CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND PEACE EDUCATION
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‘Education is the Only Defense’ Against War.

ABSTRACT

Peace Education is coherent, critical and capable of dealing with different concepts of peace among others and also able to implement them through various means. Here, teaching peace education is considered as the necessary instrument for the promotion of democracy, progress, development and civilized society without which peace may be a mirage. Accordingly, teaching peace education is critical to the promotion of democracy, nonviolence, compassion that is nascent.

This paper has six major sections namely: What is the relationship between peace and conflict? What are the different issues of conflict? Different ways to reduce conflict and achieve peace, International initiatives on peace education, peace education programs from outside India as well as within India, and finally how peace education can be helpful for the betterment of our future.

INTRODUCTION

When we rise in the morning and listen to the radio or read the newspaper, we are confronted with the same sad news: violence, crime, wars, and disasters. I cannot recall a single day without a report of something terrible happening somewhere. Even in these modern times it is clear that one's precious life is not safe. No former generation has had to experience so much bad news as we face today; this constant awareness of fear and tension should make any sensitive and compassionate person question seriously the progress of our modern world.

War has been a constant threat to mankind. The consequences of war are particularly damaging to civilian populations, displacing them within their own state, depriving them of security and stability, and preventing them from achieving self-fulfillment and self-realization. The resulting insecurity and instability that follows from these circumstances –
lack of basic needs, harsh surroundings, and oppressive governments – forces many to turn to violence in defense of their right to survive. These tragic circumstances have increased societal awareness of the need to understand and to prevent the conditions leading to violence.

The tragic events in societies and the escalation of conflicts around the world have focused attention on the urgent issues of world peace and human security. The presence of conflict and war in human history has always necessitated that priority be given to education for conflict management and war preparation, and for the preservation of the larger community, every new generation has been prepared to be sacrificed at the altar of war.

Peace education is the soul of education that can create the shield for human survival on the planet earth. It is only through peace education that peace can be installed in human mind as an antidote to ‘war is in the minds of men’. Peace education plays a dual role in not only attempting to analyze and reduce conflict and violence in its many forms, but to purposefully and actively create the conditions for achievement of a positive peace for individuals, groups and nations. Many charitable organizations and individuals are working to promote the spread of peace education throughout the world. Their valuable efforts are essential to the future peace and security of mankind. As written by peace education organizations-

“A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems; have the skills to resolve conflict constructively; know and live by international standards of human rights, gender and racial equality; appreciate cultural diversity; and respect the integrity of the Earth. Such learning cannot be achieved without intentional, sustained and systematic education for peace”.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONFLICT AND PEACE

Conflict is a state of unresolved differences within an individual, between individuals, an individual and a group, or two or more groups.

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.

Building on principles and practices that have evolved over time, responding to different historical circumstances, peace education aims to cultivate the knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to achieve and sustain a global culture of peace. Understanding and transforming violence is central. The following diagram helps visualize the core relationship between violence and peace.
Peace is understood not only as the absence of traditional forms of direct violence, but also as a positive presence. Educating for and about all aspects of peace constitutes peace education.

**THE ISSUES OF CONFLICT**

Because we are concentrating on conflict that is expressed in group violence and war, the issues we mention will mostly be those that arise between peoples and nations. But they can all be translated into local terms, to match the conflicts that you may know about personally.

1. Conflicts arise when people are competing for the same resources (such as territory, jobs and income, housing) when they aren't fairly distributed or when there aren't enough to go round. The same applies to natural resources (cultivable land, fresh water).

2. Conflicts arise when the people are unhappy with how they are governed. The most common conflicts occur when a particular group wants to be independent from a central government, or when their viewpoint isn't represented in the government, or when the government oppresses them and doesn't respect or meet their basic needs.

3. Conflicts arise when people's beliefs clash. Religious and political views are particularly sensitive, because people often depend on these for a sense of identity and belonging. Sometimes the conflict is caused by a religious/political group being attacked; sometimes it is because the group is eager to spread a particular belief and even enforce it on others. Some leaders may aggravate religious and political differences as part of their tactics for keeping or gaining power.

4. In the same way ethnic differences can cause conflict, or be made to cause it. Again, people's ethnicity gives them a sense of identity and belonging, and it is threats to this sense which can cause violent responses, just as individuals may lash out with angry words or gestures when they feel threatened.

Indeed, conflicts of all kinds most frequently arise when people feel threatened - regardless of
whether the threat is real. It is harder to soothe and reassure people when they are frightened or angry.

REDUCING CONFLICT & ACHIEVING PEACE

- **Democracy and Equality**

The first and fundamental commitment of the government is to provide all members of society with a peaceful environment, one that is conducive to freedom and opportunity. However, not all governments fulfill this obligation.

A democratic regime offers equal opportunities for education; this is another requirement in getting out of poverty: education for all groups at all levels, both formal and non-formal. A society that promotes education to all members of the society will make progress towards peace, as education will empower people to have the ability to form opinions and act on issues concerning societal development. This ability is essential for spreading the universal values of human rights, peace and tolerance, understanding and democracy.

In our increasingly interconnected and multicultural world, it is extremely important for democratic societies to develop a sound infrastructure. Examples are the provision of health and water care and equal access to natural resources to produce a healthy population. In addition, a democratic outlook promotes education of tolerance, mutual understanding and the celebration of diversity.

- **Government Programs**

A primary role for the government in any plan for the creation of a more peaceful society is to act as an information source, spreading the word to parents and society. The government can act to establish projects and programs to promote education for all. Through infrastructure development, ensuring equal access to all for basic and secondary education, and through the provision of learning materials and resources, the government can act as a major catalyst in changing the values of the society as a whole.

- **Educational Programs (Peace Education)**

Establishing a strategy to promote peace through education can be accomplished through the incorporation of the universal values of peace, non-violence, tolerance and respect for human rights into all education curricula and methods. Schools must work towards educating students in the benefits of literacy and numeracy, teaching skills and knowledge needed to fulfill self-development, in addition to teaching participation in society and how to collectively improve quality of life.

Governments can take active participation in UNESCO’s Associated Schools Project in primary, as well as secondary, levels of education. The Associated Schools Project provides learning materials to schools and focuses on four main themes, including World Concerns and the United Nations system, Human Rights and Democracy, Intercultural Learning, and Environmental Issues, to enhance the education for a culture of peace, demonstrating the viability of intergovernmental and nongovernmental cooperation in the assistance of peace education. There are currently only a few hundred schools in the entire world that actively
participate in UNESCO’s Associated Schools Project. Much greater participation is needed to make this effort succeed.

**Dealing with conflicts - step by step**

**Phase 1: Introduction**
During this phase the teachers established and motivated groups at their schools, asked colleagues for co-operation, introduced the project to the parents of their students and prepared an individual work-plan.

**Phase 2: Awareness**
As a result of the introduction phase the teachers realized that there is hardly any awareness of everyday conflicts in school. Therefore it was necessary to raise the sensitivity for problems or conflict areas. The groups then worked on the topic "personal identity" and trained communication skills in order to feel safe enough to break taboos and to deal with conflicts.

**Phase 3: Analysis**
Having developed certain stability in the group, students chose different ways to identify conflict areas in their school environment. A worksheet to analyze conflicts given by the project coordinators helped the groups to identify the social structure of the conflicts that occur in their classes.

**Phase 4: Dealing with conflicts**
According to the type of conflict and the people involved in it the students chose different strategies to deal with the conflict. Approaches of conflict resolution like "mediation" were tried out. In most cases the students were successful; some of the conflicts could not be solved immediately because they needed more attention from all concerned.

**Phase 5: Evaluation**
In order to evaluate the project in a thorough way teachers and students together reflected on the process and the results.

- **Social Programs**

Parents and teachers can play a major role in the reduction of conflict. Children and youth are desperately in need of mentors that can teach them the values of tolerance and compassion. When children leave their schools, they also need to be exposed to the values of peace within their home and in the larger society. This requires that education programs be created not only for children, but also for parents and for the society as a whole.

We must build open societies, developing infrastructures and promoting democracy. In order to do this, we must educate governments as well as civil societies. The United Nations can play a unique role in this regard, raising the standards of the international community towards a global approach, stimulating cooperation with nongovernmental and intergovernmental organizations to build a better world.
INTERNATIONAL INITIATIVES ON PEACE EDUCATION

• Global Campaign for Peace Education (GCPE)

Founded in 1999 at The Hague Appeal for Peace Conference in the Netherlands, the Global Campaign for Peace Education (GCPE) is an international organized network that promotes peace education around the world.

The Global Campaign for Peace Education (GCPE) seeks to develop the capacities, in teachers and learners, to face challenges of unprecedented proportion: the continued development of weapons of mass destruction, armed conflicts between states and ethnic groups, the spread of racism, gender inequality, community violence, the huge and widening gap between the rich and the poor throughout the globalized economy, massive violations of human rights and the degradation of the environment.

In seeking to foster a culture of peace in communities around the world the Global Campaign has two goals:

1) To build public awareness and political support for the introduction of peace education into all spheres of education, including non-formal education, in all schools throughout the world.

2) To promote the education of all teachers to teach for peace.

The Campaign is a non-formal network comprised of formal and non-formal educators and organizations, each working in their own unique ways to address the goals above. This form allows Campaign participants to focus their energies towards meeting the goals and needs of their constituents - while at the same time promoting and making visible the growing global network of educators working for peace.

The GCPE publishes a monthly newsletter featuring articles and news as to how and where peace education is active and growing. It includes reports from the field chronicling successes and challenges; profiles of peace educators; listing of events, conferences, and trainings in peace education from around the world; new publications in the field; and job postings.

• International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE)

Founded in 1982, the IIPE is an annual week-long residential learning experience in peace education. Each year the IIPE is hosted by a partner organization in a different region of the world.

The IIPE is not a traditional conference but rather a “learning community” in which the organizers and participants work together to nurture an inclusive, highly interactive learning environment. It is an intensive multicultural and cooperative learning opportunity in which participants learn from and with each other about substantive peace issues and interactive teaching approaches. The IIPE is also an opportunity for networking and community building among those who educate and work for a culture of peace in the host region and around the world.
Reflections from participants:

“The [IIPE] made me realize that many educators… feel they have no choice but to involve themselves and their learners in a process of peace education.”

“My ideas about the possibilities for peace education have been reaffirmed as I now see that there are individuals scattered across the world who believe in the possibility of peace.”

• Community-Based Institutes on Peace Education (CIPE)

A Community-based Institute on Peace Education (CIPE) is a sustainable and recurring learning opportunity that enables formal and non-formal educators in local communities to learn with and from each other about "the role and possibilities for education in the prevention of deadly conflict; the rethinking of global security; preparing individuals for engaged, democratic citizenship; and the realization of human rights, social justice and ecological balance."

CIPEs are informed by six strategic goals:

1) To provide local support for peace educators;
2) To provide opportunities for educators to learn from each other about best practices;
3) To address current and relevant local content and issues;
4) To support school and community based peace education initiatives;
5) To increase the possibility for affecting policy locally, nationally, and globally; and
6) Increase potential for research and new developments in the field of peace education.

• Canadian Peace Education Foundation

The Canadian Peace Education Foundation for a World Fit for Children (“CPEF”) purpose is to raise funds for education for building peace, and to consider results-oriented peace building educational projects at home and abroad. Our ultimate goal is to significantly reduce the human cost of violence against children and others, through:

1. Increasing peace awareness and knowledge of alternatives to violence;
2. Increasing donations of money and volunteerism for peace education;
3. Increasing information resources for peace education (eg. Books, articles, videos, etc.);
4. Increasing social educational programming (eg. Government initiatives, corporate initiatives, school initiatives, etc.)

The nature of programs to be funded includes:

- venues for dialogue (eg. conferences, community town halls, etc.; from annually to continuously)
- peace education programs, distance education, peace research
o Resource libraries (eg. books, videos, Internet, publishing, magazines; a major central location, major provincial locations, major community locations, etc.)
o Television programming (eg. Vision TV, Radio)
o Centres for Teaching Peace (eg. a major central location, major provincial locations, major community locations, etc.)
o Scholarships and exchange programs
o Exporting Culture of Peace expertise
o Safe and caring schools violence prevention type programs
o Work with existing infrastructure. Where infrastructure does not exist, we would encourage it. We will be careful to not "take away" from, or duplicate, existing organizations and programs
o projects would be funded to build peace at the individual level, family level, community level and world level

• World Citizen

World Citizen is a non-profit organization that empowers the education community to promote a just and peaceful world through activities for children and youth. World Citizen positively impacts thousands of young people through its three programs, the Peace Education Program, the International Peace Site Program, and the Nobel Peace Prize Festival.

“Empower the education community to promote a just and peaceful world.”

World Citizen is a private, non-profit organization whose mission is to support Peace Education and the concept of World Citizenship. It was founded by Lynn Elling and launched on United Nations Sunday in 1982. World Citizen focuses its activities on children and youth following the advice of Mohandas Gandhi who said, “If we are to reach real Peace in this world, we shall have to begin with the children.” In that spirit, World Citizen today touches thousands of young people through its three programs, the Peace Education Project, the International Peace Site Program, the Nobel Peace Prize Festival.

International Peace Sites commit to upholding the following five principles:

- Seek peace within yourself and others
- Be a responsible citizen of the world
- Promote intercultural understanding and celebrate diversity
- Reach out in service
- Protect the environment

PEACE EDUCATION PROGRAMS

• A collaborative project involving the Teachers College of Columbia University, the United Nations Children’s Fund, and the Afghanistan Ministry of Education will publish textbook in four local languages and introduce participatory, active, and experiential to promote peace.

• In PRIME’s writing the Shared History project, Jewish and Palestinian teachers and historians collaboratively developed a text to transform the history education in the region. In the book, one column describes the Palestinian perspective in Arabic; another
column describes the Jewish perspective in Hebrew; the third is blank in order to encourage students to write about their personal experience.

- In Northern Ireland, the “Review of the School Community Relations Programme” found that cross-community programs in Northern Ireland schools did not pay enough attention to the importance of the environment in which contact was initiated and teachers would sometimes shy away from controversial issues. In addition, the report attests to the importance of support from administration and management as well as adequate teacher training.

- National Board for Human Rights Education in Croatia introduced a peace education component in 1999 into curriculum from preschool through high school.

- Jewish-Arab Center for Peace at Givat Haviva (JACP) uses instruction, education, research, and community involvement with diverse populations.

- **PEACE EDUCATION IN INDIA (ST. JOHN’S HIGH SCHOOL)**
  
  In the year 1986 United Nation’s Year-of-peace, St. John’s High School, Bombay launched a programme to promote Peace Education amongst its students. A new subject “Peace Education” was introduced in the syllabus. Six dedicated teachers with Dr. (Mrs.) Mabel Aranha as the coordinator designed and implemented the Peace Education syllabus for Stds. V, VI and VII. A book was published as a guide for Indian Schools. Over 400 books were sent to various schools free of cost. The world is filled with tension due to communalism, casteism and regionalism. Keeping this in mind St. John’s High School started Peace Education Programme in 1986. The main goals of this programme are:

  - Instill a desire for peace and to detest war and violence
  - Understand the meaning of co-existence.
  - Reduce differences between people of various states in India and other countries.
  - Accept each other’s religion. Introduction to holy books and prayers are important parts of peace education. Values of compassion and equality are transmitted through role play and skits. Yoga and meditation are useful techniques learnt to acquire inner peace.

  The programme has been blessed by many world leaders like Mother Teresa and Mr. Rajiv Gandhi. The Dalai Lama writes, "In the course of my efforts to promote compassion, tolerance, patience and peace through them, I have stressed the importance of these qualities being taught to young people right from the beginning so that it can be a part of their lives later, I find that St. John’s High School is actually practicing what I have been talking about".

**LOOKING AT FUTURE**

What potential strategies can help to promote a culture of peace? Ethics is at least as important a value as are the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, and ethics should become a core part of every educational curriculum. People must focus on a longer-term perspective. Even if world peace is not achieved within our lifetimes, we must think of our children and of the generations to come.
We must work so that our grandchildren will look back upon our actions with pride at how far we have come. We must work so that we can ensure they will be given a just world in which to live. This is a compelling achievement to strive for. International cooperation is required in order to achieve peace – we must look beyond nationalist perspectives in order to create a better tomorrow. This is a demanding goal: encouraging countries to encompass a global perspective will not come without effort. The people have the power to enact this change – they must create the will.

These are issues of human interest, not state interest. It is in the interest of the international community to look within countries, not just between countries. We must work together; we must intervene to eliminate conditions of poverty and inequality, even if it does not concern us directly. This is essential to the future of peace: oppressive regimes affect the entire international community. There is no place for these regimes in an interconnected global open society.

Terrorist impulses ferment in poverty, oppression and ignorance. The elimination of these conditions and the active promotion of a universal respect for human rights must become a priority.

All countries have a role to play in creating this future, and all countries must actively take part. These issues transcend national borders. Alliances with NATO and other democratic and international institutions can help to reform the United Nations so that its member states act not only in terms of their own interests, but in the interests of all humankind. In addition GCPE must work to create incentive programs with corporations. With their extensive monetary resources, multinational corporations must focus not only on environmental concerns, but also on peace concerns. Together, we must focus on proactive, constructive measures that encourage the development of a culture of peace.

CONCLUSION

Finding stability and peace is certainly the greatest collective challenge that mankind has ever faced. Conflict is unavoidable, but violence is not. In many cases, the energy stemming from conflict can be directed towards achieving positive change. People need to be taught of alternatives in resolving conflict, that violence is not a necessary means to achieve their goals. Peace education is a means of achieving this end. Peace education raises awareness of the roots and causes of conflict, and it provides people with the necessary skills and knowledge how to respond to conflict.

As part of the struggle for peace and justice, education of communities, families and children and young people in creating a culture of peace is paramount. This education for peace can find its form in specific programmes and initiatives that address physical, structural, cultural or political violence with a view to creating new peaceful structures dealing with the root causes and manifestations of such violence. It is dialogical and action-based in nature, where the end goal is positive change on behalf on individuals, groups or nations towards more peaceful societies.

The creation of peace is a long, ongoing process that will take years to accomplish, but at least the generations to come will have the chance to experience its benefits. It must become our united goal as human beings to live with one another in peace and harmony. Through the
generations to come that will benefit from the fruits of our efforts towards creating a world of peace, it can still be a rewarding effort to our being. So finally the conclusion of this article is

To Reach Peace, Teach Peace.

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