

Concerns of School in Nurturing Peace Education

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ABSTRACT

These days we are living in a very disturbing society where violence, aggression and argument have become so common for no cause most of times. People are behaving very inhumanly. Most often these violence or conflicts occur due to misunderstanding and unknowingness of the facts. Hence, these misunderstanding and unknowingness posing new threats to our society. In this regard, learning to live with and in peace is prime concerns of peace education. Across the Education world, peace education is gaining attention in the policies and thereby, in the curriculum and syllabus of education. With the growing recognition and attention, school is being identified as a key role player in setting and facilitating peace education. In the beginning of the article meaning of peace is stated thereafter, it tries to differentiate between the concepts of Peace Education and Education for Peace. It also outlines the various role of school in setting of aims and objectives and implementation strategies of peace education.

Keywords: Peace, Peace Education, Education for Peace, Value Education, Conflict, Conflict Resolution.

Introduction

Education has tremendous potential in inculcating the humane values as well as social values in a human being, since this world is packed with tensions and turbulences. Peace is not just the absence of war but the practice of love. Society where residents live in unity, work together to resolve the conflict, act morally, be just and value each other is a peaceful society. In this context, education plays an important role in making society peace loving. And this can be initiated from the school of the child. In this context **Mahatma Gandhi** well said that “*if we are to reach real peace in this world we shall have to begin with the children*”. It has been found that there is no happiness greater than peace and that peace links with the practice of love. Peace is not attainable unless and until it is started with the education of child. Through peace education we can strengthen the will-power, tolerance, rationalization among the people. In the words of the Indian thinker and philosopher **Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan Ethical Policies and Practices in School Environment for Peace Education**

“We must be at peace with our whole body and soul, our feelings and instincts, our flesh and its affections”.

Meaning of Peace

The concept of peace may refer to the development of brotherhood which propels one to understand and accommodate the ideas and values adhered to by others. The feeling of this

nature against others and to appreciate the good points of others creates a healthy and prosperous society. Peace may be positive peace which is regarded as non-violent social system in which there is no place for violence, exploitation and disparity. In a way, we may say that positive peace is a positive attempt to establish a co-operative society of people. When we talk about peace in social and cultural context then it becomes more and more effective and meaningful for needs of a country. It must contain the human, social, cultural, spiritual and global values altogether. Peace should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values together with the universal human values. Then only it is relevant in present context.

According to Harris Ian, M. (1988), "Peace is a concept which motivates the imagination, connotes more than the cessation of war, implies human beings working together to resolve conflicts, respect standards of justice, satisfy basic needs and honour human rights." Here, it is very rightly highlighted that peace does not merely mean absence of war, it is much more than that and includes satisfying basic needs, upholding the human rights and all working together towards resolution of conflicts and misunderstandings. Gandhi's concept of peace includes; (i) the absence of tensions, conflicts, and all forms of violence including terrorism and war. Peace implies the capacity to live together in harmony. This calls for non-violent ways of resolving conflicts but conflicts do not have to eventuate into violence, (ii) the creation of non-violent social systems, i.e., a society free from structural violence. The duty to practice justice: social, economic, cultural, and political. Hunger is systematic violence, (iii) the absence of exploitation and injustice of every kind, (iv) International co-operation and understanding. This involves the creation of a just world order, marked by a willingness to share the earth's resources to meet the needs of all. That is, the need to shift from greed to need, (v) ecological balance and conservation, the adoption of lifestyles conducive to the wholeness of creation and (vi) peace of mind, or the psycho spiritual dimension of peace. As we can note, Gandhi ji's idea of peace is a big concept which includes non-violence in the society at all the levels i.e., individual, societal and global.

Meaning of Peace Education and Education for Peace

Let us try to understand the concepts: Education about peace and education for peace. The term education about peace may be regarded as a criticism of war. Education for peace is a positive way of thinking about peace, implying that through peace a basis for non violence may be laid down. This idea means that if wars are the result of thinking of mental attitude of some people, then why not peace may be also a result of the same mental process? Peace also may be possible through mental attitude. Peace may also be a creation of our mind. Peace education and Education for peace are two different concepts. According to the position paper of National Focus Group on Education for Peace, NCERT (2006) – Peace education is a component of syllabus while education for peace shapes the vision of education. It is based on the entire transactional strategies of education. Today, education has become market oriented and it fulfils the needs of market demand. It is more or less recognised as means of livelihood. In this context, education for peace serves the value of market need but it is more than that. Although, there is no universally accepted definition of Peace education, we try to understand the real meaning of

peace education through the definitions given by some renowned thinkers and institution, which are as follows:

According to R.D. Laing (1978) – “*Peace education is an attempt to respond to problems of conflict and violence on scales ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is about exploring ways of creating more just and sustainable future.*”

Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman (1988) put in this way – “*Peace education is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. It is based on philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, co-operation and reverence for the human family and ally itself on our beautiful planet.*”

Another definition which is given by the same authors i.e. Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman (1988), – “*Peace education is skill building. It empowers children to find creative and non-destructive ways to settle conflict and to live in harmony with themselves, others, and their world Peace building is the task of every human being and the challenge of the human family.*”

Peace education, according to UNICEF refers to *the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.*

The essence of the definitions is to promote the patience, harmony, values among the individuals inculcating the love, trust, co-operations that they can understand each other and hence the society and at large the whole community to face the challenges of humanity and our society.

Now let us try and understand the second concept, that is, **Education for peace**, it is education for life, society and at large for humanity and not merely training for a livelihood. Equipping individuals with the values, skills, and attitudes they need to be wholesome persons who live in harmony with others and as responsible individuals that is the goal of education for peace. Education for peace needs to inculcate the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that comprise a culture of peace. It is a time consuming proactive strategy to nurture peaceful persons who resolve conflicts non-violently. Education for peace is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework of human values.

According to Harris Ian, M. (1988), “Education for peace implies drawing out from people their instincts to live peacefully with others and emphasizes peace values upon which a society should be based.”

Need of Peace Education

Unfortunately, violence is emergent everywhere in our society. Human beings have become insensible in every walk of life whether it is working place, walking place, school or whatever else. In school or colleges in the name of fresher's welcome, ragging has become a very common practice and there have been experiences with very bad consequences for individuals and society at large. It is very sad to realize that we live in the era of unprecedented violence in the forms of terrorism, war, crime, injustice and oppression and exploitation. Many of us live in very miserable conditions and are struggling for survival. There is so much violence and their consequences in our environment and society which have a very greater impact on children and adversely affecting their innocent minds. This raises a dire need of nurturing the mind, heart and thoughts of children at school level which upholds peace and its related values. However, in spite of materialistic views of current education world our education system also has the humanistic thoughts in the lines of Rousseau, Henry Thoreau, Tolstoy and Maria Montessori; they kept the sense of education alive, reawakening to the need of developing the humanistic side of education at least among a few educationists. Education must act on the human personality to develop the conscious vision of the mission of mankind and the present conditions of social life. What we need today is an education that is capable of saving mankind from the present predicament and develops human being spiritually and mentally. At school level, we must construct and create such an environment where our children can be actively engaged in learning and practice those values in their life in real sense.

Objectives of education for Peace at School Level

Today, most of the schools across the nation or even in the globe are passionate with only academic record or report card of the students only and are neglecting the character and moral building of the students. This can be seen through various violent happenings that have been taking place frequently in the school in India and abroad. In this present situation of school environment the aims and objective for peace education have become very important through which we can seed a sound character into the personality of the children. Now a day, Peace is a prime requirement for progress and national integration. The great spiritual leaders and teachers of the past were educators for peace. Education for peace seeks to nurture the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that comprise a culture of peace. It is holistic in nature as it embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth of children within a framework of human values. Peace is equated with absence of violence. Even for Gandhi Peace includes the practice of values such as love, truth, justice, equality, tolerance, harmony, humility, togetherness and self-control. Education for people calls for a significant reduction in the curriculum load. It is a long-term proactive strategy to peace for persons who resolve conflicts in non-violent ways. In this regard, following can be pointed as aims and objectives at school level:

- To develop a positive attitude in among students towards each other.
- To enable one to understand the value of peace and to lead students to assimilate the idea for actually practicing it in life.
- To develop a feeling of international brotherhood in students.

- To enable students to distinguish between just and unjust, appropriate and inappropriate.
- To develop in the students certain spiritual values this will lead people to love all.
- To make students aware of the fatal consequences of violence and bloody struggles.
- To help the students to prepare a background for establishing peace in the family, institution, country and world.
- To help students understand some of the complex processes leading to violence and conflict at the individual group, national and global levels, and be aware of some of the ways in which these conflicts may be resolved.
- To encourage attitudes that lead to preference for constructive and non-violent resolution of conflict.
- To assist students in developing the personal and social skills necessary to live in harmony with others and to behave in positive and caring ways that respect the basic human right.
- To develop human learning communities in which students and teacher are encouraged to work together co-operatively to understand and find resolution to significant problems.
- To respect the diversities of culture at national and international level.
- To develop ability for recognizing the importance democratic system and appreciate the decisions taken by others to solve conflicts under the circumstances.

Curriculum for Peace Education

The curriculum for peace education may be as under:

For Primary stage:

- Stories and Poems pertaining to moral values of life.
- Stories about various religions, regions and cultures.

For Junior Stage:

- Biographies of such great people who have worked for establishing peace in the world.
- The positive role of various religions in establishment of peace in the world.

For Higher School Stage:

- The concept of peace.
- The need and importance of peace.
- The means of establishing peace in family, society and world.
- The relevant functions of U.N.O., UNESCO, Red Cross, Scout and Girl Guide movement, International treaties for establishing peace.
- The cause of war and violence and an evaluation of their consequences

Co-curricular Activities for promoting feeling of International Peace

- Celebration of Peace Day (2nd October), Women's Day (8th March), Environment Day (5th June) and other such days.
- To participate in activities of Red Cross, Scout and guide, Marathon, etc.
- To participate in social forestry and community labour like Swachha Bharat, etc.
- To establish pen friendship, collection of stamps of various countries, photos, calendars, etc.

Ethical Policies and Practices in School Environment for Peace Education

Our role as peace teachers is to understand the social climate prevailing in schools and to mediate agents of change. We could facilitate the development of healthy attitudes and relationship at all levels among students whether they are juniors or seniors, also among teachers, parents and even staff members and officials, whenever possible.

Most conflicts and stresses in our relationships in school, etc are born due to our judgemental attitudes towards each other. The ways of dealing with these attitudes lie in adopting a non judgemental attitude towards all relationships; such attitude must be adopted and modelled by peace teachers also. Becoming non judgemental involves becoming descriptive rather than evaluative and flexible and empathising with others.

We have to be mindful of our own attitudes and practices, reflecting on the way we relate with others. Forthright acknowledgement and affirmation of injustices to others and willingness to dialogue and negotiations are the key to transforming conflicts ridden relationships. Conflicts dissipate energy. From dialogue and respect can come a process of reconciliation and healing of bitterness and distrust.

Teachers are the most affecting factor in school setting so for peace education. Peace education depends on the teacher's sense of responsibility and responsiveness towards the students. He is responsible for supervision, awareness, motivation; values and skills. Teachers plays role of parents and guardian for the community at schools. Taking these responsibilities and having the capacities they can sow the seeds of peace among the students. Students are needed to learn the different values for inculcation of Peace among themselves and for a peaceful society. The values come from participation and inclusion; inclusion of all children, especially those who are differently able or with abilities, disadvantaged, marginalised, migrants, refugees, etc. Teachers should shoulder the responsibility and behave in a model way for being ideal for the students to inculcate the right kind of values, attitudes and behaviour. In the line of act as a model, James Baldwin had rightly said '*Children are not good at listening to their elders but they never fail to imitate them*'. Apart from acting as a model and setting ideal environment, school must need to work on activities like debates, seminars, games, dramas, celebration of festivals of all religion, celebration of days etc. in school to highlight the values among these very different concepts. These values must be brought out and highlighted for a harmonious society. Now the question

arises what a school can do for peace education. School can facilitate a more humanistic management approach, improve human relations between, teacher-student, teacher-teacher, student-student, etc., help develop good attitude in students and teachers as well, e.g. co-operation, mutual respect, help healthy emotional development in students, facilitate socialization through participation in interactive and co-operative learning activities, improve students' discipline and moral behaviour, develop creativity both in students and teachers, improve standard of quality of teaching and learning.

Conclusion

Since, inculcation of peace among the students in school environment is a very complex and time taking process. The way towards peace is not just a narrow, straight road; it has many diversions. We need the will and the courage to remain committed to the path of education of peace. It might be that our initial attempts may seem small and insignificant but here Mother Teresa has put it best by saying, "*We ourselves feel that we are doing is just a drop in the ocean but the ocean would be less because of that missing drop.*" Likewise the other activities in school setting, it should be also well planned, nicely managed and must dependent on the shoulder of the teacher who are the real guide for students. Further, we cannot rule out the role of policy maker and curriculum programmers. Curriculum is nothing but it is a road map for achieving the qualities for peace education. So, it has its own importance and here programmers must be so creative and imaginative that it becomes very easy and straight for students and teachers as well and Peace should be a part of the overall school environment.

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