UNIT 14   PEACE EDUCATION

Structure

14.1   INTRODUCTION

> We have chosen the way of non-violence simply because we think it's politically better for the country in the long run to establish that you can bring about change without the use of arms
>
> Aung San Suu Kyi

The concept of 'peace' is multidimensional. It is widely defined as a state where there is no conflict, disturbance or hostility. It is seen as a non-violent way of life, a state of tranquility and harmony. Peace can also describe a relationship between any people characterised by respect, justice and goodwill. It also pertains to an individual's sense of himself/herself to be at peace with one's own mind (see Peace in Wikipedia). There is no consensus regarding its definition and has been defined in different ways. For example, to Gandhi, it is related to truth and non-violence. To achieve this state of 'peace', especially in the present conflict-ridden world, it is being widely recognised that peace education is an essential aspect that would guide the mankind to shun violence and live in a harmonious society/world. It is being recognised as 'an intellectual enterprise devoted to the study of peace and the bringing about of a state of peace in human society' (John Baylis, p.277). At the same time, peace education is not just a concept that is confined to academic curriculum. It is a means to attain social justice, to live in accordance with moral rights and duties, and recognise one's relationship to all beings. Peace education became a platform for the potential of hope for a better world (Meyerhof, see URL).

Aims and Objectives

After reading this Unit, you would be able to understand:

● The concept and meaning of peace education

● Its moral and spiritual foundations

● The importance of peace education in the contemporary world

14.2   MEANING AND IMPORTANCE

In the previous Units, you have already been familiarised with many aspects of peace and conflict, from what they are, their origins, sources, types, local, regional and global conflicts and peace efforts. The humankind has been a witness to conflict in some form or other at all levels. Violence in all forms is on increase and has percolated even to the school levels. Violent expressions and aggression are increasingly being resorted to leading further to conflicts. Therefore, peace has become all the more imminent in such contexts. Efforts are now being made to inculcate the values related to harmony, respect and tolerance for better interpersonal relations. These are seen as seeds to ensure in the long-term a conflict-free world. As Meyerhof put it, 'peace studies encompass the learning of nonviolent communication, tolerance, acceptance of diversity and love as the basic law of life'. Thus peace education, most importantly, helps in deconstructing the mindset and discourses of power struggle by the use of violence. It helps people to cooperate and negotiate problems at the individual as well as societal levels.

In the 1950s and 60s, the definition of 'peace' was confined to the absence of war. The focus of studies on peace was mainly on interstate conflicts, wars and so on. Subsequently, there was a departure from this view of peace; the focus shifted to the aspects of structural violence and the inherent contradictions in social and societal structures. From this, the focus sharpened on the role of individual's moral and ethical disposition and is now zeroed down to the 'human values' that guide the conduct of individuals. The shift in this field has been gradual and steady. Therefore, 'presently character education, moral education and self-esteem development are considered aspects of aiding in the individual reaching this personal inner potential and becoming a valued citizen for peaceful coexistence' (Ibid). Peace education is thus not a history of peacemaking as she says but to create peace in one's environment while standing for truth, justice and self preservation. It is also more than learning about conflict resolution. If one has to mediate for establishing peace, it is necessary that one should be receptive to other's perception, viewpoint and adjust one's own perspectives in order to reach an understanding, compromise and consensus at a collective level.

The objectives of peace education include: (1) appropriating intellectual and emotional development of the individuals; (2) developing a sense of social responsibility and solidarity; (3) observing the principles of equality and fraternity towards all; (4) enabling the individual to acquire a critical understanding of the problems at national and international levels; (5) creating willingness for continuous learning; (6) accepting and participating in free discussions; (7) taking decisions on a rational basis; (8) appreciating other's cultures; and (9) overcoming obstacles towards promotion of peace.

14.2.1   Towards Positive Peace

Peace education is seen as leading to positive peace. Positive peace means state of tranquility, calm, quietness, harmony and friendship. It flourishes in the presence of the feeling of brotherhood and in the absence of the ignorance in mind. As Dr.Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan said, 'If we wish to achieve peace we must maintain that inner harmony, that poise of the soul, which are the essential elements of peace. It cannot be achieved by organizations. It can come only when our minds become endowed with generosity and goodwill towards all. We must be filled with the moral power of love and the vision of spiritual unity. We have to solve our problems through the help of our higher nature' (S.Radhakrishnan, Religion and Culture, p.135; 173). Positive peace is one of the most effective means to get the society rid of biases, structural violence which is mostly latent in nature and such negative traits that impede the progress of the individual in the real sense. Peace education is invariably linked with this concept that is

designed in such a way as to 'alter attitudes regarding peace in the hope that this will stimulate changes in structure' (John Baylis, p.277). Similar views are echoed by Johan Galtung wherein he states that 'peace must not only be conceived of as the absence of war and direct violence (negative peace) but rather, working towards peace as the means to the realization of conditions leading to a maximal reduction of structural violence (positive peace)'.

14.2.2 Institutional Support for Peace Education

The UNESCO's call for 'recommendation concerning Education for International Understanding, cooperation and Peace Education relating to Human Rights and Fundamental freedom' in 1974 is said to be the starting point for recognising the need for peace education. It aims to establish peace across international borders and to augment respect for each other. As the UNESCO remarked, 'education should include critical analysis of the historical and contemporary factors of an economic and political nature underlying the contradictions and tensions between countries, together to study of ways of overcoming these contradictions which are the real impediments to understanding, true international cooperation and the development of world peace'. Education, as it envisions, addresses the real interests of people as against the practice of exploitation and fomenting war. The introduction of peace education in school curricula is being undertaken the world over; peace research and education is now a subject of high relevance in many eminent universities, for example, Bradford University. Further, institutions like Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, University of Peace, United Nations University are all undertaking pioneering research work in this field. In India, most of the institutes related to Gandhian Studies or those undertaking to spread Gandhi's message of peace and nonviolence are all immensely contributing to this field of education and such efforts are being encouraged by both national governments as well as international organisations. Further, peace education manuals have been prepared and under preparation in some of the leading educational institutions and research centres like National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT). In the year 2000, the UN declared it as a 'Decade of Peace and Nonviolence for Children of the World'. This found support from many peace organisations and educators leading to building up of 'Culture of Peace'. Peace education has thus become important in the institutional discourses on peace and the UNESCO mission of promoting peace. Education for Peace specifically found mention in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989).

14.3   MORAL AND SPIRITUAL FOUNDATIONS

Dale Snauwaert interprets that 'peace education is premised upon the cosmopolitan belief that the moral community includes all human beings, that all human beings have moral standing, and thus war and peace, justice and injustice, are moral considerations. It is not merely a philosophical ideal—There is an actually existing cosmopolitanism, a transnational, global moral community based in widespread agreement' (in Encyclopedia of Peace Education, 2008). Human beings are entitled to a good life; it includes fulfilling such basic needs as good health, knowledge, feeling of brotherhood and friendship, positive experiences that nourish one's attitudes and perceptions. These entitlements are bestowed in the form of rights which are codified in the law. The moral connotation of this law requires an individual to fulfill certain obligations like (a) positive duties of mutual care and support (duty to aid); (b) negative duties of no harm to others (duty to avoid harm) and (c) norms of rudimentary fairness (duty to protect) (cited in Snauwaert, pp.1-2). These ethical norms ensure human dignity and recognition of what Snauwaert says 'the intrinsic value of innate human characteristics and capacities'. This is supposed to lead to a cosmopolitan moral order that secure human rights, which is

essential for an individual to live with dignity and worth. Unless an individual fully realises this aspect of moral rights and duties, he/she cannot empathise with others and respond to others similarly. There is a need to realise the importance of interdependence and interconnectedness between human beings. As Betty Reardon says, 'peace education should aim at the transformation of both the structure of society and the structures of consciousness', suggesting that 'peace education has interrelated moral and spiritual foundation'.

Spirituality is highly inherent in the concept of peace education. The modern day life bestows on individual immense material prosperity and possessions. Immersed in this materialistic life, individual fails to recognise the enjoyment of true peace, which is beyond the materialistic aspect. It further leads to more acquisition, more possessions, more wealth and so on. This self-centredness blinds one to the needs of others and even deprives others of their due and just demands. In the long-term this leads to the enlarging gap between the haves and have-nots, totally altering the coherent social structure. This leads to what is called structural inequalities that brings us to the concept of structural violence. It is here that the need for peace education is felt the most. It helps in addressing the crucial question of potential discord- both internal and external.

The question of values remains as an important component of peace education. Peace education is crucial in enhancing the virtuous traits in individuals. Respect for others, feelings of sympathy and empathy, tolerance, harmony and extending a hand of friendship determines the character of an individual and his/her capacity to interact with others with utmost respect. Commitment to such values all through life is no easy task. Peace education helps people to live harmoniously inspite of disagreements and differences of opinion. Peace education without morality, spirituality and value-commitment becomes a futile exercise and reaps negative results in the long term.

14.4   RELIGIOUS SOURCES OF PEACE EDUCATION

For long, it has been recognised that the Indian traditions insist on peaceful coexistence of all communities and people. The very culture of the nation, its eternal spirit of unity and diversity, respect and reverence to all forms of life stands testimony to the traditions of peace in the society. Various customs, traditions, languages and cultures proclaim peace as the main element guiding these numerous traditions.

Almost all the religions, in their own unique way, subscribe steadfastly to peace and its promotion. It should be noted that it is not religion, but the perversion in its interpretation by many an incompetent people that damages the fabric of harmony. When one gets acquainted with the sacred texts of various religions, one realises that all religions preach peace; all point out towards one supreme formless being; all preach respect and tolerance towards other's faiths. In short, peace is the central theme of all religions. Some of the religions like Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism originated in India. The earlier teachings of peace were rooted in religious teachings and traditions. It has also imbibed the cultures and traditions of later entrants Islam and Christianity in its culture. Most of these religions preach as to how to live in and attain peace. The teachings of Lord Buddha, Lord Mahavira, Prophet Mohammed and Jesus Christ centre on the practice of peace in thought, word and deed. All religions prescribe the path of truth, one's moral duty, peace, love and non-violence. They propagate love towards other living beings like animals and plants/trees. Hinduism has numerous examples depicting reverence towards nature, plants and animals and worshipping of five elements; Christianity propounds the Gospel of Love; Islam, meaning 'Peace', deals with the code of conduct to be followed by all that leads to peace; Jainism forbids harming even insects and other beings; Buddhism promotes peaceful tradition and way of living; and Sikhism propounds

peace as the method and means to treat our fellow-beings with love. Most of these religions insist on adhering to truth, non-violence, limited or non-possession, non-injury to others, and absolute faith in the Supreme Lord. Jainism prescribes the three-fold path of Right knowledge, Right faith and Right conduct; Islam, through Quran, gives a message of hope, faith, and peace; Buddhism preaches the eight-fold path to peace; Hinduism, primarily a way of life, too prescribes through its Vedic texts and the Gita the immanent need to follow the path of peace. The teachings are related to achieving peace for world order and humanity. Similarly, the Baha'i Faith appeals to mankind to accept its inherent essential oneness and strive towards attaining the global peace through various grassroots local and international collaborative actions founded on the principles of "unity in diversity, equity, justice, gender equality, moral leadership and freedom of thought" (BIC #05-0402, 2005, p.2). Considering the importance of religion, the calls for inter-faith dialogue and activities have been gaining momentum all over the world. The aim is to encourage freedom of belief and to eliminate religious prejudices and work together towards common social goals.

India has been home to saints and learned teachers across ages. Adi Shankaracharya has been recognised as one of the earliest teachers to have propounded peace and harmony. The subsequent periods have witnessed peace (also religious) apostles like Kabir, Sri Ramakrishna Paramhans and Swami Vivekananda, who were pioneers of peace and constantly preached on how to achieve inner harmony and ultimately attain salvation. All of them have taught the merits of unity of the mankind, abhorred divisions in the society in the name of caste and religion and focused on the necessity to attain inner peace, in order to be at peace with others. Jiddu Krishnamurthy was also a prominent spiritual teacher belonging to this genre. Tagore, Sri Aurobindo, Gandhi and several other leaders, reformers and educationists propounded their views and ideas on peace and its importance in the field of education from to time.

14.5   GANDHI AND PEACE EDUCATION

No other eminent leader in the realm of the world history is so much associated with peace and nonviolence as does Gandhi. Infact, any discourse, literature, debate, discussion or piece of work on peace is deemed to be incomplete without the mention of Gandhi. One can gauge the extent of importance he gave to peace through his own sayings, speeches, writings etc. Examples are often quoted regarding his participation in Boer War or his preference for violence over cowardice as instances of contradictions; while these may be termed as isolated instances, one cannot ignore the magnitude of force with which he argued for peace as its astounding champion.

Peace was central to Gandhi's political, social and religious philosophy and demonstrated to the world the supreme method of achieving world peace. Gandhi considered violence as the root cause of all evils. His method was non-violence, identified invariably with peace and truth. The same is reflected in his thoughts on education too. As S.N.Prasad says, 'Gandhi's concept of education reflects more or less what we call today as peace education. The values he propounded reflect in his thought, speeches and in communication with others. The most fundamental principle of Gandhi's philosophy of peace is "Ahimsa" or nonviolence which is the law of love, life and creation as opposed to violence or himsa, the cause of hatred, death and destruction'. Gandhi considered non-violence as an indivisible, important and essential part of education and should serve as basic component guiding our day-to-day activities. Gandhi proclaimed that the foundations for the development of morality in a man should begin as early as in his childhood through moral and ethical education and considered it as important and necessary for the all round-development of personality in general and to progress towards

the path of peace in particular. Gandhi's approach to value education familiarises us, in holistic perspective, the necessity of basic education that emphasises social consciousness and the dignity of every individual.

Gandhi considered the moral education as essential component of education, leading to character development. He advocated the introduction of religious studies in education so as to enable the students to strengthen their moral and spiritual aspects. He felt that it would promote the values of self-control, patience, and veneration in one's character. He considered moral education for "developing culture of the heart or building of character". Gandhi wanted spiritualisation of not only politics but also education to realise the ultimate goal of truth. Gandhi saw education as "the all-round drawing out of the best in the child and man- body, mind and spirit". To him, a personality well-substantiated on peace would be able to grasp the intricacies of human nature and accordingly, conducts himself/herself towards others. Peace thus became an essential aspect towards the character development.

Gandhi's concept of education had high components of morality and spirituality. He prescribed certain rules for the students to ensure morality and righteousness for education does not consist of mere learning of theories but in gaining knowledge and spirituality. Education, he opined, should enable one to rationally analyse the situation and act with peace and tolerance even under difficult circumstances. For this, the students should have a strict regimen of high morals, self-control and right thinking; spirit of service to society and respect towards all. Education, as he says, should lead to rediscovery of peace. This is crucial in dealing with others and in playing a constructive role for the betterment of society, nation and ultimately towards the world. Gandhi aimed at eliminating the negative traits like communal disharmony and caste discrimination through constructive work. This, he felt, could be achieved only through the inculcation of right values.

Gandhi believed that the introduction of religious studies in education would fortify ethics in students and develop the values of forbearance, tolerance, and humanity. Since every religion preaches and prescribes peace, it would be easy to inculcate the virtues in the students at a very early stage. Since India is a nation of diverse cultures, Gandhi thought it best to introduce the religious studies to achieve peace in the long run. Gandhi's approach may be termed as an important component to the construction of a sustainable culture of peace. The organisations and institutions involved in making efforts towards fostering peace and harmony often acknowledge Gandhi as the source of their inspiration and action.

14.6   CONTRIBUTIONS TO PEACE EDUCATION

It is an irony that Gandhi, who is widely acknowledged and cited in the works related to peace, was neither a recipient of Nobel Peace Prize nor included in the mainstream curriculum on Peace Studies. Eminent Scholars like Arne Naess, Johan Galtung, Gene Sharp, J.C.Kumarappa, J.K.Mehta, and others have based their studies through direct or indirect association with Gandhi's thoughts and ideas. Some other prominent Peace researchers and educators include John Dewey and Paulo Freire, whose works on peace education have widely been recognised. There are numerous contributions to peace education by many eminent men but only few (primarily Western) are being discussed here.

John Dewey (1859-1952), one of the leading philosophers and educational theorists made substantial contribution to peace education. He advocated the promotion of international understanding, in other words, '*world patriotism'* as opposed to the traditional patriotic indoctrination as taught in different schools. The tragedies of wars made him examine the

futility of the same and called for building a nonviolent world, using geography and history for understanding other cultures, and incorporate the values of peace and global understanding.

Freire's (1921-1997) philosophy methodically consisted of peace education pedagogy and practice. He concentrated on the concept of *conscientization* that provides the foundation of peace education and the hope for coordination between education and social transformation. His insistence on dialogue and his discussions of egalitarian teacher-student relations provide the basis for peace education pedagogy and continue to resound throughout the field. Arne Naess, one of the most important philosophers of *deep ecology* and Gandhian satyagraha, made significant contribution to the field of deep ecology. His love for nature, his contentment in self-sufficiency made him disregard luxury, the root of all complications. Naess was impressed by Gandhi's 'self-realisation' and explained that for the 'self to be realised is not the ego, but the large Self created when we identify with all living creatures and ultimately with the whole universe' (cit in T.Weber, p.95).

Johan Galtung's works on peace research and education form the most significant contemporary contributions to the field. Elaborating on the form of peace education, Galtung insists on ruling out direct violence as well as structural violence, meaning any inherent violence that exists in the *structure* (of the society). The content of peace education, according to him, consists in (1) analysis (2) goal-formation (3) critique (4) proposal-making and (5) action (Empiricism, 1972). Galtung noted that peace education should not overshadow peace action. A much higher level of peace consciousness, he reiterated, would make up the world in which people are less easily manipulated and it is in pursuit of that kind of a world that peace education would be a contribution (Galtung, Form and Content of Peace Education, p.6).

Gene Sharp, in his memorable work on the Political Development of Nonviolent Struggle, focused on the objective of justice and freedom that requires the empowerment of the oppressed ones. He advocated addressing the conflicts according to the situation and formulating and implementing nonviolent struggle to each new situation. The strategies have to be refined and adaptable, and should be effective replacements to violence. As he says, 'the growth, adaptations to newer situations will have problems because people do not know anything about the peculiar dynamics of the new problem or about the science and methodology of a nonviolent struggle'. The key lies in understanding the general and specific problems and formulating strategies according to the need of the situation.

Among the prominent people who promoted and worked for education, few women have made an outstanding contribution like Jane Addams and Maria Montessori. Addam's 'Peace and Bread in Time of War' defines what 'pacifism means to educators and the importance of teaching toleration and accepting nonviolence as the proper means to achieve peace and justice' (Howlett, C.F, 2008). Howlett also says that 'as an educator and reformer, she perceived "Peace as a social dynamic based on individual acts of common decency rather than cold, detached stipulated agreements among national states" (Addams, Peace and Bread in Time of War, 33-36). Addam considered war as unnatural, anti-progressive, and immoral and was a throwback to an archaic stage of social history; and "it was fought to maintain the balance of power, a concept that glorified stasis and left no room for innovation" (Quoted in Allen F. Davis, American Heroine, 143-145). Similarly, Dr.Maria Montessori asserted that values like global citizenship, personal responsibility, and respect for diversity must be both an implicit and explicit part of every child's (and adult's) education (Cheryl Duckworth, 2008). Montessori developed methods that insisted on self-discipline instead of imposing discipline from outside. She opined that students should be 'involved in forming and enforcing the rules of their community; when undesired behaviour occurs, the manner in which it is handled must

honour the humanity of both the student who exhibited the behaviour, as well as the victim'. The other names that are associated with peace education include Edwin Ginn, Elihu Burrit and Elise Boulding. One can also find the resonance of Gandhian thought in the works of Kumarappa, Mehta and others, which are dealt exclusively in the subsequent Course on Gandhi's Economic Thought.

14.7   PEACE EDUCATION IN ACTION

Haavelsrud (1975) suggested that peace education, as in the case of all education, should be conducted in three areas: (1) Information; (2) Attitudes; and (3) Action. It consists of Awareness, Analysis and Action. Peace education is a part in the larger framework aiming at social change. It is a transformative change for better. In this scheme, the transformation of the individual is the primary requisite. This individual transformation gradually brings in a change in the system/structure. Individually and collectively, it becomes imperative to come together for 'learning to live together, creating awareness about others' tribulations, analysing the situation rationally and taking action with willingness to produce the positive results'. It is important to note that peace education can be promoted only in an atmosphere of nonviolence. There is a crucial link between human nature and violence. As Gandhi believed, the evil can be overcome by a steadfast adherence to nonviolence. But, holistically, he believed that all human beings are inherently good. It is through this belief that he brought out the blueprint for development, 'Constructive Programme'. It aims at social change through nonviolence. Similarly, in the process of peace education, the individual is exposed to the stark realities of the world wherein there are severe disparities and makes him/her understand the ground realities in which millions of their brethren live. This develops the ability to understand others, and also the willingness to change things for better. This is what John Dewey termed as 'world patriotism', for creating a better world.

Peace education is not an abstract concept or that which can be imparted only through classroom teaching. It is a continuous learning process. Peace education can begin from the family setting and move on to the other levels like school, institutions of higher education, workplace or areas where related projects take place. It is important to note the following points for an effective learning in the process:

● Emphasis should be on the participatory and self-initiated learning

● Preservation and advancement of peace should be integrated into discussions

● Development of curricula on peace and practical approaches

● Imparting of peace related knowledge through media

● Imparting of the knowledge through religious institutions

● Knowledge dissemination through social work projects

● Cooperation and collaboration in the fields of education

● Selection of information and evaluation

● Eliminating bias in conflict information

● Organising campaigns, conducting seminars and talks on peace

● Giving training to the educators of peace to cater to all sections of society

- Promoting volunteerism to provide learning opportunities

- Maintaining consistent motivation levels to promote peace

The following table depicting the general learning goals related to tolerance, as developed by eminent peace educator Betty Reardon, helps us in understanding the modalities involved in this process.

Values	Knowledge	Capacities and Skills
Human dignity/rights	Varieties of human, personal and cultural identities, social issues	Living with diversity: cross-cultural cooperation; using human rights standards to make judgements
Social justice/democracy	Multiple forms of democratic processes and governance	Exercising responsibility: critical reflection; communication of facts and opinions; political decision-making
Co-operative non-violent society/peace	Alternative ways of responding constructively to human differences and conflicts	Managing conflict: discussion and debate; conflict resolution; reconciliation; social reconstruction; co-operative problem-solving and task achievement

Source: Reardon, 1997: Unit 1, p.53. (cited in Margaret Sinclair, Learning to Live Together, Encyclopedia of Peace education, Teachers college, Columbia University, 2008. see http://www.tc.edu/centers/epe/)

The curriculum on peace education, as developed by the UNHCR peace education programme, which is now known as Peace Education Programme of the Interagency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE), has in its content specific skills that help in promoting the ideas of peaceful living. These include:

- Understanding similarities and differences (for older children, exclusion and inclusion)

- Active listening

- Better communication (two-way)

- Handling emotions

- Understanding that perceptions vary and avoiding bias

- Understanding others' situation and feelings (empathy practice)

- Cooperation

- Appropriate assertiveness

- Problem analysis and problem solving

- Negotiation

- Mediation

- Conflict resolution (with conflict transformation and reconciliation)

- Human rights

- What have you learned about peace?

14.8   SUMMARY

Peace education aims at enhancing the human values that are needed to deal with conflict situations at an individual and societal level. The sources can be found in the cultures where peace traditions are strong. Also the religious sources play a crucial role in changing the mindset towards achieving positive peace and thereby contribute to world peace. Many peace educators and researchers have made immense contribution to this field. Gandhi was one of the leading personalities associated with charting out measure for a scheme of education that would promote peace. With the development of skills and modern techniques, peace education is increasingly being taken up in various educational programmes all over the world, supported substantially by the state and national governments apart from international organisations like UNESCO. Peace education has now become a hope for a better future.

14.9   TERMINAL QUESTIONS

1. What do you understand by peace education? Analyse its meaning and importance.

2. Trace the religious sources of peace education in India.

3. Can Gandhi's thoughts on education be considered as part of peace education?

4. Analyse the major contributions to peace education field.

5. Write short notes on:

   (a)   UNESCO and Peace Education

   (b)   Moral and Spiritual Foundations of Peace Education

SUGGESTED READINGS

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