

# TEACHING VIABLE PEACE EDUCATION AT THE PRIMARY EDUCATION LEVEL FOR SUSTAINABLE UNITY AND CO-EXISTENCE IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

The Paper Focused On The Teaching Of Viable Peace Education At The Primary Education Level For Sustainable Unity And Co-Existence In Nigeria. Primary School Is The Foundation Of Education. All Other Levels Of Education Are Built On It, And If The Foundation Is Destroyed, What Will Be The Fate Of Education In Nigeria? Of Course, The Society Would Be Engulfed With Crisis, Confusion, Conflicts And Violence. The Lack Of Peace In The World And Our Country In Particular, Has Affected The Educational Sector Adversely. Our Young Children Are In The State Of Dilemma As A Result Of The Unfortunate Situation. This Situation Can Be Attributed To Poor Practice Of Viable Peace Education In Schools. The Issues Discussed In The Paper Include Viable Peace Education, Teaching Viable Peace Education In Primary Education Level And Developing A Culture Of Peace In Primary Education Level. It Was Established That Teaching Viable Peace Education At All Levels Of Education Will Go A Long Way To Ensuring Peaceful And Harmonious Existence Among Individuals In Nigeria.

**Keywords:** Viable Peace Education, Primary Education, Sustainable Unity, Co-Existence

## **Introduction**

There Is No Single Individual Who Does not Want To Live In Peace. In Fact, From The Home Level, Husbands And Wives Want To Live In Peace, Communities And The World At Large Want To Live In Peace (Aminu, 2014). Peace Is A Global Desire, And It Is Only Education That Can Help In Achieving This. The Absence Of Peace Brings About Bloodshed, Destruction Of Lives And Properties, Conflict, Pains And Violence. When Peace Is Suppressed By Conflict In The School System, There Will Hardly Be Any Meaningful Teaching And Learning. Hence, The Need To Manage Peace Education For Harmonious Living Becomes Necessary.

A Decade Ago, The United Nations (Un) Declared The Year 2000 As The International Year For Culture Of Peace. This Declaration Was Made To Spur The Young People To Fully Participate In Peace Building And National Development. The Young Ones At The Primary Education Level Are Full Of Energy, And If This Energy Is Not Properly Channeled To Productive Activities, They Can Use The Excess Energy To Create Violence In The School As Well As The Society (Unescoculture Of Peace.Htm 2012). At Tender Age, The Behaviour Of The Pupils Can Be Molded, They Can Be Taught How To Live Harmoniously With Their Class-Mates, Teachers, School-Mates And Neighbours For Peaceful Coexistence. Education Is A Very Powerful Instrument For Preaching Peace And National Development. Nigeria Is A Multi-Cultural And Multi-Religious Country That Needs Peace For National Building And Co-Existence. Therefore, There Is Need For Viable Peace

Education For Clarifications And Dissemination Of Knowledge. Education Is Therefore, The Tool Needed For Enlightening The People In The Society For Peace And National Building.

### **Concept of Peace**

Most Often Than Not We Hear People Say “We Want Peace, Donot Bring Upon Us Problem That Will Generate Tension.” What Then Is This Peace? Is Peace The Absence Of Conflict In The Society? Lawal (2013) Perceives Peace As A State Of Calmness Within Individuals, Societies, Communities And Nations. It Involves A Condition Where There Is Harmony Among Individuals And The Various Facets Of Society Giving Way For Development. The Definition Looks Appealing, But, The Question To Answer Is, Is It Possible To Have This State Of Calmness And Complete Agreement Among Individuals And Nations? This Can Only Happen If Individuals, Societies And Nations Think Alike, Have The Same Needs, Religion, Language And Ethnicity. Again, The Question To Ask Is, Is It Possible To Have All Individuals Who Do Not Differ In Thought, Opinions, Needs, Religion And Language? Unfortunately, Nigeria Is A Multi-Ethnic, Tribal Religious Country. The Differences In Opinions, Religious Belief, Cultural Beliefs, Political Ideologies And Economic Status Are Reasons Why There Are Misunderstanding, Crisis, Violence And Chaos In The Societies (Aminu, 2014). These Are Common In Every Society.

Nwankwoala (2013) Citing Martin Luther King (Jr) States That “Peace Is Not The Absence Of Conflict, But The Presence Of Justice, And Justice Demands That What Belongs To A Man Should Be Given To Him And Not Another, And If Otherwise, There Will Be Problem Which May Lead To Conflict. Once There Is No Fair Treatment Among Individuals, There Will Be Chaos Which Will Result To Lack Of Peace In Schools And Societies. It Is Obvious That When People Are Denied Their Rights Such As Food, Shelter, Good Governance, They Are Prone To React In Different Ways. It Is When There Is Justice, Then There Can Be Some Level Of Calmness And Harmony In The Society. Viable Peace Education Therefore, Is Inevitable In Our Schools.

### **Viable Peace Education**

Viable Peace Education Is Process Of Acquiring The Values, Knowledge And Developing The Attitudes, Skills And Behaviours That Enables One To Live Harmoniously With Oneself And Other Individuals In The Community (Lan& John, 2002). This Type Of Education Enables The Learners To Avoid Violence And Embrace Peace. The Exposure Of The Pupils To Viable Peace Education Will Make Them See Reasons To Co- Exist As Members Of One Family Irrespective Of Differences In Opinions, Religion, Tribe, Economic Status, Etc. Education Is Always Being Viewed As A Weapon For Peace. It Is Seen Brings Peaceful Co-Existence Among People. Viable Peace Education Can Be Taught Both Within And Outside The School Setting.

The Cry For Peace In The World Is So Loud That No One Can Pretend Not To Hear About It, And No One Can Pretend Not To Be Affected. Individuals, Families, Communities And Nations Are On Daily Basis Calling On Governments And United Nation For Intervention. The Fastest Way To Achieve This Global Desire Is Through Viable Peace Education. Important Agents That Can Promote Peace Are The Teachers And Parents. Peace Can Be Maintained In Schools Only When Teachers Promote Peace And Are Free Of Sentiments And Prejudice (Osaigbovo, 2015). The Teachers Must Appreciate The Fact That Peace Is Worth Having In The School And The Society, Then, They Will Commit Themselves To Teaching Peace To The Pupils.

The Issue Of Conflict And Violence In Our Societies Is Alarming; Lives And Properties Worth Millions Are Being Destroyed On Daily Basis. Also, Prevalent In Our Societies Are Issues Of Disputes, Communal Clashes, Misunderstanding Among Individuals And Communities Are All Problems Facing The Society. Again, One Is Prompted To Ask, Who Are The People Involved In These Conflicts, Violence, Chaos And Misunderstanding That Goes On In The Society? Are They Educated Or Uneducated? What Do They Stand To Gain From The Conflict? It Is Sad To Note That Most Of The Conflicts Around Are Caused By Educated Individuals In The Society Who Take Advantage Of The Confusion For Their Personal Gain.

### **Developing a Culture of Peace In Primary Education Level**

Culture Is A Way Of Life Of A People. To Develop This Culture Of Peace In Primary Schools, Pupils At This Level Of Education Need To Be Introduced To This Way Of Life. There Can Never Be Peace If What The Teacher Does Gives A Negative Message To The Child. Culture Of Peace Is A Commitment To Peace Building, Mediation, Viable Peace Education, Education For Non-Violence, Tolerance, Acceptance And Mutual Respect, Inter-Cultural And Interfaith Dialogue And Reconciliation. The Culture Of Peace Is A Deliberate Attempt By The Teachers And All Concern To Ensure That Pupils Live In Peace With One Another.

Developing A Culture Of Peace Is Also An Attempt To Create New Awareness And Mentalities In Children On How To Live Peacefully Among Themselves And The World At Large. The Teacher Can Teach The Children The Following Principles:

1. The Principle Of Learning To Live Together: The Teacher Should Place More Emphases On Community Life Style Over Individualism. The Teacher Must Ensure That Pupils Work And Play Together. This Can Only Be Possible When There Is Unity. The Second Paragraph Of The Frn (2004) Asserts That "The Overall Philosophy Of Nigeria Is To Live In Unity And Harmony as One Indivisible, Indissoluble Democratic Family. This Implies That All Forms Of Differences And Discrimination Must Be Avoided.
2. The Principle Of Tolerance: Tolerance Is A Fair, Objective And Permissive Attitude Toward Those Whose Opinions, Practices, Race, Religion And Nationality Differ From One's Own. The Differences That Must Be Tolerated By Pupils In Primary Education Level Are Religions, Opinions And Ethnic Differences. Children At The Primary Education Level Need To Learn How To Tolerate One Another Thereby Avoiding Personal Interest In Favour Of The Group Interest. When This Is Imbibed By The Pupils, They Live Peaceful Lives. Pupils Must Learn To Appreciate And Respect One Another's Opinions In The School.
3. Principle of Kindness: This Has to Do with One's Concern for the Other Person. Kindness Can Be Expressed As A Form Of Being Good To Others. Learners Can Demonstrate This Virtue To One Another When The Need Arises. For Instance, A Pupil Who Is In Need Of A Writing Material Such As Pencil, Exercise Book, Ruler And So On Could Be Helped By One Who Can Provide It.
4. The Principle Of Love For One Another: If Pupils Learn To Love One Another, A Peaceful Atmosphere Will Be Created. Once Love Is Shown Among Pupils, There Will Be No Selfishness And Partiality. Love Is Not Tangible, But It Can Be Expressed Through The Behavior Of Individuals In The School. The Holy Bible, In The 1 Corinthians 13:3-8 Tried To Tell Us That Love Is Kind, Love Is Patient And It Is Not Self-Seeking. Love Engulfs The Three Principles Mentioned Above. If There Is Love Among Pupils, Then There Will Be Peace.

### **Teaching Viable Peace Education at the Primary Education Level For Sustainable Unity And Co-Existence In Nigeria**

Primary Education Is The Foundational Stage Of Formal Education Where Children Of Ages 6-11 Gain The Fundamental And Initial Knowledge, Skills, Thoughts, Feelings And Actions. This Level Of Education Is Described By Federal Republic Of Nigeria (2004) As The "Key To The Success Or Failure Of The Whole System", And The Rest Of The Educational System Is Built Upon It. Therefore, Teaching Viable Peace Education To This Category Of Individuals Cannot Be Described As Too Early.

Viable Peace Education Is A Weapon For Harmonious Living Among Individuals Not Only In School Setting But Society At Large. The Boko Haram Crisis In Nigeria, The September 11 In America, The Alcaeda And Lsbola In The Middle East And Other Communal Clashes Are Indicators That Peace Education Need To Be Taught At Primary Education Level. How Can Teachers Help To Promote Peace Within The Child, Between Children, At School Or Home As Well As Extend This Ideas To The Community? It Is Necessary To Introduce Viable Peace Education To The Children When They Are Young. The Holy Bible In Proverbs 22.6 Said "Train A Child In A Way He Should

Go, And When He Grows Up He Will Never Depart From It". For Us To Correct The Ills Of The Society, We Most Start With The Children. When The Learners Are Taught The Way Of Peace, They Will Grow Up To Embrace Peace. When They Grow To See Their Teachers Or Parents Living Peacefully, They Will Equally Emulate Same. The Teacher Most Also Help To Shape Their Behaviour By Teaching Them Good Virtues, Norms And Values Of The Society.

According To Erukoha, Asuquo And Inaja (2004) John Locke, Believes That The Child At Birth, Has Blank Heart As Blank Slate, The Heart Is Empty Which He Called 'Tabularaza'. This View Point Suggests That Whatever Behaviour A Child Exhibits Is Acquired From The Society. If The Environment In Which The Child Comes From Is Violent, The Child Will Grow To Be Violent. Musa (2008) Maintains That, Rousseau's Discourse On Inequality" Widened His View On Natural Goodness Of Man And Asserted That Man Is Corrupted By The Society. Since The Child Is Good From Birth, The Teacher Should Try As Much As Possible To Maintain This Goodness By Imparting Good Virtues On The Child. The Child Is The Product Of His Environment, If The School And Society Treasure Peace The Learners Will Likewise Learn To Live In Peace With One Another.

One Of The Philosophies Of Nigeria Education In Frn (2004) Emphasized That There Is Need To Inculcate Right Type Of Values And Attitudes For The Survival Of The Individual And The Society At Large, What Are The Right Type Of Values And Attitudes The Children Need To Learn In Primary Schools For Their Survival In The Society? Is It Hatred? Wickedness? Prejudices? Sentiments? Therefore, Any Attitude Which Is Not Geared Towards Promoting Peace And Harmony, In The School Setting Is Not A Right Value. In Trying To Teach Viable Peace Education In Primary Education Level, The Following Steps May Be Of Help To The Teacher As Identified In [www.Allianceforchildhood.org](http://www.Allianceforchildhood.org) 2014.

1. Make Time For Creative Play: It Is Very Difficult To Deny Children Creative Play. Play Among Children Brings About Unity And Cooperation In School. They Need A Lot Of Time For Unstructured Creative Play. Social Play Reduces Aggression And Increases Empathy In Children. Children Use Play To Explore The World And Develop Relationships. Teachers Should Carefully Choose Children's Toys And Avoid Those That Encourage Violence.

2. Share Inspiring Words Of Peace From Different Cultures- Viable Peace Education Can Be Taught To Pupils Through Story Telling. Children Love To Hear Inspiring Stories About Great Men Like Mandela, Gowon, Murtala, Martin Luther King Jr And Other Champions Of Peace, Justice And Nonviolence In The World. The Teachers Should Also Teach The Learners The "Golden Rule" Which Says "Do Unto Others As You Would Have Them Do Unto You". This Is The Basis Of Social Respect And Cooperation In The School And Society.

3. Holding Class Meetings On Regular Basis- To Promote Peace In Primary Education Level, It Is Important To Have Class Meetings On Regular Basis. Through This Regular Meetings, Both Teachers And The Pupils Can Express Their Concerns And Feelings. The Teacher Provides Appropriate Language And Skills To Ensure That The Problems Are Being Addressed. Setting Of Guidelines Can Help The Pupils To Deal With General Problems Instead Of Calling Names (Lim, 2014).

### **Conclusion**

Nigeria As A Country Is In Dire Need Of Peace, Bearing In Mind The Current Happenings Around And For This Country To Experience Peace And Live In Unity, Then Viable Peace Education Needs To Be Taught In Primary Education Level To Initiate These Young Children Into Peace Culture. The Pupils Most Be Taught To Appreciate The Fact That Though We Differ In Opinions, Religion, Language, Tribe Etc, But We Are Still One And Most Live In Harmony With One Another. In Teaching Viable Peace Education, Pupils Should Be Taught The Virtues Of Love, Kindness, Tolerance And Living The Life Of Togetherness. Pupils Must Learn To Keep Away All Forms Of Malice, Pains And Offences Against One Another.

### **Recommendations**

Based On The Discussion In This Paper, The Following Recommendations Have Been Made To Ensure Sustainable Unity And Co-Existence In Nigeria.

1. Teachers Should Keep Watch Of The Pupils To Discourage Any Form Of Behaviour That Has Tendency Of Generating Fight, Quarrel, Or Misunderstanding In The Classroom Or School And Encourage Those Behaviours That Will Bring Peace.
2. Teachers Should Ensure That Activities That Promote Peace, Harmony And Justice Should Be Encouraged Among Pupils In Primary Education Level.
3. The Critical Consciousness Of Youths And Stakeholders Should Be Improved Through Effective And Constant Viable Peace Education Programmes To Sensitize The Community Members On The Importance Of Peace And Nonviolence Attitudes, Towards Issues Such As Politics, And Community Affairs.
4. Issues Of Political Violence, Assassination, Community Leadership/Chieftaincy Tussle, And Cult Wars Should Be Squarely Addressed By The Government At All Levels By Promoting Viable Peace Education Programmes And Engaging The Youths Inthe Rural Communities With Activities That Will Enable Them Earn A Better Living.
5. Coalition Of Civil Society Organizations, Which Arc Well Informed, Skilled And Capable Of Monitoring, Reporting And Cultivating In The Youths The Virtue Of Unityand Peace Through Programmes That Are Educative And Empowering.
6. Viable Peace Education Should Be Made An Integral Part Of The Educational Curriculumby Education Policy Makers.
7. Parents As Well Can Be Educated On The Relevance Of Educating Their Children And Members Of The Community On Ways Of Maintaining Cultural Standard And Peacemaking Within The Community And The Society At Large.
8. Government Should Sensitive Teachers Through Workshops And Seminars On Their Role As Managers And Planners In Promoting Viable Peace Education And Peace Culture At The Primary Education Level In Nigeria.

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