CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

As the study of culture, a phenomenon that is socially rather than genetically constructed and transmitted, anthropology assumes flexible individuals capable of teaching and learning. Learning and teaching are fundamental, implicitly or explicitly, to human adaptation, socialization, culture change, and, at the broadest level, the production and reproduction of culture and society (Pelissier 1991:75).

THE ANTHROPOLOGICAL ETYMOLOGY TO CULTURE AND PEDAGOGY

Culture is inclusive of all those things about man which are more than just biological, organic and purely psychological. Culture exists through man and thus culture assumes society and it is thus "at one and the same time the totality of products of social men and a tremendous force affecting all human beings, socially and individually (Kroeber 1948: 09). For Kroeber, Anthropology is the study concerned most directly with culture and therefore with man and culture. it does tend to see ‘society’, perhaps too narrowly as being little more than an aspect of culture, much as reciprocally many sociologists take for granted that when they understand society they also understand and interpret culture (ibid: 848-49). Edward B. Tylor's 1871 definition of culture takes a more comprehensive approach when he says that:

Culture or civilization...is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society (Monaghan and Just 2000: 36).
Tylor’s focus in his definition on knowledge and belief as acquired— that is, learned—by members of a social group, as well as his sense that these constitute an integral system, continues to inform what culture is. In a similar vein, Lowie calls it “the whole of social tradition”, where the transmission of traditional knowledge and customs is seen to be central to the evolution of culture:

In the scientific sense ‘culture’ does not mean unusual refinement or education, but the whole of social tradition...Passing from one social group to another, we at once discover differences that cannot be due to anything but social convention (Lowie 1934: 03).

In 1930, Franz Boas had put forward his idea of culture as that which:

...embraces all the manifestations of social behaviour of a community, the reactions of the individual as affected by the habits of the group in which he lives, and the product of human activities as determined by these habits (Monaghan and Just 2000: 37).

All these statements use the term “social” or “society” but in an attributive or qualifying sense. Thus, according to Monaghan and Just:

...where Tylor saw ‘culture’ as an accumulation of human accomplishment, Boas described a ‘Kulturbrille’, a set of “cultural glasses” that each of us wears, lenses that provide us with a means for perceiving the world around us, for interpreting the meaning of our social lives, and framing action in them” (ibid: 38).

From an anthropological point of view, cultural transmission is intricately linked up with the pedagogic process, and the common meeting ground of anthropology and education is the concern with the transmission of the “social heritage from one generation to another and with the process by which transmission is achieved” (Eggan 1957: 247). It is perhaps inevitable that the understanding of culture is often
attempted in terms of pedagogy and Culture itself is often defined in essentially educational terms as "the shared products of human learning". Culture is a conceptual abstraction that helps us to analyse individual human behaviour that is shared among groups (Singleton 1971: 03).

Culture, from the earliest academic postulations, is thus linked up with this anthropological perspective. Anthropology started with the objective of studying the human as a whole and a biological organism and later progressed to interpret the human as a creator and carrier of culture (Eggen 1957:248). Discipline like anthropology has always perceived culture as a repository of pedagogic values that are transmitted from generation to generation. Anthropologist like Spindler feels that education is a cultural process. According to him all learning is culturally influenced and affected and it becomes very essential to find out what extent the teacher's cultural background is similar or antagonistic to backgrounds represented by students and what means of communication are opened or closed (Brameld and Sullivan 1961:72).

TOWARDS A CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY

Thus, culture emerges to be of paramount importance in the devising of pedagogic strategies for effective teaching learning process. Kathy Hall and Patricia Murphy, in the introduction to a book they had edited, make some very crucial observations on pedagogy from a socio-cultural viewpoint:

From a socio-cultural perspective, pedagogy is crucially concerned with what is salient to people as they engage in activity and develop competence in the practice in question. It takes account of two phenomena and their dynamic relationship: a) the social order as reflected in, for example, policy and its associated cultural beliefs and assumptions: and b) the experienced world, as reflected in both the enactment
and the experience of the policy, including the beliefs, underlying the approaches used in its enactment and the beliefs mediating how it is experienced...culture is contested term in research but in a socio-cultural perspective, culture is generally thought of as emerging as people interact and engage in activity together. It is not simply a product of practice; rather it is ways of being in practice. The routines, reifications, values and concerns that people make meaning of in an education or work setting are part of culture, and a sociocultural perspective on pedagogy would direct us to attend to those routines and practices for they give insights into how to support learning and transform identities (Hall and Murphy 2008: ix-x).

This is a reopening in contemporary times of an age old debate as to the true significance of the term pedagogy. In 1986, David Lusted, in a crucial observation for the present study, had pointed out to the inadequacy of the understanding of the term pedagogy, which he finds to be 'under defined' where teachers take pedagogy as merely teaching styles, the procedure of maintaining and securing classroom control for learning, basically "a cosmetic bandage on the hard body of classroom contact" (Lusted 1986: 02). For him, pedagogy is a 'process', continuously evolving, by entering into newer configurations, where cultures play important roles in determining the variables of the transactive domain of a pedagogic situation. Both the teachers and students come from varying cultural hinterland and the meeting place, the formal classroom or the informal corridors, are veritable churning pots of emerging cultural forms, where process cannot be a prescriptive or definitive mode, but liminal and ad hoc, depending on exigencies of situations:

...as a concept it draws attention to the process through which knowledge is produced Pedagogy addresses the 'how' questions involved not only in the transmission or reproduction
of knowledge but also in its production. How one teaches is therefore of central interest, but, through the prism of pedagogy, it becomes inseparable from what is being taught and, crucially, how one learns. In this perspective, to bring the issue of pedagogy in from the cold and onto the central stage of cultural production is to open up for questioning areas of enquiry generally repressed by conventional assumptions, as prevalent in critical as in dominant practices, about theory production and teaching and about the nature of knowledge and learning (ibid: 02-03).

Knowledge and learning are related and deeply embedded in the cultural practices of a community or society. Education too is concerned with the production and transmission of culture and for more than a decade, anthropologists have examined ways of teaching that can relate better and match with cultural hinterland of the home and community of the learners which Au and Jordan had termed as “culturally appropriate” strategies (Ladson-Billing; 1995: 466). Culturally relevant pedagogy has been described by researchers like Gay, Howard, and Ladson-Billing, as an effective means of meeting the academic and social needs of culturally diverse students (Howard 2003: 196). According to Gloria Ladson culturally relevant pedagogy is pedagogy that not only addresses student achievement but also help them to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives (Ladson-Billings 1995:469). Culturally relevant teachers utilise the culture of their students for effective learning. A teacher can utilise students' interest of music, a familiar and comfortable zone for them, in teaching the figurative, literal and technical aspects of poetry like rhyme scheme and alliteration. While the students are comfortable with their music, the teacher can use it as a subtle bridge to narrow the gap between the wider
cultural text in which the learners are embedded and the pedagogic text, the prescriptive tool in the hand of the teacher:

Culturally relevant teaching is designed not merely to fit the school culture to the students' culture but also to use student culture as the basis for helping students understand themselves and others, structure social interactions, and conceptualize knowledge (ibid 1992: 314).

**ROLE OF FOLKLORE IN CULTURALLY RELEVANT PEDAGOGY**

Folklore is embedded in the cultural scape of a community and is evolving to be a crucial element in emerging forms of pedagogic strategy. In the transition of societies from the oral to the written, a vast repertoire of culturally relevant knowledge has been relegated to the margins by the scripted forms, which heavily incorporated repertoire of knowledge that belonged to those who had brought the script or structure of formal academia. In the primitive-civilised binary ushered in by formal structures of institutionalised pedagogy, folklore inevitably got clubbed with the primitive, and the immediacy of familiar cultural forms became relegated to the 'informal', 'familial', 'rustic and unsophisticated'. As Cat Coe points out:

One reason for this lack of attention is that folklore and schools are seen as polar opposites on the scale of traditional to modern: while folklore stands for the unofficial, the informal, and the past, schools call to mind the bureaucratic processes of the state and the progress of the nation (Coe 2000: 20).

In the quest to uphold the merit of the familiar, familial and the informal, a refocusing on folklore can perhaps be an appropriate pedagogic strategy; however this should not be seen as a challenge to formal structures of institutionalised learning, but rather "negotiating the
juncture between non-institutional cultural knowledge, or folklore, and institutionalised power and knowledge”, which presents:

an opportunity for folklorists to build on theoretical approaches developed in multicultural education, as well as to contribute practical and theoretical approaches relevant to central concerns of multicultural educators, especially restructuring institutional practices and fostering students’ development as active participants in society (Hamer 2000: 47).

Cati Coe, in her essay “The Education of the Folk: Peasant Schools and Folklore Scholarship”, gives us an important outline between the interface between folklore and formal pedagogy in diverse locations of Scandinavian countries like Denmark, Norway and Sweden. The Folk High School Movement was founded in Scandinavia by the collective efforts of the peasants and the intellectuals. Peasants wanted to get educated and intellectuals too believed that they should get educated as some wanted them to be educated to be political leaders, some wanted them to improve their agricultural skills and few were interested in “awakening young people to the spirit of the people” (Coe 2000: 27).

These folk high schools were initially opened for everyone and all keeping in mind to unite all social classes. however the schools ultimately had only peasants’ sons as students in these schools. The “elite” in Scandinavia usually were teaching their children at home and in ‘Latin Schools’. Thus the division between the two, Peasants and Elites, were seen clearly. Folk high schools emphasised on the use of folklore, history, and mythology and the stress was on orality and narratives, community eating and living. Mother tongue was used as the medium of instruction and teaching in the schools. N.F.S.Grundtvig is considered as the founder of the folk high school movement. He emphasised on the oral word and spoken words as he believed that
“teaching would be oral: stimulating lectures would animate and awaken the students to the Spirit of the people” (ibid: 29). In Denmark, some schools were opened by peasants and some were opened by intellectuals influenced by Grundtvig.

William Bascom in a crucial observation had identified Folklore to be a common factor across cultures. Folklore is involved in a reciprocal relationship with religious, social, political and economic institutions of a society and is important in transmission of culture specific values from one generation to another. Folklore is that body of oral tradition which has been handed over from one generation to another. As a part of living traditions and customs, Folklore can be analysed in terms of form and functions and in terms of interrelations with other aspects of culture (Bascom 1953:284-286).

Even though anthropologists did recognise the importance of folklore as an educational tool for the transmission of cultural traditions, values and histories from one generation to another, yet, attention was given more on analysis than on its educational role in society by using folklore as source of historical data to determine basic values and world views and to explain cultural traits or customs (Bonney 1985:265). Anthropologists include in culture all the customs, traditions, and institutions of people, together with their products and techniques of production. Thus, folk genres like folktale or proverb is clearly a part of relevant culture. Folklore is a pedagogical tool which passes on information and wisdom of human experience from generation to generation and folklore has been transmitting social values and environmental knowledge through both verbal and material modes.

Another important area of exploration in the relationship between Folklore and pedagogy is the aspect of methods. The transmission of folk forms follows certain methods and procedures that are effective,
and these can be adopted in contemporary situations as well. Barbara Morgan-Fleming makes an apparently innocuous declaration that “Classrooms are oral places” (Morgan-Fleming 1999: 273). Yet, this is crucial in adopting folklore methods profitably in a contemporary situation:

Children talk as they play with one another, ask questions of their teacher, take part in oral classroom performances such as the book report or show and tell, or in playground-centered genre such as jump rope rhymes, taunting, joking, and confiding life’s truths learned so far. One important function of schooling is the connection of the child’s oral world to the literate world of past knowledge and narrative. In making such a connection, thought and written text are certainly important, but a classroom in which print and thought existed without the mediation of the spoken word would appear strange to most educators (ibid: 273).

Morgan-Flemings make a case for performance centered folklore in the classroom, which will redeem the classroom from the “literary paradigm” of studying folk and oral forms in transcribed text, which negate the multi media approach of performative forms in favour of the sole media of the scripted text. In an equally important observation, Sylvia Grider declares that ‘Folklorists are compulsive teachers’:

The act of teaching is the connection between the formulaic classroom exercise and the age -old processes of tradition. In both instances, the precious materials that provide essential cultural continuity are transmitted from the masters to-the neophytes, from one generation to the next, in what we hope will be an unbroken chain but which , in reality , is only a frayed and tangled thread (Grider 1995: 179).

Grider feels that the teaching learning complements each other. In the teaching learning process the teacher is “half of the equation” and the
other important and "essential half is the learner" and thus the "thread of
tradition breaks entirely when the teacher, that is, the bearer of tradition,
no longer has anyone to teach or an eager learner has no one to learn
from" (ibid). According to Lynne Hamer, analysis of published
materials from the Folk Arts in Education/Folk arts in School (FAIE)
movement, reveals some reiterative themes "valuing nonprofessional
artistry, instilling local pride, challenging the dominance of elite and
popular culture, acknowledging, "indigenous teachers," and promoting
collaborative action (Hamer 2000: 44).

**THEORETICAL PARADIGM FOR THE WORK**

Cultural Studies as a discipline is interrogating methods and theories of
pedagogy as is being applied in institutions worldwide. This engagement
perhaps stem from what Foucault had termed as the production of docile
citizens through the hegemony of institutional conditioning where
culture assumed critical importance. For Foucault, power and knowledge
are not embedded in social structure. Power is a process, a matter of
exchange. Knowledge is always a form of power. He viewed that
knowledge can be gained from power by producing it:

... power produces knowledge; that power and knowledge
directly imply one another; that there is no power relation
without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge,
nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at
the same time power relations. These 'power-knowledge
relations' are to be analysed, therefore, not on the basis of a
subject of knowledge who is or is not free in relation to the
power system, but, on the contrary, the subject who knows, the
objects to be known and the modalities of knowledge must be
regarded as so many effects of these fundamental implications
of power-knowledge and their historical transformations
Foucault has been a prominent interrogator of disciplinary character of modern institutions. Institutions like schools, like prisons, produce what Foucault called “docile bodies”:

Many disciplinary methods had long been in existence— in monasteries, armies, workshops. But in the course of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the disciplines became general formulas of domination. They were different from slavery because they were not based on a relation of appropriation of bodies...although they involved obedience to others ... A ‘political anatomy’, which was also a ‘mechanics of power’, was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practiced bodies, ‘docile bodies’ (ibid: 137-138).

From the early 1970s, culture was being analysed through the concept ‘hegemony’, a word associated with Gramsci. Antonio Gramsci feels that all cultural practices ranging from art, literature, and education influence and exert ‘hegemonic’ influence on a given society. It involves, as generally assumed, not coercion, but consent on the part of the dominated. Ruling groups maintain their power through a process of negotiation with subordinate groups. The subordinates are more willing to go along with their oppression when they have been part of the ‘negotiation’ of control (Lewis 2003: 31). As has been remarked:

Hegemony’ is a temporary settlement and series of alliance between social groups that is won and not given. Further it needs to be constantly re-won and renegotiated. Thus culture becomes a terrain of conflict and struggle over meanings. Consequently hegemony is not a static entity. It is marked by a series of changing discourses and practices intrinsically bound up with social power (Barker 2006: 82).
Pedagogy is intricately linked up with this process of negotiation and realignment of power equations. In erstwhile colonial locations like India and elsewhere, this negotiation continues well into the post-colonial times, where new agencies of power inherit and infiltrate colonial paradigms, and a new round of political and cultural marginalisation and accommodation is set in motion. As Dennis L. Carlson points out, the apparently liberal take on contemporary ‘multicultural education’ suffers from a number of “discursive blockages” by ignoring this fact:

It has treated identity in a reified manner rather than as socially and historically constructed; it has treated prejudicial beliefs as merely individual psychological phenomena rather than as implicated in power relations that privilege some and disempower others; and it has integrated multicultural education within dominant pedagogical practices in the school rather than link it with a critical pedagogy based on dialogue and constructivist conceptions of knowledge and identity. In these ways, multicultural education has participated in educational practices that continue to define and locate various ‘others’ at the margins of power (Carlson 1995: 408)

Due cognizance to plurality and the redemption of a multicultural agenda from the agenda of containment of dissent can be attempted by perhaps accommodating folklore (content) and the folkloric (method) into a decentred pedagogic practice. According to Hamer, the study of folklore can be made into a “potentially powerful tool for promoting institutional change” which is justified by the citation of Peggy Bulger’s assertion that the folk process can be a direct “counter to the educational theory and practice…” of the contemporary times (Hamer 2000: 46). The potentially damaging confrontation between “the individualistic anti-authoritarianism of folklore” and the formal structures of schooling
can be resolved and contained by directing attention to an "understanding and venerating non institutional cultural diversity rather than on challenging the authority of the institution..." (ibid: 47).

These ideas can be seen as a throw back to some of the earliest postulations in Cultural Studies. According to Richard Hoggart, the celebration of old high culture could fit alongside an evocation of the culture of his youth because both stood apart from contemporary commercial popular culture which was threatening both. His *Uses of Literacy* (1958) advocated a 'bottom-up' conception of culture: culture that is segmentary, specific and deriving from the symbolic and everyday practices of lower-level community (Lewis 2003: 128). Raymond William's most important lesson for educators is the deep and continuous emphasis he placed upon culture as both a constitutive element of society, and as a potential for social transformation. He refused to divorce culture from other concerns. For him culture cannot be understood in isolation from the social ground from which it springs, or from the reciprocal effects it has upon the social environment.

In an attempt to understand the world, young learners are susceptible to categories that are imposed upon them and which enables them to come to terms with their condition and situation in life. So success or the lack of it can be very easily ascribed to the socio-cultural mooring and superiority/inferiority of one's way of life. Althusser had pointed out that individuals can be sucked into ideology very easily because it helps them make sense of the world, to enter the 'symbolic order' and ascribe power to themselves. Individuals identify themselves because they see themselves pictured as strong and independent. So ideology provides false or imaginary resolution (During 1994: 06).

Folklore as a discursive ideological formation is more rooted and immediate that affords learner with a familiar ground to reach out to the
unfamiliar. It is definitely not a nostalgic regression into the past or romantic cultural revivalism, two of the most common charges that can be anticipated. It is trying to accommodate newer narratives into existing familiar narratives, for learners not only learn by tracing out affinities but also by comprehending variations, diversions and differences, cornerstones of a democratic plural pedagogy, where folklore perhaps can play a valuable role.

**Literature Review**

Folklore is increasingly coming under the ambit of critical pedagogy and Judith E. Haut in her article “Folklore in the Classroom: 19th -Century Roots, 20th -Century Perspectives” describes folklore as being implicit in issues relating to public relations in a pedagogic ambiance (Haut 1991: 65-73). The folklorist and non-folklorist divide often creates confusion in classrooms, and the author explores the relationship between folklore, public relations and pedagogy. The author reflects on the public opinion on the 19th century roots of folklore as a discipline.

One aspect of folklore as a native language category is seen as that ‘folklore is an inheritance of others but not of ourselves’. Haut has illustrated the article with the students’ views on ‘folklore’ and then by inferring those concepts and using the students’ concepts in the classroom in pedagogic practices and made the experience of learning a participative event yielding positive results. In the words of Haut “Folklore, as a discipline, may have a public relations problem, but it is one that can be resolved in the classroom” (ibid: 70).

Sylvia Grider in “Passed Down from Generation to Generation: Folklore and Teaching” considers teaching as intrinsic to the transmission of folklore genres. In the words of Grider:

> We as teachers of folklore are in the enviable position of presiding over the subject matter that our students already know. That is the essence of what folklore is, the shared
culture that our students already have. We do not have to start each semester or quarter at ground zero, as do our colleagues in the hard sciences or abstract disciplines. Our role as teachers essentially is to organize and make sense of what our students already know, putting them in a position to integrate experiences from their own lives and pasts into the larger concept of our shared humanity (Grider 1995: 184).

Betty Bosma in “Fairy Tales, Fables, Legends, and Myths: Using Folk Literature in Your Classroom” highlights the importance of folk literature for children in a classroom situation by relating it to expressive domain of language usage as well as the universal appeals that at times make meaning easy across cultural divides (Bosma 1992: 01-14). Adrienne Lanier Seward in “Folklore and Liberal Learning” drew merit from the folkloric method because of its stress on “local knowledge or insiderness...exploring alternative perspectives, theories, and practices most suitable for de-centering traditional boundaries and sites of authority” (Seward 1996: 30-34).

In Suchismita Sen’s article on “Tagore’s Lokashahitya: The Oral Tradition in Bengali Children’s Rhymes”, the important point raised was that the children’s rhymes are the product of mental state. The article includes a translation of “Chhelebhulano Chhurha”, an essay on Bengali children’s rhymes by Tagore, where he claims that the composition process of rhymes is connected with word association (Sen 1996: 01-47). “Folktales and Education: Role of Bhutanese Folktales in Value Transmission” by Dorji Penjore shows the role of Bhutanese oral tradition in educating children and highlights and discusses the functions of these folktales which are embedded with multilayered meanings of great moral and social importance (Penjore 2005: 47-73). Tyrone C. Howard in article “Culturally Relevant Pedagogy: Ingredients for Critical Teacher Reflection” offers critical reflection as a prelude to
create culturally relevant strategies and outlines theoretical and practical considerations for critical reflection and culturally relevant teaching for teacher education (Howard 2003: 195-202).

Kathryn Hu-pei Au, in article “Participation Structures in a Reading Lesson with Hawaiian Children: Analysis of a Culturally Appropriate Instructional Event” in the study of Hawaiian children for reading lesson in the classroom showed that the reading achievement was increased by using talk story, a major speech event in Hawaiian culture. This reading lesson is an example of a culturally appropriate context for learning, which is comfortable both for the teacher and students and also helped in increasing academic achievement (Au 1980: 91-115).

Merridy Malin in “What Is a Good Teacher? Anglo and Aboriginal Australian Views”, compared and documented an Aboriginal teacher’s panel, an Aboriginal parent’s panel and an Anglo teacher’s panel on perceptions of good teaching, where panels viewed videotape of a Yup’ik Eskimo teacher, an Anglo Australian teacher and an Aboriginal Australian teacher. Many issues emerged like:

Should all teachers, regardless of ethnicity, be expected to teach according to an established western/industrial culture model of communicating, relating, and valuing? Is it appropriate for a teacher to speak to her or his class in a non-standard dialect of English...Is the “Aboriginal way” of teaching that was highlighted in this study as effective in conveying curriculum as the “western way”? How can the isolation that some teachers from ethnic minority groups feel be minimized? This study points to a possible clash in perceptions of what constitutes good and appropriate teaching between Aboriginal parents and teachers and Anglo Australian educators (Malin 1994: 112-113).
In the study it was highlighted that many Aboriginal parents and teachers feel that Aboriginal teachers can communicate better with Aboriginal students as they understand the needs of the students and thus operate as positive role models.

Jerry Lipka too in "Toward a Culturally Based Pedagogy: A Case of One Yup'ik Eskimo Teacher" in a case study of one Yup'ik Eskimo teacher highlighted the importance of adapting social interactions, knowledge and values towards the minority culture as one possible way for improving schooling and thus highlighted the importance of culturally based pedagogy (Lipka 1991: 203-223). In a later article, "Language, Power and Pedagogy: Whose School Is It?" Lipka describes a collaborative project which was supposedly about the language of instruction, English and/or Yup'ik but the project could not take off because of the issues of power and ideology and "this conflict reflected a deeper ongoing internal struggle between community members of Manokotak, and, in fact, the larger indigenous community about resolving dilemmas of being modern and tribal" (ibid 1994: 71).

The interface between folklore and pedagogy has antecedents in educational anthropology. Greenman in "Anthropology Applied to Education" in the book Applied Anthropology Domains of Application edited by Satish Kedia and John Van Willigen wrote "Educational anthropologists seek to understand education within its cultural contexts" (Greenman 2005: 263). Historically, Educational anthropology has been viewed as an applied field. The historical roots of anthropology and education date from the late nineteenth century when anthropology emerged as a science. The important reason for the long history of anthropological interest in education is the process of professionalisation which required the establishment and promotion of the discipline as a legitimate and needed new area of scientific teaching.
within institutions of higher education. By late 1800, a few anthropologists were concerned with the practice of education outside the academy. It was at that time the potential contributions of anthropology to pedagogy, the school curriculum and an understanding of the culture of childhood were recognised for the first time (Eddy 1985: 83-84). Maria Montessori, a professor of anthropology at the University of Rome also believed in relating and connecting anthropology and education by developing the concept of pedagogical anthropology focusing on pedagogy and cultural influence. For Montessori, pedagogy involves the science of teaching and thus by drawing from the contextual learning of children in their cultural milieu, she developed the Montessori Method. In this she proposed teaching through modeling and using planned interactive environments to foster learning by exploration and imitation. (Greenman 2005: 266).

**AIM OF THE STUDY**

The present research has been postulated primarily to explore and accomplish the philosophical and theoretical issues involved with the notion of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy. The study has tried to understand the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy as it is practiced in the West and how such strategies entered India during the colonial period and its subsequent post-colonial changes and mutations in India and other locations of the world. It also explores the notion of culturally relevant pedagogy as applicable in Indian social, cultural and pedagogic environment and the role of Indian thinkers like Gandhi and Tagore, in the fostering of such an idea. The study also tries to contextualise the role and applicability of folklore in the overall pedagogic environment by directing attention to specific case studies in a selected field, which will be indicative of the dynamics of the understanding of culturally relevant pedagogy in the culturally plural Indian context. Finally, the
study will conclude with an attempt to understand how folklore, mostly considered to be from the realm of non-institutional pedagogy can become a part in both non-institutionalised and institutionalised learning environment.

**METHODOLOGY**

**Locating Secondary Sources**

The methodology has been broadly divided into two parts. The first part deals with the collection and selection of materials relevant to the study. Various libraries were visited for the collection of secondary sources. The study was carried out by visiting the Libraries at Tezpur University, NEHU Shillong, JNU Delhi, CIE Delhi, NCERT Delhi and Gargi College Delhi. Invaluable secondary material was also accessed through the Tezpur University E-resources portal.

**Locating Primary Sources**

**Rationale and selection of the field**

Tezpur is an important town of Assam and is located on the banks of river Brahmaputra. The centrally situated Sonitpur District of Assam, comprise of some five thousands kilometer of variegated landscapes along the mighty Brahmaputra up to the picturesque foothills of Arunachal Pradesh, it is the ancient seat of culture, mythology and Romance and is located one hundred and eighty kilometers North East of Guwahati. It has one of the country's largest and oldest military garrison and Air force station. The defence establishments have personnel posted from almost all parts of the Nation and mostly are staying with their families.

Greater Tezpur is essentially a culturally plural place with the population consisting of the followers of the major religions like Hinduism, Islam and Christianity drawn from different linguistic groups like Assamese,
Bengali, Bodo,\textsuperscript{1} Marwars,\textsuperscript{2} Adivasis,\textsuperscript{3} Nepali,\textsuperscript{4} Mising\textsuperscript{5} and Hindi. However, another important consideration in the selection of the field was the presence of a considerable number of teachers and students drawn from other parts of the country that would provide a vibrant ambience of cultural negotiation and accommodation. Such a cultural ambience was found in the Kendriya Vidyalayas (Central Schools) and Army Schools, where a large number of teachers come from North and South India and students from varied cultural backgrounds, both from the local populace as well as transferable defence services and central government employees study together. Most of the wards of the defence services personnel are studying in Army and Kendriya Vidyalayas. Keeping these criteria in consideration, the following schools were selected for the study:

Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 1, Tezpur, Sonitpur district
Kendriya Vidyalaya No. 2, Tezpur, Sonitpur district
Kendriya Vidyalaya, Lokra, Sonitpur district
Kendriya Vidyalaya, Misa, Nagaon district
Army Public School Tezpur, Sonitpur district
Assam Rifles School, Lokra

These being the prominent CBSE affiliated schools in the greater Tezpur area, admissions are open to personnel of Para military forces, Central Government employees and civilians. This makes these schools vibrant.

\textsuperscript{1} The Bodos are an ethnic and linguistic community of Assam belonging to the Tibeto-Burman sub family within the Sino-Tibetan family of languages.
\textsuperscript{2} Marwars or Rajasthani people are Indo-Aryan ethnic group, who have migrated to Assam and are amongst the most prominent business men of the state.
\textsuperscript{3} Adivasis are heterogeneous ethnic and tribal groups and are thought to be the aboriginal population of India. Mostly working in the Tea Gardens of Assam, they are also known as Tea tribes in Assam.
\textsuperscript{4} Nepals are scattered all over Assam and other North Eastern states as well. In Assam there is a large concentration of Nepalese in the district of Sonitpur.
\textsuperscript{5} Misings are Indo-Mongoloid group of people. Next to Bodos, they are the largest Scheduled Tribe in the state of Assam.
multicultural locations, with the students in these schools belonging to
different states and cultures.

Data Collection and Processing

Secondary sources
The historical evolution of the notion of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy,
in Western, Indian and other locations, was understood with the help of
important essays and books and the writings of important scholars in the
field. Important theoretical postulations related to the chosen area of
research were accessed through secondary sources which enabled the
formulation of a theoretical overview and the operational parameters of
the work. Models of field study applied in diverse locations for similar
research projects were studied to get an idea as to the field methodology
to be applied for the carrying out of the present research.

Primary sources
Data from the field was collected by observation and formal and
informal interaction with the students and the teachers. The field work
was initiated by handing out a questionnaire to the teachers of the
selected schools, to elicit academic and cultural profile. The schools
were visited frequently in 2009 and 2010. The field work was initiated
on the 3rd of July 2009 and the last visits to the schools were during the
month of December 2010. The formal interview helped in getting the
basic information about the school, teachers and the students. Informal
interviews and informal discussions helped in facilitating two way
communications and allowed the interviewees and the researcher to find
out more details and discussion on the issues which were not originally
thought of. The observation in the class room and outside the classroom
helped the researcher to examine the interactions between the teacher
and taught and also among the peer group. Pedagogical methods and
strategies were critically observed by the researcher. The observation
included the reactions, verbal responses, facial expression and also the
gestures and cues.
The researcher had to face the problems like lack of access and denials.
In one of the school the researcher was not allowed to sit and observe
the classes as the Principal of the school felt that it would disturb the
teaching in the class; however most of the schools were very cooperative
and allowed the researcher to pursue the work in their schools. The
researcher's previous experience as a teacher also helped her in a subtle
manner as the teachers identified and associated with her easily and that
made the work of the researcher easy to collect data. This also helped
the researcher to establish rapport easily with the students.
Classes were observed as a non participant observer and field notes were
taken through informal interaction with the students and the teachers.
Many questions of the interviews were also derived from the observation
of the classroom lessons and through informal observation. The data
collected and the observations found in the field were interfaced with the
theory and were analysed.

Relevance of the Study
The study of pedagogic practices and strategies as embedded within a
definite cultural context is of great relevance in the ambit of the
discipline of Cultural Studies, as one interrogates theories and practices
in a contemporary plural ambience. It is but a natural corollary to the
directions taken by the exploration of relationship between culture,
pedagogy and emergence of systems and structures. Cultural Studies
thus as a discipline interrogates how pedagogic strategies connives with
political ideology in generating what Foucault calls 'conforming or
docile citizens'. Issues of pedagogy and culture had been inseparable for
centuries as the main aim of learning is the transmission of culture from
generation to generation:
In the last decade of the twentieth and early years of the twenty-first centuries, the larger domains of the humanities and the social science have witnessed a definitive churning and have produced a feeling of rapid shifts and changes. At one level, the student critiques of some of the disciplines — including English studies, anthropology, history and political science — that have emerged within the epistemological space provided by these disciplines themselves have happened through the last century and continued well into the present...The presence of cultural studies in the Indian academia foregrounds a number of issues that could be taken up for an understanding of discipline formation itself. In a post colony like ours, the question of the derivative-ness and the influence of an outside, code named 'the west', is one that most political ideologies — be it Marxism of (sic) Feminism — or be it disciplines — ranging from English studies to social anthropology — had to address (Radhakrishnan 2008 :02).

Cultural and folkloric aspects need more attention in the present day pedagogy. Thus the research that is linked to the theory and practice making folklore’s role, a specific focus of investigation can contribute significantly in understanding both theoretical and practical aspects of folklore and culturally relevant pedagogy. The research by investigating the theoretical parameters explores their applicability in the classroom and also examines Folklore as a distinctive part of culturally relevant pedagogy.

LIMITATION OF THE STUDY
The study is limited in the sense that the scope of field work is limited to only one larger cultural location. Thus the findings are indicative of the contemporary pedagogic scene in the state of Assam and cannot be said to be definitive and applicable to all locations. Moreover, philosophical
and theoretical concerns of scholars and philosophers other than the ones considered for the study, remains outside the purview of the research. Thus, one can say that the present study is an exploration of possible contours in the emerging dialogue of culturally relevant pedagogy, and points out to future possibilities.
WORKS CITED


