

PEACE EDUCATION - IMPORTANCE AND ROLE OF A TEACHER

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Abstract

In today's age of impatience, intolerance, disrespect, disregard, and aggression it has become vital for us to discuss and advocate peace education. In this paper the author has tried to throw some light on Peace, Education, Peace Education, Importance of Peace Education and Role of a Teacher in Peace Education. Before launching upon the subject it is important to understand the meaning of both peace and education separately.

PEACE

Peace is a very important / vital aspect as far as human life is concerned, because it provides the path way to progress without any fear & confusion. Peaceful co-existence and harmonious living are the essential features of any civilized society for its balanced growth and development. The word peace has a wide range of meanings. Peace is the absence of violence, both structural or indirect and direct violence. Peace can be said to be a holistic concept which includes negative & positive aspects of peace. Absence of obstructive & in conducive factors such as war, threat, conflict, social degradation, discrimination, exploitation, injustice etc. amounts to negative peace. Whereas presence of happiness, health, good economy, social justice, conducive atmosphere for human rights etc. elements can be termed as positive peace. The noble eightfold path shown by Lord Gautam Buddha and Eleven Vows of Mahatma Gandhi are very much relevant for peaceful coexistence & harmonious living in today's world. Theresa M. Bey & Gwendolyn Y. Turner (1995) defined peace in a practical way : peace is the behavior that encourages harmony in the way people talk, listen and interact with each other and discourages actions that hurt, harm or destroy each other.

All definitions & meanings of peace can come under three broad categories namely i) Inner peace (e. g. harmony & peace with oneself, compassion, joy, sense of freedom, spiritual peace, absence of inner conflicts etc.), ii) Social peace (e. g. peace between person & person, friendship, love, mutual understanding, cooperation, brotherhood, human rights, unity etc.), and iii) Peace with nature (e.g. harmony with natural environment & mother earth) It is necessary to consider all these perspectives about peace for peace building efforts. It is also essential to note that peace is both the process and the end.

EDUCATION

Peace & Education are supplementary and complementary to each other as both contribute to the development & welfare of human beings. Education shapes the society in a harmonious way & makes people civilized. Education is not just learning about academic subjects, it is lot more than that. Education is a lifelong process. The real objectives of education are 1) education for spiritual freedom 2) education for transformation 3) Education for creativity 4) education for producing complete human being 4) education for transmission of ideas of value 5) education for social democracy 6) education for creating social order peace & unity.

According to Mahatma Gandhi "Education is an unending exercise till death which moulds and shapes the human body, mind & character. It can play a vital role in the establishment of peace not only at the personal level but also at the societal, national & international level". He was of the opinion that the aim of education is to make a person self-dependant, efficient & skillful so that he could contribute for himself as well as for society & nation. He strongly advocated that Basic education must aim at the development of three H i.e. HEAD, HANDS and HEART.

According to Kothari Commission (1964-1965) following are the objectives of education i) Increase in productivity ii) promoting social & national integration iii) education & modernization , vi) developing social, moral & spiritual values.

PEACE EDUCATION

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

"Peace education is based on the philosophy of non-violence, love compassion, trust, cooperation & reverence for the human family and all life on our beautiful planet"- Fran Schmidt & Alice Friedman, (1988).

Peace education aims at the total development of a child. It attempts to inculcate human & social values in the minds

of the child and to develop a set of behavioral skills / life skills in order to help students to understand & solve problems & conflicts in positive & peaceful ways. Peace education is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual & social growth of children within a frame work, deeply rooted in traditional human values.

If we analyze the above definitions and meanings of peace education we can summarize that-

1. It is an educational response to the problem of human violence.
2. It is a skill & attitude building process.
3. It is based on the philosophy of love & non-violence.
4. It is for the total development of a child.
5. It inculcates human & social values in the mind of a child.
6. It empowers a child to use creative & non-destructive ways to settle conflicts.

Peace education addresses the prevention & resolution of all forms of conflicts & violence from the interpersonal to global level, and leads to peaceful living. It strengthens respect for human rights & fundamental freedom.

We will all agree with the fact that we have made a complete mess of education by linking it only with academic study or technical know-how. The present degradation of society and loss of human values is the result of this error. Education does not comprise merely of imparting of text book knowledge or preparing the child for a career. It is not just going to school & college for some 18 years and having a degree. It is more than that. As Swami Vivekanand rightly said,"we need

a man-making and nation building education”.

Lured by commercialism we are at present following money-making education ignoring man making education. As a result chaos and disorder reigns in the society. Various committees & commissions have been highlighting the urgent need for incorporating appropriate programmes that will bring back peace and order in our society. This can be achieved only through peace education.

A number of UNICEF documents have confirmed the vision of basic education as a process that encompasses the knowledge, skill, attitudes & values needed to live peacefully in an interdependent world. The UNICEF “Anti War Agenda”, set out in the State of the World's Children 1996, declares: “.....Disputes may be inevitable, but violence is not. To prevent continued cycles of conflict, education must seek to promote peace & tolerance, not fuel hatred & suspicion.” The 1996 study by Graca Machel on “ The Impact of Armed Conflict on Children”, reaffirmed the importance of education in shaping peaceful future. “..... Both the content & the process of education should promote peace, social justice, respect for human rights & the acceptance of responsibility. Children need to learn skills of negotiation, problem solving, critical thinking and communication, that will enable them to resolve conflicts without resorting to violence.” This vision of Maria Montessori's about education provides a meaningful and sound basis for peace education. She looked at education as a tool for building world peace.

IMPORTANCE OF PEACE EDUCATION

Violence is emerging in an unprecedented manner in our society. We are living in the era of unprecedented violence in the forms of terrorism, war, communal riots, crimes, injustice, and oppression & exploitation amidst seemingly outward development enjoyed by few. The majority of the mankind lives in stark poverty, struggling for bare survival. Due to globalized market economy disparities are growing, making a society more structurally violent & less peaceful. In Uttar Pradesh alone in 2011, there were 7,702 cases of atrocities on women & children of schedule castes and schedule tribes. Atrocities on women are also increasing every year. Women are not safe in our society. Our capital city of New Delhi, alone records almost 5,234 cases of women's harassment in 2011. In other places also cases of atrocities on women are increasing. In West Bengal 29,133, Andhra Pradesh 28,246 and in Uttar Pradesh 22,639 cases were registered. As far as riots are concerned, Uttar Pradesh & Maharashtra witnessed highest numbers of riots in the country in 2011, 104 & 84 respectively.

The innocent minds of children naturally absorb the spirit of violence in the atmosphere they soon grow to be the next generation of perpetrator of the violence. This is evident from the recent spurt in the crimes by juveniles in India. According to the data of the National Crime Record Bureau 24527 juveniles were apprehended all over India during 2007. The incidence of juvenile crimes recording an increase each year. The numbers of juvenile crimes in 2007 increased by 8.4% over 2006 and in 2008 increased by about 9.2% over the previous year.

In Gohana village of Haryana, a 16 yr old girl murdered her mother as her mother opposed her choice of life partner. In Nagpur a group of 7-8 adolescent killed a 12 standard student in an eve teasing case. In another case, a school going boy was administered poison by his schoolmates as he refused to introduce them to his female classmate. These are only few representative examples. As per State Crime Record Bureau Report 2001, almost 2972 cases were registered against juveniles, which includes murder, culpable homicide, rape, attempt to murder, kidnapping, theft, dacoits cases. In 2011, Juveniles killed 145 persons & 135 cases of attempt to murder were registered in the states.

The lack of tolerance and exposure to violence is creating problems within the social set-up. Most of the schools are also witnessing an increase in youngsters indulging in unruly and acceptable behavior. Violence or aggression which is intentional infliction of harm on others is visible in schools in five different forms i.e. i) verbal violence (e.g. insulting, name calling, shouting, cursing, threatening etc.), ii) psychological violence (blaming, condemning, scorning, ridiculing etc.), iii) physical violence (e.g. slapping, caning, torturing, hitting etc.), iv) criminal violence (e.g. stabbing, shooting, destroying property, raping etc.), v) structural violence (violence arising from the way school is set

This violence or aggression stems from many factors like i) provocation from others ii) high levels of arousal, iii) exposure to media violence, iv) unpleasant environmental conditions, v) aspects of personality, vi) frustration etc. and these should be taken into considerations while planning ways of reducing students violent behavior. Due to violence in school, the happy social climate of the school is affected adversely. A negative climate charged with fear & threat emerges which has devastating effects on the children, who are the future pillars of our nation. In this backdrop the need for peace education to nurture peace in the hearts and minds of children has arisen as an urgent need.

Unfortunately, due to subject centered & examination oriented learning at school, education has lost much of it's purpose and beauty. We are stressing on cognitive learning at the cost of developing children's emotional, social, moral and humanistic aspects. Today's youth unrest and their antisocial and behavioral problems are the consequences of such imbalanced learning. To save mankind from the present predicament what is needed today is nothing but peace education. Peace education is also essential to address problems that arise due to globalization which extends beyond national boundaries. It can effectively address the issues of environmental destructions too.

AIMS OF PEACE EDUCATION

Peace education should aim at equipping a person with the following knowledge, skill, attitudes & values

Knowledge about	Skills	Attitudes	Values
own needs	Self awareness	Respect for differences	Love
the values	Communication	Tolerance	Peace
oneself and others	Critical thinking	Acceptance of others	Non-violence
how problems & conflicts can be resolved	Creative thinking	Gender equality	Right Action
mediation process		Joy in living	Truth
human rights	Empathy	Self respect,	Justice
responsibilities	Assertiveness	Positive thinking	Equality
	Dealing with emotions	Positive self image & Self Respect	Brotherhood
	Decision making		Respect for human personality
	Coping with stress		Freedom, Honesty Secularism, Scientific temper, Self discipline

ROLE OF TEACHER IN PEACE EDUCATION

A teacher's role has been defined by our scholars in different ways. As per S. Radhakrishnan, "The teacher's place in society is of great importance. He acts as a pivot for transmission of intellectual traditions & technical skills from generation to generation and helps to keep the lamp of civilization burning." Kothari Commission rightly remarked that "The destiny of India is being shaped in her / his classroom".

According to Humayun Kabir, "Teachers are literally the arbiters of a nation's destiny."

It is clear from the above remarks that a teacher has to play a vital role in shaping the Nation's future course. What better way can we think of,

Than imparting peace education and shaping the nation destiny.

A peace educator's task is a tight rope walk. He has to take pains and exercise many cautions too. As peace education aims at the total development of the child and helps students to understand and solve problems & conflicts in non-violent ways, the role of teacher becomes of immense value. He has to inculcate human and social values in the minds of child and develop a set of 'behavioral skills necessary for peaceful living.

2. Teacher is a role model for students, hence his behavior should not contradict with what he teaches. Children learn more from the ways a teacher speaks, behaves, responds to challenges and looks at issues than from what he teaches.

3. A teacher has to first develop herself / himself and must be sincerely attempting to be free of prejudice, as he can have a powerful and positive influence on hundreds & thousands of children and youth in imparting peace education.

4. In order to play an effective & efficient role a teacher has to acquire / develop qualities such as tolerance, respect of and appreciation of others, being fair & open minded, empathetic, mediation etc.

5. To be a model for the students the teacher first transform and change his / her inner self. Then the students can be helped to understand and feel what a peaceful person is like.

6. To help students to learn how to make peace with themselves and with others it is necessary that teacher must equip himself / herself with essential skills, values etc.

7. A Teacher must understand that world's present problems are basically "the human problems" and are not technological but ethical problems i.e. they have to do with universal values. He should not deal with multicultural, multiethnic, multi religious problems in isolation or in bits and pieces but should address it as an integral part of the whole programme.

The Peace Education programme in school is basically a character building intervention based on human and social values with stress on developing peaceful living competencies in children. Hence the most effective approach would be child-centered education in which the teacher has to play a number of roles as facilitator such as planner, initiator, climate builder, analyzer, mediator, organizer of knowledge and an evaluator.

To make Peace Education meaningful the teacher has to carefully design the peace education programme. He has to i) Identify needs ii) analyze the existing apparent conditions iii) decide the specific objectives iv) Identify effective strategies & practices v) prepare the plan of action vi) implement action plan vii) monitoring the activities and viii) Evaluate the programme.

There are four levels of needs to be identified in designing a peace education programme. They are 1) Individual / self needs 2) School needs 3) National needs and 4) Global needs.

The most felt need is building an effective, integrated personality in the child with positive self-esteem. To live peacefully an individual has to have many behavioral / life skills which will enable him to translate knowledge, attitudes and values into action. Self awareness, communication, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, assertiveness, coping with stress & emotions etc. are psychological and interpersonal skills that promote mental well being and that lead to a healthy & productive life. These life skills enable individual to deal effectively with the demands & challenges of every day life - WHO (1994). Equipping persons with these skills may go a long way toward reducing aggression (Toch 1985). A teacher & school should help the children to develop such skills so that they are nurtured as empowered members of society.

In designing Peace Education Programme, a clear vision and a model to ensure integrity & the consistency of the effort, is needed. The concept of Peace Education being so wide, a Model of Peace Education is very essential.

The model should consist of following ten basic themes which can accommodate many peace values & concepts which are most meaningful in the present global context. 1) Think Positive 2) be compassionate 3) Discover inner peace 4) learn to live together 5) Respect human dignity 6) Develop critical thinking 7) Resolve conflict non-violently 8) peace in community 9) Be your true self 10) Care for the planet. Such model will help teachers to identify peace concepts in the curriculum.

However while carrying out this yeoman's task a peace educator must keep in mind the following Do's and Don't's

Do's

He should-

- 1 equip himself with essential skills and values
- 2 generate emotional climate in school
- 3 evaluate students continuously not only in academic but also in behavioral aspects.
- 4 strive for creativity in students
- 5 make learning joyful & meaningful.
- 6 identify children's needs & infuse peace values into lessons.
- 7 adopt peace approaches into the teaching & learning process.
- 8 attempt to develop a set of life skills in students.
- 9 prepare Peace Education Plan & develop a model taking into considerations needs of students.
- 10 adopt child centered approach
- 11 acts as a facilitator & plays a number of role such as planner, guide etc.
- 12 implement a fair system of discipline.
- 13 try to build school as a community based on the principles of mutual respect & cooperation.
- 14 emphasize the value of non-violence.
- 15 propagate child rights.

16 refer students found in vicious aggressive behavior for counseling.

17 take an unequivocal stand against leveling in school because it can have divesting effects both on the victims and on the bullies too.

18 each students forgiveness which can be an effective means for reducing anger & aggression.

19 make their students aware of the impact of market economic policies

20 provide sustainable solutions

21 integrate peace education in all subjects

Don'ts

1. He should not behave in contradiction with his / her teachings.

2. He should not be biased or prejudiced.

3. He should not use physical & verbal violence to control students.

4. He should not create negative climate charged with fear & threat.

5. He should not treat peace education as a separate subject.

CONCLUSION

In the present era of chaos, upheavals, separatism, terrorism and violence PEACE EDUCATION alone can stop the degeneration of our society and a well equipped Teacher is our ray of hope. Peace education should be integrally interwoven into our education system right from the Primary schooling stage.

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