

PEACE EDUCATION AND VALUE EDUCATION VIS A VIS SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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Peace and value education means providing education for internalizing appropriate values, attitudes and behaviours with a view to respecting human dignity and right and respecting the environment.

Peace does not entail only the absence of conflict but it requires a positive dynamic participatory process where dialogue is encouraged and conflicts are resolved in a spirit of mutual understanding. Respecting life, ending violence and promoting and practising non-violence through education, dialogue and cooperation can help in establishing a culture of peace while ending a culture of violence.

UNESCO, which is committed to ensuring a culture of peace, believes that education plays an important role in fostering a culture of peace. Following are some of UNESCO's suggestions through which education can help in establishing a culture of peace.

- Invigorate national efforts and international cooperation to promote the goals of education for all, with a view to achieve human, social and economic development and for promoting a culture of peace.
- Ensure that children from an early age, benefit from education on values, attitudes, modes of behaviour and ways of life to enable them to resolve any dispute peacefully and in a spirit of respect for human dignity and right.
- Involve children in activities for instilling in them the values and goals for a culture of peace.
- Develop values and skills conducive to a culture of peace, including education and training in promoting dialogue and consensus building.

Violence is emerging in an unprecedented manner in society. We expose our children from the very cradle to be competitive and aggressive. When these children grow up to be an adult, thus have no qualms about lumping queues, driving rashly, abusing, getting violent or destroying the environment. It is not only we, as parents that cultivate this aggressive attitude in our children, but the surrounding environment also as well encourages the children to become violent and selfish.

Violence in the form of terrorism, war crimes, injustice, oppression and exploitation are on the rise. The daily newspapers scream headlines of gory

details on acts of violence. Very little space is given to peace activities. Therefore print media has an important role to play, in mediatizing peace activities, just as they do immediately mediatizing violence.

Also violent films which depict the life style of the dons, showing glaring pictures on the underworld sends wrong messages to our children. Colourful toy cars and educational games have been replaced by videogames, toy tanks and a high degree of competitiveness and achievement orientation therefore giving rise to a typical child of today who is short tempered, impatient and who starts to believe that violence is not an aberration but a way of life and accumulation of wealth, no matter how it is achieved, is attractive. Therefore electronic media has an important role to play in projecting peace and values on the screen.

This disorder and confusion in the society affects the innocent minds of our children. Children absorb the spirit of violence in this atmosphere and grow to be the perpetrators of violence in the next generation.

It is here that the schools and teachers have an important contribution to make. The formative years which they spend in school actually shape their thinking process. But what we find in schools all over the world is that education is being narrowed down into teaching of certain subject matter necessary only for passing (the examination and entering job markets. Due to this subject centered and examination oriented learning at school, the purpose and the, beauty of education has been lost.

There is a growing realisation in the world today that children should be educated in the art of peaceful living. As a result more and more peace concepts, attitudes, values and behaviour skills are being integrated into the school curriculum in many countries. There IS also a renewed interest to develop peace related disciplines.

Peace and value education is an attempt to bring about changes in the values, attitudes and behaviour of the children. It is a remedial measure to protect children from falling into the ways of violence in society. It aims at the total development of the child. It tries to inculcate higher human and social values in the minds of children.

Peace and value education is the best vehicle to ensure that the next generation will have the skills, the knowledge and the motivation to create a peaceful environment. Children must be provided with the skills and knowledge to live in peace and to create mutual respect and understanding that will help them to transform their lives.

What Should Peace and Values Education Entail?

Knowledge: We must learn to know ourselves, enhance our capacities, think positively and understand each other, who-is different from us. This requires that the curriculum textbooks must be jointly revised, so that they are free from hate messages, prejudices and distortions. It also means that all

education systems should ensure that the basic knowledge of the world's main civilization, religion and belief systems is transmitted to each generation and is geared to enhancing the inherent potential of the person.

Understanding: Intercultural understanding must be based on dialogue across whatever cultural divide exists. This requires contact, exchange and negotiations for which interactive skills are vital. The ability to live together involves practical competencies that must be learnt and re-learnt in all cultures.

Sharing: In order to bridge the gap between our cultural differences, we must cultivate shared values. The universal values of tolerance, human rights non-violence and democracy are crucial, as is respect for cultural diversity and a culture of giving and taking, winning and losing.

To reinvent peace, we have to re-educate our children and ourselves. This can be done by reorienting the teacher training programmes. to ensure the professionalism of every teacher and teacher educator as a peace and values educator. We need therefore to take measures to inspire teachers, to motivate them in the promotion of peace values, using the subject matter of each curriculum.

There is a need to initiate functionaries of school management systems into peace education by providing with the enabling environment to do so. Moreover there is a need to influence the relevant authorities to ensure that mass media falls in line with the mission of peace education by recognising social responsibility.

There is a further need to develop and execute monitoring and evaluation mechanisms for peace education programmes and build these in to new programmes.

Peace and values education must be based on existing subjects taught in classes. It is not enough to have a separate subject on peace and values education only. Instead peace education should be incorporated into each and every subject of the school curriculum, such as Maths, History, Geography, language as well as into sports. The texts of these subjects, while expanding knowledge of the subject could be adapted as appropriate, this playing in highlighting concepts of peace.

Teachers should use these texts in conjunction with their traditional subjects to discuss peace values daily. By doing so, issues pertaining to peace will be taught to the students in every class, rather than just having a single class on peace education, where once the student leaves the class, its lessons will be forgotten. This may be deemed the best method for internalising peace values through education.

It is important to note that values education means imparting universally respected values of tolerance, non-violence, democracy and human rights, giving and sharing, winning and loosing, and above all respect for human dignity and right, with respect for the planet. These values are important to contribute to a peaceful environment. On the other hand peace education should

build the capacities of individual to become peaceful person by thinking positively and thinking critically.

To this end, UNESCO has brought out a publication, “Learning the way of Peace” A Teachers Guide to Peace Education. This should ideally, be globalized. Such attempts, will help in gradually changing the values, attitudes and behaviours of the children who will grow up to be responsible citizens of the world. They would act with due respect to human dignity and right and respect for the environment, which are the corner stones for peace and sustainable development, in the times to come. They would think twice as future leaders, before promoting arms trade and war economies to sustain the living standards of their respective countries.

However, we must note that it is not enough only to target peace through education. It is necessary to lobby with the decision makers in public and private sectors that environment to peace must be ensured to supplement what is done in schools, in order to bring about sustainable human development.

The dialogue between culture and development needs fresh energy and purpose.

In this context, the challenges of global governance, cultural diversity and democratic development cannot be addressed in a piecemeal manner. They must be taken up in a single framework. In the past, the policies, values and agencies concerned with dignity and diversity have been developed separately from those concerned with poverty, technology and social equity. This state of affairs much change, for the following reasons;

First, there is a widespread recognition that development without participation is doomed to failure. Without enlisting the enthusiasm of the world’s poorer and weaker groups in the task of their own empowerment, and without making space for their own ideas about freedom, dignity and power, the work of development becomes another exercise in the imposition of power upon the weak. What is more, the lack of involvement of ordinary people at the grass-roots level, in defining the meaning, shape and design of developments in their own communities is probably a major factor in the limited successes of efforts to reduce both rural and urban poverty worldwide. Although there has been a significant effort to emphasize participation, empowerment and inclusion as both means and ends in development policy, the obstacles to such commitments have been many, including the mind-sets of technocrats, the ideologies of major lenders, the biases of local communities and the fear of local elites about losing power when women, children and weaker groups achieve “voice” in their own futures.

The violent upheavals of the last few decades (often in the name of ethnic purity or racial chauvinism) and the events of this past year remind us that for the poor and disenfranchised populations of the world, there is a strong perceived link between their cultural exclusion and their economic

marginalization. Thus peace itself can become a casualty of market-driven development

Development, in UNESCO's view, is a means of enhancing the relationship between material and spiritual well-being by stressing their reciprocity rather than just their simple complementarity. Many experts would agree that the record of development over the last fifty years has not been uniformly positive. Some would agree that this is because development has itself been defined far too exclusively by tangibles, such as dams, factories, houses, food and water, although these are undeniably vital goods. What we may call intangible development (which includes such issues as empowerment, participation, transparency, stakeholding and accountability) has only recently entered the discourse of development.

Intangible development may be defined as that set of capacities that allows groups, communities and nations to define their futures in a holistic and integrated manner, stressing such values as participation, transparency and accountability. Intangible development, defined in this manner, is the critical link between cultural diversity and sustainable development. Cultural diversity enriches the pool of visions which mediate the relationships between meaningful pasts and desirable futures. The strength of this mediation provides a bridge to sustainability, since the major obstacle to sustainability has been the divorce between visions of tangible and intangible development.

Since human beings belong to the biological universe but are often in a position to determine its future, they have a special obligation to assure that a proper balance is maintained between environmental health (especially biodiversity) and equitable development. In the era where markets and their logic seem to dominate global relationships, environmental concerns, market concerns and development concerns seem to be in constant tension with each other. In many parts of the world, there is a growing gap between environmental values, which are seen as middle-class or even elite values, and the needs of the world's poor for shelter, food and employment. For example, the efforts in India's West Coast to preserve a carefully regulated environmental zone along the coast is being contested by groups of urban poor who are desperate for spaces in which to construct secure housing. Therefore, the means of accessing knowledge to have a balanced interaction with nature, must now be increasingly provided to the populations.

The main arguments for the importance of biodiversity are grounded in the reality that the earth does not have an infinite capacity for being abused and the global commons depend on the preservation and nurture of biodiversity, at all environmental scales. Though many long-term factors have contributed to the environmental degradation of the planet and the atmosphere, the historical trend towards more powerful extractive technologies, more effective world-wide market integration, and more profit-oriented forms of market organization has generally

sacrificed long-term productivity and equity, for shortterm gains for specific populations.

The era of globalization poses common challenges to biodiversity and to cultural diversity, as well as to the special relationship between them. The growing autonomy of market processes (in combination with high-impact technologies) produces unforeseen risks to biodiversity and environmental safety. At the same time, globalization in its cultural most marketized forms threatens to erode and diminish more localized and historically vulnerable cultural forms, both within and across, societies

The forces of global consumerism make it difficult for many societies to maintain their cultural dignity, as products, slogans and images of glamour, wealth and modernity flood in from outside sources. Global financial markets place heavy pressure on national governments to sacrifice; national cultural priorities in favour, of global competitive trends.

This shrinkage of the space for cultural (creativity, dignity and innovation has dangerous implications for biodiversity as well. In both cases, a blind and monotheistic attachment to market principles tends to marginalize long-term values. Cultural diversity and biodiversity are both values of and for the long run. And cultural diversity guarantees the maximum range of visions of the good life within which relationships to nature can also be varied, specific, local and self-sustaining.

Therefore, educating the future generations on preserving biodiversity, as also the cultural diversity of the worlds population, is deemed very important.

What has happened and what is happening today, are part of our inherited legacies. It is still not too late, to chart a path of peace and sustainable development for the future.

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