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Educating children about global issues

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Educating Children about Global Issues



The way we educate the children today will have a far reaching impact on the world in the future as the children of today are the decision makers of tomorrow. It is integral for them to have an understanding of the issues taking place in our world today so that they are able to take decisions maturely and responsibly as adults, later on. Child trafficking, poverty, child labor and media violence are some examples of the issues gripping our world today. How do we, as teachers, develop an understanding in our students of these issues without instilling unnecessary fear in them? This, indeed, is not an easy job. Many argue that the only knowledge and information given to children should be from fictional stories, poems and games etc. so that they can have a carefree childhood.

However, is keeping things from children the right attitude? Will they not have access to information on global issues from their friends, peers or television? In urban societies, the internet has played a huge role in bringing information to everybody's fingertips without the least bit of censorship. Aren't children becoming aware of global issues from there? In this age of communication and technology, it is not easy to draw a line. With this scenario in mind, it becomes essential for teachers to impart knowledge about global issues to children in the classroom, so that the level of information provided is adapted to the developing minds of young children and so that they can be wary of false information provided from other sources, such as from word-of-mouth etc.

However, one can state that the initial responsibility of keeping children aware of global issues lies upon the shoulder of parents as they are the people who decide everything for their children. What does a child do, what sort of company does s/he have, which school the child is admitted to and what are the expectations from children are the decisions determined by the parents. However, the role of teachers is even more important as they are likely to influence the whole life of children as well as the decisions of parents. In order to educate children about global issues, a teacher could play an important role and can design a number of strategies to educate children about important global affairs.

The major role a teacher could play in educating children about global issues is through developing awareness in the community. Most of the global issues which the children face today are the result of parents' lack of awareness. Usually it has been observed that children remain prone to various global issues and parents hardly take notice of them. If we keep on waiting for any other source to develop awareness among parents then we fail to play the role of change agent. A teacher is as much responsible for educating the community as s/he is responsible for educating the children. It could happen when the school teachers have close and constant interaction with the community members. Through constant interaction with parents, a teacher could orient them about various issues affecting their children. Moreover, a teacher could explain the roles of parents in this regard and make them agree to take some necessary measures to keep the children protected from such things as exposure to media violence, child trafficking etc.

Teachers' role should ideally extend beyond the school and school community. Teachers who are committed to play a positive role in this regard may extend their networking to other schools and even to the organizations working for human rights. Moreover, various social and religious gatherings would be good platforms for teachers to convey their voices with regard to the global issues faced by the children. Teachers could also contact and interact with high authorities, highlight the issue and urge them for support in taking necessary measures to protect children against child trafficking, child labour etc. Similarly, teachers could also influence wider communities through publishing papers on print media as well as arranging and leading discussions in electronic media.

The proposed multi-faceted role of a teacher can go a long way in transforming our society to make it more aware, educated and child-friendly.

About the Writer:

Mr. Ali Nawab is currently working as an Assistant Instructor at PDC Chitral. He earned his Masters degree in English Literature from the University of Peshawar and has done his M.Ed in Educational Leadership & Management from IED.