

## The Imperative of Peace Education in Nigeria Development using Multi-Agency Approach

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**Abstract.** The paper examined the imperativeness of Peace Education Programme in Nigerian Schools for national development using multidisciplinary agency approach. However, the concept of peace Education, national development and multidisciplinary agency approach were examined. The paper went further to look at the existence of the peace in the society which called for peace Education and how it affected the national development. Therefore, the article find out the multidisciplinary agencies that can be involved and interacted with in order to promote Peace Education for national development. It was however concluded that peace Education was not accorded high respect in Nigeria. It was suggested that teaching learning of peace Education by the teachers need to be based on the use of multidisciplinary agencies for the national development

**Keywords:** Peace Education, National Development and Multi-Agency Approach

### 1. Introduction

Peace stretched its existence from all ages, the ages of old stone, middle to the present. Invariably, peace is paramount and indispensable. And it cannot achieve its desirable ends if not processed by veritable agents. Remarkably too, the traditional domain of peace is society, having commendatory wet-net, attractive to even those that may oppose its functionality, the essence being to build peaceful,

united and strong relational bond. Convincingly, the wheels of peace are education, involving socialization. Expediently, there is nothing to substitute peace with, and peace heralds socio-economic development of a society. To lay this facts bare, Olawepo in Ogundele, Musa and Jimba (2015) argued that, for peaceful nationhood, there must be peace at home, when every home is peaceful, there will be peace in the town. When towns are peaceful, there will be peace in the Local Government Areas; and when Local Government Areas are peaceful, the States will have peace and when every State is peaceful, such a country will also be peaceful and when every country is peaceful, there will be global peace. This logical geography of peace suggests that, deliberate, rational and relevant as well as integrative mechanisms are not only necessary to put in place, but inevitably. Thus, this discourse is perceived ripe to add to the volume of literature on the imperative of peace education in Nigeria, especially at the basic and secondary levels of education. The reasons for focusing educative arsenals on these sub-sets of education are the students by reason of their ages are easily amendable to adhering to instruction. In addition, the curriculum at these stage of education, contains related concepts.

### 2. Conceptual Clarifications

#### 2.1 Concept of Education

It is generally agreed that education is the acquisition of the civilization of the past, stretching to the civilization of the present; as well as the civilization of the possible future. It is a way of preparing the younger generation to assume and perform their proper roles and functions in the society, they belong. It is germane to state that it should be an education riddled with all manner of malpractice that can/should be used as a matrix for peace, but functional education. An education according to Abdu in Fuandai, Shiaki and Gbari (2007), involving the wholesome training of an individual that makes him/her useful to himself, the community and the nation as a whole. Similarly, an education that works. To this extent, an education equips individuals with the requisite skills and knowledge to function maximally in the society in which they belong. It is a prerequisite for peace and meaningful national development.

Moreover, characteristics of functional education that can foster peace beyond rhetoric must include themes of, relevance, practicability, accessibility, empowerment, emphasis on the acquisition of practical skills and knowledge for gainful self-employment and self-reliance. For instance, the practicability feature, entails, it should be easily put into use whenever the need arises or the opportunity offers itself or the circumstances demand. Secondly, education should be accessible to all irrespective of age and gender; on the part of empowerment, beneficiaries are equipped with requisite skills and knowledge to function and engage in productive ventures and earn a reasonable living. Functional education should emphasize self-reliance in recipients. Thus, preparing and equipping people to be on their own. This will go a long way in reducing potential conflicts and positively enhance prospects of peace.

## 2.2 Concepts of Peace and Peace Education

Ordinarily, peace means the absence of conflict or violence at a particular time and place. It evokes the climate of freedom from fear, intimidation and harassment, oppression and brutalisation by external forces or agents. Ibeanu (2006), observed that philosophers are not in agreement as to a universally acceptable view of peace. Rousseau's position that peace implies the original state of existence in which man was born as "a free gentle savage" – "a state of nature", is synonymous with a state of ignorance. For Thomas Hobbes, this "state of nature" was marred by frequent conflict and violence, which rendered life "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short". In order to avoid this badly situation, men

decided to surrender their rights to an over-riding force, and thereby created a "social contract" for a more peaceful and orderly life (Sabine and Thorson, 1973). Plato, from the social context perspective, argues that justice is the fulcrum of ordered social life (Ibeanu, 2006). In other words, where justice reigns, social order and harmony will prevail, while conflict and violence will be minimal, thereby giving room for both human and material resources development through formal educational activities. Hence, the presence of conflict and violence in any society necessitates peace education.

Peace is expression of love, co-operation, unity and harmonious co-existence. It is absence of war, injustice, violence, greed and bad governance. Peace as seen by Kaitholil (2009) means tranquility, a state of undisturbed, well-being of daily experience, one's brother/sister, and ones God. Peace is security, self-assurance, freedom from fear and undue restraint. It is one of the deepest desires of every person and basic yearning of human race. Herbert in Kaitholil (2009) testified that "peace is not made at the council tables, or by treaties, but in the hearts of men". This is because peace involves calm conscientious decision.

Foremost, peace like development must start somewhere. It then means peace must be ubiquitous. However, its realization is not axiomatic, something must be done deliberately to achieve it. Thus, its corollary education is needed to propel achievement of peace. How? Education is foundational to socialization and socialization is a critical variable in conscientization of the citizenry toward goal achievement – peaceful society. In pursuing peace enterprise, knowledge forms that can unbundle sentiments, conflicts, tension and frustrating circumstances must be advocated for, hence Ikechukwu (2014) identified peace education as a process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioural changes that would enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural to resolve conflict peacefully and to create the conditions conducive for peace. Other scholars opined that peace education as a deliberate attempt to educate children and adults in the dynamics of conflict and the promotion of peace making skills in homes, schools and communities throughout the world, using all the channels and instrument of socialization. She further opined that peace education is about the creation, sustenance and management of positive attitudes to peace among and between different levels and segments of the society. Peace is

the expression of love, cooperation, unity and harmonious co-existence. It is the absence of war, injustice, violence, greed and bad governance. Peace education will enable students to adopt a positive attitude regarding the different issues they face in life and help develop skills necessary for peaceful resolution of conflicts. Peace education is important for cultivating the culture of peace. Peace education can be taught formally or informally through media, workshops, conference, adult literacy programmes and family education.

### 2.3 Conditions of Peace Education

Peace education and peace culture are essential in school because Nigerian society is sometimes infested with treats of violence. Teachers as surrogate parent promote peaceful coexistence among students by resolving conflicts justly in the class. Mutual respect, tolerance and observance of child's rights help to create love, happiness and conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Children learn peace culture through discipline, avoiding aggressive tendencies and developing team spirit through academic activities in schools. Peace education helps to create democratic leadership in the class, order, gender equality and healthy interactions. Peace education and peace culture are global targets capable of achieving quality economic output, good technological and social development. Therefore, inculcating peace culture in students is the root of quality human resources, civilization and peaceful coexistence. Thus, every available space in human culture, societal agents should:

- Create desirable society: Successful school education engenders critical spirit required in judging issues impartially and objectivity. The gullible acceptance of facts positions or views is resisted. It means citizens are not passive; rather they contribute in seeing the points themselves.
- Create interactive and better learning environment: Peace like traits in society require interactive learning to thrive; that is teachers, learners and members of the educational community deliberately engaging each other positively in joint cooperation in all teaching learning activities. Where disagreements arise, the critical spirit will sort multiple alternatives that can be explored.
- Inculcate open mindedness: In peace education process, participants should/can be disposed to developing capacity for open mindedness - points of decision is driven by an individual's judgment. Peace education

should endeavour to keep individual's mind open in new facts and ideas.

Dimkpa (2014) in affirmation of these conditions identified the import of each of these conditions, rightly understood would mean: improved security conditions – lives and properties and expected to be conveniently safe, no strife, no role confusion and tension. All person must partner with each other to create enabling environment for peace efforts; inevitably, the quality of life of the people in the polity shows manifest agreement with the conditions of peace; and everybody in the small or large peace space work assiduously in their own little way for peace. In the light of security, quality life and division of labour, life expectancy is guaranteed, because working conditions can be adjudged just and fair as well as citizens being gainfully engaged; having prospects for savings, individuals take rational regarding their environment. The inter play of these conditions can embark peace building.

The relevance of peace education to an individual, the family, the society and the world usually manifests itself in the total eradication or reduction in the rate of crimes such as inner-tribal/religious disunity within the country, militancy, occultism in schools, theft, political crisis, rape and killings. Others include hatred, prejudice, pride and murder to what peace education is capable of replacing with love, patience, tolerance, dialogue and understanding. These foster the peace and unity.

### 3. Education Promotes Peace

From the fore going, the implication of peace education for peace education has been presented as one of the most powerful tools we can implement peace initiatives in a wholistic efforts to promoting peace. A cursory, a look at the following top 10 ways education parameters, would further enhance our understanding of the germane role of education:

- (i) **Education Boosts Confidence & Hope:** Confucius said it as far back as 500 B.C.: that “education breeds confidence. Confidence breeds hope and hope breeds peace.” Confidence has been defined as the belief that you can succeed at something and a sense of self-assuredness. Knowledge is a key confidence builder; it allows one to feel a sense of accomplishment, to be more fearless, and to grow in unexpected ways. This confidence and self assuredness in turn sparks motivation

- and optimism—or hope as Confucius says—to work towards peace.
- (ii) **Education Promotes Independent Thinking:** Education encourages independent thinking, and it opens doors to new ideas. Independent thinkers tend to try to make sense of the world and draw their own conclusions instead of blindly following the beliefs of others. Independent thinkers may be less likely to join militant groups or be followers, and may instead be leaders towards positive change and action.
  - (iii) **Education Inspires Problem Solving Skills:** Along with math skills that are learned in classrooms, students are often challenged to use logical thinking in order to analyze different pieces of literature, the significance of historical events, and scientific findings. Coupled with independent thinking, these critical thinking skills can lead to innovative solutions and alternatives to violence.
  - (iv) **Education Builds Communication Skills:** In the classroom, students are often asked to speak or read in front of others, offer opinions, and break into small groups to work on projects together. This is how communication skills are honed, and communication is the key to solving conflict. Through quality education, students may be armed with the tools to work within their communities to solve problems, or to do so on a global scale.
  - (v) **Education Opens Doors:** There's no doubt that education for peace leads to career enhancement, employment opportunities, and chances of higher earnings. What was once out of reach for girls in the remote villages we work with—say becoming a doctor or a lawyer—are now possibilities. And with these careers in place, many come back to work within their communities and support their families, often promoting peace.
  - (vi) **Education Reduces Poverty:** Imagine always being uncomfortable, malnourished, and fearful, not knowing where your next meal will come from if it comes at all. This fear can often lead to anger, and anger to violence. Education, especially when it's combined with technical training, has been proven to reduce poverty. This is one driving force behind education for peace. With education comes knowledge, power, safety, security, and peace. One study by UNESCO found that income around the world would be 23 percent higher per capita in countries with education for all. If poverty were reduced, violence would follow suit.
  - (vii) **Education Increases Political Involvement:** Educated citizens are less likely to stand for government corruption and can spur more government accountability. For women, education can even the playing field, and they are more likely to participate in political discussions, town meetings, and decision making, therefore leading to a government that represents its citizens more equally. Because educated women are less likely to support terrorism (see number 8), they can promote alternatives through politics.
  - (viii) **Education Reduces Support of Terrorism & Militancy:** According to a University of Maryland School of Public Policy survey, uneducated women are more likely to support militancy and terrorism, and educated women are less likely than their educated male peers to support this way of life. And if a woman doesn't support it, perhaps she can talk her husband into not supporting it, and then her kids, other family members, and other members of her community.
  - (ix) **Education Builds Empathy & Tolerance:** The Human Rights conventions declare: "Education must prepare a child for responsible life and effective participation in a free society in a spirit of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality of sexes and friendships among all peoples, ethnic, national and religious groups and persons of indigenous origin." Therefore with quality education, a child can learn the quality of empathy and understanding towards those who are different from them. And they may be more accepting of others and less likely to solve problems with violence.
  - (x) **Education Cultivates Respect:** In the classroom, students learn to respect their teachers and their peers. They are taught to let others speak and express opinions, not to interrupt, how to deal

with stress, and how to conduct themselves within a group setting. Perhaps this learned respect for other humans can be practiced on a global scale, where there's a respect for each and every life, not just those who share the same religious beliefs and backgrounds.

#### 4. The Role of Stakeholder in Education as Agent of Peace

Meaningful education could be necessarily termed as a catalyst to boost the sustenance of peace through various stakeholders, to mention parents, students, teachers, political and other public office holders, religious leaders and community heads. Generally the business of promoting peace is the task of every party and peace loving members of the society.

Apparently, education as an agent of peace through its stakeholders plays critical roles in cases of a conflicts, peace and resolutions. The process of peace making involves the subtle, diplomatic way of dialogue, adjudication and understanding rather than resorting to wild, aggressive and inconsiderable approaches in handling wrangling issues other than muscle flexing approach. Against these, settlement of various labour disputes are peacefully organised such as the Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) Academic staff Union of University (ASUU) as all could attest to the sustenance of peace. All forms of student's peace protest bears their good fruits from the branch of education as a tool for promoting peace.

#### 5. Multi-Agency Strategies for Managing and Planning Peace Education

For Nigeria to move forward there is need to plan and manage peace education well in Nigeria. According to Asamonye (2014), the following can help to promote peace education in Nigeria:

**Education Strategy:** The educational curriculum of all categories of education should be revised to include peace ethics-from nursery to primary to secondary to tertiary education. The revised curriculum must include qualitative values, attitudes, and behaviour of cultures. All these should be included in the curriculum, things like respect for elders, loving and caring for one another, greeting of elders, peaceful slogans must be taught and included in the curriculum. Teachers at all levels must teach and emphasize these values. The educational approach should also be geared towards promoting sustainable, economic and social development. Peace clubs, peace,

societies must be encouraged and developed in schools.

**Political/Social Integration Strategy:** There should be strategy interaction between the school and the community. There should be support for participatory communication and free information among students themselves, between students and management and between school and community. Peace education should be centred on democratic and conflict resolution principles. The society must be taught not to resolve conflict through violence and war but rather through dialogue. A democratic society needs the commitment of citizens who accept the inevitability of conflicts as well as necessary for tolerance. This kind of peace education should attempt to foster a positive conflict orientation in the community by training students and community members to view conflict as a platform for creativity and growth. Peace education programme of this kind should include training the participants in skills of critical thinking, debate, coalition building, promoting the values of freedom of speech, individuality, tolerance of diversity, compromise and conscientious objective. The aim is to produce responsible citizens that could hold government accountable to the standard of peace. Activities should be structured to have students assume the citizens that should make decisions and respect the opinion of others. Freedom of interaction and sharing of information, democratic principles decrease likelihood of violence and wars and are indispensable for couture of peace.

**Legislative Strategy:** the legal/judicial system should be made more responsive to issues of violence and disruption of peace in the country. New laws should be enacted and existing laws reviewed to ensure that justice is quick and punishment meted out to the culprits is commensurate with severity of the offense.

**Government Policy Strategy:** Government should make more responsible policies to the issue of peace disruption. They should be firm and fearless when handling the culprits. Favoritism or issues of political party alliance must be deemphasized.

**Security Strategy:** Campus security/policy and protection services vary widely around the world. Nigerian schools must establish security policy services. Then aim should include the following:

- Provision of security in the school
- Assure safety of students, employees and guests
- Interact with local and external security agencies
- Provide education programmes on safety for students
- Patrol the school regularly

- Investigate any crisis trying to erupt in the school<sup>6</sup>
- Provide safety programmes to students and teachers.

#### **6. Challenges of Peace Education in Nigeria Using Multi-Agencies**

The most noticeable challenges in peace education in Nigeria secondary schools include:

Inadequate knowledge about the concept of peace education as well as its aims and objectives by both the policy makers, members of the general public and government. In other words, there is limited expertise and capacity for peace education available in most parts of the country. Baldo and Fumiss (1998) support this. In their words, peace education is most effective when the skills and knowledge of peace and conflict resolution are learned and known by the planners as well as the implementers. This implies that the planners give a clear picture how the programme will be conducted and how it will be modeled by the school in which students are taught. Of course, school managers and teachers are the key actors in the implementation of these and so, they cannot give what they do not have.

Lack of acceptability of the peace education concept by government in West Africa, Nigeria inclusive. Adeleke (2010) opined that if Nigeria government will accept peace education as it is being talked of, the rate of insecurity would have been reduced to its barest minimum and that legal or pragmatic efforts would have been in place to enforce it.

Lack of political will to adopt it as part of the education policy despite the increasing appreciation of its positive impact on the psycho social behaviour of children who have already benefited from the programme.

Inadequate funds especially funding dedicated to peace education is a major problem. Yepwi (2007) posited that: money is an absolute crucial input of any educational system. It provides the essential purchasing power with which education acquires its human and materials inputs. With too little money, education can be helpless. With an ample supply, its problems become more manageable even though they do not vanish.

Another challenge is lack of appropriate and comprehensive peace education curriculum that can be used to suit the need of the country. A number of countries have developed peace education curriculum

for schools, usually consisting of activities such as communication, cooperation, and problem solving, etc without which the objectives of peace education would not be achieved. Bar-Tal and Rosen, (2009) stated that in order to achieve the objectives of peace education, a school system has to be prepared for drastic changes including setting new educational objectives, preparing new curricula. (re) writing school textbooks, developing instructional materials, and training teachers to create a school climate that is conducive to peace education.

Furthermore, parents and guardians are often reluctant to support their children and wards to actively participate in peace education programme and activities. Socialization begins at home and nurtured by the school. Deutsch (1993) argued that besides the school the family is another most important institution that influences children's concepts of hate and love. He argued that a cooperative learning environment, conflict management initiative, the constructive use of controversy, and establishment of resolution dispute centers in the family and schools will enhance a constructive relationship which will ultimately help prepare children to live in a peaceful world.

The methodologies currently used in formal learning in schools contrast with the peace education approach and tools which place more emphasis on learning, critical inquiry and discovery method than competition learning approach. Abida, (2013) opined that it is the responsibility of every teacher to introduce experience-based learning, group work, and discussion methods in classroom lessons. Teachers should not dominate the teaching-learning situation, but rather promote an open atmosphere for discussion in which students feel free to participate. Student should learn to take up independent viewpoints and to make a contribution towards solving problems and resolving conflicts situations. Teachers thus take the role of facilitator of learning, rather than the transmitter of knowledge. These methods, if carefully followed, will foster peace education at the secondary school level.

The basic and primary needs of man in the society for survival today are food, water and shelter. It is said that a hungry man is an angry man. When these needs are not met peace education would suffer defeat. Salomon (2002) opined that to be able to live in a peaceful and non-violent life, an individual must first have his basic survival needs met. This implies that peace education is possible if the poverty level of Nigerian is alleviated. According to him, it is one of the first step to creating a culture of peace and non-

violence. For this to be possible, collaborative effort of everyone is paramount to contribute a small amount of their time and resources to the cause of alleviating the poverty of others so that there would be a drastic change in the number of impoverished people in our society.

### 7. Conclusion

The curriculum that should/can help peace in Nigeria must be relevant, suitable to the learner's level of attainment, balance between practical and academic studies, a common practical scheme for all in order to avoid parasitism by some highly informal character, teaching through practice rather than theory and relating subject matter to the present.

Secondly, mentoring approach should be explored to enrich our moral education for peace building. Mentoring can foster wonderful transformational changes in the way one views the world and live in it. In addition, mentoring is about dialogue, caring, authenticity, emotions, passion and identity (language in its practical expressible pattern).

### 8. Recommendations

Based on the deliberations, the paper recommended the following:

- Fighting, cultism, smoking, quarrelling etc. are vices that should be stopped in schools.
- Students should be discouraged from watching war and pornographic films, reading or involving in conflict raising issues.
- School managers should endeavour to promote peace education in schools for peaceful coexistence and maximum security.
- Policy makers should not only plan for peace education in schools but provide adequate supervision for implementation.
- Human rights law should be enforced to curb barbaric actions.
- Team work, cooperative studies, birthday celebrations, sports activities, good social clubs, picnics and activities that encourage friendliness should be established in schools.
- Teacher education programme needs to be incorporated with courses in peace education to enable teachers to be conversant with peace culture.
- Guidance and counselling should be practiced in schools to prevent excesses of students.

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