

AN ACTION RESEARCH ON ATTRIBUTES OF PEACE : A CASE STUDY

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Abstract

All religious and spiritual leaders have always focussed on internal peace as a precondition for peace in the world. Peace therefore is nothing but an internal state of mind where moral and ethical values of acceptance, positive feelings of oneself and others, forgiveness, tolerance, friendship are to be deeply rooted. If an individual establishes peace within oneself he is sure to bring about peace in the external world. Permanent peace is therefore the result of the development of an individual's ability to attain internal peace.

Introduction

Peace is an ethical issue that shows concern for humanity in the modern strife-torn world where universal violence threatens the fabric of human civilization. Nuclearism, terrorism, domestic warfare, knowledge explosion, information revolution, scientific & technological advancement are real concerns and causes of disharmony. The real paradox of our times is that there is more knowledge but less judgment, there are more experts but more problems and that we have split the atoms but not our prejudice. These are times of world peace but we are still clinging and entering into more and more domestic warfare. Peace we have to understand is the only way to success as said by Mahatma Gandhi. All religions also advocate the road to peace and Indian philosophy has always upheld the concept of non-violence. The question now is how to accomplish peace.

According to spiritualists the only way to achieve peace is to address the 'world of within'. Nothing can be imposed from outside. The UNESCO also supports this concept & declares that "Since wars begin in the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constructed. Mutual good will, friendless respect, forbearance, appreciation, impartiality men. It is the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constructed. Mutual good will, friendless respect, forbearance, appreciation, impartiality Compassion,

Tolerance & equanimity refer to a state of being mentally or spiritually at peace. Peace within oneself is the first step to bliss & happiness. Gandhiji, a strong believer of non-violence also said the force of love and pity is infinitely greater than the force of arms (Parel, 84).

Adherence to moral & ethical values is the only key to peaceful co-existence. All religions & Indian philosophical doctrines have restrained violence & preached universal brotherhood. Non-violence finds supreme position in Jainism & this doctrine if practiced by youth will breed positive values of friendship, compassion, forgiveness, tolerance & reconciliation. Respect for life is the only way by which universal peace can be preached & communalism in any form can be completely rejected. Mahavira proclaimed "there is no quality of soul more subtle than nonviolence and no virtue greater than reverence for life." Gandhiji also regarded nonviolence as not only a law of human species but a rule of science as well. Mahavira declared "I have friendship with all and enmity with no one." Non-violence therefore implies purity of thought, work and deed. All human vices are a result of attachment and possession. The result for power and possession has ultimately led to declining fundamentalism & ultimately is a threat to peace.

RATIONALE OF THE STUDY :-

Peace is one of the most important characteristics of a civilized society. As we all know the world is passing through a great upheaval and turmoil and at this juncture we should focus not on outer peace but peace within oneself. Peace does not mean stopping war but it means more than a war. It is living in harmony, being calm and relaxed from inside. Inner tranquility, good feelings inside about oneself and others, non-violence, acceptance and positive communication are attributes of peace which all individuals most seek. Accepting the fact that Indian philosophy has always advocated for internal peace the study has been proposed to find out the effect of some variables of an individual's life on a few attributes of internal peace.

OBJECTIVES :

1. To study the effect of moral and ethical attributes of internal peace on the undergraduate female students.
2. To assess the correlation between different attributes of internal peace.
3. To assess the outlook of the undergraduate female students towards attributes of peace.

METHOD :

Purposive random sampling method was used for the study.

SAMPLE :

The present sample comprised of 105 undergraduate girl students' of two urban colleges of Kolkata.

TOOLS :

Questionnaire / Opinionnaire was developed by the researcher. The questionnaire consisted of 54 questions. Which was converted into a score and quantified .The total score was 176. The Likert type (3 point scale) was used for major questions of the questionnaire with Never

carrying a score of 1, sometimes as 2 and always as 3. Different attributes of internal peace were clubbed together and classified into different categories as 'respect' for oneself, family and people of other religions; 'morality' in terms of truth, lying, cheating, bluffing; 'anger & aggressiveness' in terms of bullying and even going to the extent of killing someone; 'ego', 'tolerance', 'compassion' and 'sensuous feeling' or pleasure, loving attitude giving importance to physical comforts.

PROCEDURE

The girl students belonging to the undergraduate level were studied . The average age of the respondents was 18-20 years. The questionnaire duly prepared by the researcher was distributed among the respondents who were present on that particular day. The researcher tried to maintain objectivity as far as possible. The statistical measures used in the present study are mean, Sd, t-test and percentage.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION :

CLASSIFICATION OF THE SAMPLE :-

1. T1 : COMMUNITY CLASSIFICATION

Community		
Category	No of students	Percentage
Hindus	40	38.095238
Muslims	16	15.238095
Christians	42	40
Jain	3	2.8571429
Sikhs	1	0.952381
Others	3	2.8571429
Total	105	100

T2. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION OF THE FATHER

Father's education		
Education level	No of student	Percentage
No education	1	0.952381
primary stage	0	0
Elementary stage	3	2.857143
secondary stage	10	9.52381
Higher secondary	16	15.2382
Graduate	51	48.57143
Post graduate	16	15.2381
CA/CS	2	1.904762
MBBS	1	0.952381
M.Tech	5	4.761905
total	105	100

T3. ACADEMIC QUALIFICATION OF THE MOTHER

Mother's education		
Education level	No of student	Percentage
No education	2	1.904762
primary stage	1	0.952381
Elementary stage	5	4.761905
secondary stage	16	15.2381
Higher secondary	23	21.90476
Graduate	49	46.66667
Post graduate	9	8.571429
CA/CS	0	0
MBBS	0	0
M.Tech	0	0
total	105	100

T4. SOCIO ECONOMIC STATUS OF THE FAMILY

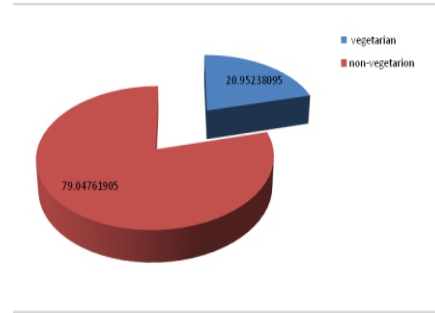
Income of the father		
Category	No of students	Percentage
No. response	1	0.952381
Middle SES	49	46.66667
Upper middle SES	38	36.19048
Higher SES	17	16.19048
Total	105	100

Middle SES-30,000 per month ,Upper middle SES-60,000 per month ,Higher SES- Above 60,000

T5. FOOD HABIT

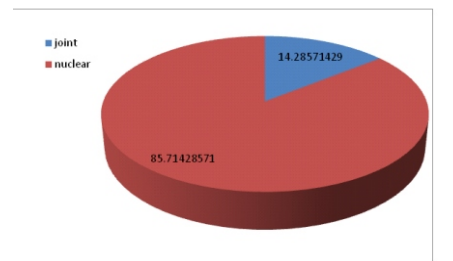
Food habit		
Category	No.of students	Percentage
vegetarian	22	20.95238
non-vegetarian	83	79.04762
Total	105	100

T5. FOOD HABIT



T6. FAMILY PATTERN

Family pattern		
Category	No.of students	Percentage
Joint family	15	14.28571
Nuclear family	90	85.71429
Total	105	100



FINDINGS :

I Communitywise Variation in Attributes of Peace

The result showed that community wise mean and S.D. for Hindus was (102.09 & 6.50) for Muslims was (98.31 & 4.55) for Christians was (111.64 & 5.43) & for others (101.57 & 3.20).

The t value of Hindus & Christians was 9.82 (two tailed) and 4.91 (one tailed) which is significant at 0.05 level. The t value of Muslims & Christians was 8.90 (two tailed) & 4.45 (one tailed) which is significant at 0.05 level.

The t value of Christians & all others is 8.25 (two tailed) and 4.12 (one tailed) which is again significant at 0.05 level.

Mean was higher for Christians than the other community namely Hindus, Muslims and others and t value (4.12) has significant at 0.05 level. So it may be concluded that a few attributes of peace level was higher in Christians than all other communities. . They may have performed better in one or more attributes of peace. Individual items when scored showed that Christians basically visit the church and listen to the holy scriptures imparted by their priests. A good moral base could be the contributory factor towards attainment of understanding oneself and others.

II. Food Habit and Variation in Attributes of Peace

Mean and S.D. for Vegetarian students was 102.09 and 6.17 for non-vegetarian was 106.63 & 7.67. The t test was 0.005 which was insignificant at 0.05 level . Earlier researches have proved that food habit determines the mindset of individuals but the researcher found that non-vegetarian students have scored better in terms of Mean.

III. Family Pattern and Variation in Attributes of Peace

Mean and S.D. for joint family was 105.26 & 7.81 and for nuclear family was 105.75 and 7.5. Both the means did not show any difference hence the t value of 0.82 was insignificant at 0.05 level. As far as collaboration and family bonding is concerned both nuclear and joint family showed no difference with regard to attributes of peace.

IV Parental Education and Variation in Attributes of Peace

This is no correlation between parental education & attributes and peace ($r=0.033$).

V. Socio-economic Status and Variation in Attributes of Peace

Mean and S.D. Score for middle socioeconomic status (MSES) was 116.89 and 7.77, upper middle socio-economic status (UMSES) was 108.78 and 7.67, higher socioeconomic status (HSES) was 107.64 and 5.60. The t test value between the MSES and UMSES was 5.76* and between MSES & HSES was 5.36* both significant at 0.05 & 0.01 level.

The t value for UMSES and HSES was 0.53 which was insignificant at 0.05 level. The research finding shows that peace attributes prevail more in the MSES category. This finding corroborates the contention of the earlier study undertaken by Inglehart 1997, which shows that those with higher income are often assumed to have less traditional values.

VI Variation in Individual items with regard to Attributes of Peace.

In course of the study the researcher while analysing individual items has found that about 95% respondents' respected and obeyed their parents, elders and teachers. The same percentage also respected people of other religions. Acceptance and appreciation is also as high as 84% and 86%. This finding corroborates the contention of the earlier study undertaken by Varshney 2002 where tolerance might be higher in urban areas where many different people interact with each other and another study by Bookman 1978 where the level of tolerance might be higher in small villages where everyone tends to know the other.

In terms of morality, lying and truthfulness has not been taken that seriously. About 95% and 93% resort to lying and being untruthful to get their work done. As far as politeness and humility is concerned 56% sometimes practice this act of morality.

As far as aggression is concerned in terms of harming or killing other 100% vehemently opposed such a heinous act of cruelty on the part of humanity. They believed in non-violence but not in the strictest terms of inculcating the Jaina Values.

84% respondents said a feeling of hatred or dislike develops for others when their parents / teachers compare them with others. The ego component is a matter of concern and disturbs internal peace..79% said admitting their mistakes in front of everyone is highly shameful for them. The ego component was further analysed and 35% respondents felt they should always be respected, 40% felt they should be praised and yet 25% others felt they should not bow down to anybody. 74% respondent opined that they would always want to be a centre of attraction in a crowd and failing to do so would make them highly frustrated, demoralized and inculcate an inferiority complex within them. Ego component has found a boost among the respondents.. Given a few Options with regard

to a breakup in a relationship like committing suicide, hating, killing, going into depression 52% opined that they would simply not bother and move ahead in life. They do not feel dampened after a breakup in a relationship .It is a matter of concern and more bonding has to be inculcated. Higher the ego ,higher the mental stress. Controlling stress and anxiety will only bring internal peace.

Conflict resolution needs special attention among this age group. 33% expressed that if there is a conflict between their friend and their enemy they would not dare to tell their friend that she were wrong. Conflict resolution should be taught in the early years of childhood when the child's plastic powers are modifiable. As far as revenge and forgiveness is concerned 70% felt revenge should be taken and 89% did not believe in forgiving a friend who has cheated on her.

Anger is a component which disturbs peace within oneself and the outside world. We lose our mental balance and this anger makes us violent : 76% respondents most of time get angry and 59% react to their anger by showing an outburst on others and 36% by becoming violent and even going to the extent of breaking things around. According to spiritualists meditation is the only remedy. Students when asked whether they practice meditation 93% reported of not ever practicing it. So if individuals within are tensed angry and frustrated then stress builds up in the collective consciousness thereby creating more stress in an individual and collective life. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi (1986C) while introducing Transcendental Programme in 1958, has emphasized that individual peace is the basic unit of world peace. Over 500 research studies have reported the effects of Maharshi's Transcendental Meditation Technique are, in fact, research on the process of developing peace, whether on individual or collective level. (Orme Johnson & Farrow 1997) Chalmers, Clements Schenkluhn & Weinless, 1989a 1989b', 1991 have also studied the process of meditation and have yielded positive results and showed significantly greater physiological relaxation.

There was yet one more sensitive issue which the researcher would like to put forth. It is human nature that we never take a blame on ourselves but easily put the onus on others. Students were asked to report on whether they have the habit of blaming others when they enter into a problem. 97% reported that this was the usual trend and they too practice it.

Regarding sensuous feeling or the pleasure loving principle a mixed trend was seen. 62% felt physical comforts and luxuries were many much important to them. 67% felt they could not abstain from tasty and stimulating food. Control of senses therefore through yoga and meditation should be taught. Sports and games should be encouraged and included within the curriculum..The researcher in course of the study found that students are not inclined towards sports and games. 48% reported of not participating at all in sports and 44% reported of doing it sometimes just for fun and frolic. Girls have not taken sports seriously in their college

When asked about the type of painting they would prefer in their room, 4% approved of spiritual paintings and the rest all went in for nature & abstract ones. Regarding the kind of TV Channel they watch 19% watch M-TV, 12% watch Channel V & 69% watch soaps and serials and entertainment channels. Given an option of watching a spiritual channel they all opted out.. Girls when asked whether they would love to read spiritual books 57% reported of not reading it and 38% reported of sometimes reading it. The researcher believes spiritual books would enlighten their mind towards internal peace. With regard to religious affinity. 45% students

visit their religious institutions and listen to the doctrines of their scriptures but there is large chunk which stays any from it. Eastern religions and cultures always and Western religions and cultures sometimes have upheld esoteric traditions and that spiritual enlightenment by inculcation of right values can always build a possible linkage between inner and outer peace in our lives .Joseph Campbell has also strongly advocated and focussed on inner peace as a precondition for peace in the world.

VII. Correlation between peace attributes

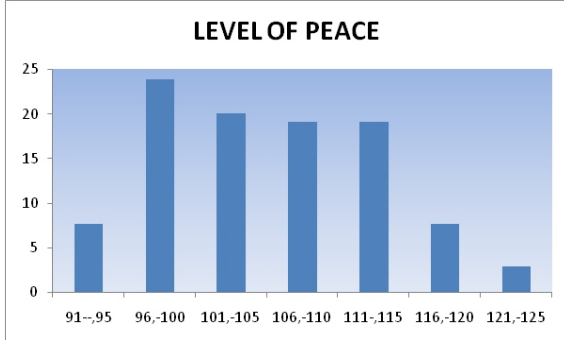
CATEGORY	FAMILY RESPECT	MORALITY	ANGER	EGO	TOLERANCE	COMPASSION
SENSOUS FEELING	0.252904*	0.40255	-0.04226	0.059351	0.528273**	0.416407**
FAMILY RESPECT		0.158569	-0.06211	0.141283	0.322474*	0.315424*
MORALITY			0.096886	0.186094	0.400709**	0.061556
ANGER				0.241275*	-0.17505	-0.18843
EGO					0.176723	-0.1463
TOLERANCE						0.506151**
COMPASSION						

*-LOW CORRELATION

**-MEDIUM CORRELATION

VIII. Level of peace among respondents

Total attributes of peace		
Class interval	No of students	Percentage
91-95	8	7.619048
96-100	25	23.80952
101-105	21	20
106-110	20	19.04762
111-115	20	19.04762
116-120	8	7.619048
121-125	3	2.857143
Total	105	100



REMARKS :- The levels of peace as designed by the researcher in table T8 shows that the peace attributes have shown a gradual decline and that no respondent has gone above the 125 mark inspite of the total scores being 176. The mean value is 105 and Sd 7.5. Scoring of 1 in each item means no peace. Since there are 54 items, 54 is the level of no peace. To classify the level of peace the researcher segregated the scores and arranged them in the form of a class interval. The highest level of peace is among 25 students between the class interval 96-100. The intervals of 101-105, 106-110, 111-115 with students numbering 21, 20, 20 respectively fall in the middle level of peace. The intervals of 91-95, 116-120, 121-125 comprising of 8, 8 and 3 respectively fall in the low level of peace. The highest score was 176 and none of the students have gone above the 125 level. It can therefore be concluded that all respondents have attained some basic levels of peace in terms of attributes assessed but the maximum level of peace in terms of attributes is a distant dream.

CONCLUSION

The above stated results have revealed non-significant differences existed between food habit and attributes of peace, family pattern and attributes of peace. The socio-economic status and attributes of peace results have revealed significant differences between the middle socio-economic status, upper middle socio-economic status and the higher socioeconomic status. The

middle class or the first category the researcher believes still cling on to their traditional values and hence a significant difference. With regard to community a significant difference is noted between the Christian community undergraduate girl students and the other communities. It cannot be generalized that such a trend would always be seen. For more generalized findings more large scale studies with a bigger sample size controlled & experimental groups should be taken for assessing individual items. The difference may have been noticed because the college from which these students were drawn is one of the renowned institutions and has a long history of traditional and moral values. With regard to other individual attributes of peace like politeness, humility, teamwork, collaboration, revenge, forgiveness, ego management, conflict resolutions the students need a long way to meet its desired level. Lasting peace cannot be brought between friends if the aggression revenge cycle is not broken. Negotiating & forgiveness is the only way. Forgiveness has to be taught right from childhood and that if everyone were to follow the 'eye for an eye' said Gandhiji, the whole world would go blind. Internal peace is the only road to external peace.

Peace education should therefore be a subject in the school and college curriculum. Teachers should also promote, encourage and focus such educational activities which will help students inculcate moral values. Moral science as a subject finds place only in the Christian missionary schools but all schools should incorporate such a useful subject. Let us not forget this subject has cognitive, attitudinal and behavioural component. Betty Reardon one of the leading experts on peace education has analysed more than a hundred peace curricula guidelines in current use in the US today from Kindergarten through high school. She concludes: "There are yet no clear and precise limits to, nor standards for what is to be included in peace education."

Indian educational system should also design its own peace curriculum catering to its diverse cultural, social and moral values. The focus of peace should be 'I' and not an outside call, but a call from within. This call from within will not be religion based identities but spiritual upliftment through meditation which the researcher in the study has proved that undergraduate girl students do not ever practice meditation. Meditation should be a part of the curriculum in every college because self introspection begins from working on the mind and not acting and reacting on the outside world. Moreover researchers in Thailand have revealed that meditation makes the mind calm and peaceful and eliminates mental impurities and increases physical health. Mind is the chief and peace will follow. Permanent peace therefore is the result of an individual's ability to attain internal peace. Let us all remember where religion ends spiritualism begins and this is the only road to peace.

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