



GANDHIAN SCHOOL OF THOUGHTS AS BACKBONE OF PEACE EDUCATION IN INDIA

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Abstract

Mahatma Gandhi once stated, "If we are to reach real peace in this world we shall have to begin with the children." Lasting peace may depend on educating future generations into the competencies, perspectives, attitudes, values, and behavioral patterns that will enable them to build and maintain peace. Peace education is an integral part of the UNICEF vision of quality basic education. United Nation announced World Peace Day on 2nd October which transpires to be the birth date of Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi known as Bapu, Mahatma Gandhi or Father of Nation in India. The reasons lie in the facts that Gandhian school of thoughts regarding peace is worldwide proclaimed. The name of Gandhi and Gandhian school of thoughts has become synonyms with peace, harmony, brotherhood, Ahinsa or non-violence, social justice, which enriched the values enshrined in Indian constitution and therefore earmarked as quality pedagogy for peace education not only in India but throughout the globe. Peace mandates the practice of values such as love, truth, justice, equality, tolerance, harmony, humility, togetherness, and self-control. Self-suffering, if need be, is to be preferred to inflicting violence on others. In the present paper, the investigator tried to rationalize the significance of Gandhian School of Thoughts in the reference of peace education.

Key Words: *Gandhian School of Thoughts and Peace Education*

INTRODUCTION

Education is what gives individuals the knowledge, aspiration and values to live in dignity and act for the common good. This is why it is the most basic foundation for building lasting peace and sustainable development (UNESCO,2012). Mahatma Gandhi once stated, "If we are to reach real peace in this world we shall have to begin with the children." Lasting peace may depend on educating future generations into the competencies, perspectives, attitudes, values, and behavioural patterns that will enable them to build and maintain peace(Johnson &

Johnson, 2012). Peace education refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level (Unicef,1999). According to Reardson (2000) peace education is the transmission of knowledge about the requirements of, the obstacles to and the possibilities for achieving and maintaining peace, training in skills for interpreting the knowledge, and the development of reflective and participatory capacities for applying the knowledge to overcoming problems and achieving possibilities. Further, based on the two dimensions involved in defining peace, peace education is teaching the information, attitudes, values, and behavioral competencies needed to resolve conflicts without violence and to build and maintain mutually beneficial, harmonious relationships (Johnson & Johnson, 2003c, 2005c, 2006).

PEACE EDUCATION: A PRIMORDIAL ELEMENT TO ORGANISE QUALITY EDUCATION

Peace education is an integral part of the UNICEF vision of quality basic education. The 1990 World Declaration on Education for All (the Jomtien Declaration) clearly states that basic learning needs comprise not only essential tools such as literacy and numeracy, but also the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values required to live and work in dignity and to participate in development. It further states that the satisfaction of those needs implies a responsibility to promote social justice, acceptance of differences, and peace (Inter-Agency Commission, WCEFA, 1990). Since 1990, a number of UNICEF documents have confirmed this vision of basic education as a process that encompasses the knowledge, skills attitudes and values needed to live peacefully in an interdependent world. 'The Future Global Agenda for Children – Imperatives for the Twenty-First Century' (UNICEF, 1999) makes a commitment to ensure that education and learning processes help to form both human capital for economic growth and social capital for tolerance, respect for others and the right of each individual to participate with equality within family, community and economic life; ... and to challenge the culture of violence that threatens to destroy family and community life in so many countries (UNICEF, 1999).

INDIAN AND INTERNATIONAL ATTEMPTS ON PEACE EDUCATION:

We are at present halfway through the decade for the promotion of a culture of peace, as approved by the United Nations (UN) General Assembly in 1999. 2000-2010 was declared by the UNESCO as the International Decade for Promotion of a Culture of Peace and Non-violence for the Children of the World. The last five decades have witnessed several significant advocacies for education for peace. The UNESCO recommendations on education for international understanding, peace, human rights, and fundamental freedoms (1974) and UNESCO's 1994 action plan for education for peace, human rights, and democracy, endorsed by 144 countries, are two of the prominent landmarks. ASP net was launched by UNESCO in 1953 to promote international understanding and peace. As of 2003, ASPnet includes 7500

institutions ranging from nursery schools to teacher training institutions in 170 countries. The network is dedicated to the pursuit of peace, liberty, justice, and human development. An innovative pilot project on “peace and disarmament education” is being implemented in four countries: Albania, Niger, Peru, and Cambodia, by the UN Department of Disarmament Affairs (UNDDA) and the Hague Appeal for Peace (HAP). The Centre for Research on Education for peace (CERPE) at the University of Haifa, Israel, which has been functioning since in 1998 serves as an interdisciplinary and international forum for the scholarly study of education for peace. The center has undertaken a number of research projects on education for peace. The Earth and Peace Education Associates International (EPE), New York, is yet another organisation which promotes basic values related to peace, viz., sustainability, non-violence, social justice, intergenerational equity, and participatory decision-making. Besides these, a number of other organisations around the world are working for peace. Many institutions in the country are working for the promotion of peace, particularly Gandhian ideas of peace, the Gandhi Peace Foundation, Gandhi Smriti and Darshan Samriti, Gandhian Institute of Studies, and Jaipur Peace Foundation being prominent examples. It is regrettable that peace studies continue to be neglected by Indian academic institutions. Given our philosophical tradition of ahimsa, cultural heritage of peaceful co-existence, and the Gandhian legacy of non-violent resolution of conflicts that inspires heroes and sagas of peace in other parts of the world, this state of affairs should embarrass us. Although Non- governmental Organisations (NGOs) have been contributing to different aspects of peace studies, viz., human rights, gender discrimination, environment, etc. they do not impact education adequately at the school level. There is need for networking among all such institutions in order to enhance their effectiveness (NCERT, 2006). According to Harris and Morrison (2003) Peace education, refers to teaching about peace – what it is, why it doesn't exist, and how to achieve it.

PEACE EDUCATION AND GANDHIAN SCHOOL OF THOUGHTS ARE CLOSE SIBLINGS:

United Nation announced World Peace Day on 2nd October which transpires to be the birth date of Mohandas Karam Chand Gandhi known as Bapu, Mahatma Gandhi or Father of Nation in India. The reasons lie in the facts that Gandhian school of thoughts regarding peace is worldwide proclaimed. The name of Gandhi and Gandhian school of thoughts has become synonyms with peace, harmony, brotherhood, Ahinsa or non-violence, social justice, which enriched the values enshrined in Indian constitution and therefore earmarked as quality pedagogy for peace education not only in India but throughout the globe. According to Bose (1981), Gandhian philosophy educated peace, to world community through Satyagraha. Gandhi perpetuated the concept of peace education through Ahinsa i.e. Non Violence (Gupta, 1968). Peace is often equated with the absence of violence. To Gandhiji, exploitation was the most familiar and practical form of violence on an individual by the state, a group, another individual, or by machines; on women by men; and on one nation by another. Peace mandates the practice of values such as love, truth, justice, equality, tolerance, harmony, humility, togetherness, and self-control. Self-suffering, if need be, is to be preferred to

inflicting violence on others. According to NCERT(2006) Gandhiji's concept of peace includes:

- (i) The absence of tensions, conflicts, and all forms of violence including terrorism and war. Peace implies the capacity to live together in harmony. This calls for non-violent ways of resolving conflicts. Diversity occasions conflicts but conflicts do not have to eventuate into violence.
- (ii) The creation of non-violent social systems, i.e., a society free from structural violence. The duty to practice justice: social, economic, cultural, and political. Hunger is systemic violence.
- (iii) The absence of exploitation and injustice of every kind.
- (iv) International cooperation and understanding. This involves the creation of a just world order, marked by a willingness to share the earth's resources to meet the needs of all. That is, the need to shift from greed to need.
- (v) Ecological balance and conservation. The adoption of lifestyles conducive to the wholeness of creation.
- (vi) Peace of mind, or the psycho-spiritual dimension of peace.

Gandhiji's thoughts have been extremely relevant and strongly convicted that education can help provide the answers to some of the greatest challenges of the 21st century, from poverty, conflict and deepening inequality to threats related to climate change and environmental degradation. Today's challenges are global in nature and require global solutions. As the international community looks towards a new sustainable development agenda, it is increasingly recognized that education can play a decisive role in fostering a sense of shared responsibility and in bringing about fundamental changes in how we coexist with each other and our planet. Education is essential to bringing shared values to life and to gaining the skills required in the new millennium: how to coexist peacefully, live sustainably, work collaboratively, think critically and develop creative solutions(UNESCO,2012)

In context to not only India but also, throughout the world Gandhiji's thoughts have demonstrated great relevance in propagating peace education to masses. After Independence of India, Gandhian school of thoughts has evolved into a disciplinary area, convicting a broad scope of scholarship. Further these thoughts also included broad-based analyses of material inequalities in addition to, specific character of India's experience with globalization to assessments of the role of social and collective action towards peace (Prasad 1998). A deep review of topics included in peace education and Gandhian thoughts show that Non-violence, conflict resolution/transformation, gender perspectives on peace, environmental/ sustainable development, Religion/morality/coexistence and United Nations/international organizations are the topics included in both areas(Bajaj,2010). These have been the topics which show close resemblance to demonstrate Gandhian thoughts as sibling of peace education.

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