



NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE
Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

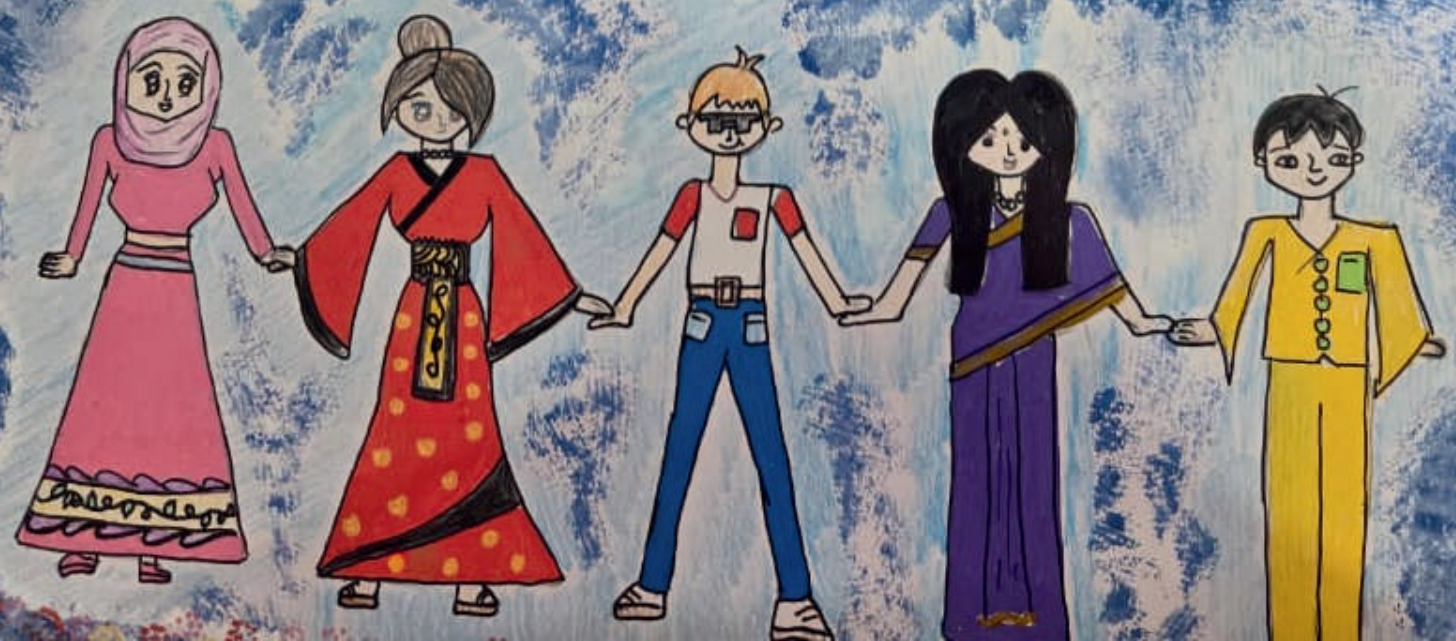
52ND ANNUAL CONFERENCE

25th and 26th April 2025

THEME:
***CONFLICT MANAGEMENT AND PEACE
EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS***

Venue:
**Air Force Auditorium
Subroto Park, New Delhi**

"Whenever you're in conflict with someone, there is one factor that can make the difference between damaging your relationship and deepening it. That factor is attitude."
– William James, American philosopher, historian, and psychologist



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- Dr Kavita Sharma- Ex-Principal, Hindu College, Delhi University
- Dr Amit Sen- Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Founder, Children First
- Prof. Edward Vickers- Professor of Comparative Education, Kyushu University

Moderator :

Dr Ameeta Mulla Wattal- Chairperson & Executive Director, Education, Innovations and Training DLF Foundation Schools and Scholarship Programmes

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- Padmashri Prathibha Prahlad- Educator, Choreographer
- Ms Prerna Bhambri- Former Indian Tennis Player

Moderator :

Ms Latika Gupta - CIE, Delhi University

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- Mr Hemant Tiwari- IPS - DCP IFSO / Cyber Crime

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- Mr Ajay Singh- Principal, The Scindia School, The Fort, Gwalior

Panel of Students

- Hriday Singh Antal- Lotus Valley International School, Noida
- Avishi Chaubey- Sunbeam School Lahartara, Varanasi
- Devasya Agarwal- Modern School, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi
- Zara Javed- Modern School, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi

Moderator

Dr Anuradha Joshi- Principal, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi

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Love Peace & Joy



Peace on
EARTH

NPSC Executive Committee

OFFICE BEARERS

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Address
1	Ms Asha Prabhakar	Chairperson	Principal Bal Bharti Public School Sector-21, Noida-201301
2	Ms Richa Sharma Agnihotri	Vice Chairperson	Principal Sanskriti School Dr S. Radhakrishnan Marg, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi-110021
3	Ms Mallika Preman	Secretary	Principal Tagore International School E-Block, East of Kailash, New Delhi-110065
4	Mr Sanjay Yadav	Treasure	Principal Ahlcon International School Mayur Vihar, Phase I, New Delhi-110091
6	Ms Rashmi Malik	Jt Secretary NCR	Principal Salwan Public School Gurugram Sector 15, Part-II, Gurugram, Haryana-122001
7	Dr Rajeev Chauhan	Jt Secretary, Outside Delhi / NCR	Principal B K Birla Centre for Education, Pune, Maharashtra

EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Address
1	Mr L.V Sehgal	Legal Advisor	Principal Bal Bharati Public School Ganga Ram Hospital Marg, New Delhi -110060
2	Dr Sudha Acharya	Member	Principal ITL Public School Sector-9, Dwarka, New Delhi-110077
3	Ms Charu Maini	Member	Principal DAV Public School, Uppal's Southend, Sector-49, Gurugram- 122002
4	Ms Geeta Gangwani	Member	Principal Bal Bharati Public School, Sector-14, Rohini, New Delhi-110085
5	Ms Heemal Handoo Bhat	Member	Principal Hansraj Model School, Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi- 110026
6	Dr Jyoti Gupta	Member	Principal K.R. Mangalam World School, GK-II, New Delhi- 110048
7	Ms Rashmi Raj Biswal	Member	Principal DAV Public School, Pushpanjali Enclave,Pitampura New Delhi- 110034
8	Ms Santosh Vyas	Member	Principal Sadhu Vaswani International School For Girls 2nd Street, Shanti Niketan, New Delhi-110021
9	Ms Swarnima Luthra	Member	Principal ASN Senior Secondary School Mayur Vihar Phase-1, Delhi-110096
10	Dr Vijay Datta	Member	Principal Modern School Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001

HONORARY MEMBERS

Sl. No.	Name	Address
1	Ms Sadhana Bhalla	Ex. Principal Mira Model School B-Block , Janak Puri, New Delhi-110058
2	Ms Malini Narayanan	Ex-Principal Army Public School, Shankar Vihar, Delhi Cantt- 110010

LIFE MEMBERS

Sl. No.	Name	Address
1	Mr S.L.Jain	Ex. Director Mahavir Senior Model School, Sangam Park Extension, Rana Pratap Bagh, G.T.K. Road, Opp Nanak Pio Gurudwara, New Delhi-110033
2	Ms Meera Balanchandran	Ex. Principal Mother's International School H502 Bestech Park View Spa Next, Sector 67 Gurgaon, Haryana
3	Dr Usha Ram	Ex. Principal Laxman Public School C-51 Shivalik Panchsheel, Geetanjali Road New Delhi-110017
4	Dr Ameeta Mulla Wattal	Ex. Principal Springdales School Upper Ridge Road Junction, Pusa Road, New Delhi-110005
5	Dr Ashok Pandey	Ex. Principal Ahlcon International School, Mayur Vihar, Delhi- 110091

SPECIAL INVITEES

Sl. No.	Name	Designation	Address
1	Dr Lata Vaidyanathan	Special Invitee	Director at TERI Prakriti School
2	Ms Rachna Pant	Special Invitee	Ramjas International School R K Puram
3	Dr Aditi Misra	Special Invitee	Delhi Public School Site No. I, Sector-45 Urban Estate Gurugram - 122001



Editorial

MS MALLIKA PREMAN

**Secretary, NPSC &
Principal, Tagore International
School, East of Kailash, New Delhi**



It gives me immense pride to present this report on the 52nd Annual Conference of the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC), held on April 25–26, 2025. This landmark gathering of over 250 member schools reaffirmed our shared commitment to nurturing education that goes beyond academics, focusing on values of empathy, harmony, and resilience. The theme of this year's conference- Conflict Management and Peace Education in Schools, was both timely and significant. In a rapidly changing world where differences often escalate into discord, schools must rise as spaces of dialogue and understanding. Through deliberations, panel discussions, and cultural explorations, our conference sought to provide a roadmap for schools to transform conflicts into opportunities for growth and peacebuilding.

The inaugural session was graced by eminent dignitaries, including Padma Shri Shobhana Bhartia, Prof. Edward Vickers, and Ambassador Shashi Uban Tripathi, whose insights set the tone for thoughtful conversations. Sessions over the two days addressed varied aspects, ranging from psychosocial causes of conflict, the role of co-curricular activities in fostering unity, to the growing need for cyber peace and digital citizenship. Workshops on deep listening, literature, and cultural expressions further enriched the dialogue, reminding us that peace education must touch both heart and mind.

This year, we also celebrated the achievements of our community, honouring stalwarts like Dr Ameeta Mulla Wattal for her lifelong contributions, inducting new member schools, and launching a new publication to advance scholarship on conflict and peace. As Secretary of NPSC, I believe the deliberations of this conference have sown seeds of transformation. The way forward lies in weaving peace education into the very fabric of our curricula and school culture. Our collective responsibility is to prepare learners not only for academic excellence but also for life as compassionate, responsible global citizens.

As I reflect on the outcomes of this conference, I am confident that our collective resolve will help us translate discussions into action. Let this not end as two days of deliberation, but as the beginning of a movement, where each of our schools becomes a living example of how conflicts can be resolved through dialogue, compassion, and understanding. In doing so, we will truly prepare our students to inherit, and indeed create, a more peaceful and humane world. The 52nd Annual Conference has reaffirmed NPSC's vision- to stand as a progressive body of schools that lead by example, creating sanctuaries of harmony where every child learns the art of living peacefully in a diverse world.



NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE

Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

INAUGURAL SESSION

Lighting of the Lamp

School Choir

Presented by Summerfields School, Gurugram

Welcome Address

Ms Asha Prabhakar
Chairperson, NPSC &
Principal, Bal Bharati Public School, Noida

Annual Report

Ms Mallika Preman,
Secretary, NPSC &
Principal, Tagore International School, East of Kailash, New Delhi

Address by Chief Guest

Padmashri Shobhana Bhartiya
Chairperson & Editorial Director, HT Media

Inaugural Address

Prof. Edward Vickers
Professor of Comparative Education, Kyushu University

Key Note Address

Ambassador Shashi Uban Tripathi
IFS (Retd)

Release of NPSC Publications

Presentation of Lifetime Achievement Award

Vote of Thanks

Ms Richa Sharma Agnihotri
Vice Chairperson, NPSC &
Principal, Sanskriti School, Chanakyapuri, New Delhi



Welcome Address

MS ASHA PRABHAKHAR



**Chairperson, NPSC &
Principal
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida**

Schools are more than just buildings with classrooms; they are the very foundation of our society. They are the places where young minds are shaped, where future citizens learn not only math and science but also values and life skills. But in recent times, we have seen a worrying rise in conflict within our own schools. There is a growing tension. Tension between parents and schools where communication often breaks down. They are increasing misunderstanding between teachers and students where trust seems to be fading, and perhaps most alarming.

There is more conflict among students themselves, which is leading to bullying, fights and even damage to school property. These are not just small incidents; they are science. Science suggests that something important is missing in the way we are nurturing our school environments. In our race for academic success, we have overlooked the deeper need to build understanding, empathy and peace, and that is why this conference is so important. It is a call to think differently.

To imagine our schools not just as places for exams in marks but as peaceful spaces where every child feels safe, heard, and valued. Where problems are not ignored or punished but solved together. This is where peace education comes in and is not just another subject but as a way of thinking, teaching and interacting every day.

Peace education is all about creating schools where kindness, listening and fairness are a part of everything we do. It should be the heart and soul of our education system. And as we strive to bring this vision to life, a question which heavily weighs down on the conscious of any reflective educator or leader, why are we investing billions to explore life on other planets, when we haven't yet learned how to live peacefully on the one we already inhabit? We dream of Mars while our own Earth trembles under the weight of conflict, inequality and division.

It's not that curiosity or progress is wrong, far from it, but what does it say about our priorities, when we search for new homes in the stars while some children still fear walking into the classrooms. Peace is not a luxury, it is a necessity. More urgent than ever and schools are here that journey must begin because if we can't teach children to live in harmony here, how will we ever expect them to do so on distant worlds.

Dear educators, let us not look to the stars in escape but in inspiration to rise higher, not just in technology but in humanity. We take inspiration from great leaders like Mahatma Gandhi who reminded us that peace begins from within and that nonviolence means compassion and courage, and from Nelson Mandela, who believed that education has the power to change the world but only when it teaches us how to live together, not just to earn a living.

So how do we start this change? We begin by listening, we begin by restoring trust, and we start using restorative practices that help schools grow stronger, not stricter. Practices that don't push people away but bring them closer. Let me give one simple example of my own school, where a student who felt very unfairly treated ended up damaging a washroom cubicle. We could have suspended him but instead we decided to call for a restorative circle where he could speak to the teacher and share his side. During the talk he quietly said, no one ever asked me mam why I was angry. That day we just didn't repair a wall, we repaired a relationship.

That's what peace education can do. It doesn't ignore problems, it transforms them over the next two days this conference will bring you powerful sessions on dealing with conflict, improving school policies, building emotional intelligence and most importantly in one of the stations hearing directly from students.



So let this be a time to learn reflect and imagine a better way forward. Let's commit to building schools that are not just smart but also kind. Not just competitive but caring. Schools where children are not just ready for tests, but ready for life. As I sum up, I leave you with the timeless words of Gandhiji, if we were to teach peace to the real world, we shall have to begin with the children. So let us begin here and now. Thank you.

Annual Report

MS MALLIKA PREMAN

**Secretary, NPSC &
Principal, Tagore International School, East of Kailash, New Delhi**

Honourable Chief Guest, Ms Shobhana Bhartiya, Chairperson & Editorial Director, HT Media, Prof. Edward Vickers, Professor of Comparative Education and holder of the UNESCO Chair on Education for Peace, Social Justice and Global Citizenship, Kyushu University, Ambassador Shashi Uban Tripathi, IFS (Retd). On behalf of the team NPSC 2023-2025, it is with great pleasure that I extend a warm welcome to the changemakers and luminaries of the progressive world. "In the words of Helen Keller, I quote, 'Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.'" This powerful statement highlights the importance of collaboration and how working together enables us to achieve far greater accomplishments than we could alone.

As we reflect on the journey of the past year, one thing stands clear: our progress has been fueled by collective effort. As we celebrate the 52nd anniversary of the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC), we take immense pride in upholding our motto: Quality, Commitment, and Excellence in Education. Over the past five decades, NPSC has remained a pioneering force in transforming the educational landscape of our country.

Through continuous collaboration, the exchange of best practices, and the creation of dynamic platforms for educators and learners alike, we have strived to foster innovation, inclusion, and integrity in schools. In this spirit of progress and reflection, this session's theme "Conflict Management and Peace Education in Schools" addresses one of the most vital needs of our time.

As schools increasingly become diverse and complex ecosystems, equipping students and educators with tools for empathy, dialogue, and non-violent conflict resolution is more critical than ever. NPSC is proud to lead and support initiatives that embed peace education at the heart of school culture. This report highlights the key efforts, initiatives, and outcomes of NPSC during this session, showcasing our continued commitment to creating educational spaces that are not only academically enriching but also emotionally safe and socially just.

As in previous years, UNIC and NPSC collaborated to create a commemorative handbook enriched with artwork, thought-provoking quotes, and thematic content. This year's theme, "Fostering a Culture of Peace for Today and Tomorrow," resonated deeply with all participants. I extend heartfelt congratulations to all the schools for their enthusiastic and meaningful contributions to this beautiful initiative.

In another remarkable collaboration, NPSC worked closely with the National Book Trust to provide students and teachers a platform to showcase their language skills and creative expression. The resulting NPSC publication, themed "Fostering a Culture of Peace: Innovative Approaches to Conflict Resolution in Schools," stands as a testament to the evolving role of education.

It highlights how teaching extends beyond the mere transmission of knowledge—it becomes a powerful medium to navigate complexities and resolve conflicts with empathy and understanding. In keeping with the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC) undertook several impactful initiatives and collaborative programs aimed at holistic development, leadership empowerment, and the integration of progressive educational practices.

Workshops and Capacity Building Initiatives : To support the vision of NEP 2020, a session on the Holistic Progress Card (HPC) was conducted by Dr Pragya, Director Academics, CBSE, in April 2024. She emphasized that the HPC is a 360-degree, multi-dimensional progress card aimed at capturing the cognitive, affective, and psychomotor growth of each learner. Dr Pragya highlighted the importance of making learning holistic, integrated, enjoyable, and engaging, in line with NEP goals. She also shared global best practices in HPC implementation from Singapore and Canada, and discussed the significance of establishing strong linkages between curricular goals, competencies, and learning outcomes.

Introduction to the National Credit Framework (NCrF). Another insightful session was organized on the National Credit Framework (NCrF) for CBSE schools, with a focus on skill education. Mr Rajeev from CBSE introduced the framework, explaining how it integrates academic, vocational, skill-based, and experiential learning into a single, flexible model. He emphasized that the NCrF is designed to ensure mobility and flexibility in a student's educational journey. Dr Biswajit Saha, Director of Skill Education, CBSE, joined the session online and further elaborated on the credit system's design and implementation. He encouraged schools to share their inputs and suggestions to strengthen the rollout of NCrF. The session concluded with an engaging Q&A round, where Dr Saha addressed the queries and concerns raised by NPSC members.

Teacher Workshop in Collaboration with Chinmaya Mission In collaboration with Chinmaya Mission, Noida, a meaningful workshop titled “Living with Excellence” was held for educators of NPSC member schools at Ahlcon International School, Mayur Vihar. Conducted by Swami Chidrupananda. The session focused on effective classroom management through the lens of spiritual growth and personal excellence. Educators left with valuable insights on how to bring mindfulness, compassion, and clarity into their daily teaching practices.

Women In School Leadership Program Under the Women in School Leadership (WISL) initiative, a delegation of ten school principals from Delhi-NCR visited Melbourne, Australia, in the Month of May 2024 to explore leadership practices in international educational settings. Key takeaways included: Emphasis on experiential learning and student-led reflection, Mission statement matrices visibly integrated into classroom environments, Visits to a specialized STEAM school and the University of Melbourne’s STEAM workshop, Cultural enrichment through the Aboriginal Art Museum, Engagement with the High Commissioner of India to Australia.

Youth Ideathon & Faculty Development Program In collaboration with ThinkStart and Youth Ideathon 2024, NPSC organized a Faculty Development Program for teachers across member schools. The workshop focused on “Design Thinking and Entrepreneurship,” equipping educators with tools to inspire innovation and creative problem-solving in the classroom. This workshop covered the fundamentals of design thinking, practical approaches to fostering creativity in the classroom, and strategies for integrating entrepreneurial skills into the curriculum. Participants will engage in discussions to explore innovative teaching methods. **Science Gallery Global Teachers Workshop** This unique international network of the University of Melbourne - linked galleries drives collaboration, transforms communities, and empowers young people through interdisciplinary experimentation.

NPSC collaborated with the Science gallery for a day-long interactive and hands-on experimentation session for teachers of the member schools. The workshop focused on the classroom initiative which aims to expand education across borders, empowering the next generation of global change- makers and STEAM [Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics] professionals.

Adobe Leadership Conclave – AI in Education In a visionary step towards embracing the future of education, the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC) hosted a groundbreaking conclave on 29th January 2025, exclusively for the principals of its esteemed member schools. This one-of-its-kind gathering served as a dynamic platform for educational leaders to delve into the rapidly evolving landscape of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and its far-reaching implications for teaching and learning.

The conclave brought together an illustrious panel of thought leaders, innovators, and educationists who engaged in insightful discussions on the theme of AI as a transformative force in education. With thought-provoking keynote addresses and expert-led panel sessions, the event highlighted AI not merely as a technological advancement, but as a catalyst for reimagining education itself. The Panellists underscored three critical dimensions where AI is set to make a profound impact - Creativity, Equity and Transformation. The event concluded with a resounding affirmation of NPSC's commitment to leading the charge in educational innovation. By fostering dialogue, collaboration, and forward-thinking leadership, the conclave marked a significant milestone in shaping the future of education in India.

Commemorating the 1994 Genocide Against the Tutsi in Rwanda Through Art and Song On 7th April, the United Nations in India, in collaboration with the High Commission of Rwanda, solemnly marked the International Day of Reflection on the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda. This observance stands as a global call to remember the victims, honour the survivors, and reaffirm a collective commitment to preventing such atrocities in the future. As part of this deeply moving commemoration, students from various schools took part in an evocative art exhibition, using the universal language of creativity to reflect on the horrors of the genocide and express their solidarity with the people of Rwanda.

The highlight of the day was a stirring rendition of the national song of Rwanda, presented by the talented students of Bal Bharati Public School, Noida. Their heartfelt performance resonated with the spirit of unity, respect, and remembrance, leaving a profound impact on all present.

SPORTS ACHIEVEMENTS

Ban Ki-moon, former Secretary-General of the United Nations, once said, and I quote, "Sport has become a world language, a common denominator that breaks down all the walls, all the barriers." Unquote. Embodying this spirit of unity, collaboration, and healthy competition, the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC) undertook a series of dynamic initiatives to promote sports across its member schools. In line with its mission, NPSC launched its inaugural U-14 Chess Tournament this year to promote student well-being and engagement through sports.

The primary goal of the U-14 Chess Tournament was to provide students with a platform to develop critical thinking, concentration, and strategic planning skills in a competitive yet safe environment. Considering the deteriorating air quality in Delhi NCR during the winter season and the upcoming pre-board exams, an indoor event like Chess for the U-14 category was selected to ensure the safety and well-being of all participants.

The tournament was conducted across six zones in Delhi NCR from 16 December to 24 December 2024. It culminated with the final matches held at Modern School, Barakhamba Road, on 24 December 2024. After a tough fight and an exemplary battle of wits, the Championship Trophies were bagged by Modern School, Barakhamba Road in the Girls' Category, and Lotus Valley International School, Noida in the Boys' Category.

The zones and their respective host schools included Bal Bharati Public School, Rohini for Zone 1 (North), Ahlcon International School, Mayur Vihar for Zone 2 (East), Bal Bharati Public School, Pitampura for Zone 3 (West), Modern School, Vasant Vihar for Zone 4 (South), Sanskriti School, Chanakyapuri for Zone 5 (Central), and Bal Bharati Public School, Noida Sector 21 for Zone 6 (NCR). The resounding success of the event is attributed to the excellent coordination between the NPSC chairperson, Ms Asha Prabhakar, the Executive Committee Members, and the school heads of all participating institutions.

National Collaborations and Co-Curricular Engagements FIT India Collaboration: NPSC schools actively participated in a bicycle rally against obesity, promoting health and fitness among school communities. It was heartening to see the enthusiastic participation of our students, teachers and parents in this event.

Several member schools proudly participated in the opening of the International Kho Kho tournament, showcasing support for indigenous sports and cultural integration. It was heartening to see the overwhelming participation of the member schools of NPSC in the New Delhi World Book Fair in collaboration with NBT. It provided an opportunity for students and teachers to learn the nuances of basic skills of a language - Listening, Speaking, Reading, Writing, and demonstrate their literary and artistic prowess. In a remarkable.

Green Diwali campaign, students of NPSC took the initiative to create powerful 2-minute podcasts promoting eco-friendly celebrations. Through their voices, they urged the community to embrace sustainable practices, avoid firecrackers, and celebrate with care for the environment. Their creative effort inspired many to choose a greener, cleaner, and more responsible Diwali.

Embodying the true spirit of compassion and community, the NPSC family launched a powerful Warm Clothes Donation Drive to bring warmth and dignity to those in need. The heartfelt response from member schools was truly inspiring, with generous donations of winter clothing for children and adults alike. This collective act of kindness was gratefully acknowledged by Cheshire Home, Goonj, Paalna, Earth Saviours, Children of the World, Shubhiksha Educational Society, and Anant Centre for students with special needs. More than just clothes, we shared hope, humanity, and the warmth of a caring community.

Vaping has become a growing concern in recent times, especially among teenagers and young adults. Its widespread usage and harmful effects make it a sensitive and crucial topic to address. Recognizing the urgent need to address this issue, the National Progressive School Council (NPSC), in collaboration with the Paediatric Psychiatry Services at the Institute of Child Health, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, launched a focused awareness campaign targeting schools and communities. Informative posters were developed and shared weekly with partner schools to be prominently displayed on school notice boards and to be circulated digitally among students and their parents.

The materials encouraged open dialogue among families and school communities about the risks associated with vaping. Through this sustained and united effort, NPSC and its partners aim to cultivate a safer, vape-free environment for students. The campaign reflects a strong commitment to safeguarding the well-being of future generations by empowering them with knowledge and healthy choices.

We had the honour of hosting Director of Education, Ms Veditha Reddy, IAS, at our General Body Meeting for an engaging and insightful interactive session. Ms Reddy expressed her commitment to collaborating with private schools to better understand and facilitate the implementation of the National Education Policy (NEP) in Delhi. Following her direction, a core group of five principals was formed to lead the delineation process. Key aspects concerning the role of private schools in NEP implementation, including the introduction of three years of pre-schooling, were discussed in depth, with a clear roadmap set for execution beginning in the 2026–2027 academic session.

Taking the initiative further, Director of Education, Ms Veditha Reddy, IAS, has invited NPSC member schools to collaborate on three transformative flagship programs aimed at enhancing governance, fostering entrepreneurship skills, and strengthening socio-emotional well-being in government schools. This collaborative effort marks a significant step toward bridging educational practices and empowering students with holistic, future-ready learning experiences.

We are proud to share our recent collaboration with the Commission for Air Quality Management in Delhi/NCR and adjoining areas. As part of this meaningful partnership, all NPSC schools actively took part in plantation drives, with a focused commitment to planting native tree species. This conscious choice ensures long-term ecological balance, supporting local biodiversity and contributing to improved air quality, rather than introducing species that may strain the environment. Together, we are nurturing a greener, healthier future—one tree at a time.

Educators hold a pivotal responsibility in shaping the future by promoting academic excellence, identifying and nurturing the individual strengths and talents of their students, and cultivating a positive and inclusive learning environment. Their dedication not only enhances intellectual growth but also inspires creativity, critical thinking, and a lifelong love for learning. By fostering curiosity and innovation in the classroom, educators lay the foundation for personal development and societal progress.

It is with great pride and joy that we celebrate the remarkable achievements of our esteemed leaders who have been bestowed with the prestigious National Teachers Award and Delhi State Award. Their relentless pursuit of excellence has not only elevated the standards of education within their schools but has also positively impacted the lives of countless students and stakeholders in the community.

The National Teachers Award was bestowed upon:

- Ms Charu Maini, Principal, DAV Public School Gurugram ,
- Ms Pallavi Sharma, Principal, Mamta Modern Sr Sec School.

State Awardees are:

- Ms Archana Soni, Principal, Chinmaya Vidyalaya Vasant Vihar,
- Ms Vandana Gupta, PGT Comp Sc, SD Public School, Punjabi Bagh,
- Dr Shipra Raghuvanshi, PGT, Salwan Public School Rajinder Nagar,
- Ms Reetu Dawar, Headmistress, Bal Bharti Public School Gangaram Hospital Marg,
- Ms Anubha Gopal, PGT Economics, DPS RK Puram,
- Ms Niva Chhonkar, PGT Biology, DPS RK Puram,
- Ms Pooja Dhingra, PGT Comp Sc, Salwan Public School Mayur Vihar
- Ms Ritu Sharma, Pgt English, ITL Public School,
- Ms Varsha Krishnan, TGT Science, Bal Bharati School , Rohini.

We also take this opportunity to congratulate the schools who have been acknowledged by the Govt of NCT as the Region Best School for their exemplary work done in the field of education. The schools were awarded a cash prize and a trophy by Ms Atishi, Chief Minister of Delhi.

- ITL Public School Bal Bharati Public School , Dwarka
- Bal Bharati Public School, Pitampura
- Mamta Modern School Vikas Puri.

Our journey of growth and achievement reflects not just determination, but a shared spirit of progress that drives us forward. Facing challenges becomes a rewarding endeavour when we walk together—with a strong, supportive community beside us. NPSC continues to thrive as a dynamic network, enriched by the inclusion of passionate educators and visionary institutions.

We are pleased to welcome the newest members to our fold. Schools that have joined us after a thorough process of review and interaction by our panel of member Principals. We extend a warm welcome to these schools and look ahead to a partnership built on trust, collaboration, and a shared commitment to excellence in education.

The schools who have been added to NPSC family are:

- Dav Kailash Hills,
- M L Khanna Dav Public School Dwarka,
- Rajmata Krishna Kumari Girls's Public School, Jodhpur,
- Apeejay School Saket,
- Crescent Public School, Pitampura.

As we conclude, let us be inspired by the words of Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” Every step we take, no matter how small, has the power to ignite progress. By embracing purpose-driven actions and nurturing a spirit of collaboration, we move closer to a more inclusive, compassionate, and forward-thinking society. Let us continue to lead with intent, inspire with integrity, and build a future rooted in collective growth and well-being. Thank you !!





Address by the Chief Guest

PADMASHRI SHOBHANA BHARTIYA

**Chairperson and Editorial Director
of HT Media**

The 52nd Annual Conference of the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC) brought together leaders, educators, and policymakers to reflect on the evolving role of education in shaping a just and inclusive society. One of the highlights of the event was the keynote address delivered by Ms Shobhana Bhartia, Chairperson and Editorial Director of HT Media, a Padmashri awardee, and former member of the Rajya Sabha.

Drawing on her extensive experience in journalism, public life, and global forums, Ms Bhartia emphasized the urgent need for education to move beyond rote learning and to instead cultivate critical thinking, empathy, global citizenship, and resilience in young people. Her speech placed education within the larger socio-political context of rising inequality, polarization, and technological disruption, underscoring the vital role of schools in anchoring democratic, inclusive, and humane values. Ms Bhartia began by situating her remarks in the context of a world in turbulence. She noted how economic retaliations such as tariffs and global trade disputes had already triggered turmoil, while unregulated technology platforms amplified polarization by creating echo chambers of misinformation.

Inequality, she observed, continues to rise globally, not only in economic terms but also across faith, caste, class, race, and gender. India has done relatively well economically compared to many nations, but socio-cultural inequalities remain acute. These fractures, she warned, are fueling sectarian tensions and fundamentalism, creating a polarized society where people are quick to take rigid positions rather than engage in constructive dialogue. Against this backdrop, Ms Bhartia stressed the transformative role of educators. Teachers and schools are not only tasked with transmitting knowledge but also with cultivating values and dispositions necessary for peaceful coexistence. She reminded the audience of her own experience as part of the UN Alliance of Civilizations, convened by Kofi Annan, where issues of biased history education and religious representation were discussed.

She recalled that history curricula have often overemphasized certain dynasties and civilizations while minimizing contributions from the Global South. Similarly, religion was either ignored or taught in accusatory ways. In India, she argued, the absence of a constructive approach to religious education created long-term gaps. However, as India becomes more confident in its civilizational legacy, there is now greater scope to forge inclusive narratives that embrace pluralism.

To prepare students for an uncertain and polarized world, Ms Bhartia recommended three key orientations:

- **Cultivating Scientific Temper** – Students must be trained to value evidence, data, and analytical thinking. Skills such as probability and statistics should be taught with real-world applications, such as understanding weather forecasts or economic trends. Such numeracy helps students resist misinformation and empowers them to interpret data critically.
- **Encouraging Open-Mindedness** – In an age dominated by social media algorithms that reinforce biases, students must learn to listen patiently to diverse perspectives. This will help them resist the illusion that their viewpoint is the only correct one, breaking down digital echo chambers.
- **Fostering Empathy and Humaneness** – Education must instill the moral responsibility to care for others—humans and animals alike. Empathy, she argued, is a critical counterweight to the academic and competitive pressures of modern schooling.

Ms Bhartia offered practical strategies that schools could adopt to cultivate these orientations:

- **Conflict Resolution Labs** – Dedicated spaces where trained facilitators help students resolve disputes, preparing them for democratic dialogue both locally and globally.
- **Perspective Rotation Exercises** – Activities in which students argue from multiple viewpoints on contentious issues, fostering empathy and critical thinking.
- **Global Narratives in Curriculum** – Moving away from isolated history lessons to interconnected global perspectives, thereby dismantling silos.
- **Neighbourhood Mapping Projects** – Encouraging students to document local demographics and socio-economic conditions, then design action plans to address inequities.
- **Environmental Justice Units** – Blending science and social issues to create solution-oriented projects addressing marginalized communities.
- **Digital Democracy Modules** – Training students to identify misinformation, analyze social media critically, and navigate digital platforms responsibly.

- Community Problem-Solving Assessments – Evaluating students on their ability to collaborate in addressing real-world challenges, rather than only on individual academic performance.

Such reforms, she argued, would not only enrich curricula but also prepare students for the complex challenges of climate change, social unrest, and technological disruption.

Ms Bhartia stressed that schools must serve as anchors of stability in an increasingly uncertain world. They are the only institutions capable of equipping young people with the superpowers of critical thinking, analytical reasoning, objectivity, and compassion. Educators, therefore, must expand their role beyond fact transmission to become architects of adaptability and moral strength. The aim should not be to dictate what is right or wrong but to instill humility, curiosity, and the willingness to learn. Students should be empowered to discover truth for themselves through inquiry and dialogue, guided by the tools teachers provide.

Highlighting the role of institutions in supporting education, Ms Bhartia pledged the continued commitment of HT Media to the cause of truth, humanity, and democratic values. She reminded the gathering that Hindustan Times was launched by Mahatma Gandhi himself as a beacon of freedom and has continued to uphold values of integrity and honour over the past century. She reassured educators that the media must act as a partner in education, combating misinformation and promoting the dissemination of balanced, truthful narratives to future generations.

Ms Shobhana Bhartia's address provided a powerful vision for the future of education. She reminded educators that in a polarized, unequal, and turbulent world, schools must stand as spaces of inclusivity, dialogue, and empathy. By instilling scientific temper, open-mindedness, and compassion, schools can shape young people into responsible global citizens.

Her call for innovative pedagogical practices—from conflict resolution labs to digital democracy modules—outlined practical steps that schools can implement. Equally important was her reminder that educators must act not as mere transmitters of knowledge but as custodians of democratic and humanistic values. She argued, that it is in schools that the foundations of resilience, critical thinking, and empathy are laid—the very qualities that will enable future citizens to confront climate change, inequality, and technological disruption with wisdom and humanity. The address was both a challenge and an inspiration, reaffirming education's central role in building a just and peaceful future.





Inaugural Address

PROF. EDWARD VICKERS

Professor of Comparative Education at Kyushu University, Japan.

The 52nd Annual Conference of the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC) brought together leading educators, policymakers, and thought leaders to deliberate on the theme of Peace Education and Conflict Resolution in Schools. A highlight of the conference was the address by Professor Edward Vickers, UNESCO Chair on Education for Peace, Social Justice, and Global Citizenship, and Professor of Comparative Education at Kyushu University, Japan.

Professor Vickers, a distinguished scholar in the field of education, identity politics, and public culture across East Asia, offered a critical reflection on the limitations and opportunities of peace education. His talk examined the tensions between psychologically oriented approaches and historically grounded approaches to peace education. He expressed concern that excessive focus on social and emotional learning risks depoliticizing education and obscuring the structural causes of conflict. At the same time, he outlined broader challenges posed by nationalism, competitiveness, and digital technology, while calling for a renewed emphasis on teacher autonomy, critical pedagogy, and curricula that foster empathy and critical engagement.

Professor Vickers began by highlighting the growing prominence of psychological approaches particularly the global trend toward social and emotional learning (SEL) in peace education frameworks. While acknowledging the importance of emotional resilience and mental well-being, he raised concerns that framing conflict solely in psychological terms risks individualizing what are essentially structural, historical, and political problems. Drawing on his work with UNESCO's Asia-Pacific Centre on Education for International Understanding, he shared the example of the common curriculum guide for peace education in Northeast Asia.

Although the project aimed to foster critical historical reflection, political sensitivities prevented explicit reference to real conflicts such as tensions across the Taiwan Strait, the Korean Peninsula, or the oppression of Uyghurs and Tibetans. Instead, discussions often shifted to intra-personal conflict, reflecting a tendency to attribute conflict to the maladjustment of individuals rather than systemic inequalities or historical grievances. He noted a similar pattern in South Asia, referencing the Sri Lankan Grade 10 civics textbook, which defines conflict as arising from dissent in the mind of the individual. The solutions offered include meditation, counselling, or drawing exercises while avoiding engagement with Sri Lanka's actual history of civil war and ethnic conflict. While these practices may cultivate personal calm, Professor Vickers argued they divert attention from the root causes of violence, such as political injustice, poverty, and inequality.

To deepen his argument, Professor Vickers referred to the 2017 UNESCO report, *Rethinking Schooling for the 21st Century*, co-authored with Krishna Kumar and Yoko Mochizuki. The report identified three systemic challenges obstructing education's role in fostering peace:

- Instrumentalist Visions of Education – The dominance of a skills-focused, narrowly utilitarian approach, prioritizing measurable competencies such as literacy and numeracy, while sidelining the humanities, arts, and civic learning.
- Nationalism and Weak Regionalism – Chauvinistic notions of identity that emphasize national victimhood and obstruct recognition of shared humanity.
- Competitiveness and Regimentation – The credential-driven intensity of education systems, which breeds anxiety, undermines collaboration, and weakens the foundations for empathy and solidarity.

These challenges, he stressed, remain pressing today and are further complicated by the rise of digital technology in education.

Professor Vickers provided a stark critique of the culture of hyper-competition in education systems across East Asia and beyond. Education has increasingly become a relentless “race for credentials,” with parents treating children as investment vehicles and students internalizing pressure to constantly perform. The psychological toll of this environment is immense, contributing to stress, declining fertility rates, and the erosion of teacher autonomy.

He cited the tragic example of a primary school headteacher in England who took her own life after her school was downgraded by inspectors a reflection of how high-stakes accountability mechanisms devastate professional dignity. Such systems emphasize easily measurable outcomes such as mathematics and literacy, while marginalizing arts, sports, and civic education. Yet, these neglected areas are precisely the ones essential for imagination, empathy, and responsible citizenship qualities central to sustainable peace.

A recurring theme in Professor Vickers' address was the erosion of teacher professionalism. He described how schools and teachers are increasingly subjected to managerial control and corporate paradigms of efficiency. The abolition of Delhi University's Bachelor of Elementary Education (B.El.Ed.) programme was cited as a troubling example. That programme had emphasized holistic teacher preparation, integrating ethics, humanities, and active citizenship. Its abolition, however, signals a preference for rigidly monitored, skills-focused curricula, reducing teachers to mere implementers rather than autonomous professionals.

Professor Vickers emphasized that teachers, stripped of agency and pressured to deliver quantifiable outcomes, cannot model compassion, empathy, or peaceful conflict resolution. For peace education to succeed, teachers must be trusted and empowered as reflective practitioners and facilitators of dialogue.

Turning to technology, Professor Vickers issued a cautionary note on the unchecked adoption of digital learning tools, accelerated by the COVID-19 pandemic. While technology offers opportunities, it often undermines the communal and social character of education.

He referred to the UNESCO report, *An Ed-Tech Tragedy*, which documented how reliance on technology deepened exclusion, exacerbated inequalities, and elevated profit-driven models of education. Teachers have reported losing agency as technology platforms facilitated greater managerial surveillance and efficiency monitoring. The shift from resilience to convenience, as described by one B.El.Ed. graduate, epitomizes how digital platforms can subvert active, critical engagement.

In contrast, Japan's cautious embrace of digital learning reflects a cultural commitment to education as socialization—valuing the lived experience of 'learning to live together' over mere skills acquisition. This, Professor Vickers argued, underscores the importance of resisting globalized narratives that reduce schooling to measurable outputs and instead affirm education's role in shaping community, empathy, and citizenship.

Another major challenge identified was the entrenchment of nationalist narratives in peace education. Professor Vickers observed that across Northeast Asia, every nation frames its peace commitment through a narrative of unique victimhood, Japan through the atomic bombings, Korea through Japanese colonialism, and China through the Nanjing massacre. While these experiences must be remembered, competitive victimhood undermines the possibility of reconciliation, as nations demand recognition of their suffering while neglecting empathy for others.

He drew parallels to South Asia, where memories of the violence caused due to partition continue to fuel antagonism. He stressed the need for teachers to challenge inherited stereotypes and cultural memories that divide communities. Education for peace, therefore, requires curricula and classroom practices that foster critical reflection, encourage questioning of dominant narratives, and resist simplistic glorification of identity.

Professor Vickers outlined several implications for rethinking peace education:

- Reclaiming Humanistic Education – Arts, humanities, and civic studies must be preserved and expanded, as they are central to fostering critical reflection, empathy, and imagination.
- Strengthening Teacher Education – Programmes like B.El.Ed. should be reinstated and expanded, empowering teachers as professionals capable of guiding critical dialogue.
- Cautious Adoption of Technology – Schools must resist pressures to over-digitize education, ensuring that socialization and human connection remain central.
- Addressing Structural Inequalities – Peace education cannot ignore poverty, inequality, and political injustice. Without addressing systemic causes, efforts risk becoming superficial.

Promoting Critical Historical Engagement – Teachers should be supported to engage students critically with contested histories, challenging stereotypes of the ‘self’ and the ‘other’.

Professor Edward Vickers’ address at the NPSC Conference was a powerful critique of prevailing trends in peace education. He warned against the seductions of depoliticized, psychological approaches that reduce conflict to personal maladjustment, while ignoring historical and structural realities. He highlighted how hyper-competition, erosion of teacher autonomy, and the unchecked adoption of technology are undermining the humanistic and communal purposes of education.

His address was not merely diagnostic but visionary. He called for a reclaiming of education as a humanistic, social, and critical enterprise—one that equips students to question inherited identities, empathize with others, and live peacefully in pluralistic societies. Central to this vision is the empowerment of teachers, the protection of the arts and humanities, and a refusal to subordinate education to the narrow dictates of measurement and efficiency.

In an era of inequality, polarization, and technological disruption, Professor Vickers' message was both a warning and a guide. Peace, he argued, cannot be reduced to calmness or conformity; it requires courage, critical thought, and solidarity. Schools must not only teach children to be kind but also equip them to challenge injustice and imagine more inclusive futures.





Key Note Address

AMBASSADOR SHASHI UBAN TRIPATHI, IFS (RETD)

Served India as the Ambassador to Poland, Zimbabwe and Canada and as Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs.

The 52nd Annual Conference of the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC) convened educators, policymakers, and thought leaders to deliberate on the theme 'Fostering a Culture of Peace: Innovative Approaches to Conflict Resolution.' Among its distinguished keynote speakers was Ambassador Shashi Uban Tripathi, a seasoned diplomat who has represented India as the Ambassador to Poland, Zimbabwe, and Canada, and as Secretary in the Ministry of External Affairs.

In her address, Ambassador Tripathi drew from her diplomatic career, her engagement with global forums, and her personal reflections as a parent and citizen. She commended NPSC for its motto- Quality, Commitment, and Excellence and emphasized that this formula provides a strong foundation not just for education but for life itself. Her remarks centered on three interrelated themes: the urgency of peace in a turbulent world, the importance of nurturing values of peace and resilience in schools, and the need for innovative approaches to conflict resolution.

Ambassador Tripathi began by reflecting on the motto of NPSC: Quality, Commitment, and Excellence. She noted that when students strive for quality in their endeavours and pursue them with genuine commitment, excellence naturally follows. This formula, while not as groundbreaking as Einstein's equation, she remarked humorously, is nonetheless a "winning formula" that captures the essence of education.

Her endorsement of the motto underscored the belief that excellence in education cannot be mandated; it must grow organically out of consistent effort, ethical commitment, and the pursuit of quality. This emphasis on values aligned closely with the broader theme of conference- nurturing peace and harmony.

To situate her reflections, Ambassador Tripathi invoked the famous opening lines of Charles Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times.' She observed that the present age mirrors this paradox. On one hand, the world enjoys unprecedented technological advancements, which should ideally have made life simpler and more fulfilling. On the other hand, vast sections of humanity continue to live amid hunger, poverty, crime, and war.

Technology, she argued, has indeed improved the lives of a privileged few, but for the global majority, progress has been uneven and exclusionary. This juxtaposition reveals the urgency of peace, for without peace, there can be no progress, prosperity, or sustainable future. In her words, "peace is not optional but the precondition for human flourishing".

Ambassador Tripathi stressed that peace is indispensable for stability and growth, both at the societal and individual levels. A lack of peace manifests in conflict, violence, and disintegration, undermining the very foundations of prosperity. She argued that peace must be pursued not as an abstract ideal but as a practical necessity, requiring deliberate cultivation through education, family, and community.

This perspective naturally led her to the second part of the theme of the conference: innovative approaches to conflict resolution. Conflict, she observed, is inevitable in human relationships and institutions. What matters is how individuals and communities approach it—whether destructively, or as an opportunity for resilience and learning.

Drawing attention to the school context, Ambassador Tripathi focused on bullying, a universal challenge for educators and parents. While bullying exists in India, she noted that it has reached epidemic proportions abroad. As a parent, she shared how her own children faced bullying, but emerged stronger, learning how to deal with adversity and transform challenges into success.

This personal reflection highlighted the idea that schools are not just places of academic instruction but laboratories of life skills. By addressing bullying and similar conflicts constructively, schools can prepare students for the realities of life beyond classrooms.

Ambassador Tripathi emphasized that schools bear a unique responsibility in inculcating the values of peace and non-violent conflict resolution. While families play a role, students spend most of their waking hours in school, making it the primary site for character-building and value formation.

She recalled how, during her own schooling, there was a dedicated period called Moral Science. This subject, she stressed, was not about religion but about life skills, learning how to manage stress, cooperate with peers, and deal with difficult colleagues. It was a structured space for teaching resilience, empathy, and practical skills such as sewing or self-reliance. Though times have changed, she suggested that the essence of such instruction remains deeply relevant for today's students.

Ambassador Tripathi aligned her reflections with the conference's call for innovation in education. She argued that schools must find new ways of embedding peace education into curricula and daily practices. Key directions include:

- Integrating Life Skills Training – Beyond academic achievement, students must learn to manage emotions, resolve disputes amicably, and cooperate across differences.
- Addressing Real-Life Challenges – Issues such as bullying must not be minimized but tackled directly, turning adversity into an opportunity for growth.
- Reviving Value-Based Education – Moral Science or its contemporary equivalents must be reintegrated into schooling, teaching universal values without religious overtones.
- Promoting Resilience – Students should be equipped to face setbacks constructively, rather than shielded from challenges. Resilience, she argued, is a cornerstone of peace education.

These innovative approaches position schools as agents of peacebuilding, preparing students not only for examinations but for life in a diverse and often turbulent world. She humorously contrasted the skills taught in her schooldays, such as sewing a button, with today's context, where many students wear T-shirts and consider such skills unnecessary. This reflection underscored a broader truth: times change, but the essence of value-based education remains constant.

Just as sewing once symbolized self-reliance, contemporary education must find equivalents skills and practices that foster independence, responsibility, and adaptability. By evolving in response to changing times, schools can remain relevant while holding fast to enduring values.

Ambassador Shashi Uban Tripathi's address at the NPSC's 52nd Annual Conference was both insightful and inspiring. She affirmed the conference motto- Quality, Commitment, and Excellence- as a timeless formula for success, and highlighted the urgency of peace in a divided, unequal world.

Her reflections on technology, inequality, and global turbulence emphasized that peace is the foundation for progress. Through personal anecdotes, she illustrated how conflicts, including bullying, can become opportunities for growth when handled with resilience and empathy. Most importantly, she reminded educators that schools are the primary sites for teaching values, life skills, and peaceful conflict resolution.

Her call for innovative approaches, life skills training, value-based education, and resilience building provides a roadmap for integrating peace into the fabric of schooling. With warmth, wisdom, and conviction, Ambassador Tripathi's address reinforced the vital role of educators in nurturing citizens who are not only academically accomplished but also compassionate, resilient, and dedicated to peace.



NPSC Publication

“Fostering a Culture of Peace: Innovative Approaches to Conflict Resolution in Schools,”



Lifetime Achievement Award



Lifetime Achievement Award Presented to

Dr Ameeta Mulla Wattal

Chairperson and Executive Director
Education, Innovations
and Training DLF Foundation Schools and
Scholarship Programmes

for her outstanding achievement and unwavering contribution in the field
of education.

National and State Award Winners



The National Teacher Award Winners

Ms Charu Maini, Principal, DAV Public School Gurugram ,
Ms Pallavi Sharma, Principal, Mamta Modern Sr Sec School.

State Award Winners

Ms Archana Soni, Principal, Chinmaya Vidyalaya Vasant Vihar,
Ms Vandana Gupta, PGT Comp Sc, SD Public School, Punjabi Bagh,
Dr Shipra Raghuvanshi, PGT, Salwan Public School Rajinder Nagar,
Ms Reetu Dawar, Headmistress, Bal Bharti Public School Gangaram Hospital Marg,
Ms Anubha Gopal, PGT Economics, DPS RK Puram,
Ms Niva Chhonkar, PGT Biology, DPS RK Puram,
Ms Pooja Dhingra, PGT Comp Sc, Salwan Public School Mayur Vihar
Ms Ritu Sharma, Pgt English, ITL Public School,
Ms Varsha Krishnan, TGT Science, Bal Bharati School, Rohini.





Vote of Thanks

MS RICH A SHARMA AGNIHOTRI

**Vice Chairperson, NPSC and
Principal, Sanskriti School,
Chanakyapuri, New Delhi**

I am truly honored to stand before this team gathering of education leaders. This conference is not only a valuable opportunity for sharing insights and collaborating ideas, but also a meaningful platform to reflect on how we as educators can lead the way in fostering a peaceful, inclusive and emotionally safe school environment. As AI, big tech, the World Wide Web and social media take over our lives, the role of educators and Principals has expanded beyond academics.

We are now mediators, peace builders and role models in the practice of empathy and ethical leadership. Our schools must not only be centres of learning, but also spaces where young minds are taught the tools of dialogue, understanding and non-violence. At the heart of the NPSC mission, lies a deep commitment to creating safe and nurturing schools. This year's theme, Conflict Management and Peace Education in Schools, invites us to reimagine our roles as educators who help students not only dissolve disagreements but also learn to respect differences and build harmonious relationships.

In these conversations, we discover ways to embed compassion, respect and resilience into the very fabric of school culture. As an educator and as a Principal, I stand here today filled with immense pride and gratitude. NPSC began its journey with a shared vision of quality, commitment and excellence. In education, and looking around this room filled with energy and ideas. I know this vision is alive and is growing stronger every year. To our Chief Guest, Padmashri, Ms Shobhana Bhatia, our keynote speakers, Dr Edward Vickers, and Ambassador Shashi Uban Tripathi, I thank you for your presence and for sharing your deep knowledge. Your insights have sparked crucial discussions and have inspired us to think more intentionally about how we model conflict resolution and peaceful engagement in our schools. To the senior members and founders of NPSC, your vision, your guidance, and your unwavering support have inspired us all and will continue to support and propel this group forward.

Your legacy is reflected in every progressive idea and every thoughtful initiative that we undertake. And to the beating heart of this conference, the exceptional Principals and educators present here, I offer my deepest admiration. Your dedication, your belief in the power of education to shape not just minds but also character and your collaborative spirit, is what makes change possible.

The conversations you've had, the connections you've formed and the vision you carry forward will ripple across classrooms, hallways and communities. A heartfelt thank you to the team NPSC and the dynamic leadership of our Chairperson, Ms Asha Prabhakar, Principal, Bal Bharati Public School, Noida, gratitude to our dedicated Secretary, Ms Mallika Preman, Principal, Tagore International School, East of Kailash, our ever composed Treasurer, Mr Sanjay Yadav, Principal, Alhcon International School, Mayur Vihar and to the ever charming and ever smiling Joint Secretary Ms Rashmi Malik, Principal, Salwan Public School, Gurugram, and all the executive members whose tireless efforts have made this day possible.

This conference is more than just a series of sessions. It is a movement towards building schools rooted in empathy, respect and a peaceful coexistence. Together, we carry the shared responsibility of not only raising the bar in education but also raising a generation of students equipped with the mindset and the tools to create a more compassionate world. Thank you for your presence, your encouragement and your commitment. Thank you so much.



Peace & LOVE





NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE

Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

SESSION-1

Panel Discussion Conflict in Schools : Understanding Causes, Culture and Leadership Roles.

PANELISTS



DR AMIT SEN
CHILD AND
ADOLESCENT
PSYCHIATRIST,
FOUNDER, CHILDREN
FIRST



DR KAVITA SHARMA
EX-PRINCIPAL,
HINDU COLLEGE,
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DR PAYAL KUMAR
PRINCIPAL
ACADEMIC ADVISOR
ISH, VISITING
FACULTY, XLRI



**PROF. EDWARD
VICKERS**
PROFESSOR OF
COMPARATIVE
EDUCATION,
KYUSHU UNIVERSITY

Moderator :

Dr Ameeta Mulla Wattal

Chairperson & Executive Director, Education, Innovations and
Training DLF Foundation Schools and Scholarship Programmes

Rapporteur :

Dr Jyoti Gupta,

Principal, K.R. Mangalam World School, New Delhi

The first session of the conference, titled ‘Conflict in Schools: Understanding Causes, Culture, and Leadership Roles,’” convened a distinguished panel of educationists, scholars, and practitioners to deliberate on one of the most pressing concerns in contemporary education. Conflict, while often perceived negatively, is an unavoidable feature of human interaction and an essential part of learning communities. The session sought to unravel the nature of conflict in schools, identify its cultural and social dimensions, and discuss leadership strategies that can transform it into constructive dialogue and learning.

The session was moderated by Dr Ameeta Mulla Wattal, Chairperson and Executive Director of Innovations and Training at DLF Foundation Schools, and formally reported by Dr Jyoti Gupta, Principal of K.R. Mangalam World School. The panel included:

- Dr Payal Kumar – Principal Academic Advisor, visiting faculty at XLRI, author, and global leadership advisor.
- Dr Kavita Sharma – Former Principal of Hindu College, University of Delhi, and scholar of Indian traditions and higher education.
- Dr Amit Sen – Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Founder of Children First, and expert on student well-being.
- Prof. Edward Vickers – Professor at Kyushu University, Japan, specializing in comparative education and peace studies.

This diverse panel combined perspectives from psychology, organizational behaviour, ancient Indian philosophy, and comparative education, ensuring a multidimensional exploration of conflict and peace in educational spaces.

The session revolved around the following central themes:

1. Conflict as a Natural and Cultural Phenomenon – Recognizing conflict as inherent in human relationships rather than an aberration.
2. Dual Role of Education – Both as a site of conflict and as a vehicle for peace-building.
3. Individual vs. Societal Dimensions – Balancing personal emotional regulation with systemic critique of inequities and injustices.
4. Teacher Training and Leadership – Equipping educators with emotional intelligence and ethical frameworks.
5. Philosophical and Cultural Resources – Drawing from Indian traditions, such as the Mahabharata and Gandhian thought, to frame conflict resolution.
6. Contemporary Challenges – Technology, consumerism, mental health crises, and the erosion of empathy.

Dr Ameeta Mulla Wattal opened the session with literary and philosophical reflections, citing Tagore, Gandhi, and Martin Luther King Jr. to emphasize that peace is not the mere absence of conflict, but the presence of justice and equity. She highlighted how conflicts must be understood as ‘active verbs’, embedded in everyday human actions, and not confined to internal struggles alone. Her framing encouraged the panel to examine both inner journeys of peace and outward activism in addressing structural inequities that perpetuate conflict.

Prof. Edward Vickers while addressing conflict questioned the overemphasis on individual emotional regulation in peace education. Acknowledging its value, he argued that reducing conflict to personal psychology obscures the larger socio-political and cultural roots of tensions in schools and societies.

He pointed to inequalities, poverty, and political injustices as systemic causes of conflict, stressing that education should equip learners to critically analyze society, question injustice, and engage as active citizens. Otherwise, focusing narrowly on self-regulation risks producing passive individuals who conform rather than transform society.

In later interventions, Prof. Vickers critiqued the growing reliance on neuroscience and technology in education, which tend to reduce students to “brains in vats” and overlook the relational, ethical, and humanistic dimensions of learning. He warned against the dangers of manipulative educational technologies and advocated for approaches that foster critical thinking and social responsibility.

Dr Amit Sen brought a clinical and psychosocial perspective to the discussion, underlining the mental health implications of conflict and competition in schools and universities. Drawing on national studies on ragging, bullying, and student suicides, he presented alarming findings:

- Over 50% of school children surveyed, had experienced some form of bullying.
- 34% faced physical bullying, while others endured marginalization based on race, disability, language, or appearance.
- Such conflicts, he argued, are not isolated incidents but reflect the toxicity of broader societal discourses misogyny, toxic masculinity, hierarchies of success, and pervasive violence in media and politics.

Dr Sen urged schools to act as agents of change, challenging dominant narratives of competition and aggression. He advocated building emotionally safe spaces where children can express vulnerabilities without fear of judgment.

On the role of technology, Dr Sen highlighted the dilemmas faced by parents and educators in managing digital exposure. Instead of authoritarian restrictions, he recommended dialogue and curiosity, encouraging young people to reflect on risks collaboratively. This approach, he noted, nurtures adaptability, resilience, and emotional intelligence- key traits for surviving and thriving in an uncertain world.

Dr Payal Kumar emphasized the inevitability of conflict in human groups, even as small as three members. Instead of suppressing conflict, she advocated for bringing it to the surface constructively. Drawing from organizational behaviour, she illustrated how unresolved tensions often manifest as passive-aggressive behaviours in schools, highlighting the leadership role of principals in initiating open conversations.

Dr Kumar illustrated this with the unlikely friendship between Dr Nelson Mandela and his prison guard, showing how trust and empathy can overcome structural hostility. She argued strongly for incorporating emotional intelligence (EQ) into teacher training, focusing on:

- Self-awareness – Understanding one's emotions and triggers
- Empathy – Recognizing others' perspectives
- Management of emotions – Responding constructively to conflict

Dr Kumar cited her experience of training over a thousand employees in EQ, which significantly reduced conflicts in organizational settings. Later, she reflected on consumerism and narcissism in contemporary youth culture, which undermine empathy and collective responsibility. She shared a deeply personal case of her sister, a gifted student who was permanently scarred by bullying, as an example of how unresolved conflicts can destroy potential and distort societal values.

Dr Kavita Sharma drew upon the Mahabharata to provide profound ethical reflections. She identified the 'six enemies' of human life, lust, anger, greed, ego, attachment, jealousy along with laziness, as root causes of conflict.

Through stories from the epic, she illustrated how discriminative intellect (vivek) and endurance (dhairya) are essential for resolving conflicts and promoting harmony. She emphasized that spirituality, understood not as ritual but as moral clarity, is critical to overcoming destructive competition and consumerism.

In response to questions on suffering, Dr Sharma clarified that 'dharma' is not religion, but the individual's responsibility to society. She urged educators to teach children that suffering is a part of life, and that endurance, resilience, and truthfulness must guide their responses.

Dr Sharma's concluding remarks reinforced the idea that peace cannot be achieved through curriculum alone; values must permeate institutional hierarchies, beginning with leaders who model ethical conduct.

Concluding Reflections

The session concluded with a rapid round of final insights from the panelists:

- Prof. Vickers emphasized the value of doubt, warning that certainty and dogmatism breed intolerance, while doubt fosters humility and reflection.
- Dr Sen highlighted resilience and grit as key qualities to nurture in youth, noting that these are relational rather than individual traits.
- Dr Kumar reminded teachers of their immense influence as role models, stressing authenticity over hypocrisy.
- Dr Sharma reiterated that peace begins with individuals and leaders embodying values, not merely with syllabi or formal instruction.

Dr Wattal closed the session with musical references to protest songs from Joan Baez's We Shall Overcome to John Lennon's Imagine, underscoring the universal yearning for peace.

Key Takeaways

- Conflict is inevitable but manageable – Suppression is ineffective; constructive engagement is essential.
- Schools mirror society – Conflicts in schools often reflect broader cultural, political, and economic tensions.
- Peace education must be systemic – Beyond teaching emotional regulation, it should foster critical citizenship.
- Teachers as role models – Their authenticity, empathy, and leadership directly influence school culture.
- Philosophical resources remain relevant – The Mahabharata and Gandhian ideals offer enduring guidance for ethical decision-making.
- Technology and consumerism pose new challenges – Education must respond by cultivating empathy, resilience, and reflective thinking.

The session provided a rich and layered exploration of conflict in schools, transcending disciplinary boundaries to connect psychology, organizational behaviour, cultural philosophy, and educational policy. It affirmed that while conflict is inevitable, it can be transformed into an opportunity for growth, resilience, and social change when addressed with empathy, critical awareness, and ethical leadership. Ultimately, the responsibility lies with educators and leaders to embody the values they wish to instill, fostering not just peaceful classrooms but also a more equitable and compassionate society.





NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE

Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

SESSION-2

Panel Discussion Peaceful Schools, Prosperous Nation : Aligning Co-curricular activities and teacher training in Peace Education

PANELISTS



MR SOHAIL HASHMI
HISTORIAN, SOCIAL
ACTIVIST, FILM-
MAKER & HERITAGE
CONSERVATIONIST



**PADMASHRI
GEETHA CHANDRAN**
INDIAN
BHARATANATYAM
DANCER & VOCALIST



**PADMASHRI
PRATHIBHA
PRAHLAD**
EDUCATOR,
CHOREOGRAPHER



**MS PRERNA
BHAMBRI**
FORMER INDIAN
TENNIS PLAYER

Moderator :
Ms Latika Gupta
CIE, Delhi University

Rapporteur :
Ms Swarnima Luthra
Principal, ASN Sr. Secondary School, Mayur Vihar, New Delhi

The second session of the conference centered on the powerful role of heritage, arts, culture, and sports in shaping education, identity, and values. Titled 'Culture, Arts, and Education: Pathways to Identity, Sensitivity, and Peace,' the session explored how schools can integrate heritage studies, performing arts, and sports into curricula to nurture empathy, inclusivity, and holistic growth in children.

Moderated by Ms Latika Gupta, an eminent educationist, the panel brought together diverse voices representing heritage activism, performing arts, choreography, and sports. The panelists included:

- Mr Sohail Hashmi- historian, heritage activist, and educator
- Padmashri Geetha Chandran- bharatanatyam exponent and cultural advocate
- Padmashri Prathibha Prahlad- choreographer, cultural leader, and educator
- Ms Prerna Bhambri- international tennis player and role model for young women in sports

The session was distinctive in situating education within aesthetic, cultural, and ethical dimensions, rather than purely academic metrics. It echoed with arguments directed towards integrating arts and heritage as core elements of curricula to combat prejudice, nurture creativity, and create a culture of peace in schools.

The discussion revolved around several critical themes:

1. Heritage and Identity – Countering prejudices and stereotypes by contextualizing history and culture
2. Arts Education – Moving from tokenism to core curriculum, emphasizing experiential learning and de-stressing
3. Holistic Child Development – Using arts and sports to cultivate sensitivity, resilience, and empathy
4. Schools as Inclusive Spaces – Addressing socio-economic, cultural, and gender biases through pedagogy

Critical Engagement with Media – Preparing children to question misinformation, stereotypes, and superficial cultural consumption.

Mr Hashmi highlighted how biases against communities, such as Muslims and Dalits, seep into schools at an early age. Sharing anecdotes from heritage walks with children, he recalled instances of deep-rooted prejudice among 8-year-olds, reflecting larger societal influences rather than family practices.

Mr Hashmi illustrated how architectural categories like “Islamic” or “Hindu” architecture are misleading legacies of colonial classification. By questioning received categories and misconceptions such as the myth of minarets being used for calls to prayer, he urged educators to encourage critical enquiry into history and culture.

Mr Hashmi emphasized the importance of debunking misinformation from popular media and digital platforms. He asserted that platforms like WhatsApp often distort history and culture, undoing educators’ work. His call was clear: education must teach children to question everything, echoing the Buddhist principle that one should only accept knowledge aligned with reason and the common good.

Ms Geetha Chandran emphasized that arts education in schools suffers from tokenism, often limited to annual days or national celebrations. She argued that the true essence of arts lies in creating rasikas (sensitive appreciators) rather than performers alone.

Ms Chandran explained how the arts, dance, music, theatre, and visual arts foster a mind-body connect, harmony, and de-stressing. Drawing from her work in schools, she described simple interventions such as playing the tanpura at school entry to calm students and prepare them for learning.

Ms Chandran advocated for interdisciplinary teaching, where music, dance, and theatre are linked with subjects like physics or history. For example, a tabla lesson can segue into a discussion of sound waves with the physics teacher. This approach helps children grasp both artistic and scientific perspectives.

Finally, Ms Chandran stressed that arts education should be reflected in report cards to ensure accountability and recognition. Schools, she argued, must also sensitize scholastic teachers to the value of arts, so that dance and music are not dismissed as distractions but seen as integral to education.

Ms Prathibha Prahlaad took a broader perspective, arguing that culture is central to identity and should form the backbone of school education. She invoked Aristotle’s wisdom: education should train not only the mind but also the heart.

Highlighting empathy, kindness, diversity, and honesty as core cultural values, Ms Prahlaad asked if schools genuinely provide safe and inclusive environments for children. She observed that elite schools often marginalize children from lower socio-economic backgrounds, reproducing inequalities rather than dismantling it.

Ms Prahlad critiqued the examination-driven model of schooling, which prioritizes marks over holistic growth. Arts, she stressed, cultivate collaboration, patience, discipline, and appreciation of others' talents. Unlike academic subjects that reward only top scorers, arts and culture teach children to respect diversity in talent and ability.

Ms Prahlad also noted that arts are still treated as 'extracurricular,' often taught by under-supported teachers who juggle multiple art forms. Without systemic reform, the transformative potential of culture and arts will remain untapped.

Ms Prerna Bhambri shared her journey as a woman excelling in tennis, a sport overshadowed by cricket in India. She reflected on how sports can challenge gender stereotypes and colonial legacies while building resilience and dignity.

She stressed that sports, like arts, are not only about winning but also about inclusion, teamwork, and learning from pressure situations. Recalling her own training, she advocated for schools to create mock competitive scenarios where students learn to cope with stress, failure, and collaboration.

Ms Bhambri argued that athletes and coaches should be invited to schools as role models, inspiring students to see sports as pathways to discipline, empathy, and peace. Her story underscored how family and institutional support can transform individual aspirations into broader cultural change.

Both Ms Geetha Chandran and Mr Sohail Hashmi critically addressed the negative influence of popular culture and digital misinformation.

- Ms Chandran noted that Bollywood often trivializes arts and sometimes glorifies violence and hatred. Schools must counterbalance this by exposing students to folk and classical traditions, ensuring cultural diversity is celebrated.
- Mr Hashmi emphasized the dangers of misrepresented history in films and online content, such as inaccurate depictions of Mohenjodaro or Tipu Sultan.
- He warned that children now treat WhatsApp forwards as unquestionable truth, making critical engagement with media literacy an urgent task.

Both panelists urged educators to equip children with tools of critical questioning, so that they can differentiate between facts and fabricated narratives.

Key Insights and Takeaways

From the diverse but interconnected perspectives, several important insights emerged:

- Heritage as Inquiry – History should be taught as lived experience and enquiry, not as rigid categories imposed by colonial narratives.
- Arts as Core Curriculum – Music, dance, theatre, and visual arts must move from token events to sustained, experiential learning that is interdisciplinary and reflected in report cards.
- Holistic Development – Arts and sports develop empathy, resilience, collaboration, and sensitivity– traits essential for peace-building.
- Schools as Inclusive Spaces – Institutions must consciously address socio-economic and cultural biases, ensuring every child feels valued and safe.
- Media and Critical Thinking – With misinformation rampant, children must be trained to question sources and distinguish between authentic knowledge and fabricated myths.
- Teachers as Enablers – Both scholastic and arts educators must collaborate, recognizing that every subject contributes to the child’s emotional, intellectual, and cultural growth.

The session offered a compelling case for reimagining schools as cultural, aesthetic, and ethical spaces, not just academic institutions. By integrating heritage education, arts, and sports into the heart of curricula, schools can cultivate empathy, resilience, inclusivity, and critical awareness in children.

The panel made it clear that peace education is not confined to lessons in moral science but embedded in how schools value diversity, nurture creativity, and encourage questioning. As Ms Latika Gupta concluded, the task ahead is to mainstream culture, arts, and sports as curricular, not extracurricular domains. The transformative vision presented by the panel holds the potential to create not only better students but also better human beings, capable of building a society rooted in justice, dignity, and peace.







NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE
Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

SESSION-3

Masterclass

**Effective Communication for Conflict Resolution :
Mastering Active Listening and Communication Tools**

RESOURCE PERSON



MR SUDARSHAN RODRIGUES
CEO AND FOUNDER RTL WORKS

Moderator :

Dr Annie Koshi

Principal,

St. Mary's School, Safdarjung Enclave, New Delhi

Rapporteur :

Ms Geeta Gangwani

Principal,

Bal Bharati Public School, Rohini, New Delhi

The third session of the conference, “The Art of Listening: Pathways to Conflict Transformation and Leadership,” focused on a skill often overlooked in discussions on education and leadership: the ability to listen deeply. While communication is frequently framed as speaking effectively, this session emphasised that authentic leadership and conflict resolution are grounded in the art of listening.

The session was chaired by Dr Annie Koshi, former Principal of St. Mary’s School, and conducted by Mr Sudarshan Rodrigues, leadership trainer and facilitator. Together, they invited participants to examine the inner and outer dimensions of listening—how silence, attention, and presence can transform conversations, relationships, and conflicts in schools.

The discussion combined philosophical reflections, practical exercises, and experiential learning. It highlighted that conflict, though often seen as disruptive, can become an opportunity for dialogue and growth, if approached with openness and empathy. Above all, the session emphasised that listening is not simply a technique but a way of being a radical stance of humility, curiosity, and care.

The session unfolded in three broad phases:

1. Contextual Framing – Dr Koshi highlighted the challenges of leadership in educational institutions, where communication often breaks down because voices remain unheard.
2. Deep Listening Practices – Mr Rodrigues led participants through exercises that illustrated how silence, presence, and reflection open space for generative conversations.
3. Values and Reflections – The facilitators guided participants to examine their fears, articulate their values, and reflect on the implications of listening for leadership and conflict transformation.

The session was designed to be experiential and participatory, allowing participants to not only hear about listening but also practice it directly.

Key Discussions and Insights

1. Leadership, Communication, and Listening

The session began with a recognition that leadership is less about issuing directives and more about enabling meaningful conversations. Schools often face conflicts between students, teachers, administrators, and parents, that are exacerbated when communication is hierarchical, fragmented, or dismissive. Effective leadership, the panel argued, requires listening empathetically and attentively.

When leaders listen without judgment, they create trust and openness. Teachers and students alike feel valued, and conflicts can be addressed constructively rather than suppressed or escalated. Listening-centered leadership fosters not only harmony but also innovation, since people are more likely to share ideas when they feel heard.

2. Conflict as Opportunity for Transformation

Conflict was reframed not as a disruption to be avoided but as a portal to transformation. Every conflict contains the potential to deepen understanding and strengthen relationships. The decisive factor is how one approaches it.

- If conflict is treated as a battle to be won, it escalates destructively.
- If conflict is approached as an opportunity to learn, it becomes generative.

In this framing, conflict is not an enemy of peace but a necessary element of growth. The art of listening allows educators and leaders to recognize conflict as a resource, not merely a problem.

3. Generative vs. Disempowering Conversations

A central insight of the session was the distinction between generative and disempowering conversations.

- Generative conversations open new possibilities, foster empathy, and build inclusion. They allow people to feel seen and acknowledged.
- Disempowering conversations diminish, exclude, or silence others. They reinforce fear, hierarchy, or apathy.

Generative conversations depend on listening without interruption, judgment, or premature advice. When people feel fully heard, they often discover their own solutions to challenges. Conversely, when listening is absent, even well-intentioned words can leave others feeling invalidated.

4. Values and Inner Capacity in Leadership

Participants were asked to reflect on their core values—principles such as empathy, fairness, trust, and humility. Leadership, the facilitators emphasized, is not primarily about titles or positions but about embodying values in daily practices. Conflicts often reveal the gap between espoused values and enacted behaviors. For example, a school may claim to value inclusivity, but if certain students' voices are ignored, the enacted behavior contradicts the stated value. Effective leadership requires bridging this gap through conscious practice and integrity.

5. Role of Fear in Communication

Mr Rodrigues invited participants to examine the fears that shape communication. Leaders may fear losing authority; teachers may fear conflict with parents; students may fear ridicule from peers. These unacknowledged fears often distort dialogue, producing defensiveness, aggression, or silence. By naming and recognizing fears, their hidden power diminishes. Courage is then understood not as the absence of fear, but as the capacity to act meaningfully despite fear. Acknowledging vulnerability can create more authentic, trust-filled conversations.

6. Deep Listening and Presence

The facilitators described deep listening as a discipline requiring presence, humility, and patience. Listening is not merely hearing words but attending to tone, silence, emotion, and what remains unsaid.

Participants were guided to practice:

- Suspending habitual thought patterns rather than preparing rebuttals while others speak.
- Embracing silence instead of rushing to fill conversational gaps.
- Being fully present to another person, setting aside distractions and judgments.

Such listening, though challenging in a culture of speed and noise, was experienced as transformative. Participants reported feeling more connected, respected, and understood through the practice.

7. Writing and Reflection as Tools for Listening

Another dimension explored was the role of reflective writing in deepening listening. Journaling creates space for individuals to pause, notice their own thoughts and emotions, and process before responding.

Reflection enhances listening in two ways:

- It allows individuals to listen inwardly to their own values, fears, and assumptions.
- It strengthens their ability to listen outwardly to others without projection or premature reaction.

Participants were encouraged to integrate journaling into their daily practice, using it as a tool for self-awareness and growth in leadership.

The session included several interactive exercises to move from theory to practice:

Values Identification Exercise - Participants listed their core values and reflected on how these shaped their leadership style. The activity revealed discrepancies between aspirational values and enacted behaviours, prompting participants to consider how they might bridge these gaps.

Fear Recognition Exercise- Through guided reflection, participants identified their fears in professional and personal contexts. Naming fears helped reduce their unconscious influence, making room for courage and authenticity.

Structured Listening Practice - In pairs, one participant spoke while the other listened silently without interruption. This exercise demonstrated the power of presence and non-judgmental attention. Many participants noted how unusual but liberating it felt to be fully heard without advice or correction.

Journaling and Reflection Questions- Participants were invited to reflect in writing on questions such as:

- What fears silence me?
- How can I cultivate deeper listening in my daily life?
- What values do I wish to embody as a leader?

This practice reinforced the idea that listening is not a one-time exercise but a lifelong discipline.

The session's implications for educators and leaders were profound:

- **Modeling behaviour** – Students learn more from how adults handle conflict than from formal lessons. When teachers and leaders practice deep listening, they model respect, empathy, and openness.
- **Creating safe spaces** – Schools should cultivate environments where students and staff feel psychologically safe to express themselves without fear of ridicule or punishment.
- **Reducing hierarchy** – Listening-centered leadership diminishes rigid hierarchies, allowing for collaborative problem-solving and mutual respect.
- **Building resilience and creativity** – When individuals feel heard, they are more resilient in the face of challenges and more willing to innovate.
- **Nurturing a culture of peace** – Ultimately, schools that value listening contribute to a culture where conflicts become opportunities for dialogue and transformation, rather than sources of division.

Session 3 illuminated the radical power of listening in conflict resolution and leadership. Listening emerged not as a passive act but as an active practice of empathy, courage, and presence. By engaging in exercises of values clarification, fear recognition, structured listening, and journaling, participants experienced firsthand how listening can transform both their inner lives and external relationships. For educators and leaders, the message was clear: to listen is to lead. Deep listening cultivates authenticity, nurtures resilience, and creates inclusive communities where every voice matters. In a world often dominated by noise, distraction, and polarisation, the art of listening stands as a vital pathway to peace, dialogue, and transformation.





PEACE



DAV



NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE

Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

SESSION-4

Performance by the Ventriloquist



Mr Santhosh
TEDX Speaker & Voice Coach

Special Address



Dr Sudhanshu Trivedi
Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha

Performance by the Ventriloquist

Mr Santhosh
TEDX Speaker & Voice Coach



Special Address

DR SUDHANSHU TRIVEDI



**Member of Parliament,
Rajya Sabha**

This report documents the key elements of Dr Trivedi's address, analysing the ideas he presented and their relevance to contemporary educational practice.

Setting the Context

Dr Trivedi began his speech by acknowledging the vision of the National Progressive Schools' Conference and its sustained contribution over five decades to shaping the landscape of Indian schooling. He commended the conference for choosing a theme of great contemporary relevance, as conflict management and peace education are not merely desirable attributes but urgent necessities in an era marked by global tensions, technological disruption, and social divides.

He emphasized that schools are the foundation of societal harmony. The manner in which conflicts are addressed within classrooms and campuses has a direct bearing on the kind of citizens the nation produces. Education, therefore, cannot be limited to knowledge transmission but must serve as the bedrock of character-building, empathy, and peaceful coexistence.

Conflict and Peace: A Philosophical Lens

Drawing from India's civilizational heritage, Dr Trivedi explained that conflict has been a part of human history, but the Indian ethos has always emphasized balance, dialogue, and the pursuit of harmony. He referred to the philosophical traditions of the Upanishads, the teachings of the Buddha, and the principles of Mahatma Gandhi, all of which underscore non-violence, tolerance, and the importance of resolving disputes through understanding rather than aggression.

He urged educators to introduce these timeless values in everyday pedagogy. According to him, peace education should not be restricted to a single subject or moral science period but should become an intrinsic part of all teaching-learning practices. History lessons, for instance, should not glorify wars but highlight reconciliation; literature should encourage empathy; and science should inspire ethical responsibility.

The Role of Technology in Education

A significant portion of Dr Trivedi's address was devoted to the intersection of education and technology. He argued that in the 21st century, the ability to manage conflicts is closely tied to how societies engage with technology. Digital tools, social media, and artificial intelligence have immense potential for collaboration but also for division if misused.

Dr Trivedi underscored the urgent need for schools to prepare students not only as consumers of technology but also as responsible digital citizens. He outlined the following priorities:

- Digital Literacy as a Core Competency – Students must be trained to identify misinformation, avoid digital conflicts, and use online platforms for constructive dialogue.
- Infrastructure Development – Schools must invest in modern technological infrastructure to ensure equitable access for all learners.
- Teacher Training – Educators need continuous professional development in digital pedagogy and cyber ethics so that they can guide students effectively.
- Blended Learning Models – He advocated for a balanced use of technology where digital tools complement, rather than replace, human interaction and values.
- He stressed that while technology can accelerate learning, it must not erode the humane dimensions of education. The ultimate purpose of digital innovation must remain the holistic development of the learner.

Peace Education as a Pedagogical Imperative

Moving to the theme of the conference, Dr Trivedi identified peace education as a multi-layered concept. At the individual level, it involves cultivating patience, self-regulation, and emotional intelligence. At the interpersonal level, it requires developing skills of dialogue, negotiation, and empathy. At the societal level, it calls for inclusivity, tolerance, and respect for diversity. He highlighted that the Indian classroom is a microcosm of the nation's diversity. Schools, therefore, carry a special responsibility to model peaceful coexistence. Teachers must not only impart academic knowledge but also act as facilitators of dialogue, role models of tolerance, and mediators in conflicts.

Dr Trivedi recommended that peace education should include:

- Role-play and simulation exercises to practice conflict resolution.
- Cross-cultural exposure to build respect for differences.
- Integration of art, music, and literature for emotional expression and healing.
- Community service projects to nurture social responsibility.

Teachers as Nation-Builders

In his speech, Dr Trivedi paid a rich tribute to teachers as the architects of the nation. He asserted that the effectiveness of conflict management and peace education lies primarily in the attitudes, skills, and dedication of teachers. Teachers must combine authority with empathy, discipline with compassion, and intellectual rigor with moral guidance. He reminded the audience that in Indian tradition, the guru has always been revered as a figure who shapes not only the intellect but also the soul of the learner. In today's world, teachers must also become mentors who guide students through the complexities of identity, technology, and globalization.

Policy Perspectives

Addressing the policy dimension, Dr Trivedi aligned his thoughts with the National Education Policy 2020, which emphasizes holistic and multidisciplinary learning. He observed that NEP 2020 provides ample scope for embedding peace education, value-based learning, and skill development into the curriculum. He also underlined the government's commitment to enhancing digital infrastructure, expanding skill development programs, and supporting innovation in schools. According to him, these initiatives are essential for creating future-ready learners who can navigate conflicts with wisdom and contribute to a harmonious society.

Call to Action

Dr Trivedi concluded his address with a powerful call to action. He reminded educators that the true test of education lies not in producing degree holders but in nurturing citizens who can live harmoniously in a diverse world. Conflict management and peace education must not remain lofty ideals but should translate into daily practices in classrooms, staff rooms, and school communities.

He encouraged NPSC and all progressive schools to take the lead in this mission by:

- Developing structured peace education modules.
- Establishing peer mediation programs within schools.
- Encouraging research and innovation in conflict resolution techniques.
- Creating partnerships between schools, families, and communities to foster peace-building . Values.

Dr Sudhanshu Trivedi's speech at the 52nd Annual NPSC Conference was a rich blend of philosophy, policy, and pedagogy. He connected India's cultural wisdom with the demands of modern technology and policy frameworks, presenting a vision where schools act as incubators of peace and laboratories of innovation.

The address served as a timely reminder that education is not merely about academic excellence but also about fostering character, empathy, and societal well-being. His words provided both inspiration and direction for educators, urging them to embrace their role as peace-builders and nation-builders.

As schools across the country navigate the challenges of a rapidly changing world, Dr Trivedi message resonates with urgency reminding us that to educate is to build peace, to manage conflict is to nurture harmony, and to teach is to serve the nation.





NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE

Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

SESSION-5

Expert Dialogue

“Conflict in the Cybersphere : Exploring the inter section of Technology and Peacebuilding”

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Dr Ashok Pandey-
Innovator, Classroom Practitioner,
and Influential Educational Leader.



ESTEEMED GUESTS



MR PAWAN DUGGAL
CYBER LAW
EXPERT



MR BHASKAR BASU
DIRECTOR,
MICROSOFT



**MR HEMANT
TIWARI**
IPS - DCP IFSO /
CYBER CRIME

Rapporteur :
Dr Santosh Vyas
Principal

Sadhu Vaswani International School for Girls, New Delhi

The 52nd Annual Conference of the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC) convened in New Delhi with a sharp focus on Conflict Management and Peace Education in Schools. Among its many thought-provoking deliberations, Session 5 addressed a question of urgent global relevance: How can technology serve as both a source of conflict and a tool for peacebuilding in the school ecosystem?

The session brought together experts from law enforcement, technology, and cyber law. It was moderated by a leading educationist, to interrogate the paradoxical role of digital technologies. As schools embrace artificial intelligence, digital learning, and virtual engagement, they simultaneously confront the rising risks of cyberbullying, misinformation, hacking, and identity theft. The discussion framed cyberspace not merely as a technical domain but also as a new frontier for peacebuilding in education.

The digital revolution has reshaped education in unprecedented ways. Classrooms today are hybrid, students are digital natives, and knowledge is no longer bound to textbooks but flows across screens, applications, and platforms. Artificial intelligence, augmented reality, and digital collaboration tools have unlocked powerful opportunities for creativity, personalization, and global connections.

Yet, these same tools have also opened new corridors of conflict. Students are vulnerable to cyberbullying, misinformation campaigns, phishing, online radicalization, and emotional isolation. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digital immersion, but schools are still catching up in embedding safety nets. The absence of comprehensive legislation, especially in rapidly digitizing nations like India, amplifies these risks. It is within this tension—of promise and peril—that Session 5 situated its inquiry.

Legal and Ethical Dimensions – Mr Pawan Duggal

Mr Duggal, one of India's foremost cyber law experts, began by outlining the growing complexities of cyberspace. He narrated real cases where school students misused artificial intelligence and social media platforms to manipulate images, harass peers, and create false narratives. Such incidents, he explained, are not isolated but symptomatic of a larger ethical vacuum in digital engagement.

He cautioned that India lacks a dedicated AI law, making it difficult to address emerging crimes. In his words, the world is edging toward "cognitive colonialism", a scenario where algorithms and digital platforms begin to dictate human thinking and decision-making, eroding independent judgment.

Some of his key observations included:

- **Culture of Instant Gratification:** The digital age promotes immediacy of answers, likes, and rewards, fueling impatience and impulsivity among youth. This cultural shift undermines emotional resilience and escalates conflicts.
- **Ethics and Emotional Balance:** Students, while technologically adept, often lack ethical grounding in digital use. The challenge is not access, but responsible access.

Practical Resources: He emphasized the promotion of official mechanisms such as [cybercrime.gov.in](https://www.cybercrime.gov.in) and the national helpline 1930, which remain underutilized in schools.

Mr Duggal's central argument was clear: cybersecurity must become a way of life. He urged schools to integrate cyber law awareness sessions, promote responsible AI usage, and build capacity among educators to act as digital first responders. His call to action was urgent: "We are running against time. Let us collaborate, innovate, and educate together."

Technology and Innovation Perspective – Mr Bhaskar Basu

Representing the technology sector, Mr Basu illuminated the duality of digital tools. Drawing from personal anecdotes and references to popular media, he illustrated how children today navigate technology intuitively but precariously using it seamlessly for learning and entertainment, yet remaining unaware of risks.

He distilled his message into three imperatives for schools:

- **Awareness** – cultivating a culture where students recognize threats such as phishing, cyber fraud, and misinformation.
- **Digital Literacy** – teaching not just how to use technology, but how to evaluate, cross-verify, and discern credible sources.
- **Empathy in Usage** – encouraging students to view technology as a tool for connection and creativity, not competition or hostility.

As a leader from Microsoft, Mr Basu highlighted the company's commitment to responsible innovation. He introduced Microsoft Copilot as an AI tool designed with principles of trust, safety, and accountability. His intervention underscored that technology is not inherently harmful, it is the design and usage frameworks that determine its impact. He argued that schools must actively engage with technology companies to co-create safer digital ecosystems.

Law Enforcement Experience – Mr Hemant Tiwari, IPS

Bringing the voice of law enforcement, Mr Tiwari grounded the discussion in real-world threats from school contexts. He recounted cases of:

- Bomb hoaxes orchestrated by students through anonymous emails and messages.
- Digital extortion where peers threatened classmates by misusing private data.
- Online radicalization risks, where youth unknowingly engaged with malicious networks.

He stressed that these incidents underline the urgency of early intervention. Schools cannot dismiss such actions as pranks; they must be treated as serious breaches requiring reporting and corrective measures.

Mr Tiwari offered three recommendations:

- Strengthening School-Police Partnerships – Schools should maintain direct communication channels with local cybercrime units and invite officers for awareness sessions.
- Reporting as Prevention – Legal systems can only act when cases are reported; silence or stigma around cyber incidents perpetuates harm.
- Psychological Reassurance – Beyond punitive measures, reassurance and counselling are vital. “Reassurance,” he noted, “is the most common medicine.”

His intervention emphasized that peacebuilding in cyberspace is as much about building trust between institutions as it is about policing violations.

The session echoed concerns visible worldwide. In the United States, rising cases of cyberbullying have prompted school districts to invest in digital citizenship curricula. In Europe, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) has established frameworks for protecting minors online. Nations such as Singapore have pioneered cyber wellness programmes in schools, integrating digital safety into everyday learning.

For India, the challenge is compounded by scale: with over 250 million school-going children, even small lapses can escalate into systemic vulnerabilities. The absence of an AI-specific law further complicates enforcement. Yet, as the panelists emphasized, educational institutions can become the frontline of resilience by teaching ethics, empathy, and awareness alongside academic learning.

The deliberations crystallized into several consensus points:

- Technology as a Double-Edged Sword: It offers connection and creativity but equally enables manipulation, identity theft, and cyberbullying.
- Schools as Centres of Peacebuilding: No longer limited to academics, schools must prepare students to be ethical digital citizens.
- Curriculum Integration: AI education should include modules on ethics, consequences of misuse, and emotional intelligence.
- Reporting Mechanisms: Awareness about portals like [cybercrime.gov.in](https://www.cybercrime.gov.in) and helpline 1930 must be embedded in school systems.
- Cross-Sector Collaboration: Schools, police, policymakers, and technology companies must coordinate efforts for sustainable impact.
- Educators as First Responders: Teachers are increasingly frontline actors in identifying and addressing digital conflicts.

Based on the discussion, the following recommendations emerged for different stakeholders:

For Schools:

- Introduce mandatory digital citizenship modules.
- Establish cyber safety cells with counsellors and designated reporting mechanisms.
- Conduct regular workshops with law enforcement agencies.

For Policymakers:

- Develop a national AI ethics and safety framework for schools.
- Invest in teacher training programmes on cybersecurity.
- Provide financial support for infrastructure that promotes safe digital learning.

For Technology Companies:

- Design child-friendly digital platforms with built-in safety features.
- Partner with schools to provide tools for age-appropriate AI engagement.
- Support research on the impact of digital immersion on student well-being.

Session 5 of the 52nd NPSC Annual Conference illuminated the urgent intersection of technology, security, and peace education. The dialogue established that digital peacebuilding is no longer optional; it is essential for preparing students to thrive in a rapidly changing world. While cyberspace presents new conflicts, it also offers unprecedented opportunities for collaboration, empathy, and innovation. The responsibility now lies with educators, law enforcement, and technology leaders to co-create frameworks that protect students while empowering them.

The session closed with a powerful reminder, voiced by Mr Duggal: “ChatGPT has read the entire human civilization,now it’s time for humans to act with civilization.” In essence, the challenge is not whether technology will shape the future, but how humans choose to shape technology, either as a tool of conflict or as an instrument of peace.





NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE

Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

SESSION-6

“Voices from the Bard: Memory, Meaning, and Metaphor”

PRESENTATION BY



Dr Ameeta Mulla Wattal
Chairperson & Executive Director,
Education, Innovations and
Training
DLF Foundation Schools and
Scholarship Programmes

Introduction

Ms Aditi Misra

Principal, DPS, Sec-45,
Gurugram

Rapporteur

Ms Rashmi Malik

Principal,
Salwan Public School, Gurugram

In Praise of Dr Wattal Ji: A Beacon of Wisdom and Innovation

"O Thou, Lady of Rare Wit and Boundless Spirit, the Most Esteemed and Radiant Muse of Learning - Dr Wattal Ji

Greetings!

Upon the fair gathering of the NPSC, thy presence did shine as a star most resplendent. With cutting-edge thought and a mind rich in wisdom, thou didst breathe new life into the hearts and minds of all assembled.

Thine understanding is vast as the ocean, and thy talents spread wide as the morning light upon a new world. With a spirit both vigorous and gracious, thou hast woven creativity and foresight into a tapestry that doth inspire both the learned and the young.

Surely, it is meet and right that thy light be shared amongst our students and teachers, that they may, under thy noble influence, grow into a generation bold of thought, rich in spirit, and steadfast in hope. Thy very being is a clarion call to greatness, to kindness, to fearless innovation.

We are deeply beholden to thee, dear Lady, for the hope and vision thou dost bestow so freely. Long may thy influence prosper, and long may thy legacy of light endure.

With humblest admiration and unfeigned respect,

Dr Sujeet Eric Masih

Principal at Apeejay School, Saket, New Delhi







NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE

Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

SESSION-7

“Student – Teacher Perspectives : Collaborative Solutions for Classroom Conflicts”

PANEL OF PRINCIPALS



MR SKAND BALI-
PRINCIPAL,
HYDERABAD PUBLIC
SCHOOL, BEGAMPET



DR RUCHI SETH-
PRINCIPAL, LOTUS
VALLEY INT.
SCHOOL, NOIDA



MS PARVEEN
QUAISER- PRINCIPAL,
SUNBEAM
LAHARTARA,
VARANASI



MR AJAY SINGH-
PRINCIPAL, THE
SCINDIA SCHOOL,
THE FORT, GWALIOR



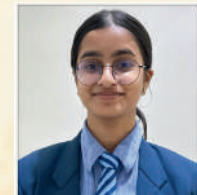
Hriday Singh Antal
Lotus Valley International
School, Noida

Devasya Agarwal
Modern School,
Barakhamba Road, New Delhi



Avishi Chaubey
Sunbeam School Lahartara,
Varanasi

Zara Javed
Modern School
Barakhamba Road, New Delhi



Moderator
Dr Anuradha Joshi
Principal, Sardar Patel Vidyalaya, New Delhi

Rapporteur
Ms Rashmi Raj Biswal
Principal, DAV Public School, Pitampura, New Delhi

The 52nd Annual Conference of the National Progressive Schools' Conference (NPSC) brought together an eclectic mix of educators, principals, students, counselors, and law enforcement professionals to deliberate on the critical theme of conflict in schools. The seventh session on Day 2 was particularly impactful, providing a platform for multiple voices especially students to articulate how conflict manifests in their daily lives and how schools can serve as both sites of friction and laboratories of peacebuilding.

Conflict, as underscored in the session, is neither unusual nor inherently destructive. Rather, it is an inevitable feature of human interaction. When constructively addressed, it becomes an opportunity for learning, resilience, and personal growth. When neglected or mishandled, however, it leads to alienation, hostility, and long-lasting psychological harm.

The session highlighted that schools, as microcosms of society, inevitably mirror wider tensions, economic disparities, cultural differences, competitive pressures, and digital influences. Therefore, the way schools understand and manage conflict is of immense importance, not only for student well-being but for the broader mission of building an inclusive and peaceful society.

The discussion was framed around three primary objectives:

1. Understanding Student Experiences of Conflict – To provide a platform for students to candidly express how they perceive and experience conflict, both within and beyond school walls.
2. Exploring Educators' Strategies – To reflect on how principals, teachers, and counselors navigate conflict, including the challenges of balancing discipline, empathy, and institutional accountability.
3. Building a Vision for Schools as Peacebuilders – To arrive at a consensus on how schools can evolve into safe, inclusive, and supportive spaces where conflict is not suppressed but constructively transformed into learning and growth.

By integrating these objectives, the session sought to generate actionable insights-recommendations that move beyond theory into practical steps implementable in diverse educational settings.

One of the most striking aspects of the session was the candid contribution of students. They spoke with refreshing honesty about the challenges they encounter, revealing how conflict is woven into their daily academic and social lives.

Students identified several sources of conflict:

- Peer Rivalry – Competition for grades, recognition, or leadership positions often generates tension. While competition can motivate, unchecked rivalry sometimes spills over into hostility.
- Bullying and Exclusion – Many students recounted experiences of being sidelined, teased, or excluded from peer groups. The emotional toll of such experiences often outweighs the academic pressures they face.
- Academic Pressure – Conflicts with teachers, parents, or even within themselves frequently emerge from the weight of academic expectations.
- Social and Economic Differences – Students admitted that disparities in financial background or cultural identity sometimes create invisible divisions within classrooms.

Several students emphasized that social media intensifies these conflicts. Platforms designed to connect often amplify comparison, competition, and miscommunication. A lack of “likes” or exclusion from digital groups can have profound psychological effects.

Yet, amid these challenges, students also acknowledged moments of resilience. Some described how peer support, empathetic teachers, or counseling interventions helped them overcome exclusion and develop confidence. Their testimonies underscored a powerful truth: students do not merely endure conflict, they are capable of reflecting on it and contributing to solutions, provided they are given voice and agency. Educators and principals brought a broader, institutional perspective, reminding the conference that conflicts within schools often mirror larger societal tensions. They emphasized the need to balance discipline with empathy, an area where schools often falter.

A principal shared how the introduction of peer mediation cells dramatically reduced incidents of bullying by allowing students to resolve disputes through dialogue rather than punishment. Another principal highlighted the integration of value-based education into everyday classroom activities, observing that children who internalize empathy, respect, and responsibility are less likely to escalate disagreements into conflicts.

Teachers also spoke about their dual role as instructors and mediators. While academic excellence remains central, they acknowledged that ignoring the emotional and interpersonal needs of students undermines long-term learning. Several educators argued that professional development in conflict resolution should be mandatory for teachers, equipping them with tools to manage classroom tensions constructively. The digital dimension of conflict emerged as a recurring theme. Students, educators, and law enforcement officials alike emphasized that online interactions extend the reach of conflict beyond physical classrooms.

Social media has redefined peer relationships. While it fosters connectivity, it also creates hierarchies determined by likes, comments, and followers. Several educators observed that online disputes often spill into classrooms, making them harder to resolve since they occur outside the direct supervision of teachers.

Law enforcement representatives highlighted disturbing cases where online conflicts escalated into serious threats, including cyberbullying, identity theft, and even extortion. They urged schools to partner with authorities in spreading digital literacy and promoting resources such as the cybercrime helpline (1930) and [cybercrime.gov.in](https://www.cybercrime.gov.in).

Counselors also stressed that the blurred boundaries between school and home—where conflicts continue on digital platforms—place additional emotional burdens on students. Thus, digital peacebuilding was recognized as an essential extension of school-based conflict management strategies.

The session highlighted a spectrum of strategies being implemented in schools:

- Restorative Practices – Encouraging dialogue between conflicting parties to repair relationships rather than resorting to punitive measures.
- Dialogue Circles – Structured forums where students and teachers discuss concerns openly in a non-judgmental setting.
- Emotional Intelligence Programs – Embedding self-awareness, empathy, and communication into the curriculum to equip students with lifelong conflict-resolution skills.
- Collaborative Learning – Group projects and co-curricular activities that require cooperation across diverse backgrounds.
- Parent-School Partnerships – Engaging parents as partners in conflict resolution, ensuring consistency between home and school values.

These strategies framed conflict resolution as a proactive culture, not merely a reactive mechanism. Schools that embed empathy and communication into their ethos are better positioned to prevent conflicts before they escalate.

As the session unfolded, several common themes emerged:

- Conflict is Inevitable but Constructive – Rather than treating conflict as failure, schools must reframe it as a learning opportunity.
 - Student Agency Matters – Students should not merely be recipients of adult-led interventions but active participants in shaping peace.
 - Digital Pressures Require Urgent Attention – The cyber dimension of conflict cannot be ignored; digital literacy and cyber ethics education are essential.
-

- Schools as Laboratories of Democracy – Schools must embody the values of respect, dialogue, and inclusivity that they wish to impart to society.
- Collaboration is Key – No institution can manage conflict alone; partnerships with parents, law enforcement, and civil society are essential.

The consensus was clear: peace education must move from the periphery to the centre of schooling. It should not be confined to special programs or annual events but integrated into daily teaching, assemblies, and co-curricular activities.

The session concluded with a powerful reaffirmation: peace is not the absence of conflict but the ability to navigate it constructively. Schools, therefore, must view themselves not just as academic institutions but as training grounds for life in a diverse and interconnected world. Ultimately, the session underscored that conflict, when navigated with empathy, creativity, and resilience, becomes the crucible in which future citizens are forged. Schools that embrace this vision will not only resolve disputes but will nurture the next generation of compassionate, ethical, and resilient leaders.









NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE
Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

MOVING BEYOND DISCORD: A CULTURAL CELEBRATION OF UNITY AND COOPERATION

**A captivating dance performance that
weaves together the theme of unity,
cooperation and harmony.**

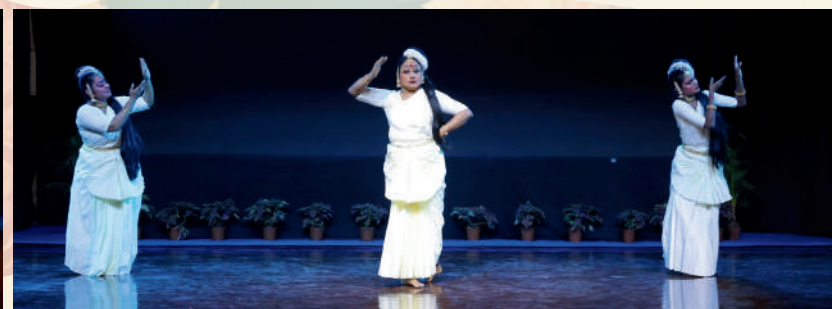
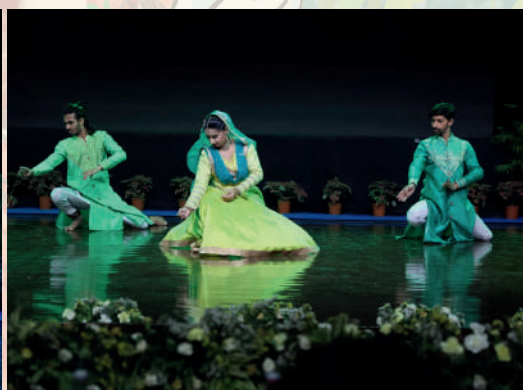


अयं निजः परो वेति गणना लघु चेतसाम् । उदारचरितानां तु वसुधैव कुटुम्बकम् ।

Artist
EKAM SAT

A Presentation by
Ms Prathibha Prahlad's Group

Moderator
Ms Malini Narayanan
Ex- Principal,
Army Public School, Shankar Vihar, New Delhi





NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE SCHOOLS' CONFERENCE

Quality, Commitment and Excellence in Education

VALEDICTORY SESSION

School Choir

Modern School, Barakhamba Road

Introduction

Dr Sudha Acharya

Principal, ITL Public School, Dwarka

Address by the Chief Guest

Mr Rahul Singh

IAS, Chairman, CBSE

Special Address

Mr M J Akbar

Indian Author, Journalist &
Ex-Member of Parliament, Rajyasabha

Overview of the Conference

Mr Sanjay Yadav

Principal, Ahlcon
International School, New Delhi

Vote of Thanks

Dr Vijay Datta

Principal, Modern School,
Barakhamba Road, New Delhi

Address by the Chief Guest

MR RAHUL SINGH

IAS, Chairman, CBSE



The 52nd National Progressive School's Conference (NPSC) brought together leaders in education to deliberate on the theme of conflict management and peace education. A highlight of the conference was the address delivered by Mr Rahul Singh, Chairman of the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE). Speaking with humility, Mr Singh admitted that, though trained in engineering and management, he wanted to share reflections on how conflict resolution, negotiation, and ethics could be woven into school life. His address focused on three key principles- empathy, fairness, and ethics, and on the vital role of teachers as role models in shaping children's values.

Mr Singh began by stressing that conflict is a natural and ever-present part of life. It can be as trivial as two students vying for the last samosa in a canteen or as significant as disagreements between teachers and students in the classroom.

He recalled his own school experiences where peers often demanded to copy answers, which created small but real conflicts. As students grow older, conflicts become more complex, ranging from issues of sharing to clashes of ego and intellect between students and teachers.

The way such conflicts are handled during school years, he argued, significantly influences how individuals manage disagreements in adulthood. Schools, therefore, play a crucial role in teaching children the skills to handle conflict constructively.

Drawing on his training in management, Mr Singh explained that negotiation theory identifies empathy as the first requirement for resolving disputes. To resolve a conflict, one must understand the other person's perspective and motivations.

He described exercises used in management education, where participants learn that sustainable solutions emerge only when each side feels heard. For schools, this means that teachers and students must learn to put themselves in others' shoes, appreciating different contexts and challenges. Yet, empathy alone, he cautioned, is not enough. For a resolution to last, it must also be fair and ethical.

Conflict outcomes must be fair to all parties, Mr Singh emphasized. Without fairness, even empathetic agreements collapse over time. For schools, fairness means treating every child, regardless of background, status, or ability, with equal respect and opportunities.

He noted that unfair treatment leaves deep scars on children. Whether a student is from a privileged household or a modest background, from any region of the country, the treatment must remain the same. This sense of equity builds trust and ensures that students believe in the integrity of their teachers and institutions.

Moving beyond empathy and fairness, Mr Singh underlined ethics as the cornerstone of conflict resolution and education. Any settlement without an ethical base, he said, is incomplete and potentially harmful to society.

He warned against unethical practices in education, such as teachers privately coaching their own students for extra marks. Such actions weaker respect and faith in teachers. Children, he reminded the audience, observe their teachers closely. If they detect double standards or dishonesty, they lose trust. Thus, teachers must embody ethical behavior consistently, for their example speaks louder than their words.

According to Mr Singh, teachers are often the first role models for students, sometimes more influential than parents. Their words, actions, and attitudes carry immense weight. He illustrated this with a personal anecdote. His son, encouraged to explore advanced physics books, was discouraged after a principal insisted that NCERT books alone were sufficient. The incident showed how strongly children internalize teachers' advice, sometimes more than parental guidance.

This underlined the need for teachers to exercise caution, empathy, and consistency, knowing that students are constantly observing them. A teacher's credibility rests not only on what they teach but on how they live the values they espouse.

Mr Singh encouraged teachers to practice empathy by understanding the diverse contexts from which students come. A child may fail to submit homework not out of laziness but because of personal struggles at home. Sensitivity to such differences fosters a culture of care rather than judgment. He urged teachers to adopt a compassionate lens, recognizing that every child brings unique experiences and challenges into the classroom. This approach, he argued, strengthens student-teacher relationships and promotes peaceful conflict resolution.

Mr Singh concluded by connecting his reflections to national education reforms. The National Education Policy (NEP) and the National Curriculum Framework (NCF), he noted, share the same aspirations that guided the conference: to develop students not just academically but as ethical, empathetic, and socially responsible citizens. The sessions and deliberations at NPSC, he believed, would enrich not only participating schools but also CBSE itself in its mission to align education with values of peace and ethics.

Mr Rahul Singh's special address at the 52nd NPSC Conference was a compelling call for schools to embrace empathy, fairness, and ethics as the guiding principles of education. By drawing from personal anecdotes, school experiences, and management insights, he provided educators with a practical framework for conflict resolution.

Teachers, as the most visible role models, must embody these values in their daily practice. Their behavior, more than their words, shapes the moral compass of the next generation.

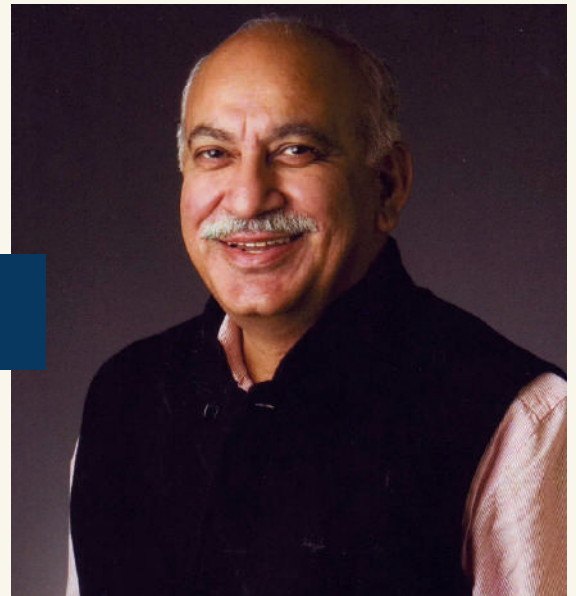
By situating his reflections within the broader vision of the NEP and NCF, Mr Singh reaffirmed that schools are not just centers of academic excellence but crucibles of ethical citizenship. His speech was both an inspiration and a reminder that conflict resolution in education is not about avoiding disagreements but about transforming them into opportunities for empathy, justice, and ethical growth.



Special Address

MR M J AKBAR

**Indian Author, Journalist &
Ex-Member of Parliament,
Rajyasabha**



The 52nd National Progressive School's Conference (NPSC) brought together educators, thinkers, policymakers, and social leaders to deliberate on the pressing challenges of conflict, peace, and education in contemporary times. Among the most powerful and thought-provoking contributions was the special address delivered by Mr M. J. Akbar, distinguished journalist, author, and parliamentarian. His speech was not merely an academic reflection but a profound meditation on the responsibility of education in shaping the future, the search for peace, and the necessity of truth and justice in confronting conflict.

Speaking with candor, historical insight, and moral urgency, Mr Akbar wove together personal anecdotes, historical lessons, and philosophical reflections to argue that education is central to creating a society anchored in peace, justice, and honesty of vision. His address transcended the boundaries of a conference session, leaving the audience with questions about their role as educators and citizens in building the moral fabric of the nation.

Mr Akbar began by expressing gratitude for the privilege of addressing an audience of educators. He reminded them that “no school is a cocoon”. A school does not merely exist in isolation from society; it both draws from life and contributes to life. Its purpose is not limited to preparing children for examinations or professional futures, it is fundamentally about shaping the destiny of the nation.

Drawing from his personal experience of taking his seven-year-old grandson to the Science Museum, Mr Akbar emphasized the transformative impact of modern education. He noted how the intellectual curiosity and knowledge of young children reinforced his faith in India's educational journey and in the future of the country. In this simple yet profound observation lay his conviction: educators are not only transmitting knowledge but nurturing generations that will define the nation's tomorrow.

Linking his reflections to the conference theme, Peace in Schools, Peace in Society, Mr Akbar asserted that peace cannot be confined to classrooms; it must become a lived reality. He reminded the audience of the disturbing paradox that while India nurtures peace and progress through millions of instances of constructive schooling, the world still witnesses tragedies such as repeated incidents of mass shootings in American schools.

Yet, he insisted, peace cannot be achieved through complacency, denial, or comforting rhetoric. It requires courage to confront uncomfortable truths and to address the root causes of conflict. “Peace cannot exist without recognition,” he said, underscoring that honesty and truth are the foundation stones of any sustainable peace.

Mr Akbar identified three essential ingredients for building peace through education:

1. Truth – Without acknowledging truth, societies cannot navigate the confusion imposed by conflict. Truth, though often surprising and uncomfortable, is the compass for peace.
2. Clarity of Mind – Education must remain untainted by selfishness and greed. While life may be plagued by such distortions, schools must strive to remain sanctuaries of clarity.
3. Honesty of Vision – To truly see the world, one must also look within. For this, humility is essential. It is not enough to critique others; we must be willing to recognize our own faults.

These principles, he argued, are not abstract ideals but essential tools for educators who bear the responsibility of shaping the values of future generations.

Mr Akbar turned to the pressing realities of conflict in South Asia, especially the continuing tensions emanating from Pakistan. He posed a crucial question: “As Indians, what do we want?” The answer, he asserted, must be clear—Indians seek justice, not revenge. Revenge perpetuates conflict, while justice upholds civilization.

Justice, he clarified, cannot bring back lives lost in violence, but ignoring justice would corrode society from within. In this context, he held Pakistan accountable for perpetuating cycles of conflict born out of ideological incoherence and historical errors. He described Pakistan as a “Balkanization Project” created through a conspiracy between colonial powers and political opportunism, founded on the false premise that “Islam is in danger.”

Drawing on his own identity as a proud Indian Muslim and his scholarship of the Quran, Mr Akbar dismantled the dangerous notion that Islam could ever be “in danger.” For a faith that is eternal and universal, such a claim is not only false but also heretical. Communities may be in danger, he admitted, but faith itself is beyond peril.

By exposing the fallacy of Pakistan's two-nation theory, Mr Akbar reminded the audience that its contradictions were laid bare in 1971, when Bangladesh emerged not as a result of diminished faith but because of political rejection of Pakistan's oppressive structures. Thus, the ideological foundation of Pakistan, built on fear and falsehood, stood discredited.

In a masterful move, Mr Akbar turned to Mahatma Gandhi, whom he called not just the father of India but also one of the greatest teachers of the 20th century. Gandhi's non-violence, he noted, is often misunderstood in the context of terrorism. Gandhi himself had clarified that while non-violence is a powerful tool against oppression, the state has the responsibility to defend itself by armed force against criminal aggression.

Nevertheless, Gandhi's legacy of non-violence reshaped history. Mr Akbar highlighted three world-changing outcomes of non-violent resistance:

- The end of colonialism under Gandhi's leadership.
- The collapse of the Soviet Union through people's peaceful protests.
- The dismantling of apartheid in South Africa, and the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr. in the United States.

For educators, this was a reminder that teaching the history and philosophy of non-violence is not merely moral instruction, it is a study of how humanity has transformed itself.

In one of the most moving sections of his speech, Mr Akbar reminded the audience that Islam, like all major religions, is universal in spirit. The Quran defines God as Rabbul-Alamin—the Lord of all creation, not of any single community. Similarly, Hinduism's Brahma is not the creator of India alone but of the entire universe.

By emphasizing this shared universalism, Mr Akbar made a passionate plea to separate faith from nationalism. "Faith lives in a mosque. Faith lives in a temple. Faith does not live in a nation," he declared, cautioning against the dangerous conflation of religion and politics. This message resonated with the audience of educators who are daily confronted with the task of instilling inclusivity and tolerance in young minds.

Throughout his address, Mr Akbar returned to the centrality of education as the platform where peace, justice, and vision must be nurtured. He urged schools to teach children to distinguish truth from propaganda, justice from revenge, and universalism from narrow sectarianism. Education, he insisted, must remain a moral compass in an increasingly polarized world.

By linking historical lessons, religious philosophy, and contemporary geopolitics, Mr Akbar offered a roadmap for how schools can contribute to a more peaceful, just, and honest society.

Mr M. J. Akbar's address at the 52nd NPSC Conference was a stirring call to action for educators. With eloquence and conviction, he reminded the gathering that schools are not merely institutions of learning but also crucibles where the nation's future is forged.

By advocating for truth, clarity, honesty of vision, and justice, Mr Akbar illuminated the moral responsibilities of education in the face of conflict and division. His reflections on Gandhi, non-violence, and universal faith offer timeless wisdom. His critique of falsehoods such as the "Islam in danger" narrative challenged the audience to confront ideology with reason.

Ultimately, his message was one of hope, that through education rooted in truth and justice, India can continue to be a beacon of peace and progress. His words echoed long after the session, serving not only as a commentary on present challenges but also as a vision for the future that educators are called upon to create.



Vote of Thanks

DR VIJAY DATTA

**Principal, Modern School,
Barakhamba Road, New Delhi**



I would say to all the core members of the NPSC for making it such a beautiful, mesmerizing NPSC Conclave. The Brits say marvelous, the Americans say awesome, but to describe a conclave of this stature, I think we'll have to use both marvelous and awesome that the conclave was, and all due to the hard work of the core team. It's been a great learning experience and fun learning, I would say, all the way, very much in the NEP way. And we are grateful to all the dignitaries who honored this conclave for the last two days who have been here, the list is long, and we would like to thank the executive body of the NPSC for providing us the theme for the 52nd NPSC Conclave, Conflict Management and Peace Education in Schools, such an appropriate, and especially in these times, the choice, I think, couldn't have been better.

My hats off to all those who put together a very relevant topic. Well, the mood of the day was set by Ma'am Ameeta Wattal. I appreciate the efforts of the core members. Planning and organizing a conference of this magnitude is indeed a herculean task. Reaching out to the esteemed guests, over 300 speakers, moderators, ambassadors, requires meticulous planning and precision. Ladies and gentlemen, the core team under the leadership of Ms Asha Prabhakar, Chairperson, NPSC, and principal, Bal Bharati School, Noida, has truly done it to perfection.

Ship loads of thanks to the mentors, former Chairpersons, NPSC for encouragement and inspiration, all the seniors, Mr S L Jain, Ex Director, Mahavir Senior Model School and everybody present here. We are grateful to you for your guidance through the conclave. I think I must thank the member principals, educators, whose presence has made it complete. We congratulate Dr Ameeta Wattal for her Lifetime Achievement Award, for her involvement and contribution to NPSC, and of course for the role play, The Voice of the Bard.

Well, it was a different world altogether that she created and it lingers on and tickled my Shakespearean bone and I'm a bit too tempted to quote a bit of Shakespeare through my remaining part of the Thanksgiving speech. "Life's a poor player, but she played it really well", -Macbeth. The Jew wanted the pound of flesh, well, very well done. Thanks to the hospitality team for looking after the guests. We would like to thank Ms Geeta Gangwani, Principal, Bal Bharati Public School, Rohini and Ms Swapna Nair, Principal · Bal Bharati Public School Brij Vihar Ghaziabad for floral decoration and stage management.

We thank Dr Jyoti Gupta, Principal, K.R. Mangalam World School, GK II and Ms Mallika Preman, Secretary NPSC Principal Tagore International School, East of Kailash for putting up wonderful banners for the conference. Mr Sanjay Yadav, Principal, Ahlcon International School, Mayur Vihar has very meticulously looked after the audience and entire arrangements. We thank Ms Rashmi Malik, Principal, Salwan Public School, Gurugram, Dr Jyoti Gupta, Principal, K.R. Mangalam World School, GK II and the Bal Bharati Noida team for coordinating with the NPSC schools and releasing the artwork of our children in the form of calendar, UNIC contributed to the calendar.

I also want to thank Ms Charu Maini, Principal, DAV Public School, Gurugram and Ms Geeta Gangwani, Principal, Bal Bharati Public School, Rohini for their publications which were coordinated with the trust. Sincere thanks to Madam Aditi Misra, Director, DPS International, Gurugram for setting up the reception, preparing bags for the conference and wonderful arrangements. Credit goes to DPS sector 45 as well. I move on to thanking the team of Bal Bharati, Noida and Tagore International School, East of Kailash for visuals on the screen, and for digital displays. Team Modern Barakhamba Road for the press release and pre-conference and post-conference releases. We thank the press and media professionals for covering the event.

Ma'am Asha Prabhakar, Chairperson, NPSC, and principal, Bal Bharati School, Noida and I are happy that we could successfully coordinate the permission for this venue, very well followed up by Mr Sanjay Yadav, Principal, Ahlcon International School, Mayur Vihar. It has been a journey of collective and collaborative efforts full of camaraderie and bonhomie. So we look forward to have such collaboration and endeavors in future. I would like to conclude with three cheers to the chairperson and the Core Team.





Message of Gratitude

MS ASHA PRABHAKHAR

**Chairperson, NPSC &
Principal
Bal Bharati Public School, Noida**



Dear Members of the NPSC Core Team, Executive Team, and Extended Team,

As we draw the curtain on the 2023–2025 session, I extend my heartfelt thanks to each and every one of you for your unwavering commitment, tireless efforts, and outstanding collaboration.

The success and smooth functioning of NPSC during this term have been made possible by the collective dedication of the Core Team, the leadership of the Executive Team, and the consistent support of all team members who worked diligently behind the scenes. Each contribution, big or small, has played a vital role in helping us achieve our shared goals.

It has been a truly enriching experience to witness such synergy, professionalism, and passion in action. Your collective spirit has not only strengthened the fabric of NPSC but has also left a lasting legacy for the future.

Thank you once again for your exemplary service during this term. I wish you continued success in all your future endeavors.











52nd ANNUAL CONFERENCE

National Progressive Schools' Conference

Quality Commitment And Excellence In Education

Conflict Management And Peace Education In Schools