

Critical Pedagogy in the Context of Nepal:

A Teacher's Experiences of Challenges, Struggles and Pleasures in Implementing Critical Pedagogy

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The teacher-centered teaching method focuses on students memorizing and repeating the curriculum's content. In this approach, the teacher and the subject matter hold primary importance, while students play a more passive role. In contrast, the learner-centered teaching method prioritizes effective learning processes over the curriculum's content. It places the learner at the center, encouraging active engagement and personal growth. Critical pedagogy goes beyond both methods by focusing on societal transformation. While it builds on the principles of learner-centered teaching, its primary goal is to promote social justice and create a fair and equitable society. Through critical pedagogy, education becomes a tool for empowering learners to challenge inequalities and work toward societal change. The major objective of critical pedagogy is to facilitate societal transformation by addressing and challenging systemic issues such as poverty, disease, hunger, illiteracy, discrimination, untouchability, inequality, and economic disparities. This approach aims to empower individuals through education, fostering critical consciousness and active engagement to dismantle structural injustices and promote social equity. The primary objective of this study is to empower children and effect transformative change in their lives and surroundings by employing critical pedagogy in the teaching process. This study reflects on my experiences working on a non-governmental project in the Kailali district of Nepal, where I encountered challenges and critical questions related to implementing critical pedagogy in teaching children. These experiences are presented in the form of a narrative, as the study employs a narrative methodology. Additionally, I engaged in discussions with two colleagues, critically analyzing my story to deepen the insights. The findings of this study highlight that in a country like Nepal, characterized by significant economic,

social, educational, and political disparities, critical pedagogy emerges as a promising approach. It demonstrates potential not only for effectively teaching various subjects at the school level but also for fostering transformative change in Nepali society.

Keywords: teacher-centred teaching, learner-centred teaching, critical pedagogy, transformation of society, social justice.

1. Introduction

Context of the Study

Fateism is the philosophical concept that emphasizes belief in destiny or luck over personal agency and actions. It is a widespread conviction among many individuals that one's fate is predetermined by a divine force, rather than being shaped by individual actions. This belief fosters a reliance on rituals, prayers, and religious ceremonies as means of influencing outcomes, often at the expense of personal responsibility and effort. Such a perspective is commonly referred to as fateism. Throughout my life, I have encountered numerous individuals who adhere to the belief in fate.

During my travels in India, I have seen busy Nepalese labour suffering from disease, hunger and pain on the streets of New Delhi, who believe that the reason they are poor is not the society, but the result of their previous birth. I have also meet Nepalese working inside the sewage drains in Mumbai who remember the destiny written on their foreheads because of their condition. I have also come to know many poor and helpless people in my village, who consider poverty, fate and suffering not as a perverse result of the society but as a result of their own destiny. Sociologist Dor Bahadur Bista has written about fatalism based on this fact. In fact, fate leads people to a dark world where poverty, luck, disease, hunger, and suffering are not associated with society and all these aspects are considered to be given by prebirth, fate or God (Bist, 1999). In fact, fatalism is the barriers of development. In fatalism, we accept various aspects like disease, hunger, poverty, and deprivation as something written in our destiny on the sixth day of our birth, rather than as distorted products of society. In fatalism, the result of society's actions is accepted as the result of one's destiny.

Poverty, deprivation and oppression are common features of any society. But common people do not have the awareness that poverty, injustice and oppression are distortions created by society. Common people accept these pains and sufferings as the result of their own actions in previous births. It is considered as a natural process of society. Therefore, in order to know that poverty, suffering and inequality are distorted culture and values created by society, critical pedagogy is necessary and to make critical pedagogy effective

in the classroom, a deep knowledge of the pedagogy of love is also very important. It is necessary to implement concept of pedagogy of love in the classroom.

Educational institution is considered as a place to think independently, develop critical thinking and think about the ideas you have (Giroux, 2011a). Thus, liberty of thought and critical thinking are essential characteristics of educational institutions. In fact, educational institutions are the place where freedom is practiced, diverse ideas are shared and public dialogue is held. In reality, educational institution can be established as democratic institutions only if classrooms can be made the major basis for communication, debate, discussion and cultural exchange (Giroux, 2010). But schools are constantly being attacked by neoliberalism. With the rise of neoliberalism in Nepal, the process of democratic dialogue, discussion and sharing of ideas is becoming more and more likely to be overshadowed. In addition to this, the rise of neoliberalism is also creating obstacles in the development of public schools. In today's world, schools are struggling to build critical individuals and communities that can face the growing social inequality, discrimination and imbalance (Giroux, 2010).

The advocates of critical pedagogy and social justice suggest that schools should ensure that students' opinions are heard and that their arguments and opinions are valued in their classrooms and among their classmates. In this context, teaching methods should be developed based on different geographical, political and theoretical contexts for the establishment of social justice. There are some sociological theories such as: sociology of education, critical theory of the Frankfurt School, Freire's pedagogy of the oppressed as well as Marxist postulates (Devis-devis, 2006). These theories have made oppression, empowerment, dialogue, justice and social inequality the key concepts of discussion. These concepts are based on academic research findings. This study is especially based on Freire's critical pedagogy. If the students aim to develop a better world than the previous generations left them, then they have to fight against the existing poverty, inequality and economic imbalance. Freire's critical pedagogy is the political tool to raise awareness for this fight (Freire, 1987). According to Freire, the pedagogy of the oppressed can develop students' consciousness, wisdom and critical thinking to name the world we live in a new way, think about it, dialogue it and transform it, and only through such awareness can we transform the world we live in (Freire, 1987).

For the past few years, apart from language subjects, other subjects such as social studies, physical education, health education, science education, and mathematics education have also been felt the need for critical pedagogy to make students aware of social inequality, imbalance, and discrimination (Ovens et al., 2018; Walton-Fisette & Sutherland, 2018). Critical pedagogy can be an important tool to solve the many social, political and educational obstacles

faced by teachers in the course of their teaching profession. But many people are not aware that critical pedagogy and the teaching of social justice can be an important basis for the research and teaching practice of various school subjects (Philpot, 2016). In fact, while we use the critical pedagogy and the pedagogy of social justice in the classroom, various aspects such as history, local social and cultural environment, geographical conditions, the orientation of the pedagogues, and various teaching theories influence the teaching learning process (Schenker et al., 2019).

Two large-scale critical pedagogy projects on physical education teacher training were conducted in Sweden, Norway, and New Zealand (Schenker et al., 2019). Similarly, in North America, Europe and Australia, projects related to critical pedagogy were carried out (Hill et al., 2018). According to the study done by Schenker et. al. (2019), the effectiveness of critical pedagogy varies depending on the context. For example, marginalized groups are different in different contexts and strategies for acting on different inequalities may be different (Tinning, 2016). In the study conducted by Hill et. al. (2018), it was found that the scope of sharing the concept of social justice of the participants was different. The understanding of this concept was seen to be influenced by the gender, sexuality, and ethnicity of the participants. But this study indicated that participants were indifferent towards democracy, empowerment and critical reflection.

The Situation of Critical Pedagogy at the School Education in Nepal

In the context of Nepal, critical debate on the curriculum, teaching learning process and assessment procedure was started only after the establishment of democracy in 1951. In 1956, Nepal National Education Planning Commission (NNEPC-1956) was formed and it, for the first time, developed a relevant model of school level curriculum and recommended government to implement it. At the same time, this commission recommended learner-centered teaching as a teaching method in its curriculum (NNEPC, 1956). It was suggested that the project method should be applied in the curriculum created by this commission (NNEPC, 1956). In addition to this, the curriculum of primary level social studies incorporated subject matters such as home, neighborhood, community and districts. Although no method was prescribed for teaching these each topic, the teacher could use critical pedagogy while teaching these contents. But teachers do not teach like that. In the year 1961, the All-round National Education Committee (ARNEC-1961) was formed and it also made suggestions to the Government of Nepal about the school level curriculum. It has emphasized diagnostic teaching in the school curriculum (ARNEC-1961). But the contents of the curriculum prepared by the committee were also such that teachers can use critical pedagogy as their teaching learning activities (Singh, 2012). In 1971, based on the suggestions of various commissions, committees and advisory committees, a national education system

plan (NESP-9171) was developed and implemented throughout the country. This commission, for the first time, developed the school level curriculum on the basis of principles of modern curriculum development ((Singh, 2013; NESP-9171). Although it suggests that the teaching method should be scientific, it does not mention about the nature and process about scientific teaching method (Shah, 2013).

After the political change of 1990, the democratic was restored in Nepal. After two-year of restoration of the democracy, National Education Commission (NEC-1992) was appointed and the school level education policy was changed on the basis of changed political system. Based on this, extensive changes were made in the school level curriculum. Topics such as social justice, social inequalities, poverty, discriminations were incorporated in the revised curriculum at the school level (Shah, 2019). Learner-centered teaching learning activities were included in the revised curriculum with priority. From the year 2006 till now, there has been drastic change in the political system of Nepal. At present, national curriculum framework, educational policies, school level curriculum have been developed and implemented at all level of school. But critical pedagogy as teaching method is not incorporated in the existing curriculum with priority. Therefore, it is very crucial to study the potential of critical pedagogy in Nepal's education system. Keeping this fact in mind, this study has also made an in-depth study about the potential of critical pedagogy in the present study.

In this study, the challenges, struggles and pleasures faced by social studies teachers in understanding and implementing critical pedagogy in Nepal have been studied. In this study, I have presented two major aspects i.e. my story and dialogue on the story on how to use social justice and critical pedagogy while teaching social studies curriculum at different specific moments of my profession. First of all, I have presented the story of teaching social studies through critical pedagogy. After this, I have discussed extensively with two colleagues about how critical pedagogy can be used in teaching social studies in the context of Nepal using dialogue on my own teaching practice. This will be a helpful for school and university level teachers teaching social studies and other school subjects. In addition, it will also fill an important gap in the literature. Because it has started a deep theoretical debate about the use of critical pedagogy in the teaching of social studies in Nepal.

2. Research Process and Design

The research method used in this study is based on the radically transformative method of social studies and sociological foundation of education. A case study approach is adopted in this study. In addition, present study is based on a narrative writing framework that develops relevant insights in the field of sociological foundation of education and social studies. This

study has helped me to formulate my identity as teacher. at the same time, this study is completely different from the research method done by other western countries on the white race. Likewise, I have used another important aspect of the critical pedagogy by having an in-depth dialogue with my two colleagues about the content of my story.

In the first phase of this study, I have mentioned the context of studying at the school level and the teacher-centered pedagogy developed in me. After this, I have also presented the facts of the concepts of learner-centered teaching that gradually developed in me. After this, in the second stage, I have also presented a dialogue with my two colleagues about the content of my story. Research design and process is provided in the following paragraphs.

Introduction to Author

I am a teacher who has been continuously teaching the subjects of education discipline in schools and universities for the past 40 years. I taught in various educational institutions for a long time, imbibing the teacher-centered teaching pedagogy. The title of my PhD thesis was "Designing a Progressive Curriculum of Social Studies for Primary Education in Nepal". During my PhD study, I faced a lot of challenges and was very excited while developing a model curriculum for primary level social studies. While I was working at Kailali Multiple campus, I started to work as a psychosocial counsellor and an educationist in non-governmental organization. During this time, while working as an educator in WVAF (INGO), I got the opportunity to provide psychosocial counseling service and teaching service to conflict victim children who had socially, educationally and economically weak backgrounds. This raised a question in me that the purpose of education is only to study about the society or the purpose of education is also to transform the society? If society is to be transformed, it is necessary to implement Freire's critical pedagogy. When I worked as a teacher, I got the opportunity to teach children through critical pedagogy. I have used it as an important opportunity of my life.

The Colleagues Engaged in the Dialogue

In this article, I have engaged two colleagues to contribute to the dialogue. The first, Shankar Rawal, has been a postgraduate-level educator for the past 20 years. He holds advanced qualifications in curriculum and evaluation and possesses substantial expertise in critical pedagogy. His inclusion in this discussion is primarily due to his extensive research in critical pedagogy and his profound interest in the field. Moreover, he expressed a willingness to participate, facilitating a deeper exploration of the topic at hand.

Likewise, my other colleague, Mr. Hari Balayar, has been serving at the Curriculum Development Center for the past 25 years, with extensive experience in the design and development of school-level curricula. He possesses advanced academic credentials in pedagogy, further establishing his

expertise in this field. His extensive research and numerous publications in critical pedagogy underscore his invaluable academic contributions. I engaged him in this study to leverage his scholarly expertise. Mr. Balayar participated in the dialogue with considerable interest, offering critical insights that significantly enriched this study.

Narrative Approach

This study is based on a narrative writing. Story writing can be broadly defined as narrative writing. It is a piece of writing that depicts an event encountered by a main character in a certain situation or an experience engaged in any interesting, significant or entertaining activity (Beverly, 2005). In this, the events that the main character faces are called the plot (Chase, 2005). A plot has a beginning, middle and end. The middle part of the story is the biggest and most important part which we call the main event. The main event of the story is important and it solves the problem and talks about the important experience of the main character's life. Therefore, the author's main objective in this article is to provide the reader with a vivid experience of his uses of critical pedagogy in a community of children (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). The main part of this study is my critical pedagogy experience which I have presented in the form of a story and I have also analyzed it critically through dialogue.

Story writing is a style in which a writer tells a story. In this, the author can tell real events in chronological order or fictional events created by the author can be told in chronological order. Story writing can keep the reader's attention on the story and give them a realistic experience through words. Therefore, narrative writing is basically a story writing method. The story can be anything fictional or non-fictional. Such a story may be a historical story, a semi-autobiographical story, or a dramatic retelling of real events, or a combination of these stories. This study is based on the real experience of critical pedagogy and the actual chronological and linear method. In linear narrative, the events of the story are presented in chronological order. With a linear story, each scene is followed by another logical scene. There may also be gaps between scenes. Similarly, this study is based on a linear quest narrative. Narrative method is closely connected with the construction of any person's identity. The story is made in a certain situation and the narrator interprets it through the analysis of scenes, scenarios, dialogues to reach the goal as a narrator (Riessman, 2011, p. 324). Only when we compare our stories with specific events are we able to construct arguments for the process of social transformation (Riessman, 2011, p. 324).

If case studies based on specific contexts can be constructed and experiences can be expressed in the form of stories, it is easier to understand the content and is also effective for human aspect in research (Flyvbjerg, 2006). The case study presented by me is based on actual situations of real life which

made it easier to express a nuanced perspective of the researcher's realities (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Essential elements of fiction are also included in this case study to present the ambiguities and complexities of real life (Flyvbjerg, 2006, p. 237). Dowling et al. (2015) studied the stories and thematic aspects of teachers and students and researched how the story method can be used in physical education teaching and concluded that the story method can be used as a suitable teaching method. Therefore, in my case study, I have tried to develop a critical consciousness about social justice by teaching the conflict victim children studying at the primary level of Kailali district through critical pedagogy, and I have included the experiences I had during the teaching process in the story of my case study.

Dialogue

Dialogue is also used in this study as an important aspect of critical pedagogy. According to Tinning's (1997), effective narratives help people share their experiences and connect personal, political and intellectual commitments to those themes. In this study, I went one step beyond the presentation of the story and created a Freireian dialogue with my colleagues about the story. In Freire's view, dialogue is not just about everyday life. Dialogue is also a political tool that aims to unveil social practices (Freire, 1998; Betti et. al., 2015). Therefore, the dialogue of this study aims to acquaint the educators of with the principles and reflection of critical pedagogy while thinking about the political context of the country. The major basis of Freirian dialogue is deep reflection and political action. According to Freire, dialogue is a social practice full of local perspective and understanding (Giroux, 2011b; Freire, 1987). Freire's dialogical method is also an important tool for social change. There has been intensive dialogue between our colleagues about various aspects of the story included in my study.

The first source of inspiration for this study is Freire's critical pedagogy. This has made it easier to develop the identity of the researcher. Nepal's education system is still under development. Freire's critical pedagogy is a beacon of light for teachers who aim to eliminate disease, hunger, poverty, backwardness, social discrimination, economic imbalance, etc. from society and to transform it. Those teachers can use it as an illumination to Freire's philosophy (Knijnik, 2013). It is this deep vision that has made the dialogue between me and my colleagues possible. This does not mean that I have accepted Freire's philosophy without accepting the criticism.

The dialogue between myself and my colleagues was systematically prepared in alignment with established research methodologies, procedures, and ethical considerations. Initially, with their explicit consent, I recorded the in-depth critical dialogue on Microsoft Teams. This recording was subsequently transcribed in Nepali, followed by a translation into English. The feedback and suggestions derived from this process were then integrated into the narrative.

Research Process

After I wrote a story about my experiences of teaching conflict victim children in Kailali district, I developed a protocol with two of my friends to communicate about my story. Initially, we exchanged emails for a month. During this process, we discussed and explained each other in detail about teaching. Now it is clear to us that we have similar views regarding Freire's philosophy and critical pedagogy. Similarly, we organized four online meetings of one hour each. In each meeting we discussed my story in depth. Based on the conclusions drawn from the meeting, we tried to further refine the details and concepts of my story. Then, we finalized my story. An interesting thing is that initially I wrote the story without a contract. But we mostly talked in English language. However, all exchanges were grounded in Freire's concepts of critical pedagogy that shaped our identities and practices.

In the following paragraph, first of all, I have presented my story and in the second section, I have presented the conclusions of the dialogues between three of us colleagues, who will develop a new theoretical concept of critical pedagogy by studying the living experiences of teaching social studies. An important feature of these dialogue is that they have identified the dynamic social structure where these dialogues took place. My story is not created in a vacuum, the conversations in the story are products of historical circumstances. The methods we used helped us contextualize the construction of educational identity (Riessman, 2011). Because the story method presented by me is based on critical pedagogy which will enable the social studies teachers of Nepal to fight disease, illiteracy and poverty and it will make a great contribution to the transformation of the society.

3. Journey towards Critical Pedagogy

In this section, I address two significant aspects of my personal and professional journey. Initially, I provide a detailed account of my first experience with critical pedagogy, exploring how I was introduced to its principles and ideas. Following this, I discuss the practical application of critical pedagogy, examining how I integrated concepts of critical pedagogy into my classroom delivery.

My First Encounter with Critical Pedagogy

I remember very well when I was five years old my family moved to another place from my village temporarily. The temporary village we moved to was socially very backward. I started making new friends by playing on the field with my friends from the new village. After two or three years, we came back to our permanent home. Now that I have grown up, I joined a nearby school. As we have three brothers and sisters studying in school, the household expenses increased a lot. The entire income of the house started to be spent on

our studies. I remember, when I went to school, I used to wear Chinese shoes to school. This shoe was a very cheap and cheap brand of shoes. We used to go to school wearing polyester shorts and half pants. All the poor children of the village used to study in that school.

My teachers who taught me at that time were experienced and specialists with a high level of knowledge in social science subjects such as history, geography, and economics. In my social studies curriculum that I studied, lessons like our village, our neighborhood, the professions of the neighbors, our society, our district were kept. But while studying these themes, we never discussed, debated and explored the aspects like diversity, multiculturalism of the village, inclusiveness, social integration, social discrimination, social discrimination. What I was taught was that everything the teacher said was fixed, objective, real, and true and teachers were subject matter experts. Therefore, the teacher is powerful in the teaching learning process. In these early days, my brain developed the idea that there is only one truth and knowledge is objective. In this way, in my initial stage of study, I developed my worldview that social change can be brought about by teaching the curriculum of social studies through teacher-centered teaching methods.

While studying at primary school, I felt that some of my friends in school ignored me. I felt lonely, helpless and sad. But my teachers loved me very much and took care of me. My teachers showed personal commitment to support my studies and built strong relationships with me. As a result, I became first in every class. Most of the teachers of school became very close to me and started loving me personally. This friendship completely changed the way I see, understand and assimilate the world. In addition, this experience gave me hope that love plays an important role in the development of dialogue and social transformation.

In 2006, I started my PhD studies in the Department of Education, Lucknow University, India. The title of my thesis was "Designing a Progressive Curriculum of Social Studies for Primary Education in Nepal". While studying at the PhD, I began to understand that the social transformation I wanted in the society is not possible with the teacher-centered pedagogy. While I was developing the curriculum of social studies for my PhD study, I began to understand the importance of learner - centered pedagogy. While preparing the thesis, I saw the learner-centered pedagogy and critical pedagogy as the only important basis to ensure the empowerment of students in the school level social studies curriculum that I am going to develop. Therefore, I developed a model curriculum for the PhD thesis by imbibing critical pedagogy while focusing on learner-centered pedagogy. My first encounter with critical pedagogy was filled with struggles, challenge, confusion, joy, pleasures, excitement and love.

Facilitating a Community Engagement Project: Implementing Critical Pedagogy

I left Tikapur Multiple Campus in the year 2006 and joined another college Kailali Multiple Campus. While teaching at Kailali campus, I got an opportunity to work in an NGO, World Vision Advocacy Forum (WVAF). This project was implemented in some other districts of Sudurpaschim Province of Nepal including Kailali district. I worked in this project as a psychosocial counsellor as well as an educator. My main task in this project was to provide counseling and teaching service to the conflict victim children of the 10 years long Maoist movement in Nepal. Among these tasks, my major task was to facilitate teaching learning process of conflict victim children, especially in the field of social studies subject. In addition, this project provided a scholarship of 4000 Rs. (four thousand Nepali rupees) annually to one conflict victim children to make teaching learning process more effective. This project was community-based experiment. This work is one of the most important and challenging tasks of my professional life. The project developed an important educational approach. In this project, we worked with children from educationally, socially and politically poor backgrounds in Kailali district. Our purpose major aim was to transform children's teaching learning process into transformative learning. In this process, we worked together with their teachers, parents, political leaders, social activists and other people of that community to connect learning with social transformation using critical pedagogy and overall, this work was very effective, fruitful and productive.

In this experiment, we constructed cultural circles of children based on principles of critical pedagogy. During teaching learning process, we made a procedure that first everyone children in each group reads the contents of the reading materials and after everyone has read the contents, one person puts his opinion in the group. After that, we started the process of introducing others to that topic and thanking friends who presented good ideas. We have developed a culture of sharing our thoughts about the subject matters.

But apart from this we also used another experiment. We decided a topic, "student's regularity in the classroom" for discussion. We made the children of that group dialogue among themselves about the reasons why they could not go to school regularly. They concluded that reason was 10-year long Maoist conflict of Nepal. Because the parents of some of children were injured and disabled due to the conflict. At the same time, the parents of some of the children even died. Therefore, due to the lack of parents, an obstacle was created in their studies. After this, we connected the causes of conflict with the themes of social studies and made them discuss issues such as social discrimination, imbalance, and inequality in development. But we discussed ways to solve the causes of the conflict without blaming any of the parties i.e. Government or Maoist. In this way, we have developed the habit of studying

social studies topics in children by connecting them with their real life and analyzing those topics. After this, we developed the habit of drawing conclusions by connecting the contents of all subjects with their real life. In this way, the tradition of communicating critically and drawing conclusions on various topics such as discrimination, poverty, imbalance and partiality in the society was started among the students. Teachers also started teaching this tradition in schools in that community.

Now I want to be a different teacher than other teachers. I always try to connect subject matters of my teaching learning process with various societal aspects. It is part of who I am. I have been very sensitive about the various dimensions of pedagogy of love presented by Freire in his book on the pedagogy of the oppressed. Love is not only the main basis of classroom dialogue; it is also the main basis of social and political transformation of teachers and students. In fact, the loving commitment of the teacher to establish social justice in the society is the main basis of social transformation.

4. Critical Dialogue

The main message of the story of my case study is that critical teaching learning process should be a deep bond of love between teachers and students (Freire, 1998a). This concept is based on Freire's pedagogy of love. The argument of my story is that the act of teaching learning and the social, educational and political transformation that develops as a result of that action is possible only through love, mutual respects, and belief among each other (Freire, 1998a). My story, like Freire's, believes that true love between teacher and student is an act of freedom (Freire, 1998a). True love cannot be changed by deception. Love makes teaching learning process effective and successful (Freire, 1998a; Hooks, 1994), and it also supports other actions of freedom. The love between teacher and student has enabled the them in my story to fight against poverty, illiteracy, social inequality, discrimination, and social injustice. It is because of this love that I am motivated to lead those children and their communities on the path of transformation (Freire, 1987). In this section, the conclusion from the dialogue of our colleagues on my story is presented.

Critical Pedagogy in the Classroom: Cultural Circles of Students

The main strategy of the researcher's class is the formation of cultural circles (Freire, 1987, 2016). He mentioned that the laziness and passivity seen in the children in the early phase of teaching was gradually removed by the group activities and the children started to be active in the teaching learning activities. Moreover, this activism also started to be appeared in the classroom. The cultural circle of students formed by the researcher proposed ways to rethink education as a practice of freedom (Freire, 1987; Giroux, 2011). He developed a democratic model of reflection to help students critically

understand their relationship with the teacher, with themselves and with the world, develop common understanding, and strengthen this relationship. This story shows us how teachers and students can develop a deeper awareness of the historical process through efforts to name and change the world (Darder, 2017). In that sense, pedagogy should connect education with social change. Hence a project that challenges both teachers and students to critically engage with the world so that they can name it and change it.

The conscientizacao Process: Becoming a Critical Educator

The opening statement of the story is very powerful: the researcher admits that he happily embraces critical pedagogy, but also looks at it with doubt. His opening thoughts remind us that it is not enough to teach to be a critical teacher. Because the process of teaching and reflecting on practice is also included in the teaching process (Freire, 1998b). According to Freire, conscientizacao is an ongoing process that is only possible through ongoing dialogue within our social consciousness and communities and through the relevant reflection of that society (Freire, 1987). When the researcher describes his social class in the story as a poor boy wearing cheap Chinese shoes, playing in mud and dust, then he takes ownership of his society (Hooks, 1994; Knijnik, 2013) and the process of his conscientizacao continues. It creates a political identity. In this process, love and freedom made his critical pedagogy possible. Similarly, the early educational identity of the researcher in the story is formed from the experience of teachers who are committed to take care of him, to love him, to give him affection, and to give him encouragement. As a result, it is these affectionate acts of love that have led the researcher to develop the habit of caring for each other and sharing experiences. It is this love that has developed the foundations for transformation into a loving democratic environment filled with dialogue between students and teachers (Freire, 1996). The researcher or narrator experiences love in different ways and these experiences are transformative experiences for him (Freire, 1987; Fine, 2007). As a student, the experience of the pedagogy of love provides the narrator with a platform to trust, care for, and empathize with others and provides a world in which it is easy to love and exchange love (Freire 1987, p. 24).

On the contrary, the researcher's experience while initially working as a teacher was based on teacher-centered pedagogy. The initial approach of the researcher was based on the banking concept of education and there was no place to think about human and human life in the teaching learning process of that concept. It was a teaching based on the notion of the existence of a universal human being which did not introduce the reality of human beings. Thus, the researcher's early teaching provided his students with neither concrete experiences nor a foundation for establishing close relationships with future communities where he could apply his professional knowledge.

The Journey to Untested Feasibility

The researcher has taken steps to change his teaching practice in order to free himself from the traditional teaching method after his teaching period has come to the middle of the profession. The researcher has accepted his traditional teaching as an irrelevant teaching method and has also vowed to improve it. As a proof of a critical pedagogue and teacher who is moving forward towards the journey of freedom, he advanced the journey of PhD as a new teaching method to answer the differences, inequality, and imbalance of his community (Shah, 2013).

The researcher, while doing his PhD at Lucknow University, clearly realized that it is not possible to transform the current situation of victim children through teacher-centered pedagogy in the current limited situation (Freire, 1987; Freire, 2016). Therefore, he embarked on historical actions (or limit - actions) to create social conditions in favor of transformation by simulating those limit situations (Giroux, 2011b; Freire, 1987). Thus, he was on the way to building an untested feasibility and that was the future that was necessary to transform the society he was in today (Shor and Freire, 1987, p. 153). He started the construction of society by taking human as an unfinished product.

His next step was to challenge himself and the traditional pedagogy of children in the real situation of oppression as an educator in the sociological study of education (Hooks, 1994, p. 193). He gained this experience during about three years of participatory critical pedagogy with conflict victim children in Kailali district. This teaching work was based on research. He took that experience as the most meaningful educational challenge and opportunity of his life where the challenge was also taken as an opportunity and it was also looked at from the point of view of doubt.

The researcher had the love he received from the teachers during his studies at the school level and he had the courage and courage to use that love in the field of teaching. Therefore, he gave those conflict victim children a chance to understand their personal and social challenges. He took care of those children with affection and love. He made them human beings who could understand the world and give it a name. The love, and affection he showed were the result of children's enthusiasm, vigilance, and energy that helped turn theory into practice, motivated students, and transformed the classroom into a dynamic place where theory is realized as transformational and social relations (Hooks, 1994, p. 195). Now critical pedagogy has started to play an important role in the teaching of the social studies subject of the researcher.

5. Future Direction

In this study, as a social studies school teacher (past experience) and as

foundation of education (present experience of university teacher), I have explored the challenges, struggles, and pleasures I have faced while implementing critical pedagogy. In addition, in this study, my two colleagues and I have analyzed the story presented by me from the perspective of critical pedagogy and pedagogy of love. This study analyzed the literature on how teachers of different subjects in different countries practice critical pedagogy (Ovens et al., 2018; Philpot, 2016; Schenker et al., 2019; Walton-Fisette & Sutherland, 2018). Schenker et al. According to Schenker et al., (2019), the implementation of critical pedagogy and social justice varies according to the situation. Because the marginalized groups are also different according to the circumstances and the strategies to act in such unequal situation are also different (Philpot, 2016). The dialogic experiences described in this study suggest that the contextualization of various teaching practices (rather than generalizations) provides an opportunity to create concepts based on local teaching and local cultural practices (Freire, 1987). Therefore, the findings of this study and Schenker et. al. (2019) shows a similarity between the studies.

Teaching practices, mentioned above, are inspired by a sense of social justice and these feelings are also based on Freire's critical pedagogy (Ovens et al., 2018). Four major themes emerging from my story are: the construction of the critical teacher, conscientizacao process, the journey of untested feasibility, and social change through the pedagogy of love. All these themes are based on critical pedagogy and it is clear how these topics are practiced. On the other hand, I have tried to develop a relationship of trust and love with my students, remembering the inspiring and loving teachers of my school life (Walton-Fisette & Sutherland, 2018).

I hope that this story will be very useful for the contemporary schools and universities of different countries which are facing the same situation even though it is completely different from the political system of Nepal. Another challenge of critical pedagogy for social studies teachers is how to effectively implement the pedagogy of love in schools around the world in the current neoliberal environment (Ovens et al., 2018). The assessment procedures of teachers are also based on neoliberalism ideology that challenges the pedagogy of love that fosters deep dialogue and meaningful relationships among students (Shelley and McCuaig, 2018). My argument is that if teachers are to truly claim to be critical, then they need to work with, understand, and love students to effectively implement critical pedagogy in today's classrooms. But this is not happening. There is lack of pedagogy of love in the classrooms (Ovens et al., 2018).

Till the time of this study, education system of Nepal is facing so many

challenges. Challenges that threaten the existence of public schools and universities, such as the rise of neoliberal government, continuous decreasing investment in public education sector, the lack of an education system that can understand life, the situation where teaching cannot be connected with life, etc., are making teachers and teaching ineffective day by day. The educational policies and practices of the neoliberal governments are not able to develop a suitable environment in schools for the implementation of critical pedagogy. Due to the nature of the curriculum, the excessive number of students, and the horrible educational environment, teachers are not able to develop an environment where they can transfer power to the students. Since Freire's philosophy helps young generations to prepare active critical citizens, the development of that environment in school classrooms is very necessary, but it is not happening.

Nepalese teachers face many challenges in implementing Freire's critical and dialogic pedagogy. The first obvious challenges are structural. Similarly, these challenges are related to personal, cultural and political aspects. But all these challenges are interrelated. These problems are always weakening the educational system of Nepal. The critical and democratic pedagogy that has been developed in Western countries for the past few decades has attracted school and university teachers to this field. Including my story in the study will provide an opportunity to reflect on the possibilities of critical pedagogy in the teaching learning process of schools and universities. In addition, I hope that this study will provide more strength and encouragement to schools and universities teachers to bring critical and democratic pedagogy to the classroom.

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