

## Role of Education in International Understanding

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### Abstract

All nations, whether big or small, developed or under-developed, are part of one global family. Like how all members of a family, whether young or old, live together peacefully, it is compulsory for all countries of the world also to live with each other harmoniously. It is said that education is very important for the international harmony because it performs many roles in the society at different levels, it enhance the overall ambience of the entire world by making its citizens knowledgeable, well aware, develops systematic and scientific attitude that they apply in their daily life. This article is an attempt to flash some light on the role of education to understand the international brotherhood and its importance in avoiding the conflicts at the world level.

**Keywords:** Education, World Harmony, Internationalism, world Conflicts

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### Introduction

Internationalism is the feeling which tells a person that he isn't merely a resident of his country, but also the citizen of the world. This can also be explained as:

*“Isolation means backwardness and decay. The world has changed and old barriers are breaking down, life becomes more international. We have to play our part in this coming internationalism.”*

-Jawaharlal Nehru

International Understanding means world citizenship. This feeling emphasizes on the fact that each person must possess feelings of brotherhood towards other people and the whole world feel like a family. In this light, international understanding, being based on world-friendship and world-brotherhood, focuses on human welfare. In other words, international

understanding, points towards spreading love, sympathy and cooperation towards the all nations of the world and their citizens.

*“International Understanding is the ability to observe critically and objectively and appraise the conduct of men everywhere to each other irrespective of their nationality or culture to which they belong. To do this, one must be able to observe all nationalities, cultures, and races as equally important varieties of human beings inhabiting this earth.”*

-Dr. Walter H. C. Laves

On observing the trends from the last hundred years, it is found that numerous ambitious nations of the world, in their respective methods, made provisions for spreading education to their citizens to develop the feeling of nationalism. Here, from the elementary stage, children are taught that their country is the best of all the countries of the world. These kinds of lessons create narrow minded nationalists, which was the reason behind the two world wars and could possibly aid the third also. And it was because of these world wars that not only were the human and political rights of people crushed, but they also had to face different kinds of tortures. Hitler's Nazism and Mussolini's Fascism, whose basis was chauvinism, led to disturbance in Europe resulting in the world war. This led to all nations hoping that there should not be a war again; and for that it was necessary that international Understanding be promoted and narrow minded nationalism be discouraged. Its historical evidences can be found in Pierre Dubios's concepts of International Schools. Apart from that, Comenius had suggested opening Panosophic Colleges to strengthen world peace and harmony. We must also not forget the Commission on Intellectual Cooperation's establishment in 1926, which was unsuccessful due to lack of funds and cooperation. After the Second World War, the most impactful step taken for world peace and harmony is the establishment of the United Nations Organization, in which UNESCO is an important element supporting the cause.

There are some strong reasons for the promotion of International Understanding. People are of different caste, community, religion, race, etc. yet they all have the same human spirit, and the whole world is one unit. How does it make a difference whether a person residing in India is Indian, Japan is Japanese or United States is American? Everyone is human and is a citizen of the world. To develop this feeling of unity, the promotion of International Understanding is of utmost need. It is evident that in modern day and age, which has turned into a global age, the world has become a global hub and what goes on in one nation affects the others. Radio, Television and Wireless means of communication have broken all barriers. Scientific discoveries have conquered over Time and Place.

*“A war starts in Europe and three million die of famine in Bengal, and millions more find themselves uprooted from their homes, cut off from their normal occupations and deprived of all that makes life pleasant, gracious and meaningful.”*

*-K. G. Saiyidain*

Today no nation in the world can claim of being self-dependent. Culturally, financially or politically, all nations depend on each other. The Industrial Production in one country depends on the supply of raw materials from the other. For the welfare of a small nation, it must become a part of a big political power group. This also helps in keeping their existence. Just like economic and political dependency, the world has now become culturally bound together. Culture cannot exist without changing situations. Through print media and electronic media, one nation's culture not only affects the other, but it changes and develops it also. Since modern age is a dependent age, the welfare of each country demands upon maintaining harmony, cooperation and support with other countries. At these times, to develop international understanding is not just important, it is mandatory.

All nations, whether big or small, developed or under-developed, are part of one global family. Like how all members of a family, whether young or old, live together peacefully, it is compulsory for all countries of the world also to live with each other harmoniously. Yet, it has been a trend that large and developed countries try to dominate over the smaller and undeveloped ones. But, like an older brother helping out his younger sibling, these larger countries should also support and aid the smaller one's development. Like a gust of wind and a wave of water do not follow boundaries, human values like love, kindness and sympathy are also not bound by any country's geographical borders. They are universal and should not be confined to one's own nation. It is possible that people of one country have a different point of view that the other's, but it doesn't imply that one should possess the feeling of hatred towards them. In India, it is even more important to develop international understanding because we attained freedom after a very long struggle and we need to build our future on our own. We need to create good relations with other nations so that we can actively participate in international matters.

There are some basic principles for developing international understanding. The power of independent thinking should be cultivated in the minds of the youth. It is a hard reality that each nation thinks that their policies and the way they work is the correct way and not the other countries' and to legitimize that, they stoop to unethical practices which creates disharmony and misunderstanding in the minds of their citizens towards others. And if we are successful in ingraining in the minds of the youth this independent thinking, then they will be

able to distinguish between right and wrong, and fact and fiction, which will put a stop to these unfair practices by political groups and parties and a balanced environment will be created. Apart from this, the youth should be trained to put into practice their attained knowledge. K. G. Saiyidain said, "The person who cannot even dream about hurting a child of his nation by restricting his food, is the same person who, without a second thought, stops the food supply to an enemy nation. He then forgets to consider how many children of that nation will die of hunger." His thoughts describe aptly the contrast in the minds of many developed and so-called civilized nations, because of which humanity is getting crushed every day. It is therefore necessary that the youth must put their knowledge into practice so that they can understand that the principles that one thinks are ideal for his country's people are the same principles that he should follow while making decisions about other country's people. Next, we need to focus on removing fear from individual and social life. There is a feeling of fright in everyone's life in this modern age. It cannot be predicted when one nation will attack the other. That is why people do not try to come close to or understand people from across the borders. Hence, an environment should be created which helps people get over their baseless fears and they get the courage to solve their problems and develop trust in mankind. It should be noted that it is far better to conquer the hearts of the people of a country than to conquer the country itself. The next principle is interdependence. All of mankind is a unified entity. Each member of this family depends upon the other for something or the other. If not impossible, then it is difficult for any nation to sustain itself on its own. We should focus on this point while developing international understanding among the youth. The principal of collective responsibility states that the whole world is one big unit, it cannot be divided, we all are its residents and its welfare and destruction depends upon us. Lastly, the principal of action explains that the above mentioned principals can only be made productive by taking the required action. It is insufficient to build only a feeling of international understanding in the hearts of the youth. It is equally important to provide them with appropriate opportunities so that they can implement this understanding.

### **Education as a means of developing International Understanding**

*"Schools may and generally do represent the best elements in the surrounding culture. They should be and they generally are above the average level of the community in their regard for truth, honesty and fair dealing. They contrive to rise appreciably in standards and values of people."*

*-Towards World Understanding; UNESCO*

Unanimously, almost all philosophers, educationists, politicians, scientists and social reformers agree that although organizations like UNESCO are trying to develop the feeling of International Understanding in their own ways in the minds of the youth, education is still the key element to aid its spread. Hence, a main goal for education should be the spread of International Understanding to the youth. The environment of a school should be based on cooperation and students should be encouraged to work collectively instead of working individually. This will enable in them understanding, discipline, cooperation, tolerance and acceptance. Also, programs should be conducted at school through which the students can develop a healthy attitude and respect for other religions, cultures and societies. The environment of a school should be such that it helps develop faith in change and a feeling of brotherhood in the minds of its pupils. If the earlier mentioned values and principles are developed in the heart and mind of a child at a primary level, although for national issues, they will help him later on in life to have a better international understanding. Such an education will also assist people in having an open minded and positive attitude towards other human beings. Mudaliar Education Commission 1952-53, thus, had declared the feeling of nationalism harmful for the good of society and had promoted internationalism.

All countries must, for the promotion of education, develop their curriculum in such a way that it contains subjects which would encourage the abolishment of casteism, so that the students may develop a peaceful personality, cooperation and responsibility.

Teaching methods are of utmost importance in the promotion of International Understanding. Successful teaching methods develop critical and logical thinking in the minds of the students. For example, while teaching science, its social consequences should also be explained. Say, while teaching about farming, it should be explained how manure can help solve the problem of food shortage in many countries.

In the view of the above mentioned, we can say that the main objective of education is to create such a connection between man and society, where man can mould himself and adjust according to the situation and both he and society achieve a permanent contentment and gratification.

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