Role of teacher in peace education

Dr. Santosh Kumar Behera
Assistant Professor,
Department of Education, Sidho-Kanho-Birsha University,
Purulia, West Bengal-723101, Email:santoshbehera.jkc@gmail.com

Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men [and women] that the defenses of peace must be constructed.

-- Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution

Abstract:

Now-a-days, we live in an age of unimagined levels of violence with uncountable reasons. People are forgetting human values. Hence peace and welfare aspects are facing new challenges at this juncture. It is believed that war and violence occur due to unresolved conflicts. Learning to live with and in peace is emerging as a premise of peace education. It is our endeavour to educate our children about peace from the very beginning so that when they grow up, they work towards peace and harmony in the world. Teachers are the pivot around which all education revolves. The role of teacher in this context is obvious.

The present paper wants to highlight the Concept of peace, Sources of Peace, Peace Education, Aims of Peace Education, and the role of a teacher in peace education.

Keywords: Education, War, Violence, Peace, Source, Peace Education.

Introduction:

Peace means being one with life itself having no fear or bitterness. It is more than merely sitting still or in silence. Peace therefore, is a state of mind. Tagore rightly said "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high,....... into that kingdom of freedom my father let my country awake". Peace is simply having a feeling of security, calm and restfulness. We often tend to think of peace as being an international issue, far from our daily life, but we do not realize that global peace can only be achieved if each country is settled and at peace. The peace and happiness of each country can only be achieved if every citizen is at peace. This follows therefore that a country can be peaceful and progress if her people live tolerantly.
“Peace” is a word that is uttered almost as frequently as “truth,” “beauty,” and “love.” It may be just as elusive to define as these other virtues. Common synonyms for peace include “amity,” “friendship,” “harmony,” “concord,” “tranquility,” “repose,” “quiescence,” “truce,” “pacification,” and “neutrality.”

Peace has been defined in various ways. It has been defined as:

- Freedom from, or cessation of, world of hostilities; that condition of a nation or community in which it is not at war with another.
- A ratification or treaty of peace between two powers previously at war.
- Freedom from civil commotion and disorder; public order and security.
- Freedom from disturbance or perturbation.

Peace is a state of unwavering mind. It is a state of oneness, sameness, or non-duality with abiding happiness and joy (Saraf, 1998). Peace is one of five core universal values (truth, righteous conduct, love, and non-violence being the other four values) which represents one of the five domains of human personality i.e., emotional (intellectual, physical, psychological, and spiritual are the other four personality domains).

Peace as ‘absence of violence’ means absence of fistfights or firing or carpet bombing or use of nuclear war heads. This is rather inadequate and incomplete definition. Peace is a state of mind. This is beautifully expressed in the Preamble to the UNESCO Constitution:

"Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defence of peace must be constructed". All ranges of shades of meaning of peace come easily under three basic sources. These are inner peace, social peace and peace with nature. These can be analyzed further as under:

1. **Inner Peace**: Inner peace is peace with self – self-contentedness. One, ‘whose mind remains unperturbed amid sorrows, whose thirst for pleasure has altogether disappeared, and who is free from passion, fear and anger’ is said to have achieved inner peace. For example, harmony and peace with oneself, good health and absence of inner conflicts, joy, sense of freedom, insight, spiritual peace, feelings of kindness, compassion, and content, appreciation of art.

2. **Social Peace**: Social peace is ‘learning to live together’; indeed one of the important four pillars of learning as enunciated in the UNESCO report, “Learning: The Treasure Within.” Human beings are social beings; they cannot live in isolation. The tapestry of the living community is fast changing from living in homogeneous, cultural, linguistic and religious groups to cosmopolitan community that is multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious. For an enriched and meaningful life, it is necessary to learn to live together within diversity. Again, for social peace, tolerance for diversity is not enough; respect and love for diversity is the precondition. Social peace implies harmony in human relationships, conflict reconciliation and resolution, love, friendship, unity, mutual understanding, co-operation, brotherhood, tolerance of differences, democracy, community building, human rights, morality, etc.
3. **Peace with Nature:** Planet earth is the cradle of human civilization. Symbolically, she is the mother earth. Peace with nature implies stopping the violation of her dignity through environmental and ecological degradation, exploitation, etc. Peace with nature is harmony with natural environment and mother earth.

These sources of peace are important as they provide the necessary basis on which peace can be built. Total peace arises from working through all the sources:

![Diagram of Sources of Peace: Inner Peace, Social Peace, Peace with Nature, Total Peace](image)

**Concept of peace education:**

Peace education is not a modern invention or an innovation of the modern age of science and technology. As far back as about five thousand years ago, the Rig Veda has ushered in a new era of enlightenment and one-worldness. The Vedantic idea of “Brahaman” speaking of “oneness of the mankind”. It signs of mutual co-existence and eternal peace. It dreams of “the father-hood of God” and “the Brotherhood of man” i.e., “Bashudheib Kutumbakam”. Education which promotes international understanding, fellow-feeling and brotherhood is called peace education. Peace education is more effective and meaningful when it is adopted according to the social and cultural context and the needs of a country. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values together with the universal human values. It should also be globally relevant. Peace education could be defined in many ways. There is no universally accepted definition as such. Here are some good definitions from peace literature.

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 futures”.

**Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman** (1988) 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 all life on our beautiful planet. He also defined that Peace education is skill building. It empowers children to find creative and non-destructive ways to settle conflict and to live in harmony with themselves, others, and their world . . . . . . Peace building is the task of every human being and the challenge of the human family.

**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.

According to the **National Curriculum Framework** by **NCERT (2005)** “The space for peace education within the framework of National School Curriculum document is compellingly clear in the light of escalating trends of, and taste for, violence globally, nationally and locally. Education is a significant dimension of the long term process of building up peace, tolerance, justice, intercultural understanding and civic responsibility”.

**The International Commission on the Development of Education** (1973) has rightly mentioned, “in educational activities, anything designed to help man live at peace with himself, anything which draws him out of unhappy isolation and loneliness also helps towards harmony among the peoples….”


**Ian Harris and John Synott** has described peace education as a series of “teaching encounters” that draw from people:

- their desire for peace,
- non-violent alternatives for managing conflict, and
- skills for critical analysis of structural arrangements that produce and legitimize injustice and inequality.

In fact, two out of the four pillars of education suggested by the Delor’s report, namely learning to live together and learning to be, are related to peaceful living. The following diagram shows the five inter connected frame work of Peace education.
Spiritual development

*   *   *

*   *

Human rights   Human values

*    PEACE EDUCATION   *

*   *

*   *

*   *

*   *

*   *

Learning to live   *    *    *    *    *   dismantling culture of violence

The Flower-Petal framework focuses on intercultural solidarity, disarmament education, and the relationship between diverse forms of life and ways of living that subvert ethno-centrism, de-humanization, and pseudo-speciation while fostering peace, global environmental stewardship and contemplative practices.

Education for non-violence and peace includes training, skills and information directed towards cultivating a culture of peace based on human rights principles. This education not only provides knowledge about a culture of peace, but also imparts the skills and attitudes necessary to defuse and recognize potential conflicts, and those needed to actively promote and establish a culture of peace and non-violence.
AIMS OF PEACE EDUCATION:

- To understand the nature and origins of violence and its effects on both victim and perpetrator.
- To create frameworks for achieving peaceful, creative societies.
- To sharpen awareness about the existence of un-peaceful relationships between people and within and between nations.
- To investigate the causes of conflicts and violence embedded within perceptions, values and attitudes of individuals as well as within social and political structures of society.
- To encourage the search for alternative or possible nonviolent skills.
- To equip children and adults with personal conflict resolution skills.

ROLE OF TEACHER IN PEACE EDUCATION:

Dr. Kothari says “the destiny of a nation is shaped inside the four walls of the classroom”. The teacher has the greatest responsibility of building a nation. In a multiethnic and multi-religious country like India the teacher’s task is very noble and ennobling. Teachers are mirror of upcoming generations in the form of students and an effective element of establishing peaceful atmosphere. A teacher’s prime responsibility is to help students become good human beings, motivated to fulfill their true potential not only for their own benefit but also for the betterment of the society as a whole. The teacher and school may devise other context-specific strategies to develop among students a sense of openness and comprehension about diverse cultures, histories, and fundamental shared values.

Teacher can play an important role in imparting the peace education as:--

- Value and model life-long learning.
- Know the curriculum and communicate expectations to students and parents.
- Are approachable and have a positive relationship with students, colleagues, parents and community members.
- Provide a safe, supportive and inclusive environment in their classroom and school.
- Design and implement effective and meaningful instructional and assessment strategies.
- Challenge students to reach their potential and foster independent learning.
- Are firm, fair and consistent with discipline.
- Assist their students in recognizing and understanding their role in a local and global community.
- The teacher must understand that multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, and multi-religious problems in society are not to be dealt with in isolation in bits and pieces of a good peace education program but, being interconnected with all other problems of peace and violence, are addressed in the whole program. For example, developing qualities such as compassion and service to others can help reduce racial, religious, or other prejudices, but students of all backgrounds must take part in the program.
- The teacher must be cognizant and wholly supportive of the basic nature and aims of peace education. According to Dale Hudson “…education that actualizes (people’s) potentialities in
helping them learns how to make peace with themselves and with others, to live in harmony and unity with self, humankind and nature.” The principles upon which this statement rests include:

1. The cardinal prerequisite for world peace is the unity of humankind. 2. World order can be founded only on the consciousness of the oneness of humankind. It follows that, in this view, the teacher of peace education in an apparently diverse society must keep certain basic aims in mind: the achievement of a unified, peaceful society both globally and within the nation, where world citizenship is fostered and “unity in diversity” is recognized and practiced.

- The teacher should constantly keep in mind that the attainment of any aim is conditioned upon knowledge, volition, and action. Unless these three are forthcoming, nothing will be accomplished. The power needed to accomplish a peaceful world is the unification of humankind. To this end, the teacher must use his will-power. In the words of Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan, we should “… will peace with our whole body and soul, our feelings and instincts, our flesh and its affections.” Then we should act intelligently to reduce intercultural, interethnic, and inter-religious violence, bringing a greater degree of unity and harmony in society. To accomplish this, the teacher should develop qualities such as tolerance, respect of and appreciation of others, being fair and open-minded, and being able and willing to consider other points of view looking beyond his or her own self-interest. In other words, the teacher must be sincerely attempting to be free of prejudice.

- When a teacher becomes deeply and regularly involved in teaching peace education, it gives him an opportunity to take a long, deep look at his or her values and beliefs. In order to be a model for the students, the teacher has the opportunity of transformation and could modify his inner self. This modification would help the students to understand who is a peaceful person and a peacemaker. Thus, the teacher will have a powerful, positive influence on hundreds and thousands of children and youth.

- Teachers must cope with prejudices, conflicts, and violence in an increasingly diverse society by starting with themselves. Firstly, the teacher must develop his own emotional intelligence. People with high EQ know and manage their own emotional life well and understand and deal effectively with the feelings of others. They are skillful in relationships.

Thus, in order to establish peace teacher plays a vital role in our society. It is not only the individual responsibility of teacher’s but also it is the responsibility of all of us. In this context, the government (Central and State), NGOs, Mass media and Social organizations should take some measures to safeguard, protect and promote the precious peace of our nation.

Conclusion:

Our Indian President Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam linked Nation’s prosperity with peace. He referred the message received from a Buddhist Monk in a statement that, ‘If you want peace, remove ‘I’ and ‘Me’. When you remove I and Me, You remove Ego. When you remove Ego, you remove hatred. When you remove hatred you have Peace’. Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, the first president of independent India rightly
commented, “It is essential for us not to live apart but to live together, understanding one another, knowing one another’s fear and anxieties, aspirations and thoughts’. “Learning-The treasure within” highlights the four pillars of learning and the third pillar which is most important is-Learning to live together.

‘Let us work together

Think together

Achieve together

With no hatred to each other.’

This is most important to all particularly to the learners to learn to live together on this planet. In order to survive on this planet peacefully every one must learn to live in harmony and in a violence free environment. Differences in race, caste, colour, creed, language, customs, traditions and cultures exist and to learn to live amidst these differences should be a wonderful and unique experience for all. If you want to establish world peace, then first you have to establish peace in your country. If you want to peace in the country then establish peace in your state. If you want to peace in your state then establish peace in your district. If you want to peace at district level then establish peace in your village. If you want to peace in your village then establish peace in your family. If you want to peace in your family then establish peace in yourself. Thus world peace lies in individual himself. Let us:-

“Pray for peace, work for peace, live and let live in peace”

Om Sarve Bhavantu Sukhinah
Sarve Santu Nir-Aamayaah |
Sarve Bhadraanni Pashyantu
Maa Kashcid-Duhkha-Bhaag-Bhavet |
Om Shaanthi Shaanthi Shaanthi ||

Meaning:

Om, May All become Happy,
May All be Free from Illness.
May All See what is Auspicious,
May no one Suffer.
Om Peace, Peace, Peace.
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