

Peace education

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Abstract

“A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems, have the skills to resolve conflicts and struggle for justice non-violently, live by international standards of human rights and equity, appreciate cultural diversity, and respect the Earth and each other. Such learning can only be achieved with systematic education for peace.”

-Hague Appeal for Peace Global Campaign for Peace Education

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Introduction

In 1945, the United Nations was established to “save succeeding generations from the scourge of war”, “to reaffirm faith in the...dignity and worth of the human person (and) in the equal rights of men and women”, “to establish conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained”, and “to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom...”

Peace Education has developed as a means to achieve these goals. It is education that is “directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.” It promotes “understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups” and furthers “the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.”

In other words, peace education is an integral part of the work of the United Nations. Through a humanising process of teaching and learning, peace educators facilitate human development. They strive to counteract the dehumanisation of poverty, prejudice, discrimination, rape, violence, and war. Originally aimed at eliminating the possibility of global extinction through nuclear war, peace education currently addresses the broader objective of building a culture of peace. Since the early decades of the 20th century, “peace education” programs around the world have represented a spectrum of focal themes, including anti-nuclearism, international understanding, environmental responsibility, communication skills, non-violence, conflict resolution techniques, democracy, and human rights awareness, tolerance of diversity, coexistence and gender equality, among others. Some have also addressed spiritual dimensions of inner harmony, or synthesized a number of the foregoing issues into programs on world citizenship.

While academic discourse on the subject has increasingly recognized the need for a broader, more holistic approach to peace education, a review of field-based projects reveals that three variations of peace education are most common: conflict resolution training, democracy education, and human rights education. New approaches are emerging and calling into question some of theoretical foundations of the models just mentioned. The most significant of these new approaches

focuses on peace education as a process of worldview transformation.

Concept

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 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 urgent issues to be addressed. Fortunately, a few countries may still remain unaffected by such forces extending over the surface of the earth. But the questions remain: How long can they remain so? No country can remain aloof under the pressures of globalization. Under the present secular forces education is narrowing down into the teaching of certain subject matters necessary only for passing examinations. Due to such subject- centred and examination-oriented learning at school the purpose and the beauty of whole education seems to have much lost.

Today teachers complain about increasing disciplinary problems in schools. One teacher says, "I am appalled to see the mindless behaviour 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. Under the present predicament 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 behavioural 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 behavioural problems.

What is Peace Education?

Peace education is more effective and meaningful when it is adopted according to the social and cultural context and the needs of a country. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values together with the universal human values. It should also be globally relevant. Peace education could be defined in many ways. There is no universally accepted definition as such. Here are some good definitions from peace literature:

Ian Harris and John Synott have described Peace Education as a series of "teaching encounters" that draw from people:

- i) their desire for peace;
- ii) non-violent alternatives for managing conflict; and
- iii) skills for critical analysis of structural arrangements that produce and legitimize injustice and Inequality.

It is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviour to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the natural environment.

According to James Page, "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 love the world and to imagine a peaceful future; and as caring for the student and encouraging the student to care for others."

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 - R. D. Laing (1978).

Philosophy

Definition: The Philosophy of Peace Education

The philosophy of peace education can be defined, most simply, as the elaboration of reasons why we ought to be committed to peace education. To some extent, all writers on peace and peace education may be said to be articulating reasons why we ought to be committed to peace education. However, if we think of an organized philosophy of peace education, this implies that such reasons for the commitment to peace education as organized within the context of established philosophical traditions. A philosophy of peace education is thus more than a personal statement of the importance of peace education, as valuable as this might be. There must be some argumentation of the importance of peace education through either established philosophers and/or established schools of philosophical debate.

Reasons for a Philosophy of Peace Education

The reasons for developing a philosophy of peace education are, at one level, similar to the reasons for developing a philosophy for any educational activity. Put simply, if the state and civil society are expected to commit resources to peace education, and then it is reasonable that the state and civil society be told why this is important. Peace education is often mentioned within United Nations instruments as being of central importance, although in most instances this is an assumed importance. The importance of peace and education for peace may well be obvious to some, although it does nevertheless need to be argued.

In addition to this, there is a special reason for articulating an educational philosophy with regard to peace education: peace education is often prone to accusations of political correctness (something which we might define as fashionable morality) or constituting a form of indoctrination. If indeed peace education is to be regarded as more than political correctness or indoctrination, then a well-developed philosophy of peace education is one way of countering this accusation. In developing a philosophy of peace education, we are arguably engaging in an apologetics of peace education and subtly also an apologetics of peace.

The Expansive Nature of a Philosophy of Peace Education

One of the central problems for articulating a philosophy of peace education is the definition problem of peace education, in much the same way that the definition of peace is a problem for peace research. Working from Galtungian theory, peace is now generally taken to include direct peace, structural peace and cultural peace. So too, peace education may be taken to include development education, futures education, educational for international understanding, human rights education, inclusive education and environmental education. One problem which flows from this is whether a philosophy of peace education ought to constitute a philosophy of the expansive understanding of peace education and, if so, how the definitional boundaries ought to be drawn.

A related problem for a philosophy of peace education is the closeness of peace education to peace advocacy, especially if we think of education operating within formal and informal contexts. For education within formal contexts, it is relatively easy to distinguish peace education from peace advocacy, although the distinction is not so straightforward for education within an informal context. In some respects peace education is a form of peace advocacy. This expanded notion of the philosophy of peace education is not something we ought necessarily to feel uneasy about: the leading figure of modern educational philosophy, John Dewey, famously equated philosophy with the philosophy-of-education, suggesting that philosophy may be described as a general theory of education and that philosophy substantially originated in response to educational questions.

Fundamental Principles

- A learning environment where both teacher and students teach and learn from one another through equitable dialogue
- Combining academic study with practical application towards societal transformation

- Analyzing issues in a holistic way that accounts for the past, present, and future, and includes the personal, local and global levels
- Promoting values such as compassion, equality, interdependence, diversity, sustainability and non-violence.
- Promoting Common Parenthood Among the Human Family
- Understanding the Wisdom in the Prayers to “Rest In Peace” after Death
- Global Peace Begins in the Local Family: (Peace is globally scoped but locally focused)
- Building Sustainable Global Partnership beyond the Traditional Barriers of Religion, Region and Resources.
- Examining and discussing our values and attitudes towards diversity, cultural differences, tolerance and human dignity and directing our efforts towards achieving fundamental changes within societies.
- Developing language and social interaction skills to promote peaceful relations among people, among nations and between human beings and the natural environment.
- Learning to solve problems and to think critically regarding issues of conflict and violence.
- Acceptance of the child's rights to the freedom of expression, obtain information and make opinion.
- Acceptance of the right to childhood.
- The child is the agent of his own learning.
- Education should foster the development of the individual in the child.
- Education is not mere preparation of the child for an adult life in future.
- Subject fragmented curriculum distorts the perception of wholeness. Adoption of integrated school curriculum is helpful to whole child development. Children need life education as well.
- Learning to learn is the foundation of child-centred education.

Need

The UN charter I Article 2(iii) contains the clause on state sovereignty, which restricts the situation in which domestic affairs of a nation can be questioned. The campaigns for peace education at community level can therefore better serve as an ultimate solution where international intervention cannot be a reality. This is because the methodology of peace education encourages critical thinking and prepares learners to act on their convictions.

Thus the main reason for educating for peace and the following:

- a) To make learners aware of the basis of conflict in their daily lives;
- b) To use classroom as a microcosm of a just world order, in which the global values of positive inter dependence, social justice and participation in decision making processes are learned and practiced; and
- c) To prepare students to become good citizens with skills to promote peace and human dignity at all levels of interaction.

Network for Peace-Building Initiatives (NPI)’s focus for peace education has two goals:

1. To build public awareness and political support for

introduction of peace education into all spheres of education including non-formal education, in all schools throughout the country,

2. To promote the education of all teachers, civic leaders and partners to teach and advocate for peace.

We need peace education for ourselves, our relationship with other human beings to promote respect for oneself and respect for others on individual level as a prerequisite for the prevention of violence and conflict at society level and to raise people’s consciousness about their rights whilst promoting international understanding between the people of different worlds.

Also NPI believes peace education helps increase people’s awareness about the mechanisms that enhance a culture of peace and helps to empower and strengthen people’s rights as well as promote their confidence.

Peace education should thus seek to transmit such relevant information and other methods of peaceful conflict resolutions, training and non-violent means of setting differences in the family, at school or the work place and in other common place settings, thus creating a commitment to similar behaviour on a larger national and international level and this underpins NPI’s peace education philosophy.

Aims & Objectives

- Working for a human dignity and better humanity through peace building using cultural peace heritage.
- Developing a cultural, documentation and educational resource centre in Lari.
- Imparting peace heritage in our children through peace education in schools and in/with colleges/universities
- Ensuring life security through environment conservation, food security, promoting human rights and healthy living.
- Documenting our dark history in order to learn from our past mistakes and remember them without victimization. Learning the truth about humanity’s past failures is a way to increase people’s capacity to handle conflicts in a non-violent manner, through a joint reckoning of history.

Curriculum & Schools

NPI’s focus on school based instruction of peace programmes inclines on activities geared to changing school environment towards production of peace materials, empowering teaching staff, curriculum change and carrying out all the necessary peace education research to determine the best way forward.

NPI aim is make peace education most effective through researching, designing, modelling and developing of peace and promotion of community participation for peace programmes. Through its advocacy arm it intends to improve the learning environment to a microcosm of the more peaceful and just society. The consistency between the curriculum, personnel and education setting is paramount to education for peace. Training of trainers, administrators and communities is vital.

Evaluation of peace manuals developed in other countries on themes like communication, cooperation and problem solving will be studied and if possible tailored to local circumstances with the fully researched data suiting the different settings in the country. The UNICEF, “Children working for Peace” pack of teaching materials will be one of the examples employed.

NPI intends to further document various stories, poems on

peace themes through the use of drama, sport and physical education for advancement of peace skills and attitudes. Promotion of community service facilitated by schools could be used to build corporation between schools and societies. Teacher education in peace matters will be carried with the help of volunteers, development workers and other personnel relevant to NPI cause.

NPI further intends to intensify promotion of peace education out of school by use of banners, car stickers and posters in vital and strategic places like bars, health and trading centres as well as use of bill board publicity. Peace campaigns, international peace day celebrations, contests and exhibitions as well as increase peace components in the traditional cultural programmes.

Schools can

- Develop a more humanistic management approach.
- Improve human relations between, teacher-student, teacher-teacher, student-student, etc.
- Help develop good attitudes in students and teachers as well, e.g. co-operation, mutual respect.
- Help healthy emotional development in students.
- Facilitate socialization through participation in interactive and co-operative learning activities
- Improve students' discipline and moral behaviour.
- Develop creativity both in students and teachers.
- Improve standard of quality of teaching and learning.

Methods of Teaching

1. Debating

Debate is a curiosity provoking activity that leads learners to find information on a particular social, political or ethical issue under study, e.g. should we abolish capital punishment? Debate promotes students' critical and logical thinking. It also helps to improve skills in public speaking and presentation. A debate need not always be organized elegantly. It can be used as a brief activity during a lesson at the classroom.

2. Colloquy

Colloquy is a formal discussion. As a part of lessons colloquies are useful in developing perception, awareness, and in-depth exploration.

3. Case studies

Provide a case study relevant to the issue under discussion in the lesson.' Students can critically study it, in groups and answer the given questions. They can identify the cause - effect relationship, underlying principles, practical implications of the issue.

4. Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a method of encouraging students to come out with ideas, solutions, or views about the issue under study. It generates creative ideas and alternative solutions to problems.

5. Puzzles

The teacher gives a puzzle related to the lesson. The class has to guess, or find the solution. They can work individually or in groups.

6. Crossword puzzles

Prepare a simple crossword puzzle as an exercise, to be given at the end of the class. The words are taken from the terms used in the lesson.

7. Self-expression

Children like to express their feelings, wishes, fancies and ideas in various forms. They can be used as effective learning activities in the class. Examples: Sharing experiences on an issue under discussion; expressing one's future.

8. Writing poetry or songs

Children can be easily guided to write simple verses or songs. Stimulate their effective feelings on a given topic, allow them to express feelings in the class and let them write the feelings in poetical forms. Their writing could be recited or sung.

9. Drawing

Drawing is an activity that can be used for almost every subject in various ways. In a traditional school, drawing is considered to be an activity, which should be taught only by a trained artist. Teachers of other subjects think they can't draw and therefore they shouldn't use drawing in their subjects. They also think that drawing involves following many rules which they do not know or are unfamiliar with.

10. Role-play

Role-play involves setting up an imagined situation through acting out certain characters. The teacher sets the scene by inviting a number of students to play out a scene, relevant to the lesson. The activity takes the forms of instant extempore drama or dialogue. Role-plays develop children's skills in communication. They can help inculcation of good attitudes as well. The activity is especially helpful to develop understanding of the characters they play. Role-play needs to be followed by reflection and discussion.

11. Co-operative games

There are activities designed to build up co-operation, group awareness and trust in the groups. Everyone has to work together in the activities, e.g. make a machine joining up together and rhythmically show how it works, with sounds.

12. Affirmation activities

These activities are effective in developing the self-esteem of children. Children express affection, positive remarks, appreciation and friendship for each other either verbally or none verbally, in these activities, e.g.: Children move around the classroom making pleasant comments to each one they meet.

Role of UNICEF and UNESCO:-

There are numerous United Nations declarations on the importance of peace education. Ban Ki Moon, U.N. Secretary General, has dedicated the International Day of Peace 2013 to peace education in an effort to refocus minds and financing on the preeminence of peace education as the means to bring about a culture of peace. Kocher Matsuura, the immediate past Director-General of UNESCO, has written of peace education as being of "fundamental importance to the mission

of UNESCO and the United Nations". [4]Peace education as a right is something which is now increasingly emphasized by peace researchers such as Betty Reardon. And Douglas Roche. There has also been a recent meshing of peace education and human rights education.

UNICEF and UNESCO are particularly active advocates of education for peace. UNICEF describes peace education as schooling and other educational initiatives that:

- Function as 'zones of peace', where children are safe from violent conflict
- Uphold children's basic rights as outlined in the CRC
- Develop a climate that models peaceful and respectful behavior among all members of the learning community
- Demonstrate the principles of equality and non-discrimination in administrative policies and practices
- Draw on the knowledge of peace-building that exists in the community, including means of dealing with conflict that are effective, non-violent, and rooted in the local culture
- Handle conflicts in ways that respect the rights and dignity of all involved
- Integrate an understanding of peace, human rights, social justice and global issues throughout the curriculum whenever possible
- Provide a forum for the explicit discussion of values of peace and social justice
- Use teaching and learning methods that stress participation, Cupertino, problem-solving and respect for differences
- Enable children to put peace-making into practice in the educational setting as well as in the wider community

Concluding Thoughts

The above discussion describes the conditions that make 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.

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