

RELEVANCE OF UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES & PEACE BASED EDUCATION IN DEMOCRATIC NATIONS

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ABSTRACT

No democracy can thrive and advance without universal human values and peace based education. Democracy has hardly any meaning without human values and peace. A democracy is basically to promote and support good causes and value education is a powerful means to achieve this objective. Every society needs to be bound together by common values, so that its members know what to expect of each other, and have some shared principles by which to manage their differences without resorting to violence. Universal human values and peace are all the more relevant in the present context given the kind of problems democratic countries are grappling with. Value education plays a very significant role in development and promotion of peace in the world. It teaches a person to realize the difference between good and great.

KEYWORDS: Democracy, Education, Peace, Universal values, Violence.

DEMOCRATIC FORM OF GOVERNMENT

The democratic form of government is a government of the people, by the people and for the people. The citizens in such a form of government have the rights to exercise freedom of speech and voice in running the State for the well-being of the populace in the areas of economy, education, health, infrastructural development etc. Democracy has the system of separation of powers among the legislature, executive and judiciary and also checks and balances for the executive and transparency in decision-making. In such a system of government, the parliament, the media and the judiciary ensure that the executive fulfils the aspirations of the people and governs the state in accordance with the constitution of the respective country and does

not indulge in any wrongdoing. When elected representatives in a democratic government give good performance, common men respect and repose their faith in them. It is unfortunate that such an ideal situation is almost non-existent in present vitiated atmosphere all over the globe and the reason behind it is lack of human values and peace based education among common man.

EROSION OF SOCIAL VALUES

Today's youths, almost all over the world, are a little bit confused of unrestricted inflow of new technological devices, information outburst and frequent news by the print and electronic media relating to violence, terrorism,

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deception, theft, dacoity, corruption, immorality, harassment, atrocities, rape, adultery, forgery, dishonesty, disrespect to seniors, and what not. During the recent past, personal and sectarian motives have dominated over the democratic concerns and a quick erosion of social values has become rampant to such an extent that the future of democracy becomes a question mark. Globalization has brought us closer together in the sense that we are all affected by each other's actions, but not in the sense that we all share the benefits and the burdens. Instead, we have allowed it to drive us further apart, increasing the disparities in wealth and power both between societies and within them.

PEACE

Peace is described as the absence of physical and structural violence, and the presence of justice. The learners should explore the root causes of conflict, know international humanitarian and human rights laws, envision alternative structures of security, and learn skills for managing micro/ macro conflict without violence. On nurturing cultures of peace, Sommerfelt and Vambheim (2008) write that peace requires citizens to restrain from aggression, exhibit cooperative behavior, and resolve conflicts without violence.

VIOLENCE

Violence might be defined as "avoidable, intentional harm, inflicted for a purpose or perceived advantage of the perpetrator or of those who, while not direct perpetrators, are, however, advantaged by the harm" (Reardon 2001, 35). Education for peace raises dialogue on critical issues at the heart of the community in order to transform oppressive systems from a violent orientation toward a culture of peace. Thus, through education for peace, educators and students critically discuss manifestations of, and justifications for, violence, identify the

actors involved and propose peaceful futures (Boulding 1988, Hicks 1994).

EDUCATION

The term education has its origin in the Latin word '*Educare*,' which means 'to elicit'. *Educare* has two aspects, the worldly and the spiritual. Worldly education brings out the latent knowledge pertaining to the physical world. The worldly education, which relates to the head, is ephemeral. Reading, writing, eking out a livelihood, attaining name and fame are the outcomes of worldly education. On the other hand, the spiritual education brings out the inherent divinity in man. Spiritual education is for life, it relates to the heart, the origin of sacred qualities like compassion, truth, forbearance, and love.

GOODNESS AND GREATNESS OF MAN

Spiritual education makes a man good whereas worldly education makes him great. Greatness is temporary whereas, goodness forms the basis for spiritual life and is long-lasting. In the modern society, only worldly education is given prominence. Today the parents all over the world expect their children to go in for higher studies, amass wealth and become great, but very few want their children to be good. There are millions and millions of people who have become great by amassing wealth, but their contribution towards the welfare of mankind is almost nil. A person can contribute towards welfare of society, peace, harmony and righteousness only when he is equipped with both the aspects of education, and only then can he be deserving of respect and adoration in society.

BASIC UNIVERSAL HUMAN VALUES

Mutual respect is one of the most important human values for establishing peace and harmony among people of a nation and among

various nations. It is both what we expect others to do to us and what we aim to give to other human beings ("Do unto the other what you wish for yourself"). Apart from this, following are the basic human values:

Honesty, fairness, loyalty, sharing, solidarity;

Brotherhood, friendship, empathy, compassion, love;

Openness, listening, welcoming, acceptance, recognition, appreciation;

Civility, mutual respect, consideration;

These human values are universal: they are shared by all human beings, whatever their religion, their nationality, their culture, or their personal history. By nature, they induce consideration for others and thus they build peace in any democracy. These values though vary according to age groups of people; to one's education and surrounding culture they still have the effect of bonding, comforting, reassuring and procuring serenity for building peace in any society. They are the foundation for any viable life within society; they build space for a drive, a movement towards one another, which leads to peace in any democracy.

INDIAN VALUE EDUCATION AND DEMOCRACY

In India, the five main human values are considered as '*Satya*' (truth), '*Dharma*' (duty), '*Shanti*' (peace), '*Prema*' (affection) and '*Ahimsa*' (nonviolence). A true human being is one who practices the five human values. Today man does not speak truth, is apprehensive of the consequences and does not practice '*Dharma*' (duty) as he does not know what it really means. For any vibrant democracy, peace is essential and peace can be attained only through the practice of '*Satya*' and '*Dharma*'. Today man is leading a life bereft

of '*Satya*' and '*Dharma*' resulting in lack of peace ('*Shanti*'). The culture of Bharat teaches, '*Sathyam Vada Dharmam Chara*' (Speak truth and follow righteousness). The preamble of the Constitution of India emphasizes values and reads as: "We, the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a Sovereign, Socialist, Secular and Democratic Republic and to secure all its citizens Justice-social, economic and political; Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and Worship; Equality of status and of opportunity and promote among them all, Fraternity assuring dignity of the individual and the unity and integrity of the nation".

The Committees/ Commissions constituted from time to time to suggest measures for educational reforms have also recommended inclusion of basic values in education through various curriculums. The Central Advisory Board of the CABE, 1945 has also stressed that spiritual and moral teaching common to all religions should be an integral part of the curriculum. The NCERT, New Delhi has established a National Resource Centre in Value Education (NRCVE) that is catering to value education needs of the country using multi-pronged strategies. The National Policy on Education 1986 says that "The National System of Education will be based on a national curricular framework which contains a common core along with other components that are flexible. The common core will include the history of India's freedom movement, constitutional obligations and other content essential to nurture national identity. These elements will cut across subject areas and will be designed to promote values such as India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy and secularism, equality of the sexes, protection of the environment, removal of social barriers and observance of the small family norms and inculcation of the scientific temper. All educational programs will be

carried on in strict conformity with secular values." Hence India, prior to independence and after as a democratic nation, emphasizes on observation of universal Human Values in reality.

PEACE EDUCATION

Peace education is, in fact, problem resolving education that attempts to build in every person the universal values and behaviors on which a culture of peace is predicated, including the development of non-violent conflict resolution skills and a commitment to working together to realize a shared and preferred future. Many scholars in the field address violence and the war system as the core problematic inhibiting peace and seek to propose viable solutions to violence in all its manifestations (e.g. social, economic, political, environmental, spiritual, and ethical).

Peace education includes the cultivation of peace building skills (e.g. dialogue, mediation, artistic endeavors). Peace educators, then, teach the values of respect, understanding, and non-violence, present skills for analyzing international conflict, educate for alternative security systems, and use a pedagogy that is democratic and participatory.

Peace education reflects a dynamic field. Harris (2004) divides peace education into five categories: international education, development education, environmental education, human rights education, and conflict resolution education.

Curricula in peace education cover a range of topics, including the history and philosophy of peace education (Reardon 1988, Burns and Aspeslagh 1996, Harris and Morrison 2003), the dialectic between 'negative' and 'positive' peace (Galtung 1969, 1996), gender and militarism (Reardon 1993, 2001), conflict resolution education (Johnson and Johnson

2006) and the formation of peaceful values in education (Boulding 1988, Toh and Cawagas 1991). Jenkins (2007) illuminates the difference between education *about* peace and education *for* peace. Peace education includes modules on war and peace and leaders of peace movements, such as Gandhi and Martin Luther King, Education *for* peace, on the other hand, intends to nurture knowledge, values, behaviors and capacities to confront violence.

PEACE BASED EDUCATION

Peace based value education is normally considered to be an answer to the decline in moral, democratic and social fabric to ensure global peace and thus the survival of mankind. Democratic values can foster fundamental and human values and can generate a 'caring and compassionate consciousness' (Karan Singh, 2000).

PEACE BASED EDUCATION THROUGH EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Children are members of a small society that exercises great influence on their moral development. Teachers act as role model to students in school; they play a major role in inculcating their ethical behavior. Peers at school diffuse audacity about cheating, lying, stealing, and consideration for others. The educational institutions should endeavor to inculcate basic values in the children such as responsibility, ideality, sensitivity, empathy, solidarity, tolerance, equality, non-violence in an informal way.

The teachers should play a major role in developing ethical behavior in children through examples of different activities, stories and tales, which will encourage them to engage in more helping behaviors. These values are the same for one and all as the people all over the world are desirous of peace.

FRAMEWORK OF PEACE EDUCATION

The learning to abolish war stresses four strands of learning: root causes of conflict, international law, conflict management and global disarmament. The conceptual framework of this model places violence at the core of cultures of war, and non-violence and international understanding at the center of cultures of peace. This framework is particularly concerned with the role of international law in maintaining global justice, the construction of peace building mechanisms, and the formation of personal lifestyles and behaviors conducive to fostering a culture of peace. In this framework, education for peace is education for the abolition of war. This education relies on an exploration of what constitutes peace, dialogue at the intersection of identity and violence, and a process of re-defining human security in terms of needs and social welfare in place of national security, the armaments industry and militarism. Peace education through this framework seeks to foster a commitment among educators to educate the learners for non-violence and generate active citizenship among youths.

ACADEMICIANS & PEACE

The concept of classroom education represents social outcomes relevant to democratic political systems. Hence, autonomous learning relates to individual and national autonomy and democratic classroom participation models active citizenship in a democracy. Among a number of values stressed are the ideals of non-violence, peace, truth, compassion, love, and right conduct exemplified by spiritual leaders and prophets such as Sant Kabir, Guru Nanak, Lord Buddha, Mahavir, and others. In modern India, prominent leaders such as Mahatma Gandhi, Dr. Radhakrishnan and many others have stressed these values. Peace education is also found philosophically in the work of authors (e.g. Tolstoy, Thoreau), social

thinkers (e.g. Mead, Foucault, Adams), social learning scholars (e.g. Bandura and Walters) and activists (e.g. Martin Luther King, Ikeda, Syuu Kyi).

ROLE OF UN IN MAINTAINING UNIVERSAL PEACE

During forties the United Nations announced action-oriented measures towards protection of life, liberty, and property of citizen's rights. Some of the tangible results were the 'United Nations Charter' of 1945, the 'Universal Declaration of Human Rights' of 1948, and the 'United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child' of 1959. The values of freedom, peace, equal rights, human dignity and social progress enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights are no less relevant even today than when, over six decades ago, those documents were drafted and adopted by representatives of more than a hundred different nations and cultures. The 1972 UNESCO document "Learning to Be" mentioned that the 'aim of development is complete fulfillment of the man in all the richness of personality, complexity, forms of expression and various commitments'. 'Learning: The Treasure Within' (UNESCO, 1996) suggests two of the four pillars of learning as 'Learning to be' and 'Learning to live together'. These charters recognize the linguistic, cultural, religious and ethnic pluralism as a fact of life (Starkey 1992). Special concerns related to value education have been obvious in a number of recent UN activities like *Declaration on a Culture of Peace* (1998), and declaration of the year 2000 as the 'International Year for a Culture of Peace' and 2001-2010 as the 'UN International Decade on Education for Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World.' In the beginning of the present century, all the members of the UN reaffirmed certain fundamental values as being "essential to international relations in the twenty-first

century”: freedom, equality, solidarity, tolerance, respect for nature, and shared responsibility. They adopted practical, achievable targets - the Millennium Development Goals for relieving the blight of extreme poverty and making such rights as education, basic health care and clean water a reality for all. Training material for teacher educators in values has also been prepared and published by UNESCO as ‘Education for Affective Development: A Guidebook on Programs and Practices.’

The Declaration and Integrated Framework of Education for Peace, Human Rights and Democracy (1995), suggests “basic guidelines which could be translated into strategies, policies and plans of action at the institutional and national levels according to the conditions of the different communities.” It further suggests that education for peace must be trans-disciplinary and included in all learning spaces. It should include education on knowledge, values, skills, behaviors, respect for all living beings, and a commitment to non-violence that support peaceful societies and denounces thinking that supports the war system. The learning space should foster intercultural and international dialogue and respect, knowledge of national and global systems of governance. Authoritarian and exclusive learning spaces work counter to the cooperative and inclusive goals of peace education.

The United Nations University for Peace (UPEACE), through consultation with leading international peace educators, including Reardon, began formulating a framework and strategy for offering a master’s degree program in peace education in 2002 covering principles of peace education underscore a holistic and comprehensive model of peace education. The learning objective of peace education is to transform conflict through dialogue and non-

violence. It is particularly where peace education affects youth conflict.

VALUE EDUCATION IN INDIAN CONTEXT

The International Institute on Peace Education (IPE), under the directorship of Betty Reardon, has been leading education for peace through a model of community learning since 1982. Every year IPE brings together international educators to discuss on current themes related to peace, violence and the war system. IPE has 3 goals: to develop peace education through identifying new and challenging themes, to form new institutional alliances among NGOs, universities, and agencies, and to generate regional cooperation toward transforming society (Jenkins 2007). Through dialogical community learning, participants learn with and from each other toward political action possibilities to address the social issues under study in order to transform institutions of violence (Jenkins 2008).

CONCLUSION

Human values are such virtues that guide us to take into account the human element for peace when one interacts with other human beings in any society. In the democratic form of government, an ordinary man, too, has a role to play directly or indirectly to elect a representative to govern the country democratically. We are not judged by what we say but by what we do. Those who preach certain values loudest - such as the values of freedom, the rule of law, and equality before the law have a special obligation to live by those values in their own lives and their own societies, and to apply them to those they consider their enemies as well as their friends. We need to find within ourselves the will to live by the values we proclaim - in our private lives, in our local and national societies, and in the

world. Value education can help us cultivate an outlook congenial for any democracy. Humans are humans regardless of any tags and their values are dear to all the persons for the common progress and development. Human rights and universal values are almost synonymous - so long as we understand that rights do not exist in a vacuum. They entail a corresponding set of obligations, and obligations are only meaningful where there is the capacity to carry them out.

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