



IN PURSUIT OF INNER PEACE

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Abstract

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.



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“Peace is a daily, a weekly, a monthly process, gradually changing opinions, slowly eroding old barriers, quietly building new structures.”

~ **John F. Kennedy**

“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.”

~ **Albert Einstein**

- 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. The joy of learning is taken away from children. They are trained to cope

with the rat race of the corrupt society. Today school is no more a place of leisure or of peace as the very word 'school' means. (The word school drives from Greek 'skhole meaning leisure) .

WHAT IS PEACE EDUCATION?

PEACE EDUCATION IS :
THE PROCESS OF ACQUIRING VALUES, THE KNOWLEDGE AND DEVELOPING THE ATTITUDES, SKILLS, AND BEHAVIOURS TO LIVE IN HARMONY WITH ONESELF, WITH OTHERS AND WITH NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

IT IS A SERIES OF "TEACHING ENCOUNTERS" THAT DRAW FROM PEOPLE:

- THEIR DESIRE FOR PEACE
- NONVIOLENT ALTERNATIVES FOR MANAGING CONFLICT
- SKILLS FOR CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF STRUCTURAL ARRANGEMENTS THAT PRODUCE AND LEGITIMIZE INJUSTICE AND INEQUALITY

P	Patience
E	Encouragement
A	Acceptance
C	Communication
E	Empathy
F	Fair
U	Understanding
L	Loving

Better than a thousand hollow words, is one word that brings peace.

- ❖ 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.
- ❖ In our increasingly shrinking world, both in terms of human mobility and faster communications, multi-faith issues are no longer the concerns of the few but are fast becoming matters of utmost importance for educationalists, whether secular or religious, to prepare the next generation for world citizenship.
- ❖ Women have always played an important role as first educators for their children in inculcating values and teaching religious education in most societies and cultures, but have rarely been credited for that work. Behind the scenes work, within the confines of home, is not newsworthy; it is perhaps looked at as responsibility which a woman has brought upon herself as part of motherhood. However, in the Sikh Scripture, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, there is recognition that the first religious and spiritual teacher is the mother, father being the next in line, then the guru, the spiritual master, God. The woman is a symbol of respect and the key person who meets physical, emotional and religious needs of children. In my opinion, the person who recognised Guru Nanak, not as a mere mortal but as the divine messenger of God, was Bebe Nanki, his sister and devotee.

- ❖ It is my experience that most primary education, concentrating on the state sector, government school, is delivered by women. It is rare to see a man teaching in nursery establishments, infants and junior schools; if there is one, he is most likely to be the head-teacher, classroom teachers are very few and they don't stay too long there. Therefore, the main responsibility of teaching falls on the shoulders of women. It is mainly in secondary schools and in further and higher education where there are more male teachers.
- ❖ Religious education is compulsory in England and it is mainly and broadly Christian. However, parents can withdraw their children from acts of collective worship, if they wish. Some parents may take this opportunity to withdraw their children, but there are insufficient arrangements made to provide for those children's particular needs; i.e. Jewish or Muslim worship. Not many Sikh or Hindu parents withdraw. In England as probably elsewhere, there is the additional difficulty of religious education being taught by teachers whose knowledge of religious education is limited. Also they may not be practitioners of their own faith, or any faith, but are expected to teach something up to about six world religions and they teach it as if it were any other subject.
- ❖ Teachers in primary school are trained in teaching children and are not usually subject specialists. They teach all subjects of the National Curriculum and it is also their responsibility to facilitate a coherent approach to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This approach should be informed by links with parents and supported by the sense of a close community. In some ways it is meant to be an extended family atmosphere, a community on its own in which pupils have opportunities to learn about and explore different values, beliefs and views and to develop and express their own. The teachers' role is to enable children to reflect on their own experiences in a way which:
 - develops their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge
 - teaches the principles which distinguish right from wrong
 - encourages them to relate positively to each other
 - encourages them to take responsibility
 - encourages them to participate fully in the community
 - helps develop an understanding of citizenship
 - teaches pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures

All these spiritual, moral, social and cultural values are related and most of them are based on religious values and could be in any faith or no faith. They are essential human values for the

growth and development of active and responsible human beings, to which women as carers, mothers and teachers play a significant role.

We live with great mystery, this great dilemma in our lives, whether religion liberates or puts shackles on us. I ask myself how I can live my life as a visually distinctive Sikh woman, while advocating universality of my faith in a religiously plural world; how do I live my faith in an increasingly secular and materialistic world; how can I, in this age of logic and science, come to understand that the tensions between religious and materialistic progress are polarities one can live with without becoming schizophrenic; how can I be true to my faith with total acceptance of the other, particularly when there is the big baggage of historical and continued persecution by followers of other faiths of my faith community; how can we move forward and grow together, while holding on to what is dear to me, in my religious tradition, in my family and in the wider society of which I am part. These are the issues I am struggling with, every day and there are many more.

On the other hand, there is much that unites us as I learnt while contributing to the World Congress of Faiths and International Interfaith Centre publication 'Testing the Global Ethic -- Voices from the Religions on Moral Values'. We are all part of God's creation and part of God's divine purpose, half of humanity being women. God is both mother and father who provides both spiritual and physical sustenance to both believers and non-believers. We are all affected by what happens in other parts of the world and there is cosmopolitan atmosphere in most major capital cities. Children growing in such an environment attend multi-racial, multi-lingual and multi-faith schools and have no choice but to learn skills of living and sharing with their neighbour, in the wider interest of peace and harmony. Women are well suited to imparting these skills with help from their male counterparts.

➤ **How to Integrate Peace into the Curriculum**

If you are a peace-loving teacher naturally you want to integrate it into all the aspects of schooling. There are six major media of integration into the total curriculum of the school. They are:

1. **Subject context:** Here we take Language, Social Studies, Religion, Physical Education, Arts, and Science as the core curricular subjects, which can be used to infuse peace.
2. **Subject perspectives** these are how teachers make a subject meaningful. A Subject is not learned merely for the subject's sake. It has to be interpreted in such a manner so as to contribute to learners' social, emotional, intellectual and moral Self-development. Peace education attempts to humanize subjects through bringing in human perspectives and effective dominion into learning.

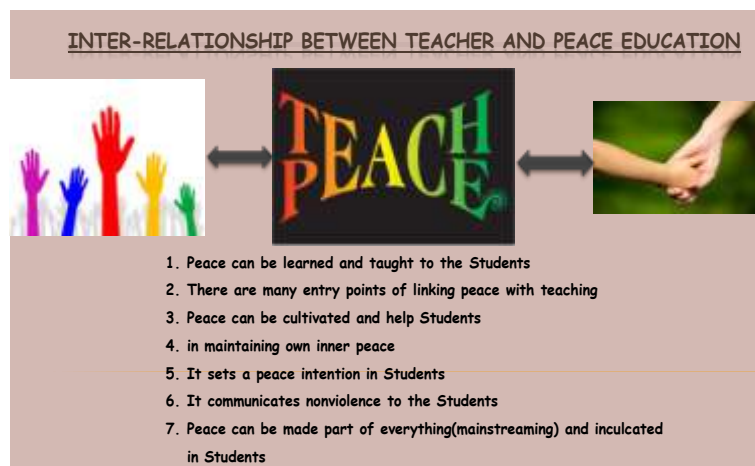
3. **Teaching methods** In education both what is taught and how it is taught are equally important .A good teacher adopts the child-centred education approach, especially in the primary and secondary levels. Instead of routine lecturing, she uses interesting learning activities. She is not only concerned with imparting knowledge but also concerned A xiv Learning the Way of Peace with developing socializing skills, moral attitudes and learning skills of children in parallel.

4. **Co-curricular activities** These are activities done outside the classroom to achieve the goals of the formal subject learning. Here we include extra curricular activities as well. Extra curricular activities are complementary in the sense that they do not directly relate to subjects or formal curriculum, but are helpful in achieving the goals of education.

5. **Staff development** To successfully implement any innovation, first of all the teachers need to develop by raising awareness and training. This can be done through in-service seminars and school-based sessions.

6. **Classroom management** Classroom management includes maintenance of discipline, organizing learning, character building, conflict resolution, counselling, etc.

7. **School management** This is the administrative, structural, policy-making and policy implementation level at the school level principal as the Head. Teachers who implement peace education at the classroom level need the support of the whole school. Peace education provides important insights into management development of the school.




PEACEFUL CLASSROOM AND ROLE OF A TEACHER

PEACEFUL CLASSROOM

1. The peaceful classroom is characterized by affirmation, cooperation, communication, appreciation for diversity, appreciate expression of feelings and peaceable conflict resolution
2. The students feel safe and secure in peaceful classroom.
3. It is the place where they grow as persons without threats of being ridiculed, marginalized or hurt

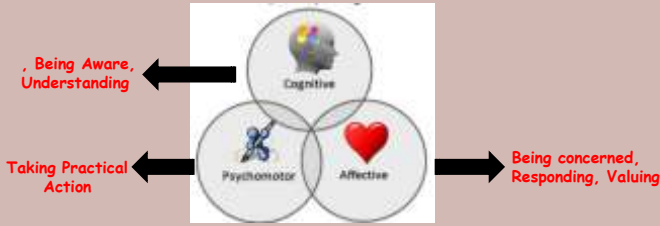
Role of teacher:

1. Announce your classroom as a area of peace and form rules to achieve it
2. As a teacher, be a role model. Let the peace begin with you.
3. Encourage respect for and acceptance of differences
4. Teach students how to resolve conflicts peacefully and constructively
5. Employ more cooperative and competitive activities



INCULCATING PEACE IN GENERATION NEXT

Domains of Development



1. Education is the most effective means of preventing intolerance
2. Appreciation other culture, Respecting cultural difference is taught from the small age
3. Intolerance gives rise to violence, terrorism and discrimination within societies therefore teaching for tolerance is a practical alternative Educating for tolerance

“Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.” ~ **Martin Luther King, Jr.**

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