

## PEACE EDUCATION IN INDIA: A PROPOSAL

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### ABSTRACT

Now-a-days, we live in an age of unimagined levels of violence with uncountable reasons. People are forgetting human values. Hence peace and welfare aspects are facing new challenges at this juncture. It is believe that war and violence occur due to unresolved conflicts. Learning to live with and in peace is emerging as a premise of peace education. Across the world, peace education programs are gaining popularity, as states international agencies and civil society organizations increasingly recognize the importance of such education. However, with this growing recognition there are increasing contestations over both the broader objectives and the specificities of carrying out peace education programs. This articles sketches out the various options that are available, and also looks at how a regional perspective on peace through education can be generated. While such a perspective would have to be sensitive to the history, the current reality and the future needs of the different South Asian states, given the shared cultural practices in South Asia, it may not be an impossible undertaking.

**Key Words:** Peace, Conflict, Conflict Resolution, Peace Education.

### INTRODUCTION

Education aims at all-round development of the individual. But unless he is at peace within himself and with the external world or his environment, he cannot achieve progress in various fields. According to Swami Vivekananda, *“Education is the manifestation of divine perfection already in man”*. The individual has the potentiality to make progress and go ahead. He is endowed with different qualities of hand, head and heart (3H). He is to live in a peaceful atmosphere for utilizing there qualities and express himself through various activities.

Education is the powerful means of self expression and self realization. That is why, Gandhiji means education as *“an all round drawing out of the best in child and man – body, mind and spirit”*. He is (Gandhi) the celebrated apostle of peace and for him peace is not merely absence of war. Rather for him, peace is creative, positive and co-operative. In the modern shrinking world; one cannot keep himself aloof from others. All are interrelated and share the same destiny- sorrows and sufferings, happiness and prosperity. Mankind is threatened with nuclear holocaust and mass devastation today. Peace is felt need of the hour. It has been eulogized through ages.

## MEANING OF PEACE EDUCATION

Peace is the cherished goal of mankind. It cannot be achieved by peaceful measures and cannot be enjoyed by a group of people or a particular country or exclusive other. It can be realized only through mutual understand, international harmony and world brotherhood. Education which promotes such international brotherhood, follow and brotherhood is called peace education. It must enable the human being to be in peace irrespective of caste, creed, colour and geographical location.

**Global Campaign for Peace Education**, Peace education teaching for and about human rights, gender Equality, Disarmament, Social and economic justice, Non-violence, Sustainable development, International law and traditional peace practices.

According to R.D. Laing (1978) *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.*

**Peace education** is 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.

## AIMS OF PEACE EDUCATION

- To understand the nature and origins of violence and its effects victims and perpetrator.
- To create frameworks for achieving peaceful. Creative societies.
- To sharpen awareness about the existence of unpeacefull relationship between people and within and between nations.
- To investigate the cause of conflict and violence embedded within perceptions, values and attitudes of individuals as well as within social and political structure of society.
- To encourage the search for non violent skills.
- To equip children and adults with personal conflict resolution skill.

## PEACE EDUCATION SKILL

- Identifying bias.
- Problem solving.
- Problem solving and co-operation.
- Creative self expression.
- Shared decision making.
- Honest talk and sensitive listening.
- Recognizing and expressing felling.
- Conflict resolution strategies.
- Non violent action.
- Self reflection.
- Independent research.

## THE NEED FOR CHANGE: AN INDIAN SCENARIO

All over the world, a great deal of emphasis is currently being placed upon peace education, as the quest for peace necessitates extensive knowledge and unflinching assiduity. The widespread interest in preparing individual for peace on earth makes us resort to the teaching- learning process. The inevitability of this emphasis upon

education for peace has arisen not only from the need to educate the public opinion of the scourges of war, its prodigality or the danger of total annihilation etc, but also from the necessity to promote understanding, acceptance and friendship among all peoples and nations and to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Learning to make a living is not the sole reason for getting education; there is another, equally important by product: learning to make a life, a life that is beneficial, useful and peaceful. After all, humans are social animals; their success in life is largely a matter of successful social relations. Quite evidently, student age is the crucially important period which enriches one's whole life pattern seen from this perspective, one could very well understand the critical necessity of teaching students, youth and young leaders the art of loving together, in mutual respect, justice, love and peace.

Alfred North Whitehead calls education "*the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge*". We need to tell our students, youth and young leaders about our world and its problems. We need to explain to them their part in the solutions. We need to instill in them a genuine appreciation of, and a profound liking towards, our humanitarian traditions and values such as non violence, tolerance, understanding, and cooperation and peace. To quote H. G. Wells, "human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe" and hence, we must educate the youth for peace. However, will any kind of education, given by anybody to anybody under any circumstances, bring about these results? It is highly unlikely.

Peace education itself is as abstruse a notion as peace. Any attempt to define peace education in strict terms, or to typify asset of programs for the purpose of generalization would prove futile, as the most important features that characterize the notion of peace education are many and varied. The aims and objectives, the perspective of the subject, the working methods and other theoretical and practical approaches are decisive variables. Furthermore, place, period, local environment and other internal variations are major affective components in deciding the kind of peace education, its scope, its nature and the values one would attach to it. Owing to these factors, peace education varies from country to country, and even between regions within one country. However multifarious the approaches are, all educational programs and activities collected under peace education would seek to prepare the students for peace. To put it in a nutshell, peace education sees to the construction of defenses of peace and fences of justice in the minds of younger generation. And to making the youth hold to peace individually in life.

#### APPROACHES OF PEACE EDUCATION

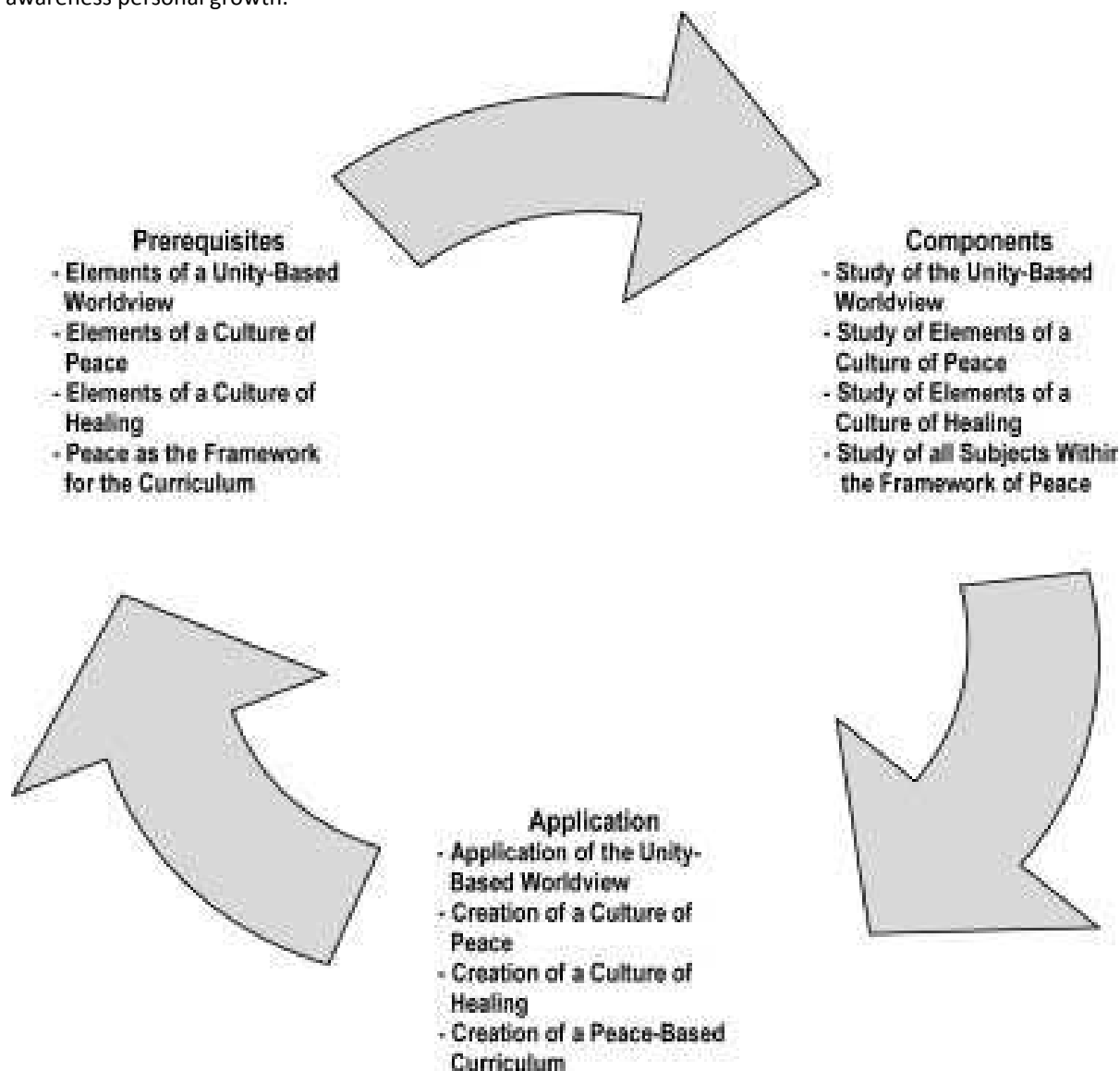
Peace education covers a wide territory, and has many subsidiaries. Mitsuo Okamoto argues that disarmament education, international education, development education and the like can, by broad definition, be included as programs in peace education. The contents denominated by the various titles like world order education, global education, education for international understanding, education for justice, ecological education etc., have been categorized by Okamoto into four types of peace education.

The first sees peace education as criticism of war. The basic view here is that peace is the absence of war (negative peace). Content of this type includes teaching, concerning the legacy of war experience, a scientific explanation of the causes of war and condition of peace. The promotion of international understanding as a preventive to war, etc.

The second type considers peace education as liberation. Here, a new concept of peace, positive peace (which is defined as that social condition characterized by economic independence, a stable order, social justice, human rights and welfare), is presupposed. Liberation from poverty, ignorance, discrimination and oppression etc. is seen as the objectives goal for peace education here.

The third type regards peace education as a learning process. In this type, peace education is grasped as learning process towards inter-personal maturity on the basis of unity between theory and practice on the hand, and a critical understanding of history and society on the other.

The fourth type holds peace education as life-style movements: it rests upon the realization that warfare and war preparations are intimately tied to the fact that the over – production and extravagance of the nations at the center have been gained at the expense of the wealth and development of nations at the periphery. Here, we can refer to a standard of values emphasized a simple life, human scale, self determination, ecological awareness personal growth.



*(Prerequisites and components of an effective program of Peace Education)*

Disarmament education is a major development in the field of peace education. It implies education both for and about disarmament. All who engage in education or communication may contribute to disarmament education by being aware and creating an awareness of the factors underlying the production and acquisition of arms, of social, political, economic and cultural repercussions of the arms race, and of grave danger, to the

survival of humanity, of the existence and potential use of nuclear weapons. Development education explores development issues and focuses on the development process. Obviously, the content of development education in a developing country like India is entirely different from that of a developed country. Given the present situation in India, creating a deeper consciousness and awareness of our development problems among our students, and designing programs of personal involvement in development activities will open up new vistas in our development process. We can also find a very strong correlation between development education and environmental education.

The wider view of the meaning of peace gives rise to several innovations in the domain of peace education, viz. the teaching of human rights and fundamental freedoms, education for international understanding, education about the UN, its other non-formal peace education programs, such as the UN students' association, UNESCO clubs, UNESCO Associated Schools Project and so forth. Both the conceptual and the practical approaches must be quite conspicuously delineated. Having developed a theoretical frame work and drawn up policy prescription for carrying out peace education programs and activities, we should attend to curriculum change. In deed, peace education demands the modification of the existing educational system, rather than mere expansion of it.

In the case of India, although caste oppression, untouchability, gender discrimination and other cruelties existed (and continue to exist), the culture has been marked by acceptance, catholicity and an innate inclusiveness which refuses to be taken away by doctrine divergence. All these factors have facilitated the commingling and constant cultural exchanges of tribes, races religions and ethnic groups with grave doctrinal, philosophical and ideological differences. Islam, which came to conquer, compromised and became indianized in the form of Sufism, and Islam influenced Hindu reformation thoughts of the nineteenth century. Indian culture, characterized by a profound understanding of the nature of humans and their relations with bother beings and the universe, is absorbing all the essentials in the western scientific civilization, and the inherent Europeanism in it has made it possible to understand the Christian culture. This ancient culture of India was taken too many contiguous lands in Asia. When improved means of communication like the printing press and the rail road were about to hasten culture communication, the advent of political changes and aspirations, the movement for independence, fears of dominance dependence and all such sorts of influence gave rise to an insistence on cultural independence and actual divide. The South Asian scene, which was once described as a 'harmony of contrasts', gave a different picture. The contrasts with strong political and psychological undercurrents became violent and caused recurrent divisions.

Recently, however, there has been a rejuvenated will to see harmony through regional cooperation efforts, and bilateral transactions and dialogues. After all, there are many cross- cutting alliances and allegiances. One of the main philosophic-religious schools of Indian culture, Buddhism, reigns supreme in Sri Lanka, where the minority Tamils share their language and religion with the people of Tamil Nadu in India. Besides the Tamils, there are other 'language-culture' groups represented by the Urdu-speakers in Pakistan and India. Bengali speakers in Bangladesh and West Bengal (India), and Sindhi, Punjab and Nepali speakers across the borders of Pakistan, India and Nepal. If Pakistan, Bangladesh or the Maldives claims a preponderance of Islam, India too possesses eminence in Islamic culture as it has the second largest Muslim population in the world. Signaling India's unique identity, Hinduism and Buddhism offer a basis of understanding with the Himalayan kingdoms of Nepal and Bhutan.

Furthermore, there is ample scope to define commonalities on the foundations of philosophy, ethics and religion, literature, theater, music, dancing, painting, sculpture, architecture and even minor arts such as wood-caving, copper and cloisonné work, carpet making, earthenware etc. the wind and the limbs, the brush and the chisel, the trowel, the pen and the spirit itself strengthen the fabric of the rich cultural milieu off South Asia with some basic character-emphasis on melody in music, traditional and stylized form in dance, free variations in painting, monumentalism in sculpture, lyricism in poems, and realism in stories. Religious fervor, fervent

wedlock, strong affinity to family, respect for elders, and a host of others cultural habits and customs, too contribute to the spinning of the regional cultural web. In spite of all these, South Asian countries cannot be simply lumped together culturally; it is even less likely, under the present circumstances marked by divided politics, diverse allegiances, differing perspectives and cultural policies etc. May be a good compromise would be engaging in peace education activities in one's country without overlooking the larger regional backdrop.

#### TEACHERS' ROLE IN PROMOTING PEACE

The peace education we plan should be carefully adapted in kind, in amount and in distribution. The major point we have to reckon with, while deciding the quality of teaching to be given, is to understand the subcultures of India as a prerequisite to develop world-mindedness. It is highly difficult to specify the exact amount of peace education. But it is worth taking note of some of the basic questions in distribution. First, few teachers are capable of meeting the requirement and values dictated by peace education which are crucial for favorably affecting the awareness and behavior of young minds. Second, a trite descriptions and vague discussion will prove as useless as mere cramming up details, unless a solution is specially mentioned and the means of implementation are spelt out. Third, the form and content of peace education is quite unique and so it does not go with conventional treatment. Evaluation, for example is a rather difficult process as the teaching aims at the essence of individuals. There are many more related things which demand our prudent concern. It is important to remember that peace education is not an additional academic subject we add to the existing system. Instead, it is the general orientation that we introduce in the in the existing subjects, textbooks and teacher discourses. For instance, the sociology textbooks could underscore the fact that peaceful coexistence is an objective requirement for peaceful development, and vice versa. In the physics textbooks, emphasis could be laid on the need to fight for a ban on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and international agreements in this field. Biology books could explain, among other things, the deadly effects of exposure to radioactivity on human beings. Needless to say, one who wills the end wills the means. Though international comparisons are difficult, general lessons and indicatives suggestions can be taken from international experiences also.

#### CONCLUSION

The challenges for educators all over the globe is to chose between going ahead with the present effect educational system, or preparing our younger generation for the kind of life each and every one of us aspires towards. To use Swami Vivekananda's categorization, should we teach them just 'to know 'or to be? "**Learning-The Treasure within**" highlights the four pillars of learning and the third pillar which is most important is-Learning to live together.

'Let us work together  
Think together  
Achieve together  
With no hatred to each other.'

This is most important to all particularly to the learners to learn to live together on this planet. In order to survive on this planet peacefully every one must learn to live in harmony and in a violence free environment. Differences in race, caste, colour, creed, language, customs, traditions and cultures exist and to learn to live amidst these differences should be a wonderful and unique experience for all.

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