



Policy Dialogue II

SANG CHAL

An initiative on Education for Peace

Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Opportunities and Challenges

WISCOMP Policy Dialogues



Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Opportunities and Challenges

WISCOMP Policy Dialogue II



Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace
Foundation for Universal Responsibility
New Delhi

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Published by:

WISCOMP

Foundation for Universal Responsibility

UGF, Core 4 A, India Habitat Centre

Lodi Road, New Delhi-110003

India

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Acknowledgements

The Policy Paper and the Consultative Dialogue on Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir were envisioned as part of the Hum Kadam initiative of Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) and its partner the Foundation for Academic Excellence and Access (FAEA). We thank the FAEA Board for its unwavering support and Prof. V. R. Mehta for mentoring the initiative.

WISCOMP is grateful to Mr. Rajiv Mehrotra and the Foundation for Universal Responsibility of His Holiness the Dalai Lama for their constant guidance and encouragement.

We thank Dr. Sumona DasGupta for authoring this Paper and for bringing her rich expertise on Jammu and Kashmir to bear on this document. We also acknowledge and thank all the stakeholders who participated in the Consultative Dialogue and provided valuable feedback and inputs on the future course of Education for Peace initiatives in J&K. WISCOMP will take on board their ideas and suggestions as it explores the contours of Education for Peace initiatives in the state.

Manjri Sewak
WISCOMP

Introduction

This publication consists of two sections: A Policy Paper on Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir (authored by Dr. Sumona DasGupta) and a Report on the Consultative Dialogue that WISCOMP organized to garner feedback on the Paper and seek inputs on the future course of its peacebuilding work in Jammu and Kashmir.

Over a three-year period (2012–15), WISCOMP's Education for Peace initiative (titled *Hum Kadam*) sought engagement with the youth of Jammu and Kashmir and the National Capital Region by forging partnerships with schools and colleges in the two regions. Capacity building trainings, periodic consultations on the state of education, development of quality reading material, and nurturing networks of committed youth and educationists were the primary modes of achieving the project goals, which included:

- Reduce social distance and prejudice between the youth and teachers of Kashmir and Delhi, using face-to-face dialogues and trainings in conflict transformation and developing and strengthening sustainable networks.
- Enable access of the most disadvantaged students from Kashmir to institutions of excellence and thereby create a sense of empowerment.
- Build soft skills and leadership potential of the youth to be agents of positive social transformation.
- Introduce theoretical knowledge from the evolving discipline of peace and conflict studies and its application in educational spaces in Kashmir.
- Sensitize stakeholders about the significant role that education can play in peacebuilding in Kashmir.
- Build sustainable cross-institution linkages and alliances, which could continue even after project support ended.

The Policy Paper was prepared with a view to build on the learnings from the *Hum Kadam* initiative and to explore a conceptual vocabulary and possible components of Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir. It puts forward some considerations for policymakers which could be of use to those who frame curriculum at the national and state levels as well as to the community of peacebuilders who have taken steps to introduce Education for Peace in schools and colleges in Jammu and Kashmir. Informed by the NCERT (National Council for Educational Research and Training) Position Paper on Education for Peace, the National Curriculum Framework of 2005, the educational content produced by the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education, and first-hand interviews conducted with students and teachers in the Kashmir Valley in December 2014, the Policy Paper calls for a new context-specific understanding of Education for Peace without which the term stands in danger of being hollowed out. It also flags the link between the vision of Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir and the larger educational challenges of access, quality, equity and inclusion in the state.

The Consultative Dialogue, organized in March 2015, brought together senior professionals from civil society, academia, government and the education sector to deliberate on, and provide inputs to, the WISCOMP Policy Paper on Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir. Many of the participating experts had been co-travellers with WISCOMP in its decade-long journey to harness the potential of education for peacebuilding. Some had even helped in giving shape to its Education for Peace initiative in Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of India.

The Dialogue was a collective exploration of what could constitute Educating for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir. It provided a space for the confluence of diverse experiences in a collaborative effort to conceptualize an approach that was inclusive, sensitive to the needs of justice and could fit into the larger paradigm of educating for peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Opportunities and Challenges

Sumona DasGupta¹

Introduction

The purpose of this paper is to understand the relevance and possible components of “education for peace” with specific reference to Indian Jammu and Kashmir which has been the epicentre of a violent conflict from 1989 onwards. It also puts forward some considerations for policy makers which could be of use to those who frame curriculum at the national and state levels as well as to the community of peacebuilders who have taken steps to introduce education for peace in schools and colleges of Jammu and Kashmir. Informed by the position paper and National Curriculum Framework of 2005, the educational content produced by the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of Secondary Education, and drawing on first hand interviews conducted with students and teachers in the Kashmir valley in December 2014, this paper calls for a new context specific understanding of education for peace without which this term stands in the danger of being hollowed out.

This paper begins by defining and contextualizing education for peace and goes on to link the vision for education for peace in Jammu and

¹ Dr. Sumona DasGupta is a member of the Calcutta Research Group (Kolkata) and serves as Chair of the International Advisory Group at INCORE (International Conflict Research Institute), University of Ulster, Northern Ireland. She has been a Visiting Fellow at the Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. She was also a Senior Research Consultant at Society for Participatory Research in Asia (PRIA), New Delhi, and has been a Lead Researcher for the EU research project on *Cultures of Governance and Conflict Resolution in Europe and India*. DasGupta has also held the position of Assistant Director at WISCOMP, prior to which she was a Lecturer in the Department of Political Science, Loreto College, Calcutta University. She holds experience in designing modules on *Understanding the Kashmir Problem* for various universities’ programmes and has executed participatory trainings on conflict resolution for 300 women leaders in governance at the local level in India. DasGupta has been an International Consultant for the Danish Institute for Parties and Democracy and an India Consultant for the paper, *Analysis of Political Parties from a Gender Perspective*, commissioned by International IDEA. She has authored and coauthored various policy briefs, books, book chapters and journal articles on issues of gender, security, conflict resolution and the Kashmir conflict, among others. Her areas of interest include peace, conflict and critical security studies; governance and politics in South Asia; and gender and peacebuilding.

Kashmir with the larger educational challenges of access, quality, equity and inclusion. It then examines the key formulations of the position paper on education for peace and its place in the National Curriculum Framework of 2005 and explores how this resonates with the current situation in Jammu and Kashmir. Informed by this it makes a brief indicative analysis of the actual content of textbooks to teach social sciences in Jammu and Kashmir as prescribed by the Jammu Kashmir Board of Secondary Education before outlining some policy considerations for a possible template for education for peace in the state.

Defining and Contextualizing Education for Peace

A key challenge that this paper grapples with is the lack of any shared understanding on the use of the term education for peace. While some of its components can be identified there has been an understandable reluctance to define its parameters in a manner that constricts the directions it could take in the future.² Further, education for peace is often used interchangeably with peace education. However, since the difference is more on the approach rather than the content it is useful to begin by looking at some definitions of ‘peace education’ which is the term that is more commonly used in the currently available pedagogy.³

An expansive definition is offered by Harris who defines peace education as “the process of teaching people about the threats of violence and strategies for peace.”⁴ He identifies five distinct types of peace education: human rights education, conflict resolution education, development education, international education and environmental education. Clearly this would imply the use of multiple pedagogies both in the classroom and outside of it to cultivate what Desai calls “a consciousness that desires peace.”⁵ In recent times education for peace has come to be associated more with the concept of positive peace which is intrinsically

² Sumona DasGupta and Deepti Priya Mehrotra, “Institutions in the Field of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development,” unpublished paper, 2011.

³ The Indian approach as reflected in the National Curriculum Framework has distinguished between the two terms. While peace education signals a separate subject approach the term education for peace connotes an integrated approach.

⁴ Ian Harris, *Peace Education in Different Countries and Contexts*. <http://faculty.human.mie-u.ac.jp/~peace/report-on-the%20latest-peace-education-commi-meeting.htm>

⁵ Mihir Desai, *Peace Education*. Aakash. Asha Stanford’s Quarterly Newsletter. Volume 1, Issue 3, 2004 <http://www.ashanet.org/stanford/newsletters/aakashwin04.pdf>

linked with justice and the absence of not just physical but also structural and cultural violence.⁶

Whatever definition we may accept we cannot automatically assume that education for peace will seamlessly translate into a concurrence on how multiple “peace” values, beliefs and skills are to be prioritized through the education system. This is particularly problematic for an area like Jammu and Kashmir that has witnessed violent conflict and where there has been a huge loss of human lives as a result of the conflict. Difficult and uncomfortable questions inevitably arise. Does truth come before reconciliation? If there is a dissonance between justice and peace in a certain situation how is it to be resolved? How does one explain the continuing presence of armed forces in civilian spaces despite the institutional presence of democracy in Jammu and Kashmir? These difficult questions can be integrated into conceptual tools for peace if students are encouraged to develop skills for critical analysis that takes into account the complexities and contradictions that are a part of any conflict. Rather than avoid questions that are a part of their lived reality in the classroom uncomfortable questions can be converted into lively encounters between educators and learners that foreground their role as potential agents of change and transformation.

Co-creating the specific meaning of peace in a conflict area like Jammu and Kashmir where episodic violence continues to remain a part of life and militarization of the state and society continues to be endemic is a challenge in itself. Yet asking that fundamental question of what peace really means to the *people and communities* living in this area, is the first prerequisite towards a meaningful progress in the road to any form of peace education. Schools and colleges are not located in a social and political vacuum.” Imposing” a “peace” curriculum that is at odds with the people’s understanding of what such a process represents and entail sat this point in the history of Jammu and Kashmir will only create further webs of confusion and alienation. Instead of that students can be encouraged to articulate their own philosophy of peace education and what this would entail at this present conjuncture of the trajectory of the conflict within which they are living. This could well lead to a more nuanced understanding and appreciation of competing nationalisms

⁶ Anupama Srinivasan, “A Survey of Civil Society Peace Education Programmes in South Asia,” *Educational Policy Research Series Vol. 1, No 2, 2009*, <http://www.prajnya.in/eprs12.pdf>

and identity politics in post-colonial contexts. Is there a paradigm of peacebuilding that students in Jammu and Kashmir can identify with, that goes beyond the straight jacketed labelling of victims and perpetrators and is instead built on an acknowledgement that in a conflict situation there are multiple realities and that one reality does not cancel out another?

Indeed in a country like India with pockets of armed conflicts in Jammu and Kashmir, north east and in parts of central and eastern India, a one size fits all formula on education for peace carries little meaning. There may be a consensus at the broadest levels of values that are to guide education for peace but at the experiential and operational level the divergences may be sharp. In the case of Jammu and Kashmir, though the armed militancy which had reached its peak in the 1990s particularly in the valley of Kashmir has petered out, many of the basic drivers of the conflict are yet to be addressed. Jammu and Kashmir (and particularly the Valley of Kashmir) continues to simmer with new forms of civil protests and agitations. Instead of ignoring this lived reality it could be taken as a starting point for a larger understanding of forms of protest and nonviolent alternatives that is part of the matrix of peace.

The continuing presence of the state's armed forces in civilian spaces and special laws granting a large measure of immunity to them such as the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA)⁷ along with the continuing presence of some armed militants have generated fierce debates on the nature of democratic space available to the people of this state, despite the presence of institutional mechanisms of democracy. Curfews—whether declared by the state or called as a form of civilian protest (civil curfew)—have undoubtedly impacted the education system both in terms of loss of days in the academic calendar and a sense of insecurity and fear among children in terms of their long term future prospects. As interviews in Kashmir valley has indicated even the physical act of going to schools and colleges—the journey itself from home to school—is fraught with tension about whether the

⁷ AFSPA was introduced in Jammu and Kashmir in 1990 to allow the Indian army to carry out counterinsurgency operations following the outbreak of the armed militancy in the Kashmir valley. At the centre of the controversy and the debate on the immunity it grants to the armed forces is section 4 of the Act. For a more detailed analysis on the act and its implication see Sumona DasGupta, "Why Muddy the Debate Around AFSPA," <http://infochangeindia.org/governance/analysis/why-muddy-the-debate-around-afspa.html>

students “will return home safely”, though armed militancy is not pervasive any more.

It is indeed a matter of concern that the armed rebellion and the counterinsurgency operations of the Indian state in the 1990s have left behind a legacy that cannot be brushed off by the fact that the frequency and “incidents” of crossfire and militancy related deaths have seen a sharp decline. In 2013, Samir Ahmed in a study on the militarization of education in Kashmir examined the impact of military camps and bunkers in the vicinity of schools and other educational institutions by exploring the relationship between the presence of security personnel within and around schools and the sense of insecurity among school going children. The purpose of the study was to investigate whether the presence of the military was causing any impediment for students to have free and safe access to their schools. Out of thirty schools randomly selected for this survey, his study found 79% were at a distance of 1 km from the nearest military camps/bunkers and 1% was partially occupied by the military or paramilitary troops.⁸ The JRM report of Jammu and Kashmir has also noted that post 1989 conflict in the state and the presence of armed forces has been a source of disruption in the education sector. In particular it has drawn attention to the fact that a number of DIETS as well as school buildings have been occupied by security forces for several years and that infrastructural damage was widespread during the conflict years.⁹ The militarization of the state and society and the consequent fear and insecurity it breeds cannot but touch the educational institutions which are located in that society and through that, the hearts and minds of the students who go there every day.

Well known peace activist and scholar Betty Reardon has identified violence as the central problematic of peace education. As she points out “all violence degrades and/or denies human dignity. This is why I assert that the substance of the field should comprise an inquiry into violence as a phenomenon and a system, its multiple and pervasive forms, the interrelationships among the various forms, its sources and purposes, how it functions and potential alternatives for achieving the legally

⁸ Samir Ahmed, “Impact of Militarization on Education in Kashmir” <http://blogs.cuit.columbia.edu/peace/2013/11/12/impact-of-militarization-on-education-in-kashmir/>

⁹ Joint Review Mission on Teacher Education in Jammu and Kashmir, April 2013, p. 6.

sanctioned, socially accepted, or politically tolerated purposes commonly pursued through violence.”¹⁰ This has a powerful resonance for Jammu and Kashmir which has witnessed a high degree of militarization of state and society and killings both by militants and security forces. As the position paper on education for peace points out, it is important for the students to understand “the logic, modes and expression of violence.” Citizenship education therefore must not shy away from this in Jammu and Kashmir.

While the National Curriculum Framework of 2005 has for the first time introduced the idea of education for peace the real challenge lies in first making meaning out of this phrase in a particular context and then working on what could constitute its contours. Peace—as several students and teachers in Jammu and Kashmir mentioned in interviews—means different things to different people.¹¹ Clearly the very meaning of peace is contested in Jammu and Kashmir where competing nationalisms and multiple visions for the future are often on a course of collision. As the conflict continues to simmer and manifest in different forms in Jammu and Kashmir, uncomfortable questions on what peace means in this troubled state will inevitably arise. Instead of brushing these under the carpet these questions will have to form the building blocks of the new imagination for education for peace.

The position paper that informed the education for peace segment of the NCF 2005 boldly charted out a vision of promoting a culture of peace as the basic purpose of the “enterprise of education.” This draws attention to the term education and the manner in which it is used. While the implication of education and its myriad interpretations is clearly outside the ambit of this paper it is still important to note for the purpose of this paper that an education system with an instructional approach is at odds with the vision of education for peace which pre supposes that learners are at the centre of the classroom. This is of course true for all areas regardless of the presence of active violent conflict. For education for peace to thrive, pedagogy must be envisioned as much more than

¹⁰ Betty A. Reardon, 2010, *Human Rights learning: Pedagogies and Politics of Peace* (San Juan, Puerto Rico: UNESCO Chair for Peace Education, University of Puerto Rico).

¹¹ A series of interviews was carried out by the author in Srinagar in December 2014 with teachers and teacher educators from Delhi Public School, Srinagar, Presentation Convent, Army Public School Srinagar, as well as teacher educators from across the districts studying in Government College of Education, Srinagar.

just teaching—it must embrace the entire set of practices of educators who look to accompany learners. This is far from the reality in India and therefore the chasm between the vision and the practice of education for peace remains extensive.

A reading of the NCF 2005 makes it amply clear that it sees education for peace as integrally linked with all subjects in the curriculum rather than take a separate subject approach and in alignment with this, prefers the term “education for peace” rather than “peace education”. The classroom is the learning space in which the values of education for peace are to be imbibed. Given this approach, education for peace cannot be separated from the broader educational challenges facing the country which is currently poised around access and quality.

Linking Access, Quality Inclusion and Equity with Education for Peace

If education for peace is to be a pioneering move that starts right from the nursery class as envisaged in the position paper on education for peace the first challenge is to ensure that all children are provided access to schools. This cannot be over stated. Children first have to come to a formal school before education for peace can be implemented in the classrooms!

The *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* (SSA) adopted in 2001, and running in mission mode in partnership with state and local government, was the flagship programme for universalization of elementary education across India including in Jammu and Kashmir. The JRM report for Jammu and Kashmir has cautiously noted that while the SSA in Jammu and Kashmir cannot be uncritically commended it did energise the school education sector in several ways particularly after the extremely disturbed period of the 1990s.¹²

The 2011 report of the Financial Management and Procurement, Government of India, relating to SSA in Jammu and Kashmir is telling. While it acknowledges that Jammu and Kashmir does face many adversaries in implementation of SSA like harsh weather, lack of accessibility in hilly and mountainous terrains for several months in the year, the entire assessment seems to have been done on a conflict neutral

¹² JRM report for Jammu and Kashmir, 2013, p. 8.

canvas. There is no mention of the impact of the armed conflict on the educational infrastructure and environment in schools despite the fact that the “surprise visits” of the team was done in two of the two districts that have been widely affected by the conflict—namely Kupwara in the Kashmir valley subdivision and Rajouri in the Jammu subdivision.¹³

Recognizing that access to education cannot be viewed in isolation, the Right to Education Act (RTE) of 2009 made it incumbent on the government to not only provide free and compulsory education to all children from 6-14 years of age but also built certain ‘quality’ indicators into the act pertaining to classroom settings, teacher student ratios etc.¹⁴ Integrating the notion of equity as part and parcel of quality and recognizing the polarization and stratification that had entered the school system it also provided that all private schools (whether aided or not) would have to reserve at least 25% of their seats for economically weaker and socially disadvantaged sections in the entry level class. As noted educationist Anita Rampal had noted SSA may have increased the enrolment in schools but had ended up socially stratifying the school system even further since a certain (negative) image was associated with government schools.¹⁵ This in fact was in contrast to the Kendriya Vidyalayas which were much more inclusive.

The RTE Act of 2009 does not automatically apply to Jammu and Kashmir on account of its special status under the Indian Constitution,¹⁶ but it is important to take it on board because as and when Jammu and Kashmir’s school education laws are amended the RTE will undoubtedly

¹³ In Chapter 12 the report outlined the salient findings of school visits to 14 schools in Rajouri and 15 in Kupwara and uncovered a rather dismal picture with instances of text books not being distributed, absence of lab facilities, lack of compound walls, absence of drinking water and electricity in the majority of the schools. The report in general pointed to financial and procurement mismanagement, lack of amenities and hygienic facilities for girls, uneven ratio of teachers to students across the state in urban and rural areas.

¹⁴ See Elementary Education, MHRD, Department of School education and Literacy (<http://mhrd.gov.in/rte>) which speaks of a right-based framework where every child has a right to full time elementary education of satisfactory and equitable quality in a formal school which satisfies certain essential norms and standards.

¹⁵ Anita Rampal, “Teachers Education: Enhancing Quality and Relevance”, keynote address delivered at the seminar organized by ORF Mumbai and St Xaviers Institute of Education, 10 May 2014.

¹⁶ As per article 370 no law passed by the Indian parliament applies automatically to Jammu and Kashmir except those pertaining to defence and foreign policy. All other laws need to be ratified by the state assembly.

be a reference point. In fact the state has now decided to amend its 2002 law called the Jammu and Kashmir School Education law which provided for free and compulsory education for children in the age range of 5-14 but did not specify the responsibilities of the state in this regard. The amendment seeks to address this and in the process bring their own act more into alignment with the national legislation.¹⁷ The results of this experiment are still awaited.

In India quality education (a term that is used in the RTE Act as well) has been defined by NCERT in terms of eight dimensions each with its associated indicators. These dimensions include school infrastructure, school management and community support, school and classroom environment, curriculum and teacher training materials, human resources, teacher and teacher preparation, classroom practices and processes, opportunity time, learner monitoring and supervision.¹⁸ An ambitious, comprehensive indicator based framework has been constructed by NCERT with a set of quality monitoring tools (QMT) to be used at five levels – the school/community, cluster, block, district and state.¹⁹

How does this resonate for Jammu and Kashmir? Significantly the CAG report for the year ending 2011 indicates that in Jammu and Kashmir 35% of the checked districts have no school buildings. Insufficient fund utilization, financial mismanagement, absence of community involvement, and the official language policy of using Urdu and English rather than the mother tongue have been other factors that have emerged as core problems in the delivery of quality education in Jammu and Kashmir.²⁰ While accepting that elementary education is best imparted in the mother tongue the language issue presents its own challenge in Jammu and Kashmir because of the multiple languages used in the former princely state including Kashmiri, Ladakhi and Dogri.

¹⁷ See Jammu and Kashmir set to make education a fundamental right for its children, <http://indiasanitationportal.org/18261>

¹⁸ National Council of Educational Research and Training (2006) Monitoring Formats for Quality Dimensions Under SSA: Tools for Monitoring, Delhi, NCERT, p.1.

¹⁹ Ibid, p. 4. For a critical assessment of these QMTs see Robin Alexander, “Education for All: The Quality Imperative and the problem of pedagogy”, New Delhi, Department of Education, 2007.

²⁰ WISCOMP, Quality Education in Jammu and Kashmir: Special Focus on Kashmir, Unpublished Policy Brief (undated).

Another key challenge relates to teacher training. In 2013, there were only 2 government-run B.Ed colleges in J&K, one in Srinagar and another in Jammu. While commending the College of Education in Srinagar for its institutional dynamism and investment in research, training and outreach the JRM for Jammu and Kashmir has noted that by and large teacher education had become the reserve of unprecedented number of private colleges in the state. This is an extremely dangerous trend to privatise teacher education that would leave the sector vulnerable to market forces²¹ rather than create a cadre of educators and ‘social healers’.²²

Indeed the term social healers, used in the NCF 2005, acquires a special resonance in the context of the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir where schools can be part of a child’s safety net in the midst of uncertainty. It is therefore important that training facilities not only have to be widened but also deepened so that teachers are sensitized about this responsibility as part of their general orientation during training in B.Ed colleges. A key question here would be re-visioning the role of teachers in situations of conflict which can generate personal and social trauma for learners in the course of their day to day life. Perhaps educators under these circumstances do need to be trained as psycho social counsellors – as interviews with school teachers in Srinagar in December 2014 indicated many times teachers have to take on this role anyway whether or not they are equipped for it. Training in counselling is not just a function of skills but also the active cultivation of a mindset among potential educators that understands and appreciates what students are facing in a situation of political conflict which sometimes spills over in the form of manifest violence in homes, schools, community and streets.

With this backdrop of the larger educational challenges facing the country and Jammu and Kashmir in particular we now examine the NCF 2005 in greater detail which has for the first time, included a section on education for peace.

NCF 2005: From Peace Education to Education for Peace

Though most schools in Jammu and Kashmir are affiliated to the Jammu and Kashmir Board of Secondary Education with its own syllabus and

²¹ Joint Review Mission on Teacher Education in Jammu and Kashmir, April 2013, p. 5-9.

²² Position paper National Focus Group on Education for Peace, NCERT.

textbooks the national curriculum framework is consulted when revisions and changes are made and the general expectation is that the Jammu and Kashmir board along with other state boards in India will bring the content of their syllabus in alignment with the basic principles and vision of the national document in due course. This is why we examine the NCF 2005 in some measure of detail as it sets standards for education in the country as a whole.

When the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) was tasked with revising the National Curriculum Framework in July 2004, it used the opportunity to deliberate long and hard over the much broader question of what was to be taught to the children of India and how.²³ Amidst the copious analysis and advice contained in the 140 page document published in 2005, some general principles that form its leitmotif have been pithily highlighted by Yash Pal in the Foreword.

NCF 2005, as Pal points out, highlights that specificities and contexts matter and social, economic and ethnic backgrounds are important for children to enable them construct their own knowledge. The acknowledgement of diversity and plurality is not seen as a problem; on the contrary this is celebrated. Media and educational technologies are seen as important as is “societal learning” but none of this is a substitute for the teacher. NCF 2005 also acknowledges the mother tongue as an “important conduit.”

These foci emanate from the constitutional vision of India as a plural, secular, egalitarian society based on social justice and equality. The different subject areas are interwoven with these constitutional values which include independence of thought, sensitivity to the wellbeing and thoughts of others, responsiveness to new situations, participation in democratic and economic processes and social change.

Two things stand out in this document. The first is the manner in which the plural ethos and participation in social transformation is emphasized as core values of education. Second and most importantly from the point of this paper is the inclusion of a new subject area that appears for the first time in the national curriculum framework—namely, peace

²³ The revamping was done primarily in the light of a report produced in 1993 titled “Learning without Burden”.

education. Indeed, peace education appears in addition to the four more familiar subject areas of mathematics, science, social science and language, though it is later clarified that an integrative approach rather than a separate subject approach should be adopted.

The component called peace education is first discussed in the executive summary as part of what is described as “other” curricular areas, along with work, art and heritage crafts, health and physical education. Recommending peace education as an area for inclusion in the curriculum for teacher education, the NCF notes: “peace as a precondition for national development and as a social temper is proposed as a comprehensive value framework that has immense relevance today in view of the growing tendency across the world towards intolerance and violence as a way of resolving conflicts. The potential of peace education in socializing children into a democratic and just culture can be actualised through appropriate activities and judicious choice of topics *in all subjects and at all stages.*” [Emphasis added]

It is clear that peace education is not seen as a stand-alone subject that is to be “taught” in a separate box within a classroom—evidently an organic integration into all subjects as was being proposed. Significantly, the idea of peace education was also linked with the larger goal of national development and most critically, with the notion of justice.

Interestingly, the term peace education that appears in the executive summary of the NCF 2005 is changed to “education for peace” in section 3.8 of the document which provides a more detailed outline of this segment of the curriculum. This seems to be more in alignment with the vision that is outlined at the outset—a vision that sees this as being interwoven into all segments of the curriculum. The NCF suggests education for peace implies the cultivation of a certain mindset and a set of values that respects and cherishes plurality as a way of life and seeks to find harmony within oneself, with others and in nature. It raises awareness about constantly seeking nonviolent ways of transforming conflict in an age of “unprecedented levels of violence, with constant threats posed by intolerance, fanaticism, dispute and discordance.” While acknowledging that all conflicts do not lead to violence and war it makes a case for consciously applying nonviolent conflict resolution skills to disputes between individuals, groups and nations.

Warning that education as practiced in the schools often ends up promoting violence both real and symbolic and the increasing representation of violence in the media can have a negative impact on the minds of children the document makes a strong pitch for cultivating peace “as a value” that cuts across all curricular areas and becomes the concern of all teachers.

More specifically, the document suggests that education for peace should embrace the following overlapping values and skill-sets so that children can be makers of peace rather than just consumers of peace.

- Human rights
- Justice (including commitment to equity and social justice)
- Tolerance
- Cooperation
- Social responsibility
- Respect for cultural diversity
- Commitment to democracy
- Nonviolent conflict resolution.

Clarifying that ethical consideration does not mean imposing a set of dos and don'ts the document calls for providing an opportunity for the child to make choices about what is right and wrong in keeping with these broad social values. It suggests a calibrated and age appropriate approach to education for peace that uses questions, stories, games, anecdotes, dialogues, role plays to build perspectives on peace.

What then are the specific challenges of applying this template of peace education to Jammu and Kashmir and can we suggest possible pathways along which a vision for peace can be meaningfully integrated into the curriculum? As we have already noted Jammu and Kashmir presents its own set of challenges in terms of implementing such a programme in the midst of the current political milieu. The following section addresses this.

Education for Peace: Opportunities and Challenges in Jammu and Kashmir

There is no best time for education for peace to take off. Whether it is pre conflict, the phase of violent conflict, post violence, or peace building phase it is important to note that none of these phases are linear and the

importance of education in managing, as well as transforming conflict through all of them remains important. As Alan Smith suggests education can play a preventive role when the conflict is incipient but not yet out in the open; it can play a protective role during the violent phase of the conflict; and finally it can play a transformative role once the peace process is under way.²⁴

In Jammu and Kashmir the wave of violence that characterized life in the 1990s has abated but sporadic violence and other forms of civil unrest continues along with counterinsurgency operations. Education particularly school education can now play both a protective role by bring some routine and order into the lives of students specially children and also play a transformative role by encouraging dialogue and critical thinking.

Education particularly in a conflict area, as Smith observes, is not just a service to be delivered—it is the means of socialization and identity development through transmission of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes across generations. It can be a driver of the conflict or can transform it by helping channelize protest and dissent into nonviolent avenues.²⁵ The role of education in positively transforming conflict is of course contingent on the right to express dissent and protest democratically and in reality this is clipped when special laws operate. Integrating a culture of peace through education would therefore translate into allowing space for students to actually experience how dissent can be expressed through nonviolent means.

The NCF 2005 as we have noted stresses commitment to democracy as a key aspect of education for peace which would imply not just the institutional mechanisms of democracy but also to democratic ethos and values. This would cover the full spectrum of political and economic rights—freedom of speech and expression, faith and worship, right to assemble peacefully without arms, right to life et al along with basic social and economic rights.

Time and time again in the course of interviews conducted with college and school teachers in December 2014, the author was reminded of the

²⁴ Alan Smith, *The Hidden Crisis: Armed Conflict and Education*, Paper commissioned for EFA global monitoring Report, 2011, p. 2.

²⁵ *Ibid*, p. 1.

gap between this stated purpose and the reality in Jammu and Kashmir. There is a strong perception that genuine democratic space has been shrinking and the freedom of speech and expression or the right to peaceful protest enjoyed by citizens in other parts of India is curtailed in Jammu and Kashmir. At the outset therefore the contradictions between what is espoused as a core component in peace education—namely promoting democratic values—and what is experienced by the people in their everyday life creates anger and resentment that does little to cultivate a culture of peace in the long run. Perhaps the way to go is to treat the classroom space as an open forum for discussion and debate—as a true democratic space where students are free to express their dissent and angst—and where educators can channel this into creative discussions on civil paths to peace.

As one university professor opined: “Our students are told about Indian democracy but in Kashmir there are barriers to the free speech which is enjoyed in other parts of India.”²⁶ Other college students opined that one can have a debate on Kashmir’s future in other parts of India but here “you are watched and noted.” Even some PhD topics cannot be touched or no one will be willing to guide you. What is the meaning of peace education under these circumstances? “We are not given the same freedoms as others in India and only when our students go out of the Kashmir valley, they realise this.”²⁷ This angst is widespread and can perhaps be used as an opportunity to understand the structural causes of conflict and how learners can both understand the conflict at different levels with an honest acknowledgement that while there are some things that they as students may not be able to change at that moment there are several things that they can and within the constraints it is still possible to leverage the system to become agents of change either individually or through collective group work or forming student alliances and networks for peace and justice.

A related and central theme linked to education for peace in the NCF 2005 is justice. In fact the position paper on the subject that informed the NCF 2005 has stressed on the complementarity of peace and justice. In a refreshingly bold statement it notes: “in the event of a conflict of interests, the claims of justice must take precedence over the dynamics

²⁶ Interview at IUST, Avantipora, Kashmir, 6 December 2014.

²⁷ Interviews with college students, Srinagar, December 2014.

of peace in the interest of peace in the long run, *lest peace becomes a repressive or retrograde ideology*” [emphasis added]. It reminds us that “what is tainted by injustice cannot be a vehicle of peace” and as several teachers particularly from the Kashmir valley have pointed out the term peace cannot be delinked from justice. Issues of justice, conflict resolution, reconciliation, dialogue, and people’s participation will have to form the matrix of a new humanizing vision of education at all levels of the school. This is a particularly important clarification for Jammu and Kashmir where the word peace evokes mixed feelings and even suspicion because it is often seen an attempt to paper over instances where justice has not been done or not seen to be done.

Interviews with teachers from the Valley conducted in 2014 suggested that the reluctance to be identified with a programme for peace that comes from New Delhi is largely due to this perception. Invariably conversations on justice particularly with college students and teacher-students lead to expressions of pain and agony over human rights violations, another rubric envisaged for the Education for Peace programme of the NCF 2005. The killing of non-combatants in the 1990s, whether by militants or security forces, the disappearances leaving behind half widows during the phase of armed militancy in Jammu and Kashmir, has left a deep and indelible mark on the psyche of the people. The displacement in the border villages including in the Jammu subdivision due to shelling and cross fire continues to create fear and havoc in the lives of people even today.

A programme on education for peace therefore needs to find safe spaces to discuss these issues in an open and transparent manner. While constituting a formal truth and reconciliation commission as suggested by the former chief minister Omar Abdullah may not materialise as of now, democratic spaces for debates and discussions in schools and colleges must not be suppressed—indeed this must form part of the programme on education for peace. If the Armed Forces Special Powers Act²⁸ can be openly debated in other parts of India, why can the same space not be opened up in schools and colleges of Jammu and Kashmir where the lives of the people are affected by it?

²⁸ The Armed Forces Special Powers Act became applicable to Jammu and Kashmir in 1990.

Extreme anger and alienation particularly among the youth on the streets of Srinagar and the lack of a forum where dissent can be expressed has been one of the reasons why stone pelting has emerged as a visible form of protest. A healthy debate on the causes of anger among the youth in schools and universities in Jammu and Kashmir including a frank exchange of views with the “providers” of security on why there is a huge trust gap is perfectly in keeping with the democratic ethos that is India’s post independence legacy. It is important for the youth to feel they can “do something” when an injustice unfolds in front of them. Education for peace in Jammu and Kashmir must therefore provide learners with an understanding of applicable laws and rules and their rights and duties rather than allow young minds to be stymied by despair that “nothing can be done.” If an issue affects the life of a student what are the concrete actions they can take in Jammu and Kashmir within existing legal parameters?

Another aspect of education for peace as envisaged by NCF 2005 related to respect for pluralism and diversity. The Position Paper on Education for Peace underscores the importance of nurturing in the students the social skills and outlook needed to live together in harmony and the need and duty to propagate a secular culture. In this connection several teachers shared that Kashmir’s own traditions of plurality has not been given space in the curriculum – in fact the rich cultural history of Kashmir is not taught in schools and colleges.²⁹ A new generation of students who have grown up in the 1990s have not been in touch with any religious and cultural tradition other than their own for circumstances beyond their control.³⁰ The notion of pluralism and co-existence is therefore neither co-related into lived experience nor is an understanding of Kashmir’s past syncretic traditions brought to the forefront. Yet as Scholar Yoginder Sikand points out “the popular Sufi traditions of Jammu as well as Kashmir, then, contain rich possibilities that could be used to develop new understandings of identity that can help articulate a new vision of religion that is grounded in universal love and concern

²⁹ A survey of social science textbooks of JKBOSE from Classes 8 to 10 indicates that there is no mention of Kashmir’s indigenous Rishi and Sufi traditions which could be used to stimulate the minds of students on faith and Kashmir’s spiritual resources for peacebuilding.

³⁰ Almost the entire Pandit (Hindu) population of the valley left for camps in Jammu, Delhi and other parts of India in the 1990s with the onset of the armed militancy in the Kashmir valley.

transcending narrowly inscribed communal boundaries.”³¹ Apart from one translated poem of G.A Mehjoor (included in the English language text of Class X) there is no mention of the non-denominational powerful spiritual resources of Jammu and Kashmir even though these have been widely translated now and could have, at the very least, been included in the literature texts.

Cooperation and social responsibility—two other values specifically identified with the programme for education for peace in the NCF of 2005—are particularly important in a militarized context. This is also where the community can play an important role and the inculcation of such values can be part of the education for personality formation right from the nursery classes. While debates on democracy, justice, human rights and diversity are clearly part of the education for citizenship for the more senior classes the inculcation of cooperation and social responsibility can begin from the onset of school.

Without reducing education for peace to a set of skills there is undoubtedly a specific set of skills associated with education for peace which can be mindfully integrated through all the classes. These could include critical thinking (including the ability to distinguish between fact and rumours, opinion and belief, reasoning skills reduction of prejudice and bias) deep listening, dialogue skills. They require a calibrated and gradual approach and there is no evidence that these skills are being inculcated mindfully among the student community. Several teachers interviewed in the Kashmir valley while recognizing the importance of these pointed out that such skill development required time and engagement and this becomes particularly difficult in Jammu and Kashmir in view of the number of days lost to strikes, *hartals* and other forms of civil protest. As a result teachers were always racing to finish the designated syllabus and any exercise requiring contemplation and critical reflection that is so essential for conflict resolution appears to be a luxury they could not afford.

Providing concrete examples of the impact of loss of school days whether due to strikes and *hartals* or devastating natural calamities like the floods of 2014, students were being taught from two parallel sets of syllabi till

³¹ Yoginder Sikand, Kashmiri Sufism: The Resources for Peace, Counter currents, 21 July 2006.

such time as the Jammu and Kashmir Board of Secondary Education clarified matters. In the midst of such tension and uncertainty the students were so stressed that it was difficult to find time for any quiet activity and contemplation. The JRM report of 2013 also notes that political unrest is a continuing phenomenon in the state and that in 2013 alone the valley suffered from a setback of about a month due to *hartals* and curfews at the commencement of a new semester. The JRM team also placed on record their horror at the shooting to death of a JKBOSE functionary in the course of conducting an examination during the disturbances of 2010 in the valley.³² Under the circumstances to talk of education for peace as a “lifestyle movement”—as the NCERT position paper on education for peace suggests—seems premature.

The Jammu and Kashmir Board of Secondary Education: Curriculum and Social Science Textbooks (Classes IX and X)

Much of the role that can be played by education in generating a climate for dialogue and peace depend on the manner in which the educational system is controlled and how content and processes are generated. In India, the 42nd amendment Act of 1976 shifted education from the state list to the concurrent list thereby granting collective jurisdiction over this subject to both the central as well as the respective state governments in the federal set up. The Jammu and Kashmir Board of School Education, tasked with framing the curriculum in schools in a synchronized manner, came into existence in the year 1975 by an act of the legislature. Significantly it mentioned the “willing participation of people in the democratic process” as part of its envisioning and highlighted the challenge of producing students who can compete globally in a cross cultural environment.

A quick overview of social science text books used in senior classes in Jammu and Kashmir offers several insights into how this can be used to further the programme of education for peace in the broadest sense that is in terms of a set of critical values and skills. While an exhaustive analysis of all textbooks in schools across the grades is not being attempted here as this would involve a paper in its own right we focus on a few examples drawn primarily from the senior class texts of JKBOSE.

³² Joint Review Mission on Teacher Education in Jammu and Kashmir, 2013, p. 7.

Geography Textbook of the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of Education: Class IX

The geography textbook of Class IX acknowledges the importance to “localize the contents to make the students aware of their state” while enabling them to understand the geography of the country. This is a laudable step and indeed begins with the first chapter itself titled India: Size and Location which has a separate page where statistics and facts on Indian Jammu and Kashmir are presented. This approach is followed in the subsequent chapters as well which introduces the student to the physical divisions of the state, the Indus river system, and the Indus Water Treaty, the natural vegetation and population. The manner in which this is interspersed with and connected with the rest of the country encourages learners to look at both unique features as well as ones distinctive to the state. This is a welcome step and the approach can be used to link it with what the NCF calls ‘peace activities.’ For instance, the silk route which is important for Jammu and Kashmir both historically and geographically can be imaginatively used to use the idea of “connectors” in conflict resolution. Project activities on the silk route can be used to understand the similarities, differences as well as links between places through the study of human and physical geography of a region—in this case within Asia.³³

Given the specific political situation in the region, it is perhaps important to ensure that “labelling” of different geographical regions of the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir is done with care. For instance, on page 3 of the textbook, while referring to the time zones in the state there is a specific reference to the difference between the two parts of the state now administered by India and Pakistan where it is stated that the “Pak held part” is only 5 hours ahead of GMT whereas the standard time of the state with India is 5 and half. The use of the term “Pak held” in the valley where the right of self determination is very much a part of the public consciousness may spark off a debate. Are the teachers ready to provide a space for this? Is there a way to use this fact about time zones to interrogate the different labels that are used to describe the different parts of the erstwhile princely state of

³³ This approach to teaching Peace through geography in the classroom is reflected in Anna Liddell, Peace Education in the Geography Classroom, GA Annual Conference presentation, 15 April 2014, available at www.geography.org.uk/download/GA_conf14%20workshop%2029.ppt

Jammu and Kashmir? For a group of 15 year olds who have possibly grown up listening to stories at home and in the public discourse over how India and Pakistan have fought over Kashmir’s territory is it enough to simply mention that there is a time difference with “Pak held part” and leave it at that or can this be used to initiate a larger discussion on how a conflict results in the same geographical area being described differently by different stakeholders? Can the students be encouraged to find out geographical facts about the other side of the Line of Control—the terrain, the crops grown, the economic activities? This would lead to a deeper consciousness of how a common ecosystem can be protected and shared even among two politically hostile neighbours.

One of the most contentious issues in Jammu and Kashmir today is the Indus Water Treaty of 1960 signed between India and Pakistan and how it has impacted the people of the Valley. While the fact that this has been introduced on page 24 under the box called “do you know” is welcome, the information provided is sketchy and misleading. The textbook states: “According to the Indus Water Treaty (1960), India can use only 20 per cent of the total water carried by the Indus river system. This water is used for irrigation in the Punjab, Haryana and southern and western parts of Punjab.” It makes no mention of the hydro power projects in the Kashmir valley and the provisions of the treaty that allow this, the ecological impact of these, the “hydro dollars” debate popularized by some civil society activists in Kashmir, and the larger basis of sharing of the waters between India and Pakistan. Given the current debates on the Indus water emerging at the top of the conflict issues between India and Pakistan a ‘peace activity’ that could be designed here is to introduce some of the provisions of the treaty and ask learners how they would re-write it if they were the negotiators in a way that ensured equity for all stakeholders.

History Textbook of the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of Education: Class IX and X

The first edition of the new textbook on History for class IX published its first edition in 2013 and revised the curriculum in keeping with the National Curriculum Framework of 2005 to help the “growth of well-informed and reasonable citizens who can in future contribute effectively in the process of nation building and all-round development.” It recognized that children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information provided to them and must be treated as participants of

learning. Moving away from the notion of history as the story of great men and their conquests, this new edition has focused on the process of inter connected change across time and space by dividing the book into 4 units—Events and Processes, Livelihoods, Economies and Societies life, and Culture and Politics.

Page 16 of the book introduces two conflicting views on liberty with one view (taken from the speech of Robespierre) espousing that “terror is nothing but justice, swift, severe and inflexible.” In the hands of a well-trained and imaginative teacher the ideas of liberty, justice and terror can be used as conceptual tools to gain a deeper understanding what had happened in Kashmir in the 1990s and its aftermath including the use of violence. During the armed rebellion who used violence, to what end and why? When is the use of violence justified? A state has legal monopoly over instruments of coercion- can this power be used and misused? Rather than avoid the issue, a series of debates on violence and non-violence could form part of the activities envisioned under education for peace as it would resonate with the contemporary history of Kashmir. One of the comments that the author heard in the course of a group discussion in Kashmir was that Bhagat Singh is revered in India despite the fact that he believed that under some circumstances violence was a legitimate tool. Does this mean that there are cases when violence is justified and does the end justify the means? Is one man’s terrorist another man’s freedom fighter? However difficult this is a topic that must be dealt with squarely as an integral component of education for peace.

The new chapter on the history of Jammu and Kashmir is a welcome component of the text book the material is descriptive rather than analytical and can be expanded into project work in groups to explore issues of diversity and tolerance. An imaginative addition has been the introduction of a chapter on history and sport and the story of cricket in a state where this is a popular sport and where the willow bat is famous. Tapping into this the chapter has used cricket to look at the interface of this sport with race, religion and caste. This topic too can be harnessed for generating a series of peace activities including the idea of sports as a connector across fault lines—a topic on which substantial literature exists in the field of conflict resolution. A discussion on the role of sports in conflict resolution in other parts of the world following a inter school match in Kashmir may well carry a powerful resonance.

The history textbook for Class X has a thoughtful chapter on Nationalism in India (chapter 2 leading on from an earlier chapter on the idea of the nation) which offers much room for critical reflection in the hands of an educator trained in the grammar of education for peace. On page 31 for instance the coloured box introduces students to a source titled “Mahatma Gandhi on Satyagraha” and follows this up with a question: what did Mahatma Gandhi mean when he said *satyagraha* is active resistance? Drawing this out to understand forms of resistance including the ones the students see in their everyday life in Jammu and Kashmir will enable them to develop critical thinking on one of the most pressing questions of our times namely the idea and ethics of nonviolence. It can also be supplemented by encouraging students to read about modern day Gandhis in other parts of India and the world—the life and struggle of Irom Sharmila for instance with whom students in Kashmir can identify because of her principled opposition to the Armed Forces Special Powers Act. These are the spaces where the textbooks can be used for novel teaching encounters that can give meaning and substance to education for peace.

Political Science Textbook of the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of Education: Class IX

The overall theme in the new edition of the textbook on Political Science for Class IX is power to the people. In keeping a focus on democracy and politics the textbook has closely followed the themes outlined in the position paper on education for peace produced for the NCF 2005. Divided into six chapters—democracy in the contemporary world, what is democracy, constitutional design, electoral politics working of institutions and democratic rights—this textbook provides wonderful opportunities for a skilful teacher to generate discussion and on education for peace. The exercises at the end of the chapters such as statements about democracy in which students are asked to agree or disagree can promote critical thinking. An imaginative exercise encourages the students to follow any newspaper for a month and collect editorials, articles and letters that have anything to do with democracy classifying them into constitutional and legal aspects of democracy, rights, politics etc. The fact that these exercises are spelt out in the textbook itself provides opportunities for aligning the material in the text book to the vision for education for peace.

Page 70 of the textbook has a section on the assembly elections which provides factual information but steers clear of the controversy on this

subject. Yet no discussion on assembly elections in Kashmir can take place without invoking the reality of rigged elections and opportunistic alliances. Elections in Jammu and Kashmir have been laced with controversy and contention. Students will inevitably ask why has this happened? Teachers have to be prepared to answer rather than evade difficult questions. What explains the increasing voter turnout in Jammu and Kashmir? How do the students interpret this? It is important to generate a debate on elections in Jammu and Kashmir and the changes that have happened so that the students can also appreciate the difference between the assembly elections of 1987 which were undoubtedly rigged on a massive scale and the elections of 2014 which were largely perceived to be free and fair. Without this critical discussion in the context of Jammu and Kashmir education for peace carries little meaning.

This is where teacher education and conflict sensitivity comes into play. Subjecting India's policy in the valley to a critical appraisal does not constitute anti national behaviour as some would have us believe. Leaving this unattended and letting the students learn about this through unverified sources is on the other hand dangerous. Indian democracy is mature enough to take criticism where this is due and a group of students in the valley discussing assembly elections—with all its flaws and abuses—is likely to strengthen rather than weaken the long term prospect for peace. A role play with students taking on the role of election commissioners could provide a context for new learning on the uses and abuses of elections in a democracy.

It is clear that textbook content and its continuous development in response to changing realities, teacher training including grounding on how the current conflict in Kashmir can be interpreted in different ways, and student led “peace activities” are the three intervention areas that have to go hand in hand. The understanding of peace as a passive notion that simply amounts to acceptance of the status quo will be unacceptable to a new generation of Kashmir is now coming into their own and exposed to the social media and information from across the world. A new conceptual alphabet of peace that links it with justice and democracy provides space for democratic dissent and allows students to develop critical thinking, dialogue and conflict resolution skills through classroom activities and engagements, acknowledges the wrongs of the past and envisions a future that is different is more in alignment with the education for peace envisaged in the NCF 2005.

Policy Considerations

Education for peace as part of the general curriculum implies that all children go to school in the first place. This drive for universal access to education should however not compromise quality. Balancing access to and quality of education is the challenge of the times along with ensuring that the social and gender gap is bridged. It may be useful for policy makers to now frame the discourse in terms of ‘access with quality’ rather than look at these as two separate and distinct goals in a hierarchy of priorities.

We also suggest that a conflict sensitive lens be applied to educational planning—one that takes into account that school infrastructure has been blown up in the armed conflict, school premises have been used by militants and security forces. It is not just mountains and difficult terrain that keeps children from going to school as the report on SSA in Jammu and Kashmir would have us believe but also fear and insecurity particularly in areas close to the line of control like Kupwara through which infiltration and counterinsurgency operations continue to occur. Armed encounters and killings may have sharply declined over the years but are by no means a legacy of the past—the death of two schoolboys who were mistaken for militants in Budgam in November 2014 is a grim reminder. Aarti Tickoo in her book *Guns and Books at Odds*³⁴ has used primary sources to examine the impact of armed conflict on students focusing in particular on the complex relationship between armed conflict, school curriculum and identity construction. Policy makers need to be alive to the reality of the conflict, its changing trajectory, and the political economy of conflict where there are some economic pay offs for the people in keeping the conflict alive. Educational planning must take these factors on board.

As the Position Paper has indicated education for peace must be implemented with vision and determination. The paper notes: “A casual and half-hearted attempt could trivialize it and aggravate cynicism about its efficacy.” At the centre of this vision as outlined in the NCF is the integration of education for peace with all subject areas in the school. While Social Science texts may be natural starting points for discussions on the implications of peace and violence it is important for teachers to seek out ways in which science and mathematics can be meaningfully

³⁴ Aarti Tickoo, *Guns and Books at Odds*, WISCOMP.

used to cultivate a culture of peace. David Wagner's views are instructive in this context. In his article titled "Another Look at Relevance: Teaching Mathematics for Peace" he writes: "The expression on the faces of most people when I describe the teaching of Mathematics to an interest in peace tell me that this idea is a strange one to many people." Wagner however makes the point that peace is about harmony and Mathematics can be seen as building connections between things. Words that relate to interconnections, interactions and relations can be used in scoring rubrics, classroom decorations and classroom resources.³⁵ By providing open ended questions students can listen to each other's mathematical ideas and "directed to see a diversity of approaches."³⁶

The heart of education for peace lies in creating safe spaces for dialogue in schools and colleges, sensitization of teachers and students to the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir and the ability to develop a multiple perspectives on it from different sources, finding time to learn skills for conflict resolution and searching for role models from the history of Kashmir, India and the world from whom values can be imbibed. While the classroom—with its school setting, teacher training and the textbook—is the anchoring point for education for peace there are other prerequisites such as parent-teacher relationship and the role of the community. Increasingly in today's world, education for peace would also involve media literacy so that educators and learners can learn how to apply a discerning eye to the misinformation and rumour mongering which can have an inflammatory impact particularly in an area with a legacy of long conflict where truth has in fact been the first casualty.

The media, whether in India or in Kashmir, has rarely presented a nuanced view of the conflict by looking at the multiplicity of actors and causes in Jammu and Kashmir. Instead it has drawn people into polarities associated with an "us" and "them" formulation. Mainstream media seems to have little time to build what Sebastian Cody calls a "polygon of perspectives" in a conflict zone.³⁷ Classroom exercises that look at how the same piece of news has been reported differently in different newspapers can be an important peace activity.

³⁵ <http://andromeda.rutgers.edu/~powellab/docs/gcedm-cmesg/wagner2005.pdf>

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Sebastian Cody of the Open Media used the term polygon of perspectives to describe a new framework of reporting to bring all contributors to the story to a "starting gate." See <http://www.globalissues.org/article/534/the-peace-journalism-option>

Assuming that children have access to schools imparting quality education—which cannot be taken for granted of course under the current circumstances—the following recommendations for generating and implementing education for peace can be made in the context of Jammu and Kashmir.

- Jammu and Kashmir needs to come up with its own vision document for education for peace which is alive to the specificities of its ongoing conflicts and its historical and cultural resources for peacebuilding. This will require a long consultative process with stakeholders across all sub regions of the state on the meaning of peace and education for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Special attention has to be paid to building a cadre of teacher educators who imbibe this vision and for this peace education as a lifestyle movement has to be integrated into teacher educator trainings. The first concern is to build the basic teacher education centres across the state and ensure that in these spaces there is an engagement with the Jammu and Kashmir vision document for education for peace.
- The classroom has to be appreciated as a space for learning and dialogue rather than transmission of knowledge. Education for peace cannot be “taught” in a didactic way and for this there is a need to change the very ethos of the classroom and build student-teacher partnerships the beginnings of which need to be integrated into the teacher training courses.
- Steps have to be taken to ensure that schools are not socially stratified spaces in Jammu and Kashmir. Reform and policy must be directed at integrating equity and inclusion as part and parcel of ‘quality education’. Without this the four pillars of lifelong learning which is integral to education for peace—learning to know, learning to do, learning to live together, and learning to be—cannot be brought into the living spaces of classrooms.³⁸

For Primary classes (Nursery to Class 5), education for peace can begin with attention to personality development. This could imply:

³⁸ The four pillars of education throughout life were spelt out in the UNESCO document “Learning The Treasure Within” available at <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0010/001095/109590eo.pdf>

- Encouraging an experiential understanding of cooperation and interconnectedness as core values of education for peace: Chapters from the environmental studies can be used to generate ideas of interdependence of life and through story-telling, role plays, children can be encouraged to share incidents from their day-to-day life where they have experienced cooperation and interconnected living.
- Appreciating diversity: Festivals and celebrations in Jammu and Kashmir as a context to impart a sense of understanding of cultural diversity, plurality and appreciation. Encouraging children to visit homes of those from other communities to find out their customs, forms of celebrations, commonalities and divergences in practices or a talking project where they interview grandparents to find out about Kashmir's syncretic past.

For Middle School (Classes 6 to 8), the emphasis could shift to critical thinking and skill for conflict transformation and creation of a safe space for expression within the school where students can debate without fear. More specifically:

- Resources in existing textbooks as well as everyday incidents could be creatively used to generate debates and discussions on human rights, democracy and justice (the three key themes identified in the education for peace template).
- The existing material in textbooks could be supplemented to ensure that students are made aware of Kashmir's own history and cultural legacy. A heritage walk across the shrines, temples and *gurdwaras* in Srinagar itself could be an awakening experience.
- Building in time for creating awareness and practice of conflict resolution skills including active listening and dialogue.

For Senior School (Classes 9 and 10), civics and history should be taught systematically with opportunities for citizenship education, which can then be made the core of education for peace. This could involve:

- Deepening the understanding of rights and duties of citizens in a comparative framework. Group projects on global perspectives on deepening democracy and people's participation can be built into the schedule and woven into the evaluation so that this is not seen as an extra "load."

- Reflections on violence and conflict transformation where the students are encouraged to come up with their own definitions of peace and cultures of peace and how this relates both to the Indian subcontinent and their state.
- Specific conflict transformation skills and awareness of different forms of protest and dissent in a democracy. Role plays and enactments of scenes from their everyday realities should be freely encouraged rather than suppressed.

Conclusion

The Position Paper on Education for Peace and the NCF 2005 have formulated an ambitious programme of education for peace as a “lifestyle movement.” In its broadest interpretation, it goes beyond the four walls of the classroom to include the homes and communities. What is required as a first step is for each state to develop its own context sensitive template for implementation of the vision. If there is active ongoing conflict and violence in the state or a movement for self-determination, the challenge for drawing up a plan for education for peace is even more critical. What is clear however is that avoiding discussion around an ongoing conflict that manifests itself in everyday life in the name of safeguarding “national security” defies the very logic of education for peace. In Kashmir, stone pelting in 2010 by angry youth including school children, the harsh reprisal by the state, the “discovery” of unmarked graves, the killing of two school boys in 2014 in Budgam due to mistaken identity, the warnings against voting in elections issued by the local militant group Hizbul Mujahidin and their killing of civilians are realities that have an impact on everyday life and the psyche of school-going children. They have to find a safe space within school where they are given the freedom to critically develop their own ideas on the manner in which the conflict continues to play out in everyday life and a context to reflect on how they can be agents of conflict transformation.

The central challenge is to stem the general air of despondency among students struggling to finish the syllabus after delays and loss of school days due to natural calamities or unrest that sometimes leaves them with little time and energy to embrace a new paradigm that is implicit in the call for education for peace. It is only when the students are motivated to debate and reflect on the meaning of peace, the modes of violence, the ethics and practice of nonviolence and how these play out in their

everyday lives that they can begin to envision alternatives for the future. In this they need to feel supported by a cadre of empathetic educators and policy makers who see the importance of classrooms as the space in which new understandings and self-reflexivity can be nurtured in students. After years of violence and unrest, the physical educational infrastructure in Jammu and Kashmir needs to be repaired and restructured. This includes building not only schools but also institutions for teacher training so as create a pool of educators who can readjust their role in a conflict zone and emerge as social healers, and facilitators of dialogue and reconciliation. The expansive vision of education for peace reflected in the NCF calls for educators, learners, parents, community members, media and policy makers to move in concert and for this a common understanding of what constitutes education for peace in Jammu and Kashmir has to first emerge.

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WISCOMP Consultative Dialogue



Experts at the Consultative Dialogue on Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

Consultative Dialogue

The Consultative Dialogue, held in March 2015, brought together senior professionals from civil society, government and the education sector to provide inputs to the WISCOMP Policy Paper on Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir. The Dialogue was a collective exploration of what could constitute Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir. It provided a space for the confluence of diverse experiences in a collaborative effort to conceptualize an approach that was inclusive, sensitive to the needs of justice and could fit into the larger paradigm of educating for peace in Jammu and Kashmir.

Overview of WISCOMP's Work in Jammu and Kashmir



*Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath,
Founder & Director,
WISCOMP, New Delhi.*

The Consultative Dialogue opened with an overview by Dr. Meenakshi Gopinath, Director, WISCOMP, of the organization's work in Jammu and Kashmir, which started in the year 2000 with a Roundtable titled "Breaking the Silence: Women's Voices from Kashmir". Recalling the palpable tension at this Roundtable (15 years ago), Gopinath shared that this was the first initiative in Delhi (since 1990) to bring together women and men from across the faultlines of region, religion and ethnicity in J&K. From this Roundtable in 2000,

WISCOMP embarked on a journey to build "Constituencies for Peace" in J&K. This, however, was a challenging process because, at the time (early-2000s), the word "peace" elicited negative reactions in J&K since it was identified with the preservation of the status quo. Not wishing to parachute into a situation with predetermined solutions, WISCOMP returned to the drawing board and conducted a listening project, travelling to diverse parts of the state to understand the aspirations and needs of the people. From this listening project, it became clear that what people truly desired was a culture where human rights were respected, where justice was delivered, and where democracy was a lived reality. Over time, the "Building Constituencies for Peace"³⁹

³⁹ The word "constituencies" alluded to spaces—that were safe and enabling—where the transformation of beliefs and attitudes could translate into action for a "just peace".

initiative evolved into a very representative dialogue group where-in each stakeholder (from J&K) sensitized herself to the competing realities in the state and recognized that one person's pain did not cancel another's pain. Rather, it was important to bring on board the differing narratives to understand the layered mosaic of diversities that existed, even politically, within Jammu and Kashmir.

The women who constituted this group—which came to be known as *Athwaas*—went on to build their own networks and became articulators of an alternative vision, not just about political autonomy or *aazadi* but also about issues concerning economic empowerment, the articulation of democratic rights and changing patriarchal mindsets. In so doing, they exercised their personal and political agency and steered clear of the discourse of victimhood.

One of the biggest gains of the *Athwaas* group was that WISCOMP succeeded in building a modicum of trust in the Valley. WISCOMP was not seen as an “agent of the Indian government” or having an “agenda” dictated by donors. This was because it did not have a pre-defined agenda, but rather helped *Athwaas* to evolve and unfold organically based on how the stakeholders perceived their relationship with the changing realities in Jammu and Kashmir. Under the leadership of Dr. Sumona DasGupta, the organization was able to steer the *Athwaas* group through difficult times with humility and transparency.

After a decade of working at the grassroots in J&K, WISCOMP felt that the education sector represented a space where intervention for a “just peace” could initiate processes of long-term social change. As Gopinath stated,

The education sector represented a space where counter-narratives which are empowering could be developed and, at the same time, a space where it could be recognized that the conflict need not be swept under the carpet and that there were constructive ways of addressing differences while building on the commonalities...There was hope that educational institutions could be perceived as liberating spaces where people who live in Jammu and Kashmir as well as those outside the state could come together to put their certitudes to scrutiny and to collectively envision spaces for pluralism and coexistence.

It was in this context that the *Hum Kadam* Education for Peace initiative was conceptualized with the encouragement and support of partners in Delhi and Kashmir. From the beginning, WISCOMP decided that this Programme would not be instrumentalist; rather it would invite educational institutions to provide spaces—for dialogues, for ruminations, for healing, for the nonviolent transformation of conflict—which could, in the long run, unleash processes of “positive peace”.⁴⁰



*Ms. Seema Kakran,
Deputy Director,
WISCOMP, New Delhi.*

Highlighting how political events in J&K influenced the contours and goals of WISCOMP’s work in the state, Ms. Seema Kakran, Deputy Director, WISCOMP, talked about the major rethink that the Education for Peace initiative underwent following the 2010 summer of protest. The sight of children (as young as seven years) protesting on the streets of Kashmir and pelting stones, when they should have been in school, led to much churning and introspection on the causes of the violence and the way forward. A few months

after this violent shutdown of the Valley, in November 2010, WISCOMP organized a consultation with civil society members from Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh—where government “interlocutors” and the Home Secretary also participated—with a view to assess what they can do to reduce the polarization and transform the ground situation to prevent another outbreak of violence.

Among the many recommendations that were made at this consultation was the idea that there needs to be some form of sustained engagement with the youth of Jammu and Kashmir to respond to the polarization and alienation, which have grown deep roots in the state. A follow-up meeting was organized with a smaller group of stakeholders in March 2011 to give concrete shape to this youth engagement. Suggestions were made to start student exchange programmes, provide spaces for Hindu and Muslim youth from J&K to express their views at various forums and to dialogue with one another. While such exchanges and dialogues provide an important space for the ‘expression of voice’, WISCOMP’s

⁴⁰ In this context, Gopinath clarified WISCOMP’s position, which is that not all conflict is bad and sometimes conflict is necessary for constructive social change (particularly in situations where structural violence is endemic).

primary concern was with respect to the sustenance of these interactions over a long period of time. From this emerged the idea of establishing institutional partnerships between schools and colleges in J&K and Delhi. The idea was to offer a space for face-to-face dialogues between school and college youth (in J&K and Delhi) to reduce prejudice (inter-community/inter-region), to alleviate the sense of hurt/anger that exists among the youth in Kashmir, and to address the lack of awareness/ignorance (and accompanying stereotyping) among Delhi youth about the situation in J&K.

An important dimension of this initiative was the involvement of educators at the partner schools/colleges so that it could be sustained over a longer period of time. Capacity building workshops were designed for the educators so that they may continue with this work at their respective institutions, independently, with or without the support of WISCOMP.

In addition, taking on board some of the learnings from WISCOMP's earlier initiative in J&K—Building Constituencies for Peace—Kakran shared that the Hum Kadam Education for Peace initiative addressed the immediate economic/professional needs of the participants along with the long-term goal of trust-building. Many of these immediate needs resonated with the idea of addressing the structural causes of the conflict. With this in mind, WISCOMP collaborated with the Foundation for Academic Excellence and Access (FAEA), which provides scholarships to Kashmiri youth from socio-economically marginalized groups to study at premier educational institutions and builds their professional capacity through trainings in soft skills, entrepreneurial skills and leadership development.

Opportunities and Challenges to Educating for Peace in J&K

Dr. Sumona DasGupta, a peacebuilding scholar-practitioner, Member of the Calcutta Research Group and author of the WISCOMP Policy Paper on Education for Peace, presented a summary of the key findings of her research on this subject.

Drawing on her textual analysis of the NCERT Position Paper on Education for Peace, the National Curriculum Framework 2005 (NCF) and the new textbooks produced by the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education as well as first-hand interviews conducted with

students and teachers in the Kashmir Valley in December 2014, DasGupta advocated for a new context-specific understanding of Education for Peace without which this term stands in the danger of being hollowed out. She cautioned against the tendency to reduce Education for Peace to a set of skills (while acknowledging the NCF's focus on overlapping values and skills). While skill-building is critical (particularly as far as the educator is concerned), she urged educationists to not lose sight of the diverse range of ideas enshrined within the NCF.

Foregrounding some of the challenges of working with the template of Education for Peace in the Kashmir Valley, DasGupta pointed to four theme clusters, which are highlighted in the NCF and the NCERT Position Paper. These are:

- a commitment to democracy, human rights and justice;
- tolerance, pluralism and respect for cultural diversity;
- cooperation and social responsibility; and
- nonviolent conflict resolution and peacebuilding.

The three values in the first cluster were linked and extremely relevant to the conditions in Kashmir. One reality that echoed in DasGupta's interviews with educators in the Valley was that while textbooks talked about democracy, human rights and justice (and this was even taught in the classroom), the lived experience of a Kashmiri outside the classroom was one of constant violation of these very values. Some of the teachers also shared, in their conversations with DasGupta, that when students from Kashmir visited other parts of India, they saw the manner in which democratic freedoms were enjoyed by other citizens—and this was so very different from their own lived reality in the Valley. This enhanced the sense of alienation and mistrust that Kashmiris felt towards the Indian state.

DasGupta shared that the NCERT Position Paper on Education for Peace has a powerful resonance in the Valley. This is because it states that in the event of a conflict between the “imperatives of justice” and the “dynamics of peace”, the imperatives of justice must prevail in the interest of peace in the long run. Some Kashmiri teachers found this Paper to be extremely empowering because it was a national document which unequivocally prioritized the imperative of justice over the imperative of peace in the interest of “sustainable peace”. In fact, the

NCERT Paper goes on to state that if the imperative of justice is not prioritized, then peace will become a retrogressive idea.

When the second set of ideas embedded in the NCF—pluralism and respect for cultural diversity—are contextualized in the context of Kashmir, DasGupta said that the experience of living with other communities is severely limited after the exodus of the Kashmiri Pandits. On a day-to-day basis, there is little chance of interacting with members of other communities. The Valley has become a mono-cultural space

for reasons totally beyond the control of the young people living there today.⁴¹ Sharing the learnings from a research study that WISCOMP had commissioned (a few years ago) to look at non-denominational spiritual resources for peace in Kashmir, DasGupta said that while there were several such non-denominational resources, she did not find these reflected in school textbooks, except for one reference to Lal Ded in a poem in an English literature book. There is an urgent need for the inclusion of indigenous peace resources in school textbooks in Kashmir. A whole generation of youth has been raised in the Valley without any awareness or understanding of the rich spiritual resources for peace and coexistence embedded in their culture for centuries.

The third set of ideas—cooperation and social responsibility—are integral to efforts to build shared solidarities across the faultlines of conflict and extremely relevant to Kashmir. Likewise, the fourth set of ideas—nonviolent conflict resolution and peacebuilding—which involves the use of skills such as deep listening, critical thinking and dialogue, hold significance for the contemporary challenges that face Kashmir.



*Dr. Sumona DasGupta,
Peacebuilding Scholar-
Practitioner,
New Delhi.*

⁴¹ Wajahat Habibullah, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi, and a former IAS officer who served in J&K for several years, articulated a different view on this issue stating that there is an immense and under-acknowledged diversity of identities within the state in spite of the exodus of the Pandits. This diversity is reflected in the presence of Sikhs, Gujjars, Bakarwals and Sunnis and Shias (within the Muslim community). According to him, what however is disappointing is the increasing feeling of difference among the communities.

DasGupta shared two pictures (juxtaposed on a slide), to foreground the central conundrum that she grappled with while writing the Policy Paper. The first picture—Kashmiri women showing their voter identity cards during the recent Assembly elections in the state (which were perceived as free and fair)—demonstrates that the institutional mechanisms of democracy are working in Kashmir. The Assembly has emerged as a vibrant space where interesting debates are taking place; Panchayat elections were held recently in the Valley; and the High Court has been responding to a host of Habeas Corpus cases. The second picture shows a group of Kashmiri youth throwing stones, reflecting that the Valley is still a place of exception, a place where the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act and the Public Safety Act generate a huge amount of debate. The armed forces are still very visible in civilian spaces even after the armed insurgency has petered out. In fact, they continue to occupy school and university buildings in the Valley and even land reserved for higher education in the state.

These two pictures signify the unresolvable tension and dilemma in Kashmir. They represent the contradiction between the vision of Education for Peace and the lived reality of the people in the region. DasGupta in fact noted that Kashmir is not “post-conflict”. Irrespective of the number of tourist footfalls, the discontent, the angst, the grievance and the alienation remain palpable. The difference, perhaps, is that the form of protest has changed. Stones have replaced guns and there are other forms of nonviolent protests. J&K is a state that does not feel comfortable with the idea of India and there is no getting away from this. The question, then, is how does one work with this reality?

DasGupta made three recommendations. These could be useful to those who frame curriculum at the national and state levels as well as to the community of peacebuilders who have taken steps to introduce Education for Peace in schools and colleges in J&K:

1. The state of Jammu and Kashmir needs to come up with its own vision document on Education for Peace. The NCF highlights the importance of children constructing their own knowledge. In the context of J&K, this implies that they must be allowed to construct knowledge that draws on their experiences of conflict and violence—whether in the home, on the streets or in public spaces. As DasGupta put it, the key question is:

Do we have a cadre of teachers in Kashmir who can deal with the explosive potentiality of this? Can teachers constructively channelize the anger of their students into something that looks like a debate or dialogue so that children can appreciate the fact that there are multiple stakeholders, multiple truths and multiple narratives...and most significantly, that one truth does not refute another truth?

2. Teacher training or re-training is vital to the implementation of Education for Peace programmes in Kashmir. There is only one government teacher training (B.Ed) college in Srinagar and the rest of the institutions are private players driven by the motive of profit without any checks on the quality/content of their teacher training programmes. Private colleges are not invested in creating a cadre of social healers, which is what Kashmiri students expect their teachers to be. In this context, DasGupta shared that, in the interviews, teachers kept saying that they have to play the role of counsellors/healers, whether they were equipped to do this or not.

We have to provide teachers with skills in dialogue facilitation and psycho-social counselling. There is no getting away from this reality because children come to teachers with the expectation that they already have these skills. So, whether we want to or not, we have to equip them with these skills.

3. Education for peace cannot be taught in a didactic manner. There is a need to change the ethos of the classroom to build student-teacher partnerships, parent-teacher partnerships and partnerships between the community and the school. There is a whole lot of meaning-making that needs to be done through these partnerships. And this can only happen through multi-stakeholder consultations. As DasGupta put it, “The heart of Education for Peace lies in creating safe spaces for dialogue in schools and colleges.”

In her concluding remarks, DasGupta stated that dialogue and debate were the only way forward in Kashmir. “It is much better to have a vibrant classroom which is an open space for dialogue and where a polygon of perspectives is discussed, rather than stifling debate and grievance, which will only bring stones back to the Valley.” These recommendations, if implemented, can help form the new conceptual alphabet of Education for Peace in J&K.

Commenting on the unique challenges that teachers in Kashmir confront, Mr. Wajahat Habibullah, Chairperson of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi, and a former IAS officer who served in J&K for several years, disagreed with the practice of attempting to insulate educational institutions from the political environment in the Valley. Partly because of this practice, there is a complete disconnect between what is taught in Kashmiri schools and what the children believe in and experience outside the school campus. Value education (as highlighted in the NCF) is particularly problematic in a context like Kashmir because while textbooks may extoll democracy as an important value, Kashmiri children do not have a lived experienced of this value. Habibullah in fact noted that the people of Kashmir have not been able to experience even a semblance of the kind of democracy that the rest of India has enjoyed. Referring to the definition of Education for Peace in the Policy Paper as inclusive of human rights education, conflict resolution education and development education, Habibullah urged for the integration of these into the school and college curriculum in Kashmir. He also urged WISCOMP to engage on a sustained basis with the under-30 generation in Kashmir since this group has grown up in an environment of outright violence, quite distinct from what earlier generations experienced. The involvement of the youth in peacebuilding was thus underscored.



*Mr. Wajahat Habibullah,
Chairperson,
Commonwealth Human
Rights Initiative,
New Delhi.*

Prof. Varun Sahni, Chairperson, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi (and a former Vice-Chancellor of Jammu University) made reference to a research report by a Bangalore-based private company, which conducts tests for undergraduate students to assess the different skills that they possess and, based on this, provides career-oriented advice. To convince universities in J&K about the utility of this Programme, the company conducted a sample survey among undergraduates in the state. The survey had about 35 indicators and criteria. Sahni shared that there were only two indicators on which undergraduate students in J&K scored way above students in other parts of India. On all other indicators, they were somewhat lower than the average. Those two indicators were: their ability to deal with uncertainty and their ability to deal with difference.

While this was astonishing, it perhaps should not have come as a surprise. As Sahni put it, “This is a generation of children that has grown up with uncertainty and difference. And they have developed the resources to deal with it.” Referring to research done in cognitive psychology on children and learning, Sahni said that children pick up a lot from their environment and develop their own very robust resources to deal with the difficult situations in which they find themselves. It is therefore important to acknowledge the reality that children will bring their experiences with the conflict into the classroom and they will construct their knowledge based on what they witness in their homes, in schools, and in public places.

In this context, Sahni pointed to the important role that the teacher can play and stressed on the need for teacher education reforms. He attributed the sad state of affairs with respect to teacher training to a variety of factors, some of which include: the absence of linkages between teacher training programmes and the local situation (particularly with respect to the conflict), institutional malpractice, the dominance of politician owners (since educational institutions are mostly owned by politicians) and the overwhelmingly commercial motive of private colleges to increase enrolment numbers (at the cost of the quality of curriculum) by luring students from across North India.

Sahni urged WISCOMP to foreground the idea of sustainability in its interventions in J&K, stating that Education for Peace should not be confined to one-off events or time-bound/funder-driven projects. The lack of follow-up, even when such initiatives were received well and had demonstrated their worth, posed a serious challenge to the larger goal of Education for Peace in the state. He cited the example of a four-day J&K university festival (*Virasat-e-Riyasat*) which he initiated during his tenure as Vice Chancellor of Jammu University. The festival was a big success and received generous sponsorships from the government, J&K Bank and private companies in the state. Since it was received so positively, a decision was taken to convert it into an annual feature, traveling each year from one university to the other in the state.



*Prof. Varun Sahni,
Chairperson, Centre for
International Politics,
Organization and
Disarmament, Jawaharlal
Nehru University,
New Delhi.*

However, in practice, the festival was relegated to a one-off event with support for its sustenance reducing in the second year. Reflecting on this experience, Sahni said,

When we are working to establish education as a transformatory mechanism or as a tool for social change, there has to be an iterative and cumulative aspect. Iteration is extremely important because otherwise it becomes just a one-off event with little impact in the long-run.

Highlighting the dismal state of teacher education in J&K, Prof. Anita Rampal, Dean, Faculty of Education, University of Delhi, Delhi, said that Kashmir is quite cut-off from many of the educational initiatives for teacher training in India, as a result of which it is years behind. This is true for the situation at both the school and university levels. For instance, Rampal shared that teacher training institutes in Kashmir are still using learning theories from the 1940s and are nowhere close to social constructivism, which is the buzzword in teacher education programmes in the rest of the country. She proposed the incorporation of such contemporary learning theories and building the educators' capacity to practice critical thinking. The gap (between J&K and the rest of India) is also with respect to how education is perceived and how educators look at issues related to peace and justice.

Rampal, however, added the rider that school systems across the country are facing challenges in their efforts to implement constructivism. The practice of critical thinking is difficult for educators who have been socialized in top-down pedagogies wherein content is dictated and students engage in rote learning. But within Kashmir, the challenge is certainly more daunting. Rampal cited the example of a residential training that she had organized for in-service Kashmiri teachers where they told her that this was the first training programme they had attended and, thanks to this, they finally "felt like academics"!

In this context, Rampal underscored the need for a teacher education programme as part of the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education (JKBOSE) as also forums/spaces which helped educators to express themselves freely, reflect on their own teaching styles (and how they use textbooks) and discuss the structures of the education system within which they work. As a specific recommendation, she proposed that the J&K Department of Education organize an annual 10-day



*Prof. Anita Rampal,
Dean, Faculty of
Education, University
of Delhi, Delhi.*

workshop for teacher educators outside the state to enable them to interact with counterparts who work in different social and cultural settings and, through this, facilitate a cross-fertilization of ideas and approaches. Steering clear of any kind of pontificating, the workshops could use methodologies such as collaborative research and action research. Kabir Vajpeyi's BALA (Building As a Learning Asset) Programme of the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* was offered as a model that could be considered in J&K schools. On the subject of textbook content, Rampal suggested that these be more locally rooted and

responsive to the turbulence and violence that the state has experienced over the last two decades (rather than being Delhi-centric).

Interestingly, Rampal shared that the infrastructure of some of the schools that she visited in the different districts of Kashmir was fairly good, but what was lacking was the feeling that the school represented a space for learning and creativity—and this links back to the motivation and capacity of the teacher to make it such a space. Institutionally, she suggested that schools introduce activities such as newsletters, student camps and exchange programmes (with children from different regions and cultural settings) and use innovative tools such as student-led research, creative writing, films and the arts.

Dr. Shweta Singh, Assistant Professor in the Department of International Relations at South Asian University, New Delhi, opened her comments with two questions: Does education play the role of a connector or a divider in Kashmir?⁴² How do schools respond to the challenges posed by the conflict and what role do they see for themselves in the context of the peace process in the region?

Drawing on the Do No Harm Framework⁴³ (designed by Mary Anderson), Singh introduced the analytical tool of Connectors and

⁴² Singh drew on research from her monograph titled *Connectors and Dividers: Challenges and Prospects for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding* (commissioned and published by Regional Centre for Strategic Studies, Colombo).

⁴³ Anderson, Mary, B. (1999) *Do No Harm: How Aid Can Support Peace or War*, Lynne Rienner, Boulder, CO.

Dividers (C&D), which is informed by the idea of conflict sensitivity and which offers five variables as a compass to uncover the hidden potential of Education for Peace on the ground. These five variables are: symbols, occasions, systems and institutions, attitudes and actions, and shared/different experiences. Singh invited reflection on how education systems engage—or should engage—with these five variables.

She referred to conversations with youth from Sopore (which at one point of time had the largest number of B.Ed colleges in Kashmir) to highlight “memory and memorialization” as important challenges that must be taken on board by educational institutions in the Valley. Sopore is a highly radicalized area of the Valley and the narratives that recurred in Singh’s interviews with boys and girls here were those of memory, pain and victimhood; shame, humiliation and violence; and a dehumanization of the other. The identity of the Kashmiri Muslim, which in itself represents a complex narrative, was foregrounded to demonstrate how this is perceived as contradictory to the idea of “mainstream India” or “shining India”. Reference was made to American psychiatrist James Gilligan’s theory of “emotional shame” as a primary cause of violence, which was confirmed during the course of Singh’s interviews with youth in Sopore. How, then, should education address the idea of shame/humiliation? Education plays a role in the legitimization or de-legitimization of the structures of conflict and violence. It can itself be a source of conflict depending on how it is structured and what it promotes: Does it promote conformity to a single set of values or does it promote the development of identity-based institutions or encourage shared institutions? In this context, Singh posited the need for deeper discussions on the normative and ontological frames of Education for Peace that WISCOMP envisioned in J&K.



*Dr. Shweta Singh,
Assistant Professor,
South Asian University,
New Delhi.*

Commenting on WISCOMP’s Education for Peace initiative, she said that its greatest accomplishment was with respect to the intangible outcomes, such as prejudice reduction and the re-humanization of “the other” through attitudinal and behavioural shifts. WISCOMP’s methodology of providing safe spaces for dialogue was also appreciated as was its emphasis on using a “generational approach to peacebuilding”.

As a step forward, Singh proposed that future interventions could be carried out following a mapping of the schools across J&K. This recommendation was made in the interest of ensuring that children from all the districts of the state (representing government and private schools as well as madrassas and army-run educational institutions) are included in the programme).⁴⁴ She cautioned that “entry” to each of these four categories of schools would pose a different set of challenges and WISCOMP would thus need to customize and refine the strategy of “gaining entry” to each of these categories of schools. The need to reach out to the not-so-conventional spaces, particularly moving beyond English-speaking schools, was underscored.

Sharing the work of NCERT (National Council for Educational Research and Training) in the area of Education for Peace, Prof. Saroj Yadav, Academic Dean at the National Institute of Education, NCERT, New Delhi, talked about a teachers’ manual titled *Ways to Peace* which had been published by the Elementary Education Department of the Council and which could be used as a resource for trainings with educators. In the context of J&K, she said that some schools in the state were using NCERT textbooks and the Council had been working with them to improve the quality of education they provided. NCERT has also built linkages with the Jammu and Kashmir State Board of School Education (JKBOSE) to improve textbook content and pedagogy, using the constructive approach. In addition, Yadav underscored the need to foreground topics such as life skill development and population health awareness in deliberations leading up to the National Policy on Education.



*Prof. Saroj Yadav,
Academic Dean, National
Institute of Education,
NCERT, New Delhi.*

Dr. Sushobha Barve, Executive Director, Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, New Delhi, shared her experience of developing a peace education curriculum in consultation with Kashmiri teachers. For four years, she used this curriculum to facilitate teacher training programmes in the Valley. At the end of this four-year period, CDR brought together a core group of 25 teachers from all the batches for a final workshop to

⁴⁴ Singh shared that there are 14,531 schools in Kashmir of which 851 are madrassas, 30 are the army goodwill schools and the remaining 13,650 are government or private schools.



*Dr. Sushobha Barve,
Executive Director,
Centre for Dialogue and
Reconciliation,
New Delhi.*

discuss how this initiative could be taken forward (as it was proving difficult for the organization to financially sustain the teacher training workshops). All the teachers, without exception, said that unless such trainings were institutionalized—wherein they became a part of both the teacher education curriculum as well as the school syllabi—it would be difficult for educators to use in the classroom what they had learnt at the trainings.

Taking on board this feedback, she went to the J&K State Board of School Education where government officials kept her in discussion for a few years. Finally, they asked CDR for money as an incentive to include peace education modules in the school curriculum. As a result, CDR closed its engagement with JKBOSE and continued to work with Kashmiri youth through other peacebuilding projects.

Dr. Susheela Bhan, Founder and Honorary Director of the Institute of Peace Research and Action, New Delhi, focused on the need to revive the rich syncretic heritage of Kashmir (reflected in the teachings of Sheikh Nuruddin Rishi and Lal Ded) and incorporate this into school curricula. The values of nonviolence, compassion and empathy were the hallmark of this heritage and, even today, beneath the veneer of the conflict, Kashmiris continue to live by these values. Yet sadly, she stated that this history is not taught in schools and a whole generation of Kashmiri youth has grown up with a very limited understanding of their syncretic past. In this context, Bhan suggested that teacher training programmes build the educator's capacity to develop a nuanced understanding of Kashmir's heritage and how this may be used to respond to the complex challenges posed by the conflict. She also drew the audience's attention to challenges posed by the current reality, which is that today there are 32 lakh drug addicts in Kashmir—the overwhelming majority of them below 35 years of age. How do educators respond to such challenges?

Reminiscing about her experiences as an educator in Kashmir (pre-1989), Ms. Neerja Mattoo, a senior Kashmiri writer and poetess, talked about a time in Kashmir when people entered the teaching profession because



Mr. Shankar Musafir, Programme Officer, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, New Delhi; Dr. Susheela Bhan, Founder and Honorary Director, Institute of Peace Research and Action, New Delhi; and Mr. Mohit Sippy, Senior Programme Manager, British High Commission, New Delhi.

they had a passion to teach and a desire to make a contribution to society. Educational institutions represented vibrant and free spaces where mixed groups of students—Punjabis, Kashmiri Pandits and children of civil servants and army officers from across the country—studied together and learnt important lessons in coexistence.⁴⁵ Post-1989, this culture of pluralism was wiped out with the emergence of the gun. And today, as Mattoo put it,



Dr. Neerja Mattoo, senior Kashmiri writer and poetess.

...the situation is such that we have to rebuild the bridges that we have burnt... We have to reintroduce ourselves to a holistic culture and history that were once ours... I had great difficulty in convincing the J&K Board of School Education to include texts on Lal Ded, Nand Rishi and contemporary Kashmiri writers. All I managed was that the Board agreed to include three pieces in the elective course on literature.

⁴⁵ Mattoo shared an example from the 1970s when a girl from Assam was the president of the student's council at Women's College, Srinagar.



*Prof. Gurpreet Mahajan,
Centre for Political
Studies, School of Social
Sciences, Jawaharlal
Nehru University,
New Delhi.*

Prof. Gurpreet Mahajan, Centre for Political Studies, School for Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, took cognizance of the fact that the situation is extremely complex and defies an easy beginning. She pointed to the challenges of implementing the different elements of Education for Peace, which include human rights education, conflict resolution education and development education. Each element pulls in a different direction. For example, if institutions include education for human rights, they have to talk about the demand for self-determination. Do teachers have the capacity to address this question?

In this context, Mahajan suggested that WISCOMP (and other institutions working in this area) prioritize which concept they wish to address first. And even as they do this, she felt there was a need to build some kind of a balance between bringing into the classroom the experiences of conflict from the outside and yet at the same time drawing some kind of a boundary, however permeable and artificial it may be. This was necessary to bring some sense of ‘normalcy’ to the classroom. She proposed that one way to address the contradiction between the values taught in the school and the lived realities of the children outside was to include the experiences of ordinary Kashmiris in classroom discussions and to give voice to these in the textbooks.

Dr. Jyoti Bose, Director, Springdales School, New Delhi, drew on Jacques Delors’ four pillars of learning to establish what educational institutions should aspire to be. The four pillars are: learning to know; learning to do; learning to be; and learning to live together.

Responding to comments on the relationship between education and the political conflict in Kashmir, Bose said that any kind of education is political and its aims will be related to ideologies of some kind. There is, however, a danger if education progressively becomes party



*Dr. Jyoti Bose,
Principal, Springdales
School, Dhaula Kuan,
New Delhi.*

political. As the head of a school, she felt that educationists have to steer clear of what they are made to perpetuate as the status quo and their aim should be to work for a humane society within the context of the aforementioned four pillars of learning.

She felt that children should be exposed to the reality of conflict. It is only when they are exposed to the suffering and pain that violence unleashes that they will develop the values of empathy and sensitivity and an appreciation for peace. While this is particularly relevant for regions of conflict such as Kashmir, she talked about initiatives that Springdales School had taken to sensitize students to the different forms of violence that surround them—for instance, gender-based violence such as domestic abuse, sexual assault and female foeticide/infanticide, which are widespread in the National Capital Region.

As heads of schools, we have to be bold enough to break through the dictated curriculum and have a determination to build in those values that sensitize students to the realities of life. We must have the boldness to get out of the mould of the textbook. Books are an aid...for the exams, they are a guidebook. But they are not sufficient for the larger goal of Education for Peace. For this, our teachers need to be trained first and they need to be convinced that what we are doing will contribute to positive peace.

Educational institutions in Kashmir must provide spaces for children to voice their own views, even if these don't conform to ideas in the textbooks. Inculcating in students a feeling of agency and the skill to protest in a responsible way are important processes through which the more long-term goal of conflict resolution may be accomplished. In this context, Bose shared examples of activities carried out at Springdales School where students were introduced to nonviolent protest movements and how songs, poetry and theatre were used to voice dissent.

Drawing on his experiences of initiating an “accelerated learning programme”⁴⁶ for primary school children in Iraq (after the 2003 US-led invasion), Mr. Amit Kaushik, Director for Education and Skill

⁴⁶ This programme involved enabling those children whose schooling had been disrupted by the war in Iraq to complete the six-year primary school cycle in a period of three years.

Development (Practice Head) at IPE Global, New Delhi, introduced four elements, which may be considered by education planners in J&K:

- Infrastructure: Rebuilding schools affected by the conflict.
- Curriculum development.
- Teacher training.
- Counselling for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder: Every school had to have a certain number of teachers who were trained to work with children exhibiting symptoms of PTSD.



*Mr. Amit Kaushik,
Director, Education and
Skill Development
(Practice Head), IPE
Global, Delhi.*

Although the challenges that education systems confront in regions of political conflict are complex and daunting, Kaushik articulated the view that some of the problems discussed in the context of Kashmir were in fact true for states across India—for instance, poor teacher training, corruption, high percentage of teacher absenteeism, schools owned by politicians (and consequent political interference), et al. Yet, he acknowledged that due to the lack of industry in Kashmir, programmes that focus on skilling young people and building their professional capacity face a seemingly insurmountable challenge: After the youth have completed the

skill development course, where will they be placed? In the absence of industrialization, the percentage of professional placements is abysmally low for Kashmiris. This exacerbates the level of frustration since Kashmiri society has a large number of young people who are trained but who don't have adequate professional opportunities to earn a livelihood. This is a major challenge.

Issue-specific recommendations

Several issue-specific recommendations were also made at the Consultative Dialogue. These are shared here with a view to incorporate them into WISCOMP's blueprint of its future work in J&K and other parts of India. WISCOMP plans to incorporate these in its presentation of the Policy Paper to the Department of Education (J&K) and the Ministry of Human Resource Development, New Delhi.

Transforming teacher education programmes through a focus on content, pedagogy and values

One of the most significant recommendations was with respect to the content and pedagogy of the B.Ed programmes in J&K. With reference to content, participants articulated the need for professional development in the area of “educating for peace” and how this may be integrated with other subjects. With reference to pedagogy, the need to train educators in experiential learning, elicitive skills and new teaching methods such as art-based learning and heritage education (where local heritage sites are used in teaching) was highlighted. This shift, both in content and pedagogy, was perceived as critical for larger Education for Peace efforts because of its powerful impact on teacher-student relationships. If teaching becomes student-centred—where the child is viewed as the “end-consumer”—then the teacher-student relationship will transform into a compassionate one, enabling children to voice their views without fear or inhibition. Such relationships are also vital to the success of new pedagogies, which encourage children to embark on journeys of experiential learning.



Dr. Deepti Priya Mehrotra, Educationist and Social Activist, New Delhi.

There was also the view that the overarching emphasis on reforming B.Ed programmes was concealing a more important issue, which was the cultivation of a love for children and a passion for teaching in educators. Dr. Deepti Priya Mehrotra, a Delhi-based educationist and social activist, felt that schools would do better if they built the teachers’ capacity to create a culture of empathy in the classroom. She suggested that aside from reforms related to the content and pedagogy of teacher education programmes, the focus should be on modules for self-development, counselling and the

cultivation of empathy.⁴⁷ This would go a long way in helping the educator to create a classroom space that was perceived by children to be safe—both psychologically and physically. But for this, the educator must demonstrate the willingness to understand what is going on with

⁴⁷ For this, Mehrotra proposed a detailed mapping of the teacher education institutions in Kashmir (government and private) as a starting point for the selection of a cohort of teacher training colleges for a long-term intervention.

the children within the home/community and s/he must have the skill to bring these experiences into the education space.⁴⁸



*Ms. Aditi Misra,
Principal, Delhi Public
School, Gurgaon.*

Ms. Aditi Misra, Principal, Delhi Public School, Gurgaon, called for a shift in focus towards those educators who had demonstrated a love for children and teaching as opposed to those with B.Ed. degrees. If this shift were made, she felt that the first necessary step would have been taken in creating a happier and more constructive environment in schools. This had worked in the context of her school (DPS Gurgaon) and could be considered in Kashmir. This approach has also been used successfully at *Shiksha Kendra* where over 1000 children

from backward villages in Haryana have enrolled as first-generation learners. According to Misra, this model has worked *not* because teachers have B.Ed degrees but because “we have created an environment of empathy in the school...making it a space where teachers join the school because they love children and have a passion for teaching...and where children come to school because they love what happens in that space and learn lessons that make sense in the context of their own lives.”

Wajahat Habibullah and Deepti Priya Mehrotra proposed that teacher education programmes in Kashmir must include trainings in psychosocial counselling, trauma healing and self-development. This would enable educators to identify and respond to PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) symptoms in children as well as cultivate a feeling of “inner peace” in them, even as they continue to live in a region of conflict. The widespread prevalence of PTSD in the Valley poses a serious challenge to the work of educators and this must be addressed at the institutional level. Foregrounding the need to *first* focus on the psychosocial healing of teachers, Dr. Kalyani Akalamkam, Senior Lecturer, Department of Elementary Education, Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi, reminded participants that teachers are also victims of PTSD

⁴⁸ Mehrotra acknowledged the challenge that this posed because the overwhelming focus (in J&K as well as in schools across the country) is on passing exams and teachers often feel that there is no time for such engagements.

and many, in fact, do not have access to any kind of help. If teachers themselves are not at peace, how can they be expected to help their students or teach peace? In this context, Akalamkam proposed the methods of journaling, storytelling and mentoring to facilitate some degree of healing for the teachers *before* expecting them to counsel their students.

Urging WISCOMP to focus on the relationship between school education and higher education, Amit Kaushik stated that the higher education system provides the teachers who feed back into the school system. Education planners must therefore focus on the content and pedagogies used in institutions of higher education and how these influence the quality of education at the school level.

Textbooks, technology and new media as elements for social transformation

While participants spoke in unison of the need for an in-depth analysis of textbooks that are in use in J&K, they also suggested looking beyond this medium of education. A strong pitch was made for exploring the transformatory potential of technology and how educational planners could use new media as a tool to promote Education for Peace. For example, in recent years, video games have emerged as a popular technology for the under-30 generation. In this context, it was suggested that educationists could engage with the community of gamers and partner with them to harness the powerful potential of video games in efforts to educate for peace.

Urging educators to tap into the peace potential of social media, Dr. Suba Chandran, Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi, posed the question: “If Facebook and Twitter are my primary modes of understanding...if I get my primary inputs about the conflict from social media, how much will changing the school curriculum help me to address issues concerning the conflict?” Shweta Singh added that Kashmir has the highest number of Facebook users in India and the use of smart phones among the youth is the highest in the state of J&K.



*Dr. D. Suba Chandran,
Director, Institute of
Peace and Conflict
Studies, New Delhi.*

Varun Sahni pointed to the evidence emerging from regions of conflict, which indicates that the appropriate use of new media/technologies can accomplish two outcomes:

- It can reduce inter-community/inter-region polarization and bridge divides between students.
- It can help educators to overcome the problems posed by predetermined content (which is a huge shortcoming of the Indian education system). Technology makes it possible for education planners to envision curriculum designs/frameworks through which the same set of values and ideas can be introduced to different children, differently.

It was also suggested that the education sector be opened to non-traditional players such as civil society groups and the private sector who can make a significant contribution to the effective use of non-conventional technology to meet the goals of Education for Peace.

The inclusion of creative pedagogies and experiential methods

Innovative methods such as art, music, theatre, puppetry, filmmaking, cinema studies, cultural exchanges and home-stays need to find a more central place in Education for Peace programmes. Ms. Anamika Gupta, Programme Officer, Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development, New Delhi, shared the example of an NGO that used creative and unconventional educational tools in its work with girls (who had lost their parents to the militancy) in the border districts of J&K. The cultural exchanges were a particularly successful approach since the Kashmiri girls were able to meet with their peers from different parts of the country and exchange ideas on youth aspirations and dreams. This initiative was sustained over several years and it succeeded in influencing the attitudes of not just the girls, but also their micro communities on issues such as Hindu-Muslim polarization, alienation vis-à-vis the Indian state, et al. A similar experience was shared by the faculty members of Lady Shri Ram College (New Delhi) who had facilitated home-stays and educational exchanges for young



*Anamika Gupta,
Programme Officer,
Mahatma Gandhi
Institute of Education for
Peace and Sustainable
Development,
New Delhi.*

women from Kashmir and Delhi. As Dr. Kasturi Kanthan, Consultant and a Retired Faculty Member of LSR, put it, “These creative methods of interaction generated an understanding of a universally shared humanity that could coexist with many unique differences.”

Highlighting the significant role that civil society organizations (located outside of educational institutional spaces) can play in this sphere, Ms. Shabnam Hashmi, founder of two leading grassroots peacebuilding organizations, *Sahmat* and *Anhad* in New Delhi, shared her experiences of bringing together Kashmiri and Delhi youth through the mediums of poetry, film and theatre. In her efforts to create oases of democracy in Kashmir, she intervened through the cultural sphere by organizing literary and film festivals and Sufi music concerts for Kashmiri students—thus highlighting their own heritage of a composite culture. These also had a professional development dimension wherein young people interested in pursuing careers in acting, theatre and filmmaking, could enroll, get trained and be placed with organizations outside Kashmir. She shared the example of a theatre workshop with actor Nasirruddin Shah which was held in the Valley and whose participants now have established careers in acting.



*Ms. Shabnam Hashmi,
Founding Trustee, Anhad
and Founder, Sahmat,
New Delhi.*

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Buy-in from micro and macro communities

The success of Education for Peace initiatives is greatly dependent on the support provided by the micro and macro communities of the students. This engagement requires considerable time, energy, strategizing and humility. Suba Chandran argued for a greater focus on parenting as a vital and overlooked influence outside of the school system—one that could play a pivotal role in Education for Peace initiatives in Kashmir. This view was seconded by faculty members of Lady Shri Ram College (New Delhi) who had worked with the army goodwill schools in Kashmir. They suggested that specific approaches be designed institutionally to connect the home and the school/college. Teachers must regularly communicate with the parents so that they may also become supporters of the Education for Peace efforts made by the school. As Kasturi Kanthan put it, “If the teacher is using a peace education lens in the class but if this is not being affirmed or experienced within the home, then the teacher will not get very far in her efforts.”



Dr. Kasturi Kanthan, Consultant, Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi; Dr. Kalyani Akalamkam, Senior Lecturer, Department of Elementary Education, Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi; and Mr. Murtaza Hussain Mir, Team Leader (Direct Technical Assistance on Education Schemes), Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi.

Structural challenges and deficits in the governance of the education sector in J&K

Participants spoke in unison of the urgent need to transform the education system in J&K, flagging it as one of the biggest governance failures in the state. The state government was perceived as being ill-equipped to provide training for Education for Peace as its teacher training centres had lost their vitality and were left with little potential for change. They therefore expressed the view that the government educational system, in its current form and shape, could not provide a space for the kind of education that the WISCOMP Policy Paper envisioned.

Commenting on the rot in the education system, Neerja Mattoo said that school educators lacked the passion and capacity to teach “They are neither conversant in English nor in Urdu and have merely joined the teaching profession to earn a livelihood. Teacher recruitments are done without logic...The B.Ed colleges need a complete transformation.” Mattoo added that those who did *not* study at these colleges may perhaps do a better job by using their own intellectual resources. Suba Chandran echoed Mattoo’s point, asserting that public

confidence in the education system was abysmally low—whether this was with reference to the quality of teachers, or corruption in the process of recruitment and transfers, or the overall structure of educational spaces. Further, it was noted that sustained capacity building initiatives for educators—whether by the government or private institutions—were conspicuous by their absence across the districts of the state.

Highlighting the structural challenges in J&K, Mr. Murtaza Hussain Mir, Team Leader (Direct Technical Assistance on Education Schemes), Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi, said that in the absence of access and equity, Education for Peace efforts will stand contested. While there is adequate funding to ensure access and equity, the quality of education is appalling with Class 6 children being unable to do double-digit sums. He also raised the issue of untrained teachers and poor salaries: “How can we get good teachers if the state pays them only 2000 rupees per month?” Hussain shared the example of a school in a Gujjar-Bakerwal village where the teacher had studied up to only Class 10. There were no norms for training teachers to transact courses using the new CCE (Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation) guidelines. Poor teaching outcomes are also linked to the medium of instruction, which is English across Kashmir. Hussain underscored the need to use languages that children were familiar with. This is a particularly daunting challenge in the rural areas of Kashmir where children feel completely lost with English as the medium of instruction.



Mr. Murtaza Hussain Mir, Team Leader (Direct Technical Assistance on Education Schemes), Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi.

In addition, questions were raised about the rationale behind decisions taken by government administrators. For example, Hussain cited the decision of the state government to allocate funds for upgrading the infrastructure of existing schools rather than establishing new schools in villages where none existed for a distance of 10 kilometres. The condition of schools in the rural parts of Kashmir was particularly appalling. Teacher-student ratios were as poor as 2 teachers to 200 students; toilet facilities were lacking on the ground in spite of government approvals on paper.

While these challenges of quality, equity and access were raised by DasGupta in the Policy Paper and do present a huge obstacle to Education for Peace efforts, it is difficult for WISCOMP (or other civil society groups) to make any large-scale intervention in this sphere. The primary onus rests with the state government administrators to use funds and resources in ways that benefit the largest number of children and educators.

Education for peace in the context of the deepening regional divide between Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh

Educational institutions cannot shy away from the challenge posed by this growing regional (and religious) divide. Echoing the views of several participants, Sushobha Barve stated that peace education initiatives will work in the state only if they adopt a regional approach. In other words, it is not possible to develop curricula/trainings for one region (the Valley) at the exclusion of places such as Poonch and Rajouri, which are located in the Jammu region. Jammu alone is home to communities with unhealed wounds of violence. In fact, a large number of Kashmiri Pandits and Kashmiri Muslims now live in Jammu city. Peace education practitioners must keep in mind these regional dimensions, even as they work with the challenge of developing curriculum for Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh which addresses the unique aspirations and cultures of each region.

Sharing a successful example of bridging this divide, Varun Sahni referred to the cross-cutting and vibrant individual and institutional linkages between universities in Jammu and Kashmir. The five universities in the state are connected to each other in terms of norm-setting, rules and resource generation. In addition to these institutional linkages, there are personal solidarities between the teaching communities at the different universities in the state. These are very dense relationships (mostly on the lines of disciplines) and they are also built into the structures of the university systems in J&K.

These cross-region relationships have expressed themselves at times of tension and conflict. For example, Sahni shared that during the disturbances in the summer of 2010 (when the Valley was shut down for days-on-end), a group of faculty members from Jammu University went to Srinagar in the midst of the *bandhs* to hold meetings of the Joint Committees (which consist of faculty members from the different universities of J&K). Teachers from Jammu University reached out to their counterparts in the Valley to send out the message that they will continue to work together as a teaching community in spite of the widespread polarization that was underway

between Jammu and Kashmir. They did this even though that was opposition to their visit to the Valley. Such personal solidarities between members of the universities in Jammu and Kashmir are, unfortunately, one of the less talked about aspects in the context of the divisions between the two regions in the state. He posited that these relationships (personal and institutional) can emerge as a huge resource to Education for Peace efforts in J&K.

Educational institutions as zones of peace

Schools and colleges in J&K have been under assault due to both militarization and the structural dimensions of the political conflict. While schools as institutional sites can swing both ways—supporting religious/regional polarization or peaceful coexistence—they must be conscientiously shaped by educators, families and communities to emerge as spaces where the “ideal” vision for a “just peace” is practiced. In this context, participants suggested that the presence of the security apparatus of the state in these spaces should be reduced. Schools and colleges should be allowed to function without any intrusions from the state. They advocated for a re-envisioning of the educational institution as a special zone which embodied the best practices of what we wish to associate with peace.



Participants at the Consultative Policy Dialogue held in March 2015.

Participant Profiles

Aditi Misra is the Principal of Delhi Public School, Gurgaon. A visionary, an educationist, and a socially sensitive philanthropist, she runs the *Shiksha Kendra*, a philanthropic educational initiative which provides education to over 1000 underprivileged children. Misra has also spearheaded an HIV/AIDS awareness programme called *Jagrit* at DPS Gurgaon since 2004. She has been a master trainer for the CCE reforms of the CBSE and has initiated several international exchange programmes at DPS. She is an alumna of Delhi Public School (RK Puram) and Lady Shri Ram College, and holds a Masters' degree in History and an M.Ed from Delhi University.

Amit Kaushik is the Director for Education and Skill Development (Practice Head) at IPE Global, a Delhi-based Consulting Firm, which partners with governments, multilateral organizations, and for-profit and not-for-profit entities to integrate the development agenda with sustained and equitable growth. He spent 20 years as a civil servant, joining the Indian Railway Accounts Service in 1987. After managing several assignments in the Railways, he served as Director, Elementary Education, on deputation to the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, from 2001 to 2006. During this time, he helped in the implementation of the *Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan* in various states, and was responsible for India's international commitments such as Education for All. Kaushik was also associated with the drafting of the Right to Education Bill, 2005, which subsequently became the basis for the Right of Children to Free and Compulsory Education Act in 2009.

Anamika Gupta is Programme Officer at the UNESCO-initiated Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP), New Delhi. She holds a Masters' degree in Peace and Conflict Studies from the European Peace University (Austria) and has worked as a journalist across print, broadcast and online mediums. At MGIEP, she works on the Gaming and Learning Labs programmes for informal learning on EPSD.

Anita Rampal is Dean at the Faculty of Education, University of Delhi, Delhi. She has been a Scientist at the University Grants Commission, Fellow at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and has held the

Nehru Professor Chair at the University of Baroda. She has worked at the grassroots level in rural schools across India engaging with school teachers to devise child-centred curricula and teaching-learning materials. She was the Adviser for the new sets of books for schools in India prepared under the path-breaking constructivist National Curriculum Framework 2005 of the National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT). Rampal has been actively involved in ensuring that the Jammu and Kashmir School Education Amendment Bill 2013 takes on board the learnings from the Right to Education Act at the central level.

D. Suba Chandran is Director at the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies, New Delhi. His primary area of research includes Pakistan, Afghanistan and Jammu and Kashmir. He is currently working on two books, *The Gathering Storm: Pakistan in the Next Decade* and *State Failure, Fragility and Stability in South Asia*. Chandran is the Editor of *Armed Conflicts in South Asia* (an annual publication brought out by Routledge). He writes a weekly column on regional security in *Rising Kashmir* and regular commentaries in the *Tribune*. He is an Associate at the Pakistan Study Research Unit of the University of Bradford. He holds a PhD in International Relations from the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, and a Masters' degree in Political Science from Madras Christian College, Chennai.

Deepika Papneja is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Elementary Education, Lady Shri Ram College for Women, New Delhi, where she teaches courses on Gender Studies and Social Sciences. She holds a Masters' degree in Education from the University of Delhi and a Masters' degree in Sociology from Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She was selected by UNICEF for undertaking a research project under their Knowledge Community on Children in India Summer Internship Programme in 2009. Her research interests include Gender Studies, Social Science Education and Gender Issues in Schooling.

Deepthi Priya Mehrotra is an independent scholar and activist based in New Delhi. She works extensively with civil society organizations as Advisor and Consultant, and has taught political science, philosophy, peace and gender studies at Delhi University and Ambedkar University. Her book *Burning Bright: From Sharmila and the Struggle for Peace in Manipur* (2009), draws attention to nonviolent modes of struggle for justice and human rights. As a Fellow of the Centre for Conflict

Resolution and Human Security, New Delhi, she has written a monograph on *Education for Peace: A Gandhian Perspective*. Mehrotra holds a PhD from the University of Delhi in Political Science.

Gurpreet Mahajan is Professor at the Centre for Political Studies in the School for Social Sciences at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She has written extensively on issues of multiculturalism, secularism and civil society including *Identities and Rights: Aspects of Liberal Democracy in India* (1998), *The Multicultural Path: Issues of Diversity and Discrimination in Democracy* (2002) and *Religion, Community and Development: Changing Contours of Politics and Policy in India* (2011). In addition, she has edited *The Public and the Private: Issues of Democratic Citizenship* (2003) and *Accommodating Diversity: Ideas and Institutional Practices* (2011), and coedited *Minorities and the Nation State* (1999).

Jyoti Bose is the Director of Springdales Schools and Principal of Springdales School, Dhaula Kuan, New Delhi. She has worked in the field of education, literacy and peace education for over three decades and was conferred with an Honorary Doctorate (in 2005) for her contribution to Education and Peace Studies. Bose is a founder member of the Delhi Schools' Literacy Project, an organization that works closely with the National Literacy Mission of the Govt. of India. She is also the Managing Trustee of the Sarvodaya International Trust (New Delhi Chapter), an organization that works to promote communal harmony through the ideals of Gandhiji. She has also worked with the Guild of Service on their projects, "Mainstreaming Kashmir through Children" and "Bridges of Friendship", through which children from orphanages in Kashmir lived with the families of students at her school.

Kalyani Akalamkam is Senior Lecturer in the Department of Elementary Education at Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi. At LSR, she teaches courses in the Pedagogy of Environmental Sciences, Mathematics and School Internship. She also has a decade of experience in teaching at schools at the senior secondary level. Her doctoral work was in the area of science education and curriculum. Her research interests include science and mathematics education and she has published in this area. She has also been involved in writing books on pedagogy.

Kasturi Kanthan was until 2014 Associate Professor in the Department of English, Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi. For over three decades,

she was Faculty Advisor to the Students' Union of LSR, and convener or member of a large number of college committees (academic and extra-curricular). She is currently associated with the College in a consultative capacity. An MPhil in English Literature from Delhi University, her areas of specialization are Modern Indian Writing and Renaissance Drama, with a focus on Shakespeare. Actively involved in the Delhi cultural scene, she has anchored shows on Classical Carnatic Music for Doordarshan and is a regular contributor to the journal *The Book Review*. Kanthan has also been engaged in Translation Studies and has worked closely with *Katha* in this area.

Meera Khanna is a Delhi-based social activist and freelance writer. She is a Trustee of The Guild of Service and also Trustee of the Women's Welfare Trust, Jammu and Kashmir. She has 14 years of experience in the development sector, focusing on women's empowerment and peace issues in South Asia, with a deep and abiding interest in Kashmir and widows of conflict. Her recent publications include a survey on the impact of armed conflict on women in Kashmir, in which she coordinated and analyzed data of 5000 respondents in the high and low militancy-affected districts of Kupwara and Udhampur in J&K.

Mohit Sippy is Senior Programme Manager at the British High Commission, New Delhi, where he is responsible for developing programme policy, managing the Indian-Pakistan and India-China strand of the British High Commission's Conflict Prevention Programme and building stakeholder relationships. Previously, he worked with the Japanese Embassy as a Senior Associate (Economic).

Murtaza Hussain Mir is Team Leader of Direct Technical Assistance on Education Schemes in the Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Government of India, New Delhi. His profile includes planning, appraisal, capacity building, research activities, and disbursement of scholarships to Scheduled Tribe students. He has been a member of international delegations to study best practices in education and has attended various managerial and leadership programmes conducted by the government and international organisations. Murtaza is a qualified engineer and holds degrees in IT and Management. He has over 10 years of professional experience in the education sector with the government of J&K and is presently pursuing Doctoral Research in Public Administration on the theme, "Changing Governance and Performance of District Administration under SSA in J&K".

Neerja Mattoo is a core member of *Athwaas*, a network of women from J&K who have been engaged with peacebuilding in the state since 2002 in collaboration with WISCOMP. She has taught English language and literature at the Government College for Women, Srinagar, from 1958 to 1995, and has also served as the Principal of the College. She was awarded a two-year Senior Fellowship in Kashmiri Literature by the Department of Culture, Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India, for her work on four women poets of Kashmir. She is the author of *Stranger Beside Me: Short Stories From Kashmir* (1994), *The Best of Kashmiri Cooking* (1995) and *Essential Sufism: Selections From The Saints & Sages* (2009), among others.

Saroj Yadav is Academic Dean at the National Institute of Education, NCERT, New Delhi. She is also the Head of the Department of Education in Social Sciences, National Coordinator of the National Population Education Project (implemented in 32 States and Union Territories), Coordinator of the Adolescence Education Programme (funded by the United Nation Population Fund) and a Member of Sub-Groups on Adolescents set up by the Planning Commission in the Twelfth Five Year Plan. Her areas of interest and specialization include the economics of education, population education, adolescence, health and physical education programme planning, monitoring and evaluation.

Shabnam Hashmi has worked for more than 20 years to combat communalism in India. She was associated with the creation and running of *Sahmat*, formed by artists and intellectuals in memory of her activist brother, who was murdered while performing a street play in 1989. In the aftermath of the Gujarat carnage in 2002, she established *Anhad* (Act Now for Harmony and Democracy), an organization which seeks to systematically counter fascist propaganda and reduce polarization and violence. Working voluntarily and without fees and with limited funds, Hashmi has emerged as a single-person pressure group.

Shankar Musafir is Programme Officer at the UNESCO-initiated Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Education for Peace and Sustainable Development (MGIEP), New Delhi. His areas of specialization include experiential, participatory and contextual learning processes. He is currently working on the “State of EPSD” report for the Asia Pacific Region, and embedding EPSD in school curricula.

Shweta Singh is an Assistant Professor at the Department of International Relations at South Asian University, New Delhi. Prior to this, she taught

for nearly a decade at the Centre for Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding, Lady Shri Ram College, University of Delhi. With Marie Nissanka, she is the co-recipient of the 2013 Mahbub-ul-Haq Award, which led to the publication of *Connectors and Dividers: The Challenges and Prospects for Conflict Transformation in Kashmir and Sri Lanka* (Manohar, 2015). She has done her specialized training in Peacebuilding from the Centre for Justice and Peacebuilding, Eastern Mennonite University, USA. Singh holds a PhD from Jawaharlal Nehru University and her doctoral research focuses on “Human Security Approaches to Conflict Resolution Strategies in Sri Lanka”. She has also worked on Education for Peace, and has published a module on “Education for Peace” in the Teachers’ Resource Manual published by the Ministry of Human Resource and Development, Government of India.

Susheela Bhan is the Founder and Honorary Director of the Institute of Peace Research and Action (IPRA) in New Delhi, the first institution of its kind in the country. A specialist in education, she has written extensively in the area of Education and Development. Presently, she is involved in developing, at the Institute, a major research programme in the area of Peace Studies with a special focus on Peace Education.

Sushobha Barve is the Executive Director of the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, New Delhi. An eminent peacebuilder in South Asia, she has received several awards, including being one of the 1000 women nominated for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005. She is the author of *Healing Streams: Bringing Hope in the Aftermath of Violence* (Penguin Books India, 2003) and is a founding member and trustee of the Mumbai Mohalla Committee Movement Trust, which functioned from 1992 to 2000 to set up citizen-police joint ventures. Barve has also served on the Governor’s Peace Committee during the Mumbai riots of 1992-93. She joined Moral Re-Armament (now called Initiatives of Change) as a youth volunteer and continued working with the organization for many years, building bridges of understanding across the many divides in South Asia. Barve works closely with teachers, community leaders and police, engineering conversations that involve all parties in an exploration of the root causes of conflict and developing practical solutions. Barve has helped feuding groups make and implement strong plans to end, recover from and avert violence.

Tamanna Khosla teaches Political Science at the University of Delhi. She holds a PhD in Political Theory from Jawaharlal Nehru University, an MPhil in Political Theory, a Masters’ degree in Political Science

from the same university, and a Bachelors' degree in Political Science from Lady Shri Ram College, New Delhi. Her MPhil dissertation title was "Feminist Responses to Multiculturalism: An Examination", and her PhD work was on "Multiculturalism and Feminism: Reconciling Cultural Diversity and Gender Equality". She has previously worked as a Research Associate with the Centre for Social Research, New Delhi; Political Assistant to Diplomats at the Embassy of Japan, New Delhi; and Research Associate at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

Varun Sahni is Professor of International Politics and Chairperson of CIPOD (Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament) at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. Previously, he was Vice-Chancellor of the University of Jammu. He is the Editor of South Asian Survey and lectures at the National Defense College (New Delhi), Foreign Service Institute (New Delhi) and the Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (Mussoorie). Sahni is currently writing a book on India's external security. In recognition of his "outstanding achievements in research and teaching", the Institute for Social and Economic Change and the Indian Council of Social Science Research conferred upon him the VKRV Rao Prize in Social Sciences (for the year 2006).

Wajahat Habibullah is the Chairperson of the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative, New Delhi. An officer of the Indian Administrative Service from 1968 to 2005, he has served as the Chairperson of the National Commission for Minorities. Prior to this, he held the position of the first Chief Information Commissioner of India. He was also Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Panchayati Raj (Local Government) and was appointed as a member of the World Bank's Info Appeals Board in 2010. He has been a member of (and on the board of) several advisory councils and significant committees including the Advisory Council, Brookings Doha Centre; the International Advisory Council, Doha; the Advisory Council, USIP Education and Training Centre, Washington DC; and Chairman, Board of Governors, National Institute of Technology, Srinagar. Habibullah has also won several accolades and awards, including the Rajiv Gandhi Award for Excellence in Secularism (1994) and Gold Medal for Distinguished Service, Governor of Jammu & Kashmir (1996).

About WISCOMP

WISCOMP is a unique South Asian research and training initiative that works to build a culture of coexistence and nonviolence that is gender-sensitive and inclusive. It creates synergy between theory, practice and policy by providing an interface between academia, formal structures of governance and grassroots peacebuilding.

Sang Chal Series

WISCOMP uses innovative curricula and pedagogy in an attempt to build a culture of peace in areas that have witnessed violence and conflict. The Sang Chal series documents the proceedings of the substantive events and workshops organized for teacher educators, students and teachers as a part of this process.

Education for Peace in Jammu and Kashmir: Opportunities and Challenges is the outcome of WISCOMP's engagement in Jammu and Kashmir through the Hum Kadam Education for Peace initiative.

Women in Security, Conflict Management and Peace (WISCOMP) Foundation for Universal Responsibility

Core 4A, Upper Ground Floor, India Habitat Centre

Lodhi Road, New Delhi-110 003, India

Phone: 91-11-24648450 Fax: 91-11-24648451

Email: wiscomp2006@gmail.com

Website: www.wiscomp.org