

Strengthening Peace Education in Secondary School Curriculum

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Abstract

This study intends to identify strategies for integrating peace education concepts into the Secondary school curriculum. Two research questions and two null hypotheses were used. A total of hundred B. Ed and BTC trainees of Bijnor District of State of Uttar Pradesh, India were used as the sample for the study. A 20-item questionnaire structured on a 3-point scale was used for data collection. The findings identified strategies like the integration of peace education contents such as cultural similarities, human rights, global challenges, nonviolence, equality between women and men, tolerance, respect, justice, forgiveness, love, value systems, inter caste marriages, local languages and natural resources and resource problems and religion concepts in the Secondary school curriculum. The findings also identified co-curricular and instructional strategies for use in teaching the identified peace education concepts. It was recommended that the identified peace education concepts could be added to the Secondary school curriculum and the thematic approach should be used in restructuring the Secondary school curriculum to reduce curriculum overload while integrating the peace education concepts.

Keywords: secondary school, peace education, teacher trainees

Introduction

The word 'PEACE' is mostly used in a narrow sense to mean the absence of war. Surely it is more than that. It should mean not only the absence of war, but violence in forms such as conflict, threat to life, social degradation, discrimination, oppression, exploitation, poverty, injustice and so on. Peace cannot be built as long as violent social structures exist in society. Naturally such structures will lead people to act violently. Education is a powerful means to shape the people's minds and hearts towards peace. Peace is important because it precisely means human life. Among the basic rights of mankind the first one is protecting life. The most important factor that reflects the importance of peace is psychological comfort. If you don't have psychological comfort at first you are stressed then depressed. Anyway, but if peace is permanent like all

other goods, the services of health care and education work continually. By this way people gather around a specific aim. The human learns to have respect for other's ideas, religions, point of views and most importantly learns to have respect for other's freedom. Peace is the most anxious and concern at the school stage. The world is generally hungry for peace, because of the terrible nature of weapons made by the nations in which billions of money are spent as research on the tools of war. Governments are hardly thinking it worth while even to spend a meager amount on peace research. Educational institutions are more suitable places where peace education should be earnestly studied and discussed- languages, mathematics, social studies; general sciences can be utilized for this purpose.

For this purpose, a totally new approach in the curriculum will have to be taken in relation to the following aspects: - Peace scheme should be incorporated into curriculum of various disciplines – Arts, Sciences and Commerce. When administrative reforms and achievements of a King –History is taught, peace enjoyed in his country, his peace initiatives may also be presented. Ideas of peace should be introduced even in Mathematics lessons in the form of profit and loss. Lessons that help to develop a destructive mentality should be avoided. When the results of the war are presented in the class, more stress should be given to the misery and destruction of human life and property caused by the war. The need and importance of peace for – man, family, society and country should be presented.

The National Curriculum Frame Work (NCF) 2005 View of Peace Education

According to the NCF,(2005) only education has the capacity for building long term peace through inter cultural conversations. School aged children are endowed with a special sensitivity to constructing their moral character. The NCF echoes this thought and describes the various stages of ethical development and how they occur. According to the NCF, at the primary stage, children become conscious of both themselves and their immediate environment and begin to form notions of right and wrong. At the next stage, they develop reasoning abilities and learn to question, discuss and reflect upon ethical dilemmas. The result, an independent individual who can make well reasoned judgments. It is through this complex process —dialogue, sensitivity to issues, learning skills for resolution and imitating good role models — that children will learn to construct their value systems, and proactively choose peace over violence. Peace education is, thus, a teaching of skills and values that supports respect for all humans and calls for a change in attitudes.

Teacher training

A teacher functions within the broader framework of the school education system – its goals, curricula, materials, methods and expectations of the teacher. A secondary schoolcurriculum framework needs to be in consonance with the curriculum framework for school education, and a teacher needs to be prepared in relation to the needs and demands arising in the school context. As such, it needs to engage with the questions of the learner, the learning process and the content and pedagogy of educating teachers. The expectations of the school system from a teacher change from time to time, responding to the broader

social, economic and political changes taking place in the society. The issue of secondary schoolaccordingly has to be discussed in the much wider and changing context and demands of school education. Suggestions for teacher training include sensitizing teachers to their own biases so that they can set aside judgments while dealing with students. The emphasis is on how teachers can create a non threatening environment by treating students with respect and thereby help them feel confident and comfortable. Teachers need intensive training so that they can address issues in a fair and unbiased way and become good role models of peace. One cannot advocate a way of tolerance for children without embodying the same. Another suggestion is to include discussions and dialogues in everyday processes, thereby setting the stage for respectful communication between students and teachers. Historically, value education has focused on encouraging desirable behavior; here, the emphasis is on creating an environment that will also offer an opportunity to discuss undesirable feelings and thoughts. This will ensure that children and teachers can engage in constructive dialogue to find positive solutions. Differences between students should be used constructively to support peer learning. A true society is made up of individuals with varied levels of skills and strengths; classrooms and school community should reflect this diversity and value each person's contribution. The NCF emphasis on interdependence and the need for children to be aware of it. Teachers should also be encouraged to contextualise lessons to suit the current situations in the child's immediate environment. While doing so, care must be taken to include a gradation to the suggested activities so that younger children experience the issues in a way that they understand. Similarly, with older children the conversations and activities can be more realistic and in depth. This will also ensure that peace conversations are held across different grades, to complement the intellectual capacity of that age. Peace education has to do with training on the avoidance and management of violent conflicts, better human relationship, unity and internal cooperation among the various tribes of the country. Mishra .L (2012) described peace education as those aspects of formal and non-formal education, in school and out-of-school aimed the elimination of groups prejudice, stereotypes and hatred which make people prefer war to peace, violence to non-violence, exclusion to cooperation and destruction to construction. Peace education is therefore education for peace and non-violent co-existence. Since education was conceived as an instrument “par excellence” for enhancing peace education,. Secondary schoolis a subject, which

helps the individual to be useful to the society and to appropriate the culture in order to be acceptable by the society. Onipe (2008) sees Secondary school as an education that cater for the well being of the learners in a way that enables them participate in the day-to-day activities of the community. Secondary school has been seen by several countries of the world as a more relevant liberal education which furnishes a greater understanding of mankind. Secondary school is an integrated study of man and his interactions with his environment. To Edozie and Ezeoba (2010), Secondary school is a school subject comprising a selection of themes from economics, agriculture, geography, history, political science, and moral education. It teaches learners to become aware and conscious of their immediate social and physical environment, as well as their civic responsibilities. By its very nature as an interdisciplinary subject, Secondary school education is useful for national integration, socio-economic development, as well as the development of the right attitudes and values which are needed for peace education. Secondary school is vital for peace education and national development which has necessitated its prominence as a core subject in the secondary school Curriculum. Through the subject, learners are expected to acquire requisite skills, values, attitudes and cognition to meet the challenges of a peaceful society. The focus of Secondary school therefore is essentially a man, the society and the environment. Its ultimate aim is to equip individuals with knowledge and understanding for peaceful relationships and living. Hence Secondary school curriculum, noting that some peace education concepts need to be further integrated into the curriculum, if peace is to be achieved. Secondary school is a tool for cohesion and peace, one therefore wonders how peace education could be enhanced through the Secondary school curriculum. Through what strategies then can peace education be integrated into the Teacher Education? This question constitutes the problem of the study.

Research questions Two research questions that guided the study are:

1. What are the major concepts of peace education that could be added to the present Secondary school curriculum?
2. What is the plan of action for enhancing peace education through Secondary school curriculum?

Hypotheses: Ho1: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of BTC trainees and those of B. Ed trainees on the concepts that could be added to the

Secondary school content for enhancing peace education.

Ho2: There is no significant difference between the mean ratings of BTC trainees and those of B.Ed Trainees on the plans and policies for enhancing peace education through Secondary school curriculum.

Methodology

This study was a descriptive survey. The data for the study were collected from a sample of B. Ed trainees and BTC trainees in order to investigate how Secondary school curriculum can contribute to strengthen peace education.

Population and sample of the study

The population of study consisted of 800 B.Ed trainees of 8 Secondary school colleges of Bijnor Districts of Uttar Pradesh state, India and 150 BTC trainees of 3 elementary teacher training institutions of the above district. The researcher selected 60 B.Ed trainees from 5 B.Ed (12*5) colleges and 60 BTC trainees from 3 BTC institutions as the sample of the study.

Tools

A self made 20-item questionnaire was developed by the researcher. The instrument was separated into three sections. Section A comprised four (4) open-ended questions that elicited information on the biodata of respondents. Sections B and C contained 16 items that sought information on the strategies for increasing the possibility of enhancing peace education through Secondary school curriculum. The items were structured on a modified 3 point Likert scale of Agree (A), Disagree (D) and undecided (UD).

Validation of instrument The questionnaire was validated by the experts in Teacher Education. They were provided with the topic, statement of the problem, research questions and hypotheses to enable them to ascertain enough information to validate the instrument. Proper modifications were carried out based on the comments of those who helped in the validation. The reliability was established using the split-half method. The correlation co-efficient obtained from the instrument was 0.86, which was considered satisfactory for the instrument.

Analysis of Data

Data collected using the questionnaire instrument were analyzed using mean scores to answer the research questions. The questionnaire items were weighted thus:

Table 1: Mean Scores of BTC Trainees and B. Ed trainees on Peace Education Concepts for Addition to Secondary school Curriculum

SI No	Items	BTC		B.Ed		Average	
		X1	A/DA/UD	X2	A/DA/UD	X1-X2	A/DA/UD
1	Human right education	3.05	A	3.23	A	3.13	A
2	Nonviolence	3.02	A	3.42	A	3.22	A
3	Tolerance	2.87	A	2.94	A	2.90	A
4	Forgiveness	2.54	A	2.58	A	2.56	A
5	Environmental issues	2.93	A	2.87	A	2.90	A
6	Local language issue	2.87	A	2.69	A	2.73	A
7	Communities at peace Promoter	1.86	DA	1.92	DA	1.89	DA
8	Global challenges	1.97	DA	1.94	DA	1.95	DA
9	-Religion as an Instrument of peace	3.23	A	3.64	A	3.43	A
10	Natural resources	3.02	A	3.52	A	3.27	A
11	Conflict resolution	3.54	A	3.08	A	3.31	A
12	Gender equity	2.64	A	2.72	A	2.68	A
13	Indian Value system	3.42	A	3.84	A	3.63	A
14	Biography of Great Indian leaders	3.73	A	3.47	A	3.60	A
15	International peace and security	3.51	A	3.24	A	3.37	A
16	Cultural heritage	2.95	A	2.87	A	2.91	A
17	Democratic participation	1.86	DA	1.52	DA	1.69	DA
18	Disarmament	1.72	DA	1.79	DA	1.75	DA
19	Decision making	2.67	A	2.65	A	2.66	A
20	- Identity	2.74	A	2.75	A	2.74	A

A-Agree ,DA-Disagree and UD-Undecided

agree (3 points), disagree (2 points), and undecided (1 point). The cutoff point of accepting an item was 2.0 which was obtained by $(3+2+1) \div 3 = 2.00$

From the above table it is found that , the item no 7,8,17,18 obtained a mean rating below 2.00 in the columns for BTC and B. Ed Trainees . This indicates that both categories of respondents disagree that community as peace promoter, democratic participation, disarmament global challenges could not be added to the present Secondary school curriculum content to enhance peace education. The rest of the items had average mean ratings above 2.00 indicating that the respondents agree that these concepts could be added to the secondary school curriculum to enhance peace education.

A-Agree ,DA-Disagree and UD-Undecided

In the above table it is found that only one item i.e students should join and participate in cultural society is disagreed by both the B.Ed and B.TC trainees ,where as all the statements were agreed by both the trainees for inclusion of concepts in peace education in secondary school curriculum.

The t-calculated is 1.23, while the t-critical is 1.96. At the

0.05 level of significance, the t-calculated is less than the t-critical value. The decision is to accept the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of BTC trainees and those of B.Ed trainees on other relevant concepts that could be added to the present secondary school curriculum for enhancing peace education.also the t-calculated is ,1.14, while the t-critical is 1.96. At 0.05 level of significance, the t-critical is greater than the t-calculated. This warrants the acceptance of the null hypothesis. Therefore, there is no significant difference between the mean ratings of BTC trainees and those of B.Ed trainees on other strategies that could be adopted to increase the possibilities of enhancing peace education through the secondary school curriculum.

Discussion of the findings

In response to research question one, this study found that the respondents agreed that some peace education concepts could be added to the secondary school curriculumfor enhancing peace education. These concepts are: cultural similarities among indians, human rights in india , and global challenges, communities as peace promoting institutions, hostage taking as a threat to peace, imperatives of evolving democracies to peace, Indian value systems Others are peace prospects of inter caste mirage

Table 2: Mean Scores of BTC Trainees and B. Ed trainees' attitudes on Peace Education Concepts for enhancing secondary school Curriculum

Sl No	Items	BTC		B.Ed		Average	
1	Integrating peace Component in exiting Secondary school curriculum	3.21	A	3.53	A	3.37	A
2	Strengthening co curricular activities	4.20	A	4.12	A	4.16	A
3	Setting out separate themes for peace concepts.	3.05	A	2.98	A	3.02	A
4	Peer teaching	2.12	A	2.13	A	2.12	A
5	School interstate excursions and field trips should be encouraged	2.56	A	2.43	A	2.50	A
6	Students should join and participate in cultural societies	1.98	DA	1.96	DA	1.97	DA
7	Establishing of peace club	3.42	A	3.44	A	3.43	A
8	Use of innovative teaching methods	3.23	A	3.07	A	3.15	A
9	Government and private bodies should organize debate competitions on peace education concepts	3.12	A	2.98	A	3.05	A
10	Annual interstate essay competitions on peace should be organized for secondary school students.	2.56	A	2.42	A	2.49	A

, local languages as instruments of peace, natural resources and resource problems in india and religion as an instrument of peace. In null hypotheses one, there was no significant difference between the responses of both the teacher trainees on the concepts that could be added to the present secondary school for enhancing peace education. The respondents shared similar views that the identified concepts should be added. One can see that the identified concepts cut across local, cultural and world peace issues. One can also argue that the need for adding these concepts to the secondary school curriculum is not based entirely on the fact that the secondary school curriculum lacks some peace education concepts, but also on the need for including rich and extensive concepts relevant to the Nigerian socio-cultural environment Some strategies which the respondents agreed could be adopted for enhancing peace education through the secondary school curriculum are encouraging inter-state excursions and fieldtrips, government should organize inter-state social studies competitions on peace education concepts, schools should form cultural associations and annual inter-state essay competitions should be organized for social studies students. Use of innovative methods of teaching such as inquiry, project, role plays, entertainment education, futures wheel, computer assisted instruction, and games and simulations are also among the strategies in this respect. It was also found that there was no significant difference between the mean ratings of BTC trainees and those of

B.Ed trainees on other strategies that could be adopted to increase the possibilities of enhancing peace education through the secondary school curriculum. The respondents unanimously agreed on these strategies.

Conclusion

The present secondary school curriculum of Uttar Pradesh of India needs to be enriched with some relevant concepts for enhancing peace education. Strategies identified for increasing the possibility of enhancing peace education through the curriculum bother largely on reforms in integrating peace education concepts under themes, curriculum review, innovative teaching methods, teacher motivation and textbook review. In view of these findings, it is recommended that:

1. The present secondary school curriculum content could be reviewed to reflect the identified concepts that are relevant to peace education.
2. The use of thematic approach in restructuring the social studies curriculum content is also crucial. This will help to reduce overloading the curriculum content while integrating the contents that are relevant to peace education.
3. Training and retraining of secondary school teachers should be refocused and intensified to enable the teachers acquire the skills to use appropriate methods and techniques to effectively teach peace education concepts in the secondary school .

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