

FOCUSSING ON PEACE FROM “EDUCATION- LENS”

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ABSTRACT

Peaceful co-existence is the sign of development and prosperity of the society. All the activities of the country run smoothly in the situation of peace. People can raise their living standard by working hard. Peace brings happiness among people. Peace is the mother of civilization and war is the demon of destruction. Civilization and development cannot progress if there is no peace in the country. Literature flourishes only in the time of peace. It is also the case with philosophy, science, industry and art. In our daily lives also we find interest and pleasure in doing work in times of peace. All our Vedic as well as Puranikaworks start with Shanti-Patha, called as Peace Invocations. Our sages and saints always prayed for peace and well-being of all. This type of prayer itself emphasizes the utmost need for peace. These prayers were done when Bharat was materially at the helm of its development, less population, plenty of food etc. and yet people felt the need of peace. Peace seems to be the primary need of mankind, a sort of basic need or urge, just as hunger, food, shelter and clothing.

KEYWORDS: *Higher Education, Peace, Education- Lens*

INTRODUCTION

Present day society is highly competitive. This competitive process obviously poses many challenges for the society and the susceptible individuals by causing anxiety, stress and tension. Modern men are experiencing the lack of inner harmony but rather sleepless nights, restless mood, constant stress and fatigue and the consequent psychic disorders or psychosomatic diseases. Hassija, J. C (2001) opines that much of the turmoil and suffering in our world is, and has been, due to one or the other kind of disharmony between their emotions and intellect, desires and judgments, beliefs and behavior, or views and values. Disharmony at the international level may also find expression in the form of suspicion and fear or anger and vengeance between two countries or two power blocks and may lead to manufacture and stock piling of deadly weapons of mass-scale destruction or to cold or hot war. The use of these weapons may bring doom to the whole world. Therefore, Peace has to do with freedom from fear, justice, tolerance, international understanding and bringing an end to conflicts. These are the foundations on which peace must be built and nurtured. Therefore, Peace is the guiding principle of man. Any attempt to deviate from the principle will only bring about destruction

NEED AND IMPORTANCE OF PEACE

Peace is desired by not only a poor, or a deprived person all whose efforts are being spent on making his basic ends meet, and neither is it required only by a stressed, and dismayed person who has been hard is own life-hit by time and situations. People belonging to affluent family are seeking peace. Similarly most of the people who are in search of peace these days are those who have been gifted with all kinds of material treasures and opportunities, and yet with a feeling of a deep emptiness within. We need peace and it is essential for a healthy, happy and long life. To be content, blissful and loving we need peace. It provides power to achieve our goals in life. All human pursuits endeavour ultimately to attain peace. Man

runs to temples, churches or mosques and visits parks, seashores, hill stations, hot springs, historical monuments and such other sight-seeing spots for solitude and peace. In this context Nabin, B.K. (2003) views that we are so inclined to and desirous of peace, that we cannot tolerate someone speaking loudly or if our dear children make noise while at play. Even after death one needs peace. All pray for the departed soul to rest in peace. All these indicate how dearly one needs peace. Moreover, science and technology have created a new trend in human thought. Man thinks that he is making rapid progress and that civilization has spread fast but, in terms of the second Law of Thermodynamics, man is enormously or voluptuously using the non-renewable sources of energy and natural wealth and is polluting the world. By supplying more and more comfort and luxury-goods besides consumer items, it has whipped up desires in man. Hashija, J.C, (2001) views that today man needs or desires thousand-and –one more things than he needed, say two hundred years ago. The whole human effort now seems to be geared up to production, acquisition and consumption of goods. In a sense man has now become more dependent on material things which, by their very nature, are transitory and ephemeral and make man pleasure-hungry and discontented. The desires have thus increased manifold due to man's giving a long rope to them. This has resulted in loss of peace because, despite best efforts, many desires of man remain unfulfilled. One thoughtful person has given a mathematical equation to find out how much peace a person has. He has said that

$$\text{Peace} = \frac{\text{Numbers of Desires Fulfilled}}{\text{Number of Desires Unfulfilled}}$$

Since the number of unfulfilled desires, lying hidden in man's mind or findings expression in various forms, is far greater than the number of desires fulfilled, man has, in his mind, only a small fraction of peace. The more man reduces his desires, the more peaceful he will be. Otherwise the result of ever increasing trend towards consumerism is more and more pollution of the environment, for the ecological balance is greatly disturbed by gearing up industrial production and its consumption.

PEACE AND EDUCATION

Peace is a mental situation at the ground level. Education is both the *seed* and the *flower* of the vital processes of societies. Education shapes societies and societies guide the processes of education. Education acts as a cause and an effect of "*peace & development*." Peace education is necessary in this case. 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.

In tracing the recent development of peace education we begin to see that in the past it has been an integral part of education at all times and in all cultures. Every culture regards peace as a noble ideal to attain. However, with the advent of Western secularism at the beginning of the 20th century through the guise of a positivist scientific outlook to education, moral and human values including peace were slowly discouraged away from school curricula. The whole education was viewed narrowly as teaching facts of various subjects. However, in spite of such materialistic views, the thinking of such humanists like Rousseau, Henry Thoreau, Tolstoy and Maria Montessori kept the sense of education alive. With the witness of the horrors of the first and second World Wars there was a reawakening to the need of developing the humanistic side of education at least among a few educationists.

According to Pandey, S. (2007) in India education for peace programmes have traditionally been concerned with promoting certain core values. Mahatma Gandhi envisaged a non-violent society, which would be free from exploitation of

any kind, and can be achieved through the instrument of education. Peace and living together have been integral part of Indian way of living and manifested in its Constitution through various articles. It firmly believes that inculcation of certain values among younger generation would help them to exist in the dynamic socio-cultural fabric with peace, harmony and prosperity.

National Curriculum Framework 2005 states that 'Education in true sense should empower to clarify their values to enable them to take conscious and deliberate decisions taking into cognizance the consequences of their actions; to choose the way of peace rather than violence; to enable them to be makers of peace rather than only consumers of peace' National Institute of Education (2000) Bulletin on Education for Conflict Resolution Programme has been developed to live a conflict – free life in school, to build up mutual cooperation and to make the future happy and successful and to live as a peaceful citizen. Realizing the importance of peace in the modern era NCERT has started giving trainings to the teachers about the education for peace. NCERT in its introductory remarks of training course on peace Education for Teachers (2008) mentions that peace stands for absence of conflicts in society and avoidance of violence by people.

PEACE ATTAINMENT AS GIVEN IN BHAGVAD GITA

We, the people of India, are very fortunate to have been gifted with the most invaluable treasures of spiritual wisdom. Shrimad Bhagwat Gita which help us to withdraw from the external world of illusion, and stabilize our inner being to explore the secrets of inner peace. Peace can be attained by giving up all the vices such as ego, anger, lust, greed, attachment etc. peace is directly associated with the purity of character in an individual, in society and the world as a whole. Peace can be achieved by maintaining the stability of one's mind. Peace can only be established through the Ocean of Peace, i.e. God, the Almighty .Gita embodies Godly versions on peace as follows:

- Peace is not possible to one who does not have a stable mind. And one who does not have peace, will never be happy.(Gita2-66)

Na chaabhaavayatahshaantihashaantasyakutahsukham.

- Peace is possible to one who is steadfast in his intellect, one who is not greedy or desirous, whom the sensual objects do not disturb. (Gita2-66)

Aapuuryamaanamachalapratishtam Samudramaapahpravishantitadvad,

Tadvatkaamah yam pravishantisarvesashaantimaapnotinakaamakaami.

- Further, (Gita in 4-39.) says God

Shradhhaavanlabhatedyanam tat parhsamyatendriyah

Dnyamlabdhvaaparaamshaantimachirenaadhigachhati.

One can get peace, only after, having a deep conviction in his guru, and one who has controlled his senses; it is only the knowledge, which can give one peace of mind. This means that knowledge is to be put into practice.

- In chapter 12/12 , God says, wisdom is superior to mere study of scriptures, meditation is superior to wisdom, superior to meditation is the abandonment of the fruits of actions , because, it is this renunciation of the fruit of karma i.e. *Tyaaga*, which ultimately leads to mental peace. Thus again God emphasizes upon the practical aspect of knowledge. .

- In chapter 16, God has elaborated some 26 divine virtues called *Daivi Sampattih*. One such divine trait is Mental Peace. *Ahimsaa Satyamakrodhah Tyagah Shaantirapaishunam.etc.* Thus if one inculcates such divine virtues, like non-violence, truth, giving up of anger, sacrificing attitude, etc, along with practicing peace under all the circumstances, one is bound to get mental peace. In fact, peace is the precondition to achieve the liberation. Peace is a very high ordered value.
- And if; nothing is possible to be practiced, one and the final method given by God is to surrender oneself at the holy feet of Lord, because, it is His Grace which will bestow unto you the permanent and everlasting peace.

ACTIVITIES FOR INCULCATING EDUCATION FOR PEACE

- Education for peace need not be taught as an independent subject. It can be integrated with the various school subjects and various extra-curricular activities embodying peace themes.
- School must adopt the method of teaching of wider range such as discussions, group discussions, cooperative learning, collaborative learning, and debates on the world issues to raise the global awareness in the learners. It also imply with special reference to peace with sacred source which helps understand the whole world as a family.
- Participation of children in role plays, dramas, composing peace poem and peace songs etc
- Participation in international day like Human rights Day, Children's Day, UN Day, Girl Child Day, Environment Day etc
- To encourage sensitivity towards others through visiting old age home, disadvantaged groups and enable to develop interest in their welfare
- Religious festivals and National day's celebration in the school and in the neighbourhood
- Story telling and discussions to promote tolerance and understanding
- Since learning may take place in many different contexts, all of which can promote messages of peace, a number of activities as part of the after school programme could also be taken up which includes:
- Camps that bring together children of different cultural groups through recreational activities
- Sport activities that build character, promote the spirit of team work, cooperation, sportsmanship etc
- Media awareness to reduce violence and increase peace content of radio and television programmes for children.
- Magazines focussing on peace themes, street plays, using dance drama, songs and self expression and educating the community concerning peace through puppets to popularize the values of fairness, non-violence and social harmony
- Television and radio sports as well as peace campaigns can also be used to raise public awareness concerned with peace and conflicting issues.

ROLE OF A TEACHER

Teachers are nation builders. Indian Education Commission (1964-66) has remarked that India's destiny is being shaped in the classroom. According to National Focus Group on Education for Peace (2003), position paper 3.4, "Schools are potential nurseries for peace and teachers are the gardeners. In the same line the present study also highlights on the role of teachers as transmitter and agent of peace. Teacher can create open, flexible, creative and yet orderly value based environments. Teachers are the role models of the peace values such as , the art of listening, the humility to acknowledge and correct one's mistakes, assuring responsibility for one's actions, sharing concerns, and helping each other to solve problems transcending differences, even if they do not preach. Teachers as the agents of positive changes and are responsible for helping and guiding the students through proper communication with each other, communication with oneself and communication with the Sacred Source. For this teacher needs to be pro-active not reactive. The greatest task of the teachers is to eradicate physical, economic, psychological and ecological violence. In order to promote education for peace, teachers must define global, national and personal goals including personal relationships, economic equality, the value of human rights and the elimination of violence towards the environment.

To maintain the peaceful environment in the educational institutes teacher has to play the crucial role to avoid violence through actions, words and thoughts. Teacher can adopt learner centric teaching methods such as Heuristic, Personalized Self learning Approach to enhance the individual peace of the learners. Teachers have to adopt collaborative, cooperative learning, group project to foster social, global peace amongst the learners. Teacher can organize various activities such as collective prayer services, value based activities, meditation etc besides the curricular and other co-curricular activities. This can definitely bring out the positive results in the days to come. In recent years, two trends have especially increased the challenges of raising and educating children: growing materialism and violence in entertainment media. These have greatly impacted families, diverting time and focus away from traditional pastimes and the transmission of cultural and spiritual values. Many children spend far more time in front of the television than in front of their parents. Violence in entertainment has a profound influence on youth. Violent films, television programs and videos not only glamorize violence, they sanction inhumanity and normalize disrespect. As disrespectful words, gestures and expressions become commonplace, feeling of hurt, loneliness, alienation and anger in turn become more prevalent in children, young adults and even adults. In addition, watching more than four hours of television a day diminishes the development of children's psychomotor, language and social skills. Many adults spend less and less time enjoying and interacting with their children and families as they try to gain security and happiness through materialistic pursuits – or simply try to cope with more complex world. As relationship deteriorate and divorce rate increase, many children have few adults in their life to nurture them. Traditionally values were transmitted by parents and communities. The call for values in education is asking educators to be the heroes –to fill society's void. It implores education to be leaders in recognizing that technology and materialism are not enough. They need to be aware of their own inner potential and develop new skills and powers essential for effectiveness in the present environment. Teacher needs to be Pro-active, effective and efficient as the current situation is characterized by commotion, chaos, feeling of insecurity, poverty, rising prices, crime, corruption, valuelessness, political instability etc. Teacher can play the proactive role to build up the peace skills of their own first.

CONCLUSIONS

Today education has to play a very important and positive role than ever before in inculcating peace among children because they are the future citizens of a nation. A nation can prosper only if there is peaceful co-existence among its citizens. Therefore, the responsibility of developing right kind of attitude among children for a peaceful, harmonious personality falls on the collective efforts of the school, teachers, parents and as well as the community. Through a healthy and learning environment that encourages tolerance, gender equity, cooperative group work, broadening of social imagination and skills of resolving conflict, a culture of peace should be developed among children. All these should be imparted taking into account the social and cultural context and the needs of a country. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values and with the universal human values which should also be globally relevant.

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