



BUILDING PEACE AND WELLBEING IN THE MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION SET UP THROUGH PEACE SKILLS

Chrisia Laura Pinto* Umesha G.R**

**UGC-JRF (MANF), Department of Education, Regional Institute of Education (NCERT), Mysore (University of Mysore), Mysuru.*

***UGC-JRF (MANF), Department of Education, Regional Institute of Education (NCERT), Mysore (University of Mysore), Mysuru.*

Abstract

Skills are considered as foundation stone of capabilities that shape human actions and counter actions. Current educational practices call upon teachers with varied skills to face the challenges that they meet every day of their life. So application of appropriate skills is upheld. Present paper conceptually discusses role and importance of peace teacher as instructor of peace skills and the experiences of peace student who is seeker of wisdom, rather than only knowledge. Skills that are bringing meaning to life are referred as life skills. If these life skills bring about healthy interpersonal as well as intrapersonal relationships, they are peace skills. Peace skills facilitate role of peace teacher and peace student in the multicultural education set up. Educating the student in multicultural set up a teacher need to be thinker, good communicator and need to have personal skills. Building peace and wellbeing is possible when we have peace schools. 'Education for Peace' offers scope for such peace skills that are required to multicultural education setup.

Key words: *Life skills, Peace skills, Peace teacher, Peace student, peace schools and Multicultural education setup.*

Introduction

School is considered multicultural context for children's growth and a personality shaping place of culture of peace. The current reality of education system is alarming. We have qualified citizens and not educated ones. Skill development is an integral part of building personal with abilities that will enable them live as human being. Education contributes to the learner's personality growth. Peace is desirable in every aspect, so are peace skills. It is said education is not name of any degree it is just learning for life, if one is educated person need to possess right attitudes, actions, language, behaviour and personality with others in real life, life cannot be lived in fullness. The peace skills are integral part of the curriculum and is a comprehensive behaviour change approach that concentrates on the development of the skills needed for life such as communication, decision-making, thinking, managing emotions, assertiveness, self-esteem building, resisting peer pressure, and relationship skills. It also addresses the important issues like empowering girls and guiding boys towards new values. In other words peace skills are sister concerns of life skills.

Peace a catalyst to wellbeing

Peace is Peaceful behaviour has often been found to have been the result of a certain type of a peaceful inner disposition on the part of some. Some have expressed the belief that peace is a certain quality of inner tranquillity which does not depend upon the uncertainties of daily life for its existence. The acquirement of peaceful internal disposition would seem to perhaps be a valuable skill, capable of assisting in the resolution of otherwise seemingly contradictory challenging one. Peace is the integrative part of school education. Individuals are sometimes known to lessen conflicts or to improve emotions through compliments or generosity. Small gestures of generosity or appreciation that are reciprocated may be followed with even more kindness. Generosity expressed abundantly can eventually become a pattern of life or a routine that may become a lasting basis for improved relationships. A communication that brings about peace often starts without preconditions and preconceived notions, because they are more than just opportunities to prove ones mentor.

Being internally at peace is considered by many to be a healthy mental state, and to be the opposite of feeling stressful, mentally anxious, or emotionally unstable. Within the reflective culture of peace, the psychological or inmost achievement of peace of mind is often associated with bliss and happiness or wellbeing.



Peace of mind, peacefulness, and tranquillity are metaphors of a disposition free from the effects of stress. In some contemplative traditions, inner peace is believed to be a state of consciousness or enlightenment that may be cultivated by various types of meditation. Here peace is the way to wellness.

Life skills and well being

Knowledge and skills are the tools we require to do any job. But a skill for peace and wellbeing lies in the attitude that we possess which adds to the quality of job that we perform. Life skills are the skills that we need to deal with the life's challenges effectively whether it in school, at work place or in the personal life. The time here and now is looking forward beside soft skills, the skills persons possess in order to make someone happy, peaceful, pleasant....more so at personal level as good health and wellbeing. The life skills are for comprehensive behaviour change that concentrates on the development of the skills needed for life such as communication, decision-making, thinking, managing emotions, assertiveness, self-esteem building, resisting peer pressure, and relationship skills. Students of today who are able to understand and use these peace skills, along with their educational qualifications, will be better placed with their educational and employment opportunities. In a constantly changing environment, having life skills is an essential part of being able to meet the challenges of everyday life. To deal with the increasing pace and change of present life, students need new life skills such as the ability to deal with stress and frustration.

To be in wellbeing persons require

- time for self and self confident
- positive self esteem and positive relationships
- Inner freedom and greater composure to express emotions
- Living and working productively
- Coping with stresses of daily life
- Adaptability and adjustments
- Tranquillity in times of uncertainties and challenges.

Peace skills

Peace skills are skills necessary to be proactive and effective as peace makers. Skills and attitudes are regarded as bedrock of capacities that shape human actions and counter actions. So application of appropriate skills is upheld. There are harsh realities, of life from conflict, poverty, or climate change, to securing or enhancing one's economic survival or offspring and challenges as well as the future of the human race. We have no choice; either adapt or perish. We choose to adapt in manner which is more becoming. And school context it is best possible place (multicultural context) through peace skills.

Need of peace skills are felt in following ways

- To encourage to live in peace and harmony
- To promote culture of peace, justice equality and human rights
- To enhance more quality of life
- To be happy and contented
- More flexible to adjust and open for change
- To stay away from conflict
- To set right ones inner disposition
- To mend personal and interpersonal relationships.

When it comes to Peace skills they are majorly thinking skills, Communication skills and Personal skills.

- Thinking skills: Thinking skills of peace skills consists of critical thinking, information handling, creative thinking, reflection and dialectical thinking(NCFEFP-2005)Teaching/learning for peace is not as same as teaching/learning any subject. It involves construction of knowledge about peace. Since young students are



receptive, teachers have the responsibility to teach them to learn how to think, about something, reflect, evaluate critically, appreciate self values along with that of others and decision making. Here curriculum is the means to teach thinking skills that promote culture of peace.

- Communication skills: communication skills of peace consists of presentation, active listening, negotiation, and non-verbal communication.(NCFEFP-2005) It does not (or rarely) as the UNESCO's pioneering publication (2000)on the doorstep of the 3rd Millennium indicated, called learning to be and learning to live together. Peace skills and values-based education nurtures human values and equips learners with interpersonal skills to act constructively and interact harmoniously, such as active listening, empathy and peaceful communication. Communication skills are needed for living with cultural diversity, conveying respect, to help others and effective self expression in general particularly dealing with conflicts.
- Intra/inter personal skills: These are personal skills that build culture of peace through cooperation, adaptability, self-discipline, responsibility and respect(NCFEFP-2005). In building self we become skilful to meet life's challenges, we tale failure and success in constructive way and build our relationship with bridges and not with walls.

Peace school

Peace schools are those which promote culture of peace. Here student is formed in a free and friendly environment for learning. Freedom to be what one ought to be and not doing as one likes it. When we visit a hospital we expect everyone to be kind to us, surrounding to be clean and tidy. When we visit a hotel, we expect room to be conducive for our stay. The management and staff of such places very well know the expectation of their patients and guests. And will not consider it as a burden as they carry out their responsibility. Similarly the schools need to be zones of peace, tranquillity, eco-friendly, and extended families to the learner. As teachers when we are aware of where our individual efforts leads to then it will not be considered as burden thought yet times it is testing and taxing. It is the duty of the every stakeholder of education to see the school environment becoming for learning and abode of peace.

Peace skills for the in the context of multicultural school set up

Multicultural schools welcome students from diverse backgrounds. They are inclusive and are to prepare students to be who are culturally sensitive and internationally focused, with an orientation toward the future rather than the past. Students who transcend all barriers and bring about a unity in diversity are the product of culture of peace. Including diversity is an on-going process that unleashes the various talents and capabilities which a diverse population brings to an institute, community or society, so as to create a wholesome, inclusive environment. It is a safe for differences, enables people to reject rejection, celebrates diversity, and maximizes the experience the fullness of life in a cultural context where everyone benefits. Some of its features are

1. positive learning experience with diverse population
2. incorporating multicultural perspectives across all learning domains
3. incorporating multicultural, anti-racism, and human rights perspectives in school policies and practices
4. enhancing teachers' and students' intercultural understanding and cross-cultural communication skills
5. Making sure that school environment and its ethos conducive for learning.

Hence peace skills will help students with

1. childhood abuse, trauma, violence or neglect
2. social isolation or discrimination
3. homelessness or poor housing
4. a long-term physical health condition
5. social disadvantage, poverty or debt and unemployment of parents
6. caring for a family member or friend
7. Natural calamities and accidents.



Response of schools in the context of multicultural education set up

Peace skills will nurture a mindset that is critical, including self-critical, open and curious or welcoming and celebrating diversity as a source of learning, adventure and joy, Persons who are pro-peace can engage in a constructive dialogue and look for creative solutions to problems with others rather than camp on its position, focus on differences and blow things into dangerous and unhealthy proportion.

There is a growing level of intolerance in many countries, especially between diverse populations. A lack of cultural awareness can channel this intolerance into violent clashes that divide segments of the population along lines of cultural or religious belonging and lead to exclusion. Students could be taught, informed, moulded, made, formed, directed, corrected, guided, in the right perspective as they are in the multicultural society called classroom. Teacher need to have right attitudes towards education. In the Indian scenario one could lay ones focus in the constitution and the values it upholds. Students are to inculcate values through their curriculum more specifically through their text books or through the kindness they experience from their teachers. Humankind needs a global mind and behaviour shift from the way we currently think and interact to value diversity. For this to happen, we need pro-active, both targeted and universal, interventions to rectify bias, stereotypes, labelling, ignorance, fear of the unknown.

Peace could be promoted and taught through peace related programmes in the schools by providing possibilities to explore culture of peace among all the stakeholders of school education. Institution needs to be more open and democratic in nature and be free from the clutches of political pressure. Parents need to be responsible towards their wards in allowing them to learn from their mistakes and not to be too much anxious or over protective.

Peace teacher as an instructor and transmitter of peace

Teaching peace is not an easy task unless one is practicing, committed, interested and willing to do so. Instructional skills are defined as the cluster of behaviour manifested in the teacher which could be acquired through practices. Teacher is the gardener plants every plant nurtures it with care and loves (values) and manures it besides pruning it in order to see its growth to withstand (skills) all the odds of weathers. In the words of Abdul Kalam ‘learning gives creativity, creativity leads to thinking, thinking provides knowledge, knowledge makes you great’ knowledge does not mean only of the mind but that which makes you as a whole person. When people with healthy mind grow, they build a healthy society. ‘There is no way to peace; peace is the way’ says Mahatma Gandhi. School is the multicultural set up and teacher as ambassador of peace be able to do good always, looking and acting her best. Promoting what is good, just, decent, fair, and progressive and helping the less fortunate than oneself are features of peace.

Teacher’s attitudes, temperaments, approaches towards pedagogical strategies, values culture prevailing in the classroom will decide status of peace. Communicative skills will reveal the values teacher stands for and this will determine the right atmosphere of the classroom for the learning. Teacher must encourage students to build their knowledge by connecting and consolidating their experiences in real life and enable them to respond to the challenges of outer world appropriately and effectively. Current educational practices call upon teachers with varied set of skills to meet the teaching challenges of every day.

Current education challenges addressed by the teachers through peace skills accordingly

1. Guidance and counselling
2. Dealing with diverse population with understanding and addressing their concerns as and when arise
3. Teaching practice through related classroom challenges
4. communications: with individual student as well with their parents;
5. Knowing and reaching them out through school to address their socio-economic conditions of students.

Following are the teaching strategies teacher can employ for peace transmission

1. Silent sitting ,
2. drama and role play,
3. storytelling discussion ,



4. learning in small groups,
5. encouraging children to maintain dairy,
6. time to self expression through the classroom situations,
7. examinations and evaluations
8. mass-media usage
9. 'books corner' in the classroom
10. active involvement in ecological concerns and
11. Exposures to farms, old age homes, orphanages, destitute homes and palliative care centres.

Peace student

Peace skills and values-based education as a key tool to foster individual and societal transformation towards building respect for diversity, nonviolence and social cohesion. Education today, in particular in schools, is still heavily or exclusively focusing on cognitive knowledge, math and languages. In such situation students have tough time to deal with day today difficulties. Most of the parents of the students are focused giving students comfortable life than prepare them for adversity. Hence these children who come to school with attitude of school as a burden can only sees to mere passing exams and not prepare for life. Those children who are prone to school violence tend to be ruder in their approach to school and its stake holders.

Peace skill promotes academic excellence:

Students are expected of some traits such as capacity to listen, a sense of higher purpose, patience and endurance, purity of mind ,facilitating concentration, aptitude for cooperation and teamwork, willingness to seek out answers with curiosity and reason, acceptance of discipline, a positive attitude to study and towards teachers make student orient towards academic excellence. The above said skills make a student more pro-peace. Parents and teachers are to understand the purpose of learning to be seen in the light of education and not contrary to it. Joyful learning and exposure to harmonious living in the mini-society called classroom is equally important. We all admit and say 'learning is life-long'. Fostering peace skills among students is to be seen as life-long investment, in building them for life- long learning.

Conclusion

There is universal concept for life skill and there is a necessity of concept of peace skills growing in every heart. If the peace skills are to be transmitted one should be aware and have the right attitudes towards it. Peace is desired from every aspect and a peace skill teaches us the way to attain it. Peace is the way. Learning to build relationships and sustaining it need to be the integral part of every learning institution. School or classrooms are the abode of multicultural contexts. Schools are called abode of peace, tolerance, harmony, and co-existence and alters of human rights. We need, through preventive action, to address other related issues leading to discrimination, violence and exclusion. Peace skills will enable individual student to bounce back from depression, disappointment, failures and problems with more innovative and problem solving abilities and build their life's on the bedrock of culture of peace.

References

1. Beeckman K., (2012), 'Multicultural skills and values based education fostering a culture of nonviolence and peace'. Keynote opening address Head, Principles & Values Department, International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies at the International Conference on Migration and Multicultural Education. National University Korea.
2. 'Position paper on National Focus Groupon Education For Peace '(2006): National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT),New Delhi
3. PantD. and Gulati S.(2010), "Ways to peace-A resource book to teachers" DEPFEE-(NCERT), New Delhi