State of Peace Education in Teacher Education Curricula of Bangladesh, India, Nepal & Bhutan: A Comparative Estimation

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Abstract

Present day Secondary teacher education systems not only demand necessary pedagogical skills from teachers rather focus on inclusion of modern global trends like Peace Education, Life-skill education, Environmental Education etc to their curricula in varied capacities. Adoption of Peace Education in the curriculum of secondary teacher education of India and her three neighbours like Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan has got its relevance due to increasing terrorist activities and ensuing unstable social scenarios in these countries. All these four countries share a common platform – ‘SAARC’ which has already framed some SAARC Development Goals (SDGs) in diverse perspectives. In the SAARC Social Charter also, some guiding principles have been suggested to be persuaded for smooth functioning of Government policies and eradication of social evils among the students and student-teachers. Experiencing some significant issues and to pursue the SDGs, concerned authorities of aforesaid countries have also felt the necessity of incorporating the contemporary, relevant and need-based innovative trends like Peace Education to their secondary school curricula and corresponding secondary teacher education curricula. As part of SAARC consortium, these member countries are helping each other in a symbiotic manner to meet the challenges through administrative as well as educational perspective also. This paper is an attempt to make an analytical and comparative study on state and status of Peace Education in secondary teacher education curricula of aforesaid countries. The method employed for the present study is comparative, interpretative, and analytical in nature.

Key words: Recent trends, Peace Education, Teacher Education Curriculum

1. Introduction

Educational reforms in varied forms have been cropped up in South Asian countries like India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan due to rapid developments in technology and economy, worldwide since the wake of 21st century. Some points like how education and teacher education could be accountable to the students and how the practices of education and teacher education would be relevant to the changing social demands and how could the practices of pre-service teacher education meet needs of the stakeholders have appeared as crucial. As a result, traditional pre-service teacher education system of the countries mentioned, stood in a juncture of paradigm shift from the internal prospective to the interface perspective. Accordingly, signs of changes in both school and teacher education could be noticed. Besides, there are some related social and political issues in all the aforesaid countries. Secondary school authorities of the region, experienced from the social context, felt the importance of incorporating global trends like Peace Education to the curriculum. Teachers of secondary education in such challenging environments are expected to take essential role towards providing proper guidance, strategic support, and assistance to their students. Consequently, the Student-teachers are being prepared accordingly, through modified pre-service teacher education programmes so that they could make present day secondary students acquaint with trends like Peace Education.
2. Objectives of the Paper
- To investigate the status and significance of Peace Education in secondary teacher education curricula of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan.
- To make a country-wise comparative discussion on status of Peace Education in secondary teacher education curricula of countries concerned.

Comparative, interpretative, and analytical methods have been adopted in the present study.

2. Background of the Study

Peace Education is defined as education for transforming consciousness towards a culture of peace and non-violence. Through Peace Education, values and knowledge can be acquired and attitude, skills and behaviour may be developed to live in harmony with oneself and with others. According to Bull, Peace Education ‘…is not only rooted in building peace with one self, but it also interconnects and interrelates with every issue of life’. Peace Education includes six components like: ‘(1) Educating for human rights and responsibilities; (2) Educating for personal peace; (3) Educating for environmental care; (4) Educating for inter-cultural solidarity; (5) Educating for living with justice and compassion; (6) Educating for dismantling a cultural of war’. Peace Education is not only concerned with the content of teaching but also with the form and structure within which teaching takes.

India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan belong to South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) consortium which was formed in 1985 within a cooperative environment. Though geographically separated, these four countries bear common British colonial legacy. They share almost common social, cultural and political features. Formally, the SAARC forum is prohibited from addressing any bilateral or contentious issues between its member states, but the forum couldn’t ignore the value of regional cooperation in addressing the threats of terrorism and ensure peaceful environment. Soon after set up of SAARC, SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism was signed in 1987. To reaffirm their commitment to jointly fighting terrorism, the Additional Protocol to the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism was signed in 2004. At the summit in Bhutan, the leaders once again condemned terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and agreed to deal with this issue with greater cooperation in the region. Consequently, some important meetings were organized with the representatives of the countries to review the implementation of relevant SAARC commitments, such as the SAARC Convention on Mutual Assistance in Criminal Matters, signed in 2008. SAARC authorities are now on their way to take concrete measures to root out terrorism from South Asia.

Influence of SAARC in Peace Keeping Activities within the Region
- The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) of India has taken major initiatives to promote peace education in entire South Asia. The NCERT, which already has a peace education programme in the country, is set to extend it to eight member countries of the SAARC.
- Both the formal and informal peace building activities are practiced in these countries for achieving greater understanding and cooperation in the region, and thus promoting peace.
- At the 16th SAARC summit held in Thimpu, Bhutan, the leaders of the SAARC member states signed “Thimpu Silver Jubilee Declaration” containing 37 points. The declaration is the outcome of a regional vision towards a green and happy South Asia. It was the first ever SAARC Summit held in

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4 Source: http://www.livemint.com/Politics/IpE4nqRzCqTT9ETvTm3v1H/NCERT-to-promote-peace-education-in-SAARC-countries.html
Bhutan, where two separate declarations were addressed to boost regional cooperation and implications of climate change in the region.

The proposal of setting up a regional police force, SAARCPOL, resembling the Interpol, has already been put forward by the government of Nepal at the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu. SAARC has also organised the “First Conference of SAARC Police Chiefs” in Islamabad on 17 April 2008. Furthermore, the SAARC has established the SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) in Colombo, Sri Lanka. STOMD initiated its operations in 1995 with the objectives to bring together, analyse and disseminate information on terrorist offences, tactics, strategies and methods to combat them. Since then, STOMD has taken significant role in organising activities to enhance cooperation to fight terrorism.

The issue of India-Pakistan rivalry has often acted as constrain to regional cooperation in South Asia. However, SAARC forums, though informally, have been providing a platform for talks between the leaders and representatives of India and Pakistan. Such talks have often helped in decreasing the tension between the two countries. In Thimpu SAARC Summit, both the Prime Ministers and foreign ministers discussed over the matter. Following the meeting an informal agreement to resume the process of composite dialogue to address various bilateral issues, including the Kashmir dispute and cross-border terrorism was started. Now the effort has stopped a little bit after the terrorist attacks of Mumbai, 2008.

A secretary-level meeting was held in Islamabad in June 2010 as the follow up action of the meeting between both the Prime Ministers on the sidelines of the SAARC Summit in Thimpu. Indian Foreign Secretary Nirupama Rao met Salman Bashir, Foreign Secretary, Pakistan in Islamabad to prepare the agenda for a meeting between the foreign ministers of India and Pakistan. SAARC forum has thus taken positive initiatives for betterment of relation between the two countries. Hopefully, governments of India and Pakistan are likely to resume the process of composite peace dialogues. So, contribution of SAARC towards peace keeping activities in the region, even though informally, should be acknowledged.

3. Status of Peace Education in Secondary Teacher Education of Bangladesh, India, Nepal and Bhutan

All most all the SAARC countries are facing some external and internal issues, violating peace situation of the country, resulting hindrance in promoting quality education. In this situation countries like India, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan have also persuaded call of UNESCO: ‘Peace for Development and Development for Peace’. So practice of education for peace, human rights and democracy began to get more attention and priority in these SAARC member countries. Almost all the countries in the region have already incorporated Peace Education to their secondary school curriculum as well as to corresponding teacher education curriculum. Status of Peace Education in teacher education curricula of India as well as in three of her neighbouring countries like Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan are delineated here:

- **Bangladesh**

Bangladesh exhibits several internal conflicts with the army and political parties to take control over the nation since their independence in 1971. Several occurrence of terrorism have been occurred since 2002 which includes; bomb blasts allegedly organized by Islamic fundamentalist groups, ongoing separatist movement in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. A sound education system cannot be developed within a week administration. Political indulgences are there on education system of the country. Naturally, teachers here have lost the values and ethics. The situation demanded incorporation of different components of Peace Education, Charity Education and Education for Sustainable Development in the existing school education curriculum of the country. Accordingly, teacher education curricula of Bangladesh have integrated Peace Education, Charity Education and Education for Sustainable Development. Education in
the country also refers to the introduction of environment and value education in school and corresponding teacher education curriculum.\(^5\)

- **India**

In India, NCERT has started the process of arranging teacher education programme on Peace Education since 2005. Experts of NCERT advocated that implementing Education for Peace are not only an appropriate strategy for solution of conflict or avoidance of the same, rather they supported it for the future students. One of the major objectives of Peace Education is to raise consciousness of teachers about their role as agent of peace. In the Peace Education programme, themes of ‘Practicing Peace’, like empowering self for peace, attaining conflict resolution skills, schools as nurseries for peace, classroom practices for peace, issues of curriculum load, examination stress and media literacy have been covered. Peace Education programmes in India have also been organized by several civic societies. Main source of internal conflicts in India are separatist movements in several north-eastern states, extremist incidents organized by Maoist groups and some other cross-border terrorist activities. To make secondary students conscious about the socio-political status of the country and to maintain a peaceful condition, Peace Education has been incorporated into the teacher education programme in some of the states and teacher-educators are provided required training.

- **Nepal**

Nepal also has experienced a decade-long violent internal conflicts, though has recently made a crucial move towards settlement, following the Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2006. During the Government-Maoist conflicts, several education institutes were demolished. Still there are many challenges like unstable political environment, poverty and growing ethnic tensions and religious fragmentations which could result violence, and which are need to be overcome to create a better environment of education. After the conflict is over, Ministry of Education, UNICEF, UNESCO and Save the Children in Nepal came together for implementing Peace Education.

To make the students responsive of significance of peace for development of the country, the Nepal Curriculum Development Centre (CDC) with some international agencies has incorporated peace, human rights and civic education (PHRC) into basic and secondary curricula and accordingly curricular materials have been prepared. Moreover, this collaboration has further developed innovative teacher education modules on PHRC. Besides this Nepal Teacher Training Innovations (NTTIs) has launched innovative teacher education programmes in Nepal aiming at setting up quality education.\(^6\) In February 2012, NTTI launched its “Teacher-Leader” Mentorship programme also.

- **Bhutan**

Bhutan has developed a relatively modern system of teacher education within a limited resource. A weather of peace persists over the country since long. Naturally, no Peace Education is there at least under the unequivocal label of ‘Peace Education’. However, in 1999, value education was introduced in Bhutanese schools, with an aim to educate students largely on moral values of life. The National Report on the Development of Education in the country also

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\(^5\) Source: www.education.gov.bt/DYS/dys.htm...retrieved on June 18, 2013

refers to the introduction of environment and value education as well as education for sustainable development in school and corresponding teacher education curriculum.  

5. Comparative Discussion

The SAARC Social Charter was signed by the SAARC Heads of States at the 12th SAARC Summit, Islamabad on 4th January, 2004. The Charter projected some activities in the areas like poverty alleviation, health, education, human resource development, population stabilization, drug addiction, rehabilitation, status of women, human rights, well being of children, and life skill education. These actions will surely help the national processes of policy making, policy implementation and their evaluation with respect to secondary education and corresponding teacher education system of the country concerned. Teachers play the most important role in improving the quality of education. Through the pre-service teacher education programmes student-teachers of these countries are prepared to perform an optimum task and hold required responsibility to build the nation through their students.

Table 1. Country-wise Status of Peace Education in Secondary Teacher Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Names of Countries</th>
<th>Peace Education in Secondary Teacher Education</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>Political indulgence is there in each and every educational movement of the country so Peace Education and Charity Education have been incorporated to the school education and concerned teacher education curricula.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>Some states have included Peace Education into their school education and training on Peace Education has been imparted there for the teacher-educators. Peace education is proposed to be integrated in pre-service teacher education curricula of every state as the country has been facing some internal conflicts as well as external threats in recent past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nepal</td>
<td>Innovative teacher education modules have been developed on peace education, human rights and civic education (PHRC) by the Curriculum Development Centre (CDC), Nepal with the aid of international agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhutan</td>
<td>The concept has not yet adopted in concerned curriculum as peaceful environment prevails here but value education has already been introduced in the Bhutanese schools.</td>
</tr>
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6. Concluding Remarks

A number of researches have been proposed to be undertaken to find out the causes of conflicts and their remedies. Today, Peace Education is considered as an important global trend. A Peace Education curriculum for secondary level would not be effective without trained teachers who can impart it and the aspirant students of the countries at secondary level who have gathered some consciousness on the socio-political status of their country and who can play active role in maintaining peace environment in their country. Teachers can champion peace, but in order to sustain peace within the secondary classroom and to imbibe peace in the behavior of students under secondary level, the action of the teachers needs to be reinforced by the school management, parents and the community so that peace may be self-generated in all settings in the community. Teaching peace in the secondary classroom may be done most effectively using introspective, transpersonal or evocative strategies, such as meditation, psycho-synthesis and positive social interaction. Besides these, exchange of resource persons on Peace Education and social scientists is thought of in the aforesaid countries to promote Peace Education. Education is capable of building a post-conflict nation in its own way. Peace Education programmes would facilitate sharing of

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7 Source: www.education.gov.bt/DYS/dys.htm...retrieved on June 18, 2013
experiences within the region and each country utilizing the platform can promote Peace Education in secondary school level in the region as students of secondary level in the region have the maturity to propagate peace in the region.

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