

Peace Education as a Panacea for National Development in Nigeria

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Abstract

Various shades of violent conflicts have ravaged almost all parts of the world with no end in sight. From well-coordinated terrorist activities in the Middle-East Asia to the North, West and some parts of East Africa often carried out with very strong religious colourations and as well as some countries in Europe and America characterized with all kinds of conflicts ranging from armed banditry to drug related violent uprisings, there have been endless search for the kind of peace that goes beyond the absence of war. Unfortunately, the Nigerian state has had a fair share of violent conflicts and crises situations diagnosed with different root causes from independence to date with attendant consequences of loss of lives, destruction of properties and billions of naira in trying to mitigate the debilitating effects. Sadly, government's efforts in trying to bring lasting peace to all the nook and crannies of the country have not yielded the desired result. Against this backdrop, this paper proposes that peace education would be a veritable tool and panacea to achieving national development in Nigeria. In advancing this proposal, five posers touching on the concept of peace and peace education, component and scope of peace education, the nexus between peace and national development, implications of peace education to national development and suggestions on the way forward were raised as guide to reaching a logical end for the paper. The paper concluded that a holistic and participatory process that takes place in a broader social context and not exclusively in schools is required to harvest the multifaceted gains of peace education in Nigeria.

Keywords: Peace, Education, Peace Education, Development and National Development.

INTRODUCTION

Peace is a necessity for development anywhere in the world, be it in the political, economic, social, cultural and scientific sphere. As a result the tools (values, skills, attitudes and knowledge) for its actualization should be inculcated in people who desire development which is the centre message of peace education. Historically, the origin of peace education according to Hamad (2005) could be traced to attempts to prohibit wars and the quest for a more peaceful

world. Some of events that helped to shape this course of human history are the American war of independence, (1775-1783), French revolution (1789-1815), the First world war (1914-1919), Second world war (1939-1945) and in more recent times inter-tribal wars and ethnic conflicts. The devastations and colossal sufferings, as well as the brutality, banditry, insensitivity, arson and murder, which stemmed from these wars, particularly the two world wars, the American war of independence and the French revolution have had a great impact on the quest for peace and its education in human race in recent time.

At the very beginning, the realization by some of the principal actors during the Second World War, especially in the USA that their societies have been greatly dehumanized by happenings during the war years; to arrest the situation, vigorously implemented new educational programmes like social studies and citizenship education in their schools. This timely initiative positively changed the attitudes and value orientations of the American people. Taking clue from the reforms in education in America, the British government took prompt actions to review its curricula especially in social studies and languages. Other countries that followed this example laid by the Americans with a considerable achievement in this area include France, Russia, the Scandinavian countries and Japan. At the global level, it was the need for peace that calumniated in the formation of the United Nation Organization in 1945 shortly after the end of the 2nd world war, with the purpose of:

saving succeeding generations from the scourge of war, reaffirming faith in the dignity and worth of the human person, in equal rights of men and women, establishing conditions under which justice and respect for the obligations arising from treaties and other sources of international law can be maintained; and promoting social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom ...

In fact, this marked the beginning of man's quest for peace education in the globe which has taken firm root in school education curriculum in recent time. However, in order to give the paper a proper focus and direction, answers would be provided to the following posers:

- What is peace and peace education?
- What are the components and scope of peace education that should be included in the school curriculum?
- What is the nexus between peace and development?
- What are the implications of peace education on national development?
- How would the introduction of peace education as a separate subject promote peace and development in the Nigerian state?

Concept of Peace Education

There is no point denying the world in the twenty first century is in dire need of peace going by the frequent enduring conflicts and their devastating effects on the human race today. For instance, there is crisis in Gaza between Israeli soldiers and the displaced Palestine, the crisis in Libya, the activities of the Al-shabab militants in Somalia, Talibans in Afghanistan, the rise of militants in Iraq and Syria that is unabated, the uprising in Yemen, the massive destruction of lives and property here in the North-Eastern part of Nigeria by the insurgents called Boko

Haram, the return of the Niger Delta militants (the Avengers), the international face-off between the Russian separatists and Ukrainian soldiers, the cold war between the United States of America and Russia, the outbreak of various types of diseases such as HIV, Aids, monkey pox, Ebola virus disease and many others make one feel that the entire world is at war against either fellow humans or nature.

These are factors that have worked against development. Going by the report of Global Peace Index in 2015 (GPI, 2015) as cited by Oluwadamilare (2015), Iceland was ranked the most peaceful country, followed by Denmark, Austria, New Zealand and Portugal, while five countries at the bottom of the ladder are Syria with an on-going conflict leading as the least peaceful in the world followed by South Sudan, Iraq, Afghanistan and Somalia (the continent of Africa parading two out the five). The above recurring news of violence leading to the loss of lives and property is a source of concern to humanity over the years. This state of worry has provided the basis for the human race to devise various-mechanisms to entrench peace in society so that man's living condition will be enhanced so that development could be sustained.

Peace as a concept has enjoyed many definitions from several writers because of its value for human and societal development. The concept of peace has been viewed differently from philosophical, religious, sociological, political and layman perspectives. For instance, Peace to Hornby (1997) means a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area. Olumokoro and Oyitso (2007), defined the concept of peace as one that requires social structures that provide protection and security from acts of direct physical violence, whether by individual, group or nation, the presence of well-being, social justice and human rights as well as gender equality, all characterized by compassion and trust for one another.

Aguisobo (2009) defined peace as a combination of situations with no wars, violence or hostilities, state of freedom from disorder within a country, friendliness among people living and working together, calmness, quietness, freedom from anxiety or troubled mind, general security of life and property. What is clear in all these definitions is that peace is a dynamic, holistic and dialectical process that reflects a work-in-progress capable of bringing about a balanced development (Ikejiani-Clark & Ani, 2009). Therefore, the concept of peace can be conceptualized in this paper to simply mean a state of mental, social, psychological and physical well-being devoid of rancor, violence, acrimony and antagonism with all people living in harmony with one another.

This being the case, what then is education and ultimately peace education? The concept of education has equally enjoyed several definitions from several scholars; however, for the purpose of this work we shall limit ourselves to the elaborate, timeless and universal perception of the concept as conceived by Peters (1966). Peters did not give a definition of the concept *per se* but rather provided a set of criteria which present the conditions and standards by which methods, processes and product would qualify for the concept of education. These criteria as stated by Peters are that education:

- Implies the transmission of what is worthwhile to those who become committed to it (that is there must be commitment on the part of those who are subjecting themselves to education due to the values it has for its recipients);
- Involves knowledge and understanding and some sort of cognition which are not inert (meaning that knowledge and values among others as content of education is not static but dynamic as dictated by the needs of the society concerned); and

- At least rules out some procedures of transmission on the grounds that they lack willingness and voluntariness on the part of the learner.

Paulley (2005) after reviewing the various ways the concept of education is conceived, had observed that whichever way it is conceptualized, two things appear common to all conception of education. These according to him are that:

- The goals of education are derived from the society's value system; and
- Education is intended to equip the learner with knowledge, attitudes, skills and competence necessary for the production of rational and productive citizens for societal transformation in all its ramifications be it socially, politically, economically and technologically. The essence is to make its recipient who is committed to it become functional so as to stimulate development of his/her society.

Bearing the above in mind, Paulley (2005) went on to define education to mean all those planned, deliberate and unplanned programmes of both the schools and the society generally leading to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitude/values adjudged desirable by the society guided by its needs, philosophy and ideology aimed at producing the type of individuals needed for its development. The essence is to ensure stability, growth and development of both the individuals and the society.

Consequently, the foundations of peace can be constructed in the minds of men through education. This is the position of UNESCO (1946) as reflected in the preamble to its constitution where it is stated clearly that "*since wars began in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace should be constructed.* Montessori (1938) had equally alluded to this fact when she states that "...establishing peace is the work of education". Peace education is aimed at producing an enlightened citizenry whose disposition to conflict should be its positive outcomes. Providing a definition for peace education, Alimba (2010) argued that it is an attempt to change individual's perception of others collective narrative and consequently about one's own social self, as well as come to practically relate less hatefully and more trustingly towards that collective others; an essential instrument for changing mindset, behavior and perception of people for positive thinking and creativity. This approach to the study of peace education is quite relevant in a society like Nigeria that is associated with protracted social conflicts ranging from ethno-religious, to insurgency and militarization due to its inherent value to change the physical intellectual, emotional and spiritual abilities of people within the context of their cultural, political and social settings.

Harris and Morrisson (2003) see peace education to mean a process that involves empowering people with skills, attitudes and knowledge to create a safe world. For Wahistron (1991), peace education is the process of redressing the culture of violence and aggression and to inculcate the values of peace, the concept of human dignity and human right among citizens of a given country. Peace education to Menon (2001) is all about an attempt to educate the youths in the dynamics of conflicts and the promotion of peace making skills in communities and environments throughout the world.

Similarly, UNESCO (2002) provided a more embracing definition of peace education as a process of empowering people with skills, attitudes and knowledge needed to build, maintain and restore relationships at all levels of human interaction developing positive approaches towards dealing with creating a safe environment both physically and emotionally that nurture each individual, creating a safe world based on justice and human rights, and building a sustainable

environment and protect it from exploitation and war. Implicit in the above is the fact that, it means how people are assisted through education to understand and contribute to the effective working of their society to enhance peace, that is, how to promote peace and maintain a peaceful environment in society. In other words, it is a process of helping people learn how to become active, informed and responsible citizens as ambassadors of peace building in society. It encompasses all forms of education, from informal education in the home or through non-formal education to the more formal type of education provided in the schools, colleges, universities, training organizations and the work place as instruments of enhancing peace in society.

Components and Scope of Peace Education

Today, peace education addresses the broader objectives of building a ‘culture of peace’ as opposed to the original goal of eliminating the possibility of global extinction through nuclear war. Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights brought out this vividly when it states that

peace education is directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It promotes understanding tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups and furthers the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace (UN, 2012).

Agusiobo (2009:262) citing Delors *et al* (1996:91) of the International Commission on Education for the Twenty-First Century in their report to UNESCO had equally argued that to address the many security challenges currently facing the world so as to ensure peaceful co-existence, peace education should be a major concern of today’s education. Putting the above position in perspective, they said “*learning to live together, learning with others, this type of learning is probably one of the major issues in education today*”.

Peace education in general is all about educating people on the need for peaceful living in society to enhance development. It is, therefore, to impart **knowledge** (*cognitive*), **attitudes** and **values** (*affective*) **skills** (*psychomotor domains*) to the people so as to enable them appreciate the value of an environment of peace for the development of the individual and the state which is national development. In other words, the aims of peace education cover all the three domains of the individual. Expanding on the above, the UNICEF Peace Education Programme (1999) listed the following as the major aspects of peace education under the knowledge, attitudes and skills components.

Table 1: Components of Peace Education

Knowledge	Attitudes	Skills
This involves knowledge of	These include	These are made up of
a) one’s own needs;	a) self-respect, positive self-image, strong self-concept;	a) communication, active listening, self-expression, paraphrasing and reframing;
b) understanding nature of conflict and peace;	b) tolerance, acceptance of others, respect for differences;	b) assertiveness;
c) ability to identify causes of conflicts and nonviolent means of resolution;	c) respect for rights and responsibilities of children and parents;	c) ability to cooperate;
d) conflict analysis;		d) critical thinking;
		e) ability to deal with stereotypes;

e) enhancing knowledge of community mechanisms for building peace and resolving conflict;	d) gender equity;	f) dealing with emotions;
f) mediation process;	e) empathy;	g) problem solving;
g) understanding of rights and responsibilities;	f) reconciliation;	h) ability to generate alternative solution;
h) understanding interdependence between individuals and societies;	g) solidarity;	i) constructive conflict resolution;
i) awareness of cultural heritage; and	h) social reasonability;	j) conflict prevention;
j) recognition of prejudice.	i) sense of justice and equality;	k) participation in society on behalf of peace; and
	j) joy of living; and	l) ability to accept change.
	k) awareness of discrimination.	

Source: UNICEF Peace Education Programme (1999).

Similarly, Asuka and Paulley (2013) had noted that some of these capacities do not develop unaided, they have to be learned. While a certain amount of peace education may be picked up through ordinary experience in the home or at work, it can never be sufficient to equip citizens for the sort of active role required of them in today's complex and diverse society. This is so because the content of Peace Education as shown above in terms of knowledge, attitudinal change and skills acquisition is quite encompassing and comprehensive. Accordingly, it is necessary to be provided in all forms of education be it the formal, informal as well as the non-formal setting so that all persons irrespective of wherever they are situated could imbibe the culture of peace to enhance development of the society. In spite of the above position, however, for the citizen to become genuinely involved in the public life and affairs, a more explicit approach to Peace Education is required. This approach should be:

- Inclusive- an entitlement for all young people regardless of their ability or background.
- Pervasive- not limited to schools, but an integral part of education for all people.
- Life-long- continuing throughout life.

In terms of its scope, Peace Education which should be inclusive, pervasive and life-long in nature involves a wide range of different elements of learning which include the followings:

To facilitate the *knowledge* component of Peace Education as provided above Asuka and Paulley (2013) had suggested that the curriculum should have for example such topics as laws and rules, the democratic process, the media, human rights, the economy, the environment, sustainable development and the world as a global community, and about concepts such as democracy, justice, equality, freedom, authority and rule of law among others.

On the development of the *skills* and *aptitudes* component of Peace Education, Asuka and Paulley (2013) had suggested that such skills as critical thinking, analysis of information, expressing opinion, taking part in discussion and debates, negotiating, conflict resolution and participating in community action should be part of the school curriculum while respect for justice, democracy and the rule of law, openness, tolerance, courage to defend a point of view and a willingness to listen, to work and stand up for others should constitute the values and disposition that should be emphasized in the curriculum of Peace Education. From the above, it shows that peace education must embrace all facets of human endeavour to make it deliver the necessary skills and knowledge to detect conflict triggers, prevent conflict and manage it when it occurs. Accordingly, relevant concepts and themes in History, Geography, Economics, Social

Studies, Civic Education, Human Rights Studies, Law, Security Studies, Environmental Studies and a host of other disciplines must be integrated into its curriculum.

Issues in Peace Education as can be gleaned from Asuka and Paulley's perspective are characterized by being *real*- that is issues that actually affect people's lives; *topical*- that is being current; *sometimes sensitive*- that can affect people at a personal level, especially when family or friends are involved; *often controversial*- that is people disagree and hold strong opinions about them; and *ultimately moral*- that they relate to what people think is right or wrong, good or bad, important or unimportant in society.

Nexus between Peace and National Development

National development which is an aspect of the whole process of development conceptually covers a wide range of positive and progressive changes in human activities and endeavours in the life of a people. It is the focal point in the aspiration of all states in the world, which in their desire to actualize it have initiated various plans, strategies and programmes. As a concept in social discourse it has suffered from the challenge of general consensus among scholars leading to what La Palombra as cited by Ofoeze (2008:228) describes as "conceptual headache". The reason for this dilemma stems from the value laden nature of the concept and its being inextricably embedded in normative evaluations. In spite of this national development according to Ollawa (1982) refers to:

...the qualitative realization of a state of affairs characterized by adequate and equitable distribution of social and material services and well-being, free individual participation in the affairs of the state and an overall human mastery of his environment in a structurally transformed national society (pp. 49-50).

Contributing to the discourse on its meaning, Ifemeje (1985:47) opined that "no practical national development efforts would be divorced from attitudinal development or worthy attitudes of the individuals that make up the state". This is so because it is the worthy attitudes of the people that will make for the sane utilization of the material indices of development. This bit was confirmed by Ugwu (2007:261), who argued that

the cardinal or focal points of national development are the individuals and positive societal changes (more than anything as being facilitated by a good functional education), adding that a nation cannot be said to have developed when a significant percentage of her population live without quality education, shelter, good food and worse still with their potentials not fully tapped and channeled towards fruitful enjoyment.

In other words, national development has to do with the development of the human personality so as to enable the individuals to contribute to the transformation of his/her society.

Peace is essential for the development of every individual, family, community, country and the world at large. Buttressing the above position, Okebukola (2006) had asserted that "to promote development..., there must be peace not just peace as defined as the absence of war or some forms of 'détente', but an atmosphere where people are not only aware of their differences

but are also understanding and willing to live and work together”. The Institute for Economics and Peace (IEP, 2016), alluded to the above position by saying that, the word ‘peace’ is one of the three cardinal points of Goal 16th of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set out by the United Nations Organization in 2016.

According to the IEP report of 2016, the full objective of this goal is to promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (IEP, 2016). This goal, therefore, establishes the relationship between peace and development. Lack of peace at the level of the family which is the bedrock of the society will lead to discord, marriage collapse, neglect of children, emotional depression and psychological trauma which will snowball in society manifesting various forms of social vices such prostitution, armed robbery, militancy, secret cult activities among others. When these are manifested in society due to lack of peace, then the socio-economic and political activities will be in crisis as there will be mutual suspicion and distrust, encouragement of intra and inter religious and ethnic crises which will ultimately hinder the overall development of the affected society.

For the sustenance of peace in any society so as to promote development, IEP (2016), highlighted eight points as pre-requisites. These are:

- well-functioning government;
- equitable distribution of resources;
- free flow of information;
- good relation with neighbours;
- high level of human capital;
- acceptance of the rights of others;
- low level of corruption; and
- sound business environment.

All these are lacking in varying degrees in the Nigerian society thereby creating development deficit in the country in recent time which only a proper and well-articulated peace education will enhance in the country.

Implications of Peace Education on National Development

Peace as a way of life can be learnt. This was aptly captured by the charter establishing UNESCO when it states that “since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that defenses of peace must be constructed” which is one of the cardinal roles of education. It is a known fact that in a state of insecurity, violence and crime, there can be no development. This is so because, the challenge of insecurity in the country has given the Nigerian state a negative image to the international community that it is a country where crimes and its associates such as corruption, electoral violence and malpractices, political instability, ethnic and religious wars, riots cultism, ritual killings, kidnapping,, paid assassins and murder, oil pipe vandalism among other social vices flourish well.

Accordingly, the environment is presumed not to be safe and secure, and so is not suitable for economic investment which is the purveyor of national development. This is important in view of the efforts made by government to create the desired atmosphere to attract foreign investments as no country can develop herself without recourse to others. This calls for social

change and transformation in the Nigerian state through the process of re-education so as to redirect the attitude of the people towards having and imbibing a positive response to these challenges.

This way, democracy will thrive which in turn will promote the development of the state as investors will come to invest. One way of achieving this is through peace education which will help to bring in the culture of peace in the society as peaceful ways of resolving and managing conflicts among the people will be taught, making the people to understand government functions and what the citizens' duties and obligations are. These are necessary ingredients for democracy to succeed in any state in the world. Ogunna (1981) had opined that "... democracy cannot be achieved in a state dominated by illiterates".

This is because an indispensable requirement for successful democracy is a literate and reasonably well-educated citizenry. Without good education available to the people, a good portion of the electorate will be prevented from performing their civic responsibility of voting wisely in an election for the establishment of democracy. This again is a safe-guard against bad government. This is where education in general and peace education in particular has a very crucial role to play in the promotion of democracy in any country including Nigeria which in turn will enhance the development of the country.

Suggestions on the Way Forward

To ensure the entrenchment of culture of peace through peace education so as to ensure national development, the United Nations Declaration and Programme of Action on a Culture of Peace to which Nigeria is a signatory is hereby reproduced for action in the country's national development effort. These are:

- Training of decision makers and leaders in the skills needed to promote peace and non-violence;
- Revision of curriculum materials to promote mutual understanding and remove bias or stereotypes;
- Creating of new curriculum materials addressing peace, non-violence and human rights;
- Production and dissemination of educational materials and textbooks on education for a culture of peace and human rights;
- Production and dissemination of educational materials and textbooks on education for a culture of peace and human rights;
- Promotion of linguistic pluralism and encouragement of multilingualism;
- Promotion of networking among national institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and civics education specialists; and
- Development of new methods of non-violent conflict resolution that include traditional peaceful approaches. From the above, it is implied that a sound curriculum of peace education should be inter-disciplinary in nature to include the sciences, geography, civics and other humanities and the other social sciences.

The full implementation of the above is premised on two things namely a strong political will on the part of the leadership of the country and secondly which is a follow up of the former is adequate funding of the educational sector so that the needed enablers of the sector such teachers and other resources will be on ground to achieve them. This is to forestall the fear that the country is not caught in its age-long of challenge of non-faithful implementation of its own

policies over the years including budgets. Accordingly, the government should have the political will to implement these if indeed the country would join the league of the developed countries as envisioned in its Vision 20:2020 which is fast becoming a tall dream due partly to the state of the educational sector through inadequate funding.

CONCLUSION

The attainment of the aims of Peace Education which can be seen in the three major components that is in-built into its contents, will no doubt require a holistic and participatory process that takes place in a broader social context and not exclusively in schools or classrooms giving credence to the point made by Asuka and Paulley (2013) earlier on that peace education is quite encompassing and comprehensive and is necessary to be taught in both the formal and informal as well as the non-formal setting so that the people could imbibe the culture of peace. Peace education is highly desirable in Nigeria in view of her being baptized with reports and incidents of violence on daily basis coupled with multiple social, political and economic challenges. Therefore, the time for the re-education and review of the curriculum to reflect the above suggestions is now.

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