

Peace Culture Through Peace Education

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of education is to create peace-loving citizens capable of participating in building a peaceful and sustainable society. Integrated and systematic education for peace can achieve a shared culture of peace. In the new millennium, as the world has become increasingly interdependent and interactive, peace education seeks to harness the power and intellect of future generations in the hope of building a sustainable culture of peace together. International education for peace is largely responsible for saving subsequent generations from the scourge of war. Influenced by the consequences of positive and negative globalization, peace education for students is highly significant. It allows them to commit themselves to building a sustainable and peaceful community. It is clear that their experiential and received knowledge they have acquired through peace education will sow the seeds of a culture of peace for future generations. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the significance of peace education for students as part of education.

Key Words: Peace Culture, Peace Education, Globalization

Introduction:

At the dawn of the third millennium, societies and civilizations are in a constant state of dynamic transformation culturally, economically, and politically. Economic globalization needs a world at peace so that it can function securely and flourish, and one of the basic requirements for attaining this necessary security and an effective and sustainable development of the world, is the building of a new global and regional culture and literature of peace. A harmonious peace culture that counteracts violence and exposes and promotes the progress of a peaceful human civilization is urgently needed. Its major aims should be:

1. To address the global and regional, cultural and ethical root-causes of violence, conflicts and war.

2. To build harmonious bridges of culture, understanding, and respect among people and nations.

A powerful and influential peace culture would create values, ideas, and ethics, which reached various sectors of the society. Culture is the very core and essence of individual and national identity. The kind of culture, literature, values, and norms that people are exposed to and absorb, and what they read and watch, determines the basic ideas, ethics, and norms which affect and motivate them throughout their lives. After an "atomic mushroom" twentieth century that witnessed two devastating World Wars, and many cruel and senseless regional ethnic wars that most often did not bring any solutions to conflicts, it seems that humankind has not yet learnt that conflicts should be resolved by other means than killing.

Peace Education:

Peace education may be defined as the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment. Peace education is a series of teaching encounters that draw from people, their desire for peace, nonviolent alternatives for managing conflict, and skills for critical education can also be thought of as encouraging a commitment to peace as a settled disposition and enhancing the confidence of the individual as an individual agent of peace; as informing the student on the consequences of war and social injustice; as informing the student on the value of peaceful and just social structures and working to uphold or develop such social structures; as encouraging the student to leave the world and to imagine a peaceful future; and as caring for the student and encouraging the student to care for others. Peace, as an integrative perspective for the school curriculum, is an idea whose time has come. Education for peace, as distinguished from peace education, acknowledges the goal of promoting culture of peace as the purpose shaping the enterprise of education. If implemented with vigour and vision, education for peace can make learning a joyful and meaningful experience. Education for Peace requires a reduction in curriculum load. Peace offers a contextually appropriate and pedagogically gainful point of coherence for all value. In the event of a conflict of interests, the claims of justice must take precedence over the dynamics of peace in the interests of peace in the long run, lest peace becomes an oppressive or retrograde ideology. The purpose of education goes beyond the propagation of knowledge. As Daniel Webster said, "Knowledge does not comprise all that is contained in the larger term of education. The feelings are to be disciplined. The passions are to be restrained. True and worthy motives are to be inspired. ... And pure morality is to be inculcated in all circumstances". Education for

peace is different from peace education. In the latter, peace is a subject in the syllabus. In the former, peace becomes the shaping vision of education. This implies a paradigm shift in the total transaction of education. Currently, the enterprise of education is driven by market forces. Education for peace is not antagonistic to the market, but it does not recognise the market as the purpose of education. The market is only a part of our life-world. Education for peace is education for life, and not merely training for livelihood. Equipping individuals with the values, skills, and attitudes they need to be wholesome persons who live in harmony with others and as responsible citizens is the goal of education for peace.

Initiatives For Peace Education:

We are at present halfway through the decade for the promotion of a culture of peace, as approved by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1999. 2000-2010 was declared by the UNESCO as the International Decade for Promotion of a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. The last five decades have witnessed several significant advocacies for education for peace. The UNESCO recommendations on education for international understanding, peace, human rights, and fundamental freedoms (1974) and UNESCO's 1994 action plan for education for peace, human rights, and democracy, endorsed by 144 countries, are two of the prominent landmarks. ASP net was launched by UNESCO in 1953 to promote international understanding and peace. As of 2003, ASP net includes 7500 institutions ranging from nursery schools to teacher training institutions in 170 countries. The network is dedicated to the pursuit of peace, liberty, justice, and human development. An innovative pilot project on "peace and disarmament education" is being implemented in four countries: Albania, Niger, Peru, and Cambodia, by the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA) and The Hague Appeal for Peace

(HAP). The Centre for Research on Education for peace (CERPE) at the University of Haifa, Israel, which has been functioning since in 1998 serves as an interdisciplinary an international forum for the scholarly study of education for peace. The Earth and Peace Education Associates International (EPE), New York, is yet another organisation which promotes basic values related to peace, viz., sustainability, on-violence, social justice, intergenerational equity, and participatory decision-making. Besides these, a number of other organisations around the world are working for peace. Many institutions in the country are working for the promotion of peace, particularly Gandhian idea of peace, the Gandhi Peace Foundation, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samiti, Gandhian Institute of Studies, and Jaipur Peace Foundation being prominent examples. Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been contributing to different aspects of peace studies, viz., human rights, gender discrimination, and environment. There is need for networking among all such institutions in order to enhance their effectiveness.

Policy Perspectives: A Brief Overview:

The approach to education in the pre-British period, as the Report of the University Education Commission (1962) points out, was shaped by the awareness that “education should not stop with the development of intellectual powers but must provide the student... a code of behaviour based on fundamental principles of ethics and religion.” The British Period, otherwise termed the Raj, in contrast, marked a hiatus in the history of education. The attitude of the Raj was negative, even antagonistic, to religious and moral education. The Education Commission of 1882, however, ventured to recommend the inclusion of moral education in the curriculum, which the government dismissed as “impractical” in 1884. The Report of the Central Advisory Board of 1944-46, however, marked a departure in the thinking on the subject. It

recognised that “religion in the widest sense should inspire all education and that a curriculum devoid of ethical basis will prove barren in the end.” This did not, however, result in any change on the ground. The Special Committee appointed to study the feasibility of implementing this recommendation, under the Chairmanship of Bishop G. D. Barne, came to the conclusion that religious education should be “the responsibility of the home and community to which the pupil belongs.” The Report of the Secondary Education Commission of 1952–53 is a significant landmark in the thinking on moral and religious education. It identified character building as the defining goal of education. “The supreme end of the educative process should be the training of the character and personality of students in such a way that they will be able to realise their full potentialities and contribute to the well-being of the community.” The report prescribed moral instruction as the means to achieve this goal. It recommended, besides, an integrative approach to moral instruction rather than treating it as a separate subject. In respect of “religious instruction”, however, the report stipulated that it “may be given in school only on a voluntary basis and outside the regular school hours, such instruction being confined to the children of the particular faith concerned and given with the consent of the parents and the managements.” The Report of the University Education Commission (1962) struck a more confident note. “If we exclude spiritual training in our institutions,” the Report warned, “we would be untrue to our whole historical development.” The Report then goes on to make a case, not for religious or moral education, but for evolving “a national faith, a national way of life based on the Indian outlook on religion, free from dogmas, rituals and assertions.” The Education Commission of 1964–66 put the spotlight on “education and national development”, from which perspective it identified the “absence of provision for education in social, moral and spiritual values” as a serious defect in the curriculum. The commission

recommended that these values be taught with the help, wherever possible, of the ethical teachings of great religions.” Agreeing with the Sri Prakasa Committee Report it recommended “direct moral instruction” for which “one or two periods a week should be set aside in the school time-table.” The National Policy on Education (1986) expressed concern over “the erosion of essential values and an increasing cynicism in society”. It advocated turning education into “a forceful tool for the cultivation of social and moral values”. Education should “foster universal and eternal values, oriented towards the unity and integration of our people”. The Programme of Action of 1992 tried to integrate the various components of value education into the curriculum at all stages of school education, including the secondary stage. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (2000), echoing the National Policy on Education (1986), lamented the “erosion of the essential social, moral and spiritual values and an increase in cynicism at all levels.” Against this backdrop, the framework advanced a plea to integrate value education into the curriculum. Stating that what was required, however “is not religious education but education about religions, their basics, the values inherent therein and also a comparative study of the philosophy of all religions.” The framework prescribed an integrative approach. Value education and education about religions should be “judiciously integrated with all subjects of study”. The shift of focus, over the decades, from religious and moral education to education for peace, via value education, parallels the shifting sense and sensitivities in the larger context of education. Remedies point to maladies. The acceptance of education for peace as a necessary ingredient of holistic education in the western context was driven by deepening anxieties about the rise and spread of violence. A similar pattern is obtained in our context as well.

Role of Teacher in Inculcating Values Among Students:

Education is a mean of value development. The end product is development of moral character, personality and good human being. The teacher has a great role in making the students good human beings and this is possible only if he himself is a good human being. The whole thrust of education is the development of values in human behaviour. Educational values are those activities which are good, useful and valuable from the point of view of education. These contribute to every sphere of life. The teacher should help in making understand the various principles of life to the students and thereby inculcate educational values among students. These values signify a code of principles which are essential for leading a noble life. It helps in building of character. The moral values which need to be inculcated among the students by the teacher are honesty, truthfulness, moral stability, good character, kindness, purity, sympathy and humility. It would help in developing the capacity of earning, vocational efficiency, character, healthy personality, use of leisure time. It promotes social efficiency by developing skills of social adjustments. Swami Vivekananda asserts, “Education is the manifestation of divine perfection already existing in man. The ideal is that we must have the whole education of the country, spiritual and secular in our hands and it must be on national lines, through national method as far as practicable. There should be an institution to train teachers who must go about preaching religion and give secular education for our people.” In the view of R.N. Tagore, “The greatest use of education is not merely to collect facts, but to know man and make one self-known to man.” Teacher can be a significant factor in the inculcation of values in the students such as Equality, Justice, Liberty and Fraternity, development of vocational and social efficiency, development of character, development of balanced personality, reorganization and reconstruction of experience, creation of good citizenship, adjustment with the environment and its modification and utilization of leisure time.

Teacher should teach to the students that every religion contains components of belief, rituals, information and knowledge, behavioural consequences and the expectations that guide the whole system. Meaning to life and reality. Spirituality connects, with the self, others, god and native. Social scenario in India and the world over demands an active Teacher population striving for peace and tolerance and hence the Teacher needs to take this agenda. The teacher has a great role in the process of a child's growing socialization. The role of a teacher during a child's early years of development is vital for children's physical and mental growth at this time. The teacher observes how the prepared environment works for a child, how children engage in materials and then the teacher adjusts the environment to their needs. This is very important in supporting a process of socialization through which the true nature of a child is revealed. Teacher has a great role in giving peace education to the students and thus promoting communal harmony among students. Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment. Teacher has a great role in Nation building which is a constructive process of engaging all students in building social cohesion, economic prosperity and political stability in an inclusive and democratic way. It is important to note that the priceless resource of any country is its human resource. There is no other resource that matches the human being, because mankind is the foundation or the corner stone of any development and civilization. Out of the human intellect, a nation is built. This can be confirmed by the fact that many countries are able to attain steady growth and development with limited natural resources through the intelligence of their people and the labour force. Students are a crucial segment of a nation's development. Thus teacher's contribution is highly

needed in promoting peace education and communal harmony among students.

Global Literacy for Promoting Cultures of Peace

Education is an effective weapon to end wars if it is used as a seed to grow the next generation into mature, peace-loving citizens of local and global communities. If an educator is an artist, education is the greatest of the arts since the medium is the human mind, love, spirit and attitude which are required for global peace and local welfare (Nakamura: 2004). Therefore, multicultural and transcultural perspectives, respecting each cultural identity would be more vital in the true sense of globalization, which should be primarily cultivated as a kernel of global literacy through global citizenship education. There must be several basic attitudes to be cultivated as a new paradigm of global education. First of all, educators should be very aware of the urgent necessity of peaceful and sustainable coexistence on this fragile earth. Secondly, we should clarify the true meaning of globalization as a transformation from ethnocentrism into multi-culturalism. Thirdly with the power of human love we should plant seeds of global literacy deep in the hearts of students in order to create a more peaceful world. Global literacy is a premise of global peace. Global literacy includes cross-cultural competence and sensitivity with multicultural, transcultural and transnational perspectives. It also requires communicative competence in an international language for global dialogue in order to solve common human problems with people of the world. Moreover, it develops cognitive, affective, social skills to reconcile from mutual strength and integrate seemingly opposing values on a higher level for the purpose of equitable coexistence.

Conclusion:

The construction of peace and the promotion of development is the responsibility of individuals, groups and international society. Responsibilities, duties and rights exist at every level and form the

basis of peace and development education programs. The role of education is essential to the promotion of a culture of peace at the level of society, which is made up of people, groups and communities. Education plays a key role in teaching about conflicts, solidarity and global citizenship. Peace and development education should not be limited to school settings, which is the current tendency, and their importance in training facilitators of groups of young people, neighbours, women and other social networks should be highlighted. Formal education should promote curricula that encourage a greater understanding of the roots of conflict, in this way offering students the keys to understanding the current world. In order to do this, it is essential to improve the training of teaching staff and the content of curriculum, courses, manuals and pedagogical materials, including new technologies in education. At the international level, multilateral organizations must guarantee the protection of human rights, protection of minorities, protection in armed conflicts, and protection of the environment. Education must promote the formation of a wide alliance of actors, which can be a new paradigm of education for peace, cultivating global literacy will guide the next generation to walk into the deep forest of cultural diversity with the necessary attitude toward issues of cultures. Consequently, it will open up the way to the creation of harmony and strength of the civic culture of peace involved in cultural diversity for human solidarity.

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