

# Promoting World Peace Through Education

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*Abstract: In the modern world, violence in various forms and complex forces unleashed by techno-scientific development has transformed the people into miserable and restless creatures on this earth. Today, we are living in the world of international terrorism and warfare. War is not limited to battlefields or national boundaries; rather it has taken the form of Guerrilla war or the proxy war where the agents of enemies and terrorist groups create devastation amidst the civilian population of the countries. As the world is shrinking today, to a global village on one hand, on the other hand there is growing intolerance, violence, race, caste, sex, creed discrimination and fanaticism. There is no denying fact that the crime is also becoming globalized. As a measure, peace education can be the most appropriate way to prevent violence of all types and nourish the young learners from their formative period with rational and relational skills.*

*Keywords: Peace education, Peace building, Globalization, War, Violence.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Despite tremendous advances in science and technology in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the dawn of the new Millennium has witnessed violence, terrorism, wars and conflicts all over the world. The human miseries and pains were always there in the history of mankind, only their nature changed with the period of time. Today in the modern civilized world, where material development has crossed all boundaries man is moaning in pain that has never been before. Today, on one hand human civilization has reached the apex of material development due to techno-scientific progress and on the other, human society has become a victim of war, and weapons of mass destruction, terrorism, environmental destruction, population menace, poverty, food and hunger, illiteracy, over politicization of human civil society, globalization, moral decay of human being and consequent psycho-physical diseases.

Not only this, the population growth in most of the part of the world, especially in developing countries is creating a great threat to human security. Moreover, the demographic imbalances have become a major challenge to the human society. Particularly in India due to social taboos, sex determination, female feticides and infanticides are rampant and are causing a decline in male and female ratio. This may give rise to sexual crimes and abuses.

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## II. MEANING OF PEACE

Peace has been defined as 'absence of violence'. This is rather a narrow and negative definition. Peace should mean not only absence of war, but also violence in all forms, such as conflicts, threat to life, social degradation, discrimination, oppression, exploitation, poverty, injustice, and so on. Peace cannot be built as long as violent social structures exist in society. Naturally such structures will lead people to act violently. For instance, an unfair system of resource distribution in a society would lead to frustration of those who are deprived or get less. Frustration in turn could lead people to violence. Presence of all such obstructive and indicative factors can be termed *negative peace*. Peace as 'absence of violence' means absence of fistfights or firing or carpet bombing or use of nuclear war heads. This is rather inadequate and incomplete definition. Peace is a state of mind. This is

beautifully expressed in the Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defense of peace must be constructed".

### III. MEANING OF PEACE EDUCATION

Peace education hopes to create in the human consciousness a commitment to the ways of peace. Just as a doctor learns in medical school how to minister to the sick, students in peace education classes learn how to solve problems caused by violence. Social violence and warfare can be described as a form of pathology, a disease. Peace education tries to inoculate students against the evil effects of violence by teaching skills to manage conflicts nonviolently and by creating a desire to seek peaceful resolutions of conflicts. Societies spend money and resources training doctors to heal the ill. Why should not they also educate their citizens to conduct affairs nonviolently? Peace educators use teaching skills to stop violence by developing a peace consciousness that can provide the basis for a just and sustainable future.

Peace education could be defined in many ways. There is no universally accepted definition as such. Here are some good definitions from peace literature-

*According to R.D. Laing (1978)* - "Peace Education is an attempt to respond to problem to conflict and violence on scale ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is about exploring ways of creating more just and sustainable future."

*Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman (1988)* - "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 a philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, co-operation and reverence for the human family and all life on our beautiful planet."

*National Curriculum Framework by NCERT (2005)* - "The space for peace education within the framework of National School Curriculum document is compellingly clear in the light of escalating trends of, and taste for, violence globally, nationally and locally. Education is a significant dimension of the long term process of building up peace, tolerance, justice, intercultural understanding and civic responsibility."

*UNICEF defines peace education as* "the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitude and values needed to bring about behavior change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflicts and violence, both overt and structural, to resolve conflict peacefully, and to create the conditions conducive to peace whether at interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level."

The basic concepts embedded in the above definitions are that Peace Education is a remedial measure to protect children from falling into the ways of violence in society. Learning for peace really deals with learning the skills, attitudes and values in order to create and sustain peace. Furthermore, peace education helps to deal with conflicts without the recourse of violence, learning to think creatively and learning to apply the

methods of active non-violence. It also reveals that peace education aims at the total development of the child and inculcates higher human and social values in the minds 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 be benefited.

### IV. NEED OF PEACE EDUCATION

Men are living a critical junction in human history. No man is at peace today. Increasing fanaticism, race superiority, intolerance is dominating all the societies today and as a result human beings are feeling more and more insecure. Looking at the world today, any sensible person feels disheartened and horrified to see the kind of violent acts committed by man against man and nature. Women and children are insecure and fear to move around alone. It is really sad to realize that we live in an era of unprecedented violence, in the form of terrorism, where crime is just an operation and exploration amidst a seemingly out world development enjoyed by a few.

Not only are the adults, even children in the present society exposed to a vast amount of violence, both in the media and in their own lives. It has been said that in television alone, children will see over 8,000 murders and 10,000 other acts of violence by the time they finish school. Therefore, introducing Peace Education in the schools and colleges is all the more necessary and urgent. Peace, as we all know is not merely the absence of war and conflicts alone. It has something to do with the minds and attitudes of people. In the deepest sense, peace is a sense of good will towards others, wishing them the best in life. There is love and concern for others, not only as human beings, but as brothers and sisters whose happiness and welfare directly affects a person. It is also the promotion of a sense of belonging in that, the sufferings and sorrows of others are shared with concern and steps are taken for redress of those sufferings. In short, peace wants the complete wellbeing of a person in relation to others.

But in today's society, such considerations are hardly seen in the lives of the people. Our life and lifestyles appear to be heading towards concern for the individual only. There is no consideration for the other person as a human being. The attitude one can see is that 'if it is okay for me, it is right and good'. No one is concerned with the lives of others. Even in business and trading practices, many people are involved in selling drugs, guns, explosives and other destructive substances knowing that these are things that will ruin the lives of other people. Not to speak of concern our respect for the consideration of other lives have become so little that human lives are reduced to having no value or meaning. There is no concern whatsoever for human life as human beings. Under such circumstances need for peace education is all the more necessary and urgent. It has been said that "If violence begins in the minds of people, so should the foundation of peace be laid in the hearts of human beings" (UNESCO). We need to begin building counter-forces against violence in our minds. This is to ensure that our attitudes are structured towards reaffirming the images of peace. This is a great responsibility of our educational systems and possesses a challenge for future curriculum development. Education plays

an important role in the process of peace building because it reflects and transmits our social values and norms from one generation to another. But peace is not a subject which should be learnt and memorized for use at certain time only. It is to be practiced in life at all times. Peace should be instilled in the minds of children right from the formative period. Therefore, the curriculum at elementary stage should be developed in such a way so that students can develop different skills and knowledge of promoting peace.

Thus, Peace Education should be fundamental principle of education right from the elementary stage. The need of peace education is felt all over the world today. In India, peace education has already been incorporated in the higher education curriculum. Therefore, it is felt that even in the elementary stage, peace education should be included in the curriculum so that we can foster peace in the minds of the children right from the formative years.

#### V. FACTORS AFFECTING GLOBAL PEACE

There are numerous factors that affect Global Peace, listed by various people, organizations and countries over centuries in the initiative to attain Global Peace. Though there are so many intrinsic factors, they can be classified under broad categories. Some of them are listed below:

##### ✓ RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

Every religion says that God created this entire world. Apart from major know religions, there are numerous religions across the globe, which have their own ideals. For centuries, there was no connection between the people of various parts of the globe and so they strongly believed in their own religions and their advocacy. But in the present communication era, the globe has shrunk and so do the Minds of the people who stick to the means of the religion and fail to realize the destiny.

##### ✓ COMMUNAL WARS

Communes supposed to be the oldest for of living and had been very successful as a unit. But through ages, wars always prevailed between the communes due to various reasons primarily to prove the superiority of one over the other, grab the lands and territories and influencing one's ideology over the other. But in the present era, everyone has the right to grow and prosper irrespective of communities they belong to. In spite of the change, people are clinching the older roots and sink in elapsed ideals of their own community.

##### ✓ POVERTY AND SUFFERING

Irrespective of the sound economic growth of the countries, poverty prevails everywhere. Many governments and service organizations announce many relief packages for eradicating poverty. But the truth is that, all the benefits are not reaching the deserved people due to lack in operational efficiency and greed of the middle people who swindle major portion of the Aids for their personal benefits. Moreover, mere

social service is like free boarding and lodging given to hostel students without any teaching or classes. Life Education should be primary for the poor as it gives them strength and attitude to overcome poverty and stand in their own leg.

##### ✓ CORRUPTION

Corruption is grabbing the wealth of others for the sake of comforts of one's own body and family. Corruption prevails in many countries top to bottom. People are more concerned about their self and family comfort. This selfish attitude coupled with desire for material wealth has prompted people into corruption. The scientific advancements have done very little to prevent corruption. Corruption cannot be prevented unless there occurs a mental transformation among people that cultivates love and compassion for others and leads to spiritual realization.

##### ✓ DIFFERENCES IN FAITHS AND BELIEFS

Faiths and beliefs come from the instincts and impressions sown in the sub-conscious mind of every individual. Faiths may be personal, methodical, theoretical, practical, political, social or religious. Conflicts occur when one tries to impose his/her Faith on the other, which is happening in day to day life across the globe.

##### ✓ DIFFERENCES IN DOCTRINES

Every individual, organization or government has own doctrines. At all levels doctrines are set as the guiding principles for functioning. It is obvious that in this diversified world no principle can be accepted by all and differences are inevitable. But the distortion of peace occurs in the manner the differences are cited. If there is a violent means of expression of difference, there is always method on the other hand. But this depends on the choice.

##### ✓ TERRORISM

Terrorism is the act of distorting peace by following violent path resulting in loss of lives and properties. Again, terrorism is the result of faith of the terror groups in adopting the path of destruction and their belief in their own ideology. The governments are forced to pay in the same coin to fight against terrorism to establish peace. Sadly, the ultimate goal has not been served till date.

##### ✓ URGE FOR POWER AND PROSPERITY

For ages, this has been a vital factor of peace distortion. Right from the era of Kingdoms to the present Governmental rule, countries try to expand their territories for showing their power. In the past, countries like India were susceptible to invasions for looting the wealth. From the macro level of Governance to the micro level of individuals, the tendency to establish power and gain prosperity is evident.

✓ NON AVAILABILITY OF RESOURCES

In the process to fulfill the needs, either primary needs like food and water or luxury needs like accumulation of wealth and enhancing the resources, Peace is distorted some way or other. We can scale this from small level burglary to war between countries. This is the result of trying to enhance their sufficiency in crude and destructive means. This tendency prevails in almost all people and countries in some level or other. But the intensity differs. Looting the natural wealth for satisfying personal needs also is categorized under this.

✓ NATURAL DISASTERS

This one is not under the control of humans. Volcanic eruptions, Tsunamis, earth quakes, flood, cyclones, fire, heavy rain, draught etc. keep occurring for ages and all living creations have to live with this. Certainly, natural disasters are one of the vital peace disruptors.

VI. ROLE OF EDUCATION FOR PROMOTE PEACE

Education has been touted as one of the most powerful tools we can implement in our global efforts to promote world peace. Here's a look at some ways education can help promote peace.

- ✓ *EDUCATION BOOSTS CONFIDENCE & HOPE:* Confucius said it as far back as 500 B.C.: "Education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope. Hope breeds peace." Confidence has been defined as the belief that you can succeed at something and a sense of self-assuredness. Knowledge is a key confidence builder; it allows one to feel a sense of accomplishment, to be more fearless, and to grow in unexpected ways. This confidence and self-assuredness in turn sparks motivation and optimism—or hope as Confucius says—to work towards peace.
- ✓ *EDUCATION PROMOTES INDEPENDENT THINKING:* Education encourages independent thinking, and it opens doors to new ideas. Independent thinkers tend to try to make sense of the world and draw their own conclusions instead of blindly following the beliefs of others. Independent thinkers may be less likely to join militant groups or be followers, and may instead be leaders towards positive change and action.
- ✓ *EDUCATION INSPIRES PROBLEM SOLVING SKILLS:* Along with math skills that are learned in classrooms, students are often challenged to use logical thinking in order to analyze different pieces of literature, the significance of historical events, and scientific findings. Coupled with independent thinking, these critical thinking skills can lead to innovative solutions and alternatives to violence.
- ✓ *EDUCATION BUILDS COMMUNICATION SKILLS:* In the classroom, students are often asked to speak or read in front of others, offer opinions, and break into small groups to work on projects together. This is how communication skills are honed, and communication is the key to solving conflict. Through quality education,

students may be armed with the tools to work within their communities to solve problems, or to do so on a global scale.

- ✓ *EDUCATION OPENS DOORS:* There's no doubt that education leads to career enhancement, employment opportunities, and chances of higher earnings. What was once out of reach for girls in the remote villages we work with—say becoming a doctor or a lawyer—are now possibilities. And with these careers in place, many come back to work within their communities and support their families, often promoting peace.
- ✓ *EDUCATION REDUCES POVERTY:* Imagine always being uncomfortable, malnourished, and fearful, not knowing where your next meal will come from if it comes at all. This fear can often lead to anger and anger to violence. Education, especially when it's combined with technical training (read more about CAI's vocational training programs), has been proven to reduce poverty. One study by UNESCO found that income around the world would be 23 percent higher per capita in countries with education for all. If poverty were reduced, violence would follow suit.
- ✓ *EDUCATION INCREASES POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT:* Educated citizens are less likely to stand for government corruption and can spur more government accountability. For women, education can even the playing field, and they are more likely to participate in political discussions, town meetings, and decision making, therefore leading to a government that represents its citizens more equally. Because educated women are less likely to support terrorism (see number 8), they can promote alternatives through politics.
- ✓ *EDUCATION REDUCES SUPPORT OF TERRORISM & MILITANCY:* According to a University of Maryland School of Public Policy survey, uneducated women are more likely to support militancy and terrorism, and educated women are less likely than their educated male peers to support this way of life. And if a woman doesn't support it, perhaps she can talk her husband into not supporting it, and then her kids, other family members, and other members of her community.
- ✓ *EDUCATION BUILDS EMPATHY & TOLERANCE:* The Human Rights conventions declare: "Education must prepare a child for responsible life and effective participation in a free society in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendships among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin." Therefore with quality education, a child can learn the quality of empathy and understanding towards those who are different from them. And they may be more accepting of others and less likely to solve problems with violence.
- ✓ *EDUCATION CULTIVATES RESPECT:* In the classroom, students learn to respect their teachers and their peers. They are taught to let others speak and express opinions, not to interrupt, how to deal with stress, and how to conduct themselves within a group setting. Perhaps this learned respect for other humans can be practiced on a global scale, where there's a respect for

each and every life, not just those who share the same religious beliefs and backgrounds.

#### VII. ROLE OF SCHOOLS IN PROMOTING PEACE EDUCATION

The basic concepts embedded in the definitions of peace education are that peace education is a remedial measure to protect children from falling into the web of violence prevalent 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 humanity will be benefited. In fact, two out of the four pillars of education suggested by the Delor's report, namely learning to live together and learning to be, are related to 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. Through applying peace education and creating a peace culture, it has been observed that schools can have the following responsibilities:

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

#### VIII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, peace education as a practice aims to confront and resist violence to transform societies toward culture of peace. Peace education focuses both on education about peace and education for peace while addressing the knowledge, values, skills and behaviors needed to nurture a peace culture. The content of peace education include knowledge of peace movements, peacemakers, negative and positive, peace, direct and indirect violence, peace as an active process, human right and responsibility word views and ideologies, non-violent communication community and dialogues. This includes negotiation and mediation practice, journaling, reflection circles and alternative futures exercises.

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