

Exploring the Role of Pakistan Peace Project in Promoting Social Harmony: Evidence from Secondary Schools in District Hub Balochistan

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Abstract

The Pakistan Peace Project, implemented in Sakran-Baluchistan, seeks to promote sustainable peace through community-led initiatives, including activities involving teachers and students. Unlike many conflict-prone areas in Baluchistan, Sakran is relatively peaceful, offering a conducive environment to test grassroots peace building efforts. This study evaluates the project's impact by focusing on the role of teachers conducting activities with students to foster tolerance, understanding, and conflict resolution skills. Using a structured questionnaire administered to participating teachers, the research explores their perceptions, experiences, and the outcomes observed among students. Key findings highlight the effectiveness of activities such as workshops on peace, and cultural exchanges in enhancing students' communication skills, respect for diversity, and teamwork. Teachers noted increased enthusiasm among students and positive behavioral changes, though challenges such as resource constraints and engagement barriers were also identified. The study underscores the importance of empowering educators in peacebuilding processes and provides recommendations to enhance teacher training, align activities with curriculum goals, and expand resource availability. Findings from Sakran demonstrate valuable insights into grassroots approaches for sustainable peace in conflict-affected areas.

Keywords: Pakistan Peace Project, Conflict Resolution, Social Harmony, Sustainable Peace, Peacebuilding Strategies.

Introduction

The concept of peace implies respect for human rights and valuing human life, working cooperatively to resolve conflicts nonviolently and training citizens for positive contribution in their governments (Harris & Morrison, 2003). People use different strategies to establish the means of peace and education is one of those strategies. It helps to establish long term and sustainable peace by educating and training citizens. The role of teacher is important in this regard being the key player in the system of education. As mentioned in the study conducted by Bukhari and Ahmed (2020) that the quality of teachers largely influences education programs, and peace education is no exception. In the case of

Pakistan, where traditional methods and teacher-centered learnings are more dominant throughout the schools, peace educators are required to have certain qualities that suit pedagogies recommended by peace education.

Peace education is the acquisition of values, knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, others, and the natural environment. It also refers to the worldwide initiative to change the way people think and act in promoting peace and is a key tool for fostering peace globally (UNESCO, 1998). There are several objectives presented by (Harris, 2022) in his study for an effective peace education program, which includes appreciation of peace, understanding of violent behaviors, enhancing intercultural understanding, promoting social justice and cultivating respect for life.

Peace Education is linked to Quality Education. The objective of SDG 4 (Sustainable Development Goal 4) is to make sure that children and youth have access to quality education and various learning opportunities without difficulty. In addition to this, it seeks to guarantee inclusive and high-quality education while encouraging lifelong learning opportunities for everyone. These goals can be achieved through the advancement of Peace Education.

Background

Baluchistan, the largest province of Pakistan, has faced many issues in the past like political unrest, instability on social and political ground, social inequality, and economic underdevelopment. All these factors resulted in a cycle of conflict that deeply affects communities and the overall progress of the region. Schools, particularly in the public sector, are seen as crucial institutions where future generations can be educated to promote peace and resolve conflicts. Introducing peace education in public schools is considered important for promoting understanding, tolerance, and non-violent conflict resolution among students. Peace education in schools seeks to instill values such as respect for diversity, human rights, and cooperation, which are crucial in conflict-ridden areas.

Sakran, located in district Hub, despite experiencing political and tribal rivalries, is a relatively peaceful area in Baluchistan. Public sector schools in Sakran have the capacity to drive transformation by promoting values of peace, non-violence, and tolerance among the youth. Given the foundational role of school education, incorporating peace education in Sakran is expected to empower young people with conflict-resolution skills and create a more harmonious atmosphere both within the schools and wider community. The Pakistan Peace Project is taking place in Sakran aims to find challenges through grassroots peacebuilding efforts focused on conflict resolution and enhancing social unity. This programme engages local communities, particularly youth and educators, in activities that promote understanding, collaboration, and long-term peace measures.

Objectives of the Study

The objectives of this study are:

1. To assess the impact of the Pakistan Peace Project on reducing conflict in Sakran, Baluchistan.
2. To evaluate the role of teachers in the project's activities and its influence on fostering social cohesion.
3. To identify the key challenges faced by the project and its participants.

Research Questions

1. How effective is the Pakistan Peace Project in reducing conflict in the youth in Sakran?
2. What role do teachers play in the project's activities, and what is the perceived impact on students' behavior and attitudes?
3. What challenges have been encountered during the implementation of the project, and how can these be addressed?

Literature Review

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical foundation for this study is grounded in Conflict Resolution Theory and Peacebuilding Frameworks, with a particular focus on grassroots and community-driven approaches. Conflict

Resolution Theory emphasizes the need for addressing the underlying causes of conflict such as resource scarcity, political exclusion, and ethnic tensions through dialogue, negotiation, and inclusive governance. Theories of peacebuilding, especially those based on the work of scholars like John Paul Lederach and Adam Curle, argue that sustainable peace is best achieved through the active participation of local communities, rather than solely through top-down interventions (Dinda, 2020). These frameworks advocate for a multi-layered approach to peacebuilding that involves both local and national actors, integrating social, economic, and political strategies.

Peace education programs have been developed in a number of UNICEF country offices and National Committees for UNICEF over the past decade (UNICEF, 1999). The ultimate goal of peace education is for individuals to be able to maintain peace among aspects of themselves, individuals and countries, societies, and cultures. To do so, peace education needs to focus on; establishing a cooperative environment; understanding of rights and responsibilities, recognition of prejudice and to develop the ability to identify causes of conflict, and non-violent means of resolution (Susan Fountain; 1999, UNICEF)

Previous Studies on Conflict Resolution in Baluchistan

Baluchistan has long been a focal point of conflict in Pakistan due to a combination of ethnic tensions, resource disputes, and political marginalization. Several studies have examined the region's socio-political dynamics, identifying the lack of effective governance, infrastructure, and education as key drivers of unrest. For example, Ganguly (2005) and Zeb (2017) argue that historical grievances related to autonomy, resource control, and neglect from the central government have contributed to persistent tensions in Baluchistan. Moreover, Baloch and Naseem (2019) discussed the role of ethnic identity and tribal politics in shaping the conflict, noting that these social divisions often fuel mistrust between communities and the state.

While these studies highlight complexities of conflict in Baluchistan, there is limited research on practical interventions focused on imparting peace education to youth as well as community-based conflict resolution. Some studies have examined top-down peace efforts, such as the role of the military and government policies, but imparting peace education to youth and community-led peacebuilding efforts has been understudied. More recent work, such as Khan (2021) calls for local initiatives that engage communities directly in the peace process, suggesting that such initiatives are quite important for lasting stability in the region.

Community-Driven Peacebuilding Approaches

In the field of peace studies, community-driven approaches have gained significant attention as effective means of resolving conflicts, particularly in regions with historical grievances and entrenched social divisions. Lederach (1997) highlights the importance of "building peace from the inside out" through local communities, arguing that sustainable peace emerges when communities engage in the resolution process rather than relying solely on external intervention. This perspective is supported by Galtung (2000) who advocates for peacebuilding strategies that focus on transforming the relationships, attitudes, and structures that fuel conflict.

Numerous examples from conflict zones around the world have demonstrated the efficacy of grassroots peacebuilding efforts. In regions like Northern Ireland, Rwanda, and Colombia, local peace initiatives involving dialogue, reconciliation, and joint problem-solving have proven essential for long-term peace. Similarly, in Afghanistan, community-based programs have been credited with reducing violence and fostering cooperation among various groups.

Other than the quality of contents, peace education depends on the quality of teachers, which varies from project to project. Students respond more readily to trained teachers. Participatory pedagogies are significant for achieving the desired outcomes of peace education. Peace education programs need to strengthen their outreach by bringing parents on board. NGOs and their international partners should keep trying to integrate peace education in curricula at provincial levels (Ahmed & Baxter, 2007). The governmental and non-governmental sectors should support the cause of peace education as a joint effort. The contents of textbooks should be reviewed regularly to promote the neutral use of language

and nondiscriminatory discussions to avoid conflicts. A range of activity-based learning should also be introduced into the content of the books to promote peace education, such as service learning projects and community service activities. Curriculum developers must also collaborate with eminent religious scholars of different religions to incorporate multi-religious views (Aftab & Sadaf 2024). The Pakistan Peace Project in Sakran follows an approach of involving teachers and students in the peace process. By engaging local educators to implement peace activities, the project aims to foster positive relationships and open communication between different groups within the community.

Research Gaps and Need for the Study

Despite the theoretical support for community-driven peacebuilding, there is a significant gap in the literature regarding the practical implementation and impact of such models in Baluchistan, particularly in Sakran. While studies on conflict resolution in Baluchistan have primarily focused on the role of the state, military, and political elites, little attention has been given to grassroots initiatives that engage local communities, teachers especially in rural areas like Sakran.

Additionally, existing research on peacebuilding in Baluchistan does not adequately explore the role of education, youth, and local institutions in fostering peace. Teachers, as key actors in shaping young minds, play a critical role in conflict resolution but have been largely overlooked in academic discourse about peacebuilding in the region. The Pakistan Peace Project provides a unique opportunity to fill this gap by examining how community-based education programs can contribute to long-term peace in a region historically marred by conflict.

Thus, this study is considered essential for addressing these gaps, providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of student-teacher approach and community-driven peacebuilding initiatives in Baluchistan, and offering recommendations for policy and practice that can enhance peace efforts in the region.

Methodology

Research Design

This study adopts a mixed-methods research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches to provide a comprehensive analysis of the Pakistan Peace Project in Sakran. The quantitative component involves use of questionnaires to collect data on the impact of the peacebuilding activities on teachers and students. The qualitative component explores deeper insights into the experiences, challenges, and perceptions of those involved in the project thus allowing a robust understanding of the project's effectiveness and the dynamics of the peacebuilding process.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Sakran, located in district Hub, Balochistan.

Population

The population consisted of teachers involved in the Pakistan Peace Project in Sakran area. Two secondary schools, where this project is being run through, were selected for the study. Five male and five female teachers, who were involved in taking up the project were chosen. The strata were based on variables such as gender (male and female), age (20 to 40 years), educational qualification (Intermediate to M.Ed.) as well as teaching experience (1 to 20 years). This ensured that a diverse range of perspectives is captured for the study. From each stratum, participants were randomly selected to minimize bias and ensure that the sample is representative of the broader teacher community involved in the project.

Data Collection Methods and Analysis Techniques

A five scaled Likert questionnaire was given to 10 teachers (5 male and 5 female teachers) of a Boys secondary school and a Girls secondary school. Analysis was conducted using both quantitative and qualitative techniques. A questionnaire using Likert-scale was administered to teachers involved in the project's activities (Table 1). This allowed collection of quantifiable data which assisted in

measuring students' understanding of the peace, communication skills to address conflict, and conflict resolution. Qualitative questionnaires (Table 3, 4 and 5) helped in understanding teachers' perceptions of project's effectiveness and their recommendations for further improvement to the peace education activities in Sakran area.

Ethical Considerations

The study adheres to ethical guidelines to ensure the integrity and safety of all participants involved. Key ethical considerations include:

- **Informed Consent:** All participants were informed about the purpose of study, and written consent was obtained prior to their participation.
- **Confidentiality:** The identities of participants will be kept confidential, and data will be stored securely to ensure privacy.
- **Voluntary Participation:** Participation in the study was voluntary.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** The research team ensured that cultural norms and local sensitivities are respected during the data collection process, particularly given the cultural context of Baluchistan.

Results and Analysis

Quantitative Data analysis

Analysis was done through questionnaires using Likert-scale given to educators those were actively involved in activities.

Table 1: Questionnaire Responses

S. NO	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
1.	My level of involvement in planning these activities has been significant.	1	2	1	3	3	10
2.	The activities are effective in promoting peace and understanding among students.	1	1	2	2	4	10
3.	Students have shown an improved understanding of conflict resolution after participating in the project.	-	1	2	2	5	10
4.	Peace education has significantly changed the behavior of students.	-	-	1	5	4	10
5.	Students respond positively to the activities conducted in the project.	-	-	3	4	3	10
6.	Peace education has an important role to play in schools in Sakran.	-	-	1	4	5	10
7.	Students in my school commonly face conflicts or issues.	2	2	2	2	2	10
8.	Peace education is effective in addressing conflicts or issues students face in school.	-	-	3	3	4	10
9.	I have successfully used conflict	-	-	1	4	5	10

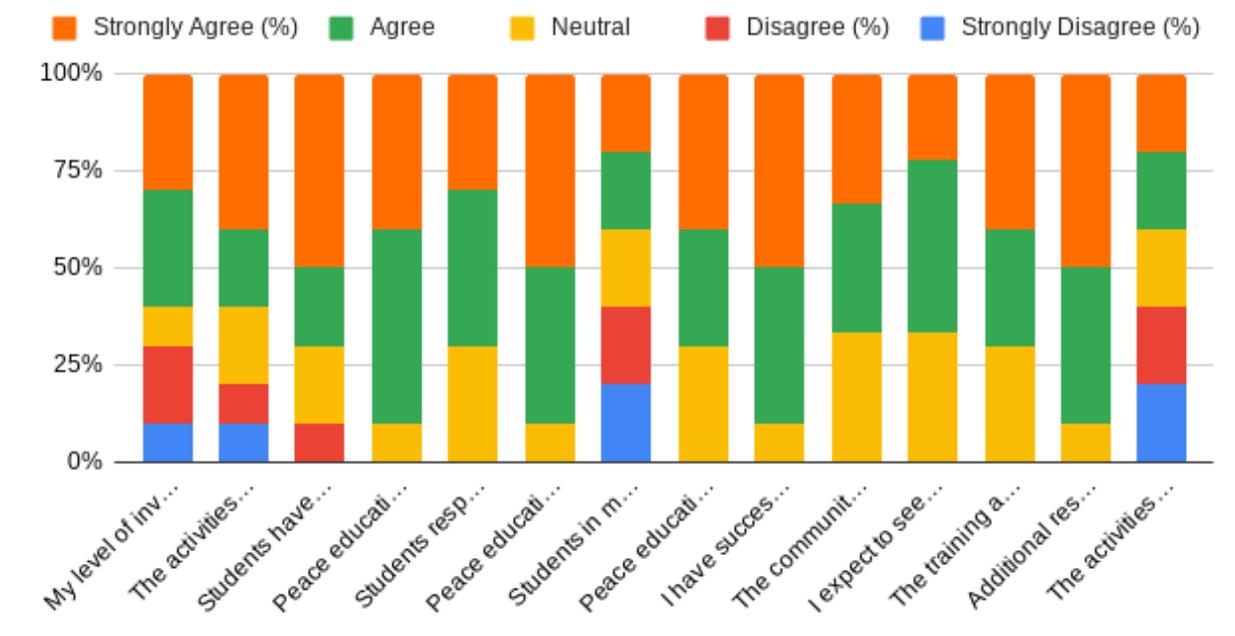
	resolution or peace building techniques with students.						
10.	The community supports peace education in schools.	-	-	3	3	3	10
	I expect to see positive changes among students as a result of peace education within the next 5–10 years.						10
11.		-	-	3	4	2	
	The training and support provided by the project team have been helpful.						10
12.		-	-	3	3	4	
	Additional resources or support would help me conduct activities more effectively.						10
13.		-	-	1	4	5	
	The activities are generally aligned with the educational curriculum.						10
14.		2	2	2	2	2	

Analysis of Responses

Responses are notably distributed across the spectrum. A significant number of participants agree with their involvement in planning activities and are convinced that these activities are effective in promoting peace and understanding that results in reduced conflicts, more positive response and good behavior among the students. Responses also highlight the success of the project in achieving its goal and core objective, as high levels of agreements are observed when asked about the use of conflict resolution or peace-building techniques with students by the teachers. Responses are evenly split across all categories when asked about the conflicts faced by students in the school, reflecting diverse school contexts. This suggests that while some schools face significant conflict issues, others may not experience this to the same extent.

Some participants indicate varied experiences in planning participation and do not agree that the educational curriculum is aligned with these activities and suggests room for improvement in this regard. Support of locals is very important for the successful implementation of any program. Our results show that support exists but more community engagement could boost the effectiveness to achieve the milestone. Most of the participants find this project helpful and believe that additional resources and support could enhance the impact and reach of the project. Neutral responses in all categories indicate that some participants may need additional evidence or context to form a positive opinion.

Questionnaire Response Analysis (Percentage-wise)



Qualitative Data Analysis

For the qualitative analysis of research and to make the findings more reliable, teachers were asked to give their thoughts/ suggestions. In order to accomplish this three questions were asked to 10 teachers, these are:

- What additional topics or themes would you like to include in future activities?
- How would you engage other stakeholders in peace education?
- What type of training or professional development would help teachers and school leaders effectively deliver peace education?

Based on the responses, the analysis of the suggestions for future activities (Table 2), stakeholder engagement (Table 3), and training needs (Table 4) are tabulated below:

Table 2: Additional Topics or Themes for Future Activities

Response	Frequency (No of Responses)	Percentage	Comments/Details
Conflict Resolution Techniques	6	60%	Teachers expressed a need for more focused activities on conflict resolution skills.
Emotional Intelligence & Empathy	5	50%	There was a strong interest in including emotional intelligence development and empathy-building activities.
Community Involvement & Integration	4	40%	Teachers suggested themes focusing on involving the wider community in peace education, including parents and local leaders.
Understanding Cultural Differences	4	40%	Inclusion of activities that promote cultural awareness and tolerance was suggested.

Role of Media in Peace Education	3	30%	Teachers recommended introducing media literacy programs to help students understand the media's impact on peace and conflict.
Leadership Skills for Students	3	30%	Focusing on teaching students leadership skills for conflict management and promoting peace was proposed.

Table 3: Engaging Other Stakeholders in Peace Education

Response	Frequency (No. of Responses)	Percentage	Comments/Details
Parent Involvement	8	80%	Teachers emphasized the need for more active involvement of parents in peace education through workshops, meetings, or discussions.
Community Leaders & Local NGOs	6	60%	A significant number of teachers suggested engaging local community leaders and NGOs to extend peace education beyond schools.
Collaboration with Other Schools	5	50%	Teachers proposed organizing joint activities with other schools to foster a larger network of peace education.
Government & Policymakers	4	40%	Some teachers suggested involving policymakers to advocate for peace education at the governmental level.
Peer Mediation Programs	3	30%	Including peer mediation programs where students could mediate conflicts among their peers was recommended.

Table 4: Training or Professional Development Needs

Response	Frequency (No. of Responses)	Percentage	Comments/Details
Ongoing Workshops & Refresher Courses	7	70%	Teachers highlighted the need for continuous professional development opportunities and regular refresher courses on peace education strategies.
Conflict Resolution Training	6	60%	There was a demand for more specialized training in conflict resolution to empower teachers in dealing with challenging situations.
Active Teaching Methods & Pedagogies	5	50%	Teachers suggested training focused on more interactive and student-centered teaching methods to engage students in peace education.
Collaboration with Experts/Facilitators	4	40%	Teachers recommended inviting external experts or facilitators to conduct workshops on peace education.
Emotional Intelligence & Classroom	4	40%	Professional development on emotional intelligence, handling difficult emotions in

Management			students, and classroom management was deemed crucial.
Curriculum Integration Techniques	3	30%	Some teachers suggested that training should also focus on integrating peace education within the existing curriculum.

Findings of Qualitative Research

The responses provided by the teachers from two secondary schools of Sakran, offer valuable insights into the current status of peace education in the region offered by Pakistan Peace Project. Their suggestions emphasize the need of more insightful techniques in the project that could connect not only students but the parents and local social workers and leaders to the peace education. The techniques may focus on development of emotional intelligence, awareness and leadership qualities with the goal to resolve the conflicts. The project should promote the activities that could build empathy, positivity and tolerance among students. Certain participants have proposed that programs like media literacy should be added to help students understand the impact of media while some recommended to include peer mediation programs.

Participants also believe that taking peace education at government level and involvement of government policy makers especially in the education sector would enhance the efficacy of this program at all levels. It has also been suggested that there is a need for continuous professional development and more specialized training to empower teachers to effectively address conflicts and other challenges. Training should focus on more interactive and student centered teaching methods, conducted by experts in the field. Furthermore, Integration of peace education within the existing curriculum is also one of the golden suggestions.

Conclusion

The data collected highlights both the strengths as well as areas for improvement in the implementation and sustainability of peace education. It is evident that while significant progress has been made in promoting peace education, there are several aspects that need to be further developed to maximize its impact. As teachers largely feel involved in the activities, and many have acknowledged the positive influence of peace education on students, their level of involvement in planning the activities can still be improved. The feedback shows that peace education has had a positive effect on students in terms of conflict resolution, behavior changes, and an improved understanding of peace. However, there is still room to enhance the effectiveness of these activities, especially by integrating more themes like emotional intelligence, cultural awareness, and community engagement.

Teachers view peace education is essential for addressing the conflicts students face in schools and consider it an important aspect of the curriculum. Despite this, some teachers expressed a desire for more support and resources to conduct peace-building activities effectively. Teachers have indicated that they need continued professional development, especially in areas such as conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, and active teaching methods. This indicates that the success of peace education heavily depends on teachers' capabilities and confidence in delivering these concepts. There is a strong desire for greater involvement of parents and community leaders in the peace education process. The Government involvement was also mentioned, pointing to the need for advocacy and policy support to integrate peace education at national level. Teachers feel that peace education cannot be solely the responsibility of the schools; it requires active participation of the entire community for greater impact.

Recommendations

Impact of peace education on different areas of Pakistan should be measured and compared in order to get more valuable insights of how regional contexts influence effectiveness of the peace education and highlight best practices that could be adapted nationwide.

Limitations of the Study

This research is limited to the Sakran, District Hub, Balochistan.

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