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Peace Perception of Higher Education Students: An Exploration

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ABSTRACT

This research study was conducted at the master's level which aimed to study peace perception of higher education students with reference to their gender, stream and to study the factors contributing towards the promotion of peace and factors responsible for the deterioration of peace among students studying in higher education institutions. As Peace education is the process of acquiring values, knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with other and with the natural environment. The study was conducted to explore the peace perception of higher education students. Descriptive survey design was adopted for conducting the study. Two tools, a Peace Perception Scale and a Questionnaire on Peace Perception, were used for collection of data from the students studying in higher education (N=119) in Khordha block of Odisha state (India). The results revealed no significant difference in mean perception of higher education students with reference to their gender as variable (girls and boys) and stream of study did not have any bearing upon for developing peace perception among the students at higher education. Further, most of the students (84.03%) perceived that peace as an essential element for day-to-day life; majority of students (92.43%) perceived discipline as necessary element for an academic institution; and 82.35% perceive moral and ethics are essential elements for promoting peace in the society.

Keywords: Peace Education, Perception, Higher Education Students, Gender, Stream.

INTRODUCTION

Concept of Peace and Peace Education

Peace is generally understood as absence of conflicts and violence in the society. Conflicts take place due to uneven distribution of socio-economic and political power, resources, religious and regional differences. The action for nurturing and peace building must be located in the educational system. As the National Curriculum Framework, NCERT (2005) asserts that education must be able to promote values that foster peace, humanness and tolerance in a multicultural society. Human beings are in search of peace and happiness irrespective of cultural background. The thirst for peace is always a need. Peace education equips both teachers and learners with knowledge, understanding, skills, attitude and values for developing a peaceful culture in our society for harmonious living. Peace is the behaviour that encourages harmony in the way people talk, listen, and interact with each other and discourages actions to hurt, harm, or destroy each other (Theresa and Turner, 1995) as cited in UNESCO (2005).

Peace education is the process of acquiring values, knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with other and with the natural environment. It is a part of all learning areas and each reinforced by people treating each other in positive ways in classrooms, playgrounds and in their families and communities. Peace education is a holistic concept including physical, emotional, intellectual, and social growth of children. Peace Education needs to be inculcated in curriculum and schooling.

Peace Education and Education for Peace

There is a difference in perception about Peace Education and Education for Peace. NCERT document (2005) makes a distinction between Peace Education and Education for Peace. Peace Education refers to wide cognitive understanding of various aspects of peace and social strength. Education for Peace can also be realised through the co-curricular life of the school. Education for Peace seeks to nurture the knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that comprise a culture of peace. The Education for Peace connotes that all subjects studied by students must develop a comprehensive scenario of peace; that the education system as such must develop knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes that promote culture of peace and culture of social cohesion, social understanding and social capital.

To explore peace perception, various the studies were reviewed. Sagkal; Turnuklu & Totan (2016) conducted a study on effect of peace education on aggression. The results indicated that aggression levels of the experimental group were significantly reduced compared to the control group students. That the peace education program led to positive changes in student behaviours and improved relationships among and between students and teachers. Mary (2016) conducted a study on effectiveness of peace education programmes in secondary school in Kenya. The researcher used descriptive survey design to analyse the data of the study. The result found that there was a weak coordination of psychological interventions during violent conflicts due to lack of a proper response framework. Arslana, Guncavd & Polat (2015) conducted a study on the impact of peace education programme at university, university students' intercultural sensitivity. There was a significant difference between participants' pre-test and post-test scores of intercultural sensitivities. Faheen & Iqbal (2021) concluded that no significant difference was found between the perceptions of male and female teachers and about Peace Education themes and also there was no significant

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difference between the perceptions of rural and urban teachers about the Peace education themes. Heidi (2001) conducted a study on a peace education study: perception of U.S. adolescent women in international peace building camp. The results revealed that the Americans tried to make close relationship with Middle East participants which helped them to understand conflicts.

Rationale of the Study

Terrorism, violence and intolerance are destroying basic human values. Every citizen of the world wants to make the world a place of peace based on the principle of freedom, equality and justice. The present world should change its perspectives from narrow nationalism to universalism, from cultural prejudice to tolerance and understanding (Prasad,1998; Pandey, 2007). For this there is a need to create a culture of nonviolence and tolerance in every walk of life, which may help in creating a peaceful society. There is a need of awareness for peace education among the students because they are the future of our country (Bhatnagar, 2010). Greater majority of teachers suggested that time table should be rescheduled, a separate period for imparting Peace Education should be allotted and adequate training should be imparted (Rajeswari, 2013). Only the teachers are the right agencies for preservation and transmission of peace among children (Das, 2013). Many studies have been done in mostly abroad countries comparison to India. The studies showed a positive role of peace education. In the studies of Yablon (2009), Joseph & Duss (2009), Schimmel (2009) and Bedir & Arslan (2013) it was revealed that there was a positive change in students' behaviors and improved relationship among and between students and teachers. Since few research works is conducted on the perception of peace among Higher Education students, the researcher was decided to conduct the present study to fill the gaps in this area of research in India context.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the study were formulated as-

1. To study the peace perception of higher education students with reference to their gender.
2. To study the peace perception of students studying in higher education institutions with reference to their stream.
3. To study the factors contributing towards the promotion of peace among students studying in higher education institutions.
4. To study the factors responsible for the deterioration of peace among students studying in higher education institutions.

Hypotheses of the Study

On the basis of the objectives of the study the hypotheses were formulated as-

1. The mean peace perception scores of higher education students do not differ significantly with reference to their gender.
2. The mean peace perception scores of arts, science and commerce students do not differ significantly.

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Research Questions of the Study

Based on the objectives the research questions were posed as-

1. What are the factors contributing to the promotion of peace among the students of higher education institutions with reference to their social, personal and educational life?
2. What are the factors responsible for deterioration of peace among the students of higher education institutions with reference to their social, personal and educational life?

METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

Descriptive survey design was adopted for conducting the study. This study examined the perception of peace of higher education students studying in institutions situated in Khordha block of Khordha district of Odisha state, India. Both random sampling and incidental sampling techniques were adopted to get appropriate samples. Although there were six colleges in Khordha block, but the researchers selected only 3 colleges randomly. For the propose of data collection on the peace perception, as a whole, 119 students of the colleges namely, P.N.(Auto.) College, Women's College and Sri Jagannath (Degree) College, Kaipadar, Khordha were selected as the site for data collection. Incidental sampling process was adopted to obtain the target participants. Out of the 119 students (N=119), 52 were selected from P.N.(Auto) College (28 boys and 24 girls), 32 were selected from Women's College (32 girls) and 35 were selected from Sri Jagannath (Degree) College (21 boys and 14 girls). For collection of data two tools were used such as: Peace Perception Scale for Students (Self-developed) and Questionnaire on Peace Perception for Students (Self-developed).

The Peace Perception Scale (Likert-type) was consisted of 41 items with 5-point ratings such as Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Undecided (UD), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). The dimensions in the scale were of, peace knowledge of students, action/activity towards peace, and perception about peace. The Questionnaire on Peace Perception was consisted of 14 items with closed and open-ended items. The collected data were be analyzed quantitatively statistically by employing statistics such as t-test, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and percentage.

THE RESULTS

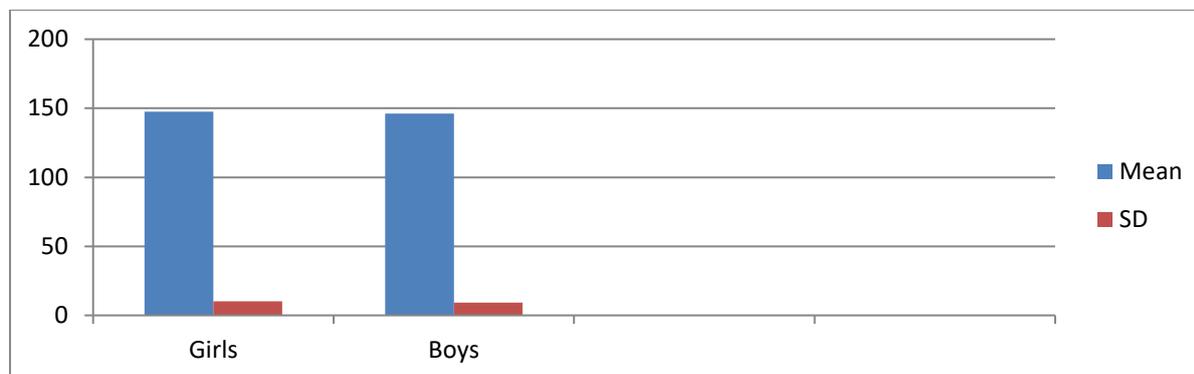
The data have been analyzed objective wise and results are presented below:

Peace Perception of Higher Education Students with reference to their Gender

Under this dimension, the objective was set as to study the peace perception of higher education students with reference to their gender. The hypothesis was formulated as 'the mean peace perception scores of higher education students do not differ significantly with reference to their gender (Girls and Boys)'. To verify the hypothesis, t-test technique was used. The results are presented in the table 1.

Table1: Mean, SD and t-value with reference to Male and Female students(N=119)

Gender	Number of Students	Mean	SD	Calculate d t-value	Table t-value	df	SE _D	Level of significance
Girls	70	147.50	10.19	0.76	1.98	117	1.80	0.05
Boys	49	146.13	9.33					



(Figure 1: Mean scores and SDs in the peace perception of boys and girls)

Table 1 and figure 1 reveal that the mean scores in peace perception of girls and boys studying in higher education are 147.50 and 146.13 respectively. The Standard Deviations are 10.19 and 9.33 respectively. The calculated t-value with regard to gender is 0.76 and the table t-value at 0.05 level was 1.98. Hence, the t-value is not significant at 0.05 level. Therefore, the hypothesis ‘the mean peace perception scores of higher education students do not differ significantly with reference to their gender (Girls and Boys)’ is retained. It is concluded that, there is no significant difference in mean perception of higher education students with reference to their gender as variable.

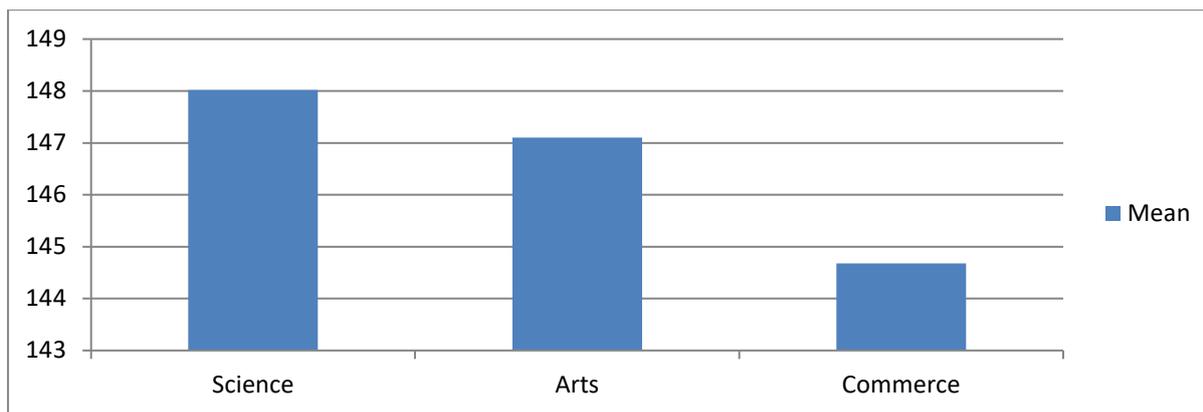
Peace Perception of Students Studying in Higher Education Institutions with reference to their Stream of study

Under this dimension, the objective was set as to study the peace perception of students studying in higher education institutions with reference to their stream. The hypothesis was formulated as ‘the mean peace perception scores of arts, science and commerce students do not differ significantly’. To verify the hypothesis, ANOVA was calculated. The results are presented in the table 2.

Table 2: Mean difference in peace perception of students with reference to stream (N=119)

ANOVA Summary					
Source of Variance	Sum of Square	df	Mean of Square	F	P
Treatment [between groups]	202.5764	2	101.2882	1.04	0.356727
Error Variance	11252.348	116	97.003		
Total	11454.9244	118			

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(Figure 2: Mean difference in peace perception with reference to stream)

Table 2 depicts the sum of square between the groups as 202.5764. The df value is 118. Here the mean of square of 3 stream found 101.2882. The F-value calculated with regard to stream was 1.04 and the table F-value at 0.05 level is 2.29. Hence, the F value is not significant at 0.05 level. It can be concluded that there is no significant difference in peace perception of students studying in higher education level with reference to their stream of study. Therefore, the hypothesis is retained. Stream has no bearing upon for developing peace perception among the students at higher education.

Factors for Promotion of Peace among Higher Education Students

To explore the results under this dimension, the objective was set as to study the factors contributing towards the promotion of peace among the students studying in Higher Education Institutions. Corresponding to the objective, a research question was posed as ‘What are the factors contributing to the promotion of peace among the students of higher education institutions with reference to their social, personal and educational life? The data were collected with the help of a questionnaire for students pertaining to the objective and research question. The percentages were calculated for analysis of the data. Results are presented in table 3.

Table 3: Perception of students on Factors contributing for Promotion of Peace (N=119)

Sl.No.	Factors	Yes (in %)	No (in %)
1	Peace is an essential element for day-to-day life.	100(84.03)	19(16.96)
2	Do you live peacefully at your home?	85(71.00)	34(29.00)
3	Do your family members cooperate to each other?	83(69.74)	36(30.26)
4	Parental conflicts result in loss of confidence among their children.	94(74.00)	25(21.00)
5	Is discipline a necessary element for an academic institution?	110(92.43)	9(07.57)
6	Do you think that there is better understanding among your family member?	67(56.31)	52(43.69)
7	Is non-violence the best way to maintain peace and tranquility?	105(88.24)	14(11.76)
8	Are moral and ethics essential element for promoting peace in the society?	98(82.35)	21(17.65)

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From the above table, it is revealed that majority of students (92.43%) think that discipline is necessary element for an academic institution. Most of the students (84.03%) think that peace is an essential element for day-to-day. More than 70% students live peacefully in at their home, but due to various reasons 28.58% students do not perceive to live peacefully at their home; 69.74% students perceive that their family members cooperate to each other; 88.24% students perceive non-violence as the best way to maintain peace and tranquility and 82.35% perceive moral and ethics essential elements for promoting peace in the society.

Factors responsible for deterioration of Peace among Higher Education Students

To find out the results under this dimension, the objective was stated as to study the factors responsible for the deterioration of peace among students who were studying in higher education institutions. Corresponding to the objective, a research question was formulated as ‘What are the factors responsible for deterioration of peace among the students of higher education institutions with reference to their social, personal and educational life?’ The data were collected with the help of a questionnaire for students pertaining to the objective and research question. The percentages were calculated for analysis of the data. The results pertain to the research question are presented in table 4.

Table 4: Perception of students on factors responsible for deterioration of peace (N=119).

Sl.No.	Factors	Yes (in %)	No(in%)
1	Do you think that ragging has positive impact on students?	0	119(100%)
2	Do you think media has acted as an effective role for solving conflicts?	36(30.26)	83(69.74)
3	Antisocial people are the main reason of violence.	56(47.06)	63(52.94)
4	Do your family members believe in conflicts?	25 (21.00)	94(79.00)
5	Is terrorism only responsible for hampering peace in the present era?	31(26.06)	88(73.94)
6	Growing crime rate in India is only due to narrow politics?	89(74.78)	30(25.22)

Table 4 depicts that almost all the students (100%) do not agree with the fact that ragging has positive impact on them, as they conveyed that it has nothing good in it for anyone to learn from it. Almost half of them (52.94%) disagree that only antisocial people are the main reason of violence; whereas nearly half of them (47.06%) agree with this fact. Media is one of the four pillars of Indian democracy. But as per the data most of the students (69.74%) out of 119 think that media does not act an effective and acceptable role for resolving conflicts of current society. But 30.26% students are of positive perception on this fact; most of the students (74.78%) perceive that growing crime rate in India is only due to narrow politics whereas 25.22% disagreed with this.

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Major Findings

1. There was no significant difference in mean perception of higher education students with reference to their gender as variable (girls and boys) (M1: 147.50, M2: 146.13, t: 0.76). The mean scores of girl students were little high as compared to boy students. This might be due to the reason that girls experience more emotion and more peace than the boys. So, it can be concluded that there is a need for development of awareness of teaching of peace education among students with special focus on boy students.
2. Stream did not have any bearing upon for developing peace perception among the students at higher education (F=1.04). There was no significant difference in peace perception of students studying in higher education level with reference to their stream of study.
3. The mean score of science students was a little more as compared to the Arts and commerce students. This might be, science students seem more active on peace education than the Arts and Commerce students and their perception on peace was very strong.
4. Most of the students (84.03%) perceived that peace as an essential element for day-to-day life and non-violence as the best way to maintain peace and tranquility.
5. Majority of students (92.43%) perceived discipline as necessary element for an academic institution.
6. Most of the students (88.24%) students perceived non-violence as the best way to maintain peace and tranquility and 82.35% perceive moral and ethics as essential elements for promoting peace in the society.
7. Almost all the students (100%) did not perceive that ragging has positive impact on students.
8. Media did not act an effective and acceptable role for resolving conflicts of current society as perceived by 69.74% of students.
9. Almost half of them (52.94%) disagreed that only antisocial people as the main reason of violence; whereas nearly half of them (47.06%) agreed with this fact.

Discussion and Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to find out the perception of students studying in higher education about peace education with reference to their gender and it was found that, gender had no role to play on peace perception. The findings revealed that there was no significant difference in mean perception of higher education students with reference to their gender as variable (girls and boys). It supports the findings of Faheem & Iqbal (2021). Similarly, the study aimed to find out role of stream of study on peace perception and it was revealed that stream had no bearing upon for developing peace perception among the students at higher education. In case of analyzing data collected through questionnaire about factors responsible for developing peace and deteriorating peace, it was revealed that most of the students (84.03%) perceive that peace is an essential element for day-to-day life and non-violence is the best way to maintain peace and tranquility. Majority of students (92.43%) thought that discipline as necessary element for an academic institution. Most of the students (88.24%)

students perceived non-violence as the best way to maintain peace and tranquility and 82.35% perceived moral and ethics as essential elements for promoting peace. Almost all the students perceived that ragging had no positive impact on students. Media did not act effectively for resolving conflicts of current society as perceived by 69.74% of students.

Implications of the Study

UNESCO is considering peace education as an important area in the field of Education. National Curriculum Framework 2005 also emphasized the importance of peace education. Hence, the findings of the study will help in inculcating peace concepts among higher education students. Educational institutions can work for development of peace among the students through various research works as suggested by the researcher. Teachers need to be provided refresher training courses for developing their knowledge towards peace. The research suggests that teacher should also be oriented for peace education by means of training program in the field of teaching of peace education. Students are the prospective citizens and if the teachers are oriented for developing peace culture, then it will be prevailed among the students.

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