

An Analytical Study of Teachers' Insights on the Integration of Ethnocultural Perspectives in Indian Education

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Abstract

The study was being undertaken among secondary school teachers regarding their perception of ethnocultural inclusion with special focus on inclusive pedagogy and cultural responsiveness. As India is a diverse socio-cultural country, the research focused on how teachers in an educational setting use cultural symbols and communal knowledge as part of their teaching in a homogeneous classroom environment. A descriptive survey design has been employed, and data collected on 168 teachers working in government and private schools of Patna district, Bihar. The cohort of participants was ethnically diverse and covered the fields of gender, school system, and subject area. The Perception Scale on Ethnocultural Practices (PSEP), a researcher-designed scale with 18 items that are structured into three dimensions – Understanding of Ethnocultural Perspective, Perception of Pedagogical Approaches, and Personal Engagement with Ethnocultural Perspectives – was utilized. An acceptable reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha = 0.755) was produced by estimates of internal consistency. The results of the analysis showed significant disparities in ethnocultural perception with gender, type of school, and stream of teaching. In such a way, the study focuses on the necessity of special programmes of professional development, curriculum reform, and culturally relevant teacher education in order to reduce perception deficits and foster fair educational settings. The potential of integrating the ethnocultural views is especially strong concerning inclusive schooling that is identity-affirming, especially among students who belong to historically marginalized populations. These results have policy, teacher-training, and teaching-curriculum implications in the pluralistic setting in education.

Keywords: Ethnocultural Perspectives, Indian Education, Pedagogical Practices.

Introduction

Ethnocultural perspectives on the approaches of teaching have a critical role in the multifaceted Indian landscape of education (Wahab et al., 2018). Classes comprising a tandem of ethnical backgrounds and cultural narratives are becoming more and more prevalent, and educators are beginning to understand the necessity for teaching that is now sensitive to it, but at

the same time, proactive about it (López & Malfa, 2020). Hence, this realization emphasizes why intercultural education is not only a beneficial but an essential part of the inclusive learning environment. Thus, pedagogy is transforming itself into spaces in which learning is based on the context of the students' own cultural experiences. This method promotes learning that is interesting and meaningful since it happens in environments where students feel most

comfortable and considers the ways they naturally understand the world.

According to D. Quiao et al. (2024), “Ethnocultural perspective is an educational design that makes clear identification, synthesis, and appreciation of the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic background of learners in every aspect of teaching and learning. This prism is not profane at its surface; it puts the culturally responsive pedagogy, democratic ability of participation, and acknowledging students’ lived realities in the foreground (Ortikov, 2021; Ladson-Billings, 1995). In classrooms, such an approach is realized with the inclusion of local cultural content into textbooks, with the adoption of mother tongue or regional idioms as teaching devices, and the development of assessment protocols that reflect community-based systems of knowledge.

Outside India, empirical research studies have revealed that an ethnocultural practice can improve student participation, performance, and identity formation. In New Zealand, Māori oral narratives play an important role in that the Māori oral narrative is at the heart of early childhood education (Ritchie & Rau, 2006). In Alaska, Indigenous ecological knowledge is embedded in the

science curriculum (Barnhardt & Oscar Kawagley, 2005). However, in the Indian case, the assimilation of ethnocultural insights into mainstream education is still relegated to the periphery due to inflexibility in curricular planning, lack of teacher preparation, and poor policy formulation.

Additionally, teachers can find out a far more meaningful level of engagement and involvement by centering students’ life history and personal experiences (Figueredo-Canosa et al., 2020). Honoring the individuality of each learner is so important, and it is what these student-centric teaching approaches do, which allows a deeper learning experience (Chiner et al., 2015).

This research involves the investigation of the perceptions that the Indian school teachers have towards the ethnocultural practices and how much they affect their pedagogical choices. The research will utilize a formalized perception scale completed by a non-homogenous sample of teachers to outline the existing degree of awareness levels, establish gender-based and stream-based differences, and determine the role of school type in teacher willingness to include ethnocultural aspects in their own classrooms.

Examples of Ethnocultural Perspective in Educational Settings



Figure:1 Traditional play ‘Jamuran’ is a character-building media among students (Source: Sakti et al., 2024)



Figure 2: Students visiting a traditional market to enhance local community enhancement in character education among students (Source: Sakti et al. 2024)



Figure 3 The modern Seega game (Source: Fouze and Amit, 2017)

Ethnocultural Perspective Used in the Classroom

Curriculum Adaptation: At the level of curriculum, a teacher redesigns the textbook and other teaching materials strategically by blending in contextual narrative, symbols, and examples that appeal to the local community of learners to create a sense of meaning and connection to their local culture.

Culturally Responsive Teaching: The didactic sequence itself is constructed in a way that confirms the linguistic and cultural identity of students; proverbs, idioms, and narratives that are extracted from regional traditions are applicable as explanation tools and the main concepts.

Inclusive Assessment: Evaluation procedures and practices are not limited to standard examinations and include knowledge delivery methods (e.g., oral folklore, cultural display, and group collaborations), hence making it possible to access a wide variety of learning with the evaluations.

Community Engagement: Educators collaborate with adults, community artisans, and parents in order to co-create learning experiences, such as bringing in a member of a local tribe who weaves to explain concepts around symmetry and pattern making as part of a mathematics unit.

Significance of the Study

Understanding ethnocultural diversity in educational settings is not a matter of conforming to political correctness (Kansal et al., 2022). Rather, it honours differences and is a direct source of increasing student learning outcomes. Culture-based education strategies are proven to increase the academic success of those traditionally disadvantaged, particularly the labour group who have endured educational inequalities because of a misfit with the dominant culture (Kansal et al., 2022). Culture-based curriculum and teaching methods incorporated by educators are more inclusive to all students because they value and acknowledge the cultural uniqueness of all students (Koptseva et al., 2011). Equity and social justice can be promoted through this approach, which also helps develop a sense of belongingness and engagement among students, which can ultimately lead to better academic achievement (Ortikov, 2021). Addressing the education inequalities based on caste and ethnicity that are found in Indian society, students from all backgrounds are given the opportunity to become academically successful. By doing so, educators not only help reduce the gap of educational disparity, but they also take part in the preservation of ethnic cultures, which is more and more significant in the diverse and connected world of today.

Statement of the Problem

The research paper titled 'An Analytical Study of Teachers' Insight on the Integration of Ethnocultural Perspectives in Indian Education,' which conceptualises the relevance of cultural diversity in the Indian education system, is analysed. The study stresses the necessity for culturally sensitive teaching styles that recognize and appreciate the various cultural backgrounds of all students.

Literature Review

Kansal et al. (2022) analyzed the cross-cultural barriers of students of the Indian subcontinent and the methods of understanding and approaching obstacles by the university staff. Their findings emphasized the necessity of adopting culturally responsive approaches in educational institutions to enhance the level of inclusion, as well as engagement of the students. The paper argues that not only is recognizing ethnocultural diversity beneficial in improving academic achievements, but it is also countering systematic disparity. The results, therefore, provide evidence to show the assertion that the inclusion of ethnocultural points of view is fundamental to inclusive pedagogic practice in diverse societies.

Sinha (2024) explored how cultural diversity affects the primary-school teachers in India. Communication barriers and cultural misunderstandings are also mentioned in the research as major hindrances to classroom communication and impediments to learning. However, the discussion shows that promoting intercultural knowledge may foster student performance and help to promote societal integration.

Parveen an Ansari (2022) examine the general attitude of Indian teachers towards cultural diversity in educational practice. The research indicates a general understanding by teaching faculty of the necessity to consider ethnocultural

awareness during the planning of instruction. This evidence gives the indication that there is a growing agreement amongst academicians that ethnocultural competence is necessary for the delivery of equitable, context-relevant learning conditions. On this basis, the author suggests that behavioral perceptions of teachers play a central role in promoting inclusive learning contexts.

Sarangapani (2021) views comparative education study in India as essential and indicates that it must be serious, as it improves cultural lenses into teacher preparation and instruction procedures. The author believes that professional development needs to help educators foster an ethnocultural sensitivity so that they can accommodate versatile learner communities within the country, in their service. This argument is supported by the current research, which shows that there are differences across disciplines in terms of ethnocultural perception, especially among social science educators.

Pradhan (2015) defines culturally relevant pedagogy as a paradigm that is supposed to establish inclusivity and equity in schools. It is argued in the study that reform to align and match curriculum and instructional practices by bringing a sense of students' cultural identities can build a more accommodating learning environment. The author claims that this type of pedagogy supports the feelings of respect and understanding held by the students, which are both highly considered critical to success in academia.

Hariyadi and Rodiyah (2023) evaluated the gendered differences in the perception of multicultural education among the teachers and their attitude to the values of diversity. Their findings recorded high levels of differences: male teachers exhibited improved levels of cultural responsiveness, whose results the authors linked to different training or exposure.

Figueredo-Canosa et al. (2020) looked at how teachers perceived intercultural

education and how teacher training is a key aspect of enhancing cultural sensitivity among them. These results show that teachers who have been adequately equipped with intercultural elements are more likely to use inclusive classroom practices. The authors thus emphasize systemic professional development as an instrument to increase cultural competence.

Chiner et al. (2015) study examines the perceptions of teaching professionals in relation to diversity as well as how their individual and professional experiences are associated with the field of inclusive teaching. The results show that culturally aware persons create more engagement among students by applying the concept of diverse identities of learners.

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the level of awareness among teachers on the integration of ethnocultural perspective in Indian education.
2. To study the teachers' awareness of ethnocultural practices in educational settings with respect to their demographic variables.

Hypotheses of the Study

1. There will be no significant difference between the level of awareness among teachers on the integration of the ethnopedagogical perspective in Indian education.
2. There will be no significant difference between male and female with regard to overall teachers' awareness of ethnocultural practices.
3. There will be no significant difference between the types of schools with regard to overall teachers' awareness of ethnocultural practices.
4. There will be no significant difference between their streams with regard to overall teachers' awareness of ethnocultural practices.

Methodology

This study employed a descriptive survey design to investigate school teachers' awareness of ethnocultural perspectives in Indian education. A descriptive approach was deemed appropriate for exploring existing attitudes, awareness, and practices among teachers regarding ethnocultural inclusivity within the school environment.

Population and Sample

The target population for the study comprised school teachers from Patna District, Bihar, teaching at the secondary level. A purposive sampling technique was used to select 168 teachers representing diverse institutional backgrounds, including Patna Central School, Kendriya Vidyalaya Sangathan (KVS), and Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS). The sample was balanced across variables such as:

- Gender: 86 male, 82 female
- Area: Urban (59), Semi-Urban (64), Rural (45)
- Stream: Physical Science (42), Biological Science (60), and Social Science (66)
- School Type: Government (90 teachers) and private (70 teachers)

Tools Used

To collect data, the researchers developed a structured instrument titled 'Perception Scale on Ethnocultural Practices' (PSEP). The tool was specifically designed to capture the perception of teachers on how ethnocultural elements are recognized, practised, and valued in classroom settings.

The scale comprised 18 items, covering three key dimensions:

1. Understanding of Ethnocultural Perspectives
2. Perception of Pedagogical Practices
3. Personal Engagement with Ethnocultural Elements

The tool was validated through expert consultation, and language adjustments were made to ensure contextual relevance.

Reliability

The internal consistency of the scale was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a reliability coefficient of 0.755, indicating acceptable reliability for attitudinal research instruments.

Result and Discussion

Objective 1: To find out the level of awareness among teachers on the integration of ethnocultural perspective in Indian education.

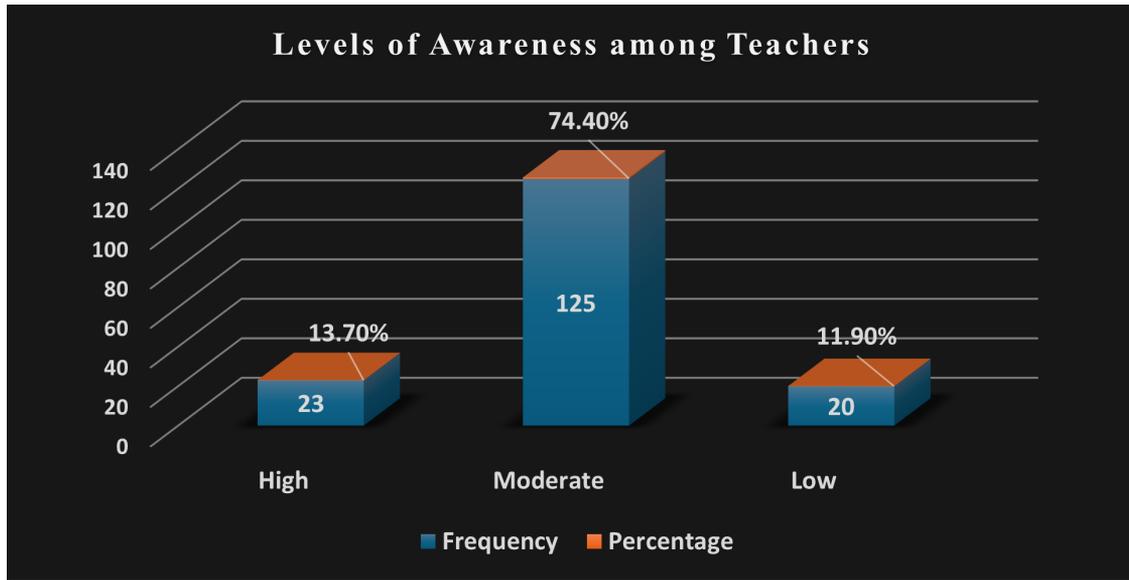


Figure 4: Levels of awareness of teachers on the integration of ethnocultural perspective in Indian education

Figure 4 shows the level-wise distribution of teachers' awareness, with the majority of the respondents lying within the moderate to high levels regarding their awareness of the integration of ethnocultural perspectives in education. This implies that although most teachers exhibit a relatively good understanding and appreciation for cultural diversity, there is still a proportion with a low awareness

level, a phenomenon that continues pointing to the need for professional development and sensitization towards teaching inclusively and culturally responsively.

Hypothesis 1: There will be no significant difference between the level of awareness among teachers and the integration of the ethnopedagogical perspective in Indian education.

Table 1: ANOVA for significant differences among the level of awareness among teachers and the integration of ethnocultural perspective

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Inference
Between Groups	2054.358	2	1027.179	201.216	.000	Significant
Within Groups	842.302	165	5.105			
Total	2896.661	167				

*Denotes significant at 0.05 level

Table 2: Difference in the level of awareness among teachers, Post-Hoc Test

Factors(I)	Factors(J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.	Inference
High	Moderate	5.870	.000	Significant
	Low	13.824	.000	Significant
Moderate	High	-5.870	.000	Significant
	Low	7.954	.000	Significant
Low	High	-13.824	.000	Significant
	Moderate	-7.954	.000	Significant

The results of the one-way ANOVA ($F(2,165) = 201.216, p = .000$) prove that there is a significant difference in how teachers use ethnopedagogical approaches according to their levels of awareness. In addition, it is shown that teachers who have higher awareness put ethnopedagogical practices to use more than teachers who score moderately or low on awareness. It is similar to the findings from (Chiner et al., 2015; Figueredo-Canosa et al., 2020), which suggest that being aware of cultural issues encourages teachers to address students' differences. It argues that a teacher's view

of the subject plays a big role in applying ethnocultural awareness in the classroom. The study also agrees with Sarangapani (2021), who suggests that professional development helps teachers become culturally competent and adapt to different teaching situations. Thus, teachers should have a better understanding of ethnocultural issues to make education more inclusive in India.

Hypothesis 2: There will be no significant difference between male and female with regard to overall teachers' awareness of ethnocultural practices.

Table 3: Factors of ethnocultural perspectives with respect to gender

Factors of Ethnocultural Perspectives	Gender				t value	P value	Remarks
	Male		Female				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Understanding of Ethnocultural perspectives	11.07	1.807	10.37	1.703	2.595	.010*	Significant
Perception of pedagogical practices	11.41	1.745	10.32	2.319	3.452	.001*	Significant
Personal engagement with ethnocultural perspectives	12.12	1.718	10.98	2.272	3.682	.000**	Significant
Overall awareness of ethnocultural practices	34.59	3.050	31.66	4.641	4.865	.000**	Significant

*Denotes significant at 0.05 level

**Denotes significant at 0.01 level

Table 3 shows the results of a gender-wise comparison of teachers' awareness, finding that scores for male teachers were significantly higher than those of female teachers in all domains of understanding of ethnocultural

perspectives, pedagogical practices, and personal engagement. These results that are significant at the 0.05 and 0.01 levels indicate the fact that gender is a significant variable in determining teachers' cultural responsiveness.

The results reject the null hypothesis and speak of substantial distinctions in all aspects of ethnocultural perception along gender lines. There was a uniform superiority in all factors exhibited by male teachers. The significant gender-based differences suggest that male teachers may have greater exposure to cross-cultural classroom situations, more confidence in managing diversity, or increased participation in professional development

programmes. This finding aligns with Hariyadi and Rodiyah (2023), who highlight the need for gender-balanced training in multicultural pedagogical skills. Addressing this gap through gender-sensitive teacher education can ensure equitable application of ethnocultural practices.

Hypothesis 3: There will be no significant difference between the types of schools with regard to overall teachers' awareness of ethnocultural practices.

Table 4: Factors of ethnocultural perspectives with respect to types of school

Factors of Ethnocultural Perspectives	Types of School				t value	P value	Remarks
	Government		Private				
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD			
Understanding of Ethnocultural perspectives	10.82	1.790	10.60	1.789	.773	.441	Not Significant
Perception of pedagogical practices	11.21	1.938	10.40	2.261	2.503	.013*	Significant
Personal engagement with ethnocultural perspectives	11.84	1.774	11.17	2.408	2.062	.041*	Significant
Overall awareness of ethnocultural practices	33.87	3.379	32.17	4.923	2.649	.009*	Significant

*Denotes significant at 0.05 level

Table 4 shows the comparison of teachers' perceptions from government and private schools on the factors of ethnocultural perspectives. The findings show that pedagogical practices, personal engagement, and overall perception by government school teachers' scores were significantly higher, at a significance level of 0.05, while the difference for understanding ethnocultural perspectives was not significant. This signals a better alignment with inclusive practices in public education settings.

This analysis shows that teachers in government schools have a remarkably higher sense of perception regarding ethnocultural practices as opposed to teachers in private schools, therefore rejecting the null hypothesis. The significant differences between government and private

school teachers indicate that public school educators may be more routinely exposed to students from tribal, linguistic, and caste-diverse backgrounds. Government schools often follow inclusive education policies more rigorously, including the use of regional languages, resource teachers, and community-based curriculum content. On the other hand, private schools may focus more on standardized curricula with less flexibility for local cultural integration. This echoes the findings of Ortikov (2021) and Subasi Singh and Akar (2021), who noted that socioculturally diverse contexts tend to demand more responsive pedagogy.

Hypothesis 4: There will be no significant difference between their streams with regard to overall teachers' perception of ethnocultural practices.

Table 5: ANOVA for significant differences among teachers' awareness with respect to the factors of ethnocultural perspectives

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Inference
Understanding of ethnocultural perspective	Between Groups	16.392	2	8.196	2.616	.076	Not Significant
	Within Groups	517.012	165	3.133			
	Total	533.405	167				
Perception of pedagogical practices	Between Groups	29.607	2	14.803	3.417	.035*	Significant
	Within Groups	714.768	165	4.332			
	Total	744.375	167				
Personal engagement with ethnocultural perspectives	Between Groups	39.760	2	19.880	4.798	.009*	Significant
	Within Groups	683.644	165	4.143			
	Total	723.405	167				
Overall awareness of ethnocultural perspectives	Between Groups	249.317	2	124.658	7.770	.001*	Significant
	Within Groups	2647.344	165	16.045			
	Total	2896.661	167				

*Denotes significant at 0.05 level

Table 5 examines awareness of teachers based on their subject streams using ANOVA. The understanding of ethnocultural perspectives showed no significant difference ($p = .076$), but differences

regarding pedagogical practices, personal engagement, and awareness (overall) were significant ($p < .05$), illustrating how subject discipline might affect the ethnocultural sensitivity.

Table 6: Difference in factors of overall perception of teachers, post-hoc test

Dependent Variable	(I) Stream	(J) Stream	Mean Difference	Sig.	Inference
Overall Awareness	Physical Science	Biological Science	-.714	.650	Not Significant
		Social Science	-2.851*	.001	Significant
	Biological Science	Physical Science	.714	.650	Not Significant
		Social Science	-2.136*	.009	Significant
	Social Science	Physical Science	2.851*	.001	Significant
		Biological Science	2.136*	.009	Significant

Table 6 provides the post-hoc comparison between the subject streams and demonstrates that social science teachers differ significantly with regard to overall ethnocultural perception from those of physical and biological sciences. The differences are statistically significant ($p = .001$ and $p = .009$, respectively), confirming the fact that the pedagogical environment's cultural diversity is perceived by social science educators more than it is perceived by those who teach other disciplines.

The statistically significant differences in awareness across subject streams reveal that social science teachers are naturally more engaged with ethnocultural themes. Their curriculum inherently involves discussions of history, society, identity, and diversity, making it easier to integrate culturally relevant examples. In contrast, science and mathematics teachers may struggle to see the immediate connection between their content and cultural contexts, unless they are explicitly trained to embed indigenous

knowledge or local examples. Sarangapani (2021) suggests that teacher education in India often lacks interdisciplinary ethnocultural content, leading to subject-based disparities in implementation.

Major Findings

According to the study, extreme variation in the awareness of ethnocultural integration of teachers is found under differentiation by gender, the type of school, and academic discipline. There was a significant difference in the overall awareness between male and female teachers with male teachers having higher overall awareness than female teachers, particularly in understanding, pedagogical implementation as well as personal engagement with the ethnocultural perspectives, implying a gender difference in cultural responsiveness (Hariyadi & Rodiyah, 2023). The teachers in government schools were more receptive to ethnocultural practices, as compared to the private schools, probably because they had more contact with culturally diverse students (Kansal et al., 2022). Moreover, social science teachers claimed a more profound understanding and association with the ethnocultural modes of teaching in contrast to physical and biological sciences teachers, which signifies that the context and sociocultural make-up are the inherent features of their subject matter (Sarangapani, 2021; Pradhan, 2015). These results reaffirm the inequality in the Indian teaching community with regard to the distribution of ethnocultural awareness and the need for a more comprehensive professional training that breaks the boundaries of disciplines and institutions.

Educational Implications and Suggestions

Based on the findings and interpretation of this study, the following suggestions are offered for enhancing the integration of ethnocultural perspectives in Indian school education:

Targeted Training for STEM Teachers

Since social science and language teachers showed a higher level of ethnocultural awareness and integration (Hypothesis 4), subject-specific capacity-building programmes should be designed for science and mathematics teachers. Workshops should demonstrate how ethnocultural elements like local agricultural knowledge, tribal numeracy patterns, and indigenous environmental wisdom can be linked to STEM content meaningfully.

Gender-sensitive Teacher Development

The findings indicated that male teachers exhibited slightly higher awareness and engagement with ethnocultural practices (Hypothesis 2). This points to a need for focused support programmes that ensure all teachers, regardless of gender, are equally empowered to implement inclusive pedagogy. Training modules must consider gender-related experiences and encourage reflective practices.

Equitable Pedagogical Strategies Across School Types

Although no significant difference was found between government and private school teachers (Hypothesis 3), it is important to ensure that all schools, regardless of funding, are equally resourced and guided to implement culturally responsive practices. Policies should encourage schools to connect the curriculum with local community knowledge systems, particularly in multilingual and socio-economically diverse settings.

Curriculum and Textbook Reform

The moderate awareness among teachers reflects the need for stronger curricular alignment with ethnocultural perspectives. State and national boards should include content from local history, tribal knowledge systems, regional art, and folk narratives to make the curriculum more inclusive and contextually relevant (Rawat & Nagaraju, 2024).

Inclusion of Ethnocultural Elements in Pre-service Teacher Education

As the study revealed variation in understanding and engagement levels among teachers, integrating ethnocultural pedagogy into B.Ed. and D.El.Ed. syllabi are essential. This will ensure that new teachers are equipped from the beginning with the frameworks and tools needed to build inclusive, culturally responsive classrooms.

Development of Localized Teaching-learning Materials

Since many teachers rely on standard materials that may not reflect cultural diversity, education departments should support the creation of region-specific, multilingual, and culturally responsive instructional materials, co-developed by teachers, local experts, and community elders.

Conclusion

Overall, this study ratifies the important place of the ethnocultural convergence in the fostering of the inclusive, equitable, and context-appropriate education within the Indian academic forum. The varied

understandings from the educators indicate the need for deliberate, organized, and inclusive pedagogical interventions that match the cultures of the learners. Enmeshing ethnocultural sensibilities into the texture of educative action not only increases teaching effectiveness but also becomes a medium for keeping the indigenous knowledge system and intercultural discourse alive. After all, the realization of cultural plurality within the educational discourse is not just a pedagogical necessity, but a moral one in a globalized world of immense plurality.

Funding

No funding was received for this study.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval

This study was conducted in accordance with institutional ethical standards. Ethical approval was obtained from the Institutional Ethics Committee of Indira Gandhi National Tribal University.

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