, others are better at writing them down. Therefore, a variety of evaluation techniques should be employed to gauge students' capacity for critical thought.

7. Conclusion

A society or country with a strong educational foundation would always be successful. India aspires to rank among the developed countries. To achieve this, Indians must place a high value on education, and all residents must endeavour to enhance it and make high-quality education accessible to everyone. The pedagogy established or intended to teach the students should be properly planned taking into mind the importance of classroom learning as a daily activity for learners. The stakeholders of education system should adopt pedagogical approaches considering the needs of the learners and the society and arrange the requisite human and non-human resources for the implementation of critical pedagogy in the classroom layout. Critical pedagogy presents both obstacles and possibilities for transformative education within the contemporary classroom setting. Thus, conditions prerequisite for effective implementation of critical pedagogy should be considered by the stakeholders in education system to fulfil the objectives and recommendation mandated by NEP-2020.

References:

- [1]. Barrios, Angela and Nanton, Carmela MS (2008). "21st Century Conscientization: Critical Pedagogy and the Development of Competitive Capacity in Colombian Corteros," Adult Education Research Conference. <https://newprairiepress.org/aerc/2008/papers/5>
- [2]. Best, J.W., & Kahn, J.V. (2011). *Research in Education*. Prentice Hall of India.
- [3]. Drishti The Vision Foundation, India. (2021, 1 September). PISA (Program for International Student Assessment): OECD. <https://www.drishtias.com/daily-updates/daily-news-analysis/pisa-program-for-international-student-assessment-oecd#:~:text=In%20this%20round%20of%20PISA,for%20the%20test%20in%202022>
- [4]. Fobes, C & Kaufman, P. (2008). Critical Pedagogy in the Sociology Classroom: Challenges and Concerns. *Teaching Sociology*, 36(1):26-33 DOI:10.1177/0092055X0803600104
- [5]. Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. Continuum.
- [6]. Giroux, H. A. (2011). *On critical pedagogy*. Bloomsbury Publishing
- [7]. Govt. of India (2005). National Curriculum Framework 2005. <https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/nc-framework/nf2005-english.pdf>
- [8]. Govt. of India (2020). National Education Policy 2020. https://www.mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/NEP_Final_English_0.pdf
- [9]. Guilherme, A. (2017). What is critical about critical pedagogy? *Policy Futures in Education*, 15(1), 3–5. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1478210317696357>

- [10]. Jayalekshmi, S. (2012). *Effectiveness of critical pedagogy combined with constructivist approach in learning commerce at the higher secondary level*. [Doctoral dissertation, Mahatma Gandhi University]. Shodhganga. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/25939>
- [11]. Kaliyadan, R. (2014). *A study on effectiveness of Critical Pedagogic Approach for Media Education at Higher Secondary Level in Kerala* [Doctoral dissertation, Assam University]. Shodhganga. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/99454>
- [12]. Kareepadath, V.P. (2018). Critical pedagogy in practice: A case study from Kerala, India. *Journal of pedagogy*, 9(2), 33-54
- [13]. Kaufman, P. (2017). Critical Contemplative Pedagogy. *Radical Pedagogy*, 4(1), 1-20
- [14]. Kincheloe, J. L. (2008). *Critical pedagogy: An introduction*. Peter Lang.
- [15]. Kubota, R. (2017). Critical pedagogy in teacher education: Possibilities and challenges. *Journal of Language and Literacy Education*, 13(1).
- [16]. Manoj, C. (2018). *Restructuring Critical Pedagogy in the English Language Classroom Input Intake Model for Tribal Children*. [Doctoral dissertation, Bharathiar University]. Shodhganga.
- [17]. Panthi, P.N. (2023). The Critical in Critical Pedagogy: The Interface between Challenges and Opportunities. *Journal of Tilottama*, 1, 24-35
- [18]. Plato. (1940). *The Republic*. University Press
- [19]. Rajesh, R.V. (2014). *A study on the effectiveness of critical pedagogical approach in social studies at secondary level*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Mysore]. https://ncert.nic.in/division/der/pdf/Rajesh_Rv.pdf
- [20]. Shor, I. (1992). *Empowering education: Critical teaching for social change*. University of Chicago Press.
- [21]. Singh, J. (2015). *Effect of a Model Based on Critical Pedagogy On Learning Skills, Democratic Attitude And Achievement in Educational Psychology Of Bed Students*. [Doctoral dissertation, Pondicherry University]. Shodhganga. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/225448>
- [22]. Thomas, T. (2018). *The praxis of critical pedagogy in improving intelligible communicative competence in the tertiary level*. [Doctoral dissertation, Manonmaniam Sundaranar University]. Shodhganga.
- [23]. Uddin, M.S. (2019). Critical Pedagogy and its implication in the classroom. *Journal of Underrepresented and Minority Progress*, 3(2), 109-119. <http://ojed.org/jump>

Cite this Article:

Aishorya Bharati, Dr. Nisanth PM, "A STUDY ON PSYCHOLOGICAL WELL-BEING OF SECONDARY STUDENTS IN RELATION TO GENDER AND LOCALITY" *International Journal of Scientific Research in Modern Science and Technology (IJSRMST)*, ISSN: 2583-7605 (Online), Volume 3, Issue 4, pp. 20-27, April 2024.

Journal URL: <https://ijrmst.com/>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.59828/ijrmst.v3i4.203>