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Collaborative learning as a context for quality of interactions with peers and change in moral and emotional behaviour of the students

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Abstract

The purpose of the present study was to explore the process on which the teacher created ecological or collaborative learning environment, how students' established relationship with peers, how quality of interactions held with peers and what kind of behavioural changes occurred in the collaborative settings. For this purpose, the researcher organised collaborative setting in a sample of 30 undergraduate education honours students studying in second semester of Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur, Odisha, India during the session 2019-2020. The design of the study was qualitative in nature. The data were collected through three measuring tools such as participant observation, classroom record/field notes and students' final notes drafted after discussions. In addition to that, the researcher also used vignettes and triangulation for data collection, analysis and interpretation. The findings of the present study revealed that collaborative learning intended to refine students' i) content knowledge; ii) inquiry skills; iii) critical and creative thinking; iv) accountability and responsibility to own and others learning; v) socio-cultural background as a meaningful tool for learning; vi) learning with current affairs vii) ethical and moral values and viii) sensitivity and enjoyment to learning. The arguments, counter arguments, discussions, deliberations and negotiations among and between the students enabled them to develop their self-opinions about the world. It was recommended to adopt collaborative learning at higher education levels across the country.

Keywords: Collaborative learning, higher order cognitive abilities, pedagogical practice

1. Introductions

Education is fundamental for achieving individual, social and national developmental goals of a country. Providing quality education to each individual at every level is key to develop inherent talent of the students, establish social justice and equality, achieve economic growth, advance scientific outlook and national integration. The provision for universal quality education is the best way to develop and maximize the talent and higher order cognitive abilities of the students across the country. Achieving the mission of universal quality education will be successful only by ensuring quality in teachers, pedagogical practices and finally teacher education institutions. For ensuring quality in pedagogical practices of 21st century, many researchers across the world have conducted research studies and marched from traditional method of teaching (or teacher centred methods) to collaborative learning styles (or students centred learning). Additionally, in the 21st century, the trend of classroom practices has given emphasis on to think and work together on critical issues (Austin, 2000; Welch, 1998) [3, 40] and shifted from individual efforts to group efforts, from independence to dependence in community (Leonard & Leonard, 2001) [26].

The growing demand of collaborative learning is not only fuelled by policy recommendations but also by acknowledging its values for improving students' academic performances (Al-rahmi *et al.* 2015; Wilson & Narayan, 2014; Wentzel & Watkins, 2002; Dunbar *et al.* 2016; Hampton & Grudnitski, 1996; Koppenhaver & Shrader, 2003; Prater & Rhee, 2003) [2, 43, 41, 13, 18, 22, 34] and higher order cognitive abilities (Dillenbourg & Schneider, 1995; Alavi, 1994; Chinn *et al.* 2000; Bhowmik, 2016) [12, 1, 8, 6]. Many scholars have investigated the academic success of the students by correlating and associating collaborative learning with various other variables. From the analysis of the related literatures, it was visualised that the dependent variables taken against the collaborative learning were problem solving (Dillenbourg & Schneider, 1995) [12], critical thinking, higher level perceived skills and self-reported learning (Alavi, 1994) [1]; process and product based assessment (Macdonald, 2003) [28]; ability to draw conclusions (Chinn *et al.* 2000) [8].

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The researchers also used students' satisfaction and knowledge construction (Zhu, 2012) ^[44]; self-efficacy and self-regulated learning (Wilson & Narayan, 2014; Dunbar *et al.*, 2016) ^[43, 13]; team learning performance (Lindsay, 2016) ^[27]; learning style (Dunbar *et al.*, 2016) ^[13]; construction of knowledge (Comeaux & McKenna-Byington, 2003) ^[9]; student achievements (Garrison & Cleveland-Innes, 2005) ^[14] as some dependent variable. Some other dependent variables against collaborative learning were construction of meanings (Cortazzi, 2013) ^[10]; computer-based learning (McLoughlin & Oliver, 2000) ^[30]. Experiencing interpersonal conflicts of the students was another dependent variable associated with collaborating learning (Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Hadwin & Miller, 2015) ^[19, 17]. Collaborative learning styles enhanced academic and intellectual outcomes (Gauvain & Rogoff, 1989; Tudge, 1992) ^[15]. Collaborative learning was also related to high levels of engagement, use of advanced strategic thinking skills, and specific academic gains (Rogoff, 1990; Tudge & Winterhoff, 1993; Tudge *et al.* 1996) ^[35, 38, 39]. By establishing association between collaborative learning, the variables also taken were social self-efficacy, leadership status, and academic performance (Dunbar *et al.*, 2016) ^[13].

A body of researches affirmed maximum studies conducted in first world countries like United State of America (Alavi, 1994; Chinn *et al.* 2000; Wilson & Narayan, 2014; Wentzel & Watkins, 2002; Dunbar *et al.*, 2016) ^[1, 8, 43, 41, 13]. Many studies on collaborative learning in developed countries were United Kingdom (McDonald, 2003) ^[28]; Switzerland (Dillenbourg & Schneider, 1995) ^[12]; Belgium (Zhu, 2012) ^[44]; Malaysia (Al-rahmi *et al.* 2015) ^[2]. Furthermore, whenever the researchers tried to find out the association between collaborative learning strategies and various dependent variables mentioned above, a subject on which the content of the collaborative learning strategy was taken. The maximum subjects were dentistry, chemistry, mathematics, sociology of race relations, and computer skills (Keeler & Anson, 1995; Maier and Keenan, 1994; Alavi, 1994; Bhowmik, 2016) ^[21, 29, 1, 6]. The other subjects were marketing, accounting, and management courses (Bacon *et al.*, 1998; Deeter-Schmeltz *et al.* 2002; Hampton & Grudnitski, 1996; Miglietti, 2002; Julie, 2005) ^[4, 11, 18, 31, 20]. Specifically, many researchers have taken accounting as subject to study the association between collaborative learning and some other dependent variables (Kunkel & Shafer, 1997; Lancaster & Strand, 2001) ^[23, 25].

2. Objective of the study

With the rising importance of collaborative learning style in both lower and higher education level in India, and given that dearth number of research studies explore the process of how exactly collaboration occurred? how a teacher creates ecological or collaborative learning environment?, what behavioural changes occur during the collaboration?, the present study attempted to explore the process on which the teacher created ecological or collaborative learning environment, how students' established relationship with peers, how quality of interactions held with peers and what kind of behavioural changes occurred in the collaborative settings. Again, little research explored the correlation and association of collaborative learning in the subject of social studies. Thus, in this qualitative study, the researcher attempted to create a collaborative learning environment in

social study in general and educational sociology in particular.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

In the present study, the researcher employed a qualitative research design. Since the interpretation and description of qualitative data were undertaken through interpretative approach and descriptive research design, the present study was described as descriptive research. The study was conducted in the undergraduate second semester state model syllabus in education (designed for both honours and elective student) in Odisha, India. The syllabus comes under Choice Based Credit System (CBCS) implemented by government of Odisha across the state.

The content covered under the present study was unit-4 of educational sociology. The Unit-4 of educational sociology deals with study of equal educational opportunities for ensuring equity and inclusion. In this unit, the equity and inclusion to three marginalised sections of India such as Schedule Caste (SC) and schedule tribe (ST), women and children with special needs (CWSN) were discussed.

3.2 Participants

In the present study, a sample of 30 undergraduate education honours students studying in second semester of Gangadhar Meher University, Sambalpur, Odisha during the session 2019-2020 was taken purposively. The sample consisted of 10 boys and 20 girl students. Demographically, 20 students were belongs to rural background and 10 students were from urban background. Occupationally, almost every rural students were having agricultural or farming background where as the backgrounds of urban students were government services and self-businesses.

3.3 Instruments

For data collection, there were two types of instrument used in the present study. First, the instructional tools and second the measuring tools.

- 1. Instructional Tools:** As a teacher researcher, the researcher himself taught the unit for one month. During the class, the researcher organised three main classroom activities on topics Gender Equality, Equality in the Education of Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST) and Inclusive Education. The classroom discussions and deliberations were based on the ideas and ideals of collaborative learning. "Collaborative learning (CL) is an educational approach to teaching and learning that involves group of learners working together to solve a problem, complete a task, or create a product". In collaborative learning, "learners at various performance levels work together in small groups toward a common goal". In the CL environment, "the learners are challenged both socially and emotionally as they listen to different perspectives, and are required to articulate and defend their ideas" (Laal & Laal, 2012) ^[24]. The role of the teacher was to facilitate collaborative learning by creating suitable learning situation.
- 2. Measuring Tools:** In order to collect qualitative data, the researcher used three main tools. The tools were 1) participant observation by the researcher; 2) classroom record/field record by the researcher and 3) students'

notes especially final draft of each group in each activity.

3.4 Procedure

As a teacher researcher, the researcher taught the content of the activities for one month in regular basis. In one month, the researcher conducted three main activities in three social phenomena related to caste, gender and person with disability in collaborative learning strategy. The main sources of data collection were participant observation, classroom record or field record and students’ final notes. Both teacher and students in their respective field notes recorded all the activities carried out in the classroom. After the data collection, the entire data was organised, transcribed and analysed. Since the present study was qualitative in design, the researcher used triangulation for collecting data through multiple methods and multiple sources so that a comprehensive understanding of the phenomena could be established. The students were allowed to use mobile phones and other sources for searching information about the phenomena. Again, the researcher used vignettes to present the activities in the classroom. Vignettes refer to telling short stories and short examples about any person, social phenomena or so forth for research purpose. Since the topic of discussion in the present study were sensitive and related to emotions of all students, the researcher used vignettes and asked students to critically examine the social phenomena with rationality and without hampering the emotions of others. In the entire study, the researcher acted as a guide or facilitator and created situations in such a way that the students got opportunities to communicate with other students and teachers. The activities carried out in the present study provided the scope of work in a group, group interactions, arguments and counter arguments, negotiations for exploring a fund of knowledge in concern topic.

4. Results

In the result section, the three important vignettes and their reflections through activities are presented one by one.

4.1 Activity-1

Gender Equality

Teacher: Good afternoon students.

Students: Good afternoon sir.

Teacher: Why girls are sitting in a separate row? Boys are also sitting in a separate row. Why are you not sitting in same bench and same row together?

Students: Conventionally we are sitting in separate rows sir. In our school level also, we were sitting in separate rows. In University, our seniors are sitting in separate rows. Sitting of Boys and girls in separate rows is tradition sir.

Teacher: Oh, it is tradition or convention.

Teacher: Have you ever heard about “Sabarimala Temple”?

Students: Only two students raised their hands and said

‘Yes’. It is located in Kerala.

Teacher: Do you know why “Sabarimala Temple” was in news in recent past.

Students: Don’t know sir.

Teacher: Explained the context of “Sabarimala Temple”.

Sabarimala Temple is located in Sabarimala Temple complex inside the Periyar tiger reserve in Pathanamthitta district of Kerala state. In this temple, the Hindu celibate deity Ayyappan is worshipped. The temple is open for worship during main four occasions such as Mandalapooja (from mid-November to last December), Makara Sankranti, Maha Vishuva Sankranti and days of each Malayalam month. According to the judgement of Kerala High Court in 1991, the women of age group 10- 50 years (women undergoing through menstrual cycle) are restricted to enter the temple. The restriction for entry of such women is in accordance with customary traditions of the temple decided by Devaswom Board. The women of age group 10-50 years agitated to the judgement of Kerala high court and filed petition in the Supreme Court of India to intervene in the matter.

However, on 28th September 2018, a judicial panel of Supreme Court of India, in 4-1 majority gave a judgement and overturned the ban on the entry of such women of age group 10-50 years. The then Chief Justice, Dipak Mishra clarified that selective ban is not an essential part of Hinduism rather it is a religious patriarchy. Another justice, D.Y Chandrachud stated that the ban on women entry reflects stigma and stereotypes in the society. After the Supreme Court judgement, many devotees of lord Ayyappa had filed petitions to review the judgement. In other words, the male devotees are against the judgement of Supreme Court where as some women devotees are fighting for entering to the temple. The conclusions of this issue have not been arrived till date.

Teacher: after explaining, what is the conflict in the present issue?

Student: Some students said, sir, the conflict between “Hindu Religion” and “Women Rights”. Some other students said, it is a conflict between “Hindu traditions” and “gender equality”.

Teacher: Okay, let’s form some heterogeneous groups and have a healthy discussion on this matter.

Now teacher started another activity

The aim of this activity was to discuss the issue “Gender Equality” through the context of Sabarimala Temple and many others. The overview of the activity discussed below.

First of all, a table comprising of five columns was drawn in the blackboard. The headlines of the table were what are the constitutional provisions in India on equality in terms of gender? Does Hindu religion restrict women to enter temples of any kinds? Critical analysis of Supreme Court judgement in Sabarimala Temple issue and others, what is your group opining on gender equality? And any other information you want to add.

Table 1: Comprising of five columns was drawn in the blackboard.

What are the constitutional provisions in India on equality in terms of gender?	Does Hindu religion restrict women to enter temples of any kinds?	Critical analysis of Supreme Court judgement in Sabarimala Temple issue and others	What is your group opining on gender equality?	Any other information you want to add.
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Secondly, the entire class was divided into four heterogeneous groups. Each group consisted of members of all kinds such as male, female, rural and urban students. The students were allowed to use mobile phone to search any information from the Google.

Thirdly, the findings came up after discussions, deliberations, arguments and counter arguments were written on the blackboard.

Finally, further discussions were undertaken on the issues that emerged.

There were two major outcomes such as content related outcomes and process related outcomes recorded during classroom discussions.

A) Content related outcomes

1. The constitution of India had adequate number of provisions to safeguard the rights of women and promote gender equality. The provisions were in the form of fundamental rights (right to equality, article-15 & 16, right to education, A-21A, right to religion, A25-28), directive principle of state policy (equal pay for equal work, maternity benefit, uniform civil code), national commission for women, ministry of women and child development and so forth.
2. Hindu religion does not restrict any women of any age to enter into the temple of any God and Goddess except some temples like Sabarimala. Therefore, the judgement of Supreme Court of India that allowed women of all age group to enter Sabarimala Temple is constitutionally valid. In the name of religion, no community is having supreme power to deprive women. For example, the instant triple talaq- An way to divorce women in Muslim religion was abolished by the government of India by passing a stringent law.
3. The gender discrimination not only started in educational, political, social and religion institutions but also started from family institution itself when girls children were allowed to hold long hairs but not boys, when girls were asked to clean the house and boys were allowed to go for playing football outside home. In this way, the gender discrimination continuously develops from one institution to another. Thus, the inculcation of values of gender equality must be started from home itself and proceeds to all other institutions. Gender inequality is nothing but mental problem of both men and women.
4. Both male and female students were agreed in women empowerment starting from family institutions to classroom, religious, social-economic and political institutions.
5. They also supported interventions of Supreme Court and legislation in making stringent laws to eradicate gender stereotype of all forms in India.

B) Process related Outcomes

1. During group discussions, it had been observed that the students were very enthusiastic and vocal in sharing their experiences, information and knowledge with other members of the group.
2. Only one person was allowed to share his/her knowledge at a time and rest were listening carefully. After the speech of one person, the rest of the students were giving their consent and critical judgement on the topic.

3. In order to justify their words, the students were citing local examples being faced in the life. The examples such as how women with menstruation cycle were hesitant to go temple and other places of worship.
4. While discussing on menstruation cycle as a biological phenomena in women, both boys and girls were feeling shy and reluctant to share information because most of the boys and girls were never been public in such type of discussion. In India, the sharing of personal information in public place is an embarrassing situation for all.
5. For sometimes, most of the girls were against Hindu God and Goddesses who were against the entry of women into their temple just because of natural and biological phenomena like widowhood, menstruation cycle and so on.
6. The ability to associate one context with another was developed. For example, the case of Sabarimala temple was associated with the case of Jagannath temple of Puri, Odisha. Because, in Jagannath temple, the Muslim and Dalit communities were opposed to enter.
7. During arguments and counter arguments, the abilities to apply, analyse and synthesise any information, example, topic, fact, judgement and so forth were developed.
8. Despite of serious discussion, the students were also laughing to the comic judgement of others and enjoyed the learning in a group.
9. The ability to evaluate any topic with its positive and negative aspects, agreements and disagreements, merits and demerits was developed among the students.
10. After every discussion, each group arrived to a consensus, developed problem solving, and decision-making ability.

4.2 Activity-2

Equality in the education of Schedule Caste (SC) and Schedule Tribe (ST)

Teacher: Good afternoon students.

Students: Good afternoon sir.

Teacher: Who is called as father of Indian constitution?

Students: Almost every student raised their hands and said, the father of Indian constitution is Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Teacher: Do you know how Dr. B.R. Ambedkar became father of Indian constitution?

Students: Few students raised their hands and said, Ambedkar was the chairman of drafting committee of constituent assembly.

Teacher: Good, do you know how Ambedkar faced discrimination in his school days primarily from the schoolteachers and other students?

Students: Some students said, he was belongs to Dalit community and people of this community were treated as untouchable at that time.

Teacher: Okay, do you think the practices of untouchability are still prevailing in India, either in educational, social or religious institutions?

Students: Yes sir, many untouchable practices are still prevailing especially in rural India in social and religious institutions mainly. Sir, what Ambedkar faced in his life, we don't think the students of present generations they are facing. But, the educational status of deprived sections like SC, ST and Person with disability are poor as compare to that of other developed society.

Teacher: Do you want to know, what are the problems being faced by SC and ST in contemporary India? And what are the different ways to equalise SC and ST with other developed community through education?

Students: Yes sir.

Teacher: Let's form some groups and have some healthy discussions on it.

Now teacher started another activity

The aim of this activity was to discuss the issue "equality in the education of SC and ST" through the context of B.R.

Ambedkar and many others examples generated in recent past. The overview of the activity discussed below.

First of all, a table comprising of five columns was drawn in the blackboard. The headlines of the table were who are SC and ST in India? Why they were deprived in the society? What are the different problems and challenges being faced by SC and ST in present time? What are the constitutional provisions in India on equality in terms of caste? What is your group opinion on equality in the education of SC and ST? Any other information you want to add.

Table 2: The headlines of the table were who are SC and ST in India

Who are SC and ST in India? Why they were deprived in the society?	What are the different problems and challenges being faced by SC and ST in present time?	What are the constitutional provisions in India on equality in terms of caste?	What is your group opinion on equality in the education of SC and ST?	Any other information you want to add.
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Secondly, the entire class was divided into four heterogeneous groups. Each groups consisted members of all kinds such as male, female, rural, urban, SC, ST, OBC and general students. The students were allowed to use mobile phone to search any information from the Google.

Thirdly, the findings came up after discussions, deliberations, arguments and counter arguments were written on the blackboard.

Finally, the content and process based outcomes were recorded in following ways.

A) Content based outcomes

1. The term Scheduled Caste mentioned in Indian constitution represents a group of people called "Dalit". The term Dalit referred to broken/ scattered. The traditional occupations of these people were skinning, cleaning toilets and bathrooms, cleaning of roads and markets, cleaning of clothes of others, fishing and so forth. Because of their occupations, the SC people were treated as untouchable since the time immemorial but the Indian constitution empowered these people by removing all kinds of untouchable practices through article-17.
2. Like Scheduled Caste, the term Scheduled Tribe is mentioned in Indian Constitution that represents a group of people called "Adivasi". Most of the "Adivasi" people were residing in forest and hilly areas. The traditional occupations of these people were collecting forest products and selling in the markets. Because of their traditional occupations, they were poor, illiterate and socially isolated.
3. The problems faced by SCs and STs in contemporary time are in the form of poor economic status, socially deprived, poor educational status, lack of political development, displacement in the name of development, low employment and so forth.
4. The Indian constitution safeguarded the rights of SCs and STs through many of its provisions such as article-14, 15, 338, 338A etc.
5. In order to provide quality of education to both SCs and STs in India, the proper implementation of government programs and policies to its fullest, adequate educational opportunities in terms of financial assistance, job opportunities, legal supports and soon.
6. The building of a healthy nation is only possible when all constituent parts are healthy, therefore, the all-round

development of SCs and STs are crucial in national development of India.

B) Process based outcomes

1. Since the discussion on SCs and STs was sensitive in nature, the students irrespective of their categories participated in the group discussions and shared valuable thoughts with responsibilities and accountabilities.
2. Some SC and ST students were radical towards prevailing quota system of India. They strongly supported permanent quota system in educational and economic sphere because SC and ST were deprived and marginalised by upper caste people from the time immemorial. In reaction to radical views of SC and ST students, the non SC/ST students were not happy with permanent quota system. They argued and said, no doubt, maximum numbers of SC/ ST people are still poor in economic sphere and have less number of representatives in public institutions of India but the permanent quota system is not the rational choice for all. Therefore, the quota system to a particular group of people should be temporary until they attain equilibrium status.
3. Initially, some non-SC and non-ST students were opposing the quota system in employment and education but after the arguments and counter arguments among the students and between the students-teacher, everybody came into the conclusion in favour "Chain type quota system". In "Chain type quota system", a group of people who are educationally and economically weak should be supported until they attain equilibrium status. In between this, if any group is again weak, that group should also be supported so that it will become a continuous process.
4. During the discussion, almost every student was serious and keen to listen the views of others because everybody they were trying to justify their own favour to others. SC/ST students were happy when a student was favouring the quota system where as non-SC/ST students were unhappy and vice versa.

4.3 Activity-3

Inclusive Education

Teacher: Good afternoon students.

Students: Good afternoon sir.

Teacher: Have you ever visited all the buildings located in your university?

Students: Yes sir.

Teacher: Have you observed the physical infrastructure of all the buildings?

Students: Yes sir.

Teacher: What are the different physical infrastructures you found?

Students: Classroom, playground, stage, ramp, lift etc.

Teacher: Can you say, why ramp (a path going up and down) along with steps or stairs are there in every buildings?

Students: Almost every student said, ramps are used for easy passage of person with disability especially for orthopedically handicapped students.

Teacher: Okay, you mentioned one word i.e. person with disability (PWD). Then what is PWD? Who are PWD?

Students: Some students said all kind of disabilities such as visual, hearing, orthopedically disability and so on.

Teacher: Okay, (by citing the example of Person with Disability act-2016) there are 21 type of person with disability. Even acid attack victims are coming under PWD.

Teacher: Let's study some more about who are children with special needs (CWSN) and their education, special focus to inclusive education.

Teacher: in order to learn the concept of inclusive education, let's form some heterogeneous groups and have a healthy discussion.

Now teacher started another activity and the aim of this activity was to discuss the issue "Inclusive Education" through the context of India. The process of this activity was similar with two other activities (1 & 2) mentioned above.

There were two major outcomes such as content related outcomes and process related outcomes recorded during classroom discussions.

A) Content related outcomes

1. Inclusive education is a program, which include all children despite any differences under same roof.
2. There are two main causes of disabilities, first, the natural causes and second the environmental. From the in-depth discussion, it was found out that some students are showing themselves as disabled (especially in hearing impaired case) but they are neither naturally disabled nor environmentally caused disabled (for this argument there was no solid evidence from the students).
3. The problems faced by CWSN in contemporary time are in the form of poor economic status, social discrimination, socially deprived, poor educational status, low employment and so forth.
4. There are many safeguards relating to the CWSN ensured through both constitutional provisions (Article-15,17, 21, 23, 24 and so on) and statutory laws such as PWD act-2016 that covered education, health law, family law, employment and affirmative action, non-discrimination, social security, grievance redressal and so forth.
5. In order to provide quality of education to CWSN in India, the proper implementation of government programs and policies to its fullest, adequate educational opportunities in terms of financial assistance, job opportunities, legal supports and soon must be ensured.

B) Process related outcomes

1. Since the discussion on topic inclusive education for CWSN is connected to the emotions of all students, they were all quite emotional while sharing their personal experiences in the groups.
2. Since there were no CWSN children in the class, the discussions were carried without personal experiences or real experiences of the students. Some students participated in the discussion were having disable children in their homes and nearby to them. Many students used the internet and mobile phone to collect information regarding CWSNs.
3. In every discussion, through rational arguments and counter arguments, students came into the conclusion of sympathy and emphatic treatment to CWSN.
4. Apart from these outcomes, all other outcomes noted in process related outcomes of activity-1 were observed in this activity.

5. Discussion

The strategies under collaborative learning is concurs with the features of constructivist approach and it is a learner centric pedagogic approach. The role of teacher is not only to facilitate and guide learning but also to create best possible authentic learning environment for collaboration. The findings of the present study revealed that a teacher can become an authentic researcher and create best possible ecological environment through vignettes for collaborative learning. Through collaborative learning, every student irrespective of gender, caste and socio-economic background get equal opportunity to participate in the discussion. The collaborative learning intended to refine students' content knowledge, inquiry skills, critical and creative thinking, accountability and responsibility to own and others learning, socio-cultural background as a meaningful tool for learning, learning with current affairs, ethical and moral values, sensitivity and enjoyment to learning. The arguments, counter arguments, discussions, deliberations and negotiations among and between the students enabled them to develop their self-opinions about the world. The collaborative classroom environment enhances students' learning through active participations, inquiry, problem solving and collaboration (Cannella & Reiff, 1994) [7]. In collaborative learning, a problem can have multiple solutions through multiple interpretations. The teacher in a collaborative classroom act as guide and facilitator and gives counter examples, offer multiple perspectives and varies information to present any information to the learners (Nuthall, 2000) [33]. The acquisition of skills and solve problems are the main orientation of collaborative approach. In order to teach social science contents like educational sociology, there is a need to use variety of methods, procedure and approaches so that students will be benefitted to learn the concepts in a meaningful way.

As can be seen from the above mentioned activities, the collaborative learning as a pedagogic practice began with learners' understanding (Known) of various aspects of current and traditional news and daily life activities and moved towards critical reflections, problem posing and problem solving (Unknown). This pedagogical practice (moved from known to unknown) provided space for connecting previous knowledge of the students with new knowledge. At the same time, the learners were engaged in

their respective groups and participated in group activities so that they could achieve common educational goals. The continuous discussions and deliberations in the group gave importance to communication, gender cohesiveness, caste inclusions and sympathy towards person with disabilities. The collaborative learning lead to community inquiry; recognition of individual cognition (Slavin, 2011) ^[36]; emphasis on learner-learner relationship, learner-subject matter relationship (Wertsch, 1998) ^[42]; democratic discussion and finally awareness about caste, gender and class discriminations. The present study would play significant role in establishing equity and inclusions in the Indian society.

6. Conclusion

The present study has high contextual value in the field of teacher education in India and abroad. It is highly contextual in two contexts. Firstly, the processes and practices of organising collaborative learning environment in a qualitative design has been discussed in the present study. Secondly, the present study concurs with recommendations of National Education Policy, 2020 published by Government of India that suggested a paradigm shift in teaching and learning practices from individual learning to collaborative learning. The present study arrived into the conclusion that the collaborative learning enhanced students' i) content knowledge; ii) quality interactions with peers; iii) moral values and emotional stability.

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