

Can Education Contribute to Peace?

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Abstract: The paper questions the common assumption that education promotes peace. By referring to pedagogic routines and the political culture of nationalism, the paper indicates the nature of reforms education requires for contributing to peace. The basis of discussion is the author's own study of the role played by school education, specifically through the teaching of history, in maintaining mutual hostility between India and Pakistan. The paper is divided into four sections. The first section summarizes conceptual issues raised by philosophers and educators in the context of schooling and peace. Section II introduces the author's Indo-Pak study in relation to the challenges that nationalism, religion and culture place before education. Section III deals with regimentation as an integral aspect of modern schooling and its implications for the role expected from education in promoting peace. The final section discusses the demands and contradictions education faces under the increasing dominance of the human capital ideology. The paper concludes by highlighting the importance of humanist goals and processes in education for serving the cause of peace.

Keywords: Education, Peace, Socialization, Popular Hinduism, Nationalism , Regimentation , Discipline, Counter- argument

Introduction

We can start by making a dummy response to the question posed in the title: 'Yes, It can, but it doesn't.' We will survey a lineage of peace thinkers to examine this possible answer before turning to the deeper question: 'Can it, really?' This deeper question will enable us to probe the obstacles education faces in contributing to peace. The question will also help us clarify, towards the end, what we mean by peace when we use that word in the context of education in the contemporary world.

Both 'education' and 'peace' carry more than one meaning. For understanding education, a broad distinction between two spheres of its meaning is necessary. One is the sphere of meanings inherent in the concept or idea of education. The other sphere refers to meanings that arise when we use the term 'education' to refer to a system, normally to refer to the system of education in a particular country. A lot of confusion in debates on education might become

avoidable if we keep the conceptual and the systemic spheres apart and remain aware of the distance we notice between them. The distinction is particularly important for discussing education in the context of peace because the systemic meaning allows us to notice the impact of economic and political conditions on education while the conceptual meaning permits us to view the potential of reform in education for preparing it to serve peace.

The paper is divided into four sections. The first section starts with a narrative and moves on to discuss a lineage of peace thinkers. Following the tracing of this lineage, the section discusses some theoretical problems of education and learning, with special reference to nationalism, religion and culture. We will analyze the complexity and problems involved in considering education as an obvious means of promoting peace. The second section dwells on the specific case of hostility between India and Pakistan. This stable hostility is discussed from the perspective of school education and the role that history, as a school subject, plays in it. This discussion includes the learning about the past that occurs during childhood at home. The third section focuses on regimentation that children go through at school. It is examined with the help of available research in the context of the role of school education in inculcating civic loyalty. The last section discusses the policy trends that are exacerbating the school's regimenting role. How this trend can be resisted and the gap between the concept of education and its systemic reality can be bridged are discussed. For these aims, some essential features of peace education that might facilitate institutional recovery and reform in the system of education are identified.

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Section I: Crossing a Border

Two decades ago, I went through an experience which convinced me how necessary peace education was. In 1998 I started a study of the textbooks used in India and Pakistan for the teaching of history. My study was confined to the portrayal of the anti-colonial or nationalist struggle. This was a segment of the past that the two modern nations had shared until the moment of their partition in 1947. My interest was in examining how the 90-year period, from 1857—when the British faced the first major rebellion—to independence and partition in 1947, is discussed in a sample of mainstream textbooks used in the two countries. After preliminary analysis of the textbooks, I decided to visit Pakistan and chose to travel by the Delhi Lahore bus that had recently been introduced as a symbol of the shared aspiration of the two governments at

the time to improve bilateral relations. Hostility between the two nations had been interrupted several times earlier by similar symbolic gestures, without attaining sustainable peace. The bus left New Delhi early in the morning and took the whole day to reach Wagah where the Indo-Pak border provides an official passage for traffic from both sides. Checking of passports and luggage took a long time before I could board the bus along with other passengers. As soon as the bus started, I noticed a group of small boys playing cricket in a nearby vacant plot of land. This was a common, familiar, sight. However, at the moment of seeing those boys, I was struck by the thought that their minds carried a very different construction of the past and the present. The role education had played in giving them, as Pakistanis, and me as an Indian, two different designs of knowledge about the past became clear in that moment. That this is the role whereby education contributes to the hostility between the two nations became clear in that epiphanic moment.

National borders all over the world serve as epistemic watersheds, though not in every case do they separate historical constructions as sharply divergent as those of India and Pakistan. Borders between nations mark the modern state's role in deciding what the young will learn in order to belong to the nation located in those borders. The state uses its authority to calibrate the kind of belonging schools will nurture towards the nation and also the intensity of the sense of belonging.

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Lineage of Peace Educators

Peace as an educational concern has attracted many modern philosophers. Nearly all of them have examined the role of education in the context of peace by referring to the demands that nationalism places upon the system of education. Bertrand Russell, Rabindranath Tagore, Mahatma Gandhi and J. Krishnamurti are four modern philosophers who examined this compulsion of education in modern times. All four focused on the contradictions that afflict learning during childhood under the nationalistic demands that the state makes on schools and teachers. The critical outspokenness of these thinkers is difficult to practice today in many countries of the world where national fervour and pride are witnessing a wave of aggressive revival. After a brief period during which the discourse of a technologically enabled, marketfriendly globalization, claiming to soften national boundaries and barriers, acquired popularity, a renewal of politically charged nationalism has occurred in many parts of the world. This is the kind of nationalism Tagore had warned against, during the inter-war years, as a threat to human sanity and survival (Tagore, 2004). Though he was committed to India's freedom from

colonial domination, he felt uneasy about the idea of a national community bonded by political interests. His concern for human unity was inspired by ideals that transcended nationally defined interests and insecurities. Mahatma Gandhi and Tagore came into a dialogical relationship in their attempt to explore and define humanist aspirations in an era of violent expression of narrow national ambitions. Gandhi's political ideals found fuller expression in his own political career as a leader of India's struggle against British imperial rule (Sheean, 1949). In the course of his long, non-violent struggle, Gandhi also developed an educational vision and programme, to which we will refer later in this paper. A contemporary of Tagore and Gandhi, Sri Aurobindo (2007), articulated the idea of human unity, and India's integrity as a society, by referring to the infinite diversity in which nature expresses itself.

Bertrand Russell(1916) too made a distinction between the role that nationalism might play in cultural life as opposed to political and economic life. In the latter sphere, he thought nationalism could play a harmful role. Russell's activism against the dangers of a global nuclear war led him to critique the role that education of the young, particularly the teaching of history, plays in consolidating adversarial identities. His advice that the writing of national histories for use in schools should be assigned to foreigners will invite ridicule today if any country seriously considered it. In viewing the role of education in building emotionally charged collective egos, Russell's echo can be heard in Krishnamurti. In his dialogues titled 'Education and the Significance of Life', Krishnamurti said that modern education constitutes a threat to world peace (Krishnamurti, 1953). We will do well to add a clause to make the philosopher acceptable today, namely, that he was referring to 'education as it is presently understood and imparted'. All five philosophers we have briefly considered offered radical advice for reforming education and pedagogy.

In Krishnamurti's view, not just nationalism, but any collective identity promoted through education tends to diminish its potential for cultivating peace. Krishnamurti included religion and language as markers of collective identity in his critique of education, saying that when education is involved in cultivating a common collective self through the teaching of religion or language, it will tend to encourage negative feelings towards people who have a different religious identity or who regard a different language as their representative voice. This is the 'othering' effect of the active promotion of collective identity. Education exacerbates this effect for two reasons. One is that education takes place during childhood when the chances of internalizing a particular discourse carrying a collective self-image are high. Secondly, a teacher is involved in the process of education, so a certain kind of force is added to an information that it would not have had if it had been learnt in the normal course of growing up.

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Education, Peace and War

The popular notion that education contributes to peace is based on insufficient engagement with the process of schooling and the relations between school and home. The thesis that education can and does provide the foundations of a peaceful world seems to draw its strength almost entirely from its capacity to tempt. Who wouldn't like to believe that education is a force of peace? Indeed, if a survey of opinions were to be conducted on this, it will probably find a strong support for the view that education has already made the world more peaceful. Evidence to prove this verdict is said to lie in the number of decades that have passed since the second of the two World Wars fought in the first half of the last century. Many would readily attribute the lack of any major war over the last seven decades to the spread of education.

There are two obvious problems with this thesis. One problem arises from the selective use of the term 'war' or 'major war.' The other problem lies in our accrediting the spread of education with the claimed absence of a 'major war.' Let us examine both these problems. To say that the last seven decades have been relatively peaceful, compared to the two decades preceding this period, is possible only if our focus is on what we call the 'developed' world, a term that covers mainly the western nations and some countries of east Asia, especially Japan. In the rest of the world, the post-World War II period can hardly be described as peaceful even if we reduce the meaning of peace to the absence of war. The terrible violence that Vietnam faced at the hands of the US or the endemic internal strife in Cambodia, Rwanda and Chile, to take just a few cases, is quite comparable, in terms of the number of civilian deaths that occurred in the Second World War, discounting the deaths caused by America's nuclear attack on Japan. In the more recent period, Afghanistan and Iraq have suffered the fate of Vietnam and Sri Lanka has been the site of a horrible civil war. All these names, of nations, indicate that in the seven decades following the Second World War, violent conflicts have occurred mainly in the poorer or 'underdeveloped' nations as they are called. We also need to include in our accounts of violence the considerable and continuing incidence of violence associated with acts we now classify as terror or terrorist. Accurately arithmetical comparisons between the deaths caused by the two 20th-century World Wars and the regional conflicts of the post-war period may be both difficult and futile, except to make the point that the latter cannot be described as a peaceful or even relatively peaceful period.

Let us now turn to the second problem. Those who see the role of education in the relative peace of the post-war period surely ignore the nature of violence and war that humanity has witnessed in modern history as a whole. If education as such were a source of peace, then what were and still are the most educated parts of the world would not have been the sites of horrifying violence during wars. Nor would a country like the United States of America, known for its democratic culture and educational attainments, have been actively involved in extensive violence in other, notably poorer countries. If the spread of education is a factor associated with peace, the country way ahead of its neighbours in literacy and elementary schooling in South Asia, namely, Sri Lanka, would not have witnessed a gruesome and prolonged civil war. We can argue that education enhances the possibility of peace only if we treat education as a simple matter, a toy that can only bring joy to a child. In order to arouse some hard thinking on education, we need to frame our question somewhat bluntly and unexpectedly: 'Can education promote hate and help sustain a conflict over time?' When the question is framed this way, we can begin to see the futility of seeing education as a benign toy. Its instrumentality can be better appreciated if we examine the role of the school curriculum and textbooks in socializing the young in India and Pakistan. A comparative study of school textbooks used for the teaching of modern history in the two countries led me to the conclusion that education can perpetuate conflict and feed hostility (Kumar, 2001). This study also offered persuasive evidence to say that education has played a role in the sustaining neighbourly hatred in the two countries.

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Education and Socialization

This insight needs to be examined with care and conceptual wherewithal, otherwise we will miss the key benefits such a case study of conflict between two nations might offer for developing a general theory of the relation between education and peace. One thing that my study (Kumar, 2001; Kumar, 2007) of the Indo-Pak case brings out most crisply is that a conflict can be guaranteed to persist and hold its potential for violence if its seeds get sown early in life so as to enter primary socialization. This term has conceptual value specific to sociology of culture. It tends to get rather limited, and somewhat diluted, attention in the field of education. This is mainly because education is perceived more as a domain of practice and policy than as a field of inquiry whereas sociology is regarded primarily as a field of inquiry along with other social sciences. Therefore, in education, socialization is studied mainly to adjust pedagogic effort to the influences the child might carry from home.

The depth at which early socialization shapes self-identity, attitudes and values is often underestimated by those involved in education, such as teachers and curriculum designers. If we hold early socialization as a major factor involved in the construction of self-identity and outlook towards those regarded as the 'other', we will be on firm ground to say that hatred and hostility between nations gains a self-perpetuating momentum when education at school adds to a prejudice already prevailing in the social ethos. To elucidate this role of schooling and curriculum, we will need to examine the complex relations that underpin any process of institutionalized learning in modern society, namely, relations between education and socialization. These relations are important for the learning involved in any school subject, including those included in the natural and the social sciences, mathematics and language. The relationship between education at school and socialization at home plays a key role in shaping the learning of history. Before we embark on our specific inquiry about India and Pakistan, let us discuss briefly why learning about the past or history forms a critical factor in the role of schooling in the context of peace.

The social, unlike the physical, world surrounding a young person cannot be discovered without assistance and encouragement or guidance. Physical objects and happenings, such as the rising of the moon in a darkening sky or a passing train, attract the child and demand attention. Contrastingly, information about how parents got married or about events that happened a long time ago gains a child's attention and a place in his or her consciousness only on being pointed out and narrated in one form or another. The young depend on adults for learning about the past. By the time children enroll at school, they have already 'learned' a great deal about the past at home – from the adults who look after them and the resources, such as television, a modern home possesses. The school waits for several years before starting to teach history; learning about the past at home, on the other hand, starts in infancy itself and continues, as part of routine life at home.

Children's absorption of knowledge about the past takes place at home in its own unique ethos without the interference of reflective thought, questioning or awareness of alternative narratives or explanation. It occurs with substantial emotional content which is characteristic of primary socialization (Berger and Luckmann, 1966). The narrative is not necessarily woven into an integrated story. Rather, it is sporadic, fragmented and interspersed by visual, auditory and other forms of sensory experience. Quasihistorical knowledge, some of which borders on myth, is interwoven in religious beliefs and attitudes including attitudes towards 'others' who have a different history. A sense of community is embedded in this amorphous body of quasihistorical knowledge, and this sense imparts an identity to the small child. It marks separation from others who belong to a different 'community.'

Normally we do not view religious experience of children as an induction or immersion into history. We feel reluctant, even unwilling, to do so because we are used to classifying

history as a documentary field of study based on facts and evidence. We tend to ignore and to denigrate perceptual history (Kumar, 2007) which is nourished and sustained by memory of experience spanning several generations. The history inherent in religion is similar. It covers long stretches of time, covering the pre-formation, growth, and subsequent development periods of a faith-system, with its attendant ideas, beliefs and collectively held memories. Characters or personalities, sometimes held at the level of myth, are a part of this faith-system. Its value as a shared or collectively owned memory-record is crucial to the selfhood or identity it imparts to a group. It is so crucial to the group's survival and intellectual well-being that it is passed on to the newly born at the earliest possible moment and the imparting continues throughout infancy and childhood, ensuring deep imprinting in the mind. As imprinting, it is impervious to doubt or question. It serves as a well-ploughed field for the knowledge of history imparted at school in later childhood. This process whereby primary socialization at home merges into, and is consolidated by, secondary socialization at school is sharply illustrated in the case of IndoPak antipathy maintained over seven decades now. By examining it, we can grasp the difficulties and challenges that education presents for the pursuit of peace between two hostile nations.

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Section II: Education and Indo-Pak Hostility

In many countries, religion and its history as a social institution are intertwined with the history of modern nationalism. This condition appears to have been responsible for hostility and warlike relations between nation-states in recent times. The case of India and Pakistan is of this kind although there are several factors that make their mutual hostility look like a somewhat unique matter. At the same time, there are factors that lend to their hostile relationship a rather common character of territorial rivalry. For educational planners, especially curriculum designers, study of Indo-Pak history offers an important lesson, namely, that education cannot be seen in isolation from the wider ethos of society. This lesson has value for curriculum planners

concerned about peace in any part of the world. The depth at which sedimented layers of knowledge about the past influence learning at school require recognition for any significant attempt to re-orient education towards peace to succeed. While it is true that the Indo-Pak problem cannot be reduced to a single or simple axis, religion and its relationship with the growth of nationalism have a definite explanatory value for making sense of the problem. And it does not arise from the Indo-Pak partition alone as many would like to believe. Had undivided India not been partitioned in 1947 along religious lines by the departing British colonial authorities, religious strife between the two major religious identities of the region would still have remained a live phenomenon. It had already become one in the latter half of the 19th century. The widely held view that the Hindu-Muslim divide was stoked by the colonial rulers in their own interest is of course true, but it is only a half truth. The advent of modernity and its expression in political institutions and procedures provide us the other half.

Colonial authority furnished an axis along which the two religious identities struggled with modern institutions, such as the census, courts, schools and the elections for representation at various levels (Cohn, 1987). Religious identity provided an available resource that the elites, both colonial and local, could use to negotiate the emerging structure of economic and political opportunities. They used religious identity, wound up as it was in history, legend and myth, to mobilize popular support in order to strengthen their clout in engaging with British colonial power structure. With the passage of time, the engagement grew into full-scale politics (Nair, 2010). Contrary forces also emerged, challenging the use of religion as a political tool. However, religion did remain a crucial handle for the colonial government to deal with contending claims, creating copious opportunities for taking advantage of the religious divide.

Following partition, India and Pakistan became two separate national entities with their own states articulating their national spirits. Once the separation occurred, the two entities acquired great mutual reactivity (Kumar, 2007). Any observer who attempts to understand the negative energy that flows between the two entities is likely to assume that their internal worlds are entirely different. The self-identities the two nations publicly carry do indeed look different. India carries the self-identity of a secular nation-state where people of different religious faiths live with constitutionally endowed equal rights. Pakistan, on the other hand, carries the self-identity of a state based on Islam with the intent of practising Islamic values in all domains of life, including politics and civil administration. These two distinct official self-identities interact on the global or public stage as fixed role-players or actors in a symbolic play. The plot in which the two nations serve as characters in the play is historical, drawing its causality from the pre-partition past and moving towards a known, logically coherent future. We can call it a story of two nationalisms, exuding incompatibility in an extended competition for claim to moral superiority.

Claim to moral higher ground is the heart of the message conveyed to the young in the two countries. Both the Indian and the Pakistani narratives of the history of the freedom movement attempt to convince the young that as modern nation-states, they have a principled reason to be different in an incompatible way. This objective of the narratives is grounded in the need to explain why Partition occurred, both as an event by itself and as the defining moment of freedom from colonial rule. If the two narratives offered instances of similarity between the two nations, how would Partition find a sufficient justification? This structural imperative compels them to be as divergent as possible. Since the two nations have a shared past, the historians who prepare textbooks must construct the past differently, placing all major events in a light capable of rendering it different from how it might look to the other nation.

Divergence is also attained with the help of characterization, especially that of heroes or great leaders. Their portrayal as influential, larger-than-life personalities enables the two narratives to acquire sumptuous emotional effect (Kumar, 2001). Children—the intended readers—are expected to identify with them so as to develop faith in the causes that drove them as heroes. In the case of India, the hero is Mahatma Gandhi, and in the case of Pakistan, the hero is Jinnah. Their personalities emerge from the texts like giant-size cutouts, personifying the nations they represent and symbolically gave birth to. The contrast between their personalities and life-styles serves as a sign pointing to the contrast that the two nations are supposed to signify between the ideologies on which they are based. The exercise gets completed by mutual vilification, that of Gandhi in the Pakistani narrative, and of Jinnah in the Indian narrative.

The two narratives embody the nation-building project which has elements of jubilation and pride as well as grief and tragedy in each case. The element of pride and celebration in India's case comes from winning against colonial masters and their designs; in Pakistan's case, both pride and joy are associated with birth despite the desperate attempts made to prevent its birth as a nation. The tragedy, in the case of India, is Partition; in Pakistan's case, Partition represents birth; the tragedy is that Partition did not do territorial justice.

These contrasting constructions necessarily assume that the two nation-states are not just based on different principles; their internal worlds, comprising demographic and cultural realities, also differ. We can now turn towards examining this assumption. The Indian narrative, which is not necessarily reflected in all State-level textbooks (Kumar, 2017), is designed to represent a nation where the religious life of the population is subservient to their civic life. Secularism as a principle of statecraft is rather different from secularism as a symbolic statement of nationhood. In the context of statecraft, it provides India a useful means whereby the state can perform its various functions in a demographically and culturally diverse social environment. However, as a symbolic representation of nationhood, secularism has remained an inadequate idiom in as much as its validity as a descriptor comes from its denial of the importance and role of religion in shaping everyday life. This is one reason why the term 'secularism' as state

ideology has remained subject to interpretation (Kesavan, 2001) and has allowed revivalist politics to mobilize support. The instrumentality of 'secularism' as a linguistic tool to distinguish India from Pakistan has proved weak, and with the passage of time, it has been showing signs of failure with increasing frequency.

On India's treatment of secularism as a representation of its nationhood, one can ask: 'Does India have a choice?' In other words, India can hardly be expected to drop the idiom of secularism and thereby accept the colonial assumption that Partition was based on religious lines and its purpose was to separate a Muslim Pakistan from a Hindu India. There were indeed serious problems with this colonial discourse, and its truth value remains very poor. Be that as it may, India's narrative of its own history does not need to deny Hindu religiosity.

The term 'popular Hinduism' is often used to distinguish ritual and myth from abstract or spiritual Hinduism. This distinction is yet another example of the discomfort inherent in the ideological usage of secularism. Secular voices hesitate to accept religiosity as a major aspect of common life, and this hesitation enables the consolidation of revivalist politics which focuses on profiling Hindu-ness.

The crisis that Pakistan has faced is not altogether different. Its adoption of Islam as a nationalist creed has meant the denial of the diverse forms that popular Islam has taken in its population. Once Islam was declared as a marker of the newly formed nation's single, state-authenticised identity, the considerable diversity of practices and beliefs, myth and ritual that characterizes popular Islam in Pakistan, had to be ignored or suppressed in the official narrative fed to the young in schools.

These developments also led to mutual stereotyping. In Pakistan's official narrative – and the discourse upholding it, India's claim to being a secular country is labeled as humbug. For Pakistan, India is simply Hindu and Hinduism is a fixed set of practices and beliefs, one being the belief that Islam poses an evil threat to Hinduism. This belief justifies fear and the projection of common hatred in India towards Muslims and Pakistan. As stereotypes do not allow room for nuances or any kind of differentiation, the Pakistani stereotype of India allows no scope for the thought that Indians may hold diverse views and perceptions.

On the Indian side, the stereotype of Pakistan is that of a country signifying monolithic Islam which allows recognition of no other religion as worthy of faith, certainly not Hinduism. The idea that all Muslims are one and so are Pakistanis, that they are united in their belief that Pakistan need not exist as an independent country, is central to this stereotype. Here too, hatred is a core emotion, to be kept alive as a guide for cautionary, suspicious behaviour towards a geographically unavoidable neighbour. The stereotypes that the two nations maintain serve as frames drawing strength from chosen episodes of history going as far back as required. In India's

case, the image of Muslims as invaders and marauders is available in medieval past. To Pakistan, the imaginary of the wily Hindu is available in the freedom struggle, particularly in the resistance shown to the idea of Partition which was necessary for the birth of Pakistan.

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Section III: The Process of ‘Othering’

The Indo-Pak case illustrates the role education can play in maintaining collective consciousness stuck in a nationalistic groove. Our study of this case also indicates how intricate and layered the relations of hostility between two nation-states may be. How far this particular case permits us to generalize about the role education plays in maintenance of hostility may be debatable. But it does show the importance of history in education and the challenges that culture and other sources of socialization present to the learning of history during childhood. Cases like the Israel-Palestine relationship may require analysis of a similar nature wherein we examine the knowledge of history imparted at school in the context of the wider ethos. Teaching of history at school mostly avoids addressing the learning that has already occurred at home. Curriculum designers rarely acknowledge that the learning involved in children’s socialization serves as a backdrop for further learning at school. The latter does not specifically address the behaviours, attitudes and values imbibed from the family and community. Stereotyping on the basis of religion is a common aspect of this learning.

Research on religious socialization, though limited, throws light on the role played by the family and community and on the resources they use to induct the young from early childhood onwards into a collective, religious self-identity (Sinha, 1981). How deeply are stereotypes of an ‘othered’ religious community lodged in the minds of the young was brought out by Kakar (1998) in his study of Hindu-Muslim relations in Hyderabad. A similar conclusion came from the study carried out by Gupta (2005). She found that pre-school children living in a mixed locality of Delhi had internalized strong negative images and impressions of the religious community they considered different from their own. We can expect that the manner in which

information about religion—one's own and that of the 'other'—is imparted or made available to the young differs across communities. Studies of this kind indicate how early in childhood is religious selfhood formed, along with the 'otherness' it thrives on. In each case, the 'other' must carry disagreeable qualities that the 'self' is protected from. Suspicion, fear and hatred shape the perception of the 'other'. Learning to avoid proximity to the physical presence of the 'other' and his or her places of worship is a part of the process of growing up Muslim or Hindu (Razzack, 1995). This kind of learning can be described as a tacit inheritance. Inherited ignorance of the other's religion sharpens the tendency to nurture mutual stereotypes.

At school, the effects of early socialization seldom get acknowledged and therefore get no real chance to be challenged through engagement. Neither the curriculum, nor the classroom ethos permits such engagement. Creating capacity for such an engagement is simply not part of teacher training. When history begins as a subject at age 11, it usually adds further strength to an existing construction of the collective 'self' and the collective 'other'. These constructions are full of emotional value which is invested in them by adults in the family. Their role can be seen as that of passing on an inherited form of knowledge. We may be tempted to label this knowledge as myth or a story. We are right to deny it the status of history, but we must remember that the essential character of all these genres is narrative. It creates the frame for future learning of nationalist narratives of history at school. If we use the two modes of thought, proposed by Bruner (1997), to decide where history belongs, our choice will have to be the mode defined by literary narration rather than the other which is defined as logico-mathematical or scientific thought.

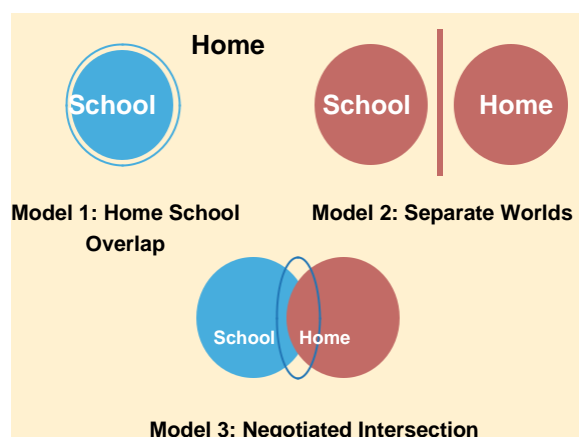
If history at school is to contribute to scientific reasoning, the least it will have to do is to acknowledge the perceptual history children carry from home, then engage with it with logical rigour, to prove why it is not a reliable guide for understanding the past. Pedagogic engagement of this kind will have the potential to break stereotypes of the collective 'self' and the collective 'other' which nurture cultural antagonisms and provide handy material for ideological mobilisation for political purposes.

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Three Models

The past constitutes the most challenging domain of knowledge from the point of view of developing a peace perspective. The role of education at school is critical in this respect. More specifically, the role comprises a choice between two alternatives with reference to the socialization of the young at home. Education at school can either supplement the socialization that has occurred at home or, alternatively, the school can differ from home and socialize the child into a new orientation towards the past. To analyse home-school relations, in the context of education for peace, let me refer to a typology I have presented in Kumar (2007). It offers three models as shown in Figure 1. Model 1 covers educational systems where home and school overlap, implying a marked continuity between socialization at home and formal learning at the school. Model 2 presents the opposite cases where home and school are detached and indifferent to each other. Model #3 offers the possibility of interaction and negotiation between the two.

Figure 1: Three Models of Home-School Relationship



Source: Kumar (2007; p. 199)

These models help us to capture the complex relationship between schooling and learning through socialization at home in India and Pakistan. Both countries inherit colonial policies in education which enable schooling to stay aloof from home culture (Kumar, 2014). Since independence, the two countries have pursued divergent paths in the matter of religious instruction at school. It is an essential part of the daily school routine in Pakistan whereas in India it is prohibited, except in minority schools (UNESCO MGIEP, 2017). Thus, educational policy in Pakistan adheres to Model 1 while in India it adheres to Model 2. The pursuit of Islamization in Pakistani policy over the recent decades has further sharpened the use of school education for promoting nationalistic perspective based on religion and the distinction with regard to India on the basis of religious difference.

In India, the policy scenario presents a more complex and somewhat volatile picture. Curricular reforms undertaken on the basis of the National Curriculum Framework (NCF)–2005 (NCERT 2006) point towards an attempt to apply Model 3. Under this model, the school tries to

engage with the child's life at home. This goal is reflected in the NCERT (National Council of Educational Research and Training) textbooks based on NCF. Schools administered under the norms of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) are obliged to use NCERT textbooks. These schools constitute less than 10 per cent of the total number of secondary schools in the country. Other schools follow State-level syllabus and textbooks. In many States, the recent years have witnessed the rise of religious nationalism as a political ideology. It has made an impact on textbooks and the school ethos in several States. The attempt made in NCF–2005 to promote a secular perspective and peaceoriented values has not proved easy to pursue in the States. This attempt followed a two-pronged approach: one, to redesign syllabi and textbooks so as to provide room for critical reflection on culture and history; and two, to prioritize peace values such as tolerance, non-violence, and conflict resolution through negotiation. Although no major review has taken place with regard to the implementation of NCF, its general impact on India's vast and complex system is undeniable. How far it will be sustained remains to be seen.

Citizen and the Nation

History is not the only subject nurturing collective antagonisms during childhood. Its role is supplemented by early introduction of political boundaries and civic responsibilities. The school curriculum is mostly out of step with children's cognitive development in geography and civics. Well before children can grasp the mathematical and geometrical concepts involved in the preparation of maps, they are exposed to maps showing the territorial boundaries of the nation. Identification with the territorial nation proceeds parallel to the teaching in yet another area of knowledge out of step with children's intellectual development. This is knowledge about the state and the functions of the government.

In many countries, this latter knowledge articulately demands loyalty to the nation-state and willingness to sacrifice one's life as a test of this loyalty. This aspect of the civics curriculum has gone through radical changes in India under recent curricular reforms through which civics has been renamed as 'Social and Political Life'. This new subject attempts to use children's own curiosity about how the social world is formed and how some of the older social divisions get challenged by humanistic assertions of a political nature (Gupta, 2015).

Though this new construction of knowledge has not spread to all regions of India, it is a marked departure from older teaching of civics which continues to dominate the social studies curriculum in Pakistan. Indeed, social studies there is subsumed under the subject called 'Pakistan Studies' which is directly aimed at cultivating unflinching commitment to a militaristic, masculine state (Saigol, 2015). Nationalism and children's education are firmly welded together in all parts of the world. The use of school education for propaganda has a long history of its own, and the history demonstrates a strong affinity with the rise of identity-driven political ideologies. These ideologies have found fertile ground in the current political and

economic climate prevailing in many countries in different parts of the world (Economist, 2017). In Asia, a recent study of curriculum policies of 22 countries found the promotion of national identity as the most frequently mentioned aim of education (UNESCO MGIEP, 2017).

Regimentation

When the promotion of a strong nationalistic feeling is actively defined as the aim of education from the earliest stage, it exacerbates the phenomenon of regimentation in schools. Regimentation has been closely associated with mass education in every region of the world. Many regard it as an essential aspect of education, and go to the extent of accepting it as a process that creates the enabling conditions for teaching. Indeed, this view is so common and popular that a plea for making education more child-centric and less regimenting is dismissed as being unrealistic and therefore pointless. Old concepts of learning demanded the child's undirected energy to be brought under control, and the harshest means for achieving this goal were considered legitimate. The teacher's right to inflict corporal punishment of any kind was an important aspect of his authority. School and classroom rituals of various kinds were used to create a culture of compliance. These have become part and parcel of school routines to such an extent that they are often treated as signifiers of quality and rigour. Terms like 'good discipline' are used to appreciate the efficacy of a school in subduing any expression of individuality by children, except through officially approved channels.

The term 'discipline' is often used to refer to a certain kind of moral education. In his attempt to analyse ideas about discipline and moral education, Clark (1998) found that traditional ideas are incoherent and unworkable, yet they remain dominant. Enforcement of school uniform, hairstyle and shoes, slogan shouting and militaristic drills and marching are common features of what is considered a well-functioning school. Together, they enable school authorities to construct a concrete, visual evidence of efficiency and order. They serve as elements of a habitus that acquires self-perpetuating or autonomous power over children. Its symbolic power has been recognized as a form of violence by researchers in different educational systems, following Bourdieu's theorization of habitus (Bourdieu, 1991). In a study of school culture, Yadav (2014) identified several aspects of regimentation in the daily ritual of morning assembly. Collective slogan shouting, marching to martial tunes, collective listening to the principal's messages were among the routines included in the morning assembly. It enabled schools to achieve an ethos where children's individual personalities could submerge into an orchestrated whole. The use of school uniform to merge individual identities is common across many countries. Horvat and Antonio (1999) have examined how these means of control affect the lives of Afro-American girls.

Evaluation is yet another aspect of schooling that has provided a fertile site for regimentation to deepen and grow. Classroom tests and annual examinations are an integral part of contemporary school culture. They are used not merely to motivate children to work hard, but

also to promote competition among them. This latter aspect has gained prominence partly because it resonates the wider ethos of marketcentred policies in every sphere of life. Attempts to encourage child-centred methods of teaching have failed to soften the hold of exams on teachers, parents and children. Opposition to progressive curricular reforms is articulated by referring to the utility of tests and exams for instilling fear of losing out and encouraging discipline. The emotional value invested in exam success finds strong consensus between teachers and parents. Starting at the earliest stage of schooling, the regime of tests and exam reinforces the terror that schools cultivate. Recent upsurge of ‘outcome-driven’ policies have reinforced testing and exam routines in schools. In the Right to Education (RTE) passed by the Indian parliament in 2009, the practice of annual exams that divide children into ‘pass’ and ‘fail’ categories was replaced by a Continuous and Comprehensive Evaluation (CCE) process. This shift has been under assault and the demand for reverting to the old exam system has been getting louder.

Learning at school is permeated by a continuously reinforced fear, of consequences of diverse kinds, including that of failing in an exam. In an essay on her own encounter with primary schooling, Kadyan (2008) describes the general regime of fear that a small child’s mind internalizes. She says:

“Many parts of my school I had heard of but never seen and I am sure that there must have been others which I had not even heard of. How could I risk my life simply to know the school building fully, when every time one tried, one faced the highest probability of meeting a heartless devil of keeping children inside their allotted cells? The only thing that belonged to me was my seat. I hated all the occasions that required me to move from it. Who knows when someone might snatch that seat away from me, accusing me of being a bad learner?”

Kadyan’s autobiographical narrative brings out the impact that the school ethos makes on a child’s mind, by alienating and exercising total physical control. Numbing of children’s intellect is achieved by schools at an early stage, not necessarily deliberately or as a project although that too may be the case under certain circumstances. A great deal of regimentation of the body is built into the school’s daily routine. It covers things like walking, standing and sitting, but more significantly it covers how they will talk, respond to a question asked, or raise a question or point if such a behaviour is permitted at all. Even as this discussion echoes Foucault’s architecture of terror, it must be supplemented by a reference to the pedagogic routines that occupy children’s time with inconsequential, repetitive exercise of power. These have been described by La Dousa (2015) in his ethnographic study of the languages of schooling in Varanasi. Some of the routines he describes are part of a ‘time pass’ strategy which conditions learners into accepting the school as a space where endurance of triviality and meaninglessness is the key to survival and progress.

* Terms like ‘good discipline’ are used to appreciate the efficacy of a school in subduing any expression of individuality by children, except through officially approved channels

* Numbing process may include a political function, that of maintaining inherited structures of social and economic dominance by pervasive marginalization of the poor.

The Counter-Argument

A great deal of critical commentary made during the 1960s and the 1970s in the US, UK and some other countries brought to light the depth to which school-induced numbing of children’s intellectual capacities can go. Holt’s (1964) *How Children Fail* is a classic of that period. Other works, such as Kozol’s (1968) *Death at an Early Age* remind us that the numbing process may include a political function, that of maintaining inherited structures of social and economic dominance by pervasive marginalization of the poor. Regimentation as a tool of subduing children’s intellectual agency figures well before the 1960s as a subject of philosophical interest. The plea for ‘child-centred’ methods has a political edge in the progressive writers, pedagogues and thinkers of the inter-war years. Among them, Maria Montessori, Bertrand Russell and Sri Aurobindo wrote eloquently about the role that collective controlling of the minds of the young plays in school in making them vulnerable as adults to political propaganda, especially that of state-managed nationalistic propaganda. They cautioned against the collective ego represented by the state as it tends to suppress the creative energies available for shaping the future. Rabindranath Tagore too criticized political nationalism as it discourages humanistic values and ideals. His short story, ‘The Parrot’, captures the tragedy whereby the natural instincts and capacities of the child are shown in contest with brute power of the state, and the child loses. Recent additions to this lineage of thinkers are Krishnamurti, Paulo Freire and Ivan Illich. They were iconoclastic and positive about the possibility of radical restructuring of public learning. Their critique of prevailing education was harsh, and it reminds us that educational reform cannot occur in isolation from change in other institutions of society, including the state.

In our attempt to look for philosophical guidance to develop both a critique of education and a means to reform it, we can find in Gandhi’s experiments in politics and education a creative answer. His life as a pacifist political thinker and his legacy of non-violent struggle against oppressive imperial rule make him a major figure in the history of ideas (Parel, 2016). Throughout his life he remained eager to seek an educational means for breaking the cycle of economic oppression and violence. His proposal for the use of traditional crafts as means to reconstruct education is often seen in purely economic terms, i.e. as a route to changing attitudes to manual work and cultivating self-reliance. This conventional reading of Gandhi’s *nai talim* (new education) has been critiqued in two recent investigations (Srinivasan, 2017; Gaur, 2016). These scholars have made independent attempts to reconstruct Gandhi’s epistemology from the

wider corpus of his ideas and engagements. For Srinivasan, Gandhi's view of knowledge should be defined in the context of a theory of ethical learning which responds to the problems of human social existence in the widest possible sense. Gaur locates the centre of his pedagogic plan in the concept of Swaraj or self-rule wherein he offers a means to define human freedom. Gaur has used the concept of Swaraj to study Anand Niketan, a school started by Gandhi which has recently been revived. It serves children from villages located in the vicinity of Gandhi's ashram at Sevagram. Children's life and activities, especially those related to environment education and craft work, offer considerable evidence to say that Gandhi's pedagogic theory encourages self-driven learning.

Similar evidence and direction can be found in the work of Devi Prasad, an art teacher, artist and a world-renowned pacifist. His experience of teaching art to children at schools started by Tagore and Gandhi enabled him to formulate a full-fledged argument explaining the nature and logic of aesthetic discipline (Prasad, 1998). It recognizes freedom as the aim of art work in childhood. Prasad's analytical account of his experience as a teacher establishes how the pursuit of freedom enables children to develop self-awareness, balance, proportion and symmetry, and predisposes them towards peace. Gandhi's political thought also offers us a wider vision for reorganizing school subjects such as history and civics. The contribution they make, in their present form, to reinforcing nationalist antagonisms, needs to be critiqued from Gandhi's perspective on modern civilization and its propensity to encourage fear and aggression.

* Children's life and activities, especially those related to environment education and craft work, offer considerable evidence to say that Gandhi's pedagogic theory encourages self-driven learning.

Section IV: Contemporary Landscape

The lineage of child-centred ideas and practices in education discussed above provides us the elements of peace education. These are: recognition of the child's agency and teacher's role in encouraging children to reflect on their own experience. If we use these basic principles to examine prevailing trends, we find that practices challenged earlier and replaced by child-centred approaches are witnessing resurgence. The force of this trend is strong and pervasive enough to put any criticism of regimentation on the defensive, lest it be charged of sheer romanticism.

Advances in technology of communication have served to strengthen instrumentalist ideas in education, both at the level of policy-making and the everyday world of school teaching. The 'new technological environment' described by Elkind (2003) places the child at a receiving end, exposed to forces that parents and teachers cannot fully grasp or deal with. Neo-behaviourist advocacy of scripted curriculum and pedagogy has diminished teacher's autonomy. These developments are being led by managerial experts who regard education yet another area where

they can bring efficiency. Their intervention has resulted in further erosion of the democratic space available for shaping education as a social institution. The emerging pedagogic landscape is dominated by the use of testing as a means to enhance competitiveness and accountability.

Policy packages echoing the human capital theory justify mechanistic models of learning and teaching. In this scenario, peace education figures as an instrument to be used for tangible purposes. One is to limit the concept of peace itself to a set of behaviours capable of being manipulated and measured. To complete this picture, we must turn towards the economic policy scenario in which recent shifts in education are situated. The term 'neo-liberal' is often used to describe these policies, conveying the tilt towards privatization in all spheres of social policy, including education. A great deal of scholarship exists on the impact of neoliberalism on state spending. Research shows radical increase in expenditure world-wide on armaments, indicting a link between neoliberalism and militarism (Cypher, 2007). This economic trend suggests why nationalism as an ideology is witnessing a revival. After a brief spell of popularity, the discourse of globalization is already in recession. National interests are serving as the axis of political mobilization for conservative leadership.

In India, nationalism defined on religio-cultural lines has come into dominance, marginalizing older claims to a secular national identity. Erosion of secularism and the propagation of religious separatism through public media and education occupation have made several regions of northern India look similar to Pakistan where religion has been the official marker of national identity. In Rajasthan, school textbooks produced by the State government have been revised with a view to promoting among children a politically constructed regional identity based on distortion of medieval struggles. The new history attempts to use religious identities of medieval warriors to justify a majoritarian national identity for contemporary India. This is not an isolated example of provincial curriculum and textbooks being used for promoting sectarian politics. The gap in Indian curricular planning at federal and provincial levels has been quite pronounced, both in terms of quality and aims. When we consider that provincial textbooks are used in schools serving economically weaker sections of society, we realize how socio-economic inequality adds to the complexity of curricular reform.

Conclusion

Let us conclude by placing the India-Pakistan example discussed earlier in this paper in the context of current economic policy scenario. The role education plays in maintaining longterm hostility is unlikely to change without radical reformulation of the aims of education and changes in its content and methods. For such a change to occur, peace education offers a means to question prevailing policies and preferences. It also provides a site for critiquing education itself. Before education can be used to promote peace, its own humanistic potential will have to be rescued. Peace education can be viewed as a site of resistance to the all-round

attempt currently underway to push education into becoming a means of total regimentation. In order to make peace education a resistant force, its key elements need to be articulate. One is to restore personal meaning in learning; two, centrality of critical enquiry in any process of institutionalized education; three, importance of justice for making peace sustainable.

These core elements and the interplay among them can be used to seek a direction for reform in education. A major sign of crisis in education is its inability to impart meaning to the experience of attending school or college. As a social institution managed by the state, the school has now become a universally enforced experience of childhood. Though its lure and the legitimacy of schooling have grown enormously, the school's ability to educate has diminished along with its autonomous status and ability to uphold the values constitutive of education as a concept (Miri, 2014). Historical changes in the economic and political demands on education have affected its capacity to serve the young in their search for meaning through the exercise of curiosity and enquiry. Affirmation of faith in the potential of education to impart the means to make sense of the world is necessary as a first step towards reforming schools. The idea of global citizenship education can provide some valuable energy and direction in this regard, provided that this idea does not become a matter of advocacy for mechanically made insertions in the curriculum. Education imbued by critical enquiry implies learning to situate oneself where we are in history, in order to understand how we got 'here', and thereby to act upon the problems facing us today.

In the study of a conflict, critical enquiry helps us to acknowledge and thereby release the emotive energies buried below the surface behaviour. When the past buried in a conflict is excavated through enquiry, it allows us to assess the kind and scale of justice required to achieve peace by addressing a conflict. This is crucial for the future to be qualitatively different from the past and present. Education will acquire a transformative role when learners gain from it an experience of enquiry into the sedimented past. They will develop, what Yash Pal (2006) called 'a taste of understanding'. It will make 'the present of our children wholesome, creative and enjoyable'.

Defined in this manner, reform in education to make it child-centred necessarily means loosening its power of regimentation. As discussed in this paper, this power has multiple sources and it resides in the everyday culture of schooling. But apart from the regimentation embedded in the schooling process itself, a matching imperative comes from the state which imposes on the school the duty to propagate nationalist ideals and imagination. Thus, the school becomes an instrument in the hands of the state to consolidate the civic loyalty of the younger generation in its formative years. This process pushes the school to sacrifice humanistic ideals of education and commit itself to nurturing the committed citizen. The apprehension that the state will use education to prioritize citizens' loyalty over their humanity was recognized by Rousseau (Soetard, 1994). His query, whether we can nurture the citizen without injuring the human, has

acquired poignant relevance in our times. In numerous cases of hostility between nation-states, education nourishes the historically inherited consciousness of hostility more explicitly than it creates the capacity to reconcile with the past (Frieberg and Chung, 2017; Kumar, 2003). The recovery of humanist ideals and values through education is possible through reconstruction of education itself, aimed at bridging the gap between the concept and the system of education.

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* It was published earlier.