

DEVELOPING PROGRAMME OF ACTION ON PEACE EDUCATION

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ABSTRACT

People all over the world crave for peace. The educationists, politicians and the leaders of the world are trying their best to achieve world peace, but they face many problems. Many advanced countries of the world try to dominate the weaker ones, exploit them and capture their trade, thereby, decreasing the possibilities of world peace. Achieving world peace will remain a dream until they try to achieve peace at the local and global level. Hence, some measures should be taken to achieve peace at the national and international levels. It is here that the philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi shows us a ray of light for achieving peace.

“There is no way to peace, peace is the way”. (Mahatma Gandhi)

INTRODUCTION: Peace is an active and dynamic state in which one gets the opportunity to move forward towards the development without confusion. Peace entails the absence of conflicts, disputes, dissensions, fight and struggle. Peace is a state of mind which allows the individual to operate optimally and freely. This pre-supposes that there should be complete avoidance of the religious, political, economic, social, technological and cultural constraints which affect an individual's freedom.

Secondly, there must be an opportunity for the individual to grow in body and mind, in emotions and spirituality, in isolation and in communion with others.

Therefore, peace is a comprehensive enterprise that requires a transformation in our thinking, sense of values, will, resources and solidarity of all.

Today, people are broken up from within, and this disintegration is reflected in the disorganized state of human systems at all levels. The current culture of violence based on distrust, suspicion, intolerance, injustice, hatred and inability to interact constructively with all those who are different, must be replaced by new culture based on non-violence, tolerance, mutual understanding, solidarity and the ability to solve disputes and conflicts peacefully. Therefore, the concept and practice of peace must resolve and permeate first at individual level, then at family level, followed by community, nation, and finally the international community. This necessitates the learning and valuing of peace at all levels.

Learning about peace means obtaining knowledge and understanding of what contributes to peace, what damages it, what does peace mean on each level and how the different levels are connected. Learning for peace means learning the skills, attitudes and values that one needs in order to contribute to peace and help maintain it. This involves learning to deal with conflicts without the recourse to violence, learning to think creatively, learning to apply the methods of active non-violence or learning to deal with cultural difference in a constructive way.

There is a need to encourage a commitment to peace as a settled disposition and enhancing the confidence of the individual as an agent of peace, as informing the individual on the consequences of war and social injustice, as informing the individual on the peaceful and just social structures and

working to uphold or develop such social structures, as encouraging the individual to love the world and imagine a peaceful future and as caring for the individual and encouraging him to care for others.

To fulfill this purpose, the coming generation deserves a radically different education. Education that is holistic, participatory process that includes teaching for and about human rights, justice, gender equality, environmental sustainability, disarmament, and human security. The education which encourages reflection, critical thinking, cooperation and responsible action. The education that promotes multiculturalism and is based on values of dignity, equality and respect. The need for such an all comprehensive education has given rise to the concept of peace education.

Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself and with the natural environment. Peace education focuses both on education about peace and education for peace while addressing the knowledge, values, skills and behaviors needed to nurture a peace culture.

According to Dale Hudson, “Peace education can be defined as the education that actualizes children's potentialities in helping them learn how to make peace with themselves and with others, to live in harmony and unity with self, humankind and with nature.”

According to findings by UNESCO, through applying peace education and creating; peace culture, it has been observed that schools have following benefits:

Develop a more humanistic approach.

Improve human relation between the teacher student, teacher-teacher, student- student etc.

Help develop good attitudes within students and teachers as well organization, co-operation, mutual respect, trust, brotherhood etc.

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Help healthy emotional development in the students.

Develop creativity both in students and teachers.

Gandhiji's scheme of education is known as Basic Scheme of Education. It aimed at the development of the physical, intellectual and spiritual parts in human. Craft centered education is the part of basic scheme of education. It can be in the form of agriculture, spinning and weaving, wood work, gardening and lather work etc. With the medium of craft centered education, people would be able to be financially independent and will contribute in creating peaceful society.

Gandhiji's Philosophy of education can be understood with the help of following aspects of education:

1. All boys and girls should grow up to seek truth and peace.
2. All children should grow up as citizens in a new social order, based on cooperative work and with understanding of their rights and responsibilities.
3. Every individual should have full opportunity for his balanced and harmonious development.
4. Each individual must develop a scientific attitude of mind.

5. Education in a poor country like India should enable the individual to stand on one's own feet to fight against unemployment.

6. The ultimate aim of education should be self realization and the knowledge of God.

For attaining all these aims of education, we need to have curriculum which is cultural dominated. For this efforts should be made to relate curriculum with the nature of the child i.e. physical, psychological, sociological etc. The curriculum has to be activity based and utilitarian. Music and drawing should be a part of curriculum. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values together with the universal values.

According to him, general education is not only purposeless but also harmful. Thus, he recommended craft centered education through the basic method of Learning by doing as it is very practical and is related to the socio-economic background and basic occupation of the child. It links education and productivity and is job oriented.

In achieving all this, a teacher has a great role to play. A teacher should be a man of sincerity, honesty and affection. He should be committed and a peace loving nationalist. Instead of being a talker, he must be a doer, thinker and planner. He should teach through his examples rather than through his words. He has to correlate the various subjects with craft.

Gandhiji stressed mother tongue as the medium of instructions as mother tongue is nearest to us than any foreign language. He stressed on teaching by lecture method and learning by self experience.

PROGRAM OF ACTION

Thus, we find that Gandhiji synthesized the philosophy of naturalism, idealism and pragmatism into his philosophy. He suggested that peace education should be introduced in the schools at all levels, because there is need of peace education to inculcate certain values among the children, at various levels of education i.e. Preschool level, elementary level and secondary level.

A program of action has been developed for secondary level of school education since it is the most crucial period of education as this period deals with adolescents, who face several difficulties in life and education. Most of the adolescents suffer from frustrations, anxieties and worries, which may result into aggressive acts done by them. At this stage, it is very essential to introduce peace education to help them live a peaceful and co-operative life. Surely, it can help the children to understand the concept of peace.

Peace education can be introduced as an integrated subject with the help of following activities:

Lessons on Peace - A lesson on theme of peace can be read every day during school hours.

Craft centered activities - Craft centered activities should be introduced in the school, where they can jointly do the work in a team.

Developing stories on peace - Peace education can be imparted by asking the students to develop new stories on values. These can be taken from mythology also.

Celebration of special occasions and holidays - Celebration of the festivals like Diwali, Dushehra, Holi, Birth of Mahatma Gandhi, Bhagat Singh etc. can inculcate the spirit of knowing the background behind these festivals.

Role playing - Role playing in dramas make the children to learn the various values on peace, love and compassion.

Historical knowledge and understanding - It can be used for explicit learning about experience of war making and peace building in past.

Quotes - Quotes on the themes of peace education can be written on the flash board of the school premises.

Peace day - This day should be celebrated on September 21st of the year in the schools as this is the International Day of the peace.

WAYS OF INCULCATING PEACE EDUCATION AMONG STUDENTS

Peace in the individual is a concept of co-existent with truth and love. Peace becomes an attitude in which the students can be given the necessary training. Therefore, if efforts are made there is great scope of increasing the awareness of peace as a treasured value in education.

The UN as peace keeping Agency

The United Nations today constitutes the most supreme institution that functions at the very apex of all efforts for peace in the world. The UN has quite a number of members as well as associated agencies like the WHO and the UNICEF. The very first method of peace education is to keep the students fully conversant with the aims, prospects and activities of these agencies in detail. The spirit of the UN will be one of those important aspects which can control peace education in schools. The celebration of all the UN days in education institutions will certainly help to foster a love for international peace on the hand and the activities and the spirit of the UN on the other. The easiest that schools can do is organise study sessions, group discussions, talks by guest speakers or other similar activities. Pictures relating to the activities of the UN can be collected on a regular basis and used systematically for small-scale exhibitions.

Knowledge of Red-cross society and NSS

The international involvements of the Red cross society in times of war would constitute excellent background for students to imbibe concepts and values of peace. The ideals, movements and the activities of the Red cross should be studied and observed by group of students in the school under the guidance of a teacher and present their observations and materials for the follow up of the rest of the school.

The involvement of the National Service Scheme (NSS) provide considerable help in developing the students understanding of peace in the framework of social service. The NSS can easily lead students at the college level, where it is at present functioning, to the midst of the masses of people, get to know their problems and develop the values of peace and tolerance.

Inter-religious experiences

Educational institutions will be able to provide students with religious experiences that belong to the different religions in our country. This effort must be based especially on those prayers, functions and ceremonies that have a universal, human significance and can be easily accepted to members of other communities. Exposure to such religious services will enable students to develop a clear sense of sympathy attraction as well as reverence for the religious viewpoints of other communities. These experiences can be chiefly in the form of simply prayer services and reading sessions based on scriptural texts that belong to the different religions. These sessions may be conducted by the staff and the students belonging to the school or by guest-participants who can be invited from the community. It is most important again that these experiences should develop the basic spirit in them rather than merely add an item to the already burdened syllabus.

Use of Peace-based Materials

Instructional materials of different types can be developed for students, in which the concept of peace can be coherently presented, These materials may be regular classroom study

materials or additional reading materials which should have easy access to students. Students should be introduced to these materials in different ways such as providing additional reading hours or by motivating students to read them on their own finding their own time. The success of these, materials depends considerably on the way they are introduced to students.

Cultural Interactions

Considerable cultural interaction can be made possible at the level of education and promote better understanding between communities with diverse cultural experiences. A sense of acceptance and appreciation of the cultural concepts, cultural values and practices of other communities will make peace education a fruitful endeavour. As part of these culture studies, tours, and visits to culture centers can be organised in such a way as to promote the value and urgency of peace and tolerance among communities based on Gandhian ideals.

Developing awareness and love for peace

Education for peace basically requires a development of the awareness and love for peace as a necessary atmosphere in academic institutions. This requires a general pattern or framework of learning experiences, work experiences and co-curricular and extra-curricular involvements for providing an ever greater and well organized awareness of peace. Efforts can be made to keep outside the scope of the institution violence of any form.

PEACE CLUBS

Peace clubs are important part of peace education. Schools and colleges can directly get benefit from such clubs: by introducing them in their campus. Peace clubs are selecting 2-3 students from each section of the class so that a group of 45 to 50 students can be formed. These selected students are called Peace Makers, who discuss peaceful activities on special days and occasions. It can devote 80 minutes per month, which is not a huge time to affect the regular school routine. U prepares them building a peaceful world by providing them necessary altitudes and skills.

NEED OF PEACE CLUBS

Develop a more humanistic management approach.

Bring out thorough social change for the establishment of non-violent order as Gandhiji dreamt.

Encourage students and teachers to experience creative aspect of non-violence in their daily life.

Orient students, teachers and members of the family to be tolerant and respectful to each other.

Expose the evil intentions of the anti-social elements that prosper very often on violence, death and destruction.

Improve human relations between teacher and student and student and student.

BENEFITS OF PEACE CLUBS:

Strengthening the character of the students.

Increasing discipline among the students and teachers.

Controlling violence in society, especially among youngsters.

Improving relationship between teachers and taught.

Mad race of materialism, consumerism can be checked.

Different works can be assigned to the Peace Makers.

These are: The students can be asked to prepare the calendar of activities including selection of the topics based on local problems.

They can be asked to prepare small speeches, poems, drawings, which can be displayed on display boards.

Students can be asked to take a peace pledge.

Games should be promoted inculcating co-operation among the students.

Slowly these messengers in the schools can be converted into home messengers and can propagate peace among people.

There are few suggestions which could direct the activities of peace clubs. These are as under :

Promoting reading of books of various writers like Gandhiji's 'My Experiments With Truth'.

Excursions for students to places like birth place of Mahatma Gandhi or Rabindra Nath Tagore.

Showing films on the themes of peace and non-violence.

Proclaim World Peace Day on September 21st every year.

One minute silence program should be encouraged among the students to concentrate on who they are.

On birth anniversaries of great personalities like Mahatma Gandhiji, special programs can be organized to keep the flame of non-violence alive.

Social awareness campaigns on issues of social and environmental concerns can be planned.

Organize a contest on composing a Peace Anthem or song.

Organize a concert to take forward the spirit of peace and non-violence.

Every year awards should be given to voluntary teachers, who have given marvelous contribution in promoting peace education among the students.

CONCLUSION

Peace education becomes an international goal in the framework of Gandhianism. Educational institutions may employ suitable methods of developing peace education which should be in total harmony with the working of the institutions. In every subject, every material and in every actively, we shall find a way of developing in students a deep awareness and sensibility of peace. The aims, the principles, the concepts and the methods of education can be oriented to develop peace in the individual as well as in the nation.

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