

Indigenous Socio-Cultural Impact on Preschool Curriculum Transaction in Cooch Behar of West Bengal

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ABSTRACT

This study is field-based survey research for a significant understanding of the status and impact of Indigenous socio-cultural implementation and transactional effect by the preschool institution on preschoolers of Cooch Behar. This study mainly discusses practices of the Koch community's cultural activities in preschool education. Government preschool practiced various cultural activities (folk song- Bhawaiya: Chatka, Dariya; Bisohari pala songs, folk dance Bairati dance, etc) in the form of scholastic and co-scholastic activities but it varied in respect of locality. Private preschools were not willing to practice indigenous Koch community culture and Rajbanshi language in their day-to-day formal curriculum transaction, they were occasionally practicing (it also differs in respect to the teaching experience of the teacher.) which directly impacts the curriculum transaction process because it was a significant effect on teacher pupils' relationship, as well as negatively effect on pupils cognitive, socio-cultural, language development.

Keywords: Indigenous, Socio-cultural, Preschool, Curriculum transaction.

INTRODUCTION

From the beginning of human civilization, the socio-cultural aspect is considered a significant component of human development, which provides the social and cultural identity of a particular community people. Throughout human civilization, societal demand progressively increased day by day and societal people realized the importance the education in their day-to-day life. Earlier Preschool education was an informal form of education run by the family but in the contemporary education system as per NEP-2020 preschool education (for 3 to 6 years age groups of child) is the initial stage of formal education in India, where give more emphasis on child socio-culture specific - language, cognitive and emotional development to create as a productive social human being, that why Researcher of education, neuroscience, and economics validates that ensuring free, accessible, high-quality ECE (Early Child Education). (NCFES-2022) and NEP-2020 more emphasis on the mother tongue or local language as a medium of instruction for the initial stage of education, language as a socio-cultural help to child cognitive thinking and mind-mapping and also help to express themselves in classroom interaction, at the time of curriculum transaction. Cooch Beha as a district of West Bengal comes under the North-Eastern part of India, which has a culturally reach identity of the Rajbanshi community in north-east India. Since the long-time Cooch Behar was ruled by the "KOCH" dynasty and the Rajbanshi people are the indigenous inhabitants of Cooch Behar and they are communicating in the 'Kamrupi' dialect which is the local form of Bengali language. With the growing demand for social mobilization through education in Cooch Behar, preschool education institutions also significantly grow up day by day. A large number of preschool institutions are run by private management but only a few institutions are run by the West Bengal government which is entitled as Anganwadi institution but it's newly transformed as a Shishu Alloy as a preschool.

REVIEW RELATED LITERATURE

Basria Salma (2021); worked on the social and cultural history of Cooch Behar where little bit studied the numerical status of the educational institution at the time of the koch dynasty, Adhakary Chanchal (2021); studied the medieval regional history of Cooch Behar and focused on society and peasants' life in the seventeenth century and it's significant in Cooch Behar historical development. Md. Khurshid Alam & Prasanya Sarkar (2018),

worked on the socio-economic status of Cooch Behar in respect of population growth, sex ratio, literacy, and monthly income. Ajizul Hoque & Deben Chandra Kalita (2021); focused on the twenty-century socio-cultural history of Cooch Behar and found multidimensional history of socio-cultural aspects. Prosenjit Roy (2021); who worked on socio-cultural activities from 1849 to 1911 periods found that the activities related to socio-economic conditions, educational reforms, development of press and literature, art, architecture, and Sports culture. Das Pampa (2004); focused on the socio-economical aspect concerning agriculture and also worked on the Koch dynasty's rules and its effect on modern periods. Roy, Sachindra Nath (1988); focused on state culture and literature and the nature of Cooch Behar. Dey, Dilip Kumar (2002); focused on the local cultural aspect of Cooch Behar -more, folk songs, rituals, folk dance, religious ceremonies etc. Many research works were done on the cultural dimension in Cooch Behar a north-eastern part of India but there has a lack of indigenous Koch cultural impact-based research work in the field of education, especially in preschool education which is untouched that's why indigenous Koch culture as cultural capital of Cooch Behar need to introduce in curriculum and practices through classroom transaction by the transactor from the beginning stage of education which have socio-cultural significant for pupils social development in modern era.

Significant of the study

The socio-culture aspect represents a demographic of people's societal beliefs, norms, values, language, behavior, knowledge, etc., and the educational institutions are also a miniature form of society because it's established to fulfill the individual needs as well as societal need. After all, no one can ignore the societal value in his or her life, and preschool is beginning stage of education for the socialization of children after home. Every education system has its own goal which is directly or indirectly set by the local society and educational institutions try to achieve that goal through the curriculum transaction through social interaction among the students within the sociocultural environment using the local communicative language which is understandable for students in a natural setting. After reviewing related literature as a north-eastern part of India, Cooch Behar has a significant socio-cultural history and socio-educational demand to practice indigenous culture and language in the field of education for the betterment of child development from the beginning of preschool education. NEP-2020 and National Curriculum Framework for Foundational Stage (NCFFS-2022-page no.- 33) also focus on the rootedness of ancient culture and knowledge systems and the power of local language.

METHODOLOGY

In this study researcher used descriptive survey research because the study was conducted in a contemporary scenario. Under this study preschool institutions of Cooch Behar of West Bengal as a north-eastern part of India considered as a population. From the population, 60 preschools (30 private preschools & 30 government preschools) were selected as a sample through using a simple random sampling technique. After that from the selected preschool, teachers were considered as the main sample. Open-ended unstructured interview schedules and participant observation techniques were used as a tool for data collection.

Objectives

To find out the status & impact of indigenous socio-cultural activities in preschool curriculum transaction in respect of -a. types of management (i. Private; ii. Government)

Research questions

What is the status and impact of indigenous socio-cultural activities in preschool curriculum transaction in respect of -a. types of management (i. Private; ii. Government)

FINDINGS

Private preschool

Only 5 % urban area's private preschool in Cooch Behar practicing indigenous 'Koch' community-based cultural activities in their institution curriculum transaction process as a part of co-scholastic activities in the form of

dance (Bairati folk dance); folk songs (Bhawaiya folk song) which come under the indigenous culture based creative co-scholastic activities but not practiced as a mainstream activity in a regular form of curriculum transaction but practiced occasionally but 12 % rural private preschool practiced indigenous Koch culture which was planned based co-scholastic activities of institution(like- bairati folk dance, excursions on important cultural place, bhawaiya songs, etc.)

Only 1% of preschool teachers of urban private preschools were taking in Koch indigenous language (Kamrupi dialect) while interacting outside of the classroom with pupils but not using instructional communicative language in classroom interaction at the time of curriculum interaction within the classroom and those teachers interacted in kamrupi language they are the maximum belong to specifically Koch community. This indicated that the institution does not promote the indigenous cultural history and language as a cultural component among the pupils which hampers the socio-cultural development of Koch community peoples.

Maximum numbers of urban private preschools followed various international teaching methods (Kindergarten, Montessori methods) and language (English, Bengali) as a formal instructional language for classroom interaction as well as outcome evaluation but they were not considering local dialect if the particular community pupils face difficulty to understand the content, concept or instruction when they are in the initial stage of preschool education, it created conflict between prior learning experience(which was learn from home) and new knowledge which effected child mental and socio-cultural development and also create barrier to build interpersonal relationship among the teachers. However, few rural private preschools showed flexibility in using the local language at the time of curriculum transaction.

Every geographical location follows its specific culture and it's a social capital for them, which is transmitted from generation to generation. Preschool is the second social institution after home but the urban private preschool of Cooch Behar does not promote indigenous cultural activities, beliefs, livelihoods, language, dressing sense, traditions, rituals, etc. (Cooch Behar – Koch culture). Which is perilous for socio-cultural development as well as lost the cultural history and the identity of particular geographical area.

Few rural private preschools promote Koch culture but in a specific segment like – minimum use of kamrupi language, and dress code but at the time of community-specific cultural programs, cultural observation days, and celebration of Koch community hero's birthday as per government holiday list.

A maximum number of preschools in urban areas follow particular pedagogical methods or approaches, but they do not follow specific pedagogical /methodological curriculum structures. they followed their curriculum structure but they were not introducing or transact indigenous cultural, and cultural history in their curriculum which constructively cut the root of particular geographical culture because the institution enjoys to their practices of own curriculum but they did not include the historical importance socio-cultural which is indigenous capital of Cooch Behar.

Government preschool

Government preschool is entitled as a Shishu Aloy by the government of West Bengal, which is one kind of government model school for preschool education.

40 percent of government preschools from urban areas practiced some Koch community-based cultural activities like- indigenous games (dungali, buri ana, etc) within the 4-hour activity duration but the percentage of practicing Koch cultural activities in rural government preschools (Shishu Aloy) was more than twice which 85 percent. Rural preschool practiced various indigenous activities like – games, traditional methods of counting, various local foods names, community-specific relation names, etc. in 4 hours of circle time for curriculum transaction which help pupils understand the concept, respect cultural importance in daily life and also create a cultural bridge with their individual and social life. But the urban preschooler was not too much connected with indigenous culture of Cooch Behar that why they lost the origin of their cultural identity.

Language is a vital tool for cultural practice but only 30 percent of teachers of urban preschool interacted through the local indigenous Koch dialect (Kamrupi) with Koch community pupils, only when they have difficulty

understanding concepts, then teachers use a little bit of the kamrupi dialect. But most of the time teachers do not prefer multilingualism (if the class is culturally diverse) from the beginning of the curriculum transaction if the majority of pupils come from the Koch community when the teacher also belongs to the same community that case teacher also not use kamrupi language parallelly.

Out of 30 percent of urban preschool teachers 10 percent teacher interacted with kamrupi language within school hours, they were highly experienced teachers with more than 20 years of teaching but those are the new teachers with below 10 years of teaching experience they were not very much willing to interact in kamrupi language with pupils, which is break down the teacher pupils relationship culturally and pupils not connect their learning experience with curriculum which taught in school and hampered their socio-cultural development.

Where both the central and state governments more focus on pupils' community engagement, and socio-cultural development and promote mother tongue/ local language as an instructional medium in the NEP-2020, NCF-FS-2022, and Shishu Aloy booklet.

80 percent of rural government preschool teachers interacted through the kamrupi language which helped to build an effective interpersonal social relationship among the students and it helped them to run transactional activities Smoothly, also they shared the historical perspective of the Koch community which connected pupils to their root of culture.

In the West Bengal government Shishu Aloy booklet gives some instruction regarding curriculum and curriculum transaction and also gives direction to prepared activities plan through giving more priorities to local culture, but the urban government preschool in Cooch Behar district did not implement the instruction, few percent of the teacher were transacted indigenous Koch community history, language, social, cultural practices.

But in rural preschools, a maximum number of teachers inculcated Koch history culture, folk, more, etc. practices throughout the scholastic and co-scholastic curriculum transaction activities which help pupils to know their culture in a significant way and they feel a connection with their root culture as well as help them (pupils) to think rationally in their local language.

Government preschool teachers transacted various historical content of Koch culture, literature, dramatical stories, etc. through the story-telling method in classroom circle time and as a co-curricular activity practiced Koch traditional games (like- Dangali, Buri-Ayana, etc.) folk songs and dance (Bhawaiya- Chatka, Dariya songs; Bisohari pala songs, Bairati dance, etc.) but it was mostly followed in rural government preschool as compared to urban government preschool. Which impacts pupils' culture-specific cognitive, psycho-social, cultural, and motor development.

CONCLUSION

culture is cultivated by the people, for the people throughout the practices and it indicates the social status of individuals who are located in a particular geographical location and it's also a social indicator for human beings. India is a culturally reach and diversified nation. Cooch Behar geographically comes under the north-eastern part of India, where the majority of Koch community people belong, they call Rajbanshi- it's their socio-cultural identity. they have various indigenous socio-cultural practices- like folk songs, dance, social festivals, food habits, etc which are transmitted from generation to generation by family after that school as a social institution will take this responsibility, and the initial stage of education start from preschool education they are practicing through curriculum transaction. The lack of cultural knowledge, awareness, positive attitude, and willingness most of private preschool teachers not inculcate Koch cultural activities and kamrupi language in the curriculum transaction process, where the Ministry of Education through NEP-2020 gives direction to focus on community engagement, local language, and indigenous knowledge in curriculum, but the government institutions are practicing indigenous Koch community culture in their transaction process, which helps to build pupils positive attitude toward ingenious cultural as well as also help teacher to build mutual positive relationship among pupils and it's help to smooth curriculum transaction in classroom.

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