

AN EXPLORATION ON THE VARIOUS STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTING PEACE EDUCATION AMONG ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

Man had been in quest for peace, since time immemorial. The contemporary world, focuses on implementing Peace education to the children as they are docile. The children when they grow up to become adults can become the agents of peace building in the world bereft of peace and harmony. India is the land of values, where every living creature is valued and worshiped. It also harbours the world's largest democracy where all the major religions co-exist in harmony. The present article provides an insight on the different strategies used in imparting peace education in Indian schools and the opportunities it provides for the students to practise it through its curriculum.

Keywords- Peace education, strategies, Indian schools, curriculum.



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Introduction

Though an abstract phenomenon, peace is most vital for human existence. The concept of peace had been evolving throughout history. On layman terms, it is a calm and relaxed state of mind consisting of positive thoughts, pure feelings and good wishes. The word peace originated from Anglo-French (*pes*), old French (*pais*) and Latin word (*pax*) which is synonymous to peace, reconciliation, amity, friendship, tranquillity, pacification, etc. It confers a harmonious state of existence and an absence of all forms of violence through practise of non-violence and interweaving of relationships between individuals, groups and institutions.

Peace has to be experienced in order to understand it. It can be realised under three contexts i.e., individual, social and universal levels and can be classified into two categories- internal peace based on individual context and external peace based on social and universal context. Internal and external peace are inter-related, interdependent and support each other.

At the individual context, peace implies tranquillity or calmness in the mind and heart of an individual. When an individual learns to practise certain principles of life such as love, compassion, forgiveness, truthfulness and controls- desire, greed, anger- along with certain

skills of conflict resolution and negotiation, he is able to experience peace in his daily life. Inactivity or idleness do not signify peace. The motto of United Nations organisation— “Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”-refers to the importance of internal peace and education as a true foundation of peace in society.

Tolerance is not enough for social peace; respect and love for diversity is the precondition. It implies harmony in human relationships like conflict reconciliation and resolution, friendship, unity, mutual understanding, co-operation, brotherhood, tolerance, democracy, morality, etc. The universal context considers the whole world as a family as prescribed in the Indian scriptures and Upanishads- ‘*vasudhaiva kudumbakam*’. On a narrow note, external peace is the absence of war, hostility, social disorder, injustice, inequality, violence, etc., while on a broader note it represents social harmony, justice, equality, friendly relations, public order, security, respect for human rights and ecological balance.

Arun Gandhi (2013) opines that we are destroying humanity and becoming inhuman because of the culture of violence that dominate every aspect of our life- language, sports, entertainment, business, government, religion, and even education is tainted by a culture of violence.

Fountain (1999) defines peace education as “the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioural changes that will....prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, at intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level”.

The UN has dedicated 21st September as the ‘International Day of Peace’ to refocus on the pre-eminence of Peace Education for preventing war sustainably and to reinforce a culture of peace. Peace Education as one’s Right is increasingly being emphasized by peace researchers and is being implemented as a part of active or hidden curriculum worldwide.

Strategies adopted around the world for implementing Peace Education

Strategies used worldwide to teach Peace education can be divided into approaches adopted in the school (curricular and co-curricular activities) and by other agencies.

- A. School- Public schools in New York City, play as channels for critical peace education through its democratic principles, commitment to peace and social justice, particularly for young people who were historically marginalized from schools through multiple intentional school mechanisms and structures (Hantzopoulos, 2011).

- I. Inside the classroom- Classroom is a miniature society where various didactic methods are incooperated to teach students.
- a) In Northern Ireland schools, **Peer mediation programmes** deliver skills in listening, turn-taking, acceptance, observe rules and give opinions in discussions; widen the perspective with a qualitative semiotic change in measurable vocabulary. Though new words and concepts were being used in the programme, pupils were seen to be using existing vocabulary in more complex and creative ways (Moffat, 2004). **Mediator-Mentorprogram**, a school-university partnership, implemented the overall improvement of the learning climate through peer mediation. Mediators demonstrated higher gains on measures of social-cognitive development from variables like empathy, perspective-taking and more positive perceptions of school safety when compared to non-mediators (Lane- Garon, Ybarra- Merlo, Zajac, & Vierra, 2005).
 - b) **Dialogues** were used for fostering mutual understanding and respect in Israel. It is more than just a cognitive exchange of different memories, values, fears, prejudices, stereotypes and other potential barriers to coexistence. Empathy and emotional resonance take place as people open up and share, and make themselves vulnerable to one another through conversation (Schimmel, 2009). This context for peace education is used effectively with teenagers and adults, as it limits itself by emphasizing on deliberate revelation in a primarily verbal manner.
 - c) **Communication specialists**, teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL) professionals also promote peaceful interaction (Kruger, 2012). The content-based approaches enable TESOL teachers to engage learners with issues surrounding peace and non-violence for the creation of a sustainable future. TESOL curriculum deals with global issues and peace-related content to provide the skills and opportunity to consider, understand and appreciate others, so as to become part of a global civil society.
 - d) **Conceptualised Grammar Teaching** was framed to emphasize the importance of environmental peace education with positive feelings and opinions (Arikan, 2009). Students found such activities enjoyable, likeable, and meaningful while they helped each other. Thus, contextualizing grammar through environmental peace education activated learners to delve into the use of English in real-life situations where the language was naturally spoken.

e) The **role of history** in peace education cannot be ignored from the theoretical and philosophical perspective. The new Israeli history uses history basically in the same manner as Zionist history in order to install a mobilising regime in service of ‘truth’, ‘justice’ or ideologies of what constitutes the good (Feldt, 2008). Japanese students were taught that war is an immoral act of which their country is historically guilty whereas American students are not necessarily taught this and are presented with extensive coverage of their country’s activity around the world (Langager, 2009). In Canada, **History Textbooks** not only tell the history of the modern state and its relationship to war and war-related issues (i.e., peace-making/keeping), but also disseminate racialized representations as a glorious and exceptional ‘living organism’ that matures through the development of such redeeming qualities as respect for humanity, morality, compassion, heroism and tolerance (Montgomery, 2006). Wars functioned in these textbooks illustrate the coming of age of the national body while peace initiatives (e.g., peace-keeping, humanitarian relief) enhanced its stature in the eyes of the world.

II. Co-curricular activities-

a) Daily experience of **Drama classes** in Israeli junior high schools on Peace education reveal that the more insight one gains, the more they develop their critical thinking, the more aware they will become of the emotional content and the form with which they are working (Schonmann, 2000).

Ideological, ethical, pedagogical dilemmas and strategies are used by various playwrights, directors and actors to build texts meant to influence their viewers to distinguish dramatic works that educate for peace (Gesser-Edelsburg, 2011).

The skills and concepts that the students encountered in the theatre peace education programme would be marginalized or lost if they are restricted to one program and not allowed to practice. Hence, it must be part of a school-wide curriculum and culture of peace (Duckworth, Allen and Williams, 2012). It should engage the parents and whole community in peace efforts.

b) **Telling and hearing stories** can help people learn to approach life with greater peace of mind (Kirkwood, 2009).

c) **Simulation games**- Viking training platform developed by the Swedish government were used to play at the operational and tactical levels to mimic the reality of peace operations (Gelot, 2019). It creates a complex learning environment where

coordination and a holistic perspective of the players is necessary to bring the different pieces together into workable solutions. The Problem-Based Learning (PBL) for educating peace actors using the case of the Carana simulation delivered at Linné University (LNU), Sweden, added-value for the development of professional skills with all participants finding it superior to traditional courses and lectures (Gelot, 2019b).

- d) **Sports** was recognized by the United Nations as a cost-effective tool to accelerate the achievement of Millennium Development Goals and to promote peace. Its systematic and coherent use can make important contributions to public health, universal education, gender equality, poverty reduction, environmental sustainability, disease prevention, peace-building and conflict resolution (Beutler, 2008).
- e) **Technology-enhanced peace-making devices** like interactive tabletops can promote collocated collaboration even in cases of low literacy levels and communication barriers among students in conflict (Ioannou & Antoniou, 2016). They allow power to be shared and distributed over the display enabling participation by all collaborators and even “forcing” the participants to consider the interests of the “other”.

B. Other agencies

1. **Internet**- Weblogs based on war and peace content as chronological streams of hyperlinks and related diary-like narratives, is an easy and effective way to reach out to people on different themes. **Peace blogs** are weblog sites which emphasise anti-war and conflict resolution learning. They share everyday reflections about internet content, with more detail and context than sets of bookmarks or emailed URLs. Peace blogs are generated by participants or observers of conflict. Through reading and constructing weblogs, students obtain critical knowledge of day-to-day events—which is of special value during conflict (Oravec, 2004).

Virtual Peace Education (VPE), is a web-based learning method in Israel, where participants defend themselves from the constant political and cultural indoctrination of their societies and states, which can be transferred into pressure over their leaders to change their policy towards peace (Firer, 2008). VPE can cross borders of nations, religions, gender and races as an effective way to broaden and deepen peace education among people and between hostile parties.

2. Culture of **Peace News Network**, an internet news service initiated by UNESCO for universality of news with all cultures and regions of the world to have equal priority and reflection (Adams, 2013). The readers participate by reading and commenting in it.
3. **Peace Clubs**- helps teachers in drawing on local practices, rituals and symbols for turning local culture into peacebuilding interventions through indigenous proverbs, rituals and practices within the curricula of international aid agencies (Higgins, 2019).
4. **Projects**-
 - a. Peace education project initiated by World Bank in Sierra Leone schools, involves local and international agencies in contributing to national peace-building effort through **Peace Education Kit**. Though peace education was marginal to the curriculum, the Peace Education Kit has become central to teacher training (Bretherton, Weston & Zbar, 2005).
 - b. **Environmental Education and Technology Integration (ENVETI) project** in Cyprus focus on the prospects of empowering teachers to integrate technology (as part of professional development) while at the same time addressing environmental and peace education issues. ICT and professional development programs can help teachers and development teams from all communities to develop strong partnerships and become powerful agents of change (Vrasidas, Zembylas, Evagorou, Avraamidou, & Aravi, 2007).
5. **Non-governmental Organisations (NGOs)**-“Journeys for Peace” a Mexican NGO program, facilitates young people get involved in activities that help them understand the importance of spreading messages of world peace (Kopeliovich & Kuriansky, 2009); conducted projects based on creative and expressive arts including painting, photography, music, theatre and publishing topics addressing human rights, tolerance and non-violence. Signature activities include mini-parliaments, debating issues like diversity, media responsibility and children’s rights, and the “Condition for Peace” activity wherein participants pose questions about peace to special guests, including world leaders.

IndyACT, a Lebanese NGO, focuses mainly on mitigation through external or internal education: External education directed towards the public, politicians, journalists, and young people mainly in the form of awareness raising, training, and mobilization explicit in educational purposes. Internal education directed towards NGO activists

included exchanges, training, brainstorming, simulations, discussions, debates, games, trips, and leisure as well as conception and implementation of collective projects (Naoufal, 2014). The ongoing pedagogies included movie projections, talks, debates and contributions to an environmental television show.

6. **Peace Museums**- define peace based upon the social and cultural conditions, which are expressed as advocacy of non-violence, social order and justice (Tamashiro & Furnari, 2015). The classroom interaction is limited to teacher-pupil, while in museums, learning takes place through interaction between family, friends, neighbours and museum professionals (van den Dungen & Yamane, 2015) is promoted by a volunteer guide service (Tanigawa, 2015). Tehran Peace museum facilitate peace education and develop peaceful environments drawn from the personal experiences of war survivors (Lewis & Khateri, 2015). Thus, they provide exposure to the country's peace heritage, and facilitate the community's access to resources and management of traditional peace materials (Gachanga & Mutisya, 2015).

7. **Summer camps**- Concordia Language Villages- a Norwegian summer camp programme focus on facilitating responsible global citizenship and peace through linguistic and cultural skills. The individual activities in a camp provides considerable variety and differentially service central aspects of the programme mission (Dahl, 2009).

Seeds of Peace, an NGO annually brings together children from the Middle East and various other regions of conflict for a summer camp experience in the woods of Maine, USA (Engstrom, 2009). It seeks to do its part to end conflict by reducing young people's misconceptions about the conflict and their 'enemy', give them a place to forge friendships and build a sense of community, and provide hope for a future that seems bleak in the political climate of places in armed conflict.

Strategies for implementing Peace education in India.

In India, peace education is taught in schools through various strategies as a part of their curricular and co-curricular activities. There are many teaching-learning strategies compatible with the approaches of Peace education like discussion, pair-share, visualization/imagination exercises, role-playing, stimulation games, problem solving, considering positions\issue roll, encouraging action, reading/writing a quotation, films, photographs, storytelling, song\poem analysis, sentence completion, journal writing\individual reflection, interviews\research, expert resources, reciprocal teaching, projects, dialogues, trips, brainstorming, case studies,

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collage making, show and tell, etc (Subramanian, 2016). Values of peace and co-operation are taught through three approaches-

- **Direct approach-** Here the teacher deliberately uses techniques like silent sitting, meditation, yoga as well as group activities like role playing, social camps and competitions.
- **Incidental approach-** The teacher, based on the situation in the class or school, inculcates the importance and implementation of Peace education.
- **Integrated approach-** The teacher integrates the values of peace and harmony in the curriculum and co-curricular activities of the school.

Indian schools incorporate peace education in their curriculum and co-curricular activities under two perspectives.

- **Subject perspective-** The subjects are interpreted in a meaningful and enjoyable manner so as to contribute to learner's social, emotional, intellectual and moral development. Peace Education humanize subjects by bringing about humane perspectives and effective dominion to build peaceful attitude among students. The subjects such as languages, social studies, mathematics and science are effectively taught with the integration of peace components inherent in the lessons. Different instructional strategies/approaches/techniques for teaching Peace Education are adopted for teaching all the subjects in the educational institution. Peace-building and self-development activities, story of civilization, religious harmony, environmental awareness and self-discipline are integrated as hidden activities of all subjects. Some schools also have separate classes on moral or value education which emphasise peaceful living.

•Teaching Methods

Teaching has a formative effect on the mind, character and physical ability of an individual. Hence the process is more important than what is taught. The teaching methods practiced by teachers for their subjects can be used for teaching Peace Education. Some of the specific teaching methods discussed below, are more effective than others, hence most often practiced.

1. **Peer Teaching:**

Students are divided into small groups and the teacher provides them an overview and specific tasks which must be met within a given timeframe. Topics such as learning

violence from war-toys, video games, mass media and their effects are discussed. Contributions of Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, and other great peace makers, are taught by the peers.

2. **Group Discussion:**

Group discussion permits effective communication among its participants to share their views and opinions. It is enriched with factual information, good thought-out ideas and development of cooperation & analytical skills, leadership qualities, attitude and confidence. Students in small groups to discuss peace topics like:

- Building peace at home and in the society
- Importance of social integration
- Stress management
- Environment issues and sustainable development

Pair Share - is a discussion technique to improve listening skills. Here partner groups are formed and the facilitator poses a question or topic for discussion. Here person A responds uninterrupted while B listens, after which their roles are reversed.

Expert Resources- The school often invites guest speakers or form a panel board to discuss on ideas that advocate justice and peace. The use of a moderator is most helpful for controversial topics.

3. **Brain Storming:**

It is a popular psychological technique used for fostering creativity amongst students by breeding fresh ideas and solving problems. The students identify a problem in a well-defined manner and the topic is systematically developed by merging the ideas into a large idea map. They then develop a common understanding of the issue by sharing the meanings behind their ideas. Finally, a mind map is drawn providing principles of analyzing the problem in the context of causes, consequences, impact and solution. The teacher encourages participants while noting their ideas. Teacher is a facilitator and a keen observer, for managing emotions during the process along with the cultivation of values for a sustained in-depth exploration of the problem.

4. **Dialogues**

Students converse or mediate here rather than debate on issues. Dialogues are two-way communication process where each student listen to the other to find common grounds, voice their opinion with integrity, for a mutually acceptable course of action.

The topic for dialogues are often on the principles of tolerance, peace, respect for diversity, human rights and citizenship, promotion of peace process between nations, etc. Open-mindedness and tolerance are enhanced through this method by perceiving the world openly and providing the ability to accept differences and diversities.

5. **Role play:**

This strategy provides its participants an opportunity to “feel” the situation. By acting out scenarios, one can explore how others think and respond to different situations; and understand approaches that are likely to work or become counter-productive. It cultivates both cognitive and affective learning by developing empathy and understanding. In the context of Peace Education, students play the role of peace heroes such as Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela, Mother Teresa, Swami Vivekananda, etc. or on the consequences of violence.

Perspective-taking- enables learners to understand and appreciate other’s point of view and how they experience things through their senses (i.e. visually or auditory). This entails “standing in the shoe of the other and walking in them for a while”. It is often used to develop problem-solving skills, empathy and tolerance.

6. **Motivators:**

Activities at short intervals, help students to learn better. Students watch videos, news, journals and magazines regarding Peace Education as an energizer.

Many **songs and poems** contain peace-related messages. Students identify their favorite lines when read out and interpret messages which helps them to learn values in a creative manner.

Film and photographs help create vivid images in the learner’s minds. This is followed by a discussion on learner’s reaction and the messages conveyed.

Web-Charting- is a springboard for discussion on peace-related concepts. Words such as “war” or “peace” are written on the board and learners are invited to write or draw their associations with the word to stimulate thinking.

Display boards depicting pictures, Thought for the day and write ups on the themes of peace and co-existence inspire and motivate students.

Story telling is a far-reaching methodology for Peace Education, wherein listening and vocalizing peace-building stories and literature about people who contributed to peace. Learners always remember the concepts conveyed through the anecdotes and stories. Sharing personal experiences related to an issue help illustrate better the

values conveyed. It also helps the learner connect on a more personal basis. The teachers use this unique and innovative way to promote positive social change for peace.

7. Clubs

Environment & Nature clubs enable the students to understand and appreciate nature by making them involved in cleaning activities, planting trees, taking care of school vegetable gardens or pet animals.

Literary clubs regularly conduct competitions in the form of elocution, essay writing, story writing, poetry writing and reviews. This develops the students to investigate and communicate their ideas based on a common theme.

8. Sports, Culture and literary festivals

The school fests bring together students to compete for a common goal. During this process students get to appreciate cultural diversity, ideas, talents and endurance of others. It is a common ground to socialise with individuals of similar taste and interest. These fests are conducted at interschool\college, state and national levels.

9. Yoga practices

Yoga is a process of gaining control and calming the mind by concentrating on any desired object with a capacity to remain quiet for some time. Patanjali taught an eight-fold (Ashtanga) system of yoga emphasizing on integral spiritual development including ethical dimensions (Yama and Niyama), postures (Asanas), breathing exercises (Pranayamas), control of the senses (Pratyahara), concentration (Dharana) and absorption (Samadhi). Based on the aliment or body condition, the yoga type is chosen and practiced on a daily basis in the morning or evening.

10. Meditation\ silent sitting

This technique sharpens the intellect, develop memory and promote inner peace. Pupils learn to appreciate things around them and to express themselves better with an attitude of introspection. The actual practice is done in silence; but soft melodious background music is sometimes played. The students are instructed in simple breathing in and out with a thought of taking in goodness and expelling out the bad thoughts.

Jyothi Meditation is an effective technique of meditation devised by Sri Sathya Sai Baba, which uses the energy from the light rays of a flame. This energy illuminates inside the body and removes the thoughts of jealousy, anger, lust or depression. With

regular practice, one feels the light growing wider and larger to cover the entire body and open up all our senses.

Guided visualization exercises allow students to visualize lakes, scenery, forests, sky even gentle animals. Values of peace, beauty and diversity can be incorporated while doing this exercise. This helps form photographic memory as well as to appreciate nature.

11. Service Learning

Service Learning integrates meaningful community service with instructions and reflection to enrich learning experience, civic responsibility, strengthen communities and provide experience to students. It helps them to understand diversity, mutual respect, develop interpersonal and decision-making skills along with leadership qualities. *Seva* activities enhance the peace building behavior among individuals through service. Common service-learning activities are taken up by **National Service Scheme (NSS), National Cadet Corps (NCC) and Scouts & Guides.**

12. Exposure Trips-

Students are taken to **visit old age homes, orphanages, animal shelters, medical camps, rural villages,** etc. Encounter with an underprivileged is more powerful in developing empathy and compassion among the learners. Contact opportunities motivate students to take action instead of being a silent spectator.

Educational visits to **National war memorial** (a tribute to the martyred jawans killed protecting the nation during war and Peacekeeping operations) and **Peace museum** at Imphal, help develop patriotism among students. They should appreciate the sacrifice of the armed forces for maintaining peace in the country.

Conclusion

Peace Education is the acquisition of values and knowledge for developing the skills and attitude to enable the individual to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the environment. The interest and involvement of students is important not only in the process of education, but also for their contribution for the development of a harmonious society. Hence, from an early age children should be inculcated with values at school and home, using any one of the above mentioned approaches on a daily basis, to become the society's active members. The role of the parents, teachers, peers and society to bring about this crucial aspect cannot be ignored as it forms the very basis of human existence.

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