Media, Education, and Peacebuilding: The Role of Journalism in Promoting Nonviolent Learning Narratives

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Abstract

The function of journalism in influencing classroom discussions about nonviolence, civic duty, and peacebuilding is the focus of this article. Journalism helps bring about change at the grassroots level and in policymaking by portraying education as a means of resolving social conflicts and fostering unity. This study claims that how societies perceive education—not just as a formal schooling but as a vehicle for human development, intercultural conversation, and peaceful social transformation—can be shaped by the media. It draws on theories of media framing, agenda-setting, and peace journalism to support this claim. Within the framework of international discussions on media and peace education, this article places an emphasis on journalism's applicability to the Indian setting.

Keywords: *Journalism, Education Narratives, Peacebuilding, Nonviolence, Media and Society, Civic Engagement, Holistic Human Development, Peace Journalism*

1. Introduction

Education has always been about more than just imparting facts and figures; it's a powerful force for positive change in people's lives, communities, and the world at large. The promotion of nonviolence, tolerance, and critical thinking through peace education is vital in societies that are confronting inequality, fragmentation, or conflict. Mediating these narratives of education is journalism, which serves as the principal conduit for public conversation. It decides whether classes focus on test prep, job skills, or more generalized social ideals like tolerance and understanding. When people use social media, they are more likely to become aware of each other's perspectives and take action based on that knowledge. A contemporary means of communication, social media allows for the instantaneous dissemination of information and the establishment of virtual connections between individuals. By educating the public about the importance of a tolerance culture, promoting an environment free of hatred and discrimination, and providing statistics, news articles, figures, and stories about

child abuse, among other things, the media can play a significant role in promoting peacebuilding and preventing societal violence. Consequently, by raising awareness of the significance of these issues and encouraging action, social media can aid in the prevention of social violence and promote peacebuilding [1].

Young people can find a safe space to talk about these concerns and share their stories on social media. Those who have been victims of violence or are fighting for peace may find a sense of belonging and support in this [2]. There is a close relationship between preventing social violence and peacebuilding, since the latter directly addresses the root causes of conflict to reduce the likelihood of violence before it occurs. As Denskus (2019) explains, peacebuilding should be viewed as a preventative measure that creates the conditions necessary for sustainable peace and stability [3]. Gill (1996) further emphasizes that the core goal of peacebuilding is not only to halt ongoing violence but also to prevent conflicts from escalating, persisting, or recurring. Efforts such as dialogue promotion, reconciliation, and strengthening of institutions and civil society are essential in laying the foundation for long-term peace [4]. Roth (1994) also notes that violence prevention focuses on lowering the probability of violent acts in communities through early interventions and community-based programs, tackling fundamental issues like poverty, inequality, and prejudice [5]. Jacobson (2023) identifies poverty and economic inequality as key contributors to social unrest and resource conflicts, while also highlighting discrimination on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, or sexual orientation as factors that expose individuals and groups to acts of violence [6].

In this context, social media emerges as an important tool for peacebuilding. Platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and WhatsApp enable users to connect, collaborate, and exchange content, helping to bridge communication gaps among diverse communities. According to the *Journal of Media and Interdisciplinary Studies* (Vol. 4, Issue 4, June 2023), such platforms foster dialogue and shared expectations, thereby influencing how audiences interpret and respond to conflict [7]. Ekoh and George (2021) observe that digital technology now provides real-time information and video evidence, which can strengthen accountability in conflict zones [8]. Denskus (2019) further argues that social media can aid peacebuilding by issuing timely warnings and influencing policy decisions [3], while Lanz and Eleiba (2018) highlight how mediators increasingly use digital platforms to widen participation in peace talks without physically enlarging negotiating tables [9]. Lunga (2020) also underscores the potential of social media to spread messages of tolerance and peace, provided it is used responsibly [10]. Ultimately, social media not only enables information sharing but also empowers individuals to actively participate in peace projects, interactive dialogues, and conflict prevention strategies, making it a dynamic force in the contemporary peacebuilding landscape.

Peacebuilding through Media and Narratives

Scholars such as Galtung [11], Galtung et al. [12], Howard [13], Lynch and McGoldrick [14], and Shinar [15] highlight the media's potential to serve as an effective instrument of peacebuilding. By directing attention toward negotiations and creating platforms for communication between divided groups, media outlets can facilitate conflict transformation. Broadcast narratives, in particular, have been central in shaping how wars and peace processes are understood by the public. Research shows that media can either exacerbate tensions through biased reporting or contribute to reconciliation by promoting dialogue and constructive engagement. This dual role makes the study of media narratives in conflict and peacebuilding essential.

Media and Peacebuilding: Unintentionally or otherwise, the media frequently escalate conflicts by spreading, withholding, or manipulating information. Conflicts are always entangled in ideological and historical power struggles, shaped by differences in values and goals [16]. At the same time, the media serve as arenas where conflicting parties compete to promote their versions of events. Scholarly analyses suggest that journalism can

either intensify violence or mitigate it, especially through accessible mediums like radio, which can reach remote and marginalized populations [17]. Peace, as Orgeret argues [18], should be understood not as an endpoint but as an ongoing process. In this context, the media play a decisive role in influencing perceptions of conflicts, shaping expectations of peace, and legitimizing or delegitimizing political actors. Lugalambi [19] stresses that the media can cultivate "cultures of peace" by portraying peace as a cherished value and by exposing systemic injustices that perpetuate violence. However, spotlighting isolated events without addressing long-term peacebuilding dynamics is inadequate; peace must be represented as a continuous, evolving process [20]. The relationship between media and conflict is complex and fluid, with blurred lines between conflict, post-conflict, and peace contexts [21]. Journalists themselves operate within constraints imposed by political, social, and professional systems [17], which complicates their ability to promote peace. Nevertheless, media interventions can facilitate dialogue, educate conflicting groups, and highlight shared interests [13]. As Mac Ginty [22] and Kappler [23] emphasize, peacebuilding aims to transform long-term relationships and address underlying structural inequalities. Media therefore contribute to this process by fostering trust, creating spaces for dialogue, and supporting "peace from below" approaches that prioritize local ownership and everyday actors [24].

Stories in the Media Dialogue: Narratives are essential for understanding peacebuilding because they provide a coherent way of framing complex events. As Michel de Certeau [25] and Munslow [26] argue, narratives organize events into a sequence that makes sense to audiences. Ricoeur [27] and Crowley [28] similarly note that storytelling helps individuals interpret change and permanence, offering symbolic frameworks for identity and meaning-making. In the media, narratives are constructed through linguistic strategies, framing devices, and selective omissions, which influence how conflicts and peace efforts are perceived [29]. While constructive storytelling can raise consciousness, resist domination, and promote conflict resolution, destructive narratives can mask inequalities, inflame prejudice, or misrepresent social realities [30]. Narrative conflicts, often described as "competing stories" [31], reflect struggles over truth and legitimacy between opposing groups. The media's portrayal of these narratives can either entrench divisions or help establish a shared vision of the past, present, and future—a prerequisite for sustainable peace [32]. Radio programs, in particular, provide accessible forums for dialogue where citizens can voice their views in real time [33]. While media discourse is shaped by power dynamics between interviewers, interviewees, and editorial choices [34], it remains one of the most open spaces where ordinary people can engage with peacebuilding processes. As Millar [35] and Orgeret [18] remind us, peacebuilding is both "talked about" through media narratives and experienced through lived interactions. Thus, analyzing broadcast discourse offers valuable insights into how peacebuilding narratives are constructed, circulated, and contested in society.

The Power and Influence of Media and Communication

The power of the media and communication to influence public opinion, rally support, and direct resources is immense. Their capacity to enlighten, persuade, and reach large audiences is the source of their power (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). According to Galtung (1996), when it comes to peacebuilding, communication and media may be incredibly effective in increasing comprehension, starting conversations, and giving a voice to those who are disadvantaged. The media has the power to shape public perception and understanding of conflicts, crises, and peacebuilding activities through agenda-setting and framing (McCombs & Shaw, 1972). According to Brock (2012), media outlets have the power to educate broad audiences, rally support, and cultivate empathy by showcasing stories of reconciliation, effective peacebuilding initiatives, and the human toll of conflict. In addition, outlets for media can promote productive discourse and discussion, which are crucial to peacebuilding efforts. The media have the power to promote conflict-sensitive reporting, create inclusive spaces for varied perspectives, and increase intercultural understanding by addressing the preconceptions that contribute to polarization (Shinar, 2007). But there are also major dangers and difficulties

associated with the influence of media and communication. According to Haskett (2011), sensationalized or biased reporting can make things worse, spread damaging narratives, and make peacebuilding efforts harder. Transparency, accountability, and the free flow of information are essential for effective peacebuilding; nevertheless, they can be hindered by censorship, media control, and limits on freedom of expression (Hoffmann & Hawkins, 2015). The significance of new forms of communication and media, such citizen journalism and social media, has grown in this era of rapid technological advancement. Although these platforms provide chances for more involvement, participation, and amplified voices of the underprivileged, they also pose problems with false information, hate speech, and the possibility of radicalization through the internet (Brock, 2012).

Journalism as a Catalyst for Peace-Oriented Educational Narratives

The media has a profound impact on public perceptions of education, which the media often expands beyond vocational training and job prospects to include the promotion of social justice, mutual respect, and harmony. By covering student-led civic efforts, interfaith dialogue projects, or school-based peace education programs, journalism serves as a link between society and education, placing classroom activities in broader socio-political frameworks. By bringing attention to programs like youth-led campaigns for community harmony or conflict resolution workshops in schools, the media does double duty: it educates the public and gives credence to these initiatives as necessary components of contemporary education. By serving as a link between different sectors, education can be better seen as an integral part of society that fosters democracy and peace rather than as an isolated academic discipline. The power of journalism to elevate narratives of nonviolence, healing, and cross-cultural collaboration is equally crucial. Stories about schools that foster empathy, tolerance, and collaborative problem-solving offer a positive narrative in an era where conflict news often takes center stage. These stories motivate positive action. Media portrayals of intercultural exchanges facilitated by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) or students from other communities learning side by side paint a compelling picture of education as a means of overcoming cultural differences. The media's promotion of such narratives establishes the credibility of peace-oriented education and shows that schools should focus on more than just test scores when it comes to shaping students' character traits, which are crucial to ensuring peaceful coexistence in the world.

Further evidence of journalism's influence comes from examples where peace education programs have grown as a result of media attention. In India, for instance, the media's portrayal of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Pratham and Seeds of Peace has brought the issue of teaching civic and peace ideals to the forefront of the country's consciousness. Thanks to the media's coverage, these groups have been able to increase their donor base, strengthen community involvement, and persuade lawmakers to think about curriculum improvements that incorporate nonviolent pedagogy. There are similar cases all around the world. For instance, following the violent elections in 2007 and 2008 in Kenya, media coverage of "peace clubs" in schools led to changes in the curriculum that emphasized conversation and reconciliation. These examples show how high-profile coverage in the media may turn grassroots initiatives into blueprints for larger-scale implementation of policies. Theorizing framing and peace journalism helps us understand journalism's catalytic function. The goal of media outlets, according to Johan Galtung's Peace Journalism Theory, should not be to report on conflicts in a sensationalized manner but rather to promote dialogue, reconciliation, and solutions. It tells journalists to place an emphasis on nonviolence and intercultural peace while creating educational curricula and practice. In support of this view, the Framing and Agenda-Setting Theory elucidates the ways in which favorable press about peace education shapes popular sentiment and governmental agendas. Journalists influence public opinion and policymaking on education by choosing which components to highlight, such as academic achievement or peace-oriented learning. Taken as a whole, these theories highlight the significant role that journalism plays in creating educational narratives that encourage peaceful learning and peacebuilding, rather than only observing them.

Challenges, Responsibilities, and Policy Implications for Media in Peacebuilding

Journalism holds immense potential as a catalyst for peace-oriented education, but its role is also limited by several structural and contextual challenges. Commercial pressures drive much of education reporting toward exam scores, university rankings, or institutional scandals, since these topics generate more audience attention and advertising revenue. Such priorities push peace education, civic engagement, and intercultural initiatives to the margins. Similarly, sensationalism tends to dominate media discourse, with incidents of violence, campus unrest, or communal tension overshadowing quieter but more transformative stories of reconciliation and dialogue. In many cases, journalists also face practical constraints: lack of resources to travel to rural or conflict-affected areas, absence of training in peace journalism, and editorial hierarchies that favor quick headlines over long-form, constructive reporting. Furthermore, in politically polarized societies, stories about nonviolence, interfaith dialogue, or social harmony may be dismissed as "soft" or partisan, undermining their credibility and reducing their impact. These challenges illustrate the difficult terrain in which media must operate when promoting peace-oriented narratives in education.

At the same time, the responsibilities of journalism in peacebuilding are clear and urgent. Journalists must move beyond merely reporting events to contextualizing them within broader socio-political realities, thereby providing audiences with a deeper understanding of education's role in fostering tolerance and trust. They carry the ethical responsibility of amplifying marginalized voices—whether of students, teachers, or communities—whose perspectives are often excluded from mainstream debates but are central to peacebuilding. They must also ensure accuracy and fairness in reporting, resisting the temptation to sensationalize conflicts in ways that escalate division. Equally important is the responsibility to counter misinformation and extremist narratives by foregrounding education as a space of reconciliation. In doing so, journalists are not only fulfilling their democratic mandate but also shaping civic discourse in ways that align with the goals of peace and nonviolence. These realities carry important policy implications for governments, media organizations, and educational institutions. Governments and civil society actors must recognize the media as a stakeholder in peace education and develop policies that encourage balanced, constructive coverage of education. This may include state support for training programs in peace journalism, incentives for reporting on community-based educational initiatives, and stronger protections for journalists who cover sensitive issues of conflict and peace. Media houses must invest in specialized education reporting beats, providing journalists with the time and resources to investigate and tell stories of civic engagement and nonviolent learning. Partnerships between news organizations, NGOs, and international bodies such as UNESCO and UNICEF can amplify local efforts and scale their impact. Finally, policy frameworks should encourage the integration of media literacy and peace education into curricula, so that future generations both consume and produce media in ways that contribute to long-term stability.

This study situates journalism at the intersection of education and peacebuilding. It argues that by responsibly framing educational issues, journalists can shape narratives that highlight the importance of nonviolent conflict resolution, civic participation, and intercultural understanding.

2. Literature Review of the Previous Studies

Krishna Kumar (2005)[36] — Drawing on the National Curriculum Public communication, including journalism, has the power to either support or undermine these goals, according to educationist Krishna Kumar, who argues in the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) 2005 and later NCERT position papers that schools should foster attitudes of tolerance, openness, and constitutional values. By analyzing educational policy documents and media coverage, he demonstrates how test-focused reporting undermines peace and civic education and how constructive reporting can support teaching strategies that promote diversity and

empathy in the classroom. In conclusion, a public realm that promotes and values nonviolence is essential for its delivery through education. Theories: Freire's critical pedagogy provides the theoretical groundwork for his demand for classes that challenge power and prejudice, while Habermas's normative public-sphere lens clarifies the significance of media frames for the success of policy initiatives.

In *2007, Sevanti Ninan[37]* — A journalist and scholar, Sevanti Ninan charts the ecology of Hindi-language journalism and how it affects civic understanding in Headlines from the Heartland. Her regional newspaper research demonstrates how agenda-setting surrounding identity, development, and education impacts public common sense, even if the article was not created as a peace-education text. District journalism case studies show that commercial demands stifle gradual, constructive reporting (on topics like teacher development, inclusivity, or peace clubs, for example). In conclusion, schools acquire polarization when regional media prioritize spectacular conflict frames, while social legitimacy for nonviolent learning is achieved when media prioritize community problem-solving. Education narratives are shaped by ownership models and news routines, as shown by political economics of media and framing theory.

Vinod Pavarala & Kanchan K. Malik (2007)[38]— Community radio in India has the potential to settle disputes, provide access to information, and promote participatory learning, as these scholars based in Hyderabad show in their book Other Voices: The Struggle for Community Radio in India. Ethnographic and policy research reveals that these stations facilitate conversations on schooling, local government, and rights among women, minorities, and youth, frequently dispelling rumors and grievances in the process. To sum up, community radio serves as a peace infrastructure by normalizing co-learning and discussion in precarious settings. In Habermas's theory of communicative action and participatory communication for social change, the radio is portrayed as a micro-public sphere that promotes peace in everyday life.

Pradip Ninan Thomas (2010; 2012)[39] — Thomas explores in books like Digital India and Political Economy of Communications in India the ways in which the discourse surrounding education is shaped by marketization and governmental policies. He demonstrates how commercial logics favor ratings-friendly education stories over structural disparities or peace education through the use of policy critique and case studies (campaigns, ed-tech, NGO communication). Results: The importance of schools in fostering nonviolence and good citizenship is under-reported due to a lack of contrasting public-interest media and alliances within civil society. His theoretical justification for demanding changes to the media that make room for peace and development narratives is based on rights-based communication and critical political economy.

Shakuntala Banaji (2018)*[40]* — Scholar Shakuntala Banaji, who was born in India, compiles studies on children and media in India, as well as on media literacy and civic engagement. She demonstrates, using a combination of survey data, classroom observations, and content analysis, how news and social media platforms both facilitate civic expression and subject young people to harmful stereotypes, false information, and hate speech. In sum, journalism and education must work together to foster media literacy that prioritizes tolerance, safeguards for marginalized communities, and standards against violence. Curriculum and newsroom practices that challenge dominant narratives and sensationalized reporting are informed by critical media literacy, civic education, and intersectional feminism.

Rita Manchanda (2001; 2015)[41] — Rita Manchanda, in her reportage-inflected scholarship on women, war, and peace in South Asia, shows how the mainstream media frequently ignores educational programs and other forms of women's peace work in conflict zones like the Northeast or Kashmir. She uses interviews, archival materials, and field research to show how journalists can change policy narratives by amplifying schooling-for-peace and women's community mediation. In sum, by establishing the credibility of educational reconciliation initiatives spearheaded by women, gender-aware journalism broadens the toolbox of peacemakers. Theoretically, the fields of feminist peace research, subaltern studies, and ethics of care bring attention to the question of whose narratives matter in public education.

Anjali Monteiro & K.P. Jayasankar (2016)[42] — A Fly in the Curry is an analysis by several TISS scholars of an independent documentary from India that aims to educate the audience about diversity, memory, and

rights. In order to promote critical thinking and peaceful civic engagement, they exhibit documentaries in communities and colleges as counter-media schools, analyzing the films and interviewing the filmmakers. Conclusion: Beyond textbooks, documentary practice, in conjunction with college journalism and debate forums, accelerates critical thinking. Academic fields such as public pedagogy, cultural studies, and documentary publics present cinema as an arena for slow journalism that imparts democratic discord.

Nalini Rajan (2007)43] — Professional and ethical standards for Indian newsrooms are laid out by researcher Nalini Rajan in her book Practising Journalism. Through an analysis of reports on religious tensions, caste systems, and student protests on college campuses, she demonstrates how the principles of veracity, proportionality, and harm-minimization may shift the focus of news reporting from breaking news to civic education on equality, diversity, and discourse. Conclusion: Regular education reporting that incorporates peace journalism principles de-escalates conflict and exemplifies nonviolent conversation. Her theoretical framework for journalistic norms is based on deliberative democracy, peace journalism (Galtung), and virtue ethics.

B.G. Verghese (2001–2005)[44]— In his reflections on the media's responsibility in a diverse democracy, veteran editor B.G. Verghese discussed education, development, and insurgency in peripheral regions. In his reflection essays and case studies, he presents the argument that development/constructive journalism—which involves reporting on education, health, and livelihoods with patience and context—helps to debunk rumors, humanize "the other," and establish faith in entities. In districts prone to conflict, confidence-building measures include long-form, field-based education coverage. Theories such as conflict transformation, development journalism, and public-interest journalism view news reporting not merely as disseminating facts but also as a means of social learning.

Sanjay Asthana (2012)[45] — Digital storytelling, campus newspapers, and youth media initiatives that foster participatory citizenship are the subjects of Sanjay Asthana's research in Youth Media Imaginaries from India. He demonstrates how school media clubs and youth-led journalism engage in discussion, empathy, and collaborative problem-solving, particularly with local conflicts, through the use of ethnography and textual analysis in several locations across India. Conclusion: School-based youth media programs strengthen civic capacity for nonviolence and protect students from divisive messaging. Theory: According to Sen and Nussbaum's capacities approach, youth participatory communication, and public pedagogy, media-making is a form of peace education in and of itself.

3. Theoretical Framework

The study draws upon **Peace Journalism Theory**, developed by Johan Galtung, which argues that journalism should move beyond sensationalism and conflict-centered reporting to emphasize solutions, dialogue, and reconciliation. Applied to the field of education, this theoretical lens underscores how media narratives can highlight curricula and pedagogical approaches that nurture empathy, tolerance, and nonviolence. Rather than framing education through crisis-driven stories—such as exam pressure or campus unrest—peace journalism encourages coverage that demonstrates how schools and communities foster trust, intercultural dialogue, and peaceful coexistence. Closely connected to this is the **Framing and Agenda-Setting Theory**, which provides insight into the powerful role of media in shaping public perception of education. By deciding which aspects of education to highlight—whether employability skills, academic achievement, or peace-oriented learning—journalists effectively influence what society prioritizes. Repeated positive coverage of peace education initiatives builds legitimacy, raises awareness, and can create pressure on policymakers to integrate such practices into national curricula. This theory helps explain why sustained reporting on peace education can translate into broader cultural and institutional support. The third pillar of this framework is the **Holistic Human Development Theory**, which conceptualizes education as a pathway not only to individual advancement but also to collective social harmony. Journalism, within this lens, is seen as a tool that can

strengthen the connection between education and human development by showcasing community schools, intercultural initiatives, and models of peace education that promote equity and social cohesion. This theory positions journalism as more than an observer—it becomes a facilitator of holistic learning, fostering both personal growth and societal well-being.

4. Role of Journalism in Promoting Nonviolent Learning Narratives

The Role of Journalism in Connecting Knowledge and Society

Journalism plays an essential connecting role between the educational system and the broader social and political context in which it works. Reporters emphasize the role of education in fostering societal trust and peaceful coexistence by covering student-led civic initiatives, interfaith discussion projects, and school-based peace education programs. In addition to enlightening the general population, this coverage places education in its proper social context, showing it as more than just a means to an end (a job). Publicizing a school's initiatives to include conflict resolution into the curriculum, for example, helps society perceive education as a tool for peace. Journalists legitimize peace-oriented practices in classrooms and communities and help citizens see the larger civic function of education in this way.

Influencing Public Debate and Policy

Both public opinion and the trajectory of policy are profoundly impacted by the narratives that media outlets build on education. Extreme coverage of incidents of school violence, intolerance, or disturbance in the media has the unfortunate effect of polarizing audiences and painting education in a negative light. Journalism that highlights beneficial changes, like peace curricula, nonviolent communication seminars, or intercultural exchange programs, helps influence the conversation to be more inclusive and reconciling. These stories have a greater impact on policymakers, who are more apt to implement changes that include peace education in national curricula. The media's portrayal of a topic has the potential to exacerbate existing differences or spark systemic changes that advance nonviolent pedagogy and social cohesiveness.

Representation of Marginalized Voices

Journalistic work's capacity to highlight underrepresented viewpoints and voices in the classroom is a crucial asset in the fight for nonviolent learning. Journalism emphasizes the importance of education in promoting social justice and peace by reporting on the ways in which marginalized groups, such as women, minorities, or economically disadvantaged communities, use education to their advantage. In order to raise attention to inclusive practices that may otherwise go unnoticed, media coverage of grassroots schools that unite students from diverse religious backgrounds, ethnic backgrounds, or areas impacted by conflict is one good example. Not only do these stories lend credence to the struggles of underrepresented groups, but they also rally the public and legislators behind educational initiatives that promote equality and healing. Journalists have an inclusive role when they place education in the context of justice, dignity, and human rights.

Dispelling False Information and Extremism

Journalism serves an essential balancing function in the current divided society, when extremism and disinformation can readily skew discussions about education. The media combats division by portraying education as an alternative story to narratives of hate speech, communal strife, or ideological propaganda. Effective instances of peaceful change can be seen in school-based campaigns that promote inter-community collaboration, such as programs that encourage students from diverse religious or cultural backgrounds to work together on projects. Reading these stories should serve as a reminder that the ideals of critical thinking, empathy, and peaceful coexistence may be inculcated via education, protecting society from radicalization.

One of the most powerful weapons against polarization and for the construction of inclusive, democratic futures is education, and media is doing more than just reporting the news; it is actively creating peace discourses.

Journalism as a Promoter of Media Literacy and Critical Thinking

Promoting media literacy and critical thinking among students and the general public is one of journalism's greatest contributions to peace-oriented education. In polarized societies, disinformation, stereotypes, and hate narratives abound; audiences are empowered to challenge them when knowledge is reported responsibly in the media. Media that reveals the pernicious effects of communal propaganda or the falsification of historical facts educates viewers about the dangers of bias, the importance of fact checking, and the value of considering other points of view. Journalism, in this sense, serves as an informal educator by providing lifelong guidance in discernment. Journalism lays the intellectual groundwork for democratic engagement by teaching readers to critically examine information, question presumptions, and place importance on arguments supported by evidence. Because students who learn to think critically are less prone to extremist beliefs and more inclined to embrace dialogue and nonviolence, this process indirectly improves education's ability to develop people who are peace-oriented. Journalists have an essential role in educating the public so that they can fight harmful narratives and work together to create more inclusive communities.

Journalism as a Platform for Civic Engagement and Youth Voices

The capacity of journalism to provide a stage for youth voices and civic involvement is another critical function it plays in advancing narratives of peaceful learning. Media coverage frequently gives young people a platform to express their views on social change, justice, and peace. When articles about student-run projects, classroom discussions, and campus peace campaigns appear in mainstream media, they are framed as larger social issues. Campus newspapers and community radio stations provide a platform for students to express their opinions and offer answers on important topics like gender equality, community harmony, and human rights. This often leads to productive conversations both on and off campus. Online communities and social media have given young people a greater platform to share their perspectives on pressing global issues like democracy and peace. Journalism promotes a culture of active citizenry by highlighting these projects, which teaches young people that their voices matter and supports their agency. With this kind of diverse coverage, journalism may serve as a platform for youth-led peacebuilding by fostering democratic principles, communal accountability, and nonviolent action.

Journalism in Building Intercultural Dialogue and Understanding

The media has a significant impact on promoting cross-cultural understanding by reporting on the ways in which schools bring people from different backgrounds together. Journalists do their part to unite communities by covering stories that address minority education, creative community schooling programs, and cross-cultural school exchanges. Media portrayals of student groups working together on cultural festivals, collaborative learning initiatives, or language exchanges show how education promotes tolerance and acceptance. Similarly, tales that center on the education rights of oppressed groups (e.g., efforts to conserve indigenous knowledge or equal access for underrepresented students) help to shed light on issues and solutions that may otherwise go unnoticed. Journalism plays an important role in bolstering these initiatives, which in turn legitimizes schools as places of plurality and inclusion and shapes public opinion in ways that promote tolerance and conversation.

5. Case Studies

India – Coverage of Peace Education Initiatives: Journalists in India have been crucial in drawing attention to the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) like Pratham and Seeds of Peace, which work to include lessons on conflict resolution and peace education into public programs and school curriculum. Public opinion and policy debate are both impacted by the increased exposure and legitimacy of these organizations, thanks to the continuous coverage they receive in newspapers and digital media. The Hindu, Indian Express, and other regional media have featured their grassroots initiatives and success stories of empowering children from underprivileged or conflict-prone areas through an education that prioritizes empathy, cooperation, and conversation. Journalists' upbeat coverage has been essential in drawing in donors, getting people involved, and getting lawmakers to think about include peace education in larger educational changes. The media in India has promoted peace education as an important part of the country's development plan, moving it away from the traditional emphasis on exams and employment prospects, by reporting on success stories of how education has helped ease tensions in the community or foster mutual respect among faiths.

Kenya – Media and Post-Conflict Education: After a war, education can be a powerful tool for peace, and Kenya is a prime example of how media can help make that happen. Kenyan media started highlighting grassroots efforts, such as "peace clubs" in schools, when ethnic violence broke out following the 2007–2008 elections. Stories about how these clubs fostered an environment where children of many backgrounds could talk to one other and learn from one another were covered in local publications, community radio, and national news. Schools were portrayed in this way because they were transformed from places of learning into places of healing and nation-building. Politicians started to see the need to include peace education in the country's curriculum as the stories became more popular. As a result of the constant scrutiny from the media, the Kenyan Ministry of Education has recently implemented changes to the curriculum, including more lessons on conflict resolution and civic engagement. Beyond just reporting the news, the media had a significant role in shaping the conversation by demonstrating how a generation traumatized by political violence could become peacemakers and social integrators through peaceful education.

Campaigns on a Global Scale—UNESCO: On a worldwide scale, media has played a key role in promoting UNESCO's programs centered on worldwide Citizenship Education (GCED), which includes lessons on nonviolence, sustainable development, and intercultural understanding. The initiatives of UNESCO have reached educators, politicians, and the general public through partnerships with media outlets, press releases, films, and worldwide coverage. For example, GCED has been covered in articles by BBC, Al Jazeera, and The Guardian, among others. These articles highlight the ways in which schools across the world, in many different regions, are teaching students about human rights, peacebuilding, and global citizenship. The continued exposure of GCED has played a crucial role in persuading UNESCO member nations to incorporate parts of it into their own education programs. Journalism has emphasized the importance of education in raising awareness about global issues including migration, climate change, and terrorism by portraying these programs as necessary rather than idealistic solutions. With the media's support, these efforts will grow in scope, making education a cornerstone in the quest for global harmony and collaboration.

"Operation Sindoor" Modules in NCERT Textbooks: The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has recently introduced supplementary modules for Classes III–XII that present Operation Sindoor not simply as a counteroffensive but as a promise of peace. These modules frame national events within narratives of solidarity, remembrance, and reconciliation. By integrating such lessons into the curriculum, NCERT has shifted the educational focus from militaristic framing toward peace-oriented learning, demonstrating how civic education can shape collective memory in constructive ways. Media outlets

such as The Times of India reported extensively on this initiative, framing it as a progressive step in connecting real-world events to classroom instruction. By covering the modules positively, journalism highlighted how education can be used as a tool to reinforce nonviolence and unity, thereby legitimizing the incorporation of peace values into mainstream curricula. eiehub.orgThe Times of India

Election Literacy Clubs in Rajasthan Schools: In Rajasthan, the establishment of Election Literacy Clubs (ELCs) within schools has attracted considerable media coverage, especially from The Times of India. These clubs aim to build democratic values among students by embedding voter awareness and electoral education into the curriculum. With the support of digital monitoring frameworks, ELCs strengthen students' understanding of participatory citizenship, rights, and responsibilities. Media narratives framed this as a form of peacebuilding, where the act of teaching youth about free and fair elections contributes to reducing future political conflicts and fostering inclusive governance. By portraying schools as spaces where civic education can prevent social tensions, journalism has legitimized ELCs as an essential component of long-term democratic peacebuilding. The Times of India

"Happiness Curriculum" Expanding Holistic Learning

Delhi's Happiness Curriculum, introduced in government schools, continues to receive attention in both national and international media. Originally focused on mindfulness, empathy, and emotional well-being, the program is now being considered for adoption in other Indian states and even internationally. The curriculum shifts emphasis away from rote learning and exam performance to holistic human development, where social-emotional learning becomes as important as intellectual growth. Media coverage—including Wikipedia summaries and journalistic commentary—has portrayed the program as a model of peace-oriented education. By spotlighting how students engage in meditation, reflective practices, and group discussions on empathy, journalism has amplified the curriculum's role in cultivating critical thinking, tolerance, and cooperative values essential for nonviolent and inclusive societies. Wikipedia

Empathy Integration after School Violence: In the wake of a violent stabbing incident in Ahmedabad, media outlets such as The Times of India reframed discussions on school safety. Rather than focusing exclusively on stricter security measures, education experts featured in the media emphasized the need for integrating empathy, emotional resilience, and conflict resolution into school practices. This coverage shifted the narrative from reactive policies to proactive educational reforms aimed at addressing the root causes of violence. Journalistic attention to expert calls for balanced approaches highlighted the importance of social-emotional learning as a preventive tool, showing that nurturing empathy and dialogue within schools can create safer and more peaceful environments. In doing so, media acted as a catalyst for rethinking education not just as academic preparation but as a foundation for psychosocial well-being and peacebuilding. The Times of India

Model United Nations (MUN) as Peace Training: Recent reporting on school- and college-level Model United Nations (MUN) events, such as LITUMUN 2025, has framed these extracurricular activities as platforms for peace education. Widely covered by outlets like The Economic Times, The Times of India, and academic publications (Taylor & Francis Online), MUN simulations encourage students to engage in structured debates on diplomacy, international cooperation, and conflict resolution. By placing young learners in the roles of diplomats and negotiators, MUN nurtures skills such as empathy, critical thinking, negotiation, and cross-cultural communication. Media portrayals have emphasized these activities as more than academic exercises; they are seen as training grounds for future global citizens capable of dialogue over confrontation. By highlighting the success of MUNs, journalism underscores how experiential education can prepare youth

to become peacebuilders and socially responsible leaders. economictimes.indiatimes.com+3tandfonline.com+3The Times of India+3

Challenges and Limitations

The prevailing influence of corporate interests remains one of the most significant obstacles for journalists covering education. Stories centered on exam scores, college rankings, admissions cycles, or university scandals dominate newsrooms because they attract higher readership and, consequently, more advertising revenue. Media houses, driven by the economics of visibility and profits, tend to sideline deeper explorations of education as a tool for peacebuilding and social development. This commercial bias has created a situation where topics such as civic participation, nonviolent learning, and holistic human development—though crucial to social progress—are underreported. The result is a narrow public discourse where education is understood primarily in terms of performance metrics and competitiveness, rather than as a pathway to peace and inclusive growth. The tendency of media outlets to sensationalize stories also undermines the visibility of peace education. Incidents involving school violence, bullying, student protests, or campus crimes receive extensive media attention, while programs focused on dialogue, empathy, and cooperation are often overlooked. This kind of coverage reinforces a conflict-oriented narrative that prioritizes drama over depth. Although sensational stories may bring immediate visibility, they fail to capture the quieter but far more transformative impact of peace education initiatives. The long-term efforts of educators and NGOs to instill values of tolerance and nonviolence thus remain marginalized in the shadow of short-lived media spectacles. Peace education efforts are often concentrated in rural, marginalized, or conflict-prone regions, where they address the needs of vulnerable communities. However, journalists frequently lack the funding, institutional support, or time needed to travel to and cover these grassroots initiatives. As a result, important stories about teachers building intercultural understanding, NGOs promoting dialogue in divided communities, or students leading peace clubs rarely reach mainstream platforms. This absence of coverage diminishes the potential impact of such initiatives, preventing them from gaining public legitimacy, donor funding, or policy recognition. In this way, the structural limitations of journalism contribute to the invisibility of peace education at the national and global levels. In politically divided or ideologically polarized societies, media portrayals of peace education often encounter skepticism and resistance. Narratives that emphasize nonviolence, interfaith dialogue, or social cohesion are sometimes branded as partisan, "soft," or even revolutionary, depending on the political climate. Such labeling erodes the credibility of journalists and delegitimizes their stories in the eyes of certain audiences. The perception that peace narratives serve hidden political agendas can stifle open discussion, restrict dissemination, and reduce public trust in education journalism. This challenge is particularly acute in contexts where the media itself is polarized, as journalists struggle to frame peace education as a universal social good rather than as a divisive political issue. Most journalists who cover education are trained in general reporting rather than in peace journalism or developmental reporting. Without exposure to these frameworks, reporters may fail to identify how education contributes to peacebuilding or may overlook the significance of grassroots initiatives. This lack of knowledge results in shallow reporting that privileges events and statistics over nuanced analysis of long-term social transformation. Furthermore, without specialized training, journalists are less likely to frame stories in ways that highlight the connections between education, civic responsibility, and nonviolence. As a consequence, the coverage remains limited in scope and fails to convey the full significance of peace education to the public. Finally, the fast-paced, round-the-clock nature of modern media undermines the sustainability of peace narratives. Newsrooms prioritize immediacy and novelty, which means that stories about exam results, institutional controversies, or political debates in education receive continuous coverage, while peace education stories tend to surface only once before fading from public memory. Long-term initiatives, such as reforms in curricula or the impact of student peace clubs, require consistent reporting to shape public discourse, but such stories rarely fit within the short

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news cycle. As a result, journalism struggles to sustain attention on peacebuilding and educational reform, limiting its capacity to influence policy or cultural attitudes in the long run.

Recommendations

1. Journalism schools should integrate peace education modules into curricula.
2. Media houses must dedicate beats for education, with special focus on civic values, peace, and nonviolence.
3. Collaborative reporting with organizations like UNESCO and UNICEF can amplify narratives of nonviolent learning.
4. Social media platforms can be leveraged to share short films, podcasts, and stories showcasing youth-led peace initiatives.

Conclusion

Journalism has a tremendous impact on how people perceive and value education, which extends well beyond the realm of developing marketable skills. The media has a unique opportunity to shape educational narratives around the importance of trust, nonviolence, and reconciliation by routinely showcasing peace education, interfaith discussion, and civic involvement. This perspective does double duty as it enlightens and motivates, urging communities, schools, and lawmakers to see education as a means to societal unity and peace. Providing counter-narratives that favor peace over conflict, discussion over silence, and fragmentation over division is the pressing task of journalism in this age of increasing polarization, sensationalism, and divisive language. Journalism has the power to change education into a system that helps people learn and grow, which in turn builds peaceful, equitable, and inclusive communities.

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