NEED OF PEACE EDUCATION IN TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

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 behavioral skills are being integrated in to school curricula in many countries. There is also renewed interest to develop peace related disciplines such as value 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 behavioral problems. The paper focuses on the inculcation of education for peace as an integral part of the teacher training programme. Education for peace implies an active concept of peace through values, life skills and knowledge in a spirit of equality, respect, empathy, understanding and mutual appreciation among individuals, groups and nations.

Keywords: Peace, Peace Education

Introduction:

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 form 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 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 perpetuators of violence. Therefore the need to nurture peace in the hearts of children has arisen as urgent issues to be addressed. It is important to recognize the crucial role of education in contributing to build a culture of peace and condemned in instance in which education is undermined in order to attack democracy and tolerance.

Meaning of Peace:

Peace is a state of tranquility and harmony at the personal and interpersonal level that entails a set of skills, values and attitudes that if internalized leads to constructive, non-violent resolution of conflicts. It is supported by social institutions that prevent occurrence of violence.

Peace Education:

If our schools today are to produce truly global citizens, then that puts a heavy burden on educators to stimulate critical thinking about the critical issues of the day – war and peace, global conflict and inequality, issues of gender ,race, class and so on. It is a long list. Peace education is a broad field and can be difficult to define. Very simply, peace education empowers learners with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values necessary to end violence and injustice and promote a culture of peace.

Human Right Education, Multicultural Education, Global Citizenship Education, and Conflict Resolution Education all fall under the scope of Peace Education and provide different approaches to the field. Although peace education is highly contextual and often tailored to specific settings or regions, the underlying goal is the same –peace is peace, no matter where you are.

Definition of Peace Education:

The process of imparting, knowledge, values, skills and attitudes necessary for enhancing peace. It also entails a conflict sensitive approach to the development of education plans, policies, structures and systems.

Key principles of Peace Education include:

1. A learning environment where both teacher and students teach and learn from one another through equitable dialogue.

2. Combining academic study with practical application towards societal transformation

3. Analyzing issues in a holistic way that accounts for the past, present and future, and includes the personal, local and global levels

4. Promoting values such as compassion, equality, interdependence, diversity, sustainability and nonviolence

We all can be teachers of peace by leading by examples in our day to day lives, and peace education can take place in the formal, nonformal and informal sectors. However, school

teachers have a particularly important role to play in promoting peace, as they serve as role models and knowledge sources for children and young adults at a formative phase in their development. By being role models for peaceful living, and by helping learners to acquire the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to live peacefully, teachers can play a vital role in the transformation towards a culture of peace.

Peace education is not just about what happens in school. It is not about what you need to know for the test or memorize to please the teacher. Peace education is about how you can help to build the future and make your world a more peaceful place to live.

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 (1989)

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 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)

In the classroom, peace education aims to develop skills, attitudes, and knowledge with co-operative and participatory learning methods and an environment of tolerance, care, and respect.

Through dialogue and exploration, teachers and students engage in a journey of shared learning.

Students are nurtured and empowered to take responsibility for their own growth and achievement while teachers care for the wellbeing of all students. The practice of peace education is an opportunity to promote the total welfare of students, advocate for their just and equitable treatment of youth, and promote individual and social responsibility for both educators and learners. Through pedagogy and social action educators demonstrate that there are alternatives to violence.

Challenges and Opportunities:

Peace Education does not teach students what to think, but rather how to think critically. In the

Process, its holistic and participatory approach may conflict with more traditional curriculum design or strict standards- based schooling. Peace education aims not to reproduce but to

transform. It consists of people "consciously striving to educate their successors not for the existing state of affairs but so as to make possible a future better humanity."(John Dewey, Democracy and Education) And with this task come significant challenges and opportunities for all involved.

One way to meet the challenges of peace education is to build bridges of support among key participants. Just as learning takes place in a broader social context and not exclusively in schools or classroom, so peace education relies on families, communities, social networks to affect positive and lasting change. The notion "Think globally, act locally" is central to educating for a culture of peace in that it links theory with practice, international issues to individual efforts. As a peace educator, you need not work alone. The international peace education community is active and growing through networks, publications, global campaigns, national initiatives, and international programs. Concerned citizens, educators and activists of all ages around the world are promoting and building peace through education.

"Peace is possible for life at all stages and it is up to man to choose his destiny or to suffer from the horrors of war. Today mankind is at the crossroad where he has to choose with courage, determination and imagination." - Federico Mayor

Peace Education @ School:

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. It humanizes the child, teaching and learning, and school.

Peace education is a remedial measure to protect children from falling into the ways of violence in the 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 behavioral skills necessary for peaceful living and peace- building from which the whole of humanity will benefit.

In fact, two out of the four pillars of education suggested by the Dolor report, namely learning to live together and learning to be, are related to peaceful living. Naming such efforts as peace education is not always necessary. What matters is integrating peaceful attitudes, values, and skills into the teaching and learning process in school and makes 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 subject names it can be integrated into the formal curriculum and co-curriculum of schools. Through applying peace education and creating peace culture, it has been observed that schools can have the following benefits (as reported by teachers and principals who have used the peace approach in their schools in Sri Lanka. Source: Education for Conflict Resolution Project. National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka).

School can:

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

Integration of Peace Education with Teacher Training:

For successful implementation of Peace Education in the schools we require well trained teachers and this emphasizes the need of integrating Peace Education Programmes at the Teacher Training Institutes.

We are all well aware of this truth, how the great teachers - Acharyas and Gurus in Indian terms,

creating an atmosphere of harmony among people and in the state of peace contributed to the larger welfare of society and the nation. The examples of Gautama Buddha, Vardhaman Mahavira, Socrates, Kung Futsi [Confucius], Chanakya, Plati, Shankararacharya, Paramahansa Ramakrishna and so many others who were the Gurus, Acharyas and teacher par excellence are before us. There is no need to mention anything more in this regard except quoting the following statement of Mahatma Gandhi:

"A teacher is not only the nuclei of the education system, but is also the backbone of the system and the success or failure of this system depends to a large extent on the community of teachers. A teacher, if works with sincerity, honesty and a sense of duty, raises students to their all –round development on the one hand and contribute unprecedentedly to harmony and peace in society and the nation on the other."

In the changing global scenario the man aim of 'Teacher education' will be to help people to develop themselves as responsible citizens of their immediate society and the world, who shall not only live conscientiously but also strive toward building a humane mankind. The focus of 'Teacher Education' would be to find and evolve ways of inculcating values of peace and harmony based on concepts of right living, mutual respect and trust, cooperation ,social justice, open –mindedness and fruitful co-existence. Keeping this in view it is necessary to reorient and restructure 'Teacher Education' programs to include the need for this kind of tutoring. Teacher Education for peace and harmony is intrinsically linked to the understanding of global world orders and commonalities and at the same time differences of socio-political –economic and legal systems.

The training of personnel at all levels of the education system – teachers, planners, managers, and teacher educators – has to include education for peace, human rights and democracy. This pre-service and in-service training and retraining should introduce and apply in situ methodologies, observing experiments and evaluating their results. In order perform to their tasks successfully, schools and institutions of teacher education and those in charge of non-formal education programmes should seek the assistance of people with experience in the fields of peace , human rights and democracy (politicians, jurists, sociologists, psychologists) and of the NGOs [non-govt. organizations] specialized in human rights, Similarly pedagogy

and the actual practice of changes should form part of the training courses of all educators. Teaching peace in the class room may be done most effectively through the use of introspective, transpersonal or evocative strategies, such as meditation, psycho synthesis and positive social interaction.

1. Across the curriculum:

Peace education can be integrated with subject matter across the curriculum, for instances :

1. Writing essays on peace
2. Studying intercultural works about peace
3. Information exchange through newsletters or brochures
4. Simulation activities on inter-country conflict resolution
5. Discussing or reflecting on the ethics and responsibilities of scientists and the users of technology (e.g. in inventing and using the atomic bomb)
6. Debate
7. Artistic representation of students images of violence and peace
8. Preparing posters, slides and materials for campaigns for peace
9. During school experience programme

Peace education can be taught through various activities during school experience programmes through activities like communication between children of various groups/cultures/ schools through

- The exchange of letters
- The exchange of work
- Student/faculty exchange

3. School-based activities involving parents, teachers and students (this might include a parade, peace education orientation workshops and forum)

4. Celebrating and coordinating activities Days of International Importance must be celebrated at the school level and activities must be coordinated through various social and international organizations or institutions) like the UNESCO, UNICEF etc.

5. Development of learning materials

The following guidelines must be provided to the student teachers in order to develop learning materials for peace education:

1. The materials should give practical help in teaching and learning about peace.
2. The materials should suggest various methods that can promote students active participation.
3. The materials should be able to meet the particular needs of a country or teacher. In this respect, the materials are not a complete set, but an ongoing series.
4. The materials stimulate student's interest in understanding more about other groups or cultures.
5. The materials contain case studies showing how conflicts between people and countries have been resolved peacefully.
6. The materials highlight the most urgent problems challenging world peace today.

Conclusion:

The educational action for promoting the concept of peace concerns the content of education as well as training for teachers. A culture of peace must take root in the classroom for an early age. It must continue to be reflected in the curricula at secondary and tertiary levels. However, the skills for peace and non-violence can only be learned and perfected through practice. Active listening, dialogue, mediation, and cooperative learning are delicate skills to develop. This is education in the widest sense. It is dynamic, long term process: a life-time experience. It means providing both children and adults with an understanding of and respect for universal values and rights. It requires participation at all levels – family, school, places of work, newsrooms, playgrounds, and the community as well as the nation.

The educational context should provide programs addressing psychological and physical violence, including cyber bullying, through violence prevention, conflict resolution and meditation in all levels of education.

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Learning to live together in peace and harmony .. A UNESCO APNEIVE Resource book for teacher education and tertiary level education, Values Education for peace, Human Rights, Democracy and Sustainable Development for the Asia- Pacific Region.