

# **PEACE EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT - ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION-**

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## **ABSTRACT**

‘The world could be transformed and peace would reign if the basis of Education is knowledge wielded by love and value for sustainable development’.

Education is the single most important means for empowerment and sustained improvement in all well being. Sustainable development is a basic Human Right and unless this target is reached with the potent tool of Education the purpose of Education would remain unfulfilled.

Education for Sustainable development is a dynamic undertaking where every person has a chance to benefit from Educational opportunities and learn the life style, behaviour and values necessary to create a sustainable future. If Sustainable development has to move into reality, the world, both, developed and developing must move towards a new world order in which ‘Peace’ must be in the agenda.

In the words of Betty Reardon Peace Education would provide knowledge to be applicable to the problems of reforming and restructuring the present conflicting and violent human society to make it peaceful, unified and violence-free.

Confronting issues like HIV/AIDS, illiteracy, war, ethnic violence, violation of Human rights and militancy are addressed separately and some of the issues are treated as separate components for sensitization and imparting Education to the learners. The best approach would be to club some of the sensitive issues under one heading to be called ‘Peace Education’.

An attempt is made in this paper to throw light on the impediments leading to Peace Education and to develop a culture of peace by using Education as the potent tool with reference to Higher education.

## **INTRODUCTION**

The 21<sup>st</sup> century society is the knowledge, information and education society. Higher education is called upon to make a key contribution for opening up of and highlighting new pathways to a better future for the society, to the individuals and to give better shape and direction to the future. The development of capacities to explore the future and to anticipate this deserves the full attention of Higher education. The mission of HE is therefore to see that the new society merges with our own smoothly and this requires active participation of all concerned in solving the major Global, National Regional and Local problems comprising poverty illiteracy, social insecurity, breach of peace, degradation of the environment, rise of militancy, corruption, extortions, violations of

Human rights, communal and ethnic violence as well as threats and wars. Higher education must highlight these sensitive issues and lead the mission for an end to all these and sow the seeds of peace and harmony. The UNESCO's comprehensive document on 'Higher Education for 21<sup>st</sup>. century visualises the Universities to have multidisciplinary approach for the path finding mission.

### **Higher education:-Objectives.**

**Sir Ashotosh Mukherjee** described the meaning and purpose of HE years back in 1922 in his Convocation address at Calcutta University that,  
 'to my mind, the University is a great store house of learning, A great bureau of standards, a great workshop of knowledge a great laboratory for the training of men of thought as well as men of action. The University is thus the instrument of the state for the conservation of knowledge, for the discovery of knowledge, for the distribution of knowledge and above all for the creation of knowledge makers."

### **Higher education and Sustainable development.**

Education is a basic component of human development, its interface with the sustainable development is established. Education is the single most important means for empowerment and sustained improvement in all well being Sustainable development is a basic Human right and unless this target is reached with Education as a tool, the purpose of HE would remain unfulfilled. The link between the two must be forged into a closer bond to empower the people.

Education for sustainable development is a dynamic understanding that envisions a world where every person has a chance to benefit from educational opportunities and to learn the life style, behaviour and values necessary to create a sustainable future.

The UN Earth Summit-the conference on Environment and Development(UNCED) held in 1992 June at Rio De Jenerio came out with the manifesto called 'Agenda 21'or Rio Declaration in which the concept of sustainable development was first spelt out. The principles set forth cover economic, social political, environment and Pacific concerns of human existence as a whole.

Sustainability when looked from social sphere would mean an egalitarian community that ensures an equal sharing of resources and opportunities for sustained human welfare.

If sustainable development has to move from wishful thinking and slogan mongering into a reality, the world both developed and developing must move towards a new world order in which peace in the world must be in the agenda

### **Peace education for sustainable development.**

Peace education is a broader discipline. Disarment education, Environment education, Human right education, International education are associated with Peace education.' Peace education deals with conflicts arising out of aggression or war situations and also arising out of injustice, exploitations and violation of Human rights'.

Peace education creates a culture of peace, helping to build a non violent and just society and is essential for survival of human beings on this earth.

Robert Aspeshgh in his write up on 'Peace education' stated that "Peace education is feasible in a violent world because there is a societal and educational necessity of Peace education. The societal necessity of Peace education focuses the need of insight to be given to Global issues and to bring changes accordingly and the people in general needs to be educated in order to be aware of the fact that the Global society should be made more peaceful.

### **Peace and Higher education.-Objectives.**

The main objective of peace education is to sensitize the learners towards the problems arising on the Globe and to play a positive and effective role. The objective of sensitization would be the instrumental in struggling for social justice and other social problems at Global, National and Regional level.

Peace education would arise the dawn of 'Peace culture.' Once this culture is learnt it would help in minimizing and eradicating the social ills like poverty, exploitation, oppression, violence and wars.

In the words of Betty Reardon, the purpose of Peace education is to provide knowledge to be applicable to the problems of reforming/restructuring present Human society to make it more just and less violent.

UNESCO calls for a 'comprehensive system of education and training for all groups of people at all levels and forms of education. Education for Peace and sustainable development needs to be holistic and participatory; focusing on Peace and non violence, Human rights, democracy, tolerance, international and intercultural understanding as well as cultural and linguistic diversity"

### **Strategies for Peace education.**

Educational programs can make great efforts at achieving Peace through formal, non formal and informal education.

Ginsberg Et Al.(1995)stated that schools and Universities can function towards educating students for cultivating the seeds of Peace. Curriculum and pedagogy to be followed at all levels of education can encourage development of Peace and international understanding.

### **Promotion of Peace culture in India:Paradigm past and present.**

India has a past history of promoting Peace ,International understanding , tolerance and self restraint. which are evident from the Vedas, Puranas and Upanishads. The ancient Indian Rishis visualized the Earth as a Global village. They visualized it as "vasudaiva kutumbakam'-meaning The whole world is a family.

**Swami Vivekananda**,the illustrious apostle of **Sri Rama Krishna** whose great mission was to preach unto mankind their divinity and how to make it manifest in every moment of life.

**Swami** highlighted the ultimate aim of education to establish internal Peace and security by strengthening the spiritual foundations of different Nations. He preached tolerance in religion and education which essentially lead to Peace. He preached the Universal Brotherhood of man.

**Srimanta Shanker Dev of Assam**(1449 AD-1568 AD)not only propagated the new “Vaishnavism”in Assam but consolidated the foundation of the Assamese culture, music literature and unified the people of diverse caste and community. He preached the principle of equality, compassion, love and brotherhood and boldly asserted in the Kirtan Ghosa the need of giving everyone equal status and dignity in the society.

**Swami Chinmayananda** was an ascetic of modern India who worked for over four decades spreading the Vedantic message of Peace and happiness to the classes and masses around the Globe.

The thoughts and actions for promoting Peace by outstanding personalities like **Mahatma Gandhi,Md. Iqbal,Rabindra Nath Tagore and Bishnu Prasad Rava captivated the world's attention.**

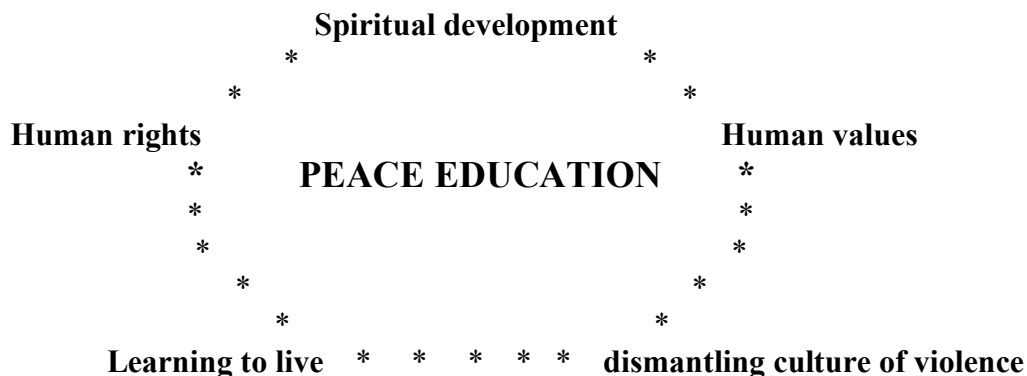
Living spiritual leaders of India like **Sri Satya Sai Baba, Sri Sri Ravi Shankar** of Art of Living are the apostle of peace and harmony.

Our Indian President **APJ Abdul Kalam** linked Nation's prosperity with peace. He referred the message received from a Buddhist Monk in a statement that, ‘If you want peace, remove ‘I’ and ‘Me’. When you remove I and Me, You remove Ego. When you remove Ego, you remove hatred. When you remove hatred you have Peace.

### **The sources of Peace and Peace education.**

Peace to prevail Peace education is significant and would be possible by sowing in the minds of the Learners and the people in general the seeds of Spirituality, Human rights knowledge ,Human values and by Learning to live as well as to dismantle the present conflict and violence culture.

The following diagram shows the five inter connected frame work of Peace education.



### **Dismantling the culture of Violence,**

The UN Human Development report noted the Armed conflicts, Civil wars, Gurilla wars, Ethnic violences, Separatists movements are bringing untold miseries and tragic deaths to our own brothers and sisters living all over the Globe. Terrorism has now acquired Global dimensions and has become a challenge for the world. Terrorist activities in Bangladesh, India, Afghanistan, Cambodia are just a few picked up Nations subjected to blood shed and deaths.

A report from Geneva, Oct'2002 as reported in Hindu(Daily publication) stated that violence kills more than 1.6 million people every year. In addition to deaths millions are left injured and suffer from physical, sexual, reproductive and mental health problems.

In the year 2006 86 people have been killed in military related incidents.

**Table 1**

Sl	Civilians	Security/F	Terrorists	Total
Jan'06	5	1	2	8
Feb'06	10	1	1	12
March'06	3	0	0	3
April'06	4	0	3	7
May'06	1	1	0	2
June'06	13	6	5	24
July'06	7	0	3	10
Aug'06	5	7	8	20
Total	48	16	22	86

(Institute of Conflict management data base)

India's North-Eastern region which was once undivided Peaceful Assam is now in the grip of violence and terrorists activities A number of cultural and social effects of militarization and leading to loss of Human resources for development has taken place. The Government is spending enormously on maintaining Law and order resulting in tardy development of the state. Exploitations, sexual violence and so many horrified effects has intensified sustainable development.

Therefore for sustainable development it has become essential to understand, realize and get sensitized about the horrifying effects of war, conflicts ,militancies at all levels of life.

The UNESCO in its preamble has stated, 'Since war begins in the minds of man, it is in the minds of man that defense of Peace must be constructed'. Human beings are involved in both war and Peace, knowledge, understanding, critical thinking and kindness and therefore stands as the most potential instrument for tuning the mind sets of the learners at all levels of Education particularly at Higher level.

Teachers at the micro level should be sensitized to shun physical violence, assaults, corporal punishments at the Institutions. The learners at all levels must be taught to say 'No' to wars/conflicts/violence so that education for sustainable development becomes possible on the Globe. Learners must be made to understand that to build a 'Humane society' a social order is essential where violence, exploitations and inequality has no place in the Institutions.

The new vision of curriculum in HE should therefore envisage education for mutual understanding, tolerance, peace, harmony, international cooperation, coexistence, and appreciation to develop the spirit of unity in diversity, equality of gender and removal of social barriers.

Through course contents of syllabus in HE the internalization of values of love, compassion, generosity, empathy spirituality, gratitude and non violence are possible resulting in learning to live in peace and harmony.

The **NCERT** has taken a positive strategy in this regard through syllabus at school level. If sustainable development has to be translated into action the restructuring of syllabus/course contents in HE is the need of the hour. HE needs an agenda to be adopted in tangible steps to follow the path of sustainable development.

### **Human rights awareness**

'All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and right'. These words are included in the **Article 1** of Universal Declaration of HRs and is the theme and basic of all fundamental rights of each and every democratic constitution and declaration. The doctrine of Universal declaration of Human rights rests on ancient injustice perpetrated on poor and helpless in the social structure.

The HR violations and Human assertions for dignity and freedom has now become very much visible. HR violations leading to impeachment of peace is visible from the rapid growth of Nationalism, racism, xenophobia, sexism and religious intolerance.

The world conference on HR and the **Vienna Declarations** stated that HRE, training and public awareness has become essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations amongst all communities for fostering mutual understanding tolerance and peace. The major task in the area of HRE was taken by UNESCO at the General conference in 1974 by bringing out UNESCO's recommendations concerning education for International understanding, cooperation, peace and education relating to HR and fundamental freedom.

The need is arising is now to mould the minds of the young and adult learners the vision of a world that is 'Human centred' and genuinely democratic where all human beings living on this planet are from the same family guided by the universal principles of democracy and equality.

The decade of 1990s witnessed a series of Global conferences and most of these conferences highlighted issues relating to HRs particularly those affecting sectors like women and children and issues like Health, Population Habitat and Environment. The 1993 world conference on HR at Vienna led to significant results such as the establishment of the office of the High commissioner for HR and the adoption of the UN

decade for HRE(1995-2004).At the National level the Vienna conference helped to establish HR Institutions as well as adoption of HR action plans in several countries in Asia-Pacificregions.

HR education should be imparted through Civic education Moral education Religious education and Gender studies. Along with theoretical studies the learners should have hands on practice in the affairs of the family, society, state and in the National level.

The NCERT stated that ‘HRE is not an independent area in the school curriculum but its various aspect and discussion have been integrated in the curriculum of various school subjects and educational materials particularly text books based on them. This suggestion is also applicable in case of Higher education education as HRE makes an essential contribution to the maintenance and promotion of peace as well as to socio econic progress. Therefore through course contents HRE and teachings should be based on the principles underlying Universal Declaration of HR.’

### **Spiritual development for Peace culture.**

Spiritualism lies in looking at life and the world through the eyes of the soul. It is to identify the self with all the beings. Where there is total identification of objects and persons involved, the realization of this concept is the essence of spiritualism. Spiritulism is person’s ‘whole’ process which is based on values that are eternal..

The average human beings in today’s world gives a great deal of thought and applies a great amount of energy to attain material welfare. Not withstanding even success in this endeavor there is much unhappiness, discontent and misery pervading the lives of people. it is the result of unbalanced application of efforts. The human existence consists of both material and spiritual aspects and both are equally important for harmonious development of human beings .Our ancient fore fathers neglected the material existence and generally lived in sickness and poverty. In this world to-day majority of human beings neglect spiritual life and this is resulting in horror and sufferings. Therefore along with advancements spiritual attainments through spiritual education has become essential.

The learners at all levels should be taught to view the world as a whole. It is beautifully said in Bhagavad Gita-“Sarvabhu tastham atmanamsarvabhutani”-ie, he who holds the self in all the beings and all beings in the self”. This is how spiritualism wants us to see things. We have to go into our inner being and learn to live in it and from it the outer mind. Life and body becomes for us only an outer chamber. This education is spiritual education.

In reality spiritual education helps in understanding the ‘truth’ which is overlooked in our present educational system at all levels. Now ‘Specialist education has bypassed Spiritual education and this is failing to produce the real man and the failure to cultivate inner peace of mind leading to peacelessness.

Spiritual leaders and Peace educators all over the world have talked about ‘inner dimensions and sources of peaceful values and practices” needing equal cultivation in the mind of learners.

Most of the teachings of spiritual leaders, saints or sages stated the strategies for developing inner equilibrium and tranquility through meditation and contemplation and to use the teachings for holistic process of spiritual growth..

Faiths and spirituality traditions educate the followers to cultivate inner peace and thereby adopt life styles based on inter-personal relationships, justice, non-violence, respect love and kindness for all beings living on this planet.

The reflection on creating inner peace as an essential theme for educating the learners to develop a culture of Peace suggests that a holistic paradigm of ESD should not be isolated from the ideas, principles ,spiritual knowledge and wisdom found in all cultures, faiths and civilization.

What is essential now for the learners at all levels particularly at Higher level to develop better concentration, positive thinking and inner peace and these can be developed through ‘Raj yoga’ as introduced by ‘Brahma Kumari Iswaria Vishwavidyalaya’ of India. The power of concentration can be achieved through the practice of easy Rajyoga. Raj yoga is nothing but the establishment of the connection of the soul with the source-the supreme soul-the source of all values. Through connection with one eternal and unlimited source of power human being’s ‘reservoir’ overflows with silent strength. As the rays of light concentrated through the lens can burn a paper so the waste thoughts and negative dispositions can be burnt by concentrating the mind on the supreme soul which is the source of all values.(Brahma kumari Iswaria Viswavidyalaya)

When a young adult emerges from his/her Alma mater it is important that he/she should acquire the qualification to facilitate financially rewarding employment and it is also equally important for him/her to prepare for meeting the various social challenges and stresses and expectations of life in the family, community Nation and the Globe as a whole .Therefore HE needs to play the pertinent role through education to teach cultures integrity, values and other skills and dimensions which would make the learners better man and woman to contribute qualitatively for developing a better world where Peace and other values can survive.

Learners should be made to understand and develop ‘the four aspects of spiritual education-Love, Knowledge, Power and Beauty. These four attributes will spontaneously express themselves in our being. The psychic will be the vehicle of true and pure love, the mind that of infallible knowledge, the vital will manifest invincible power and the body will be the expression of a perfect beauty and perfect harmony’.

### **Learning to live for developing Peace culture**

Today’s society is a Knowledge society. Generation of knowledge, storage and retrieval of knowledge, dissemination of knowledge are the main functions of an Educational system particularly in HE. Education output concentrate on teaching situations and learning required skills. This focuses the holistic purpose of education which rests on intellectual, physical, emotional and other aspects of the learners and the overriding purpose of all these is to prepare the learners to prepare them to learn to live together.



The HE must make the learners more open minded and receptive to new ideas and challenges. The liberating power of education is of great relevance to the society. The HE system must produce products(students) of positive outlook inspired with sprit of service as well as values, ethics, attitudes and knowledge to constitute the social capital necessary to construct healthy societies and socially binding cultures.

Education is considered also as social necessity and it socializes the individuals in the society where learning and sharing takes place Education must promote learning to the present and future society. Dr. S.Radhakrishnan,the first president of independent India rightly commented, “It is essential for us not to live apart but to live together, understanding one another, knowing one another’s fear and anxieties, aspirations and thoughts’.

“Learning-The treasure within” highlights the four pillars of learning and the third pillar which is most important is-Learning to live together.

‘Let us work together  
Think together  
Achieve together  
With no hatred to each other.’

This is most important to all particularly to the learners to learn to live together on this planet.In order to survive on this planet peacefully every one must learn to live in harmony and in a violence free environment. Differences in race, caste, colour, creed, language, customs, traditions and cultures exist and to learn to live amidst these differences should be a wonderful and unique experiences for all.

To help the learners to learn to live together, the present Educational policy in India needs to be reviewed and made systematic where the social aspects of education must have a place in the curriculum. In the Educational Institutions particularly HE the curriculum should aim at contents to develop in the learners not only the desirable behaviour but attribute to the moral ,cultural and ethnic aspects

What is more effective to the learners to learn to live together in the Institutions is the ‘Role’ of teachers .Teachers are the best “Role models’to the learning community and through their attitudes, behaviour, democratic administration and interactions would build the desirable and congenial ambience to learn to live together.

The learners must be made to understand that differences and diversities are opportunities to know each other. The Institutions must help the learners to participate more in community works, extension works and co curricular activities so that they learn to live and work amidst diversities.

In regards to ‘Learning to live together’ the cardinal relationship between learners and teachers should be maintained. Through dissemination of knowledge the learners must learn to respect and protect their relationship which is important to promote the frame work for appropriate behaviour.

Teacher education for Peace and sustainable development needs to be included in the Teacher education curriculum for moulding pupils who can find a difference in the Institutions and learn to live in peace and harmony.

It is from the Institutions that learners learn to behave in appropriate ways. The training of Teachers and Administrators towards democratic interactions must be one of the leading agenda of Teacher education programs. It is also important to translate into action what is learnt in the Institutions to carry to the homes media, communities and other informal agencies so as to learn to live together.

For Learning to live together the role of Education must be activated, awareness strategies to be adopted and to develop strategies at all levels of education so that the learners can learn to live together in this beautiful world.

### **Living with values.**

**Swami Vivekananda** said, 'We want that Education by which character is formed, strength is increased, the intellect is expanded and by which one can stand on one's own feet'. To him the end and aim of all education, all training should be man making. The end and aim of training is to make the man grow. The training by which the correct and expression of will are brought under control and made fruitful is called Education". Swami's thinking reflects the eternal and universal values which is important for all to learn in order to live in the culturally pluralistic society.

Today science and technology are dominating the curriculum. Human values and universal values are given less importance which is accountable for large scale of criminalization, dehumanization, exploitation, environmental degradation wars, conflicts and violences. But today's world could be transformed and peace would reign if the basis of education is knowledge wielded by love and values for sustainable development. The National policy of Education 1986 has pointed out the crisis of values in all aspects of life and recommended a special thrust on inculcation of values at all stages of education. The Programme of action document 1992 dealt with value education as 'broad cultural education leading to removal of superstition, religion, fanaticism and all other narrow loyalties. The POA stressed the importance of positive approach in which the roots of Indian culture have to be highlighted along with the development of scientific temper, unity and National integrity having a spiritual focus ".

Education for a peaceful and sustainable Global community must emphasis the crucial role of value formation through its pedagogical process.(Toh and cawagas 1991)

Peace education and sustainable development should be explicit about the preferred values like compassion, justice, equity, gender fairness, caring for life, non violence,integrity and sharing.

In the Educational system the inculcation of values depends upon enthusiasm and commitment of Teachers, Management and Government. The curriculum framers should keep in mind that values permeate in all works and activities of educational system and in the Institutions it should be like a 'Guardian angle'.

In the HE system, strategies for inculcation of values should be through routine co-curricular activities and through curriculum course contents. Teachers should go through the curriculum and text books of the respective subjects and find out situations which

normally evoke value questions and they should try to internalize the importance of all the values in life through discussions, role play, problem solving and assignments.

Learners at Higher level of learning have strong idealistic impulses and the urge to improve the world. Hence this is an appropriate stage in life of learners to utilize and channelise youthful energies in the right directions. Therefore at the HE level practical experiences need to be combined with academic inputs.

The University Grants Commission made several recommendations for the Universities to act upon in this regard.

As education is the most effective tool for transforming younger generation the light of values must be lit by the educational institutions and for this during the Teacher education programs, the teachers should be made clear the concept of value, inculcation of values and to get aware of the different methods and techniques ,formal or informal, direct or indirect keeping in view the various physiological and psychological development of students for promoting Human values.

The learners at Higher level of education are generally adolescents and youths undergoing changes in the thinkings and emotions. The objective of inculcating ethical and social values is to develop positive personalities at this crucial stage of adolescence and youth.

Peace education at Higher level can be inculcated through core and applied programs as well as through extension programs. Higher education should adopt the ideal of better worldliness, pursuing universal knowledge and develop the physical, mental(intellectual and aesthetic)spiritual faculties of man to secure the wisdom so as to make right and correct decisions to live in peace and harmony on this planet. The ideal of better worldliness should become the goal of human life and the education system should be geared to meet this objective. The curriculum of HE should be the core of the educational system around which educational edifice is built. The curriculum contents should be built around the specific purposes for which the educational provisions are made and they should be made explicit to the learners and the society.

HE develops and nurtures values. It is important that special efforts must be made to preserve and promote educational values like thirst for knowledge, critical thinkings, search for truth and more important is to inculcate Universal Human values such as peace, tolerance, love patriotism ,non violence through education. Such an education will have everlasting effect on achieving sustainable development.

At a time when pertinent issues like AIDS, Global education, Illeteracy, Population education, HR education are considered to be separate components, the approach would be to integrate these areas under one area of Learning **called Peace education for sustainable development.**

### **Concluding remarks**

The United nation's action plan for 21<sup>st</sup>. century"Agenda 21"states that "education is crucial for promoting sustainable development and improving the capacity of all people to address environment and development issues". Together with the students and teachers education sector is a powerful force, a communication channel for disseminating

knowledge and skills. It is noted here that the lion share of the budgetary allocations goes to the education sector. Therefore education institutions in general and Higher institutions in particular shoulders the responsibility to increase awareness, knowledge, skills and human values needed to create a sustainable future. Education being an effective tool for promoting sustainable development the Educational institutions should incorporate the concepts of sustainability in all academic disciplines and should take the leadership for establishing a net work with primary and secondary education.

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5. Human values, Moral values and spiritual values.  
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**Sarba Siksha Abhiyan project**

Working in the capacity as Chairman of the Monitoring Institute,Gauhati University since 2003 November.

**Professional /O.Membership:**1. World council for curriculum & Instruction  
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- 1.Chairman: Drug abuse information prevention and rehabilitation centre,Assam
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#### **Members of various committees of GU.**

- 1.C.C.S.( Both Post Graduate and under graduate)
- 2.Departmental Advisory committee
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- 4.Academic council,GU
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#### **Goodwill Mission to Bangladesh**

Lead the Indian Goodwill Mission to Bangladesh on behalf of Council for Teacher Education,India in 2004 february.

#### **Honours received**

- 1..The award of being the **Fellow**’ of Common wealth council for Education, Administration and Management given in October 2006 at Cyprus University.
2. The **Award of excellance** by Council for Teacher Education, India in June 2006.
- 3.IIFS Award for significant **contribution to the field of Education and social commitments** in April 2006.

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