

Transacting Peace Education in School Using PETS– A Study

Dr. Usha A.Borkar

*Assistant Professor, Hansraj Jivandas College of Education (Affiliated to University of Mumbai) Khar (West),
Mumbai -400 052, Maharashtra, India*

Abstract : *In the present research paper, the researcher introduces an educational approach, by the name of “Peace Education Through Story (PETS)” as a part of Peace Education, which can undo certain basic negative effects of unrests taking place all round us. It attempts to do so by way of bringing in core human values essential for peaceful and health living. It provides a wide range of interesting and interactive stories which may be used as methods of teaching and learning and to deliver the curriculum effectively alongside with a focus on core human values. This study was aimed to evaluate the effectiveness of PETS at the Standard Eight level. Null hypothesis was formulated. The research was experimental in nature. The research design followed by researcher was One group Pre test Post Test Design. Data was analyzed using t-test. The conclusion is evident that PETS is an effective manner of providing Peace Education for Standard VIII students.*

Keywords: *Human values, Peace Education, Secondary School students, and Story*

I. INTRODUCTION

Peace education is not just about what happens in school. It is not about what you need to know for the test or memorize to please the teacher. Peace education is about how you can help build the future and make your world a more peaceful place to live.

Peace education asks you to ask yourself:

- What is PEACE?
- Is there peace in my life? Where? In my classroom? In my family? In my community?
- In my town? In my country?
- Where in my life would I like to see more peace?
- What is important for me to LEARN?
- What can I DO with what I learn?

Lots of kids and young adults around the world are asking themselves what they can do to make the world a safer, healthier, greener, more fair and less violent place for everyone to live and grow. With so many challenges for the future, learning about peace in school is an important beginning.

1.1 What Is Peace Education?

'Peace is possible for life at all stages and it is up to man to choose his destiny or to suffer from the horrors of war. Today mankind is at the cross-road where he has to choose with courage, determination and imagination.'- Federico Mayor [1]

On reading this a teacher might wonder 'Is it really necessary to teach peace as such? Whole education is for peace. Isn't it already in the curriculum?' She may be right in a sense. But the questions remain: Are we giving adequate attention today to teach peace? Are our schools really interested in producing a peaceful young generation? Is it enough having mere peace concepts in the curriculum?

Under the present predicament there is a growing realization in the world of education today that children should be educated in the art of peaceful living. As a result, more and more peace concepts, attitudes, values and behavioural skills are being integrated into school curricula in many countries. There is also renewed interest to develop peace-related disciplines such as values education, moral education, global education, etc. In the past we seemed to have assumed that the more knowledge people have, the better they are. Accordingly, we stressed cognitive learning in schools at the cost of developing children's emotional, social, moral and humanistic aspects. The consequence of such imbalanced learning is evident today in the forms of youth unrest with their antisocial attitudes and behavioural problems.

1.2 Development of Peace Education

In tracing the recent development of peace education, we begin to see that in the past it had been an integral part of education at all times and in all cultures, every culture regards peace as a noble ideal to attain. However with the advent of Western secularism at the beginning of the 20th century through the guise of a positivist scientific outlook to education, moral and human values including peace were slowly discouraged

away from school curricula. Under the ideal of value-free positivist and reductionist knowledge the whole education was viewed narrowly as teaching facts of various subjects.

However, in spite of such materialistic views, the thinking of such humanists like Rousseau, Henry Thoreau, Tolstoy and Maria Montessori kept the sense of education alive. With the witness of the horrors of the First and Second World Wars there was a reawakening to the need of developing the humanistic side of education at least among a few educationists.

Peace education is more effective and meaningful when it is adopted according to the social and cultural context and the needs of a country. It should be enriched by its cultural and spiritual values together with the universal human values. It should also be globally relevant. Peace education is holistic. It embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. It is based on philosophy that teaches love, compassion, trust, fairness, co-operation and reverence for the human family and all life on our beautiful planet (Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman, 1988)

Peace education is skill building. It empowers children to with creative and nondestructive ways to settle conflict and to live in harmony with themselves, others, and their world. Peace building is the task of every human being and the challenge of the human family (Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman 1988)

II. Educational Power of a Story

Story has tremendous power to influence learning. It can be a very effective instructional tool. It can be easily integrated into different subjects. It can be applied in real life situations. It can be as a form of creative activities for many skills. It comprises of three terms – the teller, the story and the audience. Stories may be used as Entertainment, Education and for relieving distress. In their later avatars, manifestations, it has been experience of many educationists, therapists including this author, that a message is conveyed far more clearly through a tale, than a command or instruction. T.S. Eliot once wrote of written literature for young: “I incline to come to the alarming conclusion that it is just the literature that we read for ‘amusement’ or ‘purely for pleasure’ that may have the greatest and the least suspected influence upon us.” [2]

The word ‘story’ is derived from Latin root ‘Historia’ meaning History. A tale, legend, myth, anecdote, novel and romance are all stories in different formats. The story is an account of real or imaginary events. It comes alive when it is told or read. The Sanskrit equivalent of the word story, ‘Katha’ has originated from the verb ‘kath’, which means to tell. Thus the process of telling or narrating has been associated with stories from the very beginning.

In stories, real or imagined events are portrayed in words, images, and sounds. Since ancient times, human beings were narrating stories to communicate a message or feeling. Initially these images were also scratched onto the walls of caves. With the gradual evolution of human activities and technology, woodcarving, stone carving, painting on canvas, filmmaking or electronic digital messages were used to share these images. With the invention of writing, stories were recorded, transcribed and shared over wide regions of the world. These written stories have become some of the humanity’s most enduring message of struggle, hope and triumph.

In India storytelling is a part and parcel of Folk media, other forms of folk media being puppetry, proverbs, visual art, drama, concert, songs, drumming and dancing.

A mythological story has been a part and parcel of every Indian Grandmother’s food for thought for her grandchild. We all have grown up on this nutrition. The mythological story shared by the elders in our families often motivates the us to perform certain special ceremonies daily or annually as our lives move through cycle of the seasons.

The word myth is derived from Greek word mythos, which has a range of meanings from word to through saying and story to fiction. Myth has existed in every society. It is basic constituent of human culture. Mythology is a part of the study of religion and every myth fits in the total structure of the life of the society that believes in it.

The students would have heard some of these stories in the present context. Some such stories used by the researcher to infuse peace education is as follows:

- ❖ In India, environmental awareness dates back to the 14th century, in Rajasthan. The Bishnois are a small tribe in Rajasthan, who practice a religion of environmental conservation. They believe that cutting a tree or killing an animal or bird is blasphemy. In 17th century, during Aurangzeb’s time, a king of Jodhpur, wanted to cut the trees in the Bishnoi area and use it to build a new palace. The Bishnois protested and hugged the trees to protect them but the soldiers paid no heed. 294 men and 69 women were axed to death. When the king heard of this massacre he stopped the operation and offered protection to the Bishnois. The sacrifice of the Bishnois was the inspiration for the Chipko movement.
- ❖ Noah was asked by God to prepare a boat and take with him all his sons and their wives along with the male and female species of all living things clearly indicating emphasis on the interdependence of the species.

2.1 Peace Education Through Story - PETS

Creating the Situation

- Teacher introduces the problem with help of a role play, dramatization, case study, anecdote, newspaper cutting etc
- Teacher asks probing questions in order to focus the attention of the Pupil on the problem
- Teacher with help of Pupils defines the problem/issue

Creating the Linkage

- Teacher narrates a mythological story:

In Mahabharata, the Pandavas were exiled for twelve years, after having lost the kingdom in a game of dice. Arjuna went to the heaven to acquire the Divya astras to be used in warfare against Duryodhana. When he returned, the Pandavas were curious to know the strength of the astras, and requested Arjuna to demonstrate their use. But, just as he was about to use one of the astras, the devas stopped him. They said the use of such a powerful weapon just for exhibition or fun was strictly prohibited. The forest reserves cannot be targeted for casual experimentation.

Group Discussion

- Teacher with the help of developmental questions establishes a logical link of the story with the content to be taught.
- This mythology can be effectively used to integrate the need to use nuclear energy for peaceful purpose in the subject of Science as well as History. It can be used in the teaching of forest wealth in Geography and Economics.

The above procedure of PETS was used to Transact Peace Education to standard eight students and the effectiveness of the same was studied.

Objectives of the study

Following were the objectives of the research.

1. To prepare PETS for transacting peace education among standard eight students.
2. To test the effectiveness of prepared PETS.

Variables of the study

Independent variable: Peace Education Through Story -PETS

Dependent variable: Awareness about peace education.

Operational definition

Awareness about Peace Education: It is defined as the extent of sensitivity about need and importance of peace at international level and skills required for sustaining unity in institution. (Mhatre, 2008)

Hypothesis

Following null hypothesis was put forward.

There will be no significant difference in the pre and post test scores on awareness about peace education.

Scope and limitation of the study

The study was limited to English medium students of standard eight studying in a school situated in Mumbai.

Significance of the study

The developed PETS will be useful to the teachers of the schools. The PETS also will provide guidelines for developing pedagogy for transacting peace education. The use of PETS will enable students not only understand the Indian culture through mythology but also create an insight into the rich cultural heritage and the sound values of it.

III. Methodology

For the present study experimental method has been used. Researcher adopted single group pre-post test design.

Sample

Non-probability sampling method was used. Students from one class of standard eight were included in the sample. Fifty students were selected by incidental sampling.

Tools used

Rating scale prepared by the researcher for measuring awareness about peace education was used. This is 4-point scale with 36 statements. Coefficient of reliability by Cronbach alpha is 0.50 and by split-half method is 0.66. The maximum possible score is 144 and minimum is 36.

Development of PETS

On the basis of operational definition following objectives were decided.

To create awareness about

1. Need and importance of peace education.
2. Importance of communication skill in maintaining peace.
3. Importance of co-operation in maintaining peace.
4. Making proper decisions in maintaining peace.
5. Importance of conflict resolution in maintaining peace.

Following points were taken into consideration while preparing activities.

1. All the activities were group centered.
2. Activities were based on the stories.

Altogether ten clock hours were required for implementing the PETS.

Data Analysis

Single group t-test was used for analysis of the data. TABLE 1 shows significance of difference in the pre and post test means.

Table 1
Significance of difference between means of pre and posttest

Test	N	Mean	r	SE _D	t-value	LOS
Pretest	50	92.98	0.27	0.67	11.79	0.01
Posttest	50	100.86				

For df=49, calculated t is greater than tabulated t. Hence null hypothesis is rejected at 0.01 level. It shows that PETS was effective in creating awareness.

Discussion: Since students had given opportunity to think and reflect on the stories, it may have helped them to realize the importance and maintenance of peace. That may be the reason for effectiveness of the prepared PETS.

Suggestions for Teachers

From the above conclusion it is evident that simple Stories are useful for giving the message of peace. There is no need to include peace education as a separate subject in the syllabus. One can plan such simple stories and implement them during proxy periods or value education period. Wherever possible teacher can use integrated approach. For example while teaching about atomic energy in Science class teacher can have discussion about use and misuse of it. The teacher has a key role, facilitating the process by which students hone their social competency skills. More specifically, this methodology includes five techniques:

1. Model skills such as reflective listening, I-Statements and problem-solving on an regular basis.
2. Teach skills by promoting basic understanding and recognition of the skills as well as providing an opportunity to practice the skills in low-stress situations.
3. Coach students by supporting their efforts to translate mental knowledge into practical application and providing feedback regarding their efforts.
4. Encourage students to use skills appropriately by providing brief prompts and reminders. Reinforce students' efforts through praise and recognition of intrinsic rewards.
5. Export students' skill proficiency by involving them in opportunities for meaningful participation such as service learning projects or mentoring less-experienced students.

Benefits

The report drafted in 1996 by the UNESCO commission for Education in the 21st century entitled "Learning: The Treasure Within" reflects on four pillars of Education; two out of the four pillars of education suggested are "Learning to Live Together" and "Learning to be", are related to peaceful living. At matters is integrating peaceful attitudes, values, and skills into the teaching and learning process in school and makes it a part of the total curriculum. Certain countries and institutes have it in the form of subjects such as Values

Education, (Malaysia and Philippines), Citizenship Education (U.S.A.). Education for Mutual Understanding (Ireland) and Developmental Education (UNICEF). Apart from such subject names PETS can be integrated into the formal curriculum and co-curriculum of schools. [3]

Through applying peace education and creating a peace culture, it has been observed that educational institutions can have the following benefits

Educational Institutions can:

- Develop a more humanistic management approach.
- Improve human relations between, teacher-student, teacher-teacher, student-student, etc.
- Help develop good attitudes in students and teachers as well, e.g. co-operation, mutual respect.
- Help healthy emotional development in students.
- Facilitate socialization through participation in interactive and co-operative learning activities
- Improve students' discipline and moral behaviour.
- Develop creativity both in students and teachers.
- Improve standard of quality of teaching and learning.

IV. Conclusions

No education system is complete without some form of component similar to peace education. It may take such forms as moral, value or citizenship, democratic or global education. The differentiating feature of peace education is the focus it has on the problem of human violence. In short, peace education can be defined as an educational response to the problem of human violence. It has the following basic features: It aims at protecting children's minds from being imbued by violence in the society. It prepares them for building a peaceful world by empowering them with necessary knowledge, attitudes, and skills. It humanizes the child, teaching and learning, and school.[4]

Educational institutions can directly benefit by adopting peace education. There is ample evidence to show that it improves the quality of teaching and learning, discipline, and helps emotional development in children. [5]

It is interesting to mention here an evaluation done on affective learning techniques such as using stories to infuse Peace Education has resulted in the following major outcomes:

- Better learning of cognitive material.
- Heightened motivation and response to learning situations.
- Greater appreciation of self, nature, others, feelings, etc.
- Greater pupil responsibility

Hence to conclude one may say that stories are a wonderful resource for Teachers, Parents, Grandparents, Mentors, coaches, Mental health professionals and even political speakers to convey a point and drive it home.

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