

Perceptions of Secondary School Teachers Regarding the Role of Education in Social Conflict Resolution

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Abstract

Social conflicts are the unavoidable and undeniable phenomena of human life. At the same time, resolution of these conflicts is also indispensable. Social conflicts resolution demands for untwisted analytical competency. Education is seen to be a cornerstone in the process of social conflicts resolution. The aim of the study was to evaluate the perceptions of secondary school teachers about the role of education regarding social conflict resolution. The objectives of the study were; to sensitize the teachers about the social conflicts and their resolution and to investigate the role of education in addressing the resolution of the social conflicts. All the male secondary school teachers of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa constituted the population of this study. A sample of 560 teachers was selected randomly. Data was collected from the teachers of eight districts out of the total 25 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa i.e. Peshawar, Nowshera, Mardan, Abbottabad, Swabi, Kohat, Swat, and Dera Ismail Khan. Data was collected through a self-developed questionnaire. The raw data was organized, tabulated, analyzed and interpreted by using chi square and percentage. It was found that education regarding social conflicts resolution did not exist formally in our education system and did not provide/inculcate practical skills for the social conflict resolution. Teachers were also not trained in social conflicts resolution skills. Our education department has neither arranged any type of workshops on the social conflicts resolution nor conducted any dialogue/discussion etc. among the students about the social conflicts resolution. Recommendations were made in the light of the findings.

Keywords: Social conflicts, conflict resolution, education

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Introduction

Conflict may be defined as a situation of falling-out, chaos and turmoil or antagonism or when two parties or individuals are engaged in some protracted fight, struggle or quarrel with each other. Dzurgbe (2006) is of the opinion that a social problem in which differences or disagreements exist between two or more than two individuals, family units, parties, communal groups, or regions is called a social conflict. Obegi & Nyamboga (2008) stated that social conflict is the condition where two or more than two people individually or collectively exhibit opposing behavior. He maintained that it is a struggle for drag and draw and compromising attitude besides being a tussle for maintaining a balance of power. Davies (2004) defines conflict as the incompatibility of interests or goals in real, noticeable and perceptibly apparent behavior. It cannot be believed that the strong desire of peace can be availed by both the conflicting groups at the same time or at once. This struggling situation is only the outcomes of the superior cultures, status quos and other production units. It is also an intermediate stage of struggle that expedites and causes more devastation.

A social conflict is a situation where two or more persons hanker after the aim or aspiration that they did not agree to share with each other. A conflict is not necessarily violent. Usually a conflict arises when some change occurs. Some wants the change, while others oppose it. A conflict has both negative and positive effects on the lives of human beings, depending upon how the conflict is dealt and managed. If it is not managed properly then it becomes terrible. If conflicts are tackled with composure and creatively, the result can be positive promoting good relationships, constructing unity and nourishing smooth interaction. It builds up organizations and institutions. It also promotes new beliefs, principles and rules (Phillips & Goldberg, 2011).

Types of Conflicts

Durojaye (2010), under the title of “Understanding Conflict and War” expresses that some of the conflicts we involve in our day to day activities are the following:

Intra-personal conflicts - Conflicts that occur within an individual/person are called intra-personal conflicts. Goal differences, interests, ethical questions and other such things cause such conflicts.

Inter-personal conflicts - Conflicts that occur over an issue or some concern among or between individuals are called inter-personal conflicts.

Intra-group conflicts - Intra-group conflicts occur between persons, members or factions belonging to the same group e.g. within a bigger group.

Inter-group conflicts - These types of conflicts arise between or among different groups of the society e.g. among different classes or families/castes etc.

National conflicts - In such types of conflicts, a whole nation is involved. These are the conflicts which arise within a nation, in which various groups of the same nation are involved. These may be about the resources, ideology etc. These conflicts could be in the shape of inter-ethnic, or a struggle for the resources or inter-religious and sectarian.

International conflicts - These are the conflicts which arise between or among different states/countries/nations because of many reasons. The sources of these conflicts could be ideology, territorial claims, and political antagonism etc. (Durojaye, 2010).

Conflict Resolution

According to Albert (2005) and Omoluabi (2001), resolving of conflicts is an intellectual process of tackling the conflicts. It needs meticulous examination to get insight about the conflict. It is a deductive process in which the opposing parties are brought to decisive stage through productive communication. Conflict resolution has got many aspects but in actuality, it refers to the specified field of endeavor of an individual, the conflict does not exist there where the individual is not aware of that. The hostilities and opposition may be the result of those negative decisions which are badly affected by the management activities, relationships between different individuals and relationships of an individual with the society. As a result of such negative decisions, disputes are fanned and the results are very unfruitful for different groups and individuals in the society. It arouses the feelings of hatred even at the higher level i.e. between the states.

Conflict resolution demands for untwisted analytical competency. The cruxes are brought into focus and a logical solution is tabled. The word conflict in this context unveils the state in which the opposing individuals struggle for the achievement of collective or solo desire, the core motive is the achievement of the desired interests, targets and values as per the subjective conceptions through negotiation (IPRA, 1994). Wallensteen (2002) stated that conflict resolution is to make efforts to remove the inappropriateness or solve the inaptness of the conflict. In this process, the opponent parties agree upon the existence of each other. A durable

solution to the problem is chalked out in an astounding manner. Conflict resolution is a difficult process as it involves clashes as well as recognition of interests. This conflict solution is based on mutual interests, needs and everlasting existence of the individual in the society. These conflicts can be removed and wiped out only with the help of the agreed upon and acceptable solution. Other steps can also be taken for the conflict resolution with the provision that the solution is based on mutual respect and acceptance (Miller, 2005).

Education and Conflict Resolution

According to Harris and Morrison (2003), it seems that since the last two decades, conflict resolution education has been getting impetus as an educational movement. Conflict resolution education is now a part of the curriculum of many educational institutions. It teaches and provides skills to the learners about how to handle conflicts constructively and productively.

Education is a powerful agent and brings positive changes in those societies which were once conflict stricken and mould the tendency of violence and aggressiveness into a conducive and congenial attitude which is later on displayed through the behavior of the individuals and groups. These polished tendencies of individuals and social groups directly or indirectly influence the political system, policy making, and legislation etc of the society. This further enhances and makes the financial condition better for both the individuals and groups. These molded and modified relations have a positive and everlasting effect on the individuals as well as on the groups in communities. These challenges and the trying situation can be dealt through confidence of the individuals living in their respective societies (UNCEF, 2011).

Education remains the most viable tool for the transformation of human behavior and the development of the society. It is also a vehicle for engineering the behaviors, attitudes and skills of the individuals towards empowering them to contribute positively not only for their personal growth but also for the development of the society. According to Coleman and Fisher-Yoshida (2004), the University of Columbia has a global centre which is meant for research and training in conflict resolution i.e. ICCCR. The programs of this university are brought into practice and function by the school level master trainers and make the concepts clear related to conflict resolution and conflict resolution is a part of the curricula. The teaching methods touch the area and aspect of cooperation, and contentions are resolved in a positive way through discussions. These trainers kill the notion of competition among the students and create a sense and environment of cooperation.

Objectives of the Study

1. To explore the awareness of the teachers about the social conflicts and conflict resolution
2. To investigate the role of education in addressing the social conflict resolution

Method and Procedure

Population

All the male teachers working at secondary and higher secondary level in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa constituted the population of the research study. There were total 1592 schools i.e. 241 higher secondary and 1351 secondary schools in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In these schools, there were total 23651 teachers in which 6182 were working at higher secondary level and 17469 at secondary level (EMIS, 2014).

Sample

A sample of 560 teachers was randomly selected from eight districts out of 25 districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa i.e. Abbottabad, Dera Ismail Khan, Kohat, Mardan, Nowshera, Peshawar, Swat and Swabi. For the proper representation from each district, 10 schools were selected randomly and from each school seven teachers who taught the secondary classes were chosen as respondents for the study.

Research Design and Instruments

The study was descriptive and quantitative in nature and a self-developed structured questionnaire was used as data collection instrument. The questionnaire was consisted of 16 items. It was a close-ended questionnaire and was prepared in consultation with the experts and subject specialists of the concerned field. It was a dichotomous and there were two options i.e. agreed and disagreed. The respondents had to tick one of the options.

Data Collection and Analysis

The data was collected through personal visits from the participants via a self-developed structured questionnaire. Then it was organized, tabulated and analyzed through percentage and chi square. A statement was supported, when the chi-square value was found greater than the table value of 3.841 at the 0.05 level of significance and was not supported when found lesser than the table value.

Formula for calculating chi-square

$$\chi^2 = \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

Where as

O = Observed Frequency in each category

E = Expected Frequency in the corresponding category

Df = Degree of freedom (N-1)

χ^2 = Chi-square

Analysis and Interpretation

Following are the analysis of the responses of the respondents.

Table 1

Education provides long term solutions and strategies for social conflict resolution.

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	488	72	560	1	309.02
Percentage	87.1 %	12.8 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 1 indicates that 87.1 % of the teachers agreed that education provides long term solutions and strategies for social conflict resolution while 12.8 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05, hence the statement was found significant and was accepted.

Table 2

Education improves analytical power of the individuals about the social conflicts.

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	527	33	560	1	435.77
Percentage	94.1 %	5.9 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 2 depicts that 94.1 % of the teachers agreed that education improves the analytical power of the individuals about the social conflicts while 5.9 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05 so the statement was found significant and was accepted.

Table 3*Social conflicts resolution education exists formally in education system.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	270	290	560	1	.714
Percentage	48.2 %	51.8 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 3 shows that 48.2 % of the teachers agreed that peace education exists in the education system while 51.8 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found lesser than the table value at 0.05 hence the statement was not significant and was rejected.

Table 4*Education creates positive attitude towards the social conflicts resolution.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	527	33	560	1	435.77
Percentage	94.1 %	5.9 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 4 indicates that 94.1% of the teachers agreed that education improves the analytical power of the individuals about the social conflicts while 5.9 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05 so the statement was found significant and was accepted.

Table 5*Education system of Pakistan provides practical skill for social conflicts resolution.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	120	440	560	1	182.85
Percentage	21.4 %	78.6 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 5 portrays that 21.4 % of the teachers agreed that education improves the analytical power of the individuals about the social conflicts while 78.6 % of the teachers disagreed to the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05 so the statement was found significant in favor of “disagreed” and hence, it was rejected.

Table 6*Educators are sensitive about the social conflicts resolution.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	324	236	560	1	13.82
Percentage	57.9 %	42.1 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 6 illustrates that 57.9 % of the teachers agreed that the educators are sensitive about the social conflict resolution while 42.1 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05 hence the statement was found significant and was accepted.

Table 7*Educators develop awareness about social conflicts and their resolution.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	355	205	560	1	40.17
Percentage	63.4 %	36.6 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 7 reflects that 63.4 % of the teachers agreed that the educators develop awareness about the social conflicts and their resolution while 36.6 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05 hence the statement was found significant and was accepted.

Table 8*Teachers are trained in social conflict resolution skills.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	108	452	560	1	211.31
Percentage	19.3 %	80.7 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 8 indicates that 19.3 % of the teachers agreed that the teachers are trained in social conflict resolution skills while 80.7 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05, the statement was found significant in favor of “disagreed” and hence, it was rejected.

Table 9*The existed curriculum contains materials for social conflicts resolution.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	167	393	560	1	91.20
Percentage	29.8 %	70.2 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 9 illustrates that 29.8 % of the teachers agreed that the existed curriculum contains materials for social conflict resolution while 70.2 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05, so the statement was found significant in favor of “disagreed” and hence, it was rejected.

Table 10*Hidden curriculum promotes environment and attitudes, which exerts influence over the transmitting of the social conflicts.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	325	235	560	1	14.46
Percentage	58.03 %	41.96 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 10 shows that 58.03 % of the teachers agreed that the hidden curriculum promotes positive environment and attitudes, which exert influence over the transmitting of the social conflicts while 41.96 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05, so the statement was found significant and was accepted.

Table 11*Education department arranges workshops about the social conflicts and social conflicts resolution.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	99	461	560	1	234.00
Percentage	17.7 %	82.3 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 11 depicts that 17.7 % of the teachers agreed that education department arranged workshops about the conflicts and social conflicts resolution while 82.3 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05, hence the statement was found significant in favor of “disagreed” and hence, it was rejected.

Table 12*Educators conduct dialogues among the students about the social conflict resolution.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	112	448	560	1	201.60
Percentage	20 %	80 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 12 shows that 20 % of the teachers agreed that the educators conduct dialogues among the students about the social conflict resolution while 80 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05, hence the statement was found significant in favor of “disagreed” and hence, it was rejected.

Table 13*Education develops analytical skills which help in social conflict resolution.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	437	123	560	1	176.06
Percentage	78 %	22 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 13 indicates that 78 % of the teachers agreed that education develops analytical skills which help in social conflict resolution while 22 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05, hence the statement was found significant and was accepted.

Table 14*Educators teach the values of respect, tolerance and understanding.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	483	77	560	1	294.35
Percentage	86.2 %	13.8 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 14 portrays that 86.2 % of the teachers agreed that the educators teach the values of respect, tolerance and understanding while 13.8 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05, hence the statement was found significant and was accepted.

Table 15*Educators foster the knowledge, practical skills and attitudes about the social conflict resolution.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	319	241	560	1	10.86
Percentage	57 %	43 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 15 depicts that 57 % of the teachers agreed that the educators foster the knowledge, practical skills and attitudes about the social conflict resolution while 43 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05 hence the statement was found significant and was accepted.

Table 16*Community programs about the social conflict resolution are conducted by the education department.*

Category	Agreed	Disagreed	Total	Df	χ^2
Frequencies	122	438	560	1	178.31
Percentage	21.78 %	78.21 %	100		

Significant level = 0.05

Table value= 3.841

Table 16 indicates that 21.78 % of the teachers agreed that community programs about the social conflict resolution are conducted by the education department while 78.21 % of the teachers disagreed with the statement. As the Chi Square value was found greater than the table value at 0.05, hence the statement was found significant in favor of “disagreed” and hence, it was rejected.

Discussion

The study revealed that education improved the analytical power of an individual about the social conflicts. It was found that education created positive attitudes toward the social conflict resolution process. Social conflict resolution (peace) education did not exist formally in our education system. So, in the light of these facts it should be made a part of the formal education system. The study affirmed that education provided a long term solution and strategies for social conflict prevention and peace-building. So, the education system should work as an antibiotic for social conflicts.

The study exposed that the education system of Pakistan did not provide practical skills for the social conflict resolution and peace-building. At the same time the study also revealed that the educators were sensitive about the social conflicts and their resolution. The teachers were not trained in the social conflict resolution and peace-building skills. Solomon (2002) said that training was necessary for conflict resolution.

It was also exposed that the existing curriculum did not contain material for the social conflict resolution and peace-building; however the hidden curriculum promotes an environment and attitude that are helpful in the transformation of the social conflicts. Kester (2010) spoke highly for curriculum. The research study pointed out that the education department did not arrange workshops about the social conflicts and their resolution. It also indicated that the educators did not conduct dialogues etc among the students about the social conflict resolution. Ajala (2003) said that education for peace and conflict resolution arranges dialogues on life-threatening issues in a society.

The study also revealed that education develops analytical skills which helped in social conflict resolution and peace-building as stated by Kester (2010). They also affirmed that the educators develop the value of respect, tolerance and understanding. At the same time it was also exposed by the study that the education department failed to arrange community programs for social conflict resolution and peace-building.

Recommendations

1. The study revealed that social conflicts resolution education did not exist formally in our education system. It is thus recommended that the textbooks and syllabus for the secondary level should be rationalized and re-organized to manifest the concerns that conflict resolution education is needed. It is recommended to start conflict resolution and peace education as a separate subject in secondary school curriculum, or if not possible due to a burden of already present subjects then the main beliefs and doctrines of peace education should be included in other regular subjects of the formal school curricula.
2. The study indicated that the hidden curriculum promoted an environment and attitudes, which exerted influence over the transmitting of the social conflicts. It was recommended that in pre-service and in-service training programs, practical training should be arranged to develop the skills that help in achieving the hidden curriculum.
3. Teacher education and training programs at all levels i.e. PTC, CT, B. Ed, M.Ed, and other such trainings and refresher courses be re-structured and rationalized so as to develop a system of education that may meet the needs of education for peace.

4. Education department should conduct such activities to make possible the enhancement of students' socialization via taking part in cooperative and interactive learning strategies. The Education department should organize workshops, seminars and symposia for understanding the phenomenon of social conflicts, their resolution for teachers, principals, parents and students as well.
5. Community programs for the awareness should be conducted by the education department. Furthermore, projects for peace education should be run by the government itself or through NGO'S to manage these types of trainings.

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