



The Politics of Violence And Non-Violence: Education As A Medium To Create A World Without Violence

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Abstract:

This paper delves into the relationship between education and non-violence, intending to address global violence through education. The lack of education is seen as a contributing factor to violent tendencies, and the paper argues that education can promote peace personally and in communities worldwide. It explores the history and philosophy of non-violence, highlighting its advocates like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr. The paper discusses how education can reduce violent tendencies and promote empathy and conflict resolution skills. It emphasizes the importance of instilling values of non-violence, reshaping attitudes, and empowering individuals to resolve conflicts peacefully. The paper suggests practical approaches to encourage non-violent thinking and actions and underlines the significance of incorporating non-violence into curricula. The paper also highlights UNESCO's efforts to integrate peace and tolerance values into education systems, acknowledging the challenges in implementing non-violence education. Despite these challenges, education remains a powerful tool for positive change in promoting peaceful coexistence. The paper also highlights the mutual interdependence of the politics of non-violence and non-violent education systems. By embracing innovative solutions, a safer and more peaceful world can be achieved through education.

1. Introduction

Violence is a significant issue that plagues societies worldwide, whether domestic abuse, gang-related violence, or conflicts between nations. To tackle this problem, it's crucial to understand its root causes. Research shows that a lack of education significantly contributes to violent tendencies. Therefore, this article examines how education can promote peace and non-violence, both personally and within communities and globally. Education plays a crucial role in fostering non-violence in a world filled with conflicts, unrest, and violence. It has the power to shape minds, influence perceptions, and guide behaviours, making it an essential tool for cultivating peace and harmony within societies. This paper explores the various ways education can promote non-violence and transform individuals and communities.

Making an effort towards building a violence-free society requires a fundamental shift in the narratives about politics. In general, the structures and systems of the political sphere are intertwined with violence. However, there is a robust alternative tradition of politics, which professes and practices a non-violent mode of social and political change. Adopting and promoting this narrative of politics and non-violent education are mutually interdependent. An educational model based on the inculcation of values of non-violence will foster a polity that abjures violence. And a political structure professing non-violent ways will further promote the philosophy of non-violence in education.

2. Concept Of Non-Violence

Human existence has been perennially marred by conflict. And conflict breeds violence. Human society has long used violence to settle disputes. Violence has been justified in the name of peace. If the end is pious and worthy, then the violent means are sanctioned, even by ethical standards.

Against this idea that the end justifies the means, the proponents of the philosophy of non-violence argue that means are equally important as the ends. So, violent means cannot be used to achieve violence-free social goals. In other words, the methods used to achieve change are inseparable from the change itself.ⁱ

The philosophy of Non-violence opposes the use of violence to attain social or political change. This belief is grounded in the understanding that violence is always harmful, not only to the victim but also to the perpetrator. Recently, non-violence has emerged as a popular approach for bringing about social and political change. This concept, also known as non-violent or civil resistance, was first introduced in its modern form by Mahatma Gandhi during India's fight for independence. Non-violence involves actively and openly refusing to cause physical harm to opponents as a strategic and moral decision. Gandhi described non-violence as love in action. For him, it encompassed respect and care for all, including opponents, rather than seeking to defeat them.ⁱⁱ He developed Satyagraha's philosophy, a Sanskrit word that means "truth force" or "soul force." Satyagraha is based on the belief that truth and love are more powerful than violence. Besides Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Jr., Nelson Mandela, and Aung San Suu Kyi are other significant proponents of non-violent political methods. Martin Luther King was the leader of the American civil rights movement. He developed the philosophy of non-violent direct action, a form of protest that seeks to change society by confronting injustice directly. Nelson Mandela was the leader of the anti-apartheid movement in South Africa. Aung San Suu Kyi is a Burmese politician who has been a leading figure in the struggle for democracy

in Burma. The Dalai Lama is another prominent advocate of non-violence. He is the spiritual leader of Tibetan Buddhism.

Some scholars have dedicated their lives to studying non-violent methods. One such scholar is Gene Sharp, who defined non-violence as "the technique of applying power in interactions with opponents without the threat of physical harm."ⁱⁱⁱ

Non-violence promotes persuasive tactics such as symbolic protests, economic boycotts, strikes, and other forms of dissent and disruption that do not involve physical force. Peter Ackerman is a scholar who argues that non-violence is morally superior as it avoids direct harm. He also believes it is strategically more effective by eliciting conscience, sympathy, and discomfort among the public and opponents.^{iv} It is effective not only because of its moral persuasion but also due to the resilience and power of mobilized people. It is a popular alternative to violent methods and remains one of the most influential philosophies of social change in the modern world.

Recent studies by scholars like Erica Chenoweth have analyzed numerous political and social movements worldwide, demonstrating that non-violent approaches are more effective than violent ones.^v

There are various approaches to non-violence, each with its interpretation of violence and the most effective method for achieving social change. Two examples are the Satyagraha theory, developed by Mahatma Gandhi, and the non-violent direct action theory, developed by Martin Luther King Jr.

Social change has been achieved through the use of non-violence as a successful tool in the fight for democracy, peace, and civil rights. However, some people disagree about its effectiveness. While some argue that non-violence is not always successful, others believe that it is the only way to achieve lasting change. The effectiveness of non-violence can be influenced by various factors, such as the level of dedication shown by activists, support from the community, and the response of authorities. When there are many committed activists, community backing, and leaders willing to listen to the activists' demands, non-violence is most likely to succeed.

3. The Role of Education in Promoting Non-Violence

Education and non-violence are closely intertwined. Studies have shown the benefits of education in reducing violent tendencies and promoting tolerance, empathy and conflict-resolution skills. According to UNESCO, every year of schooling reduces an individual's risk of conflict^{vi}. Educated individuals are less likely to become perpetrators or victims of intolerance, hate crimes and terrorism.

At a societal level, education is correlated with more peaceful and democratic societies. Researchers have found a strong negative association between the number of years of education received and the likelihood of conflict, with each additional year reducing the chance of conflict by around 3%^{vii}. Education can increase contact between different groups, breaking down stereotypes and promoting peaceful coexistence among diverse communities. Furthermore, educated individuals are less likely to elect and support authoritarian or totalitarian leaders who may provoke instability by targeting perceived threats.

4. How Education Cultivates Non-Violence

Education plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' values, attitudes, and behaviours to align with the principles of non-violence. By emphasizing empathy, compassion, and respect for diversity, education can help mould individuals who are less likely to use violence to resolve conflicts. Studies have demonstrated that education can alter perceptions of "otherness" and promote a more inclusive and empathetic society.^{viii}. Communication skills are essential to resolve differences. Unlike animals, humans have the unique capacity to use language to communicate and resolve issues. Education helps individuals and societies to build effective communication skills. Education equips individuals with the tools to engage in constructive dialogues, negotiate differences, and find peaceful solutions to disputes.

Education exposes individuals to diverse points of view and critical thinking. Exposure to diversity reduces prejudices. Therefore, by acceptance of others, the long-standing norms of violence can be broken. Through critical thinking and exposure to diverse perspectives, education can challenge deeply ingrained beliefs that support aggression and hostility. By advocating for gender equality, social justice, and human rights, education contributes to creating environments that discourage violence and oppression.^{ix}.

Education is crucial in instilling moral principles such as compassion, fairness, and respect for human rights. It teaches students to control their emotions, resolve conflicts amicably, and be socially sensitive. Exposure to diversity helps dispel stereotypes about marginalized groups, reduce prejudice, and promote acceptance. Education fosters democratic participation, a commitment to non-violent protest, and a reduced susceptibility to indoctrination. With increased employability and income, education leads to lower crime, rebellion, and exploitation motivations. Additionally, educating women and girls helps to reduce attitudes that support abuse and domestic violence. Values learned in childhood influence current parenting norms and practices, and their effects accumulate over generations.

5. Inculcating Norms And Values Of Non-Violence Through Education

The value of non-violence in education is well proven. By teaching the philosophical values of non-violence, education will help in achieving a greater good for human society. The question is, how can it be done? There are many ways and strategies for Incorporating non-violence into curricula and pedagogical methods. "Pedagogy is the combination of teaching methods (what instructors do), learning activities (what instructors ask their students to do), and learning assessments (the assignments, projects, or tasks that measure student learning)."^x. On the other hand, the curriculum is defined as, in essence, "what the school is attempting to teach, which might include social behaviours as well as content and thinking skills. A curriculum consists of the "roadmap" or "guideline" of any given discipline. A curriculum is the combination of instructional practices, learning experiences, and students' performance assessments that are designed to bring out and evaluate the target learning outcomes of a particular course."^{xi}.

Certain pedagogical elements must be present for educational systems to promote non-violence effectively. Programs for resolving conflicts must instruct students in non-violent communication techniques, such as negotiation and mediation. Social-emotional learning should foster compassion, respect, and empathy. Civics education programs must cover human rights, ethics, and active citizenship. Courses that promote media

literacy, critical thinking, and fact-checking should also be offered. Creating equitable and inclusive classrooms is vital for promoting cross-cultural collaboration. Similarly, extracurricular activities should encourage positive intergroup conversations. It is also crucial to provide psychosocial support to address trauma that fuels anger and radicalization. To achieve this, teachers should receive training in cultural sensitivity, de-escalation, and non-violent discipline. It is necessary to foster a culture of safety and positivity in schools. This will reduce harassment, violence, and marginalization. However, implementing these changes may face obstacles such as poverty, gender discrimination, physical and mental impairments, and conflict. These obstacles prevent people from accessing high-quality education.

When it comes to teaching non-violence, it's important to adjust our methods to promote understanding, empathy, and peaceful conflict resolution. One effective approach is to encourage open-ended discussions, foster critical thinking, and explore non-violent principles. It's also beneficial to involve students in hands-on activities that simulate real-life conflicts and promote collaboration and non-violent solutions.

It's important to include stories about non-violent movements, figures, and events when teaching students. Role-playing games can also be helpful in promoting participation and engagement. Community service initiatives that use non-violent means to address regional problems should be highlighted as well. Encourage students to express their ideas about non-violence through poetry, art, music, or other forms of creativity. Assigning group projects that require cooperation to address societal issues using non-violent techniques can instil teamwork and empathy.

It is crucial to help the students cultivate inner peace by introducing mindfulness techniques that can aid in managing emotions. The teachers can foster moral judgment and critical thinking by presenting moral conundrums related to violence and non-violence. The institutions should arrange for non-violence experts, activists, and academics to give presentations to students, which can inspire dialogue and provide first-hand knowledge. Educators should encourage a collaborative learning atmosphere by encouraging students to study different aspects of non-violence and share their findings with their classmates.

One helpful approach to promoting non-violent conflict resolution among students is to hold workshops that teach effective methods such as negotiation, active listening, and mediation. Additionally, it's important to examine how violence is portrayed in media and explore different approaches to resolving conflicts as they arise. By incorporating these pedagogical methods into teaching, educators can create an engaging learning environment that fosters students' understanding of non-violence and equips them with the skills to approach conflicts constructively and peacefully.

6. Non-Violence Education in Curricula

Incorporating non-violence education into formal curricula can provide long-lasting advantages for societies. By teaching conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and ethical decision-making from an early age, education enables individuals to address challenges in peaceful ways. Research suggests that students exposed to comprehensive non-violence education demonstrate improved interpersonal skills and reduced aggressive behaviours.^{xii}

To effectively integrate non-violence into education, a careful and systematic approach is necessary. Educational institutions can adopt various tactics, including creating courses or modules that focus on non-violence, conflict resolution, and peace studies. The principles of non-violence can also be incorporated into existing subjects such as literature, social studies, ethics, and history. Collaboration across fields such as psychology, sociology, philosophy, and international relations can provide a comprehensive understanding of non-violence. Historical case studies, the lives of non-violence advocates, and current conflicts can also be used to demonstrate the power and effectiveness of non-violent strategies.

To encourage conflict resolution, effective communication, active listening, and negotiation skills should be taught. Critical thinking and analysis can be promoted by asking open-ended questions about the moral implications of violence and non-violence. Literature, art, and media highlighting the perspectives and experiences of those impacted by violence can promote empathy and understanding. Exploring the history of non-violence in different cultures and societies can help understand various dispute resolution methods. Global citizenship, human rights, and social justice should be emphasized to promote responsibility towards creating a peaceful world.

To ensure that non-violence education is a permanent part of the institution's culture, it should be integrated as a regular component rather than a one-time lesson or semester. Partnering with civil society groups focused on human rights, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution can enhance the impact of non-violence education. Leveraging technology to extend the reach of non-violence education through online platforms, webinars, and interactive tools can also be helpful.

By implementing these tactics, educational institutions can successfully integrate non-violence education into their curricula and promote a more peaceful world.

7. International Perspectives on Non-Violence Education: UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization is a specialized agency of the United Nations that promotes world peace and security through international cooperation in education, arts, sciences and culture.

"UNESCO's approach to educating for peace is multidimensional, in that it links education with a range of activities that address the root causes of violence, from human security to sustainable development.^{xiii}."

Through education programs and partnerships, UNESCO aims to create inclusive education systems that promote human rights, intercultural understanding, and tolerance. The organization advocates for education that fosters peace and non-violence by instilling knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours that align with these values. UNESCO aims to create inclusive education programs and partnerships that promote human rights, intercultural understanding, and tolerance. Through education for peace and non-violence, individuals can develop the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviours that align with and encourage these values^{xiv}.

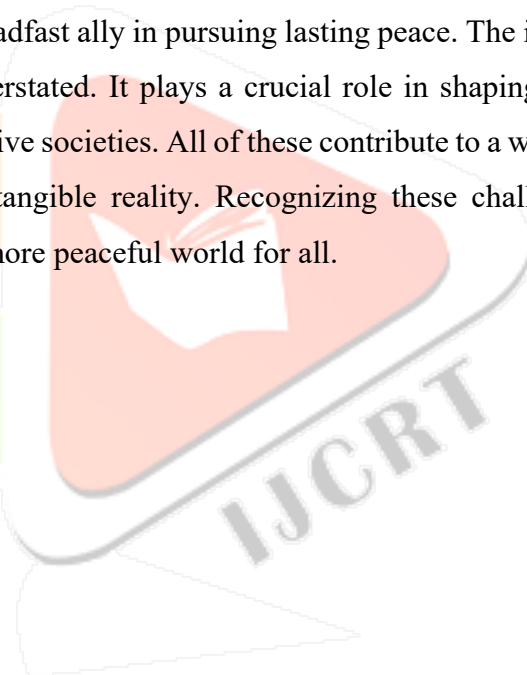
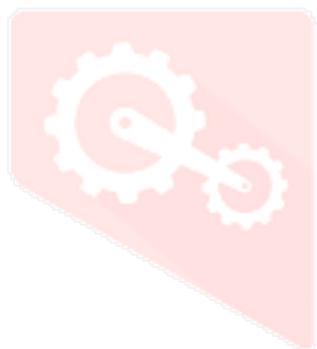
Even the United Nations General Assembly has accepted the importance of the culture of peace. In 1999, the Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace, UNGA Resolution 53/243, was adopted by the

United Nations General Assembly on September 13, 1999. The Declaration affirms the importance of education for peace and non-violence.

8. Conclusion

Although education can promote non-violence, challenges, such as limited resources, cultural barriers, and political resistance, must be acknowledged. In addition to this, the possible benefits of non-violent education cannot be guaranteed. Like any other approach in human relations, this is premised on available literature, experiences and logical possibilities. There will always be a need to balance non-violence education with addressing systemic issues. However, innovative approaches such as online platforms, community engagement, and partnerships with non-governmental organizations offer opportunities to overcome these obstacles and expand the reach of non-violence education.

Education is a beacon of hope for a more peaceful future in a world filled with conflicts and divisions. It can transform societies from within by shaping attitudes, fostering empathy, and equipping individuals with the skills to resolve disputes non-violently. This research paper highlights the multifaceted significance of education in promoting non-violence, emphasizing its role as a powerful tool for positive change. As societies face the challenges of violence, education remains a steadfast ally in pursuing lasting peace. The importance of education in promoting non-violence cannot be overstated. It plays a crucial role in shaping attitudes, enhancing conflict resolution skills, and fostering inclusive societies. All of these contribute to a world where peaceful coexistence is not just an aspiration but a tangible reality. Recognizing these challenges and embracing innovative solutions can create a safer and more peaceful world for all.



End notes

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