

Peace Education as a Pedagogy to Promote Peace Among Youth

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Abstract

Peace Education is a discipline that focuses on teaching students such concepts as human rights, freedom, democracy, and environmental protection, as well as informing them about the negative consequences of conflict and violence. This is currently the most common approach to inclusion of peace in school curricula. Knowing the students better would better help in content integration and curriculum making, knowledge construction, and prejudice reduction, as relevant here. Knowing about the students, the things they value, their ideals, beliefs, and interests, how these interact with other communities, their inter-communal relational dynamics, and the biases carried from their social and educational experiences a teacher is in a better position to address the issues of conflict, hatred and mistrust among the students from different racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds towards each other. The present paper explores the need of peace education in contemporary world.

Introduction

Education is the key to raise inner self of the individuals. It is uniting the nations, bringing human beings closely together. Now a day we are living in the digital era and many parts of the world, civil society suffers because of situations of violent conflicts and war. It is important to inculcate and recognize the crucial role of education in contributing to building a culture of peace. A culture of peace and non-violence goes to the substance of fundamental human rights of the present era.

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?

Peace has been defined as '**absence** of violence'. This is rather a narrow and negative definition. Peace can be explained in positive terms as well. **Presence** of happiness, health, content and good economy, social justice, and freedom of expression, creative support for personal growth at all levels, are some of the elements of peace. Such a peace can be termed as positive peace.

Peace is a broad concept with practical and spiritual connotations. It can imply a state of inner calm or end of conflict. Peace has been understood to mean the absence of conflict or violence and conversely as the

presence of states of mind and of society such as harmony, accord, security and understanding.

According to Indian scriptures, there are three kinds of violence, namely, mental (manasik), verbal (vachik) and physical (kayeeek).

- **Mental:** Thinking of hurting others, thoughts like ‘I wish I had hit him hard’ is mental violence although it was only a wish and no physical harm was actually done. Thinking ill of others is also one form of violence.
- **Verbal:** Use of harsh words is another form of violence since it hurt others. There is an important dictum in Sanskrit, an advice by the preceptor to the disciple, “Speak the truth, speak sweetly, and do not speak the truth that’s not sweet”. This dictum is to prevent violence through speech.
- **Physical:** Using physical force to harm others. This is the most commonly recognized form of violence between individuals, groups, communities, and countries.

There is almost a cause and effect relationship in this three-tier violence. The abusive language or ‘verbal violence’ has its origin in violent thinking hidden in the mind. Unless one thinks ill of another, he/she cannot use violent or abusive words. The violent physical action is indeed because of the thoughts and the speech. It's not unusual to find that there is heated argument and violent speeches before actual physical violence.

The origin of violence or absence of peace is in the desire. Thus peace can be ensured only by nurturing contentedness (संतोष) through control of desires. The concept is beautifully illustrated by Acharya Vinoba Bhave. He used three words to explain this concept of contentedness. These are:

- **Prakriti** - One who eats when hungry; it is natural and normal.
- **Vikriti** - One who eats even though his stomach is full and is not hungry. This is human deformity and degradation.
- **Sanskriti** - One who gives away his/her own food to another hungry person, keeping his/her own hunger in abeyance; this is culturedness.

The second origin is the intolerance of different religious beliefs, languages, social customs and practices, etc. Another important source of violence is competition.

Peace Education: Need of the Hour

Education for Peace (EFP) is an approach that creates violence-free and peaceful school environments conducive to meeting the emotional, social, and intellectual needs of diverse school populations. Through creating a peaceful school environment characterized by unity in diversity, EFP harnesses the freeing and healing properties of unity to meet the manifold needs of increasingly diverse populations in different cultural settings. EFP engages students, teachers, parents/guardians, and school staff in a cooperative effort to create a violence-free, peaceful school community.

The emphasis on peace is based on the fact that peace and education are inseparable aspects of civilization. No civilization is truly progressive without education, and no education system is truly civilizing unless it is based on the universal principles of peace.

Peace Education is a discipline that focuses on teaching students such concepts as human rights, freedom, democracy, and environmental protection, as well as informing them about the negative consequences of conflict and violence. This is currently the most common approach to inclusion of peace in school curricula. However, Education for Peace (EFP) focuses on helping students, teachers, staff, and parents/guardians to become peacemakers by developing inner, interpersonal, and intergroup peace.

Education for non-violence and peace includes training, skills and information directed towards cultivating a culture of peace based on human rights principles. This education not only provides knowledge about a culture of peace, but also imparts the skills and attitudes necessary to defuse and recognize potential conflicts, and those needed to actively promote and establish a culture of peace and non-violence.

The ultimate goal of education for peace, human rights and democracy is the development in every individual of a sense of universal values and types of behaviour on which a culture of peace is predicated. Education must develop the ability of non-violent conflict-resolution. It should therefore promote also the development of inner peace in the minds of students so that they can establish more firmly the qualities of tolerance, compassion, sharing and caring.

Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself and with others. Peace education must address the prevention and resolution of all forms of conflict and violence, whether overt or structural, from the interpersonal level to the societal and global level.

Peace education means to learn about and to learn for peace. Learning about peace means obtaining knowledge and understanding of what contributes to peace, what damages it, what leads to war, what 'peace' means on each level anyway, what is my role in it, and how are the different levels are connected. Learning for peace means learning the skills, attitudes and values that one needs in order to contribute to peace and help to maintain it.

Peace education is a planning strategy of eliminating the conflicts and violence caused by in justice, inequality and human rights, violations, and implementing the ways and means of reducing the same through appropriate teaching and learning tactics by means of producing responsible global citizen to attain and spread the peace in the world.

Conclusion

A teacher can initiate peacebuilding even in the absence of a formal peacebuilding curriculum, by caring and relating with the students. Knowing the students is actually more than this. It is an additional step further by the teacher on peacebuilding in a class of students from diverse ethnic, linguistic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Knowing the students is about multiculturalism. Rapidly changing demographics have led to new challenges and new opportunities for twenty-first century teachers. Learning about the lived experiences of immigrant children and families in schools is an important step in multicultural educators' classrooms.

Knowing the students better would better help in content integration and curriculum making, knowledge construction, and prejudice reduction, as relevant here. Knowing about the students, the things they value, their ideals, beliefs, and interests, how these interact with other communities, their inter-communal relational dynamics, and the biases carried from their social and educational experiences a teacher is in a better position to address the issues of conflict, hatred and mistrust among the students from different racial, ethnic, or religious backgrounds towards each other.

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