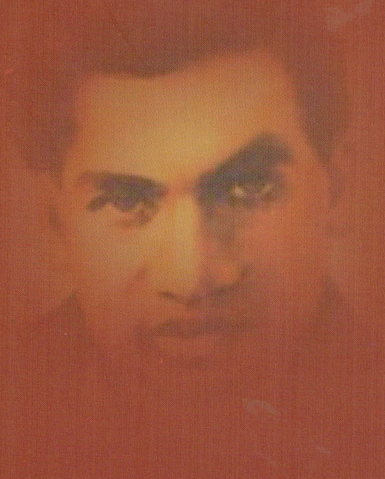


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A faint, sepia-toned portrait of Srinivasa Ramanujan is centered on the cover. He is shown from the chest up, looking directly at the camera with a serious expression. The background of the portrait is a light, textured pattern.

Srinivasa Ramanujan
(1887 - 1920)

Centre for Ethics and Values
Ramanujan College, University of Delhi

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BUILDING YOUTH FOR A BRIGHT FUTURE A CASE STUDY OF RAMANUJAN COLLEGE – PART I

Naghma Siddiqi*

Our youth are our future. We should invest in them as we do in other things related to our future. One important way of investing in them is by providing them with quality education that helps them to face global challenges. In doing so many educational institutions – schools, colleges and universities – often impart education towards global-readiness with mere economic considerations. This makes our youth 'money-making machines' with little human considerations. In the face of this challenge many institutions have laid emphasis on holistic education that integrates the humane aspects within the curriculum. Through holistic education students are made aware that while individual success is important; it can be made more fulfilling and result-oriented by understanding our human nature and striving towards our positive goals keeping ourselves and others in mind.

EDUCATION FOR PEACE

In India ground-breaking efforts were made by National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) in their *National Curriculum Framework for School Education* (2000) that integrated value-education (rooted in religions) on formal lines in primary and middle school curriculum. NCERT's *National Curriculum 2005* led to the emergence of peace education as a discipline that sought 'to nurture ethical development, inculcating the values, attitudes and skills required for living in harmony

* *The present article is the first part of a case study of the impact of **Towards a Culture of Peace and Reconciliation Program** in Ramanujan College and The Centre for Ethics and Values. The author of the article, member of Center for Peace and Spirituality, www.cpsglobal.org, has developed this program based on the findings of her doctoral research 'The Role of Islam in Establishing Peace in the Contemporary World' that she is doing from the Department of Islamic Studies in Hamdard University, New Delhi. naghma@cpsglobal.org.*

with oneself and with others.'¹ NCERTs Position Paper (September 2006) on 'Education for Peace' defined it as nurturing of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values that comprise and promote a culture of peace as the purpose shaping the enterprise of education.

Earlier UNESCO (1992) had defined the *culture of peace* as 'a growing body of shared values, attitudes, behaviours and ways of life based on non-violence and respect for fundamental rights and freedoms, on understanding, tolerance and solidarity';² while Professor Felipe McGregor (1914-2004) had linked the culture of peace with education for peace,³ stating: 'The concept of education for a culture of peace links it closely with educational themes, fields and concerns with a view to generating a holistic vision of quality education.'⁴ In higher school education Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) made pioneering efforts to introduce subjects focusing on adolescence education and peace at the secondary and senior secondary level. In February, 2007, the then Chairman of CBSE, Ashok Ganguly mentioned this in a statement to Khaleej Times (Dubai): 'Emphasis is being laid on integrating peace and value education as well as adolescence education programs into the curriculum from six grade upwards to expose students at an early age to various social, cultural and religious issues facing the world.'⁵

Education for peace became more relevant in imparting holistic education when the word 'peace' came to be looked upon as an 'umbrella

¹ National Curriculum Framework 2005, National Council of Educational Research and Training, New Delhi, 2005, 61.

² UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Bureau of Education: *Learning to Be: A Holistic and Integrated Approach to Values Education for Human Development – A UNESCO-APNIEVE Sourcebook for Teachers, Students and Tertiary Level Instructors*, UNESCO, Bangkok, 2002, 173.

³ Felipe McGregor: *Culture of Peace*, Peru, 1986.

⁴ UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Bureau of Education, *ibid*, 163.

⁵ CBSE Blogspot, <http://www.cbseschools.blogspot.in/>, [accessed January 7, 2014].

term⁶ (Galtung) to collectively refer to all the positive values such as *love, non-violence, compassion, truth, justice, equality, tolerance, patience, good conduct, harmony, humility, togetherness, self-control* and more.⁷ As a result, ethics, values and attitudes, as the building blocks of the culture of peace, came to be imparted as the basic foundations of ethics, values and morality.⁸

INTEGRATING MIND, BODY AND HEART (IMBH)

Delhi University has probably taken the boldest step in this regard by introducing a compulsory (non-credit) course titled 'Integrating Mind, Body and Heart' (IMBH) as part of the Four-Year Under-Graduate Program (FYUP), which is a brainchild of Professor Dinesh Singh, Vice Chancellor of the University. In an interview on Doordarshan, when asked why he had introduced the program, Professor Singh replied that he considers it the primary duty of a university to give direction to society and to channelize the energies of youth for productive and creative purposes through education.... It is in fulfilling this responsibility of Delhi University that this platform has been created.⁹ He defines education as a quest to understand one's *antardhvani* (inner self), so that a person is able to understand who he is and what he wants to do in life. He feels that if students are able to do this they will choose their subjects based on an understanding of their own potential and capabilities and enter society to become its productive and contributing members.

The IMBH course requires students to become aware of certain defining moments from the life of Mahatma Gandhi to imbibe principles of non-

⁶ Johan Galtung: *Theories of Peace – A Synthetic Approach to Peace Thinking*, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, 1967, 6.

⁷ A. S. Balasooriya: *Learning Ways to Peace: A Teacher's Guide to Peace Education*, UNESCO, New Delhi, 2001, 1.

⁸ UNESCO Asia Pacific Regional Bureau of Education, *op. cit.*, 38.

⁹ "A Journey of Thoughts with Prof. Dinesh Singh," Doordarshan, [uploaded May 22, 2013], <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BKb0lsJejOg>, [accessed January 5, 2014]

violence and ground them holistically. The practice-oriented program was introduced in the academic session of 2013 in various colleges of Delhi University to kindle a value oriented and holistic process in the minds of students to lead them to better realize and appreciate the fact that there should be harmony between what one thinks, what one feels and what one creates or presents externally.¹⁰

RAMANUJAN COLLEGE AND THE 'ANTARGYAN' FEST 2013

As in other colleges the IMBH course was introduced in Ramanujan College, Kalkaji under the guidance of its Principal, Dr. S. P. Aggarwal. To inspire students and teachers to take maximum advantage of the newly introduced foundation courses, especially the 'Integrating Mind, Body and Heart'; *The 'Antargyan' Fest 2013* was organized during the mid-semester break under the chairmanship of Dr. Aggarwal, directorship of Mr. T. K. Mishra, Director of *Centre of Ethics and Values* and in collaboration with Gandhi Smriti & Darshan Samiti and Baha'i House of Worship.¹¹ The fest aimed to create a positive impact of activity learning on the minds and hearts of participants for four days from 7th to 10th October, 2013.¹²

Be the Change

I have been associated with Ramanujan College and The Centre for Ethics and Values since March 2013 to share with its students the findings of my research as regards ethics and values based on peace. I had the pleasure of taking part in the fest and see its impact directly. As an ex-student of Delhi University, I was surprised to see so many opportunities available to students which were not available during our time. The sessions at Gandhi

¹⁰ Four Year Undergraduate Program, "Integrating Mind, Body and Heart", [June 7, 2013], <http://fyup.du.ac.in/IMBH.html>, [accessed January 7, 2014].

¹¹ "Ramanujan College organizes fest during mid-sem break," [October 7, 2013], <http://dubbeat.com/2013/10/ramanujan-college-organises-fest-mid-sem-break/>, [accessed January 7, 2014].

¹² *The 'Antargyan' Fest 2013*, Centre for Ethics and Values, Ramanujan College, Delhi, 2013, 2.

Smriti and Darshan Samiti, Rajghat were particularly pertinent in helping students understand the principles of peace and non-violence. One teaching of Mahatma Gandhi, “Be the change that you wish to see in the world”, is exemplary. This, essentially, teaches that we should change ourselves instead of asking others to change themselves. We have to stop blaming others for our vows and take responsibility for our life. This important law of nature teaches us that in a world in which all are free we cannot control others. We can only control ourselves. The choice before us is to either adjust with others or live in complaint and negativity. While the former, in taking us on the path of peace, leads us towards success and progress; the latter, in placing us on a confrontational path with others, only leads us to frustration and failure.

I noticed that the interactive sessions of the fest were focusing on individuals as the target of change in an endeavour to inculcate ethics, values and knowledge of applying them in daily life. Within four days, I witnessed the beginning of a process of positive change in certain students. On the first day many had been quiet and subdued; whereas on the last day, more students spoke freely and were able to share their views effectively on ethics and values and their application in daily life.

If individuals are made to understand the importance of changing themselves, a marked behavioural change can occur in them. Such a transformation in individuals at the level of the mind will be reflected in their behaviour and action. And once individuals change at the level of the mind they become an instrument of broader change in society. As per my study, if we want to change society on positive lines we have to motivate and educate individuals to transform from the culture of violence to the culture of peace. Holistic education should, thus, be grounded in peace education.

Change Your Mindsets to Succeed

The organizers were kind enough to give me an opportunity to share the findings of my doctoral research on '*how to establish peace in the world*' that I am pursuing from Hamdard University, New Delhi. In my

presentation on '*Change Your Mindsets towards Peace, Non-Violence*', I explained that each of us is born with unlimited potential and certain unique capabilities; if we recognize and match the two then we can succeed. That is, if we are able to recognize our inner capabilities and select our goals in life based on these capabilities, success is bound to come our way, it being only a matter of time. This, however, requires that we change our mindsets towards the culture of peace and lead a life based on principles of peace and reconciliation, some of which are as follows:

1. Principle of Giving: One important principle that I shared with them was the *principle of giving*, exemplified by the dictum, "in giving we receive". The principle teaches us that when we strive towards our goals, we should become *givers* instead of being mere *takers*. It is only in giving that we receive from others; while remaining mere *takers* makes us become unwanted members of society. And we can become giving members of society by following the *principle of reciprocity*.

2. The Principle of Reciprocity: The principle of reciprocity is based on the *golden rule of ethics* which is given in the Bible in these words, 'Do unto others as you would have them do to you' (Luke 6: 31) and in the Hindu texts as, 'One should never do that to another which one regards as injurious to one's own self. This, in brief, is the rule of dharma.' (Brihaspati, Mahabharata: Anusasana Parva, Section CXII, Verse 8). This principle teaches us to treat others as we want others to treat us. We all know what attitude we want or do not want from others. We should simply follow the same in our dealings with others. If we want positive speech and behaviour from others, we have to also speak and behave positively with them. If we do not want others to stand in our way, we have to like wise ensure that we do not stand in the way of others.

3. The Principle of Non-Confrontation: The *principle of non-confrontation* is another principle that tells us how to strive towards our goals successfully. This is given in the Quran with respect to planets in these words, 'each floats in its own orbit.' (36:40). Just as planets have continued to move in the universe for millions of years without colliding with other

planetary bodies; if we want to strive towards our positive goals uninterruptedly, we have to confine our activities to our own sphere, without interfering or confronting with the spheres of others. How can we do this? When we strive towards our goals in society, we should carve out a path for ourselves without confronting with the path of others. We will, thus, continue to strive towards our goals to climb the ladder of success.

4. Principle of Conversion: In spite of our best efforts to not confront others; situations do occur in which others cross our path. This leads to negative experiences. At such times instead of getting provoked, angry, hating others and seeking revenge; we have to rise above the negativity and give a positive response. This is called the *principle of conversion*, a cow being an excellent example of this principle. A cow ingests grass and through a process converts it into wholesome milk. In a similar way man should also be able to rise above negative experiences and give positive responses in return. An illustrative example of this can be seen in the following incident. A young man once took offense at something an elderly person had said and kicked him in the chest. The elderly man responded saying, 'I hope your gentle foot was not hurt by my hard stony chest.' The elderly man, in knowing the principle of conversion, was able to normalize a potentially explosive situation. Similarly all of us can manage the negative situations of our life by following such unilateral ethics.

BENEFITS OF FOLLOWING UNILATERAL ETHICS

The benefits of following unilateral ethics are many. Here I would like to share two of them: *one*, they help us to develop intellectually and *two*, they help us to succeed in life. How does this occur? It is a fact that the human personality (the mind) has unlimited potential. But our potential lies in the dormant state until the challenges of life activate them. And it is difference of opinions, criticism and provocative situations that present challenges for us. Thus, differences and problems of life are not negative; they have a positive role. Problems and differences, when considered as negative, evoke a negative reaction; but when looked upon positively, as challenges, elicit a positive response that helps us to advance our intellectual development. Arnold Toynbee in his book, *A Study of*

History has attributed all developments of history to this *challenge-response mechanism*.¹³ How does this occur? When we are able to look upon problematic situations positively as challenges we are able to successfully indulge in dialogue and discussion, which starts a process of brainstorming that helps us to develop intellectually and spiritually.

The second major benefit of maintaining unilateral ethics in our dealings with others is that it helps us to strive towards our goals towards success. But this requires that we set realistic goals and strive towards them with patience and determination. In the face of provocation we can either react negatively or respond in a positive manner. If we become negative or get provoked, it will only cloud our judgment and our mind will not be able to think about the task at hand, but will busy itself with how to get back at the person. The result will be failure to deal with the task at hand. If on the other hand we remain patient in the face of provocation we are able to keep our minds free to plan on how to deal with the task so that we are able to better strategize and execute our goals. As a result maintaining unilateral ethics ensures that we continue to climb the ladder of success.

DEONTOLOGICAL ETHICS

During the course of my further interaction with the college and the IMBH staff, I realized that the IMBH course, by providing interactive activities to gain insight into the humane aspect of life provides students an effective platform to apply such principles in their lives. It further gives them the time and opportunity to plan their life in such a way that they can concentrate both on their subjects and their application besides learning to manage societal relations positively. In this manner they learn to succeed and become contributing members of a duty-conscious society based on WE-WE ethics rather than WE-THEY ethics. The concept of WE-THEY ethics means that we demand our rights from others while giving them little or nothing in return. This proves to be ineffective and results in protests, demands and chaos in society.

¹³ Toynbee, Arnold: *A Study of History*, Vol. 1 Oxford University Press, 1987, 70-76.

The concept of WE-WE ethics, essentially means that one is ready to give others' their rights as a duty, being content with what one gets from others, not demanding more and more. This is a subject of a discipline called deontology. Derived from the Greek word *deon*, meaning duty, deontological ethics are described as morality of an action based on 'duty' or 'obligation'. The most famous deontological ethicists was Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), whose ethics can be summarized as 'do only the action that you would wish to see made a universal rule to govern the lives of everyone around you all the time,'¹⁴ the central ethic being 'limit your own freedom, do not coerce the freedom of others.' As a result the formula of one who follows WE-THEY ethics is, 'I have to win at any cost'; while the formula of one who follows WE-WE ethics is 'I can win by helping others.' Following deontological, WE-WE ethics is, thus, the only way to ensure that one does not stand in the way of the success of others' while continuing to climb the ladder of his/her own success.

TOWARDS A CULTURE OF PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PROGRAM

The *Center for Ethics and Values* of Ramanujan College had planned to measure the success of the fest and its impact through conducting surveys and psychological tests with students of the Psychology Department. The organizers allowed me to test my research findings that have been developed in the form of a personality development program entitled, *Towards a Culture of Peace and Reconciliation*. The program postulates that social evils do not erupt all of a sudden; rather they germinate and grow over a period of time. One way of checking them is by training individuals to transform themselves towards a culture of peace and reconciliation. The program is planned as a *pre-test questionnaire*; an intervention in the form of a *personality development program* and a *post-test questionnaire* along with a *response form*.

¹⁴ Kant, Immanuel: <http://trivialcontemplations.wordpress.com/2011/01/13/ethics-why-deontology-teleology-and-existentialism-are-illogical-apart-from-god/>, [accessed January 7, 2014].

The program was launched in the college in December 2013 when nearly 800 first-year students of Ramanujan College took part in this program by taking the *pre-test questionnaire* that comprised of 25 questions to test their *pre-test peace quotient* prior to the intervention. The “peace quotient” is defined as a state of peace in the mind of an individual based on the findings of the research. Having found the *pre-test peace quotient* of the participants, a personality development program, *Towards a Culture of Peace and Reconciliation* will be given to those who volunteered to take part in it. The program has been developed with a threefold aim: *one*, to help individuals develop positive personalities; *two*, to help them form positive relations with others in society and *three*, to transform society on positive lines by focusing on the individual. The program aims to achieve these by helping individuals learn the importance of peace and train them to apply principles of peace and reconciliation in daily life. The intended result of this exercise is that people inculcate unilateral ethics so that they can become duty-conscious members of society and become masters of life's situations rather than victims of circumstances. The personality development program comprises of *twenty Peace and Reconciliation Modules* listed below.

1. Positive Personalities Succeed
2. From Ore to Steel
3. Peace and Reconciliation – The Way
4. Realism, Not Idealism – The Method
5. Freedom of Choice for Test, Not As a Right
6. Realistic Achievable; Ideal Unachievable
7. Freedom, Peace and Opportunities
8. Peace-First, Not Condition-First
9. A Culture of Peace and Reconciliation
10. Change Your Mindsets, Change the World
11. Unilateral Peace, Then Opportunities
12. Art of Conversion, *Tazkia*
13. Strive Through Non-Confrontation
14. Accept Flowers Amidst Thorns
15. Art of Difference Management

16. Journey of Life: Water in a Flowing River
17. Challenges Lead to Development
18. Duty-First, Not Rights-First
19. Manage Yourself; Manage Life
20. Become a Master of Situation

The personality development program will be given to the students of the college in January 2014 followed by a *post-test questionnaire* to ascertain their *post-test peace quotient* and the impact of the intervention and a *response form*. As the program will only be completed after the publication of this article, its findings will be shared with the readers in the second part of this Case Study in the next issue of the journal. I would, however, like to share one aspect of my interaction with the students so far that gives insight into the positive results of the efforts of Ramanujan College and the Centre for Ethics and Values. In the pre-test questionnaire there is a column in which participants are asked if they would like to take part in the personality development program. Normally, when we give this questionnaire we usually obtain a 25-30% affirmative response. From Ramanujan College we received a positive response from nearly 90% of the participants. This clearly shows that the college has been able to create an enthusiasm in students to strive for positive change and goes to the credit of the administration, teachers and staff of the college.

IN CONCLUSION

Franklin D Roosevelt (1882-1945) had said, 'We cannot always build the future of our youth, but we can build our youth for the future'. Ramanujan College and Centre for Ethics and Values has made a beginning to build their youth for the future. This is definitely a step in the right direction in imparting holistic education. Its impact will be ascertained as the program progresses in the college. I look forward to sharing the findings with the readers of the journal in the next issue.

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