

EDUCATIONPLUS

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Albert P'Rayan

When we open newspapers or turn on news channels, we are bombarded with reports of international conflicts, wars between nations, the killing of innocent people, communal violence, societal unrest, violent crimes, and various forms of injustice. Consuming such news often disturbs our peace of mind and leads us to believe that a lack of peace is widespread and the norm. In the 2023 Global Peace Index (GPI), an annual report prepared by the Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP), Iceland maintains its position as the most peaceful country for the 16th consecutive year, followed by Denmark, Ireland, New Zealand, and Austria. Conversely, Afghanistan ranks as the least peaceful country, followed by Yemen, Syria, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. India occupies the

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126th position out of 163 countries covered by the IEP. What can be done to strengthen the ideals of peace? Now, more than ever, peace is imperative. It is everybody's responsibility to cultivate an understanding of peace and to promote discussions on its importance. Incorporating peace education into the school curriculum can be a crucial tool in nurturing harmony and ultimately achieving peace within society.

What is peace? Before exploring the concept of peace education, it is essential to understand the essence of peace itself. The interpretation of 'peace' varies according to individual perspectives. For individuals enduring conflict in Palestine, peace could signify the absence of turmoil or the cessation of war. For Dalits in India, who have historically suffered injustice, peace could mean the attainment of justice. For those who have been denied human rights and stripped of human dignity, peace could mean leading a dignified life. Peace can be achieved through various means: the power of law, dialogue, and love. Each society has its own set of values deemed crucial for fostering harmonious coexistence. When a society embraces these values, peace becomes attainable. Moreover, peace and happiness share an in-

Give peace a chance
Incorporating peace education into the curriculum can be crucial in nurturing harmony and ultimately achieving peace within society



PIXABAY

tricate relationship; a peaceful nation is often a happy one. Iceland serves as a prime example, ranking not only as the most peaceful country but also the third happiest in the world, trailing only Fin-

land and Denmark. Iceland's commitment to prioritising the peace and happiness of its citizens, along with its lack of a military budget or armed forces, clarifies why it consistently secures the top spot among peaceful na-

tions worldwide. In 2016, Reykjavik, the capital of Iceland, and the University of Iceland jointly established a Peace Centre aimed at promoting non-violent communication, eradicating interpersonal violence, and fostering

peaceful relations between states and organisations. The conventional definition of "peace education" is "the process of acquiring values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviours to

live in harmony with oneself, others, and the natural environment." As Fran Schmidt and Alice Friedman (1988) express it: "Peace education is holistic, embracing the physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children within a framework deeply rooted in traditional human values." According to R.D. Laing (1978), peace education seeks to address conflicts and violence on various scales, from global and national to local and personal. It aims to explore ways to create more just and sustainable futures. Based on these definitions, the objectives of peace education include enabling students to become aware of the importance of peace and its societal impacts, nurturing an appreciation for concepts like peace, human values, democracy, human rights, and justice.

Integrations It is not essential to offer a dedicated peace education course; instead, it can be integrated in various ways. Textbooks could include engaging authentic texts centred around themes such as social harmony, interfaith dialogue, intercultural understanding, democracy, human rights, inclusivity and diversity. When teachers initiate discussions on these subjects, students can cultivate empathy, gain insight into others' emotions, learn to respect differing viewpoints and develop their negotiation

skills. Exploring the values expressed in the Preamble to the Constitution can help students understand its significance. Additionally, activities promoting cooperation and collaboration can further nurture students' compassion and courtesy. Nowadays, the analysis of news stories across various print, electronic, and online platforms shows that viewpoints are frequently disguised as news, with many reports framing conflicts between communities or countries in terms of 'winning' and 'losing'. This influences news consumers and fosters animosity towards certain communities or countries. It is crucial to raise awareness of bias in news reporting to enable them to become critical thinkers. Additionally, it is important to help students understand how peace journalism, an approach rooted in factual reporting and dedicated to exploring peaceful resolutions, can contribute to maintaining harmony and peace in society. Mahatma Gandhi, a profound advocate of peace and non-violence, emphasised, "If we are to teach real peace in this world...we shall have to begin with the children." Are our educators ready to inspire young students and empower them to become ambassadors of peace?

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Align with your goal

Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This career counselling column may help



OFF THE EDGE Nandini Raman I have done a B.Ed. in Physics and a BCA but do not have a B.Sc. in the subject. Can I become a teacher in a government school? Gaurav

Dear Gaurav, How and where did you do your B.Ed in Physics with a BCA and not a B.Sc in Physics? Is your B.Ed degree valid? Do you want to teach the students Physics or Computer Science? What age group or class do you wish to teach and, most importantly, what are you eligible to teach? To be a Primary Teacher (PRT), Trained Graduate Teacher (TGT) or a PostGraduate Teacher (PGT) in a government school, you need to qualify for the Central Teacher Eligibility Test (CTET) conducted by the CBSE or the Teacher Eligibility Test (TET) exam conducted by concerned state government. For PRT, the minimum eligibility is a Senior Secondary School certificate with 50% marks or its equivalent, a pass in the CTET or TET and a two-year diploma in education (D.Ed) or Bachelor in Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.). To be a TGT, you need a four-year Integrated degree from NCERT's Regional College of Education in the concerned subject with at least 50% aggregate, or a Bachelor's

degree with at least 50% aggregate in the concerned subjects and a B.Ed. from a recognised university and a pass in the CTET or TET. A PGT requires a two-year Integrated PG course from NCERT's Regional College of Education in the concerned subject or a Master's degree from a recognised university with at least 50% aggregate in the specific subjects and a B.Ed from a recognised university. Check the specific requirements of the government schools you want to teach in and reach out to the education authorities for more specific information on the academic qualifications required. I am in the last semester of the Hotel Management course at IHM. To work abroad, should I first pursue PG? If so, which institutes should I look at? Gundeep

Dear Gundeep, Pursuing a PG abroad depends on your career goals and finances. Identify and understand your long-term goals. If this involves advanced qualifications, pursuing a PG may be beneficial. Otherwise look for international job placements in hotels, resorts and establishments abroad. Check with your institute's placement cell for leads or research online. Look up the websites of international hotel chains for job openings. Consider international internship programmes. Are you open to event management, cruise line services, bartending or luxury hospitality? These may have international opportunities. For your PG, you could consider a Master's in Hotel or Hospitality Management, an MBA in Hospitality Management, a specialised Culinary Arts Programmes or

Event Management and/or Tourism Management programmes. Some well-known institutes are Ecole Hôtelière de Lausanne (EHL) in Switzerland, Glion Institute of Higher Education (in Switzerland and London), Les Roches Global Hospitality Education (Switzerland, Spain, and China) and Cornell University's School of Hotel Administration (the U.S.). Look for programmes that have strong industry connections, internship opportunities, and alumni success stories so that you gain practical experience and build a professional network. Be aware of the language requirements in the country you plan to study in and evaluate finances (tuition fees, living expenses, and potential return on investment) wisely.

I am in the final year of my degree in History. I want to try for UPSC. Should I do an M.A. or opt for professional streams such as LLB or enrol in a coaching programme? Hari

Dear Hari, What do you like or you see yourself doing in life? Choosing the right course depends on your career goals, interests, and core strengths. Each option has its advantages. Doing a M.A. in History may be beneficial for your UPSC preparation. It will also enhance your analytical and research skills. An LLB will be advantageous if you are interested in administrative or legal services and opens up diverse career paths, including legal practice, judiciary, and administrative services. To prepare for the UPSC, a coaching programme will help in focused preparation and help you with specific strategies for each stage, time management and

expert professional guidance. You could also combine options, and pursue an M.A. or LLB and enroll in a coaching programme. Consider your personal interests and strengths to choose a path that aligns with your passion.

I have completed my Masters in Paediatric Dentistry but, since Indian degrees aren't recognised abroad, should I consider a doctorate? Abdul

Dear Abdul, Many foreign universities conduct their own qualifying examinations and assessments to certify our Indian (and foreign) degrees. Research the licensing/ board certification requirement of the country that you are interested in moving to and prepare for that exam to validate your degree. Some countries offer speciality fellowship programmes in paediatric dentistry. Many countries offer advanced education programmes and residencies that may be for a few years. Check the universities or dental schools in the countries of your choice for their criteria and pre-requisites. You can also enroll in continuing education courses in paediatric dentistry at reputable institutions abroad to be updated with the latest advances and enhance your professional recognition. A doctorate is a great option if you're interested in academia or research. Evaluate your career goals, interests, and requirements in your desired location before you make a decision. Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

Aritro Dasgupta

The definition of the word 'classroom' has evolved significantly over the last few years. Today's classroom could be in a posh private school, an underfunded government college, an overcrowded coaching class, or even in the comfort of home. Wherever it is, a classroom must steer clear of divisive issues and forge a new path toward nation-building. However, 'steer clear' should not mean the suppression of discussion. Instead, it should be about exploring the broader concepts so that the students may be resourceful enough to decide for themselves.

Hate speech is clearly one such area where a classroom needs to be proactive enough to dispel misconceptions, especially those going easily viral in the ongoing digital age. With total access to social media, many popular, but largely incorrect, themes enter mainstream thinking. Classrooms need to be bold enough to take on these misconceptions and dismantle them, using not emotion alone but indeed hard data. As a teacher, one of the areas in which I lay maximum emphasis is the source of information. Whatever a student's views on a topic, they must be backed by reliable

No room for hate
How classrooms can counter hate speech in the age of social media



data from some reputable or official source. Unfortunately, youngsters and adults often fall for crowd-pleasing mentions on social media. While a lot of misinformation exists across social media outlets, none is as deadly as those that promote hate speech. Such hate speech can be categorised as derogatory and often downright inaccurate remarks about any religious, linguistic, tribal, caste, or even gender group. Sometimes, it could be a combination of these or intersecting points. A lot of potential hate can be countered by providing effective examples of people who 'look like us' and have done well abroad. These

could be examples of people like Ajay Banga, Sundar Pichai, or Satya Nadella, who have all risen to the top due to diversity in cultures being embraced. This, in a way, forces us to look around us and embrace diversity of opinion, ethnicity, religion, class around us as well. Tackle ignorance An unfortunate method that a lot of the educated class often takes to solve some of the issues around us is simply not talking about it, as if ignorance will lead to any inherent hate disappearing altogether. On the contrary, ignorance leads to a lack of empathy and a failure to recognise one's privilege.

The best example of this in our society is caste. In many educated families, this is barely spoken of as if the non-mention will remove the concept altogether. That is where classrooms come into the picture. Teachers need to be bold enough to discuss caste in a way that students come to know of it, yet choose not to discriminate. A skill that teachers need to learn at work constantly is diplomacy. Many of these complex topics must be navigated covering all facts and figures yet ensuring that stakeholders do not take offence. Stakeholders could be the pupils, their parents, the school authorities, and society in general. Fortunately, despite much provocation on social media, the Indian youth is still essentially an advocate of peace. Youngsters are far more likely to engage with Taylor Swift or Virat Kohli than with any rabble-rousing hate preacher. Classrooms must leverage this inherent goodness by providing the students guidance on what constitutes appropriate content to engage versus what does not.

The writer is a visiting faculty at Career Launcher.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Institution of Engineering and Technology (IET) India Scholarship Award**Eligibility:** Open to students studying in any year of a full-time UG Engineering programme (any stream) at an AICTE or UGC-approved institution, including lateral-entry students, who have cleared all regular credit courses in a single attempt and scored at least 60% aggregate or an equivalent CGPA.**Rewards:** Scholarships worth ₹10 lakhs**Application:** Online**Deadline:** May 31
www.b4s.in/edge/IET4

Oxford and Cambridge Society of India Scholarship (OCSOI, the U.K.)**Eligibility:** Open to Indian students who have secured admission to full-time academic programmes at the Universities of Cambridge or Oxford and intend to pursue a course of study that falls into one of the specified categories.**Rewards:** Up to ₹4,00,000 (one-time)**Application:** Online**Deadline:** May 31
www.b4s.in/edge/OCSOI

Global Scholarship Programme AISAn initiative of AIS Technolabs Pvt. Ltd. to support students.**Eligibility:** Open to citizens of India who have completed Class 12 and have applied for a UG or PG course in any subject from an accredited institution anywhere in the world and have completed at least one term in the respective course. The applicant must be continuing the course and should not have dropped out of college.**Rewards:** An annual scholarship up to two years and other benefits**Application:** Email sunnyc@aisotechnolabs.com**Deadline:** May 15
www.b4s.in/edge/GSPA6

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