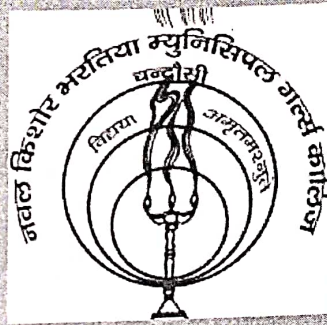# (e) - PROCEEDINGS

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INDEX

PEACE EDUCATION IN INDIA

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20

Peace Education

"Those who want war prepare young people for war: but those who want peace have neglected young children and adolescents so that they are unable to organise them for peace".

MariaMontessori

As an academic discipline, peace education begs some clear definition; the evolving concept means different things in different contexts. Ian Harris suggests that peace education includes any attempt to teach about violence and alternatives to violence. While this might present a useful starting point, we need a more focused idea of what comprises this expanding discourse. Betty Reardon, one of the USA's groundbreaking peace educators, suggests that peace education is . . . the transmission of knowledge about the requirements of, the obstacles to and possibilities for achieving and maintaining peace, training in skills for interpreting the knowledge, and the development of reflective and participatory capacities for applying the knowledge to overcoming problems and achieving possibilities.

Peace education—education on peace-related content—is often distinguished from education for peace, which is a holistic approach to education that seeks to shape individuals and societies. These two processes, however, are not mutually exclusive. As peace educators, we typically see our role as twofold: To educate students about issues related to peace, conflict, and violence, and to transmit ideas and values that can infuse our students with ways of engaging in the world that add to its potential for peace. Some suggest that the main goal of peace education is to influence people to behave more peacefully, or to develop caring and non-aggressive people, who relate peacefully to others in their own lives, facilitate the well-being of others, and work to promote peace and prevent violence in society and the world at large. The goal is not regarded as simply to educate students but to transform societies: "For peace education to be effective, it must transform ways of thinking that have been developed over the millennia of human history." An emerging question for peace educators is the degree to which our work should be focused on content, compared to the degree to which it should be focused on process, practice, and values that impact, both directly and indirectly, the students and contexts we encounter. A further question is to what degree academics take on the role of transforming societies as suggested above. Various dimensions of this field—conflict management, conflict resolution, conflict transformation, nonviolence studies, peace studies, peace research, and peace science—have all been carved out as particular pieces of this pie, perhaps unnecessarily creating arbitrary divisions. In some contexts, what might be considered peace education is also known as education for democracy, civic education, tolerance education, or human rights education.

Within its scope, peace education has included a focus on interpersonal, intra-group, inter-group, and international conflict. Within certain realms, inner peace, or a spiritual dimension, has been related to the ability to impact larger global issues. Some contexts focus largely on international issues, while others prioritize the domestic domain. Harris has delineated five types of peace education:-

- Global Peace Education, which includes international studies, holocaust studies, and nuclear and disarmament studies.
- Conflict Resolution Programs, which teach about mediation, negotiation, and various communication skills.
- Violence Prevention Programs, which emphasize domestic violence, drug abuse, anger management, and the teaching of tolerance.
- Development Education, which includes human rights education, environmental studies, and an emphasis on power, resource inequities, and structural violence.
- Nonviolence Education, which finds roots in the teachings and philosophies of Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi, and other great peacemakers.

While most programms of peace education likely combine various components of the above categorizations, these constructs are useful to consider as we begin to analyze the contexts in which they are offered. While some elements of peace education could be universal in relevance and applicability, Gavriel Salomon suggests that the ways we consider peace education should depend on the context in which it originates. The goals, methods, and opportunities of this discipline are largely informed by the political climate of the region involved. Societies embedded in deep violent conflict, those struggling with subtle ethnic tensions, and others enjoying a climate of relative tranquility will each require a different integration of this discipline in academic and political arenas. In considering these goals along with the components of peace education suggested by Harris, we can see the myriad ways that peace education will vary according to context. However it is defined, peace education is a discipline that has gained much momentum in the last several decades. As a form of diplomatic intervention, it has come to be accepted as essential to the social change necessary for peacemaking and peace building efforts worldwide. Education has long been considered an important dimension of multi-track diplomacy in an ever-conflicted world. There has been a tremendous increase in the number and types of certificate and degree programs offered in response to conflict and violence.

The reasons why educational institutions develop peace education programs during these troubled times may seem obvious. However, how and why such courses and curricula have been developed in some parts of the world and not in others may be less obvious. Issues related to ideology, socioeconomic and structural conditions and traditions of learning all play a part. Peace Education in India While the development of peace studies curricula is becoming a global phenomenon, some regions of the world, including India, have only recently joined this academic discourse.

Only in the last few years has higher education in India turned deliberate attention to peace studies. At a Conference on Conflict Resolution at the Birla Institute of Technology and Science, Jane Schukoske and Manjrika Sewak, citing information provided in 2003 by researcher Veena Bhalla at the Association of Indian Universities, reported that there were no institutions in India offering conflict resolution courses, and only a few courses in negotiation or alternative dispute resolution. The *Global Directory of Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution Programs* lists only three offerings in all of India: a postgraduate diploma in Human Rights at the University of Hyderabad, "coursework" in peace studies at the University of Calcutta, and a focus on Gandhian philosophy and theories of nonviolence at the Centre for Gandhian Studies. Although peace education as a distinct academic discipline has been slow to emerge, Indian institutions of higher education have, in certain ways, addressed the types of peace education that Harris

delineates. These areas of focus are often scattered among various academic departments and suffer from a lack of coherent curricula focused on issues of peace and conflict. Departments of political science, international studies, and defence and strategic studies exist in many departments and research centres within Indian universities and colleges. The topics of peace, nuclear disarmament, and international conflict tend to be studied with strong emphasis on political, military, and strategic dimensions, and less on the intersection between interpersonal, inter-group, and international phenomena. The students in these arenas typically come from a relatively homogenous academic framework rather than from an inter-disciplinary focus typical of other peace studies and conflict resolution programs.

Since the Supreme Court of India's 1991 directive around environmental issues, Environmental education has been taken more seriously, and since 2003 has become part of the compulsory education curriculum at all levels. Gender studies, social work, and psychology have addressed issues such as domestic violence and drug abuse, and the Domestic Violence Act of 2005 has attracted attention at the national level. Of course, Mohandas Gandhi is widely studied in multiple political and philosophical arenas, and there are several programs in Gandhian thought and peace studies, which inform the studies on nonviolence. In all of these arenas, while important dimensions of this field are addressed, the focus is not on peace education, but more on specific discipline-bound pieces of the pie. Furthermore, in most of these programms, the focus is mainly on content rather than on "education for peace," whose curriculum is intended gradually to transform society. Slowly, other dimensions of peace education are emerging. The Nelson Mandela Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution was launched in 2004 by Jamia Milia Islamia in New Delhi; it claimed to be one of the first centers for peace and conflict studies in an Indian University. The University Grants Commission, the highest body administering higher education, has contemplated introducing peace and conflict resolution studies in a concerted way in its 2007–2012 Plan. The Commission has encouraged the study of human rights and funded universities and colleges to initiate courses in these areas. Human rights education has therefore developed out of various departments including History, Political Science, and Legal Studies. Compared to many other countries, however, there are surprisingly few programs of this kind. Further, the number of courses in these areas and the number of students who take these courses are few. Regional factors, employment issues, and delays in filling up faculty vacancies in the universities and colleges have affected the quality of, and demand for, these areas of study. Many, both in India and beyond, have wondered why Indian academic institutions do not have larger numbers of departments and centers studying and researching peace-related areas. This seems a particular paradox, given Gandhi's legacy of peacemaking, and traditions such as Buddhism and Jainism, which represent nonviolence principles at their core. Scholars have often turned to peace issues when wars wreaked widespread destruction or involved nuclear weapons. Similarly, one would expect that events like the partition of India, migration and consequent huge refugee problems, communal conflict and riots in select Indian cities, and Gandhi's practice of nonviolent protest under the most provocative circumstances would make this population think of exploring the theme of peace and nonviolence more pervasively. Yet, while many individuals and groups around the world, including Nobel Peace Prize winners, have been inspired by Gandhi, less of that inspiration is evident in Indian academic society. In India, where issues of peace, nonviolence, and social change were the cornerstones of independence and development, why have academics only recently pursued these issues?

On an ideological level, it is important to understand the connection between Gandhi's work and the limited development of peace education in India. While Gandhi's life and thought attracted the attention of many in India and beyond, his eclectic thinking and activities drew diverse responses. Followers picked up on select dimensions of Gandhian thought and championed these causes in a selective manner. Gandhi wrote and spoke on matters both trivial and profound, and many in India celebrate certain facets of his personality while ignoring others. On the one hand, uncritical approaches have dominated the study of the "Father of the Nation"; on the other, some blame Gandhi and his views for stagnant India's sociopolitical ills. Though scholars in history, political science, philosophy, economics, and literature engaged Gandhi's ideas during the post-independence period, they could take only as much as their respective disciplines would allow. To a large degree, institutional forces dictated the academic development of this thought. While certificate, diploma, and even master's courses were initiated by Gandhian Studies departments and centers, in order to meet university standards, academic courses had to be structured in an acceptable form. Collective choice and administrative interests dominated the ways in which this curriculum was framed. In many situations, what might be defined as "Peace Studies" or "Peace Education" as outlined by Harris got subsumed into other arenas or departments and was not given a central place in the curriculum.

In many cases, Gandhi's life and thought became the central point within this curriculum, but analysis of the implications of this thought and its efficacy in a comparative perspective within a global context was lacking. While the events of Gandhi's period were chronicled in detail, the connections of his thought to global problems attracted less attention. Gandhi's relation to peace evoked different reactions.

Gandhi's views evolved over time and his "pacifism" is markedly different from that of western anti-war pacifists. The study of peace, as it related to Gandhi's work, focused mostly on *satyagraha* and *ahimsa*, which are only a portion of his work. Because there has often been a divide between nonviolent action and conflict resolution in peace studies curricula, the seemingly natural link between Gandhi's ideas and peace studies as an academic curriculum has been surprisingly blurred. Gandhi did discuss education in his writings and, in many ways, espoused a philosophy parallel to those who see educating for peace as a way to imbue values and transform societies. He had an integral and holistic perspective of human living, and his ideas on education primarily addressed national regeneration and progress. Gandhi's ideas spelled out in "Basic Education," combined with his other views, have strong relevance to peace studies curricula. This relevance is evidenced by the number of scholars and activists in several fields—education, religion, environment, politics, economics, and others—who follow and incorporate Gandhi in wide-ranging cultural contexts and situations. It is ironic; therefore, that academia has so tepidly implemented his ideas.

Besides ideological issues, structural and institutional factors influence higher education and the development of peace studies in India. On a structural level, it is unclear how much influence academic thought carries in the political arena. There is much cynicism about the role of academics in third-world societies; researchers and scholars are often considered to be armchair theorists. While the academy has much to offer in the understanding and prevention of violent conflict, this wisdom has yet to be fully utilized. Offering curricula in this context can only be a viable proposition if academics have a significant and substantial voice. While academia may have a limited influence on a day-to-day basis, India has allowed an academic such as Dr Man

Mohan Singh ji and Shri Narendra Modi ji to become the prime minister of the country, and, consequently, several policy channels have been opened to academics and intellectuals. On an institutional level, higher education in India inherited certain features from the British system, which was extremely traditional in the content and form of its educational practices. Both pedagogy and curriculum are informed by this traditional approach.

This includes the policies and administrative structures of the universities, the perseverance of rules and procedures that may lose relevance in a changing context, systems of rote assignments and examinations, and manners of bureaucratic administration. The basic educational patterns have remained the same for a long time and have failed to adapt to the changed conditions of post independence India. Methods of learning remain largely traditional, and alternative pedagogy has yet to infiltrate the college and university system in a significant way. These overarching institutional forces and rigid disciplinary boundaries make it very difficult to develop alternative pedagogical methods and innovative programs. While the number of colleges and universities has increased, they have imitated existing institutions rather than developing areas of special interest based on region, intellectual resources, or other capacities.

It has become common in recent years to establish separate universities for agriculture, veterinary science, technology, women's education, medicine, law, sports, and allied fields. Most universities introduce the same disciplines and teach the courses in a more-or-less uniform way. Typically, administrations have not allowed deviation or innovation to suit the new necessities and changes in society. Reforms percolate slowly, sometimes imitating western institutions without adequate preparation and consensus.

Within the Indian university system, the potential for new departments to innovate around interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary areas is diminishing. Faculty strength is not increasing, and university administrations are suggesting that departments raise their own funds to continue or start fresh academic activities. As education in the humanities and social sciences is undervalued in certain Indian states, fresh initiatives are slow to emerge. Relative emphasis on science and technical education has also limited the resources available to promote new courses and ideas in new branches of learning. As is the case in many other countries, Indian universities seem to be operating with less state funding for their programs than before. Furthermore, the percentage of the Indian population pursuing higher education is still a small fraction of the overall population; currently, only ten per cent of young people are seeking a college education and still fewer are enrolled in universities. These institutional issues make it difficult to introduce topics such as peace studies, when their relationship to the university system and their potential for contributing to employment remain unclear. On a resource level, peace education has yet to develop its potential in India due to a paucity of funding. Universities in India struggle with many of the same resource issues that face much of the country. Things that many take for granted in better funded institutions overseas are precious resources in India.

The socio-economic situation in higher education has been changing, and the emphasis on consulting and fundraising to earn more resources for the institution is challenging the role of the traditional teacher. The employment situation has changed, and people are no longer getting jobs as a result of merely completing a bachelor's or postgraduate degree. Academia has been forced to educate for professional success, sometimes at the expense of intellectual and socially driven pursuits. It is impossible to ignore the acute levels of economic disparity that exist between

Indian institutions and their counterparts in the West. Is peace education a luxury items that only countries with ample resources can afford to integrate into their curricula? Is peace education only possible in countries without serious economic and development issues? These questions present another paradox: countries with the greatest need for peace education programs are least able to implement them. If we consider Johan Galtung's concept of structural violence as a great inhibitor of peace, then we see that India is, in fact, a victim of many of the conditions discussed in peace studies. Structural violence is those systems of economic, ecological, racial, and gendered injustice that pervade societies and inhibit their members from reaching their full potential. Both chronic and acute forces of structural violence plague Indian society every day. A major goal and responsibility of academics should be to address these dimensions of structural violence in India. Some institutions have analyzed issues pertaining to structural violence in specific contexts, have offered solutions in neighbouring villages, and have contributed to the working of civil-society organizations in certain localities. However, India's larger economic, structural, and ideological challenges make it difficult for peace studies and peace education to meet their potential for impact. The structural violence that peace education seeks to eradicate is the very thing that inhibits its development.

The Development of a Centre:-

In an attempt to address some of these issues, five faculty members at the University of Madras with a long history of shared interests in the area of peace and conflict founded the Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies in 2003. They came from the departments of Politics and Public Administration, International Law, Christian Studies, Islamic Studies, and Anthropology. The Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies was started through the initiative of these individuals rather than through any institutional body or agenda. It received verbal support from the University administration but no formal financial or institutional support. At different times, several of these faculty members were heads of their respective departments, with extremely limited time, energy, and resources to carry out Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies activities, but they persevered. The experiences and interests that motivated these faculty members toward the development of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies varied. Motivations included a lifelong interest in Gandhi and his thinking on peace, awareness of the economic issues related to both military spending and development, increased dissatisfaction with an overly litigious and combative legal system, increased concern over the role of religion in violent communal conflicts, and extensive involvement in human rights issues, particularly those related to caste-related oppression and women's rights. The interdisciplinary nature of the faculty and their interests created a wide-ranging agenda. Initial goals and objectives were as follows:-

1. To explore the theoretical underpinnings of peace and conflict.
2. To provide educational programs and activities for students and community members.
3. To provide support for, and engage in, various peace building activities.
4. To increase the role of scholars in India in peace-related issues and conflict resolution activities.
5. To develop a network of scholars in the field.

While much energy had been put into visioning its development, no programs had yet been offered. One of the goals of the collaboration between the Centre for Peace and Conflict

Resolution Studies and USEFI was to produce programs for students and community members in order to raise the profile of the Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies. Some of the programs conducted included a two day mediation training for lawyers and law students; a two-day seminar on gender, power, and conflict; and lectures for a wide range of student and faculty audiences on topics such as intercultural conflict resolution, peace studies and education, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and collective memory and conflict resolution. Further, various meetings were held with community groups to explore local and national issues of peace and conflict resolution. Ongoing efforts subsequent to the Fulbright collaboration have continued. The Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies organized a major conference with Fulbright scholars from Sri Lanka, Nepal, and India, and has received visiting lecturers from numerous countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, North America, and South America. Furthermore, the faculty members have signed memoranda of understanding with International Conflict Research at the University of Ulster and with the United Nations University in Tokyo. In collaboration with USEFI, staff conducted additional programs and a workshop for school teachers. The ongoing networking with other similar institutions in India and abroad has gone well, and the Centre for Peace and Conflict Resolution Studies seems to be becoming part of a larger phenomenon called peace education.

The Role of Peace Educators within India

Given the challenges presented above, the role of the peace educator in India warrants deep exploration. The Centre's faculty members have given much thought to this question, and the following thoughts emerged in discussion: The role of educators is to serve people:-

- In a variety of ways, for academia is answerable to the people, to society. When academics engage themselves with the issue of peace, they are doing what every academic should be doing. This flows from the social responsibility that all forms of knowledge should have. It is important to awaken a sense of responsibility among scholars and students to contribute to peace and communal harmony. The role of academics is one of animation and, wherever feasible, guidance.
- Education should be used as a means to transform institutions and societies. Scholars need to initiate peace through academic discourse within and outside campuses and institutions. They need to teach peace, order, and conciliatory attitudes as value-laden life processes in civic education. They need to change the mindset inherited from past generations by re-implanting a culture of tolerance and conciliatory notions both at early-learning and mature levels of education.
- Academics can play a major role in peacemaking and peacebuilding activities, and the academy can play a leading role in making society more peaceful. Through their work in their respective institutions, through their writings, and through appearances in the media, academics can play a vital role.
- Academic institutions are becoming aware of the efficacy of training programs. They are prepared to learn from common people and be influenced by their needs and desires.
- A peace centre can address a variety of issues and make more and more people see why peace is needed and what peace can bring.

- Wherever possible, teachers should teach these courses even when formal and financial support are lacking. Commitment to peace should enable teachers to start in a small way and try to convince the more influential of the need for, and scope of, peace studies.
- Scholars need to set examples and make students and administrators believe in the efficacy of peace education.
- The role of peace educators is rooted in the ability to provide hope and confidence. Despite skepticism regarding the role of scholars, people still have faith in them; their works and words carry respect and regard among common people. Their involvement in peacemaking and peacebuilding will generate confidence. Their impartial, supposedly unbiased, and forthright views will first of all enhance hope among the needy, those who are most in need of peace. And their involvement will be welcomed without suspicion. The academics' role is one of hope.

Suggestion

In light of the challenges outlined above, we offer several suggestions to assist in the nurture of peace education in India:-

- Awareness about peace education has not percolated adequately in India. It is imperative to increase this awareness. Through all levels of education, community groups, and private and public organizations, communicating the potential for this discipline is important for its success and viability. By teaching peace-related issues in primary-school levels, educators may introduce peace education as a core, rather than peripheral, force in education.
- Scholars must involve the media whenever possible in peacemaking and peace education in order to cultivate these ideas in the public mind.
- Peace educators need to spark the interest of the media and the general population, and finding connections to this interest is crucial.
- The world, and particularly the academic world, needs to be aware of the paucity of resources in Indian academic institutions. The ability of third-world countries to contribute their most vital scholarship to this discourse depends on their ability to reach their audience. Greater understanding of the limitations within third-world institutions in the development of peace education programs is vital.
- One way to address these resource issues is to develop partnerships for Indian institutions. Linkage grants and reciprocal arrangements between institutions in India and institutions overseas can have multiple benefits: they can distribute global financial resources more equitably, increase the opportunities for cultural and intellectual exchange, and expand the network of international peacemakers.
- An additional way to help develop peace studies in India is to cultivate the support of corporate sponsors and foundations.
- Academics need to find ways for potential funding bodies to see peace education as a discipline that is in line with their own goals and missions. Peace is everyone's business. Supporting the development of peace education as an academic discipline is not just an act of philanthropy; it is an investment in the future of the country.
- Academics need to bridge the divide between theorists and practitioners. Partnerships between universities and other peacebuilding institutions such as nongovernmental organizations, development organizations, religious organizations, and dialogue, training,

and reconciliation groups will all increase the role and visibility of academics. These bridges are essential to develop successful partnerships for peace.

- Political decision and policy makers need to know about the need for peace studies and peace education programs. Their acceptance and support will greatly enhance the respectability and validity of peace education in academia. Academics, in turn, need to be not just theorists, but also viable policy informants. It is important to utilize and nurture the bridges that do exist between the academic and political worlds.

- Scholars need to develop curricula that have both domestic and international relevance. Peace studies will only become a viable and successful venture in India if students show an interest in its offerings. Connections to current crisis situations of which people are aware go far to popularize peace education courses. It will help to broaden the definition of "peace" as a concept that goes beyond the cessation of war, and make links to issues crucial to society.

- Issues such as women's and *Dalit*22 rights, democracy, resource distribution, environmental issues, communal conflicts, and development are all vital to the teaching of peace. Joining forces with other departments teaching in these areas and connecting with them under the rubric of peace studies can give peace education greater visibility and a stronger base in Indian colleges and universities.

- Issues of pedagogy in India demand attention. One way to help integrate the issues and skills essential to the work of peacemakers is to challenge traditional learning methods.

- Indian educators need deeper discussion on what they most hope to achieve to further peace education in India. Issues of development, human rights, communal conflict, and conflict with Pakistan have been the foci of peace studies curricula. Given these foci and India's own history of embedded conflict, using education to address the conflicting histories, narratives, and inequities among its population could go far to break through some of the intractability around these conflicts.

- Education is a highly underutilized tool to address India's multiple issues.

While some of these recommendations may seem self-evident, it is important to think clearly and directly about them. Peace is a choice, not an accidental state of being. So also is the conscious development of ways to enhance the work of peace. Peace education and research make up a large part of this work. India has the intellectual, historical, and philosophical potential to be a leader in this field, and the world has much to learn from her. Yet in the current state of vast global and structural inequities, India cannot do this alone. As stated earlier, peace is everyone's business; so is the development of peace education in India and other third-world regions.

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