

INDIAN PHILOSOPHY AND PEACE EDUCATION

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Abstract

Philosophy is a part of our day to day life, it is an attitude towards life and universe, it provides a living force to mankind. Today the way violence is emerging in an unprecedented manner in our society and 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 oppression and exploitation amidst a seemingly outward development enjoyed by a few. The saddest part of the story is that this state of disorder and confusion in the society is affecting the children's innocent minds. Therefore the need to nurture peace in the hearts of children has arisen as an urgent issue to be addressed. The basis of the whole peace education lies on philosophy of love and wisdom, truth and ahimsa that teaches and inculcates values in human being. It may have different forms and modes like value education, moral education, and spiritual and life education. Peace education is more effective and meaningful when it is adopted according to the social and cultural context and the needs of the country. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values together with the universal human values. We as teacher educators are influenced by the Indian philosophy and feel that education of any form involving the principles followed by our ancient saints, social reformers, our great leaders based on the value system can definitely contribute in spreading the message of peace to mankind at every level right from our family, school, college and university.

Introduction

The differentiating feature of peace education is its focus on the problems of human violence. In short, peace education can be defined as an educational response to the problem of human violence. Peace education should aim that child should be flawless, full of goodness and when he becomes adult and fully grown up as a man or a woman, he or she must be perfect. This quality should not be only reflected in his degree from a school or a college or university but it should appear also in his practical life to others that he or she lives without flaws. Perfection should be the main aim of education. The paper will discuss the various aspects of peace education and how Indian philosophy can help in implementation of the goals of peace education.

Philosophy is a part of our day to day life; it is an attitude towards life and universe, which provides a living force to mankind. Today the way violence is emerging in an unprecedented manner in our society and 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 oppression and exploitation amidst a seemingly outward development enjoyed by a few. The majority of mankind lives in stark poverty, struggling for bare survival. There is so much disorder and confusion in the society man has built for himself. The saddest part of the story is that

this state of disorder and confusion in the society is affecting the children's innocent minds. Children naturally absorb the spirit of violence in the atmosphere and will soon grow to be the next generation of perpetrators of violence. Therefore the need to nurture peace in the hearts of children has arisen as an urgent issue to be addressed.

To create and establish a just and peaceful world, peace and human right education is a starting point because peace is the only way to reduce violence and promote the culture of tolerance, harmony and interfaith dialogue, we must provide peace education in schools, colleges, universities and family. The basis of the whole peace education lies on philosophy of love and wisdom, truth and ahimsa that teaches and inculcates values in human being. It may have different forms and modes like value education, moral education, and spiritual and life education. Peace education is more effective and meaningful when it is adopted according to the social and cultural context and the needs of the country. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values together with the universal human values.

Today teachers complain about increasing disciplinary problems in schools. One teacher says, "I am appalled to see the mindless behavior of the adolescents in school. Their mentality seems so different from us!" The public criticizes the youth whom we produce at schools as insensitive to the problems of society, selfish, narrow minded, lacking in intellectual depth and susceptible to the violent and corrupt social pressures. The excellence of a few students cannot make up for the rest. R.D. Laing (1978) puts it this way:

' A child born today in the U.K. stands a ten times greater chance of being admitted to a mental hospital than a university.... We are driving mad our children more effectively than we are genuinely educating them.'

In India educational conditions of our children today are not that grave, but if proper care is not taken at this stage that day will not be far away, when condition of our children will be beyond our control and we will force these children to be treated like mechanical objects for learning science and technology mainly. Peace education is not just about what happens in school. It is not about what you need to know for the test or memorize to please the teacher. Peace education is about how you can help build the future and make your world a more peaceful place to live.

Under the present scenarios there is a growing realization in the world of education today, that children should be educated in the art of peaceful living. As a result, more and more peace concepts, attitudes, values and behavior skills are being integrated into school curricula in many countries. There is also renewed interest to develop peace-related disciplines such as values education, moral education, global education, etc. In the past we seemed to have assumed that the more knowledge people have, the better they are. Accordingly, we stressed cognitive learning in schools at the cost of developing children's emotional, social, moral and humanistic aspects. The consequence of such imbalanced learning is evident today in the forms of youth unrest with their antisocial attitudes and behavior problems.

Violence is not originally an external force. It starts in the minds of the individuals. When man starts thinking of amazing wealth and power to promote his own self he goes to any extent in order to achieve this and shuts out every other being and values. Man uses his intellect not to cultivate good will and peace but to breed violence and terrorism thus destroys the peace in the world. A Gandhi is born only once, so is a Jesus, a Buddha, but lesser mortals like all of us should contribute our genuine efforts to fight against violence for peaceful co-existence. To achieve this right kind of education is to be provided. It is an instrument which shapes the destiny of people. Education lights the lamp of the dispelling darkness and ignorance.

Bhagwat Gita says- Education imparts intellectual culture- it secures capacity and adoptability. Capacity and stability available once, secures wealth wealth to conform to Dharma which leads to ultimate peace & happiness. The right type of education is the key to peace and prosperity leading to a just society. Right type of Education inspires one with confidence, indicates moral values, faster social stability, gives prosperity and ultimately teaches us the values of fraternity and love for everyone. Our National poet Tagore prayed for knowledge that is free, and for strength to raise the mind high above daily trifles, for tireless striving towards perfection and for a mind that is without fear. Only education can make this a reality.

Axiology refers to values or value system. Are values ultimately decided once and for all? or are values in a state of flux? What values are to be acquired and what values are to be rejected. Logic, Ethics and Aesthetics are absolute values. Truth, goodness, beauty, judgment and morals include the study of what is good and what is bad? What is virtue and what is wise? What is right and what is wrong? Indian philosophers consider Darshan as the symbol of visual knowledge which means to gain such a knowledge which can be obtained through eyes. Overall we can say Indian philosophy is an attitude towards life and universe where an effort is made to search truth on the basis of logical inquiry. Further we can say it is a living force.

Education ensures continuity of thinking, continuity of mind without which human progress is impossible. The negative thinking that nothing is worthwhile unless it lasts for ever, runs very deep in human psyche. This is very important, for continuing and existence of life, to consider. Even a little discontinuity of mind may result into disaster for the mankind.

Cultivation of knowledge is necessary for the human beings. This keeps them engaged in the most useful purpose of understanding and utilizing the nature. The important question is whether the aim of education should be to fill the mind with knowledge which has direct practical utility or should we try to give our pupils mental possession, which are good on their only account. Humanistic elements in education are not less important than the utilization elements. If the life of imagination, is to be sufficiently developed the study of art, literature, culture etc. is important. It is only through imagination that man becomes aware of what the world might be, without it the progress will be trivial and mechanical. Of course, science can stimulate imagination which can be beneficial to the development of the society and the world.

One should think about the methods of training, especially in relation to peace education. Here we are no longer concerned with politics, but with normal education and training of character with this psychology and ethics. Maintaining discipline in education is very important. For this the child acquires self-discipline, which consists partly of good habits, partly of the realization, in concrete terms, that it is sometimes worthwhile to resist an impulse for the sake of some ultimate gain. It is clear that education of character must begin at birth and requires a reversal of much of the practices of nurses and ignorant mothers. Great Philosophers and Thinkers on Education have given their opinions on the philosophy of life:

Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam's philosophy of life is

Glory of God, Faith in God & Efficacy of Prayer.

Gandhiji's Philosophy of life was his

dedication to Supreme God- He said "God provides everything; God is life, truth and light." Truth and Ahimsa- Truth and ahimsa are two sides of the coins.

He wanted to establish Ram Rajya which he identified with justice, peace, happiness and welfare of all.

Dr. Radhakrishnan-

Philosophy is idealism, means life has a purpose, and ideas and values are the dynamic forces that give direction to life and help it to achieve its goal.

Swami Dayananda-

Back to Vedas-Vedas holds the key to all our social and religion problems. Vedas contain the truth of science as well as truth of religion.

Swami Vivekananda-

His philosophy tells us that-

God resides in every human's heart.

The best worship of God is service to mankind.

Ethics and morality should be the real basis of life.

Love and renunciation should permeate the universe.

Religion means self realization through self control.

We as teacher educators are influenced by the Indian philosophy and feel that education of any form involving the principles followed by our ancient saints, social reformers, our great leaders based on the value system can definitely contribute in spreading the message of peace to mankind at every level right from our family, school, college and university. Our media can definitely play a positive role of spreading the message of peace whenever the incidences of terrorism, crime and cruelty are happening around. Focus should not only to be given on highlighting the problems, but also words with a touch of values and peace education will definitely help the community to withstand such undesirable incidences, and will not work as fire to increase the level of anger in people.

Finally peace education should aim that child should be flawless, full of goodness and when he becomes adult and fully grown up

as a Man or a woman, he or she must be perfect.

This quality should not be only reflected in his degree from a school or a college or university but it should appear also in his practical life to others that he or she lives without flaws. Perfection should be the main aim of education.

Conclusion:

Looking at the conditions of our society, it makes peace education obligatory in our schools. Though it seems to be a recent development, it has been evolving even before the 20th century. No education system is complete without some form of component similar to peace education. It may take such forms as moral, value or citizenship, democratic or global education. The differentiating feature of peace education is the focus it has on the problem of human violence. In short, peace education can be defined as an educational response to the problem of human violence. It has the following basic features:

It aims at protecting children's minds from being imbued by violence in the society. It prepares them for building a peaceful world by empowering them with necessary knowledge, attitudes, and skills. It humanizes child, teaching, learning and school. Schools can directly benefit by adopting peace education. There is ample evidence to show that it improves the quality of teaching and learning, discipline, and helps emotional development in children.

Peace Education should aim to develop

Following attitudes in students:

- Ecological awareness
- Self-respect
- Tolerance
- Respect for human dignity and difference
- Intercultural understanding
- Gender Sensitivity
- Caring and empathy
- Non-violence and reconciliation
- Social responsibility
- Solidarity, world-mindedness resolution

Peace Education is not only the challenge for Teachers and Students, it is the responsibility of every citizen to come forward and adapt the path of peace to make the world worth living with happiness.

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