

## Education for Peace in the Light of NCF–2005

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### Abstract

We live in an age of unprecedented levels of violence, with constant threats posed by intolerance, fanaticism, dispute and discordance. Ethical action, peace and welfare are facing new challenges. A strong need is being felt by educationists, philosophers, scientists and political leaders to rejuvenate the human values, which may bring long lasting peace on this planet. The purpose of education goes beyond the propagation of knowledge. Delor's report (1996) on learning to live together as the central pillar of education proposes that education must be geared to promote a culture of peace, tolerance, democratic values, human rights and duties among students. With the reality of the alarming increase in violence in school life, the National Curriculum Framework (NCF)–2005 strongly advocates education for peace at all levels of schools. In this backdrop the present paper tries to epitomise the concept of education for peace in the light of NCF–2005. In the final section, approach, strategies, activities and teacher's role in education for peace in the landscape of school education are also addressed as envisaged in the NCF–2005.

**Keywords :** Education, Peace, Human Values, Harmony, NCF–2005.

Peace however is an elusive concept having different interpretations in different cultures as well as different connotations for the spheres in which peaceful processes are applied. It ranges from inner peace to outer peace. Consequently, the interpretation of peace ranges from absence of war, and society without structural violence to liberation from exploitation and injustice of any kind, ecological balance and conservation and peace of mind, etc. Education for peace therefore includes a variety of issues like human rights education, environmental education, international education, conflict resolution education and development education, etc.

In India education for peace programmes have traditionally been concerned with promoting certain core values (Pandey, 2007). Mahatma Gandhi envisaged a non-violent society, which would be free from exploitation of any kind, and can be achieved through the instrument of education. In Gandhian concept of peace – truth and non-violence are important. The educational policies of the country lay stress on combative obscurantism, religious fanaticism, violence, superstition and fatalism, and promote some core values such as India's common cultural heritage, egalitarianism, democracy, secularism, equality of sexes and inculcation of scientific temper, etc. Peace and living together have been integral part of Indian way of living and manifested in its Constitution through various articles. It firmly believes that inculcation of certain values among younger generation would help them to exist in the dynamic socio-cultural fabric with peace, harmony and prosperity. This is the reason why all commissions and committees on education in India, like, the Radha Krishnan Commission (1948–49), Mudaliar Commission (1952–53), Sri Prakasha Commission (1959), Kothari Commission (1964–66), Sampurnanand Commission (1961), Rammurti Committee (1992) and Chavan Committee (1999) etc. make important recommendations for incorporation of value education at all levels of education. Consequently, the National Curriculum Frameworks of 1975, 1988 and 2000 had adopted a value-oriented approach to integration of peace concerns in education.

A major shift in this approach is witnessed in the National Curriculum Framework–2005, which considers that value education is subsumed in Education for peace, but is not identical with it. The National Focus Group on Peace Education constituted in the context of NCF–2005 in its Position Paper on *Education for Peace* says, “Peace is a contextually appropriate and pedagogically gainful point of coherence for values. Peace concretises the purpose of values and motivates their internalisation. Without such a framework, the integration of values into the learning process remains a non-starter. Education for peace is, thus, the ideal strategy for contextualising and operationalising value education” (p. 1). While accepting the traditional approach of integration of various peace related values and concern in school curricula, it further adds, that, education for peace must be a concern that permeates the entire school life – curriculum, co-curriculum, classroom environment, school management, teacher pupil relationship, teaching-learning processes, and the entire range of school activities.

### **Education for Peace and NCF–2005**

The purpose of education goes beyond the propagation of knowledge. Education is now a significant dimension of the long-term process of building up peace – tolerance, justice, intercultural understanding and civic responsibility. However, education as practiced in schools often promotes forms of violence, both real and symbolic. Under these circumstances, education needs reorientation and therefore the school curriculum takes priority. According to the NCF–2005, peace, as an integrative perspective for the school curriculum, is an idea whose time has come. Education for peace is different from peace education. In the latter, peace is a subject in the syllabus. In the former, peace becomes the shaping vision of education. This implies a paradigm shift in the total transaction of education. Education for peace, as distinguished from peace education, acknowledges the goal of promoting a culture of peace as the purpose shaping the enterprise of education. If implemented with vigour and vision, education for peace can make learning a joyful and meaningful experience.

The NCF–2005 is more vocal and direct towards the need of promoting peace through education than the earlier curriculum reform attempts where the concept of peace was subsumed in value education. The NCF–2005 in its position Paper on Education for Peace proposes –

*“Education for peace is education for life, and not merely training for a livelihood. Equipping individuals with the values, skills, and attitudes they need to be wholesome persons who live in harmony with others and as responsible citizens is the goal of education for peace”* (p. 1).

Historically, moral instruction and value education were the precursors of education for peace. They share much in common. Religion, according to the National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE)–2000, is a source of value generation. Values and attitudes are the building blocks of the culture of peace. What, then, is unique to education for peace?

Education for peace calls for a significant reduction, not an increase, in curriculum load. Peace embodies the joy of living. Learning, from the peace perspective, has to be a joyful experience. Joy is of the essence of life. Peace is not unrelated to peace. Today’s world, hurry and worry sour the joy of learning and undermine learning and the harmony of life. It is a serious matter that schools, which are meant to be the nurseries of peace, become transmission points for violence. Education for peace contextualises learning. It calls for a liberation of learning from the confines of the classroom and its transformation into a celebration of awareness enlivened with the delight of discovery.

NCF–2005 says *“Education for peace seeks to nurture ethical development, inculcating the values, attitudes and skills required for living in harmony with oneself and with others, including nature. It embodies the joy of living and personality development with the qualities of love, hope and courage. It encompasses respect for human rights, justice, tolerance, cooperation, social responsibility, and respect for cultural diversity, in addition to a firm commitment to democracy and non-violent conflict resolution. Social justice is an important aspect of peace education. The concern for equality and social justice, which refers to practising non-exploitation towards the have-nots, the poor and the underprivileged and creating a non-violent social system, is the hallmark of education for peace. Similarly, human rights are central to the concept of peace. Peace cannot prevail if the rights of individuals are violated. Basic to human rights are the values of non-discrimination and equality, which contribute to building a culture of peace in society. These issues are inter related. Peace education is thus a host of overlapping values”* (p. 61–62).

Education for peace thus empowers individuals to clarify their values; to enable them to take conscious and deliberate decisions, taking into consideration the consequences of their actions; to choose the way of peace rather than violence; to enable them to be makers of peace rather than only consumers of peace. Education for peace, therefore, an essential component of holistic basic education that aims at the comprehensive development of persons.

### **Major Frontiers of Education for Peace**

NCF–2005 in its Executive Summary points out the major frontiers for education for peace in the Indian context. This is done with reference to the two major goals of education : namely education for personality formation and education to foster responsible citizens.

The major frontiers of education for peace are : (a) bringing about peace-orientation in individuals through education; (b) nurturing in students the social skills and outlook needed to live together in harmony; (c) reinforcing social justice, as envisaged in the Constitution; (d) the need and duty to propagate a secular culture; (e) education as a catalyst for activating a democratic culture; (f) the scope for promoting national integration

through education and (g) education for peace as a lifestyle movement.

### **Education for Peace – Some Strategies**

- **Simplistic Approach to Moral Behaviour :**

- i) At the time of teaching values, teacher needs to move away from mere talk, to a meaningful discussion of experiences and reflections.
- ii) The teacher needs to draw out the children, gain their confidence, and avoid using threatening language or hostile body language.
- iii) Teachers should make deliberate attempts to infuse and reinforce the importance of peace-related values that are commensurate with the textual material taught in school and the developmental stages of children.

- **Using Appropriate Strategies for Understanding Peace related Values :**

Strategies like questions, stories, anecdotes, games, experiments, discussions, dialogues, clarification of values, examples, analogies, metaphors, role playing, and simulation are helpful in promoting peace through teaching-learning. The teaching and practise of ethics go from the personal sphere to social and community-oriented thinking and then link up with global perspectives.

- **Presenting Lesson or Topic from a Humanistic and Positive Perspective :**

Every peace-laden topic or lesson (hidden or explicit) needs to be transacted with deliberate planning from a positive and humanistic perspective. The methods of teaching should be creative, child-centred, largely experiential, and participatory. These include creation of appropriate learning experiences, discussion, debates, presentation, and group and cooperative projects, depending on students' maturity levels and the subject content.

### **Approach to Education for Peace**

In the NCF–2005, education for peace is not envisaged as a separate subject that would further augment curriculum load, but a perspective from which all subjects are to be taught. An integrated approach to education for peace is the ideal, especially since peace is an integrative and all-embracing concept. The integrated approach must be reflected in the totality of educational programmes in schools and must permit the school curriculum and co-curriculum. NCF–2005 in its Executive Summary made some suggestions with respect to curriculum contents. They are as follows –

- i) The primary school years could focus on laying the value foundations for personality formation and the development of the social skills necessary to live together in harmony. Focus could then shift gradually to a perspective on peace, especially to enable students to understand the value-foundations of peace. The area of special emphasis here is the need to promote skills for the peaceful resolution of conflicts.
- ii) In the upper primary years, students could be enabled to view the culture of peace from the perspective of Indian history, philosophy and culture.
- iii) Thereafter, education for peace could focus more on citizenship education. A brief introduction to the basic features and ethos of the Constitution is what is envisaged here. The emphasis may shift, thereafter, to 'peace as a lifestyle movement'. Students can be made aware of the need to for lifestyles conducive to the integrity of creation and stability of society. The various challenges to national unity can be the focus thereafter. The main emphasis here must be on promoting an attitude of respect for diversity and difference. Students also need to be made aware of the various hindrances to unity.
- iv) At the plus two level, the foci of education for peace could be : (a) understanding the logic, modes and expressions of violence; (b) skills for an objective understanding of issues and (c) developing a global perspective on peace (p. 57).

### **Teaching-Learning Activities for Education for Peace**

NCF–2005 suggested some examples of teaching-learning activities for integration in the subject content. Children could be asked to –

- Demonstrate the many ways in which one can show respect to elders at home and in school (Environmental Studies / Language).
- Express the meaning of the word 'cooperation' in different subject (Language).
- Imagine a peaceful world and what would it be like (Social Science).
- Write a story on tolerance, sensitivity to others, etc. (Language).
- Compose a poem or a song depicting values like honesty, hard work etc. (Language).
- Organise field visit to local orphanages or old age homes to sensitise students to the loneliness, deprivation,

and helplessness of these sections of society.

- Discuss how environmental degradation affects the poor.
- Describe how anger destroys peace (Social Science / Language).

Education for Peace can also be realised through the co-curricular life of the school. A number of activities and projects embodying peace themes could be organised in school.

- Students can be motivated to learn and develop skills for peacemaking by including peace issues in debates, seminars, and audio visual shows.
- Participation of children in role-plays, dramas, composing peace poems, peace songs, etc.
- Participation in various days observed internationally, such as, Human Rights Day, Children's Day, UN Day, Day for the Disabled, Girl Child Day, Environment Day, etc.
- To help develop sensitivity towards others, children could be encouraged to visit homes for senior citizens, disadvantaged groups, etc. and enabled to develop an interest in their welfare.
- Religious festivals and national days could be celebrated in the schools and in the neighbourhood.
- Story-telling sessions and discussions could be held to promote tolerance and understanding.

### Conclusion

The NCF–2005 set out a few foundational convictions which underlie the contours and contents of education for peace, such as, schools are potential nurseries for peace, peace skills promote academic excellence, education for peace can humanise education, teachers can be social healers, and justice is integral to peace. This framework thus made a plea to turn education for peace into a people's movement. Education for peace needs to be seen as an enterprise for healing and revitalising the nation. Education for peace could be an effective catalyst in activating a holistic vision for education. This could also transform education into a movement for national integration and regeneration, which is the need of the hour. An approach to education that erodes social cohesion, aggravates economic inequalities, and undermines ethical foundation needs to be recognised as a threat to peace and a disservice to society. Peace must be pursued with single-minded vigour and an undeviating sense of purpose; and education for peace must be implemented with vision and determination. Conclusion can be ended with words of Mahatma Gandhi –

*“If we are to teach real peace in the world we shall have to begin with children”.*

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