
Conflict Transformation & Peacebuilding

The term conflict transformation is a highly sought-after concept in peace and conflict studies. This approach was first discussed by John Paul Lederach. He addressed conflict at different stages starting from the indirect to direct conflict and its resolution. Dr. Murphy highlighted that Conflict transformation is different conflict resolution. Transformation addresses pertinent issues like structural violence, role of an individual in reducing the intensity of the conflict, nature of the conflict, etc. Listening is one of the key skills required for dealing with conflict as we get to understand other's perspectives on several issues. The key question involved here is how we end destructive things and work on building something desired. The focus of conflict transformation is on the relationship rather than just content. Conflict Transformation is a broader approach encompassing a thorough analysis of the underlying factors that led to the conflict not just focusing on the reducing the numbers of conflicts. (Lederach, 2003)

Following methods may be adopted to establish and maintain peace worldwide:

Peace Circle

The Peace Circle is primarily a conversation happening in an enclosed safe space to discuss and resolve negative and difficult issues happening around us. It works on principle of mutual respect and understanding for each other. It involves interacting with other participants in different rounds of the peace circles. It works on strengthening our ability to listen and share thoughts with others in a confident manner. It creates an atmosphere of trust and built a bond amongst the participants. In a Peace Circle all participants are seated in a circle. It calls for resolving family issues as in such a set up accountability is more important than punishment. The practice of Peace Circle assumes that everyone involved in the dialogue has an equal worth and have dignity for each other. This set up gives an equal opportunity to the members to voice their opinions and share different things in the circle.

Dialogue

Dialogues plays a significant role in conflicts. It is a process where all the participants involved in a meaningful conversation on a particular issue. . It provides a platform to the participants to work on their differences in a peaceful and secured environment. It reduces misunderstandings, encourage open and trustful deliberations, makes way for a better understanding between individuals, groups. It has proved to be an effective method to transform conflicts worldwide. It is evident that because of the willingness of the state machinery, international bodies and others to have a peaceful dialogues have led to the decrease of violent conflicts. It has proved to be beneficial in transforming societies, combating

different forms conflicts- military to individual, human right violations, environmental concerns like health and sanitation, education, gender issues, employment, etc. (Michael, 2021)

Peace Education

Peace education has become an important way to work towards a peaceful world. It transforms our conflicts into learning opportunities. There is strong requirement of the introducing peace education in formal education in school and colleges. It is an important part of quality education. Peace education would definitely promote the skills, knowledge, values and behaviour required for bringing out positive change in the world by preventing violence and conflict in a peaceful manner. The Reconstructive Empowering approach of Peace Education highlights that it is a transformative process that helps in creating opportunities for continuous learning. It acknowledges humans as good communicators, wherein participants express their views explicitly along with respecting others' views. Furthermore, this approach excludes violence in different forms- direct or indirect.

However, Peace education alone can't bring about changes in the world necessary for peace. It creates awareness of different political and social responsibility and encourage people to construct their own learning. It makes people work on resolving their problems and achieving better living conditions for themselves and others as well. (Cabezudo & Haavelsrud, 2013)

Nonviolent Communication

There is a lack of courses, resources on non-violence and peacebuilding in media studies. There is a need to come up with more programs to educate and engage media students on proper usage of media regarding conflict transformation and peace building. It is the need of the hour to resort from violent and destructive ways of handling conflicts to ponder over creative, non- violent and constructive methods to deal with conflict for bringing about positive changes in the society. Therefore, it is significant to practice Nonviolent Communication in contemporary's world. Conflict Transformation and Peacebuilding Studies being an interdisciplinary subject have the potential to create an important context in the media industry. Media can act as a catalyst in the conflict transformation process. As the information is considered as power, it can have a great impact on public discourse. Therefore, there is a dire need to incorporate Nonviolent Communication in Communication and Media Studies. It must be included as a separate discipline within Communication and Media Studies. To further the interest and understanding of peaceful communication, transformative non-violent conflict resolution and growth of cooperative peaceful cultures in the world different programs,

courses, webinars, lecture series in different universities/ institutions must be organised frequently.(Kundu, 2020)

Peace Ecology

It is an emerging paradigm that related peace and non-violence with theories of ecology and philosophies of environment. It is a new field of study and activist genre, though it is practiced in many indigenous communities. Individuals, communities and different nations have started applying the principles of ecology for easing conflicts and extenuating peace. Human goals related to peace, non-violence, social justice, betterment of environment, human rights, nature are considered an important aspect of peace ecology. It is inspired by practices such as Ahimsa, Taoist and is eco-centric or bio-centric. It focuses on preservation and interaction of people with nature as peace and tries to maintain peace as an ecological asset. It can't be considered as a uniform or homogeneous field. (Gomes)

Peace Psychology

Peace Psychology has emerged as a powerful approach to combat conflict and promote peace and justice and human well-being in the world. It focusses on comprehending, preventing and suggesting ways to end both organised and structural violence all over the world. During the Cold war many psychologists from different disciplines suggested that conflicts can be resolved through peaceful dialogues and conversations rather than indulging in any forms of violence. It categorises violence in two categories- Direct and Structural Violence. Direct violence harms and slaughter people and structural violence is widespread and affects people by killing people by depriving them of their basic needs. The concept of peace psychology has become global. It suggests that we must work towards “positive peace” by ending structural violence and promote social justice. (Arnett, 2008)

Empathy, Love, Compassion and Peace

Empathy plays a pivotal role in bringing about peace in the world as it acknowledges and understand other person's perspective and respond to that appropriately. It is an great resource for conflict transformation. Empathy doesn't only transforms conflicts but also has the power to avert conflicts. (Akel & Cohen, 2019)

The value of love must be well understood to live peacefully in this world. It includes wide forms of attitude, emotions, and actions. The social bonds shared by people, groups,

organisations, institutions, states, governments, countries, help contributing in peace building and reduces conflicts.

Compassion is an important aspect of building peace. It helps in problem solving as the participants share stories, their own observations and suggest ways to solve problems. This is important as it find solutions that works for everyone involved. Compassion approach shifts from an individual to collective effort, thereby increasing the chances of long- term success in peace building and conflict transformation. (Rothbart & Allen, 2019)

Peace Culture

Culture of peace is an integral part of combat conflicts. It is indeed an alternative to culture of war and violence. It highlights the importance of peace education, disarmament, sustainable socio-economic development, solidarity, democratic participation, mutual respect for human beings, gender equality, free flow of information, We must work towards world anthropology rather than global anthropologies as it is a broader concept which includes people in various places because of violent displacement and refugee communities also. It instils a sense of belongingness by working on common issues, activities and teaching aids. Furthermore, it promotes dialogue, coordination and cooperation. Anthropology plays an important role in conflict transformation and peace building. UNESCO's Culture of Peace Program has six major components to develop peace culture in the world. (Boulding, 2008)

Power is defined in terms of active nonviolence.

People are mobilized for a better understanding, tolerance and solidarity amongst each other

Culture of Peace is characterised by a democratic process, focussing on people participation.

There is a free flow of information.

Equal importance is given to both men & women.

Sustainable development of all holds significance.

Media and Peacebuilding

Information is considered to be powerful and its insight impact the discourse. Media can act as catalyst in peace building and conflict transformation Newspaper, Television, Radio, Digital platforms, Cinema, can help in peace building, conflict management and its prevention. In case of conflict, media attracts worldwide attention towards that issue or event. It can defuse tensions and acts as a watchdog by keeping an eye on the government, opposition and society.

It is the responsibility of the media to disseminate credible information to the masses, which can help in managing conflicts and promoting democratic principles. The concept of Peace Journalism goes into the causes of the conflict and tries to humanise the victims of the conflict. However, the power of media is limited, as they cannot eradicate armed conflicts completely. Mass media must indulge into ethical and responsible reporting of conflicts to peace and safety in the world.

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