Peace Education and Positive Psychology

Jayshree Anil Airekar

College of Education, Manchar, Pune

Abstract

The main aim of this paper is to present the co-relation between peace education and positive psychology. Positive Psychology began as a new area of Psychology in 1998. Positive Psychology is a relatively new branch of Psychology that seeks to understand positive emotion, such as joy, optimism and contentment. The objectives of this paper are 1) To study the concept of positive psychology, 2) To study the concept of peace education 3) To explain the role of school in promoting peace through positive psychology. Qualitative analysis method was used for the present study. The data collected through the secondary sources like Books, Magazines, Journals, Newspapers, and Websites was then subjected to qualitative analysis.

Several humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and Erich Fromm developed theories and practices that involved human happiness. Recently the theories of human flourishing developed by these humanistic psychologist have found empirical support from studies by positive psychologist.

"Peace Education is the pedagogical efforts to create a world at peace. By peace, we mean more that the absence of violence (negative peace)." - Gultang

Peace in its most positive aspects embraces ideas of justice, global sustainability and the eradication of structure that promote insecurity, poverty, hunger, malnutrition and lack of access to resources.

In the four pillars of education, namely learning to live together and learning to be, are related to Positive Psychology and peaceful living. So, it is essential to integrate peaceful attitudes, values, and skills into the teaching and learning process in school and to make it a part of the total curriculum. Certain countries and institutes have it in the form of subjects

such as Value Education (Malaysia and Philippines), Citizenship Education (U.S.A.), Education for Mutual Understanding (Ireland) and Developmental Education (UNICEF). Apart from such subjects, it can be integrated into the formal curriculum and co-curriculum of schools.

Keywords: *Peace education, positive psychology, learning to live together.*

Introduction:

Positive Psychology began as a new area of Psychology in 1998, when Martin Seliman considered the father of modern positive psychology movement, chose it as the theme for his term as president of the American Psychologist Association. Though the term originates with Maslow, in his 1954 book Motivation and Personality, the first positive psychology summit took place in 1999. The first international conference on positive psychology took place in 2002 and in June 2009, the first world congress on positive psychology took place.

Objectives :

The study was taken up with following objectives in mind.

1. To study the concept of positive psychology
2. To study the concept of peace education
3. To explain the role of school in promoting peace through positive psychology

Study Method :

Qualitative analysis method was used for the present study.

Data Collection and Analysis :

The data collected through the secondary sources like Books, Magazines, Journals, Newspapers, and Websites was then subjected to qualitative analysis.

What is Positive Psychology:

Positive Psychology is a relatively new branch of Psychology that seeks to understand positive emotion, such as joy, optimism and contentment. Positive Psychology is interested in the condition that allows individual, groups and organization to flourish.

The field of Psychology has proven effective in studying and treating mental illness. The field has proven so effective that some believes, it's time to stop directing research towards what makes us mentally ill and start studying what makes us happy. This new subfield is called as Positive Psychology.

Positive Psychology studies the strengths and virtues that enables individuals and communities to thrive.

Components of Positive Psychology:

Happiness, mental health, motivation, confidence, curiosity, hope, kindness, leadership, love, mercy, mindfulness, praise, prudence, psychological resilience, wisdom, gratitude, etc.

Development of Positive Psychology:

Several humanistic psychologists such as Abraham Maslow, Carl Rogers and Erich Fromm developed theories and practices that involved human happiness. Recently the theories of human flourishing developed by these humanistic psychologist have found empirical support from studies by positive psychologist.

Current research in positive psychology include Sonja Lyubomirsky, Martin Seligman, C. R. Snyder, Christopher Peterson, Donald Clifton, Carol Dweck and Jonathan Haidt.

Peace Education:

Peace Education may be defined as the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the natural environment.

"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)

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 does 'Peace' mean on each level and what is my role in it, and how are the different levels connected?

"Peace Education is the pedagogical efforts to create a world at peace. By peace, we mean more that the absence of violence (negative peace)." - Gultang

Peace in its most positive aspects embraces ideas of justice, global sustainability and the eradication of structure that promote insecurity, poverty, hunger, malnutrition and lack of access to resources.

Aims of Peace Education:

1. To help students understand some of the complex processes leading to violence and conflict at the individual, group, national and global levels, and be aware of some of the ways in which these conflicts may be resolved.

2. To encourage attitudes that lead to a preference for constructive and non-violent resolution of conflict.

3. To assist students in developing the personal and social skills necessary to live in harmony with others and to behave in positive and caring ways that respect the basic human rights.

4. To develop human learning communities in which students and teachers are encouraged to work together co-operatively to understand and find resolutions to significant problems.

Basic education is a process that encompasses the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values need to live peacefully in an interdependent world. 'The Future Global Agenda for Children - Imperatives for the Twenty-First Century' (UNICEF 1999, E/ICEF/1999/10) 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, community life in so many countries."

"Peace education is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. It is based on philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, co-operation and reverence for the human family and all life on our beautiful planet." - Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman (1988)

The basic concepts embedded in the above definitions are that Peace Education is a remedial measure to protect children from falling in to the ways of violence in society. It aims at the total development of the child. It tries to inculcate higher human and social values in the mind of the child. In essence it attempts to develop a set of behavioural skills necessary for peaceful living and peace-building from which the whole of humanity will benefit.

The Constitution of UNESCO enjoins that unless we remove all the differences arising out of ill-will, mistrust and misunderstanding and spread mutual trust, fellow-feeling and friendship throughout the world, the entire world will be dragged to unprecedented destruction of all. Such annihilation can be eradicated only by Peace Education based on universal love, liberty, equality and fraternity. In brief, democratization of the human culture and civilization will ensure such Peace Education.

The international association of educators for world peace has been promoting the kind of education which will stress the release of the full potential of the individual in terms of his / her development of the family, the local community, the country and the whole family of nations. These world bodies have been using various communication strategies and

techniques for removing controversies and achieving maximum understanding. Peace Education seeks to contribute to formation of character capable of solving conflicts in a positive and creative manner.

Role of Schools in Promoting Peace Education through Positive Psychology:

In the four pillars of education, namely learning to live together and learning to be, are related to Positive Psychology and peaceful living. So, it is essential to integrate peaceful attitudes, values, and skills into the teaching and learning process in school and to make it a part of the total curriculum. Certain countries and institutes have it in the form of subjects such as Value Education (Malaysia and Philippines), Citizenship Education (U.S.A.), Education for Mutual Understanding (Ireland) and Developmental Education (UNICEF). Apart from such subjects, it can be integrated into the formal curriculum and co-curriculum of schools. Through applying peace education and creating a peace culture, it has been observed that schools can have the following benefits:

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

Ref.

1. Pradip Kumar (2010). Positive Psychology and Higher Education.

2. Lopez, Shane (2009). The Encyclopaedia of Positive Psychology. U.S.A.

3. Jefferey, J. F. (2004). The History of Positive Psychology

4. www.positivepsychology.org

5. Kumar, Balvinder (2006). Peace Education: New Trends

6. Pillai, Sivadasan (1995) Relevance of Peace.

7. Bhatnagar, Manisha. Role of School and Teachers in Peace Education.