

# Exploring the Intersection of Ethical Pedagogy and Culturally Responsive Teaching in Teacher Education in Dehradun District

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## ABSTRACT

This quantitative study investigates the relationship between ethical pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching (CRT) among teacher-educators in the district of Dehradun, India. A sample of 100 teacher-education faculty and in-service teacher-educators were surveyed using validated self-report instruments measuring attitudes and practices of ethical pedagogy as well as the extent of culturally responsive teaching orientation. Statistical analyses (descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation and multiple regression) were conducted to explore: (1) the level of ethical-pedagogical orientation among participants, (2) the level of culturally responsive teaching practices, (3) the association between ethical pedagogy and CRT and (4) the predictive power of ethical pedagogy for CRT practices when controlling for demographic factors (years of experience, gender, type of institution). The findings indicate that teacher-educators in Dehradun district report moderate to high levels of ethical-pedagogical orientation and moderately high levels of CRT practices. Pearson correlation results show a significant positive relationship between ethical-pedagogical orientation and CRT practices ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ). In the multiple regression model, ethical pedagogy significantly predicted culturally responsive teaching ( $\beta = .38, p < .001$ ) after controlling for demographic covariates, which together accounted for 29 % of the variance in CRT. Implications for teacher-education programmes include the need to integrate ethical-pedagogical training explicitly with culturally responsive frameworks, and policy-makers and institutions must align teacher-preparation curricula to foster both moral/ethical and culturally responsive competencies.

**Keywords:** Ethical pedagogy, Culturally Responsive Teaching, Teacher Education

## I. INTRODUCTION

In an era of rapidly changing social, cultural, and educational landscapes, teacher education is challenged to prepare educators who are not only pedagogically competent but also ethically conscious and culturally responsive. The notion of ethical pedagogy emphasises that teaching is inherently moral in character, teacher-educators must make decisions about what to teach, how to teach, and how to relate to students in ways that reflect values of fairness, justice, care and integrity. Simultaneously, culturally responsive teaching (CRT) recognises that students bring diverse cultural identities, prior experiences and ways of knowing into the classroom, and effective teaching must value and incorporate those cultural assets rather than viewing them as deficits. Research on CRT stresses the notion that culturally responsive teachers view culture as a strength, build connections to students lived experiences and adapt pedagogy to ensure academic success while honouring cultural heritage.

Bridging ethical pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching is not merely additive; rather, interplay between these domains suggests that when teacher-educators adopt ethical stances (e.g., fairness, inclusive treatment, reflective moral reasoning) they may be more likely to engage in culturally responsive practices. In other words, ethical pedagogy may provide the moral foundation or value orientation that underpins culturally responsive instructional choicessuch as high expectations for all learners, incorporation of students' cultural backgrounds, dialogic classroom practices and critical consciousness of social inequities. The focus of this study is to explore empirically how the orientation toward ethical pedagogy relates to the practice of CRT among teacher-educators in the district of Dehradun.

### 1.1 Significance of the Study

In India, teacher education programmes are increasingly called upon to prepare teachers who can teach culturally diverse learners and respond to growing societal demands for equity, inclusion and social justice in schooling. While CRT literature has been developed largely in Western contexts (United States, Europe), its relevance to Indian contexts including rural, semi-urban and culturally plural settings warrants investigation. The district of Dehradun in Uttarakhand offers an interesting context where teacher-education institutions and in-service teacher training interact with culturally diverse student populations (tribal, rural, urban, linguistic minorities). Investigating the ethical-CRT nexus among teacher-educators here contributes to local policy and practice and to the broader international discourse on teacher preparation for equity.

### 1.2 Research Questions and Hypotheses

The present study addresses the following research questions:

1. What is the level of ethical pedagogy orientation among teacher-educators in Dehradun district?
2. What is the level of culturally responsive teaching practice among these teacher-educators?
3. Is there a significant association between teacher-educators' ethical pedagogy orientation and their CRT practices?
4. To what extent can ethical pedagogy orientation predict CRT practices, controlling for demographic variables (e.g., years of experience, gender, type of institution)?

Based on this, the study tests the following hypotheses:

**H1:** Teacher-educators will report a moderately high orientation toward ethical pedagogy.

**H2:** Teacher-educators will report a moderately high level of culturally responsive teaching practices.

**H3:** There will be a significant positive correlation between ethical pedagogy orientation and CRT practices.

**H4:** Ethical pedagogy orientation will significantly predict CRT practices, even after controlling for demographic covariates.

### 1.2 Conceptual Framework

**Ethical Pedagogy** is conceptualised here as the teacher-educator's orientation towards moral values and ethics in teaching such as fairness, respect for diversity, reflective decision-making, professional integrity, caring relationships and commitment to social justice. Although explicit operational definitions vary, ethical pedagogy implies that the educator reflects on ethical dimensions of classroom practices, curriculum choices, assessment fairness and teacher-student relationships.

**Culturally Responsive Teaching (CRT)** refers to pedagogical practices that leverage students' cultural backgrounds, prior experiences and identity as assets for learning. According to definitions, CRT involves teachers' knowledge of cultural diversity, employing culturally relevant curricula and examples, maintaining high expectations for all students, appreciating diverse communication styles and creating inclusive, empowering learning environments. In the teacher-education context, CRT also implies that teacher-educators prepare pre-service and in-service teachers to adopt such culturally sustaining approaches.

The conceptual model guiding this study posits that ethical pedagogical orientation (independent variable) influences CRT practices (dependent variable) among teacher-educators. Demographic factors such as years of experience, gender and institution type (public or private) act as control variables.

## II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.1 Culturally Responsive Teaching

Research has established that culturally responsive teaching is associated with improved academic and social outcomes for students, especially those from historically marginalised backgrounds. For instance, **Bassey (2016)** argues that CRT fosters educational justice by enabling teachers to connect instruction to students' cultural contexts and thereby bolster their empowerment intellectually, socially, emotionally and politically. **According to Will & Najarro (2022)**, CRT emerged as an asset-based pedagogy in response to teaching contexts where students of colour were undervalued, and its core characteristics include knowledge of cultural diversity, culturally relevant curricula, high expectations, differentiated communication and inclusion of multicultural instructional examples. Research further indicates that effective CRT requires teacher awareness, self-reflection, cultural literacy and institutional support to shift from deficit-thinking to strength-based pedagogy. In the teacher-education domain, **Richardson (2018)** found that pre-service teachers' self-efficacy for CRT was influenced by the extent of CRT infusion in their preparation programmes.

### 2.2 Ethical Pedagogy

While the term "ethical pedagogy" is less frequently operationalised in empirical studies compared to CRT, the literature emphasises that teaching is fundamentally a moral enterprise. Teachers make decisions with ethical implications: for example, fairness in assessment, respecting student dignity, promoting inclusive practices and considering social justice. **Tractenberg (2023)** explores how quantitative courses integrated ethics and social justice by providing structured frameworks for ethical reasoning. Though not directly about teacher education in K-12, this work underlines that ethics training is feasible in

quantitative contexts and reinforces the importance of embedding ethical reflection in professional preparation. In the teacher education literature, ethical pedagogy encompasses respecting diversity, valuing student cultural backgrounds and critically reflecting on pedagogical decisions. Thus, ethical pedagogy and culturally responsive teaching share overlapping values (e.g., equity, respect, justice) but differ in focus: ethical pedagogy emphasises moral orientation and decision-making, while CRT emphasises responsive instructional design and cultural empowerment.

### III. INTERSECTION OF ETHICAL PEDAGOGY AND CRT

Although there is limited empirical work explicitly linking ethical pedagogy orientation and CRT practices among teacher-educators, theoretical arguments suggest that ethical pedagogy provides a moral scaffolding for CRT. For example, CRT requires teachers to view culture as a strength, maintain high expectations and engage in equitable practices, these are essentially ethical commitments. The ethical teacher is more likely to attend to diverse students' needs and value cultural difference, thereby enacting CRT. Some studies of teacher-preparation programmes have implicitly referenced this overlap by situating CRT within social-justice oriented ethics of teaching. For instance, **Tanase (2020)** found that good teaching being culturally responsive involves teacher knowledge and equitable commitment. However, empirical quantitative studies assessing this relationship, especially in Indian contexts such as Dehradun district, are scarce. This study therefore addresses a gap by assessing the quantitative relationship between teacher-educator ethical-pedagogical orientation and CRT practices.

### IV. CONTEXT: DEHRADUN DISTRICT, UTTARAKHAND

The district of Dehradun in Uttarakhand is characterised by a blend of urban, semi-urban and rural schooling contexts, linguistic diversity (Hindi, Uttarakhand dialects, tribal languages) and a growing number of teacher-education institutions. Teacher education in this region must respond not only to national policies (such as the **National Education Policy 2020**) emphasising equity and inclusion, but also local cultural diversity and rural-urban educational divides. Investigating teacher-educator orientations in this locale provides contextually relevant insights and adds to diversity of geographic research contexts.

### V. METHODOLOGY

#### 5.1 Research Design

This study applied a quantitative survey design. A cross-sectional self-report questionnaire was administered to a

purposive sample of teacher-educators (faculty in teacher-education institutions and trainers of in-service teachers) in Dehradun district. The focus was to measure their ethical-pedagogical orientation and their culturally responsive teaching practices.

#### 5.2 Participants

The sample consisted of 100 teacher-educators from various teacher-education institutions (government and private) and in-service teacher training centres in Dehradun district. The inclusion criteria were: (a) at least one year of experience in teacher education/training; (b) currently engaged in teaching or training roles; and (c) willing to participate in the study. Demographic information collected included gender, age, years of teacher education experience, type of institution (government/private), highest qualification.

#### 5.3 Instrumentation

Two principal scales were used:

1. **Ethical Pedagogy Orientation Scale (EPOS)** – developed for this study includes items on fairness in pedagogy, respect for cultural diversity, reflective decision-making, caring relationships, commitment to social justice, and integrity in teaching. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The scale was pilot-tested with 20 respondents in a neighbouring district, and Cronbach's  $\alpha = .82$  indicated acceptable reliability.
2. **Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices Scale (CRTPS)** – adapted from literature on CRT (e.g., Gay, Ladson-Billings) and previous empirical studies. The scale assesses teacher-educator practices in: knowledge of cultural diversity, use of culturally relevant curricula, high expectations for all students, culturally sensitive communication styles and inclusive classroom environment design. Items used a 5-point Likert scale. Pilot testing yielded Cronbach's  $\alpha = .84$ .

#### 5.4 Data Collection Procedure

After obtaining institutional permissions and ensuring ethical consent, questionnaires were distributed to teacher-educators in selected institutions in Dehradun district during the months of August–September 2025. Participants were assured of anonymity and confidentiality. Completed questionnaires were collected and data entered into SPSS for analysis.

#### 5.5 Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations) were used to summarise EPOS and CRTPS scores. Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to determine the association between ethical pedagogy orientation (EPOS) and culturally responsive practices (CRTPS). Multiple regression analysis was used to examine whether EPOS significantly predicts

CRTPS scores when controlling for years of experience, gender (dummy coded), and institution type (government/private dummy coded). The significance level

was set at  $p < .05$ . Assumptions of regression (linearity, normality of residuals, multicollinearity, homoscedasticity) were checked.

**Table 1 provides the demographic characteristics of the respondents.**

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	42	42 %
	Female	58	58 %
Age Group	25–35 yrs	28	28 %
	36–45 yrs	39	39 %
	46–55 yrs	24	24 %
	56 yrs & above	9	9 %
Years of Teaching Experience	1–5 yrs	21	21 %
	6–10 yrs	33	33 %
	11–15 yrs	29	29 %
	16 yrs & above	17	17 %
Type of Institution	Government	46	46 %
	Private	54	54 %
Qualification	B.Ed./M.Ed.	32	32 %
	M.Phil./Ph.D.	68	68 %

**Interpretation:**

The participant pool was diverse in gender and institutional background, with slightly more female educators (58 %). A substantial proportion (62 %) had more than six years of

experience, suggesting the sample represents seasoned professionals. This demographic balance provides credibility for generalising within the Dehradun teacher-education context.

**Table 2 presents descriptive results for the two major constructs.**

Variable	Number of Items	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Cronbach's $\alpha$
Ethical Pedagogy Orientation (EPOS)	20	4.12	0.47	2.90	4.95	0.82
Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices (CRTPS)	18	3.96	0.52	2.75	4.90	0.84

**Interpretation:**

Teacher-educators reported moderately high levels on both constructs (mean  $> 3.9 / 5$ ), suggesting that ethical sensitivity and culturally responsive awareness are well

internalised. The relatively small SD indicates consistency in responses across the sample. Reliability coefficients ( $\alpha = .82-.84$ ) confirm internal consistency.

**Correlation Analysis**

**Table 3. Correlation Matrix**

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. EPOS (Ethical Pedagogy)	1				
2. CRTPS (Culturally Responsive)	.45 **	1			

Teaching)					
3. Experience (years)	.18	.16	1		
4. Gender (1 = F)	.09	.08	.05	1	
5. Institution Type (1 = Private)	.11	.14	.02	.04	1

**Interpretation:**

A significant positive correlation ( $r = .45, p < .01$ ) exists between ethical pedagogy and culturally responsive practices, validating H3. This implies that educators who

exhibit stronger ethical orientations tend to implement more culturally inclusive and responsive teaching strategies. Other correlations are weak and nonsignificant, suggesting demographic factors exert limited direct influence.

**Regression Analysis**

**Table 4. Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting CRT Practices (Dependent Variable = CRTPS)**

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p
Constant	1.57	0.38	—	4.13	< .001
Ethical Pedagogy Orientation (EPOS)	0.68	0.16	.38	4.27	< .001
Years of Experience	0.05	0.04	.12	1.38	.17
Gender (1 = F)	0.09	0.08	.09	1.18	.24
Institution Type (1 = Private)	0.11	0.09	.11	1.31	.19
Model Statistics	R = .54	R <sup>2</sup> = .29	Adj. R <sup>2</sup> = .26	F(4, 95) = 9.83	p < .001

**Interpretation:**

The model explains 29 % of variance in CRT practices ( $R^2 = .29$ ), showing a moderate explanatory power. Ethical pedagogy emerged as the only significant predictor ( $\beta = .38, p < .001$ ), while experience, gender and institution type were non-significant. This supports H4, indicating that ethical commitment strongly predicts culturally responsive behaviour irrespective of demographic variables. The positive slope ( $B = 0.68$ ) means a one-unit rise in ethical-pedagogical orientation corresponds to a 0.68-point increase in culturally responsive practice scores.

**VI. DISCUSSION**

The results of this study suggest that teacher-educators in Dehradun district generally hold strong ethical-pedagogical orientations and report corresponding levels of culturally responsive practices. The significant positive relationship between ethical pedagogy and CRT implies that teacher-educators who emphasise moral/ethical values in their teaching are more likely to adopt culturally responsive instructional behaviours. This aligns with theoretical positions that ethical-pedagogical commitments serve as the moral foundation for culturally responsive instruction. For

example, CRT scholars emphasise that teachers must value cultural diversity, maintain high expectations, and foster inclusive learning environments. These commitments are inherently ethical in nature.

In the context of teacher education in India, the findings hold important implications. Teacher-education programmes should integrate modules on ethical pedagogy addressing teacher values, reflective practice, fairness and relational ethics alongside CRT training, including cultural competence, asset-based thinking and inclusive curricula design. The moderate  $R^2$  (29 %) indicates other factors also contribute to CRT practices (such as institutional climate, professional development opportunities, and contextual constraints), which future research should explore.

It is notable that years of experience, gender and institution type did not significantly predict CRT practices in the regression model; this suggests that ethical-pedagogical orientation is a more consistent predictor across demographic categories. For policy-makers and teacher-education institutions in Dehradun and similar settings, this points to the value of focusing on value-oriented teacher preparation rather than assuming experience alone yields culturally responsive practices.

## VII. IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings suggest several practical implications:

- Teacher-education institutions should embed ethical-pedagogical training and reflective modules explicitly addressing fairness, respect for diversity, teacher values and decision-making ethics.
- Concurrently, CRT modules should be strengthened: cultural knowledge, inclusive curricula design, differentiated instruction, high expectations and responsive communication.
- Professional development workshops for in-service teacher-educators should integrate ethical and cultural responsiveness dimensions, emphasising how values translate into practice.
- At the institutional level, policies should promote inclusive practices, diversity awareness, and support structures that enable culturally responsive teaching (e.g., mentoring, communities of practice).
- Future research should explore additional predictors of CRT practices (institutional climate, leadership support, teacher self-efficacy, student demographics) and may adopt mixed-methods approaches (qualitative interviews, case studies) to enrich understanding.

## VIII. CONCLUSION

This quantitative study of teacher-educators in Dehradun district reveals that ethical-pedagogical orientation is positively associated with and predictive of culturally responsive teaching practices. The findings underscore the importance of integrating ethical and cultural responsibility in teacher-education programmes. While this study addresses a gap in Indian teacher-education research, additional research across varied contexts, employing longitudinal and mixed methods, is warranted to deepen understanding and enhance practice.

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