

Peace Education and Gandhian Studies

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ABSTRACT

Modern Science has taught us to reach the moon but we have not learned to live with our fellowmen in peace in the society. This paper examines the similarities and differences of the fields of Gandhian studies and peace education through an exploration of their content, institutional development, and globalization since the mid-twentieth century. The emergence of global issues and problems infesting humankind in general underlines the fact that we need a new philosophy not only of thinking but also of practicing which is epitomized by Gandhian philosophy of peace education. For Gandhi, religious and moral education in the overarching framework of non-violence is complimentary in nature and form the core of peace education. Gandhi's thoughts on inequality, social development, education and non-violence if operationalised, can go a long way to negotiate and overcome not only the socio-economic challenges but also the ethical dilemmas of present times. The present nature and content of education undermines the social goal and obligation of developing a balanced personality. For Gandhi value education is necessary for moral development of individual whereas peace education is vital for humankind as a whole. His peace education offers many possibilities for dealing with short-term violence, but its greatest strength is its long-term preventative education and socialization.

1. Introduction

For Gandhi value education is necessary for moral development of individual whereas peace education is vital for humankind as a whole. The Gandhian thought of peace is worldwide acknowledged. Gandhi was clear in his mind that war or peace would have its roots basically in the heart and head before they manifest outwardly. As for the word "PEACE" Gandhi used it in a normal sense as "mental peace" on one side and as "absence of conflicts and wars or warlike situation on the other. Going deep into the problem of conflicts and wars Gandhi realized that the individuals as individuals or as groups, should pay attention to their inner calling that benefit them to be human and humane. The name of Gandhi is synonyms with peace & non-violence. That is why United Nation announced World Peace Day on 2nd October, the birth date of Mahatma Gandhi. The contribution of Gandhi to the humanity is incomparable. The present paper is an attempt to locate how he tended to blend peace education & education for peace within his broad schema on his ideas on education in general. Gandhi viewed education as vital in the overall development of individual as well as society. This education has to be given to the students so that they can learn and imbibe the ethics and values of a humanitarian, just and peaceful society i.e. 'Sarvodya Samaj'. Before elaborating on the Gandhian notion of peace education, we need to locate what peace education broadly means.

2. Peace Education

Peace education can be understood education for facilitating peace. According to Page (2008), "a fundamental concern of peace education is education to prevent the suffering and wastage of warfare within the modern era" (Page, 2008: 2). Harris and Morrison (2003) argue that "peace education, refers to teaching about peace – what it is, why it

doesn't exist, and how to achieve it" (Harris and Morrison, 2003: 25-26). According to Peace Education Working Group at UNICEF, peace education "refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to prevent conflict and violence." Hague Appeal for Peace defines peace education as "a participatory holistic process that includes teaching for and about democracy and human rights" among other issues.

For Gandhi, peace can be located in "his revolutionary mode of action which he called satyagraha, and his challenging goal of sarvodaya, meaning the welfare and good of all, a fuller and richer concept of people's democracy than any we have yet known' (Bose, 1981: 159). Peace to Gandhi is primarily located in his idea of Ahimsa i.e. non-violence however, according to Gupta (1968: 1876), his ideas of trusteeship and passive resistance both form the base peaceful and just society. For Gandhi, "A votary of ahimsaremains true to his faith if the spring of all his actions is compassion, if he shuns to the best of his ability the destruction of the tiniest creature, tries to save it, and thus incessantly strives to be free from the deadly coil of himsa."

3. Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To explain the emergence of global issues about peace since the mid-twentieth century.
2. To show Gandhian views on education for peace.
3. To highlight the peace in Gandhian thought in India.
4. To show Gandhian Basic Education and Non Violence.
5. To narrate Gandhi's thoughts on inequality and social development.

6. To show what Gandhiji advised the practice of nonviolence.

4. Methodology

The information presented in this paper was collected from primary and secondary sources. The methods utilized for gathering information were document review, archival investigation, and informal interviews carried out in person and over the phone. Representative themes that were found across materials gathered were coded and analyzed for presentation. The research inquiry explored the emergence and current state of Gandhian studies in Indian universities and the ways in which this discipline could (and could not) be read productively alongside the field of global peace education.

5. Research Questions

The researcher has conducted the study on the basis of the following questions:

- What are the recommendations of Gandhian philosophy for promoting peace?
- Is there any improvement in the field of peace education of Gandhian thoughts of peace in India in 21st century?
- What were the problems behind peace education in India?
- Are there any obstacles to peace and the possibilities for achieving and maintaining peace?
- Are there any educational initiatives for peace education?

6. Globalization and Gandhian view

Gandhian studies' emphases on issues of globalization and development studies are important insights for the field of peace education. By acknowledging the larger global order and the limits it may impose on even the most radical innovations in the educational system, peace education scholars would be better equipped to consider, propose, and evaluate approaches towards greater peace and equity through education. It is important to note that this does not mean that scholars in both fields do not continue to carry out scholarly work in the areas that have conventionally defined each field, but that increased globalization, growing inequalities, and the need for 'home-grown' solutions increasingly necessitate that both peace education and Gandhian studies attend to the local. By understanding the diverse chords that resonate with peace education across the globe and within distinct cultural and social contexts, new directions, insights and information can increasingly inform peace education in order to make it more attentive to issues of identity and diversity. Ultimately, the continual renewal and reinvention of approaches to peace and education – regardless of the scholarly or disciplinary field to which such endeavours belong – can improve the ability of researchers and practitioners to examine the roots of violence and explore ever-expanding possibilities for peace.

7. Mahatma Gandhi and Satyagraha

Gandhi proposed and adopted "Satyagraha" as a moral equivalent to war and conflict. As we all know the successful

conduct of war involves two things. On the one hand, suppression of the virtues of kindness, friendliness, forgiveness and consideration for the sufferings of fellow human beings, and on the other, encouragement of the feelings of unqualified hatred, anger and hostility towards so called enemies. Thus war leads to total violation of the liberal democratic principles of respect for persons and dignity of the individual. On the contrary, satyagrahi while resisting injustice shows respect for his opponent by making moral appeals to him and expecting him to be responsive. Satyagrahi aims at conversion of the opponent's heart by making him aware of his ill will or inhuman behaviour through self-suffering. Satyagraha aims at winning over opponent by love and gentle persuading and by arousing in him a sense of justice rather than forcing him to surrender out of fear. The method of Satyagraha is purely moral and humanistic as it involves faith in the inherent goodness and good sense of the opponent coupled with goodwill towards him and readiness to come to an understanding and compromise. In fact Satyagraha aims at settlement of issue or issues with the opponent without causing him even psychological injury but it implies soul-force, courage and determination. A well-conducted Campaign of Satyagraha absolutely untouched by violence in word and deed, made the hypocritical opponent suffer from split personality as his own moral consciousness getting alarmed by the exposure of the immorality of his action. Gandhi believed in the technique of Satyagraha, because he had faith in the goodness of human nature.

8. Satyagraha as Method of Resolving Conflict

The moral and humanistic grandeur of Satyagraha as method of resolving conflict and securing justice has been appreciated by several thinkers, politicians and social workers. Conflict cannot take place if we behave on Gandhian maxim that humanity (rational beings) should always be treated as an end-in-itself. If we wish to keep peace, we ought to follow the UN charter of human rights, according to which dignity of human life must be honoured and maintained without reference to caste, colour, creed etc. We have to redefine the concept of Development and Progress as Human Welfare and well-being by replacing the prevalent misleading concept of development and progress in terms of Economic Development and material progress. If we want peace, we have to replace the humanity negating industrial consumerist culture by idealistic humanism. Belief in the spiritual constitution of man led Gandhi to affirm equality of all human beings and to declare innate goodness of men. Humanism as the philosophy of Globalism or Global philosophy implies non-discrimination with regard to race, sex, language, region, religion, political ideology, social and economic status, international status of the country etc. 'since the basic structure and nature of human beings all over the world is same. We must rationalise our ways of thinking and to think of the world in terms of maps and markets, we should think of it in terms of men, women and children i.e. in terms of mankind.

9. Sarva Dharma Sambhav

To prevent conflicts caused by religious bigotry, Gandhi suggested "Sarva Dharma Sambhav". According to him all religions are true and man cannot live without religion so he

recommends attitude of respect and tolerance towards all religions. Since the scientific and technological researches aimed at material comforts are ruining human sensitivity and sentiments i.e. human feelings and relations, so scientists and of the very relevant precursors of conflict-resolution movement with his comprehensible philosophy of peace based on the psychology of human nature, awareness of social realities and knowledge of economic and political systems and situations.

10. Non - Violence and Gandhi

By non-violent action, Gandhi meant peaceful, constructive mass action. As has been argued by Samuel Ravi, that "The principle of non-violence is the basis of basic education. Through it.....Gandhi wants to develop qualities which are necessary for building a non-violent society. It is true that Gandhi did not write on peace education in any very specific way, but his whole philosophy and life have been, of course, important in peace studies and peace education not only for India but for other nations of the world as well. (Prasad 1998, 4). All religions are based on love and compassion towards humanity and thus teach tolerance to its respective followers. Religious teachings should not be confused with the dogmatic, conservative and static notions of social reality rather these should be seen as a form of moral cleansing of individual. The practice of non-violence can achieve its optimum if one has an attitude of tolerance of others. He argued that religious and moral education in the overarching framework of non-violence is complimentary in nature and form the core of peace education. Peace education needs to inculcate tolerance among the different faiths. His thoughts on inequality, social development, education and non-violence if operationalised, can go a long way to negotiate and overcome not only the socio-economic challenges but also the ethical dilemmas of present times.

11. Gandhi's Views of Peace Education through basic Education

The origin of Gandhiji's basic system of education may be traced back to July, 1937. Gandhian concept of education is based on all round development of human personality that includes physical development, intellectual development and spiritual development. According to Gandhi, "By education I mean an all round drawing out of the best in child and man." Gandhi's important writings on education is compiled in two books; '*Basic Education*' (1951) and '*Towards New Education*' (1953). He didn't like the western education. According to him western education is based on materialism. In western philosophy the value of education is like the value of land or property, which is a very narrow concept. He believed that education is very broad concept and if it is implied in a better way, it can solve many problems of society and world.

At the primary level, Gandhi promoted an education system called 'basic education', which focused on vocational education and the use of local vernacular as the medium of instruction (Gupta 2007). He emphasized manual labour and hands-on training in addition to intellectual pursuits to provide holistic development as well as skills. According to him, education should be provided for free and special attention

should be paid to character building. One of the main components of his educational philosophy was the importance of religious education (in students' own religions) which, according to Gandhi, was synonymous with the concepts of truth and nonviolence. He promoted this form of education as a social good, emphasizing social responsibility, rather than having students view and use their educational qualifications solely for personal gains. Gandhi also advocated for a program of 'new education', which emphasized through practice the values of self-reliance, living within a community and oneness with nature (Prasad 1984). *Buniyadi Shiksha* (Basic Education also known as '*Nai Talim*') was the base of educational practice as propounded by Gandhi in 1937 at Wardha which subsequent became as Wardha Scheme or Basic National Education. It is against exploitation and centralization." (Ravi, 2011: 232). His idea of basic education was firmly oriented towards activity based. He elaborated on his notion of 'Nai Talim' as "Craft, Art, Health and education should all be integrated into one scheme. *Nai Talim* is a beautiful blend of all the four and covers the whole education of the individual from the time of conception to the moment of death".

This idea of establishing an institute for peace is to stress the need for non-violence, tolerance, full respect for human rights and fundamental freedom for all, democracy development, mutual understanding and respect for diversity as reinforcement for peace and growth of mankind.

Gandhian views go hand in hand with gestalt view on learning when he considers Persistent questioning and healthy inquisitiveness as the first requisite for acquiring learning of any kind. Gandhi extends the educative thought to ideology of democracies self-sufficiency and function is not knowledge of facts, but right education. Zakhir Hussain committees consider basic education as an effective approach to the problem of providing an integral all sided education.

For education to be effective, efficient and in rationality with basic education imparted at primary level, the Higher education must focus upon the ideologies of

- Combining general and vocational education in par with the requirements of the society.
- Students earning a part of their fees through socially useful productive work and community development services and this should form a compulsory character of education.
- Dependence of college on public support must be enhanced and such institutions must be accountable to society.

12. Path of Peace as said by Gandhi

Gandhi's life as an historical example of peace. Gandhi describes the Bhagavad-Gita as his favourite scriptural text, and he arrives at his central interpretation of the activist path of karma yoga through a very unusual nonviolent political reading of the Gita. This has to be situated within a context of positive and negative Jain, Buddhist, Hindu, and Western influences, including a contextualized political struggle for national

independence from British colonial domination. True, his formulations of peace education are shaped by his commitment to the absolute ideals of ahimsa (nonviolence) and satya (truth), but they are also shaped by his changing and conflicted reactions to the specific contextualized structures of a British colonial education. These had socialized “modern” Indians to adopt Western models and to devalue or feel ashamed of traditional Hindu and other Indian values. Gandhiji’s philosophy of life shows the path of peace that can be described as follows:

1. **Truth and Ahimsa.**
2. **Satyagraha** (It implies holding of truth through love and purity).
3. **Supreme God.**
4. **Righteousness and Truth as the Highest Religion** (true religion and true morality are inseparably bound up with each other).
5. **Service of Humanity.**
6. **Ram Rajya as the concept of a Society** (which he identified society with justice, peace, happiness, and welfare of all).

13. Equality and Gandhiji

Gandhian education negates selectivity in education. The selectivity in education must be minimized to bring in equality. Education must aid to uplift morality of masses. Education has been selective in nature from time immemorial the strategies of selectivity has just changed its forms over the centuries from class based to competitive exam based one. The equality in education is spoken of only up to secondary level all over the world. Only when the bar of equality is raised till higher education can the democratization of education fulfill its objectives. The strategies of inbreeding found in our educational systems need a qualitative revision as knowledge differ from person to person. Although the modalities of teaching–learning change over time the basic tenants always remains the same. The future of teaching Gandhian perspectives in the educational scenario lies in the inherent refined values it upholds for the generations to come.

14. Fundamental principles of National Education proposed by Gandhiji

Gandhiji continued to say that to be a creative facilitator of research of the human brain, anger and violent behaviour and providing education and training along with problem solving through leadership, to create transformation in the society and establish Global Peace. He believed that the institute can serve as a significant contributor providing leadership to diffuse crisis, create understanding, and provide options/solutions through active and attentive listening and impartial mediation, and establishing agreement, peace and harmony in the living and work environment in the world. Following are the Gandhiji’s educational principles:

- There should be free and compulsory primary education.
- The education should be craft – centred.
- It should be self – supporting.

- It should be given in mother tongue.
- It should be based on non – violence.

15. Indian educational initiatives for promoting peace

Indian educational initiatives, as well as those in a variety of other countries. In addition to teaching about Gandhi as part of the Indian history curriculum in primary and secondary schools, several schools employ elements of Gandhi’s philosophy in their names and operational structures. Additionally, dozens of Indian universities have ‘Gandhian studies’ departments, centers or programs that offer degrees in the subject and emphasize various disciplines within Gandhian studies ranging from history to economics to development studies.

16. Conclusion

Though Gandhi’s approach to peace education faces many significant challenges and formidable difficulties, nevertheless, his approach has much of value in challenging dominant philosophical approaches and offering creative alternatives. The present times crisis both at the levels of global and national once again has made our self aware of the immense importance and relevance of Gandhian philosophy. It is true that unlike other theoreticians, he did not theorize the social issues and presented them in a sound methodological framework. Yet, his ideas on education are very much in tune with the needs of the present generation. Peace today has become a rare and priced commodity. As Gandhi has said, that it is in the minds of the grown-ups we need to see the problems and it is in the minds of the children we need to sow the seeds of solution to such problems. Educating the children regarding peace, non-violence and most importantly mutual respect towards each other is very important. Needless to say, Gandhi’s Basic education engrained such thinking. As violence also has its roots in wealth and individuals’ desire for accumulating it beyond his/her need, Gandhian notions of *Astaya* (non-stealing) and *Aparigraha* (non-possession) needs to be engrained in the educational philosophy. He focused on the internalization of the education in day to day life so as to imbibe its moral values. The practice of non-violence is also central as it not only relates to the physical violence rather the inner soul is mauled and left bleeding. His peace education offers many possibilities for dealing with short-term violence, but its greatest strength is its long-term preventative education and socialization. Key to Gandhi’s peace education are his ethical and ontological formulations of means-ends relations; the need to uncover root causes and causal determinants and to free oneself from entrapment in escalating cycles of violence. Though it can be argued that Gandhi did not specifically wrote on peace education yet it is diffused across his writings which are very critical for today’s time. Therefore we should never forget Mahatma Gandhi, and his teaching and practice of truth and nonviolence for individual, national and world peace. The researcher would like to end the paper with the advice of Mahatma Gandhi who himself said, “I cannot teach you violence, as I do not myself believe in it. I can only teach you not to bow your heads before any one even at the cost of your life.”

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