

PEACE STUDIES

The Mahatma Gandhi Peace Centre

University of Mumbai



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FOREWORD

Dr. Satischandra Kumar (Coordinator MGPC)

“Love and peace of mind do protect us. They allow us to overcome the problems that life hands us. They teach us to survive... to live now... to have the courage to confront each day.”

—Bernie Siegel

“Mahatma Gandhi Peace Center (MGPC) was established on 12th August 2008. The center was housed in University department of Applied Psychology and the objective was to disseminate the ideas of peace psychology, peace education, peace studies, peace building initiative and peace making strategies in multicultural society.

The center also brings awareness of Mahatma Gandhi philosophy ideas along with other world leader’s ideas through lecture, seminars, symposium, and short term part time alternate Saturday courses on peace studies. MGPC had already organized 5 short term courses. The present batch is a 6th batch of Short term Part time Certificate of Participation students of peace studies course. They have taken an initiative to come out with a Peace Studies certificate course Journey book which captures the whole course. It was a great idea, and also they developed the Google feedback form and also did the Strength Weakness Opportunity and Threat (SWOT) analysis of the full journey of 6 month certificate course. The participants also went for two visits which was for Mani Bhavan and Godrej India Cultural Laboratory to get the firsthand experience of diversity and inclusion not only at world of work but also every aspect of our social life. I congratulate the batch for coming out with the Peace studies magazine which will provide insight to the upcoming batches, students and professionals from all walks of life eager to be a part of this course and enrich their lives with values of Peace in today’s time. “

VISION

“The Mahatma Gandhi Peace Centre, University of Mumbai, envisions contributing towards a community that thrives towards total acceptance and equality of all faiths and classes, living in harmony where conflicts are countered through regular peace-making efforts.”

MISSION

“The mission of Mahatma Gandhi Peace Centre, University of Mumbai, is to develop ideals of peace, justice, non-violence and equality into realities of today’s society by organizing talks, conferences, guest lectures, youth training programs in collaboration with other agencies that work towards this larger goal.”

ABOUT THE COURSE

We live in a “Century of violence” which seems threateningly more violent than the last century. To cope with this, governments of developed nations have pursued policies of intensifying their military powers to suppress claims of people and resolve the world situation of violence, but such policy has only induced counter-violence and made conflict-resolution more difficult and peace non-existent.

There is an urgent need to address the problems at the individual, social, national and communal levels, wherein a social structure built on values of justice, equal opportunity, humanitarianism, multiculturalism and peace is pursued through a mutual dialogue.

In this regard the role of peace studies is pertinent. The goal of a peace analyst is to understand mechanisms of oppression, suppression and marginalization operating within the society. Following which, ways to manage conflicts can be determined, in ways that reduce the possibility or the level of violence without diminishing other values of justice or freedom. For looking into the roots of conflicts, it does not suffice to look into one field of thought. Therefore, Peace Studies is a Multi-disciplinary field. In order to understand the roots of especially violent conflicts, this academic field analyses reasons for war and conflicts by borrowing and expanding theories from psychology, social sciences, international relations, philosophy, education, political science and many more.

The present course follows both psychological and educational paradigms and seeks to enhance understanding theories and practices aimed at prevention and mitigation of conflict and violence. This course aims at fostering the ability of imagination and creativity and to use them in promoting peace. It aims to promote the Gandhian principles of non-violence, equality and understand Gandhi’s word “an eye for an eye, leaves the whole world blind”. This course finally aims at social justice through deliberations on peacemaking and peace-building methods.

OBJECTIVES OF THE COURSE:

1. To understand the theoretical dimension of Peace Studies.
2. To highlight the meaning, need, aim and scope of Peace Psychology.
3. To delineate the meaning, need, aim and scope of Peace Education.
4. To underline implication of Peace Studies for state and society through use of conflict management and peace-building initiatives.
5. To study the process of Peace Building and Peace-Making in multicultural societies and the pursuit of social justice.

COURSE STRUCTURE

1 Introduction to Peace Studies

- Introduction to Peace Studies and its various multi-disciplinary dimensions.
- Psychology of Peace and Conflict: Meaning, Aim and Scope
- Peace Education: Meaning, Aim and Scope

2 Theoretical Understanding

- Theories of Violence: direct, structural
- Theories of Nonviolence: Contemporary issues and Gandhian Thought.
- Peace building, Peace-Making and Promotion of Social Justice

3 Global Issues

- Distinguishing Culture of Peace from Culture of War.
- Societal Conflict and Promoting Culture of Peace.
- Peace Movements

4 Peace – Building Education

- Human Rights Education.
- Multicultural Education.
- Environmental Education

5 Peace - Making Interventions 8 Hours

- Psychological Construct of Personality for achieving Peace.
- Confidence Building, Conflict Management and Conflict – resolution.
- Negotiation, Communication, Decision-Making, Critical Thinking Skills

6 Practicum 8 Hours

- Exercising Peace Building & Peace Making Initiatives in the Community – Street Plays, Posters, Talks, Workshops, etc.
- Project Presentation of twenty minutes for each group.

48
Hours

COURSE CONTENT

1. Introduction to the course
2. Visit to Mani Bhavan
3. Peace (Philosophical Dimension)
4. Peace Education and Peace Building Education
5. Peace and Politics
6. Societal Conflict and Promoting Culture of Peace
7. Peace and Economics
8. Confidence Building, Conflict Management, and Conflict Resolution
9. Gandhi's Gram Swaraj and Community Based Action Research
10. Visit to Godrej Culture Laboratory
11. Distinguishing Culture of Peace from Culture of War and Societal Conflict, and promoting Culture of Peace
12. Can We Give Peace Education A Chance in Schools?
13. Film Screening: Peaceful Warrior
14. Gandhian Notion of Trusteeship and Corporate Social Responsibility.
15. Living Peacefully – A Rational Way
16. Psychological Construct of Personality for Achieving Peace
17. Retracing the Ideals of the Mahatma Through Music and Poetry.
18. Closing Remarks and Certificate Distribution

Introduction & Orientation to Peace Studies

Dr. Satishchandra Kumar

“Peace’ is defined not just as the absence of war but also the presence of the conditions for a just and sustainable peace, including access to food and clean drinking water, education for women and children, security from physical harm and human rights.”

This session provided students a clear understanding of the journey they have all boarded on towards studying peace and how it will be helpful in their day to day life. He emphasized on “The Education For life, Education through life and Education throughout life” with the inclusion of value of peace of mind and well - being.

As peace is vital in this world of Artificial Intelligence which is steadily moving towards advancement in technology but still has to cope with the human touch in life which is equally necessary.



Peace & Politics

Dr. Pratibha Nathani

Dr. Nathani brought to view the atrocities the tribals in the state of Uttarakhand face and the conflicts that arise due to the violation of community rights by the conservation policies made by the state government. The environmental disruption that occurs due to excess human intervention; Dr. Nathani explained this using the Kedarnath Floods as an example. The session focused on how man and nature need to be at peace too, and this could be only achieved if we choose to limit ourselves to our essential needs rather than catering to our never-ending wants.

Dr. Nathani also highlighted the problems faced by the community that faces the brunt of section 35A; the gross violation of human rights that is a cause of major unrest to the people of the affected community. Documentaries showcasing the plight of both - the tribal of Uttarakhand and the classification created by Article 35A that treats non-permanent residents of J&K as second class citizens - were screened for the class.



Societal Conflict and Promoting Culture of Peace

Dr. Umesh Bharte

Nelson Mandela once argued 'if you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.' Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) may sound elusive to many, but in essence Mandela's pearl of wisdom captures the nature and scope of these measures – encouraging political leaders, civil society and businesses that face a conflict situation to cooperate with the 'other' side on a plethora of issues with the aim of building peace. By modifying relations and behavior, one can create a new context for resolving a conflict. Confidence is not something that can be learned like a set of rules; confidence is a state of mind.

Dr. Bharte in his session got us to think about how confidence and self-esteem are not the same thing, although they are often linked. Confidence is the term we use to describe how we feel about our ability to perform roles, functions and tasks. Self-esteem is how we feel about ourselves- whether or not we feel worthy or valued.

Peace and Economics

Dr. Vivek Belhekar

The session revolved around the concept of Game Theory which then moved into how such a matrix was also involved in the idea of peace. The session also covered an evolutionary perspective on peace and a brief discussion of common property resources.

The session also touched upon the evolutionary aspects of fairness and psychology of morality. The discussion revolved around how humans innately avoid harming other humans, since living in groups had an evolutionary benefit.

A brief mention was made of Steven Pinker's book, "Better Angels of our nature" which brings to light the decreasing violence in today's society. The session, thus, brought in various perspectives of economics, evolutionary psychology and resources along with peace to help the class broaden their ideas of how humans behave in coalitions.

Visit to Mani Bhavan

To commemorate Martyrs Day, students of the Peace Studies Certificate course were taken to visit Mani Bhavan, which is where Mahatma Gandhi carried out most of his political activities from in Mumbai, between 1917 and 1934. Students were shown around the museum which housed a photographs and press clippings documenting the Mahatma's life. A documentary on Gandhiji was also screened for those present. A glimpse into Gandhiji's simple and minimalistic lifestyle was provided through exhibits of his personal room. Students also had the opportunity to spin the charkha. The experience was cherished by all and set the tone for the following sessions.

Confidence Building, Conflict Management, and Conflict Resolution

Dr. Wilbur Gonsalves

Building confidence between opposing parties is a crucial step in resolving conflict. Nelson Mandela once argued 'if you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.'

This session went on to explain conflicts in different areas, from varied perspectives, as well as the causes and impact of conflicts. It further suggests the 3 areas for analyzing conflict, namely the magnitude of the conflict, the situation in which it exists and the identities in question. While providing an insight into the various aspects of conflicts, it was established that conflicts are inevitable and are not always dysfunctional. This precisely was the crux of this session, wherein the major focus was on Building Confidence among vulnerable groups, Managing existing Conflicts to prevent escalation and finally Conflict Resolution.

The session highlights how confidence building reduces threats, tension and suspicion while increasing security, trust and the scope for communication. All of this in turn fosters mutual respect and transparency which helps to avoid or defuse conflicts whenever possible.

This session also involved practical application of the concepts covered, by groups of individuals, each of them taking up a case study, involving some kind of conflict in different scenarios. While each group presents their ways of resolving the stated conflict, they attempt to highlight the core concepts of the session in their suggestions.

Gandhi's Gram Swaraj and Community Based Action Research

Dr. Anita Patil Deshmukh

Dr. Anita Patil Deshmukh and her team of barefoot researchers from PUKAR (Partners for Urban Knowledge And Research) presented and discussed their work and how it falls in line with Gandhi's ideology of Gram Swaraj.

In this session, Dr. Deshmukh also explained Community Based Participative (or is it participatory?) Action Research (CBPAR) and how it is action research anchored in communities. CBPAR is assets based, in that it empowers people from within the community to conduct research. It focuses on acknowledging the diverse epistemologies of knowledge.

Like Gandhi's Gram Swaraj, CBPAR is participative, inclusive, and stresses on the decentralization of power. It believes in development from the ground up and that total transformation will take place only if these provisions are followed.

Visit to Godrej Culture Laboratory

The visit to the Godrej Culture Lab session was an enriching experience for all students. The session got the process of introspection going for all present. Following are a few questions answered by the panelists, reading which will help understand the tone of the session the students attended.

How should people with disabilities be addressed?

Always ask the person how they would like to be addressed. Some are fine with being called disabled, some prefer differently abled and others just might want you to view them as any other person. What could we do to make society more inclusive?

We could achieve that by being more empathetic. Being more sensitive towards others in society. One of the panelists gave this example “Diversity is like inviting a person to a party and inclusion would be asking that person for dance.”

How does a person with disability make peace with their handicap?

Illusion of perfection and being flawless has been glorified but it is and cannot be the reality. Difference between normal group and people with disabilities is that one group has identified and accepted their flaws the other still has to identify and consciously accept it. Limitations are present for all, only the kind of limitation faced is different.



Distinguishing Culture of Peace from Culture of War & Societal Conflict, & Promoting Culture of Peace

Dr. Kanamma Raman

The session commenced with Dr. Raman asking everyone to share their idea of peace; drawing from which we contrasted the concept of peace with that of justice. The students were encouraged to dissect and study peace in terms of - Negative Unorganized Peace, Negative Organized Peace, Positive Unorganized Peace, and Positive Organized Peace. This helped us understand that if we used a narrow definition of peace, meaning solely the absence of war or armed conflict between states (or within a state) peace could logically exist in a state where there was both much personal violence such as rapes and unequal distribution of resources so that some people starve to death.

After understanding the concept of peace, Dr. Raman led the students through the sources of conflict, the six clusters of threats, and the global inequality in terms of wealth distribution – making poverty one of the leading causes of violence and unrest.

Dr. Raman concluded the session by sharing the Ubuntu Philosophy, which can be roughly translated to mean “I am because we are”. It is the universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity.



Can we give Peace Education a chance in School?

Dr. Jayshree Inbraj

Peace Education deserves a premium emphasis in school education which forms the foundation of our lives ahead. Schools are our main social avenue of learning. While the primary focus of teaching in schools is predominantly on academic skills, an emphasis on life skills is equally important. This session basically addresses the question, Can we give Peace Education a chance in School?

This session introduces the concept of structural violence which is the hidden violence in our midst, built into the structure of society itself and therefore more difficult to pinpoint and eradicate. Hence, we need to build in sensitivity and awareness among pupils from a very young age to help fight this hidden violence. This is especially important because it is easy for those who benefit from unjust social structures to ignore the harm they are doing unless they are shown in a forceful way the results of their actions on other people.

However, imparting peace education is no cake walk. It requires formal training and developing a fine set of skills. It is inherently a process of life-long learning, and we are all students that are perpetually seeking greater knowledge and understanding. Most importantly, peace educators must practice what they preach.

The highlight of this session involves making all participants experience how conflicts arise and ways to avoid them from escalating, while focusing on regulating one's emotions and channeling it appropriately through activities and discussions following the same.

Film Screening: Peaceful Warrior

The movie peaceful warrior is based on the novel 'Way of the Peaceful Warrior'. It depicts the spiritual discovery of a talented but troubled gymnast (Dan Millman) who meets a spiritual guide (Socrates). Socrates enables Dan to appreciate every moment; to view the journey toward a goal as more meaningful and significant than the attainment.

Through the course of the movie, hints about how to be at peace and lead a peaceful life, are dropped. Some of them include:

1. Live entirely in the present moment, because this is more important than the past or the future.
2. Don't give up on what you love, find love in what you do.
3. Fear creates restlessness and contributes to a lack of peace within your current reality.
4. Too often we let past results dictate what we can or cannot do, rather than simply being in each moment as a completely separate experience.
5. Rather than evaluating everything in terms of wins and losses, we should focus on what we took from each experience.



Gandhian Notion of Trusteeship & Corporate Social Responsibility

Dr. Harsha Badkar

The session by Dr. Harsha Badkar focused precisely on the Gandhian notion of Trusteeship and Corporate social responsibility. Dr. Badkar started off with tracing the concepts of Capitalism from both a Marxian and Gandhian point of view. She went on to highlight the problems caused by capitalism while suggesting trusteeship as the non-violent means to combat it. The session further highlighted the notable contributions towards CSR by various well-known organizations. In order for a company to be socially responsible, it first needs to be responsible to itself and its shareholders. Often, companies that adopt CSR programs have grown their business to the point where they can, and want, to give back to society. Thus, CSR is primarily a strategy of large corporations. Also, the more visible and successful a corporation is, the more responsibility it has to set standards of ethical behavior for its peers, competition, and industry.

Living Peacefully – A Rational Way

Dr. Anjali Joshi

The session was conducted by Dr. Anjali Joshi who highlighted how living peacefully could be done through a rational path. She went on to elaborate on the REBT (Rational Emotive Behavior Therapy) model which was pioneered by Albert Ellis. The session went on to gaining an understanding of how an activating event is usually viewed as the cause of emotional consequences (C) but by the REBT way, it is our beliefs (B) i.e. the meaning we give to the situation which result in the consequences. self talk and images of the main ways in which we manifest I believe I am also went on to explain the technique of disputing the which helps us to change or irrational beliefs two rational beliefs which if we practice on a daily basis leads to an effective philosophy of life the session was also enhance through various activities to better consolidate our learning. Dr. Joshi and it is a session by asking a what we learn what we would focus on and what questions we had interesting discussions was passed by the questions at rest and the session ended on an insightful quotes by Albert Ellis “People and things do not upset us; rather we upset ourselves by believing that they can upset us.”

Psychological Construct of Personality for Achieving Peace

Dr. Vivek Belhekar

Dr. Belhekar kicked off the lecture with a discussion on what personality as a construct is, its various definitions and intricacies, and a common understanding was established which set a base for the lecture.

The class was given an in depth understanding of the Trait approach and was engaged in an activity for identifying their own positive and negative traits which were further discussed on the line of the Big 5 model.

The session moved on to understanding how personality traits were related to peace. The discussion revolved the traits of agreeableness and openness; e.g. An individual low on

agreeableness would be vulnerable to conflict.

The takeaway from the session was highlighted in terms of how personality dimensions could help to identify and develop people, as well as be a consideration in schooling and parenting practices. The session reflected how an in depth understanding of personality in relevance for peace could aid in bringing about a social change.

Retracing the Ideals of The Mahatma through Music & Poetry

Dr. Vasumathi Badrinathan

Vasumathi Badrinathan delivered a beautiful session reflecting up on relationship between music poetry and peace. Ms. Vasumathi took us back to pre-independence era of south India and shared its music and poetry; addressed contributions by Mahatma Gandhi. She also spoke about poetry from the western world by referring to “letters from my window mill” by French poet Alphonse Taude; about Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi’s poems on freedom and the drawing by AK Ramanujan. Ms. Vasumathi engaged the audience through interactive sharing and making them participate. Peace cultivation through music and poetry sounded a promising dimension of human life.



Closing Remarks and Certificate Distribution

The last session of the Mahatma Gandhi Peace Centre's certificate course gave students the opportunity to present and discuss their takeaway from this journey. A few students elaborated on what they consider to be peace and how they have incorporated it in their lives; others expressed the same through different mediums, such as, posters, prose, poetry.

The second half of the session was addressed by Dr. Gautam Gawli, HOD - University Department of Applied Psychology & Counseling Centre, who was also previously a coordinator for the Peace Studies Certificate Course. He spoke of the importance of a course of this nature, especially in a state of constant unrest and violence that we find ourselves. Dr. Gawli interacted with the students to understand their journey and current understanding of peace.

The Mahatma Gandhi Peace Centre Certificate Course was concluded with the presentation of certificated, by Dr. Gautam Gawli to the students.



POETRY & QUOTES

"Education For Life
Education Through Life
Education Throughout Life"
- *Mahatma Gandhi*

"Peace is not the absence of
conflict, it is the ability to
handle conflict through
peaceful means."
- *Ronald Reagan*

"Education
breeds
confidence,
Confidence
breeds Hope,
Hope breeds
Peace"
- *Confucius*

PEACE OR PIECE

Peace or Piece Choice is Ours,
At last, we are Humans
The Message is not for violence,
Peace is all about Silence
Love is getting less,
Peace working on Kindness
Think of 9/11, 26/11, which hurt everyone,
Peace is the way of Heaven
Remember Mahatma Gandhi, Rabindranath Tagore
Who followed peace all over
Holding bombs, guns brings Piece
Holding Love, Hope, Faith brings Peace
Some say it psychology, Some say its philosophy,
Achieving Global Peace is the real Trophy
Start with a Smile, It's a Peace Style
Piece Destroying Us, Peace Uniting Us
Peace or Piece Choice is Ours,
At last, we are Humans

"Education is the
most powerful
weapon we can
use to change the
world"
- *Nelson Mandela*

-*Aniruddha Vikas Kumawat*

THE BATCH OF 2018



CONTACT US

Mahatma Gandhi Peace Center (MGPC)



C/o Department of Applied Psychology & Counselling
Center, C.D. Deshmukh Bhavan,
University of Mumbai, Vidyanagari Campus, Santacruz
(East), Mumbai - 400 098



022- 26527734, 26543282, 26543066



mgpc@mu.ac.in