

CEILING ON DESIRE' FOR PROMOTING PEACE

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Abstract

In today's world, man is using his intelligence in multiple ways to satisfy his needs, sometimes inflicting violence on his fellow beings to fulfill his desires. Arat-race for materialistic development, compounded with nuclear armament of nations, and global terrorism have ruined the tranquillity of human lives. Thus, the delirious man has forgotten the future sustenance of human life on this earth. Population explosion, along with the desire for better living conditions, and greater consumption of material goods have given considerable strain on the limited resources that nature offers us. Thereby, creating disorder and confusion in the society man has built for himself. Today's innocent children are often confronted with a lot of stress and strain. They tend to mimic their elders and peers in every way. They also develop low tolerance towards their problems and physically act it out with a pervasive threat of violence. Thus, by absorbing the spirit of violence in the atmosphere, they grow to be the next generation of perpetrators of violence.

Keywords: Arat-race, stress and strain, physically....

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Introduction

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'A child born today in the U.K. stands a ten times greater chance of being admitted to a mental hospital than a university... We are driving mad our children more effectively than we are genuinely educating them.' - R.D. Laing (1978)

The school is no more a place of leisure or peace. It has become subject-centred and examination-oriented. Thus, the joy of learning is taken away from children. They are trained to cope with the maelstrom of the corrupt society. In short, the youth produced at schools have

become insensitive to problems of the society. They are selfish, narrow-minded, lacking in intellectual depth and susceptible to the violent and corrupt social pressures.

In the present situation, the main focus of education must be to educate children in the art of peaceful living. Good qualities like respect, sense of compassion, caring for another, genuine sense of brotherhood, etc., should be inculcated automatically along with acquisition of knowledge. As a result, more and more peace concepts, attitudes, values and behavioural skills are being integrated into school curricula in many countries. There is also a renewed interest to develop peace-related disciplines such as value education, moral education, global education, etc.; for developing the child's emotional, social, moral and humanistic aspects.

‘CEILING ON DESIRE’

‘In a world beset with violence, it is very interesting to learn the true meaning of non-violence from Sri SathyaSai Baba. His definition of non-violence includes very subtle points like saving water, energy, time and money. In the near future, the world will not have enough energy, power and fuel, even for the day today life. Hence he interprets non-violence and relates it to a program of saving as ‘Ceiling on Desire’. The root cause of violence everywhere is the proliferation of desires. The only remedy to curb violence is to minimize desire.’ - (Indulal Shah, 1993).

It is in this atmosphere of gloom and hopelessness that Sri SathyaSai Baba (founder Chancellor of Sri SathyaSai Institute of Higher Learning) has given to the world the concept of ‘Ceiling on Desire’ to guide the suffering humanity and put man back on the path to his rightful destiny. Simply stated, the concept of ‘Ceiling on Desire’ is not Supply management or Demand management but Desire management. Sri SathyaSai Baba inaugurated the ‘Ceiling on Desire’ program on his 60th birthday to build discipline and reduce wastage in the lives of his devotees. The program gives a clear guideline on how to live our lives. He has repeatedly emphasized that man cannot make any spiritual progress unless he limits his desires. He has pointed out that desire is an all consuming flame- the attempt to fulfil man's desire only results in the creation of a hundred new desires, all of which lead man to unhappiness and ruin.

The message of placing a ceiling on desires is to utilize the money thus saved into a fund for social service among the villages, the poor and illiterate. The program ‘Ceiling on Desire’ is

designed to help each individual live happier and lead a more fulfilling life. Instead of wasting life and its gifts, the program enables those who follow it to have more food, money, time and energy at their disposal, by making life less stressful and enjoyable. The program of 'Ceiling on Desire' has four important components:

1. Do not waste money. Money has its own importance. The use of money should be properly regulated. One should use the power of intelligence to avoid the misuse of money as it can become the cause of evil. It can also enhance life if used appropriately.
2. Do not waste food. One should eat only the amount needed for survival i.e., one should not be greedy. The surplus food can feed another. Food is the main source of man's life, body, mind and character. Hence food is God. One should always eat *satwic* food and give what is in excess to the needy.
3. Do not waste time. Man's life is wasted in brooding over the past and worrying about the future while an idle mind is a devil's workshop. One should not degrade time by involving in unnecessary conversation or activity. One should use time efficiently.
4. Do not waste energy. Every action involves the use of energy. One should not waste his physical, mental and spiritual energies. Hearing bad things, speaking evil, thinking and doing evil deeds; wastes one's energy. If the energy in the body is properly utilized, balance will be maintained, the body and mind will be at peace.

Thus, this program offers individuals the opportunity to think about the difference between their needs and their wants. Every time when one is about to buy or use goods or services in relation to their daily requirements, they must stop to reflect on whether the purchase of those goods or services will meet their need or merely fulfil their want. One has to reflect on their use of natural resources and structure their lifestyles for future sustenance. They should restrain themselves from purchasing goods or services which they want and by doing so save or conserve, so as to meet the real needs of someone in the local or wider community. Though individual level relates to person-centred awareness of the body, mind, emotions and spirit, the community level refers to interpersonal relationships (i.e., trust, openness, interdependence), and the global level concerns about the cultural and environmental consciousness.

TECHNIQUES FOR TEACHING 'CEILING ON DESIRE'

In Sri SathyaSai organisations and institutions, the inculcation of 'Ceiling on Desire' is done through a direct approach in addition to indirect and integrated approaches, which is continuously followed throughout all institutional activities.

I. DIRECT APPROACH

The lesson is deliberately planned to expose students to a particular value. It consists of individual as well as group activities such as:

- **Silent-sitting:** Involves encouraging students to sit silently for a few minutes daily. It relaxes the mind and body by making it tranquil, free from agitation. This technique enables students to think and examine themselves and then come to a decision. Silent-sitting is the most effective form of communication with one's inner self.
- **Social service camps:** To get a real feeling of peace and direct experience, social service camps can be organized for students. Students can make people aware about the consequences of their actions by organising community programmes. At higher education level students can be motivated to use their energies and enthusiasm to change the world. At the university level, through Scouts & Guides, National Service Scheme (NSS) and Narayana Seva (feeding of poor), young students can be encouraged to help the poor and needy.
- **Role-play:** Students explore human relations and problems by enacting problematic situations. In role play, they explore feelings, attitudes, values and problem solving skills. This model of teaching touches both the individual as well as the social dimensions of education. It involves the participants and observers to enact the situation and find solutions to their own problems.
- **Dramatics and literary activities:** Dramatics motivates and helps the students to identify themselves with the characters leading to development of empathy. Issues like poverty, starvation, illiteracy, etc.; can be dramatized to sensitize students. Literary activities like essay competitions, composition writing, composing songs, paintings, drawing, etc.; could be organised and conducted from time to time. Videos on relevant theme could also be shown. Various issues on terrorism may be highlighted and students involved in debates, to know their attitude and reaction and suggestion for restoration of peace.
- **Multimedia approach:** Includes the media- printed material (books, newspapers, journals, charts, posters, comics, photographic stories and novels), television, internet, films,

documentaries, tape recorders, folk media (street plays, folk theatre, folk dance and folk songs), puppet shows, shadow plays, etc.

- Ideographic approach: Is a unique method to educate masses. This method includes field survey, demonstrations, talks by experts, panel-discussions, symposia, debates, games, group discussions, brainstorming sessions, attitude mapping, seminars, contests and quiz.
- Story-Telling: Students of all age groups enjoy listening to a story; which is a very old and effective method of teaching. The story should generate interest, capture the attention and leave one feeling uplifted and inspired. While telling the story, it is important to have an eye contact with the children and the language used should be appropriate to the level of the class. The teacher can include various stimulus-variation skills like gestures, interaction styles, pauses, speech modulation and humour into the story to make it interesting. In the end, students should be questioned to evaluate how much they have understood and encouraged to come out with their own ideas. This technique is more suitable at the primary and elementary stage.

II. INDIRECT APPROACH

The indirect approach has been found very effective when applied systematically. In this approach, the teacher takes the advantage of the situation or a chance incident as it arises in the classroom, campus or playground to teach by correcting, praising or discouraging certain behaviour. Sometimes the situation can even be created by the teacher to observe the reaction of students to assess them. Suppose, there is shortage of water in the school, the teacher can discuss the various sources of water, its uses and how it is wasted in daily life. She can also discuss the various methods they can adopt to save water.

III. INTEGRATED APPROACH

Through this approach, values are integrated with curricular and co-curricular activities, whenever one gets an opportunity to do so. The teachers should be trained to integrate values seamlessly into various topics of the subjects as they teach. This method is found to be useful as it does not require extra time for imparting values separately. For example, if the teacher is teaching nuclear fission or fusion in physics, she can highlight its uses for the welfare of mankind and the destruction it will cause if misused, and its effect on environment. In subjects like mathematics, civics, and economics, emphasis can be laid on the need to save money, to calculate its loss, observing causes of poverty and measures taken to elevate poverty, etc. In

subjects like botany and zoology, she can emphasise the cause of habitat destruction, effect of pollution, environmental protection, need for conservation of resources, alternate forms of energy, etc.

CONCLUSION:

Man is becoming inhuman by spreading violence in all aspects of his life through language, sports, entertainment, religion, administration, family and education. Children absorb this culture of violence and imitate it as a means to get recognition or attention. Hence it can be appropriately stated that...

If the child lives in.....	He learns to.....
Criticism	Condemn
Hostility	Fight
Ridicule	Be Shy
Shame	Be Guilty
Tolerance	Be Patient
Security	Have Faith
Encouragement	Have Confidence
Praise	Appreciate
Fairness	Be Judicious
Approval	Like himself
Acceptance and Friendship	Love in his work

Table 1: The effect of Environment on a child's personality development.

Therefore, it has become unavoidable to educate the children in the art of peaceful living. Humane values like respect, compassion, caring, etc; should be instilled simultaneously along with knowledge acquisition by schools where they spend their maximum time, so that they have a peaceful childhood and grow up to become ideal citizens.

From the above mentioned approaches the child learns to avoid violence of wasting what is available and to give respect to all aspects in life. These develop the personality of the child and mould it into an ideal model for the community and to the nation at large. The various strategies that can be undertaken for saving resources at individual, family, community and global levels are as given below in Table 2.

RESOURCE	INDIVIDUAL	FAMILY	COMMUNITY	GLOBAL
MONEY	Discriminate spending. Practice money management.	Avoid unnecessary expenditure on luxury.	Avoid frequent strike. Sticking to the budget.	Direct the funds for warfare to that of people's welfare.
FOOD	Eat only when hungry and to satisfy one's hunger.	Cook only the required amount of food.	Adopt clean and hygienic methods of food preparation.	Find new methods to preserve food
TIME	Avoid procrastination. Punctuality Plan one's action.	Family-planning.	Pre-plan about new changes and their consequences.	Plan each individual's contribution globally

ENERGY	Avoid excessive talk Minimum use of electricity, water, etc.	Use of energy efficient gadgets like CFLs, CNG, etc.	Converting waste into energy resources after treatment like gobar gas, bio gas, etc.	Observe Green hour Find alternate fuel resources Abstain from using fossil fuels
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Thus, this programme enables students to control the vagaries of mind and temptations which surround them. Ultimately, this paves the pathway to promote peace through saving, sharing and conserving.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

It is up to the discretion of the teacher to select a method suitable to the level of the children and explain the consequences of wastage and the value of conservation. Parents and teachers have equal responsibility on the personality-development of children. They should practise the values in their daily life to become role models before inculcating the same instudents.

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