
RE-ENGINEERING PEACE AND CONFLICT STUDIES FOR EMPLOYMENT AND SELF PRODUCTIVITY IN NIGERIA

By

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Abstract

This paper offers a new and broader look at certain issues fundamental to re-engineering Peace and Conflict Studies for employment and self productivity in Nigeria. It highlights the missing link in previous studies and fills this gap in literature. It argues that peace and conflict education is a pivot of any national development that needs urgent attention to be able to arrest and eradicate the incessant violence and murderous militancy as we have today in Nigeria. The paper concludes that unless Peace and Conflict Studies is given its rightful place in Nigeria education, insecurity will continue to frustrate and hinder national development objective and national-building.

The study of peace and conflict has become a global imperative due to the fact that two relate to the conditions that define and shape human existence and well-being in the present situation in Nigeria. The conditions that threaten peace and security are proliferating, making necessary the need to understand those conditions and the means of transforming them. The conditions for conflict and insecurity appear to have found fertile ground in post-cold War African, particularly in Nigeria. For a long time, even though Nigeria has faced different forms of conflict, peace education and peace research have suffered a setback, irrespective of the progress recorded in other parts of the world. Thus, Nigeria's conflicts were studied by scholars from outside with foreign academic and theoretical lenses that did not strictly fit or understand the Nigerian experience. The backwardness of peace and conflict studies also means that the resources and institutions for conflict management and resolution have remained underdeveloped. These have put Nigeria in a poor position to respond to her own conflict and peace challenges, and created a dependence on reluctant foreign interveners and their resources (Shedrack, 2006:5).

It is against this background that Nigerian scholars are trying to beef up the capacity of Nigerians to respond to their own conflict and security challenges through education in peace and conflict management and to identify areas of intervention in Nigeria. The preoccupation of this paper is to grant its audience access to conceptual issues in conflict, answer some of the most common questions usually asked by people, and provide theoretical as well as practical skill for the audience.

Conceptual Clarification

Conflict

The conceptual clarification provides the basis for the structure of this work as well as facilitate understanding of peace and conflict studies which is the Nigeria's inability to provide the needed security as a sovereign nation. The underlying concept here, therefore, are peace and security which provide the paradigm for analytical framework. Conflict could be defined as the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving these goals (Folger, 1997: 115). Prouitt and Rubin (1986:50) defined conflict as perceived divergence of interest or a belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously. To Deutsh (1973:16), conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur... one party is interfering, disrupting, obstructing, or in some other way making another effective party's actions less effective.

Maoz (1982:12) identified conflict as a state of incompatibility among values, where the achievement of one value can be realized only at the expense of some other value. Conflict may arise within single organisms pursuing multiple goals as well as striving at incompatible goals. The definition opined that one may find his aspirations not compatible with this personal quality which tends to lead to frustration (conflict), and when such frustration (conflict) gets to the climax, then crisis will emerge.

Peace

Peace is generally defined as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence, and about peaceful coexistence. It is primarily concerned with creating and maintaining a just order in society and the resolution of conflict by non-violent means. In general, six meanings of peace are agreed on by many peace researcher including; peace as the absence of war (absence of direct violence), peace as justice and development (absence of structural violence), peace as respect and tolerance between people, peace as Gaia (balance in and with the ecosphere), inner peace (spiritual peace), and peace as 'wholeness' and "making whole" (Shedrack, 2006:19) according to Galtung Johan (1996:20), distinguished three types of violence relevant to the understanding of peace and conditions that create unpeaceful situations or 'peacelessness'. Direct violence, i.e., physical, emotional and psychological violence; structural violence i.e.; deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm, and cultural violence, i.e., cultural norms and practices that create discrimination, injustice and human suffering. Galtung, in broadening the definition of

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peace, also outlines two dimensions of peace: 'negative peace', i.e. the absence of direct violence, war, fear and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels; and 'positive peace', i.e., the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships, justice and inner peace at individual level.

It is imperative to note that different cultures and civilisations have different interpretations and conceptions of peace. For instance, Islam talks about 'Salaam' meaning peace, the Jewish 'shalom', in the Gandhian tradition- 'Ahimsa', and in the Africa tradition – 'Ubuntu'.

Also, the particular historical and political context of a country and community determines their perceptions of peace for example, a society fragmented and polarised by perpetual war and armed conflict will interpret peace as the absence of war. Similarly, a political community driven by unjust structures and policies will equate peace with justice and freedom. People suffering material deprivation and poverty will inevitably perceive peace in terms of equity, development and access to existential necessities of life.

Re-Engineering Peace Studies for Employment and Self Productivity in Nigeria

Peace Studies or Peace Education, as an academic discipline was developed in Europe in the late 1940s and 1950s with a strong root in the Scandinavian countries. Peace research institutions developed in other parts of the world as a specialised study in the social science tradition. As an academic discipline, it has developed as a multi-disciplinary field of study including Politics, Law, International Relation, Sociology, Development Studies, Economics, Social Psychology, Philosophy, History and Political Theory (Jeong, 2000:19).

Peace Studies is a distinctive method of inquiry and practice concerned with the understanding of the causes of violence and conditions for a peaceful world. Its primary focus is on 'peace and the creation of peace', and concerned with the movement from war to peace. It is not an utopian state, but peace is something that can and does exist alongside violence and war. As an academic discipline concerned with the transformation of a culture of war to a culture of peace, it has emerged as a critique of the realist interpretations of war and conflict and in particular, has developed as an alternative academic study of politics and international relations. The study of peace research became institutionalised as polemology – science of peace that concerned with the causes and resolution of conflict. There are various research strands to peace studies including International Relations, Development Studies and Conflict Resolution. Hence, we see the development of both undergraduate and postgraduate degree curricula on Peace and Development Studies, Politics and Peace Studies, Conflict Resolution etc.

Peace Studies also saw the emergence of peace movement. It is argued that the evolution of peace movements predates peace research and has considerable influence on the institutionalization of Peace Studies. Between 1880 and 1945, there were visible

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peace movement in Europe not only opposing war, but also participating in war, (Van den Dungen, 1996:6).

Though the idea of peace movement is largely associated with Western liberal democracies, there are many examples of community peace activities and grassroots social movements contesting and resisting structures of oppression and violence in countries of the South. There are many strands of peace movement such as religious pacifism, which renounces war as a goal of any society and is opposed to military conscript (Quarters), secular peace groups (but with different objectives, strategies, and visions of world peace), and the anti-nuclear (nuclear disarmament) environmentalist movements.

According to Onwubiko (2002:2), Peace Education is the deliberate attempt to educate children and adults in the dynamics of conflict and the promotion of peacemaking skills in homes, schools and communities throughout the world using all the channels and instruments of socialization. It provides education for global security and focuses on direct, organized violence, particularly the institutions of war and armed conflicts, employing the framework based on recent theories of human security. Peace education concerns itself with human and social dimension of peace. Overall, peace education is an investment in the younger generations, and attests to the fact that by educating younger minds in the virtues of peace, the skills of conflict analysis and management, identification of conflicts and sources of conflict etc., a more peaceable future could be secured for humanity.

Holistically, Peace Education openly acknowledges its purpose as education to facilitate the achievement of peace and related sets of social values, largely through learning to recognize, confront, and practice alternate multiple forms of violence.

Peace Education is an integral part of the work of the United Nations. Through the harmonising process of teaching and learning, Peace Education is out to enlighten students and adults concerning the ills that confront the human race on daily basis. These dehumanising ills which are caused by man and woman's in humanity to humankind among others include discrimination on the basis of sex, race, religion, poverty, prejudices, violence and war etc, but Peace Education will create a culture of peace base upon fundamental scientific and ethical.

In the early years, Peace Education addressed issue like text book revision, reform of history teaching to reflect the new needs, furthering knowledge of the League of Nations and mobilising support for the press to take greater responsibility in fostering peace and international understanding. The focus at the time, as it is predominantly today, was on secondary school students but university students were not targeted (Van den Dungen, *ibid*).

Moreso, Peace Education is one means of bringing about rational awakening of humanistic, aesthetic and ethical values, which are the precondition for peace

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individuals, families, societies, nations and international life. This indicates that Peace Education is really needed as a necessary tool that should be used and encouraged among generations of the young. Student need to be taught the right path to love, harmony and peace, for peace begins in our hearts and begins from you and I.

Peace Education is now the subject of UN policy, research and training by UNESCO, the Council of Europe and ministries of education; various universities throughout the world, transnational conceived and conducted NGO Global campaign for Peace Education (Veronic Gumut, 2006:165).

According to Veronic Gumut (2006, *ibid*), opined that since wars originate from the minds of men (and women), it is in the same minds that the defences of peace must be constructed. This therefore means that deliberate effort must be made to ensure that everyone is educated and enlightened about peace and young persons made vanguards of peace.

Children and young persons have been repeatedly used as instruments to fight wars for reasons which they have very little knowledge about. In many Africa's conflicts like those in Angola, Mozambique, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the phenomenon of child soldering became a menace that needed to be tackled. Peace Education sets out to redressing this culture of violence and aggression and to inculcate values of non violence change among young persons and adults alike. It opens up people's eyes and minds to see and understand action taken and their consequences. Children and young persons have to know what peace is and guard themselves against embracing or being used to create violence. Peace Education is also seen as an application for positive peace content as opposed to negative peace (Galtung, 1996:35) and processes concerning the achievement of peace to individuals who are still growing and learning. Early Peace Education is vital in making it life-long for all citizens of all ages in all countries of the world. Experience is not always the best teacher; children and young persons must not be exposed to war and violence to be able to learn to live in peace. Through Peace Education, human begins would be taught to suppress their instinctive nature of being violent and instead strengthen their spirit-oriented nature so that it becomes dominant. Children and young persons are doorways to a peace continuum. Therefore, when most young persons are educated to achieving long lasting peace, peer mediation becomes an alternative to formal teaching of peace. Skills acquired by those taught could easily be learnt by their peers.

Education for peace sets out to let people see that one do have choices to every action. It is possible for all to live in harmony with one another, and with the planet. People cannot remain passive to achieve peace, but active participants in the quest for peace. Participation can be: as a long-term broad-based programme focusing on important problems and trends of a society and promoting mostly through school and colleges as positive peace and as a more focused activity aimed at addressing or preventing a specific conflict.

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Furthermore, Education for peace could be formal or informal. It is formal when education is incorporated into the school curriculum and taught within many school subject areas including Religion, Geography, History, Science, Social Studies, Literature, Drama, Art and Mathematics which is the one advocated for in this research. On the other hand, informal Peace Education is the one that takes place in informal settings where people gather for work or leisure, through socialization and initiation process within the community, in family settings etc. Just as in schools, informal peace education primarily addresses attitudes and aims to have a direct impact on personal behaviour.

Informal peace education can tackle important issues in almost an infinite number of ways. It can take the form of a workshop. Items to discuss could include publishing story books for children, designing posters, distributing peace badges and printing of T-shirts and posters with peace messages.

Conclusion

The strength of any research and its contribution to knowledge lie in its ability to explore new grounds and to expose some vital issues. This paper is able to achieve most of that by citing case studies in some selected areas of importance.

It is Established that development as a nation does in deed lie in ability to ensure peaceful development of our human capital. Development of human capital represents a sustainable strategy for transforming Nigeria into a viable economy (Patrick, 2010:290). Without Peace Education, Nigeria would not obtain global relevance neither would the nation be able to create good society with informed citizens.

Recommendations

Government should ensure that Peace and Conflict Studies is made compulsory in our educational curriculum so that every Nigerian will learn about peace both in school and at home (Comfort, 2009:102).

Conflict prevention strategy should be integrated into orientation programme when given a job and also youths should be encouraged to take job in conflict prevention organization. This is as a result of the emerging nature of conflict prevention strategy that seeks to integrate efforts of all those working for peace.

More importantly, resources should be budgeted to support and establish conflict and peace programme across Nigeria and should be in control of commission working under the presidency.

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