

Pillars of Peace

Research by Students of WeSchool*

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Pillars of Peace is a new conceptual framework proposed by our research study for understanding and describing the factors that create peaceful societies. This framework defines the characteristics which are most closely associated with peace and has been derived from a process of intensive study and statistical analysis. This holistic and quantitative study highlights the positive factors which sustain and reinforce peaceful societies.

The problems humans are facing today are global in nature. They include climate change, ever decreasing biodiversity, depletion of the fresh water and other resources on the planet, increasing strife and conflict, and underpinning all these - overpopulation. Without peace we will be unable to achieve the levels of cooperation, inclusiveness and social equity required to begin

solving these challenges, let alone empowering the international institutions needed to regulate them. It is impossible to accurately portray the devastating effects that global challenges will have on all of us unless unified global action is taken. Our shared challenges call for global solutions, and these solutions will require cooperation on a global scale unparalleled in human history.

Our focus of the study has been not what 'someone else' has to do to bring about Peace; but what 'I' at my level think, feel, mean, and do from the term 'Peace'. Taking a leaf from our historical manuscripts we epitomize the four pillars as the Ashokan pillar comprising of four animals (lion, horse, elephant, bull) facing different directions, mounted on a cylindrical abacus, featuring 24-spoked Dharma-wheel over an inverted lotus. The four pillars are: Culture, Education, Work-life balance and Government, Symbolizing power

*Ravneet Kaur, Aaditya Kandalkar, Aditi Khare, Disha Chaudhry, Kalyani Mandavgane, Kashish Motiwala, Sarang Mahajan, Shrutika Deshmukh, Suhina Roy, Zoya Versey (**Business Design**), **Batch (2014 - 2016)**.

Aneree Ajmera, Isha Ganatra, Yamini Parimi (**E-Business**), **Batch (2014 - 2016)**.

Amol Rathod, Aniket Umekar, Girish Bonde, Lokesh Khandale, Neha Abrol, Nishant Pandita, Rupesh Bhirude, Tushar Hol, Vikas Vijayan (**MMS**), **Batch (2014 - 2016)**.

Mentored by WeSchool Faculty **Prof. Dr. Ketna L. Mehta** and **Prof. Chitralkha Kumar**.

This is an excerpted research report which was the basis of the panel discussion with **Padmabhushan Smt. Rajashree Birla**, Chairperson, the Aditya Birla Centre for Community Initiatives and Rural Development, **Shaina NC**, Indian fashion designer, politician and a social worker, **Brig. (Retd). Kuldeep Singh Chandpuri MVC**, VSM, **Dr. Sadanand Date**, Joint Police Commissioner, **Shailesh Haribhakti**, Chairman, BDO Consulting Pvt. Ltd., Sarosh Bana, Executive Editor, Business India, **Dolly Thakore** Indian theatre actress and casting director., **Kia Scherr**, co-founder One Life Alliance, Author and Inspirational Speaker, on 26th December 2014 at **WeSchool**, Mumbai, India.

(Education), courage (culture), confidence (Work-Life), and pride (Government) the abacus is girded by four animals; the Lion of the North, the Elephant of the East, the Horse of the South and the Bull of the West. Each of these animals signifies the centrifugal balance it must have to maintain peace.

This report focuses on the how four pillars of Peace inclusive of 'I' can bring about change at an individual level, by giving a balanced approach and information that is positive and solution based. We hope that this will help you make better choices to create the kind of future in which you wish to live.

INTRODUCTION

When we talk about peace a picture of serenity and tranquillity comes to our mind, a world without violence, a meadow of endless harmony. Year 2013 was marked by heightened tensions in the Ukraine, the on-going conflict in Syria, civil war in South Sudan and a broadening and increased intensity of terrorist activity in many countries including Afghanistan, Iraq, the Philippines and Libya. Not just nations but Individuals in general have also become more impulsive and prone to retaliation. In today's fast paced world there are innumerable challenges that we face. Situations do not always favour us. Somewhere down the line we always need to find our inner peace. In the words of Lord Buddha, "Peace comes from within. Do not seek it without". If every individual strived towards practicing and promoting Peace the world would be a better place to live in. So why is there so much of discord? What is stopping us from maintaining peace and what is instigating others to

promote peace? There are certain inevitable factors in every individual's life that moulds one's life and contributes to the decision making process. It is said that everything has a good and a bad side and it depends upon us to strike a balance between them. An imbalance in the above factors leads to dissonance. Starting at a personal level this disturbance goes on amplifying to a national and further to a global level. "Our World unified for Peace" is an initiative on how an individual on its part can contribute to make this world a better place by restoring peace, harmony and unity.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The objective of the study is to identify the dominant factors that influence an individual's contribution towards attaining Global Peace. It also focuses on understanding the essence of peace in an individual's life. The respondents belong to the age group 16 - 60 years and the survey pool comprised students pursuing higher education which included undergraduate and post graduate students, and financially dependent and independent individuals. Sample size comprises of 341 individuals. Statistical bar graphs, pie charts and tables were made in order to draw statistical inferences and effect measurements. Both Primary and Secondary data has been deployed for the present study. For the Primary Research, an online survey comprising of 18 questions was circulated through the "ESurv :www.esurv.org" website. 302 complete responses were captured through the questionnaire. Using Opinion Survey method, open ended questions were asked to 39 opinion holders. They were approached for in depth interviews. Statistical graphs are made in

order to draw statistical inferences and effect measurements. Secondary Research data has been collected through various books, magazines, websites, research papers and web portals.

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

PILLARS OF PEACE

As an individual, one's life is highly dominated by four undeniable influences whether one likes it or not. Directly or indirectly they prove to be heavy influences on how we are nurtured.

These 4 pillars are:

CULTURE AND I

Role of society in building peace: In the history of institutionalized relations between states, the preservation of peace and stability has always been a predominant concern-an ideal that is also enunciated in the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations. The gap between the idea of peace and the reality of tension and conflict, however, has proven to be a major challenge to the world organization ever since its foundation after World War II-and that challenge was not only due to conflicting political and economic interests. Situations of conflict often arise in a complex setting of historical, social, cultural and political interaction between communities; accordingly, they must be dealt with in a multifaceted and integrative manner. This is only possible if we are knowledgeable about our distinct cultures, traditions and value systems.

Role of family in building peace: The Family is the most basic social unit in today's society. Like the world as a whole, the family is in transition. In every culture, families are disintegrating,

fragmenting under pressure of economic and political upheavals and weakening in the face of moral and spiritual confusion. Despite its small size, it plays important roles in stabilizing and enhancing the growth of the adult members of the society and provide a context for the growth and development of the children. Strong families are deeply committed to the family unit and to promoting the happiness and welfare of each other. Commitment is a vital factor in developing a strong sense of family unity. What families do together does not matter as much as that they do SOMETHING together that is mutually planned and enjoyable. Spontaneity, humour, wit, and fun are goals to work toward.

EDUCATION AND I

High quality education is basic impetus of the human capital for social and economic development, access to knowledge and awareness rising for basic human rights and strengthening the rule of law, as well as for decent standard of living, public health and quality of life improvement. In addition, the education in general and especially public health and peaceful education need to be recognized as a catalyst for peace and its role is supplemented with the possibilities for promotion of solidarity, social justice and humanity, decreasing of social tensions and prevention of violence, poverty and all forms of discrimination, resettlement, humiliation, trafficking in human beings, promotion of the democratic principles and creation of more equal, stable and democratic world. The most important is working to foster peace and international understanding
ENDLESSLY.

Peace Education: Peace education refers to the

process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioural changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural; to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level.

Education for development: Education for Development is the term used in UNICEF to describe an approach to teaching and learning which builds a commitment to global solidarity, peace, acceptance of differences, social justice and environmental awareness in young people (Fountain, 1995). Five basic concepts of Education for Development are interdependence, images and perceptions, social justice, conflict and conflict resolution, and change and the future. These concepts are approached as interdisciplinary perspectives that can be incorporated into the teaching of a wide range of subject matter, rather than as specific subjects in themselves. Interactive, participatory, cooperatively-structured teaching methods are as important as the content of Education for Development. These methods allow learners to better grasp complex concepts, build problem solving abilities and develop social skills. These approaches have been used in both formal and non-formal educational activities, and provide a human development-oriented framework for educating about peace and social justice issues.

WORKLIFE AND I

On an average an individual approximately spends 45 hours in his professional life or work sector if

he is working for 5 days a week. In a professional life of 30-35 years an individual has to face many ups and downs. In this period it is challenging for him/her to maintain state of peace. If life is a play then an individual performs many roles. An individual can be a father, mother, brother, sister, spouse, friend, leader etc. As being human we all have expectations from our relationships. Don't you think it would be difficult to maintain peace of mind with all these expectations?

Corporate plays a major role when it comes to world peace. Big companies, directly or indirectly have a huge impact on an individual or nation at large and their involvement in the peace building process cannot be undermined. Negative involvement leads to complicity and conflict. This makes them silent witness to the wrong in the world whereas a positive involvement is achieved when corporate houses understand their responsibility to conflict resolution and goodwill of people, thus building peace.

GOVERNMENT AND I

Governance and Peace: Everybody desires peace - harmony and balance forming comfortable life for themselves, family, communities and ultimately society. Yet every person's individual ideal of peace varies. Often it is dependent on their environmental conditions. For example a person growing or surviving in a conflict zone may desire shelter and protection from violence; an Indigenous tribe forced to flee their homes due to commercial logging may desire preservation of their natural habitat. A person in an abusive, violent relationship may desire a refuge and means to relocate.

The system is more than simply the sum of its components, as the wider interactions in a system also determine the way components themselves operate. Similarly, when considering the environment which underlies a peaceful society it is vital to recognize the way government, the economy, and culture might interact the equity of taxation and the appropriate provisioning of goods and services are also important when considering the effectiveness of government. This is because how revenue is raised and how public funds are spent will impact the material and perceived fairness of government. On a practical level this might involve government funding of services which encourages community access to justice, the funding of infrastructure projects or whether the burden of taxation is inequitable. Other measures of the effectiveness of government include the Economist Intelligence Unit's 'Functioning of Government' indicator, a sub-component of the Democracy Index.

LAW AND PEACE

At their most basic level, legal rights should allow individuals to live a life as free as possible of violence. This requires that when violence does occur that the perpetrators are brought to justice within a system that is accepted as fair and impartial. Further than just requiring that the legal protections are in place, it also requires that the police, judiciary and military are free from corruption, independent, accountable and accessible. There are also some rights which are thought to be consistent across nations. These might include the right to life, to be treated equally regardless of race or gender, or the right to speak freely or own property. It was suggested that this

might occur both as a consequence of the grievances created through government abuse of rights and the limited means for individuals and groups to air these grievance.

Laws can both ensure that differences are negotiated between parties while helping to avoid them from occurring at the outset. The legal acceptance of the rights of others based on the customs of the culture is therefore a crucial component to building a more peaceful society.

Duality

THE MAJOR FORCES INFLUENCING PEACE

Apart from the 4 basic pillars of our life, there are forces which though a regular part of our life, provide a grey shade to our characters and have tendency to push us further from peace path while at the same time bringing us near it. At times they are the reason we get peace and at other times they are the ones which push us to our darker selves.

POWER AND MONEY

SINCE THE END of the Second World War in 1945 there have been some 250 major wars in which over 50 million people have been killed, tens of millions made homeless, and countless millions injured and bereaved. In the history of warfare the twentieth century stands out as the bloodiest and most brutal - three times more people have been killed in wars in the last ninety years than in all the previous five hundred.

Money is the instrument of exchange, helping in buying and selling and also in fixing a value on

things and commodities. It may be in metal or in paper. With the market getting more and more complicated there are other negotiable instruments which are as good as the minted coins or the printed notes. Money gives purchasing power but this power is not absolute as it is on various factors. In such a case it is termed currency and according to their purchasing power they are termed hard, soft and weak. Power and Money also affects the average person with expenses of all sought. This plays an important role in politics. Ross Perot was an unknown multimillionaire and his money is the only reason that he made it into the presidential election. Only if we begin to imagine politics as a relation occurring between communities, might we understand that peace is the political good. This definition has the advantage of trying to name a realm in which the relation between principal (self) and other is noticeably different from those of ethics, aesthetics, and religion. It also recognizes that the primary difficulty of politics lies not in forming communities, which in fact spring forth spontaneously, but in finding ways of harmonizing the needs of different communities.

RELIGION

"My Religion is simple. My religion is peace, love, compassion and equality." - Notes from Nora

There are two primary tasks facing religious practitioners who are concerned with world peace. First, we must promote better interfaith understanding so as to create a workable degree of unity among all religions. This may be achieved in part by respecting each other's beliefs and by emphasizing our common concern for human well-being. Second, we must bring about a viable

consensus on basic spiritual values that touch every human heart and enhance general human happiness. This means we must emphasize the common denominator of all world religions - humanitarian ideals. These two steps will enable us to act both individually and together to create the necessary spiritual conditions for world peace.

Despite the progressive secularization brought about by worldwide modernization and despite systematic attempts in some parts of the world to destroy spiritual values, the vast majority of humanity continues to believe in one religion or another. The undying faith in religion, evident even under irreligious political systems, clearly demonstrates the potency of religion as such. Religious resources are contained in the four main elements of which religions consist. Haar identifies these elements as: religious ideas (content of belief), religious practices (ritual behaviour), social organization (religious community), and religious- or spiritual- experiences. These dimensions can all be used in the service of peacemaking. Two critical elements in religious life that are centrally important to peacemaking are empathy and compassion, and the value of tapping into these attributes is readily apparent in effective religious peacemaking.

TECHNOLOGY

Technology can enhance the impact of a broad range of peace building, social cohesion and peace advocacy initiatives, drawing both on the expertise of academics and technologists and on the lived experience of practitioners working to transform conflict. Technology plays a major impact on peace through being an essential

channel of information, communications, gaming and networking.

Empowerment: One key reason to use technologies in peace-building is that they can empower a larger number of people to engage and participate. But there are many ways technology can be used to empower various groups in conflict and post-conflict contexts. There are well documented tensions, for example, between state uses of technologies for surveillance purposes and the security implications of some grassroots uses.

Behaviour change: Either by shaping peace and conflict narratives, through training or education, or by helping shape alternative identity formation processes. Technological tools can affect behaviors that pertain to patterns of violence and peace. **Impact:** Another assumption underlying the use of technologies for peace-building is that it can help 'improve' peace building, with the caveat that there are associated risks and ethical issues. Are there actual or possible impacts of using technologies for peace-building? What are they? How can we measure them? Does technology fundamentally change what we can achieve in peace-building?

Instant worldwide communication, instant media coverage and the compelling market forces of modern economics are all bittersweet fruits of the technology revolution that are affecting quality of life as well as security perceptions. The impact of technology will be even more pronounced in the future, and hence the technology control mechanisms of the future will have to face new challenges, some of which are yet to be identified clearly. Past analysis has shown that terrorism could not have gained this amorphous global

presence without state-level support. Given the effects of globalization and the inevitable diffusion of technology, protecting sensitive technologies from violent misuse will be the major and immediate challenge for arms control during the early decades of this century. If parents, educators, and mentors are aware of the risk factors and warning signs, they can use technology as another tool to prevent and detect violence among the young people they know.

MEDIA

It can be suggested that media is both a friend and a foe to the process of peace. Media can foster human security, but there is evidence that media can reinforce motives for fuelling wars. It can be an instrument for peace and conflict management, which promotes messages and strategies that can lead to peaceful agreements and tolerant behavior in a given society. Media can also be a weapon of violence that propagates biased information and manipulates societies or groups in conflict with divisive ideologies and harmful actions. Thus, the media have become pervasive and extremely influential in attitudes towards conflict.

The role of media in conflict has increased its place in public attention. Policy makers, journalists, and social scientists all point to the central role of the press in events such as the genocide in Rwanda, the Israel-Palestinian conflict, the war in Bosnia, Somalia etc. A more descriptive example is the case of Colombia. Daily life in Colombia is bombarded, not only with explosives, but also with war news. It is very common to read news that vividly describe the drama of death and terror by informing the public of how many people have been massacred, for instance. Most Colombians

have accommodated to this type of news, since there is nothing else on the menu.

Media as promoter of Peace: There are efforts to promote the use of media to facilitate conflict resolution, and 'peace media'. Peace media can be defined as the use of "radio, television, and printed journalism, to promote peace, to disseminate truthful information or alternate viewpoints that could turn public sentiment toward peaceful resolution of conflict, or to counter 'hate radio'".

A media environment that is influenced by sensationalist priorities for news coverage is less likely to contribute to a peace process. Peace media, in contrast, is characterized by balanced reporting, emotional distance, presenting a broader and more multifaceted view of the conflict, and rejecting entertainment and partisan interests as major influences on news presentation. In this context, it is noted that an independent public sphere for open and free communication between different political currents, religions, minorities etc. is necessary for an effective peace media approach.

In sum, as a platform for discussions and sharing information by antagonists, peace media is needed as a significant catalyst for any peace process. Since the general public is dependent on news media for information, the media also influences the general view on the conflict and the peace process. Unfortunately, many have found that the media is more likely to hinder peace processes than to promote them.

Finally, forty years of conflict in Colombia is enough to learn important lessons. Peace media needs time and perseverance in highly complex conflict situations like the one in Colombia. A shift from a

short term to a long term perspective and gradual peace building must permeate the news media and the society as a whole. Unity and dialogue are required and media could contribute to these by setting the platform for a point of convergence for all institutions of the Colombian society.

"All of us who professionally use the mass media are the shapers of society. We can vulgarise it. Or we can brutalise it. Or we can help lift it to a higher level." **Bernbach**

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

We are all connected to the world and its elements, and each one of us play a significant role in this cycle we call 'Life'. Human qualities such as morality, compassion, appreciation, empathy and intuition, to name a few, are all found at the core of our Self. These are personality traits that come naturally to us as we were born with it. It is the way we have been brought up that defines how much or how little these traits continue to live on and remain evident in our personalities. As Jettie says, "don't grow up, it's a trap!"

This is the classic debate of whether it is our nature, who we really are, or is it our nurture, that is, how our environment has shaped our ideologies, hence defining how we react and interact with our environment. As we are all dynamic in nature, some people have more of a propensity to accept change than others would. Instead of focussing on materialistic gains being the vital source of happiness, there must be a shift of consciousness to think of the bigger picture of what our purpose of existence is and how we are all one.

To create a world filled with peace and happiness, there should be a realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own - populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness - an epic story that continues invisibly around us.

"Why can't we control our anger?

Because we love perfection.

Make a little room for imperfection in our lives."

- Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

Perfection is shallow, unreal and fatally uninteresting. This perfection we strive for is risen in standards due to us being aware of the many alternatives to living which we see through the 3000 odd advertising and marketing messages we are exposed to daily. This increases the number of options of choices we make on a regular basis, which decreases the satisfaction we get from ultimately choosing the final choice which one will never be satisfied with because of the sheer awareness of "what if I chose the other options?"

India is known to have the youngest population worldwide, with 50% of its population being below the age of 24. This means, if the younger generation starts to understand the importance of the inculcation of peace and harmony in personal and work life, these children would grow on to imparting this basic knowledge to the following generations which thus helps the collective consciousness from performing tasks for immediate gratification to a more sustainable living and understanding.

This need to live a sustainable life comes out of having a 'peaceful mind'. So, we ask ourselves, what is a 'peaceful mind'? From our research,

when asked about "what enhances a peaceful mind?" most of the respondents out of a count of 280, opted for music, family and happy interpersonal relationships (in order of preference). Therefore, even though we look at education and work life as necessities for the end-goal of earning 'money and power', people still look to music and family for stress-busting.

"Family" was also selected as the first option for most candidates who were asked, "what brought them back to a path of peace when strayed?". This also reassures us that family still holds a lasting impression on one's confidence, self-motivation, and world-views and so on. Those who have lesser family support are more likely to feel lonelier.

Not only should the family be a part of peace incorporation, but the school should continue educating children till college-level education on sustainable living, peace and moral principles, so as to ensure all activities taken over in work and personal life should be done with the present and future generations in mind.

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