

# THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES OF PEACE EDUCATION

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## ABSTRACT

*Today we are living in a very troublesome society where cruelty, aggression and thought have become so common for no cause most of times. People are behaving very inhumanly. Most often these violence or conflicts occur due to misunderstanding and unknowingness of the facts. Hence, misunderstanding and unknowingness posing new threats to our society. In this regard, learning to live with and in peace is prime concerns of peace education. Across the Education world, peace education is gaining attention in the policies and thereby, in the curriculum and syllabus of education. With the growing recognition and attention, school is being identified as a key role player in setting and facilitating peace education. In the beginning of the article meaning of peace is stated thereafter, it tries to differentiate between the concepts of Peace Education and Education for Peace. It also outlines the various role of school in setting of aims and objectives and implementation strategies of peace education.*

**Keywords:** *Peace, Peace Education, Education for Peace*

*“Peace education is grounded in active citizenship, preparing learners for assiduous participation in a democracy, through problem – posing and problem – solving education, and a commitment to transformative action in our society.”*

By John Dewey

### ► Introduction:

Education is the key to raise inner self of the individuals. It is uniting the nations, bringing human beings closely together. Now a day we are living in the digital era and many parts of the world, civil society suffers because of situations of violent conflicts and war. It is important to inculcate and recognize the crucial role of education in contributing to building a culture of peace. A culture of peace and non-violence goes to the substance of fundamental human rights of the present era. The highest form of objective for any education is inculcating peace and it is an essential value to be cherished by every individual. The father and mother is the first teacher to their children and peace is nurtured in the family. The peace nurtured at home again enhanced at school. Peace is a broad concept with practical and spiritual connotations. It can imply a state of inner calm or end of conflict. “Peace is what you think it is (or wants it to be). Peace has been understood to mean the absence of conflict or violence and conversely as the presence of states of mind and of society such as harmony, accord, security and understanding.

### ► Meaning of Peace:

Peace is a stress-free state of security and calmness that comes when there’s no fighting or war, everything coexisting in perfect harmony and freedom. In our war-torn world, it seems like there’s not nearly enough peace. However peace can be big and small, seen in entire countries or brief moments. After a war, two countries may sign a peace treaty, agreeing to not fight anymore. Sweden has avoided war since 1814, and enjoys the peace that the lack of conflict brings. When you feel at peace with yourself, you are content to be the person you are, flaws and everything. Peace is a feeling we are born with. Being a Parent. The most peaceful moment of parent’s life is when parent held his/her child for the first time. It was like everything around his/her stopped and his/her child and parents were at absolute peace for those few moments.

The word ‘peace’ in the English language is derived from the Latin ‘pax’. Peace in the Roman Empire meant a cessation in fighting as well as rule over subject races. A modern equivalent is found in definitions of peace through deterrence. This definition describes peace in terms of what it is not, rather than what it is.

The term ‘peace’ does not merely imply the absence of overt violence (sometimes referred to as ‘negative peace’). It also encompasses the presence of social, economic and political justice, which is essential to the notion of ‘positive peace’ (Hicks, 1985).

Peace comes from having unity, kinship, and harmony with those around you — **Purvi Shahpatel**

Peace is when you love yourself enough to forgive others around you — **Debbie Jones**

My definition of peace: The first word that comes to my mind is “calm.” It’s that feeling to be able to breathe the air and tell myself, “I can do whatever I desire to do.” To me, it’s a value to express myself among others’ opinions without any conflict. A result of an understanding by absorbing the differences in a healthy manner is what I call peace — **Kinjal Amin**

Peace will be when everything around us stops and we live in the moment — **Sara Scmit**

For me the most vital is one’s inner peace. Where mind and body is relaxed and life is wonderful. — **Bushra Siddiq**

Peace means positivity — **Amarah Gillani**

To be at peace means to accept everything around you, I am never at peace as there is so much around me that needs to be changed — **R.K**

Peace can only be found in the small corners of my own self, I can look around me and think someone else will give it to me but that’s not how it works — **Jonathan Armando**

#### ► **Concept of Peace Education and Education for Peace:**

- ✚ Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment.
- ✚ Peace education is about helping students to understand and transform conflict in their own lives, in the community and in the world at large. It is part of all learning areas and is reinforced by people treating each other in positive ways in classrooms, playgrounds and in their families and communities.
- ✚ **James Page** suggests peace education be thought of as "encouraging a commitment to peace as a settled disposition and enhancing the confidence of the individual as an individual agent of peace; as informing the student on the consequences of war and social injustice; as informing the student on the value of peaceful and just social structures and working to uphold or develop such social structures; as encouraging the student to love the world and to imagine a peaceful future; and as caring for the student and encouraging the student to care for others".

From the above definition it can be agreed that in the absence of elements such as tolerance, understanding, empathy, cooperation and respect for the difference in others, there cannot be peace. Any strategy or educational system helps to enhance the above said entities among the individuals could be known as peace education.

- ◆ According to **Albert Einstein** “Peace is not merely the absence of war but the presence of justice, of law, of order – in short, of government.
- ◆ According to **Freire** (2006) “Peace education is a mechanism for the transformation from a culture of violence to a culture of peace through a process of “conscientization”
- ◆ **Betty Reardon** defines “Peace Education is the attempt to promote the development of an authentic planetary consciousness that will enable us to function as global citizens and to transforms the present human condition by changing the social structures and patterns of thought that have created it”.
- ◆ “Peace Education is an attempt to respond to problems of conflict and violence of scale ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is about exploring ways of creating more just and sustainable futures said by **Laing.R.D.**(1978)

Let us try to understand the concepts: Education about peace and education for peace. The term education about peace may be regarded as a criticism of war. Education for peace is a positive way of thinking about peace, implying that through peace a basis for non violence may be laid down. This idea means that if wars are the result of thinking of mental attitude of some people, then why not peace may be also a result of the same mental process? Peace also may be possible through mental attitude. Peace may also be a creation of our mind. Peace education and Education for peace are two different concepts. According to the position paper of National Focus Group on Education for Peace, **NCERT (2006)** – Peace education is a component of syllabus while education for peace shapes the vision of education. It is based on the entire transactional strategies of education. Today, education has become market oriented and it fulfills the needs of market demand. It is more or less recognized as means of livelihood. In this context, education for peace serves the value of market need but it is more than that. Although, there is no universally accepted definition of Peace education, we try to understand the real meaning of peace education through the definitions given by some renowned thinkers and institution, which are as follows:

According to **R.D. Laing (1978)** – “Peace education is an attempt to respond to problems of conflict and violence on scales ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is about exploring ways of creating more just and sustainable future.”

**Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman (1988)** put in this way – “Peace education is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. It is based on philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, co-operation and reverence for the human family and ally itself on our beautiful planet.”

Education for peace is a conceptual framework from which schools may devise a programme comprising the transmission of Universal values and enduring attitudes, and the development of skills which enable our students to become active global citizen. The implementation of this conceptual framework recognizes the practice of peaceful relations at all levels: personal, familial, communal, inter-cultural and global. It entails a process of knowledge acquisition and skill – building which affects the behaviour of individuals and groups and provides a model for the formal and informal curriculum of the school. Education for peace is a process and condition which permeates all aspects of school life, with implications for learners, teachers and administrators and it extends beyond the school to society as a whole.

### ► Dimensions of Peace Education:

If we agree that the peace education is a training process for developing our positive attitude, and behaviours among other, then this education has several dimensions which can be enumerated as below:

- ◆ Education for war control.
- ◆ Education for develop tolerance in human beings.
- ◆ Education to establish positive willingness and unity for international society.
- ◆ Education for promotion of human right for salving to the problem of social discrimination.
- ◆ Education for conflict resolution.
- ◆ Education for democracy.
- ◆ Education for international understanding.
- ◆ Education for environmental responsibility.
- ◆ Education for coexistence and general equality.
- ◆ Some have also addressed a dimension that is spiritual dimensions.

### ► Principles of Peace Education:



### ► Aims and Objectives of Education for Peace:

The aim of peace education is perhaps best summarized in the Hague Appeal for peace which states that a culture of its peace will be achieved when citizen of the world:

- ◆ Understand global problems
- ◆ Have the skills to resolve Conflict – Constructively
- ◆ Know and live by international standards of Human rights, gender and racial equality.
- ◆ Appreciate cultural diversity
- ◆ Respect the integrity of the earth

Declaration of the 44th session of the international conference on education held at Geneva in 1994 has listed the following aims of peace education.

- ◆ To develop sense of universal values in every individual.
- ◆ To prepare citizens to cope with difficult and uncertain situations and fitting them for personal autonomy and responsibility.
- ◆ To educate the individual and develop the ability to recognize and accept the values which exist in the diversity of individuals.
- ◆ To strengthen peace, friendship and solidarity between individuals and people.
- ◆ To develop the ability of non-violent conflict – resolution among the individuals.
- ◆ To cultivate the ability to make informed choices, basing their judgments and actions not only on the analysis of present situations and the vision of a preferred future among the individuals.

Therefore, the peace education is actually a call for an inclusive approach to mutual coexistence and to a holistic way of living. Peace education applies to the contents of all curricular, at every level in the education system. Peace education should be extended to all learners, including refugee and migrant children, children from all social sectors and disabled with the objective of promoting equal opportunities through education

### ► **Curriculum for Peace Education:**

The primary stage of education is the ideal time for laying the foundation of peace oriented personality. These years comprise the formative period in the lives of the students. At this stage, students are comparatively less burdened. The number of students who could be exposed to education for peace is at the maximum during this phase. Thereafter, students begin to drop out. Therefore, this is the stage at which focused attention should be paid to laying the foundation for a culture of peace through education. As the saying goes, “it is easier to build a child than it is to repair an adult”. Therefore, peace education is important for each and every individual at different stage. The approach to peace education at early childhood, Elementary stage, secondary stage, Higher education stage and adult stage varies in different aspects.

### **Peace education approach to early childhood**

Starting peace-building education in early childhood is of paramount importance. In yearly years a child’s brain architecture is developing most rapidly, habits are formed, differences are recognized and emotional ties are build through social relationships and day-today in homes and neighborhoods. Parental practice and the environment that are most proximal to children are key determinants of their physical, social and emotional development. Proximal contexts, such as the home, family, early learning programmes and community protection programmes, play a key role in the children’s ability to manage conflicts, reduce violence and shape key characteristics of the Children’s moral behaviour therefore, the family members should create conducive environment to enhance the above said behaviour among the children at early childhood stage.

### **Peace education approach to elementary**

As children grow older and reach the Elementary school stage. They begin to grasp abstract thoughts. In a limited way they develop the capacity to think rationally and relationally about the various happenings in their surroundings. A crucial issue for children at this stage is that of relating to other children and their environment. Since, the school brings together children from environment backgrounds, streets need to be equipped with cognitive competence to understand the values underlying hygiene both of the self and of the surroundings, respect for others and for elders, recognition of the dignity of labor, honesty, love, sharing and cooperation, tolerance, regularity, punctuality, responsibility etc. Therefore, the education for peace for primary school children is about helping them enjoy and celebrate diversity, beauty, and harmony in nature. They must be encouraged to develop the skills it takes to be at home with others (especially the art of listening and with nature aesthetic sensitivity and a sense of responsibility).

### **Peace education approach to secondary stage**

In the secondary and senior secondary stage students gradually become aware of their identity. They are on the threshold of becoming independent persons, though still deficient in maturity. The resulting confusion leads to conflict with peers, parents, and teachers. During this phase, their skills for rational thinking, communication, and self discipline are tested. They need training to resolve, through dialogue and negotiation, the conflicts they are sure to encounter in day-to-day interactions. They also need to develop awareness about inter – relationship and interdependence in the global and ecological context, so that they can form a wider perspective on justice, peace, and non-violence. It is important to enable them to be not only the recipients of peace but the active makers of peace, who can think for others and help them.

### **Peace education approach to Higher Education Stage**

Educators at all levels generally agree that students should be taught about peace. This is especially true in the current situation in the world. Higher education is perceived as extremely important, and the students in the higher education should be inculcated the knowledge, attitude and competencies in the area of peace keeping. These students are going to become a national builders and role models of the society. Therefore the students in the higher education should come out with all good entities of human beings. Further, the role of the teachers in the higher education is of paramount importance. The higher education teachers to be a role model for their students. The teachers need to be aware of the effect of their behavior on students. In this stage, the international understanding, universal brotherhood, human rights awareness, crisis and conflict management skills could be taught along with their other syllabus. The special elective subjects and major branch of studies in peace education courses would be more benefit to the students at higher education level.

### **Peace Education Approach to Adult Education stage**

As society continue to learn and develop their competencies in relation to the new realities and challenges ahead. This is where adult education plays a key role in meeting such demands in their more interconnected globalised world. Investment in adult education plays a critical role in supporting a society's capacity for adaptability and change, and helps create a competitive workforce which is essential in competing in the global economy and international challenges. Today we are living in the ever changing technology era with lot of human conflicts. The potential and capacity of adult education to enable people to realize their full human potential by drawing link between their individual experiences and relating it to wider structural factors around them. Further, developing self-confidence, social awareness, cultural understanding, communal harmony and prosperity among adult education curriculum would help to inculcate peace in the minds of the adults.

#### **► Teaching Methods of Peace Education:**

Teaching in the broadest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character and physical ability of an individual. In the process of integrating peace education, how to teach is more important than what to teach. The teaching methods already practiced by the teachers for the existing subjects can be used for teaching peace education also. But some of the specific teaching methods discussed below could be more useful.

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|-------------------------|---|
| 1. Cooperative Learning | 7. Story telling                        |
| 2. Group Discussion     | 8. Service learning                     |
| 3. Peer Teaching        | 9. Experimental Teaching                |
| 4. Brainstorming        | 10. Inquiry based learning and teaching |
| 5. Role play            | 11. Dialogues                           |
| 6. Energizers           |   |

#### **► Role of teachers for Peace Education:**

The role of the peace educator in India warrants deep exploration. The Centre's faculty members have given much thought to this question, and the following thoughts emerged in discussion: The role of academics is to serve people • in a variety of ways, for academia is answerable to the people, to society. When academics engage themselves with the issue of peace, they are doing what every academic should be doing. This flows from the social responsibility that all forms of knowledge should have. It is important to awaken a sense of responsibility among scholars and students to contribute to peace and communal harmony. The role of academics is one of animation and, wherever feasible, guidance.

- Education should be used as a means to transform institutions and societies. Scholars need to initiate peace through academic discourse within and outside campuses and institutions. They need to teach peace, order, and conciliatory attitudes as value-laden life processes in civic education. They need to change the mindset inherited from past generations by re-implanting a culture of tolerance and conciliatory notions both at early-learning and mature levels of education.
- Academics can play a major role in peacemaking and peace building activities, and the academy can play a leading role in making society more peaceful. Through their work in their respective institutions, through their writings, and through appearances in the media, academics can play a vital role.

- Academic institutions are becoming aware of the efficacy of training programs They are prepared to learn from common people and be influenced by their needs and desires. A peace centre can address a variety of issues and make more and more people see why peace is needed and what peace can bring.
- Wherever possible, teachers should teach these courses even when formal and financial support are lacking. Commitment to peace should enable teachers to start in a small way and try to convince the more influential of the need for, and scope of, peace studies. Scholars need to set examples and make students and administrators believe in the efficacy of peace education.
- The role of peace educators is rooted in the ability to provide hope and confidence. Despite skepticism regarding the role of scholars, people still have faith in them; their works and words carry respect and regard among common people. Their involvement in peacemaking and peace building will generate confidence. Their impartial, supposedly unbiased, and forthright views will first of all enhance hope among the needy, those who are most in need of peace. And their involvement will be welcomed without suspicion. The academics' role is one of hope.

#### ► **Conclusion:**

Peace education has its own level as per the human requirements. Every human has its own mental level such as, adolescence, adult, old. Everyone has different maturity level as well as understanding level and peace education deals with it for example, jurisprudential model of teaching, role playing, introspection and Nishedh Vidhi, social service camps, Yoga and Meditation, games and sports etc. There are based on the level of human and these are also teaching methods of peace education. Therefore, the entire details conclude with the statement that peace is a universal truth and need of human life. No matter how old human is and how much high living he has in worldly things at the end what is actually needed is peace and only peace. At the last we can conclude by saying that peace is the conceptual truth and universal need for everyone and we should try for this by formal and informal education. We can trained our generation to make our surrounding peaceful. Knowledge skills, values and action are the methods to imbibe the peace education in students.

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