The influence of media to create a culture of peace

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Abstract

At the present moment of history, war and peace are issues that cannot be decided by the town and city. Instead the power to make decisions about these issues is monopolized by the state, with the support from various institutions allied with it, the arms industry, the mass media and the educational systems, including universities. However, there are some visible examples of states that follow culture of war and some culture of peace. Generally, culture of peace emphasizes the well-being of citizens. In contrast, culture of war consists of the power and military authorization over people. Some scholars chose to ignore the concept of culture of war and look instead for the culture of peace in the modern nation-state. In this scenario, media plays a key role in communicating and sharing the information among people. Now a day's media can be differing to one another.

The Declaration and Program of Action on a Culture of Peace, adopted as Resolution A/53/243 by the United Nations General Assembly in 1999, includes the final definition of the culture of peace. It has identified some basic concepts of peace culture which will benefit the human being around the world. In this article, concepts of education for culture of peace, social development, free flow of information and wider participation of women will be discussed further relating to the media mainly focusing on daily newspapers.

Key words- *Culture, Peace, War, Media.*

Introduction

With the emergence of United Nations, It has challenged to take with a renewed committee and resources in order to save future generations from the scourge of war. Thus, the above-mentioned statement does not emphasize the requirement of transforming not only the institutional structures and roots of war, but also the deep cultural roots and violence in to a culture of peace and non-violence.

Therefore, the dynamics of the global movement for a culture of peace should be different from the peace movements and social justice movements of the past. Rather than coming to an end through short term victory, it should gather strength from each success leading toward

a total social transformation. This is different from the past, when movements dedicated to the overthrow of a government came to an end with the formation of a new government or, if they were oriented against a particular war, they stopped with the end of the war.

In 1992, UNESCO decided to undertake an "action program for the culture of peace." It was one of those crucial moments in world history when advances could be made because the old order was changing. Although the Declaration section was somewhat politicized by the diplomats (e.g. insisting that it would not apply to the internal policies of the Member States), the section on the Program of Action retained intact for the eight program areas of a culture of peace. Those programs include:

1) Culture of peace through education
2) Sustainable economic and social development
3) Respect for all human rights
4) Equality between women and men
5) Democratic participation
6) Understanding, tolerance and solidarity
7) Participatory communication and the free flow of information and knowledge
8) International peace and security [with a priority on disarmament]

At this point, it is important to recognize that all of the above-mentioned cultures of peace areas, except the 8th program, apply as directly to the policies of the city as they do to the policies of the state. The 8th program area can be interpreted as public safety and gun control at the local level, as well as networking with other cities for peace at an international level.

Basic aspects of culture of peace

Education for peace

Education is the principle means of promoting culture of peace. This aspect mainly focuses on the informal education gained from some institutions, family and media rather than formal education taught in schools**.** Further, this concept elaborates the idea of the logic of transforming force and fear to the force of reason and love. This generally means the expanded meaning of education towards learning to live together. A global effort of education and training United Nations should empower people at all levels with the peace

making skills with dialogue, mediation, conflict transformation, consensus building and co-operation.

Promotion of development

It is gradually recognized that in the long term, everyone gains from the implementation of sustainable development for all. This pertains with the economic growth which was earlier considered to be benefiting from military supremacy and structural violence achieved at the expense of the vanquished and the weak. Moreover, according to the World Summit for Social Development (Copenhagen, 1994), social development, social justice and the eradication of poverty are vital for creating a culture of peace within and among the nations in worldwide.

Free flow of information

The above-mentioned concept usually adopted relating to the freedom of opinion, expression and information recognized as an integral fact of human rights and fundamental freedom which would be vital for strengthening peace and international understanding. In this regard, media can be a powerful partner for peace making. Yet, at the same time, media is misused to create and disseminate enemy images, violence and even genocide towards other ethnic and national group of people and to portray and glorify violence in many forms. Therefore, actions are proposed in support of this aim that realizes the positive potential of the media of providing important information and to promote though participatory communication, values and behaviors of culture of peace.

Wider participation of women

The fourth concept concerned in this article is known as the more participation for women. When it comes to Fourth World Conference on Women (Beigine, 1994) there is a strong linkage with equality between men and women. In contrast, culture of war develops the concept of inequality between men and women. As pointed in the conference, it is necessary to promote women's political and economic empowerment and equal representation at every level of decision making. From that women can gain diverse experience, talents and potentials that could make their fullest contribution towards the development of culture of peace.

Methodology

Sample

The universe and the sample are randomly gathered through daily newspapers both published in Sinhala and English. Moreover, the data was collected via 30 newspapers in the month of September and October, 2015.

Data Collection

The data was mainly collected through the Sri Lanka daily newspapers in order to search information for the title of culture of peace for the research article.

Data Analysis

Data was qualitatively analyzed after categorizing them into relevant topics/concepts and summaries were presented in the discussion section.

Data findings, presentation and analysis

Education for peace

The first concept discussed in this article will be the education for peace. In this regard number of collective information from the newspapers was gathered. In culture of peace, it elaborates not only the formal education but also the informal education in the complete range of institutions as well as in the family and media. Therefore, this clearly develops the concept of education in all forms of in an ethical way for all. Even the media plays a significant role relating to this concept. Hence, education in every sector is highly accepted as an essential part when it comes to culture of peace. Daily newspapers have published several concepts regarding education but generally towards the formal education of students. It has emphasized the general aspects which the benefits for the students on their education will be increased. Instead the newspapers have not followed the concept of leaning to live together and there have been no such important aspects of education in the culture of peace is highlighted.

Promotion of development

Development of the country would have been less though some articles have indicated variety of development structures, such as the construction of "Digana" stadium, construction of a new building For Maharagama General hospital and the social development from the Mathugama Provincial Council where they have inaugurated construction on children's park

and education programs which notify general public about the danger of Dangue fever. Eradication of poverty was not visible in the newspapers as such some of the arrestments of culprits were highlighted with regard to the social justice which consider in the culture of peace. Moreover, the article was appeared publishing the injustice has occurred where Public law and order favored for the officers and the drivers of the Politicians. The case against Vaas Gunawardana was fixed for judgment and the High Court has ordered for a report on alleged duplicated performances of an official who had unauthorizely duplicated his performance including his way of his voice in a manner of infringing his economic rights.

The free flow of information

In this concept not only the free flow of information rather it covers the basic aspects of freedom of opinion expression and Human Rights. There were some discussions of protests campaigns by the residents of Badagiriya, Hambanthota who underwent untold hardships due to the lack of pure drinking water for a considerable period brought into the notice. The basic human rights of freedom of expression mainly in different types of elections have focused on the newspapers. The Provincial Council election processes and information were notified to the public.

Wider participation for women

In this regard, a limited room was given to this specific concept. Only one article based on arts and women was published and the other one was based on a lady politician and her career. The concept of equality between men and women as elaborated the wider participation of women in decision making is not been highlighted which has indicted in culture of peace.

Discussion and suggestions

Each new medium of communication changes the society. From printing to broadcasting to digital technologies, the mass media of communication have had successively greater impact on people's lives, their ways of thinking and of viewing the world. As a consequence, throughout history what became known as the mass media have often been constrained by government, corporate and religious interests raising crucial questions of ownership, control

and censorship. Such constraints inevitably led to the creation of alternative media, more accessible, less restrictive spaces in which citizens can express their own opinions and agendas.

Regarding the four concepts the media, the sample indicated the majority of social justice and the free flow of information. Pertaining to this, newspapers have mainly focused on the social development, social justice and the struggles where the people convey their problems and views which carried out the idea of freedom of information, attitudes and views.

The room given to provide education for peace and wider participation for women is very limited in this source of media. Therefore, the sufficient fact which develops the culture of peace being quietly ignored by the newspapers as it seems. The media should strengthen the education in consensus building and non-violence actions rather than creating and disseminating enemy images among other nations and ethnic groups. It is quite visible that the media influences the image of violence rather than the concepts of peace. It is essential to provide information and facts which strengthen the bond among the nation's despites of the differences in diverse ethnicities. Education based on the learning to live together concept should be developed by media as it encompasses the general idea of the peace culture.

Yet, Peace implies that love, compassion, human dignity and justice are fully preserved. Peace entails that we understand that we are all interdependent and related to one another. Media is individually and collectively responsible for the common good, including the well-being of future generations. Media's ethical awareness requires setting limits to technology.

Media, itself must respect and conduct its proceedings accordance with Human rights, including religious freedom and the rights of minorities. Other than that Media should commit themselves selves to assure a truly humane education for all. Culture of peace emphasizes the education for peace, freedom and human rights, and religious education to promote openness and tolerance; hence media should emphasize it to in a way better. Media is responsible to a civil society which respects environmental and social justice. Media can make the initiative for this process locally and continues to national and transnational levels where we can commit ourselves to work towards a world without weapons and to dismantle the industry of war. Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.

The goal of a culture of peace is a world in which the rich diversity of cultures is cause for appreciation and co-operation. A culture of peace is a body of shared values, attitudes and behaviours based on non-violence and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, on understanding, tolerance and solidarity, on the full participation and empowerment of women, and on the sharing and free flow of information.

Full participation and empowerment of women is essential to the development of a culture of peace. It was the monopolization of warfare by men that led to the exclusion of women from power. But women's skills of exchange, co-operation and solidarity, as well as their experience of giving birth, bringing up the next generation and managing informal economies, are all essential to the evolution of a culture of peace. Therefore providing wider participation for women in every aspect of work is a must. Media can take the initiative in this regard.

Media should be pluralistic, independent and accessible which can ensure the free flow of ideas essential for a culture of peace. The framework recommends including peace, human rights and racial equality in the curricula at all educational levels and that could be promoted by media especially in news papers. It is essential to develop support systems for peace promoters so that they receive regular information and periodic training and encouragement.

Media must enable those who have been in conflict to work together, the 'peace promoter' functions as arbitrator, mediator and facilitator to transform their relationship from conflict to co-operation.

It is up to young people to take up the task of building and cultivating a culture of peace in the next generation. Newspapers including media should provide wider priority for the young who has engaged in the above tasks.

In moving from a culture of war to a culture of peace, every aspect of social relations and every person, from the centers of power to the most remote villages, may be engaged and transformed. Despite the range of imaginative activities already undertaken to establish a culture of peace, the duty of media's securing the funding for peace-building remains a formidable task.

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