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The Role of Global Citizenship Education in World Peace and Security

Mohsen Farmahini Farahani (Ph.D) *

Associate professor, Shahed University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract

Today's crisis, specially war, environmental pollution, terrorism, and nuclear proliferation, is challenging the peace and security of the world. Many of these crisis are the result of misunderstandings and lack of familiarity of cultures with one another. Most of these crisis are solvable through citizenship education, particularly in higher education. In fact one of the major goals of global citizenship education is to help learners to attain an individual, national, and global identity so they will be able to participate actively in solving international problems such as opposition, war, AIDS, global poverty, etc. This demands educating individuals beyond geographical borders, educating Individuals who pass the geographical borders and do not imprison themselves within the borders in which they were born. This is in fact how religions look at human beings; Universal thinking and concern for native and local community modifications originate from celestial revelation. In this article the effort is taken to explain the necessity of global citizenship education as well as to explore the relationship between globalization, and global citizenship education. Global citizenship education will also be reviewed from three aspects of knowledge, skill, and value. Finally the appropriate content of such education will be discussed.

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Introduction

Undoubtedly citizenship education is one of the essential and fundamental missions of educational system in different countries. Different countries perform the task of citizenship education by designing a certain course called CE or in form of a cross-disciplinary or an inter-disciplinary course. Due to its great influence, especially on world peace and security, citizenship, has a general attraction among educational issues, and is supported by different groups such as radicals, conservatives, communitarians, and environmentalists.

Citizenship is a multi- dimensional concept to name a few of the concepts; national identity, social, cultural, and supernatural belongings, political and civic participation, and effective system of rights (Kymileka, 1998). At

* Corresponding Author: Mohsen Farmahini Farahani Tel.: +98-9123-372-1060
E-mail address: farmahinifar@yahoo.com

present era, citizens' super national belonging is of great importance. This is why global citizenship education, e-citizenship, environmental or ecological citizenship are at the focus of attention in scientific centers.

There are so many instant and future advantages to study of the world issues and global citizenship education i.e. students and teachers will feel that they can be effective in making a better world. Enhancing the peace, increasing the respect for values such as justice, equality, truth seeking, is on the benefits of such education.

The necessity of global citizenship education in higher education today, even in most of the developed countries, millions of people are suffering from lack of shelter, and health care. War and invasion are threatening millions of people around the world. The global changes as the result of earth temperature increase, millions of tons of dangerous waste material produced by industrial countries and using more than three million pounds of pesticides which has killed and harmed the wild world and water living creatures are ringing the bell and demand a world demand and effort for solving the problem (Sachs 1995, Sanders 1997). In addition; prevalence of international crimes, terrorism, AIDS, illicit drug business, soil destruction, environment ruination, species extermination, desert creating, and forest destruction.

The abovementioned problems are rather global, and that is why the global citizenship education is posed. Global citizenship education will help students to see the issues rather broadly and will make them ready to behave as accountable global citizens who will think about global issues such as sustainable development, international trade, as well as global aspects of local issues.

Higher education institutes must offer the knowledge of being global citizenship to students and attain the skills necessary for understanding local, national, and international issues, and are aware of the opportunities which have surrounded them at different stages of their lives.

Tomorrow's educated beings have to become ready to live in a "universal" world. The future civilized being should become a "global citizen" as far as his attitude, vision, and information is concerned. However he should return to his native and tribal identity, and should try to do his best to enrich and develop his native and local culture (Drucker 1993).

To reach a stable world peace and security we should all each an inter subject about what endangers the world peace and security. Fortunately the research results show that students, especially those between the ages of 11 to 14 years of age are increasingly concerned about issues such as world peace and security, poverty, and earth pollution. For example when they are asked about today's world they show their concern about Ozone layer, global warming, AIDS, racism, sexism, species extermination, violence increase, terrorism, genocide, proliferation of nuclear weapons, poisons in the air, food, and water (Andrzejewski and Alessio 1999).

Globalization and global citizenship education

Globalization has influenced citizenship in many ways, putting forth new issues. Population increase, movement, and displacement of people in an international scale have challenged the basis of belonging to the nation state. There are millions of people holding multiple citizenships. Ohma in his book titled "limits of citizenship" talks about global citizens. Ohma believes that economical power is transferred from the government to the companies and to the market, and Soyal talks about post national citizens. He argues that, the new and more universal concept of citizenship has appeared after the Second World War. Its organizing and legitimizing principles are not based on national belonging, but it is based on universal personhood.

In general globalization has put forth new issues, which demand rethinking. New security problems related to infra national threats such as nuclear annihilation or environmental disasters have made governments more concerned about other nations rights. As an example; ecological citizenship has brought about a rather deeper understanding of citizenship beyond our materialistic interests, to think about environmental issues beyond our own society and to even think of the future generations, and other species. Rethinking about citizenship for answering environmental concerns is a great evidence for the claim that struggling with the world dangers requires desolation of citizenship with whatever restricting concept with only local considerations.

Global Citizenship Education

Educating global citizens is teaching those skills and attitudes that make them aware, active, critical and sociable citizens. Students need the knowledge, skill, and attitudes which enable them to have an active role in different areas as a member of the world community. So, citizenship educating parameters are; knowledge and understanding, skills, and values related to citizenship as shown in the following table (UNDP, 2000).

Table 1: Global citizenship education parameters in higher education

KNOWLEDGE DEVELOPMENT AND UNDERSTANDING	SKILLS	VALUES AND ATTITUDES
-Social equality	Critical thinking	- Thankfulness attitude towards cultural heritage of other countries
-Awareness of the destructive and harmful factors for the environment	- Accepting and respecting pluralism in society	- Being interested in human rights
-Awareness of international law	- Respecting others' rights ability to challenge injustice and inequalities	- Concern for the environment safety
-Awareness of the role of government in establishing democracy	- Mutual understanding ability	- Sense of identity and self esteem
- Awareness of the differences between political institutions of different countries	- Participation and cooperation ability	- Commitment to social justice and equality
- Awareness of the citizenship role in an international scale	- Respect for people and things	- Tolerating opposing views
- Awareness of the globalization and interdependence	- Respect for traditions and culture of other countries	- respect for human beings
-Awareness of the global aspect of the issues such as immigration, trade, consumer's rights, ... and fatal malaria	- Ability to evaluate different global issues	- valuing and respecting diversity
-Awareness of different types of government in different countries and the major characteristics of their parliaments.	- Dialogue and communicating ability	- Concern for his own and others' peace and welfare
Awareness of the different religious national and moral identities of different countries	- Logical and just decision making	- Sense of patriotism
-Awareness of the influencing factors in sustainable development and peace	- Accountability , cooperation, and conflict settlement ability	- Law oriented attitude
		- Tendency towards justice and truth seeking

Global Citizenship Educational Content

The appropriate content for global citizenship education can be designed according to the citizenship education parameters i.e. it should be designed in three dimensions of knowledge and understanding, skills, and values so as to make students ready to live in a multicultural society as well as to make them feel that all of us are the member of the same world community that should help one another when it is needed. As Saadi, the great Persian poet intones it:

Human beings are the organs of the same body

They are of the same nature in creation

If one of the organs is harmed

The rest of the organs cannot rest

And as Quingly intones it: today, most of citizenship and civic education programs are entirely limited to the native country whereas, there should be certain civic education programs designated to global studies (Quingly, 2000).

John Dewey believes the more a society is educated , the closer it gets to the fact that not only is responsible for his own ecological environment, but also plays a role in making a better society in future, and the school is the best place for this task (Dewey, 1916).

The above mentioned content can be comprised to the following items:

1. Citizen's responsibilities toward others, society and environment
2. Democracy and citizenship from different points of view (with a religious and non-religious approach)
3. Citizens duties and commitments towards society, nation and the world
4. The importance of environment safety
5. Familiarity with the rules and regulations concerning citizenship, democracy, and human rights
6. Civic and moral responsibilities of people in different jobs
7. The role of governmental institutions, and NGO's strategies concerning citizenship education, democracy, human rights and environmental safety
8. Characteristics of a pluralistic society and the necessity to consider the rights of people of different race, nationality, and religion
9. Global controversial issues and scientific study of them
10. Different citizenship skills such as _expression ability, media analysis writing letter, evaluating candidates, propaganda for desired representative, literature organizing ability, and ...
11. Human rights issues and peaceful methods for settlement of conflicts

In general citizenship education should result in educated people with the following characteristics:

PARTICIPATION: be an active member of a social group and his own society specially in global issues

ENGAGEMENT: further participation i.e. taking the effort to influence the group's strategies and policies.

ADVOCACY: supporting a certain idea through reasoning

RESEARCH: the ability to find different sources and needed information

EVALUATION: the ability for value judgment and evaluating the relative advantages of different facilities

EMPATHY: viewing an issue from other people's point of view

CONCILIATION: analysis and settling disagreements and oppositions

LEADERSHIP: the ability to manage the group, participate and cooperate in activities that group members have agreed upon

REPRESENTATION: the ability to talk and act on behalf of others

RESPONSIBILITY: thinking before acting and accepting the consequences of action

Conclusion

Todays, citizenship and citizenship education issues not only should be considered attentively, in higher education but also should be paid attention to these issues at the international and global levels. Todays, issues such as globalization and fast growth of communicational technology has vanished the borders between countries. That is why cultural coexistence of different cultures is quite evident more than any other time. Thus, common problems of human beings on earth such as endangered global peace, environment, war, inequality, etc strongly needs the sense of global citizenship education. However, there are numerous obstacles in the way, and it can only be established through learning coexistence. Although citizenship education should not be limited to the official education, yet the role of school learning environments in citizenship education is undeniable. We cannot expect official educational system to be the only source to play the role of citizenship education. However it is the whole society along with different institutions and organizations that should get involved in citizenship education.

The role of governments in citizenship education is also quite outstanding. Governments should put a step forward through establishing an appropriate institutional education framework and by establishing an efficient educational system specialized in citizenship and global citizenship, show a rather stronger tendency towards performing the task beyond their borders.

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