Exploring Educational Spaces for Peace & Nonviolence
A Roundtable Discussion

Lady Shri Ram College for Women
New Delhi
September 21, 2013

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Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace
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Shilpi Shapdita
Introduction*

“The highest education is that which does not merely give us information but makes our life in harmony with all existence. But we find that this education of sympathy is not only systematically ignored... but it is severely repressed. From our very childhood, habits are formed and knowledge is imparted in such a manner that our life is weaned away from nature, and our mind and the world are set in opposition from the beginning of our days.”

Even though a century has passed since this observation was made by Rabindranath Tagore, the issues that he highlighted continue to resonate for educators and peacebuilders in India. The challenges posed by violence (of different forms) remain and so do the debates over the role that education should play in engendering peace in our society.

On the International Day of Peace (September 21, 2013), Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) and Lady Shri Ram College for Women (LSR) brought together students and aspiring educators for a Roundtable titled Exploring Educational Spaces for Peace and Non-Violence. The Roundtable offered an opportunity to the participants to pause, reflect, and consider whether education can play the transformative role that visionary leaders like Tagore, Krishnamurti and Gandhi had envisioned.

The theme for International Peace Day 2013 was “Education for Peace”. In an official statement the UN Secretary General averred that on this day, “The United Nations will examine the role education can play in fostering global citizenship. It is not enough to teach children how to read, write, and count. Education has to cultivate mutual respect for others...and help people forge more just, inclusive, and peaceful societies.”1

* Prepared by Seema Kakran

While there is a general consensus among educators that education should play a transformative role in the individual and collective lives, many of the broader questions about the nature of the transformation and the means to bring about the desired change are left unanswered. The LSR-WISCOMP Roundtable provided a space to discuss some of these questions:

- Should peace be a goal of education? If so, should it only be a pragmatic choice or a principle chosen for its inherent value?
- What is the relationship between peace and non-violence?
- Can non-violence or peace be taught? If not, what conditions are required to cultivate a culture of peace?
- What possibilities exist in the Indian educational institutions to foster a culture of peace or promote non-violence?

The Roundtable programme commenced with a presentation by the team of researchers from the interdisciplinary research project – The Imprisoned Dove: Transcending Conflict and Building Cultures of Peace. This research project was undertaken by three departments of Lady Shri Ram College (Psychology, Elementary Education, and Political Science) in 2012. The research attempted to provide innovative policy relevant tools and intervention strategies to address the challenges posed by the changing nature of conflict. The project was built on the understanding that there is lack of sufficient interdisciplinary engagement with the causes and responses to protracted social conflict, both from the standpoint of theory and praxis. It explored individual attitudes, beliefs, and attribution styles about ‘self’ and ‘the other’ as well as the possibilities that peace education offers for changing negative images and reinforcing positive values among young people. The presentation at the Roundtable was based on the findings of the research studies conducted as part of the project in Delhi and Srinagar.

This exploration into the causes and consequences of individual attitudes and beliefs was followed by a presentation on Gandhi and

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2 As defined by the United Nations, the Culture of Peace is “a set of values, attitudes, modes of behavior, and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflicts by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations.” See http://www.unesco.org/iycp/uk/uk_sum_cp.htm
Non-Violence in Contemporary Education. In India, Gandhi’s ideas have often been synonymous with peace and peacebuilding. However, Gandhi did not use the phrase ‘peace’ extensively in his writings and speeches. In fact, T.M.P. Mahadevan (a Gandhian scholar) posits that Gandhi’s philosophy revolved around five principles: Satya (truth), Ahimsa (non-violence), Brahmacharya (celibacy as an approach to God), Tapasya (Sacrifice), and Sadhna (self-realization). Peace does not feature in this list of core principles. The reason Gandhi did not foreground peace was because, for him, peace flowed from acts of non-violence. In other words, he believed that non-violent practice would organically result in peace. He was also aware that if the focus is on peace, non-violence may not necessarily be the preferred method for achieving it. The relevance of this complex relationship between peace and non-violence was an important component of the discussions.

The relevance of the peace and non-violence relationship was placed against the backdrop of conflicts at the turn of the Millenium, including those in Iraq, Afghanistan, and Kosovo which were fought in the name of ‘ushering peace’. Even the proposed military action in Syria (at the time of the Roundtable discussion) was being defended by the US President in similar terms. He stated that “Out of the ashes of world war, we built an international order and enforced the rules that gave it meaning. And we did so because we believe that the right of individuals to live in peace and dignity depends on the responsibilities of nations. We aren’t perfect, but this nation more than any other has been willing to meet those responsibilities.”

Several questions were placed for discussion at the roundtable, including:

- Is non-violence essential to achieving peace?
- Can the use of violence be justified under certain circumstances or conditions?

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3 This argument was made by historian Vinay Lal at the Eighth Annual Conflict Transformation Workshop in New Delhi. See Manjrika Sewak, Enriching Democratic Practice in South Asia: Possibilities from the Field of Peacebuilding, WISCOMP, New Delhi: 2010.

What yardsticks should be used to assess if violence is justified? Do we look at the Constitution or a global ethic, or can we draw on faith traditions to seek answers?

The final set of presentations at the Roundtable were made by a group of students (at the school and college level) who had over a period of several months, attended workshops organized by WISCOMP and FAEA as part of the *Hum Kadam* initiative. Drawing from their experience of participating in the structured interactions that have taken place between youth leaders in Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi, the students shared the successes and the challenges that any attempt to use educational spaces for building peace is likely to encounter. They discussed how trust and respect for multiculturalism can be promoted across the conflict divides.
Proceedings

The Roundtable discussion opened with introductory remarks delivered by Seema Kakran, Deputy Director, WISCOMP. Extending a warm welcome to all the participants from across disciplines and educational institutions in New Delhi, she commemorated the occasion of International Day of Peace, as a day of immense value and inspiration. She noted that it was a day to acknowledge the contribution of all women and men who worked dedicatedly to repress violence and build peace across the world. It was also a day to renew individual and collective commitment to end violence in all its different forms and to create a more just and humane society. Most importantly, it was a day to pause and reflect, and consider how best to address the challenges of burgeoning violence that inflict our society.

United Nations declared the theme for the International Day of Peace 2013 to be ‘Education for Peace’ foregrounding the transformative potential of education to foster inclusive and peaceful societies. This theme, Kakran noted, resonated especially for WISCOMP for two key reasons. Firstly, 2013 marked the completion of one year of WISCOMP’s Hum Kadam: Education for Peace initiative which was conceptualized with a view to facilitate dialogue and understanding between youth and educators in Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi through workshops and trainings that promote trust and respect for multiculturalism across the regional divide. Secondly, WISCOMP has had a long standing relationship with Lady Shri Ram College for Women which is an iconic institution of excellence that nurtures young women professionals with the sensibility and sensitivity to excel in every sphere. The College prepares aspiring educators and peace and conflict scholars who are committed to addressing the daunting challenges of the time. In several ways, what happens at LSR sets an example to be emulated across the University of Delhi. It was therefore significant that WISCOMP was celebrating the International day of Peace and discussing the theme of Education for Peace at LSR.

Contextualizing the need for such a discussion, Kakran noted that the roundtable was being held amidst calls for war in Syria and the pronouncement of death sentence for perpetrators of the December 16
gang rape case in New Delhi. Clearly, the atmosphere was vitiated by calls for use of violence. This phenomena was not unique and the world was increasingly witness to the use of incessant violence on the pretext of establishing peace’. Furthermore, she acknowledged that young people had become sceptical about the efficacy of nonviolence and ‘peace talk’ and placed them in the realm of the impractical and abstract concepts. She concluded by saying that it was critical that the youth living in times of violence recovered agency, restored their faith in nonviolent action, and disallowed the crassness of the reality that surrounded them to subsume dreams of justice.

The Imprisoned Dove

Making the first presentation at the roundtable discussion, Megha Dhillon, Professor, Department of Psychology, Lady Shri Ram College, shared some of the findings of the Research Project – The Imprisoned Dove: Transcending Conflict and Building Cultures of Peace. Using perspectives from the disciplines of psychology, education and political science, the interdisciplinary project, she said, had sought to explore the interplay of identity, education and nation-state to foster or inhibit cultures of peace within the classrooms in Indian schools.

Explaining the sample and methodology employed in the research, Dhillon stated that the study used individual as the unit of analysis. The sample included principals, teachers and Muslim adolescents (of grades 9 and 10) at 10 schools in Delhi and 3 schools in Kashmir. The effort was to compare perceptions of people in an area of armed conflict and an area of ‘relative peace’. Data was collected through questionnaires, drawings, and semi-structured interviews and analysed through qualitative and quantitative methods.

The researchers investigated certain psychological processes in adolescents including stereotypes, religious identities, and attribution styles for in-group and out-group behaviours that are closely associated

5 Attribution is a concept in social psychology addressing the processes by which individuals explain the causes of behavior and events.
with conflicts in classrooms. They also explored notions of peace and conflict harboured by teachers, and their views on how pedagogy and curricula facilitate or inhibit cultures of peace in the teaching-learning process. This was based on the premise that all these factors interacted to create the reality that exists in classrooms.

With a view to unpack the psychological mechanisms that underlie conflicts, researchers posed questions that presented hypothetical situations based in school settings to indirectly test the adolescents’ patterns of attribution styles based on the religious identity of the actor. Their responses indicated that religious identity was stronger in adolescents in Kashmir as compared to their counterparts in Delhi. Interestingly, Kashmiri adolescents had more positive perceptions of Hindus as well as Muslims. Students in Kashmir attributed good deeds by both Hindus and Muslims to internal factors while adolescents in Delhi largely attributed socially desirable behaviour in people to external factors. It was noted that despite living in a zone of protracted conflict, adolescents in Kashmir held a more positive outlook of people in general, as compared to adolescents in Delhi who displayed a sense of cynicism.

In addition to questionnaires, drawings were studied as a projective technique to understand the dominant identities that children of Delhi and Kashmir expressed. In this exercise, children from both regions revealed a convergence in thoughts. They selected similar themes for drawing that included environmental issues and social concerns. Some of the children from both Kashmir and Delhi also depicted violence in their drawings. It was noted that while adolescents from Delhi highlighted violence at the personal level (like burglary and crime-murder) those from Kashmir drew attention to systemic violence (like terrorism and stone pelting).

The researchers also found that personal identity was overwhelmingly prominent in Delhi, and completely missing in Kashmir. Regional identity emerged as a strong theme in the drawings of adolescents from Kashmir where they displayed an emotional connection with the State and a deep admiration for its natural environment. In contrast, regional identity in Delhi was not as pronounced. National identity emerged more strongly in Delhi, but was also quite strong in Kashmir. There was no distinct sense of anger or apathy expressed by children in
Kashmir towards the rest of the nation in the sample but this, the researchers observed, may have been due to the nature of the sample which was drawn exclusively from the Indian Army run schools.

The research project also analysed the perspectives of teachers on peace and conflict as their beliefs can have a strong influence on students’ attitudes. Teachers from both Delhi and Kashmir felt that, at the personal level, peace meant serenity and freedom, yet paradoxically, when asked what peace meant in the context of the classroom, they pointed towards strict discipline and silence. Majority of the teachers in Delhi expressed that peace can be taught, while those in Kashmir stated that peace cannot be taught to children and must be ‘experienced or felt’. To a large number of respondents in Delhi, peace meant absence of war, but to the teachers in Kashmir that was not enough. For them, peace had its religious, political, economic and social facets and could only be achieved if there was a balance in all these aspects and the government helped in bringing stability and development in the state.

Identifying the sources of conflict within classrooms, teachers from Kashmir largely pointed towards religion and community, while teachers from Delhi highlighted economic standard and gender as the key factors that triggered conflict. Besides variations in terms of caste, gender, religion and class, teachers from both regions commonly noted that several external factors which the child experienced beyond the school frontiers and carried as baggage into the classroom, were also manifested in conflicts. These encompassed domestic violence, primary socialization experiences, nuclear family setups and emotional deprivation amongst children. Many teachers were also deeply conscious of how curriculum, both overt and hidden, contributed to accentuating conflict in the classroom.

Teachers from both Delhi and Kashmir noted that challenges to promoting a culture of peace in classrooms were numerous and varied from administrative constraints to a teacher’s inability to handle contentious issues in classrooms. Stereotypes and cultural baggage of children and teachers, patterns of aggression in students, overcrowded classrooms, burden of prescribed syllabus, and lack of adequate training provided to teachers were seen as factors that inhibited cultivation of a peaceful ethos in schools.
Comparing the perspectives of adolescents and teachers in the context of Kashmir, Dhillon underscored a marked difference. The adolescents were more positive in their attitude towards the out-group and displayed greater optimism about the future and possibilities of peace. The teachers, however, felt more victimized and were sceptical of their role in building peace. This, perhaps, ensued from the fact that the teachers had personally experienced insurgency at its peak in Kashmir and had unaddressed issues of trauma. It was learned that unless teachers were provided forums to address their own trauma, it was unreasonable to expect them to promote peace in the classroom.

Dhillon said the research revealed the importance of education for peace in classrooms, yet noted that classrooms were falling short of being spaces where peace was being encouraged and nurtured adequately. The teachers in the education system remained focused on gaining control over the mind rather than liberating young minds. Furthermore, she stressed the need to train teachers to handle the emotional and psychological state of learners and to provide a safe space to discuss contentious issues in classrooms, rather than brushing them aside. The research also foregrounded the need to acknowledge that teachers from Kashmir and from Delhi could have experienced overt violence, and therefore required avenues to discuss and resolve that before beginning to contribute towards building peace in the classrooms. For this they would need increased avenues for networking and skill building, so that the vision of schools as ‘nurseries of peace’ can be successfully translated at the ground level and does not remain only an idea, she concluded.

**Gandhi and Non-violence in Contemporary Education**

Any discussion on peace can be enriched by bringing in the Gandhian perspective, since many peacebuilders across the globe have looked to Gandhi’s writings for inspiration and informing their practice. Deepti Priya Mehrotra, an independent scholar and activist, discussed some facets of Gandhian philosophy and practice by addressing critical questions like — ‘What is the relevance of Gandhian ideas in education today?’
‘Can education help make us more peaceful, wise and well-meaning, so that we, in turn, are able to create peace and justice in the world?’ She began with a thought expressed by Amit Bhatt, a senior educator at a Gandhian school in Gujarat, who said: “Education must have two things – love and work. Each child must be loved. Love is the way, not harsh words or punishment. Work must be done by everybody, as part of the daily schedule. Teachers and students must work – it may be a craft, or agriculture – involving physical labour. If these two conditions are met in education, it would take care of all problems of society. Marxists fight–rightly–for the rights of workers, but according to Gandhi, we should all become workers.”

Mehrotra underscored that in the model of basic education envisaged by Gandhi, children learn how to respect both intellect and physical labour. The goal of such an education is to cultivate *Swavalamban* or ‘self-reliance’ in children. When each person learns as a child to do physical labour and produce something functional and useful to the human society, then the child already has a means of livelihood. In some senses, this pointed to the fact that the Gandhian model of education assures full employment and is inextricably linked to the economy and politics. Furthermore, she noted that establishing dignity of labour and an inclusive non-hierarchical society are at the heart of this approach to education.

Sharing an example of a school which truly embodied Gandhi’s philosophy of ‘learning by doing’, Mehrotra spoke about a residential school in Jhabua, Madhya Pradesh. Children at the school worked with their teachers to help with cooking, agriculture and producing handicrafts which were sold at the local market. They even formed a peace group called *Shanti Toli* where young students engaged in conflict resolution to address local conflicts. Thus, she stressed that Gandhi’s idea of basic education, which integrates knowledge and work to make children self-sufficient and socially useful, holds immense value.

Mehrotra noted that education ought to enable young people to develop the best in themselves, bringing out their latent capacities and enhancing these in a way that was aligned to the wider social good. Gandhi too recognized this as the goal of education and consciously refrained from fixing any particular educational system as ideal for all times and all
ages. To this end, he articulated *Nai Taleem* as an expanded vision of education, which went beyond school education, to advocate ‘education for life’. This model indicated that education should forever be renewed, in consonance with changing contexts.

Integral to the essence of *Nai Taleem* was training in nonviolence. Underscoring *ahimsa* as an extremely powerful force, Mehrotra explained that Gandhi taught nonviolent dissent and resistance to everyone. He said, “One person who can express *ahimsa* in life exercises a force superior to all the forces of brutality”. Non-violence, for Gandhi, was akin to love. It signified a deeper underlying force of affinity and fellow-feeling with all, a cosmic connection, which united across superficial differences. Such an understanding always provided ground for building on some commonality with others despite all the apparent differences and carved a space for dialogue.

In conclusion, Mehrotra noted that given the burgeoning conflicts, the purpose of education should be to increase awareness about the complexities inherent in conflict situations that surround us, and to propel self-reflection in individuals. Encouraging the participants to critically reflect over their thoughts and actions, she underscored the need to perpetually ask oneself – How am I contributing to a culture of peace or violence? She ended her presentation on the note that if we practice peace and nonviolence, we must do it holistically and consciously in all spheres of our lives, in the personal as well as public space.

At the conclusion of the presentation, Kakran made some observations. She noted that Gandhi taught us how to perceive education through a different lens, linking it to the broader economy and politics. In this context, it becomes imperative for educators to question the goals they set for education in terms of what it seeks to achieve. Are we over-emphasizing productive individuals in terms of employability and the scale of income they can generate? Or are we thinking more broadly of combining love and work in education and inspiring young students to become conscientious citizens and positive change-makers in society?

She further noted that the notion of nonviolence as love holds immense value. At a deeper level, we all long for a shared humanity and feel affinity with our fellow beings despite our differences. However,
realizing this underlying human connection in practice is extremely challenging because our ideas, principles and affiliations define who we are and inform our identity. Thus, it becomes difficult to transcend differences and accept those who hold diametrically opposite beliefs as worthy of our love. In this context, Kakran asked – Can education provide that space for us to be self-reflective and interrogate our identities? The key lies in communicating with the ‘other’, sensitizing ourselves to one another’s realities and challenging and questioning our prejudices. To this end, she asserted the need to harness the potential offered by new methods of communication spawned by advances in the internet and information technology which had opened new avenues for connection and collaboration between people across the globe. Using these global platforms, young people could search for creative and inclusive solutions, provided they developed the required will.

**Prospects of Educating for Peace:**

**The *Hum Kadam* Experience**

Moving from a purely theoretical engagement with ideas on education of peace, the next segment at the roundtable focused on praxis. Some students from Delhi and Srinagar who had participated in peacebuilding workshops as part of the *Hum Kadam* initiative, made presentations at the Roundtable. These workshops were provided avenues for face-to-face interaction for youth from Kashmir and Delhi, to enhance understanding and communication, deconstruct prejudices and foster active coexistence. The workshops also trained young people in conflict transformation skills and empowered them to value democratic participation and pluralism. Some participants from these workshops shared their experiences of interacting with the perceived ‘other’, and highlighted what in their view were the constraints or possibilities of bringing a larger number of people into the ‘peace fold’.

In the context of Delhi-Kashmir relations, absence of channels of communication, biased media coverage, and exclusion of important narratives of history in textbooks, have meshed together to generate deep-rooted prejudices and suspicion of the ‘other’, especially amongst the youth. Most of the participants, from schools and colleges, underscored that they immensely valued the opportunity to engage in face-to-face interactions with the perceived ‘other’. Such an
engagement, they noted, provided them a safe space to interrogate their own biases and forge an understanding of each other’s realities leading to more positive perceptions and attitudes about the ‘other’. They also imbibed values such as respect for multiple viewpoints, interdependence, universal responsibility, empathy, and nonviolence. One of the participants shared,

“As our conversations deepened, we realized there are no sides. Human rights violation is common to us all. There is no taking of sides when I hear of unmarked graves, half-widows, only one thousand Kashmiri Pandits left in Kashmir, people are detained and tortured and killed. Where I live and where I come from does not matter. What matters is that there is this human connection between all of us which is so beautiful.”

Several participants also felt empowered with skills in active listening, dialogue, and consensus building and shared that the innovative formats employed at the workshops facilitated critical thinking and deeper self-awareness in them. A student from Jamia Millia Islamia shared that after experiencing the militarized context of Jammu and Kashmir (J and K) first hand and witnessing incidents of daily humiliation and terror that the locals suffered, she could make sense of the alienation and grievance that her Kashmiri classmates in Delhi harboured. Many saw merit in building on commonalities and engaging in peace partnerships towards a shared and peaceful future. As someone said, ‘We are all young people with similar dreams and share ambitions to bring about positive change.’ A participant who was studying to become an educator felt inspired to spread the ideas she learnt at the workshop in her classroom by consciously basing her pedagogic strategies on ideas of nonviolence and respect.

Through the interactions, the presenters shared that they also became more self-reflective and critical of their thoughts and actions. For many, the meaning of leadership expanded beyond its managerial connotation to include respect for others’ points of views and collaboration. Participants from Delhi expressed surprise at how hopeful and lively their counterparts from Kashmir had been, despite hailing from a context of protracted conflict, while a participant from Kashmir noted having
transcended hostility and feeling a sense of ‘deep oneness’ with his friends from Delhi.

Sharing the challenges one might encounter in bringing a larger number of people into the ‘peace fold’, a participant from Kashmir pointed to the differences in opinion and hardened identities that existed in different regions of J and K. Given the stark polarization, it would be difficult to bring people from different regions of the state together to engage in dialogue. Another participant studying at Jamia Millia Islamia observed that people often labelled her institution as being ‘Islamic, fundamentalist and undemocratic’. The first step towards dispelling such stereotypes, she noted, was to increase communication and cross-cultural exchanges to enable people to experience each other’s contexts. To this end, she suggested instituting a core team of youth, passionate about spreading the message of peace, at colleges/universities across Delhi. These young people could serve as initiators of activities on the campus. Support for such initiatives was critical since peace education was absent in the curriculum of most higher education institutions, she concluded.

The discussion that followed the presentations mainly revolved around suggestions for taking action and clarifications on WISCOMP’s work in the area of educating for peace. One of the participants inquired about the ways in which community involvement could be encouraged to take peace education to a large number of people. To this, Kakran responded that as part of its Education for Peace initiative, WISCOMP was working concertedly with students and educators at schools and colleges, exploring possibilities of engaging in community outreach programmes. For example, some of the workshop participants at St. Mary’s School, New Delhi planned to change the structure and functioning of their Students’ Union to make it more participatory and democratic, which in turn would positively impact the ethos of the entire school. Some schools in Delhi had proposed institutional linkages and exchange programs with schools in Northeast India to encourage understanding and respect for multiculturalism. Thus, Kakran shared that through small and gradual steps, WISCOMP envisioned a larger ripple effect to bring change.

A participant lauded the work being done by organizations such as WISCOMP, which creatively engage with educational institutions to
expose them to values of nonviolence, universal responsibility and respect for diversity. However, he expressed concern over the inclusion of only a few educational institutions into their fold which were concentrated in the ‘elite’ areas within Delhi. It was critical, he noted, to extend such initiatives to schools and colleges in the periphery of the city to expose students and educators with diverse backgrounds to such learnings and experiences.

One of the students pursuing a Bachelors’ degree in Elementary Education shared a concern from her experience of teaching at a government school in Delhi as part of her course work. On several occasions, issues of prejudice emerged among young students in the classroom along the faultlines of religion, gender and class, but she felt helpless in mediating such conflicts owing to lack of prior training in handling such situations. While she had been exposed to trainings on dialogue and prejudice reduction as part of the WISCOMP workshops she attended, she foregrounded that teacher education programmes must equip educators with innovative pedagogic skills to handle contentious issues in classrooms.

Another participant asked, ‘What are the possibilities of mainstreaming peace education?’ Noting the importance of the question, Kakran remarked that several academicians and peace practitioners doubt that a curriculum based homogenous method of imparting peace education would be an effective strategy. She asked, ‘Do we want to have pre-defined modules of peace education that are taught in all contexts across the country, regardless of what the life experiences of different groups and regions are? ’ Answering in the negative, she underscored that notions of peace education perhaps need to be context-sensitive and rooted in the ground reality in order to be sustainable. It would be naïve to undermine the complexities and intricate layers of building peace, and it is pertinent to engage with these aspects before we consider mainstreaming peace education.

One participant pointed that the language of instruction used in several schools in India was Hindi, which was not necessarily the native language of the region. In such situations, she asked, how effective was learning for the child? Mehrotra responded that India has a very complex linguistic map which is further complicated by language politics in the field of education. Gandhi endorsed learning in the
mother-tongue during the early literacy stage to preserve continuity with local languages and culture. Using the local language and cultural experiences, and building on the knowledge that the child already has, makes learning more effective. But she cautioned against getting parochial about this beyond a point. Offering an alternate view, Mehrotra shared the Dalit point of view foregrounded by Ambedkar, who argued that English as a language should be learnt by everyone in India as it could be a means of empowerment. Thus, she underscored the need to think in terms of multilingualism and systematically investing in learning more languages from an early age. She noted, ‘All the traditions of the world can actually be our traditions. We must draw the best from all the traditions, languages and cultures and learn to be multicultural.’

Concluding the Roundtable, Kakran expressed hope that the discussions and presentations would compel the participants to introspect and lead to the germination of new ideas, if not resolve all their queries. She noted that it was only by challenging our certitudes and engaging with muddled thoughts that clarity and progression of knowledge could occur.
Programme

10:30 a.m. – 10:40 a.m. Welcome
Seema Kakran

10:40 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. The Imprisoned Dove
Dr. Megha Dhillon
Department of Psychology, LSR
Innovation Project Team

11:00 a.m. – 11:20 a.m. Gandhi and Nonviolence in Contemporary Education
Dr. Deepti Priya Mehrotra

11:20 a.m. – 12:00 noon Prospects of Educating for Peace: The Hum Kadam Experience
Sampurnaa Dutta, Jamia Millia Islamia
Mukarram Wahid, St. Stephen’s College
Ashmita Phukan & Atharva Puranik, St. Mary’s School
Diksha Poddar, Ambedkar University
Naincy Catherine, LSR

12:00 noon – 12:45 p.m. Discussion
List of Participants

Lady Shri Ram College for Women

Department of Elementary Education
Pooja Chhabra
Upasana Singh
Chetna
Anjali
Nishtha Bhutani
Gayatri Tahiliani
Shilpa Kaim
Aabha Rawat
Maggi Gupta
Ramnika Singh
Aditi Dhyani
Neha Yadav
Aditya
Nisha Rani
Nisha Yadav
Ritapya Sharma
Anamica Sharma
Bhawna Singh
Lipika

Department of Political Science
Baisali Mohanty
Shanvi Tripathi
Maleeha Mukhtar
Anjana Anchayil
Suman Talukdar
Ananta Seth
Gayatri Raghunandan
Arunima Khanduri
Asawati Bhardwaj
Shailja Tandon
Ayushi Parvathanani
Shalini Chaudhary
Avni Bamnia
Komal Gaur

Department of Journalism
Aakriti Kalra
Susmita Jhirugudu
Meenakshi Yadav
Akanksha Berry
Pulkita Khetarpal

Department of Psychology
Vandana Bhramasa

Department of History
Prerna Bhagi

Department of English
Aashita Agarwal

Department of Philosophy
Sonakshi Samtani

Aung San Suu Kyi Centre for Peace
Bani (Lady Shri Ram College for Women)
Vinayak Rajesekhar ((Lady Shri Ram College for Women)
Shreya Das (Hindu College)
Apurav Maggu (Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College)
Christina Atkinson (Lady Shri Ram College for Women)
Ruby Bultwatkins (Lady Shri Ram College for Women)
Apoorva Gupta (Lady Shri Ram College for Women)
Vikas Choudhary (Jamia Millia Islamia)
Devileena Bose (Lady Shri Ram College for Women)

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Department of Political Science
Nehal Ahmed
Sampurnaa Dutta

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School of Development Studies
Diksha Poddar

St. Stephen’s College
Department of History
Mukarram Wahid

Miranda House
Department of Political Science
Divyanshi Wadhwa

Maharaja Agrasen College
Department of History
Aditi Mudgal

St. Mary’s School
Ashmita Phukan
Atharva Puranaik
Profiles of Speakers

Ashmita Phukan is a Class XI student at St Mary’s School, New Delhi.

Atharva Puranik is a Class XI student at St Mary’s School, New Delhi.

Deepti Priya Mehrotra is an independent scholar and activist. She works extensively with civil society organizations as adviser and consultant, and has taught political science, philosophy, peace and gender studies at Delhi University and Ambedkar University.

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