

INSTITUTIONALIZING PEACE EDUCATION CONCEPTS IN NIGERIA SECONDARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Olowo Oluwatoyin Olusegun; Fakolujo Abayomi Babatunde and Kataye Taofeek Oladimeji

Abstract

This paper examines the problem and prospect of institutionalizing Peace Education concepts in Nigeria school curriculum, Peace Education is an innovation in the educational system; and it is borne out of frequent inter-ethnic conflicts and religious fanaticism which give rise to destruction of lives and property. The recent security challenges the nation is passing through in the hand of the faceless religious fundamentalists 'Boko Haram' and political crisis generated by elections justify the need for peace education in Nigerian schools. The paper explores the concept of peace and peace education; the basic elements of peace education, peace education curriculum, prospects of peace education in Nigeria, conclusion and recommendations are made as well.

Peace education has become a means of catching them young to minimize the spirit of intolerance that engenders conflict all over the world. Nigeria's historical past had witnessed a lot of political brigandage, religious violence, kidnapping, arson, vandalism, hostage-taking for ransom and many other vices (Ogunyemi&Adetoro 2013, Sunday punch, 15th April, 2007, Tell Magazine, June 4, 2007 and July 14th 2008; Adeniji, 2008). Thus, the need for a culture of peace in Nigeria necessitated the emergence of peace education concepts in the 2007, 9 – years Basic Education Social Studies curriculum for Junior Secondary Schools (JSS). These concepts and themes according to Ogunyemi and Adetoro (2013) include: meaning of peace, types of peace, importance of peace, ways of promoting peace (tolerance, social justice, human rights etc.) non-violent methods of resolving conflicts, Global / International cooperation (Federal Ministry of Education, 2007: 43-44 and 50).

Peace Education is crucial for the Nigerian educational system to achieve especially in secondary schools. Peace education has to do with training on the avoidance and management of violent, conflicts, better human relationship, unity and internal co-operation among various tribes. In both formal and non-formal education, peace education is aimed at the elimination of group prejudice, stereotypes and hatred which make people choose war for peace, violence instead of non-violence; or exclusion to cooperation and destruction to construction. Peace education is therefore education for peaceful and non-violent co-existence (Ezeoba, 2012). Since education was conceived as an instrument "par excellence" for enhancing peace education, Adeoluna (2006), Aguba (2006) and Aguba (2010) noted that it is expedient on educational planners to make peace education an integral component of curricula so that Nigerians can be educated on how to peacefully live together as one.

The Concept of Peace and Peace Education

The existence of peace indicate the absence of both alert and structural violence. Most conflict situation result into violence emanating from poverty, discrimination, lack of access to opportunities and the inability to understand other persons' point of view. (Akudolu, 2010). Whenever two or more people are doing something as a group, conflict are bound to arise from individual differences. Peaceful co-existence of the group members depend on their conflict management abilities. Peace education is the process of equipping learners with tools for developing knowledge, skills, values and attitude needed for resolving differences and conflicts in non – violent ways and in living peacefully with oneself and others in their environment. Consequently, peace education is concerned with resolving conflicts at intrapersonal, interpersonal and intergroup levels without violence. It is also concerned with conflict resolution at local, national and international levels. Peace education is also concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitude for creating atmosphere of peace within the individual or for achieving inner peace. In fact peace education is both of philosophy and a process that is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge about different

manifestation of peace and violence as well as peacemaking skills. It is a process of inculcating elements of peace education in the learners to enable these learners to develop the abilities to manifest tolerance, the skills for non-violent conflict resolution and these sense of dedication to the establishment of the culture of peace.

The following are the basic elements of peace education according to Akuole (2010).

S/N	PEACE DIMENSIONS	BASIC ELEMENTS
1	Knowledge	Peace, Justice, Human rights civic participation, Emotional literacy, Problem solving (including conflict prevention, conflict management and conflict resolution), as well as understanding (including international and inter-cultural understanding) etc.
2	Values and Attitudes	Tolerance, Caring, Social Equity, Peace, Justice, Cooperation and Solidarity, Human rights, active citizenship, Gender equity, self-awareness, empathy, conflict resolution using peaceful means, Promotion of sustainable environment, Freedom of religious practices, Compassion, Respect for Human life etc.
3	Skills	Active listening, understanding similarities and Differences, cooperation, mediation, problem solving, trust, critical thinking, self-reflection, self-esteem etc.

Source: Adapted from (2010) 8th Biennial Conference on Developing Peace Education Curriculum for Nigeria Pp. 4-5.

The acquisition of these elements of Peace Education will enable learners to develop peace building skills as well as the knowledge, skills, values, behaviors and capabilities to recognize and confront violence.

Introduction of Peace Education in Nigerian Schools

The development of the culture of peace can be traced to the indigenous system of Education in Nigeria, Traditional Education laid emphasis on character training. Falade, Akinola and Adejube (2009) opined that the Yoruba of Nigeria have norms meant for social cohesion and smooth-running of the community. The Yoruba adopt proverbs to teach the virtue of forgiveness harmony and Peaceful coexistence. An example of such proverbs is “bi a kogbagbeoroana a konireniba sire” (unless we over-look the past misdeeds, we will not be able to relate). In the traditional community, like any other human society, conflicts or disputes arise. Such disputes are settled through dialogue by the family and community leaders. The extended family system and the decentralized political structure in some parts of Nigeria promote conflict resolution, respect for elder’s mutual understanding and harmony.

Westernization and long years of military rule in Nigeria have eroded the culture of peace. Fwa (2001) observed that the prevalence of armed conflicts in less developed nations originate from the imbibed western culture. The western culture is characterized by individualism, competition, profiteering, monetization /commercialism of all services. The strong elements of competition and profit maximization in the western culture can create high levels of social stress and conflict especially in societies that have not fully developed or modernized in the western sense. The development, of the culture of peace through Peace Education is now a global issue. The nation of a culture of peace was hits elaborated for UNESCO at the international congress on peace in the minds of men, held at Yamousoukro, Cote d’ Ivoire, in 1989. At the congress the UNESCO was called to construct’ a new culture of peace by developing a peace culture based on the universal values of respect for life. Liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human right and equality between women and men, and to promote Education and research for that vision (United Nations, 2009).

Peace Education has therefore become part of the school programme in many nations of the world. In some countries, Peace Education has been referred to as Education for Conflict Resolution, International Understanding and Human Rights, Global Education, Life Skills Education, Social Justice Education, Environmental Education etc. The scope and nature of Peace Education in nations of the world are determined by societal issues and problems. In Nigeria, Gen. Sani Abacha set up the Centre for Peace, Research and Conflict Resolution (CPRCR) in 1996. The CPRCR was set up to study cases and issues of conflict in the country. This was to enhance proper understanding of the causes and nature of conflicts and thereby resolve them so as to promote enduring peace in the nation.

The Nigerian government introduced the 9-years Basic Education Programme as one of the means of attaining the Millennium Development Goals (MDGS) by 2015. This promoted the need for the revision of the existing school curriculum. Hence, the National Council on Education (NCE) in 2005 directed the Nigerian Educational Research and Development Council (NERDC) to review, re-structure and re-aligned the existing primary and JSS curriculum into 9 years Basic Education Programme. In 2006, the NERDC produced the 9 years Basic Education Curriculum which covered current and imagining issues like value reorientation, Peace and dialogue including Human Rights Education, Family Life and HIV/ AIDS Education, etc (NERDC, 2007). In the light of this, a new basic Education Social Studies curriculum was developed. The new Social Studies curriculum incorporate contemporary issues like Peace and conflict issues, child/women trafficking, youth unemployment and youth restiveness, gender issues etc. While a new Civic Education curriculum was disarticulated from the new Social Studies curriculum, other imagining areas like Peace Education, Gender Education, and Family Life Education were integrated into the Social Studies curriculum.

Peace Education is not a separate subject in the new Basic Education Curriculum. Rather, Peace Education concepts have been integrated into Social Studies curriculum. The table below show some of the Peace Education Upper Basic Studies Curriculum.

Problems and Prospects of Peace Education

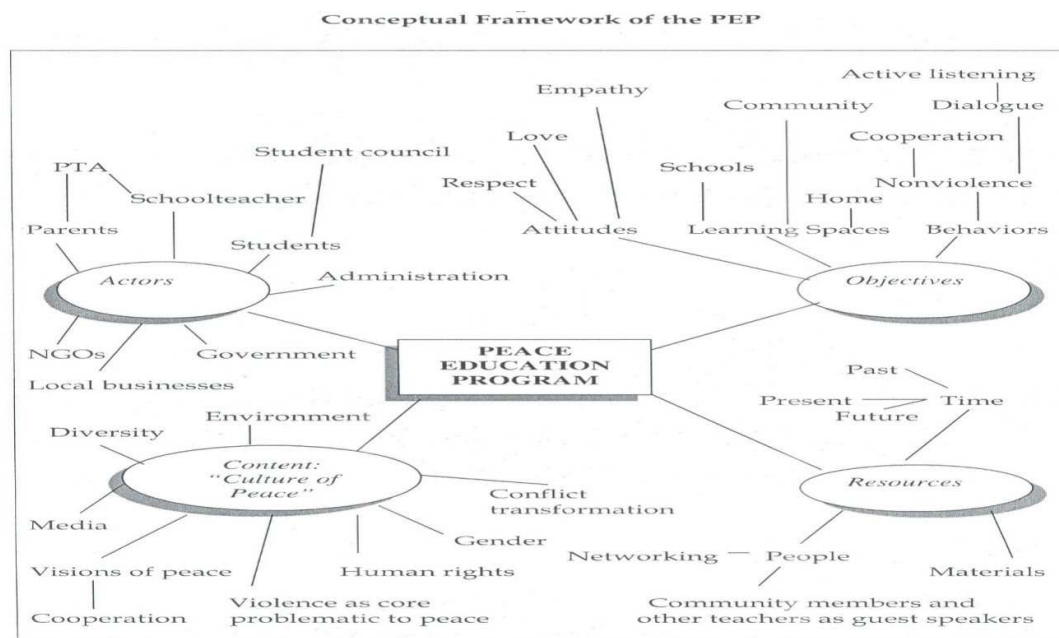
Considering the pluralistic nature of Nigeria as a nation, culture and belief system, the importance of peace education in Nigeria's educational system at all levels should not be brushed aside. Despite the introduction of citizenship education, social studies, civic education and other related problem solving disciplines in Nigeria educational system, there are a lot of social vices militating against Nigeria as a developing Nation. For instance, students still fight in schools and public places. There are several cases of looting, injustice, corruption, intolerance, thuggery, sexual harassment and the likes. The problem of institutionalization of peace education in the school system is due to a number of constraints such as wrong perception of the discipline (Peace education), lack of instructional materials and qualified manpower for its pedagogy (Ikwumelu, 2010). Nigeria constitutional provision for peace-related education as an instrument for national integration confirms the institutionalization of peace education in the Nigeria educational system. If this aspect and provision is strictly followed religiously, the skills, knowledge and competence of peace will be well developed in the life of Nigeria citizens. Also, peace education imbues one with the skills of solving existing problems without opening new frontiers of conflict. Hence peace education in a tool for peaceful co-existence of people in the society and sustenance of national development.

The development of the culture of peace can be achieved through peace education based on the universal values of respect for life. Peace education has therefore become part of the school programme in many nations of the world. In some countries, peace education has been referred to as education for conflict resolution, social justice education, environmental education etc. Peace education enhances proper understanding and nature of conflicts and thereby resolve them so as to promote enduring peace in the nation. According to Kester (2008), the development of the peace education programme (PEP) and its curriculum is the intervention to help alleviate problems associated with and derivative of sexism and racism in homogeneous schools. The hope is to get the rootcauses of social problems in order to collectively effect better social relations. Where peace education is concerned with addressing the multiple manifestations of violence and exploring alternatives to transform and transcend conflict, it helps in assisting students in realizing their full potential. Building a peace education programme is reliant upon its inclusive, comprehensive approach to designing and facilitating holistic education (Kester 2008).

Peace education is not central in content, rather it is centered in the process of acquiring the knowledge, attitudes, values and skills to promote peace. Peace pedagogy emphasizes the role of the peace educators as one who works with students to develop a more positive and elaborated concept of peace, learning them from the most obvious manifestation – the absence of war, - through an appreciation of less visible forms of violence, such as structural inequalities, towards an understanding of the conditions which build positive peace (Brock- Utne, 1989; Readon, 1993)

Peace education will not only be relevant in schools, but will be relevant in the society as it enhances teaching the values and traditions of different cultures in Nigeria (Orungbemi and Olowo

2011). In agreement with this assertion, Akintunde (2008), Falade(2008), Sugar (2002), Nagle (2001), Falade, Akinola and Adejube (2009) reported that the development of the culture of peace can be traced to the indigenous system of education centers and respect for other opinions. They equally stressed further that Yoruba of Nigeria have norms meant for social cohesion and smooth running of the community. The Yoruba adopt proverbs to teach the virtue of forgiveness and peaceful co-existence.



Source: Adapted from Kester (2008) Development Peace Education Programs Beyond Ethnocentrism and violence, peace prints: South Asian Journal of Peace building Vol 1, No 1

Peace Education is inevitable considering the events around the world. There is division or wide gaps between the rich and the poor, racial discrimination, degradation of the environment, gender inequalities and the likes provide enough evidence that the present generation of people need a change. That is, a change in attitudes, behaviours, and the culture of peace. To end violence as Kester (2008) rightly put it, Peace Education Programmes must take a holistic approach to addressing the root causes of violence and to this end, the implementation and practice of Peace Education needs to be properly and continuously evaluated to ensure effectiveness.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Peace education according to United Nations Children’s Fund (1999) has a place in all societies not-only in countries undergoing armed conflict or emergencies. This is so because lasting behavior change in children and adults only occurs over time, effective peace education is necessarily a long term process, not a short-term intervention. While often based in schools and other learning environment, peace education should ideally involve the entire community. The goal of peace education is peaceful living, as no Nation, be it developed or under-developing can record any meaningful feat of development without relative peace. Based on this position, the institutionalization of peace education in Nigeria Schools and out-of-school is a veritable tool of attaining the overall peace and sustainable development

For the sake of unity, progress and peaceful co- existence in Nigeria, the Federal government in collaboration with the non-government organization like UNESCO, WHO, UNICEF should train teachers in pedagogical approaches which encourage planning and decision making on the part of children and parents, to enable them to be actively involved in both the school and outreach activities. In addition to this, parents, teachers and administrators should be sensitized to issues of peace and conflict.

Since learning takes place in many different contexts, the message of peace should not be limited to the classroom settings alone, government should provide enough funds to develop or sponsor summer programmes, after- school programmes with a peace education in focus. This also should be followed up with workshops training programmes and activities for schools, youths and communities.

Moreso, this paper recommends that young people, that is the youth from different ethnic groups should be engaged in re-recreational activities and vocational training that focus on building teamwork, cooperation, sportsmanship, and decision making skills which should be part of the peace education programme in Nigeria, just as we have in Burundi and Rwanda.

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