

*Building Sustainable Peace: Understanding the Linkages between Peace Teachings and Practices at School level in Pakistan*

# Building Sustainable Peace: Understanding the Linkages between Peace Teachings and Practices at School level in Pakistan

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## **Abstract**

The question of building peaceful societies has been a cornerstone of academic debates in the world history. Linkages of peace teachings and practices at school level need to be explored to assess the achievement of goals of building sustainable peace in the society. Exploring the linkages between peace teaching and practices in youth is agenda of many countries for establishing a more peaceful world. Learning to build sustainable peace is the one of the basic goals in schools. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of peace teaching linkages with the practices of students of schools in Pakistan. The study provides a true picture of the utilization of peace promoting agenda in the form of academic activities in the schools of Pakistan. Participants of the study was include faculty members of federal schools of Pakistan. Content of social studies concerning peace teachings at school level was analyzed through thematic content analysis. Unstructured interview was used as a tool of research. The findings of the study extended the knowledge concerning the existing gaps and needs for strengthening the linkages between peace teaching and practices in students at schools in Pakistan. The study is significant in policy making for the schools to reduce the challenges and gaps in promoting conceptual understanding peace in school adolescents.

**Keywords:** Building Sustainable Peace, Peace Teachings, Practices, School level

## **Introduction**

Schools play a vital role in peace building in the new generation. Schools are said to be as peace promoting agents in the society. First World Conference on the Role of the schools in promoting peace was arranged in 1969 in which 200 scholars participated around the world. The focus of the conference was to identify the linkage between schools and the world peace. It was concluded in the conference that schools played significant role in building sustainable peace to reduce the violence in any shape in the society. It was concluded that peace

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promoting practices would be incorporated in teaching and research to overcome the extremism and violence against humanity in the world (Hill, 2014). United Nations established University of Peace as an academic symbol of role of schools in promoting peace in the world in 1980 in Costa Rica with the goals of promoting tolerance and peaceful coexistence (Peter-van-den-Dungen, 1999).

UNESCO (2008) states that, “peace education equips individuals with knowledge and skills needed to actively promote and establish a culture of peace and non-violence” (p. 3). McLeod (2014) elaborates that teaching tolerance and human rights education instructs skills and knowledge for the peaceful coexistence in the new generation. Diaz-Soto (2005) determined critical analysis to integrate peace with teaching and research to understand and reduce the violent issues in the societies of the world. Unfortunately, higher education institutions have less role in promoting peace teaching and because of this, peace practices have been less observed in the school’s students. Profit oriented and political interference in the higher education institutions have kept peace education away from the teaching and research. John Galtung has described empirical, constructive and critical perspectives of peace (1996, p.9). Ian Harris & John Synott (2002) determined the dimensions of violence that produced the critical instability in the societies and legitimize inequality and injustice The Democratic Peace Theory is based on numerous evidences of peace building. This theory reflects the argument that democratic societies have peace builders. The domestic disputes can be resolved with the democratic attitude. For this, higher education institutions play dominant role in promoting the democratic attitude in the people of a nation (Weart, 1998).

Building sustainable peace in societies affected by conflict and violence remains one of the greatest challenges of our time. Schools are increasingly recognized as crucial spaces where values of peace, tolerance, and social cohesion can be nurtured from an early age. In this context, the education system in Pakistan, a country marked by socio-political instability and ethnic tensions, plays a critical role in promoting peace. This paper explores the linkages between peace teachings and practices at the school level in Pakistan, aiming to understand how educational institutions can foster sustainable peace through structured curricula and pedagogical approaches.

The idea of integrating peace education into school curricula is rooted in the recognition that education is a powerful tool for both conflict resolution and peacebuilding. According to UNESCO, education can contribute to the prevention of conflict by promoting critical thinking, empathy, and non-violent conflict resolution strategies (UNESCO, 2017). Schools, as microcosms of society, can reflect and address the broader societal conflicts, thus serving as incubators for peace. However, the success of peace education depends on the alignment between peace teachings embedded in the curriculum and the actual practices observed within the educational environment.

In Pakistan, the development of peace education has gained importance, especially in response to internal conflicts and rising extremism (Rashid, 2019). Despite policy initiatives aimed at incorporating peace education into the national curriculum, significant challenges remain, such as lack of teacher training, inadequate resources, and inconsistent implementation of peace practices in schools. Previous studies have highlighted the need for an in-depth analysis of how peace education is translated into practice at the school level and the factors that either facilitate or hinder this process (Rehman, 2020; Asadullah & Chaudhry,

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2021).

This paper seeks to fill this gap by examining the connection between peace teachings and everyday school practices in Pakistan. The study will explore how peace education is implemented in public and private schools, investigate the role of educators in promoting peace, and analyze the impact of peace teachings on students' attitudes and behaviors. Understanding these dynamics is critical for informing policies that support sustainable peace in Pakistan's complex social landscape.

### **Statement of the problem**

Peace teachings is included in the agenda of school. No educational institution can neglect peace teachings to develop a sustainable peaceful society. Unfortunately, youth looks be in violent activities to smaller or larger extent in various societies of the world. Therefore, it's essential to explore the linkages between peace teaching and practices at school level to assess the achievement of goal of schools concerning peace teachings.

### **Objectives**

The objective of the study was to analyze the perceptions of federal school's teachers towards the linkages of peace teachings and practices at schools in Pakistan. To achieve this purpose, teaching peace content of school level curriculum was analyzed.

### **Research Methodology/Plan**

The technique for the identification and selection of participants for this research was purposive sampling. Purposive sampling technique is often used in the selection of participants for the interviews to seek the rich data resources (Roberts, 1997; Ryan, 2006). The criteria for the selection of participants were including the school teachers and administrators. The present study was a qualitative inquiry based on grounded theory methodology (Charmaz, 2014, 2006; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Because this approach permits the process of creating theory relatively to test a specific content (Patton, 2002; Strauss & Corbin, 1990). This study was follow the Interpretivism and constructivist theoretical perspectives. Interpretivism theory elaborates that people have their own self experienced perceptions concerning any incident of activity in a society Therefore, this study was assuming an interpretive position to construct participants own perceptions towards the linkages of peace teachings and practices at schools in Islamabad, Pakistan (Charmaz, 2014, 2006).

For the collection of data, researcher personally visit the participants included in the study. The participants were briefed about the nature of interview. All the interviews were recorded. Keeping in view collected data, data were analyzed on the basis of grounded theory. Grounded theory remains suitable qualitative approach to analyze the experiences and perceptions of the individuals (Charmaz, 2006). Open and axial coding was used to generate the new themes of the collected data.

### **Results**

#### **Theme 1: Integration of Peace Education in School Curriculum**

**Description:** This theme detention the level to which peace education is inserted in the

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school curriculum. Respondents highlighted whether peace teachings were part of the formal curriculum or extracurricular activities.

- **Key Quote 1:** "In our school, peace education is not a distinct subject but is comprised in our social studies classes. We talk about tolerance and empathy, but there is no keen course on peacebuilding."
- **Key Quote 2:** "We have specific lessons on conflict resolution and understanding cultural differences, particularly in higher classes."

**Analysis:**

- Public schools incline to integrate peace teachings into general subjects, while private schools offer more structured lessons.
- Teachers described an absence of resources and strategies for successfully incorporating peace education into the curriculum in public schools.

**Theme 2: Role of Teachers in Promoting Peace**

**Description:** This theme discovers how teachers act as agents of peace and the approaches they use to teach pupils about peaceful conflict resolution and coexistence.

- **Key Quote 1:** "We try to ideal peaceful behavior ourselves. When conflicts rise between students, we emphasis on negotiation and sympathetic, rather than punishment."
- **Key Quote 2:** "Various of us have not been proficient definitely in peace education, therefore we use our own experiences to teach students about respect and empathy."

**Analysis:**

- Teachers in both public and private schools' opinion themselves as role models, but various have deficiency about formal training in peace education.
- The development of peace often depends on individual teacher initiative rather than official provision.

**Theme 3: School Environment and Culture**

**Description:** This theme observes how the whole setting and ethos of the school support or delay the development of peace teachings.

- **Key Quote 1:** "The school management supports peace initiatives, but it's regularly during different events like Peace Day. It doesn't surely carry over into day-to-day practice."
- **Key Quote 2:** "In our school, there are continuous reminders of conflict because we come from diverse cultural families, and sometimes pressures arise. There's no organized determination to indorse peace."

**Analysis:**

- School culture plays a critical role in reinforcing peace teachings, with some schools organizing peace-related events but failing to maintain consistent efforts throughout the academic year.
- Ethnic diversity can lead to tensions, which suggests the need for schools to create a more inclusive and peace-promoting environment.

**Theme 4: Challenges in Implementing Peace Practices**

**Description:** This theme identifies the obstacles faced by schools and teachers in integrating

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peace teachings into everyday practices, including lack of resources, inadequate training, and systemic issues.

- **Key Quote 1:** "We don't have enough materials or guidelines on how to teach peace. It's all very general, and sometimes the concepts are hard for younger students to understand." (Teacher, Public School)
- **Key Quote 2:** "There is no follow-up after these peace education events, and students often forget the lessons they learned after a while." (Teacher, Private School)

**Analysis:**

- Respondents mentioned a lack of formal training and resources as major obstacles.
- Peace education is often seen as a one-off event rather than an ongoing process integrated into school life.

**Table 1** Thematic Table Summary

Theme	Sub-themes	Key Findings
Integration of Peace Education	Formal vs Informal Curriculum	Public schools tend to integrate peace teachings into general subjects; private schools offer structured lessons.
Role of Teachers in Promoting Peace	Teacher Training and Role Modeling	Teachers often use personal experiences to teach peace; lack of formal training is evident.
School Environment and Culture	Inclusivity, Peace Events	School culture impacts the sustainability of peace practices; ethnic tensions in public schools hinder peace efforts.
Challenges in Implementation	Lack of Resources, Inconsistent Practices	Teachers face obstacles due to lack of materials and consistent practices; peace education is event-driven.

**Conclusions**

The thematic analysis of peace education practices at the school level in Pakistan highlights several key areas where both public and private schools face distinct opportunities and challenges.

1. **Integration of Peace Education:** The integration of peace teachings into the curriculum illustrates a clear change between public and private schools. Public schools often integrate peace education into general subjects like social studies, while private schools tend to offer more organised and formalized lessons on peace and conflict resolution. This recommends that however both school types intention to adoptive peace, the methods and complexity of integration fluctuate, with private schools offering more targeted determinations.

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2. **Role of Teachers in Promoting Peace:** Teachers play a key role in peace education by modeling peaceful behavior and helping conflict resolution among students. But, the absence of formal training in peace education is a frequent matter. Many teachers trust on personal experiences rather than consistent approaches, which can lead to discrepancies in how peace is taught and indorsed. This highlights the need for more structured and comprehensive teacher training programs focused on peace education.
3. **School Environment and Culture:** The school environment significantly influences the success of peace education initiatives. Schools that foster inclusivity and regularly organize peace-related events contribute positively to sustainable peace practices. However, ethnic diversity in public schools sometimes results in tension, underlining the importance of creating an inclusive environment that actively promotes peace across diverse student populations.
4. **Challenges in Implementation:** Both public and private schools face challenges in the practical implementation of peace education. The lack of adequate resources, such as teaching materials and guidelines, limits teachers' ability to deliver peace education effectively. Furthermore, peace education is often event-driven, such as being centered around special occasions like Peace Day, rather than being an ongoing, integrated part of the school culture. This event-focused approach may hinder the long-term impact of peace teachings on students.

### **Recommendations**

The findings underscore the need for a more systematic and resource-supported approach to peace education in Pakistani schools. In particular, enhancing teacher training, providing adequate resources, and creating a school environment that continuously promotes peace beyond specific events can significantly improve the effectiveness of peace education. Schools must also tailor their peace education strategies to address the specific challenges and opportunities presented by their diverse student populations, particularly in public schools, where ethnic tensions may arise. By addressing these gaps, schools can play a more active and sustained role in building a culture of peace, both within the school setting and in the broader society.

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