

Forging Peace through Heritage Education at Elementary Level in Pakistan

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Abstract

Peace is the essential message of Islam. It can be inculcated among the learners at the critical time of their grooming such as elementary education. Heritage education is one of the most influencing area that leaves relatively permanent imprint on the thinking and practice of the learners. Hence; peace can be inculcated among the students through heritage education. Therefore, in this paper the existing content of elementary education in Pakistan was analysed with reference to the peace-blended content on heritage education. The problem under study was, "Forging peace through heritage education at elementary level in Pakistan". The objectives were: to critically evaluate the existing courses of Pakistan studies with reference to the inclusion of heritage education related materials for promoting peaceful behaviours among the students; and what corrective measures could be suggested to strengthen peace-promoting behaviours among students through heritage education. The study was of analytical nature as the courses of Pakistan Studies for elementary level were analysed so as to search for heritage education related content that is tailored for promoting peaceful attitudes. The paper is rooted in the integrative approach of content selection pertaining to peace promoting heritage education for any schooling level. All the courses of Pakistan studies taught at elementary level constituted the population. The sample consisted of courses meant for elementary school level in the public sector. The said courses were analysed from two aspects, that is, how much content related to heritage education is included in the text; and how the same is devised for the promotion of peaceful behaviours. It was found that some topics related to heritage education are there in the content but they are not properly arranged in a peace-promoting manner. It was found that the said content is less, un-practical, and devoid of promoting peaceful co-existence and global citizenship. A peace-promoting content of heritage education was recommended to be made a compulsory part of the curriculum at elementary school level that may inculcate among the students the peaceful

attitudes and behaviours of: critical thinking, tolerance, respect for diversity and global citizenship.

Keywords: *Peace, tolerance, heritage education, global citizenship*

Introduction

Pakistan is one of the growing economies of the world that has achieved better economic progress despite her active involvement against the war on terrorism. Apart from the state level the Pakistani society presents an unsatisfactory picture where injustice, atrocity, impulsiveness, absence of patience, forbearance, and respect for humanity prevail. To cope with the challenges of the 21st century, the Pakistani society needs to be equipped with the required potentialities and practices so as to successfully participate in the march towards progress and development. It is pertinent to mention here that such progress and development at national level is almost impossible without abridging the local culture and traditions of the people with the process of development that is rooted in the fast-emerging global changes as expounded by Zerrudo (2005). This concept of development was highlighted by UNESCO which encompasses its complex and multidimensional aspect including other aspects such as utilizing the potentialities of the community to positively contribute and duly share the fruits, which is more than just economic growth (Sta. Maria, 2001). This way the importance of cultural aspect and heritage education in the overall development of any society increases manifold.

Similarly, Pakistan is at the front line on war against terrorism, hence the Pakistani society need to be more potential for sustainable peace. Again, this can be achieved through an integrated strategy at national level to cope with all the aspects of war-promoting patterns of the social setup. So, peace can be promoted through a variety of approaches, one being through heritage education that gives a sort of local as well as global awareness among the students. In this respect the Peace Museum Japan is a living example of using cultural heritage for promoting peace in the society.

Keeping in view the significant role played by heritage education in promoting peaceful behaviors and global consciousness, the researcher carried this study to highlight the

positive contribution of heritage education with a peace perspective at the elementary school content of Pakistan studies.

Statement of the problem

The problem under investigation was, “Forging peace through heritage education at elementary level in Pakistan”.

Objectives of the Study

Objectives of the study were:

1. to critically evaluate the existing courses of Pakistan studies with reference to the inclusion of heritage education related materials for promoting peaceful behaviors among the students.
2. to suggest measures that could be adopted to enhance the awareness level of Elementary school Pakistan studies teachers to strengthen peace-promoting behaviors among students through heritage education.

Significance of the study

Heritage education is an emerging concept around the world that emphasizes to endow the young learners with an understanding of the cultural heritage and to promote peaceful co-existence for the better future of humanity. The study is significant in the sense that in a country like Pakistan which is badly affected by the current wave of terrorism, there is a dire need of promoting peaceful behaviors among its inhabitants as a partial fulfilment to counter extremism, war-mongering overtures, and impulsive attitudes. The study will pave way for researchers in the field to ponder over the possible mechanisms that may enhance peaceful dispositions among individuals as a lasting solution to terrorism.

Delimitation of the study

The study is delimited to the courses of Pakistan studies for elementary school level.

Review of the related literature

A brief review of the related literature is given below.

Defining culture?

There are a number of definitions of culture that is one way or the other rooted in the specific philosophies of the related scholars. Zimolmak & Stansfield, (1983) thinks about culture as the living style of a people with reference to a specific time and location. Since change is in the very nature of the Human beings, so the human culture changes with the passage of time. The reason is that what has been achieved by the existing social setup is transferred to the new generation through the various modes of education. Furthermore, every existing social setup adds something to the existing culture. This way cultural growth takes place. It is pretty reasonable to mention here that the speed of this cultural growth or change is different from society to society. Viewing in this perspective all such aspects like: art and architecture, foods, clothing, utensils and other civilizational tools, belief system, habits, customs and values constitute the culture of a particular community as put forth by Tümertekin & Özgüç, (2015). This aspect of the human nature leads to cultural diversity where people add to their existing culture with innovations. Güvenç, (1994) is of the view that every production of any people against the natural world and that which is created with nature constitutes the culture of that specific people. Alım, (2009) believes that all the material and non-material aspects of values of any people stands for the culture of that people. Similarly, social researchers like Uygur & Baykan, (2007) are of the view that culture is the outcome of the accumulation process of the people who with passage of time gradually adds new knowledge to their culture. Furthermore, as the concept of culture is of multi-disciplinary nature where social scientists from sociology, psychology, history etc., therefore, there is somewhat variation in its definition due to the respective disciplinary bent of mind as Gülcan, (2010) concludes.

Explaining Cultural Heritage

Cultural Heritage is the name of the all those values, belief system coupled with the specific practices and the distinguishing objects of art and artifacts of a community. This

idea is beautifully summarized by Zialcita, (2007) in the following words, “all the beliefs, values, practices, and objects that give a place its own specific character (p.1).

The study of cultural heritage is significant in the sense that it links together various people that have relatively closer cultural heritage. Furthermore, it enhances the sense of ‘we feelings’ among the people. Similarly, it is a source of establishing strong traditional links that could be lost in the absence of a cultural awareness (www.reference.com).

Cultural heritage identifies and explores and identifies the specific cultural attributes of a community, preserve it, and transmits it to the present generation for the betterment of the coming generation (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cultural_heritage).

This way the study of cultural heritage provides the learners with the history of the human entity and thereby paves way for strengthening a sense of unity, belongingness, and common origin among the learners. This ultimately strengthens the attitudes of co-existence, mutual respect, and respect for diversity which are the core elements of peace.

In this perspective the protection of such precious heritage of any society seems imperative so as to strengthen the ideas, behaviours, and attitudes of the people to have respect for such cultural symbols that is seen in various forms. It is due to this aspect that Doğaner, (2003) laid emphasis on the protection of these symbols of identity such as: ruins, monuments, historical buildings and sites, places of worship, masjids, and churches etc. It is, therefore, worth mentioning here that such protection is only possible when the humans are made aware of the importance of such cultural heritage. No doubt, education in the formal sense is one of the effective tools as such.

Heritage Education

Heritage education refers to the process by which a society’s history and cultural identity is taught to the learners. Huhta & Hankis, (1988) in their definition of heritage education included the following aspect of any society that are taught systematically such as: history, traditions, ancient cities, monuments, museums, architecture, cultural landscapes, newspapers, documents, court records, memoirs, handcrafts and photographs. It is defined by the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers, (1998) as

teaching cultural heritage through a variety of active teaching methodology. In this respect, Copeland, (2004) believes that heritage education enables the learners to respect cultural sites and traditions, as it endows the learners with a sound understanding of how and why to protect cultural sites. In the views of Europa Nostra, (2004), heritage education enhances students' knowledge and behaviour regarding the history and value of the natural and man-made environment in which they find themselves.

The aim of heritage education, according to, Dönmez & Yeşilbursa, (2014) is to: enable the learners to study and understand their relative history and cultural heritage; endow the learners to understand humanity in the local and global context; prepare sensible and useful citizens. It is pertinent to mention here the possible role of the formal education in promoting heritage education.

The Role of education

Besides other functions, the process of the formal education carries out the following functions that can surely play a significant role in the preservation, maintenance, and transference of the cultural heritage to the future generations.

1. Transmits cultural heritage to the learners: One of the outstanding functions of education is to transmit the cultural heritage to the present generation, thereon to pass it to the next generation. Therefore, it is of vital importance to base the education system of any society on the cherished ideals of universal brotherhood, peace, tolerance, and respect for diversity. This can be achieved, at least partially, through strengthening the awareness level of the people regarding respect for cultural heritage.
2. Reforming Human Behaviours and Attitudes: Reforming human behaviours and attitudes is another significant function of education. This is the point that is much needed for developing a sense of global citizenship and international community. Of course, the study of cultural heritage rooted in the philosophy of peace will strengthen respect for humanity.
3. Inculcation of the desired values: Every society possesses some values that are transmitted and inculcated among the learners through the process of education. If

some of the international values such as: peace, tolerance, and respect for diversity are incorporated through heritage education that will be an easier way to achieve the cherished ideal of a peaceful global community. Such values can be inculcated through a sound culture-based pedagogy.

The culture-based pedagogy

Many scholars from around the world have talked about the need of a culture-based pedagogy. Wu, (2011) in his research found that culturally relevant pedagogy empowers the learners' capacity for academic, social, and political competence. Similarly, another scholar, Mèndez (2006) found that the academic achievement of students is enhanced with the effective use of, students' heritage especially in the writing aspect. Furthermore, Alkateb, (2013) found that culture-based pedagogy strengthens students' teamwork spirit, knowledge and skills in research together with developing leadership attitudes.

Now the question is how such a teaching strategy can be devised that may cater for the intended needs. The answer has been given by many researchers such as: Passagua & Williams, (2012); Smith, (2011); Simşek, Elitok, & Kesici, (2013), who argue that an effective teaching strategy related to cultural heritage can be more effective if carried out for teaching the curriculum in a natural school setting. Passagua and Williams (2012) stress the incorporation of food items as elements of specific family related heritage education that may ensure among students a belief in cultural diversity.

Similarly, Smith (2011) is of the view that historical places, buildings, and landscapes are the most effective tools in the teaching of history. In this connection a variety of approaches have been suggested by many scholars as Simşek et al., (2013) favored the use of drama for teaching cultural heritage for children at an early stage of schooling.

Usually the social studies related courses are meant for inculcating cultural awareness among the students; however, this is worth-mentioning that through an integrated approach the inculcation of awareness related to cultural heritage can be done through other basic courses as well. In this connection the study of Alajmi (2013) is worth-mentioning who stresses to integrate the study of cultural heritage in arts subjects as well. Even Averill, (2012) goes on to the extent of including the study of cultural

heritage in mathematics as well. As mentioned earlier, raising the awareness level of the people may ensure the protection of cultural heritage and this is possible through proper education otherwise as put forth by Aktekin, (2010); Dönmez & Yeşilbursa, (2014) the preservation and protection of the cultural heritage wouldn't be possible. In this respect researchers such as: Patrick, (1988); Hunter, (1988); Patrick, (1989); Bektaş, (1992); Corbishley, (2000); Curtis & Seymour, (2004); Henson, Stone & Corbishley, (2004); Hereduc, (2005); Alkış & Oğuzoğlu, (2005); Copeland; (2006) found a strong relationship between cultural heritage and education hence; they highlighted the pivotal role of education in bringing about awareness among the people for the preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage.

The Possible role of the Teachers

Teachers are the pillars of any culture and civilization as they are assigned the responsibility to transmit the cultural heritage to the new generations; hence they play a tremendous role in this respect. They can forge peaceful attitudes among students by inculcating the three fundamental ingredients of peace i.e. accommodation, tolerance, and respect for diversity. This way cultural heritage can be protected when respect for the same is inculcated among the learners. Most of the cultural heritage related devastating incidents around the world is actually the outcome of this lack of awareness among the people. This aspect is somewhat highlighted by Uygur & Baykan, (2007) in their academic assentation. Yasin, (2007) is right in saying that cultural heritage, in the broader sense, is the common asset of the human family which in turn is the common responsibility of the human family to preserve and protect. Regarding this aspect Herbert, (1995) highlighted the latest concepts and approaches that are useful for the preservation and protection of cultural heritage at local and at global level. As a result of that some international organizations and institutes are actively involved in this connection as expounded by Emekli, (2005). It is pertinent to mention here that in this connection raising the awareness level of the people is of vital significance. That is the reason that the UNESCO launched the first ever Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (UNESCO, 1972). Another significant stride in this direction was the European Union's move under the title, "Europe a Common Heritage". The prime objective of this move or campaign was to bring about awareness

among the people of Europe and to foster supporting relationship among the member-states for enhancing awareness about cultural, natural, and historical heritage in the region.

In this regard the latest innovation is that most of the cultural heritage is preserved through the latest technology. So, an electronic version of cultural heritage preservation is applied where archives, museums and libraries have been electronically developed. Most importantly such arrangements of digital collection regarding cultural heritage are now-a-days used for educational purposes as well. Ott & Pozzi, (2011) maintain that these cultural heritages related digital collections are used by teachers for teaching activities. This is the typical example of using cultural heritage in the teaching-learning process.

Methodology

The study was of analytical nature as the courses of Pakistan Studies for elementary level were analysed so as to search for heritage education related content that is tailored for promoting peaceful attitudes. The paper is rooted in the integrative approach of content selection pertaining to peace promoting heritage education for any schooling level.

Population and sampling

The population of the study consisted of all the courses of Pakistan studies in the country. The sample of the study consisted of courses meant for elementary school level in the public sector.

Research instrument

As earlier mentioned, the approach was analytical so the existing courses of Pakistan studies meant for elementary level were examined through content analysis procedure.

Data Analysis

The related courses were analysed from two aspects, that is, how much content related to heritage education is included in the text; and how the same is devised for the promotion of peaceful behaviours.

Findings of the study

The findings of the study reveal that some topics that are related to cultural heritage have been included in the courses for various levels of the elementary stage. However, the thrilling findings are that these topics are properly linked with raising the awareness level of the learners about the importance of cultural heritage for peaceful co-existence. Furthermore, the methodology, the related activities are either missing or left at the discretion of the teachers of that subject. There is no mention among the objectives of teaching those concepts to foster an awareness among the learners about the importance of the cultural heritage. Similarly, there is no linkage of thought and concept-making of the learners regarding the positive use of the taught concepts to develop a sense of respect for cultural heritage and for developing peace promoting attitudes such as: accommodation, acceptance, tolerance, and respect for diversity. The idea of global citizenship is altogether missing in the analysed content. The content does not develop international understanding that could be fostered through heritage education at this stage of schooling. It was found that the content for the said level is devoid of any practical activity such as: heritage education related trips to notable sites and museums. During the analysis, it was found that relatively less time is allocated to the contents that are meant for cultural heritage. Similarly, a limited portion of the cultural heritage is covered despite the case that Pakistan is located at the most historical site of the ancient Indus Valley civilization which has remained the abode of where a number of dynasties, nations, and people with their respective peculiar cultures.

Alternatives for forging peace through heritage education

It is pertinent to mention here that as there is scarcity of awareness programs for teachers regarding the positive role of heritage education in promoting peaceful attitudes and behaviors among the teachers, therefore, the need of continued training sessions,

workshops, seminars may be arranged so as to raise the morale and awareness level of the teachers for the dissemination of the desired knowledge and related skills.

Discussions

Despite the fact that Pakistan is located on the very landscape of the ancient Indus valley civilization that is one the most affluent area regarding cultural heritage. However, the issue is that at one hand the people are not much aware about the importance of this cherished cultural heritage, on the other hand much of that cultural heritage is destroyed. That is the reason why heritage education is not properly addressed in the course contents at the elementary level. Similarly, the concept of peace museum is gaining momentum around the globe where museums and archaeological sites are used for promoting peace and sustainable development. But unfortunately, the same is missing in the teaching process in Pakistan. The positive side of the picture is that even in face of such circumstances there are some very meaningful attempts by various organizations, institutions, and university departments that are exclusively devoted to the preservation and maintenance of cultural heritage in Pakistan. Of course, such efforts are very encouraging however, there is the need of addressing the issue at state policy level where heritage education needs to be made a compulsory part of the schooling process that may be strengthened at college and university level. Similarly, heritage education may be used for promoting peace in the society.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussion of the study it can safely be concluded that heritage education has neither been properly addressed in the elementary school curriculum nor it has been made peace-friendly. The content for the said understudy level is not in line with the international level in Pakistan. It may include the specific cultural heritage of Pakistan together with a blend of the Islamic cultural heritage that is one of the richest on consisting of a number of buildings, palaces, forts, and mosques of world reputation. It is therefore, recommended that heritage education may be made a distinct part of the curriculum for elementary level. Furthermore, such a pattern of heritage education may be devised that may cater for the promotion of peace among the students. That the

content and teaching methodology of cultural heritage may be developed on the principles of global citizenship, international understanding, peace, tolerance, and respect for diversity.

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