

Educating the child in a peaceful and conflict free school: Good practices in Sri Lankan schools

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This study envisaged to explore the state of the art of selected five schools that have been pinpointed as having good school practices in the field of education, peace and conflict resolution. The objectives were to explore peace concepts embedded in the good practices of school processes, and to identify causal factors for the peace related processes.

Case study method was employed. Convenient sampling method was used to select Deputy / Assistant principals (7), teachers (50), Grade 11 students (50) and parents (50) to collect qualitative data by in depth unstructured observation, in depth interviews and conference cum reflective incident analysis. Content was analyzed on curriculum material to identify sections that deal with peace education and to evaluate the prevalent practice at classroom level. Correlation Coefficient of responses in questionnaires was calculated and z test was used to determine the significance of the correlations. Qualitative data were coded to identify specific patterns of good practices and they were elaborated in narrative style citing qualitative judgments as vignettes. In the report a rich and vivid description of events in the respective schools emphasizing chronological order of school history, individual actors' role in good practices, school processes in a day and during the year were emphasized.

Good practices in peace and conflict resolution in nine school processes (School management, Classroom management, Student development, Staff development, Teaching/ learning process, Co - curricular activities, School environment building, Community relations and cultural harmony) and peace concepts embedded to these processes were identified. The role of the principal was an influential factor in deciding good practices. The cooperation of teachers, students and school community are centered on principal's role and personality, which is 'Sri Lankan' in nature. The child friendly approach in planning school and classroom programmes, implementing them in fulfilling needs of the child and sensitizing community needs have contributed to develop peaceful environment of the school. Good school practices in co curricular activities were centered on developing school premises beautifully, inculcating peaceful minds and behaviour patterns of students and teachers.

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