

# Addressing Challenges of Multiculturalism through Peace Education in Pakistan

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## Abstract

*Pakistan, a multicultural country, is likely to become a global economic hub after completion of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. Therefore, it is imperative that the country's new generation has an inclusive approach towards cultural diversity and respect for individuality. Recent events of extremism against fellow students at educational institutions make it even more vital to inculcate peace education within the curricula to address issues like intolerance and racism.*

*Primary education is believed to have a lasting and enduring impact on the overall personality of a student. Therefore, this study undertakes content analysis of primary level General Knowledge/Social Studies federal and Punjab textbooks. It calls for more focus on peace and multiculturalism by including areas like disarmament and human rights education, ecological literacy, education for development, and conflict resolution in primary level textbooks. The study also suggests pedagogical modifications by teachers with greater attention on creative and critical thinking.*

**Keywords:** Peace Education, Pedagogical Modification, Creative and Critical Thinking, Primary Education, Extremism.

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## Introduction

Averting war is the work of politicians; establishing peace is the work of education.

- Maria Montessori<sup>1</sup>

For many decades, humankind has been experiencing horrific violence in the form of genocide, ecocide, nuclear warfare, ethnic conflicts, racism, gender and domestic abuse. A decisive goal of peace education is to teach constructive and nonviolent means of resolving conflict and accepting cultural, ethnic and religious diversity. Peace education is an interdisciplinary realm that systematically teaches what peace is and why its important at the individual and global level.

Pakistan is expected to have more tourism and multicultural inflow with the success of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This requires enhancing tolerance and acceptance of various cultures at the domestic level. For this, capacity building is imperative through systematic inclusion of peace education in the curricula.

There are several types of education in Pakistan: *formal* (schools, colleges and universities), *informal* (seminaries) and *non-formal* (media, community and social organisations). The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training (MoFEPT) approves the curricula and syllabi of public and private schools in Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> The General Knowledge/Social-Pakistan Studies from grade 1 onwards have the maximum margin to include elements of peace education.

This paper will first discuss evolution of ‘Peace Education’ and its interdisciplinary expansion. Since, primary curriculum is pivotal in developing cognitive and attitudinal capacities, the second part will offer qualitative content analysis of General Knowledge textbooks from grades 1-3; and of Social Studies textbooks from grades 4-5 approved by the Federal and Punjab Textbook Boards under the aegis of MoFEPT. The

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<sup>1</sup> Britney Peterson, “Creating a Place for Peace,” *Montessori Community School of Salt Lake City, Utah*, September 16, 2016, <https://mcssl.com/blog/entry/creating-a-place-for-peace>.

<sup>2</sup> Hania Asif, “Needs of Promoting Peace Education in Pakistan,” *Academia.edu*, accessed April 6, 2018, [https://www.academia.edu/7203841/Needs\\_of\\_Promoting\\_Peace\\_Education\\_in\\_Pakistan](https://www.academia.edu/7203841/Needs_of_Promoting_Peace_Education_in_Pakistan).

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purpose of content analysis is to evaluate the existing and/or lack thereof of peace education in general, and multiculturalism in particular, in the primary curricula.

During the Twentieth Century, various international organisations were established to discourage war between states. In this regard, developmental programmes were inaugurated to eliminate structural violence and poverty as a result of conflict and war. In late Twentieth Century, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) was established to ‘examine, monitor and publicly report either on human rights situation in specific countries or on major phenomena of human rights violations worldwide.’<sup>3</sup> Later, environmental rights, conflict resolution, discouraging war and promoting peace from micro to macro level also became part of its overall mandate.<sup>4</sup>

Peace educators are adopting various strategies to mitigate violent propensities observed in the form of individual or structural violence, ethnic or civil conflict or environmental demolition that threatens humanity as whole.<sup>5</sup> In the short-term, peace education teaches how to resolve existing conflicts via peaceful means. In long run, the goal is to replace a culture of violence with a culture of peace.

Various authors have contributed to the literature of peace education. Johan Galtung, as cited by Kester,<sup>6</sup> elaborates ‘negative peace’ and ‘positive peace’, where ‘negative peace’ is the mere absence of war, an inert situation; and ‘positive peace’ means peace at the structural level - cooperation, equity, justice, acceptance, peaceful coexistence and sustainable environment for all.<sup>7</sup> Galtung also focused on gender and military aspects of the subject.<sup>8</sup> Harris and Morrison categorise peace education under international, developmental, environmental, human

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<sup>3</sup> UNHRC, “Background Information, Procedures and Mechanisms,” United Nations Human Rights Council, accessed March 14, 2019  
<https://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/CHR/Pages/Background.aspx>.

<sup>4</sup> Ian Harris, “Peace Education: Definition, Approaches and Future Directions,” *Peace, Literature and Art* 1 (2009): 78.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*: 77.

<sup>6</sup> Kevin Kester, “Education for Peace: Content, Form, and Structure: Mobilizing Youth for Civic Engagement,” *Peace & Conflict Review* 4, no. 2 (2010): 1.

<sup>7</sup> Sara Zamir, “Universal Obstacles to Peace Education,” in *Peace, Literature and Art*, ed. Ada Aharoni (United Kingdom: Oxford, 2009), 61.

<sup>8</sup> Kester, “Education for Peace.”

rights, and conflict prevention education. Betty A. Reardon promoted peace through international collaboration and education about women, religion, peace and security. David W. Johnson and Roger T. Johnson emphasised promoting peaceful values in the education system. Sommerfelt, Ole Henning and Vambheim saw peace education as a didactic programme to promote cooperation and discourage aggression among citizens. Tony Jenkins illustrated the importance of education about peace (studying existing knowledge) and education for peace (indoctrinating peace).<sup>9</sup> Rozandic explains cognitive (where education deals with facts and developments), and affective (where education deals with attitudes and aptitudes) dimensions of peace education. However, Gavriel Salomon's definition of peace education is more practical as he divides it into three categories:

- peace education during intense conflict (promoting reconciliation);
- peace education in inter-ethnic conflict (peaceful coexistence); and,
- peace education in proficient tranquility (education about peace).<sup>10</sup>

### **Peace Education versus Peace Studies**

There is a difference between Peace Education and Peace Studies. Peace Studies started as a formal discipline after the World War II to study geopolitical aspects of conflict/wars and find an effective means of resolving and preventing conflict via in-depth study of war and its substitutes. Many universities and colleges now offer Peace Studies that include a wide range of subjects on war and peace. Peace Education, on the other hand, is interdisciplinary and teaches individuals values and knowledge to eliminate violence at the structural level. It is not just limited to formal institutions as peace educators can also be peace activists, who promote peace in informal settings as well.<sup>11</sup> However, Peace Studies and Peace Education work side-by-side.

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<sup>9</sup> Kester, "Education for Peace."

<sup>10</sup> Zamir, "Universal Obstacles to Peace Education," 63.

<sup>11</sup> Harris, "Peace Education: Definition, Approaches and Future Directions," 86.

## **History of Peace Education**

John A. Comenius, a Seventeenth Century educator, was the first person who advocated for ‘universal education’, i.e., knowledge sharing without discrimination. Comenius is considered father of the modern education system since he revolutionised school systems, educational theories and methods making them more holistic.<sup>12</sup> The idea of perpetual peace was introduced by Immanuel Kant during the same period. He was of the view that war between states is natural, therefore, it should be countered through peaceful political systems, treaties, laws and jurisdiction. He believed that humans are rational enough to develop just laws that are fair for all.<sup>13</sup> However, peace education formally started after the establishment of a state system, particularly after the horrific devastation of World War I and II, and the significance of international cooperation was realised. Organisations like the United Nations and United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) were formed to promote peace and collective development. UNESCO’s main objective was to develop and promote education on peace and security with the changing international political structures. Social, human rights, environmental, and disarmament movements not only compelled peace education to become interdisciplinary, but also pushed it to address developed, underdeveloped and developing countries simultaneously.<sup>14</sup>

Initially, educators taught international relations along with social studies, so that students themselves discourage war and accept other nations to make the world more peaceful. For the formal adoption of peace education in schools, Maria Montessori travelled all over Europe and discouraged authoritarian pedagogies and submissiveness towards power. She stressed that students should be free to choose a dynamic subject and think creatively, wherein teachers promote love, peace and

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<sup>12</sup> Hannah S. Bowers, “John Comenius’ Philosophy of Education,” *Coffeeshopthinking*, October 4, 2013, <https://coffeeshopthinking.wordpress.com/2013/10/04/john-comenius-philosophy-of-education/>.

<sup>13</sup> The-Philosophy.com, “Kant and the Perpetual Peace Summary,” May 14, 2012, <https://www.the-philosophy.com/kant-perpetual-peace-summary>.

<sup>14</sup> Education Encyclopedia, s.v. “Peace Education - The Development of Peace Education and its Basic Principles,” accessed March 27, 2018, <http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2314/Peace-Education.html>.

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tolerance so that both become more like a family. The Vietnam War and threats of nuclear war triggered peace research and peace education at colleges and universities. The field further expanded with peace movements against colonialism/imperialism, war/conflict, and direct/structural violence.<sup>15</sup> The history of peace education is quite vast and it has developed through various efforts. However, it is a realm that now includes research, philosophy, psychology, history, communication, sociology, international and interpersonal relations.

### **Principle Concepts in Peace Education**

Peace education refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.<sup>16</sup>

The overarching theme of peace education allowed it to become multidisciplinary and as shown in Figure 1 share common goals with other disciplines.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> Harris, "Peace Education: Definition, Approaches and Future Directions," 84.

<sup>16</sup> Susan Fountain, "Peace Education in UNICEF," (paper, United Nations Children's Fund, New York, 1999), 1, <https://www.unicef.org/education/files/PeaceEducation.pdf>.

<sup>17</sup> Monisha Bajaj and Belinda Chiu, "Education for Sustainable Development as Peace Education," *Peace & Change* 34, no. 4 (October 2009): 441-455 (444), <https://ssrn.com/abstract=2143437>.

**Figure-1**  
**Framework of Peace Education and its Co-disciplines**



*Source:* Bajaj and Chiu, “Education for Sustainable Development as Peace Education,” 444.

### **Approaches of Peace Education**

Reardon defined two main approaches to peace education - ‘education *for* peace’ and ‘education *about* peace’. Education *about* peace answers ‘what is peace?’ through historical and empirical evolution of peace education emphasising knowledge of subjects like human rights education (justice and equity), conflict resolution education (prevention and peacekeeping) and traditional peace studies (substitutes of war). Whereas, education *for* peace focuses on knowledge, values, aptitude and attitude learning of peace, for instance through multicultural education (religious acceptance and anti-racism), international relations education (global coordination), and environmental rights education (preservation and protection).<sup>18</sup> Some fields of peace education use both approaches, e.g., environmental rights is education *about* peace when it talks about knowledge and development

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<sup>18</sup> Betty A. Reardon, “Peace Education: A Review and Projection,” report (Peace Education Report 17, Malmo: Department of Education, August 1999), 8, <https://peacelearner.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/betty-reardon-peace-education-a-review-and-projection1.pdf>.

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of laws, but it is education *for* peace when it relates ecological devastation with human security. Thus, both approaches are imperative for understanding of peace education.

### ***Disarmament Education***

Peace education for disarmament is about dismantling the culture of war, which is a preliminary step towards promoting a culture of peace. The need for such education arose after the nuclear attack on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (Japan) in August 1945, but it does not remain limited to nuclear weapons as it also advocates prohibition of chemical weapons, guns, artillery, mines, small or large weapons that threaten human survival overall. Unfortunately, permanent members of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) are involved in arms trade - thus, sponsoring violence one way or the other.<sup>19</sup> Education *about* disarmament involves the study of means and methods of disarmament that include nuclear non-proliferation, non-armament treaties, and lowering military expenditures (in comparison to health and education budgets). On the other hand, education *for* disarmament encompasses knowledge, proficiencies and critical thinking that enable students to take rational decisions by comprehending the security of others.<sup>20</sup>

### ***Human Rights Education***

Peace education for human rights is about positive peace that seeks justice and equity. It develops perspectives which allows non-violent means of resolving conflict and helps in maintaining social cohesion.<sup>21</sup> Education *about* human rights includes learning mechanisms, treaties, and the provisions of international laws and byelaws about rights such as those established under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR)

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<sup>19</sup> Anup Shah, "The Arms Trade is Big Business," *Global Issues*, January 5, 2013, <http://www.globalissues.org/article/74/the-arms-trade-is-big-business>.

<sup>20</sup> TWB, *Peace Education Program: A Professional Development Course for Educators*, report (Teachers Without Borders, 2011), <https://www.achva.ac.il/sites/default/files/achvafiles/r%26d/institute/rd/PEP%20Curriculum%20FINAL%20-%20Sep2011%20Revision.pdf>.

<sup>21</sup> Betty A. Reardon, "Human Rights as Education for Peace," in *Human Rights Education for the Twenty-First Century*, ed. George J. Andreopoulos and Richard Pierre Claude (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997).



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and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC). Whereas, education for human rights encompasses skills and values which are learnt to avoid violence, both on a small and large scale, and promote tolerance, equality, empathy and harmony to have a better understanding of one's rights as well as responsibility towards others.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Education for Development***

Peace education is recognised by the UN as a universal pedagogy.<sup>23</sup> According to the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), education for development is a process of learning global solidarity, acceptance of differences, empowerment of impoverished, awareness of rights and responsibilities to bring out constructive change throughout the world.<sup>24</sup>

Five basic concepts of Education for Development are interdependence, images and perceptions, social justice, conflict and conflict resolution, and change and the future. These concepts are approached as interdisciplinary perspectives that can be incorporated into the teaching of a wide range of subject matter, rather than as specific subjects in themselves.<sup>25</sup>

### ***Ecological Literacy***<sup>26</sup>

The environment is a complex set of physical, geographic, biological, social, cultural and political conditions that surround an individual or organism that ultimately determines its form and the nature of its survival.<sup>27</sup>

Without earth and environmental resources, human existence is not possible, therefore, 'ecological literacy' is vital. Education about the

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<sup>22</sup> Fountain, "Peace Education in UNICEF," 7.

<sup>23</sup> Bajaj and Chiu, "Education for Sustainable Development as Peace Education," 447.

<sup>24</sup> Fountain, "Peace Education in UNICEF," 8.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>26</sup> Coined by David Orr and Fritjof Capra.

<sup>27</sup> Robert Steele, "Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainable Development: Guidelines and Tools - Environmental Protection," report (Bangkok: Asia and Pacific Regional Bureau for Education, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, 2010), 2, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001890/189062e.pdf>.

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environment is an essential part of peace education and formally started in the 1960s and 1970s, when wars fought for scarce resources devastated the planet, international conferences were held and declarations were passed to limit environmental degradation and research was promoted of ecological development.<sup>28</sup>

In the Asian region, environmental education has been given a high importance and place in educational reform and innovation due to the pre-eminence of the natural environment in everyday life and culture. Concern for nature and natural resources has been a part of Asian civilization for hundreds of generations. The people of Asia share common scriptures and folklore, which are replete with examples that show how their ancestors were environmentally conscious and advocated concepts of sustained usage of resources through many social customs, myths, taboos, traditions and religious beliefs.<sup>29</sup>

First, education *about* the environment is learning to understand ecological systems, how to make life possible on Earth and using various principles and methods to ensure sustainable living and solving environmental problems.<sup>30</sup> Education *for* the environment starts at the grassroots level for its protection and preservation, and establishing a sense for ecological responsibilities.<sup>31</sup>

### ***Education about Conflict Resolution***

Conflicts can occur in daily life due to differences in interests, needs and opinions. Their occurrence is acceptable till the involved parties creatively resolve them, but a process of conflict transformation takes place when

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<sup>28</sup> Robert L. Carter and Bora Simmons, "The History and Philosophy of Environmental Education," in *The Inclusion of Environmental Education in Science Teacher Education*, ed., A.M. Bodzin and B.S. Klein (New York: Springer, 2010), 6. DOI: 10.1007/978-90-481-9222-9.

<sup>29</sup> Steele, "Reorienting Teacher Education to Address Sustainable Development," 4.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Betty A. Reardon, "Peace Education: A Review and Projection," report (Peace Education Reports No. 17, Malmo, Sweden: School of Education, Dept. of Education and Psychological Research, 1999): 12, <https://peacelearner.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/betty-reardon-peace-education-a-review-and-projection1.pdf>.

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conflicting parties refuse to understand each other's perspective and are unable or incapable of resolving them peacefully. Here, peace education inculcates values, willingness and capabilities in individuals so they can transform and deal with conflict more effectively.

For conflict resolution, two fundamental types of peace education are *direct peace education* (developing a person's capacities), and *structural peace education* (formal and informal change).<sup>32</sup> Education *about* conflict resolution is quite vast as it provides insight into war/conflict hostilities, mechanism of disarmaments, reintegration of combatants, peacekeeping, conflict prevention and knowledge of international developments and resolutions. However, education *for* conflict resolution encompasses peer mediation, negotiation skill settings, non-aggressive communication and diligence taught in both formal and informal settings. Peer mediation is widely taught in schools that enables students to resolve conflicts not only within their academic setting, but in their communities as well, hence, empowering children for peace.<sup>33</sup>

### **Peace Education in Pakistan**

You are free; you are free to go to your temples, you are free to go to your mosques or to any other place or worship in this State of Pakistan. You may belong to any religion or caste or creed - that has nothing to do with the business of the State.

- Quaid-i-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah

Address to first Constituent Assembly of Pakistan, August 11, 1947

The core principle of peace education is peaceful coexistence, acceptance and tolerance; it is an essential component to foster a safe and healthy environment for ethnic, religious and culturally diverse communities, as anticipated by the founder of Pakistan. Now, more than ever, the country is in dire need of peace education in both formal and

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<sup>32</sup> Uli Jäger, *Peace Education and Conflict Transformation*, report (Berlin: Berghof Foundation, 2014), [https://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Handbook/Articles/jaeger\\_handbook\\_e.pdf](https://www.berghof-foundation.org/fileadmin/redaktion/Publications/Handbook/Articles/jaeger_handbook_e.pdf).

<sup>33</sup> TWB, *Peace Education Program: A Professional Development Course for Educators*, 145.

informal settings not only to counter intolerance and extremism, but also for sustainable development.

National universities are producing professionals who can teach peace education in schools; provide conflict resolution guidance at communal and organisational level; advocate tolerance and acceptance; promote human and environmental rights, hence, stimulate sustainability. For example, the discipline of Peace and Conflict Studies (PCS) as a Bachelor of Science degree programme is being offered by the National Defence University (NDU), National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and Muslim Youth University (MYU) in the capital city Islamabad; whereas NDU, the National University of Science & Technology (NUST), University of Peshawar, and COMSATS University also offer MS/MPhil degrees in PCS.<sup>34</sup>

However, the MoFEPT needs to develop holistic and universal curricula with the help of experts and specialists of peace education to achieve the goals and objectives laid out in its National Education Policy 2017-25.<sup>35</sup>

The importance of peace education in the restoration and rehabilitation of people in Swat Valley is discussed in the article *Role of Peace Education in Restoration of Community Confidence in the Wake of Terrorism Wave*. Schools and educational institutions remain a target of terrorism, leaving children and parents haunted and traumatised, thus, a Peace Awareness Program (PAP) was launched with assistance of the United States Institute of Peace (USIP). The results of the study revealed the peace education is an effective tool to restore confidence and tranquility in conflict-struck societies, and has potential to prove equally effective in other settings as well.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, Durrani and Dunne find that:

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<sup>34</sup> EduVision, "MS Conflict & Peace Studies Universities in Pakistan", accessed April 6, 2018, <http://www.eduvision.edu.pk/institutions-offering-conflict-peace-studies-with-field-social-sciences-at-ms-mphil-18-years-level-in-pakistan-page-1>.

<sup>35</sup> MoFEPT, GoP, "National Education Policy 2017," (Islamabad, Pakistan: Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Government of Pakistan), accessed April 6, 2018, <http://www.moent.gov.pk/userfiles1/file/National%20Educaiton%20Policy%202017.pdf>.

<sup>36</sup> Iqbal Ahmad, Hamdan Said and Faisal Khan, "Role of Peace Education in Restoration of Community Confidence in the Wake of Terrorism Wave," *Research Journal of Recent Sciences* 3, no.2 (February 2014): 81, <http://www.isca.in/rjrs/archive/v3/i2/11.ISCA-RJRS-2013-450.pdf>.

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To promote national unity across the diverse ethnic groups comprising Pakistan, the national curriculum uses religion (Islam) as the key boundary between the Muslim Pakistani 'self' and the antagonist non-Muslim 'other'. Ironically, this emphasis creates social polarization and the normalization of militaristic and violent identities, with serious implications for social cohesion, tolerance for internal and external diversity, and gender relations.<sup>37</sup>

### *Importance of Multicultural Education and Critical Thinking*

According to the Oxford dictionary, multicultural means 'containing several culture or ethnic groups within one society', thus, the aim of multicultural education is to inculcate values which motivate individuals to reject mechanisms of manipulation, stereotyping, prejudice and racism; and encourage holistic and conciliatory relations at intra/interpersonal level.<sup>38</sup> The resolve of multicultural education is *cognitive* (indoctrinating knowledge of other cultures for increased acceptance and peaceful coexistence), and *attitudinal* modification (developing tolerance, admiration and appreciation for cultural diversity).<sup>39</sup> It is linked with human rights education as it advocates inclusiveness, kindness and respect for individuality and possesses great potential to eliminate ills like discrimination, chauvinism, racism and biases.

Education is the most powerful tool to address the multiethnic and multilingual divides in Pakistan,<sup>40</sup> making the new generation capable of understanding basic human values like respect, compassion, care, tolerance, and acceptance for social cohesion in order to prepare them as agents of peace and a strong force against extremism and radicalisation.

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<sup>37</sup> Naureen Durrani and Máiréad Dunne, "Curriculum and National Identity: Exploring the Links between Religion and Nation in Pakistan," *Journal of Curriculum Studies* 42, no. 2 (2010): 234, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220270903312208>.

<sup>38</sup> Soula Mitakidou, Evangelia Tressou and Eugenia Daniilidou, "Cross-Cultural Education: A Challenge or a Problem?," *International Critical Childhood Policy Studies* 2, no. 1 (2009): 70, <http://journals.sfu.ca/iccps/index.php/childhoods/%EE%80%80art%EE%80%81icle/viewFile/10/14>.

<sup>39</sup> TWB, *Peace Education Program: A Professional Development Course for Educators*, 114.

<sup>40</sup> Amna Khan, "Multiculturalism in Pakistan," *I Believe*, accessed April 12, 2018, <http://ibelievepretentious.blogspot.com/2012/12/multiculturalism-in-pakistan.html>.

Pakistan is a multicultural society, thus, for resilient social harmony it is essential that young children are aware of the cultures of communities living in their neighbourhood, in other provinces and those living beyond the country's borders.

University and college teachers need to adopt special mechanisms to teach multicultural and diverse classes where students come from different provinces and different educational backgrounds. Sadly, in most cases, teachers are not trained to deal with such situations. Thus, special multicultural courses for teachers need to be designed and implemented so that they can creatively address intolerance and hatred (if any) between students belonging to diverse cultures.<sup>41</sup>

Afshan Huma, an educator and the Department in-charge at Allama Iqbal Open University, in her interview to Shaoor Foundation explained that there are two mechanisms of a child's formal grooming, the home and educational institutes, making teachers responsible for inculcating peaceful values among children to address challenges of extremism. She further elaborated *explicit* (provided in textbooks) and *implicit* (perception of a teacher) curricula and impact of such curriculum in shaping the overall personality of a child. According to Huma, the lynching of Mishal Khan explains failure of teachers in cultivating peace and cohesion among students. When freedom of speech, freedom to question and freedom to express oneself uniquely is discouraged, it compels violent and extremist means of expression. In the interview, she shared how in her training sessions, she asks a Muslim student to start the session with a recitation as per Islamic teachings, followed by asking a non-Muslim participant to do the same as per their religious inclination. Huma advocates Critical Thinking (CT) which is vital to achieve the objectives and goals of peace education.<sup>42</sup>

In the next section, public school primary level textbooks of Social Studies/General Knowledge from Grade 1-5 are qualitatively analysed in order to identify content (or lack thereof) on multiculturalism.

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<sup>41</sup> Sufiana Khatoon, Shafkat Rehman and Muhammad Ajmal, "Teaching in Multicultural Classroom-Assessing Current Programs of Teachers' Training in Pakistan," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* 1, no.6 (June 2011): 73, [https://www.academia.edu/5814972/Teaching\\_in\\_Multicultural\\_Classroom-Assessing\\_Current\\_Programs\\_of\\_Teachers\\_Training\\_in\\_Pakistan](https://www.academia.edu/5814972/Teaching_in_Multicultural_Classroom-Assessing_Current_Programs_of_Teachers_Training_in_Pakistan).

<sup>42</sup> Afshan Huma, interview by AmnQalaab, posted by Peace without Borders - Pakistan, January 18, 2018, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia\\_rJAUAlgQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ia_rJAUAlgQ).

### **Content Analysis of Federal and Punjab Board Textbooks**

The National Book Foundation is the distributor to Federal Textbook Board in Islamabad. The Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board, Lahore provides primary level General Knowledge/Social Studies books to Rawalpindi public schools.

**Table-1**  
**Federal Textbook Board GK/SS Primary Level Books**

No.	Class-Subject	Content Author	Available Content on Multiculturalism
1	Grade 1-General Knowledge	Shabnam Riaz	- No mention of culture
2	Grade 2-General Knowledge	Iffat Gul Aizaz	- Holy Prophet PBUH's teachings are identified as part of culture <sup>43</sup> - Teachers are guided to emphasise Islamic teachings <sup>44</sup> - Few random statements about Hindu, Christian and Sikh festivals <sup>45</sup> - Chapter on "Respecting Others and Appreciating Diversity" does not address the meaning of diversity & is focused only on Islamic teachings <sup>46</sup>
3	Grade 3-General Knowledge	Rehana Farhat Kiani & Perveen Abid	- No mention of culture
4	Grade 4-Social Studies	Misbah-un-Nisa Nagrah & Rabia Ramzan	- Chapter on "Culture: The Way We Live Together" briefly explains various cultures of Pakistan followed by explanation of peace and conflict <sup>47</sup>
5	Grade 5-Social Studies	<i>The book was unavailable due to a legal case going on for the past few months.</i>	

Source: Author's own.

<sup>43</sup> Iffat Gul Aizaz, *Blessings/Bounties of Almighty Allah-Grade 2* (Islamabad, Pakistan: Federal Textbook Board, 2016), 6.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 124.

<sup>47</sup> Misbah-un-Nisa and Rabia Ramzan, "Culture: The Way We Live Together-Grade 4" (Islamabad, Pakistan: Federal Textbook Board, 2016), 70.



**Table-2**  
**Punjab Textbook Board GK/SS Primary Level Books**

No.	Class-Subject	Content Author	Available Content on Multiculturalism
1	Grade 1-General Knowledge	Sibte Hassan and six others	- No mention of culture - Images of Hindu, Christian and Sikh places of worship are shown <sup>48</sup>
2	Grade 2-General Knowledge	Shahzad Mehmood Ali and five others	- No mention of culture - Brief introduction of Christmas, Baisakhi, Diwali and Holi along with Islamic festivals <sup>49</sup>
3	Grade 3-General Knowledge	Ghias Amir and three others	- No mention of culture - Chapter "Respect and Regards for Others" briefly advocates respect for other religions
4	Grade 4-Social Studies	Safdar Ali Shirazi and three others	- Chapter on "Culture: The Way We Live Together" discusses various provincial cultures of Pakistan <sup>50</sup>
5	Grade 5-Social Studies	Safdar Ali Shirazi and three others	- Chapter on "Culture" explains various cultures with Islam being common to all - Brief information about minorities <sup>51</sup>

Source: Author's own.

<sup>48</sup> Sibte Hassan et al. *Prayer (Salat)-Grade 1* (Lahore, Pakistan: Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board, 2016), 10.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>50</sup> Safdar Ali Shirazi et al. "Culture: The Way We Live Together-Grade 4" (Lahore, Pakistan: Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board, 2016), 51.

<sup>51</sup> Safdar Ali Shirazi et al. "Culture-Grade 5" (Lahore, Pakistan: Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board, 2018), 53.

Islam is predominant in the curriculum of General Knowledge (GK) – there are multiple chapters devoted to Islamic teachings to elaborate daily routine matters. However, while Islam preaches peace within and without most effectively, discriminating or not including minority religions in the curricula is likely to create a sense of superiority among Muslim children, and *Us-Them* divide. At such a basic level, it is imperative that children have knowledge and respect for other faiths whose followers may also be present in the classroom and in the community. The same is true for multicultural and ethnic diversity. Gradual incorporation of multiculturalism and knowledge of various ethnicities in the curricula is imperative to break stereotypes, prejudices towards the ‘other’. In General Knowledge textbooks, teachers and parents are guided to discuss religion and festivals of various faiths in order to increase religious tolerance. This is a positive initiative but not as impactful as adding literature in the textbooks.

The elements of peace education, i.e., human rights, environmental rights, rules and responsibility, conservation of resources, care, respect for self and others, all-inclusiveness, critical/creative thinking, conflict resolution and co-discipline (Figure 1) are well enunciated in primary curriculum. Only ‘teach with peace’ needs reinforcement through frequent teachers training courses on multiculturalism. This is imperative because teachers are role models for students.

Changing existing primary curricula and making it secular at least from grade 1-3 is likely to be challenging and lengthy, therefore, worksheets and extracurricular activities on multicultural and multiethnic identities could aid in promoting tolerance. Creative and critical thinking would allow students to respect difference of opinion and identity with others more pragmatically.

Every religion contains, in varying degrees, elements of the soft and the hard. For the sake of world peace, dialogue within religions and among them must strengthen the softer aspects.<sup>52</sup>

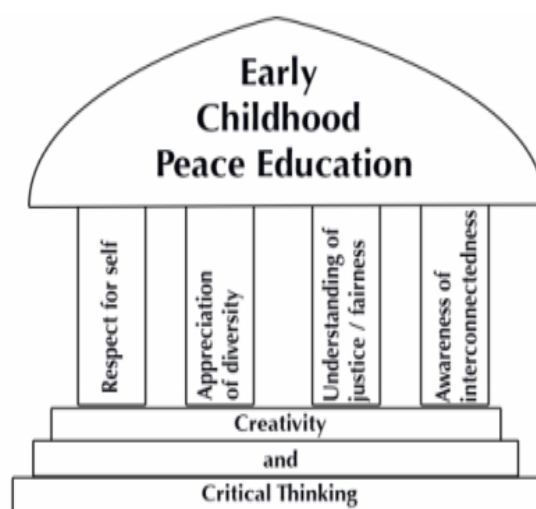
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<sup>52</sup> Johan Galtung, “Religions, Hard and Soft,” *Cross Currents* 47, no. 4 (Winter 1997-98).

## Addressing Challenges of Multiculturalism through Peace Education

According to Reardon, multicultural education implants in students, *international tolerance*, *anti-racism* and above all, *religious acceptability*.<sup>53</sup> Mono-cultural education, on the other hand, limits creative thinking and compels students to judge others through the values of their own culture, and consider others peculiar, and even valueless. Consequently, it is vital that curricula elucidate cultural events and diverse cultures to improve relations with marginalised groups and culminate biased views of others.<sup>54</sup>

**Figure-2**  
**Peace Education Model for Primary Curricula**



Source: Stacey M. Alfonso, "Peace Education in Early Childhood Education," *In Factis Pax* 8, no. 2 (2014): 185, <http://www.infactispax.org/volume8dot2/Alfonso.pdf>.

<sup>53</sup> Reardon, "Peace Education: A Review and Projection."

<sup>54</sup> Nevcan Demir and Bünyamin Yurdakul, "The Examination of the Required Multicultural Education Characteristics in Curriculum Design," *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences* 174 (2015 ): 3653, [https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042815011441/1-s2.0-S1877042815011441-main.pdf?\\_tid=a4f6b9f5-eea6-4cd8-b5be-4105d17c5368&acdnat=1524724854\\_7afa46f1de42d2eea8952520437b2567](https://ac.els-cdn.com/S1877042815011441/1-s2.0-S1877042815011441-main.pdf?_tid=a4f6b9f5-eea6-4cd8-b5be-4105d17c5368&acdnat=1524724854_7afa46f1de42d2eea8952520437b2567).

It is in the early years that children develop their cognitive and attitudinal capabilities, therefore, employing components of peace education (Figure 2) like respect for self, an appreciation for diversity, understanding of justice, and significance of connectedness<sup>55</sup> with a more human-centric rather than religion-centric approach would have an impartial and lasting impact. These elements of peace education are present in the Punjab and Federal primary GK textbooks, but defined only through the lens of Islam. In addition, now more than ever, students need to become global citizens. Therefore, the prime resolve of multicultural-peace education is to address marginalisation and discrimination in a way where differences are endorsed and appreciated constructively. The National Curriculum 2017 for General Knowledge from Grade I-III repeatedly demands that concepts should be based on 'Islamiat/ethics.'<sup>56</sup>

Nayyar asserts that Islamic teachings are used significantly as examples in English, Urdu and GK/Social Studies textbooks, which is in violation of Article 22 (1) of the Constitution of Pakistan:

No person attending any educational institution shall be required to receive religious instructions, or take part in any religious ceremony, or attend religious worship, if such instruction, ceremony or worship relates to a religion other than his own.<sup>57</sup>

Thus, according to the Constitution, Islamic teachings alone should not be part of the curricula since this is a violation of minority rights.<sup>58</sup> Extremism and radicalisation are seeded through marginalisation and discrimination. Every culture in Pakistan has lessons of peace and

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<sup>55</sup> Alfonso "Peace Education in Early Childhood Education."

<sup>56</sup> MoFEPT, *National Curriculum for General Knowledge Grade I-III* (Islamabad, Pakistan: Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, 2017), [http://moent.gov.pk/userfiles1/file/General%20Knowledge%20I-III%20%20\(20-09-17\).pdf](http://moent.gov.pk/userfiles1/file/General%20Knowledge%20I-III%20%20(20-09-17).pdf). For further details, see "Learning Themes" (p. 12-33) identified for Grade I-III General Knowledge textbooks by the MoFEPT.

<sup>57</sup> Pakistani.org, "The Constitution of Pakistan, Part II: Chapter I: Fundamental Rights-Fundamental Rights and Principles of Policy," accessed May 17, 2018, <http://www.pakistani.org/pakistan/constitution/part2.ch1.html>.

<sup>58</sup> A.H. Nayyar, *A Missed Opportunity: Continuing Flaws in the New Curriculum and Textbooks after Reforms*, report (Islamabad, Pakistan: Jinnah Institute, June 2003), 7-12, <http://eacpe.org/content/uploads/2014/05/A-Missed-Opportunity.pdf>.

### *Addressing Challenges of Multiculturalism through Peace Education*

harmony which need to be part of the curricula to promote cohesion and inter-connectedness among students:

Intrinsically, we are a peace-loving society. Islam, Pakhtunwali and peace are synonymous. They cannot be separated from each other. Our religious seminaries and school curriculum need changes regarding peace and tolerance.<sup>59</sup>

Therefore, implementation of holistic and accurate multicultural education in the curricula is vital to cultivate acceptance and respect for diversity among students. This will help them lead a harmonious and peaceful life in diverse social settings like Pakistan. At the international level, the Hague Appeal for Peace after a comprehensive study of the root causes of conflict/war and means of conflict resolution proclaimed that:

A culture of peace will be achieved, when citizens of the world understand global problems, have the skills to resolve conflicts and struggle for justice non-violently, live by international standards of human rights and equity, appreciate cultural diversity, and respect the Earth and each other. Such learning can only be achieved with systematic education for peace.<sup>60</sup>

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations are based on the study findings:

- Incorporate religious commonalities and deferential representation of multicultural segments in textbooks to promote respect for diversity.
- Teacher training and capacity building to address bullying, extremism, lynching and radical grouping in schools, colleges and universities.

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<sup>59</sup> "Govt. urged to include 'Peace Education' in Curriculum," *Dawn*, March 11, 2015, <https://www.dawn.com/news/1168778>.

<sup>60</sup> Hague Appeal for Peace, *The Hague Agenda for Peace & Justice for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, report (Hague, Netherlands: Hague Appeal for Peace, 2000), accessed May 22, 2018, <https://www.peace-ed-campaign.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/HagueAgendaPeace-Justice4The21stCentury.pdf>.

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- In order to sensitise the general public, informal means should be used to promote peace via media, think tanks and social organisations.
- Allocate resources in the public education sector to make primary learning more interesting and creative; and strict monitoring by the government to ensure efficient utilisation of resources.
- Emphasise extracurricular activities and creative team building exercises for primary level students.
- Incorporate ‘teach with peace’ agenda in teachers’ trainings.
- Work towards bringing uniformity in public and private school curricula, both at the federal and provincial level.
- Implement holistic educational reforms as provided in the National Action Plan (NAP) for a united, prosperous and peaceful Pakistan.

### **Conclusion**

It is at the earliest age that a child develops cognitive and attitudinal capabilities which are influenced by family and the educational system through explicit and implicit learning. Schools are responsible for inculcating egalitarian values among students that groom them towards becoming civilised human beings. Content analysis of Pakistan’s primary level General Knowledge/Social Studies curricula shows that the basic elements of peace education exist, but are predominately explained through the precepts of Islam, and pertinent knowledge about other cultures and religions is missing. The government needs to bring desirable changes in the guideline documents of curricula development in line with the Constitution of Pakistan, Article 22 (1). Pakistan is culturally and ethnically diverse and it is the state’s responsibility to counter religious/cultural intolerance, extremism and radicalisation and foster peace, respect, cohesion and harmony between various segments of society. ■