

PEACE EDUCATION FOR KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

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Peace is a state of mind that has to be experienced for oneself. It is a question of feeling and experiencing it. It represents whatever good there is in life. Peace is the ultimate, absolute, everlasting and most desirable thing for any human being. We are living in an area in which science and modern communication have turned the world into one small community reducing the barriers of time and space. The latest developments in the field of tele-communication keeps us informed instantaneously of events occurring in any part of the globe which affect the entire planet to a greater or lesser extent. Although the world has become closer through technology, we have not drawn closer in hearts. Peace is not just the absence of war and conflict. It goes well beyond that, peace must be fostered within the individual, within the family and society. Simply transferring the world's nuclear weapons to a museum will not itself bring about world peace. The nuclear weapons of the mind must first be eliminated.

Role of Education in promoting peace

The cause of peace is furthered through education. There is a universal responsibility for nations to assist each other in the quest to achieve free and compulsory quality education for all children. By helping one another, nation to nation, we help to create not only an appropriate atmosphere for learning to occur, we create a culture of peace. Education is the principal means of building a culture of peace. Learning and practicing the skills of active non-violence, of dialogue, of tolerance and solidarity, respect for human rights and the constant struggle for justice are the various keys.

Concept of Peace Education

Peace education may be defined as 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.

Ian harris and John Synott Have described peace education as a series of "Teaching encounters" that draw from people:

- their desire for peace
- non-violent alternatives for managing conflict, and
- skills for critical analysis of structural arrangements that produce and legitimize injustice and inequality

James Pages suggests peace education be thought of as "encouraging a commitment to peace as a settled disposition and enhancing the confidence of the individual as an individual agent of peace; as informing the student on the

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consequences of war and social injustice; as informing the student on the value of peaceful and just social structures and working to uphold or develop such social structures; as encouraging the student to love the world and to imagine a peaceful future; and as caring for the student and encouraging the student to care for others."

Since the early decades of the 20th century, "peace education" programs around the world have represented a spectrum of focal themes, including anti-nuclearism, international understanding, environment responsibility, communication skills, non-violence, conflict resolution techniques, democracy, human rights awareness, tolerance of diversity, coexistence and gender equality among others. Throughout the world today there are current names for peace education. In India, the NCERT of the Govt., of India calls it education for peace and aims at having it replace values education in Indian schools. But worldwide there are such diverse terms for peace education as "human rights education," "environmental education", "international education," "conflict resolution education" and "development education", each with a particular focus.

Peace education is important in today's global economy. It is essential because it provides culturally rich inputs to every learner. That alone would generate respect for the institutions of family and the society. Issue like social cohesion, respect for traditions, beliefs and practices of other and advancement towards a well-knit society would be possible only in such situations.

Truth, righteous conduct, peace, love and non violence are the core universal values which will have to be identified as the foundation stone to build a value-based education programme. These are universal values and represent the five domains of the human personality: intellectual, physical, emotional, psychological and spiritual. They also correlate with the five major objectives of education, namely knowledge, skill, balance, vision and identity.

Aims of Peace Education

- To Understand the nature and origins of violence and its effects on both victim and perpetrator.
- To Create frameworks for achieving peaceful, creative societies.
- To Sharpen awareness about the existence of unmerciful relationships between people and within and between nations.
- To encourage the search for alternative or possible non-violent skills.
- To equip children and adults with personal conflict resolution skills.
- To investigate the cause of conflicts and violence embedded within perceptions, values and attitudes of individuals as well as within social and political structures of society.

Principles of Peace Education

- The education for peace should comprise of two aspects: First, explain the necessity and the possibility of peace and second, take action in favour of peace.
- Children, youth and adults should be made to understand the real causes and responsibilities for past and future conflicts, the economic and political processes which led or which can lead to wars.
- They should be made aware of the interdependence of the problems, such as the arms race and imperialist domination, economic and social consequences as illiteracy and unemployment. The need for peaceful coexistence should hence be emphasized.
- Citizens should individually and collectively take responsibility for the prevention of war, by taking action against arms race and should support disarmament. Passive attitudes and fatalistic views on war and peace and the concept that war forms part of the human nature needs to be combated.
- The consequences of the use of existing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons should be understood.

Ten Ways to Promote Peace in the Classroom

Education for peace is very important in the context of today's world in which the educand and the educator, the citizen and the society should understand the indispensability of peace. The teacher today needs to play an outstanding role in favour of releasing tensions, disarmament and international understanding to promote international peace, both at school/college as also in the community in which the college is located.

Promoting peace was a large part of Dr. Montessori's career. One of her most famous quotes is “Adverting war is the work of politicians; establishing peace is the work of education.” Here are ten ways to promote peace in the classroom:

- Start by defining the word 'Peace' with the students. The teacher can ask students what they think it means, their answers will probably be very enlightening. They are often surprised to realize that peace can be found at many places. It doesn't just refer to 'World Peace'. They can have a hand in creating a peaceful environment wherever they are.
- Declare the classroom a 'Peace Zone'. Do not tolerate any kind of bullying. Lay down ground rules at the beginning of the year that is posted for everyone to see. Have all the children agree to the ground rules and hold them accountable.
- Teach conflict resolution skills. One way that students enjoy very much is through role playing. Choose a time when everyone is together and there are no unresolved conflicts. Talk about peaceful ways to resolve the conflict. The teacher can define and discuss compromise, taking turns and listening skills.

- If the teacher has an annual event, like a poetry recitation, a musical or other performance, choose 'peace' as the theme every so often. Challenge the children to find stories, poems and songs about peace.
- Peace education can vary by age; college students will naturally be able to get into the history of peace and conflict by studying different countries and cultures. They can participate at a higher level by researching and writing about peace and peace education.
- Do students participate in the care of their environment, showing respect for the materials, pets, plants and other children.
- When studying geography, history and other cultures, emphasize respect for the diversity of traditions and customs found around the world.
- Consider having the school named an international peace site. The world citizen organization heads up that project, and they have information about peace education as well.
- Be a good example. Don't argue with parents, spouse or other teachers in front of the children. Speak respectfully about other people. Don't gossip. Show kindness. It can be easy to forget that children are watching every movement of the teacher and learn more from what he does than what he says.
- Establish special holiday and rituals for the school or home. These can include joyful celebrations as well as sad occasions (like the loss of a pet). Everyone can share in the planning, decorating and celebrating.

CONCLUSION

Peace education is essential for human survival in the new millennium. It is needed for individual national and global peace. In the world of physical and structural violence, peace education has to be compatible with the idea of peace which excludes direct and structural violence both. Peace education has relevance also in the age of exploitation because it teaches about altruism which is itself peace. At present, peace education has a great demand in the world of violation of human rights everywhere because it concretizes the learners towards their total situations, which enable them to fight for their liberation.

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