

Peace Education in Today's Perspective

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Abstract

Peace education is the need of today. It is a holistic concept and interdisciplinary approach. Today world is facing many problems as violence, crime, injustice, inequality and conflict. Our values are deteriorating . In spite of all the changes that are happening in the field of education, people lack peace of mind they find themselves involved in conflicts , however educated a person may be . The spiritual and social depreciation of presentday students has been increased due to the fact that the present education is artificial and highly mechanical . It does not necessarily follow the principles of true education as dictated by the educationists and true philosophers .It is the demand of time we must have to build a new society with harmony, brotherhood, cooperation. There is a big responsibility, in front of philosophers, educationists, teachers , how to inculcate values, harmony, patience and peace in youth. Our education system is need to review. It should be based on peace education. The curriculum, pedagogy, methods, tools should be related with peace education. The need for peace education is compellingly clear in the light of the escalating trends of, and taste for, violence globally, nationally, and locally. Education can significantly contributes to the Long term process of building up peace- tolerance, justice, intercultural understanding and civic responsibility. Therefore, it is necessary to review the curriculum, education policies of nation.

Keywords — *Peace Education , Brotherhood , Harmony*

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Introduction

“If we are to teach real peace in the world we shall have to begin with children”

Mahatma Gandhi

Today is the age of Information and Technology. There is a great revolution in IT sectors. Nowadays, we are talking about knowledge management and globalization. There is a tremendous progress and development in physical world. Besides all these progress and development, there is a high level of violence in the world today, both physical and structural. Our values are deteriorating. Due to ethnic diversity and globalization, conflict between individuals is increasingly characterized by differences in core values between parties with different socio-cultural identities. Values conflicts can create interpersonal and intergroup tension at different levels of society. We all want to build a new and better tomorrow, so it becomes very necessary to prevent our society from violence, conflicts and wars. The values of peace, non-violence, tolerance, human-rights and democracy will have to be inculcated in every citizen of a democratic nation. A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems, have the skills to resolve conflicts and struggle for justice non-violently, live by international standards of human rights and equity, and respect the Earth and each other. Such learning can be achieved only by Peace Education.

Peace Education

Peace is a holistic concept. It does not come with our DNA. *To reach peace, we need to teach peace.* It consists of positive thoughts, pure feelings, and good wishes. Peace education encompasses the key concepts of education and peace. Peace education is an interdisciplinary area of education. Its aim is to prevent a conflict in advance or rather to educate individuals and a society for a peaceful existence on the basis of nonviolence, tolerance, equality, respect for differences, and social justice. So it may be defined as the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment.

Need of Peace Education

In the modern shrinking world, one cannot keep himself aloof from others. All are interrelated and share the same destiny- sorrows and sufferings, happiness and prosperity. Mankind is threatened with nuclear holocaust and mass devastation today. Peace is the felt need of the hour. It is the cherished goal of mankind. It cannot be achieved only by peaceful measures. It can be realized only through mutual understanding, international harmony and world brotherhood. Peace is not just the

absence of war; it is the practice of love. In a peaceful society people would work together to resolve conflicts, develop morally, treat each other with justice, satisfy basic needs, and respect each other. In essence, they would live in unity. Peace can take place within the individual. Some believe this inner peace can be strengthened through our relationship with the Divine. Inner peace involves peace of mind and absence of fear. Outer peace is peace in society. Our impression is that in India there is, in general, a greater stress on inner peace than in the West, where there is more emphasis on outer peace. East and West must come together, as the world needs both. It has both spiritual and material dimensions. Peace education would not exist unless people throughout the world believed that world peace is attainable through a multifaceted effort but starting with the education of children and youth. Peace Education does not teach students what to think, but rather how to think critically. In the process, its holistic and participatory approach may conflict with more traditional curriculum design or strict standards-based schooling. Peace education aims not to reproduce but to transform. It consists of people “consciously striving to educate their successors not for the existing state of affairs but so as to make possible a future better humanity.” (John Dewey, *Democracy and Education*) Just as learning takes place in a broader social context and not exclusively in schools or classrooms, so peace education relies on families, communities, and social networks to affect positive and lasting change. The notion “think globally, act locally” is central to educating for a culture of peace in that it links theory with practice, international issues to individual efforts.

Historical Background Peace Education

Peace Education is a worldwide movement today. It is the requirement of today. It is not something new for the people in India. They are familiar with the concept of “Vasudeiva Kutumbkam” and ideals such as love thy neighbor as thyself. It is not a modern invention. As far back as about five thousand years ago, the Rig Veda has ushered in a new area of enlightenment and the concept of one-world the Vedanta idea of “Brahman” speaking of “oneness of the mankind”. It sings of mutual coexistence and eternal peace. It dreams of “the fatherhood of god” and the “brotherhood of man”. The Indian heritage has been based on universal brotherhood and eternal peace. Buddhism 250 years ago has also given Eight – fold path and teachings of Buddha for the World Peace .It is the basic of all education and result of all education. The ultimate aim is to achieve Nirvana which is the peace of soul. Rabindranath Tagore has visualized the utopia which is free, frank and open without any barrier and constraint. He sings: “Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high. Where the world has not broken up into fragments, By narrow domestic

walls". The late Prime Minister Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru, who was an *ardent follower* of the peace, first drew the attention of the world peace in the form of the five principles of "Panch-sheela" which could be stated as-

- a.) Mutual respect for each other's territorial and internal sovereignty.
- b.) Mutual non-aggression.
- c.) Mutual non-interference in each other's internal affairs.
- d.) Equality and mutual benefits.
- e.) Peaceful co-existence.

These principles of "Panch-sheela" could foster world peace. First time in formal way, Peace Education was introduced in 1980 in the international college of Wales. In 1945, the United Nations was established to "save succeeding generations from the scourge of war", "to reaffirm faith in the ...dignity and worth of the human being in the equal rights of men and women", "to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained", and "to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom. Peace education has developed as a means to achieve these goals. UNICEF and UNESCO are particularly active advocates of education for peace. Peace education curriculum is developed at the world level. It is based on three aspects: communication, cooperation and problem solving. A review of programmes on education for peace in different countries indicates that they differ considerably in terms of ideology, objectives, emphasis, curricula, content and practices, etc. for instance, in Australia, education for peace focuses on challenging ethnocentrism, cultural chauvinism and violence and promoting cultural diversity, nuclear disarmament, and conflict resolution (Burns, 1985, Lawson and Hutchinson, 1992). While in Japan it targets issues of nuclear disarmament, militarism and the nature of responsibility for acts of violence performed in the past (Murakami, 1992). In South America, education for peace addresses structural violence, human rights and economic inequality (Garcia, 1984; Rivera, 1978) and in the United States, it is often concerned with prejudice, violence and environmental issues (Harris, 1996, Stomfay-Satitz, 1993). In different countries as Burudi, Croesia, Liebaria and Shri Lanka Guidance manual has been prepared to execute these curriculum and for training of the teachers. According to report of UNESCO's word Directory of Peace Research and Training Institutions (1994), 25 institutes of India , are doing

execution of research work and training programme related to peace education. They are “Gandhi Shanti Pratishdan, New Delhi; Gandhi Institutes of studies, Varanasi ; The centre for Gandhian Studies and peace research , Delhi University; Institute for Defence Studies & Analysis, Peace Research , Gujrat Vidyapeeth Malviya centre for Peace Research , BHU Varansai.

Nature of Peace Education in India

“The new generation requires to be trained in the ideas of the sacredness and supremacy of spiritual life, the sense of the brotherhood of mankind and love of peace.” – Dr. Radha Krishnan.

Education for peace is fundamentally dynamic, interdisciplinary, and multicultural in nature and aims at developing knowledge, skills and attitudes needed to achieve and sustain global culture of peace. Promoting the culture of peace calls for developing skills among learners for active listening, problem-solving, and conflict resolution. These skills need to be developed early in learners and nurtured continuously. Education for peace does not teach students what to think, but rather how to think critically. In India education for peace programmes have traditionally been concerned with promoting certain core values. Mahatma Gandhi envisaged a non-violent society, which would be free from exploitation of any kind, and can be achieved through the instrument of education. In Gandhian concept of peace truth, non-violence, self-suffering and means and end relationships are important. The educational policies of the country lay stress on combative role of education in eliminating obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism, and promote some core values such as India’s common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy, secularism, equality of sexes, observance of small family norms and inculcation of scientific temper, etc. Peace and living together have been integral part of Indian way of living and manifested in its Constitution through various articles. It firmly believes that inculcation of certain values among younger generation would help them to exist in the dynamic socio-cultural fabric with peace, harmony and prosperity. This is the reason why all commissions and committees on education in India, like, the Radha Krishnan Commission (1948-49), Mudaliar Commission (1952-53), Sri Prakash Commission (1959), Kothari Commission (1964-66), Sampurnanad Commission (1961), Rammurti Committee (1992) and Chavan Committee (1999), etc. make important recommendations for incorporation of value education at all levels of education. Consequently, the National Curriculum Frameworks of 1975, 1988 and 2000 had adopted a value-oriented approach to integration of peace concerns

in education. A major shift in this approach is witnessed in the National Curriculum Framework – 2005, which considers that *value education is subsumed in Education for peace, but is not identical with it.* The National Focus Group on Peace Education constituted in the context of NCF–2005 in its Position Paper on *Education for Peace* says, “*Peace is a contextually appropriate and pedagogically gainful point of coherence for values. Peace concretises the purpose of values and motivates their internalisation. Without such a framework, the integration of values into the learning process remains a non-starter. Education for peace is, thus, the ideal strategy for contextualising and operationalising value education*”

Broad Objectives of Peace education

- Promotion of Literacy
- Elimination of conflicts
- Provision of more caring and open environment
- Development of Peaceful and Cohesive Society
- Rule of Law and Justice
- Inculcation of core values
- Promotion of Culture of Peace
- Honour of Human Rights
- Honour for Human Values
- To avoid the tendency of aggression and violence in schools
- Learning to live together
- Motivation for International cooperation and brotherhood

Ways of Achieving Peace Education

In the words of M.L.Jack, “The world of tomorrow will be born from the schools of today”.

- As education is the only effective means to develop peace. So to educate the masses is the first and the foremost prerequisite to remove any obstacle in the development of the country.
- Mahatma Gandhi once stated, “If we are to reach real peace in this world we shall have to begin with the children.” Lasting peace may depend on educating future generations into the competencies, perspectives, attitudes, values, and behavioral patterns that will enable them to build and maintain peace.
- Personal, social and moral values should be inculcated since the period of childhood.
- Education should be based on higher values.

- Every country depends upon others for its various needs and requirements. In this way, children should understand the desirability of International good, which brings about development in all spheres as political, social, cultural, economic and industrial.
- Disarmament education is a major development in the field of peace education.
- Development education explores development issues and focuses on the development process. We can also find a very strong correlation between development education and environmental education.
- The wider view of the meaning of peace gives rise to several innovations in the domain of peace education, viz. the teaching of human rights and fundamental freedoms, education for international understanding, education about the UN, its other non-formal peace education programs, such as the UN students' association, UNESCO clubs, UNESCO Associated Schools Project and so forth.
- Both the conceptual and the practical approaches must be quite conspicuously delineated. Having developed a theoretical framework and drawn up policy prescriptions for carrying out peace education programs and activities, we should attend to curriculum change. Indeed, peace education demands the modification of the existing educational system, rather than mere expansion of it.
- In the case of India, although caste oppression, untouchability, gender discrimination and other cruelties existed (and continue to exist), the culture has been marked by acceptance, catholicity and an innate inclusiveness which refuses to be taken away by doctrinal divergences. All these factors have facilitated the commingling and constant cultural exchanges of tribes, races, religions and ethnic groups with grave doctrinal, philosophical and ideological differences.
- Peace education is not an additional academic subject we add to the existing system. Instead, it is the general orientation that we introduce in the existing subjects, textbooks and teacher discourses. For instance, the Sociology textbooks could underscore the fact that peaceful coexistence is an objective requirement for peaceful development, and vice versa. In the Physics textbooks, emphasis could be laid on the need to fight for a ban on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and international agreements in this field. Biology books could explain, among other things, the deadly effects of exposure to radioactivity on human beings. Needless

to say, one who wills the end wills the means.

- In the curriculum, essential attributes of all religions of the world, various ideals of life of different people, ways of living and patterns of different nations and sections of population should be included and amply emphasized.
- National and International trips of the students should be organized.
- National and International games and sports should be encouraged.
- Cultural exchange programme should be organized.
- With pedagogy teaching skills and use of educational technology, teachers should mould and direct the presentation of facts of all subjects in such a way that they lead children towards brotherhood and peace.
- We should teach life sketch of different great people as peace ambassador. For example Gautam Buddha, Guru Nanak, Mahatma Gandhi, Mother Teresa, Nelson Mandela etc.
- International gatherings, seminars, symposia and exchange of ideas between teachers and students of various countries of the world should be organized.
- Topics related to Human Rights should be the part of curriculum.
- Peace club, Peace Diary should be prepared.
- Peace programme should be organized.
- In schools UNO day, world peace day and other events of International importance should be organized with full sincerity and Zest.

Concluding Remark

School Education involves the formative years in a person's life. We Can orient children towards peace. In different parts of the world there is a growing awareness today that propagating a culture of peace through education needs to be deemed a non – negotiable goal of education. Teachers can be social healers and peace skills can promote academic excellence if we include peace education in our education system. We the educationists should think about ways and means to inculcate the values among students .

Peace education needs to be seen as an enterprise for healing and revitalizing the nation. Undertaken in this fashion, peace education could be an effective catalyst in activating a holistic vision for education.

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