

Educating Peace in Pakistan

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Abstract

Historical record reveals that out of three and a half thousand years only two hundred and fifty years were peaceful. In other words, the history of civilization is history of constant warfare, destruction and violence and not of prosperity, peace and development. In the last century the culture of war and intolerance, in all its manifestation, became one of the greatest evil of humankind. The post 9/11 Pakistan has witnessed alarming levels of violence. The conflict between the state and the non-state actors has resulted in a massive socioeconomic and political turmoil in the country. During last eleven years over three hundred and twenty suicide attacks killed nearly forty thousand innocent people. This violence and terrorism has emerged as the most devastating threat to already marginalized and poorly managed public sector education system. The paper highlights the significance of peace education for internally peace starved Pakistan in the light of efforts made by the government in this regard and stimulates further discussion for a clearer articulation of good practice and networking in Peace Education. Short term as well as long term remedies of the problem including development of Integrated, organized and uniform national education system to achieve better dividends of peace education efforts made by all stake holders has also been suggested.

Key Words: Peace and Development, Culture of War, Intolerance, Peace education, Remedies

1. Introduction

Pakistan got independence on 14 Aug 1947. Having lived 66 years as one of the most important South East Asian states in relation to its strategic location, Pakistan, today stands on crossroads on account of the various internal threats in the shape of violence and terrorism. The post 9/11 Pakistan has witnessed alarming levels of violence. The conflict between the state and the non-state actors has resulted in massive socioeconomic and political turmoil in the country. During last eleven years over three hundred and twenty suicide attacks killed nearly forty thousand innocent people. This violence and terrorism has emerged as the most devastating threat to already marginalized and poorly managed public sector education system.

Most of the violence is being carried out in Khabar Paktoonkhaw , Balochistan and its port city Karachi. Law enforcing agencies and innocent civilians are almost daily targeted through suicide attacks in the name of Islam which has been categorically rejected by all Muslim scholars of the country unanimously. This alarming situation therefore demands an urgent intervention to develop strategies and programs to build peace in the communities that are affected by conflict and violence. While other strategies might also help, educating people through specifically designed Peace & Human Rights Education programs will prove beneficial since these help open the minds of the people towards respecting other people and their beliefs and make them better citizens in terms of positive contribution in the society. Such programs must also include teachers and students as integral and important stakeholders as to value human rights, tolerance, respecting diversity and democracy to bring about behavioral change in them and through them in their communities.

There is dire need to address this issue by promoting peace education and let teachers as well students take the responsibility to demonstrate that they are peace living global citizens who has the will and capacity to

contribute in bring peace in peace starved Pakistan. It goes without saying that peace education is a mirror that will show us our future to come that will ultimately help to develop a peaceful world. The study highlights the

significance of peace education to foster the understanding of both teachers as well as students as peace-loving citizens with global perspectives. Some short as well as long term suggestions have also been made to find out the best way forward to promote culture of peace, tolerance and harmony through education. [Koichiro Matsuura](#) (2008) Ex- Director-General of [UNESCO](#), emphasized about peace education as of primary importance to the mission of UNESCO and other United Nation bodies. Betty Reardon & [Douglas Roche](#) (1997, 1993) also highlighted the importance of Peace education many a times. There was also a profound emphasis of peace education and promotion and safeguarding of [human rights](#) in United Nations General Assembly (1993).

1.2 Research Problem

The idea behind this research is to, “discuss the significance of peace education for peace starved Pakistan, stimulate further discussion for a clearer expression of good practice and networking in Peace Education and suggest remedies to the problem.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What is the significance of peace education in internally peace starved Pakistan?
2. What are the efforts Government of Pakistan has so far made to deal with the problem?
3. How peace education can make a difference if visualized and practiced effectively.
4. What is the best way forward for the Government of Pakistan to deal with the situation?

1.4 Objectives of the study

1. To highlight the importance of Peace education to deal with the menace of violence in Pakistan.
2. To identify the efforts of Government of Pakistan to deal terrorism through peace education.
3. To stimulate further discussion for a clearer expression of good practice and networking in Peace Education.
4. To recommend short term as well as long term remedies of the problem.

1.5 Limitations and Assumptions

1. The data collection is limited to primary as well secondary sources pertaining to efforts of Government of Pakistan to promote peace Education and extensive review of related literature on peace education worldwide.
2. The study deals with multi-faceted document analysis of various non-governmental organizations of Pakistan, thus, the results of this study will only be generalizable to the Pakistan context and its unique political, socio-economic, and cultural realities.

2. A Definition of Peace Education

A European peace educator defines it as the initiation of learning processes aiming at resolution of conflicts. (Staehr, 1974: 269). UNICEF defines it to the practice that promotes the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values among individuals that are needed to bring about behavior changes. A Japanese peace educator says peace education is concerned with placeless education (MushaKogi, 1974: 3) Peace education is pertaining to the activities that build up the knowledge, skills and attitudes desired to search for concepts of peace. Hicks & Galtung (1985, 1995) highlights peace studies as construction of knowledge for skill-building. Reardon (1988) sees peace education as a process that prepares young people for global responsibility. Cremin (1993) gives a profound emphasis on skills and attitudes, defining peace education as “a global term applying to all educational endeavors. Ian Harris and John Synott (2002) have described peace education as a teaching activity desired to not only promotes peace but helps in solving conflicts as well.

3. Why should we educate tolerance?

It is the responsibility of society to educate its citizens to respect human rights of all irrespective of race, religion, creed or color. This purpose will guide us to formulate some specific goals and will also high light

related problems. It is very important since it works on both fronts. Internally it will develop a culture of co-existence and globally you are considered a peace loving nation that gives respect and element of mutual trust to flourish ethically as well as materially. About two hundred and seventy countries are there on this planet that has thousands of ethnic groups. Boulding & Palmer (1988, 1981) said civic culture represents the common space, resources, and opportunities. Culture is not given but is always being negotiated so is peace (Willis, 2002). Peace education will be most successful when we enhance our capacity learn the skills of peace and conflict resolution

vigorously (Baldo & Furniss, 1998).

4. Peace Education in the Classroom

Aim of peace education is to teach individuals the relevant information about rights of others to develop their attitudes, values as well as those competencies which are required to resolve conflicts without resorting to force or violence. It will resultantly help to build and maintain harmony and trust in relationships. Without having appropriate information of any one's culture, likes or dislikes and even history you will not be able to deal with him or her effectively (Edward Said, 2003).

[Johan Galtung](#) (1975) highlighted the importance of development of a peace education theory, however, now there exists some approaches to peace education having basis on principles, realistic practice, and fine intentions. There are three interrelated theories pertaining to peace education: First is social interdependence theory that deals with the form of collaboration and struggle. Second is constructive controversy theory which pertains with political dialogue and addressing crisis in a creative manner. Third and final peace education theory is integrative negotiations theory that is consisted of mutually beneficial agreements and cooperation. These theories have been validated by various researches and each has been transformed into various practical processes.

Five steps are involved to create an effective and useful peace education program. First step involves that a mandatory public education system must be placed that may provide an opportunity to conflicting groups to interact in a conducive environment to develop positive and trustworthy relationship.

Second step pertains to cooperative know-how need to transpire which may focus joint goals, the unprejudiced sharing of welfare from achieving the goals including joint individuality. Third step highlights that students be educated for productive disagreement procedure to ensure that they start knowing difficult decision making process finally engaging in political dialogue. Fourth step deals with, students' engagement in integrative consultations and peer arbitration to help decide mutual conflicts and disagreements in viewpoints positively. Last and the final step is to inculcate civic values that guide students to achieve a long-term common good of society.

As earlier said that peace education is necessarily the process of teaching the information, developing attitudes, inculcating values, and building behavioral competencies looked-for to resolve conflicts without violence and to build and preserve jointly valuable, pleasant associations (Johnson & Johnson, 2003c, 2005c, 2006).

Intrapersonal peace and interpersonal peace should be the eventual objective of peace education to maintain peace. Guaranteeing that related parties pursue settlements that are mutually advantageous and that capitalize on joint outcomes matching with inculcation of the values underlying consensual peace is also of great significance. Regan (1993) gives different definitions to peace studies, peace education, and peacemaking but here we are discussing only peace education.

Only research based peace education programs will be maintainable if based on social science theory and authenticated by research and put into practice through useful measures. Theory (a) identifies, clarifies, and defines the phenomena of interest and their relationships with each other and (b) guides and summarizes research (Johnson, 2003, Merton, 1957). Research always authenticates or disconfirms theory leading to its improvement and alteration.

As highlighted earlier, three interconnected theories guide many of the peace education programs. Each theory has been comprehensively researched and tested as well. Each peace education theory has produced practical measures to be implemented in various in peace education programs. Social interdependence theory gives emphasis to human relationships based on cooperation and mutual trust.

Constructive controversy theory gives emphasis on operational dialogue to solve various issues. Integrative negotiations theory deals neutralizing disagreements to exploit joint gains. The central theme of these theories is to promote the civic values.

It is also imperative to recollect that peace education cannot be a supplementary academic subject to be taught in school and colleges as an addition in our prevailing system. Rather it should be the overall understanding that we

introduce it in the existing subjects, textbooks and teacher discourses in a different manner. For example, the Sociology textbooks could emphasize the fact that nonviolent coexistence is the main purpose of society. We can lay down emphasis in the Physics textbooks to fight for a ban on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and also highlight international agreements in this field. Effects of exposure to radioactivity on human beings can be explained in Biology books among other deadly things. Pointless to say, one who wills the end wills the means. The ultimate aim of education should be to learn how to settle disagreements among conflicting groups in the manner that serves the purpose of friendship (Willis, 2000).

5. Are we all peace-loving citizens?

It is said that the only lesson mankind has learned from history is that it has not learned any lesson from the history. And reality is that we learned nothing from human history. As mentioned earlier historical record reveals that out of three and a half thousand years only two hundred and fifty years were peaceful. In other words, the history of civilization is history of constant warfare, destruction and violence and not of prosperity, peace and development. In the last century the culture of war and intolerance, in all its manifestation, became one of the greatest evil of humankind. The post 9/11 Pakistan has witnessed alarming levels of violence.

Have we become peace loving citizens in the real sense of it or it is all hoax stories published here and there about our love for peace, is a big question we need to answer now. One wonders who will answer this question.

Charter of the United Nations repeatedly uses the word “peace”. Almost all countries have their constitutions which emphasize the imposition of peace in their lands and claim coexistence in all odds. Having lived a decade plus of 21 century millions of innocent people worldwide are still victim of director structural violence. Is it going to be really impossible for us to produce a culture of viable and sustainable peace for human harmony for the generations to come?

Despite of many efforts to promote peace and harmony by various stake holders in the world, the reality is different and realistically speaking today’s world is nothing more than a document of belligerency. You open any page it smells blood .You open it or close it smells blood.

The never ending fight for natural resources, vested interests and all types of differences is in full swing by the humankind. How many extra miles does mankind has to walk for its peaceful coexistence on this so called globalized world? Baylis and Smith (2001) states globalization’ should be viewed with its five usages, internationalization, liberalization, universalization, deterioration and economic interdependence.

6. Steps Taken By Government of Pakistan to Promote Peace Education

The post 9/11 Pakistan has witnessed alarming levels of violence. The conflict between the state and the non-state actors, largely emanating from the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) has resulted in massive socioeconomic and political turmoil in the country. During 2002-2013, in over 320suicide attacks of which nearly 70% took place in KP and FATA nearly 40,000 people have lost their lives. This violence

and terrorism has also left deep emotional scars on the large sections of the population, particularly children.

This alarming situation therefore demands an urgent intervention to develop strategies and programs to build peace in the communities that are affected by conflict and violence. While other strategies might also help, educating people through specifically designed Peace & Human Rights Education programs will prove beneficial since these help open the minds of the people towards respecting other people and their beliefs and make them better citizens in terms of positive contribution in the society. Such programs must also include teachers and students as integral and important stakeholders as to value human rights, tolerance, respecting diversity and democracy to bring about behavioral change in them and through them in their communities that will minimize/prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural.

Educationists believe that the most basic and fundamental values which are instilled in humans come from the education they receive during their school years. Those values mould their personalities into the people they will become in the future. Therefore, it is imperative that schooling environment and content being taught in schools should focus more on imparting values that promote unbiased and balanced attitudes and behaviors to become better human beings. Building on the NEP, 2009 and realizing the significance of Peace & Human Rights Education programs for schools to counter violent/extremist narrative, attitudes and behaviors, PEAD

Foundation and UNESCO have jointly come up with an advocacy and training project entitled “Peace & Human Rights Education” for selected teachers, students and society at large in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA with following objectives:

- Policy advocacy with the provincial education departments for curriculum
- Review and inclusion of Peace & Human Rights Education in the curriculum.
- Sensitize and train teachers with knowledge, skills and attitudes to promote the culture of peace.
- Create awareness of the significance of peace, respect for human rights and sustainable development in the wider community through radio outreach.

To achieve the above mentioned objectives, the project adopted a three pronged approach. Each had a specific focus besides raising awareness on Human Rights issues faced by the communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA. Highlights of each are as follows:

▪ **Policy Advocacy with the Provincial Education Departments for Curriculum Review:**

A comprehensive policy advocacy campaign was designed to demand review of the textbooks and curriculum while paying special attention to inclusion of peace and human rights education in the curriculum. In this regard several advocacy meetings were held with different stakeholders. These meetings were attended by senior officials of the Education Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa & FATA including the officials of the Directorate of Curriculum and Teacher Education (DCTE), Textbook Board, publishers, textbook writers, civil society members, academicians, journalists, parents and students. SMS were received appreciating the topics of discussions as well as the quality of the debate that took place during the programs.

▪ **Teachers’ Training on Peace & Human Rights Education**

In this phase, 100 teachers from selected government schools of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and FATA will be trained on specific human rights and peace education themes including respect, tolerance, inter faith harmony and conflict resolution. The capacity building sessions are going to strengthen the beneficiaries in terms of knowledge, skills and capacities to deliver the messages of peace and human rights effectively. The trained teachers will be motivated to pass on the message of peace, non-violence and human rights to their colleagues and students in their respective schools. In this regard, a specific training manual is being developed focusing on the themes mentioned above. A positive behavioral change is expected among the target beneficiaries as a result of these interventions besides promotion of the values of peace, pluralism, tolerance, co-existence and social harmony in the region (PEAD Foundation Islamabad under the UNESCO funded project)

7. Findings

- Pakistan is extensively peace starved and its educational institutions especially of girls are under severe threat by non-state actors.
- Most of the non-state actors are creating violence in the name of Islam and most of them are illiterate.
- Government of Pakistan has not undertaken any worthwhile effort to deal with the problem and promote peace education in any shape or form.
- A UNESCO funded project named PEAD Foundation has started working on a project Titled, “Peace and Human Rights Education” harnessing social cohesion through education and access to information in conflict effected area of Khayber Pakhtoonkhaw.
- There is hardly any check on various schools teaching religion as major discipline not to be unbiased in attitude and behavior.
- Charter of UN-1945 regarding Human Rights could not save people from war.
- Liberal democracy seems to be to be undermined by some powers as a result of negative globalization and peace has become a dream yet to become true.
- Any effort to initiate sustainable Peace Education program is required to be based on scientific theory based on research.

8. Conclusions

- The conflict between state and the non-state actors is the main cause of terrorism and violence and there is hardly any clear-cut narrative received by the Government from the insurgents about their demands.
- Pakistan is internally in the state of war against insurgents who mostly attack girls’ schools.
- Government of Pakistan has not undertaken any tangible step to promote peace education.

- The conflict between state and the non-state actors is becoming day by day severe in magnitude and size.
- There has not been any national security policy formulated in previous twelve years to deal with the menace.
- Pakistan Education system does not extend any supervision over schools who teach sect education as a major discipline.

9. Recommendations

- Government of Pakistan may engage the non-state actors into meaningful dialogue to defuse the situation.
- Government may formulate policy to bring all Madaras under its administrative control making them a part of main stream of public education.
- Government may formulate a high profile inter-sect harmony body to defuse tension.
- National Curriculum may be rehashed in the relevant disciplines to highlight the most agreed upon religious jurisprudence by all sects to minimize sectarian violence.
- A uniform curriculum may be implemented with the inclusion of human rights as main subject.
- Teachers may also be trained specially to educate peace, harmony and mutual coexistence in the classes.
- Higher Education Institutions be given task to promote research funding for human rights promotion.

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