
Refocusing Secondary Education: A Way Forward for Peace and National Security in Nigeria

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Abstract

Communal, tribal and religious conflicts, terrorism, insurgency, wanton civil and politically motivated killings, armed banditry/robbery and kidnapping have ravaged the peace of Nigeria in the past two decades. Nigerians live in fear for an unpredictable tomorrow. This has gradually dampened the euphoria of civil and public servants and business men who are uncertain of their safe return from work to their homes. These orchestrated social upheavals which have political undertone must be nipped at the bud for a tranquil Nigerian state hence the need to refocus some aspects of secondary education curriculum in social studies, Christian religious studies, Islamic studies and civic education, to have modules on peace and security. Peace and security education should be enshrined in the West African Examination and National Examination Councils syllabi. This is with the aim of redirecting the mind of students toward peaceful coexistence with neighbours and eschewing all forms of evil devices detrimental to the peace of a nation. Recommendations made among others include: peace and security education should have practical classes like the core sciences to drive home required

Key words: Refocusing, Secondary Education, Peace, Security.

The term peace is a great asset to the development of nations of the world. It connotes calmness, harmony and tranquility. Ikejiani-Clark and Ani (2009) described peace as one of humanities greatest value; where meaning is multilateral and multidisciplinary. Peace was defined “as a state of mind in concourse with serenity, a state of harmony, tranquility, concord, and balance of equilibrium of powers (Ibid,; 3). They were of the view that peace has to do with the citizens mindset and perception of how they see active measures by government in securing life, liberty and property. This implies that citizens expectation is that government has the prerogative to secure lives, properties and liberate them from uncertainties of life for the emergence of a peaceful state.

Similarly, security encompasses the activities involved in protecting a country, building or person against attack and danger (Hornby, 2016). It is a state of freedom from perceived danger or threat to life. According to Agbonika and Agbonika (2013) security can be said to be a state of being or existence that is free from danger, fear, threat, anxiety and uncertainty. Security can also be defined as a state of being free from danger or threat (www.lexico.com). It can be dichotomized into internal and external security, especially when national security is involved. National security refers to when a nation is being free from danger, fear, violence and discordance. To Robinson, Obayori and Kingsley (2014), national security can be discussed in two forms namely; internal security and external security. In their opinion, internal security is the act of keeping peace within the territory of an independent nation by upholding the national law and defending internal security threats. On the contrary, external security is how a country’s security is affected by a foreign policy and the nature of the geo-political circumstances surrounding it.

Peace and security are qualities that a country must possess to attain National development. National development is the ability of a country or countries to improve the social welfare of the people through the provision of quality education, potable water, transportation, infrastructure, medical care etcetera (www.slide.share.net...). Nigeria is devoid of peace and national security as a result of security challenges emanating from terrorism, militancy, insurgency, banditry, armed robbery, cattle rustling, kidnapping, oil bunkering, illegal mining of solid minerals, vandalisation of pipelines and electric cables and most recently Fulani herdsmen attack. These social upheavals tend to escalate by the day, leaving citizens in fear and abject poverty which characterize gross underdevelopment, in a land full of bright opportunities for her citizenry; being endowed with natural resources and human capital. This unfortunate

scenario leaves dire consequences upon the Federal Government as it is handicapped in providing the necessary social amenities for a teeming population; thus exacerbating hunger, poverty, diseases and unemployment.

Government's intervention to quell security challenges in order to restore peace has not yielded the expected results, thus the paper examined refocusing secondary education with an intent of having some lasting solutions to peace and security challenges through reviewing of the secondary school curriculum; adding peace and security formations to the school programme; creating avenues for National, State and Local Government sporting activities; organizing peace and security workshops; seminars and conferences among others.

Governments Intervention in Curbing Security Challenges for National Development.

Security can be referred to as social safety or public safety simply because it addresses the risk of harm occasioned by intentional criminal acts such as assault, vandalism or burglary. In clearer terms, Nzewi (2014) defined security as:

The process or means, physical or human, of delaying, preventing and otherwise protecting against external or internal, defects, dangers, loss, criminals, and other individuals or actions that threaten, hinder or destroy an organisation's steady state and deprive it of its intended purpose for being.

Ogoh (2008) categorized security into different forms viz human safety, national safety, economic safety and environmental safety. This infers that a country that is devoid of internal and external imminence of danger and fear of the unknown is said to have national security. National security can also be said to be a condition whereby a country is free from any form of fear or threat to its peace, stability and progress (Mohammed, 2007). Mohammed (2007) further reiterated that in the event of any threat or actual attack, such a country has the ability to absorb the shock, get over it and respond effectively to restore public confidence in the state and its institutions. This may be the reason why nations fortify their armories with sophisticated armaments to protect their countries from inevitable security challenges.

The Federal Government in her endeavour to forestall criminality in the country has had several military operations in conjunction with the Nigeria Police Force, the Regional Multinational Joint Task Force, the Civil Defence Corps, State Security Service and the Federal Road Safety Commission. Such collaborations include Operation Puff-Adder in Zamfara State (nigeriaobserver.com); Operation Lafiya Dole; Operation Gama Aiki; Operation Python Dance; Operation Crocodile Smile; Operation Tsera Teku, Operation Awatse, Operation Sharan Daji/Operation Harbin Kunama, Operation Mesa; Operation Crackdown; Operation Safe Corridor; Operation Zenda; Operation Safe haven, Operation Delta Safe; Operation Ruwan Wuta etcetera. These joint operations were aimed at bringing to an end terrorism, Boko Haram insurgency,

fleeing terrorists to neighbouring West African countries, kidnapping, crime wave of criminals at festive periods, vandalism of crude oil infrastructure/facilities, piracy in the Niger Delta, armed robbery, vandalisation of ships and oil and gas installations, pipeline vandalisation, armed banditry, cattle rustling and ethno-religious conflicts. From the afore it can be deduced that the Nigerian Government through her security agencies have taken some pragmatic steps to control insecurity challenges in the bid to secure lives and properties in the country.

However, some of the insecurity challenges were blamed on high rate of abject poverty epitomized by abysmal living conditions of most people in Nigeria. In spite of the above, young people and adults cannot take laws into their hands and continue to unleash mayhem to citizens of the country. The government must rise to these challenges based on the UNDP definition of human security which has two basic functions namely freedom from fear and freedom from want (humansecurity.course.info).

The UNDP 1994 Report defined human security as safety from chronic threats such as hunger, disease and repression as well as protection from sudden and harmful disruptions in the patterns of daily life - whether in homes, jobs or communities. The latter part of this definition is what the paper seeks to address (hrd.undp.org). Thus, human security in the light of the paper is protection from unplanned, not envisioned disruptions that are injuries to individual's/groups daily life either at home, work or within communities. From 1999 till date Nigeria has been bedeviled with diverse forms of insecurity challenges. To a large extent these staggering challenges tend not to have effective lasting solution. Hence the need to adopt other options of solving this "hydra-headed monster" that has systematically crept in to devour both youths and the elderly; leaving people in fear and perpetual torment in their homes, at work, on the feeder roads, within towns and villages as well as the highways.

Concept of Peace Education

Peace education is a crucial part of education which Nigeria cannot afford to neglect. Its curriculum is not new as it is geared towards empowering students with knowledge, attitudes, values and behaviours to live in line with themselves, others and their environment (Harris & Morrison, 2013). Similarly, Opoto, Gerson and Wordside (2010) defined peace education as a process of moral inclusion. In the view of Page (2019) peace education should be thought as:

Encouraging a committeemen to peace, as a settled disposition and enhancing the confidence of the individual as an individual agent of peace; as informing the student on the value of peaceful and just social structures and working to uphold or develop such social structures, as encouraging the student to love the world and to imagine a

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peaceful future; and as caring for the student and encouraging the student to care for others (<https://www.youtube.com>).

Johnson and Johnson (2006) on a final note asserted that peace education teaches individuals the attitudes, values and behavioural competencies needed to resolve conflicts without violence and to build, maintain mutually beneficial attitude and harmonious relationships. In other words, peace education is directed towards good behavioural modifications which are apt for conflict resolution. Nigeria at this point of her history and nascent democracy is in dire demand for peace and security to chart a novel course for economic, social and political developments.

Bodine and Crawford in Mbonu (2013) proposed four approaches for promoting peace education in high schools. These include curriculum approach, mediation programme, peaceable classroom approach and peaceable school approach. The curriculum approach entails designing a curriculum on the principles and skills of non-violence and teaching its contents as a separate course to be taken by students in addition to their existing courses.

The mediation approach entails training a number of students within the school setting to provide neutral third party facilitation services to their peers. The process is found to have great results. Another approach is the peaceable classroom approach. It allows the infusion of conflict management principles and skills into different subject areas in their different departments. Lastly, the peaceable school approach creates room for the entire school to benefit from the teaching of peace principles and skills.

Refocusing Secondary Education for Peace and Security

Refocusing entails reordering what is perceived not to have an expected result, a given situation for greater results. The Merriam-Webster's Dictionary defined it as, to change the emphasis or direction of something (www.merriam-webster.com..); while the Cambridge Dictionary defined it as, to put in more effort into particular activities in the belief that you will make a company more successful (dictionary.cambridge.org..). From the dictionary meaning, it can be deduced that refocusing secondary education entails synergizing not just the efforts of government through her security agencies, but in conjunction with the secondary school system.

Peace and security is needed for a country to have social, economic, and political growth which are key to national development. In relation to the afore national security seeks to control crime rate, advance genuine development, improve the welfare, wellbeing and life of every citizen (Oyeshola, 2005). One way of achieving national peace and security in Nigeria is by refocusing secondary education. This entails secondary schools having a synergy with the existing plans of security agencies to combat crime through the school curricular, West African Examination Council (WAEC) and National Examination Council (NECO) syllabi, the National Anthem and

Pledge, Peace and Security Class Formations, School Debates, National Peace and Security School inter and Intra-Mural Sports, National Secondary School Sports Festival, Peace and Security Workshops, Seminars and Conferences and Formation of Peace and Security Clubs.

The School Curricular

The school curricular is expected to reflect the goals of basic education and senior secondary education as enshrined in the National Policy on Education (FRN, 2013) where emphasis was laid on peace and security of a nation. This can be deduced from the areas that include to: inculcate values and raise morally upright individuals capable of independent thinking, and who appreciate the dignity of labour; inspire national consciousness and harmonious co-existence irrespective of differences in endowment, religion, ethnic and socio-economic background and provide opportunities for the child to develop manipulative skills that will enable the child function effectively in the society within the limits of the child's capacity. The senior secondary education otherwise referred to as post basic education also had similar objectives to ensure peace and security. They include to: provide entrepreneurial, technical and vocational job specific skills for self-reliance, and for agricultural, industrial, commercial and economic development, foster patriotism, and national unity, with an emphasis on the common ties inspite of our diversity and raise morally upright and well adjusted individuals who can think independently and rationally, respect the views and feelings of others and appreciate the dignity of labour.

Social Studies, Christian Religious Studies, Islamic Studies and Civic Education at the Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary levels should include the afore stated values for national peace and security. Teachers of Christian Religious Studies and Islamic studies should emphasis godly traits to be imbibed by students. For instance, the Holy Bible enjoins Christians "to follow peace with all men and holiness without which no man shall see the Lord" (Hebrews 12:14). Again, Christians were warned against indolence thus, "If any would not work, neither should he eat (2 Thessalonians 3:10b). These values when learnt in school will enhance societal improvement in the areas of peace and security; as an idle mind is the devil's workshop. Similarly, as Islam is advocated as a religion of peace, it should exhibit peace in all ramifications.

Manipulative skills are entrepreneurial skills that should be acquired by students to enable them become job and wealth creators rather than job seekers. Subjects such as Basic Science, Agricultural Science, Introductory Technology, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, Food and Nutrition, Clothing and Textile, Home Management and Technical Drawing are viable subjects that could enhance students with the needed skills for their social and economic empowerment. Teachers handling

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these subjects should buttress the practical aspects of the subjects so that it affords students the needed competencies for the future. A student that has a skill and moral values to develop him socially and economically would not prefer to become a kidnapper, terrorist, armed robber nor an oil bunkerer.

Inclusion of Peace and Security Modules in WAEC and NECO Syllabi

The West African Examination Council and National Examination Council Syllabi serve as guides to students preparing for the Senior School Certificate Examinations in West Africa and Nigeria respectively. They are detailed and organised in such ways that afford candidates preparing for these examinations opportunity to achieve success. Hence it is advocated that peace and security education should form part of these syllabi.

Module 1 for SS 1 should include *Definition of peace and peace education; *History of peace education – its roots, key thinkers and theorists of peace education (giving indigenous examples), trends in peace education; *Critical thinkers; *Peace education thinkers – The Lord Jesus Christ, Maria Montessori, and other indigenous peace thinkers (General Yakubu Gowon Rtd, Dr. Goodluck Jonathan etcetera); *Negative peace and positive peace – Definitions and short notes; *Peace education as transformation practice under the six elements: spiritual under pinning, informal education in community value system, globalized perspectives, participatory learning, diversity and indigenous practice; *Non-violence – Definition, key figures in non-violent resistance movements, Martin Luther King, Junior and other key figures in non-violent resistant movements in different localities in Nigeria.

Module 2 for SS2 should include the following subtopics: *Cultures of peace and War (Note differences); * Framework for culture of peace; *Education for peace; *Critical peace education; *Disarmament education; *Human rights education; and *Global citizenship education and proponents.

Module 4 for SS3 should include the following subtopics: *Multicultural education; *Gender and peace education; *Environmental education; *Conflict resolution education; *Futures education; *Peace education in practical terms and attributes of a peace educator.

These three modules are to imbue in students the values of moral uprightness, dignity of labour, harmonious co-existence inspite of ethno-religious or tribal affiliations, national consciousness, integration and unity among the youths. The teaching of peace and security education will also reawaken the spirit of entrepreneurship especially when both examining bodies engage students in both practical and theory examinations.

Utilization of the National Anthem and Pledge for National Peace and Security

The National Anthem and Pledge should be sang and said three times within the school period of 8am and 2pm. The three periods should be : at the morning assembly; before proceeding for long break and at the point of departure from school.

The National Anthem

Arise, O compatriots, Nigeria's call obey
To serve our fatherland
With love and strength and faith
The labour of our heroes past
Shall never be in vain
To serve with heart and might
One nation bound in freedom, peace and unity.
Oh God of creation, direct our noble cause
Guide our leaders right
Help our youth the truth to know
In love and honesty to grow
And living just and true
Great lofty heights attain
To build a nation where peace and justice shall reign.

The National Pledge

I pledge to Nigeria, my country
To be faithful, loyal, and honest
To serve Nigeria with all my strength
To defend her unity
And uphold her honour and glory
So help me God (www.nigeriagalleria.com).

The lyrics of the National Anthem and Pledge are to buttress the values of hardwork, honesty, peace, justice and unity amongst others in students and cause them to eschew evil in all its ramification.

Peace and Security Class Formations

Peace education is the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills, and behaviors to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the natural environment (en.m.wikipedia.org). Peace and security class formation is to enable each class teacher to teach his/her students aspects of peace and security that is geared towards giving students a robust knowledge of what peace and security are? And how to use negotiation, dialogue, effective communication, critical

thinking, collaboration and problem solving skills to resolve challenges rather than resort to strife or violence.

School Debates

School debates should be held periodically nationwide as an avenue of engaging youths to believe in peace and security of lives and properties. This kind of enlightenment programme is to foster peace among the youths and cause them to engage in meaningful economic ventures in and out of school. Such engagements will further harness the resources the country is endowed with for an equitable, egalitarian society that has a bright future for her citizenry. Given that Nigeria is a home to one-fifth of Africans and a leading nation in West Africa having 75 million of her population as youths under 18 years of age (www.eroparl...).

States' Peace and Security School Intra-Mural, Inter-mural and National Secondary School Sports Festivals

Sports is another veritable tool for building peace. Its use in secondary schools in Nigeria is apt because of preponderance of young people with enormous energy waiting for useful outlets in the country. Sports can be used to exemplify tolerance, promote peace, cooperation, respect, understanding, discipline, fairness and teamwork in a country as Nigeria. Sports is known as a universal language which is understood by all races, culture, tribes, ethnic groups and religious divide. The reason being that it permeates all boundaries to ensure oneness particularly when an interest group wins a game. The exemplary traits of sports as listed above should be encouraged in individual state's interhouse and intramural sports and national secondary school sports festivals to bring about lasting peace and security in Nigeria.

The Peace Initiative Network (PIN) and the Generations For Peace (GFP) have decided to utilize sports for empowering communities in Nigeria in the following groups: Indigenes and settlers, Muslims and Christians, as well as all ethnic groups. According to the group, they use sports to let people understand and appreciate each other's beliefs, values and way of life better, leading to tolerance, harmonious and peaceful Nigeria (www.peaceinsight.org).

Peace and Security Workshops, Seminars and Conferences

Teachers, Vice Principals and Principals of schools must be engaged in peace and security workshops, seminars and conferences. These are avenues where teachers can collaborate with each other on how to teach modules on peace and security in class sessions to bring about a social change in the attitudes of students from volatile zones of crime in Nigeria. These programmes could be organised quarterly, bi-annually, or annually to achieve a peaceful and secured state.

Conclusion

Peace and security are two qualities that a country must deliberately strive to achieve. This is because the non-prevalence of peace and security averts trade relations and foreign investors to more peaceful and secure countries, thus impoverishing the citizens in a depressed economy. Security challenges further exacerbate underdevelopment of a country, the reason for which all hands must be on deck to exterminate or bring to the barest minimum the horror of terrorism, insurgency and other social vices in Nigeria. In the bid to overcome the aforementioned security challenges, secondary education should be refocused through inclusion of peace and security as a subject and topic in some subjects that make-up the school curriculum; formation of peace and security class formations and school clubs; introduction of national peace and security secondary school sports, intra and inter mural secondary school sports are avenue of addressing peace and security challenges for national development.

Recommendations

Peace and security cannot be maintained by security agencies alone, therefore recommendations were made as follows:

1. Peace and security education should be included in the WAEC and NECO syllabi and made compulsory for all students sitting for the external examinations; in order to surmount the insecurity challenges in Nigeria.
2. Secondary schools in Nigeria should adopt the peaceable classroom approach, curriculum approach, mediation approach, peaceable classroom approach, and peaceable school approach in cultivating and promoting peace culture among students who as part of the society become ambassadors of peace and national security.
3. Peace and security education should be taught in Social Studies, Christian Religious Studies, Islamic Studies and Civic Education in both Junior and Senior Secondary Schools; to drive home required lessons of national integration, unity, peace, fairness and security of lives and properties for harmonious living among different tribes, race and creed.
4. School debates, national peace and security school intra and inter mural sporting activities; and national secondary school sports festivals should be organised quarterly, bi-annually or annually to engage secondary school students meaningfully in cognitive and psycho-motor skills for the purpose of fostering national peace and security in Nigeria.
5. Formation of peace and security clubs in schools should be encouraged.
6. Peace and security workshops, seminars, and conferences should be organised for both students and teachers quarterly, bi-annually or annually to create awareness for national peace and security.

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