

Peace Education and Educational Reforms in Nigeria: Problems and Prospects

Nasir Mohammed, Abdulkadir Adamu Azare, Adamu Musa,
Aminu Musa

Geography Department
History department

Social studies department school of secondary education (arts and social sciences) aminu saleh college of education azare. Bauchi state nigeria.

Foundations Department School of Education, Aminu Saleh College of Education, Azare, Bauchi State.

Date of Submission: 06-12-2023

Date of Acceptance: 16-12-2023

ABSTRACT

This paper examined peace and conflict resolution education and educational reforms in Nigeria: problems and prospects. The paper explained some conceptual clarifications of the terms, reforms, peace education, conflict, and consequently problems of peace education, it also went ahead to discuss on the Possible prospects of peace education and conflict resolution. Therefore, the paper concluded that Peace education activities promote the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help people either to prevent the occurrence of conflict, resolve conflicts peacefully, or create social conditions conducive environment to peace. It was concluded that Peace Education should be taught at all levels of education so that youth and adults will be familiar with the skills of conflict resolution, knowledge of peace education and support other individuals or groups of individuals to prevent the occurrence of conflict in the communities from different geographical areas. And it was also recommended that Students and youth in our schools and communities or environment should desist from engaging in drug abuse, which may result into cultism, fighting, thuggery, banditry and other social vices, abstaining from engaging in it will be resulted at a conflict free schools and communities in our built environment that will enhance peaceful living for educational, social and economic development of our country to achieve sustainable development.

Keywords: Peace, Education, Environment and Sustainable development

I. INTRODUCTION

Nigeria being the most populous African nation is still battling with different challenges

ranging from political tensions to religious and tribal violent conflicts in all geographical location. These events constitute factors that have been negatively influencing the development of the country; as they are left unattended to, the issue of conflict keep happening and are gradually becoming part of the national culture. Consequently, the situation of conflict and tension continue and the new generations are not aware of those issues and the need to resolve them. Bearing in mind that Nigeria is a multicultural and multiethnic nation where people are raised differently (environment) according to the beliefs and customs of their ethnic group. Consequently, by observing one's behaviors it is possible to discover one's origins (Ogunyemi, 2006)

The above assertion, justify the necessity of Peace Education programme in Nigeria since there are some many unresolved issues that need urgent attention. Peace education according Kester (20008) is of very high importance, as it will enable people to adopt a positive attitude regarding the different issues they can face through their life and to develop the necessary skills to peacefully resolve conflicts. This, in turn will impact positively on the society. Therefore, it is crucial to develop a Peace Education programme.

Therefore, a society or environment where conflicts occur at various levels and in various forms. As society evolves, so does the way people interact with each other? Adults and children are often affected by disagreements in their interpersonal relationships. While parents may feel the need to shield their children from conflict, a more effective policy might be to teach children to deal with conflicts from a young age, so they are equipped with the skills and tools to deal with them

in a more positive and respectful manner. Basic tools of conflict resolution can help empower children so that they can have the confidence to resolve problems and contribute towards promoting and building healthy civil societies. Some examples of conflict resolution skills that a child can learn include: How to cool off when upset, how to speak to an adult about their feeling, how to speak to each other respectfully, how to listen carefully to others, how to apologise, how to propose solution to problems.

What is Educational Reform?

Reforms are changes or amendments made to a system or organisation in order to improve it. According to Yusuf and Yusuf (2009), reform in Nigerian education is a federal government induced and directed substantial alteration of the Nigerian educational system, program, curriculum, agencies, education levels etc. Curriculum reform may be seen as a deliberate attempt to improve existing practices or conditions in an educational institution in relaxation to certain desired objectives.

What is Peace Education?

Teachers without Borders (2021), describe Peace Education as activities that promote the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help people either to prevent the occurrence of conflict, resolve conflicts peacefully, or create social conditions conducive to peace. Core values of nonviolence and social justice are central to peace education. Nonviolence is manifested through values such as respect for human rights, freedom and trust. Social justice is realized by principles of equality, responsibility, and solidarity.

Peace education prevents the emergence of conflicts and creates conditions for peace in the world. That is why peace education is very important in the world. Peace education activities promote conflict resolution that promotes peace and values such as respect for human rights, freedom and confidence.

Peace education aims to help students. Students acquire the skills needed to solve unwise conflict, resolve problems and strengthen these skills for active and responsible action by the public to promote peace values. Consequently, unlike the concept of a conflict resolution that can be considered retroactive, peace education is more focused on resolving the conflict after it has already taken place. Its purpose is to prevent a conflict in advance or promote the development of people and society in a peaceful way, based on the

principles of harm, tolerance, equality, respect for social justice and social justice. Peace education can also help students to successfully resolve conflict and harm caused by educational institutions.

The Concept of Peace Education

Peace education is the process of equipping learners with tools for developing knowledge's, skills, values and attitudes needed for resolving differences and conflicts in non-violent ways and in living peacefully with oneself, others and the environment. It is concerned with resolving conflict of intrapersonal, interpersonal and intergroup levels without violence. It also has to do with conflict resolution at local, national and international levels. Peace education refers to the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavior changes that will enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural to resolve conflict peacefully; and to create the conditions conducive to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. (UNICEF 1999). Going by UNICEF position, peace education 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 overtime, 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. Education also concerned with the acquisition of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes for creating atmosphere of peace within the individual or for achieving inner peace (Akudole, 2010)

The nature of Peace Education enables it embraces the physical, emotional, intellectual and social growth of children within the framework deeply rooted in traditional human values. A culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems; have the skills to resolve conflict constructively; know and live by international standards of human rights gender and racial equality; appreciate cultural diversity and respect the integrity of the earth. Such learning cannot be achieved without international, sustained and systematic education for peace (Global Campaign for Peace Education, 1999). Turray (2005) opined that Peace Education enables participants to empower themselves with knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and beliefs

which build cultures of peace, non-violence and sustainability. He added that effective Peace Education enables learners to critically analyze the root causes of violence, wars, conflict and social justice, and develop alternatives to violence.

The existence of peace indicates the absence of both overt and structural violence. According to Akudole (2010) most conflict situations result from structural violence emanating from poverty, discrimination, lack of access to opportunities and the inability to understand the other person's point of view. Whenever two or more people are doing something as a group, conflicts are bound to arise due to individual differences. Peaceful co-existence of the group members depends on their conflict management abilities. Peace Education is both a philosophy and a process that is concerned with the acquisition of knowledge about different manifestations 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 develop the ability to manifest tolerance, the skills for non-violent conflict resolution and the sense of dedication to the establishment of a culture of peace (Akunole 2010).

Peace Education Curriculum

The overriding goal of Peace Education in formal, non-formal education is to develop in the learner the disposition and confidence as agents of peace who can live in harmony with oneself, others and the natural environment as well as promote peace, human rights and democracy in the society (Akudolu 2010). This goal of Peace Education is based on the eight keys of Peace Education emanating from United Nations' resolutions and the Noble Peace Prize Laureates' Manifesto 2000 (Hawke Research Institute, 2010:2) as presented:

- Respect all life: respecting the rights and dignity of each human being
- Non-violence: rejection of violence, obtaining justice by convincing and understanding.
- Sharing : developing attitudes and skills for living together in harmony, putting an end to exclusion and oppression
- Listening to understand: giving everyone a chance to learn and share through the free flow of information.
- Preservation of the planet: making sure that progress and development and good for everyone and for the environment.
- Tolerance and Solidarity: appreciating that people are different and that everyone has something to contribute on the community.

- Equality of man and woman; ensuring an equal place for men and woman in building society.
- Democracy; making decisions by having your say and giving others theirs.

To achieve the goal of Peace Education requires instrumental delivery that is geared towards

Developing in the learners the basic elements of Peace Education and the knowledge, skills and values covered in the eight keys for promoting culture of peace. This will result in the creation of a culture of peace among people. In other words, the application of these eight keys to instruction according to Akudolu (2010) will develop in individual the ability to make peace a way of life and of doing things in the society.

Mainstreaming Peace Education across the curriculum implies the use of peace prone instructional methods and strategies. These are methods and strategies that promote interactive learning processes and they include cooperative group work, peer teaching, problem-solving, discussion, role plays, meditation, consensus building, negotiations, simulation and other learner-centered instructional strategies. Apart from promoting participatory, cooperative and problem-solving abilities in learners, each of these instructional strategies is experimental based. These participatory, instructional methods are used in the teaching of topic whose learning aims relate to knowledge, attitude and skills of peace education. Also when student participate in these type of learning strategies, they listen to one another and this develops in them respect for differences (Akudolu 2010)

Problems of Peace Education

Peace education like any other field of educational opportunities has been faced with so many challenges, some of the noticeable problems includes among others:

- (a) Inadequate knowledge about the concept of peace education as well as its aims and objectives by both the policy makers, members of the general public and government.
- (b) Inadequate funds. Funding of education has been regarded as one of the important resources that are needed to manage the school system at all levels, as such when funds are not sufficient and are not provided at the right time, then the aims and objectives of Peace education and conflict resolution may not be achieved.
- (c) Lack of materials to teach peace education, such as appropriate and comprehensive

curriculum, teaching methods, scheme of work, train teachers.

It is a well-known fact that the curriculum is the base of all school activities, because it is the curriculum that spelt out the method and materials to be used to teach every subject peace and conflict education inclusive, as such peace education was not enough to be taught and inculcate peace culture to our students.

- (d) Lack of trained personnel to teach peace and conflict resolution education in schools: Teachers are the hub for the curriculum, teaching will not take place where there is no qualified and adequate teachers.
- (e) Lack of political will from the government to adopt it as part of the education policy despite the increasing appreciation of its positive impact on the psychosocial behaviour of children who have already benefitted from the programme.

Possible prospects of peace education and conflict resolution

- (a) Government should provide adequate funding and also make sure that the funds were spent judiciously, this is because corruption may destabilize everything if not properly spent.
- (b) The curriculum should be made suitable and relevant to the learner's needs. This will support the students to maintain peaceful coexistence and develop skills of peace building strategies, as such the curriculum should be learner centered instead of becoming teacher centered.
- (c) Government should recruit qualified and trained teachers to teach Peace and conflict resolution education in schools, this implies that they are at the center of the curriculum because they are the implementers of the curriculum as such, they need to be professionals in terms of delivery of the lessons, innovativeness, and capacity to utilize the necessary materials when teaching.
- (d) Through Public Private Partnership engagement, the learners, communities, and other stakeholders will be sensitized and be enlightened on the importance of the Peace and conflict resolution education.
- (e) Peace and conflict resolution education Policy should be revisited and be reformed to cater for the educational needs of the learners, so that social justice, tolerance, patience and love to each other will be inculcated to the

learners for them to desist from engaging into conflicts.

II. CONCLUSION

Peace education activities promote the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will help people either to prevent the occurrence of conflict, resolve conflicts peacefully, or create social conditions conducive to peace. Core values of nonviolence and social justice are central to peace education. Peace education is more focused on resolving the conflict after it has already taken place. Its purpose is to prevent a conflict in advance or promote the development of people and society in a peaceful way, based on the principles of harm, tolerance, equality, respect for social justice and social justice. Peace education can also help students to successfully resolve conflict and harm caused by educational institutions.

Recommendation

- (i) Peace Education should be taught at all levels of education so that youth and adults will be familiar with the skills of conflict resolution, knowledge of peace education and support other individuals or groups of individuals to prevent the occurrence of conflict in the communities or environment.
- (ii) Students and youth in our schools from different location and communities should desist from engaging in drug abuse, which may result into cultism, fighting, thuggery, banditry and other social vices, abstaining from engaging in it will be resulted at a conflict free schools and communities that will enhance peaceful living for educational, social and economic development of our country.
- (iii) Due to technological advancement, the world is now changing, as such ICT and GIS should be properly utilized teaching Peace and conflict resolution education in our schools.
- (iv) Through proper utilization of Public and Private Partnership engagement, adequate funds will be secured, proper Monitoring of schools will be carried out so that aims and objectives of peace and conflict resolution education will be achieved.

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