

**THE ROLE OF EDUCATION IN PROMOTING NATIONAL SECURITY AND
PEACE DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA**

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Abstract

The paper discusses the role of education in promoting national security and peace development in Nigeria. The meaning of security crises in Nigeria was discussed. The reason for security crisis in Nigeria was discussed. The importance of education was generally analyzed based on training and development of human resources through the impartation of appropriate skills, capacities, values, knowledge and attitude which can be used in the transformation of individuals, communities and nations at large. One of the major setbacks to development in Nigeria is insecurity. Education can be used to address the challenges of unemployment and under-employment with its multi-variant and national consequences of insecurity, social unrest, poverty and indiscipline in the society and schools. It is the opinion of the paper that education can provide any nation a long lasting culture of peace. The paper thus, concludes that educational policy making and implementation should be concerned on providing the individuals with national security. Again, national peace can be promoted and guaranteed if the constituent states experience domestic peace built on secured communities.

Keywords: Education, Security, Peace, Development

Introduction

Peace and security are two concepts which are intrinsically linked. Peace can be described as resolution of conflict and the establishment of universal values such as respects for life, human right, liberty, equity and justice (Olaleye, 2014). It means the ability of all components of the population of a country such as Nigeria to lead a decent and healthy life in a safe environment with opportunities for socio-economic educational and cultural development. On the other hand, security according to Yusuf and Babatunde (2009) is the condition which enhances the ability of government, its agencies and its citizens to function without hindrances. Section 14(1) of 1999 constitution of the federal republic of Nigeria capture the importance of security when it states that security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government. Seen this way, ‘‘security becomes a social contract between the state and its citizens, in which the former is expected to protect defend and provide for the latter in the public area’’. Therefore, security is evidently the pillar upon which every meaningful development could be achieved and sustained.

Nigeria in recent times has witness an unprecedented level of insecurity, intra-communal and inter-ethnic clashes, religious violence, kidnapping, armed robbery, assassination, murder and bomb explosion. These crises have been on the increase leading to enormous loss of life and property and general atmosphere of siege and social tension from the people. Reports showed that Nigeria like any other countries in Africa is where peace is severely threatened. Salawu (2001) has identified ethnic tensions and conflicts as one of the major factor hampering the stability and development of Nigeria since independence. For instance, the ethno-religious crises in Plateau state has persisted and implicitly reinforces the problem of indigene/settler dichotomy that seems to lack constitutional remedy. However, the inability of the Nigerian leaders to tackle development challenges, distribute state resources equitably and render good services to the people appear to be one of the causes of ethno-religious violence.

The National Policy of Education should hold the key which can open the door to development components as to increase the quality of human life through an effective and efficient educational system. In essence, education for international understanding provides a framework for understanding and preventing conflicts between nations resulting from discourse of hatred, war and narrow nationalism. Education as a human right was enshrined

in the Universal Declaration of Human Right in 1948, a document that can be rightfully be described as one of the highest pronouncement of our time.

In today's knowledge-driven society, education is perceived as a vaccine that solves all problems. Education therefore, serves as a catalyst for economic well-being, democracy and good governance, social justice, environmental preservation and peace building. According to Agi & Yellowe (2013), education is important to the development of human resources, impartation of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitude. It is the basis for transformation, industrialization, and a high way to global knowledge economy. Relating to security, the authors explained further that education is regarded as a means of achieving culture of peace. It is therefore the understanding of many that education leads to national transformation and development, through reduction in poverty which ensure peace and security.

Education, in its broadest sense is any act or experience that has a formative effect on the mind, character or physical ability of an individual. Principally, education functions as a means of socialization and social control. It helps to encourage the young to develop into good citizens and prepare for employment and productive contributions to society (Ololube; Amaele; Kpolovie; Onyekwere & Elechi, 2012c)

However, Education is not merely training for livelihood but also equipping individuals with the values, skills and attitudes they need to be wholesome persons who live in harmony with other and as responsible citizens. Agi and Yellowe (2013) also supports this when they asserted that the goal of wealth creation or generation, poverty reduction and value re-orientation can only be attained and sustained through an efficient education system which impacts the relevant skills, knowledge, capacities, attitudes and values.

The enterprise of education at its most profound level is transformative. According to peace education writer "education is the instrument for uniting nations or kingdoms, bringing human beings closely together. In many parts of the world civil society suffers because of the situation of violent conflicts and wars. It now becomes necessary to recognise the crucial role of education in building a culture of peace, unity and condemning a situation where education is undermined in order to attack democracy and tolerance. With the call for a decade of education for peace development and national security, Nigeria has a chance to take a fresh look at the underlying role of education itself in creating new directions in society and to test the possibilities for remoulding education systems so as to bring positive change.

Conceptual clarifications:

This paper conceptualises on the following: security, peace and development.

Security:

The concept of security in this context places premium on individuals that embodies elements of human rights, national security and development. David (2006) cited in Igbuzor (2011:2) posited that security is the condition or feeling of safety from harm and danger, the defence, protection and the absence of threats to acquire values. In an objective sense, security measures the absence of threats to acquire values, in subjective sense the absence of fear that such values will be attacked. However the contending perspective that tend to provide the basis for conceptualization of national security is that it has to do with freedom from danger or with threats to a national security is that it has to do with freedom from danger or with threats to nation's ability to protect and develop itself, promote its cherished values and legitimate interests and enhance the well being of its people.

National security in a broad sense implies the absence of threat to life, property and socio economic well being of the people. However, Babangida (2012) views national security as physical protection and defence of our citizens and our festival integrity. It is also the promotion of the economic wellbeing and prosperity of Nigerian in a safe and secure environment that promotes the attainment of our national interests.

Peace:

The concept of peace is defined as the process by which conflict, chaos, disputes, or differences are resolved between two individuals or group of people or from one nation to another. There is a difference between positive and negative peace. Positive peace involves the development of a society in which except for the absence of violence, there is no structural violence or social injustice while negative peace is the absence of large scale physical violence, that is, the absence of condition of war. It could therefore be rightly said that education geared towards forestalling peace could be referred to as peace education. Peace education however, entails the power of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioural changes that will enable children, youth and adult to prevent conflict and violence and to create the conditions conducive for peace (UNICEF, 1999). Peace education has a more proactive approach. Its aim is to prevent a conflict in advance or rather to educate individuals and societies for peace, tolerance, unity, equality, respect for individual and societal differences and social justice.

Development:

The concept of development seems to have been conceived as the outcome of economic growth. The assumption was that economic growth would generate fund for investment and infrastructural development that would guarantee better living condition of people. However, it became evidently clear that economic growth could not sufficiently address the state of unemployment, poverty, disease, hunger, illiteracy and ever increasing crimes and wars. This seems to have necessitated the new thinking and redefinition of development of human centred approach.

Development is now seen as a transformation of the society taking into cognisance the psychological and material factors related to the measurement of human well-being (stiglitz cited in Afekhen, 2004). Ake(2001) has argued that development is multi faceted and indeed centred on man. This view according to Okolie (2009) pointedly improves man's potentials and capacities and subsequently eliminate and/or reduces poverty, penury, inequality, unemployment and generally enhances the condition of human existence and self reproduction.

Development therefore, could be seen as the process of empowering people to maximise their potential and the ability to exploit nature to meet daily human needs (Nwanegbo and Odigbo, 2013). It can also be seen as a process by which quality of human lives and capacity to surmount daily needs are considerably improved.

Dimensions of Security Crisis in Nigeria

There have been several causes of security crisis in Nigeria that pose grave consequences to national development. Firstly is the ethno-religious conflicts that tend to have claim many lives in Nigeria. By ethnic-religious it means a situation where the relationship between members of one ethnic or religious and another of such group in a multi-ethnic and multi religious society is characterised by lack of cordiality, mutual suspicion and fear and a tendency towards violent confrontation(Salawu, 2010). Ethnic and religious affiliations determine who gets what in Nigeria. It is also central and seems to perpetuate discrimination, neglect, oppression, domination, exploitation, victimization, marginalization and nepotism.

The second is the grinding of youth's unemployment. Youth's unemployment seems to have contributed to the rising cases of violent conflict in Nigeria. Unemployment constitutes the total number of people of the economically active population who are without work but available for and seeking work. Unemployment has a severe negative implication of national development in Nigeria as most of its productive force are unemployed. What this

means theoretically is that poverty and unemployment can increase the number of people who are prepared to engage themselves with criminal or illicit activities that would undermine security of the environment.

The third is related to political aspect in Nigeria. The over-zealousness and political desperation by political gladiators to win election or remain in office at all cost has brought about incessant political violence in Nigeria. A good example is former president Obasanjo who publicly decided that the 2007 general elections would be a do or die affair. Such remark does not only endanger political developments but connotes a violent call for everyone to augment political arsenals for the contest.

Education and National Security

National security should be centred on the national education goals, derived from its philosophy. To this extent, education has to be geared towards better human relationship, individual and national unity to ensure that the nation attains the national security. In essence, education is believed to be concerned with the whole life as well as with the details of daily individual living. It is the quality of instruction that will make the child to develop and be equipped, trained and motivated and then taught his responsibilities to the world and the value of the contribution which he can and must make to the group. This is because education is an essential factor in the sustenance of the basic socio-economic condition of youths and adults in the nation.

Education places premium on development and inculcation of the right attitude, values, feelings and national consciousness on the youth. Youths that are adequately informed, educated and have acquired basic social skills in the society cannot be a security threat to the nation instead, they become access to security solution in the country. What this means is that the national policy of education has to evolve an educational curriculum which will be relevant to the country's need. This curriculum is a means through which societal values are translated by the educational institutions into tangible and memorable attestation. For instance, the recent bombing and kidnapping especially in the northern part of Nigeria e.g kidnapping of chibok girls in Borno state and bomb blasts in states such as Yobe, Jos, Kano and Maiduguri have called for the need to integrate peace education into the curriculum of Nigerian basic education.

Education and Peace Development

The educational action for promoting the concept of peace concerns the contents of education and training, educational resource and material, school and university life for young people and adult (Okediji, 2015). A culture of peace must take place in the classroom from an early age. It must continue to reflect in the curriculum at secondary and tertiary education, thus bringing about the development of peace education.

Peace education involves relevance to the immediate environment empowering individuals to achieve a just society in which all rights of every citizen is valued and respected. The major frontiers and aspects of peace education for schools curriculum as identified by the National Council of Educational Research and Training (2006) and UNESCO (2010) are:

- bringing about peace orientation in individuals through education.
- nurturing in students the social skills and outlook needed to live together in harmony.
- reinforcing social justice as envisaged in the constitution.
- the need and duty to propagate a secular culture.
- education as a catalyst for activating a democratic culture.
- the scope for promoting national integration through education.
- education for peace as a lifestyle movement.

Therefore, if peace education is effectively integrated into the Nigerian basic education curriculum, it will bring a lasting culture of peace development in the society. Thus, peace will require both education and sustainable development. The important thing is that human beings in their individuality should be educated to live together, to analyse, to reflect on their uniqueness and become capable to being enriched by diversity. Acting together to learn to live together in a context of respect for cultures and languages that is the role of education in the twenty first century (Barber, 1999)

Conclusion

This paper concluded that human security needs national security because the former can only be promoted and sustained in the atmosphere of inter geopolitical/ zonal peace and stability. Again national peace can only be promoted and guaranteed if the constituent states experience domestic peace built on secured communities. This is where education is needed as is the nexus in building a culture of peace and unity among the multi-faceted ethnic and

religious groups in Nigeria. This forms the basis for the search for national security and peace development in Nigeria.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made for this paper, to improve peace development and national security in Nigeria:

- There is need to ensure the integration of peace education into the educational curriculum in Nigeria.
- The quality of instruction at all levels of the educational system has to be oriented towards inculcating the right type of values that will transform the youths into capable citizens and goals of a culture of peace.
- A spirit of mutual understanding and cooperation is needed to be propagated and encouraged by the universities and the community. This will help in peace development.
- The security sector which comprises the military, the police, the intelligence agencies and the prisons require some restructuring or reform and the need to expose them to peace education.

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