

“A Step towards Serenity- Peace Education”

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“Peace cannot be kept by force; it can only be achieved by understanding.” – Albert Einstein¹

Introduction

According to the UNICEF, Peace education is –“the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.”² The education for peace digs to nurture knowledge, skills and perspectives that involve a culture of harmony. The peace education has a comprehensive approach. It encircles the physical, social, intellectual and emotional development of students.

Concept of Peace and Peace Education

Peace is a philosophy and not just a state of mind. Peace is nothing but a condition of soul awareness where in lies the absolute happiness of human beings. All it is, is having a feeling of security, calmness and relaxation. In the words of Ian M. Harris – “Peace is a concept which motivates the imagination. Connotes more than the cessation of war, implies human beings working together to resolve conflicts, respect standards of justice, satisfy basic needs and honor human rights.”³

The great Indian thinker and philosopher Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan explains – “We must will peace with our whole body and soul, our feelings and instincts, our flesh and its affections.”⁴

The foremost goal to be achieved while providing education is instilling peace and it is a fundamental principle to be treasured by each individual. Peace education begins at home. Peace

¹ Quotes by Albert Einstein available at <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/4464-peace-cannot-be-kept-by-force-it-can-only-be> (Last visited on April 30, 2020)

² UNICEF Programme Report, 2012-2016, <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED573879.pdf> (Last visited on April 30,2020)

³ Ian M. Harris, *Peace Education*, p.41(Published in the year 1988)

⁴ Paul Arthur Schilpp, *The Philosophy of Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan*, (Published in the year 1992)

education is a technique which helps in eradicating disputes and violence caused due to injustice, inequality, violation of human rights etc. Instead such methods should be applied that will reduce the same with proper instructions and learning strategies by producing responsible global citizens, resulting in peace and harmony in the society.

R.D. Laing defines peace education as “A Peace education is an attempt to respond to problem 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,”⁵

History of Peace Education in India

The concept of peace has always been a part of India since the ancient times. The ancient writings of India also proliferates the idea of living in such a world where everyone is free. There must be a feeling of fearlessness in a real sense. In the prehistoric ages, the administrative structure of India was also based on these writings and the same was transferred to the modern India also. Peace is natural to India.

There are various philosophies through which the same can be proved i.e.

1. Vedas

The very essence of Indian culture lies in its Vedas and Upanishads. All the four Vedas and Upanishads have talked about spreading and propagating peace and happiness.

2. Gautam Buddha

Guatam Buddha is a symbol of peace. Buddhism aims at achieving peace not only in today’s world but in all the worlds. Gautama Buddha preached that all human beings inherently possess the potential to create everlasting peace within their own life. An inner change for the better in a single person, one person becoming wiser, stronger, more compassionate is the essential first turn of the wheels towards realizing peaceful co-existence and fulfillment for the whole human race.

3. Mahatma Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi is the epitome of peace. He preached non-violence and always encouraged all his disciples to follow the same path. His hope for a better world and future was not based on circumstances, rising and falling as things seemed to be getting better or worse. Rather, it was based on an unshakeable faith in humanity, in the capacity of people for good.

⁵R.D. Laing, *Peace Education*, IJEPD 1(1), Dec 2013

Need for Peace Education in 21st century

The world today has shrunk down and all the global issues are no more just global issues. These issues have become local issues. Amidst all these issues, one thing that is very important is peace. Peace education has become a sine qua non to build and maintain peace amongst students, families, groups, workplaces and even within ourselves.

Education is regarded as one of the principle components which allow us to understand the social situations and sets us in motion to think why and how the social issues should be dealt with effectively while taking peace building initiatives. "Social Justice" is the center of the concept of Peace education. But it can only be served if we, the people learn to respect each other's individuality, freedom and human rights.

Due to various factors such as invasion by the British rulers in the ancient times, the fabric of peace living in India turned into that of separation because of the divide and rule policy followed by them. In the present times, the unrest is because of modern day problems like excessive competition for earning money, higher status in the society etc. which has all led to disturbance of peace in the present times. Also, the social issues such as terrorism, climate change, and strangled relations between various countries have also led to destruction of peace in our minds.

The goal is to promote the peace building mindset helping all of us to develop the attitude of preventing and resolving the conflicts and creating a world around us encouraging principles of natural justice and equality in all possible peaceful ways.

Peace education can address the issue of conflict management by making people anticipate creative solutions to resolve it. It will surely help us to gain knowledge and skills to grow and develop as true human beings with dignity of values, self-esteem and respect for others without any judgmental approach. And most importantly, it will develop competence for a non-violent approach for upcoming future conflicts.

Mulling over the mind boggling system of society in India, the circumstances make "peace education" a very diverse and dynamic field.

So as to accomplish the standards, peace education programs across the world address a wide scope of themes. Some methods may include nonviolence, conflict resolution methodologies, democratic government, disarmament, gender equality, human rights, sustainable environmental theories, history, communication skills, peaceful coexistence and understanding the concept of tolerance and diversity on a global level.

Peace education should be delivered to people regardless the age, in both formal and informal methods. Programs should be established at various levels such as local, national, and international levels.

Recommendations

India is a peace loving country. We have always shown the willingness to find peaceful means to resolve the conflicts without using force, violence or any other unfair mean, be it in family or on national-international scenario.

The hope for a better and peaceful world has always been a cherished idea since centuries. The search for new ways of interacting, loving and caring for each other will definitely create new positive humanitarian approach in the society.

As discussed above, Peace education is the need of the hour and therefore, here are a few measures that we would like to suggest to promote the same.

- International leaders should come together to encourage the concepts like world peace and disarmament at international level. Multilateral treaties should be signed between various countries for disarmament.
- Effective enforcement of all the fundamental rights provided under the Constitution of India, as a sum total of all of it reassures everyone's Right to co-exist in peace.
- Ministry of Peace and Security can be established like Ministry of Defense and security. It shall look after promotion of peace at national level.
- Peace education should be included in the curriculum of the school students as a compulsory subject. So that the seeds of peace are instilled in the children at home and even in schools.
- Teachers should be trained separately for teaching polite language, respectful behavior and better ways to resolve conflicts.
- Taking into consideration, the natural motherly and caring functions carried out by women surrounding us. More women should be trained and appointed as educators using the skills for valuable training involving empathy, patience, co-operation and team work.
- Special programs must be introduced for boys and men in schools, workplaces etc. cultivating gender sensitivity among them. This should be done because most of the times violence begins with the thought of being physically more powerful than others.
- More women should be appointed in military services.
- The larger a country's gender ratio difference; it is more likely to be involved in violent conflicts, according to a research in Valerie Hudson's Sex and World peace survey in the year 2012. Therefore, gender equality must be aimed at.
- Encouraging conflict resolving methods such as mediation, negotiation and conciliation.
- Conducting and actively participating in peace meetings at international level.
- Peace promoting art should be encouraged.
- Dance, music, visual arts, literature, theatres and films can be used as better and effective means to build and inspire peace.

- Awareness about climate change should be made in children and adults. Also, strict measures should be taken against people who still behave in an arbitrary manner.
- Lastly, a patient approach towards all the changes and growth towards Peace education techniques. Because implementation of these recommendations will itself be a huge challenge for the government and there is a long way ahead of us as the citizens of a peace loving country.

To implement the peace education system, a well-structured and sustainable program is needed. The same can only be executed with people's support. Constructive and peaceful values, skills and behavior are also very important factors in the same.

Conclusion

Peace is not just a theoretical term but it is an extensive term. It requires a change in our mindset and value system. The only mode which will intrigue people to bring peace in human mind and other values is education.

The only way to bring about a change in the world is to begin from each one of us. We are the future and the future is us. We would like to quote a beautiful quote by Malala Yousafzai –“If you want to end the war, and then instead of sending guns, send books. Instead of sending tanks, send pens. Instead of sending soldiers, send teachers.”⁶

In the end, we would like to conclude with a Sanskrit saying – “May there be peace in heaven, may there be peace in sky; may there be peace on the earth, may there be peace in waters; may there be peace in herbs, may there be peace in vegetation; may there be peace in all the Gods, may there be peace in entire creation; may there be peace everywhere; may there be and only peace; may that peace embrace me.”⁷

⁶ Quotes by Malala Yousafzai available at https://www.goodreads.com/author/quotes/7064545.Malala_Yousafzai (Last visited on 30 April,2020)

⁷ Sanskrit quotes on peace available at <https://resanskrit.com/sanskrit-shlok-popular-quotes-meaning-hindi-english/> (Last visited on 30 April,2020)