

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE TEACHING PRACTICES: PREPARING TEACHERS TO ADDRESS DIVERSE NEEDS OF STUDENTS IN ODISHA

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Abstract

This research paper “Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices: Preparing Teachers to Address Diverse Needs of Students in Odisha” investigates the readiness of teachers in Sambalpur district of Odisha to implement culturally responsive teaching- learning practices to meet the diverse educational needs of the learners. By employing a mixed-methods approach this study examines the understanding of teachers and application of culturally responsive strategy into the heterogeneous classroom learning environment. It aims to investigate the impact of these practices on student engagement and academic outcomes in the multicultural classroom setting. Here data was collected through official records, surveys, classroom observations and interviews with teachers and school administrators and students. The findings aim to provide insights into the existing gaps in teacher training and support and to propose culturally relevant professional development initiatives that empower educators to create inclusive and equitable learning environments and fostering improved educational experiences for all students in the Odisha.

Key words: culturally responsive teaching practices, heterogeneous environment, multicultural classrooms, inclusive and equitable learning environment, students engagement, professional development

Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices: Preparing Teachers to Address Diverse Needs of Students in Odisha

Introduction

Culturally responsive teaching is defined as an educational approach that acknowledges and embraces the cultures of students along with their diverse languages and experiences which in turn makes the learning more relevant and effective. It recognizes their cultural context and behavioural norms. Culturally responsive

teaching is a pedagogical method which find out the importance of cultural backgrounds of learners and it uses this knowledge to create a more inclusive and effective learning environment.

Culturally responsive teaching was popularized by *Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings* in early 1990s. This is a pedagogy that states and celebrates cultures, languages and experiences of learners and it also connect them to classroom learning in order to empower students to maintain cultural integrity while succeeding academically.

Dr. Gloria Ladson-Billings' Contribution: The concept of culturally relevant teaching dated back to early the 1990s with Ladson-Billings' work and it highlight the effective teaching practices for African-American students. The research and subsequent work of Ladson-Billings defined culturally relevant teaching as a pedagogy that “empowers students to maintain cultural integrity, while succeeding academically”. [¹Ladson-Billings, 1994]

Her work has been instrumental in defining and promoting culturally relevant pedagogy. This emphasizes the importance of linking teaching to cultural experiences and backgrounds of learners to empower them brainily socially and politically.

Dr. James A. Banks: He may be referred to as the *father of multicultural education*. His work provides a comprehensive and efficient framework for promoting cultural diversity, equity and social justice in education. His model of teaching emphasizes the integration of multicultural content, inclusive teaching methods and critical thinking around issues of race, ethnicity, and social inequality. His multicultural theory suggests that diversity enriches a nation and also increases the ways in which its citizens can perceive and solve personal and public problems. [²Bank J,2004, 2nd edition]

Geneva Gay: A founder of the study of multicultural education, Gay developed the concept of culturally responsive teaching. This focuses on utilizing diverse cultural characteristics, experiences and view points of learners to create effective learning environments. She also emphasizes the importance of teachers understanding and adapting their teaching to meet the needs of diverse learners. [³Gay, Multicultural Education Series, no 8]

Key Principles:

- Acknowledging and emphasizing diversity which shape their learning experiences
- Prioritizing intellectual growth of learners
- Teaching beyond the classrooms a influencing educators, students and their families, communities work to support student success
- Making learning more engaging, meaningful and relevant
- Promoting critical consciousness to examine societal inequities
- Working towards an equitable world.
- Fostering cultural awareness and sensitivity

- Addressing achievement gaps and inequities in the classroom by creating a joyful and meaningful learning environment where all students are welcomed and valued.

Culturally responsive teaching can be achieved by using :

- Differentiated Instruction to shape learning to every cultural aspects of learners
- Students perspectives to gives equal attention to thoughts, behaviour and opinions of students.
- Inclusive Environment by making and nurturing a judgment-free and egalitarian educational environment where students with diverse cultural backgrounds are emphasized.

Culturally responsive teaching has following benefits ;

- I. Increased engagement – when learning is more relevant to cultures, students are more likely to be engaged and motivated.
- II. Improved academic outcomes - especially for students from marginalized and minorities backgrounds.
- III. Development of critical thinking- to examine social issues and working towards a positive change.
- IV. Fosters sense of belonging - creates inclusive learning environment for all irrespective of their cultural background.

This research high lights into the crucial role of culturally responsive teaching practices in Odisha. It aims to equip educators with the skills to effectively address the diverse needs of their students. It also explores how understanding and valuing the cultural backgrounds of students can be integrated into teaching methodologies and curriculum design. The study seeks to find out current practices and challenges faced by teachers in this multicultural context. It deals with potential strategies to foster inclusive and equitable quality learning environments by ultimately enhancing academic outcomes for all students in the region.



(The above images are obtained from google and all images are placed in a single frame, they are intended to support the theory only, they are not generated by the researchers.)

Research Objectives

- i. To understand the existing knowledge, skills and beliefs of teachers and students
- ii. To identifying effective teaching practice employed for culturally responsive teaching
- iii. To compare the culturally responsive teaching practices in between government and private schools
- iv. To examine the impact of culturally responsive teaching on students
- v. To explore the teachers preparation for culturally responsive teaching
- vi. To study the challenges in implementing culturally responsive teaching

Research Questions

- i. What are the existing knowledge, skills and beliefs of teachers and students?
- ii. What are the effective teaching practice employed for culturally responsive teaching?
- iii. What is/ are the difference between culturally responsive teaching practices in private and government schools?
- iv. What are the impact of culturally responsive teaching on students ?
- v. How teachers have prep for culturally responsive teaching ?
- vi. What are the major challenges in implementing culturally responsive teaching?

Review of related literature

- I. Khan U et.al (2023) conducted a study on “Review of Culturally Responsive Teaching for Bridging the Gap of Teaching Efforts and Performance of Culturally Diverse Learners”. For this study they had reviewed 17 articles and Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA) protocol was adopted. After a detailed discussion practices, strategies and steps were recommended for the teachers. Findings of the study revealed that the teacher may respect the norms and cultures of the learners, engage learners in those activities that relate to their cultural contexts and welcome students’ families for a better understanding of the learners and resolve school-centered problems.
- II. Gulya N. & Fehervari A. (2024) conducted a study on “Fostering culturally responsive pedagogy related competencies among pre-service teachers: a systematic review of the recent research literature”. The present research was undertaken in order to gain a better understanding of teacher training that contributes to the development of pre-service teachers’ culturally responsive competencies. The findings of the study revealed that there are differences in the components of CRP-related competencies that teacher education programs deliver to prepare teachers for multicultural education. It was found that only a limited courses has culturally responsive pedagogy on a long-term basis.
- III. Levine E. & Tamburrino M. (2024) conducted a study on “Culturally Responsive Literatures” at Stenon Hill University. They conducted this study to find out the positive learning outcomes of culturally responsive teaching for minority students and their learning environment. This article defines culturally responsive teaching and explains how teachers can incorporate it into their lessons. It examines some practices that are culturally rand pedagogically relevant. Their work explains the characteristics of culturally responsive teaching and simultaneously it offers suggestions on implementing responsive practices in the classrooms. Through culturally responsive teaching, students’ learning needs can be met, while placing an emphasis on students’ different cultures. This will show that all students are respected and valued in the classrooms at the conclusion of their work.
- IV. Mukharjee M. (2019) conducted a study on the “Culturally Responsive Teaching Learning in Indian Multicultural Context: Review of Contemporary Policy & Practice” at Kolkata. Only culturally responsive teachers can attend and take care to the needs of their students from diverse cultural backgrounds, especially indigenous learners. He aims to investigate the literature on cultural

dimensions of learning and cross-cultural instructional challenges and practices to review the state of culturally responsive teaching learning in educational institution at the level of school education.

Research methodology

1. **Qualitative Research:** it gathers participants' experiences and behavior of participants. It could be structured and rely on qualitative data. Common qualitative methods could include case studies, interviews, observation, document analysis, narrative study and ethnography research.
2. **Quantitative research** – It is a systematic investigation using numerical data and statistical analysis to explore phenomena, test hypotheses and establish cause-and-effect relationships.
3. **Mixed Methods Research:** It's also possible the study employs a combination of qualitative and quantitative methods to provide a more comprehensive understanding.
4. **Ethical Considerations:** This study was adhere to strict ethical guidelines. Informed consent was obtained from all participants ensuring their voluntary participation and the confidentiality of their responses.

Population and Sample of the study

Population: For the present study the researcher have selected three districts such as Balangir district, Bargarh district and Sambalpur district of Odisha. The mentioned three districts are geographically nearby by distance. The sum total of all schools (both government and private) of all three district of Odisha can be taken as population.

Sl no	Name of District	Total number of blocks	Total number of clusters	Total number of private schools	Total number of government primary schools	Total number of government secondary schools	Total number of mentioned schools
1	Balangir	19	214	89	1631	210	1930
2	Bargarh	16	163	105	1522	226	1853
3	Sambalpur	13	153	132	1329	207	1668

Sample – For the present study, 40% of the population can be treated as sample. The samples are chosen using simple random sampling method.

Total Population for present research	Sample selected for present research
1930+1853+1668=5451	30 % of 5451 ≈ 1635

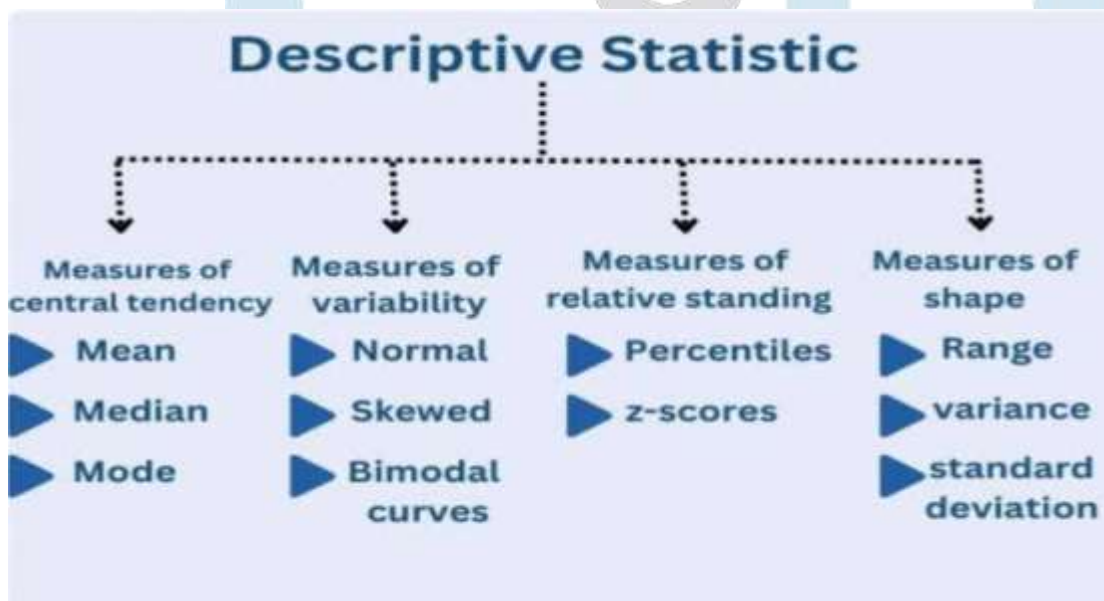
Data collection tool and procedure –

Numerical data were collected through official website, government records. Descriptive data were collected through interviewing, semi structured questionnaires that are self made by the researchers. The researchers personally observed the classrooms training learning of classes from Ist to Xth with average classroom duration in different schools in different times.

Data analysis and Interpretation

Data gathered through various methods were analysed through descriptive analysis and also by using simple statistical techniques.

- Descriptive statistics – it is a summary statistic which numerically describes or summarizes features from a collection of information. Here tools are used to summarize, organize and present data in a concise and meaningful manner. They help in arranging data in a structured way such as tables, charts, or graphs which in turn make the information easier to understand and interpret.



For the present research, the investigators have used following statistical techniques to analyse data and information has been represented by employing descriptive analysis visual tool such as pie chart and histograms.

- Percentage – It is the number/ratio/ part which can be expressed as a fraction of 100.
- Mean = Sum of all the observations/Total number of observations
- Standard deviations – it is a statistical measure which numerically quantifies how much data points in a set deviate or fluctuate from the mean.

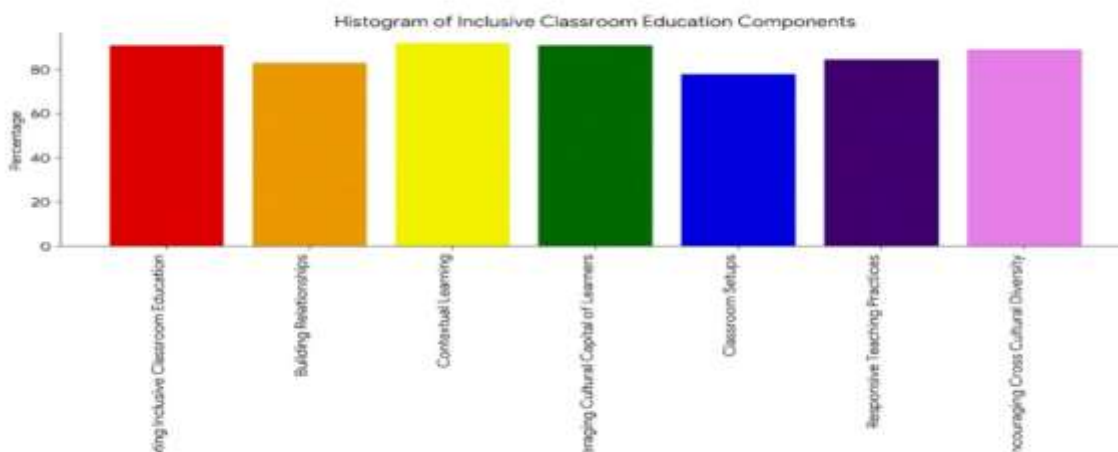
Sample Mean	Population Mean
$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{n}$	$\mu = \frac{\sum x}{N}$

where $\sum X$ is sum of all data values
 N is number of data items in population
 n is number of data items in sample

Results and Findings

Objective (i) To understand the existing knowledge, skills and beliefs of teachers and students- It was found that in classrooms cultural awareness, communication and pedagogical approaches, including understanding diverse learning styles are welcomed. Teachers are aware about self-reflection and their own cultural perspective to foster a more inclusive and equitable learning environment. They have knowledge about different cultural backgrounds, experiences, and perspectives of their students, including the learners languages, traditions, and values. The teachers are using their skills in assessment of learners that are culturally sensitive and aligned with diverse learning styles. Teachers are welcoming collaborative learning opportunities and group work for students and this have a positive classroom environment that is inclusive, respectful and supportive of all students.

(Figure 1)

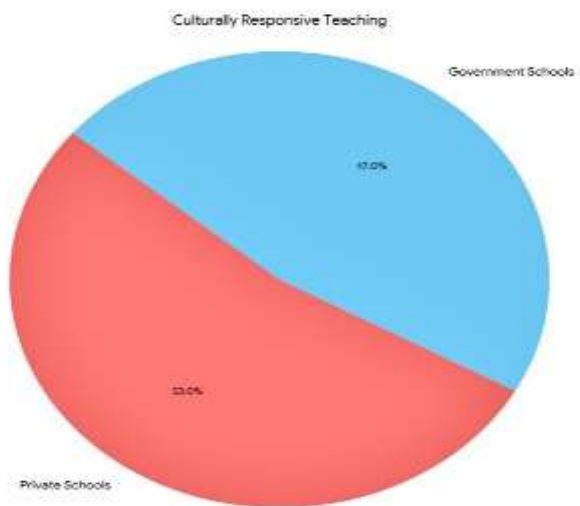


Objective (ii) To identifying effective teaching practice employed for culturally responsive teaching- Here students from diverse cultural backgrounds are welcomed . They are appreciated with oral traditions and collaboration. Here robust cultural representation are ensured. The teaching methods are flexible with varying ways of knowing and learning and a variety of instructional strategies to meet these needs of the learners.

Objective (iii) To compare the culturally responsive teaching practices in between government and private schools – In this objective the researchers found that the adoption of culturally responsive teaching practices

in government managed schools and private managed schools are approximately equal. The portion in red represents private schools and the portion in blue represents government schools.

(Figure 2)



Objective (iv) To examine the impact of culturally responsive teaching on students - This exhibit increased motivation, participation, and academic achievement, reduced academic pressure, increase rate of success, higher social and emotional development, improve students outcomes, and strong bonding between learners and teachers. Culturally responsive teaching is impactful for balancing diverse learners with cultural diversity. They impact social interactions. In government primary schools the teachers are promoting more collaborative learning with cultural diversity where as in government secondary schools they are more emphasizing on grades and scores. In private schools the scenario is slightly different.



(Figure 3)

In this diagram represented as above, the portion in yellow is represented by social interactions, orange is for reduced academic pressure, red is for balancing diverse learners with cultural diversity, peach is for improved students outcomes, blue is for bonding between learners and teachers, violet is for increased motivation, green is for social and emotional development.

Objective (v) To explore the teachers preparation for culturally responsive teaching - Teachers preparation includes both pre-service and in-service programs should focus on knowledge building about diverse cultures, appropriate pedagogical strategies, It includes classroom management, developing Skills, practical experience. It also encompasses field experiences that provides opportunities for pre-service teachers to engage in diverse classrooms and observe and practice culturally responsive teaching. In-Service Teacher Preparation strategy includes continuing education, reflective practices, collaboration, play way method of teaching, joyful learning, lesson through diversity, research and evaluation.

Objective (vi) To study the challenges in implementing culturally responsive teaching - There are some schools where appropriate materials are not available, in some schools the teachers are not supportive. Curriculum is not truly supporting to address cultural diversity of learners. Teachers are paying attention and appreciating diversity in language but this is not much sufficient. The not involvement of community members and parents is a major obstacles in the implementation of culturally responsive teaching practices in some sample schools.

(All the figures 1,2,3 were generated by google spreadsheet by putting appropriate numerical data to represent visually.)

Discussion and Conclusion of the study

The conclusion of a study on “Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices: Preparing Teachers to Address Diverse Needs of Students in Odisha” highlight the key findings regarding the current state and existing knowledge of culturally responsive teaching in the region. It discuss about the readiness and adopting capabilities of teachers to meet the diverse needs of their students. It also potentially point out both strengths and areas that need for improvement. It emphasize the importance of understanding local cultures, languages and traditions in shaping effective teaching practices. It also signifies promoting equitable and inclusive education that supports the academic and social-emotional well-being of all learners in the diverse context of the Sambalpur district.

Suggestions for Further Research

- Case Studies of Schools with Effective CRT Implementation
- Understanding Student Perspectives in culturally responsive teaching practices
- Culturally Responsive Pedagogy in Tribal Languages
- Addressing Religious and Caste Diversity
- The Role of Local Knowledge and Traditions Focusing on Teacher Preparation and Professional Development
- Effectiveness of Current Teacher Training Programs

- Designing and Evaluating CRT-Focused Training Modules
- The Role of Teacher Educators In Investigating Impact and Outcomes
- The Relationship Between CRT and Student Achievement
- Impact on Social-Emotional Development on Learners
- Long-term studies to understand the sustained impact of culturally responsive teaching on students' educational trajectories and future success.
- Policy Analysis: Examine existing educational policies in Odisha to identify the extent to which they support and promote culturally responsive teaching.
- The Role of Community Engagement: partnerships with local communities and cultural organizations can support and enhance culturally responsive teaching initiatives in Odisha.

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