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Education and Peacebuilding: Perspectives from the Field

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Editorial

The pervasiveness of everyday violence in South Asia is combined by a deep ambivalence towards it at several levels of state and society. Violence that was often seen as an effect of underlying societal tensions and conflicts has become integral to the construction of intra community solidarity. Consequently, the armed security apparatus of the state (which seeks to use legitimate force to curb violence), has come to be replicated by an equally well-armed set of opponents who resort to violence as a primary method of resolving conflicts. This has created a vicious cycle of conflict and discord, where each side enjoys legitimacy accorded by its constituency. There is an urgent need to break this cycle and to search for alternatives to processes of otherization and militarization.

This volume of Peace Prints seeks to explore how formal education can be used to expound the futility of suffering caused both by overt and covert violence and to cultivate non violent alternatives for resolving conflicts. The articles in the volume are largely perspectives from the field from which innovative theoretical approaches might emerge. They provide insights into the challenges and possibilities of educating for peace in the conflict prone states of South Asia that are deeply divided along the faultlines of religion, ethnicity, language, class and gender.

Education can provide opportunities for resolving conflicts only when it enables individuals to acquire familiarity with the beliefs, values and perspectives of others, cultivate a willingness and ability to communicate their own position, and to critically revisit their a priori. This reflexivity is crucial to peaceful resolution of conflicts. The cultivation of such attitudes is vital in a context like South Asia, primarily because the cultural heterogeneity of the region necessitates acceptance of the inherent limits of our beliefs, values and ways of thinking.

Until recently, research on ‘peace education’ was largely West centric. The growth of scholarly interest in Asia to apply, adapt and critically look at this discourse is generating several alternative perspectives. S.P. Udayakumar, in Peace Education in India: A Proposal, underscores the importance of recognizing that there are no intrinsic methods of resolving conflicts. Instead there is a need for conscious crafting of attitudes that can lead to interrogation of existing paradigms and stimulate creative ways of addressing differences that have the potential to trigger violence. Grounding his argument on the significance of cultural linkages among South Asian nations to build peace, he outlines the multiplicity of approaches available to educate for
peace in the region which continues to be marred by conflicts both at the interstate and intrastate levels.

Addressing some fundamental concerns about the underlying philosophy of education that is conducive to peace and the prototypical attributes of education that engenders peace, the article *Education for Peace: Kaleidoscopic Musings* by Shweta Singh focuses on creating a classroom that not only prepares the young for non-violent behavior but also motivates them to see justice as the core of peace. She argues that if education in India is to expand its role, it must move beyond the existing ‘transmission model’ whereby received wisdom is transferred from one generation to the next. She proposes the alternative in a “learner centered classroom”, which provides both openness and avenues for critical engagement. By encouraging the student to develop cognitive skills such as reflective thinking and problem solving techniques and motivating them to generate, discover, build and enlarge their framework of knowledge, Singh avers that such a classroom can help both the teacher and the student to cultivate a commitment to work towards ‘just peace’.

Given that religious differences have often been used to incite violence in South Asia the next two articles deal with the issues arising from assertion of religious identity. Meenakshi Gopinath in *Educating for Coexistence: Challenges and Possibilities in India* delineates the creative possibilities presented by educational practices to create spaces for coexistence. She explores the historical context within which the idea of ‘unity in diversity’ came to inform education policies in the early years of India’s independence and maps some of the developments in education policy and practice that have generated fissures within and between communities. She cautions that unless simultaneous changes are brought about to redress structural inequities, merely changing curricula and pedagogy would not repair relations between the different communities.

Addressing a related concern, Zahid Shahab Ahmed in *Madrasa Education in the Pakistani Context: Challenges, Reforms and Future Directions* critically analyzes the widespread tendency of reviling Islamic educational institutions in the aftermath of the September 11 attacks. By focusing on the recent madrasa reforms in Pakistan as a case in point, he seeks to provide an alternative perspective on how religious instruction can provide space for overcoming prejudice and sectarianism.

Drawing lessons from East Asia and the United States through an empirical exploration of the question of racial intolerance in societies where large scale in-migration has occurred, Kevin Kester and Brigid Glustein in *Linking Gender*
suggest that sensitivity to gender differences can be a useful strategy to promote respect for other differences based on race, language, ethnicity or class.

Heather Millhouse in *The Place of Peace* draws attention to a particular gap in the theory and practice of peace education— the absence of any discussion on barriers to educating for peace. To gauge the perception of barriers that peace educators encounter, Millhouse uses a survey of a group of Australian students training to become educators. She concludes that unless structural changes germane to the socio-cultural context become part of the efforts to educate for peace, transformative change may be difficult to bring about. Consequently, she argues that those who wish to use education as a tool for peacebuilding must look for localized solutions.

Illustrating the diverse strategies adopted by conflict resolution programs in developed countries as well as states in South America, Jennifer C. Batton’s contribution, *Peace and Conflict Education around the Globe* provides insights into some of the methodologies that are being used to respond to increasing levels of violence and conflict. Her lucid description of the various programs can serve as an important resource for educators as well as policy makers.

*Education and the Architecture of an Inclusive Society*, by Jyoti Bose foregrounds the issue of access to quality education and how the denial of this opportunity has led to widening chasms in Indian society. She sees the response to this inequality predicament as essential to resolution of any conflicts arising from caste, class and religious differences.

The question whether education can be an effective tool for building peace between communities and states in South Asia has no simple answers. Any discussion on the subject is bound to raise an array of responses. The ongoing debates on the shortcomings of existing systems of education in South Asia have seldom focused on its relevance to the understanding and possible mitigation of conflicts that societies with deep cleavages reveal. This volume of *Peace Prints* does not seek to settle ongoing disputes, but makes an attempt to explore why education should continue to be on the agenda of peace builders in the region.

Seema Kakran

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PEACE EDUCATION IN INDIA:
A PROPOSAL

S. P. Udayakumar

Abstract

Across the world, Peace Education programs are gaining popularity, as states, international agencies and civil society organizations increasingly recognize the importance of such education. However, with this growing recognition there are increasing contestations over both the broader objectives and the specificities of carrying out peace education programs. This article sketches out the various options that are available, and also looks at how a regional perspective on peace through education can be generated. While such a perspective would have to be sensitive to the history, the current reality and the future needs of the different South Asian states, given the shared cultural practices in South Asia, it may not be an impossible undertaking.

All over the world, a great deal of emphasis is currently being placed upon peace education, as the quest for peace necessitates extensive knowledge and unfailing assiduity. The widespread interest in preparing individuals for peace on earth makes us resort to the teaching-learning process. The inevitability of this emphasis upon education for peace has arisen not only from the need to educate the public opinion of the scourges of war, its prodigality or the danger of total annihilation etc, but also from the necessity to promote understanding, acceptance and friendship among all peoples and nations, and to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Learning to make a living is not the sole reason for getting education; there is another, equally important byproduct: learning to make a life, a life that is beneficial, useful and peaceful. After all, humans are social animals; their success in life is largely a matter of successful social relations. Quite evidently, student age is the crucially important period which enriches one’s personal life, nurtures social adjustments, fosters friendship and understanding and affects one’s whole life

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pattern. Seen from this perspective, one could very well understand the critical necessity of teaching students, youth and young leaders the art of living together, in mutual respect, justice, love and peace.

Alfred North Whitehead calls education “the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge.” We need to tell our students, youth and young leaders about our world and its problems. We need to explain to them their part in the solutions. We need to instill in them a genuine appreciation of, and a profound liking towards, our humanitarian traditions and values such as non-violence, tolerance, understanding, cooperation and peace. To quote H.G. Wells, “human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe” and hence, we must educate the youth for peace. However, will any kind of education, given by anybody to anybody under any circumstances, bring about these results? It is highly unlikely.

Peace education itself is as abstruse a notion as peace. Any attempt to define peace education in strict terms, or to typify a set of programs for the purpose of generalization would prove futile, as the most important features that characterize the notion of peace education are many and varied. The aims and objectives, the perspectives of the subject, the working methods and other theoretical and practical approaches are decisive variables. Furthermore, place, period, local environment and other internal variations are major affective components in deciding the kind of peace education, its scope, its nature and the values one would attach to it. Owing to these factors, peace education varies from country to country, and even between regions within one country. However multifarious the approaches are, all educational programs and activities collected under peace education would seek to prepare the students for peace. To put it in a nutshell, peace education sees to the construction of defenses of peace and fences of justice in the minds of the younger generation, and to making the youth hold to peace individually in life.

Peace education covers a wide territory, and has many subsidiaries. Mitsuo Okamoto argues that disarmament education, international education, development education and the like can, by broad definition, be included as programs in peace education. The contents denominated by the various titles like world order education, global education, education for international understanding, education for justice, ecological education etc., have been categorized by Okamoto into four types of peace education.1 The first sees peace education as criticism of war. The basic view here is that peace is the absence of war (negative peace). Content of this type includes teaching concerning the legacy of war experience, a scientific explanation of the

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causes of war and conditions of peace, the promotion of international understanding as a preventive to war, etc. The second type considers peace education as liberation. Here, a new concept of peace, positive peace (which is defined as that social condition characterized by economic independence, a stable order, social justice, human rights and welfare), is presupposed. Liberation from poverty, ignorance, discrimination and oppression etc. is seen as the objective goal for peace education here.

The third type regards peace education as a learning process. In this type, peace education is grasped as a learning process towards inter-personal maturity on the basis of the unity between theory and practice on the one hand, and a critical understanding of history and society on the other. The fourth type holds peace education as life-style movements: it rests upon the realization that warfare and war preparations are intimately tied to the fact that the over-production and extravagance of the nations at the center have been gained at the expense of the wealth and development of nations at the periphery. Here, we can refer to a standard of values emphasizing a simple life, human scale, self-determination, ecological awareness and personal growth.

Disarmament education is a major development in the field of peace education. It implies education both for and about disarmament. All who engage in education or communication may contribute to disarmament education by being aware and creating an awareness of the factors underlying the production and acquisition of arms, of the social, political, economic and cultural repercussions of the arms race, and of the grave danger, to the survival of humanity, of the existence and potential use of nuclear weapons. Development education explores development issues and focuses on the development process. Obviously, the content of development education in a developing country like India is entirely different from that of a developed country. Given the present situation in India, creating a deeper consciousness and awareness of our development problems among our students, and designing programs of personal involvement in development activities will open up new vistas in our development process. We can also find a very strong correlation between development education and environmental education.

The wider view of the meaning of peace gives rise to several innovations in the domain of peace education, viz. the teaching of human rights and fundamental freedoms, education for international understanding, education about the UN, its

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other non-formal peace education programs, such as the UN students’ association, UNESCO clubs, UNESCO Associated Schools Project and so forth. Both the conceptual and the practical approaches must be quite conspicuously delineated. Having developed a theoretical framework and drawn up policy prescriptions for carrying out peace education programs and activities, we should attend to curriculum change. Indeed, peace education demands the modification of the existing educational system, rather than mere expansion of it.

In the case of India, although caste oppression, untouchability, gender discrimination and other cruelties existed (and continue to exist), the culture has been marked by acceptance, catholicity and an innate inclusiveness which refuses to be taken away by doctrinal divergences. All these factors have facilitated the commingling and constant cultural exchanges of tribes, races, religions and ethnic groups with grave doctrinal, philosophical and ideological differences.

Islam, which came to conquer, compromised and became Indianized in the form of Sufism, and Islam influenced Hindu reformation thoughts of the nineteenth century. Indian culture, characterized by a profound understanding of the nature of humans and their relations with other beings and the universe, is absorbing all the essentials in the Western scientific civilization, and the inherent Europeanism in it has made it possible to understand the Christian culture. This ancient culture of India was taken to many contiguous lands in Asia. When improved means of communication like the printing press and the rail road were about to hasten cultural communication, the advent of political changes and aspirations, the movement for independence, fears of dominance and dependence and all such sorts of influences gave rise to an insistence on cultural independence and actual divide. The South Asian scene, which was once described as a ‘harmony of contrasts’, gave a different picture. The contrasts with strong political and psychological undercurrents became violent and caused recurrent divisions.

Recently, however, there has been a rejuvenated will to see harmony through regional cooperation efforts, and bilateral transactions and dialogues. After all, there are many cross-cutting alliances and allegiances. One of the main philosophic-religious schools of Indian culture, Buddhism, reigns supreme in Sri Lanka, where the minority Tamils share their language and religion with the people of Tamil Nadu in India. Besides the Tamils, there are other ‘language-culture’ groups represented by the Urdu-speakers in Pakistan and India, Bengali-speakers in Bangladesh and West Bengal (India), and Sindhi, Punjabi and Nepali speakers across the borders of Pakistan, India and Nepal. If Pakistan, Bangladesh, or the Maldives claims a preponderance of Islam, India too possesses eminence in Islamic culture as it has
the second largest Muslim population in the world. Signaling India’s unique identity, Hinduism and Buddhism offer a basis of understanding with the Himalayan kingdoms of Nepal and Bhutan.

Furthermore, there is ample scope to define commonalities on the foundations of philosophy, ethics and religion, literature, theater, music, dancing, painting, sculpture, architecture and even minor arts such as wood-carving, copper and cloisonne work, carpet making, earthenware etc. The wind and the limbs, the brush and the chisel, the trowel, the pen and the very spirit itself strengthen the fabric of the rich cultural milieu of South Asia with some basic character – emphasis on melody in music, traditional and stylized form in dance, free variations in painting, monumentalism in sculpture, lyricism in poems, and realism in stories. Religious fervor, fervent wedlock, strong affinity to family, respect for elders, and a host of other cultural habits and customs, too, contribute to the spinning of the regional cultural web. In spite of all these, South Asian countries cannot be simply lumped together culturally; it is even less likely, under the present circumstances marked by divided politics, diverse allegiances, differing perspectives and cultural policies etc. Maybe a good compromise would be engaging in peace education activities in one’s country without overlooking the larger regional backdrop.

The peace education we plan should be carefully adapted in kind, in amount and in distribution. The major point we have to reckon with, while deciding the quality of teaching to be given, is to understand the subcultures of India as a prerequisite to develop world-mindedness. It is highly difficult to specify the exact amount of peace education. But it is worth taking note of some of the basic questions in distribution. First, too few teachers are capable of meeting the requirements and values dictated by peace education which are crucial for favorably affecting the awareness and behavior of young minds. Second, a trite description and vague discussion will prove as useless as mere cramming up details, unless a solution is specifically mentioned and the means of implementation are spelt out. Third, the form and content of peace education is quite unique and so it does not go with conventional treatment. Evaluation, for example, is a rather difficult process as the teaching aims at the essence of individuals. There are many more related things which demand our prudent concern.

It is important to remember that peace education is not an additional academic subject we add to the existing system. Instead, it is the general orientation that we introduce in the existing subjects, textbooks and teacher discourses. For instance, the Sociology textbooks could underscore the fact that peaceful coexistence is an objective requirement for peaceful development, and vice versa. In the Physics
textbooks, emphasis could be laid on the need to fight for a ban on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and international agreements in this field. Biology books could explain, among other things, the deadly effects of exposure to radioactivity on human beings. Needless to say, one who wills the end wills the means. Though international comparisons are difficult, general lessons and indicative suggestions can be taken from international experiences also.

The challenge for educators all over the globe is to choose between going ahead with the present effete educational system, or preparing our younger generation for the kind of life each and every one of us aspires towards. To use Swami Vivekananda’s categorization, should we teach them just ‘to know’ or ‘to be’?
Education for Peace is a crucial mediating ‘space’ and ‘tool’ that addresses and facilitates transformation of conflict towards a ‘structure’ and ‘process’ that constitute ‘Just Peace’. In other words, actions for ‘Peacebuilding’ must be located in the educational system. This paper firstly, elucidates how Education has been used historically to address varied forms of violence in different geographical settings. Secondly, how each approach has been similar from the perspective of fundamental goals and values and yet unique, as it was a response to specific problems within a context and a particular historical setting. Thirdly, how currently the Education for Peace paradigm in India is an effort in the direction of nurturing Peacebuilding through educational system. Lastly, it discusses the ‘How’ of Education for Peace. This is an essential component because building peace through education is a dynamic process and thus the pedagogy or the ‘how’ is as important as the ‘what’ of Education for Peace. A possible pedagogical tool kit is delineated in the concluding part to make a contribution in this process.

What is Violence and Peace?

Theoretical developments in the field of peace research have shaped the direction of Education for Peace. Education for Peace is intertwined with the meaning of peace, which in turn is intrinsically linked to the understanding of
violence. The central questions therefore are: ‘What’ is the substantive content of the concepts of violence and peace? How do we transform conflict and build ‘just peace’? Is education a ‘space’ and ‘tool’ that can address and facilitate transformation of conflict towards creating ‘structures’ and ‘processes’ that constitute ‘just peace’?

The field of peace research which has provided an understanding of peace and violence is multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary but the understanding of violence from a perspective of ‘realpolitik’ has been focused on direct, organized violence, particularly the institution of war and armed conflict and peace consequently has been defined as the absence of organized war between or within nations. This definition of violence is now considered too narrow to encompass the many levels at which violence manifests itself and the myriad forms it takes to impact the political, social and economic order. In fact if peace is action directed against violence, then the understanding of violence needs to be broadened to include all its significant varieties.

In the early 1960s, when the field of peace research was still in its fledging stages, Johan Galtung through his writings explicated the need and rationale for expanding both the concept of violence and of peace. Galtung draws a distinction between direct and structural violence and links it to the idea of negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace represents an absence of direct violence such as cessation of hostilities or absence of organized war between or within nations and positive peace is taken to mean the presence of social justice or the absence of structural violence.

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2 Instead of a broad literature review some representative views are included which are considered especially relevant for understanding Education for Peace in India. The views of Gandhi, Johan Galtung, John Paul Lederach and Lisa Schirch are discussed from the standpoint of peace research, peace action and peacebuilding. Betty A. Reardon’s and Krishna Kumar’s views are discussed, as Reardon has spearheaded the movement to popularize the concept of Education for Peace from a Western perspective and Kumar, is the force behind the Education for Peace movement in India especially his contribution to the drafting and implementation of the National Curriculum Framework 2005. Kumar as the Director of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), has been one of the key proponents of the Education for Peace movement through the National Curriculum Framework 2005.


4 Galtung defines “Structural violence as the distance between the actual and the potential”. Structural violence is silent, it does not show; It is broadly a case of unjust or unfair institutions, laws, or rules that are perceived as violence by those who suffer, but not perceived as violence by those who benefit from the situation. It is found in legal institutions, political structures, governance patterns and the cultural patterns that govern a social system. Johan Galtung , “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research” Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 6, No. 3, (1969).
This conceptualization of peace was not altogether new. It could also be located in the writings of Mahatma Gandhi in India. Robert Hart writes, “Peace, as Gandhi envisaged it, is far more than the absence of war and violence. It is a state of positive and constructive world-view and world-order, where individuals, groups and nations eschew to dominate or exploit one another and live in cooperation and mutual aid.”\(^5\) Gandhi also states, “There is no way to peace. Peace is the way”\(^6\) – a perception which highlights that peace is a process and not an outcome or an end state.

John Paul Lederach similarly argues that “metaphorically peace is not merely a stage in time or condition. It is a dynamic social construct”\(^7\). Krishna Kumar asserts that “Peace is a state of being that must be consciously cultivated at individual, social, national and global levels”. Kumar in his explorations successfully divests peace of its popular connotation of passivity, and makes a compelling case for imagining, choosing and pursuing peace every moment of our lives. As he says, “…a counter-offensive for peace should become an everyday event. The desire for peace and the will to actualize it must begin in our hearts and minds, from where it will radiate into our shared spaces and some day, enfold the entire world.”\(^8\)

This is of critical importance as it posits that the understanding of peace is not limited to ending violence or negative peace but aims at building positive peace or just peace which is inclusive of social justice marked by values of democratic participation, respect for human needs, human rights and human security. This holistic view of peace, though not new, often goes unarticulated in these times when peace is enforced with weapons and wars are fought in the name of peace and democracy. If the meaning and goal of peace itself gets challenged; if it is enforced through war and weapons then, ‘How’ do we transform conflict and build peace?

With this larger objective to transform conflict and build peace, Johan Galtung, John Paul Lederach, and Lisa Schirch direct attention to Peacebuilding. The term peacebuilding refers to a complex web of processes – a web that incorporates different roles, strategies and interventions employed by different people at different stages of conflict development and directed towards building just peace. Galtung asserts that ‘structures’ must be found that remove causes of violence and offer

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6 Ibid.
8 Interview with author, New Delhi, March 4, 2008.
alternatives to violence in situations where violence might occur.⁹ Lisa Schirch asserts that an integrated peacebuilding framework goes beyond ending violent conflict and seeks to create capacity for a culture of just peace.¹⁰

It is precisely in this role of building a culture of peace that education can be used as a tool and create conditions for just peace. In other words, actions for ‘Peacebuilding’ must be located in the educational system. Thus schools are the institutions most essential to education for a culture of peace.¹¹ Teachers are the most responsible, influential and significant agents in the schooling process. Betty Reardon states ‘If we truly wish peace, we would prepare for it by educating all of our peoples about what peace is, the obstacles that impede it, the proposed and possible means to achieve it, what we need to learn to pursue these means to successful conclusions and, most important of all, the changes we must bring about in ourselves, our societies and our cultures’.¹²

**Kaleidoscopes for Peace: Education for Peace and Education about Peace**

As one moves across historical and geographical settings, patterns of conflict and the ways in which education is used for peace change. In fact each education paradigm articulates a response to the specific problems of the given historical and geographical setting, yet a universal character can be ascribed to them as they attempt to universalize values of social justice, equality, democratic participation, human rights, human needs specifically human dignity and human security. It is thus imperative to examine the distinctions that have been made between two key approaches, Education ‘for’ and ‘about’ Peace and also locate the Indian approach within this broader map.

A brief trajectory of the field is provided here to demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between the historical events and geographical spaces and education.

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¹¹ School curricula and pedagogy play a crucial role in building both a culture of peaceful coexistence or a culture marked by politics of hate, discrimination and demonization. For example in India, schools affiliated to Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) through the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and the Shishu Mandir’s affiliated to the RSS Seva Bharati follow a pedagogy and curriculum that demonises the minorities, challenges the secular fabric of Indian democracy and has a damaging impact on education at the grassroots.

The first time the question of ‘how’ to preserve peace without war and weapons surfaced at the Hague Conferences. However, there were very few direct references to education and its role in peace promotion during these conferences.

The second half of the 19th century to the beginning of World War II, what could be loosely called the period of formative peace education was focused on exposing the contradiction between religious and history education, which characterized Europe at that time. Early ‘Peace Educators’ had a two fold focus, to cleanse history education from nationalistic chauvinism, ethnocentrism and secondly, to prevent glorification of war. The factors that explain this focus were the growth of totalitarian movements in Europe, particularly the growth of Fascism and Nazism that emphasized the use of war and weapons and aggressive foreign policies and the dismal performance of the League of Nations as an institutional mechanism to preserve peace. The attempt through this paradigm of education for peace was to challenge aggressive nationalism, militarism and war heroism. However peace education during this period focused on peace and war on the ‘macro level’ or what has been articulated in the previous section as negative peace.

Scholars like Betty Reardon argue traditional or essential peace education as a field evolved after the close of World War II. Earlier at the turn of twentieth century, both Maria Montessori and John Dewey had advocated Peace Education by foregrounding a child centred and ‘progressive’ approach to education.

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13 Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 were held for the purpose of bringing together the principal nations of the world to discuss and resolve the problems of maintaining universal peace, reducing armaments, and ameliorating the conditions of warfare. An in depth analysis is available in Ervin Laszlo and Jong Youl Yoo, eds., World Encyclopedia of Peace, Vol. I (Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1983).

14 The first program of the international peace movement is linked to the International Peace Congress in Paris in 1849. This Congress emphasized on the need that participants should work in their respective countries for eradicating political prejudices and “hatred that has been learnt”. Education in this context was argued could play a key role. Victor Hugo was one of the most famous participants. This has been characterized as the first program of the international peace movement. An indepth analysis is available in Bengt Thelin “Early Tendencies of Peace Education in Sweden”, Peace Education Miniprints, No. 69, 1994.

15 Ibid.

16 Several educators and peace researchers, most notably Stitz Stomfay, M. Aline, David Smith and Terry Carson have researched this history and published their findings. See Terry Carson and David Smith, Educating for a Peaceful Future (Toronto: Kagan and Woo Limited, 1998); Stomfay Stitz and M. Aline, Peace Education in America, 1828-1999: A Sourcebook for Education and Research (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1993).
The most significant components of the post-war essential peace education have been war prevention, non violence, world order studies, nuclear education, comprehensive peace education and ecological and cooperative education. All these were responses to particular conditions and or forms of organized violence. So in this period peace education was broadly a response to Cold War marked by increased threats of war, nuclearization and arms race. But the domain of inquiry within this framework of peace education was gradually expanding and the argument was that teaching about or for peace necessitates teaching about and for economic and social justice. Human rights, economic and social structures came to be linked inextricably to essential peace education.\textsuperscript{17} This was aptly reflected in Pope Paul’s axiom, “If you want peace, work for justice”.\textsuperscript{18}

Education for a ‘culture of peace’\textsuperscript{19} is the most recent development in the field of peace education. This development is welcomed by those who have advocated a comprehensive and holistic approach to peace education. It provides an overarching concept under which the varied topics and approaches that comprise the field can be integrated, and more easily comprehended as multiple components of a single field of peace education. The urgency and necessity of such education was acknowledged by the member states of UNESCO in 1974 and reaffirmed in the Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Democracy in 1994.

Education for Peace as a concept and a movement upholds and supports the realization of international priorities which have been articulated in UN Resolution 53/25,\textsuperscript{20} which proclaimed the period 2001-2010 as the ‘International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World’, as well as UN Resolution 53/243,\textsuperscript{21} by which a global ‘Declaration and Programme of Action on

\begin{footnotes}
\item[17] This period was also marked by the approach to Peace Education derived from a peace research methodology designated as “world order inquiry” devised by the World Order Models Project (WOMP), a transnational peace research project established in 1968 by the Institute for World Order, then called the World Law Fund.
\item[18] 1963 was a pivotal year in this phase of peace education, because of the promulgation of Pope John XXIII encyclical letter, “\textit{Pacem in Terris}” and President John F Kennedy’s commencement address at American University, “Towards a Strategy of Peace” in which he announced the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Available at: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1963kennedy-peacestrat.html
\item[19] The concept of culture of violence and its antidote a culture of peace was first conceptualized by Peruvian peace researcher Felipe McGregor. The concept inspired UNESCO’s Culture of Peace program undertaken in 1993.
\item[21] UN Resolution 53/243 (A), ‘Declaration on a Culture of Peace’ (October 1999). Available at: www.un-documents.net
\end{footnotes}
a Culture of Peace’ for the new millennium was adopted. The Hague Appeal for Global Campaign for Peace Education\textsuperscript{22} and the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by UN Resolution 44/25\textsuperscript{23} also recognize the right of every child to be ‘brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.’

Education for Peace got a fresh impetus with the Dakar Framework of Action.\textsuperscript{24} The Dakar declaration emphasizes that schools should be respected and protected as sanctuaries and zones of peace. It also calls for the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development. It underlines how conflicts, instability and natural disasters take their toll on education and are a major barrier towards attaining education for all. It thus argues for a need to sensitize and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance that help to prevent violence and conflict.

The above paradigms of education in the direction of peace can be classified into two categories based on the content, goals and values: Education for Peace and Education about Peace. Thus the critical question for exploration is what is Education for Peace and Education about Peace?

Betty Reardon asserts Education for Peace is ‘education to create some of the preconditions for the achievement of peace.’\textsuperscript{25} Education for Peace is primarily concerned with knowledge and skills related to requirements of and obstacles to achievement of Peace.\textsuperscript{26} Multiculturalism, environmental and international

\textsuperscript{22} A campaign to facilitate the introduction of peace and human rights education into all educational institutions was called for by the ‘Hague Appeal’ for Peace Civil Society Conference in May 1999. An initiative of individual educators and education NGOs committed to peace, it is conducted through a global network of education associations, and regional, national and local task forces of citizens and educators who lobby and inform ministries of education and teacher education institutions about the UNESCO Framework and the multiplicities of methods and materials that now exist to practice peace education in all learning environments. The goal of campaign is to assure that all educational systems throughout the world educate for a culture of peace.


\textsuperscript{24} The World Education Forum (26-28 April 2000, Dakar) adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments. Available at: www.unesdoc.unesco.org


\textsuperscript{26} International Education and the term Education for International Understanding had currency in the first three decades following World War II. This no longer has the same currency now, and the term “Global Education” which evolved from these approaches is more widely used.
education are important components of Education for Peace.\textsuperscript{27} The major educational goal of global or international education is imparting knowledge and skills about the international system and global issues. The apparent assumption underlying this goal is that well informed public is essential to citizens calling for and supporting policies which are more likely to lead to Peace.

Multicultural education even when not self consciously practiced as Education for Peace makes a significant contribution to the goal. The fundamental objectives are detailed knowledge of one or more cultures besides one’s own as a means to comprehend the various ways of life, respect for the integrity of other cultures and an appreciation of the positive potential of cultural diversity. Multicultural Education is widely practiced in American and European schools and to some extent is being introduced in other areas experiencing ethnic tensions and conflicts. It is a popular approach with schools around the world, such as UNESCO associated schools.

Environmental education can be considered an approach to Education for Peace when it argues the preservation of environment to be an essential prerequisite to all human endeavours, including the achievement of Peace.\textsuperscript{28}

Education about Peace is education for the development and practice of institutions and processes that comprise a peaceful social order. These approaches which include creative or constructive conflict resolution training; human rights education; and peace studies, which as practiced in elementary and secondary schools is generally designated as ‘peace education’. Most of the subject matter, peace education transmits is derived from the field of peace research, which like conflict resolution emerged in the 1950’s out of the work of individual researchers. International Peace Research Association established in 1964, was one of the early establishments that contributed to the development of the field. At present three components can be identified in Education about Peace, namely human rights education, conflict


\textsuperscript{28} Among those who are interlinking environment with peace education are the Finnish educator Riitta Wahlström,”Promoting Commitment to Peace and Environmental Responsibility,” \textit{Peace, Environment and Education}, Vol. 3, No. 1, 1992, and the Swedish educational researcher Ake Bjerstedt. Another stream that informs this school of thought is developed by Edmund O’Sullivan. He stresses the need to contextualize peace and peace education in a larger framework that is linked to sustainability and well being of the whole earth. For an in depth analysis see Edmund O’Sullivan, \textit{Transformative Learning: Educational Vision for the 21st century} (New York: Zed Books,1999).
resolution and traditional peace education. These three approaches are primarily concerned with avoiding, reducing and eliminating violence.

Given the distinction between Education for Peace and Education about Peace from a broadly western perspective, it is now important to bring into the focus the Education for Peace paradigm in India. This is also an attempt to specifically locate the content, goals and value of Education for Peace in India.

**Education for Peace in India**

The National Curriculum Framework formulated by the National Council of Educational Research and Training asserts that education must be able to promote values that foster peace, humanness and tolerance in a multicultural society.\(^{29}\) The position paper on Education for Peace of the National Curriculum Framework is a critical lens for this purpose in India.

The paper provides insights on the ‘what’ of Education for Peace paradigm in India. It clearly emphasizes the need for ‘Peace as an integrative perspective for the school curriculum.’\(^{30}\) Based on the earlier classification this approach clearly falls under the Education for Peace paradigm, draws substantially from the ideals and values enshrined in the Indian Constitution and highlights personality development and citizenship education as key goals of Education for Peace. However, it has consciously eschewed any increase in the curriculum load for the students, and has therefore introduced peace orientation, peace values and skills as the basis of all knowledge instead of adding separate curriculum on peace.

In this context, the National Focus Group on Education for Peace\(^ {31}\) states that ‘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.’ Krishna Kumar\(^ {32}\) states, “The Education for peace, focus group made a very major decision and that decision was that it will not recommend a separate subject called Peace Education at any level in school education. They thought that if a separate subject is recommended, the subject will become like any other subject. And then Education for Peace will cease to be a philosophical underpinning of all knowledge, so the group recommends that knowledge in every area of the curriculum should be infused with values that are consistent with peace.”

The National Focus Group emphasizes that Education for peace in India calls for a significant reduction, not an increase in curriculum load. The group examines

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\(^{29}\) Available at: www.ncert.nic.in

\(^{30}\) Ibid.

\(^{31}\) Ibid, p.31.

\(^{32}\) Interview with author, New Delhi, March 4, 2008.
the major issues and concerns that an effective implementation of Education for Peace needs to address. They include: teacher education, textbook writing, school setting, evaluation, media literacy, parent–teacher partnership and the need to attend to the practical implications of integration as the preferred strategy for implementing Education for Peace.

A close examination of this Education for Peace approach brings to the fore the fact that it recognizes the need to address not just direct or visible violence but also structural violence and thus emphasizes building just peace, which is marked by goals of social justice, secularism, tolerance, democratic participation, human needs and human rights which are also highlighted in the Indian Constitution. However, the approach as delineated in the position paper is based on more comprehensive, holistic and developmental understanding of peace, which though is essential, is not complete in itself. While an overarching ‘integrative’ approach is essential for the purpose of meaning making in the educational endeavour, but what is also needed is a need to recognize that Education for Peace, would operate differently in varied contexts within India. To take the argument a little further, while there is a universal character to the “Why” of Education for Peace in India in the context of issues like secularism, minority rights, gender and caste discrimination all examples of structural violence, yet there are also contexts in India, which are or have been marked by direct and visible violence. Such contexts are marked by collective memories of conflict, traumatic memories of pain, continuous humiliation, discrimination and dehumanization (For example, Gujarat post 2002 riots, Kashmir and North East). Therefore there is a need to recognise that while the National

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33 An examination of Education for Peace initiatives by Samerth an NGO working in Ahmedabad, Gujarat brings to focus some of the critical dilemma’s that Education for Peace intervention faces in a context which is largely divided along religious lines and is marked by traumatic memories of pain, humiliation, discrimination and dehumanization of the minority community. The school curricula, textbooks and media here play a critical role in shaping of collective narratives which exacerbates tensions between the two communities.

Samerth envisions promoting secular and rationalist education through executing peace education modules in schools with a long-term goal to integrate such modules in the school curriculum. However the challenges are manifold for this peace approach.

During her interactions with the author Gazala Paul, founder of Samerth, provided insights into some of these challenges. She noted that firstly; it was difficult for Samerth to find an entry point into the schools. Secondly, for most State-controlled schools, the content of the module on Education for Peace had to be so designed that it didn’t appear that the organization was directly engaging with the sensitive issue of communalism. Thirdly, and most importantly since the memories of pain, humiliation, discrimination and dehumanization were fresh in the minds of children what the traditional peace education modules sought to do was insufficient. Since the children here were in many instances direct ‘victims’ of violence the need for reconciliation was vital.
Curriculum Framework and the position paper on Education for Peace are landmark blueprints for the implementation of Education for Peace paradigm in India, the daunting challenge ahead is to recognize the specific needs of each context within India. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that education as a tool for Peace building is still in its fledging stages and it is too early to make a definitive comment about the efficacy of the NCF approach.

‘Why’ Education for Peace in India?

India today, faces critical questions on issues of secularism, minority rights, gender discrimination along with a process of dehumanization and ‘othering’ on the basis of caste/religion/ethnicity/gender. Institutions and particularly schools to a great extent shape the thinking and behaviour of young people about the ‘others’. The content of education influences both social attitudes and perceptions of what constitutes knowledge among the youth. In fact it is argued that the equality principle in democracy must extend to education. In quantitative terms this means the right of every Indian child to primary and secondary education. In qualitative terms, wedded to the equality principle is the need for the democratization of content and pedagogy of school education.

However, both the content and the process of teaching-learning in schools have witnessed systematic intrusions of communal prejudices and gender biases. There has been the inculcation of perceptions of ‘difference’ across communities, and even distortion of facts, especially in history and social science texts.

Over the years, many of our history and social science texts, more and more, emphasize a prejudicial understanding and rendering of history that is certainly not borne out by historical facts. Hate language, hate politics, prejudice and division have been unfortunately guiding principles of many textbook boards across the country.

Through hate writing and the distorted teaching of history, many of these institutions have generated deep rooted prejudices about ‘other’ communities. For example, in Gujarat, some state run textbooks contain material that exacerbates tension between Hindus and Muslims. Efforts in the direction of Education for Peace would

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34 The Report “The Constitution Mandate and Education” was presented to the CABE sub-Committee on “Regulatory Mechanisms for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks Taught in Schools Outside the Government System” (April 6-7; 2005). It is edited and produced by KHOJ for a plural India Programme, Sabrang, Mumbai. And is available at: http://www.sabrang.com/khoj/CABEReport.pdf

35 Ibid.
fundamentally help address the much challenged goals of secularism, citizenship, tolerance and democracy in the contemporary era of growth and consumerism.

Krishna Kumar also in some of his writings has raised important questions on ‘how far education in India has served the secular creed and why it could not prevent the spread of communal ideas’. In examining India’s education policy, from a theoretical point of view, Kumar examines the relationship between child’s learning at home and at school. Applying various models of this home-school binary to the Indian scene, he sees the ambivalent role of education in serving the state in disseminating the message of secularism. Krishna Kumar argues that though this has been achieved to some degree, this process, owing to certain limitations of the system of education (professionally weak teachers, dominance of prescribed textbooks and overarching importance of annual examinations), has separated the orbit of home and school. And thus the process did not combat the ideas and values opposed to the creed of secularism.

Sam Pitroda, Chairman of The Knowledge Commission, asserts, “Curriculum reform remains a critically important issue in almost all schools. School education must be made more relevant to the lives of children. There is need to move away from rote-learning to understanding concepts, developing good comprehension and communication skills and learning how to access knowledge independently.”

The need, therefore, is to integrate concepts of Education ‘for’ and ‘about’ Peace both at the level of design and implementation. Education for Peace explores multi disciplinary and developmental approaches to address violence in all its varied forms. Therefore, approaches to peace education (including both for and about) are contextual and situation dependent. They are designed towards developing peace related capacities and development of peace making skills and intentionally directed towards ‘transformative learning’. Therefore at the level of design firstly, there is need to direct attention to curriculum reform, secondly, examine the process and content of textbook writing and thirdly, facilitate pedagogical innovations in the teaching-learning process. Integrating the goals of Education for peace in school system and teacher-training programs would help find a proper pedagogical

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37 Ibid.

response to the problem of dealing with the issue of religion and culture at school, while taking into consideration the extremely complex nature of Indian society. Kumar makes an argument in favour of integrating peace education progressively in the existing curriculum.

Further, Education for Peace also makes education more relevant to the lives of children and thus contributes to constructive social change. It challenges, what can be called ‘tyranny of rote memorization’. The Yashpal Committee Report highlights, “Majority of our school going children view learning at school as a boring, even unpleasant and bitter experience.”\textsuperscript{39} Yashpal asserts, ‘a lot is taught but little is learnt’.\textsuperscript{40} Education for Peace provides a valuable link to child’s experience at home and community to what the child learns at school and thus helps foreground the process of constructive meaning making. This process of meaning making is not just influenced by the content of the defined curriculum but also by the learning process, school and family spaces. Thus an integrative approach to Education for Peace facilitates a space for a mutual learning community that treads on the path of dialogical exploration which is ‘child centered’ and ‘child inspired’ and provides space for critical thinking, action and reflection.

Krishna Kumar brings in a powerful reflection by Yashpal, “All that if we need to give in Education is a taste of what it means to learn, this taste we will never forget.”\textsuperscript{41} Krishna Kumar asserts the need to create what he calls, “Sanskar of Learning”, which is also linked to the process of “what it means not just to know but what it means to know it”.\textsuperscript{42}

Krishna Kumar further states, ‘The National Curriculum framework exercise was concerned about the ‘sense of hollowness’, which a lot of young people today find in our institutional life. They find nobody cares for them, the learning game is essentially a marks-examination game and the success game is essentially a game which is being played to eliminate a lot of people from the race. Thus students don’t associate purposiveness and integrity to education….So when it comes to peace, gaining peace either within oneself is the first condition to gain peace between people or relationships. And if this is so, then gaining peace is virtually an impossible

\textsuperscript{39} A National Advisory Committee was set up by the Government in March 1992 under the chairmanship of Prof. Yash Pal, former Chairman of the University Grants Commission to suggest ways and means to reduce academic burden on school students. The Yashpal Committee Report is available at http://www.education.nic.in/cd50years/tr/2R/I3/2RI30201.htm

\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{41} In an interview with author, New Delhi, March 4, 2008.

\textsuperscript{42} Ibid.
thing today, if the child doesn’t see ‘meaning’ in education. And therefore, Education for Peace would give a purpose and meaning to education.”

Former Chief of Navy turned nuclear disarmament campaigner, Admiral Ramadas along with peace activists Praful Bidwai, Anil Chaudhary, Achin Vanaik, and Karamat Ali (of Pakistan) have made a clarion call for including peace education in school syllabus. Admiral Ramdas states, “In our school days we barely learnt anything about the heavy costs of war and impact of weapons of mass destruction. But at least the new generation should learn the lessons for lasting peace.”

Peace education is now a part of the teacher-training programme of the National Council of Educational Training and Research (NCERT), which formulates school curricula and teacher-training programmes in India. Daya Pant, the programme coordinator, states, “Peace is the most vital thing in human life. It is the need of the hour to sow the seeds of peace among students. Teachers under the peace education programme are taught the nitty-gritty of inculcating peace among students in a holistic manner.”

The following section attempts to discuss the ‘How’ of Education for Peace. This is essential, as it builds a symbiotic argument that building peace through education is also a dynamic and dialogical process and thus the pedagogy or the ‘how’ is as important as the “what” of Education for Peace. The attempt is to delineate a possible pedagogical tool kit which could facilitate the process of the ‘How’ of Education for Peace paradigm in India. Given the present state of school education (at least in majority of schools), this approach would necessitate paradigmatic shift from the prescriptive/banking model of education to an elicitive one.

The “How” of Education for Peace: Pedagogical Tool Kit

Paulo Freire, one of the pioneers of critical pedagogy writes, “Human Activity consists of action and reflection: It is transformation of the world…And as praxis it requires theory to illuminate it. Human activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action. It cannot be reduced to either verbalism or activism”.

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43 Ibid.
44 The Times of India (Nagpur, Feb 3, 2008). Available at: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/rssarticleshow/msid-2752047,prtpage-1.cms
45 Available at : http://news.in.msn.com/national/article.aspx?cp-documentid=1215653
46 Friere argues that conscientization as a process seeks to foster in students a critical awareness of the social and political conditions existing in their societies and shaping their lives, and to help them discover their own capacities to re-create alternative conditions. See Paulo Freire, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder & Herder,1973).
The assertion though revolutionary for a time when prescriptive teaching – learning was the norm is really the essence of theory and praxis of Pedagogy for Peace. Drawing from the writings of Freire and based on contemporary experience, one would argue that education in India is based more on prescription and transfer of knowledge than on conscientization and participation. This greatly inhibits the transformative power of education. The ‘prescriptive/banking’ model understands the ‘teacher/trainer’ as the expert. The learning process is built around his or her expertise, knowledge and experience of the subject. Learning and mastering the curriculum is the key goal of the event.

The pedagogical framework is built around cognitive descriptions of subjects/events/models/theories presented through readings lectures and in occasional cases visual graphics. The pedagogical methods focus on the primary role of the ‘teacher’ and the teaching learning process focuses on students mastering the contents through cognitive understanding of the subject. In this context, perceptions, experiences, cultural and ideological underpinnings of the process are rarely made explicit.

The prescriptive model as Lederach says, works on the premise of transferability and universality. In fact what Betty Reardon identifies as seven negative R’s: Resignation, Repression, Reduction, Rejection, Redress, Retribution and Reservations, which are major obstacles to the transformative process sought by Education for Peace, are implicit in the pedagogical framework in the Indian classroom; a framework largely dominated by the banking/prescriptive approach to learning. One could take it a step further and argue that this also inhibits the process of ‘meaning making’ and development of critical consciousness, which is an essential goal of Education for peace and social change.

The pedagogy for peace faces two critical challenges. Firstly, the process and tools of pedagogy must understand how people learn and how learning is transferred to real life application. Secondly, provide training content and structure that fosters both personal and systemic change.

Therefore, firstly, a pedagogical tool kit for teaching for peace should not merely be an expansion of the field or transfer of techniques but should be able to provide a context for dialogical engagement with a larger purpose of developing critical consciousness. The teaching-training therefore will need to transcend the boundaries created by the classroom. The teaching-learning will have to become a process of

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47 John Paul Lederach, Preparing for Peace. (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995).
action-reflection, in which people are invited to participate actively in the
development and application of Peacebuilding strategies and practices. The teaching/training in order to prepare the teachers/trainers for peace would be a dance of inductive and deductive forms of learning.

Secondly, the task of the pedagogical process is to create a space for transformation at personal, relational, cultural and structural levels. The essence of the process will be its ability to catalyze change. Thirdly, promoting goals of justice, empowerment and social justice through the process of education for peace requires that a pedagogical framework encourages critical and reflective thinking; provide space for dialogical engagement with the culture, context and achieve the ultimate values and goals.

Fourthly, the framework recognizes the importance of ‘relationships’ as a form of social capital. A pedagogical process therefore should not annul the process of creativity and critical consciousness that play a critical role in giving meaning to human relationships and consequently to education itself.

It is important to reiterate that values, skills and analytical tools and processes of Education for peace should draw from diverse cultural settings. There is a twofold need to recognize participants as ‘resources’ who bring to the classroom their knowledge based on experience and learning and secondly to design learner centred process that not just teaches ‘how’ to integrate goals of Peace Education but also more importantly ‘how’ to integrate these goals in their own cultural setting. To put it pithily in Lederach’s words, “It is not just important to teach people how to fish, but more importantly how to fish in your own pond.”

**Learner ‘Centred’ Pedagogical Tool Kit**

A ‘Learner centred’ pedagogical tool kit is an attempt to identify some basic tools based on dialogical methods that steer away from traditional form of educating

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50 The central argument here is that knowledge is no longer abstract and decontextualized, but is grounded in students’ own lived reality and leads to an unveiling of the social, political, and economic contradictions emerging in their experience of the world. The pedagogical process is seen as a necessary foundation for this process of dialogical construction of knowledge.

51 Through their actions, educators consciously or unwittingly contribute either to humanization or dehumanization. A pedagogy that dehumanizes is one that immobilizes students, failing to acknowledge them as historical beings with a capacity to think and act and thereby reduce them to things rather than human beings. See Paulo Freire “Cultural action and conscientization”, *Harvard Educational Review* 68 (1998).
learners that ‘deposits’ information into them. The pedagogical tool kit is an effort to help learners become full participants in their own education-liberatory education that encompasses problem posing, building of a critical consciousness of questioning the role of the teacher/student and changing education from a process of domestication to one of empowerment.

**Tool-1 : The Problem Tree**

1. Listening Project: Identify the problems in the teaching learning process that are against the culture of peace.
2. Identify some of the problems that you are facing as Teacher Educator/Teacher/Learner.
3. Describe the problems and challenges as you see them and brainstorm on ideas and resources that you might need to solve the problems or meet the challenges.

**Tool-2 : Imaging the future**

Fred Polak, a Dutch historian in his writings on ‘positive images’, contends that history has shown positive images of the future, which has empowered creative action for social change. Action on a Culture of Peace will be the fruit of human imagination and creativity. Teachers can cultivate imagination and creativity. One such effective way is described in the writings of Elise Boulding.\(^{52}\)

**Tool-3 : Building Capacities for Peace**

Two key areas would be elaborated upon in this section. Firstly, ‘what’ are the relevant ‘capacities, values, skills and attitudes’ that serve the long term goal of commitment to peace? Secondly, ‘how’ does the teacher-educator/teacher/trainer facilitate the building of these capacities, skills, values and attitudes?

**Tool-3.1 : What are the relevant ‘capacities, values, skills and attitudes’ that serve the long term goal of commitment to peace?**

Firstly, tolerance of differences is a key capacity for peace. UNESCO\(^{53}\) recognizes tolerance as a ‘threshold capacity’ or value which opens the way to the development of higher order capacities leading to the more fully complementary and mutually


enhancing relationships of a truly peaceful community. Secondly, appreciation of
and ability to view human diversity in terms of complementarity is important.
Reflection on the questions of human universality and cultural diversity can help
students understand that cultures are constructed, not given and that they
do change and evolve in time and space. Thirdly, reflective capacities are essential
to all forms of learning and authentic inquiry into all issues studied in schools.
Fourthly, schools across the world have been charged with the responsibility
of educating for ‘citizenship’, which is also the basic component for the
development of political capacities of the learner. The rationale for citizenship
education for a culture of peace is located in the need for developing capacities for
informed and responsible political action. Fifthly, building skills and capacity for
non violent conflict resolution are an essential component of education for a
culture of peace.

Tool-3.2 : How does the teacher-educator/teacher/trainer facilitate the building
of these capacities, skills, values and attitudes?

- **Developing mutually learning communities:** Learning communities are an
effective route to enhance the experience of learning itself. The teacher as the
learner is also the teacher as the inquirer, one who has the capacity to pose
instructive questions and to plan inquiries into the conditions that impede and
enhance possibilities for achieving a culture of peace.

- **Reflections/Open Questions**

  When the teacher asks open questions, what she/he demonstrates is respect for
  the participants and honoring them as subjects of their own learning.
  This allows the learner to explore the meaning of what has been said and grasp
  its implications for his/her life.

  An open question is a question without a set ‘correct’ answer. It is a question
  that invites the participants to draw upon their own life experiences and
  creativity. It invites dialogue. Open questions engage participants by requiring
  reflection and critical thinking. Examples of open questions include: “Why do
  you say that?”, “What does that mean to you?”, “How did you arrive at that
decision?”, “And tell me about that.” When Teacher/trainer use materials or
questions that invite participants to describe, analyse, apply and implement
new learning, they engage participants in praxis. Open questions encourage
reflection about experiences which leads to theory becoming personalized and
useful to learners.
• **Recognize Learners as Decision Makers:** Adults are required by daily life to be decision makers and they generally expect to be treated as such. Teachers should resist treating ‘learners’ as objects. This will ensure that learners are treated as subjects, which means they will be honored for their experience and their ability to make decisions. Treating participants of a learning session as subjects of their own learning as decision makers is a key principle in learning. The learning is in doing and in deciding. Through the process of Dialogue Education, participants have many opportunities to teach others. Recognize the resources that are being brought to the classroom. An important assertion in the context is “People are resources, not recipients.” An imperative need in the process of training is to recognize how ‘Adults’ learn. Critical questions for the process are what characteristics during the learning event would you add that strengthen engagement with goals of Education for Peace? Are there any key distinctions between engagement and participation?

• **Listening:** Reflective listening and participatory hearing. Scholars and practitioners argue that when emphasis is on understanding before responding and on clarifying before challenging, all exchanges are more productive and relationships are mutually enhancing.

**Tool-4 : Creative Strokes in the Pedagogical Design**

**Tool-4.1: Drumming Circle for Peace**

The Drumming Circle for Peace is a powerful pedagogical practice that helps in essence, to expand and put into action, conscious awareness of creating peaceful, harmonious, non-violent relations with others, which is key objective of Education for Peace. Fundamentally, the ‘Drumming Circle for Peace’ is a strategy using the concept of the circle to link people together to engender unity, encourage interpersonal relations, increase communication and foster harmonious contact between participants. Within this safe environment, this strategy makes the difference between fortuitous relating and consciously created relating. The concept of the circle symbolizes a non-linear connecting of elements that has no beginning or ending. It evokes creativity and a flow of physical movement of the participants.

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54 An understanding of the process of ‘learner’ centered trainings and designs owes a great deal to author’s discussions with Robb Davis, who teaches the course on ‘Designing Learner Centered Training for Conflict Transformation at Eastern Mennonite University, Virginia, USA(2006).
in structured or improvisational actions. The energy generated from person-to-person and from drum-to-drum resonates individually and collectively.\textsuperscript{55}

**Tool-4.2: Theatre of the Oppressed**

The Theatre of the Oppressed, established in the early 1970s by Brazilian Director and political activist, Augusto Boal, is a form of popular theatre, of, by, and for people engaged in the struggle for liberation. Accordingly, the ‘Theatre of the Oppressed’, is a participatory theatre that fosters democratic and co-operative forms of interaction among participants.

‘Theatre of the Oppressed’ techniques are practical pedagogical tools that can be integrated into the framework of Education for Peace. They are easy to learn and complement existing course material. The techniques directly address the problem of ‘learners’ motivation, passivity and engagement. By enabling students to create parallel physical and verbal texts based on their own experience, the techniques both validate students’ lives and skills and help create new structures of interaction between the students, between the students and the teacher, and also the students and the course texts.

With its emphasis on physical dialogue, Image Theatre can be advantageously integrated into the existing curriculum, for example, to explore problems related to external or internalized forms of oppression, power relations, prejudices and stereotypes. The non-verbal imagery stimulates individual expression even among the most timid, and gives rise to perspectives that can greatly enrich writing, language, literature and history courses. Due to the fact that the images evoke subconscious thought processes, they have proven especially useful in initiating insightful discussions on complex topics such as religion, caste, gender, identity and prejudices. Indeed, living body imagery can function as a powerful tool for in-depth critical analysis across the curriculum.

**Tool-4.3: Role Plays**

Role plays and simulations are another methodology that can be a part of a pedagogical toolkit for peace. They can be used to practice a given skill, learn an overall process or work on specific kind of situations teachers may face in the classroom. Role plays can also be used in conflict resolution and problem solving.

\textsuperscript{55} Edith Hillman Boxill & Cella Schieffelin Roberts “Drumming Circle for Peace” (7th March, 2003). Available at : http://www.voices.no/discussions/discm19_01.html
Critical Reflections

On a reflective note, there are some critical questions around the broader paradigm of Education for Peace that still remain unaddressed or are only marginally addressed. Firstly, while the Education for Peace paradigm provides an overarching concept under which many varied topics and approaches that comprise the field can be integrated, and more easily comprehended as multiple components of a single field of education, it also brings to fore the point of conceptual ambiguity in the field. There is paucity of research and evaluation of Education for Peace programs in India. Conceptually, the Education for Peace paradigm in India largely draws from National Curriculum Framework and the position paper on Education for Peace, which argues for an ‘integrative’ approach for the purposes of implementation of Education for Peace at school level. However, a fundamental contention is that while an overarching ‘integrative’ approach is essential for the purpose of meaning making in our education endeavour but what is also needed is a recognition that Education for Peace, would operate differently in contexts that are marked by collective memories of conflict, traumatic memories of pain, humiliation, discrimination and dehumanization. Thus in divided contexts which are marked by memories of recent violence the ‘needs’ would be different and thus the need for ‘context specific spaces’ within the broader paradigm of Education for Peace in India. This argument also links to the proposition that the ‘How’ is as important as the ‘What’ of Education for Peace as the pedagogical frame can be a catalyst for change. It can play an important role in promoting goals of justice and empowerment. Further research in the field is required to understand and analyze these challenges and it is hoped that writing on Education for peace in India will to able to address not only these challenges but the ones that arise in future.
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EDUCATING FOR COEXISTENCE: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES IN INDIA

Meenakshi Gopinath

Abstract

This article attempts to delineate the historical contexts within which the idea of 'unity in diversity' informed education policies in the initial years after India's independence from colonial rule. It then examines if education can engender social transformatory practices and thereby provide effective responses to conflicts arising from religious, ethnic, regional and other differences. Can education lead to respect for pluralism, equality of rights and gender justice in India? This is the central question the paper seeks to answer.

Introduction

Almost six decades after independence from colonial rule, the prevalent mood in India today is one marked by buoyancy and a new found confidence. Official discourse today focuses on India’s role as an emerging global player, a ‘responsible’ nuclear state, a huge potential market and a growing knowledge hub in a globalizing environment. Above all, India prides itself in being an old civilization and a ‘youthful’ nation.

That today fifty per cent of the country’s population is below twenty-five years of age, opens up enormous possibilities for dynamic change, inclusive development and progressive governance. Yet the utilization of the possibilities offered by this dividend of youth is dependent on how the country maximizes its enormous human potential, and the sagacity and vision with which it invests in its population of over a billion. Access to opportunities for gaining skills and knowledge, and the learnings from formal and informal education streams will, to a great extent,
determine whether this population can be effectively harnessed to provide the locomotive for equitable and inclusive change.

“Sa Vidya ya Vimuktaye” a motto in Sanskrit, is proudly displayed in several institutions of learning in India – a country with traditions of knowledge creation and sharing, and cultures of integral learning. Briefly translated, the motto means “that alone is knowledge which leads to liberation.” Yet, whether Indian education today lives by this transformatory exhortation is seriously open to question.

Education in India, today, is beset by issues of access, equity and quality, as also concerns about biases in curricula and flawed teaching methodology. Today, the domain of education as a possible liberatory space faces severe challenges from three distinct but inter-related trends in its society and polity. First, the threat to secular spaces from different fundamentalisms; second, the growing legitimacy of a culture of militarism and the warrior discourse; and third, the dislocating and bewildering change imposed upon it by the processes broadly described as globalization and its consequent inequities.

As these trends and concerns collide and cohere, they raise serious questions about the capacity of Indian education to renew its role in engendering social transformatory practices and to provide effective responses to conflicts and their resolution. It is the challenge to secular education and democratic engagement that is the primary concern of this paper. How can Indian education resist the illiberal impulses of sectarian forces? Can it be made capable of countering these influences or is it doomed to implicate itself in a ‘closing of the Indian mind’? Do contemporary developments in the revision of curricula represent an attempt to reclaim ‘the secular’? Can education provide avenues for the politics of the possible, without capitulating to partisan and cynical political interests and stakeholders? Can it provide a vocabulary for emancipatory praxis?

The Nationalist Vision and Composite Culture

The visionaries of the Indian national movement saw education as an effective instrument for the transformation of the consciousness of an enslaved people, to equip them to unleash their inner resources and untapped potential and to energize the anti-colonial struggle.

I invoke here three men, Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru, whose views – while substantially different – helped shape the nationalist discourse on education. Their positions on ethics, morality, culture and modernity were to provide the conceptual alphabet within which the vocabulary of education for a new India was to be
constructed. And inevitably, the disagreements and tensions between them continued to reflect in the sometimes contradictory pulls and pressures within the Indian education system. However, despite differences of emphases, at root, these men shared a remarkable commonality in their commitment to preserving what came to be described as the “composite culture” of India, from its ability to draw upon and creatively negotiate diverse influences from the cultures and religions of the world without – to use Gandhi’s phrase – being “swept off one’s feet by any one of them.”

‘Composite culture’ served as a prism to look at how people have traditionally lived together in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious society like India. Composite culture as a formulation was definitely a nationalist creation; and as nationalist creations go, it is neither entirely fact nor wholly fiction. The notion of a composite culture that emerged was a vision of proposed nationhood and of the way people would live together after independence was won. To this Gandhi added the pluralist principle of *sarva dharma sambhava* – equality of all religions.¹

Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru represent, as Khilnani has eloquently argued, “an important moment in the making of a tradition of public reason – the creation of an intellectual space which allowed morals and ethics, and the political choices these entailed, to be debated, revised, decided upon. At its best moments, the arguments and ideas generated quite exceeded the bounds of nationalism or nationalist thought.”² They engaged with the problem of how to construe the relation between political power and the presence of multiple faiths. How can a moral and integrated life be lived under modern conditions – where political power is concentrated in the state, but where beliefs are multiple and diverse across society? What set Tagore and Gandhi apart from other Indians who wished to root public morals in religion was their recognition that no religion taken in its traditional sense could serve as a basis of public morality. So Gandhi’s intellectual itinerary involved “a strenuous dismantling and reassembly of religious traditions.” By drawing on Islam, Christianity and the folk traditions of Hindu devotion, Khilnani argues, Gandhi engaged in a spiritual recovery that was respectful of existing religious faiths but also used them as a reservoir for re-articulation.³ Tagore’s “poet’s religion” reflected

¹ The early Gandhian positions enunciated in *Hind Swaraj* (1909) set up a substantial critique of ‘satanic’ Western civilization and its values of technological progress, that both enslaved and dehumanized. The task of education was to liberate itself from the shackles of its rationality. Gandhi extolled the qualities of the Indian civilization as unparalleled. This position was to change by 1921, in the course of his debates with Tagore.


a humanist faith in the capacities of man and a belief in the transcendent powers of art and aesthetics.\(^4\)

Nehru’s vision was closer to Tagore’s and, although fully cognizant of the limits of reason, was imbued with a respect for the traditions of scientific enquiry, trying simultaneously to develop a morality without the fall-back to religion. For him, the lesson of the Partition of India was to drive home the pervasive, deep-rooted force of religion in Indian society. Unlike Gandhi’s, his views were imbued with a fear of the dangers that religion posed if it should ever be linked to that most powerful form of instrumental reason, the State.

Tagore’s initiatives at Shanti Niketan, the university he founded, to create an Indian who would become the social conscience and cultural leader in that age, Gandhi’s *Nai Talim* as the basis of empowerment and mobilization of the masses,\(^5\) and Nehru’s vision of education as a humanizing, progressive and essentially liberal undertaking provided the strands with which the educational project in post-independent India sought to weave its trajectory. Not surprisingly, these strands did not always sit well together.\(^6\)

**History and its Discontents**

In the agenda followed by the state after independence, particularly from the 60s, education was harnessed to the nation-building project. Among other developments, the *mantra* of ‘Unity in Diversity’ informed its ‘national mainstream’ and was a widely shared imperative. The teaching of history in schools was expected to serve as a vital ingredient of this mission, and it became, from early on, and more especially from the late 1970s, a contested political terrain.

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\(^4\) While Gandhi searched among folk traditions, Tagore drew from classical traditions also acknowledging the influence of the European Renaissance on the modern Indian mind. In his schools, there was to be no politics, only nation building through the development of the Indian personality. His solution was to bring the urban elite and the village folk closer. The town would bring modern science and technology, and the village, traditional knowledge and skills. The curriculum of Shanti Niketan reflects this engagement.

\(^5\) Gandhi’s philosophy of Basic Education, which came to be known as the *Wardha* scheme was formulated as a practical critique of the bookish, examination-oriented colonial education. Its focus was to integrate children’s learning of different subjects with training in a manual craft. Education was to be an effective instrument to realize independence, battle social injustice, eradicate illiteracy and poverty, and also restore vernacular languages, as opposed to English, as the medium of education.

The influential Kothari Commission Report on Education of the mid-1960s articulated a position in which a national perspective was assumed to be synonymous with a modern perspective. The responsibility to produce model textbooks to buttress this modernist orientation fell on the National Centre for Educational Research & Training (NCERT), set up in the mid-1960s. It drew to its fold eminent scholars and historians, mostly of the Left, and this was to leave a profound impact on Indian historiography. A young nation-state beset by political uncertainty was not particularly inclined to curricula that prioritized the students’ freedom to reconstruct knowledge in the context of a local ethos. The influence of Gandhian educational philosophy was clearly on the wane.

During the closing decades of the Twentieth century, even as the traditional right was preparing the popular imagination against official secularism, educational policy came under strong pressure to accommodate the ideology of religious revivalism. The evolution of curriculum and textbook policy, particularly in history, has as much to do with the politics of education as with the State’s cultural policy. The ascendancy of the Bharatiya Janta Party (the political party of the Hindu Right) to power at the center in March 1998, witnessed a more “legitimized” assertion of the militarist discourse of cultural nationalism. The NCERT textbooks were in the eye of the storm during the period, being criticized for their attempts to rewrite history to subserve the saffronizing agenda of the Hindu Right. The saffronization of education was of particular salience since it represented one condensed moment in a process that challenges both the discourse and practices of secularism in India. With the ouster of the BJP-led government at the polls in 2004, the reins of power shifted to the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) was consequently revised in an attempt to bring it in consonance with the ideals of equality and justice enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The document was approved by the Central Advisory Board on Education in September 2005. Though widely debated and critiqued itself, the Framework is a considerable advance, and represents an attempt to undo the biases of the NCFSE 2000 by injecting a strong dose of the ‘secular’.

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8 The National Curriculum Framework 2005 identified “nurturing an over-riding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country” as one of its guiding principles. It furthers the values of equality, justice and fraternity, emphasizing education’s role in building a culture of peace. It encourages students to explore diverse sources of information to understand how the same content may be presented in different ways.
The Indian Constitution bears the traces of a historical context of religious discussion and conflict, and comes out resolutely in favor of a broad, tolerant humanism. The modernist conception of India, which shaped the Constitution, the choice of its national symbols and the policies of successive governments, cast the idea of the Indian nation primarily as a political and not cultural or civilizational community. In this view, India’s political identity consists of its commitment to certain fundamental principles such as justice, liberty, equality, fraternity and the dignity of the individual – all of which were new to the country and somewhat at odds with its cultural and social practices. While it served as an inspiring idea for the imperatives of forging an independent nation-state out of a multiplicity of identities, it paid little attention to their internal diversities or their creative historical interventions, and lacked a coherent notion of the place of religion in political life. Its homogenizing impulses were deeply problematic for a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, whose citizens have always taken a fluid and porous view of their identities and crossed their boundaries without inhibition. Not surprisingly, its contradictions were to unfold and manifest in violent ways. It is this context that the forces of Hindutva (the political ideology of Right-wing Hindu nationalism) sought to exploit, with startling degrees of success. The control over the media and education is crucial to its agenda, and although it is presented as a struggle to revive the purity of Indian culture, it has the consolidation of power within the political arena as its primary goal. Hindu nationalism can be seen at one level as a conservative backlash, among the relatively privileged, to resist the broader democratic transformation that has intensified political mobilization among the lower castes and minorities. Consequently, the process of questioning social hierarchies through transformatory educational agendas will not always be a peaceful one.

It is significant that the scale of violence targeting ethnic, religious and sectarian minorities has been on the increase in India. Between 1954 and 1994,

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10 Bikhu Parekh, Re-Imaging India, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, Annual Lecture 2003, p.12.

11 The lack of clarity on what constitutes Indian secularism has spawned a range of interpretations – especially within the community of students. These range from - a) secularism as a concept is defunct; it is an import from the West; there is confusion about whether it means the states equidistance from, indifference to, or equal love for all religions; it represented official ideology rather than popular conviction; that the Congress Party had taken secularism with it to the grave; that secularism is pseudo secularism and religious nationalism is real secularism. See Ananya Vajpeyi, “Teaching Against Communalism”, Economic and Political Weekly (December 21, 2002) pp.5093–5097.

there were around 15,000 communal riots in India, resulting in 13,300 casualties. In 1996 alone, 36,000 crimes were reported against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes.\textsuperscript{12} Religion still continues to be the most combustible manifestation of conflict. Nearly 2,000 people died in the communal rioting that followed the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, which touched major urban centers.\textsuperscript{13} The Gujarat carnage claimed hundreds of lives and left over 50,000 displaced.

The decade of the 1990s had seen a multiplicity of political conflicts around religion, caste and regional identity in India. Yet no single event in recent political history after the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 has shocked liberal sensibilities as the Gujarat carnage of 2002 has done. The demolition of the Babri Masjid in December 1992 and the violence in its aftermath had represented a defining moment in the assertion of processes that undermined both governance and the security of minority groups. It was a grim reminder of the fragility of official secularism. The horrors of Gujarat had completely exposed the violent underbelly of the politics of nation-building. There had been warning signals – the writing on the wall.\textsuperscript{14} Yet the tragedy remained that neither the Liberals nor the Left, were able to convert these crises into effective counter-platforms of transformative mobilization across society. The largely ‘reactive’ politics of secularists proved too weak to quell the momentum of the reactionary mobilization of both majority and minorities. The Gandhians, from whom a non-alienating mobilization could have emerged, ceded their space without much resistance, opting for retreat, oblivion or self-imposed exile in the face of their lexicon being cynically appropriated by the proponents of the Hindu Nationalism.

\textsuperscript{12} See Khadija Haq, \textit{Human Development in South Asia} (Karachi: OUP, 1999), p. 113.

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid, p. 45.

\textsuperscript{14} Examples of the communalization of the polity in the closing decades of the twentieth century are too numerous to be listed. The controversies surrounding the Shah Bano case, the debates around the Uniform Civil Code that couched an issue of women’s rights in a minority-majority framework; the Mumbai riots of 1992-3, the acquittal of Shiv Sena Chief Bal Thackeray who was implicated in inciting communal violence; the repeal of the U.P. Hindu Public Religious Institutions (misuse of funds) Act 1962 to appease the Vishwa Hindu Parishad; the selective invoking by the state of “hate speech” offences in violation of sections of the Indian Penal Code; the state-supported tirade against painter M.F. Hussain on grounds of hurting the religious sentiments of the Hindu community; the vandalization of mosques and churches in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid demolition; the targeting of the Christian minority community and the violence unleashed against priests and nuns on the issue of ‘forcible’ conversions; the riots in Gujarat in 1982, and the 106 communal incidents between 1987 and ‘91 in Gujarat were, in many ways, precursors to the carnage that occurred in 2002 and the logic of its denouement.
‘Reform’ and Appropriation

The growing need to assert ‘Indian culture and values’ cannot be isolated from a larger global pattern. Cultural imperialism, accelerated by the communication revolution, has not triggered Talibanization processes in the Islamic world alone. The reductionist view of culture reflected in these processes also found resonance within fundamentalist groups in India.

The growth of Islamic madrasas with generous funds received from the Middle East and the reported funding of Christian missionary institutions by Western sources are provided as the justification for extreme moves by the Hindu Right to effect changes in curriculum and laws on conversion.\(^{15}\)

The perception among sections of the majority elite, that successive governments have built vote-banks by appeasing minorities at the cost of the majority and “national security”, made it difficult to contain their fundamentalist fringes. The targeting of the Christian minority community since the 1990s also reflects these misgivings. Christian Missionaries were seen as an added threat in that they were able to provide quality education throughout the country. The inability of many government schools to match their standards proved an irritant. In addition, these schools provided economic and educational opportunities to hitherto disenfranchised dalits and other groups, many of whom embraced Christianity in the process.\(^{16}\)

The controversy over the Talibanization of textbook history stemmed from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) edict of October 25, 2001, to delete certain sections from well-known prescribed textbooks. Coming in the wake of a growing culture of censorship, be it of Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* or Hussain’s

\(^{15}\) It is significant to mention here that the Gujarat Assembly passed the Gujarat Freedom of Religion Bill in March 2003, which punishes anyone engaged in conversions by “use of force or any fraudulent means”, with up to three years imprisonment and a hefty fine. The courts too have not been immune to these influences. On October 2, 2002, an eleven member Bench of the Supreme Court pronounced a landmark judgment, overturning earlier practice where it interpreted Article 26 (a) of the Constitution that conferred the “right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes” in such a way as to include all kinds of educational institutions. With this, the right of non-minorities to establish and administer educational institutions is treated at par with that of minorities by the Supreme Court. See Annual Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomasevski, submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2001/29 (January 7), 2002.

paintings or films and posters, it reflected a disconcerting trend of growing intolerance that is sought to be transmitted to the learning population and future citizens.

Neeladri Bhattacharya, lamenting the tainting of the rewriting of history in contemporary India, argues that for historians, the process of rewriting history is a creative act; it is the way history develops as a mode of knowledge. The changes in history writing have occurred through intense debates and disputations, conceptual ruptures and shifts in frames. Yet this process increasingly came under strain. The writing of history itself began to be mobilized for specific sectarian political projects. When political and community sentiments began to define how the past was to be represented and what could and could not be told, subserving interests inimical to coexistence, the nightmares of Gujarat were, as Bhattacharya points out, doomed to be re-enacted.

In the school settings of post-colonial societies like India, teaching uses highly visible texts which carry the status of ‘prescribed’ texts. Though terms like “curriculum” and “syllabus” are in use, in practice, it is the prescribed textbook which acts as the de facto curriculum, and being the only reliable indicator of what is “expected” in the examination, its centrality to the classroom transaction has remained intact. Furthermore, content and impact analysis studies of textbooks have revealed that since they are ‘non-optional’ media, their influence strikes deeper and is more pervasive than other print media or even the electronic media. The textbook’s status as canon, consequently, has more far-reaching effects on the shaping of consciousness than is acknowledged. It has been used very ‘effectively’

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17 See Neeladri Bhattacharya’s excellent analysis of the narratives and dominant trends in Indian Historiography in Seminar, New Delhi, No. 522 (February 2003), pp.12-18.

18 History in India began its modern career implicated in projects of colonial knowledge. Nationalist histories developed in opposition to imperial and communal frames. Nationalist historians largely operated with Western Modernist ideas of what constituted progress. In the years after independence, as professional history matured in India, the secular nationalist vision was articulated within a Left–liberal paradigm in opposition to imperial and communal conceptions of history. The question of nationhood remained central to post-colonial reflections although the terms of conceptualization changed in many ways. Historians of the 60s and 70s explored the ideas of colonialism within a framework of Marxist debates on modes of production. In opposition to nationalist valorization of the idea of Indian unity, historians of the ‘Cambridge School’ focused on local histories of communities and castes and saw the history of tensions between them. In the 80s, the ‘Subaltern School’ challenged the elitism of earlier histories and emphasized “history from below”. By the 90s, there was growing disenchantment with Nationalist frames and the liberal consensus around the vision of Nehruvian India.

19 See Neeladri Bhattacharya, op.cit, p.18.
as a tool for religious instruction and to impact ‘moral’ and ‘value’ education in both the Muslim majority schools and the Vidya Bharati-run schools.²⁰

So effectively, even outside of the NCERT system, within schools run by community organizations and political parties, children are being socialized into a sensibility that legitimizes sectarianism, obscurantism and a culture of militarism. This is done through textbooks prepared either by the Vidya Bharati Network or the Markazi Maktaba Islam. This activity of ‘theologization’ through textbooks or the ‘core curriculum’ reinforces stereotypes and jeopardizes future spaces of meaningful dialogue between religious communities. In the teaching of history, in particular, ancient myths are reconfigured to convey communal meanings and present political projects legitimated through mythic returns to an imagined glorious past. These other histories emerging from the shadows of their erstwhile submerged location are beginning to assert themselves with greater vehemence, claiming a right to be patronized by the state.

But have mainstream schools been effective in resisting this non-inclusive ‘insider-outsider’ bias? The evidence suggests that they have either been unwilling or unable to offer an alternative orientation to contain prejudice, and have not been effective in positioning themselves to teach against communalism. This counter-positioning is crucial to any process in which education can be linked to a rights-based perspective. It is now acknowledged (and mandated by the UN and other bodies) that the integration of the economic, social, cultural and political facets of education is facilitated by the indivisibility and interrelatedness of human rights. Such an integrated approach facilitates adapting education to key contemporary challenges, including the prevention of ethnic and religious violence.²¹

A study undertaken by KHOJ, a secular education project in Gujarat in 1999, detailed how, outside of the RSS-run Shishu Mandirs and Muslim Madrasas,

²⁰ Vidya Bharati is the apex body in the educational network of the organizations propounding Hindu nationalism, broadly characterized as the Sangh Parivar. Today the Vidya Bharati runs 17,000 schools at the nursery, primary and secondary levels, and has over 19 lakh students under its tutelage. These schools are run in most states and employ 90,000 teachers. Of these, 6,000 are recognized and affiliated to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) or respective State Boards. The Muslim majority school or the Urdu medium school is the Muslim equivalent of the Vidya Bharati schools in India. But these are not part of any organizational network or system. They tend to mushroom sporadically in Muslim dominated areas. Their self-confessed ideology is one that carries forward the tradition of madrasas. Of a total of around 1,25,000 recognized secondary and higher secondary schools in India, no more than 6,200 are within the CBSE system.

textbooks prescribed by even ‘secular’ central and state education boards in the country communicate religious, caste and gender prejudice. Crucial exclusions are explored and analyzed through abstracts from state board texts, ICSE textbooks and college texts to highlight this alarming phenomenon. The silences and exclusions are particularly disturbing, since they allow Right-wing ideology to slip in through the interstices of the discourse, with insidious force.

The fact that children, and especially their access to education, were under assault during the Gujarat carnage is not pure coincidence. There were more than 50,000 affected children in camps alone in Gujarat since February 2002. There has been a systematic crackdown on the education of minority children and youth at all levels of the school system in Gujarat. This process, which had begun earlier, peaked in the period starting from February 28. Even as violence raged in the state, the language of the examination papers proved exceedingly problematic. In addition, a number of minority-area examination centers were shifted to majority areas, thereby causing many parents to fear for the basic safety of their children. The Supreme Court came down heavily on the state government and issued directives to remedy the situation. Apart from the most obvious economic, psychological and physical devastation, the educational setback to the children of Gujarat has impaired chances of intra – and inter-community healing and reconciliation for the future.

Identity and Pedagogy

The question of whether education in South Asia can become an effective vehicle for building peace between the communities and countries of our region has no easy answers. But some beginnings can be made. Since the teaching of history has been seriously implicated in the reinforcing of negative stereotypes that engender social conflicts, conscious interventions in this sphere are urgently required.

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23 Some examples cited in Setalvad’s detailed analysis of the Gujarat State Board Social Studies Textbooks include: the depiction of ancient Indian culture as Hindu culture (Std V); Muslims, Christians and Parsis categorized as ‘foreigners’ (Std IX); silence on the role of the RSS in the murder of Gandhi (Std VIII). A frighteningly uncritical account of Fascism & Nazism (Std VIII), the depiction of Hitler as lending dignity and prestige to the German government (Std X), silence on Ambedkar’s critique of caste hierarchy and his protest conversion to Buddhism, the unquestioning presentation of Hindu texts including Manusmriti, and the implicit justification of gender inequities.
Scholar and educationist Krishna Kumar has shown, based on an extensive study of curricula in India and Pakistan, that the manner in which the freedom struggle is presented to children helps sustain the hostility between India and Pakistan. The teaching of history forces a perpetual quarrel with the past in both countries. In India, the narrative of freedom is structured around the tension between ‘secular’ and ‘communal’ forces. Since this tension is relevant in terms of defining India’s national identity and its distinctiveness from Pakistan, it encourages a disapproving and suspicious view of Pakistan. On the other hand, school textbooks used in Pakistan present the political narrative to buttress the claim that the urge to create Pakistan arose out of certain irreconcilable differences between Hindus and Muslims. The conceptual ground on which this common perception of history is based is that the past is past – and it is fully known to us. This ‘memory-based’ view of history allows ideological indoctrination to become the purpose of discussing the past. These biases are also carried into inter-community perceptions within the country.

It is essential to engage with a pedagogy that is collaborative, not confrontationist or collusive. Exchanges between students and teachers to examine the roots of prejudice, primarily by acknowledging differences and accommodating rival perspectives through the additional use of biography, literature and journalism, could expand the scope of interpretation of existing historical narratives.

The application of analytical techniques and judgment is part of the curriculum in countries where a serious effort has been made over recent years to reform the teaching of history. For instance, the path-breaking work in Northern Ireland, where impressive initiatives have been made to integrate and enlist education in an overall strategy aimed at transforming the conflict, presents us with encouraging possibilities.25

There have been similar innovative attempts in other parts of the world to meet the challenges of ethnic disaffection and conflict through education. Education for

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24 Kumar, op.cit.

25 In 1981, the first integrated school, for both Catholic and Protestant children, was opened in Northern Ireland and since then, forty-five integrated schools have come into existence through community initiative. Significant work has also been undertaken to ensure that even within segregated schools, pupils have the opportunity to address existing cultural and political divisions. By the early 1990s, programs within schools were designed to increase understanding among young people, eg. The “Cultural Heritage” and “Education for Mutual Understanding” programs were an obligatory part of the curriculum for every child. Thanks to the efforts of educationists and parents drawn from all sides, an agreed history curriculum was devised in Northern Ireland.
peace programs are being promoted by UNICEF and are reaching many thousands of children in war-scarred countries in Burundi, the Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, the Honduras, Lebanon, Liberia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Sudan, the former Yugoslavia and Sri Lanka. However, while the reach of these programs is substantial, the nature of the depth of their impact is less clear.26

The case of apartheid South Africa suggests an example of how non-state actors can step in to galvanize forces for constructive change, and provide effective resistance to systems of oppression. Here, Roman Catholic schools admitted black pupils, thereby defying the government’s prohibition on integrated education. Also, a sensitive handling of linguistic issues in the curriculum can often be crucial to build and maintain peaceful relations within and between different ethnic groups.27

The early ‘secular’, modernist preoccupations with nation-building in India had very consciously kept discussions on religion outside the parameters of school and university curricula. The refusal of the Left and ‘progressive’ groups to acknowledge how pervasive issues of faith can be in the South Asian context further reinforced a somewhat myopic approach to ‘coexistence’. Even Gandhi was designated (till quite recently) by the Left broadly as a ‘bourgeois thinker’, whose contributions to the national movement were explored through the lens of class-based analysis. The genius of Gandhi, whose transformatory appeal lay in the extraordinary manner in which he could communicate iconoclastic ideas through the use of a religious idiom that resonated with ordinary people in novel ways, was largely ignored. The liberal intelligentsia remained impervious to the fact that in India, it is not possible to simply wish away religion in any mobilization for social and political transformation. This ambivalence inhibited the exploration of creative mechanisms to harness its potential and to contain its propensity to unleash conflict and discord.

In multi-cultural societies, the question of faith is infinitely more complex than that which is reflected in the dichotomy of the ‘secularism’ versus ‘fundamentalism’ debate in India. There is an inherent danger in treating faith as a totalizing category.


27 In Senegal, for example, where there are fifteen different linguistic groups and where Islamic and Christian populations have coexisted peacefully, ‘ethnic peace’ has been attributed, in large part, to an imaginative language policy for schools, where both French and other local languages were enlisted to develop an inclusive ethos (Kenneth D Bush and Diana Saltarelli 2000). The School of Peace, established in 1979 in Jaffa by the Neve Shalom / Wahat al Salam Cooperative village of Jews and Palestinian Arabs of Israeli citizenship, is a bilingual, bicultural, binational elementary school coordinated jointly by a professional team of Jewish and Arab educators.
Faith is always in the process of being defined within the specificities of particular contexts. What makes this a difficult arena is that in South Asia, faith is a reality that touches millions of people in incomprehensible, sometimes violent, ways. The educational enterprise cannot remain immune to its resonances.

More effort is needed to create a frame of reference in which the ambivalences of faith can be accommodated. This can materialize only through the process of confronting specific religious beliefs, customs and taboos that continue to have significance for particular communities. In searching for new languages of faith, it is important to stress their interventionist possibilities. If by ‘secular’ we mean a total avoidance of religious matters, secular weapons may not be enough. Ways have to be found to enrich the secular and ground it within the specificities of our cultural contexts. There is a need to distinguish between faith and its perversion, and discuss those critical junctures when religion becomes something politically volatile. Education about the boundaries of religion is crucial to enhance our vigilance of its political misuse.

Consequently, for a secular theology to strike roots in India, there would have to be an understanding that could be adapted within the multi-religious contexts of faith. As Ashish Nandy has pointed out, one can only hope that the state systems in South Asia may learn something about religious tolerance from everyday Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism, rather than wish that ordinary Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Sikhs will learn tolerance from various theories of statecraft.

The challenge for education is to engage in a sensitive and creative balance, especially since such an initiative could, through unimaginative approaches, easily degenerate into either reinforcing religiosity and orthodoxy or domesticating the pedagogy into the predicable strait jackets of unidimensional ‘secular’ rhetoric. Yet this is an engagement – difficult though it is – that Indian education can ignore today only at its peril. Teaching against communalism can be integral to envisioning how educational processes and institutions could be used to analyze communalism, and through such a process, persuade young citizens to turn away from it.

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29 It is pertinent to note that no university of national repute in India offers the comparative study of religions as a subject.
31 For an excellent exposition of the challenges and requirements to make this effective see Ananya Vajpeyi, op.cit.
Ethnicity, Conflict and Education

The theory that nation-building would develop modern homogenous cultures centered on primary affinity to the nation-state rather than on ethnically based loyalties has proved illusory. Ethnicity has, in many instances, proved to be a positive integrative force in contemporary societies. Yet violent internal conflict between ethnic communities has surfaced where state attempts at building an overriding ‘national identity’ have collided with practices enabling the democratic celebration of pluralism or diversity. Research conducted by the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) suggests that throughout the 1990s, there were about thirty active major armed conflicts, only one of which was inter-state. The rest took place within states, between factions split along ethnic, religious or cultural lines. Education has not been immune to these influences. Because of its propensity to alienate groups and create antagonism between them, in many conflicts around the world, education is part of the problem, not the solution.

UNICEF study has examined, through specific examples, the role of education in situations of identity-based conflict, highlighting the following ‘peace-destroying’ or ‘conflict-maintaining’ factors:

- Inequity in education as a means of creating or preserving positions of privilege.
- Education as a weapon in cultural repression.
- Denial of education as a weapon of war.
- Education as a means of manipulating history for political purposes.
- Education serving to diminish self-worth and encourage hate.
- Segregated education as a means of ensuring inequality, inferiority and stereotypes.
- The role of textbooks in impoverishing the imagination of learners and inhibiting them from dealing constructively with conflict.32

Examples of these processes abound, and a correlation can be found between educational practices and conflicts in societies. The fourteen-year long conflict in Kashmir has adversely affected educational opportunities for young Muslims in the valley, and today, the question of access to quality education for the children of Hindu refugees in the camps in Jammu raises serious questions about the efficacy

32 See Kenneth D. Bush and Diana Sattarelli, (Eds.), op. cit., p. 33.
of ‘rehabilitation’ policies and programs. There are many additional examples of such direct correlation between education – its use, misuse or abuse – and conflict throughout the world.\(^{33}\)

**Equity and Access: Continuing Concerns**

Education in India continues to be riddled with several unresolved issues of equity and access, making it prone to cleavages that become vulnerable to manipulation by communal ideologies. People who take to *direct violence* appear to address the perceived injustice of what Galtung calls *structural violence*, hoping to achieve systemic changes in the underlying economic, cultural, social and political structures that are perceived to detrimentally affect their lives. It is in this sense that education, too, becomes a *contested terrain*.

Amartya Sen sees education as holding many keys to the enhancement of human freedom. It increases the substantive freedom enjoyed by people through individual enhancement and distributional change, which can have many far-reaching social effects. If its immediate and direct purpose, as he sees it, is to make people “better informed, more able, more skilled more enlightened and broaden their thinking horizons,”\(^{34}\) then Indian education has, by and large, with the exception of few shining examples, fallen short of this goal.

While primary school enrolment may have increased, it is still far from adequate, and below the rates in South Asian countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. More than half a century ago, the Indian Constitution promised to ensure universal primary education up to the age of fourteen years. Today, even with elementary education having been declared a fundamental right, more than seventy million children in the age group of six to fourteen years are either school drop-outs or have never

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\(^{33}\) In the conflicts between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, the Serbian government adopted a policy of assimilation, eliminating teaching programs in the Albanian language and introducing a unified curriculum and standardized textbooks. The ethnic cleansing undertaken by the Serbian military forces in 1999, consequently, cannot be seen as a spontaneous event. Again, the Arabization of schools in Sudan from 1964 onwards, resulted in the total isolation of the southern intelligentsia, along with the expulsion of foreign missionaries. Similar examples can be cited in the case of Rwanda, where Christian missionary schools, from the late 1800s onwards, openly favored the Tutsi minority and actively discriminated against the Hutus. ‘Special Schools’ were set up to educate Tutsis as future leaders of the country, as part of state policy. Textbooks of the German and Belgian colonial periods also linked the physical differences between the two to intellectual capabilities, according to prevailing racial prejudices.

\(^{34}\) Amartya Sen, “*Education in Kerala’s Development: Towards a New Agenda*”, Institute of Social Sciences (New Delhi, 2001), pp.3-6.
been enrolled in a school at all. Many more children are formally enrolled, but barely attend classes. The bulk of primary schools in the country suffer from huge shortages in the most basic resources: teachers, textbooks, black-boards, buildings and so on.

Class and caste factors keep large numbers outside the ambit of opportunity. Poverty and the attendant pervasiveness of child labor, especially in the states of the North, add to illiteracy and disempowerment. Higher education faces even greater threats on account of decline in state funding, pressures from processes of globalization, recurrent strikes and political interference. Experiments at linking education with the world of work has led to a ghettoization of the ‘vocational stream’, which is being increasingly perceived as the repository of the ‘less meritorious’ or ‘less advantaged’ sections of the student population. Gender inequities abound, both in terms of access and retention of girl students in the school system. In addition, educational material and textbooks reinforce gender stereotypes and the sexual division of labor.\(^{35}\) Government policies to mainstream protective discrimination to provide access to disadvantaged castes and tribes continue to be met with suspicion and hostility. The recent debate surrounding reservations have brought these cleavages into sharp focus.

India is already among the worst performing nations in terms of the share of GDP devolved to public spending on education (In 2002-03 it was 3.1% as compared to international norms of 6% and as much as 12% to 15% in some countries of East Asia). It is significant that where there had been a steady increase in the percentage of allocation between 1950 and 1994, there has been a decline since then.

Fifty-eight years after independence, the average adult literacy in India is 75.3% for males and 53.7% for females (according to the 2001 Census). The primary school enrolment ratio is 110 boys: 90 girls, and the percentage of drop-outs before the fifth grade is 38%. India has 35.2% of its population aged fifteen years and above as illiterates.

The influential PROBE (Public Report on Basic Education in India) report of 1999 on elementary education brought the inequities of the basic education system into

\(^{35}\) Recent findings suggest that the social benefits from investing in female education are far greater than those from investing in male education, and that female literacy has a strong inverse correlation to average total fertility rate, public health etc. The benefits are greater than from other public interventions such as family planning services, increasing the number of physicians etc. Also, increases in women’s education generally lead to increases in their labor force participation as well as their earnings (see Jean Dreze & Amartya Sen ed, *Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives* (OUP, India, 1997).
the public space for the first time, to mobilize opinion to make the Right to Education a fundamental right in India. The PROBE findings systematically exposed several myths that had gained currency either through state complicity or silence. It highlighted that the poor in India, contrary to public perception, attached a great deal of importance to children’s education and were concerned about the quality of education. There was state inertia and blatant neglect of disadvantaged communities and regions. The number of illiterates actually rose from 350 million in 1981 to 371 million in 1991 – the proportion of illiterates in the 15-19 age group (34%) is six times higher than that of China.

While elementary education is free in terms of admission fees in the government school system, the cash costs of education discourage families from sending children to school (the cost could be as high as 318 rupees, on an average, per child in a government primary school, which, for an agricultural laborer, is a prohibitive cost). Though there has been progress in the provision of schooling facilities, there exist not just physical distances, but ‘social’ and class distances that have to be overcome. Children often internalize class and caste distinctions in the classroom, and a middle class bias is generally visible in the transacting of the curriculum. Education is transmitted as an unimaginative assemblage of facts in an alienating and intimidating pedagogical style.

The adoption of the 86th Constitution Amendment Act, 2002 by the Parliament makes the **fundamental right to education** a guaranteed right. The amendment was inserted as Article 21A, under the Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Its origins lie in a Supreme Court judgment delivered in 1993, when, in *J.P. Unnikrishnan Vs the State of Andhra Pradesh*, a five-member Bench laid down that the right to education was a fundamental right that flowed from the Right to Life. The 86th Amendment enables any citizen to seek the enforcement of the right to education by way of resort to writ jurisdiction under Articles 32 and 226 of the Constitution. While it partially fulfils the mandate of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted by the UN in 1989), it has invited some criticism for having restricted the right to children between six and fourteen years of age. Moreover, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2009, the legislation envisaged to put into effect free and compulsory education for children in the delineated age-group, awaits President’s assent.

One of the greatest challenges to the future of education in India comes from the growing chasm between the two worlds that the school-going population inhabits:

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that of privilege and that of deprivation. The reinforcing of attitudes of arrogance at one end and attitudes of subservience at the other, along with the division of the school-goers along perceptible class lines, continues to have a demoralizing impact on educators and learners alike. The general divide between children of state-run schools and the children of English-medium schools applies to all regions of India, and serves as the continuum for colonial mindsets. The two groups live in two different cultural worlds with their own specific zones of knowledge and ignorance. The academic and other components of the culture of English-medium schools engenders both ignorance and disdain for local cultures, and affiliates its inhabitants culturally and emotionally to the metropolitan centers of Western affluence and capitalism.

In its attempt to coalesce the concerns of human development and human rights, the Amendment sees “capability rights” – to use Amartya Sen’s conceptualization – as a substantive content of goal rights. The Right to Education is to be viewed as a proxy for the more fundamental rights to the capabilities that derive from access to education, namely of being free from ignorance and to live with dignity. It is here that its scope must be extended to include the right to an environment free of prejudice, respectful of difference and ensuring of equity, access and quality. This will be its ultimate litmus test – and not just the goal of achieving literacy, which, in India, has officially been benchmarked as the ability to write one’s name. However, set against the backdrop of raging debates over prejudices in curricula and teaching methodologies, whether the operationalization of this fundamental right would ensure equity and respect for difference remains an open question.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 1988 had “equality of education and opportunity” as its first concern. The document of 2000, which came in for widespread criticism, had “education for a cohesive society” as its primary focus. Though the draft made loud and repeated noises about “national identity” and the “duties of citizens”, it did not demand the provision of essential facilities for quality learning as a way to ensure equality. What was most problematic about the document was its call for a “redefinition” of the concept of secularism – a fundamental precept of the Indian Constitution. The critical concerns related to how the “equal understanding and equal respect for all religions” would actually translate within the classroom situation, given the social realities of India today. Equal respect for all human beings irrespective of their religions cannot be conflated into “equal respect for all religions” – especially when dogma and indoctrination can quite easily and insidiously creep into curriculum transaction. Although there were several references to Gandhi’s educational ideals, there was a marked lack of appreciation for the congruence between the rhythms of learning and living and the “granite
reality” of the context of the learner, for as it has been shown, “where living is in crisis, learning becomes inaccessible”.37

Clearly then, the National Curriculum Framework 2005 attempts to redress the distortions and the partisanship evident in the 2000 framework. The larger and possible goal of defining community-based education, while emphasizing the Gandhian ideal of developing and retaining local knowledge, has been highlighted in the discourse. Advocating a partnership between school and community, the document perceives the process of social transformation to be complex, multi-layered and democratic.38 It acknowledges that local knowledge traditions may be “different from the way school knowledge approaches particular subjects”, and encourages comparative and contextual study. It is clear that to walk the tightrope of providing education which is relevant to the immediate context of children, and at the same time, provide them with ‘standard’ knowledge, is no mean task, and calls for a pedagogy that is imaginative and discerning.

The curricular and pedagogic concerns in NCF 2005 are informed by respect for pluralism, equality of rights and gender justice. The need to promote a culture of peace through the curriculum finds its first official articulation in this document. Today, there is a considerable body of research that shows that the exclusion of minority cultures from schools adversely affects the sense of self, identity and motivation for learning, and that historical deprivation, isolation and exploitation may continue to be relevant to the educational experiences of the socially and economically marginalized communities, who are still portrayed largely in subservient roles, even in some textbooks.

As guidelines for building a curriculum, these are sound recommendations, but what is pertinent is how these are operationalized in the light of logistical, infrastructural and political complexities. The real challenge lies in bringing into effect the crucial balance between equity, access and quality, the imperatives of ‘education for all’ and the ‘maintenance of standards’.

This is possible only when the political underpinnings of the prevalent policy framework are subjected to rigorous debate and constructive change. An appreciation of diversity that marks ‘being, knowing and learning’ in India is a first important step to furthering coexistence.

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Educational institutions in Pakistan function under three separate systems – public, private and madrasas. The media and the government turned their attention towards the madrasas only after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, as there was a growing perception that terrorism in the region is fueled by these madrasas. Although several studies have been undertaken to analyze the madrasa curriculum and its impact on the students, the role and attitudes of madrasa teachers, and the challenges they face, have largely been neglected. This paper is based on interviews and focused group discussions conducted with madrasa teachers in Pakistan to gauge what, in their view, is required to reform the system. It also provides some recommendations for directions that public policy could take to address religious radicalism.

Introduction

Traditionally, madrasas are Islamic learning institutions, aimed at building a generation of Islamic scholars and leaders. The word ‘madrasa’ means ‘center of learning’ in Arabic. They provide free religious education, boarding and lodging. For these reasons, they are essentially schools for the poor.1 “The madrasas of

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1 A madrasa student learns how to read, memorize and recite the Qur’an properly. Madrasas issue certificates of various levels. A madrasa university is called Dar Ul Ulum, (usually having hundreds of students) a primary school, a Maktab, (up to fifty students), and an integrated school with various levels is simply called a madrasa. The graduating students are called Haffiz-ul-Qur’an (those who memorize the Arabic text of the Qur’an) or Qaris (those who can recite Qur’anic verses with proper Arabic pronunciation). Those with advanced theological training are known as Ulema (Religious Scholar).
Pakistan are said to be the breeding ground for much of South and Central Asian militancy, but for the accusations made, there is precious little known about these seminaries and their students”, notes Tariq Rahman. The increased attention of the international media, particularly after the terrorist attacks in New York in 2001 and London in 2005, created pressure on the Pakistani government to address the root causes of global terrorism. This also encouraged the government to begin monitoring these educational institutions and to establish mechanisms for creating accountability.

**History of Madrasas Since 1947**

Following the partition of India and the birth of Pakistan in 1947, a number of Ulema from Deoband migrated to Pakistan and established seminaries here. Two of these madrasas are believed to have played a prominent role in bringing a rigorous form of Islam to Pakistan in Akora Khattak (Darul Uloom Haqqania) and in the Banori township of Karachi. Today, there are five distinct types of madrasas in Pakistan, divided along sectarian and political lines. The two main branches of Sunni Islam in South Asia, Deobandi and Barelvi, dominate this sector. The doctrinal differences between these schools often seem irreconcilable in an educational setting. For example, the largest group of madrasas belongs to the Barelvi sect, known to be a rigid opponent of the Wahabbi doctrine as propagated by Saudi Arabia, Ahle Hadith/Salafi Muslims have their own schools, as do the Shias. The difference in demographically targeted recruitment and placement between these sects has not been evaluated.

In Pakistan, some madrasas turned radical in the early 1980s, due to external influences; a brief analysis of this phenomenon is provided later. Consequently, during the Afghan-Soviet war, a culture of violence got entrenched in some of the madrasas in the country. Syed Nadir El-Edroos argues that “[a] major contribution

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4 The following five are recognized as Wafaq/Tanzem ul Madrasai/Rabit ul Madaris or Madrasa umbrella organizations: 1. Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabia, 2. Tanzeem-ul-Madaris Ahle Sunnat, 3. Wafaq-ul-Madraris Al-Salfia, 4. Wafaq-ul-Madaris Shia, and 5. Rabita-ul-Madaris Al Islamia. There are also recognized individual madrasas, such as the Jamia Islamia Minhaj-ul-Qur’an, Jamia Taleemat-e-Islamia, Jamia Ashrafia, Darul Uloom Mohammadia Ghausia and Darul Uloom of Karachi.

to the militancy rampant in madrasas today was made in the 1980s. A study conducted by Patrick Belton shows how textbooks developed at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and published by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) were used to encourage and justify the ‘holy war’ against the Soviets”.6

Therefore, the changing face of the madrasa and increasing radicalization in Pakistan can be directly traced to Zia-ul-Haq’s rule, when the students of the seminaries were indoctrinated with a jihadi ideology and sent to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet occupiers. The same war-hardened zealots were used by Zia’s military establishment in Indian-occupied Kashmir.7 With state patronage, madrasas were established throughout the country in an unregulated fashion, leading to an enormous increase in their numbers. Quraishi reports that there are around 10,000 madrasas all over Pakistan, offering free education to over a million children who have been neglected by the government’s failing school system.8

External and Internal Donors

The origin of religious militancy in Pakistan can be traced back to the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. During that time, American funding and Pakistani assistance promoted the proliferation of a large number of militant Islamist groups and madrasas in Pakistan. The USA needed the Islamic fundamentalists to ‘wage jihad’ against the Soviets in Afghanistan, and thus provided substantial funding to Pakistan, entrusted to its leader at that time, General Zia ul Haq. Owing to their strategic calculations of the times, the governments of Pakistan and the USA neglected the radical ideology and methods employed by the madrasas. All of this resulted in the formation of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and extremists groups in Pakistan, which led to the production and spread of sectarianism and violence as each act of sectarian killing provoked a cycle of revenge killings. Civilian governments failed to curb this violence, either because they lacked the will and the strength to do so, or because they wanted the militants to fight for Pakistan’s corner in Indian Kashmir. That failure, in turn, allowed the religious militants to flourish and grow in strength.9

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Madrasas are/were mainly funded by the USA and Saudi Arabia. The US government of that time funded an Afghan war against the Soviets, and Saudi Arabia funded anti-Shia Islam in Pakistan. Some local philanthropists also sponsored madrasas. Financial inputs from Zakat and the Islamic ritual of Eid ul Azha can’t be neglected. In principle, Zakat is given directly to the entitled individual beneficiary. However, in case of the madrasas, the quantity of funding is decided on the basis of student enrollment, with funds given not to individual students, but to the manager of the madrasa. This system gives an authority to madrasa officials over the use of Zakat money.

The idea of jihad was incorporated into the Pakistani curriculum after the Afghan war. At that point it suited Washington and their most favoured ally, Pakistan, to encourage and glorify the Mujahideen (the ones who perform jihad), or holy warriors. Accordingly, a university in the United States was asked to formulate textbooks for Pakistani schools. After the departure of Soviets from the region, the Mujahideen not only mutated into the Taliban but also outlived their usefulness. So the same American university has been given the task of removing glorified references to the Mujahideen, under the cover of educational reforms. These constantly changing educational interventions have exposed the motives of the United States and have resulted in greater resistance from Pakistanis towards such reforms.

Islamic educational institutions have come under intense public scrutiny in recent years because of their perceived linkage to militancy. However, much of the research thus far has relied only on anecdotal accounts and investigative journalism. In particular, Pakistani madrasas have been the focus of much media coverage. In the aftermath of 9-11, the overseas Pakistanis were shocked by the news that bombers were identified as British of Pakistani origin. It was also reported that one of the bombers was trained at a Pakistani madrasa. The link between radical madrasas and aggressive behavior against Western interests has also motivated many development agencies (INGOs) to focus interest on madrasa reforms. Some prominent INGOs working on madrasa education/reforms in Pakistan are the Asia Foundation, the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy and the United States Institutes of Peace. Most, if not all, of these INGOs work in collaboration with local partners to implement their projects.

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12 Ali,(2005) op.cit.
Unfortunately, media propaganda has reinforced the link between terrorism and Pakistan’s madrasas, targeting all madrasas. In reality, few studies that have been conducted have found that only a small minority of madrasas are involved in such activities and not all madrasas in Pakistan are poisoning the minds of youth.14 Perceptions linking madrasas to terrorism arose when some radical groups made inroads into the system of madrasas, following the path laid by the politicization of textbooks and curriculum in public schools.

Madrasa reforms are becoming an uphill task for reformists in Pakistan, and a matter of great concern not only for the Pakistani government, but also for governments in neighboring countries. In early 2007, the prayer leader of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) and head of Jamia Hafsa madrasa, announced the enforcement of Islamic law (Sharia) in the premises of Jamia Fareedia and Jamia Hafsa in Islamabad. At this, the students of Jamia Hafsa, mostly girls, hijacked the Government’s Children Library in Islamabad and warned the government of suicide attacks if any operation against the madrasas was initiated.15 This was primarily to prevent the government from attempting any madrasa reforms and the demolition of illegally constructed mosques in Islamabad by the Capital Development Authority. Several other incidents since then, like kidnappings and suicide bombings, have been linked to radical elements from the madrasas.16 However, not all Ulema (religious scholars) supported such activities. In fact, some, belonging to different schools of thought, strongly condemned the acts.17 Civil society leaders have been angry over the failure of governmental writ in this particular case of religious extremism in Pakistan. Government authorities, have, for long, been avoiding getting into another conflict by saying that there will be collateral damage in case of any operation.18

Overall, only 10-15% of the madrasas in Pakistan are found to be affiliated with extremist religious/political groups who have co-opted education for their own need.19 Pluralism and secularism have been neglected by these radical madrasas in Pakistan, which preach religious extremism and intolerance to the youngsters.

15 “Government Warned of Suicide Attacks In Case of Resistance: Qazi Court to Work in Pattern of Panchayat and Jirgas”, *Daily Times* (April 7, 2007).
16 See, for example, details about a kidnapping by the radicals in “Punish Criminals, China asks Sherpao: Kidnapping in Islamabad”, *Dawn* (June 28, 2007).
19 Ibid.
The broader agenda of these groups is to propagate religion through the state and to ensure that it continues to dictate what policies are formulated. They believe that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan should and must only follow the principles of Islam, since that was the basis of Pakistan’s ‘national identity’ and the ‘Two Nation Theory.’

Nevertheless, madrasas are the only hope of education for children, mostly boys, who would otherwise be deprived of any educational opportunities. Students between the ages of five and twenty-five pay nominal fees of 100 rupees per month (approximately one and a half US dollars). When poor children see their basic needs being fulfilled at the madrasa, it is nearly impossible for them to rebel from the madrasa culture. According to a BBC report, people trained in radical madrasas in Pakistan have also been a part of sectarian violence over the last decade, during which hundreds of Shias and Sunnis have been killed.

Understanding the dynamics of madrasa recruitment, funding sources and curricular differences between sectarian schools is therefore critically important.

**Influence of Pedagogy and the Environment**

Curricular content plays a crucial role in influencing young minds. However, pedagogical practices also ensure that students do, in fact, learn what they are intended to learn. The aim of this section is to highlight the significance of the pedagogical practices of the madrasas in consolidating their impact on the beliefs and attitudes of the young students. Individual madrasas decide autonomously what to teach and preach. Many of the madrasas only teach religious subjects to their students, focusing entirely on rote memorization of Arabic texts. This can take place to the complete exclusion of basic skills such as simple math, science or geography. As a result, most graduates of these madrasas acquire skills that do not fit well with the job market.

One of the central concerns of researchers across the globe in recent years has been the propagation of jihad by radical madrasas, and whether the way these

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21 L. Harding, “Pupils at schools of hardliners seek war”, (2001) http://www.guardian.co.uk/pakistan/Story/0,2763,554835,00.html


23 The analyses presented in this section is based on information available through secondary sources.

24 Singer (2001) op. cit.
institutions have defined the term is an authentic representation or not. In this
debate, some have argued that the madrasas are distorting the meaning of jihad;
that they are using Islam as a stepping stone and that since Islam in the Qur’an
condemns killing innocent civilians and damaging properties in war, terrorism has
no place in Islam.  

Despite these vociferous claims and equally strong counter claims, research into
the attitude and beliefs of students from madrasas has revealed the extent of harm
these institutions have inflicted on the minds of many young Pakistani and Afghani
boys. A study that gathered the views of madrasa students from Pakistan revealed
that a fifteen-year-old Afghan refugee expressed his desire to fight against infidels.
Another student expressed hatred against USA and his eagerness to fight against
Americans. His classmate articulated a similar sentiment: “I will dedicate my whole
life for jihad. It is compulsory for Muslims. I will kill enemies of Islam”.  

The definition of Jihad has been distorted by extremists to manipulate young
students for their own agendas. This has aggravated conflicts not only between
Pakistan and other countries, but also within the country; and has resulted in violence
against minorities and conflicts between various sects of Islam. Shia-Sunni
differences in Pakistan have also been accentuated due to the training youth receive
at sectarian madrasas. Pakistani madrasa students with an extremist mission have
become primary soldiers in the internal sectarian conflicts that are increasingly
turning violent.

The appeal of madrasas lies not only in the low costs involved, but also in their
pedagogy. Most madrasas go beyond theory and involve youngsters in action,
such as protests, lectures and sermons. This is very different from the knowledge
students receive in other educational institutions, where pedagogy is restricted to
classroom teaching. This practical methodology of training influences students
very quickly and gives them a sense of purpose; a feel for ‘doing’. In doing this,
radical groups are following the successful model used in communist revolutions
across the world, from China to Cuba. As people become increasingly dependent
on and integrated within the private social service system provided by these groups,
the motivation to remain loyal to the State is diminished. These new, parallel

25 See for instance K. Malik, “Madrisas and enlightened moderation”, Pak Tribune,
hi/world/south_asia/3155112.stm
27 Ibid.
institutions, therefore, become means to mobilize people against the State whenever State policies go against the professed beliefs of the group. Students are often exploited and pitted against authorities, and in the process, they become increasingly radical and violent.

The curriculum used in madrasas instills a sense of superiority in the minds of students about Islam. This happens at the cost of the converse – inculcating respect for different belief systems. This results in generating hostility towards people of other religions. The ‘infidels’ are defined, discussed, understood and criticized in madrasas, within the global political frame and in terms of local community relations. This is where sectarian literature becomes instrumental in Pakistani madrasas. Examination of the syllabi and curriculum of the Pakistani madrasas shows that in the name of refutation, potent criticism of other sects and religious minorities, hatred towards other sects, and a siege mentality are imparted, from the very beginning of the schooling.28

Madrasa Reforms

A very well-known Pakistani scholar, Tariq Rahman, says, “The madrasas are obviously institutions which have a blueprint of society in their mind. What needs explanation is that the madrasas, which were basically conservative institutions before the Afghan-Soviet war, are today both ideologically activist and sometimes militant”.29

Although the current government, lead by the Pakistan People’s Party is facing numerous challenges, the election manifesto of the Party in 2008 had clearly made a commitment that “madrasas will be reformed to be madrasas that impart knowledge to children”30. The issue of tackling religious extremism or indirectly, the issue of madrasa reforms in Pakistan has been on the agenda of the government.

Madrasa reforms in Pakistan were mainly initiated or speeded up with the dawn of the policy or philosophy called ‘enlightened moderation’. This policy was proposed and promoted by President Pervez Musharraf.31 During the early days, he explained his personal position on it by calling on the Muslim world to end violence, and on

29 T. Rahman, op.cit.
30 Ibid.
western powers (especially the United States of America) to seek to resolve all political disputes with justice and to assist the development of Muslim countries. Even then, many criticized Musharraf’s vision of enlightened moderation. One of the biggest and oldest Islamic political parties of Pakistan, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) had labeled this vision and its policies as a Western or American propaganda. Leaders of JI also argued that Islam, by nature, is a religion of enlightened moderation, and therefore, doesn’t need any changes directed by the West under the guise of enlightened moderation in Pakistan. President Musharraf envisioned Pakistan to be a progressive, modern and moderate Islamic state, poised to take its place amongst the developed nations of the world. He desired the country’s development not exclusively in the economic sense, but rather in a more holistic manner, including social, cultural and political dimensions. However, this all was done by Musharraf to extend his regime in the country and in response to pressure from Washington.

The Government of Pakistan took major steps towards creating an integrated and improved system of national education. This started with the increased allocation of funds in the budget (2003-2004) for universal primary education and literacy, and was intended to strengthen the existing education system and allow new schools to be opened. This it was believed would provide students with an alternative to madrasas. The envisioned program aimed at facilitating the introduction of modern subjects such as English, Mathematics, Pakistan Studies, Social Studies and General Sciences, from the primary to the secondary level. At the intermediate level, English, Economics, Pakistan Studies, and Computer Studies shall be made an integral part of the madrasa curriculum. In total, this program expected to reach some 8000 madrasas. Moreover, the project for the integration of the religious education system with the mainstream general education system aimed at: establishing and strengthening the lines of communication between the madrasas and the government; educating about 800,000 students (male and female) of 8000 madrasas in modern subjects from the primary to the secondary level; enabling them to reach colleges and universities; and also imparting training to 28,000 teachers to improve and update their knowledge of modern subjects and expose them to modern teaching methods and the use of audio-visual aids. Somewhat related to this, the government intended to eradicate sectarianism and extremism in order to develop a tolerant and friendly atmosphere that is congenial to national cohesion and social harmony.

33 Ibid.
It was hoped that through this new madrasa reform program, the government would be able to address the challenges of extremism and sectarianism in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan, through the Ministry of Education, has also implemented its somewhat ‘secular’ curriculum in the Qur’anic schools and madrasas in Pakistan. It is important to mention that not all Qur’anic schools and madrasas are registered with the Ministry of Education. Efforts are still in progress to register as many madrasas as possible, and to introduce some secular subjects into that type of education system.34

The debate over reform has primarily limited itself to exposing these religious institutions to non-Islamic/modern disciplines in the madrasa curricula. Since the promulgation of the Pakistan Madrasa Education Board Ordinance of 2001, three model schools were established at Karachi, Sukkur and Islamabad, where subjects like English, Mathematics, Computer Science, Economics, Political Science, Law and Pakistan Studies were taught. However, these model madrasas were not accepted by the majority as they were perceived to be reforms initiated at the behest of the West or the USA. Attendance at these model schools continues to remain low.

**Pakistani Madrasa Teachers** 35

Given this context of attempted reforms, a focused group discussion with madrasa teachers in Baluchistan revealed that while there was willingness among some of the teachers to bring about change in the system, others felt that the problem of radicalization cannot only be attributed to the madrasa curriculum. The blame is to be shared by the society which isolates graduates of the madrasas, leading to a sense of alienation.

The students’ level of commitment to learning is another area that needs attention. Some believe that madrasa programs and curricula are highly developed and do not suffer from any major shortcomings. The problem lies in the lack of social acceptance of the students coming out of the madrasa system. The more serious

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34 In Qur’anic schools, children learn by reading Arabic and memorizing the Qur’an. On the other hand, madrasas are of a more academic nature, where children are taught about Islam from the Qur’an and the Hadith (the teachings of Holy Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him). Some madrasas have also introduced other subjects such as Science, Math, Social Studies etc.

35 The analysis in this section is based on interviews and focused group discussions with thirty madrasa teachers across the four provinces of Pakistan. It is important to note that most of these teachers do not acquire any formal training in education and receive their own religious education from within the madrasa system. Their monthly salaries vary between USD 30-150.
concern is that in madrasas, only 10% of the students are committed to obtaining religious knowledge, while the rest are in the institution for other reasons. Out of the 90% who just live in madrasas and are not committed to religious learning about 55% are there because they don’t want to return to their homes for various reasons, and the remainder are staying for the food and shelter they get or because their parents are unable to afford their formal school education. Of the 10% who are there for religious teachings, only 1% possess the intellectual capacity to grasp the religious teachings.36

Generally, madrasas are associated with people who are perceived as backward and who are not aware of scientific progress. This is one of the major reasons that reforms have looked to remove the fear of exposure to newer ideas, using teaching of modern/non-Islamic subjects. In this regard, a teacher from Baluchistan mentioned that one of the biggest challenges he faces as an English teacher is to convince his students about the utility of the subject. Most of his students believe that by learning Islam, they will go to heaven. A similar motive for learning English is absent and they are not convinced that learning English is important.

While in some of the other countries religious institutions are engaged in social work, madrasas in Pakistan have not been too involved in other kinds of social activities besides imparting education. For instance, some temples in India offer medical services in the form of inoculation campaigns, and are willing to allow the government to use their premises for creating awareness on health issues. While madrasa teachers appreciate such social engagement, their primary concern continues to be curricular reform. They stress the importance of translating certain important and relevant books from English into Urdu for their students. Most of them are open to accepting any contextually relevant change in their education system. The purpose of these reforms, in the view of the teachers, is that students who graduate from madrasas acquire the relevant skills to participate actively in the development of Pakistan.

Madrasas are open to embracing new changes, especially with regard to the introduction of new/modern disciplines into their curricula. However, they do demand trained and skilled teachers to teach those subjects. There are examples of madrasas now offering and encouraging their students to pursue higher education in other institutions, but the disciplines continue to remain closely associated to the core madrasa education – Islamic Studies, Arabic and Persian.

36 An observation made by one of the madrasa teachers at the FGD.
There are some exceptions to this general approach towards madrasa reforms. For example, the United Nations mandated University for Peace, Costa Rica has developed a peace education curriculum in the Islamic context (for madrasas). The curriculum was developed in consultation with Islamic scholars, from 2005-2007. So far several South Asian madrasas, mostly from Pakistan and Bangladesh, have committed to integrating that curriculum into their existing courses.

Another example is Project L.I.G.H.T. (Learning Islamic Guidance for Human Tolerance), which was developed by a team of faculty and students from the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburg. The main goal of this project is to empower ordinary members of the Muslim community through education on Islam’s fundamental messages of tolerance, inclusiveness and peaceful coexistence for all people, and on personal skills to identify and address bigotry and discrimination. This project hasn’t reached most of the global south yet, but lessons could be learned and content could be taken from such models.

However, madrasa reform will require an equal focus on teachers’ training along with curricular reform. One example of an institution attempting steps in this direction is the Dawah Academy of the International Islamic University in Pakistan, which offers professional courses to Imams, community leaders, new Muslims, etc. both at the national and international levels. The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in Islamabad has collaborated with the Dawah Academy and is organizing seminars and workshops for madrasa teachers in Pakistan, with a focus on the psychology of education, pedagogy, peace education, tolerance, interfaith dialogue and harmony. Similarly, the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy and the United States Institute of Peace are also working towards imparting training to madrasa teachers in Pakistan.

Institutional infrastructure and facilities are another area that needs immediate attention if the madrasas are to achieve their desired objective of imparting religious and secular education. Proper buildings, well equipped classrooms, lights, black/white boards, attractive textbooks etc., will need to be provided to many of these madrasas.

37 See www.upeace.org
38 For Project L.I.G.H.T. documents see http://www.upeace.org/system/cap/index.cfm?pagina=490
39 See http://www.dawahacademy.org/
40 See www.ips.org.pk
Future Directions

This paper has attempted to flag some concerns about madrasa reform in Pakistan. Before any reform policy can be successfully implemented, there will be a need to further explore how the government can ensure the effective monitoring of this sector of education. Presently, madrasa reform programs are limited to merely registering these Islamic schools with the governmental authorities. What are some of the codes of ethics that will be acceptable to both the government and the madrasa administrators? What processes of accountability can be established, that ascertain a constant flow of communication between the authorities and the madrasas? What are some of the steps that can be taken to ensure that students currently enrolled in madrasas come out of their isolated state and are more consciously integrated with children in other schools? Based on discussions with all stakeholders in the process, can the government come out with an action plan that maps the process of reforms?

Looking beyond national solutions, are there innovative solutions that other countries in the South Asian region can contribute to the reform process in Pakistan? Are there lessons to be learnt from other contexts, for example, from Bangladesh and Indonesia?

These are some of the questions researchers could investigate. To conclude, there is no denying the fact that madrasa reforms are crucial for the development and progress of Pakistan, because graduates of most madrasas (despite going to school for eight years) have no understanding of important subjects like Economics, Science, or Computing. While this may not have been a serious concern few decades ago, in the current context, such restricted education may not serve the development needs of the nation. Nevertheless, the sustainability of the madrasa reform process will depend, in part, on political will, and partly on the success of poverty alleviation efforts.
LINKING GENDER AND RACE
IN PEACE EDUCATION: PEDAGOGIES TO ADDRESS DIFFERENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

Kevin Kester and Brigid Glustein

Abstract

This paper posits that gender, the most prevalent form of diversity in our lives, can be an important tool to promote racial consciousness and awareness of other forms of discrimination. Exploratory and qualitative research was conducted with educators in two diverse settings—Shizuoka, Japan and Kentucky, United States—to assess the presence of gender and racial discrimination in their schools, as well as the relevance of homogeneous contexts in fostering prejudice. The findings indicate that educators blur the distinction between gender and sex (using the terms as synonyms) when compared to the use of the terms among peace scholars (who distinguish the terms, noting sex as a dichotomy and gender as a spectrum). This blurred distinction implies that, should educators wish to challenge prejudices that are based on ethnicity, race, or nationality, they could use gender as a platform from which to operate. Educators finally suggest pedagogies they use in the classroom to address racial and gender prejudices.

Introduction

“I’d rather shoot a nigger than a squirrel,” he said. He was a retired police officer from a small town in Southeastern Kentucky infamous for a history of intolerance and hatred toward minorities. I (Kester) was twelve years old. I have not forgotten these words, the dark, taunting ambience in which they were enveloped, or the snickers of those around me. This learning moment solidified my conviction that action must be taken to promote peaceful coexistence between groups. Through similar experiences later in Japan, and through my travels in Asia and Latin America,
when I observed how race and gender inform global power structures and exclusionary policies, I decided to compare cases of discrimination in homogeneous schools to assess how homogeneous schooling might foster and perpetuate bigoted attitudes and behaviors.

Thus, this article discusses racism and gender issues in two homogeneous societies – Kentucky, United States and Shizuoka, Japan – and exposes and deconstructs popular beliefs of racial and gender inferiority. The paper examines classroom practices and how these practices may be used to perpetuate or subvert gender and race issues, inequalities and intolerance. The paper also examines the role of homogeneity in the formation and perpetuation of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors in these two settings, with the central thesis that homogeneous schools, through monocultural privileges, nurture and perpetuate both gender biases and racism, through unquestioning adherence to authority, patriarchy and privilege of the dominant classes. This paper also suggests that classrooms in such schools limit students’ exposure to other cultures, languages and norms, and do not promote critical thinking capacities. The authors’ view of education is that in homogeneous societies, there is a pressing need for young boys and girls to question the power structures promoted by their societies, as well as examine their own interactions, to learn to work together in a respectful and equitable manner in their schools. The authors feel that unchallenged gender inequalities and racial prejudice in schools can be catalysts for the development of other forms of intolerance and discrimination.

If young boys and girls can’t learn to work together in schools (when the greatest presence of diversity in their lives is the opposite sex), how shall men and women work cooperatively in society, later in life? And how will people react when confronted with greater diversity? Southeastern Kentucky and Shizuoka, Japan, are the selected research centers because of their homogeneous composition (though, as this article clarifies, there actually exist varied levels of homogeneity or perceptions of homogeneity).

Consistent with the perspective and practice of Peace Education as elaborated in the work of Freire\(^1\), Boulding\(^2\), Reardon\(^3\), Reardon and Cabezudo\(^4\), Harris and

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Morrison, Jenkins and Kester, the approach to research in this study is correspondingly qualitative and exploratory, seeking to learn from lived experiences, and to create knowledge and alternatives together with learners. The qualitative portion of this research was conducted through an open-ended questionnaire to assess the experiences of educators in Southeastern Kentucky and Shizuoka, Japan, with manifestations of gender and racial bias, additionally asking for rationale concerning the *problematique*. Due to geographical distance, the twenty surveys and questionnaires were completed over the Internet. Ten respondents from Kentucky schools completed the survey and ten educators in Shizuoka, Japan, also replied. The findings are further supported with theory from secondary data, which, at its core, includes four influential books: *Building a Global Civic Culture*, *Multicultural Education as Social Activism*, *Re-Inventing Japan*, and *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*. In addition, the findings are supported by several intriguing journal articles, including “Rethinking School Reform in the Context of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Creating a Responsive Learning Community” and “Confronting Prejudice (Literally): Reactions to Confrontations of Racial and Gender Bias”.

The definitions of core concepts contained in this paper are identified below to provide a common platform from which to explore this *problematique*. The first three definitions are by noted Peace Educator Betty Reardon.

Gender – A device for classifying and categorizing for linguistic and social purposes. It differentiates between masculine and feminine, and has become a

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common usage term that distinguishes men from women and defines their respective roles. Gender does not refer to the biological, but to the social and cultural differences between the sexes.14

Sexism – Policies and forms of behavior that exclude women/girls (and some boys/men) from full participation in society and from enjoyment of all human rights; rationalized by the assumption that men (the masculine) are intrinsically superior to women (the feminine).15

Racism – The denial of human rights on the basis of race; rationalized by the assertion that some racial groups are superior to others.16

Homogeneous – An entity where at least 90% of the individuals represent only one race/gender/culture (Definition created by the authors for the purposes of this study.)

Commonly, the term homogeneous refers to a society of primarily one race and culture. Other issues of diversity, such as gender, class, sexuality and religion, are not explicitly explored within this paper, for practical reasons. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the authors refer to a group as homogeneous when 90% of the population represents one race and culture. However, there is no doubt among the authors that examination of other forms of diversity is necessary for a full deconstruction of homogeneity and schooling. Additionally, the authors also believe that while this first study reveals similarities in homogeneous schools and their effects on intolerance, further studies should compare homogeneous with heterogeneous schools to illuminate differences between the two contexts.

**Exploring a Not-so-common Lexicon**

Forty educators were given questionnaires and asked to respond to questions pertaining to gender and racial biases in homogeneous classrooms, based on the authors’ assumption, and supporting statistical data, that these societies qualified as homogeneous. The responses demonstrated that the educators themselves also define their contexts as homogeneous. Twenty educators in Kentucky and twenty educators in Japan were asked to reply to the questionnaires. The educators teach youth between the ages of sixteen to twenty-four. Of the forty questionnaires, fifteen

15 Ibid. p. 29.
16 Ibid.
were mailed back and an additional five Japanese teachers gave a concerted response via email. Of the twenty educators who responded, ten are from Kentucky and ten are from Japan, therefore giving the study a fifty-percent response rate. Of the Japanese teachers, three respondents reported holding a Bachelor’s degree, five reported Master’s degrees, and two did not indicate their level of education; from Kentucky, one respondent reported holding a Bachelor’s degree, three reported Master’s degrees, three others reported Doctorates, and three did not indicate their level of education.

Due to the geographical limitations imposed by conducting simultaneous research in Kentucky and Japan, questionnaires were chosen as a practical method to gather primary research data. In order to explore diverse conceptions of race, gender, and diversity, educators were first asked, in the introduction to the questionnaire, to define gender, sexism, racism and homogeneous. The varied definitions are insightful, especially when compared with the previous definitions by Reardon and the authors. The responses are listed here as illustrations of respondents’ understanding of these terms. The responses from Kentucky educators and Japanese educators are listed below.

Select Kentucky responses to the definitions

Gender

- what sex someone is. i.e. male or female gender
- whether male or female
- not necessarily male/female, considered affiliated to masculine/feminine
- differentiated between male and female of a species
- the difference between a male and female from a biological/anatomical standpoint

Sexism

- bias/prejudice/discrimination towards people of a certain sex
- a sense of superiority of one sex over the other that may or may not result in some form of discrimination
- having bias for or against a certain sex; for example, assuming all males are macho, athletic, masculine and should act that way
- the act of discrimination based on gender
- the act of believing one gender is better than the other and treating people of the two genders to manifest this point
Racism
- bias/prejudice/discrimination towards people of a certain race
- some form of discrimination based upon someone’s skin color and/or heritage
- a sense of superiority of one race against another, that may or may not result in some form of discrimination
- having bias for or against a certain race of people
- believing members of a particular race are inferior and treating them in a manner to portray this belief

Homogeneous
- sameness; all people in the group are very similar
- of one kind; sharing characteristics
- the same or extremely similar nature
- members of a group being the same, for example, a group of all girls might be considered homogeneous
- people of same characteristics, i.e. race, gender, culture, etc.

The responses indicate that the majority of Kentucky respondents believe that gender refers to the biological sex of a person, which contrasts with the definition of this term understood by many Peace Educators and exemplified by Reardon, who considers gender as social and cultural differences between the sexes, where there are two sexes (male and female) and many genders (that fall between masculine and feminine). Only one response from Kentucky mentioned masculinity and femininity. Sexism and racism are likewise seen as attitudes, an explanation that is also inconsistent with Reardon’s definitions of sexism and racism as actions, behaviors, and institutions (informed by attitudes).

Select Japanese responses to the definitions

Gender
- a socially defined label. The label is based on the biological sex feature. It is used to describe one’s role in society
- the identification of differences of sex due to cultural perceptions
- one’s sexual identity, whether male or female (or trans)
- gender is a social construct that is performed and perpetuated through language and social behavior
- a socio-cultural term, referring to a social construction of male/female roles
Sexism

- treating people differently from the viewpoint of which biological group they belong to
- discrimination based on gender, especially against women
- a power asymmetry based primarily on one’s gender
- discrimination of a person relating to gender. Unfair judgmental standards
- discrimination by one sex against the other, usually understood to be male against female, but this is not always the case

Racism

- treating people differently from the viewpoint of which social group they belong to
- discrimination or prejudice based on race
- a power asymmetry based primarily on one’s race/ethnicity
- discrimination of a person relating to race, color of skin, superficial identification of perceived race
- discrimination by a power majority against a power minority. Difference-based, mostly aimed at those who appear physically different (skin color, etc.) from the majority

Homogeneous

- nearly the same
- all of one, of the same kind or similar nature
- an adjective used by some to usually describe a situation, language, society, etc., that they perceive to have no differences (racial, ethnic, class, etc.)
- the idea that race and sex are not factored into judgments of people and that male and female and people of different racial backgrounds are equal in all societies
- a term that is understood to refer to a society composed of one major ethnic group with similar values

These answers show that Japanese educators consider gender to be primarily a social construct, contrasting with the views of Kentucky educators. One potential explanation for this difference in perception is explained by Screech, quoted in Morris-Suzuki:
Europeans (Westerners) have always assumed that there were only two clearly defined sexes, but have accepted the multiplicity of races. Japan, according to Screech, saw gender as complex and multiple – being ‘male’ or ‘female’ was inherently related to position in the family, and those outside families…could be seen as occupying a range of intermediate sexes.17

Five of the Japanese teachers defined sexism and racism as discrimination or power asymmetries, while the other five offered this telling concerted response: “We are unconscious about gender, sexism or racism…besides, it’s a very delicate problem and it takes much time to answer.” The two components of this response apparently negate each other – that, on the one hand, ‘we are unconscious,’ and, on the other hand, ‘it’s a very delicate problem.’ This response suggests that the teachers are conscious to some degree of the “problems” of gender, sexism and racism, but hesitant to discuss the issues.

The definitions given by educators from Kentucky and Japan highlight the need for teachers in these contexts to receive training to understand differences between gender and sex, male and female, masculine and feminine, to encourage their own understanding and teaching about these issues in relation to societal power structures and oppression. A deeper understanding of these concepts, and of the realities lived by members of society who are not in positions of power, could act as a catalyst for critical thinking around contemporary social issues and commitments to transform social dilemmas. There is a particular need for education that explores the multiple types of violence present in society, identified by Galtung in his typology of violence. Galtung originally included two categories of violence in his typology: direct violence, inflicted upon others by one or more persons, and structural violence, inflicted upon others by an institution or structure. Each of these types of violence affects the survival, well-being, identity and/or freedom of its victims. Galtung later added a third category, cultural violence, in 1990. He defined cultural violence as aspects of culture that justify or legitimize the use of violence. “If the opposite of violence is peace, then the opposite of cultural violence would be ‘cultural peace,’ meaning aspects of a culture that serve to justify and legitimize direct peace and structural peace.” 18

Deconstructing Homogeneity

While the US is 80% White (White is defined by the US Census Bureau as “having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa”, including “Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab or Polish,” and “Latinos”19), Kentucky is 90% White, and the population of the rural areas of Kentucky are sometimes more than 98% White.20 Thus, the population in Kentucky is primarily White, with very little racial diversity, except for small communities of predominantly black homes. The issue of the segregation of peoples of African and Afro-Caribbean descent raises questions around contemporary forms of social apartheid, as discussed within literature on multicultural societies.21 In a study on homogeneous schools, social apartheid must be factored into the discourse on diversity in communities that are largely considered uniform, because in reality, the notion of monoculturalism is exaggerated. In a similar exaggeration of monoculturalism, the definition of White, as given by the US Census Bureau, is astoundingly diverse, and by grouping all the cultures together, diversity is masked and individual cultures are stripped of their uniqueness and value.

In commenting on the ‘uniqueness of Kentucky,’ the Kentucky Secretary of State, Trey Greyson, referred to Kentucky as ‘a somewhat homogeneous society.’22 Kentucky’s population is composed of 90.4% White, 7.5% black, 1% of persons reporting multiple races, approximately 1% Asian, and, when extracted from the White population, 2% Latino.23 Hence, these statistics, in tandem with the comment by the Secretary of State, demonstrate that while Kentucky does, in fact, fall within the bounds of the definition of homogeneous, it is actually more multicultural than social concepts of homogeneous allow. Glorifying the state as ‘unique’ because of its homogeneity supports an atmosphere of singularity and encourages a sense of racial superiority.

Garcia, in discussing diversity within cultures, says:

This population identifier, “culturally diverse”, is a relatively new education-related term. Of course, it has little appreciation for the diversity among such identified

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20 Ibid.
21 Paul Street explores such discussions on social and educational apartheid in Segregated Schools: Educational Apartheid in Post-Civil Rights America. (NY: Routledge, 2005).
23 US Census Bureau.
US populations. That is, it is quite evident that such identified populations (African-Americans, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Chicanos, Latinos, Southeast Asians, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, Chinese, etc.) are quite heterogeneous, linguistically and culturally, both within and between such identified categories.24

In the US, groups are often defined as belonging to a common culture that represents the Other, while still being classified as US nationals, for example African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, Jewish-American, Native-American, etc. Each group is defined, by the White ruling class, as being homogeneous within itself, and the group is valued for its ability to assimilate US customs and speak the majority language, English, while at the same time being different from the White ruling class which defines mainstream culture, language and politics.

Japan is apparently more homogeneous than Kentucky. The 2007 census claims that 98% of the population of Japan is of Japanese ethnicity25, and common rhetoric promotes the homogeneity of Japan. According to Hayes, as quoted by Morris-Suzuki: In the words of a more recent study, “the surrounding ocean serves as a protective moat” shielding Japan from invasion and migration, so that, since the third or fourth century A.D., there has been “very little infusion of other ethnic groups, resulting in a contemporary population that is fundamentally homogeneous.26

Similar to Kentucky government officials, the Japanese Education Minister, Bunmei Ibuki, also described Japan as an ‘extremely homogeneous nation’ and his statement was supported by then Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe.27 This was said while denouncing the ‘Western-style’ individualism that these Japanese officials believe motor the United Nations’ concept of Human Rights, thus imposing Western ideals on the Eastern world. Additionally, an article in the Inter Press News Agency, concerning xenophobia in Japan, commented on the perceived homogeneous nature


26 Tessa Morris-Suzuki, op.cit, p. 9.

of Japanese society: “Surveys indicate that more Japanese – over 70% in a poll – believe that the influx of foreigners into Japan is posing a threat to the country’s famed domestic peace...where pride in national homogeneity is deep-rooted.”

In Japan, as in Kentucky, there are people who represent other nationalities, and indigenous peoples who have been assimilated (as opposed to integrated) into Japanese society. The notion of homogeneity minimizes the existence of other Asian minorities: Koreans, Japan-born Koreans, Chinese, Japan-born Chinese, South American immigrants, Brazilian-Japanese and indigenous peoples (Ainus, Ryukyuans). The assumption of homogeneity also negates the existence of socially marginalized groups such as *burakumin*, the physically challenged, and gay and transgendered people. In her seminal work *Re-Inventing Japan*, Tessa Morris-Suzuki deconstructs the notion of “Japaneseness.”

On the issue of Japan as a homogeneous society, she writes that at the end of the Pacific War, large disparities among different segments of the Japanese population demonstrate the large extent of the country’s multiculturalism. She suggests that the widely held pride in Japan as an advanced civilization was an important factor in assisting the advancement of assimilation policies where the groups at the Periphery (Ainu, Okinawans, Koreans, Chinese, and Discriminated Groups) were pressured or forced to adopt the behaviors of the Center where the ruling class lived. Morris-Suzuki suggests that in fact, the Japanese were not a homogenous group and that the ultimate goal at that point in history was to make the Margins like the Center, to assimilate, and to therefore, try to become monocultural. Today, while the goal is no longer to force the populations living in the Margins to emulate the cultures and lifestyles of Center, these people are socially and economically marginalized and have virtually no political power.

Diene explains the composition of the nation:

Japan has a population of 127.7 million, out of which 98.45% are Japanese nationals. The Japanese population includes one indigenous population, the Ainu, estimated at between 30,000 and 50,000 people: they live predominantly in the island of Hokkaido. Amongst the foreigners, who do not represent more than 1.55 percent of the population, Koreans are the largest minority (607,419 in 2004), followed by the Chinese, Brazilians and Filipinos.

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29 Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *op.cit.*

While the percentage of minority cultures in Japan may look small compared to countries that pride themselves on the multiculturalism of their population, it is also important to remember that these statistics represent only a fraction of the country’s actual multicultural reality. There are increasing numbers of non-registered non-Japanese citizens across the country, especially in some of the larger cities. Hamamatsu-city in Shizuoka prefecture (where this study was conducted), for example, has a registered foreign population of 4%, most of which are Brazilian nationals of mixed Japanese and Brazilian parentage, employed in automobile factories. The Japanese *problematique* is largely that cultural and ethnic diversity is not recognized. Some Korean-Japanese, for example, have been so deeply assimilated, that it is virtually impossible to identify them; one reason for this could be levels of discrimination against Koreans that probably encourage them to hide their heritage and change their names to Japanese monikers.

Two important contradictions in practice emerge in this analysis of the U.S. and Japan. First, it is a commonly held belief among US citizens, and taught vehemently in the school system, that the US population represents tremendous diversity. The country’s history is taught as a mixing of various groups, ethnicities and religions, a ‘melting-pot.’ Though this picture may be more completely realized in metropolises such as New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles, small homogeneous towns in Kentucky also teach this image as an accurate depiction of the entire country. The reality, however, is that certain areas of the country do not reflect this harmonious vision of the US as a mixture of races and cultures (as seen above in the case of Kentucky). This exaggerated notion of multiculturalism creates a false sense of diversity and thus, hyperbolic claims of pluralism, tolerance and understanding. Japan, conversely, suffers from hyperbolic notions of homogeneity that underestimate discriminatory practices, particularly highlighted by the absence of an anti-discrimination law for the protection of minority groups.

Second, deconstructing ill-supported social identities must be taken seriously. If Japanese and Kentucky societies perceive themselves to be homogeneous and

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32 ‘Melting pot’ was a term commonly used throughout the 1980s and 1990s as the authors were going through public schooling. Today, the term often preferred by educators and policy-makers is ‘mosaic.’ ‘Mosaic’ emphasizes the notion of cultural coexistence as opposed to the assimilation policies of a ‘melting pot.’
multicultural, respectively, then it is safe to assume that much of the rest of the world also identifies these communities in a similar regard. The first step toward ‘conscientization’ \footnote{Conscientization’, a concept developed by Paulo Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, describes the process of becoming aware of a social problem and consequently taking action to solve that problem. It relies on praxis of reflection and action.} is raising awareness of false popular beliefs before examining misdirected social policies and actions. The denial of difference in an exaggerated expression of homogeneity, without respecting diverse cultural expressions and languages, is exacerbated in state policies of assimilation and one-language laws. Hence, one route of action is to facilitate an exploration of discrimination to raise social consciousness, while taking steps to change the misinformation perpetuated in schools, communities and governing bodies.

In January 2006, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, indeed, concluded that there is racism in Japan, and that it affects three groups: national minorities, descendents of former Japanese colonies, and foreigners from the rest of the world.\footnote{Doudou Diene. \textit{Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and All Forms of Discrimination: Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, and related forms of intolerance.}} Racism and sexism are practiced widely in Japan.\footnote{Ibid; and Joanna Liddle and Sachiko Nakajima, \textit{Rising Suns, Rising Daughters: Gender, Class, and Power in Japan} (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2000).} Racism is also a fact of life in the US,\footnote{Pat Farren “Racism and Active Anti-Racism.” In Pat Farren, (Ed.), \textit{Peacework: Twenty years of Nonviolent Social Change} (Fortsamp: Rose Hill Publishing, 1991).} though many people operate under the assumption that racism is a thing of the past due to the successes of the women’s and civil rights movements.\footnote{Paul Street, \textit{Segregated Schools: Educational Apartheid in Post-Civil Rights America}; and Christine Sleeter, \textit{Multicultural Education as Social Activism} (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1996).} Moreover, not only are racism and sexism still phenomena of present day society, according to a study in Kentucky concerning violence, gender and race, discrimination is so well-developed that it takes on certain norms.\footnote{Alexander M. Czopp and J. Margo Monteith, “Confronting Prejudice (Literally): Reactions to Confrontations of Racial and Gender Bias,” \textit{Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin}, 29(4), 2003, pp. 532-544.} The superiority of the White male is an undercurrent in the teachings of US institutions, and this group’s monopoly of power and wealth is commonly accepted. It is common for a man to execute an act of gender prejudice against a woman, or for a White to show prejudice toward people of color. According to Czopp & Monteith\footnote{Ibid.}, the prejudices...
between people of different races or sexes are more socially accepted than prejudices displayed within a group. For instance, a Latino is less likely to administer oppressive measures against another Latino than perhaps toward a person of different racial or gender group, and similarly, a woman might accept prejudice from a man that she would not otherwise accept from a woman.

As the research supports, violence is manifest in Kentucky and Japan, and it must, therefore, also be present in the schools. Reardon states, “when these symptoms [of violence] exist in the community, they probably exist in the schools.” Additionally, Joan Burstyn, et al, said, Violence in schools mirrors the violence in society and is exacerbated by the availability of guns, urban and rural poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, suburban anomie, and the media’s celebration of violence. Each of these must be addressed if people want to end violence.

Homogeneity, Gender Bias and Racism in the Classroom

Questionnaire respondents were also asked to approximate the degree of racial/cultural homogeneity of their schools. The answers they provided are very near official statistical data of their respective regions. Kentucky educators estimate Kentucky to be between 85-88.88% White, and Japanese educators estimate Japan to be 96.4% Japanese. The responses show that some educators perceive their schools to reach as high as 99% White in Kentucky, or as low as 50% and between 95% and 100% homogeneous in Japan. Assuming the schools are, in fact, microcosms that reflect the demographic makeup of their respective societies, this suggests that educators are aware of the degree of racial similarity and lack of substantial diversity in their learning contexts.

Pertaining to reactions on gender bias, the research results show that all of the Japanese respondents are aware of incidents of gender discrimination in their schools, while most classroom teachers in the Kentucky schools did not report such discrimination. The proportion of respondents from each sex is approximately equal, suggesting that the sex of the individual does not factor into the likelihood of perceiving gender bias. Of the twenty educators teaching youth ages sixteen through twenty-four, nine answered that they felt there was gender bias in their schools, six did not report being aware of any such bias, and five said “it’s a very

delicate matter and it takes time to discuss.” The majority of positive responses support the possibility of a correlation between schooling in homogeneous settings and the perpetuation of gender bias.

In reaction to inquiry on racism, questionnaire data affirms that four of five Japanese educators are aware of racism in their schools, with an additional five Japanese educators stating that “it’s a very delicate matter,” and six of ten Kentucky educators reported awareness of racism in their setting. Surprisingly, all of the male respondents in Kentucky agreed that racism is prevalent, whereas all of the female teachers from Kentucky disagreed. This suggests that in the Kentucky context specifically, awareness of racism may be influenced by the sex of the actor, where males may be more likely to identify racial bias than females. In contrast, when examining the Japanese responses, the analysis of sex on the likelihood to identify racial bias becomes irrelevant. Sleeter comments that from the Western perspective (since it was the Western women educators who perceived sexism but not racism), awareness of sexism may “bloc a substantive analysis of racial oppression.”43 She says, “women’s unexamined experience with sexism limits their understanding of social stratification by encouraging them to believe they understand discrimination.”44 Her research may provide a theoretical rationale for the lack of women educators in Kentucky to acknowledge racial discrimination (because they have ‘unexamined’ experiences with sexism that hinder their understanding of racism). Clearly, this analysis pertains to Western women educators who, as Sleeter suggests, may consider further ‘examining’ their experiences with sexism to draw links between sexism and racism.

In conclusion, ten of twenty educators said that they were aware of racism in their schools, five said they could not discuss the topic because it’s too sensitive, and five stated that racism was not in their schools. This buttresses the hypothesis that schooling in a homogeneous context may correspond with the perpetuation of racist attitudes.

The responses analyzed above strengthen the theory stated earlier in this paper, that Japanese educators are more aware of gender constructs than racism, and Kentucky educators are perhaps more cognizant of racism than gender oppression (though this conclusion may depend on the sex of the educator). The research results also show that educators in rural Kentucky, where the Kentucky population is most homogeneous, were the most likely to report that gender

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44 Ibid, p. 83.
discrimination and racism do not exist in their schools while there are no obvious factors that would make these schools less likely to be susceptible to gender discrimination and racism. This, therefore, further supports the thesis that homogeneous settings are at risk of being blind to discrimination that may be taking place in their schools.

The objective was, however, not to prove the existence of intolerance in these societies but to explore teachers’ perceptions of bigotry in the face of their realities. By matching the perceptions with actuality, and through referencing the definitions given by a number of the educators, it is clear that raising awareness about these phenomena is essential. To this end, the authors propose that in-service teacher training on gender and racial awareness is necessary to facilitate comprehension and to inspire remedial action to address the problematic.

The authors’ concern that education in homogeneous settings is likely to reproduce the status quo appears to be supported, especially given that the data suggests educators in the most homogeneous settings may be more susceptible to blindness when reporting on classroom-based power asymmetries. Given this concern, what are the appropriate interventions that can be undertaken by the school community to deconstruct stereotypes and biases?

Discrimination in schools is then mirrored in society. Thus, addressing the biases in schools is a form of intervention in society. Used in this way, education is a tool for social change. Education can be an important tool in the intervention to defend the interests of minorities against those who hold a monopoly of power. Critical education recognizes that we are subject to a host of conditioning factors, including genetics, culture, economics, language and environment, and that our interaction with these elements is the basis of our understanding. Critical Education promotes the idea that education can lead to more just and peaceful societies when such education is conducted in a manner conducive to peace. Peace Education is critical, reflective, challenging and hopeful, and recognizes the possibility of education to reinforce dominant ideologies as well as unmask them.

Park and Rothbart\(^46\) write that stereotypes are developed due to an individual’s tendency to overestimate the homogeneity of other groups, as opposed to the perception of heterogeneity in traits of people in their own group. Accordingly,

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Johnson & Johnson state that prejudice and discrimination are most effectively reduced when members of the majority group and those at whom they direct their discrimination and prejudice have positive interactions with each other, dialogue about lived experiences, and commit to developing anti-discriminatory views and behavior. The authors support the concept of a school-based intervention to develop inter-personal relationships, explaining that “educators...have a unique opportunity to create the conditions for promoting in most (if not all) children, adolescents and young adults, the types of interactions, relationships, competencies and values that decrease stereotyping and prejudice.” Their model, *The Three Cs of Reducing Prejudice*, consists of developing a cooperative community that resolves conflicts constructively, and internalizes civic values. They define a cooperative community as people living in a given locality as well as all stakeholders on a given issue working toward achieving mutual goals, and working within a culture of positive social interdependence where all people in the community can learn together through frequent, accurate and open communication toward the understanding of all perspectives. A cooperative community is created by learning negotiation and mediation tools that support constructive conflict resolution, and by a commitment to values that support success for the community as a whole.

**Recommended Pedagogies to Address Gender and Racial Biases**

This study proposes in-service teacher training, peace and conflict curriculum, and peace pedagogy as means to combat discrimination. The study, therefore, compiled information of current pedagogies educators are using in classrooms (in Kentucky and Japan) to address gender and racial biases. The respondents identified multiple approaches for gender affirmation and anti-racism education as listed below.

1. **Suggested pedagogies to raise awareness of gender bias in Kentucky schools (i.e. gender sensitivity and equal participation)**
   - Direct questions to both male and female students equally and allow for equal speaking time in the classroom. Assign similar tasks to both genders.
   - Discuss the different opportunities and different needs of males and females in professions.

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48 Ibid, p. 239.
In general, make sure that all students are involved in equitable amounts. It is a great method to promote better education, and at the same time, eliminates any possible discriminatory acts. Do your best to not promote games or other activities that put boys against girls, for example.

2. **Suggested pedagogies to educate against racism in Kentucky schools** *(Empathy-building activities and case studies)*

   - Racism is an issue that one may not truly understand unless they experience it; therefore, a simulation exercise can better allow one to understand what it is like to experience racism.
   - Use case studies to address the cultural differences and needs of the various races and populations we encounter in the clinical setting.
   - Make it a point to teach and discuss as many cultures around the world as possible. Use examples from places the teachers and students have traveled to, in hopes of promoting a more positive attitude and respect from some unfortunately “sheltered” students.

3. **Suggested pedagogies to raise awareness of gender bias in Japanese schools** *(Mixed groups and personal opinions)*

   - Attempt to break down gender isolationism by partnering males and females for discussions. Try to observe and eliminate any visible forms of gender discrimination between students; and comment on rooted perceptions in a social/historical context. Devote a segment of the course to the use of gender-neutral language.
   - Use a lot of group activity work. Tell the students to always introduce themselves to others in the group, and that everyone is included and no one is excluded. Make sure that everyone gets an equal chance to respond in the group activities.
   - When something concerning gender discrimination comes up in class, make it a point to express your own opinion as well as elicit student opinions.

4. **Suggested pedagogies to educate against racism in Japanese schools** *(Personal stories, case studies and mixed groups)*

   - In terms of promoting a racially inclusive classroom, occasionally there are ethnic Korean or Chinese or Okinawan students in classes…value their different perspectives and call on them more frequently in class to talk about issues (if viable) in order to give other students a sense of diversity.
The issue of poverty be addressed in case studies that show that poverty is a form of racism aimed to repress the (global) South.

Encourage foreign and Japanese students to mix and require them to talk with each other.

The proposed pedagogies above are informative, yet problematic. They are situational, often reactionary, and for the most part lack the planning and foresight necessary to create a situation that will encourage dialogue aimed at revealing power, political, social and economic structures. The pedagogies identified by respondents aim often to structurally force students to work together with others, but without engaging them in critical discussions on social issues. Congregating people is a necessary first step, but if the space is not facilitated well, it may reinforce stereotypes and misunderstanding. As stated by Johnson & Johnson, “Within a school community, physical proximity in and of itself is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the formation of caring and committed relationships.”

In classrooms, a comprehensive and complementary approach needs to highlight both the psycho-cultural and structural manifestations of the monopoly of power, in order to discover the links between various forms of oppression. This deeper and more critical analysis has greater potential to achieve a real understanding of power structures and messages promoted in society that reinforce a culture of violence.

Accordingly, an intense examination of those societal forces that reproduce power asymmetries and oppression should be at the core of purposeful discourse about racist and sexist structures, and explicit links need to be made with what students experience at local, national, regional and global levels. In exposing structural violence, Bell Hooks stated:

Much of my work with feminist theory has stressed the importance of understanding difference, of the ways race and class status determine the degree to which one can assert male domination and privilege, and most importantly, the ways racism and sexism are interlocking systems of domination which uphold and sustain one another.

With respect to teaching strategies, Reardon provides a comprehensive list of classroom pedagogies for addressing prejudice that concerns both the structure

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and content of education. She suggests: readings and discussions of other cultures, cultural interpretations of the arts and literature of other peoples, position-taking on issues, policy simulations, alternative solutions exercises, keeping journals on personal experiences, studying international standards on women’s rights, and conducting role-plays. There are also numerous other methods teachers could use to mitigate discrimination and intervene against prejudicial acts; therefore, educators should continue to share with each other their own experiences and tools for managing homogeneous and diverse classrooms.

Concluding Without Ending: No Cause is Deterministic

In this paper, sexism, racism, the relationship between the two and the challenges of homogeneous contexts have been explored. The major postulate throughout has been that schooling in homogeneous classrooms perpetuates notions of entitlement, sexist perspectives, uncritical race awareness and an indiscriminate acceptance of the status quo. The research appears to support this hypothesis. This discrimination is sustained, in part, because of hyperbolic notions of homogeneity (in Japan) and multiculturalism (in the US), both of which are often facades. The research results have supported the hypothesis that homogeneous contexts have an impact on the development and nurturance of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. However, a cautionary finality: this research and its conclusion do not suggest that by merely living and growing up in homogeneous communities, a person will be destined to possess racist and/or sexist behaviors. It does indicate, however, that homogeneity – or moreover, the lack of recognition of diversity that does exist – may correlate with the subsistence of racist and sexist biases. Homogeneity is not a fatalistic force; it does not necessarily cause racist and sexist beliefs and actions, but may assist in the breeding and endurance of prejudice.

51 Betty Reardon, *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*, pp. 158-161.
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THE PLACE OF PEACE

Heather Millhouse

Abstract

Current approaches to Peace Education have come under censure for various reasons. Treating these criticisms as hurdles that peace educators must cross, this paper identifies the various educational, political, cultural and psychological barriers to peacebuilding in Australian schools. The conclusions are drawn on the basis of a survey conducted with students pursuing an education degree at University of Queensland. While taking cognizance of the fact that learnings from other countries and diverse contexts can enrich peace education programs, the paper concludes with the assertion that such learning cannot be a substitute for sensitivity to socio-cultural reality of the place where the peace education program will finally be implemented. It therefore offers some suggestions for tackling structural violence in Australian schools.

Tell people in Australia that you teach peace to schoolchildren and they will say, “That’s so important” or “that must be rewarding”. Teaching peace inspires hope, both in the community and in educators. Peace Education has been an integral work component of the United Nations, but it is not without its critics. Critical reviews of the field include the following:

- The most common criticism is lack of evidence- hard data that verifies Peace Education as effective at building peace. This is further complicated by the fact that peace is considered a lofty and ill-defined goal.

- Without evidence of the effects a program may have on a community, a related criticism of Peace Education concerns programs that focus on school children’s intra – and inter-personal peacefulness without including the wider community, placing an unfair burden on children who are living within violent societies.

Heather Millhouse teaches at the University of Queensland, Australia in Peace Education, a course that explores theoretical and applied principles of peace and inclusive education, with an emphasis on issues of diversity, unity and peacebuilding. She is the Workshop Coordinator for the Queensland branch of Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), an international association of trained volunteers working to empower individuals to liberate themselves from violence. She has an ongoing fascination with Integrated Communication Technologies (ICTs) as an exercise in logical balance.
In addition, Peace Education programs orientated to the individual may emphasize individual interests at the expense of the collective interest. In this way, Peace Education concepts may fail to align with local cultural understandings, and indeed, the cultural conditions of the majority of the world’s population.

Peace Education needs to answer these three criticisms in order to justify its inclusion across a crowded Australian curriculum.

How can these criticisms inform the scope and flavour of Peace Education? While the feeling of safety amongst Australian women has improved in the last 10 years\(^1\), we know our society continues to struggle with random domestic, structural and cultural violence. We know that schools are sites of direct and indirect violence, so the mandate to work with peace in our schools is clear. We do need to broaden our scope, however, to shift or balance some of the responsibility for violence in schools off the shoulders of individual students and teachers, and across the education spectrum into the wider society. According to a survey by an employment website, wider society certainly needs to consider the role of adult modelling on young people’s experience, when “almost two thirds of Australian workers say they have been bullied at work, and nearly one third claim to have been sexually harassed.”\(^2\) Limiting Peace Education to anti-bullying programs for students targets the tip of the iceberg. It feels like “Do as I say, not as I do”.

How is it possible to deliver a course in Peace Education that is fair for students and does not require its teachers to be saint-like and omniscient? It seems, at times, as if Peace Education can be about everything, and perhaps that means it might also be about nothing. Grounding a course in students’ experiences enhances its meaning and locates its relevance, and the application of Peace Education principles becomes a possibility. The principles and theory of Peace Education must be molded according to the socio-political, cultural and structural contexts of local communities, rather than generically imposed across the diversity found between schools and students. In multicultural Australia, if we can shift the orientation of Peace Education to programs that emphasize group and community concerns while still addressing individual interests and behaviors, the principles of equity across


cultural groups may find a more secure foothold. If Peace Education is not delivering opportunities for diverse worldviews to find expression, student feedback needs to make that apparent. Rigorous post-course evaluation, coupled with international perspectives of the field, enables Peace Education to be sculpted around its context. Using the criticisms of Peace Education as a litmus test, we can be guided and focused in determining the place of peace in Australian classrooms. J.P. Lederach advises us to embrace the paradoxes, to build within multiple discourses and to use the experience of the ‘other’ as a seedbed for growth.3

Those sentiments are easy to write, yet not simple to implement. Taking the first steps towards building peace means accepting that a problem exists across our communities, it means recognizing the implications of structural violence and voicing the deep scepticism regarding human nature that seems to exist just beneath the surface of the young people. Identifying the need for peacebuilding at the structural level of our education system has been undertaken by tertiary students while they are unravelling what it means to them. As the concepts of Peace Education are understood in the context of each student’s experience, ideas about other ways of being educators – harmonious, fun and effective ways of working with children and young people – are being formulated, stimulated by identifying barriers to peace. These barriers to peace in schools have become opportunities for growth.

A paradoxical approach to teaching peace delivers multiple entry points for the analysis of issues of structural and cultural violence in schools. By using the insights of recent successful school graduates, an external perspective on some structural barriers to peace in schools can be gleaned. Post-school evaluation of the education system is being undertaken by those whose memories of school are recent enough to be detailed and whose results were good, which adds intensity to their critiques when one considers their less successful counterparts.

Pre-service teachers and other students from the University of Queensland can take Peace Education as an elective unit towards their Bachelor of Education degree. Not all students opt for the course because they have an inherent interest in peace – some enrol because the assessment does not include exams, some, to fill a gap in their timetables – but many students who enrol are genuinely interested. Approximately 360 students between 2005-2009 studied discourses of peace and violence, including concepts of negative and positive peace, engaged in assessable group work, read widely in their fields of interest and education discourse, and

then contributed their insights to four categories – Educational, Political, Cultural and Psychological barriers to peace in schools. Table 1 provides a summary of these lists.

Table 1. Barriers to Peace in Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational barriers</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
<td>• Lack of recognition of prior learning and other ways of knowing.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Acknowledge only hegemony and homogenous western-centric systems of learning. Conformity expected of all – lack of attention to practical skills in learning style diversity.</td>
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<td>• Classroom process – teacher out front - unequal power dynamic – need for partnership learning.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Bullying in classrooms, disrespectful teaching styles, ignorance of nonviolence.</td>
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<td>• Pace set by institution, not by students.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Focus on teaching rather than learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviour Management</strong></td>
<td>• Strong hierarchy and unequal power relations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Few learning support staff – teacher’s increasing and constantly changing workload.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Business minded schools – choice of priorities and competition based on commercialism.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Principal’s vision for the school, or lack thereof.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Political barriers</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Fear of change both personal and structural</td>
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<td>- Lack of relationships of trust between all levels of school functioning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Competition between students as a motivator.</td>
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<td>- Outcome-based education – tests/results focus.</td>
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<td>- Narrow assessment forms advantage some and disadvantage others; ranking and failure are accepted/normal.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Assessment</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Marginalization of minority groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Exclusivity, righteousness and superior attitudes in some schools – ‘us and them’ thinking.</td>
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<td>- Single Sex schools: attitudes formed towards and with opposite sex.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Insufficient support for students by way of counselling.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Political barriers</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Global issues</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Economic rationalism – well considered policy subsumed in economic expediency.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Patriotism – the ‘other’ as enemy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Definitions of peace vary widely.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Government as exemplar in conflict – first strike.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Local issues</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Restrictions on who may attend schools–exclusivity and exclusion.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Bureaucracy: rigidity; decision making structures can be exclusive and hierarchic; communication channels can be restrictive; access to resources inequitable; staff politics, interpersonal staff relationships, personal agendas remain invisible and unexamined within the school hierarchy; paperwork prevents experiential, co-operative and open-ended learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Power relations amongst school community used to reinforce inequity and conformity.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>National issues</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>- Compulsory schooling</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Policies that yearn for ‘back to the past’ – visions for the future from the government prioritise technology over relationships.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Tyranny of democracy and weight of demographics – marginalized voices remain unheard.

- Subjective political policies not open for discussion across/between schools: who is in power, what the govt wants, instead of what schools want. Less importance placed on critical analysis. Interference of nationalism in the formation of history syllabuses. White Australian history taught at the expense of Indigenous perspectives.

- Militarism in schools e.g. cadets, public/private partnerships with the aviation industry have militarist ends, defence force recruiting at city periphery schools.

- Funding disparity between public and private schools; and insufficient funding, especially for non-commercial subjects.

- Attitudes and beliefs: school administration, teachers and parents, harbor traditional beliefs; authoritarian, command and control structures; avoid controversial issues; discrimination – gender, ethnicity, ability; single sex education as inhibiting.

- QSC – students judged in relation to their schools, not on their own merits.

- Competitive struggle to be ‘top’, system of appointing captains, awards.

- Teachers impose personal beliefs in a closed environment – classrooms.

- School funding and expertise goes towards disciplinary actions rather than peacebuilding in the school community.

- Lack of listening – students, teachers, administration.

- Students need to contribute to learning goals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological barriers</th>
<th>Group beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal beliefs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher dominant, student submissive.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Alienation, low self esteem and depression.</td>
<td><strong>Clique culture of segregated groups and discrimination, prejudice: eg locality (country versus city), gender-based, sexuality, intellectual competence, racism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, social-economic group, physical condition, age of teacher.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Insecurity and uncertainty about dealing with diversity in the classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Lack of psychological and emotional safety.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Personal perceptions, values, beliefs, life experiences, lack of experiences.
- Desire for dominance and control and fear of being insignificant.
- Self esteem issues – victims or legends.
- Motivation – lack of or hyper.
- Lack of confidence to deal with conflict.
- Need to succeed in competition, fear of failure.
- Fear and belittling used to control students.
- “I am just one person, I can’t make a difference”.

**Disorder / Dysfunction**
- Mental health issues e.g. ADHD, autistic spectrum disorder, bipolar disorder, anxiety, obsessions, depression.
- Ignorance about these and lack of treatment.
- Learning disabilities, communication issues.
- Troubled family background – violent, abusive family, substance abuse.
- Lack of self awareness.
- Social exclusion of students with special needs and reaction to others’ need for acceptance.

- Need to belong – peer group pressure and pressure to conform.
- Fear of being different, both teachers and students.
- Macho syndrome culture.
- Baiting teachers seen as student ‘sport’.

**Wider Social beliefs**
- Parental and family beliefs, attitudes and expectations.
- Punishment as first response to transgression.
- Marginalisation for religious/political beliefs.
- Feelings are discouraged.
- Acceptance of violence as ‘natural’ and belief that humans are inherently violent.
- Effects of media violence.
- Media treatment of violence in current affairs
- Lack of belief in possibility of peace.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural barriers</th>
<th>Cross-cultural issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Adversarial cultures</strong></td>
<td><strong>Language – narrow range, testing in and pre-eminence of Standard Australian English.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Binary positioning among students e.g. rich vs poor, brains vs brawn, attractive vs unattractive, sub-cultures e.g. emo vs skaters vs nerds vs jocks etc, sexism, us vs them, in-group and out-group dynamics.</td>
<td>• Different forms of deep cultural practice, different ways of being are not recognized e.g. ways to show respect, deal with conflict, negotiate, ask permission, act morally, be inclusive, prioritize relationships etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ethnocentrism and national pride at the expense of ‘aliens’ or difference.</td>
<td>• Misunderstanding cross-cultural communication – verbal and nonverbal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Demonising the ‘other’ e.g. students are against teachers and vice versa, teachers and administration think parents are inadequate, parents are demanding and hostile to teachers and administration, teachers disrespected by administration and employer.</td>
<td>• Unwillingness or inability to accept other cultures/religions due to avoidance, inaccurate data, lack of information, fear.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tall poppy syndrome.</td>
<td>• Not enough diversity in some schools, overwhelming diversity in others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Culture of competition.</td>
<td>• Tokenism or the 4D approach to multiculturalism – dance, dress, diet and dialect.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• History written by the victor.</td>
<td>• Difficulty in negotiating firm beliefs in a climate of relativism.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Militarism and machismo as hegemonic masculinity, opposed to other forms of masculinity.</td>
<td><strong>Australia-specific cultural issues</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Western exportation and imposition of market economy and democracy makes us enemies.</td>
<td>• Eurocentric or ‘skips’ dominant culture in schools is reinforced by a lack of diverse cultural enrichment, the maintenance of stereotypes that oppress, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and a lack of understanding, among non-Indigenous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• People are taught to fear or fight the ‘other’ rather than learn from and celebrate with each other.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultures of fear and conformity</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Standardized testing – fitting students onto a ‘grid’.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Narrow definitions of gender roles and promotions of stereotypes.
- Nostalgia for homogeneity – promotion of sameness rather than belonging.
- Uniforms.
- Submitting to ‘groupthink’ rather than dealing with conflicting ideas.
- World events (terrorism) portrayed as culture- and religion-based, thereby promoting fear between cultural groups.

### Australians, of Indigenous people’s cultures.
- *Terra nullius* is still impacting on non-Indigenous Australian mindsets.
- Trans-generational effects of *terra nullius* still impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian peoples’ lives.

### Ideas for change

Given a free reign and broad-stroke, almost idealised definitions of peace, the young university students responsible for generating these lists went on to look at ways to take action to address some of the challenges of structural violence in schools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Education is a tool to break barriers to peace</strong></th>
<th><strong>In the classroom</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Teachers need to read and think about these barriers, and be given a secure opportunity to voice their observations and insights.</td>
<td>- Allow different options – create variety e.g. sit next to someone new each week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Problems evolve from ignorance – address the lack of knowledge.</td>
<td>- Classroom dynamics: use group processes interspersed with very short lectures; classroom layout to promote communication, collaboration, critical analysis and problem solving.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Open knowledge is needed in conjunction with critical thinking.</td>
<td>- More human resources in the classroom – change the teacher: student power ratio from 1: many.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Change to positive peace rather than negative peace when working with all education relationships.</td>
<td>- More equal classroom dynamic – teachers and students on more equal footing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Schools help shape children and reinforce values – students, parents, teachers, administration – all develop and model the peacebuilding values of school.</td>
<td>- Involve parents and wider community in education.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- Develop critical awareness of the bias of texts used in schools and the freedom of resources.
- Parents and teachers together lobby government for funding and change.
- Lobby school and district to encourage reflection and change in curriculum to infuse Peace Education principles into all subject areas; and to encourage reflection and respect within and from the department.
- Address financial costs of university.
- Address federalism – difference between states.

**In schools**
- Link peace theory and practices through all subjects e.g. history of peace movements.
- Anonymous boxes (awards/rewards; suggestion/complaints) for students and teachers.
- More power spread out amongst teaching and administrative staff – less hierarchy.
- In the case of a ruthless power, undermine their authority nonviolently by local political action.
- Get parents and teachers onside, working together rather than being fearful of each other.
- Engage in critical thinking about problems and put a band-aid on it till action can be taken.

**Personal**
- Language – peer to peer tutoring.
- Use experiential, practical learning processes and techniques to create variety and interest and reduce boredom.
- Supportive environments – prioritize relationships.
- Encourage reflection and change in teaching practice

- Give yourself permission/ plenty of time to think about an approach/ strategy. Given opportunity, creative ideas, guidance, will /effort, you will find a solution.
- Seek advice in the tearoom, on the net, from mentors – collaboration.
- Solutions come in parts – there are many aspects to a problem.
- Be a supportive, open teacher (so students have the faith to confide in you).
- Keep your life interesting by valuing variety – teacher as an example.
- Encourage reflection and change in personal practice to honor your craft.
- Find more peaceful strategies and foster willingness to challenge barriers to peace.
- Care for self, keep physically healthy – unwell teachers do not make peaceful companions.
- Importance of dealing with diversity, especially cultural diversity.
- Increase the number of perspectives, culturally, socially, philosophically, so ideology is balanced.
- Language sub-divisions in schools at same time as integrating groups to prevent ganging up (affiliate culturally yet also mix socially).
- Indigenous studies in public and private schools.
- System of approach to bullying behaviors rather than labelling individuals e.g. address role of media in social relations e.g. America’s Favourite Model as desirable girl behaviour? “Go the biff?”
- Mix grades to develop student mentor relationships and increase school unity.
- Classroom/homeroom/form – streaming across ages eg fun, sports for more community feeling.
- Encourage reflection and change in all areas of school relationships and practice.

- Have a place and a group of people to support your practice, affirm your value and challenge your thinking.

**Education of teachers**

- Teachers need more practical skills and experience when it comes to handling conflict and teaching peace.
- Peace practices and principles need to infuse all education courses at university.
- Internships and mentoring for new teachers, similar to an apprenticeship system.
- New teachers combine part-time teaching with part-time pedagogy observation and lesson development.
- Time given to raise issues faced by teachers.
- Encourage reflection and change in all areas of teaching practice and curriculum.

The will to peacefulness is powerful in young people. Peace Education students will be moving into school positions, expecting to be able to make schools a more peaceful place for young people who are less favored by cultural hegemony than themselves. The main concerns of Peace Education students are how the values and practices of peace that they aspire to, will find a place in schools; whether the discourse of peace will be accepted by the wider school community; whether their own blossoming sense of belief in possible peaceful futures will continue to grow or wither. The bigger question may be whether these new teachers will have the persistence to maintain living out their aspirations in a structurally violent system that expects conformity. Perhaps the balance of community interests is shifting now, and peace may take its place among Australian values.
From Asia to Africa, Europe to the Americas, in all of the world’s regions, governmental and non-governmental educational institutions are integrating conflict resolution education (CRE) or peace education (PE) into their policies and educational practices. This article will provide an overview of the global effort to expand peace and conflict education by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) Peace Education and Conflict Resolution Education reference group, and a regional effort by the Organization of American States (OAS) in the thirty-four countries of the Americas. This article also includes examples of how some of the countries around the globe are operationalizing their work in this area and resources to learn more about these global efforts.

Peace and Conflict Resolution Education Defined

The terms PE and CRE are defined and operationalized in many different ways around the globe, with some common themes. PE, as defined by UNICEF, is “the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national or...
This definition ties both CRE and PE together, with the skills of CRE being a central theme. These skills generally include: understanding conflict, understanding how emotions influence conflict, good communication skills and problem solving. Conflict management programs vary in their implementation, but teach valuable life skills, mediation, negotiation and violence prevention strategies. CRE as defined by the United States’ National Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR), models and teaches, in developmentally relevant and culturally appropriate ways, a variety of processes, practices and skills designed to address individual, interpersonal and institutional conflicts, and to create safe and welcoming learning environments. These skills, concepts and values help individuals to understand conflict dynamics, and empower them to use communication and creative thinking to build healthy relationships and to manage and resolve conflicts fairly and non-violently. Conflict Resolution educators envision a peaceful and just world where citizens act responsibly and with civility in their interactions and in their dispute resolution processes.

This definition incorporates themes related to civics, multi-cultural education and social justice, showing their strong compatibility with these other important knowledge and skill sets for youth.

Global Efforts

While many are familiar with the work of the United Nations in peace and conflict education, there are many other organizations working to effect positive change and help governmental and non-governmental organizations build capacity in schools, colleges, universities and communities, for curriculum and skills integration, teacher training and community education. The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a civil society led network whose mission is to build consensus on peace-building and the prevention of violent conflict in the fifteen world regions it serves. Each region has its own action agenda which was launched at UN headquarters in July of 2005. Based in the Hague, Netherlands, and housed at the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP), the GPPAC assists in “strengthening civil society networks for peace and security

3 Association for Conflict Resolution, “Recommended Guidelines for Effective Conflict Resolution Education Programs in K-12 Classrooms, Schools and School Districts”, http://acrnet.org/acrlibrary/more.php?id=11_0_1_0_M
by linking local, national, regional, and global levels of action and effective engagement with governments, the UN system and regional organizations." One of the target areas of the GPPAC program on Knowledge Generation and Sharing is the work of their Peace Education and Conflict Education Reference Group, a collaborative of experts in CRE and PE from the world’s regions. This reference group, building upon the work of the Policy Meetings of the Inter-American Summit on Conflict Resolution Education (March 2007) in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, and a meeting of the PE Reference Group at a GPPAC meeting (April 2007) in Belgrade, Serbia, identified as a priority, the need for a global survey of PE and CRE research. The survey was to examine the benefits and challenges related to this work, including a review of current evaluations, lessons learned, and improvements needed for evaluation design. The first phase of this project, canvassing the existing evaluation and research, was completed in partnership with nine U.S. colleges and universities, and the University of Peace, Nairobi, the Nansen Dialogue Network, the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), the Department of Education, Victoria (Australia), the Organization of American States (OAS), Seisen University (Japan), the Africa Democracy Forum, Women for Development (Armenia), Miriam College (The Philippines), the Nairobi Peace Initiative and the ECCP. These findings were shared at the Second International Conference on Conflict Resolution Education (March 2007) in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., and a research agenda, identifying and prioritizing gaps, was developed. Phase three, developing and funding CRE and PE evaluation research that addresses identified gaps, was discussed at the next regional meeting in Kenya in 2008. The details of these efforts and some of the results of the first stages of the evaluation are available on the CRE website.

Regional Efforts

At the Fourth Organization of American States (OAS) Ministers of Education Meeting in August of 2005 in Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministers of Education of the Americas adopted the Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices. This program was to focus its efforts on developing a democratic culture through education in the thirty-four member countries of the

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6 See the Conflict Resolution Education Connection, “CRE/PE Research Project,” http://www.creducation.org/cre/homebase/content_presentations/cre_pe_research_project
Hemisphere. The Program would do this by working on three main areas: research, professional development and educational resources, and information exchange. An Advisory Board for the Program, consisting of renowned experts from across the Hemisphere, was formed, and met in Bogotá, Colombia in April of 2006, to recommend concrete activities in each of the three main areas of the Program. The Program’s activities in the past two years have taken these recommendations into account. A large majority of the countries working on democracy and citizenship education, both through formal and non-formal education methods, including the implementation of policies at the country level, incorporate peace education and conflict resolution education knowledge, skills and attitudes as requirements.7

These efforts resulted in a number of endeavors. These include the creation of the Inter-American Journal on Education for Democracy, the development of two distance learning courses, the Hemispheric Course on Evaluation of Policies and Programs in Citizenship Education for governmental and non-governmental organizations responsible for the evaluation of the implementation of these programs in their countries, and a course for teachers in the Caribbean on Creating Democratic Classrooms. These efforts also include collaborations on much needed research, resulting in reports such as the Report on National Policies on Education for Democratic Citizenship Education, and the development of a web portal of research, resources and information related to these macro-level efforts.8

Overview of Country Efforts

All over the globe, countries are working to integrate the various knowledge, skills and structures related to PE and CRE into their legislation, policies, standards and programming, in both formal and informal educational settings, from early childhood to young adults. Below is a summary of related efforts in Armenia, Ghana (West Africa), Israel, Thailand, Ukraine and the United States. These summaries are from presentations these countries made at international conferences on CRE in the U.S., or information submitted by representatives in these countries for the global section of the Conflict Resolution Education Connection Website.9

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8 See http://educadem.oas.org
9 For additional details about the work being done in these and other countries around the world, or to contact the contributors, please visit the global section of the website: http://www.CREducation.org
Armenia

In Armenia, over the last 6 years, the NGO Women for Development has been implementing the PE and CRE program, establishing PE centers in schools. This training was developed in the frame of the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence (2000-2010). The program, financed by EED (Germany) and ICCO (the Netherlands), has three main goals, 1) teacher training, 2) organizing various mechanisms of peace education processes in schools, and 3) cooperation with the National Institute of Education, Ministry of Education and Science. These efforts have resulted in special training and peer-to-peer education for approximately 2000 pupils from eighteen schools and the Pedagogical Institute. One of the primary successes was the integration of PE and CRE into the Social Science subjects criteria, national standards, throughout Armenia.\[10\]

Ghana (West Africa)

In 1998, as a response to the several civil wars in the region, and in an effort to help intervene in and prevent conflict situations, representatives of seven West African countries, believing in the strength of collaboration, launched The West African Network for Peace building (WANEP)\[11\] in Accra, Ghana. One of its key efforts is its youth and peace education program. WANEP has been working in seven countries in the West African sub-region to promote conflict resolution programming in schools at two levels: 1) the development of peace education tools such as teachers’ guides and resource books, and 2) the development of peer mediation programs in schools. WANEP’s work has engaged Ministries of Education in Ghana, Liberia, Cote D’Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, resulting in the revision of the education standards in Ghana to include aspects of peace education in five subject areas. The objectives of the youth program include: “1) to increase awareness of non-violent strategies among the youth, 2) to provide a platform for youth involvement in peacebuilding, and 3) to harmonise and strengthen linkages between formal and non-formal education structures in the theory and practice of peace education.”\[12\]


\[11\] Additional information on WANEP’s initiatives can be found at http://www.wanep.org

Israel

In Israel, there are thousands of PE initiatives aimed at students, from early childhood to university. While there is no official set directive or legislation requiring peace education for all students, the Ministry of Education encourages the development and implementation of PE related initiatives. For example, the “Allocation of one study hour per week throughout the education system, from kindergarten through high school” is to be integrated into the subject of life skills, including peace education related topics.\(^{13}\) The initiatives are vast and may be divided into two main types: “1) Jewish-Arab encounter programs: ‘mixed’ and bilingual schools, ‘twin’ schools, joint delegations abroad, summer camps, etc., [and] 2) Study and enrichment programs: programs within the education system that deal with education for coexistence and democracy, for multiculturalism, humanism, mediation, etc.”\(^{14}\) Despite these efforts, research on PE conducted at the University of Haifa found that while, due to the plethora of NGOs and more formalized efforts all Israeli children are exposed in some manner to these topics “only about 6% take part in comprehensive, long-term programs.”\(^{15}\)

While most CRE and PE in Israel focuses on Jewish-Arab relations, other initiatives exist that address conflicts which occur between current residents and new immigrants, and conflicts which exist between the secular and religious segments of society. Some of these initiatives are administered by the Ministry of Education, while others are operated by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and institutes.\(^{16}\) PE and CRE work is overseen by two departments within the Ministry of Education, one which covers the topics of democracy and civics through cognitive methods, and the Psychological Counseling Service, which addresses the social-emotional aspects of the conflicts, including addressing the trauma associated with the violence. In addition to the governmental agencies, there are an estimated 300 NGOs which are working to address these issues, and the Jewish-Arab coexistence network is working to bring them together.\(^{17}\)

Thailand

The Ministry of Education is developing a national policy to build a culture of peace in Thai schools at the national level. This initiative also explores positive

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\(^{14}\) Ibid.

\(^{15}\) Ibid.

\(^{16}\) See http://www.coexnet.org.il for more information on these initiatives.

\(^{17}\) Ibid.
ways to involve student participation in addressing conflict and violence. These efforts evolved from a policy signed by Thailand’s Prime Minister in September of 2003 - **Number 187/2003, A Policy to Deal with Conflict by Peaceful Means.**\(^\text{18}\) The policy’s focus is the use of peaceful means to decrease bias and negative attitudes, to stop hate and to solve problems without violence. One of the mechanisms to support this policy implementation is the creation of Institutes of Dispute Resolution at Universities, with a mandate to create a conflict resolution curriculum, to provide on-going training and workshops. These currently include governmental organizations including the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the Ministry of Education.\(^\text{19}\)

In November 2005, Thailand’s Cabinet approved a policy to encourage all the universities to set up centers and curricula in Conflict Management, and to develop an agency at the national level to oversee dispute reconciliation processes and reconciliation efforts in Thailand. In July of 2006, King Prajadhipok’s Institute (KPI) organized a meeting to review the Cabinet’s policy and to help develop a plan for it. In August of 2006, the Ministry of Justice and KPI organized a meeting to plan how restorative justice practices and school mediation could be used in schools to prevent serious disputes. In 2007, the Ministry of Education, through the Office of the Educational Council, launched a program on Conflict Resolution Education and Peace Education, which ran peer mediation in schools. KPI has helped support these efforts by training school administrators, teachers and students.\(^\text{20}\)

**Ukraine**

In the Crimean region of the Ukraine, CRE has expanded from 1997 – 2005 as NGOS (the Odessa Mediation Group, the Tavrida Mediation Group, Search for Common Ground Crimean Office, etc.) and government officials partner to conduct training in CRE and mediation, integrate these topics into the civics education course for higher grades and into teacher training and education for school psychologists. An example of these efforts is the integrated course “Culture of Neighbourhood” (including Tatars, Russians, Ukrainians, and other cultural groups),

\[\text{\textsuperscript{18}} \text{Available in Thai and English at:  http://disputeresolution.ohio.gov/country/thailand.htm}\]
\[\text{\textsuperscript{19}} \text{Vatanasapt, Vanchai, “Thailand,” The Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management, (2005), http://disputeresolution.ohio.gov/country/thailand.htm}\]
which is a joint initiative of several non-governmental organizations and educational institutions supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Crimea. There are multiple components of this thirty-five hour course in primary, secondary and high schools, including conflict resolution skills, peer mediation, etc. The main purpose of the course is to help prepare children, with key social skills, to be critical thinkers, and to increase their tolerance and understanding of their diverse communities as they grow up and live in a rich, poly-ethnic environment. As a result of these efforts, the program has gained government support, and has been approved by the Ministry of Education, the body responsible for colleges and universities. In addition, there has been a Decree of Parliament that CRE/PE be integrated into the training for children and future teachers, and included in textbooks.  

**United States**

In the United States, there is no national mandate or requirement to integrate CRE into the curriculum for students. However, there is CRE related legislation in nearly all fifty states and at the federal level. Related legislation includes topics such as school safety, violence prevention, character education, mediation and conflict resolution. Legislation, mandates and requirements range from topic integration into social studies standards, to the alignment of the school mission and discipline policy, to teacher training. The challenges to implement these requirements or mandates generally focus on inadequate funding for the training of teachers and students.

In higher education, more than 200 colleges and universities in the United States have ombudspersons with approximately 220 campus mediation programs. There are few system-wide comprehensive conflict management programs which

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22 For additional details related to what states require, visit Georgia State University’s Conflict Resolution in Schools Program Legislative Database:http://law.gsu.edu/area51/crisp/ or the Education Commission of the States overview of legislation in the fifty states and territories: http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/statesTerritories/state_map.htm

23 An ombudsperson is a representative of a college or university who serves as a neutral third-party, assisting all members of the college or university community to problem-solve and resolve conflicts before they escalate to litigation through the use of coaching, mediation and utilizing other conflict resolution tools.

24 For additional information on CRE and PE Higher Education in the U.S., visit the Campus Conflict Resolution Resource website at www.campus-adr.org
require all colleges and universities within a state to have such structures in place. However, the University System of Georgia, the University of Hawaii System, and the University of Missouri System do have such comprehensive programs.

While there are nineteen states that have some form of a state government office on dispute resolution, only Ohio has a state government office that includes an Education Director, with a mission to provide all Ohio public schools (approximately 5,000), colleges and universities (approximately fifty-two teacher training colleges), with grants, training, technical assistance and resources on conflict management. Established in 1989, the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management provided more than 800 public schools with conflict management training grants for their educators, established truancy mediation programs in more than 415 schools, and helped establish the National Conflict Resolution Education in Teacher Education (CRETE) Project funded by the United States Department of Education, the George Gund Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the JAMS Foundation. With twelve college and university partners across the United States, CRETE’s goals are to help higher education faculty infuse Conflict Resolution Education into their existing courses for pre-service teachers; develop an external training program in CRE for pre-service teachers and mentor teachers; evaluate the impact of CRETE on teacher satisfaction and retention; and develop web-based and hard copy instructional materials and protocols.25

Summary

All around the world, governmental and non-governmental organizations are building capacity in CRE and PE through large scale teacher and school administration training efforts, curriculum integration, creation of resources, and education related policy and standards development. Due to space constraints, only a few country efforts were detailed in this paper.26

These materials are available at no charge through the Conflict Resolution Education Connection website, www.CREducation.org

26 Readers are encouraged to visit the global section of the Conflict Resolution Connections website at www.CREducation.org to review other regional and state efforts, and to share information on relevant CRE and PE efforts in their own country or region.
As these efforts expand, evaluation is critical to seeing the programs achieve their intended goals. The GPPAC’s efforts to collect and analyze these global efforts, and the OAS’s efforts to better prepare those responsible for these large scale evaluation endeavors through the development of an on-line evaluation course, have the potential to provide much needed technical assistance and information to governments and non-governmental organizations as they work to promote peace and reduce conflict in their communities.
Select Bibliography


Association for Conflict Resolution. “Recommended Guidelines for Effective Conflict Resolution Education Programs in K-12 Classrooms, Schools and School Districts.” http://acrnet.org/acrlibrary/more.php?id=11_0_1_0_M


The Conflict Resolution Education Connection. “CRE/PE Research Project,” http://www.cred.edu/cre/homebase/content_presentations/cre_pe_research_project


As an educationist involved with the process of learning at school level, I cannot help but stress the importance of education in building an inclusive and peaceful human community.

The global quest for peace and harmony in a world torn apart by conflict and violence has to begin right at the grassroots level, with the education of the world’s children, millions of whom are out of school, never having held a book in their hands; many of them trained more in the art of handling weaponry than the skills of learning; many of them innocent victims to drug peddlers and smugglers; easy targets for the divisive and disintegrative forces in the world to carry out their plans for creating racial strife and communal and ethnic disharmony.

These economically deprived, out of school children, in the course of time, will swell the ranks of the adult illiterates, and it is an accepted fact that an uneducated populace provides the breeding ground for the growth of fundamentalism, obscurantism, superstition and bigoted mindsets, where hatred and violence are more in evidence than love, peace and harmony.

A global priority today is education. We need to ensure that all children get to school, and that the education imparted is holistic, wholesome and wedded to the concepts of national unity, global peace and international understanding.

As far as India is concerned, we have a literacy figure of about 61% with approximately 268.4 million illiterate adults and fifty million children still out of school.

If we aim for an inclusive society we have to also ensure that our education system is truly inclusive, bringing under its umbrella the tribal and rural poor, the backward minority groups and the mentally and physically challenged children, all of whom

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have been neglected for too long. This has been stressed in the Educational Policy of 1986.

The necessary prerequisite for building an education for a composite culture is to ensure that all our children not only have access to education, but are also given equal educational opportunity as well as an education of acceptable quality.

It is rightly said that there is hardly any country today that is mono-cultural, and many governments are in the process of making fundamental changes in their educational policies and systems to cater to the needs of different racial and ethnic groups in their countries.

India, in particular, with its one billion people of diverse groupings, is multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, and is the birthplace of many religions of the world. And in spite of many onslaughts on our democratic polity and threats to our secularism and pluralism, we have remained committed to the secular and democratic values laid down in the Directive Principles of our Constitution, and which form an indispensable part of the Educational Policy of 1986.

It is essential that our state-run and secular schools be open to children of all communities, castes and religions. They must cater to their different cultural and linguistic needs, and provide an educational environment which is non-threatening, which does not alienate or divide, which accepts differences and yet seeks to provide an overriding culture that is composite in nature, based on the ideals that India treasures – secularism, social justice and equity, and a democratic way of life.

Why do we find more and more children of minorities seeking education in separate schools? Why are more such schools opening? Why are fewer children of the minorities studying in so-called secular schools? Does it not signify a sense of insecurity among the minority families, a feeling of isolation, of alienation? Are we, in fact, being truly secular or are we allowing the religion and culture of the dominant majority community to penetrate unduly into our state-run schools, undermining the meaning of secularism?

There are many ways of looking at secularism, but to my mind, a secular school is one that considers religion to be a personal affair, respecting each child’s personal faith, giving equal respect to every religion and the right to practice it at home or in its place of worship, but keeping it out of the school setting. Rather than practice or preach the tenets of any one religion, one should inculcate a spirit of scientific humanism, of peace and brotherhood, and a value system based on truth, beauty and goodness, social equity and justice, working for national unity and a global consciousness.
It is only when children of different communities work and play together that they understand and accept each other’s differences, and can build a climate of tolerance, developing a common identity and composite culture. They begin to speak the same language of togetherness and national identity. If children of different cultures and communities are isolated and studying in their mono-cultural schools, where will we get the inter-mingling of different cultures and the weaving together of the different threads of our national fabric?

Schools can achieve a multi-cultural approach to education through their admission policies, their ethos and philosophy, through a broad-based, holistic curriculum, their textbooks, their co-curricular activity program, and through the re-orientation of their teachers.

I look forward to the day when the common neighborhood school concept becomes a reality; when children from all communities and socio-economic strata, living in the same area, live, work and play together in the same school. We need to create the conditions for making it possible, raising the quality of local schools with community help; working on mindsets and most importantly, creating the political will for its implementation.

At all costs, we have to resist the onslaughts of communalism and narrow parochial thinking in education, and uphold its secular nature. We have to fight the attempts to introduce the ideology of Hindutva into our schools in the name of the Indianization, nationalization, and spiritualization of education, or, for that matter, any form of fundamentalist thinking. We have to develop in the minds of our children, the value of rational thought, of developing inquiring/inquisitive minds, and encourage them to have a broad and liberal outlook on life.

We are familiar with the move at the Center by the BJP government, which replaced the 1986 Policy of Education with a new curriculum framework. Among other things, it sought to make Sanskrit and the study of the Vedas and Upanishads compulsory for all students, and to create a value system based on the wisdom of only our ancient Hindu saints and seers, without considering all other sources from which values can be derived.

The process of discarding and replacing the history textbooks (written by renowned scholars and historians) started with a circular from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) that deleted certain chapters from the texts at various levels. The schools were also instructed to inform students that these chapters will not be included in the examination, but most horrifying of all, it prohibited the schools from ‘discussing them in the classrooms’. So the spirit of inquiry and academic
freedom, which are an essential part of Indian ethos, in the view of the CBSE, were no longer to be enjoyed by schools.

To build an inclusive society and a composite culture in a country so diverse and plural as India is not an easy task, especially at a time when local and regional identities are being rigorously asserted, when certain communities are feeling isolated and alienated from the political and civil polity, when there is such marginalization of the socially and economically deprived sections of our society, so much poverty, illiteracy and social injustice prevail, and when the majority of women are still disempowered. These are the issues that need to be addressed. Liberal and progressive thinkers, intellectuals, educationists and enlightened citizens have to work together in their different fields to meet these challenges, build our national identity and integrity and resist all attempts to weaken our national fabric. Education has a key role to play in bringing about the social and economic transformation of our society without which the building of a composite culture and inclusive society will remain a distant dream.
Consider these two ways of comprehending the global violence that we witness…

“It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.”

– Samuel P. Huntington\(^1\)

or

“While the cultural forces are among the forces that contribute to disrespect, misunderstanding and violence, they are not the causal factors, nor are they immutable and irresistible. We need a departure from old ways of thinking about the centrality of violence and the alleged inviolability of cultural confrontations.”

– Civil Paths to Peace\(^2\)

It is with the latter sensibility that *Civil Paths to Peace: Report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding* has been written. Though the report

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receives its mandate from the Commonwealth Heads of Government, it has successfully overcome a statist perspective towards understanding conflicts or their resolution. The eleven members of the Commission come from Asia, Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean region. The diverse backgrounds of members of the Commission has brought great insight of experiences from societies located at different stages of development as well as societies that are struggling with various types and intensities of conflicts. As a result, we have a valuable document that could serve as a policy guideline in Commonwealth countries and beyond.

The ideas of ‘respect’ and ‘understanding’ invoked in the report are more substantive than their colloquial use. The report lays out the scope of these values in the following words:

…the term ‘respect’ reflects and encapsulates the principles for which the modern Commonwealth stands – human rights, liberties, democracy, gender equality, rule of law and a political culture that promotes transparency, accountability and economic development.

…Understanding implies an ability to grasp what someone else is saying in order to get to the heart of what they are trying to communicate…Understanding does not necessarily involve agreement with the views or beliefs others hold.3

It is the elaboration of the substantive content of the values of respect and understanding that makes these values relevant to the domain of international relations, which is traditionally characterized by its amorality and anarchy. The report operationalizes respect in a variety of contexts, including the respect with which the economically more powerful nations must approach the less powerful ones, the respect for different civilizations, the respect for international law and the respect shown to regional neighbors which can feed into multilateralist thinking.

Why are respect and understanding important in contemporary times? The report responds to this question with a plurality of answers. Firstly, conflicts are amplified beyond borders in an increasingly interconnected world. Secondly, in a world confronted with the phenomenon of terrorism (which the report insists is far more than just a security problem), as well as a world in possession of ever more potent weapons and the possibility of human and environmental catastrophe, the values of respect and understanding become topical.

3 Ibid, pp.16-17
The report is sensitive to the fact that to overcome violence, one needs to acknowledge that it is by capturing people’s minds and loyalties that violence is cultivated. Thus, it recommends evolving new paths to bring people’s loyalties to peace. The report, on the one hand, rejects civilizational explanations of global conflicts and on the other hand, discredits military interventions for the resolution of these conflicts. It suggests ‘respect and understanding’ as lasting ways to address global conflicts. Thus, the report is both a set of recommendations as well as a set of lenses with which one must engage with the issue of global violence.

The first half of the report lays out the foundations of its conceptual tools, the notion of ‘respect’ and ‘understanding’ and the kinds of violence that the world witnesses. It examines the explanations offered for global violence and looks toward identifying the forces that actually nurture this violence. It looks at the relatively under-explored dimensions of global violence. It looks at the role of poverty in abetting conflict, inequality that feeds into poverty and vice versa. More thoughtfully, it emphasizes a psychological dimension of both poverty as well as inequality, namely, 

**humiliation.** The report urges us to address current as well as past humiliations.

The second half of the report is a logical corollary of the theoretical perspectives presented in the first half. There are a set of recommendations for the Heads of States within as well as outside of the Commonwealth. In the second half, there are three kinds of recommendations. There are recommendations on the principles which are in sync with the overall commitment to building an international culture of respect and understanding. Secondly, there are policy recommendations broad enough for individual governments to design more specific policies that best suit their cultural, political, economic and historical circumstances. Thirdly, there are a set of recommendations on the target groups that governments could partner with in order to build a culture of respect and understanding.

A commitment to the Commonwealth principles would include affirmation to use dialogue to address all international conflicts and political differences within the states. An affirmation to keep multilateralism as the preferred way to settle domestic as well as international issues and an affirmation to look for civil routes to peace instead of military ones.

The primary policy recommendations made are: to mobilize the international community against different kinds of violence while recognizing the factors that generate as well as nurture them; to spread awareness of the human diversity in the world; facilitate a better understanding and shedding of prejudices that people
across societies and generations fall victim to; and enlarge the process of political participation. The report also urges governments to lay special emphasis on access to education, monitoring the quality of education and utilizing this powerful tool to disseminate values of respect, understanding, empathy and accepting diversity.

The report also proposes that certain groups could be partners with governments in these initiatives. A primary partner could be civil society, which could engage in advocacy and participate in creating awareness among the people. The second group is women. The report argues that women are the worst hit in a conflict situation. The losses that they commonly experience could be a resource for peace building. The third set the report recommends is faith-based groups. Most interestingly, the Commission identifies ex-combatants as potential partners too. The media could be another important partner which is very influential in shaping people’s outlook as well as breaking down prejudices and preventing conflicts.

Indeed, the report addresses its mandate successfully. However, the extent to which its recommendations could achieve the desired ends is debatable. This is because the report relies on actor-centric recommendations alone, to address violence and global conflict. It ignores the structural impediments that these actors – the media, educational institutions, women, young people and indeed governments find themselves in. These impediments could be located in the nature of international political economy, or the international balance of power. Such structural impediments that could limit the possibilities of a dialogue have remained unaddressed in the report. Sometimes, even agreements in principle between governments could go unimplemented due to structural pressures. Thus, to imagine a commitment to ‘respect and understanding’ by concerned actors, without addressing the contextual and structural limitations that impinge on them, could be unrealistic. These could be informal rules that inform the entire system, not necessarily based on the democratic pillars of ‘respect and understanding’. Actors promoting respect and understanding in an environment that produces incentives for intensifying conflicts would be faced with an impossible mission.

However, the individual governments could utilize notions of respect and understanding to address structural issues as well. This lacuna in the report under observation is the possible space for another creative flight to take off on new thinking about global violence. This report shall certainly be the runway for any fresh look at lasting peace.
and Race in Peace Education: Pedagogies to address Difference in the Classroom suggest that sensitivity to gender differences can be a useful strategy to promote respect for other differences based on race, language, ethnicity or class.

Heather Millhouse in The Place of Peace draws attention to a particular gap in the theory and practice of peace education— the absence of any discussion on barriers to educating for peace. To gauge the perception of barriers that peace educators encounter, Millhouse uses a survey of a group of Australian students training to become educators. She concludes that unless structural changes germane to the socio-cultural context become part of the efforts to educate for peace, transformative change may be difficult to bring about. Consequently, she argues that those who wish to use education as a tool for peacebuilding must look for localized solutions.

Illustrating the diverse strategies adopted by conflict resolution programs in developed countries as well as states in South America, Jennifer C. Batton’s contribution, Peace and Conflict Education around the Globe provides insights into some of the methodologies that are being used to respond to increasing levels of violence and conflict. Her lucid description of the various programs can serve as an important resource for educators as well as policy makers.

Education and the Architecture of an Inclusive Society, by Jyoti Bose foregrounds the issue of access to quality education and how the denial of this opportunity has led to widening chasms in Indian society. She sees the response to this inequality predicament as essential to resolution of any conflicts arising from caste, class and religious differences.

The question whether education can be an effective tool for building peace between communities and states in South Asia has no simple answers. Any discussion on the subject is bound to raise an array of responses. The ongoing debates on the shortcomings of existing systems of education in South Asia have seldom focused on its relevance to the understanding and possible mitigation of conflicts that societies with deep cleavages reveal. This volume of Peace Prints does not seek to settle ongoing disputes, but makes an attempt to explore why education should continue to be on the agenda of peace builders in the region.

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PEACE EDUCATION IN INDIA: A PROPOSAL

S. P. Udayakumar

Abstract

Across the world, Peace Education programs are gaining popularity, as states, international agencies and civil society organizations increasingly recognize the importance of such education. However, with this growing recognition there are increasing contestations over both the broader objectives and the specificities of carrying out peace education programs. This article sketches out the various options that are available, and also looks at how a regional perspective on peace through education can be generated. While such a perspective would have to be sensitive to the history, the current reality and the future needs of the different South Asian states, given the shared cultural practices in South Asia, it may not be an impossible undertaking.

All over the world, a great deal of emphasis is currently being placed upon peace education, as the quest for peace necessitates extensive knowledge and unfailing assiduity. The widespread interest in preparing individuals for peace on earth makes us resort to the teaching-learning process. The inevitability of this emphasis upon education for peace has arisen not only from the need to educate the public opinion of the scourges of war, its prodigality or the danger of total annihilation etc, but also from the necessity to promote understanding, acceptance and friendship among all peoples and nations, and to strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Learning to make a living is not the sole reason for getting education; there is another, equally important byproduct: learning to make a life, a life that is beneficial, useful and peaceful. After all, humans are social animals; their success in life is largely a matter of successful social relations. Quite evidently, student age is the crucially important period which enriches one’s personal life, nurtures social adjustments, fosters friendship and understanding and affects one’s whole life

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pattern. Seen from this perspective, one could very well understand the critical necessity of teaching students, youth and young leaders the art of living together, in mutual respect, justice, love and peace.

Alfred North Whitehead calls education “the acquisition of the art of the utilization of knowledge.” We need to tell our students, youth and young leaders about our world and its problems. We need to explain to them their part in the solutions. We need to instill in them a genuine appreciation of, and a profound liking towards, our humanitarian traditions and values such as non-violence, tolerance, understanding, cooperation and peace. To quote H.G. Wells, “human history becomes more and more a race between education and catastrophe” and hence, we must educate the youth for peace. However, will any kind of education, given by anybody to anybody under any circumstances, bring about these results? It is highly unlikely.

Peace education itself is as abstruse a notion as peace. Any attempt to define peace education in strict terms, or to typify a set of programs for the purpose of generalization would prove futile, as the most important features that characterize the notion of peace education are many and varied. The aims and objectives, the perspectives of the subject, the working methods and other theoretical and practical approaches are decisive variables. Furthermore, place, period, local environment and other internal variations are major affective components in deciding the kind of peace education, its scope, its nature and the values one would attach to it. Owing to these factors, peace education varies from country to country, and even between regions within one country. However multifarious the approaches are, all educational programs and activities collected under peace education would seek to prepare the students for peace. To put it in a nutshell, peace education sees to the construction of defenses of peace and fences of justice in the minds of the younger generation, and to making the youth hold to peace individually in life.

Peace education covers a wide territory, and has many subsidiaries. Mitsuo Okamoto argues that disarmament education, international education, development education and the like can, by broad definition, be included as programs in peace education. The contents denominated by the various titles like world order education, global education, education for international understanding, education for justice, ecological education etc., have been categorized by Okamoto into four types of peace education.¹ The first sees peace education as criticism of war. The basic view here is that peace is the absence of war (negative peace). Content of this type includes teaching concerning the legacy of war experience, a scientific explanation of the

causes of war and conditions of peace, the promotion of international understanding as a preventive to war, etc. The second type considers peace education as liberation. Here, a new concept of peace, positive peace (which is defined as that social condition characterized by economic independence, a stable order, social justice, human rights and welfare), is presupposed. Liberation from poverty, ignorance, discrimination and oppression etc. is seen as the objective goal for peace education here.

The third type regards peace education as a learning process. In this type, peace education is grasped as a learning process towards inter-personal maturity on the basis of the unity between theory and practice on the one hand, and a critical understanding of history and society on the other. The fourth type holds peace education as life-style movements: it rests upon the realization that warfare and war preparations are intimately tied to the fact that the over-production and extravagance of the nations at the center have been gained at the expense of the wealth and development of nations at the periphery. Here, we can refer to a standard of values emphasizing a simple life, human scale, self-determination, ecological awareness and personal growth.

Disarmament education is a major development in the field of peace education. It implies education both for and about disarmament. All who engage in education or communication may contribute to disarmament education by being aware and creating an awareness of the factors underlying the production and acquisition of arms, of the social, political, economic and cultural repercussions of the arms race, and of the grave danger, to the survival of humanity, of the existence and potential use of nuclear weapons. Development education explores development issues and focuses on the development process. Obviously, the content of development education in a developing country like India is entirely different from that of a developed country. Given the present situation in India, creating a deeper consciousness and awareness of our development problems among our students, and designing programs of personal involvement in development activities will open up new vistas in our development process. We can also find a very strong correlation between development education and environmental education.

The wider view of the meaning of peace gives rise to several innovations in the domain of peace education, viz. the teaching of human rights and fundamental freedoms, education for international understanding, education about the UN, its

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other non-formal peace education programs, such as the UN students’ association, UNESCO clubs, UNESCO Associated Schools Project and so forth. Both the conceptual and the practical approaches must be quite conspicuously delineated. Having developed a theoretical framework and drawn up policy prescriptions for carrying out peace education programs and activities, we should attend to curriculum change. Indeed, peace education demands the modification of the existing educational system, rather than mere expansion of it.

In the case of India, although caste oppression, untouchability, gender discrimination and other cruelties existed (and continue to exist), the culture has been marked by acceptance, catholicity and an innate inclusiveness which refuses to be taken away by doctrinal divergences. All these factors have facilitated the commingling and constant cultural exchanges of tribes, races, religions and ethnic groups with grave doctrinal, philosophical and ideological differences.

Islam, which came to conquer, compromised and became Indianized in the form of Sufism, and Islam influenced Hindu reformation thoughts of the nineteenth century. Indian culture, characterized by a profound understanding of the nature of humans and their relations with other beings and the universe, is absorbing all the essentials in the Western scientific civilization, and the inherent Europeanism in it has made it possible to understand the Christian culture. This ancient culture of India was taken to many contiguous lands in Asia. When improved means of communication like the printing press and the railroad were about to hasten cultural communication, the advent of political changes and aspirations, the movement for independence, fears of dominance and dependence and all such sorts of influences gave rise to an insistence on cultural independence and actual divide. The South Asian scene, which was once described as a ‘harmony of contrasts’, gave a different picture. The contrasts with strong political and psychological undercurrents became violent and caused recurrent divisions.

Recently, however, there has been a rejuvenated will to see harmony through regional cooperation efforts, and bilateral transactions and dialogues. After all, there are many cross-cutting alliances and allegiances. One of the main philosophic-religious schools of Indian culture, Buddhism, reigns supreme in Sri Lanka, where the minority Tamils share their language and religion with the people of Tamil Nadu in India. Besides the Tamils, there are other ‘language-culture’ groups represented by the Urdu-speakers in Pakistan and India, Bengali-speakers in Bangladesh and West Bengal (India), and Sindhi, Punjabi and Nepali speakers across the borders of Pakistan, India and Nepal. If Pakistan, Bangladesh, or the Maldives claims a preponderance of Islam, India too possesses eminence in Islamic culture as it has
the second largest Muslim population in the world. Signaling India’s unique identity, Hinduism and Buddhism offer a basis of understanding with the Himalayan kingdoms of Nepal and Bhutan.

Furthermore, there is ample scope to define commonalities on the foundations of philosophy, ethics and religion, literature, theater, music, dancing, painting, sculpture, architecture and even minor arts such as wood-carving, copper and cloisonne work, carpet making, earthenware etc. The wind and the limbs, the brush and the chisel, the trowel, the pen and the very spirit itself strengthen the fabric of the rich cultural milieu of South Asia with some basic character – emphasis on melody in music, traditional and stylized form in dance, free variations in painting, monumentalism in sculpture, lyricism in poems, and realism in stories. Religious fervor, fervent wedlock, strong affinity to family, respect for elders, and a host of other cultural habits and customs, too, contribute to the spinning of the regional cultural web. In spite of all these, South Asian countries cannot be simply lumped together culturally; it is even less likely, under the present circumstances marked by divided politics, diverse allegiances, differing perspectives and cultural policies etc. Maybe a good compromise would be engaging in peace education activities in one’s country without overlooking the larger regional backdrop.

The peace education we plan should be carefully adapted in kind, in amount and in distribution. The major point we have to reckon with, while deciding the quality of teaching to be given, is to understand the subcultures of India as a prerequisite to develop world-mindedness. It is highly difficult to specify the exact amount of peace education. But it is worth taking note of some of the basic questions in distribution. First, too few teachers are capable of meeting the requirements and values dictated by peace education which are crucial for favorably affecting the awareness and behavior of young minds. Second, a trite description and vague discussion will prove as useless as mere cramming up details, unless a solution is specifically mentioned and the means of implementation are spelt out. Third, the form and content of peace education is quite unique and so it does not go with conventional treatment. Evaluation, for example, is a rather difficult process as the teaching aims at the essence of individuals. There are many more related things which demand our prudent concern.

It is important to remember that peace education is not an additional academic subject we add to the existing system. Instead, it is the general orientation that we introduce in the existing subjects, textbooks and teacher discourses. For instance, the Sociology textbooks could underscore the fact that peaceful coexistence is an objective requirement for peaceful development, and vice versa. In the Physics
textbooks, emphasis could be laid on the need to fight for a ban on nuclear weapons and other weapons of mass destruction (WMD), and international agreements in this field. Biology books could explain, among other things, the deadly effects of exposure to radioactivity on human beings. Needless to say, one who wills the end wills the means. Though international comparisons are difficult, general lessons and indicative suggestions can be taken from international experiences also.

The challenge for educators all over the globe is to choose between going ahead with the present effete educational system, or preparing our younger generation for the kind of life each and every one of us aspires towards. To use Swami Vivekananda’s categorization, should we teach them just ‘to know’ or ‘to be’?
EDUCATION FOR PEACE: KALEIDOSCOPIC MUSINGS

Shweta Singh

Abstract

Education for Peace is a crucial mediating ‘space’ and ‘tool’ that addresses and facilitates transformation of conflict towards a ‘structure’ and ‘process’ that constitute ‘Just Peace’. In other words, actions for ‘Peacebuilding’ must be located in the educational system. This paper firstly, elucidates how Education has been used historically to address varied forms of violence in different geographical settings. Secondly, how each approach has been similar from the perspective of fundamental goals and values and yet unique, as it was a response to specific problems within a context and a particular historical setting. Thirdly, how currently the Education for Peace paradigm in India is an effort in the direction of nurturing Peacebuilding through educational system. Lastly, it discusses the ‘How’ of Education for Peace. This is an essential component because building peace through education is a dynamic process and thus the pedagogy or the ‘how’ is as important as the ‘what’ of Education for Peace. A possible pedagogical tool kit is delineated in the concluding part to make a contribution in this process.

What is Violence and Peace?

Theoretical developments in the field of peace research have shaped the direction of Education for Peace. Education for Peace is intertwined with the meaning of peace, which in turn is intrinsically linked to the understanding of

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The author would like to extend gratitude to Prof. Krishna Kumar, Director, National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) and Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Principal, Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, for providing valuable insights on approaches to Education for Peace. Prof John Paul Lederach, Prof. Howard Zehr, Prof. Lisa Schirch and Dr. Robb Davis (Eastern Mennonite University, Virginia, USA) for valuable insights into the field of Peacebuilding and its intrinsic linkage to Education for Peace. Also to Mr. Jagdish Gandhi, Founder Member of City Montessori School, Lucknow and Ms. Gazala Paul, Managing Trustee, Samerth, Ahmedabad. A special thanks also to Dr.Tony Jenkins, Co-Director, Peace Education Center, Teachers College, Columbia University, Global Coordinator, International Institute on Peace Education who facilitated access to valuable resources for this endeavour. The word Kaleidoscopic Musings has been used with the specific intent of highlighting the creative, reflective, interactive and dialogical nature of the learning process involved in Education for Peace.
violence. The central questions therefore are: ‘What’ is the substantive content of the concepts of violence and peace? How do we transform conflict and build ‘just peace’? Is education a ‘space’ and ‘tool’ that can address and facilitate transformation of conflict towards creating ‘structures’ and ‘processes’ that constitute ‘just peace’?

The field of peace research which has provided an understanding of peace and violence is multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary but the understanding of violence from a perspective of ‘realpolitik’ has been focused on direct, organized violence, particularly the institution of war and armed conflict and peace consequently has been defined as the absence of organized war between or within nations. This definition of violence is now considered too narrow to encompass the many levels at which violence manifests itself and the myriad forms it takes to impact the political, social and economic order. In fact if peace is action directed against violence, then the understanding of violence needs to be broadened to include all its significant varieties.

In the early 1960s, when the field of peace research was still in its fledging stages, Johan Galtung through his writings explicated the need and rationale for expanding both the concept of violence and of peace. Galtung draws a distinction between direct and structural violence and links it to the idea of negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace represents an absence of direct violence such as cessation of hostilities or absence of organized war between or within nations and positive peace is taken to mean the presence of social justice or the absence of structural violence.

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2 Instead of a broad literature review some representative views are included which are considered especially relevant for understanding Education for Peace in India. The views of Gandhi, Johan Galtung, John Paul Lederach and Lisa Schirch are discussed from the standpoint of peace research, peace action and peacebuilding. Betty A. Reardon’s and Krishna Kumar’s views are discussed, as Reardon has spearheaded the movement to popularize the concept of Education for Peace from a Western perspective and Kumar, is the force behind the Education for Peace movement in India especially his contribution to the drafting and implementation of the National Curriculum Framework 2005. Kumar as the Director of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT), has been one of the key proponents of the Education for Peace movement through the National Curriculum Framework 2005.


4 Galtung defines “Structural violence as the distance between the actual and the potential”. Structural violence is silent, it does not show; It is broadly a case of unjust or unfair institutions, laws, or rules that are perceived as violence by those who suffer, but not perceived as violence by those who benefit from the situation. It is found in legal institutions, political structures, governance patterns and the cultural patterns that govern a social system. Johan Galtung, “Violence, Peace, and Peace Research” Journal of Peace Research, Vol. 6, No. 3, (1969).
This conceptualization of peace was not altogether new. It could also be located in the writings of Mahatma Gandhi in India. Robert Hart writes, “Peace, as Gandhi envisaged it, is far more than the absence of war and violence. It is a state of positive and constructive world-view and world-order, where individuals, groups and nations eschew to dominate or exploit one another and live in cooperation and mutual aid.”

Gandhi also states, “There is no way to peace. Peace is the way” – a perception which highlights that peace is a process and not an outcome or an end state.

John Paul Lederach similarly argues that “metaphorically peace is not merely a stage in time or condition. It is a dynamic social construct”. Krishna Kumar asserts that “Peace is a state of being that must be consciously cultivated at individual, social, national and global levels”. Kumar in his explorations successfully divests peace of its popular connotation of passivity, and makes a compelling case for imagining, choosing and pursuing peace every moment of our lives. As he says, “…a counter-offensive for peace should become an everyday event. The desire for peace and the will to actualize it must begin in our hearts and minds, from where it will radiate into our shared spaces and some day, enfold the entire world.”

This is of critical importance as it posits that the understanding of peace is not limited to ending violence or negative peace but aims at building positive peace or just peace which is inclusive of social justice marked by values of democratic participation, respect for human needs, human rights and human security. This holistic view of peace, though not new, often goes unarticulated in these times when peace is enforced with weapons and wars are fought in the name of peace and democracy. If the meaning and goal of peace itself gets challenged; if it is enforced through war and weapons then, ‘How’ do we transform conflict and build peace?

With this larger objective to transform conflict and build peace, Johan Galtung, John Paul Lederach, and Lisa Schirch direct attention to Peacebuilding. The term peacebuilding refers to a complex web of processes – a web that incorporates different roles, strategies and interventions employed by different people at different stages of conflict development and directed towards building just peace. Galtung asserts that ‘structures’ must be found that remove causes of violence and offer

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6 Ibid.
8 Interview with author, New Delhi, March 4, 2008.
alternatives to violence in situations where violence might occur. Lisa Schirch asserts that an integrated peacebuilding framework goes beyond ending violent conflict and seeks to create capacity for a culture of just peace.

It is precisely in this role of building a culture of peace that education can be used as a tool and create conditions for just peace. In other words, actions for ‘Peacebuilding’ must be located in the educational system. Thus schools are the institutions most essential to education for a culture of peace. Teachers are the most responsible, influential and significant agents in the schooling process. Betty Reardon states ‘If we truly wish peace, we would prepare for it by educating all of our peoples about what peace is, the obstacles that impede it, the proposed and possible means to achieve it, what we need to learn to pursue these means to successful conclusions and, most important of all, the changes we must bring about in ourselves, our societies and our cultures’.

Kaleidoscopes for Peace: Education for Peace and Education about Peace

As one moves across historical and geographical settings, patterns of conflict and the ways in which education is used for peace change. In fact each education paradigm articulates a response to the specific problems of the given historical and geographical setting, yet a universal character can be ascribed to them as they attempt to universalize values of social justice, equality, democratic participation, human rights, human needs specifically human dignity and human security. It is thus imperative to examine the distinctions that have been made between two key approaches, Education ‘for’ and ‘about’ Peace and also locate the Indian approach within this broader map.

A brief trajectory of the field is provided here to demonstrate the symbiotic relationship between the historical events and geographical spaces and education.

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11 School curricula and pedagogy play a crucial role in building both a culture of peaceful coexistence or a culture marked by politics of hate, discrimination and demonization. For example in India, schools affiliated to Vishwa Hindu Parishad(VHP) through the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram and the Shishu Mandir’s affiliated to the RSS Seva Bharati follow a pedagogy and curriculum that demonises the minorities, challenges the secular fabric of Indian democracy and has a damaging impact on education at the grassroots.

12 Betty A. Reardon, Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective (France : UNESCO, 2003).
The first time the question of ‘how’ to preserve peace without war and weapons surfaced at the Hague Conferences.\textsuperscript{13} However, there were very few direct references to education and its role in peace promotion during these conferences.\textsuperscript{14}

The second half of the 19\textsuperscript{th} century to the beginning of World War II, what could be loosely called the period of formative peace education was focused on exposing the contradiction between religious and history education, which characterized Europe at that time. Early ‘Peace Educators’ had a two fold focus, to cleanse history education from nationalistic chauvinism, ethnocentrism and secondly, to prevent glorification of war.\textsuperscript{15} The factors that explain this focus were the growth of totalitarian movements in Europe, particularly the growth of Fascism and Nazism that emphasized the use of war and weapons and aggressive foreign policies and the dismal performance of the League of Nations as an institutional mechanism to preserve peace. The attempt through this paradigm of education for peace was to challenge aggressive nationalism, militarism and war heroism. However peace education during this period focused on peace and war on the ‘macro level’ or what has been articulated in the previous section as negative peace.

Scholars like Betty Reardon argue traditional or essential peace education as a field evolved after the close of World War II. Earlier at the turn of twentieth century, both Maria Montessori and John Dewey had advocated Peace Education by foregrounding a child centred and ‘progressive’ approach to education.\textsuperscript{16}

\textsuperscript{13} Hague Conferences of 1899 and 1907 were held for the purpose of bringing together the principal nations of the world to discuss and resolve the problems of maintaining universal peace, reducing armaments, and ameliorating the conditions of warfare. An in depth analysis is available in Ervin Laszlo and Jong Youl Yoo, eds., \textit{World Encyclopedia of Peace}, Vol. I (Elmsford, NY: Pergamon Press, 1983).

\textsuperscript{14} The first program of the international peace movement is linked to the International Peace Congress in Paris in 1849. This Congress emphasized on the need that participants should work in their respective countries for eradicating political prejudices and “hatred that has been learnt”. Education in this context was argued could play a key role. Victor Hugo was one of the most famous participants. This has been characterized as the first program of the international peace movement. An indepth analysis is available in Bengt Thelin “Early Tendencies of Peace Education in Sweden”, \textit{Peace Education Miniprints}, No. 69, 1994.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{16} Several educators and peace researchers, most notably Stitz Stomfay, M. Aline, David Smith and Terry Carson have researched this history and published their findings. See Terry Carson and David Smith, \textit{Educating for a Peaceful Future} (Toronto: Kagan and Woo Limited, 1998); Stomfay Stitz and M. Aline, \textit{Peace Education in America, 1828-1999: A Sourcebook for Education and Research} (Metuchen, NJ: Scarecrow Press, 1993).
The most significant components of the post-war essential peace education have been war prevention, non violence, world order studies, nuclear education, comprehensive peace education and ecological and cooperative education. All these were responses to particular conditions and or forms of organized violence. So in this period peace education was broadly a response to Cold War marked by increased threats of war, nuclearization and arms race. But the domain of inquiry within this framework of peace education was gradually expanding and the argument was that teaching about or for peace necessitates teaching about and for economic and social justice. Human rights, economic and social structures came to be linked inextricably to essential peace education. This was aptly reflected in Pope Paul’s axiom, “If you want peace, work for justice”.

Education for a ‘culture of peace’ is the most recent development in the field of peace education. This development is welcomed by those who have advocated a comprehensive and holistic approach to peace education. It provides an overarching concept under which the varied topics and approaches that comprise the field can be integrated, and more easily comprehended as multiple components of a single field of peace education. The urgency and necessity of such education was acknowledged by the member states of UNESCO in 1974 and reaffirmed in the Integrated Framework of Action on Education for Peace, Human Rights, and Democracy in 1994.

Education for Peace as a concept and a movement upholds and supports the realization of international priorities which have been articulated in UN Resolution 53/25, which proclaimed the period 2001-2010 as the ‘International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-Violence for the Children of the World’, as well as UN Resolution 53/243, by which a global ‘Declaration and Programme of Action on Peace Education’

17 This period was also marked by the approach to Peace Education derived from a peace research methodology designated as “world order inquiry” devised by the World Order Models Project (WOMP), a transnational peace research project established in 1968 by the Institute for World Order, then called the World Law Fund.

18 1963 was a pivotal year in this phase of peace education, because of the promulgation of Pope John XXIII encyclical letter, “Pacem in Terris” and President John F Kennedy’s commencement address at American University, “Towards a Strategy of Peace” in which he announced the Nuclear Test Ban Treaty. Available at: http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/1963kennedy-peacestrat.html

19 The concept of culture of violence and its antidote a culture of peace was first conceptualized by Peruvian peace researcher Felipe McGregor. The concept inspired UNESCO’s Culture of Peace program undertaken in 1993.


21 UN Resolution 53/243 (A), ‘Declaration on a Culture of Peace’ (October 1999). Available at: www.un-documents.net
a Culture of Peace’ for the new millennium was adopted. The Hague Appeal for Global Campaign for Peace Education\textsuperscript{22} and the Convention on the Rights of the Child adopted by UN Resolution 44/25\textsuperscript{23} also recognize the right of every child to be ‘brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity.’

Education for Peace got a fresh impetus with the Dakar Framework of Action.\textsuperscript{24} The Dakar declaration emphasizes that schools should be respected and protected as sanctuaries and zones of peace. It also calls for the engagement and participation of civil society in the formulation, implementation and monitoring of strategies for educational development. It underlines how conflicts, instability and natural disasters take their toll on education and are a major barrier towards attaining education for all. It thus argues for a need to sensitize and conduct educational programmes in ways that promote mutual understanding, peace and tolerance that help to prevent violence and conflict.

The above paradigms of education in the direction of peace can be classified into two categories based on the content, goals and values: Education for Peace and Education about Peace. Thus the critical question for exploration is what is Education for Peace and Education about Peace?

Betty Reardon asserts Education for Peace is ‘education to create some of the preconditions for the achievement of peace.’\textsuperscript{25} Education for Peace is primarily concerned with knowledge and skills related to requirements of and obstacles to achievement of Peace.\textsuperscript{26} Multiculturalism, environmental and international

\textsuperscript{22} A campaign to facilitate the introduction of peace and human rights education into all educational institutions was called for by the ‘Hague Appeal’ for Peace Civil Society Conference in May 1999. An initiative of individual educators and education NGOs committed to peace, it is conducted through a global network of education associations, and regional, national and local task forces of citizens and educators who lobby and inform ministries of education and teacher education institutions about the UNESCO Framework and the multiplicities of methods and materials that now exist to practice peace education in all learning environments. The goal of campaign is to assure that all educational systems throughout the world educate for a culture of peace.


\textsuperscript{24} The World Education Forum (26-28 April 2000, Dakar) adopted the Dakar Framework for Action, Education for All: Meeting our Collective Commitments. Available at: www.unesdoc.unesco.org


\textsuperscript{26} International Education and the term Education for International Understanding had currency in the first three decades following World War II. This no longer has the same currency now, and the term “Global Education” which evolved from these approaches is more widely used.
education are important components of Education for Peace. The major educational goal of global or international education is imparting knowledge and skills about the international system and global issues. The apparent assumption underlying this goal is that well informed public is essential to citizens calling for and supporting policies which are more likely to lead to Peace.

Multicultural education even when not self consciously practiced as Education for Peace makes a significant contribution to the goal. The fundamental objectives are detailed knowledge of one or more cultures besides one’s own as a means to comprehend the various ways of life, respect for the integrity of other cultures and an appreciation of the positive potential of cultural diversity. Multicultural Education is widely practiced in American and European schools and to some extent is being introduced in other areas experiencing ethnic tensions and conflicts. It is a popular approach with schools around the world, such as UNESCO associated schools.

Environmental education can be considered an approach to Education for Peace when it argues the preservation of environment to be an essential prerequisite to all human endeavours, including the achievement of Peace.

Education about Peace is education for the development and practice of institutions and processes that comprise a peaceful social order. These approaches which include creative or constructive conflict resolution training; human rights education; and peace studies, which as practiced in elementary and secondary schools is generally designated as ‘peace education’. Most of the subject matter, peace education transmits is derived from the field of peace research, which like conflict resolution emerged in the 1950’s out of the work of individual researchers. International Peace Research Association established in 1964, was one of the early establishments that contributed to the development of the field. At present three components can be identified in Education about Peace, namely human rights education, conflict

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resolution and traditional peace education. These three approaches are primarily concerned with avoiding, reducing and eliminating violence.

Given the distinction between Education for Peace and Education about Peace from a broadly western perspective, it is now important to bring into the focus the Education for Peace paradigm in India. This is also an attempt to specifically locate the content, goals and value of Education for Peace in India.

**Education for Peace in India**

The National Curriculum Framework formulated by the National Council of Educational Research and Training asserts that education must be able to promote values that foster peace, humanness and tolerance in a multicultural society.29 The position paper on Education for Peace of the National Curriculum Framework is a critical lens for this purpose in India.

The paper provides insights on the ‘what’ of Education for Peace paradigm in India. It clearly emphasizes the need for ‘Peace as an integrative perspective for the school curriculum.’30 Based on the earlier classification this approach clearly falls under the Education for Peace paradigm, draws substantially from the ideals and values enshrined in the Indian Constitution and highlights personality development and citizenship education as key goals of Education for Peace. However, it has consciously eschewed any increase in the curriculum load for the students, and has therefore introduced peace orientation, peace values and skills as the basis of all knowledge instead of adding separate curriculum on peace.

In this context, the National Focus Group on Education for Peace31 states that ‘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.’ Krishna Kumar32 states, “The Education for peace, focus group made a very major decision and that decision was that it will not recommend a separate subject called Peace Education at any level in school education. They thought that if a separate subject is recommended, the subject will become like any other subject. And then Education for Peace will cease to be a philosophical underpinning of all knowledge, so the group recommends that knowledge in every area of the curriculum should be infused with values that are consistent with peace.” The National Focus Group emphasizes that Education for peace in India calls for a significant reduction, not an increase in curriculum load. The group examines

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29 Available at: www.ncert.nic.in
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid, p.31.
32 Interview with author, New Delhi, March 4, 2008.
the major issues and concerns that an effective implementation of Education for Peace needs to address. They include: teacher education, textbook writing, school setting, evaluation, media literacy, parent–teacher partnership and the need to attend to the practical implications of integration as the preferred strategy for implementing Education for Peace.

A close examination of this Education for Peace approach brings to the fore the fact that it recognizes the need to address not just direct or visible violence but also structural violence and thus emphasizes building just peace, which is marked by goals of social justice, secularism, tolerance, democratic participation, human needs and human rights which are also highlighted in the Indian Constitution. However, the approach as delineated in the position paper is based on more comprehensive, holistic and developmental understanding of peace, which though is essential, is not complete in itself. While an overarching ‘integrative’ approach is essential for the purpose of meaning making in the educational endeavour, but what is also needed is a need to recognize that Education for Peace, would operate differently in varied contexts within India. To take the argument a little further, while there is a universal character to the “Why” of Education for Peace in India in the context of issues like secularism, minority rights, gender and caste discrimination all examples of structural violence, yet there are also contexts in India, which are or have been marked by direct and visible violence. Such contexts are marked by collective memories of conflict, traumatic memories of pain, continuous humiliation, discrimination and dehumanization (For example, Gujarat post 2002 riots, Kashmir and North East). Therefore there is a need to recognise that while the National

33 An examination of Education for Peace initiatives by Samerth an NGO working in Ahmedabad, Gujarat brings to focus some of the critical dilemma’s that Education for Peace intervention faces in a context which is largely divided along religious lines and is marked by traumatic memories of pain, humiliation, discrimination and dehumanization of the minority community. The school curricula, textbooks and media here play a critical role in shaping of collective narratives which exacerbates tensions between the two communities.

Samerth envisions promoting secular and rationalist education through executing peace education modules in schools with a long-term goal to integrate such modules in the school curriculum. However the challenges are manifold for this peace approach.

During her interactions with the author Gazala Paul, founder of Samerth, provided insights into some of these challenges. She noted that firstly; it was difficult for Samerth to find an entry point into the schools. Secondly, for most State-controlled schools, the content of the module on Education for Peace had to be so designed that it didn’t appear that the organization was directly engaging with the sensitive issue of communalism. Thirdly, and most importantly since the memories of pain, humiliation, discrimination and dehumanization were fresh in the minds of children what the traditional peace education modules sought to do was insufficient. Since the children here were in many instances direct ‘victims’ of violence the need for reconciliation was vital.
Curriculum Framework and the position paper on Education for Peace are landmark blueprints for the implementation of Education for Peace paradigm in India, the daunting challenge ahead is to recognize the specific needs of each context within India. Nevertheless it must be acknowledged that education as a tool for Peace building is still in its fledging stages and it is too early to make a definitive comment about the efficacy of the NCF approach.

‘Why’ Education for Peace in India?

India today, faces critical questions on issues of secularism, minority rights, gender discrimination along with a process of dehumanization and ‘othering’ on the basis of caste/religion/ethnicity/gender. Institutions and particularly schools to a great extent shape the thinking and behaviour of young people about the ‘others’. The content of education influences both social attitudes and perceptions of what constitutes knowledge among the youth. In fact it is argued that the equality principle in democracy must extend to education. In quantitative terms this means the right of every Indian child to primary and secondary education. In qualitative terms, wedded to the equality principle is the need for the democratization of content and pedagogy of school education.

However, both the content and the process of teaching-learning in schools have witnessed systematic intrusions of communal prejudices and gender biases. There has been the inculcation of perceptions of ‘difference’ across communities, and even distortion of facts, especially in history and social science texts.

Over the years, many of our history and social science texts, more and more, emphasize a prejudicial understanding and rendering of history that is certainly not borne out by historical facts. Hate language, hate politics, prejudice and division have been unfortunately guiding principles of many textbook boards across the country.

Through hate writing and the distorted teaching of history, many of these institutions have generated deep rooted prejudices about ‘other’ communities. For example, in Gujarat, some state run textbooks contain material that exacerbates tension between Hindus and Muslims. Efforts in the direction of Education for Peace would

34 The Report “The Constitution Mandate and Education” was presented to the CABE sub-Committee on “Regulatory Mechanisms for Textbooks and Parallel Textbooks Taught in Schools Outside the Government System” (April 6-7; 2005). It is edited and produced by KHOJ for a plural India Programme, Sabrang, Mumbai. And is available at: http://www.sabrang.com/khoj/CABEReport.pdf

35 Ibid.
fundamentally help address the much challenged goals of secularism, citizenship, tolerance and democracy in the contemporary era of growth and consumerism.

Krishna Kumar also in some of his writings has raised important questions on ‘how far education in India has served the secular creed and why it could not prevent the spread of communal ideas’. In examining India’s education policy, from a theoretical point of view, Kumar examines the relationship between child’s learning at home and at school. Applying various models of this home-school binary to the Indian scene, he sees the ambivalent role of education in serving the state in disseminating the message of secularism. Krishna Kumar argues that though this has been achieved to some degree, this process, owing to certain limitations of the system of education (professionally weak teachers, dominance of prescribed textbooks and overarching importance of annual examinations), has separated the orbit of home and school. And thus the process did not combat the ideas and values opposed to the creed of secularism.

Sam Pitroda, Chairman of The Knowledge Commission, asserts, “Curriculum reform remains a critically important issue in almost all schools. School education must be made more relevant to the lives of children. There is need to move away from rote-learning to understanding concepts, developing good comprehension and communication skills and learning how to access knowledge independently.”

The need, therefore, is to integrate concepts of Education ‘for’ and ‘about’ Peace both at the level of design and implementation. Education for Peace explores multidisciplinary and developmental approaches to address violence in all its varied forms. Therefore, approaches to peace education (including both for and about) are contextual and situation dependent. They are designed towards developing peace related capacities and development of peace making skills and intentionally directed towards ‘transformative learning’. Therefore at the level of design firstly, there is need to direct attention to curriculum reform, secondly, examine the process and content of textbook writing and thirdly, facilitate pedagogical innovations in the teaching-learning process. Integrating the goals of Education for peace in school system and teacher-training programs would help find a proper pedagogical

37 Ibid.
response to the problem of dealing with the issue of religion and culture at school, while taking into consideration the extremely complex nature of Indian society. Kumar makes an argument in favour of integrating peace education progressively in the existing curriculum.

Further, Education for Peace also makes education more relevant to the lives of children and thus contributes to constructive social change. It challenges, what can be called ‘tyranny of rote memorization’. The Yashpal Committee Report highlights, “Majority of our school going children view learning at school as a boring, even unpleasant and bitter experience.”39 Yashpal asserts, ‘a lot is taught but little is learnt’.40 Education for Peace provides a valuable link to child’s experience at home and community to what the child learns at school and thus helps foreground the process of constructive meaning making. This process of meaning making is not just influenced by the content of the defined curriculum but also by the learning process, school and family spaces. Thus an integrative approach to Education for Peace facilitates a space for a mutual learning community that treads on the path of dialogical exploration which is ‘child centered’ and ‘child inspired’ and provides space for critical thinking, action and reflection.

Krishna Kumar brings in a powerful reflection by Yashpal, “All that if we need to give in Education is a taste of what it means to learn, this taste we will never forget.”41 Krishna Kumar asserts the need to create what he calls, “Sanskar of Learning”, which is also linked to the process of “what it means not just to know but what it means to know it”.42

Krishna Kumar further states, “The National Curriculum framework exercise was concerned about the ‘sense of hollowness’, which a lot of young people today find in our institutional life. They find nobody cares for them, the learning game is essentially a marks-examination game and the success game is essentially a game which is being played to eliminate a lot of people from the race. Thus students don’t associate purposiveness and integrity to education….So when it comes to peace, gaining peace either within oneself is the first condition to gain peace between people or relationships. And if this is so, then gaining peace is virtually an impossible

39 A National Advisory Committee was set up by the Government in March 1992 under the chairmanship of Prof. Yash Pal, former Chairman of the University Grants Commission to suggest ways and means to reduce academic burden on school students. The Yashpal Committee Report is available at http://www.education.nic.in/cd50years/tr/2R/I3/2RI30201.htm
40 Ibid.
41 In an interview with author, New Delhi, March 4, 2008.
42 Ibid.
thing today, if the child doesn’t see ‘meaning’ in education. And therefore, Education for Peace would give a purpose and meaning to education.”

Former Chief of Navy turned nuclear disarmament campaigner, Admiral Ramadas along with peace activists Praful Bidwai, Anil Chaudhary, Achin Vanaik, and Karamat Ali (of Pakistan) have made a clarion call for including peace education in school syllabus. Admiral Ramdas states, “In our school days we barely learnt anything about the heavy costs of war and impact of weapons of mass destruction. But at least the new generation should learn the lessons for lasting peace.”

Peace education is now a part of the teacher-training programme of the National Council of Educational Training and Research (NCERT), which formulates school curricula and teacher-training programmes in India. Daya Pant, the programme coordinator, states, “Peace is the most vital thing in human life. It is the need of the hour to sow the seeds of peace among students. Teachers under the peace education programme are taught the nitty-gritty of inculcating peace among students in a holistic manner.”

The following section attempts to discuss the ‘How’ of Education for Peace. This is essential, as it builds a symbiotic argument that building peace through education is also a dynamic and dialogical process and thus the pedagogy or the ‘how’ is as important as the “what” of Education for Peace. The attempt is to delineate a possible pedagogical tool kit which could facilitate the process of the ‘How’ of Education for Peace paradigm in India. Given the present state of school education (at least in majority of schools), this approach would necessitate paradigmatic shift from the prescriptive/banking model of education to an elicitive one.

The “How” of Education for Peace: Pedagogical Tool Kit

Paulo Freire, one of the pioneers of critical pedagogy writes, “Human Activity consists of action and reflection: It is transformation of the world…And as praxis it requires theory to illuminate it. Human activity is theory and practice; it is reflection and action. It cannot be reduced to either verbalism or activism”.  

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43 Ibid.
44 The Times of India (Nagpur, Feb 3, 2008). Available at: http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/rssarticleshow/msid-2752047,prtpage-1.cms
45 Available at : http://news.in.msn.com/national/article.aspx?cp-documentid=1215653
46 Freire argues that conscientization as a process seeks to foster in students a critical awareness of the social and political conditions existing in their societies and shaping their lives, and to help them discover their own capacities to re-create alternative conditions. See Paulo Freire, The Pedagogy of the Oppressed (New York: Herder & Herder, 1973).
The assertion though revolutionary for a time when prescriptive teaching – learning was the norm is really the essence of theory and praxis of Pedagogy for Peace. Drawing from the writings of Freire and based on contemporary experience, one would argue that education in India is based more on prescription and transfer of knowledge than on conscientization and participation. This greatly inhibits the transformative power of education. The ‘prescriptive/banking’ model understands the ‘teacher/trainer’ as the expert. The learning process is built around his or her expertise, knowledge and experience of the subject. Learning and mastering the curriculum is the key goal of the event.

The pedagogical framework is built around cognitive descriptions of subjects/events/models/theories presented through readings lectures and in occasional cases visual graphics. The pedagogical methods focus on the primary role of the ‘teacher’ and the teaching learning process focuses on students mastering the contents through cognitive understanding of the subject. In this context, perceptions, experiences, cultural and ideological underpinnings of the process are rarely made explicit.

The prescriptive model as Lederach says, works on the premise of transferability and universality. In fact what Betty Reardon identifies as seven negative R’s: Resignation, Repression, Reduction, Rejection, Redress, Retribution and Reservations, which are major obstacles to the transformative process sought by Education for Peace, are implicit in the pedagogical framework in the Indian classroom; a framework largely dominated by the banking/prescriptive approach to learning. One could take it a step further and argue that this also inhibits the process of ‘meaning making’ and development of critical consciousness, which is an essential goal of Education for peace and social change.

The pedagogy for peace faces two critical challenges. Firstly, the process and tools of pedagogy must understand how people learn and how learning is transferred to real life application. Secondly, provide training content and structure that fosters both personal and systemic change.

Therefore, firstly, a pedagogical tool kit for teaching for peace should not merely be an expansion of the field or transfer of techniques but should be able to provide a context for dialogical engagement with a larger purpose of developing critical consciousness. The teaching-training therefore will need to transcend the boundaries created by the classroom. The teaching-learning will have to become a process of

47 John Paul Lederach, Preparing for Peace. (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 1995).
action-reflection, in which people are invited to participate actively in the development and application of Peacebuilding strategies and practices. The teaching/training in order to prepare the teachers/trainers for peace would be a dance of inductive and deductive forms of learning.

Secondly, the task of the pedagogical process is to create a space for transformation at personal, relational, cultural and structural levels. The essence of the process will be its ability to catalyze change. Thirdly, promoting goals of justice, empowerment and social justice through the process of education for peace requires that a pedagogical framework encourages critical and reflective thinking; provide space for dialogical engagement with the culture, context and achieve the ultimate values and goals.

Fourthly, the framework recognizes the importance of ‘relationships’ as a form of social capital. A pedagogical process therefore should not annul the process of creativity and critical consciousness that play a critical role in giving meaning to human relationships and consequently to education itself.

It is important to reiterate that values, skills and analytical tools and processes of Education for peace should draw from diverse cultural settings. There is a two-fold need to recognize participants as ‘resources’ who bring to the classroom their knowledge based on experience and learning and secondly to design learner centred process that not just teaches ‘how’ to integrate goals of Peace Education but also more importantly ‘how’ to integrate these goals in their own cultural setting. To put it pithily in Lederach’s words, “It is not just important to teach people how to fish, but more importantly how to fish in your own pond.”

Learner ‘Centred’ Pedagogical Tool Kit

A ‘Learner centred’ pedagogical tool kit is an attempt to identify some basic tools based on dialogical methods that steer away from traditional form of educating


50 The central argument here is that knowledge is no longer abstract and decontextualized, but is grounded in students’ own lived reality and leads to an unveiling of the social, political, and economic contradictions emerging in their experience of the world. The pedagogical process is seen as a necessary foundation for this process of dialogical construction of knowledge.

51 Through their actions, educators consciously or unwittingly contribute either to humanization or dehumanization. A pedagogy that dehumanizes is one that immobilizes students, failing to acknowledge them as historical beings with a capacity to think and act and thereby reduce them to things rather than human beings. See Paulo Freire “Cultural action and conscientization”, *Harvard Educational Review* 68 (1998).
learners that ‘deposits’ information into them. The pedagogical tool kit is an effort to help learners become full participants in their own education-liberatory education that encompasses problem posing, building of a critical consciousness of questioning the role of the teacher/student and changing education from a process of domestication to one of empowerment.

**Tool-1 : The Problem Tree**

1. Listening Project: Identify the problems in the teaching learning process that are against the culture of peace.
2. Identify some of the problems that you are facing as Teacher Educator/Teacher/Learner.
3. Describe the problems and challenges as you see them and brainstorm on ideas and resources that you might need to solve the problems or meet the challenges.

**Tool-2 : Imaging the future**

Fred Polak, a Dutch historian in his writings on ‘positive images’, contends that history has shown positive images of the future, which has empowered creative action for social change. Action on a Culture of Peace will be the fruit of human imagination and creativity. Teachers can cultivate imagination and creativity. One such effective way is described in the writings of Elise Boulding.52

**Tool-3 : Building Capacities for Peace**

Two key areas would be elaborated upon in this section. Firstly, ‘what’ are the relevant ‘capacities, values, skills and attitudes’ that serve the long term goal of commitment to peace? Secondly, ‘how’ does the teacher-educator/teacher/trainer facilitate the building of these capacities, skills, values and attitudes?

**Tool-3.1 : What are the relevant ‘capacities, values, skills and attitudes’ that serve the long term goal of commitment to peace?**

Firstly, tolerance of differences is a key capacity for peace. UNESCO53 recognizes tolerance as a ‘threshold capacity’ or value which opens the way to the development of higher order capacities leading to the more fully complementary and mutually

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enhancing relationships of a truly peaceful community. Secondly, appreciation of and ability to view human diversity in terms of complementarity is important. Reflection on the questions of human universality and cultural diversity can help students understand that cultures are constructed, not given and that they do change and evolve in time and space. Thirdly, reflective capacities are essential to all forms of learning and authentic inquiry into all issues studied in schools. Fourthly, schools across the world have been charged with the responsibility of educating for ‘citizenship’, which is also the basic component for the development of political capacities of the learner. The rationale for citizenship education for a culture of peace is located in the need for developing capacities for informed and responsible political action. Fifthly, building skills and capacity for non violent conflict resolution are an essential component of education for a culture of peace.

**Tool-3.2 : How does the teacher-educator/teacher/trainer facilitate the building of these capacities, skills, values and attitudes?**

- **Developing mutually learning communities:** Learning communities are an effective route to enhance the experience of learning itself. The teacher as the learner is also the teacher as the inquirer, one who has the capacity to pose instructive questions and to plan inquiries into the conditions that impede and enhance possibilities for achieving a culture of peace.

- **Reflections/Open Questions**

  When the teacher asks open questions, what she/he demonstrates is respect for the participants and honoring them as subjects of their own learning. This allows the learner to explore the meaning of what has been said and grasp its implications for his/her life.

  An open question is a question without a set ‘correct’ answer. It is a question that invites the participants to draw upon their own life experiences and creativity. It invites dialogue. Open questions engage participants by requiring reflection and critical thinking. Examples of open questions include: “Why do you say that?”, “What does that mean to you?”, “How did you arrive at that decision?”, “And tell me about that.” When Teacher/trainer use materials or questions that invite participants to describe, analyse, apply and implement new learning, they engage participants in praxis. Open questions encourage reflection about experiences which leads to theory becoming personalized and useful to learners.
- **Recognize Learners as Decision Makers**: Adults are required by daily life to be decision makers and they generally expect to be treated as such. Teachers should resist treating ‘learners’ as objects. This will ensure that learners are treated as subjects, which means they will be honored for their experience and their ability to make decisions. Treating participants of a learning session as subjects of their own learning as decision makers is a key principle in learning. The learning is in doing and in deciding. Through the process of Dialogue Education, participants have many opportunities to teach others. Recognize the resources that are being brought to the classroom. An important assertion in the context is “People are resources, not recipients.” An imperative need in the process of training is to recognize how ‘Adults’ learn. Critical questions for the process are what characteristics during the learning event would you add that strengthen engagement with goals of Education for Peace? Are there any key distinctions between engagement and participation?

- **Listening**: Reflective listening and participatory hearing. Scholars and practitioners argue that when emphasis is on understanding before responding and on clarifying before challenging, all exchanges are more productive and relationships are mutually enhancing.

**Tool-4 : Creative Strokes in the Pedagogical Design**

**Tool-4.1: Drumming Circle for Peace**

The Drumming Circle for Peace is a powerful pedagogical practice that helps in essence, to expand and put into action, conscious awareness of creating peaceful, harmonious, non-violent relations with others, which is key objective of Education for Peace. Fundamentally, the ‘Drumming Circle for Peace’ is a strategy using the concept of the circle to link people together to engender unity, encourage interpersonal relations, increase communication and foster harmonious contact between participants. Within this safe environment, this strategy makes the difference between fortuitous relating and consciously created relating. The concept of the circle symbolizes a non-linear connecting of elements that has no beginning or ending. It evokes creativity and a flow of physical movement of the participants.

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54 An understanding of the process of ‘learner’ centered trainings and designs owes a great deal to author’s discussions with Robb Davis, who teaches the course on ‘Designing Learner Centered Training for Conflict Transformation at Eastern Mennonite University, Virginia, USA(2006).
in structured or improvisational actions. The energy generated from person-to-
person and from drum-to-drum resonates individually and collectively.\textsuperscript{55}

**Tool-4.2: Theatre of the Oppressed**

The Theatre of the Oppressed, established in the early 1970s by Brazilian Director
and political activist, Augusto Boal, is a form of popular theatre, of, by, and for
people engaged in the struggle for liberation. Accordingly, the ‘Theatre of the
Oppressed’, is a participatory theatre that fosters democratic and co-operative forms
of interaction among participants.

‘Theatre of the Oppressed’ techniques are practical pedagogical tools that can be
integrated into the framework of Education for Peace. They are easy to learn and
complement existing course material. The techniques directly address the problem
of ‘learners’ motivation, passivity and engagement. By enabling students to create
parallel physical and verbal texts based on their own experience, the techniques
both validate students’ lives and skills and help create new structures of interaction
between the students, between the students and the teacher, and also the students
and the course texts.

With its emphasis on physical dialogue, Image Theatre can be advantageously
integrated into the existing curriculum, for example, to explore problems related
to external or internalized forms of oppression, power relations, prejudices and
stereotypes. The non-verbal imagery stimulates individual expression even among
the most timid, and gives rise to perspectives that can greatly enrich writing,
language, literature and history courses. Due to the fact that the images evoke
subconscious thought processes, they have proven especially useful in initiating
insightful discussions on complex topics such as religion, caste, gender, identity
and prejudices. Indeed, living body imagery can function as a powerful tool for in-
depth critical analysis across the curriculum.

**Tool-4.3: Role Plays**

Role plays and simulations are another methodology that can be a part of a
pedagogical toolkit for peace. They can be used to practice a given skill, learn
an overall process or work on specific kind of situations teachers may face in
the classroom. Role plays can also be used in conflict resolution and problem
solving.

\textsuperscript{55} Edith Hillman Boxill & Cella Schieffelin Roberts “Drumming Circle for Peace” (7th March,
2003). Available at : http://www.voices.no/discussions/discm19_01.html
Critical Reflections

On a reflective note, there are some critical questions around the broader paradigm of Education for Peace that still remain unaddressed or are only marginally addressed. Firstly, while the Education for Peace paradigm provides an overarching concept under which many varied topics and approaches that comprise the field can be integrated, and more easily comprehended as multiple components of a single field of education, it also brings to fore the point of conceptual ambiguity in the field. There is paucity of research and evaluation of Education for Peace programs in India. Conceptually, the Education for Peace paradigm in India largely draws from National Curriculum Framework and the position paper on Education for Peace, which argues for an ‘integrative’ approach for the purposes of implementation of Education for Peace at school level. However, a fundamental contention is that while an overarching ‘integrative’ approach is essential for the purpose of meaning making in our education endeavour but what is also needed is a recognition that Education for Peace, would operate differently in contexts that are marked by collective memories of conflict, traumatic memories of pain, humiliation, discrimination and dehumanization. Thus in divided contexts which are marked by memories of recent violence the ‘needs’ would be different and thus the need for ‘context specific spaces’ within the broader paradigm of Education for Peace in India. This argument also links to the proposition that the ‘How’ is as important as the ‘What’ of Education for Peace as the pedagogical frame can be a catalyst for change. It can play an important role in promoting goals of justice and empowerment. Further research in the field is required to understand and analyze these challenges and it is hoped that writing on Education for peace in India will to able to address not only these challenges but the ones that arise in future.
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EDUCATING FOR COEXISTENCE: CHALLENGES AND POSSIBILITIES IN INDIA

Meenakshi Gopinath

Abstract

This article attempts to delineate the historical contexts within which the idea of ‘unity in diversity’ informed education policies in the initial years after India’s independence from colonial rule. It then examines if education can engender social transformatory practices and thereby provide effective responses to conflicts arising from religious, ethnic, regional and other differences. Can education lead to respect for pluralism, equality of rights and gender justice in India? This is the central question the paper seeks to answer.

Introduction

Almost six decades after independence from colonial rule, the prevalent mood in India today is one marked by buoyancy and a new found confidence. Official discourse today focuses on India’s role as an emerging global player, a ‘responsible’ nuclear state, a huge potential market and a growing knowledge hub in a globalizing environment. Above all, India prides itself in being an old civilization and a ‘youthful’ nation.

That today fifty per cent of the country’s population is below twenty-five years of age, opens up enormous possibilities for dynamic change, inclusive development and progressive governance. Yet the utilization of the possibilities offered by this dividend of youth is dependent on how the country maximizes its enormous human potential, and the sagacity and vision with which it invests in its population of over a billion. Access to opportunities for gaining skills and knowledge, and the learnings from formal and informal education streams will, to a great extent,
determine whether this population can be effectively harnessed to provide the locomotive for equitable and inclusive change.

“Sa Vidya ya Vimuktaye” a motto in Sanskrit, is proudly displayed in several institutions of learning in India – a country with traditions of knowledge creation and sharing, and cultures of integral learning. Briefly translated, the motto means “that alone is knowledge which leads to liberation.” Yet, whether Indian education today lives by this transformatory exhortation is seriously open to question.

Education in India, today, is beset by issues of access, equity and quality, as also concerns about biases in curricula and flawed teaching methodology. Today, the domain of education as a possible liberatory space faces severe challenges from three distinct but inter-related trends in its society and polity. First, the threat to secular spaces from different fundamentalisms; second, the growing legitimacy of a culture of militarism and the warrior discourse; and third, the dislocating and bewildering change imposed upon it by the processes broadly described as globalization and its consequent inequities.

As these trends and concerns collide and cohere, they raise serious questions about the capacity of Indian education to renew its role in engendering social transformatory practices and to provide effective responses to conflicts and their resolution. It is the challenge to secular education and democratic engagement that is the primary concern of this paper. How can Indian education resist the illiberal impulses of sectarian forces? Can it be made capable of countering these influences or is it doomed to implicate itself in a ‘closing of the Indian mind’? Do contemporary developments in the revision of curricula represent an attempt to reclaim ‘the secular’? Can education provide avenues for the politics of the possible, without capitulating to partisan and cynical political interests and stakeholders? Can it provide a vocabulary for emancipatory praxis?

The Nationalist Vision and Composite Culture

The visionaries of the Indian national movement saw education as an effective instrument for the transformation of the consciousness of an enslaved people, to equip them to unleash their inner resources and untapped potential and to energize the anti-colonial struggle.

I invoke here three men, Gandhi, Tagore and Nehru, whose views – while substantially different – helped shape the nationalist discourse on education. Their positions on ethics, morality, culture and modernity were to provide the conceptual alphabet within which the vocabulary of education for a new India was to be
constructed. And inevitably, the disagreements and tensions between them continued to reflect in the sometimes contradictory pulls and pressures within the Indian education system. However, despite differences of emphases, at root, these men shared a remarkable commonality in their commitment to preserving what came to be described as the “composite culture” of India, from its ability to draw upon and creatively negotiate diverse influences from the cultures and religions of the world without – to use Gandhi’s phrase – being “swept off one’s feet by any one of them.”

‘Composite culture’ served as a prism to look at how people have traditionally lived together in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual, multi-religious society like India. Composite culture as a formulation was definitely a nationalist creation; and as nationalist creations go, it is neither entirely fact nor wholly fiction. The notion of a composite culture that emerged was a vision of proposed nationhood and of the way people would live together after independence was won. To this Gandhi added the pluralist principle of *sarva dharma sambhava* – equality of all religions.1

Tagore, Gandhi and Nehru represent, as Khilnani has eloquently argued, “an important moment in the making of a tradition of public reason – the creation of an intellectual space which allowed morals and ethics, and the political choices these entailed, to be debated, revised, decided upon. At its best moments, the arguments and ideas generated quite exceeded the bounds of nationalism or nationalist thought.”2 They engaged with the problem of how to construe the relation between political power and the presence of multiple faiths. How can a moral and integrated life be lived under modern conditions – where political power is concentrated in the state, but where beliefs are multiple and diverse across society? What set Tagore and Gandhi apart from other Indians who wished to root public morals in religion was their recognition that no religion taken in its traditional sense could serve as a basis of public morality. So Gandhi’s intellectual itinerary involved “a strenuous dismantling and reassembly of religious traditions.” By drawing on Islam, Christianity and the folk traditions of Hindu devotion, Khilnani argues, Gandhi engaged in a spiritual recovery that was respectful of existing religious faiths but also used them as a reservoir for re-articulation.3 Tagore’s “poet’s religion” reflected

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1 The early Gandhian positions enunciated in *Hind Swaraj* (1909) set up a substantial critique of ‘satanic’ Western civilization and its values of technological progress, that both enslaved and dehumanized. The task of education was to liberate itself from the shackles of its rationality. Gandhi extolled the qualities of the Indian civilization as unparalleled. This position was to change by 1921, in the course of his debates with Tagore.


3 Ibid, p.9.
a humanist faith in the capacities of man and a belief in the transcendent powers of art and aesthetics.\(^4\)

Nehru’s vision was closer to Tagore’s and, although fully cognizant of the limits of reason, was imbued with a respect for the traditions of scientific enquiry, trying simultaneously to develop a morality without the fall-back to religion. For him, the lesson of the Partition of India was to drive home the pervasive, deep-rooted force of religion in Indian society. Unlike Gandhi’s, his views were imbued with a fear of the dangers that religion posed if it should ever be linked to that most powerful form of instrumental reason, the State.

Tagore’s initiatives at Shanti Niketan, the university he founded, to create an Indian who would become the social conscience and cultural leader in that age, Gandhi’s Nai Talim as the basis of empowerment and mobilization of the masses,\(^5\) and Nehru’s vision of education as a humanizing, progressive and essentially liberal undertaking provided the strands with which the educational project in post-independent India sought to weave its trajectory. Not surprisingly, these strands did not always sit well together.\(^6\)

**History and its Discontents**

In the agenda followed by the state after independence, particularly from the 60s, education was harnessed to the nation-building project. Among other developments, the *mantra* of ‘Unity in Diversity’ informed its ‘national mainstream’ and was a widely shared imperative. The teaching of history in schools was expected to serve as a vital ingredient of this mission, and it became, from early on, and more especially from the late 1970s, a contested political terrain.

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\(^4\) While Gandhi searched among folk traditions, Tagore drew from classical traditions also acknowledging the influence of the European Renaissance on the modern Indian mind. In his schools, there was to be no politics, only nation building through the development of the Indian personality. His solution was to bring the urban elite and the village folk closer. The town would bring modern science and technology, and the village, traditional knowledge and skills. The curriculum of Shanti Niketan reflects this engagement.

\(^5\) Gandhi’s philosophy of Basic Education, which came to be known as the *Wardha* scheme was formulated as a practical critique of the bookish, examination-oriented colonial education. Its focus was to integrate children’s learning of different subjects with training in a manual craft. Education was to be an effective instrument to realize independence, battle social injustice, eradicate illiteracy and poverty, and also restore vernacular languages, as opposed to English, as the medium of education.

The influential Kothari Commission Report on Education of the mid-1960s articulated a position in which a national perspective was assumed to be synonymous with a modern perspective. The responsibility to produce model textbooks to buttress this modernist orientation fell on the National Centre for Educational Research & Training (NCERT), set up in the mid-1960s. It drew to its fold eminent scholars and historians, mostly of the Left, and this was to leave a profound impact on Indian historiography. A young nation-state beset by political uncertainty was not particularly inclined to curricula that prioritized the students’ freedom to reconstruct knowledge in the context of a local ethos. The influence of Gandhian educational philosophy was clearly on the wane.

During the closing decades of the Twentieth century, even as the traditional right was preparing the popular imagination against official secularism, educational policy came under strong pressure to accommodate the ideology of religious revivalism. The evolution of curriculum and textbook policy, particularly in history, has as much to do with the politics of education as with the State’s cultural policy. The ascendancy of the Bharatiya Janta Party (the political party of the Hindu Right) to power at the center in March 1998, witnessed a more “legitimized” assertion of the militarist discourse of cultural nationalism. The NCERT textbooks were in the eye of the storm during the period, being criticized for their attempts to rewrite history to subserve the saffronizing agenda of the Hindu Right. The saffronization of education was of particular salience since it represented one condensed moment in a process that challenges both the discourse and practices of secularism in India. With the ouster of the BJP-led government at the polls in 2004, the reins of power shifted to the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance. The National Curriculum Framework for School Education (NCFSE) was consequently revised in an attempt to bring it in consonance with the ideals of equality and justice enshrined in the Indian Constitution. The document was approved by the Central Advisory Board on Education in September 2005. Though widely debated and critiqued itself, the Framework is a considerable advance, and represents an attempt to undo the biases of the NCFSE 2000 by injecting a strong dose of the ‘secular’.

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8 The National Curriculum Framework 2005 identified “nurturing an over-riding identity informed by caring concerns within the democratic polity of the country” as one of its guiding principles. It furthers the values of equality, justice and fraternity, emphasizing education’s role in building a culture of peace. It encourages students to explore diverse sources of information to understand how the same content may be presented in different ways.
The Indian Constitution bears the traces of a historical context of religious discussion and conflict, and comes out resolutely in favor of a broad, tolerant humanism. The modernist conception of India, which shaped the Constitution, the choice of its national symbols and the policies of successive governments, cast the idea of the Indian nation primarily as a political and not cultural or civilizational community. In this view, India’s political identity consists of its commitment to certain fundamental principles such as justice, liberty, equality, fraternity and the dignity of the individual – all of which were new to the country and somewhat at odds with its cultural and social practices. While it served as an inspiring idea for the imperatives of forming an independent nation-state out of a multiplicity of identities, it paid little attention to their internal diversities or their creative historical interventions, and lacked a coherent notion of the place of religion in political life. Its homogenizing impulses were deeply problematic for a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, whose citizens have always taken a fluid and porous view of their identities and crossed their boundaries without inhibition. Not surprisingly, its contradictions were to unfold and manifest in violent ways. It is this context that the forces of Hindutva (the political ideology of Right-wing Hindu nationalism) sought to exploit, with startling degrees of success. The control over the media and education is crucial to its agenda, and although it is presented as a struggle to revive the purity of Indian culture, it has the consolidation of power within the political arena as its primary goal. Hindu nationalism can be seen at one level as a conservative backlash, among the relatively privileged, to resist the broader democratic transformation that has intensified political mobilization among the lower castes and minorities. Consequently, the process of questioning social hierarchies through transformatory educational agendas will not always be a peaceful one.

It is significant that the scale of violence targeting ethnic, religious and sectarian minorities has been on the increase in India. Between 1954 and 1994,

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10 Bikhu Parekh, Re-Imaging India, Institute of Social Sciences, New Delhi, Annual Lecture 2003, p.12.
11 The lack of clarity on what constitutes Indian secularism has spawned a range of interpretations – especially within the community of students. These range from - a) secularism as a concept is defunct; it is an import from the West; there is confusion about whether it means the states equidistance from, indifference to, or equal love for all religions; it represented official ideology rather than popular conviction; that the Congress Party had taken secularism with it to the grave; that secularism is pseudo secularism and religious nationalism is real secularism. See Ananya Vajpeyi, “Teaching Against Communalism”, Economic and Political Weekly (December 21, 2002) pp.5093–5097.
there were around 15,000 communal riots in India, resulting in 13,300 casualties. In 1996 alone, 36,000 crimes were reported against scheduled castes and scheduled tribes. Religion still continues to be the most combustible manifestation of conflict. Nearly 2,000 people died in the communal rioting that followed the demolition of the Babri Masjid in 1992, which touched major urban centers. The Gujarat carnage claimed hundreds of lives and left over 50,000 displaced.

The decade of the 1990s had seen a multiplicity of political conflicts around religion, caste and regional identity in India. Yet no single event in recent political history after the anti-Sikh riots of 1984 has shocked liberal sensibilities as the Gujarat carnage of 2002 has done. The demolition of the Babri Masjid in December 1992 and the violence in its aftermath had represented a defining moment in the assertion of processes that undermined both governance and the security of minority groups. It was a grim reminder of the fragility of official secularism. The horrors of Gujarat had completely exposed the violent underbelly of the politics of nation-building. There had been warning signals – the writing on the wall. Yet the tragedy remained that neither the Liberals nor the Left, were able to convert these crises into effective counter-platforms of transformative mobilization across society. The largely ‘reactive’ politics of secularists proved too weak to quell the momentum of the reactionary mobilization of both majority and minorities. The Gandhians, from whom a non-alienating mobilization could have emerged, ceded their space without much resistance, opting for retreat, oblivion or self-imposed exile in the face of their lexicon being cynically appropriated by the proponents of the Hindu Nationalism.

12 See Khadija Haq, Human Development in South Asia (Karachi: OUP, 1999), p. 113.
13 Ibid, p. 45.
14 Examples of the communalization of the polity in the closing decades of the twentieth century are too numerous to be listed. The controversies surrounding the Shah Bano case, the debates around the Uniform Civil Code that couched an issue of women’s rights in a minority-majority framework; the Mumbai riots of 1992-3, the acquittal of Shiv Sena Chief Bal Thackeray who was implicated in inciting communal violence; the repeal of the U.P. Hindu Public Religious Institutions (misuse of funds) Act 1962 to appease the Vishwa Hindu Parishad; the selective invoking by the state of “hate speech” offences in violation of sections of the Indian Penal Code; the state-supported tirade against painter M.F. Hussain on grounds of hurting the religious sentiments of the Hindu community; the vandalization of mosques and churches in the aftermath of the Babri Masjid demolition; the targeting of the Christian minority community and the violence unleashed against priests and nuns on the issue of ‘forcible’ conversions; the riots in Gujarat in 1982, and the 106 communal incidents between 1987 and ’91 in Gujarat were, in many ways, precursors to the carnage that occurred in 2002 and the logic of its denouement.
‘Reform’ and Appropriation

The growing need to assert ‘Indian culture and values’ cannot be isolated from a larger global pattern. Cultural imperialism, accelerated by the communication revolution, has not triggered Talibanization processes in the Islamic world alone. The reductionist view of culture reflected in these processes also found resonance within fundamentalist groups in India.

The growth of Islamic madrasas with generous funds received from the Middle East and the reported funding of Christian missionary institutions by Western sources are provided as the justification for extreme moves by the Hindu Right to effect changes in curriculum and laws on conversion.15

The perception among sections of the majority elite, that successive governments have built vote-banks by appeasing minorities at the cost of the majority and “national security”, made it difficult to contain their fundamentalist fringes. The targeting of the Christian minority community since the 1990s also reflects these misgivings. Christian Missionaries were seen as an added threat in that they were able to provide quality education throughout the country. The inability of many government schools to match their standards proved an irritant. In addition, these schools provided economic and educational opportunities to hitherto disenfranchised dalits and other groups, many of whom embraced Christianity in the process.16

The controversy over the Talibanization of textbook history stemmed from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) edict of October 25, 2001, to delete certain sections from well-known prescribed textbooks. Coming in the wake of a growing culture of censorship, be it of Rushdie’s *The Satanic Verses* or Hussain’s

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15 It is significant to mention here that the Gujarat Assembly passed the Gujarat Freedom of Religion Bill in March 2003, which punishes anyone engaged in conversions by “use of force or any fraudulent means”, with up to three years imprisonment and a hefty fine. The courts too have not been immune to these influences. On October 2, 2002, an eleven member Bench of the Supreme Court pronounced a landmark judgment, overturning earlier practice where it interpreted Article 26 (a) of the Constitution that conferred the “right to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes” in such a way as to include all kinds of educational institutions. With this, the right of non-minorities to establish and administer educational institutions is treated at par with that of minorities by the Supreme Court. See Annual Report of the Special Rapporteur on the Right to Education, Katarina Tomasevski, submitted pursuant to Commission on Human Rights Resolution 2001/29 (January 7), 2002.

paintings or films and posters, it reflected a disconcerting trend of growing intolerance that is sought to be transmitted to the learning population and future citizens.

Neeladri Bhattacharya, lamenting the tainting of the rewriting of history in contemporary India, argues that for historians, the process of rewriting history is a creative act; it is the way history develops as a mode of knowledge. The changes in history writing have occurred through intense debates and disputations, conceptual ruptures and shifts in frames. Yet this process increasingly came under strain. The writing of history itself began to be mobilized for specific sectarian political projects. When political and community sentiments began to define how the past was to be represented and what could and could not be told, subserving interests inimical to coexistence, the nightmares of Gujarat were, as Bhattacharya points out, doomed to be re-enacted.

In the school settings of post-colonial societies like India, teaching uses highly visible texts which carry the status of ‘prescribed’ texts. Though terms like “curriculum” and “syllabus” are in use, in practice, it is the prescribed textbook which acts as the de facto curriculum, and being the only reliable indicator of what is “expected” in the examination, its centrality to the classroom transaction has remained intact. Furthermore, content and impact analysis studies of textbooks have revealed that since they are ‘non-optional’ media, their influence strikes deeper and is more pervasive than other print media or even the electronic media. The textbook’s status as canon, consequently, has more far-reaching effects on the shaping of consciousness than is acknowledged. It has been used very ‘effectively’

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17 See Neeladri Bhattacharya’s excellent analysis of the narratives and dominant trends in Indian Historiography in Seminar, New Delhi, No. 522 (February 2003), pp.12-18.

18 History in India began its modern career implicated in projects of colonial knowledge. Nationalist histories developed in opposition to imperial and communal frames. Nationalist historians largely operated with Western Modernist ideas of what constituted progress. In the years after independence, as professional history matured in India, the secular nationalist vision was articulated within a Left–liberal paradigm in opposition to imperial and communal conceptions of history. The question of nationhood remained central to post-colonial reflections although the terms of conceptualization changed in many ways. Historians of the 60s and 70s explored the ideas of colonialism within a framework of Marxist debates on modes of production. In opposition to nationalist valorization of the idea of Indian unity, historians of the ‘Cambridge School’ focused on local histories of communities and castes and saw the history of tensions between them. In the 80s, the ‘Subaltern School’ challenged the elitism of earlier histories and emphasized “history from below”. By the 90s, there was growing disenchantment with Nationalist frames and the liberal consensus around the vision of Nehruvian India.

19 See Neeladri Bhattacharya, op.cit, p.18.
as a tool for religious instruction and to impact ‘moral’ and ‘value’ education in both the Muslim majority schools and the Vidya Bharati-run schools. 20

So effectively, even outside of the NCERT system, within schools run by community organizations and political parties, children are being socialized into a sensibility that legitimizes sectarianism, obscurantism and a culture of militarism. This is done through textbooks prepared either by the Vidya Bharati Network or the Markazi Maktaba Islam. This activity of ‘theologization’ through textbooks or the ‘core curriculum’ reinforces stereotypes and jeopardizes future spaces of meaningful dialogue between religious communities. In the teaching of history, in particular, ancient myths are reconfigured to convey communal meanings and present political projects legitimated through mythic returns to an imagined glorious past. These other histories emerging from the shadows of their erstwhile submerged location are beginning to assert themselves with greater vehemence, claiming a right to be patronized by the state.

But have mainstream schools been effective in resisting this non-inclusive ‘insider-outsider’ bias? The evidence suggests that they have either been unwilling or unable to offer an alternative orientation to contain prejudice, and have not been effective in positioning themselves to teach against communalism. This counter-positioning is crucial to any process in which education can be linked to a rights-based perspective. It is now acknowledged (and mandated by the UN and other bodies) that the integration of the economic, social, cultural and political facets of education is facilitated by the indivisibility and interrelatedness of human rights. Such an integrated approach facilitates adapting education to key contemporary challenges, including the prevention of ethnic and religious violence. 21

A study undertaken by KHOJ, a secular education project in Gujarat in 1999, detailed how, outside of the RSS-run Shishu Mandirs and Muslim Madrasas,
textbooks prescribed by even ‘secular’ central and state education boards in the country communicate religious, caste and gender prejudice. Crucial exclusions are explored and analyzed through abstracts from state board texts, ICSE textbooks and college texts to highlight this alarming phenomenon. The silences and exclusions are particularly disturbing, since they allow Right-wing ideology to slip in through the interstices of the discourse, with insidious force.

The fact that children, and especially their access to education, were under assault during the Gujarat carnage is not pure coincidence. There were more than 50,000 affected children in camps alone in Gujarat since February 2002. There has been a systematic crackdown on the education of minority children and youth at all levels of the school system in Gujarat. This process, which had begun earlier, peaked in the period starting from February 28. Even as violence raged in the state, the language of the examination papers proved exceedingly problematic. In addition, a number of minority-area examination centers were shifted to majority areas, thereby causing many parents to fear for the basic safety of their children. The Supreme Court came down heavily on the state government and issued directives to remedy the situation. Apart from the most obvious economic, psychological and physical devastation, the educational setback to the children of Gujarat has impaired chances of intra – and inter-community healing and reconciliation for the future.

Identity and Pedagogy

The question of whether education in South Asia can become an effective vehicle for building peace between the communities and countries of our region has no easy answers. But some beginnings can be made. Since the teaching of history has been seriously implicated in the reinforcing of negative stereotypes that engender social conflicts, conscious interventions in this sphere are urgently required.

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23 Some examples cited in Setalvad’s detailed analysis of the Gujarat State Board Social Studies Textbooks include: the depiction of ancient Indian culture as Hindu culture (Std V); Muslims, Christians and Parsis categorized as ‘foreigners’ (Std IX); silence on the role of the RSS in the murder of Gandhi (Std VIII). A frighteningly uncritical account of Fascism & Nazism (Std VIII), the depiction of Hitler as lending dignity and prestige to the German government (Std X), silence on Ambedkar’s critique of caste hierarchy and his protest conversion to Buddhism, the unquestioning presentation of Hindu texts including Manusmriti, and the implicit justification of gender inequities.
Scholar and educationist Krishna Kumar has shown, based on an extensive study of curricula in India and Pakistan, that the manner in which the freedom struggle is presented to children helps sustain the hostility between India and Pakistan. The teaching of history forces a perpetual quarrel with the past in both countries. In India, the narrative of freedom is structured around the tension between ‘secular’ and ‘communal’ forces. Since this tension is relevant in terms of defining India’s national identity and its distinctiveness from Pakistan, it encourages a disapproving and suspicious view of Pakistan. On the other hand, school textbooks used in Pakistan present the political narrative to buttress the claim that the urge to create Pakistan arose out of certain irreconcilable differences between Hindus and Muslims. The conceptual ground on which this common perception of history is based is that the past is past – and it is fully known to us. This ‘memory-based’ view of history allows ideological indoctrination to become the purpose of discussing the past. These biases are also carried into inter-community perceptions within the country.

It is essential to engage with a pedagogy that is collaborative, not confrontationist or collusive. Exchanges between students and teachers to examine the roots of prejudice, primarily by acknowledging differences and accommodating rival perspectives through the additional use of biography, literature and journalism, could expand the scope of interpretation of existing historical narratives.

The application of analytical techniques and judgment is part of the curriculum in countries where a serious effort has been made over recent years to reform the teaching of history. For instance, the path-breaking work in Northern Ireland, where impressive initiatives have been made to integrate and enlist education in an overall strategy aimed at transforming the conflict, presents us with encouraging possibilities.

There have been similar innovative attempts in other parts of the world to meet the challenges of ethnic disaffection and conflict through education. Education for

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24 Kumar, op.cit.
25 In 1981, the first integrated school, for both Catholic and Protestant children, was opened in Northern Ireland and since then, forty-five integrated schools have come into existence through community initiative. Significant work has also been undertaken to ensure that even within segregated schools, pupils have the opportunity to address existing cultural and political divisions. By the early 1990s, programs within schools were designed to increase understanding among young people, eg. The “Cultural Heritage” and “Education for Mutual Understanding” programs were an obligatory part of the curriculum for every child. Thanks to the efforts of educationists and parents drawn from all sides, an agreed history curriculum was devised in Northern Ireland.
peace programs are being promoted by UNICEF and are reaching many thousands of children in war-scarred countries in Burundi, the Republic of Congo, El Salvador, Guatemala, the Honduras, Lebanon, Liberia, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Sudan, the former Yugoslavia and Sri Lanka. However, while the reach of these programs is substantial, the nature of the depth of their impact is less clear.26

The case of apartheid South Africa suggests an example of how non-state actors can step in to galvanize forces for constructive change, and provide effective resistance to systems of oppression. Here, Roman Catholic schools admitted black pupils, thereby defying the government’s prohibition on integrated education. Also, a sensitive handling of linguistic issues in the curriculum can often be crucial to build and maintain peaceful relations within and between different ethnic groups.27

The early ‘secular’, modernist preoccupations with nation-building in India had very consciously kept discussions on religion outside the parameters of school and university curricula. The refusal of the Left and ‘progressive’ groups to acknowledge how pervasive issues of faith can be in the South Asian context further reinforced a somewhat myopic approach to ‘coexistence’. Even Gandhi was designated (till quite recently) by the Left broadly as a ‘bourgeois thinker’, whose contributions to the national movement were explored through the lens of class-based analysis. The genius of Gandhi, whose transformatory appeal lay in the extraordinary manner in which he could communicate iconoclastic ideas through the use of a religious idiom that resonated with ordinary people in novel ways, was largely ignored. The liberal intelligentsia remained impervious to the fact that in India, it is not possible to simply wish away religion in any mobilization for social and political transformation. This ambivalence inhibited the exploration of creative mechanisms to harness its potential and to contain its propensity to unleash conflict and discord.

In multi-cultural societies, the question of faith is infinitely more complex than that which is reflected in the dichotomy of the ‘secularism’ versus ‘fundamentalism’ debate in India. There is an inherent danger in treating faith as a totalizing category.


27 In Senegal, for example, where there are fifteen different linguistic groups and where Islamic and Christian populations have coexisted peacefully, ‘ethnic peace’ has been attributed, in large part, to an imaginative language policy for schools, where both French and other local languages were enlisted to develop an inclusive ethos (Kenneth D Bush and Diana Saltarelli 2000). The School of Peace, established in 1979 in Jaffa by the Neve Shalom / Wahat al Salam Cooperative village of Jews and Palestinian Arabs of Israeli citizenship, is a bilingual, bicultural, binational elementary school coordinated jointly by a professional team of Jewish and Arab educators.
Faith is always in the process of being defined within the specificities of particular contexts. What makes this a difficult arena is that in South Asia, faith is a reality that touches millions of people in incomprehensible, sometimes violent, ways. The educational enterprise cannot remain immune to its resonances.

More effort is needed to create a frame of reference in which the ambivalences of faith can be accommodated. This can materialize only through the process of confronting specific religious beliefs, customs and taboos that continue to have significance for particular communities. In searching for new languages of faith, it is important to stress their interventionist possibilities. If by ‘secular’ we mean a total avoidance of religious matters, secular weapons may not be enough. Ways have to be found to enrich the secular and ground it within the specificities of our cultural contexts. There is a need to distinguish between faith and its perversion, and discuss those critical junctures when religion becomes something politically volatile. Education about the boundaries of religion is crucial to enhance our vigilance of its political misuse.

Consequently, for a secular theology to strike roots in India, there would have to be an understanding that could be adapted within the multi-religious contexts of faith. As Ashish Nandy has pointed out, one can only hope that the state systems in South Asia may learn something about religious tolerance from everyday Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism, rather than wish that ordinary Hindus, Muslims, Buddhists and Sikhs will learn tolerance from various theories of statecraft.

The challenge for education is to engage in a sensitive and creative balance, especially since such an initiative could, through unimaginative approaches, easily degenerate into either reinforcing religiosity and orthodoxy or domesticating the pedagogy into the predictable strait jackets of unidimensional ‘secular’ rhetoric. Yet this is an engagement – difficult though it is – that Indian education can ignore today only at its peril. Teaching against communalism can be integral to envisioning how educational processes and institutions could be used to analyze communalism, and through such a process, persuade young citizens to turn away from it.

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29 It is pertinent to note that no university of national repute in India offers the comparative study of religions as a subject.
31 For an excellent exposition of the challenges and requirements to make this effective see Ananya Vajpeyi, op.cit.
Ethnicity, Conflict and Education

The theory that nation-building would develop modern homogenous cultures centered on primary affinity to the nation-state rather than on ethnically based loyalties has proved illusory. Ethnicity has, in many instances, proved to be a positive integrative force in contemporary societies. Yet violent internal conflict between ethnic communities has surfaced where state attempts at building an overriding ‘national identity’ have collided with practices enabling the democratic celebration of pluralism or diversity. Research conducted by the Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) suggests that throughout the 1990s, there were about thirty active major armed conflicts, only one of which was inter-state. The rest took place within states, between factions split along ethnic, religious or cultural lines. Education has not been immune to these influences. Because of its propensity to alienate groups and create antagonism between them, in many conflicts around the world, education is part of the problem, not the solution.

UNICEF study has examined, through specific examples, the role of education in situations of identity-based conflict, highlighting the following ‘peace-destroying’ or ‘conflict-maintaining’ factors:

- Inequity in education as a means of creating or preserving positions of privilege.
- Education as a weapon in cultural repression.
- Denial of education as a weapon of war.
- Education as a means of manipulating history for political purposes.
- Education serving to diminish self-worth and encourage hate.
- Segregated education as a means of ensuring inequality, inferiority and stereotypes.
- The role of textbooks in impoverishing the imagination of learners and inhibiting them from dealing constructively with conflict.32

Examples of these processes abound, and a correlation can be found between educational practices and conflicts in societies. The fourteen-year long conflict in Kashmir has adversely affected educational opportunities for young Muslims in the valley, and today, the question of access to quality education for the children of Hindu refugees in the camps in Jammu raises serious questions about the efficacy

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32 See Kenneth D. Bush and Diana Sattarelli, (Eds.), op. cit., p. 33.
of ‘rehabilitation’ policies and programs. There are many additional examples of such direct correlation between education – its use, misuse or abuse – and conflict throughout the world.33

**Equity and Access: Continuing Concerns**

Education in India continues to be riddled with several unresolved issues of equity and access, making it prone to cleavages that become vulnerable to manipulation by communal ideologies. People who take to direct violence appear to address the perceived injustice of what Galtung calls structural violence, hoping to achieve systemic changes in the underlying economic, cultural, social and political structures that are perceived to detrimentally affect their lives. It is in this sense that education, too, becomes a contested terrain.

Amartya Sen sees education as holding many keys to the enhancement of human freedom. It increases the substantive freedom enjoyed by people through individual enhancement and distributional change, which can have many far-reaching social effects. If its immediate and direct purpose, as he sees it, is to make people “better informed, more able, more skilled more enlightened and broaden their thinking horizons,”34 then Indian education has, by and large, with the exception of few shining examples, fallen short of this goal.

While primary school enrolment may have increased, it is still far from adequate, and below the rates in South Asian countries like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka. More than half a century ago, the Indian Constitution promised to ensure universal primary education up to the age of fourteen years. Today, even with elementary education having been declared a fundamental right, more than seventy million children in the age group of six to fourteen years are either school drop-outs or have never

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33 In the conflicts between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo, the Serbian government adopted a policy of assimilation, eliminating teaching programs in the Albanian language and introducing a unified curriculum and standardized textbooks. The ethnic cleansing undertaken by the Serbian military forces in 1999, consequently, cannot be seen as a spontaneous event. Again, the Arabization of schools in Sudan from 1964 onwards, resulted in the total isolation of the southern intelligentsia, along with the expulsion of foreign missionaries. Similar examples can be cited in the case of Rwanda, where Christian missionary schools, from the late 1800s onwards, openly favored the Tutsi minority and actively discriminated against the Hutus. ‘Special Schools’ were set up to educate Tutsis as future leaders of the country, as part of state policy. Textbooks of the German and Belgian colonial periods also linked the physical differences between the two to intellectual capabilities, according to prevailing racial prejudices.

been enrolled in a school at all. Many more children are formally enrolled, but barely attend classes. The bulk of primary schools in the country suffer from huge shortages in the most basic resources: teachers, textbooks, black-boards, buildings and so on.

Class and caste factors keep large numbers outside the ambit of opportunity. Poverty and the attendant pervasiveness of child labor, especially in the states of the North, add to illiteracy and disempowerment. Higher education faces even greater threats on account of decline in state funding, pressures from processes of globalization, recurrent strikes and political interference. Experiments at linking education with the world of work has led to a ghettoization of the ‘vocational stream’, which is being increasingly perceived as the repository of the ‘less meritorious’ or ‘less advantaged’ sections of the student population. Gender inequities abound, both in terms of access and retention of girl students in the school system. In addition, educational material and textbooks reinforce gender stereotypes and the sexual division of labor. Government policies to mainstream protective discrimination to provide access to disadvantaged castes and tribes continue to be met with suspicion and hostility. The recent debate surrounding reservations have brought these cleavages into sharp focus.

India is already among the worst performing nations in terms of the share of GDP devolved to public spending on education (In 2002-03 it was 3.1% as compared to international norms of 6% and as much as 12% to 15% in some countries of East Asia). It is significant that where there had been a steady increase in the percentage of allocation between 1950 and 1994, there has been a decline since then.

Fifty-eight years after independence, the average adult literacy in India is 75.3% for males and 53.7% for females (according to the 2001 Census). The primary school enrolment ratio is 110 boys: 90 girls, and the percentage of drop-outs before the fifth grade is 38%. India has 35.2% of its population aged fifteen years and above as illiterates.

The influential PROBE (Public Report on Basic Education in India) report of 1999 on elementary education brought the inequities of the basic education system into

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35 Recent findings suggest that the social benefits from investing in female education are far greater than those from investing in male education, and that female literacy has a strong inverse correlation to average total fertility rate, public health etc. The benefits are greater than from other public interventions such as family planning services, increasing the number of physicians etc. Also, increases in women’s education generally lead to increases in their labor force participation as well as their earnings (see Jean Dreze & Amartya Sen ed, Indian Development: Selected Regional Perspectives (OUP, India, 1997).
the public space for the first time, to mobilize opinion to make the Right to Education a fundamental right in India.\textsuperscript{36} The PROBE findings systematically exposed several myths that had gained currency either through state complicity or silence. It highlighted that the poor in India, contrary to public perception, attached a great deal of importance to children’s education and were concerned about the quality of education. There was state inertia and blatant neglect of disadvantaged communities and regions. The number of illiterates actually rose from 350 million in 1981 to 371 million in 1991 – the proportion of illiterates in the 15-19 age group (34%) is six times higher than that of China.

While elementary education is free in terms of admission fees in the government school system, the cash costs of education discourage families from sending children to school (the cost could be as high as 318 rupees, on an average, per child in a government primary school, which, for an agricultural laborer, is a prohibitive cost). Though there has been progress in the provision of schooling facilities, there exist not just physical distances, but ‘social’ and class distances that have to be overcome. Children often internalize class and caste distinctions in the classroom, and a middle class bias is generally visible in the transacting of the curriculum. Education is transmitted as an unimaginative assemblage of facts in an alienating and intimidating pedagogical style.

The adoption of the 86\textsuperscript{th} Constitution Amendment Act, 2002 by the Parliament makes the \textbf{fundamental right to education} a guaranteed right. The amendment was inserted as Article 21A, under the Right to Life and Personal Liberty. Its origins lie in a Supreme Court judgment delivered in 1993, when, in \textit{J.P. Unnikrishnan Vs the State of Andhra Pradesh}, a five-member Bench laid down that the right to education was a fundamental right that flowed from the Right to Life. The 86\textsuperscript{th} Amendment enables any citizen to seek the enforcement of the right to education by way of resort to writ jurisdiction under Articles 32 and 226 of the Constitution. While it partially fulfils the mandate of the Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted by the UN in 1989), it has invited some criticism for having restricted the right to children between six and fourteen years of age. Moreover, the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Bill, 2009, the legislation envisaged to put into effect free and compulsory education for children in the delineated age-group, awaits President’s assent.

One of the greatest challenges to the future of education in India comes from the growing chasm between the two worlds that the school-going population inhabits:

that of privilege and that of deprivation. The reinforcing of attitudes of arrogance at one end and attitudes of subservience at the other, along with the division of the school-goers along perceptible class lines, continues to have a demoralizing impact on educators and learners alike. The general divide between children of state-run schools and the children of English-medium schools applies to all regions of India, and serves as the continuum for colonial mindsets. The two groups live in two different cultural worlds with their own specific zones of knowledge and ignorance. The academic and other components of the culture of English-medium schools engenders both ignorance and disdain for local cultures, and affiliates its inhabitants culturally and emotionally to the metropolitan centers of Western affluence and capitalism.

In its attempt to coalesce the concerns of human development and human rights, the Amendment sees “capability rights” – to use Amartya Sen’s conceptualization – as a substantive content of goal rights. The Right to Education is to be viewed as a proxy for the more fundamental rights to the capabilities that derive from access to education, namely of being free from ignorance and to live with dignity. It is here that its scope must be extended to include the right to an environment free of prejudice, respectful of difference and ensuring of equity, access and quality. This will be its ultimate litmus test – and not just the goal of achieving literacy, which, in India, has officially been benchmarked as the ability to write one’s name. However, set against the backdrop of raging debates over prejudices in curricula and teaching methodologies, whether the operationalization of this fundamental right would ensure equity and respect for difference remains an open question.

The National Curriculum Framework (NCF) of 1988 had “equality of education and opportunity” as its first concern. The document of 2000, which came in for widespread criticism, had “education for a cohesive society” as its primary focus. Though the draft made loud and repeated noises about “national identity” and the “duties of citizens”, it did not demand the provision of essential facilities for quality learning as a way to ensure equality. What was most problematic about the document was its call for a “redefinition” of the concept of secularism – a fundamental precept of the Indian Constitution. The critical concerns related to how the “equal understanding and equal respect for all religions” would actually translate within the classroom situation, given the social realities of India today. Equal respect for all human beings irrespective of their religions cannot be conflated into “equal respect for all religions” – especially when dogma and indoctrination can quite easily and insidiously creep into curriculum transaction. Although there were several references to Gandhi’s educational ideals, there was a marked lack of appreciation for the congruence between the rhythms of learning and living and the “granite
Clearly then, the National Curriculum Framework 2005 attempts to redress the distortions and the partisanship evident in the 2000 framework. The larger and possible goal of defining community-based education, while emphasizing the Gandhian ideal of developing and retaining local knowledge, has been highlighted in the discourse. Advocating a partnership between school and community, the document perceives the process of social transformation to be complex, multi-layered and democratic. It acknowledges that local knowledge traditions may be “different from the way school knowledge approaches particular subjects”, and encourages comparative and contextual study. It is clear that to walk the tightrope of providing education which is relevant to the immediate context of children, and at the same time, provide them with ‘standard’ knowledge, is no mean task, and calls for a pedagogy that is imaginative and discerning.

The curricular and pedagogic concerns in NCF 2005 are informed by respect for pluralism, equality of rights and gender justice. The need to promote a culture of peace through the curriculum finds its first official articulation in this document. Today, there is a considerable body of research that shows that the exclusion of minority cultures from schools adversely affects the sense of self, identity and motivation for learning, and that historical deprivation, isolation and exploitation may continue to be relevant to the educational experiences of the socially and economically marginalized communities, who are still portrayed largely in subservient roles, even in some textbooks.

As guidelines for building a curriculum, these are sound recommendations, but what is pertinent is how these are operationalized in the light of logistical, infrastructural and political complexities. The real challenge lies in bringing into effect the crucial balance between equity, access and quality, the imperatives of ‘education for all’ and the ‘maintenance of standards’.

This is possible only when the political underpinnings of the prevalent policy framework are subjected to rigorous debate and constructive change. An appreciation of diversity that marks ‘being, knowing and learning’ in India is a first important step to furthering coexistence.

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MADRASA EDUCATION
IN THE PAKISTANI CONTEXT:
CHALLENGES, REFORMS AND
FUTURE DIRECTIONS

Zahid Shahab Ahmed

Abstract

Educational institutions in Pakistan function under three separate systems – public, private and madrasas. The media and the government turned their attention towards the madrasas only after the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, as there was a growing perception that terrorism in the region is fueled by these madrasas. Although several studies have been undertaken to analyze the madrasa curriculum and its impact on the students, the role and attitudes of madrasa teachers, and the challenges they face, have largely been neglected. This paper is based on interviews and focused group discussions conducted with madrasa teachers in Pakistan to gauge what, in their view, is required to reform the system. It also provides some recommendations for directions that public policy could take to address religious radicalism.

Introduction

Traditionally, madrasas are Islamic learning institutions, aimed at building a generation of Islamic scholars and leaders. The word ‘madrasa’ means ‘center of learning’ in Arabic. They provide free religious education, boarding and lodging. For these reasons, they are essentially schools for the poor.1 “The madrasas of

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1 A madrasa student learns how to read, memorize and recite the Qur’an properly. Madrasas issue certificates of various levels. A madrasa university is called Dar Ul Ulum, (usually having hundreds of students) a primary school, a Maktab, (up to fifty students), and an integrated school with various levels is simply called a madrasa. The graduating students are called Haffiz-ul-Qur’an (those who memorize the Arabic text of the Qur’an) or Qaris (those who can recite Qur’anic verses with proper Arabic pronunciation). Those with advanced theological training are known as Ulema (Religious Scholar).
Pakistan are said to be the breeding ground for much of South and Central Asian militancy, but for the accusations made, there is precious little known about these seminaries and their students”, notes Tariq Rahman. The increased attention of the international media, particularly after the terrorist attacks in New York in 2001 and London in 2005, created pressure on the Pakistani government to address the root causes of global terrorism. This also encouraged the government to begin monitoring these educational institutions and to establish mechanisms for creating accountability.

**History of Madrasas Since 1947**

Following the partition of India and the birth of Pakistan in 1947, a number of Ulema from Deoband migrated to Pakistan and established seminaries here. Two of these madrasas are believed to have played a prominent role in bringing a rigorous form of Islam to Pakistan in Akora Khattak (Darul Uloom Haqqania) and in the Banori township of Karachi. Today, there are five distinct types of madrasas in Pakistan, divided along sectarian and political lines. The two main branches of Sunni Islam in South Asia, Deobandi and Barelvi, dominate this sector. The doctrinal differences between these schools often seem irreconcilable in an educational setting. For example, the largest group of madrasas belongs to the Barelvi sect, known to be a rigid opponent of the Wahabbi doctrine as propagated by Saudi Arabia, Ahle Hadith/Salafi Muslims have their own schools, as do the Shias. The difference in demographically targeted recruitment and placement between these sects has not been evaluated.

In Pakistan, some madrasas turned radical in the early 1980s, due to external influences; a brief analysis of this phenomenon is provided later. Consequently, during the Afghan-Soviet war, a culture of violence got entrenched in some of the madrasas in the country. Syed Nadir El-Edroos argues that “[a] major contribution

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4 The following five are recognized as Wafaq/Tanzem ul Madrasati/Rabit ul Madaris or Madrasa umbrella organizations: 1. Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Arabaia, 2. Tanzeem-ul-Madaris Ahle Sunnat, 3. Wafaq-ul-Madaris Al-Salfia, 4. Wafaq-ul-Madaris Shia, and 5. Rabita-ul-Madaris Al Islamia. There are also recognized individual madrasas, such as the Jamia Islamia Minhaj-ul-Qur’an, Jamia Taleemat-e-Islamia, Jamia Ashrafia, Darul Uloom Mohammadia Ghausia and Darul Uloom of Karachi.

to the militancy rampant in madrasas today was made in the 1980s. A study conducted by Patrick Belton shows how textbooks developed at the University of Nebraska-Omaha and published by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) were used to encourage and justify the ‘holy war’ against the Soviets”.6

Therefore, the changing face of the madrasa and increasing radicalization in Pakistan can be directly traced to Zia-ul-Haq’s rule, when the students of the seminaries were indoctrinated with a jihadi ideology and sent to Afghanistan to fight the Soviet occupiers. The same war-hardened zealots were used by Zia’s military establishment in Indian-occupied Kashmir.7 With state patronage, madrasas were established throughout the country in an unregulated fashion, leading to an enormous increase in their numbers. Quraishi reports that there are around 10,000 madrasas all over Pakistan, offering free education to over a million children who have been neglected by the government’s failing school system.8

**External and Internal Donors**

The origin of religious militancy in Pakistan can be traced back to the war against the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. During that time, American funding and Pakistani assistance promoted the proliferation of a large number of militant Islamist groups and madrasas in Pakistan. The USA needed the Islamic fundamentalists to ‘wage jihad’ against the Soviets in Afghanistan, and thus provided substantial funding to Pakistan, entrusted to its leader at that time, General Zia ul Haq. Owing to their strategic calculations of the times, the governments of Pakistan and the USA neglected the radical ideology and methods employed by the madrasas. All of this resulted in the formation of the Taliban in Afghanistan, and extremists groups in Pakistan, which led to the production and spread of sectarianism and violence as each act of sectarian killing provoked a cycle of revenge killings. Civilian governments failed to curb this violence, either because they lacked the will and the strength to do so, or because they wanted the militants to fight for Pakistan’s corner in Indian Kashmir. That failure, in turn, allowed the religious militants to flourish and grow in strength.9

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Madrasas are/were mainly funded by the USA and Saudi Arabia. The US government of that time funded an Afghan war against the Soviets, and Saudi Arabia funded anti-Shia Islam in Pakistan. Some local philanthropists also sponsored madrasas. Financial inputs from Zakat and the Islamic ritual of Eid ul Azha can’t be neglected. In principle, Zakat is given directly to the entitled individual beneficiary. However, in case of the madrasas, the quantity of funding is decided on the basis of student enrollment, with funds given not to individual students, but to the manager of the madrasa. This system gives an authority to madrasa officials over the use of Zakat money.

The idea of jihad was incorporated into the Pakistani curriculum after the Afghan war. At that point it suited Washington and their most favoured ally, Pakistan, to encourage and glorify the Mujahideen (the ones who perform jihad), or holy warriors. Accordingly, a university in the United States was asked to formulate textbooks for Pakistani schools. After the departure of Soviets from the region, the Mujahideen not only mutated into the Taliban but also outlived their usefulness. So the same American university has been given the task of removing glorified references to the Mujahideen, under the cover of educational reforms. These constantly changing educational interventions have exposed the motives of the United States and have resulted in greater resistance from Pakistanis towards such reforms.

Islamic educational institutions have come under intense public scrutiny in recent years because of their perceived linkage to militancy. However, much of the research thus far has relied only on anecdotal accounts and investigative journalism. In particular, Pakistani madrasas have been the focus of much media coverage. In the aftermath of 9-11, the overseas Pakistanis were shocked by the news that bombers were identified as British of Pakistani origin. It was also reported that one of the bombers was trained at a Pakistani madrasa. The link between radical madrasas and aggressive behavior against Western interests has also motivated many development agencies (INGOs) to focus interest on madrasa reforms. Some prominent INGOs working on madrasa education/reforms in Pakistan are the Asia Foundation, the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy and the United States Institutes of Peace. Most, if not all, of these INGOs work in collaboration with local partners to implement their projects.

12 Ali,(2005) op.cit.
Unfortunately, media propaganda has reinforced the link between terrorism and Pakistan’s madrasas, targeting all madrasas. In reality, few studies that have been conducted have found that only a small minority of madrasas are involved in such activities and not all madrasas in Pakistan are poisoning the minds of youth.\textsuperscript{14} Perceptions linking madrasas to terrorism arose when some radical groups made inroads into the system of madrasas, following the path laid by the politicization of textbooks and curriculum in public schools.

Madrasa reforms are becoming an uphill task for reformists in Pakistan, and a matter of great concern not only for the Pakistani government, but also for governments in neighboring countries. In early 2007, the prayer leader of Lal Masjid (Red Mosque) and head of Jamia Hafsa madrasa, announced the enforcement of Islamic law (Sharia) in the premises of Jamia Fareedia and Jamia Hafsa in Islamabad. At this, the students of Jamia Hafsa, mostly girls, hijacked the Government’s Children Library in Islamabad and warned the government of suicide attacks if any operation against the madrasas was initiated.\textsuperscript{15} This was primarily to prevent the government from attempting any madrasa reforms and the demolition of illegally constructed mosques in Islamabad by the Capital Development Authority. Several other incidents since then, like kidnappings and suicide bombings, have been linked to radical elements from the madrasas.\textsuperscript{16} However, not all Ulema (religious scholars) supported such activities. In fact, some, belonging to different schools of thought, strongly condemned the acts.\textsuperscript{17} Civil society leaders have been angry over the failure of governmental writ in this particular case of religious extremism in Pakistan. Government authorities, have, for long, been avoiding getting into another conflict by saying that there will be collateral damage in case of any operation.\textsuperscript{18}

Overall, only 10-15\% of the madrasas in Pakistan are found to be affiliated with extremist religious/political groups who have co-opted education for their own need.\textsuperscript{19} Pluralism and secularism have been neglected by these radical madrasas in Pakistan, which preach religious extremism and intolerance to the youngers.

\textsuperscript{15} “Government Warned of Suicide Attacks In Case of Resistance: Qazi Court to Work in Pattern of Panchayat and Jirgas”, \textit{Daily Times} (April 7, 2007).
\textsuperscript{16} See, for example, details about a kidnapping by the radicals in “Punish Criminals, China asks Sherpao: Kidnapping in Islamabad”, \textit{Dawn} (June 28, 2007).
\textsuperscript{17} “Ulema Condemn Kidnapping of Chinese”, \textit{The News} (June 29, 2007).
\textsuperscript{18} Ishrat Hyatt, “Will there be an end to Lal Masjid imbroglio?”, \textit{The News} (June 6, 2007).
\textsuperscript{19} Ibid.
The broader agenda of these groups is to propagate religion through the state and to ensure that it continues to dictate what policies are formulated. They believe that the Islamic Republic of Pakistan should and must only follow the principles of Islam, since that was the basis of Pakistan’s ‘national identity’ and the ‘Two Nation Theory.’

Nevertheless, madrasas are the only hope of education for children, mostly boys, who would otherwise be deprived of any educational opportunities. Students between the ages of five and twenty-five pay nominal fees of 100 rupees per month (approximately one and a half US dollars). When poor children see their basic needs being fulfilled at the madrasa, it is nearly impossible for them to rebel from the madrassa culture. According to a BBC report, people trained in radical madrasas in Pakistan have also been a part of sectarian violence over the last decade, during which hundreds of Shias and Sunnis have been killed.

Understanding the dynamics of madrasa recruitment, funding sources and curricular differences between sectarian schools is therefore critically important.

Influence of Pedagogy and the Environment

Curricular content plays a crucial role in influencing young minds. However, pedagogical practices also ensure that students do, in fact, learn what they are intended to learn. The aim of this section is to highlight the significance of the pedagogical practices of the madrasas in consolidating their impact on the beliefs and attitudes of the young students. Individual madrasas decide autonomously what to teach and preach. Many of the madrasas only teach religious subjects to their students, focusing entirely on rote memorization of Arabic texts. This can take place to the complete exclusion of basic skills such as simple math, science or geography. As a result, most graduates of these madrasas acquire skills that do not fit well with the job market.

One of the central concerns of researchers across the globe in recent years has been the propagation of jihad by radical madrasas, and whether the way these

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21 L. Harding, “Pupils at schools of hardliners seek war”, (2001) http://www.guardian.co.uk/pakistan/Story/0,2763,554835,00.html
23 The analyses presented in this section is based on information available through secondary sources.
24 Singer (2001) op. cit.
institutions have defined the term is an authentic representation or not. In this debate, some have argued that the madrasas are distorting the meaning of jihad; that they are using Islam as a stepping stone and that since Islam in the Qur’ân condemns killing innocent civilians and damaging properties in war, terrorism has no place in Islam.  

Despite these vociferous claims and equally strong counter claims, research into the attitude and beliefs of students from madrasas has revealed the extent of harm these institutions have inflicted on the minds of many young Pakistani and Afghani boys. A study that gathered the views of madrasa students from Pakistan revealed that a fifteen-year-old Afghan refugee expressed his desire to fight against infidels. Another student expressed hatred against USA and his eagerness to fight against Americans. His classmate articulated a similar sentiment: “I will dedicate my whole life for jihad. It is compulsory for Muslims. I will kill enemies of Islam”.  

The definition of Jihad has been distorted by extremists to manipulate young students for their own agendas. This has aggravated conflicts not only between Pakistan and other countries, but also within the country; and has resulted in violence against minorities and conflicts between various sects of Islam. Shia-Sunni differences in Pakistan have also been accentuated due to the training youth receive at sectarian madrasas. Pakistani madrasa students with an extremist mission have become primary soldiers in the internal sectarian conflicts that are increasingly turning violent.

The appeal of madrasas lies not only in the low costs involved, but also in their pedagogy. Most madrasas go beyond theory and involve youngsters in action, such as protests, lectures and sermons. This is very different from the knowledge students receive in other educational institutions, where pedagogy is restricted to classroom teaching. This practical methodology of training influences students very quickly and gives them a sense of purpose; a feel for ‘doing’. In doing this, radical groups are following the successful model used in communist revolutions across the world, from China to Cuba. As people become increasingly dependent on and integrated within the private social service system provided by these groups, the motivation to remain loyal to the State is diminished. These new, parallel


27 Ibid.
institutions, therefore, become means to mobilize people against the State whenever State policies go against the professed beliefs of the group. Students are often exploited and pitted against authorities, and in the process, they become increasingly radical and violent.

The curriculum used in madrasas instills a sense of superiority in the minds of students about Islam. This happens at the cost of the converse – inculcating respect for different belief systems. This results in generating hostility towards people of other religions. The ‘infidels’ are defined, discussed, understood and criticized in madrasas, within the global political frame and in terms of local community relations. This is where sectarian literature becomes instrumental in Pakistani madrasas. Examination of the syllabi and curriculum of the Pakistani madrasas shows that in the name of refutation, potent criticism of other sects and religious minorities, hatred towards other sects, and a siege mentality are imparted, from the very beginning of the schooling.28

Madrasa Reforms

A very well-known Pakistani scholar, Tariq Rahman, says, “The madrasas are obviously institutions which have a blueprint of society in their mind. What needs explanation is that the madrasas, which were basically conservative institutions before the Afghan-Soviet war, are today both ideologically activist and sometimes militant”.29

Although the current government, lead by the Pakistan People’s Party is facing numerous challenges, the election manifesto of the Party in 2008 had clearly made a commitment that “madrasas will be reformed to be madrasas that impart knowledge to children”30. The issue of tackling religious extremism or indirectly, the issue of madrasa reforms in Pakistan has been on the agenda of the government.

Madrasa reforms in Pakistan were mainly initiated or speeded up with the dawn of the policy or philosophy called ‘enlightened moderation’. This policy was proposed and promoted by President Pervez Musharraf.31 During the early days, he explained his personal position on it by calling on the Muslim world to end violence, and on

29 T. Rahman, op.cit.
30 Ibid.
western powers (especially the United States of America) to seek to resolve all political disputes with justice and to assist the development of Muslim countries. Even then, many criticized Musharraf’s vision of enlightened moderation. One of the biggest and oldest Islamic political parties of Pakistan, Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) had labeled this vision and its policies as a Western or American propaganda. Leaders of JI also argued that Islam, by nature, is a religion of enlightened moderation, and therefore, doesn’t need any changes directed by the West under the guise of enlightened moderation in Pakistan. President Musharraf envisioned Pakistan to be a progressive, modern and moderate Islamic state, poised to take its place amongst the developed nations of the world. He desired the country’s development not exclusively in the economic sense, but rather in a more holistic manner, including social, cultural and political dimensions. However, this all was done by Musharraf to extend his regime in the country and in response to pressure from Washington.

The Government of Pakistan took major steps towards creating an integrated and improved system of national education. This started with the increased allocation of funds in the budget (2003-2004) for universal primary education and literacy, and was intended to strengthen the existing education system and allow new schools to be opened. This it was believed would provide students with an alternative to madrasas. The envisioned program aimed at facilitating the introduction of modern subjects such as English, Mathematics, Pakistan Studies, Social Studies and General Sciences, from the primary to the secondary level. At the intermediate level, English, Economics, Pakistan Studies, and Computer Studies shall be made an integral part of the madrasa curriculum. In total, this program expected to reach some 8000 madrasas. Moreover, the project for the integration of the religious education system with the mainstream general education system aimed at: establishing and strengthening the lines of communication between the madrasas and the government; educating about 800,000 students (male and female) of 8000 madrasas in modern subjects from the primary to the secondary level; enabling them to reach colleges and universities; and also imparting training to 28,000 teachers to improve and update their knowledge of modern subjects and expose them to modern teaching methods and the use of audio-visual aids. Somewhat related to this, the government intended to eradicate sectarianism and extremism in order to develop a tolerant and friendly atmosphere that is congenial to national cohesion and social harmony.

33 Ibid.
It was hoped that through this new madrasa reform program, the government would be able to address the challenges of extremism and sectarianism in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan, through the Ministry of Education, has also implemented its somewhat ‘secular’ curriculum in the Qur’anic schools and madrasas in Pakistan. It is important to mention that not all Qur’anic schools and madrasas are registered with the Ministry of Education. Efforts are still in progress to register as many madrasas as possible, and to introduce some secular subjects into that type of education system.34

The debate over reform has primarily limited itself to exposing these religious institutions to non-Islamic/modern disciplines in the madrasa curricula. Since the promulgation of the Pakistan Madrasa Education Board Ordinance of 2001, three model schools were established at Karachi, Sukkur and Islamabad, where subjects like English, Mathematics, Computer Science, Economics, Political Science, Law and Pakistan Studies were taught. However, these model madrasas were not accepted by the majority as they were perceived to be reforms initiated at the behest of the West or the USA. Attendance at these model schools continues to remain low.

**Pakistani Madrasa Teachers** 35

Given this context of attempted reforms, a focused group discussion with madrasa teachers in Baluchistan revealed that while there was willingness among some of the teachers to bring about change in the system, others felt that the problem of radicalization cannot only be attributed to the madrasa curriculum. The blame is to be shared by the society which isolates graduates of the madrasas, leading to a sense of alienation.

The students’ level of commitment to learning is another area that needs attention. Some believe that madrasa programs and curricula are highly developed and do not suffer from any major shortcomings. The problem lies in the lack of social acceptance of the students coming out of the madrasa system. The more serious

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34 In Qur’anic schools, children learn by reading Arabic and memorizing the Qur’an. On the other hand, madrasas are of a more academic nature, where children are taught about Islam from the Qur’an and the Hadith (the teachings of Holy Prophet Muhammad, Peace Be Upon Him). Some madrasas have also introduced other subjects such as Science, Math, Social Studies etc.

35 The analysis in this section is based on interviews and focused group discussions with thirty madrasa teachers across the four provinces of Pakistan. It is important to note that most of these teachers do not acquire any formal training in education and receive their own religious education from within the madrasa system. Their monthly salaries vary between USD 30-150.
concern is that in madrasas, only 10% of the students are committed to obtaining religious knowledge, while the rest are in the institution for other reasons. Out of the 90% who just live in madrasas and are not committed to religious learning about 55% are there because they don’t want to return to their homes for various reasons, and the remainder are staying for the food and shelter they get or because their parents are unable to afford their formal school education. Of the 10% who are there for religious teachings, only 1% possess the intellectual capacity to grasp the religious teachings.36

Generally, madrasas are associated with people who are perceived as backward and who are not aware of scientific progress. This is one of the major reasons that reforms have looked to remove the fear of exposure to newer ideas, using teaching of modern/non-Islamic subjects. In this regard, a teacher from Baluchistan mentioned that one of the biggest challenges he faces as an English teacher is to convince his students about the utility of the subject. Most of his students believe that by learning Islam, they will go to heaven. A similar motive for learning English is absent and they are not convinced that learning English is important.

While in some of the other countries religious institutions are engaged in social work, madrasas in Pakistan have not been too involved in other kinds of social activities besides imparting education. For instance, some temples in India offer medical services in the form of inoculation campaigns, and are willing to allow the government to use their premises for creating awareness on health issues. While madrasa teachers appreciate such social engagement, their primary concern continues to be curricular reform. They stress the importance of translating certain important and relevant books from English into Urdu for their students. Most of them are open to accepting any contextually relevant change in their education system. The purpose of these reforms, in the view of the teachers, is that students who graduate from madrasas acquire the relevant skills to participate actively in the development of Pakistan.

Madrasas are open to embracing new changes, especially with regard to the introduction of new/modern disciplines into their curricula. However, they do demand trained and skilled teachers to teach those subjects. There are examples of madrasas now offering and encouraging their students to pursue higher education in other institutions, but the disciplines continue to remain closely associated to the core madrasa education – Islamic Studies, Arabic and Persian.

36 An observation made by one of the madrasa teachers at the FGD.
There are some exceptions to this general approach towards madrasa reforms. For example, the United Nations mandated University for Peace, Costa Rica has developed a peace education curriculum in the Islamic context (for madrasas). The curriculum was developed in consultation with Islamic scholars, from 2005-2007. So far several South Asian madrasas, mostly from Pakistan and Bangladesh, have committed to integrating that curriculum into their existing courses.

Another example is Project L.I.G.H.T. (Learning Islamic Guidance for Human Tolerance), which was developed by a team of faculty and students from the Graduate School of Islamic and Social Sciences in Leesburg. The main goal of this project is to empower ordinary members of the Muslim community through education on Islam’s fundamental messages of tolerance, inclusiveness and peaceful coexistence for all people, and on personal skills to identify and address bigotry and discrimination. This project hasn’t reached most of the global south yet, but lessons could be learned and content could be taken from such models.

However, madrasa reform will require an equal focus on teachers’ training along with curricular reform. One example of an institution attempting steps in this direction is the Dawah Academy of the International Islamic University in Pakistan, which offers professional courses to Imams, community leaders, new Muslims, etc. both at the national and international levels. The Institute of Policy Studies (IPS) in Islamabad has collaborated with the Dawah Academy and is organizing seminars and workshops for madrasa teachers in Pakistan, with a focus on the psychology of education, pedagogy, peace education, tolerance, interfaith dialogue and harmony. Similarly, the International Center for Religion and Diplomacy and the United States Institute of Peace are also working towards imparting training to madrasa teachers in Pakistan.

Institutional infrastructure and facilities are another area that needs immediate attention if the madrasas are to achieve their desired objective of imparting religious and secular education. Proper buildings, well equipped classrooms, lights, black/ white boards, attractive textbooks etc., will need to be provided to many of these madrasas.

37 See www.upeace.org
38 For Project L.I.G.H.T. documents see http://www.upeace.org/system/cap/index.cfm?pagina=490
39 See http://www.dawahacademy.org/
40 See www.ips.org.pk
Future Directions

This paper has attempted to flag some concerns about madrasa reform in Pakistan. Before any reform policy can be successfully implemented, there will be a need to further explore how the government can ensure the effective monitoring of this sector of education. Presently, madrasa reform programs are limited to merely registering these Islamic schools with the governmental authorities. What are some of the codes of ethics that will be acceptable to both the government and the madrasa administrators? What processes of accountability can be established, that ascertain a constant flow of communication between the authorities and the madrasas? What are some of the steps that can be taken to ensure that students currently enrolled in madrasas come out of their isolated state and are more consciously integrated with children in other schools? Based on discussions with all stakeholders in the process, can the government come out with an action plan that maps the process of reforms?

Looking beyond national solutions, are there innovative solutions that other countries in the South Asian region can contribute to the reform process in Pakistan? Are there lessons to be learnt from other contexts, for example, from Bangladesh and Indonesia?

These are some of the questions researchers could investigate. To conclude, there is no denying the fact that madrasa reforms are crucial for the development and progress of Pakistan, because graduates of most madrasas (despite going to school for eight years) have no understanding of important subjects like Economics, Science, or Computing. While this may not have been a serious concern few decades ago, in the current context, such restricted education may not serve the development needs of the nation. Nevertheless, the sustainability of the madrasa reform process will depend, in part, on political will, and partly on the success of poverty alleviation efforts.
LINKING GENDER AND RACE IN PEACE EDUCATION: PEDAGOGIES TO ADDRESS DIFFERENCE IN THE CLASSROOM

Kevin Kester and Brigid Glustein

Abstract

This paper posits that gender, the most prevalent form of diversity in our lives, can be an important tool to promote racial consciousness and awareness of other forms of discrimination. Exploratory and qualitative research was conducted with educators in two diverse settings- Shizuoka, Japan and Kentucky, United States to assess the presence of gender and racial discrimination in their schools, as well as the relevance of homogeneous contexts in fostering prejudice. The findings indicate that educators blur the distinction between gender and sex (using the terms as synonyms) when compared to the use of the terms among peace scholars (who distinguish the terms, noting sex as a dichotomy and gender as a spectrum). This blurred distinction implies that, should educators wish to challenge prejudices that are based on ethnicity, race, or nationality, they could use gender as a platform from which to operate. Educators finally suggest pedagogies they use in the classroom to address racial and gender prejudices.

Introduction

“I’d rather shoot a nigger than a squirrel,” he said. He was a retired police officer from a small town in Southeastern Kentucky infamous for a history of intolerance and hatred toward minorities. I (Kester) was twelve years old. I have not forgotten these words, the dark, taunting ambience in which they were enveloped, or the snickers of those around me. This learning moment solidified my conviction that action must be taken to promote peaceful coexistence between groups. Through similar experiences later in Japan, and through my travels in Asia and Latin America,
when I observed how race and gender inform global power structures and exclusionary policies, I decided to compare cases of discrimination in homogeneous schools to assess how homogeneous schooling might foster and perpetuate bigoted attitudes and behaviors.

Thus, this article discusses racism and gender issues in two homogeneous societies – Kentucky, United States and Shizuoka, Japan – and exposes and deconstructs popular beliefs of racial and gender inferiority. The paper examines classroom practices and how these practices may be used to perpetuate or subvert gender and race issues, inequalities and intolerance. The paper also examines the role of homogeneity in the formation and perpetuation of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors in these two settings, with the central thesis that homogeneous schools, through monocultural privileges, nurture and perpetuate both gender biases and racism, through unquestioning adherence to authority, patriarchy and privilege of the dominant classes. This paper also suggests that classrooms in such schools limit students’ exposure to other cultures, languages and norms, and do not promote critical thinking capacities. The authors’ view of education is that in homogeneous societies, there is a pressing need for young boys and girls to question the power structures promoted by their societies, as well as examine their own interactions, to learn to work together in a respectful and equitable manner in their schools. The authors feel that unchallenged gender inequalities and racial prejudice in schools can be a catalysts for the development of other forms of intolerance and discrimination.

If young boys and girls can’t learn to work together in schools (when the greatest presence of diversity in their lives is the opposite sex), how shall men and women work cooperatively in society, later in life? And how will people react when confronted with greater diversity? Southeastern Kentucky and Shizuoka, Japan, are the selected research centers because of their homogeneous composition (though, as this article clarifies, there actually exist varied levels of homogeneity or perceptions of homogeneity).

Consistent with the perspective and practice of Peace Education as elaborated in the work of Freire¹, Boulding², Reardon³, Reardon and Cabezudo⁴, Harris and

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Morrison⁵, Jenkins⁶ and Kester⁷, the approach to research in this study is correspondingly qualitative and exploratory, seeking to learn from lived experiences, and to create knowledge and alternatives together with learners. The qualitative portion of this research was conducted through an open-ended questionnaire to assess the experiences of educators in Southeastern Kentucky and Shizuoka, Japan, with manifestations of gender and racial bias, additionally asking for rationale concerning the *problematique*. Due to geographical distance, the twenty surveys and questionnaires were completed over the Internet. Ten respondents from Kentucky schools completed the survey and ten educators in Shizuoka, Japan, also replied. The findings are further supported with theory from secondary data, which, at its core, includes four influential books: *Building a Global Civic Culture*⁸, *Multicultural Education as Social Activism*⁹, *Re-Inventing Japan*¹⁰, and *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*¹¹. In addition, the findings are supported by several intriguing journal articles, including “Rethinking School Reform in the Context of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity: Creating a Responsive Learning Community”¹², and “Confronting Prejudice (Literally): Reactions to Confrontations of Racial and Gender Bias”¹³.

The definitions of core concepts contained in this paper are identified below to provide a common platform from which to explore this *problematique*. The first three definitions are by noted Peace Educator Betty Reardon.

**Gender** – A device for classifying and categorizing for linguistic and social purposes. It differentiates between masculine and feminine, and has become a

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¹¹ Betty Reardon, 2001.
common usage term that distinguishes men from women and defines their respective roles. Gender does not refer to the biological, but to the social and cultural differences between the sexes.\textsuperscript{14}

Sexism – Policies and forms of behavior that exclude women/girls (and some boys/men) from full participation in society and from enjoyment of all human rights; rationalized by the assumption that men (the masculine) are intrinsically superior to women (the feminine).\textsuperscript{15}

Racism – The denial of human rights on the basis of race; rationalized by the assertion that some racial groups are superior to others.\textsuperscript{16}

Homogeneous – An entity where at least 90\% of the individuals represent only one race/gender/culture (Definition created by the authors for the purposes of this study.)

Commonly, the term homogeneous refers to a society of primarily one race and culture. Other issues of diversity, such as gender, class, sexuality and religion, are not explicitly explored within this paper, for practical reasons. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, the authors refer to a group as homogeneous when 90\% of the population represents one race and culture. However, there is no doubt among the authors that examination of other forms of diversity is necessary for a full deconstruction of homogeneity and schooling. Additionally, the authors also believe that while this first study reveals similarities in homogeneous schools and their effects on intolerance, further studies should compare homogeneous with heterogeneous schools to illuminate differences between the two contexts.

**Exploring a Not-so-common Lexicon**

Forty educators were given questionnaires and asked to respond to questions pertaining to gender and racial biases in homogeneous classrooms, based on the authors’ assumption, and supporting statistical data, that these societies qualified as homogeneous. The responses demonstrated that the educators themselves also define their contexts as homogeneous. Twenty educators in Kentucky and twenty educators in Japan were asked to reply to the questionnaires. The educators teach youth between the ages of sixteen to twenty-four. Of the forty questionnaires, fifteen


\textsuperscript{15} Ibid. p. 29.

\textsuperscript{16} Ibid.
were mailed back and an additional five Japanese teachers gave a concerted response via email. Of the twenty educators who responded, ten are from Kentucky and ten are from Japan, therefore giving the study a fifty-percent response rate. Of the Japanese teachers, three respondents reported holding a Bachelor’s degree, five reported Master’s degrees, and two did not indicate their level of education; from Kentucky, one respondent reported holding a Bachelor’s degree, three reported Master’s degrees, three others reported Doctorates, and three did not indicate their level of education.

Due to the geographical limitations imposed by conducting simultaneous research in Kentucky and Japan, questionnaires were chosen as a practical method to gather primary research data. In order to explore diverse conceptions of race, gender, and diversity, educators were first asked, in the introduction to the questionnaire, to define gender, sexism, racism and homogeneous. The varied definitions are insightful, especially when compared with the previous definitions by Reardon and the authors. The responses are listed here as illustrations of respondents’ understanding of these terms. The responses from Kentucky educators and Japanese educators are listed below.

Select Kentucky responses to the definitions

Gender
- what sex someone is. i.e. male or female gender
- whether male or female
- not necessarily male/female, considered affiliated to masculine/feminine
- differentiated between male and female of a species
- the difference between a male and female from a biological/anatomical standpoint

Sexism
- bias/prejudice/discrimination towards people of a certain sex
- a sense of superiority of one sex over the other that may or may not result in some form of discrimination
- having bias for or against a certain sex; for example, assuming all males are macho, athletic, masculine and should act that way
- the act of discrimination based on gender
- the act of believing one gender is better than the other and treating people of the two genders to manifest this point
Racism

- bias/prejudice/discrimination towards people of a certain race
- some form of discrimination based upon someone’s skin color and/or heritage
- a sense of superiority of one race against another, that may or may not result in some form of discrimination
- having bias for or against a certain race of people
- believing members of a particular race are inferior and treating them in a manner to portray this belief

Homogeneous

- sameness; all people in the group are very similar
- of one kind; sharing characteristics
- the same or extremely similar nature
- members of a group being the same, for example, a group of all girls might be considered homogeneous
- people of same characteristics, i.e. race, gender, culture, etc.

The responses indicate that the majority of Kentucky respondents believe that gender refers to the biological sex of a person, which contrasts with the definition of this term understood by many Peace Educators and exemplified by Reardon, who considers gender as social and cultural differences between the sexes, where there are two sexes (male and female) and many genders (that fall between masculine and feminine). Only one response from Kentucky mentioned masculinity and femininity. Sexism and racism are likewise seen as attitudes, an explanation that is also inconsistent with Reardon’s definitions of sexism and racism as actions, behaviors, and institutions (informed by attitudes).

Select Japanese responses to the definitions

Gender

- a socially defined label. The label is based on the biological sex feature. It is used to describe one’s role in society
- the identification of differences of sex due to cultural perceptions
- one’s sexual identity, whether male or female (or trans)
- gender is a social construct that is performed and perpetuated through language and social behavior
- a socio-cultural term, referring to a social construction of male/female roles
Sexism
- treating people differently from the viewpoint of which biological group they belong to
- discrimination based on gender, especially against women
- a power asymmetry based primarily on one’s gender
- discrimination of a person relating to gender. Unfair judgmental standards
- discrimination by one sex against the other, usually understood to be male against female, but this is not always the case

Racism
- treating people differently from the viewpoint of which social group they belong to
- discrimination or prejudice based on race
- a power asymmetry based primarily on one’s race/ethnicity
- discrimination of a person relating to race, color of skin, superficial identification of perceived race
- discrimination by a power majority against a power minority. Difference-based, mostly aimed at those who appear physically different (skin color, etc.) from the majority

Homogeneous
- nearly the same
- all of one, of the same kind or similar nature
- an adjective used by some to usually describe a situation, language, society, etc., that they perceive to have no differences (racial, ethnic, class, etc.)
- the idea that race and sex are not factored into judgments of people and that male and female and people of different racial backgrounds are equal in all societies
- a term that is understood to refer to a society composed of one major ethnic group with similar values

These answers show that Japanese educators consider gender to be primarily a social construct, contrasting with the views of Kentucky educators. One potential explanation for this difference in perception is explained by Screech, quoted in Morris-Suzuki:
Europeans (Westerners) have always assumed that there were only two clearly defined sexes, but have accepted the multiplicity of races. Japan, according to Screech, saw gender as complex and multiple – being ‘male’ or ‘female’ was inherently related to position in the family, and those outside families…could be seen as occupying a range of intermediate sexes.¹⁷

Five of the Japanese teachers defined sexism and racism as discrimination or power asymmetries, while the other five offered this telling concerted response: “We are unconscious about gender, sexism or racism…besides, it’s a very delicate problem and it takes much time to answer.” The two components of this response apparently negate each other – that, on the one hand, ‘we are unconscious,’ and, on the other hand, ‘it’s a very delicate problem.’ This response suggests that the teachers are conscious to some degree of the “problems” of gender, sexism and racism, but hesitant to discuss the issues.

The definitions given by educators from Kentucky and Japan highlight the need for teachers in these contexts to receive training to understand differences between gender and sex, male and female, masculine and feminine, to encourage their own understanding and teaching about these issues in relation to societal power structures and oppression. A deeper understanding of these concepts, and of the realities lived by members of society who are not in positions of power, could act as a catalyst for critical thinking around contemporary social issues and commitments to transform social dilemmas. There is a particular need for education that explores the multiple types of violence present in society, identified by Galtung in his typology of violence. Galtung originally included two categories of violence in his typology: direct violence, inflicted upon others by one or more persons, and structural violence, inflicted upon others by an institution or structure. Each of these types of violence affects the survival, well-being, identity and/or freedom of its victims. Galtung later added a third category, cultural violence, in 1990. He defined cultural violence as aspects of culture that justify or legitimize the use of violence. “If the opposite of violence is peace, then the opposite of cultural violence would be ‘cultural peace,’ meaning aspects of a culture that serve to justify and legitimize direct peace and structural peace.” ¹⁸

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Deconstructing Homogeneity

While the US is 80% White (White is defined by the US Census Bureau as “having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, the Middle East or North Africa”, including “Irish, German, Italian, Lebanese, Near Easterner, Arab or Polish,” and “Latinos”19), Kentucky is 90% White, and the population of the rural areas of Kentucky are sometimes more than 98% White.20 Thus, the population in Kentucky is primarily White, with very little racial diversity, except for small communities of predominantly black homes. The issue of the segregation of peoples of African and Afro-Caribbean descent raises questions around contemporary forms of social apartheid, as discussed within literature on multicultural societies.21 In a study on homogeneous schools, social apartheid must be factored into the discourse on diversity in communities that are largely considered uniform, because in reality, the notion of monoculturalism is exaggerated. In a similar exaggeration of monoculturalism, the definition of White, as given by the US Census Bureau, is astoundingly diverse, and by grouping all the cultures together, diversity is masked and individual cultures are stripped of their uniqueness and value.

In commenting on the ‘uniqueness of Kentucky,’ the Kentucky Secretary of State, Trey Greyson, referred to Kentucky as ‘a somewhat homogeneous society.’22 Kentucky’s population is composed of 90.4% White, 7.5% black, 1% of persons reporting multiple races, approximately 1% Asian, and, when extracted from the White population, 2% Latino.23 Hence, these statistics, in tandem with the comment by the Secretary of State, demonstrate that while Kentucky does, in fact, fall within the bounds of the definition of homogeneous, it is actually more multicultural than social concepts of homogeneous allow. Glorifying the state as ‘unique’ because of its homogeneity supports an atmosphere of singularity and encourages a sense of racial superiority.

Garcia, in discussing diversity within cultures, says:

This population identifier, “culturally diverse”, is a relatively new education-related term. Of course, it has little appreciation for the diversity among such identified

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20 Ibid.
21 Paul Street explores such discussions on social and educational apartheid in Segregated Schools: Educational Apartheid in Post-Civil Rights America. (NY: Routledge, 2005).
23 US Census Bureau.
US populations. That is, it is quite evident that such identified populations (African-Americans, Mexicans, Mexican-Americans, Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Chicanos, Latinos, Southeast Asians, Pacific Islanders, Filipinos, Chinese, etc.) are quite heterogeneous, linguistically and culturally, both within and between such identified categories.24

In the US, groups are often defined as belonging to a common culture that represents the Other, while still being classified as US nationals, for example African-American, Asian-American, Hispanic-American, Jewish-American, Native-American, etc. Each group is defined, by the White ruling class, as being homogeneous within itself, and the group is valued for its ability to assimilate US customs and speak the majority language, English, while at the same time being different from the White ruling class which defines mainstream culture, language and politics.

Japan is apparently more homogeneous than Kentucky. The 2007 census claims that 98% of the population of Japan is of Japanese ethnicity25, and common rhetoric promotes the homogeneity of Japan. According to Hayes, as quoted by Morris-Suzuki: In the words of a more recent study, “the surrounding ocean serves as a protective moat” shielding Japan from invasion and migration, so that, since the third or fourth century A.D., there has been “very little infusion of other ethnic groups, resulting in a contemporary population that is fundamentally homogeneous.26

Similar to Kentucky government officials, the Japanese Education Minister, Bunmei Ibuki, also described Japan as an ‘extremely homogeneous nation’ and his statement was supported by then Prime Minister, Shinzo Abe.27 This was said while denouncing the ‘Western-style’ individualism that these Japanese officials believe motor the United Nations’ concept of Human Rights, thus imposing Western ideals on the Eastern world. Additionally, an article in the Inter Press News Agency, concerning xenophobia in Japan, commented on the perceived homogeneous nature

26 Tessa Morris-Suzuki, op.cit, p. 9.
of Japanese society: “Surveys indicate that more Japanese – over 70% in a poll – believe that the influx of foreigners into Japan is posing a threat to the country’s famed domestic peace...where pride in national homogeneity is deep-rooted.”

In Japan, as in Kentucky, there are people who represent other nationalities, and indigenous peoples who have been assimilated (as opposed to integrated) into Japanese society. The notion of homogeneity minimizes the existence of other Asian minorities: Koreans, Japan-born Koreans, Chinese, Japan-born Chinese, South American immigrants, Brazilian-Japanese and indigenous peoples (Ainus, Ryukyuans). The assumption of homogeneity also negates the existence of socially marginalized groups such as burakumin, the physically challenged, and gay and transgendered people. In her seminal work *Re-Inventing Japan*, Tessa Morris-Suzuki deconstructs the notion of “Japaneseness.” On the issue of Japan as a homogeneous society, she writes that at the end of the Pacific War, large disparities among different segments of the Japanese population demonstrate the large extent of the country’s multiculturalism. She suggests that the widely held pride in Japan as an advanced civilization was an important factor in assisting the advancement of assimilation policies where the groups at the Periphery (Ainu, Okinawans, Koreans, Chinese, and Discriminated Groups) were pressured or forced to adopt the behaviors of the Center where the ruling class lived. Morris-Suzuki suggests that in fact, the Japanese were not a homogenous group and that the ultimate goal at that point in history was to make the Margins like the Center, to assimilate, and to therefore, try to become monocultural. Today, while the goal is no longer to force the populations living in the Margins to emulate the cultures and lifestyles of Center, these people are socially and economically marginalized and have virtually no political power.

Diene explains the composition of the nation:

Japan has a population of 127.7 million, out of which 98.45% are Japanese nationals. The Japanese population includes one indigenous population, the Ainu, estimated at between 30,000 and 50,000 people: they live predominantly in the island of Hokkaido. Amongst the foreigners, who do not represent more than 1.55 percent of the population, Koreans are the largest minority (607,419 in 2004), followed by the Chinese, Brazilians and Filipinos.

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29 Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *op.cit.*
While the percentage of minority cultures in Japan may look small compared to countries that pride themselves on the multiculturalism of their population, it is also important to remember that these statistics represent only a fraction of the country’s actual multicultural reality. There are increasing numbers of non-registered non-Japanese citizens across the country, especially in some of the larger cities. Hamamatsu-city in Shizuoka prefecture (where this study was conducted), for example, has a registered foreign population of 4%, most of which are Brazilian nationals of mixed Japanese and Brazilian parentage, employed in automobile factories.\(^{31}\) The Japanese *problematique* is largely that cultural and ethnic diversity is not recognized. Some Korean-Japanese, for example, have been so deeply assimilated, that it is virtually impossible to identify them; one reason for this could be levels of discrimination against Koreans that probably encourage them to hide their heritage and change their names to Japanese monikers.

Two important contradictions in practice emerge in this analysis of the U.S. and Japan. First, it is a commonly held belief among US citizens, and taught vehemently in the school system, that the US population represents tremendous diversity. The country’s history is taught as a mixing of various groups, ethnicities and religions, a ‘melting-pot.’\(^{32}\) Though this picture may be more completely realized in metropolises such as New York City, Chicago and Los Angeles, small homogeneous towns in Kentucky also teach this image as an accurate depiction of the entire country. The reality, however, is that certain areas of the country do not reflect this harmonious vision of the US as a mixture of races and cultures (as seen above in the case of Kentucky). This exaggerated notion of multiculturalism creates a false sense of diversity and thus, hyperbolic claims of pluralism, tolerance and understanding. Japan, conversely, suffers from hyperbolic notions of homogeneity that underestimate discriminatory practices, particularly highlighted by the absence of an anti-discrimination law for the protection of minority groups.\(^{33}\)

Second, deconstructing ill-supported social identities must be taken seriously. If Japanese and Kentucky societies perceive themselves to be homogeneous and


\(^{32}\) ‘Melting pot’ was a term commonly used throughout the 1980s and 1990s as the authors were going through public schooling. Today, the term often preferred by educators and policy-makers is ‘mosaic.’ ‘Mosaic’ emphasizes the notion of cultural coexistence as opposed to the assimilation policies of a ‘melting pot.’

multicultural, respectively, then it is safe to assume that much of the rest of the world also identifies these communities in a similar regard. The first step toward ‘conscientization’\textsuperscript{34} is raising awareness of false popular beliefs before examining misdirected social policies and actions. The denial of difference in an exaggerated expression of homogeneity, without respecting diverse cultural expressions and languages, is exacerbated in state policies of assimilation and one-language laws. Hence, one route of action is to facilitate an exploration of discrimination to raise social consciousness, while taking steps to change the misinformation perpetuated in schools, communities and governing bodies.

In January 2006, the UN Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance, indeed, concluded that there is racism in Japan, and that it affects three groups: national minorities, descendents of former Japanese colonies, and foreigners from the rest of the world.\textsuperscript{35} Racism and sexism are practiced widely in Japan.\textsuperscript{36} Racism is also a fact of life in the US,\textsuperscript{37} though many people operate under the assumption that racism is a thing of the past due to the successes of the women’s and civil rights movements.\textsuperscript{38} Moreover, not only are racism and sexism still phenomena of present day society, according to a study in Kentucky concerning violence, gender and race, discrimination is so well-developed that it takes on certain norms.\textsuperscript{39} The superiority of the White male is an undercurrent in the teachings of US institutions, and this group’s monopoly of power and wealth is commonly accepted. It is common for a man to execute an act of gender prejudice against a woman, or for a White to show prejudice toward people of color. According to Czopp & Monteith\textsuperscript{40}, the prejudices

\textsuperscript{34} Conscientization’, a concept developed by Paulo Freire in Pedagogy of the Oppressed, describes the process of becoming aware of a social problem and consequently taking action to solve that problem. It relies on praxis of reflection and action.

\textsuperscript{35} Doudou Diene. Racism, Racial Discrimination, Xenophobia, and All Forms of Discrimination: Report of the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of racism, racial discrimination, and related forms of intolerance.

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid; and Joanna Liddle and Sachiko Nakajima, Rising Suns, Rising Daughters: Gender, Class, and Power in Japan (London: Zed Books Ltd, 2000).


\textsuperscript{38} Paul Street, Segregated Schools: Educational Apartheid in Post-Civil Rights America; and Christine Sleeter, Multicultural Education as Social Activism (Albany, NY: State University of New York, 1996).


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid.
between people of different races or sexes are more socially accepted than prejudices displayed within a group. For instance, a Latino is less likely to administer oppressive measures against another Latino than perhaps toward a person of different racial or gender group, and similarly, a woman might accept prejudice from a man that she would not otherwise accept from a woman.

As the research supports, violence is manifest in Kentucky and Japan, and it must, therefore, also be present in the schools. Reardon states, “when these symptoms [of violence] exist in the community, they probably exist in the schools.” Additionally, Joan Burstyn, et al, said, Violence in schools mirrors the violence in society and is exacerbated by the availability of guns, urban and rural poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, suburban anomie, and the media’s celebration of violence. Each of these must be addressed if people want to end violence.

**Homogeneity, Gender Bias and Racism in the Classroom**

Questionnaire respondents were also asked to approximate the degree of racial/cultural homogeneity of their schools. The answers they provided are very near official statistical data of their respective regions. Kentucky educators estimate Kentucky to be between 85-88.88% White, and Japanese educators estimate Japan to be 96.4% Japanese. The responses show that some educators perceive their schools to reach as high as 99% White in Kentucky, or as low as 50% and between 95% and 100% homogeneous in Japan. Assuming the schools are, in fact, microcosms that reflect the demographic makeup of their respective societies, this suggests that educators are aware of the degree of racial similarity and lack of substantial diversity in their learning contexts.

Pertaining to reactions on gender bias, the research results show that all of the Japanese respondents are aware of incidents of gender discrimination in their schools, while most classroom teachers in the Kentucky schools did not report such discrimination. The proportion of respondents from each sex is approximately equal, suggesting that the sex of the individual does not factor into the likelihood of perceiving gender bias. Of the twenty educators teaching youth ages sixteen through twenty-four, nine answered that they felt there was gender bias in their schools, six did not report being aware of any such bias, and five said “it’s a very

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delicate matter and it takes time to discuss.” The majority of positive responses support the possibility of a correlation between schooling in homogeneous settings and the perpetuation of gender bias.

In reaction to inquiry on racism, questionnaire data affirms that four of five Japanese educators are aware of racism in their schools, with an additional five Japanese educators stating that “it’s a very delicate matter,” and six of ten Kentucky educators reported awareness of racism in their setting. Surprisingly, all of the male respondents in Kentucky agreed that racism is prevalent, whereas all of the female teachers from Kentucky disagreed. This suggests that in the Kentucky context specifically, awareness of racism may be influenced by the sex of the actor, where males may be more likely to identify racial bias than females. In contrast, when examining the Japanese responses, the analysis of sex on the likelihood to identify racial bias becomes irrelevant. Sleeter comments that from the Western perspective (since it was the Western women educators who perceived sexism but not racism), awareness of sexism may “bloc a substantive analysis of racial oppression.” She says, “women’s unexamined experience with sexism limits their understanding of social stratification by encouraging them to believe they understand discrimination.” Her research may provide a theoretical rationale for the lack of women educators in Kentucky to acknowledge racial discrimination (because they have ‘unexamined’ experiences with sexism that hinder their understanding of racism). Clearly, this analysis pertains to Western women educators who, as Sleeter suggests, may consider further ‘examining’ their experiences with sexism to draw links between sexism and racism.

In conclusion, ten of twenty educators said that they were aware of racism in their schools, five said they could not discuss the topic because it’s too sensitive, and five stated that racism was not in their schools. This buttresses the hypothesis that schooling in a homogeneous context may correspond with the perpetuation of racist attitudes.

The responses analyzed above strengthen the theory stated earlier in this paper, that Japanese educators are more aware of gender constructs than racism, and Kentucky educators are perhaps more cognizant of racism than gender oppression (though this conclusion may depend on the sex of the educator). The research results also show that educators in rural Kentucky, where the Kentucky population is most homogeneous, were the most likely to report that gender

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44 Ibid, p. 83.
discrimination and racism do not exist in their schools while there are no obvious factors that would make these schools less likely to be susceptible to gender discrimination and racism. This, therefore, further supports the thesis that homogeneous settings are at risk of being blind to discrimination that may be taking place in their schools.

The objective was, however, not to prove the existence of intolerance in these societies but to explore teachers’ perceptions of bigotry in the face of their realities. By matching the perceptions with actuality, and through referencing the definitions given by a number of the educators, it is clear that raising awareness about these phenomena is essential. To this end, the authors propose that in-service teacher training on gender and racial awareness is necessary to facilitate comprehension and to inspire remedial action to address the problematic.

The authors’ concern that education in homogeneous settings is likely to reproduce the status quo appears to be supported, especially given that the data suggests educators in the most homogeneous settings may be more susceptible to blindness when reporting on classroom-based power asymmetries. Given this concern, what are the appropriate interventions that can be undertaken by the school community to deconstruct stereotypes and biases?

Discrimination in schools is then mirrored in society. Thus, addressing the biases in schools is a form of intervention in society. Used in this way, education is a tool for social change. Education can be an important tool in the intervention to defend the interests of minorities against those who hold a monopoly of power. Critical education recognizes that we are subject to a host of conditioning factors, including genetics, culture, economics, language and environment, and that our interaction with these elements is the basis of our understanding. Peace Education promotes the idea that education can lead to more just and peaceful societies when such education is conducted in a manner conducive to peace. Peace Education is critical, reflective, challenging and hopeful, and recognizes the possibility of education to reinforce dominant ideologies as well as unmask them.

Park and Rothbart write that stereotypes are developed due to an individual’s tendency to overestimate the homogeneity of other groups, as opposed to the perception of heterogeneity in traits of people in their own group. Accordingly,

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Johnson & Johnson state that prejudice and discrimination are most effectively reduced when members of the majority group and those at whom they direct their discrimination and prejudice have positive interactions with each other, dialogue about lived experiences, and commit to developing anti-discriminatory views and behavior. The authors support the concept of a school-based intervention to develop inter-personal relationships, explaining that “educators...have a unique opportunity to create the conditions for promoting in most (if not all) children, adolescents and young adults, the types of interactions, relationships, competencies and values that decrease stereotyping and prejudice.” Their model, *The Three Cs of Reducing Prejudice*, consists of developing a cooperative community that resolves conflicts constructively, and internalizes civic values. They define a cooperative community as people living in a given locality as well as all stakeholders on a given issue working toward achieving mutual goals, and working within a culture of positive social interdependence where all people in the community can learn together through frequent, accurate and open communication toward the understanding of all perspectives. A cooperative community is created by learning negotiation and mediation tools that support constructive conflict resolution, and by a commitment to values that support success for the community as a whole.

**Recommended Pedagogies to Address Gender and Racial Biases**

This study proposes in-service teacher training, peace and conflict curriculum, and peace pedagogy as means to combat discrimination. The study, therefore, compiled information of current pedagogies educators are using in classrooms (in Kentucky and Japan) to address gender and racial biases. The respondents identified multiple approaches for gender affirmation and anti-racism education as listed below.

1. *Suggested pedagogies to raise awareness of gender bias in Kentucky schools (i.e. gender sensitivity and equal participation)*
   - Direct questions to both male and female students equally and allow for equal speaking time in the classroom. Assign similar tasks to both genders.
   - Discuss the different opportunities and different needs of males and females in professions.

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48 Ibid, p. 239.
In general, make sure that all students are involved in equitable amounts. It is a great method to promote better education, and at the same time, eliminates any possible discriminatory acts. Do your best to not promote games or other activities that put boys against girls, for example.

2. **Suggested pedagogies to educate against racism in Kentucky schools (Empathy-building activities and case studies)**

   - Racism is an issue that one may not truly understand unless they experience it; therefore, a simulation exercise can better allow one to understand what it is like to experience racism.

   - Use case studies to address the cultural differences and needs of the various races and populations we encounter in the clinical setting.

   - Make it a point to teach and discuss as many cultures around the world as possible. Use examples from places the teachers and students have traveled to, in hopes of promoting a more positive attitude and respect from some unfortunately “sheltered” students.

3. **Suggested pedagogies to raise awareness of gender bias in Japanese schools (Mixed groups and personal opinions)**

   - Attempt to break down gender isolationism by partnering males and females for discussions. Try to observe and eliminate any visible forms of gender discrimination between students; and comment on rooted perceptions in a social/historical context. Devote a segment of the course to the use of gender-neutral language.

   - Use a lot of group activity work. Tell the students to always introduce themselves to others in the group, and that everyone is included and no one is excluded. Make sure that everyone gets an equal chance to respond in the group activities.

   - When something concerning gender discrimination comes up in class, make it a point to express your own opinion as well as elicit student opinions.

4. **Suggested pedagogies to educate against racism in Japanese schools (Personal stories, case studies and mixed groups)**

   - In terms of promoting a racially inclusive classroom, occasionally there are ethnic Korean or Chinese or Okinawan students in classes…value their different perspectives and call on them more frequently in class to talk about issues (if viable) in order to give other students a sense of diversity.
The issue of poverty be addressed in case studies that show that poverty is a form of racism aimed to repress the (global) South.

Encourage foreign and Japanese students to mix and require them to talk with each other.

The proposed pedagogies above are informative, yet problematic. They are situational, often reactionary, and for the most part lack the planning and foresight necessary to create a situation that will encourage dialogue aimed at revealing power, political, social and economic structures. The pedagogies identified by respondents aim often to structurally force students to work together with others, but without engaging them in critical discussions on social issues. Congregating people is a necessary first step, but if the space is not facilitated well, it may reinforce stereotypes and misunderstanding. As stated by Johnson & Johnson, “Within a school community, physical proximity in and of itself is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for the formation of caring and committed relationships.”

In classrooms, a comprehensive and complementary approach needs to highlight both the psycho-cultural and structural manifestations of the monopoly of power, in order to discover the links between various forms of oppression. This deeper and more critical analysis has greater potential to achieve a real understanding of power structures and messages promoted in society that reinforce a culture of violence.

Accordingly, an intense examination of those societal forces that reproduce power asymmetries and oppression should be at the core of purposeful discourse about racist and sexist structures, and explicit links need to be made with what students experience at local, national, regional and global levels. In exposing structural violence, Bell Hooks stated:

Much of my work with feminist theory has stressed the importance of understanding difference, of the ways race and class status determine the degree to which one can assert male domination and privilege, and most importantly, the ways racism and sexism are interlocking systems of domination which uphold and sustain one another.

With respect to teaching strategies, Reardon provides a comprehensive list of classroom pedagogies for addressing prejudice that concerns both the structure

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and content of education. She suggests: readings and discussions of other cultures, cultural interpretations of the arts and literature of other peoples, position-taking on issues, policy simulations, alternative solutions exercises, keeping journals on personal experiences, studying international standards on women’s rights, and conducting role-plays. There are also numerous other methods teachers could use to mitigate discrimination and intervene against prejudicial acts; therefore, educators should continue to share with each other their own experiences and tools for managing homogeneous and diverse classrooms.

Concluding Without Ending: No Cause is Deterministic

In this paper, sexism, racism, the relationship between the two and the challenges of homogeneous contexts have been explored. The major postulate throughout has been that schooling in homogeneous classrooms perpetuates notions of entitlement, sexist perspectives, uncritical race awareness and an indiscriminate acceptance of the status quo. The research appears to support this hypothesis. This discrimination is sustained, in part, because of hyperbolic notions of homogeneity (in Japan) and multiculturalism (in the US), both of which are often facades. The research results have supported the hypothesis that homogeneous contexts have an impact on the development and nurturance of discriminatory attitudes and behaviors. However, a cautionary finality: this research and its conclusion do not suggest that by merely living and growing up in homogeneous communities, a person will be destined to possess racist and/or sexist behaviors. It does indicate, however, that homogeneity — or moreover, the lack of recognition of diversity that does exist — may correlate with the subsistence of racist and sexist biases. Homogeneity is not a fatalistic force; it does not necessarily cause racist and sexist beliefs and actions, but may assist in the breeding and endurance of prejudice.

51 Betty Reardon, *Education for a Culture of Peace in a Gender Perspective*, pp. 158-161.
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THE PLACE OF PEACE

Heather Millhouse

Abstract

Current approaches to Peace Education have come under censure for various reasons. Treating these criticisms as hurdles that peace educators must cross, this paper identifies the various educational, political, cultural and psychological barriers to peacebuilding in Australian schools. The conclusions are drawn on the basis of a survey conducted with students pursuing an education degree at University of Queensland. While taking cognizance of the fact that learnings from other countries and diverse contexts can enrich peace education programs, the paper concludes with the assertion that such learning cannot be a substitute for sensitivity to socio-cultural reality of the place where the peace education program will finally be implemented. It therefore offers some suggestions for tackling structural violence in Australian schools.

Tell people in Australia that you teach peace to schoolchildren and they will say, “That’s so important” or “that must be rewarding”. Teaching peace inspires hope, both in the community and in educators. Peace Education has been an integral work component of the United Nations, but it is not without its critics. Critical reviews of the field include the following:

- The most common criticism is lack of evidence- hard data that verifies Peace Education as effective at building peace. This is further complicated by the fact that peace is considered a lofty and ill-defined goal.

- Without evidence of the effects a program may have on a community, a related criticism of Peace Education concerns programs that focus on school children’s intra – and inter-personal peacefulness without including the wider community, placing an unfair burden on children who are living within violent societies.

Heather Millhouse teaches at the University of Queensland, Australia in Peace Education, a course that explores theoretical and applied principles of peace and inclusive education, with an emphasis on issues of diversity, unity and peacebuilding. She is the Workshop Coordinator for the Queensland branch of Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP), an international association of trained volunteers working to empower individuals to liberate themselves from violence. She has an ongoing fascination with Integrated Communication Technologies (ICTs) as an exercise in logical balance.
In addition, Peace Education programs orientated to the individual may emphasize individual interests at the expense of the collective interest. In this way, Peace Education concepts may fail to align with local cultural understandings, and indeed, the cultural conditions of the majority of the world’s population.

Peace Education needs to answer these three criticisms in order to justify its inclusion across a crowded Australian curriculum.

How can these criticisms inform the scope and flavour of Peace Education? While the feeling of safety amongst Australian women has improved in the last 10 years\(^1\), we know our society continues to struggle with random domestic, structural and cultural violence. We know that schools are sites of direct and indirect violence, so the mandate to work with peace in our schools is clear. We do need to broaden our scope, however, to shift or balance some of the responsibility for violence in schools off the shoulders of individual students and teachers, and across the education spectrum into the wider society. According to a survey by an employment website, wider society certainly needs to consider the role of adult modelling on young people’s experience, when “almost two thirds of Australian workers say they have been bullied at work, and nearly one third claim to have been sexually harassed.”\(^2\) Limiting Peace Education to anti-bullying programs for students targets the tip of the iceberg. It feels like “Do as I say, not as I do”.

How is it possible to deliver a course in Peace Education that is fair for students and does not require its teachers to be saint-like and omniscient? It seems, at times, as if Peace Education can be about everything, and perhaps that means it might also be about nothing. Grounding a course in students’ experiences enhances its meaning and locates its relevance, and the application of Peace Education principles becomes a possibility. The principles and theory of Peace Education must be molded according to the socio-political, cultural and structural contexts of local communities, rather than generically imposed across the diversity found between schools and students. In multicultural Australia, if we can shift the orientation of Peace Education to programs that emphasize group and community concerns while still addressing individual interests and behaviors, the principles of equity across

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cultural groups may find a more secure foothold. If Peace Education is not delivering opportunities for diverse worldviews to find expression, student feedback needs to make that apparent. Rigorous post-course evaluation, coupled with international perspectives of the field, enables Peace Education to be sculpted around its context. Using the criticisms of Peace Education as a litmus test, we can be guided and focused in determining the place of peace in Australian classrooms. J.P. Lederach advises us to embrace the paradoxes, to build within multiple discourses and to use the experience of the ‘other’ as a seedbed for growth.3

Those sentiments are easy to write, yet not simple to implement. Taking the first steps towards building peace means accepting that a problem exists across our communities, it means recognizing the implications of structural violence and voicing the deep scepticism regarding human nature that seems to exist just beneath the surface of the young people. Identifying the need for peacebuilding at the structural level of our education system has been undertaken by tertiary students while they are unravelling what it means to them. As the concepts of Peace Education are understood in the context of each student’s experience, ideas about other ways of being educators – harmonious, fun and effective ways of working with children and young people – are being formulated, stimulated by identifying barriers to peace. These barriers to peace in schools have become opportunities for growth.

A paradoxical approach to teaching peace delivers multiple entry points for the analysis of issues of structural and cultural violence in schools. By using the insights of recent successful school graduates, an external perspective on some structural barriers to peace in schools can be gleaned. Post-school evaluation of the education system is being undertaken by those whose memories of school are recent enough to be detailed and whose results were good, which adds intensity to their critiques when one considers their less successful counterparts.

Pre-service teachers and other students from the University of Queensland can take Peace Education as an elective unit towards their Bachelor of Education degree. Not all students opt for the course because they have an inherent interest in peace – some enrol because the assessment does not include exams, some, to fill a gap in their timetables – but many students who enrol are genuinely interested. Approximately 360 students between 2005-2009 studied discourses of peace and violence, including concepts of negative and positive peace, engaged in assessable group work, read widely in their fields of interest and education discourse, and

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3 John Paul Lederach, Preparing for Peace: Conflict Transformation Across Cultures (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1995).
then contributed their insights to four categories – Educational, Political, Cultural and Psychological barriers to peace in schools. Table 1 provides a summary of these lists.

Table 1. Barriers to Peace in Schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational barriers</th>
<th>Pedagogy</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Curriculum</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Curriculum is powerful in maintaining exclusive and violent structures eg. subject discrimination, weighting of subjects eg sports vs arts; sciences (hard subjects) vs humanities (soft subjects); commercialisation of curriculum.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Syllabus and work program content limitations, plus time constraints of crowded curriculum leave no room for peace.</td>
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<td>● Limits to teachers’ experience with concepts of peace.</td>
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<td>● Glorification of violent activities, especially contact sports</td>
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<td>● Religious impact on content eg intelligent design vs evolution.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Lack of critical discourse analysis eg. ‘dumbing-down’ of curriculum, especially in English.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Behaviour Management</strong></td>
<td><strong>School structure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Ignorance of students’ backgrounds.</td>
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<td>● No clear school philosophy.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Discipline and control vs freedom to be who you are; punishment as normal.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pedagogy</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Lack of recognition of prior learning and other ways of knowing.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Acknowledge only hegemony and homogenous western-centric systems of learning. Conformity expected of all – lack of attention to practical skills in learning style diversity.</td>
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<td>● Classroom process – teacher out front - unequal power dynamic – need for partnership learning.</td>
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<td>● Bullying in classrooms, disrespectful teaching styles, ignorance of nonviolence.</td>
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<td>● Pace set by institution, not by students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Focus on teaching rather than learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>School structure</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>● Strong hierarchy and unequal power relations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Few learning support staff – teacher’s increasing and constantly changing workload.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Business minded schools – choice of priorities and competition based on commercialism.</td>
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<tr>
<td>● Principal’s vision for the school, or lack thereof.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Fear of change both personal and structural
- Lack of relationships of trust between all levels of school functioning.

**Assessment**
- Competition between students as a motivator.
- Outcome-based education – tests/results focus.
- Narrow assessment forms advantage some and disadvantage others; ranking and failure are accepted / normal.

- Marginalization of minority groups.
- Exclusivity, righteousness and superior attitudes in some schools – ‘us and them’ thinking.
- Single Sex schools: attitudes formed towards and with opposite sex.
- Insufficient support for students by way of counselling.

**Environment**
- Physical classroom layout.
- Timetable – need flexible attendance options.
- Environment restrictions – need comfortable, flexible outdoor spaces for diverse learning opportunities.

**Political barriers**

**Global issues**
- Economic rationalism – well considered policy subsumed in economic expediency.
- Patriotism – the ‘other’ as enemy.
- Definitions of peace vary widely.
- Government as exemplar in conflict – first strike.

**National issues**
- Compulsory schooling
- Policies that yearn for ‘back to the past’ – visions for the future from the government prioritise technology over relationships.

**Local issues**
- Restrictions on who may attend schools–exclusivity and exclusion.
- Bureaucracy: rigidity; decision making structures can be exclusive and hierarchic; communication channels can be restrictive; access to resources inequitable; staff politics, interpersonal staff relationships, personal agendas remain invisible and unexamined within the school hierarchy; paperwork prevents experiential, co-operative and open-ended learning.
- Power relations amongst school community used to reinforce inequity and conformity.
- Tyranny of democracy and weight of demographics – marginalized voices remain unheard.
- Subjective political policies not open for discussion across/ between schools: who is in power, what the govt wants, instead of what schools want. Less importance placed on critical analysis. Interference of nationalism in the formation of history syllabuses. White Australian history taught at the expense of Indigenous perspectives.
- Militarism in schools e.g. cadets, public/private partnerships with the aviation industry have militarist ends, defence force recruiting at city periphery schools.
- Funding disparity between public and private schools; and insufficient funding, especially for non-commercial subjects.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Psychological barriers</th>
<th>Group beliefs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Personal beliefs</strong></td>
<td><strong>Teacher dominant, student submissive.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alienation, low self esteem and depression.</td>
<td><strong>Clique culture of segregated groups and discrimination, prejudice: eg locality (country versus city), gender-based, sexuality, intellectual competence, racism, xenophobia, ethnocentrism, social-economic group, physical condition, age of teacher.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insecurity and uncertainty about dealing with diversity in the classroom.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack of psychological and emotional safety.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

| **Attitudes and beliefs:** school administration, teachers and parents, harbor traditional beliefs; authoritarian, command and control structures; avoid controversial issues; discrimination – gender, ethnicity, ability; single sex education as inhibiting. |
| QSC – students judged in relation to their schools, not on their own merits. |
| Competitive struggle to be ‘top’, system of appointing captains, awards. |
| Teachers impose personal beliefs in a closed environment – classrooms. |
| School funding and expertise goes towards disciplinary actions rather than peacebuilding in the school community. |
| Lack of listening – students, teachers, administration. |
| Students need to contribute to learning goals. |
- Personal perceptions, values, beliefs, life experiences, lack of experiences.
- Desire for dominance and control and fear of being insignificant.
- Self esteem issues – victims or legends.
- Motivation – lack of or hyper.
- Lack of confidence to deal with conflict.
- Need to succeed in competition, fear of failure.
- Fear and belittling used to control students.
- “I am just one person, I can’t make a difference”.

**Disorder / Dysfunction**
- Mental health issues e.g. ADHD, autistic spectrum disorder, bipolar disorder, anxiety, obsessions, depression.
- Ignorance about these and lack of treatment.
- Learning disabilities, communication issues.
- Troubled family background – violent, abusive family, substance abuse.
- Lack of self awareness.
- Social exclusion of students with special needs and reaction to others’ need for acceptance.

| Need to belong – peer group pressure and pressure to conform. |
| Fear of being different, both teachers and students. |
| Macho syndrome culture. |
| Baiting teachers seen as student ‘sport’.

**Wider Social beliefs**
- Parental and family beliefs, attitudes and expectations.
- Punishment as first response to transgression.
- Marginalisation for religious/political beliefs.
- Feelings are discouraged.
- Acceptance of violence as ‘natural’ and belief that humans are inherently violent.
- Effects of media violence.
- Media treatment of violence in current affairs
- Lack of belief in possibility of peace.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cultural barriers</th>
<th>Cross-cultural issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Adversarial cultures** | **Language** – narrow range, testing in and pre-eminence of Standard Australian English.  
- Binary positioning among students e.g. rich vs poor, brains vs brawn, attractive vs unattractive, sub-cultures e.g. emo vs skaters vs nerds vs jocks etc, sexism, us vs them, in-group and out-group dynamics.  
- Ethnocentrism and national pride at the expense of ‘aliens’ or difference.  
- Demonising the ‘other’ e.g. students are against teachers and vice versa, teachers and administration think parents are inadequate, parents are demanding and hostile to teachers and administration, teachers disrespected by administration and employer.  
- Tall poppy syndrome.  
- Culture of competition.  
- History written by the victor.  
- Militarism and machismo as hegemonic masculinity, opposed to other forms of masculinity.  
- Western exportation and imposition of market economy and democracy makes us enemies.  
- People are taught to fear or fight the ‘other’ rather than learn from and celebrate with each other.  
**Cultures of fear and conformity** | **Different forms of deep cultural practice, different ways of being are not recognized e.g. ways to show respect, deal with conflict, negotiate, ask permission, act morally, be inclusive, prioritize relationships etc.**  
- Misunderstanding cross-cultural communication – verbal and nonverbal.  
- Unwillingness or inability to accept other cultures/religions due to avoidance, inaccurate data, lack of information, fear.  
- Not enough diversity in some schools, overwhelming diversity in others.  
- Tokenism or the 4D approach to multiculturalism – dance, dress, diet and dialect.  
- Difficulty in negotiating firm beliefs in a climate of relativism.  
**Australia-specific cultural issues** | **Eurocentric or ‘skips’ dominant culture in schools is reinforced by a lack of diverse cultural enrichment, the maintenance of stereotypes that oppress, especially for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians, and a lack of understanding, among non-Indigenous**  
- Standardized testing – fitting students onto a ‘grid’.
Narrow definitions of gender roles and promotions of stereotypes.

Nostalgia for homogeneity – promotion of sameness rather than belonging.

Uniforms.

Submitting to ‘groupthink’ rather than dealing with conflicting ideas.

World events (terrorism) portrayed as culture- and religion-based, thereby promoting fear between cultural groups.

Australians, of Indigenous people’s cultures.

*Terra nullius* is still impacting on non-Indigenous Australian mindsets.

Trans-generational effects of *terra nullius* still impacting on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australian peoples’ lives.

### Ideas for change

Given a free reign and broad-stroke, almost idealised definitions of peace, the young university students responsible for generating these lists went on to look at ways to take action to address some of the challenges of structural violence in schools.

### Education is a tool to break barriers to peace

- Teachers need to read and think about these barriers, and be given a secure opportunity to voice their observations and insights.
- Problems evolve from ignorance – address the lack of knowledge.
- Open knowledge is needed in conjunction with critical thinking.
- Change to positive peace rather than negative peace when working with all education relationships.
- Schools help shape children and reinforce values – students, parents, teachers, administration – all develop and model the peacebuilding values of school.

### In the classroom

- Allow different options – create variety e.g. sit next to someone new each week.
- Classroom dynamics: use group processes interspersed with very short lectures; classroom layout to promote communication, collaboration, critical analysis and problem solving.
- More human resources in the classroom – change the teacher: student power ratio from 1: many.
- More equal classroom dynamic – teachers and students on more equal footing.
- Involve parents and wider community in education.
• Develop critical awareness of the bias of texts used in schools and the freedom of resources.
• Parents and teachers together lobby government for funding and change.
• Lobby school and district to encourage reflection and change in curriculum to infuse Peace Education principles into all subject areas; and to encourage reflection and respect within and from the department.
• Address financial costs of university.
• Address federalism – difference between states.

In schools
• Link peace theory and practices through all subjects e.g. history of peace movements.
• Anonymous boxes (awards/rewards; suggestion/complaints) for students and teachers.
• More power spread out amongst teaching and administrative staff – less hierarchy.
• In the case of a ruthless power, undermine their authority nonviolently by local political action.
• Get parents and teachers onside, working together rather than being fearful of each other.
• Engage in critical thinking about problems and put a band-aid on it till action can be taken.

Personal
• Language – peer to peer tutoring.
• Use experiential, practical learning processes and techniques to create variety and interest and reduce boredom.
• Supportive environments – prioritize relationships.
• Encourage reflection and change in teaching practice

• Give yourself permission/ plenty of time to think about an approach/ strategy. Given opportunity, creative ideas, guidance, will/effort, you will find a solution.
• Seek advice in the tearoom, on the net, from mentors – collaboration.
• Solutions come in parts – there are many aspects to a problem.
• Be a supportive, open teacher (so students have the faith to confide in you).
• Keep your life interesting by valuing variety – teacher as an example.
• Encourage reflection and change in personal practice to honor your craft.
• Find more peaceful strategies and foster willingness to challenge barriers to peace.
• Care for self, keep physically healthy – unwell teachers do not make peaceful companions.
- Importance of dealing with diversity, especially cultural diversity.
- Increase the number of perspectives, culturally, socially, philosophically, so ideology is balanced.
- Language sub-divisions in schools at same time as integrating groups to prevent ganging up (affiliate culturally yet also mix socially).
- Indigenous studies in public and private schools.
- System of approach to bullying behaviors rather than labelling individuals e.g. address role of media in social relations e.g. America’s Favourite Model as desirable girl behaviour? “Go the biff?”
- Mix grades to develop student mentor relationships and increase school unity.
- Classroom/homeroom/form – streaming across ages eg fun, sports for more community feeling.
- Encourage reflection and change in all areas of school relationships and practice.

- Have a place and a group of people to support your practice, affirm your value and challenge your thinking.

**Education of teachers**

- Teachers need more practical skills and experience when it comes to handling conflict and teaching peace.
- Peace practices and principles need to infuse all education courses at university.
- Internships and mentoring for new teachers, similar to an apprenticeship system.
- New teachers combine part-time teaching with part-time pedagogy observation and lesson development.
- Time given to raise issues faced by teachers.
- Encourage reflection and change in all areas of teaching practice and curriculum.

The will to peacefulness is powerful in young people. Peace Education students will be moving into school positions, expecting to be able to make schools a more peaceful place for young people who are less favored by cultural hegemony than themselves. The main concerns of Peace Education students are how the values and practices of peace that they aspire to, will find a place in schools; whether the discourse of peace will be accepted by the wider school community; whether their own blossoming sense of belief in possible peaceful futures will continue to grow or wither. The bigger question may be whether these new teachers will have the persistence to maintain living out their aspirations in a structurally violent system that expects conformity. Perhaps the balance of community interests is shifting now, and peace may take its place among Australian values.
PEACE AND CONFLICT EDUCATION
AROUND THE GLOBE

Jennifer C. Batton

Abstract

The article provides an overview of the global effort to expand peace and conflict education by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC), Peace Education and Conflict Resolution Education reference group, and a regional effort by the Organization of American States (OAS) in the thirty-four countries of the Americas. This article also includes examples of how some of the countries around the globe are operationalizing their work in this area and resources to learn more about these global efforts.

From Asia to Africa, Europe to the Americas, in all of the world’s regions, governmental and non-governmental educational institutions are integrating conflict resolution education (CRE) or peace education (PE) into their policies and educational practices. This article will provide an overview of the global effort to expand peace and conflict education by the Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) Peace Education and Conflict Resolution Education reference group, and a regional effort by the Organization of American States (OAS) in the thirty-four countries of the Americas.

Peace and Conflict Resolution Education Defined

The terms PE and CRE are defined and operationalized in many different ways around the globe, with some common themes. PE, as defined by UNICEF, is “the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior change that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create conditions conducive to peace, whether at an interpersonal, intergroup, national or

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international level.”¹ This definition ties both CRE and PE together, with the skills of CRE being a central theme. These skills generally include: understanding conflict, understanding how emotions influence conflict, good communication skills and problem solving. Conflict management programs vary in their implementation, but teach valuable life skills, mediation, negotiation and violence prevention strategies. CRE as defined by the United States’ National Association for Conflict Resolution (ACR), models and teaches, in developmentally relevant and culturally appropriate ways, a variety of processes, practices and skills designed to address individual, interpersonal and institutional conflicts, and to create safe and welcoming learning environments. These skills, concepts and values help individuals to understand conflict dynamics, and empower them to use communication and creative thinking to build healthy relationships and to manage and resolve conflicts fairly and non-violently. Conflict Resolution educators envision a peaceful and just world where citizens act responsibly and with civility in their interactions and in their dispute resolution processes.³

This definition incorporates themes related to civics, multi-cultural education and social justice, showing their strong compatibility with these other important knowledge and skill sets for youth.

Global Efforts

While many are familiar with the work of the United Nations in peace and conflict education, there are many other organizations working to effect positive change and help governmental and non-governmental organizations build capacity in schools, colleges, universities and communities, for curriculum and skills integration, teacher training and community education. The Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict (GPPAC) is a civil society led network whose mission is to build consensus on peace-building and the prevention of violent conflict in the fifteen world regions it serves. Each region has its own action agenda which was launched at UN headquarters in July of 2005. Based in the Hague, Netherlands, and housed at the European Centre for Conflict Prevention (ECCP), the GPPAC assists in “strengthening civil society networks for peace and security

³ Association for Conflict Resolution, “Recommended Guidelines for Effective Conflict Resolution Education Programs in K-12 Classrooms, Schools and School Districts”, http://acrlibrary/acrlibrarymore.php?id=11_0_1_0_M
by linking local, national, regional, and global levels of action and effective engagement with governments, the UN system and regional organizations.\textsuperscript{4} One of the target areas of the GPPAC program on Knowledge Generation and Sharing is the work of their Peace Education and Conflict Education Reference Group, a collaborative of experts in CRE and PE from the world’s regions. This reference group, building upon the work of the Policy Meetings of the Inter-American Summit on Conflict Resolution Education (March 2007) in Cleveland, Ohio, USA, and a meeting of the PE Reference Group at a GPPAC meeting (April 2007) in Belgrade, Serbia, identified as a priority, the need for a global survey of PE and CRE research. The survey was to examine the benefits and challenges related to this work, including a review of current evaluations, lessons learned, and improvements needed for evaluation design. The first phase of this project, canvassing the existing evaluation and research, was completed in partnership with nine U.S. colleges and universities, and the University of Peace, Nairobi, the Nansen Dialogue Network, the West African Network for Peacebuilding (WANEP), the Department of Education, Victoria (Australia), the Organization of American States (OAS), Seisen University (Japan), the Africa Democracy Forum, Women for Development (Armenia), Miriam College (The Philippines), the Nairobi Peace Initiative and the ECCP. These findings were shared at the Second International Conference on Conflict Resolution Education (March 2007) in Cleveland, Ohio, U.S.A., and a research agenda, identifying and prioritizing gaps, was developed. Phase three, developing and funding CRE and PE evaluation research that addresses identified gaps, was discussed at the next regional meeting in Kenya in 2008.\textsuperscript{5} The details of these efforts and some of the results of the first stages of the evaluation are available on the CRE website.\textsuperscript{6}

\section*{Regional Efforts}

At the Fourth Organization of American States (OAS) Ministers of Education Meeting in August of 2005 in Trinidad and Tobago, the Ministers of Education of the Americas adopted the Inter-American Program on Education for Democratic Values and Practices. This program was to focus its efforts on developing a democratic culture through education in the thirty-four member countries of the


\textsuperscript{5} The European Centre for Conflict Prevention, “Knowledge Generation and Sharing”, Global Partnership for the Prevention of Armed Conflict, http://www.gppac.net/page.php?id=1513

\textsuperscript{6} See the Conflict Resolution Education Connection, “CRE/PE Research Project,” http://www.credication.org/cre/homebase/content_presentations/cre_pe_research_project
Hemisphere. The Program would do this by working on three main areas: research, professional development and educational resources, and information exchange. An Advisory Board for the Program, consisting of renowned experts from across the Hemisphere, was formed, and met in Bogotá, Colombia in April of 2006, to recommend concrete activities in each of the three main areas of the Program. The Program’s activities in the past two years have taken these recommendations into account. A large majority of the countries working on democracy and citizenship education, both through formal and non-formal education methods, including the implementation of policies at the country level, incorporate peace education and conflict resolution education knowledge, skills and attitudes as requirements.7

These efforts resulted in a number of endeavors. These include the creation of the Inter-American Journal on Education for Democracy, the development of two distance learning courses, the Hemispheric Course on Evaluation of Policies and Programs in Citizenship Education for governmental and non-governmental organizations responsible for the evaluation of the implementation of these programs in their countries, and a course for teachers in the Caribbean on Creating Democratic Classrooms. These efforts also include collaborations on much needed research, resulting in reports such as the Report on National Policies on Education for Democratic Citizenship Education, and the development of a web portal of research, resources and information related to these macro-level efforts.8

Overview of Country Efforts

All over the globe, countries are working to integrate the various knowledge, skills and structures related to PE and CRE into their legislation, policies, standards and programming, in both formal and informal educational settings, from early childhood to young adults. Below is a summary of related efforts in Armenia, Ghana (West Africa), Israel, Thailand, Ukraine and the United States. These summaries are from presentations these countries made at international conferences on CRE in the U.S., or information submitted by representatives in these countries for the global section of the Conflict Resolution Education Connection Website.9

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8 See http://educadem.oas.org
9 For additional details about the work being done in these and other countries around the world, or to contact the contributors, please visit the global section of the website: http://www.CREducation.org
**Armenia**

In Armenia, over the last 6 years, the NGO Women for Development has been implementing the PE and CRE program, establishing PE centers in schools. This training was developed in the frame of the UN International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Non-violence (2000-2010). The program, financed by EED (Germany) and ICCO (the Netherlands), has three main goals, 1) teacher training, 2) organizing various mechanisms of peace education processes in schools, and 3) cooperation with the National Institute of Education, Ministry of Education and Science. These efforts have resulted in special training and peer-to-peer education for approximately 2000 pupils from eighteen schools and the Pedagogical Institute. One of the primary successes was the integration of PE and CRE into the Social Science subjects criteria, national standards, throughout Armenia.10

**Ghana (West Africa)**

In 1998, as a response to the several civil wars in the region, and in an effort to help intervene in and prevent conflict situations, representatives of seven West African countries, believing in the strength of collaboration, launched The West African Network for Peace building (WANEP)11 in Accra, Ghana. One of its key efforts is its youth and peace education program. WANEP has been working in seven countries in the West African sub-region to promote conflict resolution programming in schools at two levels: 1) the development of peace education tools such as teachers’ guides and resource books, and 2) the development of peer mediation programs in schools. WANEP’s work has engaged Ministries of Education in Ghana, Liberia, Cote D’Ivoire, Guinea and Sierra Leone, resulting in the revision of the education standards in Ghana to include aspects of peace education in five subject areas. The objectives of the youth program include: “1) to increase awareness of non-violent strategies among the youth, 2) to provide a platform for youth involvement in peacebuilding, and 3) to harmonise and strengthen linkages between formal and non-formal education structures in the theory and practice of peace education.”12


11 Additional information on WANEP’s initiatives can be found at http://www.wanep.org

Israel

In Israel, there are thousands of PE initiatives aimed at students, from early childhood to university. While there is no official set directive or legislation requiring peace education for all students, the Ministry of Education encourages the development and implementation of PE related initiatives. For example, the “Allocation of one study hour per week throughout the education system, from kindergarten through high school” is to be integrated into the subject of life skills, including peace education related topics. The initiatives are vast and may be divided into two main types: “1) Jewish-Arab encounter programs: ‘mixed’ and bilingual schools, ‘twin’ schools, joint delegations abroad, summer camps, etc., [and] 2) Study and enrichment programs: programs within the education system that deal with education for coexistence and democracy, for multiculturalism, humanism, mediation, etc.” Despite these efforts, research on PE conducted at the University of Haifa found that while, due to the plethora of NGOs and more formalized efforts all Israeli children are exposed in some manner to these topics “only about 6% take part in comprehensive, long-term programs.”

While most CRE and PE in Israel focuses on Jewish-Arab relations, other initiatives exist that address conflicts which occur between current residents and new immigrants, and conflicts which exist between the secular and religious segments of society. Some of these initiatives are administered by the Ministry of Education, while others are operated by various non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and institutes. PE and CRE work is overseen by two departments within the Ministry of Education, one which covers the topics of democracy and civics through cognitive methods, and the Psychological Counseling Service, which addresses the social-emotional aspects of the conflicts, including addressing the trauma associated with the violence. In addition to the governmental agencies, there are an estimated 300 NGOs which are working to address these issues, and the Jewish-Arab coexistence network is working to bring them together.

Thailand

The Ministry of Education is developing a national policy to build a culture of peace in Thai schools at the national level. This initiative also explores positive
ways to involve student participation in addressing conflict and violence. These efforts evolved from a policy signed by Thailand’s Prime Minister in September of 2003 - **Number 187/2003**, A Policy to Deal with Conflict by Peaceful Means. The policy’s focus is the use of peaceful means to decrease bias and negative attitudes, to stop hate and to solve problems without violence. One of the mechanisms to support this policy implementation is the creation of Institutes of Dispute Resolution at Universities, with a mandate to create a conflict resolution curriculum, to provide on-going training and workshops. These currently include governmental organizations including the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Social Development and Human Security, and the Ministry of Education.

In November 2005, Thailand’s Cabinet approved a policy to encourage all the universities to set up centers and curricula in Conflict Management, and to develop an agency at the national level to oversee dispute reconciliation processes and reconciliation efforts in Thailand. In July of 2006, King Prajadhipok’s Institute (KPI) organized a meeting to review the Cabinet’s policy and to help develop a plan for it. In August of 2006, the Ministry of Justice and KPI organized a meeting to plan how restorative justice practices and school mediation could be used in schools to prevent serious disputes. In 2007, the Ministry of Education, through the Office of the Educational Council, launched a program on Conflict Resolution Education and Peace Education, which ran peer mediation in schools. KPI has helped support these efforts by training school administrators, teachers and students.

**Ukraine**

In the Crimean region of the Ukraine, CRE has expanded from 1997 – 2005 as NGOS (the Odessa Mediation Group, the Tavrida Mediation Group, Search for Common Ground Crimean Office, etc.) and government officials partner to conduct training in CRE and mediation, integrate these topics into the civics education course for higher grades and into teacher training and education for school psychologists. An example of these efforts is the integrated course “Culture of Neighbourhood” (including Tatars, Russians, Ukrainians, and other cultural groups),

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18 Available in Thai and English at: [http://disputeresolution.ohio.gov/country/thailand.htm](http://disputeresolution.ohio.gov/country/thailand.htm)
which is a joint initiative of several non-governmental organizations and educational institutions supported by the Ministry of Education and Science of the Crimea. There are multiple components of this thirty-five hour course in primary, secondary and high schools, including conflict resolution skills, peer mediation, etc. The main purpose of the course is to help prepare children, with key social skills, to be critical thinkers, and to increase their tolerance and understanding of their diverse communities as they grow up and live in a rich, poly-ethnic environment. As a result of these efforts, the program has gained government support, and has been approved by the Ministry of Education, the body responsible for colleges and universities. In addition, there has been a Decree of Parliament that CRE/PE be integrated into the training for children and future teachers, and included in textbooks.21

**United States**

In the United States, there is no national mandate or requirement to integrate CRE into the curriculum for students. However, there is CRE related legislation in nearly all fifty states and at the federal level.22 Related legislation includes topics such as school safety, violence prevention, character education, mediation and conflict resolution. Legislation, mandates and requirements range from topic integration into social studies standards, to the alignment of the school mission and discipline policy, to teacher training. The challenges to implement these requirements or mandates generally focus on inadequate funding for the training of teachers and students.

In higher education, more than 200 colleges and universities in the United States have ombudspersons23 with approximately 220 campus mediation programs.24 There are few system-wide comprehensive conflict management programs which

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22 For additional details related to what states require, visit Georgia State University’s Conflict Resolution in Schools Program Legislative Database:http://law.gsu.edu/area51/crisp/ or the Education Commission of the States overview of legislation in the fifty states and territories: http://www.ecs.org/ecsmain.asp?page=/html/statesTerritories/state_map.htm

23 An ombudsperson is a representative of a college or university who serves as a neutral third-party, assisting all members of the college or university community to problem-solve and resolve conflicts before they escalate to litigation through the use of coaching, mediation and utilizing other conflict resolution tools.

24 For additional information on CRE and PE Higher Education in the U.S., visit the Campus Conflict Resolution Resource website at www.campus-adr.org
require all colleges and universities within a state to have such structures in place. However, the University System of Georgia, the University of Hawaii System, and the University of Missouri System do have such comprehensive programs.

While there are nineteen states that have some form of a state government office on dispute resolution, only Ohio has a state government office that includes an Education Director, with a mission to provide all Ohio public schools (approximately 5,000), colleges and universities (approximately fifty-two teacher training colleges), with grants, training, technical assistance and resources on conflict management. Established in 1989, the Ohio Commission on Dispute Resolution and Conflict Management provided more than 800 public schools with conflict management training grants for their educators, established truancy mediation programs in more than 415 schools, and helped establish the National Conflict Resolution Education in Teacher Education (CRETE) Project funded by the United States Department of Education, the George Gund Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation and the JAMS Foundation. With twelve college and university partners across the United States, CRETE’s goals are to help higher education faculty infuse Conflict Resolution Education into their existing courses for pre-service teachers; develop an external training program in CRE for pre-service teachers and mentor teachers; evaluate the impact of CRETE on teacher satisfaction and retention; and develop web-based and hard copy instructional materials and protocols.25

Summary

All around the world, governmental and non-governmental organizations are building capacity in CRE and PE through large scale teacher and school administration training efforts, curriculum integration, creation of resources, and education related policy and standards development. Due to space constraints, only a few country efforts were detailed in this paper.26

These materials are available at no charge through the Conflict Resolution Education Connection website, www.CREducation.org

26 Readers are encouraged to visit the global section of the Conflict Resolution Connections website at www.CREducation.org to review other regional and state efforts, and to share information on relevant CRE and PE efforts in their own country or region.
As these efforts expand, evaluation is critical to seeing the programs achieve their intended goals. The GPPAC’s efforts to collect and analyze these global efforts, and the OAS’s efforts to better prepare those responsible for these large scale evaluation endeavors through the development of an on-line evaluation course, have the potential to provide much needed technical assistance and information to governments and non-governmental organizations as they work to promote peace and reduce conflict in their communities.
Select Bibliography


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EDUCATION AND THE ARCHITECTURE
OF AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

Jyoti Bose

As an educationist involved with the process of learning at school level, I cannot help but stress the importance of education in building an inclusive and peaceful human community.

The global quest for peace and harmony in a world torn apart by conflict and violence has to begin right at the grassroots level, with the education of the world’s children, millions of whom are out of school, never having held a book in their hands; many of them trained more in the art of handling weaponry than the skills of learning; many of them innocent victims to drug peddlers and smugglers; easy targets for the divisive and disintegrative forces in the world to carry out their plans for creating racial strife and communal and ethnic disharmony.

These economically deprived, out of school children, in the course of time, will swell the ranks of the adult illiterates, and it is an accepted fact that an uneducated populace provides the breeding ground for the growth of fundamentalism, obscurantism, superstition and bigoted mindsets, where hatred and violence are more in evidence than love, peace and harmony.

A global priority today is education. We need to ensure that all children get to school, and that the education imparted is holistic, wholesome and wedded to the concepts of national unity, global peace and international understanding.

As far as India is concerned, we have a literacy figure of about 61% with approximately 268.4 million illiterate adults and fifty million children still out of school.

If we aim for an inclusive society we have to also ensure that our education system is truly inclusive, bringing under its umbrella the tribal and rural poor, the backward minority groups and the mentally and physically challenged children, all of whom

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have been neglected for too long. This has been stressed in the Educational Policy of 1986.

The necessary prerequisite for building an education for a composite culture is to ensure that all our children not only have access to education, but are also given equal educational opportunity as well as an education of acceptable quality.

It is rightly said that there is hardly any country today that is mono-cultural, and many governments are in the process of making fundamental changes in their educational policies and systems to cater to the needs of different racial and ethnic groups in their countries.

India, in particular, with its one billion people of diverse groupings, is multi-cultural, multi-linguistic, and is the birthplace of many religions of the world. And in spite of many onslaughts on our democratic polity and threats to our secularism and pluralism, we have remained committed to the secular and democratic values laid down in the Directive Principles of our Constitution, and which form an indispensable part of the Educational Policy of 1986.

It is essential that our state-run and secular schools be open to children of all communities, castes and religions. They must cater to their different cultural and linguistic needs, and provide an educational environment which is non-threatening, which does not alienate or divide, which accepts differences and yet seeks to provide an overriding culture that is composite in nature, based on the ideals that India treasures – secularism, social justice and equity, and a democratic way of life.

Why do we find more and more children of minorities seeking education in separate schools? Why are more such schools opening? Why are fewer children of the minorities studying in so-called secular schools? Does it not signify a sense of insecurity among the minority families, a feeling of isolation, of alienation? Are we, in fact, being truly secular or are we allowing the religion and culture of the dominant majority community to penetrate unduly into our state-run schools, undermining the meaning of secularism?

There are many ways of looking at secularism, but to my mind, a secular school is one that considers religion to be a personal affair, respecting each child’s personal faith, giving equal respect to every religion and the right to practice it at home or in its place of worship, but keeping it out of the school setting. Rather than practice or preach the tenets of any one religion, one should inculcate a spirit of scientific humanism, of peace and brotherhood, and a value system based on truth, beauty and goodness, social equity and justice, working for national unity and a global consciousness.
It is only when children of different communities work and play together that they understand and accept each other’s differences, and can build a climate of tolerance, developing a common identity and composite culture. They begin to speak the same language of togetherness and national identity. If children of different cultures and communities are isolated and studying in their mono-cultural schools, where will we get the inter-mingling of different cultures and the weaving together of the different threads of our national fabric?

Schools can achieve a multi-cultural approach to education through their admission policies, their ethos and philosophy, through a broad-based, holistic curriculum, their textbooks, their co-curricular activity program, and through the re-orientation of their teachers.

I look forward to the day when the common neighborhood school concept becomes a reality; when children from all communities and socio-economic strata, living in the same area, live, work and play together in the same school. We need to create the conditions for making it possible, raising the quality of local schools with community help; working on mindsets and most importantly, creating the political will for its implementation.

At all costs, we have to resist the onslaughts of communalism and narrow parochial thinking in education, and uphold its secular nature. We have to fight the attempts to introduce the ideology of Hindutva into our schools in the name of the Indianization, nationalization, and spiritualization of education, or, for that matter, any form of fundamentalist thinking. We have to develop in the minds of our children, the value of rational thought, of developing inquiring/inquisitive minds, and encourage them to have a broad and liberal outlook on life.

We are familiar with the move at the Center by the BJP government, which replaced the 1986 Policy of Education with a new curriculum framework. Among other things, it sought to make Sanskrit and the study of the Vedas and Upanishads compulsory for all students, and to create a value system based on the wisdom of only our ancient Hindu saints and seers, without considering all other sources from which values can be derived.

The process of discarding and replacing the history textbooks (written by renowned scholars and historians) started with a circular from the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) that deleted certain chapters from the texts at various levels. The schools were also instructed to inform students that these chapters will not be included in the examination, but most horrifying of all, it prohibited the schools from ‘discussing them in the classrooms’. So the spirit of inquiry and academic
freedom, which are an essential part of Indian ethos, in the view of the CBSE, were no longer to be enjoyed by schools.

To build an inclusive society and a composite culture in a country so diverse and plural as India is not an easy task, especially at a time when local and regional identities are being rigorously asserted, when certain communities are feeling isolated and alienated from the political and civil polity, when there is such marginalization of the socially and economically deprived sections of our society, so much poverty, illiteracy and social injustice prevail, and when the majority of women are still disempowered. These are the issues that need to be addressed. Liberal and progressive thinkers, intellectuals, educationists and enlightened citizens have to work together in their different fields to meet these challenges, build our national identity and integrity and resist all attempts to weaken our national fabric. Education has a key role to play in bringing about the social and economic transformation of our society without which the building of a composite culture and inclusive society will remain a distant dream.
Book Review

CIVIL PATHS TO PEACE:
REPORT OF THE COMMONWEALTH COMMISSION ON RESPECT AND UNDERSTANDING

Published by Commonwealth Secretariat, London, 2007
Reviewed by Ankita Pandey*

Consider these two ways of comprehending the global violence that we witness…

“It is my hypothesis that the fundamental source of conflict in this new world will not be primarily ideological or primarily economic. The great divisions among humankind and the dominating source of conflict will be cultural. Nation-states will remain the most powerful actors in world affairs, but the principal conflicts of global politics will occur between nations and groups of different civilizations. The clash of civilizations will dominate global politics. The fault lines between civilizations will be the battle lines of the future.”

– Samuel P. Huntington1

or

“While the cultural forces are among the forces that contribute to disrespect, misunderstanding and violence, they are not the causal factors, nor are they immutable and irressistable. We need a departure from old ways of thinking about the centrality of violence and the alleged inviolability of cultural confrontations.”

– Civil Paths to Peace2

It is with the latter sensibility that Civil Paths to Peace: Report of the Commonwealth Commission on Respect and Understanding has been written. Though the report

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receives its mandate from the Commonwealth Heads of Government, it has successfully overcome a statist perspective towards understanding conflicts or their resolution. The eleven members of the Commission come from Asia, Africa, the Pacific and the Caribbean region. The diverse backgrounds of members of the Commission has brought great insight of experiences from societies located at different stages of development as well as societies that are struggling with various types and intensities of conflicts. As a result, we have a valuable document that could serve as a policy guideline in Commonwealth countries and beyond.

The ideas of ‘respect’ and ‘understanding’ invoked in the report are more substantive than their colloquial use. The report lays out the scope of these values in the following words:

…the term ‘respect’ reflects and encapsulates the principles for which the modern Commonwealth stands – human rights, liberties, democracy, gender equality, rule of law and a political culture that promotes transparency, accountability and economic development.

…Understanding implies an ability to grasp what someone else is saying in order to get to the heart of what they are trying to communicate… Understanding does not necessarily involve agreement with the views or beliefs others hold.3

It is the elaboration of the substantive content of the values of respect and understanding that makes these values relevant to the domain of international relations, which is traditionally characterized by its amorality and anarchy. The report operationalizes respect in a variety of contexts, including the respect with which the economically more powerful nations must approach the less powerful ones, the respect for different civilizations, the respect for international law and the respect shown to regional neighbors which can feed into multilateralist thinking.

Why are respect and understanding important in contemporary times? The report responds to this question with a plurality of answers. Firstly, conflicts are amplified beyond borders in an increasingly interconnected world. Secondly, in a world confronted with the phenomenon of terrorism (which the report insists is far more than just a security problem), as well as a world in possession of ever more potent weapons and the possibility of human and environmental catastrophe, the values of respect and understanding become topical.

3 Ibid, pp.16-17
The report is sensitive to the fact that to overcome violence, one needs to acknowledge that it is by capturing people’s minds and loyalties that violence is cultivated. Thus, it recommends evolving new paths to bring people’s loyalties to peace. The report, on the one hand, rejects civilizational explanations of global conflicts and on the other hand, discredits military interventions for the resolution of these conflicts. It suggests ‘respect and understanding’ as lasting ways to address global conflicts. Thus, the report is both a set of recommendations as well as a set of lenses with which one must engage with the issue of global violence.

The first half of the report lays out the foundations of its conceptual tools, the notion of ‘respect’ and ‘understanding’ and the kinds of violence that the world witnesses. It examines the explanations offered for global violence and looks toward identifying the forces that actually nurture this violence. It looks at the relatively under-explored dimensions of global violence. It looks at the role of poverty in abetting conflict, inequality that feeds into poverty and vice versa. More thoughtfully, it emphasizes a psychological dimension of both poverty as well as inequality, namely, humiliation. The report urges us to address current as well as past humiliations.

The second half of the report is a logical corollary of the theoretical perspectives presented in the first half. There are a set of recommendations for the Heads of States within as well as outside of the Commonwealth. In the second half, there are three kinds of recommendations. There are recommendations on the principles which are in sync with the overall commitment to building an international culture of respect and understanding. Secondly, there are policy recommendations broad enough for individual governments to design more specific policies that best suit their cultural, political, economic and historical circumstances. Thirdly, there are a set of recommendations on the target groups that governments could partner with in order to build a culture of respect and understanding.

A commitment to the Commonwealth principles would include affirmation to use dialogue to address all international conflicts and political differences within the states. An affirmation to keep multilateralism as the preferred way to settle domestic as well as international issues and an affirmation to look for civil routes to peace instead of military ones.

The primary policy recommendations made are: to mobilize the international community against different kinds of violence while recognizing the factors that generate as well as nurture them; to spread awareness of the human diversity in the world; facilitate a better understanding and shedding of prejudices that people
across societies and generations fall victim to; and enlarge the process of political participation. The report also urges governments to lay special emphasis on access to education, monitoring the quality of education and utilizing this powerful tool to disseminate values of respect, understanding, empathy and accepting diversity.

The report also proposes that certain groups could be partners with governments in these initiatives. A primary partner could be civil society, which could engage in advocacy and participate in creating awareness among the people. The second group is women. The report argues that women are the worst hit in a conflict situation. The losses that they commonly experience could be a resource for peace building. The third set the report recommends is faith-based groups. Most interestingly, the Commission identifies ex-combatants as potential partners too. The media could be another important partner which is very influential in shaping people’s outlook as well as breaking down prejudices and preventing conflicts.

Indeed, the report addresses its mandate successfully. However, the extent to which its recommendations could achieve the desired ends is debatable. This is because the report relies on actor-centric recommendations alone, to address violence and global conflict. It ignores the structural impediments that these actors – the media, educational institutions, women, young people and indeed governments find themselves in. These impediments could be located in the nature of international political economy, or the international balance of power. Such structural impediments that could limit the possibilities of a dialogue have remained unaddressed in the report. Sometimes, even agreements in principle between governments could go unimplemented due to structural pressures. Thus, to imagine a commitment to ‘respect and understanding’ by concerned actors, without addressing the contextual and structural limitations that impinge on them, could be unrealistic. These could be informal rules that inform the entire system, not necessarily based on the democratic pillars of ‘respect and understanding’. Actors promoting respect and understanding in an environment that produces incentives for intensifying conflicts would be faced with an impossible mission.

However, the individual governments could utilize notions of respect and understanding to address structural issues as well. This lacuna in the report under observation is the possible space for another creative flight to take off on new thinking about global violence. This report shall certainly be the runway for any fresh look at lasting peace.
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