Infusing Tolerance and Empathy SkillsinAdolescents for Peaceful Co-existence in 21st Century

A. Smitha[1] & Dr. Mary Vineetha Thomas[2]
[1]Research Scholar, [2]Assistant Professor Department of Education, Central University of Kerala, Kasaragod, Kerala, India.

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ABSTRACT: *Tolerance and Empathy are the most vibrant tools that are to be reinforced in the society for building up mutual relations among adolescents in the present world. Due to the globalisation and worldwide migration the education pattern for children is to be reformed for bringing positive changes in their attitudes, behaviour, beliefs and values by infusingTolerance and Empathy. Today's adolescents are belonging mostly to nuclear family so they face difficulties in getting along with people of different culture, language, caste, community, religion, age, race, knowledge, attitude, behaviour, values, ethnicity, nationality. Empathy is one of the basic and essential skills among ten core life skills proposed by World Health Organisation (WHO). So there is a need for adolescents to grow in a multicultural, multilingual and multi-religious groups that can only be fostered in well-established school environment where they spend most of their time. The present paper focuses on infusing Tolerance and Empathy among adolescents for their future benefits so that the quality of their life increases by modifying them into an individual of tolerant and empathic personalityso as to well equip themselves in the modern social settings.*

Key Words: *Tolerance, empathy, Life skills, World Health Organisation, Personality.*

Introduction

In the 21st century, traditional method of teaching-learning process is focussing on learner centred method focussing on discovering the innovative knowledge and skills of students. The aim of education is to shape the human behaviour into a positive and adaptive civilized human being for successful socialization in the multicultural, multiracial and multi-religious community. Education is the most important tools for promoting tolerance and empathy in the process of teaching and learning. Education in atolerant and empathic classroom enables the students in recognizing other's potential for accepting, appreciating, respecting the differences, thinking from their brain, feeling from their heart and seeing from their eyes.

Due to the increase in non-violence, threats and conflicts in the modern society, it is necessary for the nation and other countries to secure human beings with peaceful co-existence in the 21st century. Peace is the core factor of education at all times that helps adolescents in nurturing positive outlook and good human values. In the 21st Century, there are many challenges in the world rich in diversity that can affect teenagers on everyday basis, so tolerance and empathy is not considered to be the optional skills but are essential skills.Though the system of education is different in all parts of the world but the pedagogy of tolerance and empathy should be imbibed in the teaching learning process.

Students can become the master of concept and principle for rich diversity and frame their critical mind for applying the knowledge or skills to problem solving and community development.Important social values of our country should be tolerance and empathy as India is a nation of diversity with cultural, religious, social, racial, sexual, socio-economic status or background, beliefs, customs, practices, traditions, linguistic, geographical, lingual andethnic differences.

Adolescents usually imitates the attitude and behaviour of parents, teachers, famous personalities that influence them in the way they criticise or judge other people in the community. The stage of adolescence is appropriate for the socio-emotional teaching-learning of tolerance and empathy and enhance respect, acceptance, appreciation by listening, observing or understanding other's feelings, sufferings and experiences. Internet or social media can influence the young one's but the live experience of knowledge, behaviour, values, attitude and skills in the company of peer group, teachers, parents will have much greater impact in the life of adolescents.

Adolescents from diverse background are facing difficulties in adjustment when they are in the school settings due to the differences in languages, culture, religion, habits, values, traditions, faith or beliefs, practices, knowledge, attitude, behaviour. Adolescents due to their physical and mental changes can feel like a migrant who is at new and strange environment facing adjustment issues to face the challenges in their

daily life. Adolescents studying in a tolerant and empathic society will improve their knowledge level by developing an understanding and evaluating about the concept of tolerance and empathy perfectly and practise.

Tolerance and empathy practices will provide equal rights and chances in the society for all members thereby promoting peace and harmony. Our country is rich of citizens such as Sikhs, Christians, Hindus and Muslims, trans-genders, homosexuals, physically or mentally disabled people, immigrants living together who can raise the fundamental values or skills i.e. tolerance and empathy for building up a civic society." Gajdukova (2010) identified two ways of development of personality: tolerant (the way of man, rejected of the domination and violence, who is ready to cooperate based on consent and respect, a man with a friendly attitude to other opinions, beliefs, traditions) and intolerant (the path of men with the current notions of their own exclusiveness, a low level of education and personal culture, rejection of opposite views and customs)."The beauty lies only because of the diversity of the world with the uniqueness in the nature of each and every individual, otherwise it would have been boring, monotonous and unpleasant in the absence of any competency.

Tolerance

"The word "tolerance" originates from Latin 'tolerantia' – 'to bear', 'to endure', 'to overcome' (Komlev, 2006), which reflects only the separate aspects of the modern ideas about the tolerance construct."Tolerance is a virtue, value, skill and quality of a person that makes him or her complete for that provides spiritual insights to survive peacefully in the present society. Tolerance is a positive trait that acts as strength and not as weakness by filling the gap among people of differences by understanding everyone's beliefs, habits, attitudes, behaviours, rights, practices, view-points. Tolerance means to respect each other in spite of any disagreement or issues and express using positive words by avoiding provocative words that can hurt others.

"Tolerance is respect, acceptance and appreciation of the rich diversity of our forms of expression and ways of being human. It is fostered by knowledge, openness, communication and freedom of thought, conscience and belief. Tolerance - harmony in diversity. This personality trait is part of a humanistic orientation and identity is determined by its value attitude towards others. It is set up for a certain type of relationship, which is manifested in the actions of human personality. Tolerance means realized conscious personal commitment to action to achieve humanistic relations between individuals and groups having different world, different values, and patterns of behaviour (Grawemeyer et al., 2012)."

"Witenberg (2007) on studying children's and adolescents' tolerance of human diversity, defined tolerance as: "…the conscious affirmation of favourable judgments and beliefs involving principles of justice, equality, care and consideration for the plight of others or, more concisely, according respect and equality to others who are different through racial characteristics, ethnicity, and nationality."

"Tolerance is not passive, it is active. It is not concession, condescension or indulgence. Tolerance is primarily an active attitude prompted by recognition of the universal human rights and fundamental freedoms under any circumstances of human. Tolerance should be exercised by individuals, groups, states (Girard and Johnson, 2008)."'"Tolerance should not be reduced to indifference, conformity, denial of self-interest, and suggests on the one hand, the stability as a person's ability to realize their personal position, and the other - flexibility as the ability to respect the positions and values of others (Johnson et al., 2001)."

"The International Day for Tolerance is an annual observance day (16th November) declared by UNESCO(1995) for creating awareness among people of the dangers of intolerance. To mark the United Nations Year for Tolerance and the 125th anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi, UNESCO introduced a prize to promote tolerance and non-violence. The UNESCO declared Madanjeet Singh Prize to promote Tolerance and Non-Violence rewards for significant activities in the scientific, artistic, cultural or communication fields aimed at the promotion of a spirit of tolerance and non-violence."

"Article 1 of the Declaration of principles on tolerance by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 1995) has stated the meaning of Today's Tolerance that are as follows:

1. Tolerance is to respect, accept and appreciate rich diversity of cultures of the world.
2. Tolerance is active attitude that prompts to recognize the fundamental freedoms and human rights universally.
3. Tolerance is to accept the fact that human beings diversify in appearance, values, circumstances, speech and behaviour in natural ways."

Intolerance is rejection of other people, unavailability to co-exist with other (different) people; it is expressed with destructive, conflict and aggressive behaviour(Declaration of Principles on Tolerance, UNESCO, 1995)."

"In the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations, the stated goal is indeed 'to practise tolerance' for the maintenance of peace, justice, respect for human rights and the promotion of social progress. Tolerance can exist in its most active for only in a setting in which human dignity and civil liberties are respected.' (Proclamation of the United Nations Year for Tolerance and Declaration on Tolerance, Paris, UNESCO, 1993)."

Gordon Willard Allport's Tolerant Personality Theory

"Allport (1979) has described about the four components of tolerant personality i.e. empathic ability, self-insight, intropunitiveness and tolerance for ambiguity. In G. Allport's studies, an ability to establish warm relationships with the others as a manifestation of tolerance is one of the criterions of a personality's psychological maturity (Allport, 2002)." A tolerant person is the one who knows himself/herself and has the ability to understand others in spite of various differences.

Empathy is the ability to size up people, a social sensitivity, and a flexible capacity to know another's state of mind and adapt to it. Individuals with self-insight are self-aware, know and accept their capabilities and short comings, and are self-critical, possess sense of humour and can laugh at their own misgivings. One who can laugh at oneself is unlikely to feel greatly superior to others. Intropunitiveness is a tendency to look inward for responsibility and blame rather than projecting blame outwardly. An intropunitive person feels genuine sympathy for the 'underdog' and empathises keenly with the suffering of others also finds great reward in helping others. Tolerant personality has a tolerance for ambiguity, and is flexible and cognitively complex rather than rigid cognitively bifurcated.

"Allport (1954) had described that the more 'Tolerant types' as have a sense of inner security, freedom from threat, ego maturity, inner confidence, and strength to cope adequately with threat believing that such tolerance was fostered in a more permissive home environment, characterised by security, unconditional acceptance from parents and leading to an empathic and accepting orientation towards others. Tolerant (or democratic) personalities are viewed as more affiliative in nature, perhaps because they are able to trust others. They possess self-trust, made possible because security has been experienced in the realistic handling of inner conflicts and social transactions."

"Allport (1954) conceptualises tolerance as a personal value and distinguishes between Warm Tolerance (e.g., approving of other people), Cold Tolerance (e.g., enduring things we dislike) and limits of tolerance (e.g., intolerance of intolerance)."Tolerant personality is reflected by the one who is friendly with other people. Patience is the most powerful weapon and pillar for forbearing enduring to encounter challenges that can be practised by the people so that the mixed worldof complexity is converted into a tolerant world.

Empathy

"World Health Organisation (WHO; 1997) has defined life skills as the adaptive and positive behaviour that enable individuals to deal effectively with the demands and challenges of everyday life.Ten core life skills have been laid down by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), WHO and UNICEF are self-awareness, empathy, critical thinking, creative thinking, decision making, problem solving, effective communication, interpersonal relationship, coping with stress and coping with emotion."

The term 'empathy' was coined over one hundred years ago by Titchener, an adaptation of the German word Einfuhlung (Wispe, 1986).Rogers (1954) had defined empathy in the context of acceptance: If I say that I "accept" you, but know nothing of you, this is a shallow acceptance indeed, and you realize that it may change if I actually come to know you. But if I understand you empathically, see you and what you are feeling and doing from your point of view, enter your private world and see it as it appears to you—and still accept you—then this is safety indeed. In this climate you can permit your real self to emerge, and to express itself in varied and novel forming as it relates to the world."

"Empathy is the ability to feel or imagine another person's emotional experience. Empathy is a frequently studied personality facet in children because of its importance to prosocial behaviour, reductions in antisocial behaviour, and healthy childhood development (Eisenberg, 2013; Erikson, 1968). Past studies have found that empathy counteracts and moderates many negative personality features, in particular with a focus in interpersonal realms (Eisenberg et al., 2013). The ability to empathize is an important part of social and emotional development, affecting an individual's behaviour toward others and the quality of social relationships (McDonald and Messinger, 2011)."

Empathy is realisation of interpersonal feelings which will enlighten the potential consequences of an individual's actions on the lives of other people. Empathy will have positive impact in diverse classroom

as empathy enables students to understand each other in a better way to develop positive relationship among all. Empathy will enhance good relationship among adolescents with their peer groups and teachers by ensuring peaceful coexistence in school environment. The seed of empathy should be sown at home that can be carried over to school then to the community by the adolescents who are considered to be the backbone of the nation.

Positive Impact of Tolerance and Empathy in Contemplative Education

Toleranceand empathy are the values to be practised by adolescents to share knowledge and interact with group of people in a diverse community by focussing on language, food habits, attitudes, knowledge, beliefs, values, social behaviour, culture, religion etc. Empathy is to understand others feelings and to recognise and share their emotions i.e. stepping into another person's shoes. Empathy is the psychological potential ability to feel someone's emotional experience and enhancing the quality of social relationships. Tolerance and empathy is essential for adolescents to identify feelings, behaviour, attitudes, beliefs, values and thinking of others who are from different background. "Tolerance is interpreted as the quality of the person representing the integrative characteristics of the cognitive (knowledge about tolerance, the characteristics of a tolerant personality), emotional-evaluative (empathy, the ability objectively to assess people), behavioural (entry into dialogic relations, the establishment of cooperation in the process of interaction) components and defining the active moral position in interaction with people (Isayeva, 2004)."

Kids-bridge tolerance centre is the youth oriented non-profit organisation in the United States conducting programmes for bullying prevention, socio-economic skills and diversity education. Kids-bridge centre was created in 2006 but initially found the landmark in the year 1996. Kid-bridge has filled the gap of life skills, character education and diversity appreciation among children on understanding the inadequacy in school programmes. Unique Kids-bridge centre includes tolerance and life skills programmes for empowering, aspiring and increasingknowledge and sharpening the pro-social behaviours of young minds. Kids-bridge centre has created up-standers crossing more than 20 years (1996-2019) by encouraging empathy.

Purpose of Kids-bridge tolerance centre is sensitising children towards lesbian, gay or transgender (LGBT) persons and people with disability. Training for accepting, appreciating and respecting the diversity of others. Training the children to avoid discrimination, prejudice and stereotypes related to world religion or gender. Action plan on school, community, local and global issues are set up. The aim of the kids-bridge tolerance centre is to bring empaths into existence for caring and understanding diverse individuals by developing the quality of conscientiousness advocating for oneself and others. Simulation based on real life situations with interactive cum participative technique is applied among children to experience the effect of prejudice, stereotypes and discrimination on them and even on others. Assessment of up-stander technique, name calling and team building takes place before and after the small group discussion.

Programmes for enriching tolerance and empathy in schools and focussing on the value orientation of tolerance and empathy into the curriculum and co-curricular activities will show best results in academics. Strengthening community via tolerance and empathy will develop understanding of other's feelings and deepening the relationship with schoolmates and people belonging to different backgrounds from outside the community. Empathy and tolerance will help in the formation of future leaders of empathic and tolerant personality who can lead by developing trust among other leaders or followers or members of the community. Strengthening of education sector in the country by promoting tolerance and empathy can stop massive destruction of human lives and will turn into the solution for global issues.

Training of Tolerance and empathy in mixed environment for enhancing trust, peace and harmony will surely reduce antisocial behaviour, prejudice,stereotypes delinquency, bias, discrimination, prejudiceamong adolescents. Formation of tolerance and empathy in schools is becoming more relevant as physical and verbal violence, substance use, aggression, frustration, conflicts, killings, attacks, exploitation, suicide, bullying, destruction,harassment is increasing rapidly in every part of the world. Tolerance and empathy are the needsof adolescents for controlling their externalising behaviours by giving rise to humanity for developing a peaceful and civilised world.

Techniques of Promoting Tolerance and Empathy in Educational Institutions

Extracurricular activities are to be designed based on tolerance and empathy so that mutual understanding and trust is developed among teachers, adolescents and community. Acknowledgment and reward can be encouraged with the support of governmental and non-governmental organisations by including intercultural and inter-religious competitions so that adolescents are exposed to acceptance,

appreciation and respect the diverse classroom and also empathise with others who are different from them in all aspects. Teachers should encourage students while classroom teaching of regular subjects as well as outside the classroom to accept, respect and appreciate each other and see others from their eyes, feel form other's heart and think from other's brain.

Teachers can equip students with tolerant and empathic character and even beyond by enhancing empathy and tolerance through various techniques such as observation, cooperative learning, testing, games, role-play, hands-on activities, simulation, questioning, interview, debate, film shows, workshop, books/magazines/journals/ on tolerance and empathy, festival celebration, exhibitions, fun fair, field trip, school clubs, discussion, songs, dance, summer camp, fancy dress, poetry, art, skit, drama, food fest, story-telling, puppetry, audio-visual, poster making, excursion, etc.related to different culture, religion, race, ethnicity, nationality and sexual orientation.

Celebration of parent's day, teacher's day, grandparent's day and children's day will enhance tolerance and empathy by the exchange of life experiences, past events, thoughts and ideas. Adolescents should be exposed to the life story of famous tolerant and empathic personalities of India and abroad to concertize their character or features among adolescents for enhancing tolerance and empathy. Decolonised classroom can be reconstructed by bringing positive change in the attitude and behaviour of students such as focussing on similarities rather than differences of others, encouraging gender sensitization, eradicating genocide, fostering togetherness for cultivating mutual recognition, mutual understanding, mutual respect, mutual appreciation, mutual acceptance and cooperation.Only interactive and participatory activities can enhance tolerance and empathy in adolescents with some theoretical constructs to create awareness about the concept.

Controversial issues on culture, religion, nationality, race, caste, community, sex, ethnicity need to be fostered in a safe environment so that students develop the quality of tolerance and empathy through multi-perspective understanding of beliefs, ideas, thoughts, knowledge, attitude, values, interests and opinions. Psychological, social and emotional learning practices based on tolerance and empathy will allow students to deal with others by strongly influencing their positive attitude. Conflict resolution skills need to be developed among adolescents by involving them in group activities and cooperative learning for fostering tolerance and empathy. Diversity at national as well as international level need to be encouraged among adolescents to create a strong bond of global tolerance and empathy with others across the world. Anti-bullying campaign on tolerance and empathy is to be held in schools for adolescents to have good mutual relationship to sustain peaceful and harmonious environment.

Promoting peaceful coexistence between adolescents from different ethnics, religion, culture, socio-economic status, geographical areas, attitude, behaviour, skills and values is not an easy way for implementation of a programme on tolerance and empathy. Powerfully regulated and well managing school authorities can monitor the active participation of adolescents in the tolerance and empathy enhancement education programme improving upon cohesive relationship by accepting, appreciating and respecting unity in diversity. Teaching tolerance and empathy will establish a democratic school environment favouring human rights, human dignity, social justice and peace. Observing the International Day for Tolerance on 16 November every year in each and every school and celebrating the day by organising several programmes based on the theme 'Tolerance' to create awareness and remembrance of the particular day among students.

Conclusion

Tolerance and empathy if introduced in schools will bring effective positive changes in the overall personality of students. Tolerance and empathy are necessary for maintaining and sustaining peace and harmony among different group of people. Promoting tolerance and empathy will establish good rapport between teachers, students, parents and members of the society to survive efficiently in harmonious environment. If empathy skillsare fostered through contemplative education among childrenin school, classroom and in society, then tolerance will associate automatically with it in a natural way. Tolerance in the absence of empathy will be creating the paternalists in this world of globalisation. Tolerance and empathy is the training for life of peace, rights, dignity and freedom. The present paper is an attempt to address the infusion of tolerance and empathy in schools through every subject, every level and in all spheres of life. Also to discover the place of tolerance and empathy in a multi-religious and multi-cultural social setting as well as in classroom teaching to find outthe impact in the field of education.

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