

Peace Education As A Tool For Effective Conflict Management In Secondary Schools In Odisha

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Abstract

The study examined the concept of peace education in relation to conflict management in secondary schools of Odisha (India). With the use of archival method, with a sample of secondary schools of Dhenkanal District it was established that conflict is on the increase in secondary school and it is largely due to the inability of teachers, principals and guardians to handle conflict effectively. Thus peace education was offered as the antidote. It was specifically suggested that for peace education to have any chance of success in secondary schools of Odisha government at all levels, teachers of secondary school and training institutes in Odisha must be involved in the peace education program. It is believed that by so doing, the students and teachers and the whole education system would be able to acquire the knowledge, skill and attitudes required to have sustainable school peace.

Key Words: peace education, conflict management, teacher, students, secondary schools, tool.

Odisha'da Bulunan Ortaöğretim Okullarında Etkili Çatışma Yönetimine İlişkin Bir Araç Olarak Barış Eğitimi

Özet

Bu çalışma Odisha (Hindistan)'da bulunan ortaöğretim okullarında çatışma yönetimine ilişkin barış eğitimi konusunu incelemiştir. Arşiv yöntemi kullanılarak ve Dhenkanal Bölgesindeki ortaöğretim okulları örneklem olarak alınarak, çatışmanın ortaöğretim seviyesinde artışta olduğu ve bunun çoğunlukla öğretmenlerin, müdürlerin ve velilerin çatışmayı etkili olarak yönetmedeki yetersizliğinden kaynaklandığı saptanmıştır. Bu yüzden barış eğitimi bir çözüm olarak sunulmuştur. Barış eğitiminin Odisha'daki ortaöğretim okullarında başarılı olması için Odisha'daki ortaöğretim okulu öğretmenlerinin ve eğitim kurumlarının barış eğitimi programına katılmaları gerektiği özellikle önerilmiştir. Bunun yapılarak öğrencilerin, öğretmenlerin ve tüm eğitim sisteminin sürdürülebilir okul barışına sahip olmaları için gerekli olan bilgi, beceri ve tutumları edineceklerine inanılmaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: barış eğitimi, çatışma yönetimi, öğretmen, öğrenci, ortaöğretim, araç

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Introduction

The word conflict conjures up associations of tension, disruption, and violence with the expectation of anything from uncomfortable to life-threatening situations. From such a perspective conflict is something to be avoided or even suppressed. However, there is another side to - the bringing of a unjust situation to the surface or public arena, the stimulation to look for creative solutions and the challenging of outmoded ideas and patterns of thinking. In this way conflict can be a spur to creativity and development and can lead to a higher synthesis beyond contending views or positions. So conflict in itself is not to be eliminated but ways need to be developed to handle conflict which liberate its creative potential and curtail its destructive manifestations.

A common definition of conflict in the literature on conflict analysis is a situation in which two or more individuals or groups perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals. Mitchell (1993) puts forward a composite definition of conflict which is analytically useful. He distinguishes between: the conflict situation; conflict behavior; and conflict attitudes and perceptions. Each of these aspects of conflict are interacting and affecting each other shaping the development of the conflict

Conflict presently continues to be a factor in academic life. Schools frequently appear to be centers of tension; on occasion, they are perhaps a manifestation of problems in the community. The term conflict is viewed in a variety of ways because of its confusion with those conditions which lead to situations of different conflict. Thomas (1976) defines conflict as "the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his" Conflict involves situations in which differences are expressed by interdependent people in the process of achieving their needs and goals, and it arises when a difference between two or more people necessitates change in at least one person in order for their engagement to continue and develop. Because of diverse and varied definitions of conflict, attitudes towards it and images of its role are also varied. Conflict in schools takes different forms;

for example teachers seem reluctant to obey the principals, they do not seem to follow rules or accept extra work, they do not easily get along with their principals. Principals too adopt an authoritative approach, for example they pressurize teachers for an uninterrupted working of the school activities. It, therefore, becomes common that conflict between teachers and the school principal occur frequently at any time in the school. In institutions, conflict occurs between various individuals because of their frequent interaction with each other. Conflict is an expression of hostility, antagonism and misunderstanding between the staff members. Conflict is inevitable and often good, for example, good teams always go through a "form, storm, norm and perform" period. Getting the most out of diversity means often-contradictory values, perspectives and opinions. Conflict is often needed. It (McNamara, 2008):

- i). Helps to raise and address problems,
- ii). Energizes work to be on the most appropriate issues,
- iii). Helps people "be real", for example, it motivates them to participate,
- iv). Helps people learn how to recognize and benefit from their differences.

Conflict in Schools- Its Causes & Management Strategies

Ghaffar (2008) conflict is not the same as discomfort. The conflict isn't the problem - it is when conflict is poorly managed that is the problem. Conflict in Schools: It's Causes & Management Strategies. Conflict is a problem when It:

- 1). Hampers productivity,
- 2). Lowers morale,
- 3). Causes more and continued conflicts,
- 4). Causes inappropriate behaviors.

Sources of Conflict

The possible sources of conflict are poor communication, competition for common but scarce resources, incompatible goals and the like. Frustration of the basic needs....becomes a source of social conflict". Gray and Stark (1984) suggested that there are six sources of conflict. These are:

- 1). Limited resources,
- 2). Interdependent work activities,
- 3). Differentiation of activities,
- 4). Communication problems,
- 5). Differences in perceptions,
- 6). The environment of the organization.

Moreover Gray and Stark (1984) conflict can also arise from a number of other sources, such as:

- 1). Individual differences (some people enjoy conflict while others don't);
- 2). Unclear authority structures (people don't know how far their authority extends);
- 3). Differences in attitudes;
- 4). Task symmetries (one group is more powerful than another and the weaker group tries to change the situation);
- 5). Difference in time horizons (some departments have a long-run view and others have a short-run view).

Causes/ Factors Leading to Conflict

Conflict Resolution Skills/ Strategies resolution and peer mediation programs are often promoted as a way to reduce violence (and destructively managed conflicts) in schools Management of conflict is a human relations concept long recognized in business and industry as a necessary component of the developmental process (Mishra, 2010).

Robbins (1974) concentrates on strategies specifically labeled as resolution techniques. He lists eight techniques as follows:

- 1). Problem solving,
- 2). Super ordinate goals,
- 3). Avoidance,
- 4). Smoothing,
- 5). Compromise,
- 6). Authoritative command,
- 7). Altering the human variable,
- 8). Altering structural variables.

Since conflict is seemingly unavoidable, particularly in a scholarly setting, it is obviously necessary for administrators to be able to recognize conflict, to view its constructive as well as destructive potential, to learn how to

manage conflict, and to apply conflict management strategies in a practical way. We all face conflicts and handle them the best way we can when they arise but training can help us to be more effective and constructive in our approaches. Through a combination of increased self-awareness and skills training we can learn to be more effective agents of conflict transformation or possibly even make useful interventions in conflicts in which we are not directly involved. The training for constructive conflict handling would include (Robbins, 1974):

- strengthening self esteem - a feeling of low self-worth or helplessness on the part of an individual or a group can lead to inappropriate passive or aggressive responses to conflicts which serve to maintain the status quo or even exacerbate the conflict.
- developing reflection skills - developing an ability to reflect on one's own strengths and weaknesses, examine one's motivations and behavior in a critical light with a view to learning from experience.
- improving communication skills - training in the skills of listening and assertiveness, and developing the ability to empathize. This is necessary to minimize misunderstanding, to clearly express thoughts and feelings and to be able to work together towards solutions.
- sharpening analytical skills - necessary for a clear understanding of the conflict.
- stimulating creative thinking and encouraging a problem-solving orientation - necessary in seeking alternative solutions that take into account the needs of all parties involved
- In addition there may be the need for external intervention in the form of a mediator. The same basis of training is required for a mediator in order for s/he to be able to carry out the tasks effectively.

Peace education and conflict management in school

Peace education is the process of acquiring the *values*, the *knowledge* and developing the *attitudes*, *skills*, and *behaviors* to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment (Wikipedia, 2010). In other words, peace education is the deliberate attempt to educate children and adults in the

dynamics of conflict and the promotion of peacemaking skills in homes, schools, work organizations and communities throughout the world, using all the channels and instruments of socialization (Gumut, 2007). It implies therefore that education for peace is an attempt to respond to problems of conflict and violence of different scales ranging from the global, regional, national, local, industrial and personal levels.

Thus, peace education is a global phenomenon that pervades all the regions and countries of the world. Peace education is influenced by differing pedagogical traditions in different regions of the world. This is evidenced by the diversity in the focus and terminology, which peace education is given in the different regions and countries of the world. For instance, in Japan, peace education is referred to as “anti-nuclear bomb education”, in Ireland, it is known as “education for mutual understanding”, in Korea it is viewed as “re-unification education”, while in countries of the southern hemisphere, the title adopted is “development education”. In North America and Europe, peace education is called “conflict resolution education” and in Nigeria it is considered as “education for tolerance and mutual understanding” and in India it is peace education. Peace education programs around the world have represented a spectrum of focal themes, including anti-nuclearism, international understanding, environmental responsibility, communication skills, non-violence, conflict resolution techniques, democracy, human rights awareness, tolerance of diversity, coexistence and gender equality, among others (Mishra, 2010)

The diversity in the focus and terminology of peace education across the different regions and countries of the world is probably due to the political, social and economic situations prevalent in each country, which apparently direct and validate the model of peace education that is in vogue in the country. Nevertheless, the goal of peace education in the various countries of the world where it is embraced is the same, which is to promote the culture of peace in industries and societies at large with a view to ensuring social, political, and economic stability. Perhaps it is important to mention that though academic dis-

course on the subject matter of peace education has increasingly recognized the need for a broader, more holistic approach to peace education, a review of field-based projects reveals that three variations of peace education are most common: conflict resolution training (which is the focus of this paper), democracy education, and human rights education. The conflict resolution training version of peace education typically focuses on the social-behavioral symptoms of conflict, training individuals to resolve inter-personal disputes through techniques of negotiation and (peer) mediation, learning to manage anger, fight fair and improve communication through skills such as listening, turn-taking, identifying needs and separating facts from emotions (Abdul Ghaffar, 2008).

As a concept, peace education has been variously defined by Harris and Synott (2002), Gumut (2007), Gandhiji as peace education as a fact of holistic education, which takes into consideration the whole body and soul, mind, heart and will. In essence, peace education is meant to develop the total human person's power and potentials such as cognitive, affection, volitional and behavioral traits. In their contribution, Harris and Synott (2002) described peace education as a series of ‘teaching encounters’ that draw from people: their desire for peace, nonviolent alternatives for managing conflict, and skills for critical analysis of structural arrangements that produce and legitimate injustice and inequality.

In his view, Gumut (2007) considered peace education as one means of bringing about rational awakening of humanistic, aesthetic and ethical values, which are the preconditions for peace in individuals, family, society, national, and international life. It implies therefore that peace education has the tendency to change the physical, intellectual, emotional and spiritual abilities of people within the context of their cultural, political and social milieus for peaceful and harmonious living. So peace education in its best form is an attempt to change individuals’ perception of others collective narrative, and consequently about one’s own social self, as well as come to practically relate less hatefully and more trustingly towards that collective ‘others’. The following sections identify key

areas where careful attention to policy and practices from a conflict-perspective may prevent education systems, and the children they serve, from being mobilized as part of the dynamics of conflict.

Ghaffar (2008) says that the better educators and students understand the nature of conflict, the better able they are to manage conflicts constructively. The effectiveness of a conflict resolution and peer mediation program may be limited when the classroom and school context is competitive.

Peace Through Co-Operation

There is only one way to get peace through cooperation. Non co-operation will only create tension, anger, resentment and revolt. Whether in a family, a class, staff, a team, a country; it is necessary to have a homely atmosphere, an atmosphere that is conducive to thinking about the meeting of minds and heads. If there is no co-operation then each one will seek faults in others and no progress will take place. Compare the rule of Akbar with Aurangzeb. Power does not bring peace. It is how we use this instrument of power that matters. Power used as tyranny may only bring terror and disaster. A tyrannical father is as bad as a tyrannical ruler to his son or daughter, such fathers will create rebellious children and peace in the home will be shattered (Naire, 2007).

Peace Through Love

It is not true that sparing the rod spoils children. The rod has to be used only when other measures fail. But love never fails. Love should not be possessive, selfish or demanding. Love should be spontaneous, unconditionally showered all the time. Love generates faith, true cooperation and this is what is essential for peace. "When we love we share and not tear, When we love we win and not lose, When we love, we open and not close, When we love we progress and not retreat, When we love, we co-operate and not break up." (Naire, 2007).

In his opinion, Mishra (2010) sees peace education as a social mechanism that radiates skills, knowledge, attitudes and values that are essential for the development of people and their societies. In other words, peace education is meant to help people acquire

skills for nonviolent conflict resolution and to reinforce these skills for active and responsible action in the society for the promotion of the values of peace.

Therefore, unlike the concept of conflict resolution, which can be considered to be retroactive -trying to solve a conflict after it had already occurred - peace education, on the other hand, has a more proactive approach because it prevents a conflict in advance or rather educate individuals and a society for a peaceful existence on the basis of nonviolence, tolerance, equity, respect for differences and social justice. Mishra (2010) listed some of the basic issues under the knowledge, skills and attitudes as contained in peace education as follows:

Knowledge: Self-awareness, peace and conflict, justice and power, human rights, globalization, duties and rights of citizens, environment and ecology, social justice and power, non-violence, conflict resolution and transformation, culture and race, gender and religion, healthcare and AIDS, Arms proliferation and drug trade.

Skills: Critical thinking, problem solving, self-solving, self-awareness, assertiveness, reading, orderliness, perseverance, cooperation, cheerfulness, self-control, self-reliance, sensitivity, compassion, active listening, patience, mediation, negotiation, conflict resolution.

Attitudes: Self-respect, honesty, open-mindedness, fairly, obedience, caring, empathy, tolerance, adaptation to change, sense of solidarity, respect for differences, gender equity, sense of equality, reconciliation, bias awareness, appreciation, transparency.

From the above analysis, one can deduce that through exposure to KNOWLEDGE on the highlighted issues; an individual will be able to develop the SKILLS enumerated above, which in turn will enable him/her to exhibit the stipulated ATTITUDES that are required for peace building. This deduction finds support in the assertion of that the essence of acquiring the knowledge, skills and attitudes is to change the perceptions of people concerning the "others" collective narratives. Suffice it to say therefore that with better changes in the perception and behavior of teachers and principals and management

member, arising from training on peace education, peer mediation conflict will be more effectively handled and it will bring about sustainable school peace and harmony in Orissa (Mishra, 2010).

Conclusion And Recommendation

School leaders and teachers are key role models. Their actions as advocates of peace education actors are critical to any sustained and long-term change. Corporal punishment and teacher bullying are contradictory behaviors in a school that advocates peace education and need to be prevented. Peace education must focus on attitude and behavior change to build understanding and harmony between stakeholders. A collaboration of teachers, students, parents and the local community need to be part of the solution of conflict management. Strengthen and enhance student centered learning approaches. Abdul Ghaffar (2008). Also stress on the above statements in his findings of the study.

Encourage opportunities for students to be more actively engaged in constructing their learning environments. This means opening avenues for effective student teacher communication to diffuse potential conflict and create democratic frameworks for student participation in school life. Ensure school rules are clear, relevant and enforced. Involving students in the development and implementation of agreed rules or codes of conduct may have more meaning and power e.g. „Mobile phones! To ban or not to ban?“ Focus on participation strategies where students and teachers are more engaged in the curriculum and the life of the school. ‘Idle students and teachers contribute to violence’. The curriculum needs to be responsive to student needs and reflect relevant and meaningful study. It would be useful to investigate community-based or service learning as a strategy. Develop a sense of national unity and goals in a spirit of teamwork through the promotion of a values agenda – e.g. identify important (universal/humanitarian) values, strengthen use of symbols such as flag, anthem, school assemblies and school uniforms (not military style). Promote prevention and invest in strategies that build teacher capacity particularly in relation to social skills devel-

opment and early responses to student well-being needs.

Recommendations

Review the exam system. ‘It creates too much pressure’ and makes it potentially harder to alter the curriculum to meet local needs and interests. Therefore, to curb the conflict situation in secondary schools, there is need for re-orientation and strengthening teacher training institution to orient in-service teachers in peace education.

Activities should be organized in school for management of conflict in school

1. Introduction of Shanti Geet in morning assembly for the promotion of peace concepts & inculcation of peace values in students.
2. Teacher talk on moral values & teaching of great people in the morning assembly is a part of the club schedule
3. Quotations of Gandhi Ji, J.Krishnamurti, Shri Aurobindo and Tagore, related with peace will be written everyday on the peace board by peace club members.
4. Birthday wishes will be given to the students through peace corner. Such a small effort of peace club will certainly give happiness & family atmosphere to the students.
5. Peace can be attained by sharing the resources with other. Students will be share school infrastructure with nearby school such as sharing of labs, library books by mobile library activity& visit to computer labs by the students of local areas.
6. Peace with nature is the important concept of Peace Education. The students by planting more & more trees every year will create a peaceful atmosphere in & outside the school
7. Rallies will be organized by the school Peace club to aware the society about their rights and duties, conservation of our historical monuments, saving our energy etc
8. Celebration of National & Important days in the school Speeches will be prepared/delivered by the students
9. To make the students healthy& wise yoga classes will be organized in the school.
10. Communication with students is a important part of peace approach. Suggestion box,

meeting with students, house meeting will be arranged time to time to solve the grievances of students

11. Students are encouraged to come up with their writing, painting, poems and stories. Conducting of awareness and advocacy, seminars, symposia, workshops etc., on various issues of peace.

12. Promotion of Human Rights Education and awareness on environmental protection

13- The clubs also provide an important protection structure; the clubs should build trust between children and their own leadership. Children should be able to talk to these leaders who can then help them and some exposure in peace issues through case studies creating in students open mindedness in all spheres of life.

Peace Diary: Each student of peace club will have his/her own Peace Diary to record the school violence. The club coordinator (teacher) will analyze the in a nonviolent way.

School Newspaper: A thought-provoking newspaper by the students of Peace club. The newspaper could be an issue based newspaper which carries news, features, editorials, poem etched on one theme ex. Right to Education, Corporal Punishment, Environment etc. Themes could be selected by the editorial board/members of a peace club based on their experiences or the events taking place in the society around them

Expression through Pictures: This includes Capturing scenes and events of peace through camera. Students will be given topics to click photographs on.

Documentary: A video / Audio documentary can be scripted and produced by the students of peace club. Club may screen the documentaries of programs produced by their club and critiquing can be arranged by inviting experts from the field.

Peace Advocacy: Club coordinator along with other teachers and students will track the content of peace both print and electronic and initiate debate and discussion on various issues highlighted in the peace.

Peace Literacy Activities: Club coordinators will conduct peace literacy activities like storytelling, singing song writing poems etc with the club members to develop among students an understanding of peace.

Peace Club News Bulletin: Since lot of activities will be organized in schools, the peace club members will record the activities and pass it on to News paper and for Peace Club News Bulletin which will be published by the school. This will be a news bulletin by the students for the students.

Interface with Peace: This is the platform through which members of peace club will get an opportunity to interact with the experts from peace and peace education. Schools may organize talk by various peace personalities.

Peace Club on Face book: Each member of peace club will be invited to join the peace club on face book where they can share their experiences with others. This will be platform wherein peace club members will exchange information and explore more possibilities and opportunities.

Peace Club Blog: Each school will have their own peace club blog.

It's our voice: Student will be encouraged to participate in mainstream peace by writing letters or by joining some socially relevant campaigns initiated by the different organization.

'Peace Club Experience' Seminar: This will be organized at VIVEK COLLEGE OF EDUCATION at the end of the year wherein club coordinators will share their experience of running peace club in their school.

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