
Re-Focusing Nigerian Education Towards Peace and Security for Behavioural Change of 21st Century Youths

By

PATIENCE O. EMESIABI

*Ignatius Ajuru University of Education
Rumuolumeni, Port Harcourt,
Rivers State*

Abstract

All forms of educational activities are geared towards ensuring the attainment of identified social goals, the fact remains that the quality of the people's life depends on the quality of education given by the society. This paper sought to highlight the concept of education, peace and security, the relationship between education, peace and security. It x-rayed the nature of youths and finally recommended among other things that peace and security education should be intensified in schools to enrich the young minds with qualitative knowledge and attitudes of peace and security to promote safety and peaceful co-existence of Nigerian citizenry.

Keywords: Peace Education, Security and Insecurity.

Youths can easily be distinguished from children and adults. They have peculiar features and characteristics which may be positive or negative in the society. They have sharp memories are energetic and have healthy outlook. They are full of life, fearless, most talented and easily provoked. Ejiogu in Emesiabi (2014) declares that youths are known for their restlessness and rebellious lifestyle. These qualities have made them the most violent in the society. In view of their negative attitudes, it is imperative to enrich their minds with peace and security education to promote peaceful co-existence in the nation.

Globally, more than 1.5 billion youths live in countries affected by insecurity and conflict, majority of them fall within the range of 25- 30 years. For these reasons youths should be involved in policy making and planning but in practice, the meaningful

participation of young people in peace building has been hindered by discourses that overwhelmingly depict youth as victims or villains (Manola De Vos (2015).

Youths should be given a chance to express their opinion and be listened to.

They should not be seen as perpetrators of violence but as peace builders, therefore they should be involved in social activities such as national youth peace movement forum and community peace campaign where their views and contributions will be regarded. This will enhance the peace – building knowledge and skills of youths.

Although most young peace builders create positive impact with minimal resources, it is important to equip them with appropriate skills and attitude needed to become more effective behavioral changes in this 21st century.

In this contemporary world, innovation and changes experienced in education, religion, politics, and economic domains have not been effective in erasing the undesirable behaviors such as rioting, hot temperedness, intolerance and violence displayed by youths in the society, this shows that youths cannot co-exist with expected positive behaviors. This buttresses the need for creating a peace and safety culture based-education. This is important because the world is becoming highly unsafe and less peaceful for both present and future generations. The world is intensively experiencing serious societal strain an environment full of killing and kidnapping without respect for customs and human rights. People in most developing countries are facing cruel intimidation and harassment. The youths who deserve a peaceful and better quality of life are now suffering in the hands of wicked adults. The youths are regarded as the wealth of a country because they are full of positive initiatives and energetic. The youthful age should be known for adaptation of peace and security in the society via the youth. Due to their active nature in any country, their input to any development programme will go a long way in achieving desired objectives.

Education is meant to develop the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains in youths under the auspices of the school. Amie Ogan & Amie Ogan (2018) described education as a tool for a nation's industrialization and all round development that aid individuals to become active participants of their society through its rudiments of character moulding, training, respect for elders, spatial skills, language skills, vocational skills, psychological, emotional and intellectual developments. This definition confirms that education is a mechanism for all round development of an individual. In the same vein, Farooq (2012) maintained that education is a process in which and by which the knowledge, characters and behaviour of human beings are shaped and moulded. This view considers education as a source of knowledge and character formation. The youths are expected to acquire peace education and grow by it and to maintain peace and harmony in the society.

Ishikaku (2016) reported that the purpose of education is basically for the upbringing of the youth in the society to make them functional and useful to themselves and to the society; to this view, peace education should be the basis of the youthful education. Anwan and Saha (2017) declared that education makes a child a right thinker

and a correct decision maker. This view saw education as a source of intensive and critical thinking in order to meet the human's need in the society. Considering this view, education will make a youth to generate peaceful thoughts and behaviours which will enable them to promote safety in the society. This idea is in line with that of Agina – Obu (2016) who supported that all forms of educational activities are geared towards ensuring the attainment of identified social goals. This view shows that peace education will promote nonviolence and educate youths on how to manage conflict without violence, respect all laws and customs and engage in social justice activities.

Anwa and Saha (2014) pointed out that without proper education, the training of human mind is incomplete. This means that an individual becomes complete in the working world only when he has been educated. In its proper sense, education plays a prominent role in developing the human mind and in establishing him adequately in the society especially in this era of tribal and religious conflict, kidnapping and Herds men clashes. Peace education will enforce an atmosphere of peace and violence free which will enhance unity in the nation. Rabidas (2014) in his own view, declared that education is the key instrument in bringing social change in any society. This confirms that peace education is necessary for the behavioural change of youths and children in this 21st century.

Concept of Peace Education

Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes skills and behaviour. Tinaya declared that it is a transformative response to major societal challenge. Wikipedia sees peace education as a process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the natural environment. Peace is an attitude that is needed for everyone to live unhurt in the society. Educating an individual will equip him or her with enabling skills to live peacefully and productively in a dynamic society. This shows that peace education is necessary to promote security and unity in the country. Literally, peace is calmness and tranquility a time when there is no war or the state of having no war or conflict; it is freedom from public disturbance or disorder, public security, law and order, freedom from disagreement or quarrels, harmony, concord; it is an undisturbed state of mind, absence of mental conflict, serenity. www.yourdictionary.com June 8th 2019.

The purpose of incorporating peace education into the curriculum at primary, and secondary school level is to raise the awareness of peace as a strong idea for children to aspire to; this will help to better the social environment in the nation's school. Peace education will motivate the pupils to take responsibility of their own behavior and actions, to handle conflict resolution and make good sustainable choices in their everyday environment in order to increase peace coexistence (wemakepeace.wordpress.com).

Aims of Peace Education

Some of the aims of peace education are as follow:

1. To foster changes in order to make the world a better and more human place.
2. To develop values and skills to assist the students in stirring for fullness of life.
3. To help students/youths develop a rich vision of peace to work for a viable global society.

Since youths cannot co-exist with expected positive behavior, there is need to equip them with useful peace building experiences. The primary aims of these buildings are as follows:

4. Appreciate Peaceful Coexistence

People in the society should appreciate and imbibe the habit of living together. This will promote love and unity in the society. Creating peaceful coexistence will generate room for progress and success in all human endeavours. It will erase fear of conflict and disagreement. Peace education will help Nigeria citizens to have respect for one another, the laws of the country and the societal norms.

5. Provision of Security Alert

Different security gadgets are taught in line with peace education in order to equip the youths and other peace agitators on how to manage conflict and chaotic situations in the community and country at large. Peace educators discourage the use of arms and other dangerous weapons at home and in school.

6. Enhance Ethnical Understanding

War often occurs as a result of differences in understanding, so agreeing with other people's culture is life-threatening towards upholding peace. Disagreement causes war which makes people to embark into destruction of people's properties that worth billions of naira. Peace education if well initiated will imbue in youths and children the ability, skills and knowledge needed to discourage war in order to maintain peace.

Benefits of Peace Education

Maintenance of peace and harmony in the society will bring improvement in human lifestyle. The attitude of fighting and quarreling will be eradicated. Fear for one another will be eliminated. The killing and kidnapping will stop, shooting and rioting will be discouraged. The youths and children who are the leaders of tomorrow will take up their responsibilities as peace builders. There will be violence free relationship; then the society will be safe and secured for all. Then the military organizations will be agents of peace. Peace keeping, peacemaking and peace building will be the slogan of the people.

Concept of Security

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria specifically states that “The security and welfare of the people shall be the primary purpose of government”. Hettne (2010) defined security “as a reasonable level of predictability at different levels of the social system, from local communities to the global level”. (Aliyu, 2012) conceived and present security as a state of reduced or contained threats and tension in which the stability of a state is not in an imminent danger of disruption from within and without. Considering this view, security entails peaceful and violence free society. From the words of Nwanegbo and Odigbo (2013) the concept of ‘security’ is a crosscutting, and multi-dimensional which has, over the last century, been the subject of great debate. In view of this, the problem of insecurity has lasted for decades and therefore needs urgent attention. According to Anyadike (2013) in order to possess national security, a nation needs to possess economic security, energy security, environmental security, etc. Security threats involve not only household enemies such as robbers and kidnappers but also non-state adversaries such as the Boko Haram, international corporations and nongovernmental organizations.

From the view of Omoyibo and Akpomera (2013), security is a concept that is prior to the state, and the state exists in order to provide that concept. Security is the prime responsibility of the state (Thomas Hobbes, 1996).

According to Ewetan, (2013) Security however, can be described as stability and continuity of livelihood (stable and steady income), predictability of daily life (knowing what to expect), protection from crime (feeling safe), and freedom from psychological harm (safety or protection from emotional stress which results from the assurance or knowing that one is wanted, accepted, loved and protected in one’s community or neighbourhood and by people around. It focuses on emotional and psychological sense of belonging to a social group which can offer one protection). This description structured the concept of security into four dimensions. However, these dimension can be weaved together to give a composite definition of security as the protection against all forms of harm whether physical, economic or psychological. He added that in order to amidst the deteriorating security situation in the country, Nigeria is also confronted with daunting developmental challenges which pose serious threat to socio-economic development. These developmental challenges include endemic rural and urban poverty, high rate of unemployment, debilitating youth unemployment, low industrial output, unstable and deteriorating exchange rate, high inflation rate, inadequate physical and social infrastructure, very large domestic debt, and rising stock of external debt.

Bankong-Obi (2012) stated that there is no doubt that the major challenge of Nigeria’s national security is the containment of diverse manifestations of violence spearheaded by various unknown groups. The major group in contemporary Nigeria that has stretched the resources, expertise, patience and even the competence of Nigeria’s security apparatuses to the limit, both individually and collectively, is the Boko Haram

sect and their sponsors. The sheer number of deaths arising from bomb attacks orchestrated by the Boko Haram far outstrips any other cause of death in Nigeria, including epidemics.

Agaptus, (2013) instructively stated that one of the shortcomings of Nigeria's security issues is its pro-realist orientation that accords the deployment of force. Thus, the strategy of choice among national security agencies is the use of force in various guises to national security issues and challenges in Nigeria. The government's supposed superior force has not rolled back the menace of insecurity which creates the impression that the government is not doing enough to secure the people. This mindset led Bankong-Obi (2012) to attribute Nigeria's intractable security challenges to government's apathy towards exterminating the terror group and inefficiency on the part of the security agencies. Today, the country's nascent democracy is being tested by rampant crime and an unprecedented campaign of terror such that in the south, civil unrest threatens safety a stability, to the east; gangs who kidnap expatriates for ransom lie in wait on the roads, in bars, and cities; and to the north, the Islamic terrorist group called Boko Haram is growing both in number and brutality hence the group has posed brazen challenges to the government and issued the ultimatum "leave or die" to Christians living in the northern Nigeria and confidence that the government can protect the people is at all-time low (Agaptus, 2013). According to Alozieuwa (2012), the challenge posed by the Boko Haram group in Nigeria is not only about the cruelty of either its terror operations, or the sect's avowed mission to impose Islamic law on the country, but about the confusion regarding the exact cause(s) of the violence. However, other scholars have discussed intensively on the problem of Boko haram in the country; the conclusion of the whole matter boils down on brutal killing, rapping, and kidnapping. In view of this, Boko Haram has constituted itself as a major threat to Nigeria as a country.

Origin and Causes of Insecurity in Nigeria

According to Ali (2013) the fear of insecurity in Nigeria is on the increase and this has been compounded by the rising waves of terrorism since the country returned to democratic rule in 1999. Violent crime has a root and history in Nigeria, and could be traced back to the period from 1960 to 1970. At independence in 1960 a federal structure was imposed on Nigeria by the British.

Insecurity challenges can be traced to the early years of military rule when large quantities of arms were imported into the country for the use of the military during and after the Nigerian civil war, some of which got into the hand of the civilians. Soon after the civil war these arms were used by civilians and ex-military men for mischievous purposes such as armed robbery. There was also the army of unemployed youths some of whom lost their job during the civil war. The level of insecurity assumed dangerous dimensions in the prolonged years of military rule beginning from 1970 during which people procure arms and light weapons for personal defense. Some of these arms and

light weapons got into the hands of unemployed youths who used them for deviant purpose. While some researchers attribute youth violence to peer group influence and other psychological factors associated with growing up, others emphasized the impact of political and economic factors such as ethnic agitation, political agitation, unemployment, Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) as triggers of violent reaction among the youth.

Way out of Insecurity in Nigeria

The need for security in the country is the basis of peace and security education. This is then imperative in order to educate the children and youths on the importance of peaceful coexistence and violence free atmosphere. Having known the danger involved in insecurity, it is therefore needful for all hands to be on deck to tackle the problem of insecurity in the country. Some solutions to the insecurity in Nigeria are as follows:

1. Proper Leadership Training

Considering this problem, Nigerians should train up their children and youths in the way they will be socially, economically and physically beneficial to themselves and to the country. In other words, it is imperative that we have leaders who are adequately trained to live harmoniously with others and rule with qualities that will promote peace and development in the country. The process of developing visionary leadership can be challenging, but however, it can be overcome as Kufour (2012) suggested “by using institutions of the Nigerian constitution as a nursery ground to produce leaders with national outlook and with a missionary zeal to transform the nation”.

2. Adequate Administration/Governance

According to Oluwarotimi (2012), good governance is the panacea for the insecurity challenge in Nigeria. She stated that the war against insecurity would be won only by raising governance standards that is, generating the idea of the good governance within the three tiers of government. A situation where the governing councils are responsible and accountable to the people. Following her view, security engagement cannot be separated from good governance. However, headed that good governance is a function of effective, visionary, transparent, trustworthy and credible political leadership whose driving force is an improvement in the collective wellbeing of the citizens through well-conceived, effectively implemented economic policies and human development programmes.

3. Socio-economic development

Socio-economic development can be perceived as the central focus for peace and security in Nigeria. In the view of Kufour (2012), the challenge in solving the insecurity problem in Nigeria is to accelerate the pace of development to create employment for

the unemployed, provide scholarship skills for youths and create functional business organizations to improve the economy of the nation.

4. Equipping the country with adequate security gadgets

Adequate security gadgets are necessary to tackle the insecurity problem in the country considering the issue of Boko Haram that has lasted for years, the Fulani Herds men and the issue of kidnapping. All these can be tackled if adequate security gadgets will be put in place. From the views of Oluwarotimi, (2012) who supported that all inclusive combination of methods that would not only break their communication and interactive network, but also disarm them of resources by tracking their information inflow and resource mobility through higher technology that can also help to locate their base, their sponsors and intelligence power houses and systems (intelligence sources), identifying and isolating them for easy pick.

Conclusion

The country's educational system remains the basis for societal transformation. Peace and security education, if adopted fully into Nigerian curriculum will bring about national security and peaceful coexistence among Nigerian citizenry. For this purpose, immediate attention should be given to peace and security education at all levels of education in order to imbue peaceful skills, values, attitude and deep knowledge of security strategies in 21st century children and youths.

Recommendation

Based on the fore goings, the following recommendations were profound:

1. Education is an instrument for societal and national transformation; to this end, peace and security education should be treated adequately in the three tiers of education in order to create solid awareness of the importance of peace and security in the country.
2. Parents and guardians should imbue the habit of peaceful coexistence in their children so that they will grow and live by it.
3. The military authorities should be fully equipped to support peaceful and safe environment.
4. The government should provide avenue to enrich the minds of children and youths with peace and security education to promote peaceful co-existence in the nation.

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Patience .O. Emesiobi

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