



Inspiring global peace through education: Case stories of Nobel Peace Laureates

Vartika*

Assistant Professor, Islamia Teachers' Training (B.Ed.) College, Phulwari Sharif, Patna, Bihar, India

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.66856/educational.2026.11.3.11033>

Abstract

In the contemporary world, violence, conflict, inequality, injustice, and human rights violations continue to pose serious challenges to humanity. Wars, terrorism, crime, oppression, exploitation, and social discrimination have created an environment of uncertainty and insecurity across societies. Alongside these challenges, poverty, deprivation, and social inequality continue to affect millions of people, highlighting the urgent need for compassion, justice, mutual respect, and peaceful coexistence.

The impact of such social conditions is particularly significant for children and young people, whose attitudes, values, and perceptions are shaped by the environment in which they grow and learn. Continuous exposure to conflict, intolerance, discrimination, and aggressive behaviour—whether in society, media, or other social settings—may influence the development of their understanding of human relationships and social responsibility. Therefore, education has a crucial role to play in nurturing values of peace, empathy, non-violence, equality, human dignity, tolerance, and respect for human rights among learners. Peace education is not merely concerned with the absence of violence; rather, it seeks to develop individuals who are capable of understanding differences, resolving conflicts constructively, respecting diversity, and contributing positively to society.

In this context, the lives and contributions of Nobel Peace Laureates provide valuable sources of learning and inspiration. Their journeys demonstrate how individuals, through courage, compassion, perseverance, and commitment to human dignity, can challenge injustice and contribute towards creating a more peaceful and equitable world. The experiences and achievements of laureates such as Kailash Satyarthi, Malala Yousafzai, Mother Teresa, the 14th Dalai Lama, and Liu Xiaobo offer meaningful case narratives through which learners can explore important values such as compassion, courage, education, freedom, equality, human rights, non-violence, and social responsibility.

The present article, "Learning from the Peacemakers: Educational Insights from the Lives of Nobel Peace Laureates," examines the lives and contributions of selected Nobel Peace Laureates from an educational perspective. Through their case stories, the article explores how their struggles, ideas, and humanitarian contributions can serve as pedagogical resources for developing peace-oriented attitudes and values among children and young people. Their life journeys illustrate that meaningful social transformation can begin with individual commitment and that education can empower learners to become responsible, empathetic, and active contributors to society.

The case stories also provide opportunities for teachers to connect classroom learning with real-life experiences and contemporary social issues. By incorporating the narratives of peacemakers into teaching-learning processes, educators can encourage reflection, critical thinking, empathy, dialogue, and a deeper understanding of human rights and social justice. Such an approach can help transform peace education from a theoretical concept into a lived educational experience.

Thus, the lives of Nobel Peace Laureates can be viewed not merely as accounts of extraordinary individuals but as living lessons in peace, humanity, resilience, and social responsibility. Studying their contributions can inspire learners to critically examine the challenges confronting the contemporary world and, more importantly, to recognize their own potential to promote peace, dignity, justice, and positive social change. In this sense, learning from the peacemakers becomes an important pathway towards building a culture of peace and nurturing responsible global citizens.

Keywords: Global Peace, Noble Peace Laureates, Case Study

Introduction

As the Declaration of Principles on global peace (UNESCO) states, "The first step in global peace education is to teach people what their shared rights and freedoms are, so that they may be respected, and to promote the will to protect those of others." Thus, such awareness may not only help children become better prepared to stand up for their own freedom; but also make them less likely to be party to any attempts to take away the freedom of others. Discussing global human rights in class could be a good example of this approach. The Noble Peace Prize has been awarded to

people and organizations every year since 1901, with a few exceptions such as during World War II. The Nobel Peace Prize awarded to 131 Nobel Laureates till 2017 ^[2] since 1901. Man behind the Nobel Prize is Alfred Nobel, who invented dynamite and experimented in making synthetic rubber, leather and artificial silk.

According to Alfred Nobel's will, the Nobel Peace Prize should be awarded "to the person who shall have done the most or the best work for fraternity between the nations, for the abolition or reduction of standing armies and for the holding and promotion of peace congresses." The Peace

Prize is awarded annually in Norway's capital city of Oslo, unlike the other Nobel Prizes, which are awarded in Stockholm, Sweden.

Today, humankind is suffering from multidimensional crises such as terrorism, population-explosion, denial of human rights, economic inequality, racial discrimination, ideological extremism, religious intolerance, social injustice, ecological imbalance, consumerism, oppression of weak, etc. These peace-related issues compel us to lay down the fundamental principles of a radical global ethics that expects us to realize our roles and duties regarding global peace. It includes the role and ideals of educationalists, the duties of scientists, philosophers, and thinkers, the inculcation of human values such as nonviolence, love, tolerance etc.

Kailash Satyarthi

At the global platform Noble Laureates Kailash Satyarthi (born on January 11, 1954) is a human rights activist from India who won Nobel prize in year 2014, has been at the forefront of the global movement to end child slavery and exploitation since 1980. Kailash Satyarthi is extremely concerned about the disconnect in the way the twin problems of child labour and out-of-school children were being handled. To tackle these problems in a cohesive manner apart from building the Global March against Child Labour, he conceived, shaped, launched and led one of the biggest civil society initiatives, called the Global Campaign for Education (GCE), in 1999. One of the most significant marches was Shiksha Yatra (the Education March) in 2001 to mobilize mass support to bring about a constitutional amendment making free quality education a fundamental right in India. Working with 166 number of parliamentarians post the awareness in India on the Right to Education (RTE), Kailash's efforts paved the way for the 86th Amendment to the Indian Constitution, making education a fundamental right.

Kailash says that, "Educating children is the key to sound, sustainable economic development in any nation." His mission of creating a "child-friendly world" has its roots in the creation of hundreds of "child-friendly villages" or Bal Mitra Grams (BMGs) in India and Nepal as safe and peaceful habitats for children who have been withdrawn from work and enrolled in school. Kailash started his crusade against child labour in India in early 80s, when "child labour" was a completely unheard term. Over time, as his policy advocacy efforts and interventions in the field of child labour, education and social inclusion intensified - and especially after the passage of the Right to Education Act in 2009 - the child labour law became all the more archaic.

Malala Yousafzai

As a young girl, Malala Yousafzai defied the Taliban in Pakistan and demanded that girls be allowed to receive an education. She was shot in the head by a Taliban gunman in 2012, but survived and went on to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

In October 2014, at age 17 Malala Yousafzai became the youngest person to receive the Nobel Peace Prize. Yousafzai highlighted her focus on education and women's rights, urging world leaders to change their policies. She also urged action against illiteracy, poverty and terrorism.

At Malala Yousafzai's 2013 speech at the United Nations, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon pronounced July 12th –

Yousafzai's birthday – 'Malala Day' in honor of the young leader's activism to ensure education for all children. She chose to mark her 16th birthday with the world," said Ban. "No child should have to die for going to school. Nowhere should teachers fear to teach or children fear to learn. Together, we can change the picture."

With a growing public platform, Yousafzai continued to speak out about her right, and the right of all women, to an education. Her activism resulted in a nomination for the International Children's Peace Prize in 2011. That same year, she was awarded Pakistan's National Youth Peace Prize.

Ziauddin's school is able to reopen and Malala is excited to return to the classroom. Although she fears retaliation for speaking out against the Taliban, she publicly campaigns for girls to go to school — and wins Pakistan's first National Youth Peace Prize. Determined to continue their campaign for girls' education around the world and many heads of state, carrying her message of girls' education and equality. In response to mass kidnappings of schoolgirls by the terrorist group Boko Haram, Malala travels to Nigeria on her 17th birthday to meet with the families of the victims and add her voice to the outcry demanding for their safe return.

Malala marks her 18th birthday by opening a secondary school for Syrian refugee girls in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley. Everywhere she went, she heard directly from girls about barriers to their education, like violence, poverty, child marriage and machismo culture. Malala brought their messages and concerns directly to world leaders — she held over a dozen meetings with presidents and prime ministers urging them to invest in girls' education.

Malala is currently enrolled at the University of Oxford, where she is studying philosophy, politics and economics at Lady Margaret Hall. She balances her school work and social life with leading the fight for girls' education around the world — but she is not fighting alone.

Liu Xiaobo

Liu Xiaobo (Chinese: 28 December 1955 – 13 July 2017)^[2] was a Chinese literary critic, poet, human rights activist and Nobel Peace Prize laureate who called for political reforms and was involved in campaigns to end Communist single-party rule in China. He was sometimes referred to as "China's Nelson Mandela". On 26 June 2017, he was granted medical parole after being diagnosed with liver cancer and he died on 13 July 2017.

In 1977, Liu was admitted to the Department of Chinese Literature at Jilin University, where he founded a poetry group known as "The Innocent Hearts" (Chi Zi Xin) with six schoolmates. In 1982, he graduated with a BA in literature before being admitted to the Department.

Liu rose to fame in literary circles with his literary critiques and he eventually became a visiting scholar at several overseas universities. He returned to China to support the 1989 Tiananmen Square protests and was imprisoned for the first time from 1989 to 1991, again from 1995 to 1996 yet again from 1996 to 1999 for his involvement in the democracy and human rights movement. When the army seemed ready to violently eject the students who persistently occupied Tiananmen Square in order to challenge the government and the army that was enforcing its declaration of martial law, he initiated a four-man three-day hunger strike on 2 June. Later referred to as the "Tiananmen Four

Gentlemen Hunger Strike", the action earned the trust of the students. He requested that both the government and the students abandon the ideology of class struggle and adopt a new political culture of dialogue and compromise. Although it was too late to prevent the massacre which started on the night of 3 June from occurring beyond the square, he and his colleagues successfully negotiated with the student leaders and the army commander so the several thousand students who remained in the square would all be allowed to peacefully withdraw from it, thus preventing a possibly much larger scale of bloodshed.

Mother Teresa

Born on August 26, 1910 to devoutly Catholic Albanian parents in what is currently the capital of Macedonia, she was baptized Agnes Gonxha Bojaxhiu. Her father died when she was eight years old and this made her especially close with her charitable and compassionate mother. She joined the Sisters of Loreto nunnery in Dublin, Ireland, and took the name Sister Mary Teresa. After living in Macedonia for eighteen years she moved to Ireland and then to India, where she lived for most of her life.

In 1950 Teresa founded the Missionaries of Charity, a Roman Catholic religious congregation which had over 4,500 sisters and was active in 133 countries in 2012. The congregation manages homes for people dying of HIV/AIDS, leprosy and tuberculosis; soup kitchens; dispensaries and mobile clinics; children's- and family-counseling programmes; orphanages, and schools. Members, who take vows of chastity, poverty, and obedience, also profess a fourth vow: to give "wholehearted free service to the poorest of the poor". Teresa received a number of honours, including the 1962 Ramon Magsaysay Peace Prize and 1979 Nobel Peace Prize "for work undertaken in the struggle to overcome poverty and distress, which also constitutes a threat to peace". She refused the conventional ceremonial banquet for laureates, asking that its \$192,000 cost be given to the poor in India and saying that earthly rewards were important only if they helped her to help the world's needy.

Dalai Lama

The Dalai Lama, the exiled religious and political leader of Tibet, was named the 1989 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize today in recognition of his nonviolent campaign over nearly 40 years to end China's domination of his homeland.

The Norwegian Nobel Committee said the 54-year-old Tibetan Buddhist leader, who fled to India in 1959 after an abortive uprising against Chinese rule in which thousands of people were killed, was being recognized because he "consistently has opposed the use of violence" in his campaign.

Instead, the committee said, he has "advocated peaceful solutions based upon tolerance and mutual respect in order to preserve the historical and cultural heritage of his people."

Word of the selection reached the Dalai Lama in Newport Beach, Calif., where he was attending a conference to explore approaches to psychological well-being and spirituality.

"The Dalai Lama has developed his philosophy of peace from a great reverence for all things living and upon the concept of universal responsibility embracing all mankind as well as nature," the selection committee said. A Spotlight

on the Struggle say that Tibetan exiles expect the award to return their struggle to international prominence but that it could also be an irritant in relations between India and China. They say that the Dalai Lama's presence in India and the support extended to him there have caused resentment in Beijing in the past and that the Indian Government's statement today on the Nobel committee's selection was carefully worded to avoid offending China.

Objectives of the Study

1. To develop sense of universal values in every individual.
2. To prepare citizens to cope with difficult and uncertain situations and fitting them for personal autonomy and responsibility.
3. To educate the individual and develop the ability to recognize and accept the values which exist in the diversity of individuals.
4. To strengthen peace, friendship and solidarity between individuals and people.
5. To develop the ability of non-violent conflict – resolution among the individuals.
6. To cultivate the ability to make informed choices, basing their judgments and actions not only on the analysis of present situations and the vision of a preferred future among the individuals
7. To teach the citizens to respect the cultural heritage, protect the environment and social harmony.
8. To cultivate citizens in the line of solidarity feeling and feeling of equity at the national and international levels in the perspectives of a balanced and long-term development.

Rationale of the study

The present study is based on the growing need to promote peace, empathy, tolerance, human rights, and social responsibility through education. In today's world, violence, conflict, inequality, discrimination, and injustice are major concerns. Children are also influenced by the social environment around them; therefore, education has an important role in developing peaceful attitudes and responsible behaviour among learners.

Peace education should not remain limited to theoretical concepts. Learners need real-life examples that help them understand and practise values such as compassion, non-violence, courage, equality, justice, and respect for others. The lives of Nobel Peace Laureates provide meaningful examples of individuals who have worked for humanity and social change despite facing challenges and difficulties.

The present study focuses on the lives and contributions of Kailash Satyarthi, Malala Yousafzai, Mother Teresa, the 14th Dalai Lama, and Liu Xiaobo. Their life stories represent different dimensions of peace, human rights, education, compassion, and social justice. These stories can serve as useful educational resources for developing values and encouraging learners to think critically about contemporary social issues.

The study is particularly relevant to teacher education, as teachers can use such life stories through biographies, case studies, discussions, storytelling, and reflective activities. Learning from the experiences of peacemakers can help students connect classroom learning with real-life situations and develop empathy, tolerance, and social responsibility.

Thus, the study seeks to highlight how the lives of Nobel Peace Laureates can be used as educational resources for peace and value education, inspiring learners to become responsible individuals and contribute towards a more peaceful, just, and humane society.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to introduce development of peace education. It also describes the role of schools and teachers in promoting peace education. The states the justification of the present study, statement of the research problem, specific objectives of the research, technical terms and delimitation of the present research. It also describes in brief the method and design, sample, tests and tools and statistical design of the study.

Global peace is as important to the world as water is important to a thirsty person in the desert. It's something we need, it's a goal we have to work together to achieve, it's the ultimate utopia.

Finally, a few words about material progress. There is a great deal of complaint against material progress from Westerners, and yet, paradoxically, it has been the very pride of the Western world. There is nothing wrong with material progress it always provided precedence to people . It is a firm belief that in order to solve human problems in all their dimensions, we must combine and harmonize economic development with spiritual growth.

However, we must know its limitations. Although materialistic knowledge in the form of science and technology has contributed enormously to human welfare, it is not capable of creating lasting happiness. In America, for example, where technological development is perhaps more advanced than in any other country, there is still a great deal of mental suffering. This is because materialistic knowledge can only provide a type of happiness that is dependent upon physical conditions. It cannot provide happiness that springs from inner development independent of external factors.

References

1. The Nobel Prize. Kailash Satyarthi - Biographical, 2026. https://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/2014/satyarthi-bio.html
2. Buckley C. Liu Xiaobo, Chinese Dissident Who Won Nobel While Jailed, Dies at 61. *The New York Times*, 2017, P.02.
3. Deutsch M. *The resolution of conflict: Constructive and destructive processes*. Yale University Press, 1973.
4. Deutsch M, Coleman PT. *The handbook of conflict resolution: Theory and practice*. Jossey-Bass, 2000.
5. Dukes EF, Pischolish MM, Stephens J. *Reaching for higher ground in conflict resolution*. Jossey-Bass, 2000.
6. Ellis DG. *Transforming conflict: Communication and ethno-political conflict*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2006.
7. Fisher R, Kopelman E, Schneider AK. *Beyond Machiavelli: Tools for coping with conflict*. Harvard University Press, 2000.
8. Fisher R, Ury W. *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*. Penguin Books, 2000.
9. Fisher S, Ludin J, Williams S, Abdi DI, Smith R, Williams S. *Working with conflict: Skills and strategies for action*. Zed Books, 2000.
10. Fry DP, Björkqvist K. *Cultural variation in conflict resolution: Alternatives to violence*. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 1997.

11. Harwood J, Giles H. *Intergroup communication: Multiple perspectives*. Peter Lang, 2005.
12. Johnson R. *Negotiation basics: Concepts, skills, and exercises*. Sage Publications, 1993.
13. UNESCO. *Recommendation concerning education for international understanding, co-operation and peace and education relating to human rights and fundamental freedoms*. UNESCO document, 1974.
14. UNESCO. *Peace education framework for teacher education (IN/2005/ED/6)*. UNESCO document, 2005.