

Revisiting Peace Education in India with a focus on Jammu & Kashmir

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Abstract

Peace education in India has evolved through a rich interplay among diverse sources, including philosophical traditions, nationalist movements, constitutional commitments, and curricular reforms, thereby establishing peace as a fundamental moral principle. Although peace education has been an integral part of the Indian education system since ancient times, through indigenous traditions such as Vasudhaiva kutumbakam (the world is one family) and ahimsa (non-violence), it remains underdeveloped in formal pedagogy and vaguely defined. India of the 21st century stands at a complex crossroads of exponential socio-economic development, demographic diversity, environmental vulnerability, and geopolitical challenges. These intersecting realities underscore the increasing relevance of peace education as a transformative educational opportunity to foster democratic participation, empathy, and social cohesion. The article attempts to investigate the nature and scope of peace education in India by focusing on the existing structural deficiencies, unclear policies and pedagogical challenges through a compact case study of Jammu & Kashmir (J&K), which establishes militarised ecologies, climate justice and psychosocial resilience as new areas of research for peace education curriculum. The article proposes a context-defined, extended, and inclusive peace education framework that incorporates ecological literacy, trauma-informed teaching, and social justice-based educational practices, informed by input from borderland communities.

Keywords: borderland, conflict, Jammu & Kashmir, militarised ecology, peace education, structural violence

1. Introduction

Peace, in generic terms, is widely associated with the absence of violence and war. This parochial understanding needs to be revisited to encompass the multidimensional notions of justice, inclusion, dignity, spirituality, and diversity. As Galtung (1969) avers, peace can be categorised into negative peace (the absence of direct conflict) and positive peace (the existence of social systems that promote equality, justice and human rights). Peace education must be approached as a systematic process and as part of the wider educational curriculum to prevent conflict and reduce violence, while simultaneously promoting the values of human rights, social justice, and multiculturalism (UNICEF, 1999). As Reardon (1988) asserts, peace education plays a pivotal role in fostering responsible global citizenship by encouraging critical thinking, cooperation, and empathy, thereby contributing to the building of peaceful societies. Educational institutions, therefore, serve as a critical site for the cultivation of peace, centring responsibility on educators to nurture attributes of empathy, kindness, and mutual respect among learners through skills, values, and quotidian lived experiences.

India's educational history demonstrates that peace education has never been absent; however, it was imparted implicitly and in fragmented ways through moral and citizenship education, and, more broadly, as part of social studies curricula rather than as an independent subject. Peace education has often been perceived as an abstract moral value rather than a structural pedagogical process. For Kajal Kalsi and Renu Nanda, *Revisiting Peace Education in India with a focus on Jammu & Kashmir*, *World Voices Nexus* | The WCCES Chronicle (ISSN: 2522-7483), Special Issue Edited by Marmar Mukhopadhyay, Vol. 10 Nos. 1&2, June 2026
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instance, in the Vedic literature, peace is presented as part of religious education through values such as togetherness, truth, selfless service, mutual respect, and others (Khemka, 1988). Hence, despite its historical roots, a structurally and contextually sensitive peace education practice in the contemporary Indian education system remains largely absent. The present challenge is not necessarily in introducing peace education, but in making the existing peace pedagogy systematic by contextualising and institutionalising it as long- and short-term national and regional goals. The Indian Constitution has made Education a part of the concurrent list, with both the state and the Union government sharing the rights and responsibilities. Thus, national policies serve as guiding principles rather than mandatory regulations. Local knowledge systems must be utilised in this process to build peace education curricula that are effective and sustainable (Kroeker, 2020).

This article proceeds in five parts. The first section traces the philosophical foundations of peace in Indian traditions; the second reviews post-independence educational policies regarding peace education. The third critically examines the limits of conventional frameworks and introduces the concept of militarised ecologies and compounded risk ecologies. The fourth presents Jammu and Kashmir as a case study demonstrating why peace education must expand beyond traditional approaches. The fifth offers policy imperatives for institutionalising a transformed peace education framework across India.

This conceptual study draws on a review of policy documents, government reports, national educational policy frameworks, published academic literature, and news reports on Jammu and Kashmir. These sources are analysed through the lens of militarised ecology and climate justice to examine how conflict and environmental change co-produce vulnerabilities that existing peace education frameworks fail to address.

2. Philosophical Foundations of Peace Education in India

In the Indian philosophical tradition, peace has been an integral principle of individual and collective life, rooted in the notion of cosmic harmony. Indian philosophy has holistically conceptualised peace as not merely an absence of conflict but also the presence of inner tranquillity, ethical living and universal co-existence. Peace can be associated with the Sanskrit term ‘Shanti’, signifying spiritual calmness, harmony and freedom from social injustice. Most ancient Indian texts, such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Shastras, and the Bhagavad Gita, along with Buddhist and Jain holy scriptures, emphasise peace as an essential prerequisite for both personal enlightenment and social betterment. The traditional roots of Indian philosophy on peace are associated broadly with the principles of ahimsa (non-violence) and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam (the world as one family). The doctrine of Ahimsa has been prominently advocated in Jainism and Buddhism and later popularised by Mahatma Gandhi as the highest moral virtue.

Buddhism¹ has played a crucial role in the spread of the notion of peace by emphasising the elimination of suffering, desire, and hatred through its five precepts (Panchsheela), thereby cultivating a peaceful mind and compassionate living, with a focus on refraining from destroying living creatures and from exploitation (Gombrich, 1971/1991). Buddhist values have been central to promoting peace by advocating compassion (Karuna) and loving-kindness (Metta) towards all living creatures. Similarly, the Bhagavad Gita promotes inner peace by advocating self-control, righteousness (Dharma), and detachment from selfish desires, with a focus on one’s duty (karma) (Radhakrishnan, 1948). Jainism also avers the observance of certain values associated with the notions of non-violence (ahimsa) and truth (satya) as essential to promoting peace and liberation.

¹ The values of Buddhism as laid down by Gautam Buddha became central to the future peace movements in India (as seen under King Ashoka post the Kalinga war and later under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi) and have been held crucial to promoting peace education in India.

Ashoka's (approximately 268 to 232 BCE) policy of Dhamma. It is seen as one of the earliest state-sponsored attempts towards ethical governance and peacebuilding in Indian history. His remarkable transformation after the Kalinga War is seen as a harbinger of the propagation of peace, non-violence, and moral governance (Smith, 1920). Furthermore, the Gandhian philosophy of Satyagraha, peaceful resistance and non-cooperation, by combining the values of truth and non-violence, acted as an instrument of social transformation and conflict resolution during British rule. The approach demonstrated that with moral courage, social equality and respect for mutual dignity, sustainable peace can be achieved (Gandhi, 1927). His post-independence message to fellow Indians to not harbour bitterness toward the British, not disrespect them, and to focus on nation-building based on justice, inclusivity, and non-violence laid the foundation for a modern India's vision in the world community. Gandhi's idea of peace has gained worldwide traction. It has also been viewed as an alternative modernity. Furthermore, Ambedkar (1936) pressed for peace through internal restructuring of society based on the ideals of Buddhist fraternity, absolute human dignity and constitutional justice. He was deeply sceptical of any society striving to attain political unity/peace without first ascertaining the foundational ideals of social equity and the rights of minorities and marginalised groups, which he considered fundamental to peace and order.

These diverse philosophical strands find a contemporary articulation in UNESCO's peace education framework (2005), which conceptualises peace through three fundamental perspectives: inner peace (personal tranquillity and ethical living), social peace (harmonious co-existence and justice in human relations), and peace with nature (ecological harmony and environmental responsibility). The tripartite framework mirrors the ancient Indian understanding of Shanti as encompassing personal, social, and cosmic dimensions while extending it to address the modern ecological crisis. Peace education is seen as a response to conflict at the local, national, and international levels, and as a pedagogical process that motivates children to identify and address both prevalent and potential sources of conflict. As Mukhopadhyay (2005) asserts, peace is the antidote to war since 'war is in the minds of men', making peace education a cardinal necessity of modern times. While the traditional Indian idea of (positive) peace, a moral value to live by, was partially institutionalised and formalised in post-independence educational reforms and policies, the broader notion of peace, including negative peace, was overlooked.

3. Post-Independence Educational Policies and Peace Reforms

The Indian Constitution has established a normative framework for establishing and promoting peace, justice, fraternity, and social harmony, as reflected in the Preamble's commitment to the values of liberty, equality, and fraternity, along with social equity. Although there is no explicit articulation of the ideas surrounding peace education in the Constitution, the commitment in the Preamble lies at the core of peace education. It can be treated as a foundation for promoting an inclusive idea of peace (GoI, 1950). This Constitutional vision is reinforced by specific directive principles of state policy and fundamental duties that together provide a clear mandate for peace education. Article 51A(e) enjoins citizens to promote harmony and a spirit of fraternity, transcending linguistic, religious and regional or sectional diversities. Article 51A(g) obligates citizens to protect and improve the natural environment and to promote compassion for all living creatures, and Article 51A(i) requires citizens to abjure violence. These constitutional duties correspond to the inclusive idea of peace, encompassing social peace, peace with nature, and negative peace, thereby transforming peace from an abstract moral value into a civic obligation. It provided a foundational roadmap for the post-independence education policies to integrate peace education across the curriculum.

Post-independence education policies and reforms have consistently highlighted the role of education in fostering national integration and democratised inclusive citizenship (Ministry of Education, 1966). The Kothari Commission (1964–66) played a crucial role in shaping India's modern education

system, and its recommendations primarily emphasised value education, social cohesion and national integration (Ministry of Education, 1966). Education was recognised as an instrument for strengthening democratic values and reducing socio-economic disparities. The Commission recommended early policy direction to integrate peace-oriented values into school curricula. The subsequent national education policies of 1968, 1986, and the 1992 revision reinforced the significance of value-based education without explicitly outlining the design of peace education. These policies introduced programmes aimed at promoting cultural understanding, environmental awareness and social responsibility (Ministry of Human Resource Development 1986; 1992). Despite these commitments, the systematic implementation remained limited across Indian states.

A significant milestone was achieved with the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005, which formally introduced 'Education for Peace' as a pedagogical goal (NCERT, 2005). A direct emphasis was placed on Gandhian values in education, including ethical development, empathy, and conflict resolution as essential learning outcomes. NCF 2005 acknowledged that peace education should extend beyond the curriculum to encompass the teacher-pupil relationship, the classroom environment, and a broader range of school activities. The policy focused on training students not just to be consumers of peace but to be makers of peace, to lead ethical, meaningful lives, and to emphasise living in harmony with nature. However, peace education remained broadly defined in terms of values, with no inclusive scope and no concrete evidence of its implementation (Mukhopadhyay & Parhar, 2025).

Further, the National Curriculum Framework for Teacher Education (NCFTE) 2009 emphasised an integral approach to peace education through value orientation. It emphasised education for peace as not merely training but a living experience, particularly by equipping individuals with the values and skills that help them build a holistic personality and lead a life of harmony with themselves and others.

National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 took measures to expand and institutionalise inclusive peace education, albeit implicitly, by promoting credit-based courses and projects in community engagement, environmental education, climate change, and sustainable development (Ministry of Education, 2020). It promoted value-based education, focusing on the development of global citizens through humanistic, ethical, constitutional and universal human values of truth (satya), righteous conduct (dharma), peace (shanti), love and nonviolence (ahimsa), citizenship values, life skills in Seva (service) and participation in community service programmes as part of the holistic education. It also promoted conflict resolution at the personal and community levels through global citizenship and coexistence. However, NEP2020 and the following NCF2023, despite mentioning 'peace', largely confine it to a humanistic value and yoga, failing to institutionalise a concrete curriculum on Peace Education (Mukhopadhyay & Parhar, 2025)

Despite implicitly addressing the ideas of global citizenship and conflict resolution, NEP 2020 paid little attention to the question of negative peace and its impact on citizens vulnerable to conflict and everyday structural violence, including climate change. Moreover, the peace education curricula have been largely designed by privileged people who are often not affected by the question of violence or conflict directly, thereby determining the success of these curricula in shaping human lives (Bajaj, 2015; van Dijk, A., de Haan, M., & de Winter, M., 2020). Although education was thought to be a major instrument for instilling values of tolerance, harmony and fraternity in children, it seems to have failed miserably in achieving this goal due to the alienation of today's education from the realities and issues of the world (Pandey, 2021). India's position at 126th in the Global Peace Index highlights a stark disconnect between educational policies and the lived social realities of peace, as Indian students navigate an environment marked by multiple disparities in the digital world, a mental health crisis, and systemic discrimination (Mukhopadhyay & Parhar, 2025; Naikare & Kumar, 2025).

4. Expanding the Scope of Peace Education

The historical review reveals a persistent gap; peace education in India has been conceptualised as an abstract value system rather than a structural response to actual conflict and changing climatic conditions. Conventional peace education frameworks have largely emphasised interpersonal values of harmony, cohesion and integration. However, contemporary realities demand broader, more inclusive approaches that address structural inequality, environmental challenges, and climate-related vulnerabilities. The concept of ‘compound risk ecologies’ illustrates how conflict vulnerability and climate risk reinforce each other, particularly in militarised landscapes (Simpson et al., 2023). This raises the question of whether peace education can have the same composition across different socio-political contexts, as educational responses should combine ecological literacy, disaster preparedness, conflict resolution, and psychosocial resilience in the case of militarised ecologies² facing dual uncertainties, such as Jammu & Kashmir (J&K).

UNESCO’s (2005) framework for peace education supports this expanded scope by defining peace education through three interlocking propositions: as a response to conflict at every level from the interpersonal to the international; as a paradigm centred on love, cooperation and human welfare; and as a pedagogical practice that enables children to identify both manifest and latent sources of conflict. Viewing peace education as inherently interdisciplinary, the argument rejects restricting it to a single subject and asserts that it must permeate the entire curriculum. The concept of peace with nature is especially relevant, as it provides a theoretical foundation for integrating climate literacy and ecological justice into peace education and for addressing the compound risk ecologies that shape militarised borderlands.

J&K borderlands are militarised landscapes and can be seen as socio-ecological spaces shaped by political hostilities, conflict preparation, and sporadic wars (Lunstrum & Brady, 2026). In engagements with frontier regions, environmental disruptions often intensify emotional stress among residents, especially children, making trauma-response education essential to their peace curriculum. The intersection of militarised ecologies, climate justice, and peace education in the context of the everyday vulnerabilities in the borderlands of J&K highlights how conflict and climate change co-produce what is termed as ‘slow violence’³ in such compound risk ecologies (Nixon, 2011). By analysing the dual crisis that unfolded in the year 2025, cross-border firing along the Line of Control and subsequent flooding of the Chenab and Tawi rivers in the Jammu region, the study demonstrates how militarisation and climate extremes reinforce livelihood vulnerabilities, intensify displacement, and cause psychosocial stress by disrupting the peaceful existence among the local communities.

Military infrastructure, such as landmines, bunkers, restricted zones, and requisitioned land, actively alters environmental systems and access to resources, thereby intensifying ecological fragility and social marginalisation. This creates a paradoxical military role, as protector, violator, and regulator, simultaneously enabling disaster response, providing security while contributing to long-term ecological degradation and restricted livelihoods.

² The term militarised ecologies captures the idea that military infrastructures do not simply occupy spaces; they actively produce environmental change. This is highly evident in the borderland environments which are not neutral natural landscapes but are actively shaped, disturbed, and regulated by military infrastructure and conflict activity often resulting in what is termed as ‘everyday violence’ (Scheper-Hughes, 1992).

³ Slow violence is a concept that highlights the violence inflicted by the gradual long-term processes like environmental degradation, climate change and displacement which due to their insidious nature are not noticed as a form of violence as they do not necessarily offer an immediate spectacle, nonetheless impact the marginalised communities disproportionately over time.

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5. Jammu & Kashmir: Towards Inclusive Peace Education

The region of Jammu and Kashmir in northern India presents a quintessential case in which peace education assumes particular urgency due to the persistent complexity of socio-political and ecological realities. Sharing a border with Pakistan, J&K represents a militarised ecology, as heavy and conspicuous military infrastructure, including bunkers, defence ditches, landmines, and restricted zones, primarily shapes the border landscapes of this region. These features of borderlands not just transform environmental systems, making the ecology vulnerable, but also affect livelihoods and reshape educational realities. This border militarised ecology results in a cyclical and mutually reinforcing relationship between three domains of education, mental health and employment among the youth in J&K. The protracted border conflict between India and Pakistan has produced a vicious cycle of interrupted schooling, psychological trauma, reduced skill acquisition and employability, feeding back into socio-economic marginalisation and further psychological distress (Kumar et al., 2026). J&K reporting the highest cases of mental health crisis brings attention to the impact of this conflict-prone border on the youth who struggle to live a peaceful life (Times of India, 2025).

In any militarised ecology, the persistence of structural transformations through heavy militarisation influences citizens' access to land, water, and schooling; thereby expanding the scope of peace education beyond harmony and integration. Climate justice argues that those who contribute least to climate change suffer its harshest consequences and should have a larger say in the related policy-making (UNDP Climate Promise, 2023). In borderlands, this injustice is compounded by militarised land control, loss of farms due to defence occupation, insufficient compensation, restricted mobility routes, and recurring displacement. In Jammu's Line of Control, vast tracts of agricultural land have been occupied by the Border Security Forces, turning the cultivable land into 'no man's land' due to the planting of landmines. Besides, there is an imposition of time-bound restrictions on local borderlanders' access to their usable land for cattle grazing, cultivation, and other activities.

Children living in borderland communities frequently experience school disruptions due to the complex ecology, which leads to sporadic displacements and insecurity stemming from both environmental disasters and border skirmishes. The experiences of children who grow up in the borderlands of Jammu and Kashmir are shaped by cross-border shelling, sirens and evacuation drills, abrupt school closures, limited access to forests and fields, and the constant fear of displacement. Living with the uncertainty of everyday existence constitutes structural violence and constantly disrupts the experience of peace (Galtung, 1969). For these children, the exposure to the violence of everyday structures amplifies the structural violence induced by climate risks, as experienced recently in the year 2025 with the two events of cross-border firing in May and major flooding in September in Jammu, as mentioned earlier.

The result of these disruptions includes families fleeing overnight with minimal belongings, with some oscillating between a nearby village and their houses near the borders. The temporary displacements led to crops being left unattended and the breaking of harvest cycles; livestock suffered due to insufficient fodder and displacement; schools were converted into temporary shelters; and children were exposed to multiple cycles of psychosocial stress, anxiety and trauma. Border childhoods are therefore shaped by dual uncertainty: the unpredictability of conflict and of climate disasters. As militarised landscapes intensify climate risks and climate disasters amplify the vulnerabilities created by conflict, the boundary between environmental and security crises becomes blurred. Between 2016 and 2025, school closures were driven by a combination of conflict-related curfews, strikes, lockdowns, and the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to significant learning gaps. Kashmiri students lost over 1142 days of learning due to school closures between 2010 and 2017 alone (Kumar et al., 2026). In the marginalised borderland areas, the lack of basic learning materials, the existing digital divide, inadequate facilities, and teacher shortages/absenteeism hamper the delivery of standard education, rendering an inclusive peace education a necessity.

Many borderland families have developed ‘mobile livelihoods’ (Stepputat & Sørensen, 2001), wherein the displaced families neither permanently return nor completely break ties with their homeland, with many working both in the border villages and in the host communities in which they have settled for many years. Mobility becomes a vital part of survival during and after violent conflicts, with many displaced people preferring mobile livelihoods across rural-urban divides rather than returning permanently. Furthermore, the situation has disrupted families, as in certain cases, men continue to work in the villages. At the same time, their wives and children move to safer interiors in Jammu to secure a better future for their children.

Tinker (2016) asserts that the effectiveness of peace education depends on its contextualisation rather than on ‘cookie-cutter’ approaches. The 2025 dual crisis demonstrates that peace education must address not merely interpersonal conflict but also the long-term emotional health of children navigating recurring crises. The lack of infrastructure, especially in rural border regions, has resulted in high perceived stress, anxiety and depression, particularly along the Line of Control. J&K accounted for 12.4% of national calls to the Tele MANAS mental health helpline, far above the national average of 3.5%, indicating an extraordinarily high mental health burden in the age group of 18 to 45 (Times of India, 2025). Climate vulnerability in such militarised ecologies is further amplified because for the border communities, climate disasters strike not on a normal landscape but on an already compromised one, resulting in compounded vulnerabilities. Peace education in these conflict-prone borderlands needs to take into account these experiences and realities to be effective in shaping notions of Shanti, harmony, love, and happiness in the everyday lives of borderland students and the community at large.

6. Policy Imperatives for Institutionalising Peace Education in India

In the context of militarised ecology, peace education is not a luxury but a necessity. This article argues for peace education as a framework for border regions that must expand beyond abstract moral values and ethics to include conflict resolution, climate justice, and ecological literacy. Drawing from Paulo Freire’s (1968) theories, peace education should not be a depoliticised value-oriented ‘be kind’ curriculum. It must empower students to understand structural violence, recognise environmental injustice, and engage in collective problem-solving for negative peace and advocacy for positive peace.

To transform educational institutions into resilient community centres rather than isolated academic spaces, the school curriculum must integrate critical peace pedagogy with localised climate and civic literacy in regions vulnerable to the compounding crisis of environmental disasters and geopolitical instability. Education cannot remain neutral; it must equip students with what can be termed ‘eco-civic survival literacy’ and develop ‘critical hope’⁴. This requires a peace education curriculum that synthesises conflict resolution and climate literacy by teaching the empirical, scientific, and logical disruptions, such as flood and landslide warnings, along with justice literacy, providing communities with actionable legal knowledge regarding land rights, state compensation frameworks, and grievance mechanisms. By utilising pedagogical tools like community mapping, students must be trained to transition from passive learners to active civic agents. By directly operationalising Paulo Freire’s (1968) concept of conscientization (critical consciousness), education should become a mechanism through which marginalised communities analyse and transform their socio-ecological realities.

⁴ ‘Critical hope’ is grounded in real-world problems and finding their root causes, not mere false optimism. It focuses on shifting peace education beyond abstract moral values towards engagement with structural violence (Freire, 1968; Verma, 2024).

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In borderlands, structural resilience requires preparing educational systems for dual emergencies, the overlapping disruptions of climate disasters and active conflict zones. Psychological resilience must be paired with the physical continuity of classroom teaching. Classrooms located in unstable borderlands or disaster-prone geographies serve as a site of chronic trauma, displacement, and existential anxiety for both students and teachers. Teachers in J&K report high stress, anxiety, burnout and overburdening with counselling during sporadic conflict-induced disruptions, with many also feeling underprepared to deliver digital content, further compromising teacher education quality (Kumar et al., 2026). Research shows that the vast majority of secondary school educators lack training in critical peace pedagogy, experiential learning and mediation. Lacking such specialised training, teachers often pass on their social prejudices, turning classrooms into environments that reinforce social divisions (Naikare & Kumar, 2025).

At the policy level, several steps are required. First, education policies must formally recognise conflict as a structural determinant of learning outcomes. Conflict-sensitive planning should be integrated into flagship programmes such as Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan, including contingency protocols for school closures, alternative delivery methods and rapid restoration of academic progress after disruptions. Secondly, the digital divide must be treated as a public infrastructure issue. Policies must provide for significant investments in offline digital ecosystems and community radio that can function without internet connectivity in rural and border areas. Third, the district mental health programme must be expanded through greater decentralisation and the establishment of school-based counselling units. Mental health literacy and stigma reduction should be incorporated into school curricula and community outreach programmes as part of a larger peace education framework.

Fourth, it is imperative to institutionalise teacher capacity development as a core pillar of conflict-resilient pedagogy. As the data reflected a large number of teachers in J&K reporting being unprepared for digital content delivery, with many experiencing chronic burnout, professional training should pivot from generic modules to specialised trauma-responsive and digital pedagogy. Drawing from UNESCO's (2005) framework, teacher training must equip teachers to move beyond 'Passive banking' models towards critical peace pedagogy that addresses both manifest and latent conflicts. This includes mediation training to mitigate psychological stress and enhance mental health literacy, as well as cultivating the classroom as a site of emotional safety for both teachers and students. Finally, employment and skills development policies must be trauma-informed and closely linked to local labour market demands, incorporating apprenticeship and internship opportunities alongside psychological support and career counselling.

7. Conclusion

A close analysis of peace education in India reveals a deep-seated dichotomy. At the same time, there is a profound alignment between structural frameworks and traditional philosophies, yet its impact remains impeded by systemic bottlenecks, pedagogical failures, and localised implementation. Consequently, instead of transforming society, peace education in Indian schools and universities often remains as a value-loaded abstract moral concept rather than a tool for resolving real-world conflicts. While NEP 2020 attempted to inculcate the ideas of peace education implicitly through a curriculum designed around happiness, global citizenship, disaster management, and environmental education, there remains a gap between theory and praxis due to the passive 'banking model of learning'⁵ (Kumar, 2024).

⁵ The passive 'banking model of education' was coined by Paulo Freire addressing a system of learning that treats students as empty containers/accounts to be filled with information deposited by the teacher, focusing on rote memorization, therefore suppressing critical thinking and knowledge creation.

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The historical review presented in this article shows that India's philosophical and policy traditions have long valued peace. However, these values were never operationalised for the kinds of compound risk ecologies that borderland communities face. The case of J&K demonstrates that without ecological literacy, conflict-induced trauma-responsive pedagogy, and climate justice as core components, peace education remains an abstract attempt, disconnected from the lived realities of those most affected by conflict and environmental change.

By positioning education as a transformative tool to empower border communities to navigate intersecting crises and foster resilience, agency, and long-term sustainability in conflict-prone environments, the research advocates for integrated peace policy and educational interventions. In complex militarised ecologies like J&K, peace education becomes a transformative practice by combining climate literacy, ecological justice, conflict preparation, mitigation and psychosocial resilience. Peace education should be a tool for the empowerment of the marginalised, not merely for reconciliation. Peace education, when grounded in climate justice and local socio-political realities, offers a path to dignity, resilience, and agency for the children of every community.

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