Role of Peace Education in Restoration of Community Confidence in the Wake of Terrorism Wave

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Abstract

This study investigates the role of peace education in restoring confidence of the communities in the recent wake of terrorist violence in Swat, Pakistan. The terror plot destroyed many schools, especially girl's schools, in the locality. This situation rendered the communities of Swat helpless to provide education to their children in an environment of terror, volatility and insecurity. Many innocent children either lost their precious lives or became maimed. Parents and children suffered psychological depression and mental agony. Still the danger is looming large in many places. To grapple with the situation, various national and international philanthropic organizations in collaboration with the government of Pakistan started peace education initiatives in order to restore peace and development in the terror affected area, Swat. This study is an attempt to examine the effects of the peace education initiative on confidence restoration of the communities of Swat. The study revealed that the peace education initiative has played a great role in restoring confidence of the affected communities which has resultantly brought about positive changes among the affected communities such as that the students have come out of the psychological stress and strain, parents are now confident in sending their children to schools without any fear of losing their children. Furthermore, the peace education initiatives have resulted in mitigating the high intensity of the effects of the terror upon minds of the people. It can be concluded that peace education is an effective tool to restore community confidence in terror affected areas which can be equally applied in other settings as well.

Keywords: Peace education, community confidence, terrorism.

Introduction

Education is the primary source to shape the attitudes of individuals and education institutions play an important role in the quality of education[1]. It equips the people with significant knowledge and skills to effectively handle and grapple with various challenges of life. There are many cost effective methods and approaches to empower people with knowledge, skills and resources to promote peace and development[2]. Education enables people to resolve problems and conflicts by generating conditions that engender peace and development. Education is a source of peace and progress, because it promotes harmony and tranquility. The role of education in development of peace is an undisputable fact. It brings about a positive change in the attitudes and behaviors of people[3]. Peace and progress are the ultimate results of effective education. Individuals get awareness about their roles and responsibilities through education and training. They find mutually interactive opportunities of learning new behaviors and acquiring new knowledge. This helps them to co-exist peacefully with others and to work for sustainable peace and development of their societies. Integration of peace education in the classroom curriculum and school activities is the best way to achieve this goal[4,5].

Swat, a tourist hub of Pakistan came under the fire of terrorist attacks a couple of years ago. This unexpected catastrophic development completely changed the socio-economic and geo-politico position of the district and its adjacent areas. In the aftermath of the situation, the condition of education became maimed. More than three hundred girls' schools were turned into graveyards and deserts. Social life of the people of the area came to stand still. Children and adult equally suffered psychologically and socially. The result was psychosocial terror phobia prevailing among the school children. This condition broke down the confidence of the people of the area. Consequently, school children were stopped from going to schools and business activities closed down due to fear of abduction, killing, and bomb and blast.

To restore the shattered confidence of the communities, Peace Awareness Program (PAP) was launched by different organizations in the terror affected areas of District Swat. To achieve this goal training programmes were designed and implemented. For this purpose school teachers were intensively trained to deal with unexpected emergencies, to work closely with parents and to protect and guide school children to grow socially and gain confidence in the wake of the terrorist wave.

To carry out this training program, financial and technical support was provided by United States Institute of Peace (USIP) under the project known as Pakistan Center for Excellence (PACE). The programmes having various durations such as two

weeks, one month and three days were aimed at presenting the role of teachers as change agents, promotion of non-violence and positive changes in the behavior of the community towards peace, education and development. The trainings sensitized the teachers about the importance of peace and how to promote a culture of tolerance, non-violence and harmony by using existing school as peace restoration plate form.

Initially the PAP was implemented in 44 schools where teachers were trained through interactive sessions in order to know as to how to promote peace and confidence of parents through various school-home interactions such meetings, festivals, daily correspondence, national day celebrations, parents day and so on. The training sessions of the aforesaid training programmes were characterized by activity based approach through which the participants (teachers) were involved in the sessions through discussions, presenting and accepting difference of views, presentations, role plays and conflict handling demonstrations. This training provided wider interactive opportunities to the teachers to understand various facets of restoring confidence of parents and communities using different channels. In order to maintain the peace education initiatives in future, Peaceful Schools Guidebooks (PSGs) were prepared and distributed among parents.

Literature Review: Peace education is not a new phenomenon. It has existed in human history in one form or another since antiquity. Its roots can be found in the classical Greek period as well. Plato and Aristotle have also emphasised on the importance of peace and development in their theories. It is also attributed to Maria Montessori, john Dewey and even Erasmus. They all worked for peace and development through their ideas and theories[6]. Peace education is a problem solving practice. It is an attempt to build peace and tranquillity through educational means by promoting universal values. The basic aim of peace education is to enable the violence affected people to share exercises, to own peace, to avoid terror and to work together to realize a shared and peaceful future for humanity irrespective of cast, colour and creed on the planet earth[7]. The Peace education means educating the people about the importance of peace and its benefits. It is the process of transforming the thinking of people positively and shaping their behaviors by providing them with knowledge, values, and skills. Peace education also means training the people to resolve their conflicts, interpersonal disputes through dialogue, negotiations and mediations[8].

Peace education aims to resist and confront violence and terror to transform a society from state of disturbance to a state of peace and harmony. The main focus of peace education is restoration of peace and development through educational means[9,10,11]. Peace education is an evolutionary step towards changing people's perception and behaviors to nurture a culture of peace. Peace educators transform the minds of people which ultimately culminate in changing of knowledge, values, skills and behaviors. This process of transformation is essential to provide a firm foundation to the terror or violence affected cultures and societies[6].

According to Jenkins[12] peace education is a method to alter beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of people from negative to positive attitudes so that conflict is resolved and violence is prevented. Thus it is used as a basis for prevention of violence and resolution of conflicts. Oslo Institute of International Peace and Research (PRIO) writes that peace education is promotion of knowledge, skills, attitudes and values to bring about positive behavioral changes in order to enable children, adult and youth to avoid conflict and violence and to develop sense of care, love and respect for each other on earth as global citizens. Kester[7] elaborates that the content of peace education includes knowledge about peace movement, peacemakers, direct and indirect violence, peace as an active process, nurturing culture of peace, human rights and responsibilities, worldviews and ideologies, nonviolent communication, community and dialogue. The method of peace is collaborative, cooperative, participatory and active. The structure of the teaching learning process in peace education includes storytelling, case studies, role plays, empathy activities, negotiations, discussions, mediation practice, journaling, reflection circles and alternative future exercises.

In view of Danesh and Danesh[13] the main purpose of peace education is to transform the minds of people from conflict to peace through dialogue and non-violence means. The second objective of peace education is to transform the beliefs of general public especially youth about peace across generations. Hence, peace education is the attainment of knowledge, acquisition of values and developing skills, attitudes, and behaviors about living in harmony and peace with others and with others in the society. It is also an ability of co-existence with all living creatures in the ultimate natural environment. Kester[8] in one his paper writes that the importance of peace for tranquility and development is self-explanatory. Peace is essential for world progress. United Nations (UN) has passed numerous declarations and conventions on peace and development. One of the Directors General of United Nation Educational Social and Cultural Organization, Kiochiro Matsuura[14] is said to have remarked that peace education is one of the fundamental aims of the UNESCO mission as well as of the UN. GcGlynn[15] argues that survival and progress of peaceful society depends on peaceful, positive and educated minds. Schools are the best places where the youth could be educated and trained in the best possible manner. Therefore, schools, teachers and parents of the present day have enormous responsibilities on their shoulders regarding the achievement of this goal. It is observed that a culture of violence and terror is increasing day by day everywhere. This trend has paced the world peace and progress at a stake. Danesh[16] highlights that humanity needs a secure and safe culture to prosper. Peace education is the means through which this goal could be materialised. It has been observed that everywhere people are affected by violence, social problems and lack of respect for each other. Through peace education the difference among the people could be turned into agreements and cooperation. Sara[17] writes that peace is a global need. It could be promoted through

care, love, respect and by avoiding conflict and violence. Parents and community members could be trained to deal with conflicts, unexpected dangers, threads and violence effectively. For this purpose a mass scale awareness programmes could be initiated in such areas where conflict exists or there is an imminent threat to peace and tranquillity. The ultimate results of such activities would be creation of a culture of trust, collaboration, peace and equity.

Schools could also be used for dissemination of the message of peace education. For the achievement of this aim, at lager scales, peace education could be integrated in the school curriculum. This would help in inculcating into the minds of the young generation the concept of peace and its importance for development of human society. Apart from theoretical knowledge, attention must be paid to skills, values and attitude development. This will help in sustainable growth of positive behaviours, which is the foremost requirement for developing a sense of care, love, cooperation and unity[18]. The aim of peace education is to restore the disturbed communities socially, economically, politically and morally. This is a common responsibility which can be shouldered by all such as parents, community workers, philanthropists, teachers and students together. Halting the issue individually would not be effective. It needs an environment of trust, education and mutual actual ownership of the problem and its consequences[19]. Education is the best tool to bring about sustainable peace and to make the reconstruction activities successful. Through education the behaviours and minds of people could be positively shaped and reshaped. This leads to ultimate harmony and extension of cooperation to other parts of society where conflicts and terror exists[20].

This study draws its theoretical framework from the work of Mayor[21] who writes that peace education may be used as a panacea for the treatment of psychological and social pressures of terror affected communities on following three grounds. First, it can be used as Conflict Resolution Training (CRT). Through training the minds of the affected communities could be properly directed and moulded to restore their confidence. This is called mind moulding or mind shaping. It is performed through negotiation and peer mediation. This approach is usually used in those situations where people suffer huge destructions both socially and economically. In the wake of world war two, this mechanism was used to educate the war affected communities in Eastern Europe. This technique had helped in terms of restoring the shattered psyche of the people. Learning to manage fight, resist anger, spread care and love, listening, turn-taking, identifying needs and separating facts from emotions constitute the main elements of this programme.

Second is the technique of peace education through Democracy Training (DT). This mechanism is based on the idea that man is

peaceful by nature. It typically focuses on political processes such as participation, sharing, decision making, opinion-formations and discussion. This training proposes that human society needs the ultimate commitment from all people around who constitute the society to accept the presence of conflict and the determination to work for tolerance and mutual peaceful co-existence. The basic aim of this type of training is to attempt to foster conflict-free and positive attitudes among the people and to enable them to understand and explore the causes of conflicts in the society and view conflicts as a plate form for creativity and growth rather than a problem. This type of training enhances peoples' critical thinking skills, reflective skills and a strong consciousness about the existence and extermination of the forces of terror and violence. The end result of such programmes is production of responsible citizens who will follow standards of peace and development rather conflict and enmity. It is an established fact that democracy decreases the chances of injustices and war. Hence, democracy is essential for the creation of culture of peace and development.

Third is peace education through Human Rights Education (HRE). This program aimed at creating awareness among and sensitises the communities about the policies and plans which are needed to take threatened or deprived humanities out of the scourge of conflict and terror. This will engender a solid commitment among the stakeholders to promote an atmosphere of peace where all members of the human community are able to use their personal freedoms and become safe from the dangers of fear, killing, violence, oppression and indignity. In these programmes, the participants are familiarised with the national and international movements, covenants for peace and human rights declarations for promotion of peace, justice, security, unity, solidarity, autonomy and strong affirmation for individual and collective freedoms.

Peace education is a dynamic field. Harris and Morrison[6] have divided it into five categories such as, international education, development education, environmental education, human rights education and conflict education. According to Matsuura and Koichiro[14] peace education philosophy and curriculum covers a range of topics such as history and philosophy of peace, discrimination between positive and negative peace, formation and transformation of peaceful values to present and future generations, nurturing of culture of co-existence and avoiding aggression, conflicts and war[18]. Peace education includes cultivation of peace building skills among the people through dialogue, mediation and social artistic endeavours. Peace educators teach values of respect, understanding, love, care, non-violence and harmony. As a result, it brings various elements and communities together to form a peaceful society though democratic pedagogical means. It is a dialogical learning conducted through participation[22].
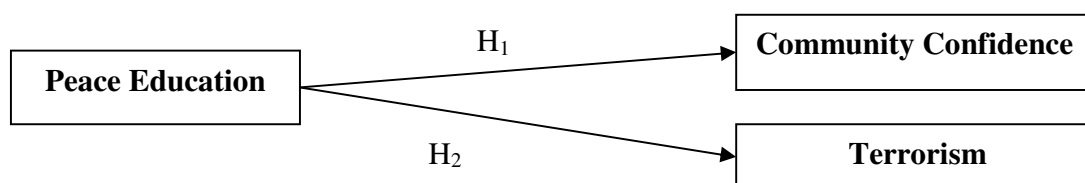
Figure-1
Hypothesis of Peace Education

Hypothesis: The following hypotheses were developed on the basis of relevant literature review**: H₁:** Peace education is significantly correlated relationship with community confidence. **H₂:** Peace education has a significant relationship with terrorism.

Methodology

This study is based on descriptive survey method. The basic purpose of the study was to investigate the perceptions of teachers in district Swat Pakistan about the role of schools in promotion of peace education initiatives in the wake of terrorist violence that hit the area a couple of years ago.

Population and Sampling: Out of the 400 government school teachers who participated in the peace education and community confidence enhancement programmes as trainers. 196 teachers were selected through simple random sampling (SRS) representative respondent group from the population see the table of Krejcie and Morgan[23]. Most of the teachers could not be accessed due to their postings in remote areas of the district. Among one hundred and ninety six teachers female were excluded due to cultural and social barriers. Woman of this area are strictly discouraged to mingle with males except on personal family relations. Hence, it was very hard to have access to the women trainers. Therefore, the researcher contended on contacting only the available male teachers.

Instrumentation: For the purpose of data collection a structured questionnaire was administered to the 196 sample teachers. Before distributing the questionnaire, it was piloted and shown to two experts in the field of education. After getting their tacit approval regarding content and construct validity of the items, finally the prepared questionnaire was fielded among the selected samples. The questionnaire was designed based on Five Point Likert Scale. Scale is usually considered to be useful tool to ascertain the degree of agreement and disagreement with each item of the questionnaire. The questionnaire was developed with the following ranges such as i. Strongly disagree, ii. Disagree, iii. Somewhat, iv. Agree and v. Strongly Agree. The items of the questionnaire consisted of various items taken from the following five main themes that is Peace Education, Restoration of community confidence and Challenges and opportunities.

For collection of data self administrated questionnaire was used as research instrument. It consisted 15 items on 5 point Likert scale. The method of Cronbach's alpha was applied to examine the reliability of the research instrument. The value of reliability was 0.85 which is greater than the standard value (0.7). The rate of return was 100% as all the participants in the research study returned the questioner distributed to them.

Analysis of data: After collection of data from the respondents the data were put to Statistical Package of Social Sciences (SPSS). After coding, entering and refining the data the researcher found the reliability by Cronbach's alpha, correlation and descriptive analysis.

Results and Discussion

The analysis of the data is presented discussed below using various statistical tools by SPSS 17.0.

Correlation Analysis: Pearson Correlation was measured to determine the relationship between independent variable (peace education) and the dependent variable (community confidence and terrorism).

Table-1
Pearson Correlation Analysis

Variables	Community Confidence	Terrorism	Peace education
Community Confidence	1		
Terrorism	0.783*	1	
Peace education	0.574*	0.741*	1

*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Independent (peace education) variable has strong correlation value with community confidence and significant at p value of 0.01. Peace education have a strong relationship with dependent variables (terrorism) through Pearson correlation values and significant at p value of 0.01.

Regression analysis: Regression analysis was determining with the help of test the hypotheses. The results for each variable are discussed.

H1: Peace education is significantly correlated relationship with community confidence. The value of coefficient beta 0.79 significant relationship between the variables. The value of R-square 0.712 shows that 71.2% variation in the dependant variable, community confidence, is explained by independent variable i.e peace education. The model's goodness of fit is shown by F-value that is 270.00. Therefore H₁ is accepted and we conclude that peace education has significant relationship with community confidence.

Table-2
Relationship between peace education and community confidence

Variables	R square	t-value	Coefficient	F-value	P value
Peace education	0.712	14.33	0.79	270.2	0.00

H2: Peace education has significantly relationship with terrorism. The value of coefficient beta 0.77 significant relationships between the variables.The values of R-square 0.747 shows that 74.7% variation in the dependant variable; terrorism is explained by independent variable i.e peace education. The model's goodness of fit is shown by F-value that is 288.3. Therefore H_2 is accepted and we conclude that peace education has significant relationship with terrorism.

Table-3
Relationship between peace education and terrorism

Variables	R square	t-value	Coefficient	F-value	P value
Peace education	0.747	17.33	0.77	288.3	0.00

Discussion: The results of the first hypothesis revealed that peace education is significantly correlated with community confidence. It means that peace education initiatives in swat have brought about positive changes in the behaviors and attitudes of the communities. Examination of the data shows that peace education has changed the beliefs, attitudes and behaviors of the terror affected people positively. It is proved to be a useful tool for the development of peaceful minds and in ensuring harmony and extension of cooperation in the violence affected areas.

The second hypothesis showed that there is a significantly correlation between terrorism and peace education. It means that peace education initiatives have effectively restored the shattered confidence of the violence affected people of Swat. It means that peace education is a strong tool to create culture of trust and tranquility in the society. It has promoted a conflict free environment where the communities are able to take the sigh of relief and send their children to school. The peace initiative activities have has prudently ensured peace and tranquility in the terror affected areas of Swat.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that as a result of peace education, the wave of terror has subsided in the Swat area. These initiatives have played an effective role in promoting strong sense of justice, democracy, care and feelings of togetherness have among the affected violence affected communities in Swat. The study further concludes that peace education initiatives have restored the broken confidence of the terrorism affected communities of swat.

Future Recommendations: This study was confined to district swat and even the sample was limited to produce more reliable and valid results. It is suggested that future research should be conducted in other terrorism affected areas of Pakistan. This would bring more comprehensive results regarding the effectiveness of the peace education initiatives.

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