

## **ROLE OF EDUCATION IN PEACE, HARMONY AND DEVELOPMENT IN DEMOCRATIC SYSTEM**

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### **ABSTRACT**

Education is a powerful means to ensure peace, harmony and development in a democratic country. Without peace, harmony, and development democracy hardly has any meaning. For promotion of peace, harmony and development, education plays a very significant role. Education only can make a man realize what activities and behaviour are expected of him as a human being. Education makes a person realize the difference between good and bad. There is little doubt to assert that the spirit of any democracy is to promote and champion good causes. Thus education becomes a powerful tool to achieve the objectives. Thus peace, harmony and development are the manifestation of education. Democracy is in a way subject to peace, harmony and development and these are subject to education. It is not hyperbolic to mention that those countries which have got the real peace, both internal and external, harmony, sustainable development have the real democracy. The more a country is peaceful, harmonious and developed, the stronger are the chances of its being a vibrant democracy. Democracy is rooted in peace, harmony and development and they in education.

**KEYWORDS:** Democracy, Peace, Harmony, Development, Education.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Democracy can survive and thrive only when there are peace, harmony and development in a country. Here it is pertinent to note that peace and war, harmony and disharmony, development and destruction originate from the mind of a person. To prepare the mind of a person in a positive manner for peace, harmony and development education plays a powerful role. None can underestimate the significance of education. The more a person realizes the significance of peace, harmony, development, the more he tends to become peace, harmony and development oriented through education. The biggest virtue of democracy is that it is

‘government by the people for the people’<sup>1</sup>. The government represents the views of the people who elect them and can throw them out if the government does things that the people do not like. Unlike other forms of government democracy is about the common man, everyone rather than the elite that are often disconnected from how everyone else lives their lives. Democracy is as much about having checks and balances to the executive and having transparency of decision-making as it is about elections and the populace throwing governments out of power.

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'Democracy is when the people keep a government in check'<sup>2</sup>. In a democracy the parliament, the media and the judiciary all keep an eye on the executive and what is being done with the people's money. They can observe if the executive is doing things that are detrimental to the country, are immoral, or even illegal. This can then be brought to a stop. Even when such actions are not visible on the surface there are separate institutions that have the power to investigate the executive and watch any 'secret' deals or actions that are going on away from public view. If democracy is really performing, then all facets of human rights are honoured.

The country men have the rights to exercise freedom of speech concerning their well-being in areas of economy, education, health, infrastructural development etc. Even this understanding for freedom of speech is possible through education. 'Peace cannot be achieved by force, it can only be achieved by understanding'<sup>3</sup> The ability of the people to have a voice in the running of the State, in the economy, health, education, infrastructural development, etc creates a bit-balanced environment for governance to thrive; this can only be achieved in a democratic government. The most developed and richest countries are all democracies. The UNESCO came into being 'to contribute to the building of peace.'<sup>4</sup>

## **EDUCATION & PEACE, HARMONY AND DEVELOPMENT**

In a globally developing society the mutual survival of mankind is education-based. Education makes a person aware about peace, harmony and development. Democratic values have sustained the mankind ever since evolution in civilization gave rise to organized structures in society. However, personal motives have at times dominated over the democratic concerns and a quick erosion of democratic values has at times become

rampant to such an extent that the future of democracy becomes a question mark. Despite all these things, education is normally considered to be an answer to the war, disharmony and destruction to ensure global peace, harmony and development and thus the survival of mankind. Democratic values can foster fundamental and human values and can generate a 'caring and compassionate consciousness'. As long as in 1972, the 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',<sup>5</sup> 'Learning: The Treasure Within'(UNESCO,1996) suggests two of the four pillars of learning as 'Learning to be' and 'Learning to live together'. 'Learning to be' hints at tapping through education 'the depth of our psyche ...to behave as responsible and creative citizens' (Karan Singh, 2000)

The forties witnessed the United Nations announce 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. These charters recognize the linguistic, cultural, religious and ethnic pluralism as a fact of life (Starkey' 1992). Indeed as per as the international conventions on human rights, teachers are attending a number of tasks related to dignity, living with others, race or gender equity, enhancing opportunities for those with special needs and peace for mankind etc.

## **INDIA & ITS CONTRIBUTION TOWARDS POSITIVE THINGS**

In the context of India education has recorded important milestones in its history in the post independent phase. In the post independent India various committees and commissions

have been constituted to revive interest and attitudes towards peace, harmony and development through human values. The memorandum on the Post War Educational Development (Sergent Committee Report, 1944) pointed out religious and cultural bias in curriculum. The Religious Education Committee of the Central Advisory Board of the C.A.B.E., 1945 also asserted 'spiritual and moral teaching common to all religions should be an integral part of the curriculum.'<sup>6</sup> The freedom fighters such as Mahatma Gandhi, Vinoba Bhave and other national prominent leaders stressed the values such as Peace, Harmony, Non-violence, Truth, Love, Right conduct etc. The Kothari Commission (1964-66) reiterated the rationale of 'democratic values in education system'<sup>7</sup>. Among a number of values stressed are the ideals of peace, harmony, truth, and compassion exemplified by spiritual leaders and prophets such as Saint Kabir, Guru Nanak, Lord Buddha, Mahavir, sufi saints of Jammu and Kashmir and others. The Commission recommended the blending of science and technology for peace, harmony and development of mankind.

The common core of the National Policy on Education was envisaged to be promoted through the subject areas with stress on peace, harmony and development through democracy, secularism, egalitarianism, equality of sexes, protection of environment etc. The instances of special concerns related to value education have been obvious in a number of recent UN activities like announcing the UN Manifesto 2000 for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence, UNESCO prize for Children and Young People's Literature in the service of Tolerance, UNESCO-APNIEVE(2001) efforts at preparing training material for teacher educators in values, UNICEF (UNESCO supported) 'Living Values: An Educational Programme' (1999), etc. UNESCO Principal Regional Office, Bangkok (1992) published 'Education for Affective

Development: A Guidebook on Programmes and Practices.' The NCERT, New Delhi has set up a National Resource Centre in Value Education (NRCVE) that is catering to value education needs of the country using multi pronged strategies.

## **PEACE, HARMONY AND DEVELOPMENT & VALUES THROUGH EDUCATION**

Human values are the virtues that guide us to take into account the human element for peace, harmony and development when one interacts with other human beings in any democracy. They are the many positive dispositions that create bonds of humanity between people and thus have values for building peace among all of us as human beings. It's 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"). These human values have the effect of bonding, comforting, reassuring and procuring serenity for building peace, harmony and development in any democracy. 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, harmony and development in any democracy. Human values thus defined are universal: they are shared by all human beings, whatever their religion, their nationality, their culture, their personal history. By nature, they induce consideration for others and thus they build peace in any democracy.

## **DESIRABLE VALUES FOR DEMOCRACY**

A democracy can thrive using such values: brotherhood, friendship, empathy, compassion, love, openness, listening, welcoming, acceptance, recognition, appreciation, honesty, fairness, loyalty, sharing, solidarity, civility, respect, consideration etc.

Respect is one of the most important human values for establishing relations of peace, harmony and development – and yet it remains elusive: its understanding varies according to age (child, teen, adult), to one's education and surrounding culture. It is better understood when combined with other values: a disposition that is deeper than civility, very close to consideration.

### **STRUCTURAL SUPPORT FOR VALUES IN DEMOCRACY**

In school and academic institutions, children are members of a small society that exerts a tremendous influence on their moral development. Teachers serve as role model to students in school and academic institutions; they play a major role in inculcating their ethical behavior. Peers at school diffuse boldness about cheating, lying, stealing, and consideration for others. Though there are rules and regulations, the educational institutions infuse the value education to the children in an informal way. They play a major role in developing ethical behaviour in children

### **RESPONSIBILITY**

They should be encouraged to be responsible for their own actions and should learn to respect and treat others kindly.

### **APPRECIATION**

The teacher should appreciate the children for developing pro-social behaviour, especially for any specific action they have done to help others

### **ASSISTANCE**

The children should be taught by emphasizing the idea through many activities, stories and tales, which will encourage them to engage in more helping behaviors. The rights of every human being are safeguarded now a days and

'the Universal Declaration of Human Rights'<sup>8</sup> have details on this issue.

### **EMULATION**

The educationists are the role model to the children outside their family. When the children see the model showing concern for others, motivating them for their good deeds and cooperating and helpful with their academic issues, the children learn them by observing and imitate it with fellow peers.

### **EDUCATION CENTRIC PRINCIPLES**

In India the five human values based on true education are 'Truth, religion, peace, love and non-violence'<sup>9</sup>. They can be compared to the five life principles of man. A true human being is one who practices the five human values. Today man does not speak truth due to being apprehensive of the consequences and does not practice Dharma as he does not know what it really means.

Under any circumstances never give up human values. When we lose any of the five human values this amounts to compromising human values. If you do not speak the truth, you lose one of your life principles. Truth is your soul. So, till you breathe your last, uphold truth. The culture of India teaches, 'Speak truth and follow righteousness'. These values are the same for one and all. People all over the world are praying for peace. How can peace be attained? It is only through the practice of Satya and Dharma. Today man is leading a life bereft of Satya and Dharma resulting in lack of peace (Santi), and for any vibrant democracy peace is essential.

### **EDUCATION FOR PEACE IN DEMOCRACY**

Education widens the horizon of the person's mind. He realizes the futility of war, conflict and negative activities.' Peace is not merely the

absence of physical and structural violence. 'It is the presence of justice and equality; therefore, students 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.'<sup>10</sup> (Kelvin Kester) The more we sweat in peace, the less we bleed in war. Education *for* peace, on the other hand, intends to nurture knowledge, values, behaviors and capacities to confront violence. 'Peace is always beautiful'.

### **EDUCATIONISTS FOR PEACE IN DEMOCRACY**

In the western world the credit for peace education as a practice in schools goes to Maria Montessori, John Dewey and Paulo Freire, though earlier thought on education for peace is traced back to Erasmus and Socrates, among other scholars. Montessori worked to foster peace on three inter-related levels: the individual, community, and globe. The individual level relates to person-centered awareness of the self (i.e. body, mind, emotions, and spirit), whereas the community level refers to interpersonal relations (i.e. trust, openness, and interdependence), and the global level concerns cultural and environmental consciousness (Montessori 1949). Dewey supported peace education through his work on the relationship between education and democracy, stating that one role of education is to foster active citizenship through the participation in processes of democracy (Dewey 1916). Freire (1970) centered education on revealing systems of oppression, particularly through the exploration of language and identity and by challenging the banking-model of teaching and learning. All three educators sought to create education that was learner-centered and autonomous. This 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.

In practice, peace education attempts to build in every person the universal values and behaviors. 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). 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"<sup>12</sup>. 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.

Peace education emphasizes on the cultivation of peace building skills (e.g. dialogue, mediation, artistic endeavors). Peace educators, then, teach the values of respect, understanding, and nonviolence, present skills for analyzing international conflict, educate for alternative security systems, and use a pedagogy that is democratic and participatory. 'Peace is not merely a distant goal we seek but a means by which we arrive at a goal.'<sup>13</sup>

### **SOME MODELS FOR PEACE**

Across the globe various models have into being to promote peace, for example, the International Institute on Peace Education (IIPE) has been leading education for peace through a model of community learning since 1982. Every year IIPE brings together international educators to discourse on current themes related to peace, violence and the war system. IIPE 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). Peace education communities foster peace through dialogical exploration of critical contemporary issues, sharing best teaching practices, and brainstorming methods for individuals and education to respond to the critical issues at hand. The program considers violence through the lens of education and the political systems in which conflict plays out. IPE begins with the Freirean philosophy that all community members are at once teacher and student. This horizontal and dialogical process of community learning and shared responsibility among learners forms a learning community that both represents peace education and participation in a democracy. 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.

In 2002, 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. The culminating document from the consultation (Jenkins 2002) designed the master's degree program around eight organizing principles: peace education as ' 1) comprehensive in scope, 2) holistic in organization, 3) values-laden, 4) inquiry-based, 5) conceptually designed, 6) practiced with learner-centered pedagogy, 7) intended to develop peacemaking skills, and 8) as intentionally-directed learning.'<sup>14</sup> The eight principles of peace education underscore a holistic and comprehensive model of peace education. Students at UPEACE interact with concepts of peace through exploration of the values, beliefs

and worldviews present among cultures of the diverse student body. This approach to peace education embodies a symbiotic relationship between education for peace and multicultural education; for, both multicultural education and peace education aim to raise global awareness, respect for all life and a re-humanization of the "Other." In multicultural learning communities learners deconstruct their previously held prejudices and beliefs about others and formulate models for greater cooperation in the future.

The pedagogy essential for peace education is cooperative, participatory and active, including case-studies, storytelling, role-plays, empathy activities, negotiation and mediation practice, journaling, reflection circles, and alternative futures exercises. The learning objective of peace education is to transform conflict through dialogue and nonviolence, and particularly where peace education affects youth conflict is transformed across generations.

## **CONCLUSION**

When man was primitive, he was neither educated nor peace loving. He was least concerned about peace, harmony and development. He believed that war was essential for peace. He was all for struggle, conflict, war etc. He hardly had any positive agenda. But with the passage of time it began to dawn on him that the permanent state of conflict and war do not let him enjoy life. He began to realize the significance of family, society. Thus he got acquainted with the significance of co-existence. Then he began to contemplate at the broader level. Now he started to call this big society as democracy. In the democracy every country man has a role to play directly or indirectly to elect a democratic government.

He realized this system was conducive to peace, harmony and development. Then he also realized the significance of education as it could enable him to cultivate the outlook suitable for any democracy. In nut shell education promotes peace, harmony and development and they promote democracy.

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