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## INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)

Article DOI:10.21474/IJAR01/15131

DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/15131>



### RESEARCH ARTICLE

#### CASTE, GENDER, AND PEDAGOGY: PERCEPTION OF DALIT STUDENTS IN RURAL INDIA

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#### Manuscript Info

##### Manuscript History

Received: 31 May 2022

Final Accepted: 30 June 2022

Published: July 2022

##### Keywords: -

Pedagogy, Caste, Gender, Dalit, And Inclusion

#### Abstract

The dropout rate of Dalit students in Maharashtra state, especially girls, is steadily increasing. Therefore, it is important to understand the caste and gender relationship in the education system in India. On that basis, I introduce the pedagogy of that caste and gender as a method of teaching in the classroom. As a Dalit feminist, I am looking at the Dalit student perceptions regarding classrooms in rural India. The roots of this discourse are found in Paulo Freire's explanation of the method of teaching "Pedagogy of the Oppressed". The research presented is the result of experiences dealing with such contradictions and the development of a discussion of the caste and gender pedagogy of conflicting oppressive practices in the classroom. The first section of the research paper discusses pedagogy and the concept of Caste conflict and gender inequality in a rural school. In the second section, the perception of Dalit students about the Indian education system and its outline, the discourse focuses on caste building. The last section discusses the possibilities to create a pedagogy method of such gender and caste in school practices with the help of narratives of Dalit students.

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#### Introduction:-

Education thus becomes an act of depositing in which the student is the depository and the teacher is the depositor, (Freire, 70). Education is a deliberate process of drawing out learning (educere), encouraging, and giving time to discovery. Plato talks about pedagogues as 'men who by age and experience are qualified to serve as both leaders (hēgemonas) and custodians (paidagōgous)' of children. (Longenecker 1983: 53)

The pedagogue was responsible for every aspect of the child's upbringing from correcting grammar and diction to controlling his or her sexual morals. Reciting a pedagogue's advice, Seneca said, "Walk thus and so; eat thus and so, this is the proper conduct for a man and that for a woman; this for a married man and that for a bachelor". (Smith 2006: 201)

As Pestalozzi constantly affirmed, education is rooted in human nature; it is a matter of the head, hand, and heart (Brühlmeier 2010). We find identity, meaning, and purpose in life 'through connections to the community, to the natural world, and spiritual values such as compassion and peace' (Miller 2000).

Philosophy of education is a careful, critical and systematic intellectual endeavor to see education as a whole and as an integral part of man's culture, the more precise meaning of the term varying with the systematic point of view of the stipulator or any Philosophy dealing with or applied to the process of public or private education and used as a

basis for the general determination, interpretation, and evaluation of educational problems having to do with objectives, practices, outcomes, child and social needs, materials of study and all other aspects of the field (**Good, C.V., 1959:395**)

Pedagogy' is a slippery concept. This is only to be expected. It is only very recently that it has been rehabilitated in the Anglo-Saxon-speaking world. Before that, it had connotations similar to 'pedantry'. Shulman uses the expression to refer to those aspects of teaching that do not relate directly to a specific subject matter. (**Stones, 1989**)

Language is the teaching tool that created the biggest barrier in learning for Dalit students to express their thoughts. Teachers who create courses that do not connect them to the original language. This puts them at greater risk of developing students' understanding and interest in learning. This is an obstacle for Dalit students to reach the minimum level of reading and writing. It is a challenge for teachers how to create a conducive environment for students so that they can learn concepts expressed through spoken or printed words, even if those words are not supported by other experiences.

**I am constantly worried about the language of the school from the teachers. I don't like teachers telling me to speak the pure language when reading books or asking questions at school. I do not understand the meaning of pure language (Narratives of Nagesh, 12 years Dalit student said).**

In this research article, I have focused on Dalit children's perspectives on teaching and learning or teaching strategies. Consider the nature of the educational relationship between teachers and Dalit children. However, in the pursuit of pedagogy, positive concepts of scientific research in education have diminished a deeper and deeper understanding of the interactive and purposeful nature of the pedagogical action of caste and gender.

#### **Caste, gender, and Pedagogy:**

Pedagogy is the constant production of an experience with students, and artistic expression framed by a normative concern for growth. (**Cuenca, 2010**).

Caste and gender pedagogy perspective, teachers should strive to encourage students to be vocal by providing an inclusive environment that does not include the teacher's voice. A caste and gender classroom should be a place where students are free to express their innermost thoughts and openly reflect on their personal experiences, and use those reflections as a way to connect them to course content.

In this research paper, I will not only focus on teaching methods and techniques in the classroom. But also, to study the process of learning is to create space for interaction with caste and gender pedagogy through the narratives of Dalit students in rural schools. Caste pedagogy is not only arguing over teaching methods but also communicating between caste cultures and solving the more fundamental problem of casteism and sexism, whose voice is heard to determine which is best for poor Dalit students.

The participation of Dalit students in the Indian education system is very low. Therefore, it is necessary to pay attention to pedagogy or teaching methods in Indian rural schools. These initial efforts were necessary to lay the foundation for the institutional integration of Dalit students and to provide discipline through curriculum literature (e.g., texts and theoretical models). However, the ignorance of the Dalit child class defines it as a social inquiry into caste and gender in academic research. In the first stage, caste and gender finally pedagogy should solve the problem of knowledge and dominant caste behavior that dominates in schools.

The approach to caste pedagogy is caste orientation, which is interrelated in complex patterns with caste behavior. Caste believes that there is no point in providing equal opportunities in schools if the social structure remains challenging. Caste and gender pedagogy in schools involves fundamental criticism and attention to the educational struggles of Dalit children, particularly Dalit girls to achieve the desired social change.

Mahatma Jyotirao Phule also described the indispensability of education for the redemption of the Dalits in the following words: "For want of education, their intellect deteriorated for want of intellect, their morality decayed, for want of morality, their progress wants of progress, their wealth vanished all their sorrows/ sprang from illiteracy". (**Keer, Dhananjay; 1954**)

Placed in a position to lead children toward academic and personal growth, the very nature of teaching and pedagogic action is animated by continuous discernment and constant determination. In this sense, the “why” and “what” of pedagogy are fused by the nature of the relationship between a teacher and student. **(Cuenca, 2010)**

The Kothari Commission in this respect states: "According to the best modern educational thought, the curriculum does not mean only the academic subjects traditionally taught in schools, but includes the total of experiences that a pupil receives through the manifold activities that exist in the schools, in the classroom, library, laboratory, workshop, playgrounds and in the numerous informal contacts between teachers and pupils. In this sense, the whole life of school becomes the curriculum that can touch the lives of the student at points and help in the evolution of a balanced personality. **(Bhatia & Bhatia; 2000:154) jay; 1954)**

Pedagogy is also associated with the Greek tradition of philosophical dialogue, particularly the Socratic method of inquiry **(Shah, 2021)**. Caste pedagogy is dialogues that engage in the critical thinking of caste and the dominance of Knowledge. it is critical to think of what reality exists and historical time and the constant process of social transformation through education. which requires critical thinking, and is also capable of generating critical thinking. without dialogue, there is no communication, and without communication, there can be no true education. **(Freire, 70)**

There needs to be interaction with pedagogy, collaborators, and castes to raise voices and explore unheard children. This requires that the concept should not be considered ‘given’ but that the general vocabulary has been created by making a clear connection between theory, research, and experience. Due to the clear correlation between theory, research, and experience, Dalit students’ narratives, and experience will develop a caste and gender-sensitive approach and pedagogy to reduce the dropout rates of children.

**I was not good at math's. Many times, teachers try to compare me with other students who are good at maths. Students always laugh at me. Because the teacher encourages other students and insults me in front of them. Many students joke about my caste name which is lower caste, it bothers me. So, I try not to mix with other students in the class (said Raja, a 13-year-old Dalit student).**

Caste and gender pedagogy introduce three subjects) Gender and caste pedagogy empathized the discrimination in school) Also, Emphasis on the participation and interaction of Dalit students in class c) It is Collaborative relationships between classmates and teachers and Dalit children. Teaching is not only used as applied knowledge but instead requires a caste and gender approach to knowledge that then invites students to personalize the field of study by participating and sharing life and experiences. Small discussion groups, extracurricular contacts, and distribution of reading materials to engage the Dalit students in the classroom.

Problem -posing education as a humanist and liberating praxis posits as fundamental that the people subjected to domination must fight for their emancipation. **(Freire, 70)**

Caste pedagogy presents important questions of Knowledge which is created for whom, for what purpose, and the answer is sought through the interaction and mediation between personal experience, the subject area, and its social and political context. In the Indian context, caste pedagogy initially has to deal with India's historical knowledge and the system of caste oppression in India. In class discussions, the school ignores the voices of Dalit students, especially Dalit girls.

Their perceptions of Dalit children's everydayness of caste and gender practices, the sense of social position, and the need to contend with biases and stereotypes against English speakers of the dominant caste, describe the dilemmas of traditional education based on caste hierarchies. These problems are evident in classrooms and often cause Dalit students to drop out of school. As researchers, they explore how caste and gender classrooms manage and practice their pedagogies.

**Since I am a Dalit girl, I cannot befriend any other girl. Because everyone laughs at me, I don't understand the language the teacher taught me. The teacher compliments the other girls but points out my mistakes. So, I dropped out of school because I was bored. (Swati, a 12-year Dalit girl said)**

According to Dr. Ambedkar, "The object of primary education is to see that every child that enters the portals of a primary school does leave it only at a stage when it becomes literate and continues to be literate throughout the rest of his life." Dr. Ambedkar identified two purposes of knowledge: first, to acquire it for the betterment of others, and secondly to use it for one's betterment. He has also argued against professional learning (The British Educational System) which aims at creating a clerical nature for workers. He emphasized secular education for social emancipation and freedom. (Kumar and Ratane, 2018)

Dr. Ambedkar believed that "Education was a sword and is a double-edged weapon, was dangerous to wield. So, an educated man without character and humility was more dangerous than a beast. If his education was detrimental to the welfare of the poor, he remarked the educated man was a curse to society. (Keer, Dhananjay; 1965:294).

The framework of caste and gender pedagogy challenges the dominant caste privileges, its characteristics need to be understood according to caste, class, religion, region, race, and gender. Attempts are made to communicate through exercises in which the experience of Dalit students also creates space for Dalit girls to express their thoughts in groups.

Pedagogy does not provide an adequate analytical framework to understand why things like social stratification and labeling of specific caste students, or why some teachers' social and cultural values do not support Dalit students in school. Therefore, it is necessary to create a framework for caste and gender equality in the classroom through pedagogy. Pedagogy helps to give special attention to Dalit students and strengthen their relationship with teachers. So other students will follow the same idea.

Caste pedagogy is generally defined as a privileged source of power, education rights, and understanding of teachers. Caste pedagogy has emerged as an attempt to encourage and support Dalit students' constructive activities, based on the constructivist concept that students must be active in creating their perceptions of the world. Often, however, the goal of promoting the active construction of students' knowledge is understood against the background of the weakening of the role of the teacher in educational activities.

**I am not interested in school. Teachers' behavior is rude to Dalit children; Also, I don't want to interact with other students. Because our setting system is different in school. Our line is different from other castes. (This is the story of Sham, a 13-year-old Dalit student)**

There are many explanatory and instructive implications of this approach for education in general and community participation in schools in particular. Initially, as an explanatory scheme, our hegemonic analysis and reconciliation of constitutional reasoning become a model. School education does not emphasize procedures and outcomes as products of an educational undertaking, but as an aspect of the larger social system, the relationship between learners, teachers, and curriculum. As such, the daily activities of students and teachers as they relate to each other and its nature. The knowledge presented in the classroom will be interpreted to provide form and substance to the ubiquitous cultural and economic imperatives.

Caste and gender pedagogy is a theory about the teaching/learning process that guides students to choose classroom practices by providing criteria for evaluating specific educational strategies and techniques for desired curricular goals or outcomes. These evaluation criteria include the extent to which a community of learners is empowered to act responsibly with each other and with the subject and to apply that learning to social action. It is a vision of the classroom as a caste and gender-friendly environment in which teacher-student and student-teacher behave as subjects, not as objects. Caste and gender pedagogy must be embedded in teaching/learning – self-engagement in a continuous reflective process; Being actively engaged in the material studied; engaging with others in the struggle to transcend caste and gender discrimination and other destructive hatreds and working together to increase knowledge; Engaged in community, traditional institutions and social movements,

#### **Inclusive Pedagogy:**

A student-centered approach is essential in trying to address the complex issues of caste and gender in rural school classrooms. By engaging in the provision of a meaningful 'Education for All, we are developing the concept of inclusive pedagogy. caste, class Gender, religion. For equality and equity regardless of race, the linguistic concept of inclusive pedagogy. It is not something different and addition. This is considered to be of equal value to the students in the classroom. Inclusive pedagogy aims not only to provide opportunities for Dalit students but also to create a

democratic space for every child in India, so that all students can participate in classroom life. This student-centered approach to individual differences differs from earlier ideas about inclusive education and inclusive studies, which are based on the process of providing for all while differentiating for some.

Dewey explained that education is a process of life; therefore, education itself is life. He said that education is the only way out for the liberty of the marginalized in society. According to him, true education is “a kind of education a student learns to make difference between thought and reality. He must be able to make a distinction among the basic issues and should be capable to understand every question based on virtue without the support of any principle in vogue. Human beings survive by maintaining their ideals and renewing them only by them constantly. Education is how this is done. Ambedkar believed in a democratic form of education. (Kumar, 2019)

**Teachers encourage caste-privileged students. I wanted to participate in sports activities. Teachers discourage me. When you're a Dalit girl, it's easy to say no. I don't have money to buy sports shoes or any equipment for sports activities. (Rani 13 years old students said).** This behavior of the teacher perpetuates caste and gender discrimination in schools in rural areas.

Caste and gender Pedagogy believed that all children should be equal in the classroom. It suggests show classrooms can be diverse and inclusive. It indicates the relationship of specific techniques to educational objectives. It is not limited to any particular subject but includes a reflexive component that enhances the caste and gender scholarship component involved in teaching/learning, of any subject. It is social transformative, helping to revise education policy and assess the performance of each student who needs more attention. But it can also be phased into a traditional teaching approach or another alternative pedagogical approach. It's not all or nothing, although researchers have found that taking one step makes the next step logically appealing. It is an important element of equality between different social groups.

Inclusive strategies allow students to find their voice and explore the power of authenticity. At the same time, they enable individuals to communicate with others and find ways to act on their understanding. Inclusive classrooms are places to explore caste and gender worldviews, confronting differences to enrich all of us rather than belittle some of us. Inclusive pedagogy does not dissolve teachers' authority or power. It moves from power to dominance as creative equality. In such a system, teachers' knowledge and experiences are identified and used with students to enhance the validating power of all. Inclusive pedagogy takes seriously the goal of lifelong learning by consciously developing teaching/learning skills as well as providing informed subject support.

Students-centered approach to the quest to articulate the specialist knowledge and skills needed to study and teach students with special needs is an important part of the democratic value of education. The analysis allowed us to identify practical examples of inclusive pedagogy that draw attention to social systems of caste and gender in India to create an equal status for Dalit students in schools. Inclusive pedagogy believed that caste and gender were barriers in the system for the Dalit student to continue primary education in school.

### **Conclusion and Discussion: -**

Overall, Dalit students' perceptions provide a tool for exploring caste and gender pedagogy practices. Caste and gender pedagogy explore, critique, and present a distinct phenomenon for Dalit students. Regardless of what they describe as areas of concern, we must embrace caste and gender pedagogy as a priority tool and see it as the best way to deliver and create inclusiveness. Caste and gender pedagogy emerged from Dalit students' experiential background of being different and displaced in the Indian educational environment. The recommendations made here as researchers arise from the experience of studying caste and gender pedagogy with Dalit students, and our position as Dalit students are uniquely limited. Above all, Indian classrooms are places where we make space for knowledge creation, where we make space for all voices—including our own, and where we make space for lingering and unexpressed dreams. This is the true definition of our caste and gender pedagogy:

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