

Peace Education: A tool for promoting peace in terrorism-affected areas Secondary School' Teachers' perspectives

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Abstract

The contemporary world is under the curse of terrorism, affecting both developed and developing countries. Pakistan is one of these affected countries, especially the two provinces Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Baluchistan being the most impacted provinces. Terrorism is a phenomenon that transforms peaceful societies into fearful and unstable ones. Education for Peace plays a critical role in mitigating terrorism and promoting peace by reinstating the values associated with a peace culture. This research explored the perceptions of secondary school teachers regarding the contribution of peace education to fostering peace in terrorism-affected areas. It was quantitative in nature, and 200 male secondary schools' teachers were randomly selected from the two districts (Malakand and Lower Dir). Data was collected through a researcher-designed questionnaire and analyzed statistically based on percentages and frequencies. The majority of respondents were agreed that knowledge about peace and terrorism mitigates the effect of terrorism. Further, peace education can change attitudes toward creating a culture of harmony and peacefulness. The majority of respondents were strongly agreed that peace education is a dire need in terrorism-affected areas. It is recommended that peace education should be incorporated into the school' curriculum and that teachers be provided with appropriate training to effectively deliver its content.

key Words: Terrorism, Peace, Peace Education, conflict Resolution, peace buildings

1. Introduction

Terrorism is a contested concept without a universally accepted definition, understood as the deliberate use of violence, threats, or intimidation to instill fear and psychological trauma. It undermines social peace and is regarded as one of the greatest challenges of the present era, affecting both developed and developing countries, with its most severe impact observed in Asia. As Gunaratna (2013) notes, South Asia became the epicenter of global terrorism after the U.S. intervention in Afghanistan, with Pakistan facing particularly severe threats in its tribal regions. Across the previous two and a half decades, Pakistan has experienced enormous human and infrastructural losses due to terrorism, ranking fourth among terrorism-affected countries in the Global Terrorism Index (2024). The province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) has been most severely impacted, where violence has claimed countless lives, destroyed educational and economic infrastructure, and created a climate of fear that fosters extremism and radicalism.

In response to these challenges, fostering awareness about terrorism, promoting peaceful values, transforming attitudes, and developing skills in conflict resolution are essential. Peace education offers a powerful approach by nurturing values of nonviolence, tolerance, and empathy among the younger generation, thereby creating hope for sustainable peace in terrorism-affected areas. Parmar (2014) emphasizes that peace education is an inclusive and comprehensive process involving democracy, human rights, and nonviolence, equipping individuals with knowledge and skills to prevent conflict, violence, and terrorism. It shapes attitudes that foster harmony, strengthens social justice, and contributes to building equitable and peaceful communities.

Educational institutions, particularly teachers and school' leaders, play a crucial contribution in making students for a peaceful and thriving society. Promoting peace requires cultivating peaceful minds, and peace education is central to developing such individuals. Against this backdrop, the present study explores the perceptions of secondary school' teachers on how peace education contributes to peacebuilding in regions affected by terrorism

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Terrorism and its impact on Society

Terrorism originated from the Latin word *terror* or *terrace* means to frighten or tremble, and *ism* is a French suffix that means practice, so terrorism is the combination of two terms, *terror* and *ism*, which means the practices of frightened. In this context, "Terrorism" can be understood as the act of practicing activities that induce fear, panic, and anxiety—essentially causing a sense of terror. Terrorism is not a new concept. It is 2100 years old (Asadujjaman, 2017). Terrorism is a complex phenomenon without a single universal definition, though scholars agree it transforms peaceful environments into ones of fear. Terrorism is characterized by the deliberate intent to instill fear through violent or threatening actions, serving as a strategy to achieve specific political, ideological, or religious goals (Asadujjaman, 2017). It involves acts such as kidnappings, violence against civilians, and killings, which create societal chaos and spread fear among communities. According to the U.S. Department of Defense, terrorism is described as the strategic and deliberate use of violence to intimidate and influence governments or societies, usually to achieve political, religious, or ideological goals. This definition emphasizes the purposeful, coercive intent behind terrorist acts rather than the specific methods or targets.

i. Impacts of Terrorism on Society

Terrorism profoundly affects societies, disrupting social cohesion, trust, and everyday life. Beyond the immediate physical harm, it generates psychological distress, fear, and anxiety among individuals and communities. The repercussions of terrorist acts extend to social structures, weakening norms, roles, and collective participation, and creating long-term instability.

➤ Psychological Trauma and Fear

various research studies have found that terrorism creates deeper fear, anxiety, and lasting trauma. In this regard Mohammed and Neuner (2022) note that terrorism is linked to trauma-related mental illnesses. Terrorist attacks have significant short-term effects on public mental health, leading to increased anxiety, stress, and psychological distress across the population, with impacts varying by age and gender (Nilsen, Wentzel-Larsen, & Stene, 2023).

➤ **Breakdown of Social Cohesion**

Terrorism undermines social cohesion by weakening trust, unity, and shared values, leading to increased division and intolerance within communities. Rahman (2023) further observes that terrorism erodes key social values such as tolerance, respect, integrity, and loyalty, causing individuals to focus on self-interest while neglecting the rights and well-being of others. Together, these effects demonstrate how terrorism disrupts the social fabric and damages collective cohesion.

➤ **Disruption of Education**

Education forms the backbone of any society, and educational institutions are often the primary targets of terrorism. As a result, terrorism creates an unsafe school environment, leading to student absenteeism, parental fear, and traumatized teachers, which severely disrupts teaching and learning (Rahman, Habib, & Kataria, 2018).

➤ **Weakening of Institutions**

Terrorism weakens government institutions by undermining law enforcement, the judiciary, and public trust. It creates insecurity that disrupts essential services and limits institutional effectiveness. By fostering instability, terrorism challenges the government's ability to maintain order and deliver justice.

2.2 Peace Education and its Role in Promoting Peace

Peace education refers to an educational approach that cultivates the values, skills, and knowledge essential to prevent violence, conflict, and social injustice. It empowers individuals to become proactive participants in building a better society. Implemented in schools, universities, and community settings, its ultimate goal is to promote a peaceful and equitable society. Peace education does not emphasize the academic learning of students, but peace education prepares students against terrorism, violence and conflict. This implies peace education challenges culture of violence and encourages a Peace-oriented culture (Brooks & Hajir, 2020). Peace education prepares students to understand an equitable and peaceful world. Peace education equips students to understand an equitable and peaceful world. Peace education is a procedure that fosters skills like cooperation Self-reflection, constructive problem resolution, and dispute settlement skills and attitudes like tolerance, respect, love, and Compassion are instilled in individuals (Sagkal, 2011). Johnson & Johnson (2014) have explained that Peace education educates individuals with knowledge, attitudes, values, and behavioral skills to address conflicts peacefully and cultivate mutually beneficial, harmonious relationships.

Role of peace education

In a society afflicted by terrorism, education serves as the fundamental means of fostering an environment that mitigates the adverse effects of terrorism. It accomplishes this by instilling in the populace the values of tolerance, racial unity, and respect for all people. Peace education provides knowledge of violence and terrorism for students and creates awareness of the adverse effects of terrorism. Terrorism has so many adverse effects on society, but the more severe effect is the elimination of values from society. A peaceful society depends upon the values those are transmitted from ancestors to the next generation. Peace education is the basic component that restores the basic values in terrorism- affects society through teaching the norms and values of a peaceful society. Peace education teaches students the knowledge and skills which end terrorism in society and promote peace in a terrorism-affected society. According to Khan (2017), Peace

education is a collaborative process that modifies individuals' perspectives and helps advance peace by fostering knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors that contribute to conflict resolution and the creation of a peaceful society. The younger generation is a nation's asset and lifeline. Peace education enhances such skills that can promote peace in a terrorism-affected society. Abdi (2020) has described some key features of peace education that promotes peace in terrorism-affected areas.

- “1. Peace education emphasizes Core values such as fairness, collaboration, unity, the nurturing of individual autonomy, and the ability to make sound decisions.
2. rejection of values such as blind obedience, ethnocentrism, intolerance, discrimination, indifference, and conformity which are at conflict with a culture of peace;
3. A emphasize on peaceful action
4. Understanding behavior and awareness in both small- and large-scale contexts
5. Peace education is to reestablish the concept of positive peace for all citizens and across all areas of human interaction”.

Velez et al. (2021) have described that Peace education can promote cultures of sustainable peace and act as a substitute for violence in order to accomplish both peacemaking and peace-building goals. Peace education is the main resource for promoting peace in terrorism-affected areas by concentrating on the basic reasons for conflict, fostering understanding and tolerance, and empowering students and communities to work towards peaceful coexistence. Peace education equips pupils with the knowledge and skills which are essential for promoting peace. Knowledge such as understanding terrorism and its causes, understanding the culture of others, respecting the beliefs of others and human rights Skills such as Conflict Resolution Skills, Promoting Dialogue, Critical Thinking and Empathy and Youth Engagement and Community Building.

3. Purpose of the study

The purpose of this research is to explore the secondary school teacher's perspectives regarding to promoting of peace the contribution of peace education in terrorism affected areas.

4. Objectives of the study are

- To analyze the perceptions of secondary school teachers regarding the role of
 - i. Knowledge imparted through peace education in promoting peace.
 - ii. Values developed through peace education in promoting peace.
 - iii. Attitudes developed through peace education in promoting peace.
 - iv. Skills promoted through peace education in promoting peace.

5. Research Question of the Study

In what ways does peace education facilitate the promotion of peace in societies affected by terrorism?

5. Method and Procedures

This study adopted a quantitative approach and utilized a descriptive research design. Data were obtained from secondary school teachers through a self-constructed questionnaire structured on a five-point Likert scale. The population included all secondary school teachers serving in terrorism-affected regions of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan. From this population, two districts—Malakand and Lower Dir—were selected randomly as the research sample. A total of 200 teachers participated in the study, comprising 100 respondents from Malakand and 100 from Lower Dir. Data analysis was carried out

utilizing SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) with frequency distributions and percentage statistics applied to interpret the findings.

Results and Findings

Table 5.1 Peace education promotes the knowledge regarding to peace and terrorism

SNO	STATEMENT	SA (f)	A (f,)	UN (f,)	DA (f ,%)	SDA(f,)	N (f,)	Mean	SD
1	Knowledge regarding terrorism can lessen support of terrorism and militancy	70 (35%)	100 (50%)	10 (5%)	20 (10%)		200 (100%)	4.1	0.83
2	Knowledge about terrorism enables the individuals to understand the root causes of terrorism	120 (60%)	60 (30%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)		200 (100%)	4.45	0.76
3	Knowledge regarding terrorism can lower the risk of terrorist attacks	40 (20%)	120 (60%)	5 (2.5%)	15 (7.5%)	20 (10%)	200 (100%)	3.72	1.16
4	Peace education equips the students with knowledge to prevent terrorism	120 (60%)	80 (40%)				200 (100%)	4.6	0.49
5	Peace education promotes knowledge that brings behavioral changes in students to resolve all sorts of violence	90 (45%)	95 (47.5%)	15 (7.5%)			200 (100%)	4.38	0.67
6	Peace education imparts knowledge that changes the way people think and act in promoting peace	40 (20%)	120 (60%)	5 (2.5%)	15 (7.5%)	20 (10%)	200 (100%)	3.72	1.16
7	Peace education promotes knowledge regarding peace and war	132 (66%)	65 (32.5%)	3 (1.5%)			200 (100%)	4.65	0.53
8	Peace education imparts knowledge to students about societal issues	160 (80%)	35 (17.5%)	5 (2.5%)			200 (100%)	4.78	0.49
9	Peace education is the weapon to counter extremist ideologies	190 (95%)		10 (5%)			200 (100%)	4.9	0.30
10	Peace education is a tool to create a culture of peace in terrorism-affected areas	180 (90%)	20 (10%)				200 (100%)	4.9	0.30

Table 5.1 depicts the responses of various respondents toward the knowledge that promotes peace in the terrorism-affected area. Supporting the statement, the majority of respondents strongly agree or agree. 50% of respondents agree that knowledge regarding terrorism lessens the causes of terrorism. 60% Respondents strongly agree that knowledge enables individuals to understand the root causes of terrorism. The majority of respondents support the statement that knowledge regarding terrorism helps in preventing terrorism. Regarding peace education, the majorities of respondents strongly agree or agree with the statement. 95% of respondents strongly agree that peace education is the best weapon to counter extremist ideologies. 80% of respondents were strongly agree that peace education imparts knowledge to students about societal issues. Similarly, 90% of respondents replied that peace education creates a culture of peace in terrorism-affected areas. From the analysis of the above responses, it was accepted that knowledge regarding peace and terrorism can promote peace in terrorism-affected areas.

Table 5.2 **Values for promoting peace in terrorism affected area**

.No	Statement	SA f (%)	A f (%)	UN f (%)	DA f (%)	SDA f (%)	N f (%)	Mean	SD
1.	Peace education teaches students to understand self-respect	40 (20%)	160 (80%)				200 (100%)	4.2	0.40
2	Peace education cultivates respect for others in students' minds	40 (20%)	120 (60%)	17 (8.5%)	23 (11.5%)		200 (100%)	3.89	0.92
3	Peace education teaches human rights	50 (25%)	140 (70%)	10 (5%)			200 (100%)	4.2	0.53
4	Peace education enables students to ensure human dignity	60 (30%)	120 (60%)	5 (2.5%)	15 (7.5%)		200 (100%)	4.13	0.80
5	Peace education promotes tolerance	60 (30%)	140 (70%)				200 (100%)	4.3	0.46
6	Peace education promotes social justice	75 (37.5%)	70 (35%)	15 (7.5%)	20 (10%)	20 (10%)	200 (100%)	3.80	1.21
7	Peace education promotes social responsibility	50 (25%)	120 (60%)	10 (5%)	20 (10%)		200 (100%)	4.00	0.88
8	Peace education teaches students respect for humanity	40 (20%)	160 (80%)				200 (100%)	4.20	0.40
9	Peace education fosters social peace	75 (37.5%)	115 (57.5%)	10 (5%)	10 (5%)		200 (100%)	4.22	0.70
10	Peace education fosters community building	60 (30%)	118 (59%)	12 (6%)	10 (5%)		200 (100%)	4.14	0.77

In table 5.2, there are a total of ten items. Regarding the responses of respondents, all ten items strongly agree or agree with the values of peace education, which can promote peace in terrorism-affected areas.

80% of respondents agreed that peace education teach self-respect play critical role in building of peace. 60% of respondents agreed that peace education cultivates respect for others in students' minds. The majority of respondents gave their opinion as agree and strongly agree that peace education teaches human rights and promotes tolerance. 37% strongly agree, 35% agree, and 10% disagree that peace education teaches social justice. 60% agreed that peace education promotes social responsibility. From the result of above table shows that all the respondents were agreed that peace education promotes those values that are helpful in promoting peace in terrorism affected area.

Table 5.3 Attitudes for promoting peace in terrorism affected area

S.No	Statement	SA (f,%)	A f (%)	UN f (%)	DA f (%)	SDA f (%)	N f (%)	Mean	SD
1	Peace education develops pro-peace attitudes in individuals	135 (67.5%)	60 (30%)	5 (2.5%)	200 (100%)			4.65	0.53
2	Peace education fosters the empathy of students with others	55 (27.5%)	90 (45%)	15 (7.5%)	40 (20%)	200 (100%)		3.80	1.03
3	Peace education develops the sense of rejection of violence in students	55 (27.5%)	135 (67.5%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)			4.23	0.56
4	Peace education advocates non-violent means of conflict resolution	62 (31%)	114 (57%)	10 (5%)	14 (7%)	200 (100%)		4.12	0.75
5	Patience is an attitude that is crucial in peace-building efforts, especially in terrorism-affected areas	73 (35.5%)	113 (56.5%)	14 (7%)	200 (100%)			4.29	0.67
6	Trust building is the fundamental attitude that promotes peace in terrorism-affected areas		81 (40.5%)	119 (59.5%)	200 (100%)			4.41	0.49
7	Peace education maintains a hopeful attitude, even in the face of severe terrorism, and keeps peace-building efforts alive	93 (46.5%)	80 (40%)	15 (7.5%)	12 (6%)	200 (100%)		4.27	0.81
8	Peace education promotes collaboration among individuals	120 (60%)	70 (35%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)			4.55	0.61
9	Peace education promotes resilience in communities in terrorism-affected areas	75 (37.5%)	93 (46.5%)	17 (8.5%)	15 (7.5%)	200 (100%)		4.14	0.84
10	Peace education produces courageous individuals to confront difficulties and advocate for peace	68 (34%)	94 (47%)	15 (7.5%)	17 (8.5%)	6 (3%)	200 (100%)	4.00	0.99

Table 3 depicts all the responses of respondents to the ten items that show that peace education promotes the attitudes of individuals in terrorism-affected areas that are helpful in building peace. 135 respondents were strongly agreed that peace education develops pro-peace attitudes and a sense of rejection of violence in students in terrorism-affected areas. 73 (35.5%) teachers were

strongly agreed, and 113 (56.5%) were agreed that peace education develops patience in students, which is the need for promoting peace in terrorism-affected areas. 93(46.5 percent) of respondents strongly agreed, 80 (40%) agreed, 15 (7.5%) respondents responded undecided, and 12 (6%) disagreed that peace education maintains a hopeful attitude, even in the face of severe terrorism, and keep peace-building efforts alive.

Table 5.4 Skills that promote peace in terrorism-affected area

.No	Statement	SA f (%)	A f (%)	UN f (%)	DA f (%)	SDA f (%)	N f (%)	Mean	SD
1	Conflict Resolution Skills	140 (70%)	60 (30%)				200 (100%)	4.70	0.46
2	Community	70 (35%)	85 (42.5%)	15 (7.5%)	20 (10%)	10 (5%)	200 (100%)	3.93	1.11
3	Problem-Solving Skills	65 (32.5%)	105 (52.5%)	12 (6%)	18 (9%)		200 (100%)	4.09	0.86
4	Critical Thinking	45 (22.5%)	142 (71%)	5 (2.5%)	8 (4%)		200 (100%)	4.12	0.67
5	Decision Making	45 (22.5%)	110 (55%)	15 (7.5%)	30 (15%)		200 (100%)	3.85	0.96
6	Conflict Analysis	85 (42.5%)	110 (55%)	5 (2.5%)			200 (100%)	4.40	0.56
7	Assessment Skill (Assessing the impact of terrorist activities)	102 (51%)	82 (41%)	10 (5%)	4 (2%)	2 (1%)	200 (100%)	4.39	0.76
8	Crisis Management	73 (36.5%)	97 (48.5%)	10 (5%)	20 (10%)		200 (100%)	4.11	0.91
9	Advocacy and Diplomacy	160 (80%)	40 (20%)				200 (100%)	4.80	0.40
10	Leadership Skills	70 (35%)	110 (55%)	7 (3.5%)	13 (6.5%)		200 (100%)	4.19	0.82

Table 5.4 displays the responses of respondents regarding the skills promoted by peace education. The majority of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that peace education enhances the skills that promote peace in terrorism-affected areas. 70% of respondents strongly agreed that peace education promotes the conflict resolution skills of individuals. 35% teachers were strongly agreed, and 42.5% were agreed that peace education promotes community engagement skills. 52.5% teachers were agreed that peace education promotes problem-solving skills. 71% of respondents agreed that peace education promotes critical thinking skills. 55% agreed that conflict analysis skills develop through peace education

6. Discussion

This research aimed to identify the perception of secondary schools' teachers regarding the role of peace education in promoting peace in the terrorism-affected area. The purposes of peace education are imparting

knowledge about peace and terrorism, developing peaceful values, changing attitudes of individuals toward promoting peace and developing skills that promote peace in terrorism affected areas. Every society has its own values on which the social system running peacefully but terrorism destroys these values. Peace education restores these values in terrorism affected society. In a terrorism-affected society, people often adopt disruptive attitudes. However, peace education has potential to play a pivotal role in changing individuals' attitudes toward peace promotion. The study findings have shown peace education is a dire need for the promotion of peace in terrorism-affected areas. Promoting peace and preventing terrorism requires comprehensive understanding of both peace and terrorism. Skills are important weapons that promote peace in terrorism-affected areas. Key skills encompass the practice of nonviolence, strategies for resolving conflicts, democratic participation, promotion of disarmament, gender equity, respect for human rights, commitment to environmental sustainability, historical awareness, effective communication, peaceful coexistence, as well as fostering global understanding and respect for cultural diversity. The attitudes of individuals play a significant role in promoting peace in terrorism-affected areas. Peace education changes the attitudes of students towards the rejection of violence and acceptance of peace. Trust-building is the fundamental attitude that promotes peace in terrorism-affected areas. Peace education promotes the different skills that are very important for peace promotion, including conflict resolution, community engagement, problem-solving skills, critical thinking, leadership skills, etc. The finding of this study is align with the study Aftab and Sadaf (2023) that conceptualizing the meaning and definition of peace education and include it in school curriculum.

Peace education has gained recognition as a crucial tool in fostering peace and tolerance, especially in areas affected by terrorism. Peace education provides knowledge about peace and terrorism and prepares students with skills that promote peace in terrorism-affected areas. Peace education promotes the values of peace in individuals. This study identified that peace education has essential role in the restoration of the values of a peaceful society in terrorism-affected areas. Ahmad, Said, and Khan (2014) have found that peace education plays a significant role in restoring community confidence.

7. Conclusions

Based on analysis, concluded that knowledge regarding terrorism has a significant role in preventing terrorism. Knowledge about terrorism creates awareness regarding the terrorist's activities. Knowledge increases awareness regarding extremist ideologies, which play a role as a base for terrorism. Knowledge regarding peace creates a background for peace in terrorism-affected areas. Peace education provides knowledge regarding peace and terrorism. Peace education equips the students with the knowledge to prevent terrorism and build a peace culture. Peace education teaches the various values that are important for a peaceful society. Values such as self-respect, respect for humanity, etc. can be achieved through peace education. Peace education changes attitudes toward possible direction. Peace education fosters hope of peace even in the worst situations. Various skills play a vital role toward the promotion of a peaceful society. Peace education teaches these skills to individuals. Peace education is a dire need in the present era. Peace education is the sole factor that may bring peace to terrorism-affected areas.

8. Recommendation

Based on conclusion following recommendation are made

- Peace education must be including in school curriculum particular in terrorism affected area
- Teachers must be given proper training regarding to peace education
- Awareness campaign about peace must be incorporated in school activities

- Peace education must be included in teachers' education program

1. Suggestion for Future Research

To gain a deeper understanding it is important to conduct qualitative studies that explore teachers' perceptions. The present study was carried out in two districts, Malakand and Lower Dir; however, it is recommended that similar research be extended to other terrorism-affected districts for broader insights. During the study, it was observed that many respondents lacked familiarity with the concept of peace education. Therefore, further research is recommended to examine the idea of peace education in depth and to conceptualize its meaning and definition within the context of teacher education.

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