Peace Education

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Abstract

Peace education is that education which develops a society which is free from exploitation, violence and injustice. Education is the only means which can generate interest, values, aesthetics and other qualities which are necessary to bring peace in human mind. Peace implies the ability to respond to the surrounding suffering and other’s needs in ways that affirm faith in the light beyond the darkness. It is the most vital thing in human life. Teacher education prepares teachers for establishing and practicing values, norms and professional ethics in institution. It may act as a tool for providing awareness for the development of peace education among the citizen of our nation through student teachers. Peace education can help in building visions of peaceful future in which diversity and plurality can be celebrated without fear and threat. If teacher education includes peace education in the teacher education curriculum it will be more effective for the students to become able to solve conflicts in a peaceful manner and respect socio-economic status of each and every one in society. There is a strong need to equip current and future generation, especially teachers, with an education which promotes the culture of peace and harmony, and consequently could bring about people’s change of mind for a much better humanity. There is a need to prepare teachers as peace makers and peace builders through teacher education.

Keywords: Peace, Harmony, Education, Peace Education, Teacher Education

Introduction

Teachers are the architect of a nation. According to Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, “the quality of nation depends upon the quality of its citizens, quality of its citizens depends upon the quality of their education, and the quality of their education, depends on the quality of teachers”. The success of a teacher depends upon the effective teaching – learning process. Teacher can change the thinking of students and promote co-operation and tolerance in them. Education for peace seeks to nurture the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that comprise a culture of peace. Education for peace is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of students within a framework of human values. Gandhi ji throughout his life followed the ideal of truth and non-violence. He observed “Education is the preparation for complete living, adjustment to environment, perfection of one’s nature, character building and harmonious development of personality. Thus, the proper inculcation of human value like peace and harmony and development of character is the responsibility of schools”. According to NCF (2005), “Peace as a precondition for national development and as a social temper is proposed as a comprehensive value framework that has immense relevance today in view of the growing tendency across the world towards intolerance and violence as a way of resolving conflicts. The potential of peace education for socialising children into a democratic and just culture can be actualised through appropriate activities and a judicious choice of topics in all subjects and at all stages. Peace education as an area of study is recommended for inclusion in the curriculum for teacher...
education”. The document recognizes the significance of peace education for solving conflicts, socializing children in a democratic life, an area of study in curriculum etc.

**Peace and Peace Education**

The English word peace originates from the French concept which denotes ‘agreement’ - agreeing to stop a conflict or war. According to Universal Dictionary of English Language the first notion of peace is “cessation or freedom from strife, warfare”, and second notion of it is “treaty of peace between hostile nations”. Even in the third notion it is understood as “freedom from strife, controversy or agitation”. The term ‘peace’ means the absence of conflict or war or the ability to cope with them. Peace Education may be defined as the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behavior to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the national and international environment.

R.D. Laing (1978) defines peace education as “A 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 futures”. It is accepted as an attempt for solution of conflicts and violence, a way for safe and secure future etc.

Peace is often equated with the absence of violence. To Gandhi, exploitation was the most familiar and practical form of violence on an individual by the state, a group, another individual, or by machines; on women by men; and on one nation by another. Peace mandates the practice of values such as love, truth, justice, equality, tolerance, harmony, humility, togetherness, and self-control. Self-suffering, if need be, is to be preferred to inflicting violence on others.

**Gandhi’s concept of peace includes:**

1. 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. Diversity occasions conflicts but conflicts do not have to eventuate into violence.

2. 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 systemic violence.

3. The absence of exploitation and injustice of every kind.

4. International cooperation 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.

5. Ecological balance and conservation. The adoption of lifestyles conducive to the wholeness of creation.

6. Peace of mind, or the psycho-spiritual dimension of peace.

According to Gandhi’s views on peace that it must be absence of war, injustice and exploitation in society. It also emphasized conservation of resources and satisfaction of mind. Peace begins with the individual and spreads to the family, to the community, to the nation, and to the global village. Promoting a culture of peace, hence, involves a two-pronged strategy. The members of a society need to be oriented toward peace rather than toward violence. At the same time, social, economic, and political systems have to be reoriented to peace.

Peace Education refers the pedagogical efforts to create a better world. It teaches love, non-violence, compassions and reverence for all life. Peace is a philosophy. It is not just state of mind. It is the total understanding, tolerance and love of that which surrounds us. Peace education is broader discipline. Environmental action, education for non-violence, education for international understanding, human right education and global education are all the branches of Peace Education. Peace Education is concerned with other peace ideas, peace studies and peace activities. It deals with conflicts arising out of injustice and exploitation in a peaceful manner. It enables the learners towards human rights and non-violence to create a peaceful society. After understanding the concepts of peace and peace education, the following features of peace education emerge:

- It is an anti-war education.
- It is an education establishing liberation.
- It is a kind of learning process for enabling one to assimilate lessons in tolerance and creativity.
- It is a lifestyle for establishing a peaceful international society.
Aims of Peace Education

- 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 a 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 cooperatively to understand and find resolution to significant problems.
- To respect the diversities and disparities of culture at national and international level.

Need for Inculcating Peace and Harmony in Society

At present, there is a greater need of peace education for peace of mind, peace in the family, peace in society, peace between nations and peace in the universe for progress of nations. This is needed because violence is emerging in an unprecedented manner in human society. Looking at the world today any sensible person feels disheartened and even horrified to see the kind of violent acts being committed by man against man and nature. It is sad to realize that we live in an era of unprecedented violence in the forms of terrorism, war, crimes, injustice and exploitation. Now a days students move freely from one country to another country in this globalized world for higher education purposes. But it is seen that students of a country are not recognized equally in visiting country only on the basis of their culture and consequently they face lot of adjustment related problems. It has also been seen that even in a country people have been facing many problems for living only on the basis of belonging a different part of regions of country. An insecure and an unsafe environment in modern society have been observed by people. Crimes have been increasing in society and sometimes undesired crimes are committed by students which indicate our attention that education should nurture peace values in people. According to Ahmad (2007), Peace in a society refers to a state of group living in which members of every group and all groups within it enjoy such a state of mind that allows them to engage themselves in pursuits of their interest, actualize their potentials and realize their aspirations unobtrusively and with confidence. In such societies people of all hues live in security and with a fair degree of happiness. All coexist side by side in harmony. They do not live in a perpetual state of uncertainty of all kinds—whether their homes are safe, whether they will arrive at work or their children and families will be safe back home, their children will return home from school safely etc.” These view emphasized a group living with full of cooperation for safe and secure life.

Peace Education has two goals. Firstly, to build public awareness towards peace education and integrate it into all forms of education which include non-formal education as well as formal education throughout the world. Secondly, to ensure that of all teachers should teach and practice peace in their practical life.

Peace is the work of justice and the fruit of love, but it must also be the production of education. Peace ensures an education that makes an individual a citizen and creates a learning environment to live in harmony with adjacent nature and act co-operatively. Education for peace seeks to nurture ethical development, values, attitudes and skills required for living in harmony with oneself and with others as responsible citizen. Report of International Commission of Education for the 21st Century UNESCO (1996) says, “living together in harmony” must be the ultimate goal of education in the 21st century- an integrative perspectives for the school curriculum. In fact, two out of the four pillars of education suggested by the Delor report, namely learning to live together and learning to be, are related to peaceful living in society.

Different Ways for Inculcating Peace and Harmony through Education

- Peace Education through Teacher Education. Teacher Education refers to the policies, procedures and programs designed to equip prospective teacher with the knowledge, attitudes, behavior and skills they require to perform their tasks effectively in the classroom, school, and wider community. India witnessed tremendous changes in Teacher Education due to Globalization. There has been recently a massive increase in number of teacher education institutions in the India. There is an extensive use of internet and ICT tools in capacity building to update teacher’s capabilities and so as to facilitate teacher’s to keep
their knowledge updated. The direction and culture of educational research has also changed. We need to reform educational policies, established practices, curricula and teaching materials in ways to facilitate intercultural learning and to create equality and in education and society. Teacher education is crucial for the society. Best teacher has capabilities to build value based society and nation-state. The global trends of movement of people from a country to another countries, Globalization and new ICT tools are big challenges for teacher education. Government and other stakeholders should formulate proper policies and procedures to design and to equip teacher across the country with skills and knowledge to face the trends created by globalization in a peaceful manner.

- **Integration of Peace Education in Teacher Education Curriculum.** If teacher education includes `peace-education` in the teacher education curriculum it will be more effective for the students to analyse the root causes of conflict and effective techniques of conflict prevention and intervention. The ultimate goal of everyone is to attain peace and harmony. The Teacher Education curricula should address the nature of conflicts and sources of conflicts within nation, between various groups, and among nations.

- **Orientation of Teachers about Peace Education.** All the teachers ought to be trained and oriented in such a way that human values like truth, non-violence, friendliness, forgiveness, co-operation, communal harmony, tolerance of divergent views, relative thinking, relative behavior, positive attitudes, patience, a sense of universal responsibility towards the world. It should be our duty that not to harm nature and respect humanity. The above values cannot be imposed on an individual from outside. They exist in all human beings but are often dormant. They must be awakened.

- **Weightage of Peace in Objectives of Education.** Peace implies the ability to respond to the surrounding suffering and other’s need in ways that affirm faith in the light beyond the darkness. It is in the presence, not in the absence of turbulence, that the capacity for peace is tested and proved’, NFG (2005). The ability to respond justly and affirmatively to the needs and sufferings of others is the hallmark of authentic inner peace. Also, inner peace is precondition for proactive solidarity. It is not an exclusive obsession with peace for oneself, but a commitment to peace for all. It includes, besides, the fortitude to recognize, renounce, resist, and remove whatever undermines peace for all. Integrating the total learning process from a peace perspective can humanize education and harmonize it with its essential goals. Recognizing the extent to which peace is basic to the purpose of education. The Secondary Education Commission (1952 -53) defined the purpose of education as “the training of the character and personality of students in such a way that they will be able to realize their full potentialities and contribute to the well-being of the community”.

- **Organization of Group Discussion, Seminar and Workshop Activities.** These activities are to be organized in an educational institute for promoting Peace and Harmony. Following topics can be discussed during the activities:
  
  i.**Democracy:**
  1. Basic equality of individuals.
  2. Civil liberties.
  ii.**Secularism:**
  1. Religious tolerance.
  2. Equal (positive) respect for all religions and groups.
  3. Condemning casteism and communalism.
  4. Making efforts enthusiastically for peaceful co-existence with groups.
  iii.**Social Justice:**
  1. Gender equality.
  2. Removal of social and economic disparities.
  iv.**Social Reforms:**
  1. Disapproval of social evils (like untouchability, dowry, drug addiction).
  v.**National Integration:**
  1. Understanding and appreciating unity in diversity of (India’s heritage and composite culture of modern India).
  2. Condemning disruptive activities and forces (linguistic, regional).
  vi.**International Understanding:**
1. Understanding interdependence of nations and humanity as a whole.

2. International cooperation in solving international economic, social cultural and humanitarian problems.


4. Role of World Bodies (UN, UNESCO, WHO, ILO, IMF, etc.) for peaceful co-existence among nations and progress of humanity.

5. Developing a sense of World brotherhood with broad humane outlook and humane approach, beyond narrow limits of nationalism.

- Methodology of Inculcating Peace and Harmony. Teacher needs certain crucial abilities and skills in order to deal effectively with conflicts between students, especially if these conflicts are intensified because of their social backgrounds. The teacher should constantly keep in mind that the attainment of any aim is conditioned upon knowledge. The power needed to accomplish a peaceful world is the unification of human mankind. The teacher has the opportunity of transformation and change of the inner self. Then the student can be helped to understand and feel what is a peaceful person and who is a peacemaker, and the teacher will have a powerful, positive influence on hundreds and thousands of students. Encourage, praise, appreciate, and reward the work of all of them as equally as possible. Positive attention to all can lead to higher achievement for all. The teacher learns that there are a number of ways to help solve conflicts. Among others, the student and the teacher learn about listening, talking, sharing, taking turns, getting help and apologizing. In all cases, stories and other activities are included in the lessons to reinforce learning.

- Organization of Cultural Activities in an Educational Institute. It is believed that peace and harmony may be nurtured through some cultural activities like group songs, street play, dramas etc. Some other literary activities like collage, paintings, slogan writing, essay writing may also be organized in an institute to nurture peace values in students.

The National Focus group Position Paper on Education for Peace developed under the aegis of NCF-2005 states that the major frontiers of education for peace are:

- Bringing about peace-orientation in individuals through education;
- Nurturing in students the social skills and outlook needed to live together in harmony;
- Reinforcing social justice, as envisaged in the Constitution;
- The need and duty to propagate a secular culture;
- Education as a catalyst for activating a democratic culture;
- Lifestyle movement.

The document further observes that Education for peace is not envisaged as a separate subject that would further augment curriculum load, but a perspective from which all subjects are to be taught. The NCF-2005 while identifying some of the basic assumption that shape the approach to education for peace stresses that

- (a) schools can be nurseries for peace;
- (b) teacher can be social teacher;
- (c) education for peace can humanise education as a whole;
- (d) the skills and orientation of peace promote life-long excellence; and
- (e) justice is integral to peace. A plea is then made to turn education for peace into a people’s movement.

Conclusion

As peace is a complex, multi-dimensional concept, the contents are not prescriptive. Rather, they are to be viewed as generalized guidelines. Peace is a comprehensive term that requires a transformation in our thinking, sense of values. Education is the only means which can generate interest, values, aesthetics and other qualities which are necessary to bring peace in human mind. The first and foremost principle that a teacher should keep in mind in this respect is “unity in diversity.” Our curricular contents draw freely upon the Indian tradition as well as the culture of the world. Our curriculum has to inculcate among the students the value of paying equal respect to all. For this, the contents should be taken from The Bhagwad Gita, The Quran and The Guru Granth Sahib, and The Upanishads. The curriculum should include religious stories, legends, myths and fables. Whenever possible, prayer, yoga, and meditation camps should be organised to cultivate ethics and develop the quality of ‘dignity of labour’ among the students. We have to prepare them for future life. We have to make them men of characterising above the considerations of country, caste, language, and religion.
For every teacher to become a peace educator there is a need to prepare teachers as peace makers and peace builders through teacher education. The teacher, teacher educators, educationists and the educational planners should help the learners to develop their body, mind and spirit in the required direction to dwell with peace, prosperity and harmony.

References
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