

10. PEACE EDUCATION AND CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN SCHOOL

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Peace means being one with life itself. Having no fear or bitterness. Peace is more than merely sitting still or in silence. Peace therefore, is a state of mind. Tagore rightly said "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high, into that kingdom of freedom my father Let my country awake".

Peace is simply having a feeling of security, calm and restfulness. We often tend to think of peace as being an international issue, far from our daily life, but we do not realize that global peace can only be achieved if each country is settled and at peace. The peace and happiness of each country can only be achieved if every citizen is at peace. This follows therefore that a country can be peaceful and progress if her people live tolerantly. We all want peace of mind.

Is peace of mind possible at all in our rushed life. It is up to us. We must come to grips with ourselves. Though the world may be full of problems and distress we must see the positive side of it all. We must accept the problem as an opportunity and not as a problem. Just as you destroy an enemy and make him your friend you can destroy a problem and turn it into joy.

When there is no peace among the persons, then peace in society is threatened. Sometimes this leads to chain of violence. Lack of peace destroys the identity of a country our mental and creative energies are diverted from useful activities to destructive one.

The need of the hour is to develop the young generation with peace consciousness and the importance of conflict resolution.

Irreparable damage has been done to the present generation by our system of government the political system and the religious leaders who exploit emotions for their immediate means. It may not be possible to change the attitude of the present generation but it is possible to mould the future generation for the good of the nation and for mankind. We all talk about the fissiparous tendencies that come up in our country in the name of religion, place and community, which in fact are

man made barriers used in the name of God. We the educationists should think ways and means to inculcate the spirit of unity and integrity.

Neither our society nor our educational system has any scope for highlighting the importance of peace and conflict resolution. In every walk of life our attention is focused on violence, confrontation, competition, self-interest and the need to win. The history of wars is no longer than peace. It took the impact of two world wars and the Hiroshima bomb disaster for human kind to begin to perceive the concept of peace as the primary goal.

Richard Chneider, chancellor of the World Peace University, Poland, Oregon says, "Never before in history has the human family faced more extraordinary dangers and anxieties. We are in remarkable transition, a pivot point in history. Society feels threatened by pollution, poverty and the threat of nuclear holocaust. More than 35000 people die of hunger every day, about 24 people die every minute, 18 of them children. Their suffering and death diminishes you and me." Dr. Rodrigo Carazo president of the University for peace, Costa Rica states that "Peace and human progress do not come about by themselves. It entails a will for peace. At the dawn of disarmament as the basis for the establishment of peace in the world must be accompanied by a new vision of peace".

Yes, we do admit that the world is in turmoil. It is wounded and sacred in many ways. It requires the healing touch, for we have to be prepared at an individual level. We can come to view with a free spirit and a sense of justice and peace at interpersonal level.

Interpersonal peace is an indispensable requisite for harmonious living in society. This inter-relationship should be rooted in respect one has for the existence of all life. No man is an island. We need peace at global level for the world is in a state of instability and tension with the depletion of human values. The world is fragmented by differences of class, economics, politics, ideologies, religion, language, territory, caste and colour. Differences can lead to imbalance, dissension and discord. Deep probing will reveal that the cause comes from man's own mental unrest.

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Peace is man's central pursuit and yet paradoxically there is less peace in our communities, in our school, in our homes, in our countries and the world than before. The human race is even threatened with annihilation at its own hands. With all the faculties that he is endowed with man, our upbringing and the education in which we are nurtured, the answer is "Yes".

THE NEED FOR PEACE EDUCATION

If war begins in the minds of men it is because of conflict. Conflicts are of different natures: personal conflict, interpersonal conflict, communal conflict etc. The concept, Peace Education goes hand in hand with Conflict Resolution. This can be considered the primary approach for peace education. We must train our children for peace. We must create positive attitude towards peace in our young minds.

Eisner questions the extent to which our school might be responding creatively and with responsibility to the needs of one's age. He says it is important to see past issues and to go beyond immediate controversies to locate the values underlying them. To what extent does the existing curriculum promote peace? Do we encourage co-operation with competition? Do we organize group projects and teamwork? Do we forbid the use of violence by teachers in the maintenance of discipline?

Education should be infused with aims and purposes set forth in the charter of the United Nation, the constitution of UNESCO and the universal declaration Human Rights. Article 26 states, "Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace".

World renowned thinker Fritj of Capra notes that "at the beginning of the last decades of our century we find ourselves in a profound worldwide crisis. It is a crisis of intellectual, moral and spiritual dimensions, a crisis of scale and urgency unprecedented in recorded human history". He goes further to suggest "we have to shift our perspective from the end of the twentieth century to a time span encompassing thousands of years."

The Industrial revolution took a wrong turn promoting consumerism and militarism. The militarism encouraged the promotion of armament industry, which indirectly influenced the war. Peace education on the lines of thought and the action, which tries to break such values. The reality of war is created by cultural and educational manipulations by reinforcing group identification and

creating images of the enemies and the possible for them. The tendency to dehumanize the enemy is due to the denial of the human values resulting in killing of innocent civilians including children and woman. It is peace education which inculcates and builds love, friendship and international understanding. We intend to teach the young minds valuable contribution towards peaceful society. The society which upholds the values of equality, solidarity, freedom, democratic inclination, tolerance, care and respect for others and willingness to change.

If we intend to create a peaceful society we must renew our educational society, which has no scope for inculcating the human values. Our examination system needs to be re examined which in fact fosters cutthroat competition; rather it should test of right type of the potential of the individual. Our environment the school, playground, home and our media focus more on violence rather than peace. The boys are given guns and trucks to play and we see violence in every day games. How do we expect peace in our children? We have to change our outlook towards society.

For the sake of argument, people may say that the moral education and religious education adequately covers the principles of peace education but infact it gives glorification of only one religion or the other. We want our children to go beyond the four walls of religion and spread the human values to built a peaceful world.

ACHIEVING PEACE

Peace is not sold in the market. Peace is personal as well as universal. Today, society is awakening to the reality of lending a hand. This is a good sign of peace. A caring people are a sign of hope. All of us have to put our shoulders to the wheel if we want a better tomorrow.

PEACE THROUGH CO-OPERATION

There is only one way to get peace through co-operation. Non co-operation will only create tension, anger, resentment and revolt.

Whether in a family, a class, staff, a team, a country; it is necessary to have a homely atmosphere, an atmosphere that is conducive to thinking about the meeting of minds and heads. If there is no co-operation then each one will seek faults in others and no progress will take place. Compare the rule of Akbar with Aurangzeb. Power does not bring peace. It is how we use this instrument of power that matters. Power used as tyranny may only bring terror and disaster. A tyrannical father is as bad as a tyrannical ruler to his son or daughter, Such fathers will create rebellious children and peace in the home will be shattered.

PEACE THROUGH LOVE

It is not true that sparing the rod spoils children. The rod has to be used only when other measures fail. But love never fails. Love should not be possessive, selfish or demanding. Love should be spontaneous, unconditionally showered all the time. Love generates faith, true co-operation and this is what is essential for peace. "When we love we share and not tear, When we love we win and not lose, When we love, we open and not close, When we love we progress and not retreat, When we love, we co-operate and not break up."

PRINCIPAL THEMES IN EDUCATION FOR PEACE

Educating for peace is concerned to help students develop a rich vision of peace which should form part of his personal life. He should understand the fullness of his own religion and appreciate all other religions. Educating for peace is also concerned with developing values and skills to assist the students in striving for the fullness of life that embraces all people.

Educating for peace is concerned with helping the students to recognize the many forms and causes of violence and to promote values and skills for living in society.

Educating for peace is helping students to the awareness of peace and to find ways of keeping peace by conflict resolution.

Educating for peace is helping students to be aware of interdependence, compassion and sensitivity for the needs of others and to encourage them to help in building a nation and not in destroying it.

Education for peace is helping students to enjoy the environment, to value the relationship of man and environment, to work individually and collectively for the betterment of the world. Educating for peace is providing students the vision towards a peaceful, loving and just world.

Use children to save the world. Peace Education should be a part of the school syllabus. Peace is a value. Values involve interaction between intellectual and emotional development of a child. In the subconscious of every child is impulse. Attitude and values give direction and quality to an action.

The students accept the stimulus in the form of planned activities. He responds and reacts to them, which brings pleasure or displeasure. He learns to value the feelings of peace and harmony and responds accordingly. He develops thoughts, ideas and images consistent with

the value of peace as priority in his personal life. (This we have observed in many of our students).

PEACE EDUCATION IN 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".

From our research we prepared a syllabus for peace education from Stds. V to Std. VII.

SYLLABUS

FIFTH STANDARD PROGRAMME

The main objectives of peace education and conflict resolution for Std. V are : to understand the concept of peace, the need for unity and to realize the joy of peace. The emphasis is on exploring the meaning of peace. The students take the pledge to be peacemakers. They make their own badges with the peace emblem of the dove.

They start "The Book of the Peacemaker" in which the activities, thoughts, poems and prayers are recorded. They also read and record extracts on peace from holy books and sometimes even write their own prayers on peace. Children select a state in India where there is unrest.

They collect, share and display information on the food, dress, customs, occupation, literature etc. of that state. On one day, children fast (miss one meal) and persuade a friend or a relative to fast for peace. They organize a peace march and perform activities, which highlight the concept of peace. This is also recorded in their books. They understand the concept of conflict and its causes. They realize that conflicts are unavoidable.

SIXTH STANDARD PROGRAMME

The main objectives of peace education and conflict resolution for Std. VI are to understand the role of a peacemaker and to know more about the known peacemaker of the world. Students learn about peace making and how to become peacemakers. The students reaffirm the pledge of a peacemaker and learn more songs on peace. They conduct assembly programmes to promote peace amongst other students. They also collect proverbs and sayings on peace by great men and women and note them in their books. Students write slogans on peace and display them in school. They also try to write their own poems on peace. They study lives of peacemakers and their contribution to world peace. They learn about the kinds of conflicts, the prevention and control method.

SEVENTH STANDARD PROGRAMME

In grade 7 students study conflicts rising between satisfaction of one's rights and duties to meet obligations. Students read and collect articles on conflicts in the world, they study the causes of conflicts, personal conflicts, prevention and control method, steps to conflict resolution, handling conflicts, valuating conflicts, students organize a peace fast, a peace march, and drawing competitions on peace. They relate their experiences to the other classes. They take the oath to evangelize the values of peace.

YOGA FOR PEACE

Mind itself is the cause of diseases. It is also a cure. Yoga is no more and no less than a better way of living. Yoga balances the state of mind generating the right kind of attitude. Yoga contributes significantly, improving the condition of health. With the help of yoga many have come out of depression and negative attitude.

Yoga is a bunch of physical exercise called Asanas. These Asanas help to calm the nerves which in turn gives us peace. It helps us to control our temper, anger. Yoga uses the techniques of relaxation of the body and mind. It is a technique of awareness, which makes an objective evaluation of life's problems. Yoga helps in giving direction to human activities that lead to the joy of fulfillment.

The first attempt in Yoga is to calm oneself so that one sees things clearly. Calmness creates enough clarity to throw up essential queries.

ASANAS : (1) SUKHASANA

Sit cross-legged on the mat. Put the palms on the knees in a relaxed way. Maintain the spine, the neck and the head erect. Draw the abdomen in. Close the eyes. Watch your normal inhaling and exhaling. Sit still. Let no thoughts come to your mind.

BENEFITS

Spreads a feeling of general quietude. With peace and calm comes clarity and understanding which help in better coordination of the day's work.

LIMITATIONS

Not for persons suffering from arthritis.

ASANAS (2) : NISHPANDABHAVA

Sit relaxed and in a comfortable position. Have soft, slow music played. Remain passive and get completely absorbed in the sound.

BENEFITS :

Trains the mind. Releases tension. Physical and mental relaxation ; quietude. There are certain activities that go well at certain hours of the day. The early hours at dawn are good for quiet thinking and contemplation. This is an asset for those who live in cities. They will be better off with reflection and recollection.

ASANAS (3) : VAJRASANA

Sit kneeling. Slip toes to join at the back, heels apart. Place buttocks in the cavity formed keeping thighs together. Place hands on thighs. Keep spine erect, head and neck straight. Reflect on the previous days events in sequence and with detachment trying to learn from the events and reactions.

This reflection gives a fresh perspective, helpful for future behavior. The important point here is that one learns to create a distance between oneself and the events. Ordinarily one gets emotionally involved. Thus one falls a prey for fears.

BENEFITS :

Feeling of quietude and turning the mind inwards acts as preparation for meditation and concentration. The fear of fear is our only real enemy.

ASANAS (4) : STITHAPRARTHANA

Stand. Join feet together. Close eyes. Join hands. Silently pray or create good thoughts. Remain in this position for 5 to 7 minutes.

BENEFITS :

Adds to steadiness and one pointedness.

LIMITATION :

Not for those suffering from vertigo. Habits good or bad do not attach themselves to us suddenly. They are the accumulated heritage of our own thoughts and actions.

ASANAS (5) BHADARSANA

This is a good Asana. It is very good meditative posture. It is said that the mind in this Asana transforms physical energy into subtle psychic energy. Sit on the floor with the legs nearer to the body while still keeping the legs in contact with the floor with knees bent outward and the soles of the feet together with the abdomen controlled and inhale for 3 seconds. Bring the feet with the toes pointing outwards close to the body. Place the hands on the knees pressing them down. Exhale for 3 seconds. Keep the body erect.

BENEFITS :

Will very important when a person wants to change. A very strong urge is required.

ACTION RESEARCH

One of the basic activities of Peace Education and Conflict Resolution is to make use of the action research methodology in school to introduce qualitative social research through which the personal skills of teachers and students could be improved as well as the organization of the school.

The aim of this activity is not only training in the identification of conflicts but to gain experience as a researcher in the context. The opportunity to be an observer rather than an actor in educational situations stimulates the sensitivity for social interaction and supports the development for the implementation of action research among the teachers. An important requirement of action research methodology is to consider the researcher as part of the social reality that he or she observes. In order to approach situations of tension and conflict a great deal of flexibility, on the part of the students and the teachers is required.

Team teaching also offers a valuable opportunity to observe, reflect on and evaluate one's own way of teaching. Action research and stress are both the cognitive and emotional dimensions of a learning process. Action research activities are much more unpredictable than normal lessons. Teachers often have to deal with unexpected situations. Action research turns out to be a bigger challenge in terms of sharing the work, responsibility, observation and reflection of one's own behaviour. The students definitely learn what a conflict is, how to develop over it, how conflicts begin and how they are dealt with. Students learn communication processes.

Students discover that learning can be an adventure. Students learn to be positively critical.

Action research processes in classroom have to be seen as a shared experience between teachers and students on the basis of equal rights. This means on the one hand the teacher's behaviour could also become an object of the conflict analysis; on the other hand discussion of other teachers should be stopped.

THE ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

1. Teacher and students will be in charge of a "researcher's diary" containing content of work and personal thoughts.
2. A group of students will act as observers during the whole project. Their task is to observe the behaviour of all involved teachers and students.
3. They write down points, which will be discussed later.

This practical training, we hope, will send out peacemakers into the world, who will offer peaceful solutions to our conflicts.

Peace and conflict studies is a social science field that identifies and analyzes violent and nonviolent behaviours as well as the structural mechanisms attending conflicts (including social conflicts), with a view towards understanding those processes which lead to a more desirable human condition. A variation on this, peace studies (irenology), is an interdisciplinary effort aiming at the prevention, de-escalation, and solution of conflicts by peaceful means, thereby seeking "victory" for all.

Joan B. Kroc School of Peace Studies
Master of Arts in Peace and Justice (MAPJ). Programme Information: The University of San Diego is inspired by a deep catholic mission which seeks to educate the whole person—intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially and culturally. The university provides character-building education that fosters independent thought, innovation, integrity, analytical thinking and open-minded collaborative world view.

Programme Information: University of Oslo's Peace and Conflict Studies programme is arguably one of the world's most prestigious peace and conflict studies programmes.

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