

# SCIENCE EDUCATION FOR PEACE AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

*In Nigeria one of the burning and bristling issues is the constant recurrence of violence in various ways in different parts of the country and the need for urgent remedial measures to avoid retarding national development. This paper focused on the degree of insecurity in the school environment in Nigeria. Having examined the following concepts; concept of peace, science education, and national development. It was concluded that there is no security in Nigerian schools. Recommendations were proffered and peace education should be intensified in Nigerian school.*

Nwachukwu (2012) stated that a good science education programme is expected to achieve an appreciable national development. But it is reality that Nigeria as a nation is not developed in spite of the proposal of the successive governments as contained in the National Policy on Education (2004). One of the paramount factors that affect this development is conflict and violence in Nigeria.

In reality, all parts of the world, there is no section that is conflict free, the intractable Middle East crises, the Arab uprising in North Africa, the Shaaba insurgence in Somalia, pockets of conflicts in Democratic Republic of Congo, the Boko Haram insurgence in Nigeria and many others. According to Dupuy (2010: 10) “it has been observed that with the exception of a few, most conflicts since the end of World War II are mainly intra-state in nature, and that about 36 million children are denied primary education as a result”.

The Nigeria nation has for over four decades been caught in the web of conflicts of different dimensions since the first military coup d’ et at in 1966, followed closely by the Nigerian civil. Nwafor, (2012) opined that the intermittent military interruptions, the sectional or tribal militant groups, and the current Islamic sect-

insurgence-all have adversely affected the psyche of the nation: slowed down its development strides and rendered many citizen socially and economically hopeless and helpless.

Nwafor (2012) also observed that as a result of this unhealthy climate, apathy and anarchy permeate the entire national fabric. Most atimes the conflicts may be as a result of lack of confidence in government because of its inability to show palpable concern for the welfare of its citizens. Thus individuals and groups express their displeasure in different ways and forms which can grow into violence of far-reaching consequences which affect the psyche of the nation and its citizens. In such scene lives and property are lost; infrastructure amenities are destroyed while social services are disrupted.

### **Peace and Science Education**

The concept of peace lends itself to several interpretations and definitions which cannot be exhaustively discussed here. However, peace has been generally defined as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence (David, 2006). But this conception has been criticized by many scholars for being inadequate for understanding the meaning and nature of peace (Ibeanu, 2006). It evokes the climate of freedom from fear, intimidation and harassment, oppression and brutalization by external forces or agents. For Thomas Hobbes, this “state of nature” was marred by frequent conflict and violence; which rendered life “the solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short”. In order to avoid this ugly 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). The Norwegian peace theorist, John Galtung distinguishes the types of violence that can help to understand the concept of peace namely;

- (i) Direct violence manifested by physical, emotional and psychological violence.
- (ii) Structure violence which comes in the form of deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm.
- (iii) Cultural violence which involves cultural norms and practices that creates discrimination, injustice and human suffering (David, 2006:4).

In summary, 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 science education activities.

Peace education which science education is involved implies efforts to promote peace especially in conflict or violence. There is no consensus among scholars as to what peace education means. As a result, the lack of conceptual clarity impedes

educational attempts to promote peace (Porath, 2003). It is in this connection that Dupuy (2010) stated that: “there is no uniform concept of peace education and the international discourse on this topic is still in its infancy”

Peace education therefore aims at ameliorating the escalating level of violence in various forms so that individuals can live and work in a relatively peaceful atmosphere that could ultimately engender “a global culture of peace”. Science education curriculum is expected to equip learners with skills that will make them self-reliant, prepare them to enter into jobs and progress in them. Where the content of peace and science education are inculcated in and imbibed as well as are practised by the individual there will be appreciable level of national development.

### **National Development**

Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionaries, 6<sup>th</sup> edition often defined development with inclusive phrases such as “to cause to grow or expand” and “a new stage, event or situation”. Development is a noticeable movement out of a perceived stagnation either through backward movement (negative development) or forward movement (positive development). It is also a concept used to measure human comfort and satisfaction (Oboada & Jerome, 2012).

According to the World Bank (2004), education can mean the actualization of an implicit potentiality, the simplest example being the patterned growth and maturation of a seed or an initial germ cell, or human person. It is a progressive unfolding of the potentialities of a given reality. As it implies to human, it is the integration of various growing’s natural, physical, acquired and human of a people towards the full working out, permanently and cumulatively of their being as persons of their nation and their real productivity (Uwadia, 2010).

In terms of national development, this is often development that can be realized through the transformation or transfer of technological ideas, institutions, attitudes, values and cultures to the underdeveloped nations.

Okodudu (2007) opined that development occurs when technological change, either through the transformation or transfer among sectors, positively and spontaneously impacts national development. Aminigo (2003) argued that it is common knowledge that economic growth and development come through industrialization as industrial development itself means wealth, employment and lessening economic strife. Obanya (2002) opined that national development as seen from human point of view simply means a state of well-being. This state is not considered from the point of view of increase in quantity alone, but in a qualitative transformation of people’s living conditions (Efemini, 2002).

Amaele (2008) observed that education, if adequately handled is the greatest legacy society can leave for the quality of mankind". Education as an instrument, for sustainable national development is no longer a contestable fact. What should rather capture attention now is the type, methods, dynamics of education as well as making the goals of education instrumental to the changing context of national development (Ololube *et al*, 2012a).

As a process of living UNESCO (2005:7) suggested that "education helps in the provision of skills preparatory for youth economic, social and political empowerment. Education therefore, does not only ensure the development of social stability and the production of new knowledge, but serves the complex interest of society. For a country to progress in her sustainable development, she must embrace these values of education. Education opens up the minds of men towards the knowledge and appreciation of societal values and aspirations. Education plays an important role in solving the problem of poverty which may hinder a peaceful co-existence of education and natural development.

### **Conclusion**

There are many ways and methods which can be applied to achieve a peaceful science education and a standard national development. These involve the traditional and judicial methods. Instead violence is increasing at an alarming rate and proportion in such a manner that it has not only threatened our national unity but also our national development. Peace education should play a vital role in promoting mutual relationships among Nigerians. The school should be seen as a place where students learn how to communicate freely without inhibitions and prejudices against people from different cultural and religious backgrounds. (Nwafor, 2012). Indeed, if peace education is incorporated in our curriculum "schools would be able to play the critical role of teaching students how to manage and resolve conflict; how to manage and form interpersonal relationships; and how to enforce authority; as well as for communicating the value and the skill of peace building" (Dupuy, 2010), which are essential perquisites for national development and stability.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations were proffered;

- (i) Government should mandate and work in collaboration with rich Nigerians to provide basic amenities for schools such as computers and other technologies that can move the nation forward.
- (ii) Steps should be taken by ensuring that all schools that are porous in terms of security be checked because students and teachers are assets to this country.

- (iii) All students should be treated to the restoration of confidence in themselves to achieve the atmosphere of peace. Peace education should be introduced into all cadre of education, community, teachers from urban and rural areas.

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