

# IMPACT OF EDUCATION ON PEACE AND SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

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## **Abstract**

*Nigeria has reached an educational cross-road, bedeviled with one crises or the other that demands a change in direction, change in our understanding, and acceptance of what educational standard and quality are. The only thing that can bring peace and sustainable development in Nigeria is quality education that will foster desirable impact, and change of attitudes of our people. That change required, is the pragmatic approach. Development cannot take place in a situation where there is no peace. Religious leaders have a big role to play in ensuring that peace reigns supreme in this country. Environmental hazards is one of the factors that is considered to be responsible for slow pace of development because of its threats. For these reasons, all the stake-holders including NGOs should join hands together to prevent future occurrence of environmental degradation.*

It is generally agreed that education is a process that helps to develop the whole human being physically, mentally, morally and socially. Nigeria has adopted Western Education as an instrument par excellence, believing that it is the cornerstone for effective national development with a general aim of inculcating the spirit of patriotism, brotherliness and love for peaceful co-existence. Ojaleye (1998) defined education as a tool to uplift the underprivileged, the marginalized, the migrants and other special groups within the society.

Since our discussion is centered on peace let us define the term 'peace'. Peace is defined by Hornby (2000) as a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country. Peace education seeks not only to continue researches into ways of fostering peace but to make the results of these researches the object of popular education. Peace education has the potential of helping us become better human beings. The main objective of peace education is to keep maintaining a reasonable level of humanness in the society through the education of new entrants to an already

humanized society. In order to inculcate peace education into children, there is need for the establishment of peace education as a discipline to be taught from primary school up to tertiary institutions.

This paper intends to discuss on the following major headings: Quality education, the role of Christian education, the objectives of Christian education as regards peace and sustainable development, Education and moral training, religious managers as instrument of peace in Nigeria and environmental hazards as it affects peace and security, and finally politics in Nigeria.

### **Quality Education**

According to Uyanga (1995), the word quality is derived from a Greek word “qualitas” used by Plato and Aristotle to establish a distinction between two things in respect of their features. There are used for work pick out attributes of people (usually good attributes) quality of mind and character such as independence and honesty.

A quality educational system relates to its pre-eminence and special features that makes it distinct from other forms of education. Hence quality is tied to features that are thought to be of immense importance and value to the society. For instance, from the layman’s point of view, a quality knife is one which is sharp and durable, hence serviceable while for a woman a quality wrapper is one of durable texture and design. For one to determine a thing of quality its judgment must be used on a set standard. In education too, quality could be judged from an assessment of the products of education in terms of the societal concept of an educated man, intelligent, honesty and hard work. Education is a process that generates desirable change in human beings, changes that make for better, self-understanding, confidence, acceptance of others and their view points.

### **Progress and Societal Changes**

This is in line with Dewey (1916) in which he described education as a means of attaining an acceptable living status with others. Quality education is expected to bring forth in recipients self-realization and national economic sufficiency, effective citizenship, national unity and civil responsibility. There are many ways of promoting quality education in Nigeria but the easiest and most neglected instrument is the empowerment of individuals and groups. The standard of our education in some aspects is falling gradually because it has no quality due to its inability to meet the needs of the set objectives.

### **Education as a Means of Empowerment**

Education in the context of social science is described as a tool to uplift the underprivileged and other special groups within the society. Example of a special group

## ***Impact of Education on Peace and Sustainable Development***

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are the women. Education makes them better mothers and improve their relationship with their spouses. It is therefore believed that education is an important tool for the achievement of social justice and equity.

### **The Role of Christian Education on Peace and Sustainable Development**

The concept of Christian Education denotes “Connected with Christians”. Let us attempt to define the term education once more. Denga (1993) defined Education as an on-going process that facilitates the learning and acquisition of theoretical and practical skills that equip mankind to utilize the environment effectively in life as well as for the development of society (p.20). It therefore means that education is a process that gives life to a society. Education aims at the development of a total person that is his intellectual ability skills to increase his productive capacity, the development of his character, his psychological adjustment and finally his emotional balance. It should be noted that mere acquisition of bookish knowledge without good conduct does not bring peace to an individual or the society.

Right now there are some critics who are anxious to throw some comments or questions concerning religious practices. Yes it is true that the Gospel has been preached for so many years now, but still, we find that there is no peace in the world. This has raised some dust as to whether the Religious leaders are not living up to expectations or the church is no longer performing her divine functions. There has been reported cases of Religious crises in Nigeria between the Muslims and Christians. The question is, what are the underlying factors that are responsible for this ugly situation? Some of these factors includes: Religious politic, ethnic rivalry which has been causing disunity between Christians and Muslims. The most affected areas are Jos, Kano, Kaduna. Other areas not directly connected with religious crises are Delta region, Lagos State, the list is endless.

### **Objectives of Christian Education as Regards Peace and Sustainable Development**

The aims of Christian Education include:

1. To develop in the students the needed skills and provide them with the means of earning their livelihood being controlled by moral values.
2. To enable the Christian church perform her full functions in the society.
3. To bring learners to live godly lives with the sole aim of having the fear of God in their minds.

The only Social Agent that can change or reform an individual is Religion (church) if people are prepared to change their attitudes for better.

### **Education and Moral Training**

Moral education is a strong base for the attainment of desired goals to education in a country but recent development in Nigeria do not seem to reduce this aspect of education as Adamu (2002) argued that:

*Education in this country has become impersonal and the management of education is directed more at cost devices rather than at providing education for useful living. Rote learning has replaced intelligent understanding of what is being taught: examination malpractice has become the order of the day, over-crowded and unfurnished classrooms have become the characteristic features of our school system (p.170).*

Although Nigeria has made tremendous strides in the expansion of education but still, it is doubtful if the same thing can be said about the quality of products of the educational system, quality in this sense is not with reference to literacy and academic attainments but quality as may be judged by one's moral, broad mindedness, patriotism, self-respect, humility, and above all, the acquisition of the right values. Today corruption is eating away the heart of the nation. People are now more concerned about the acquisition of wealth, power, and influence with total disregard for justice and fair play and morality.

The trials and tribulations that Nigeria is passing through today is the product of this decadence that had ruled the conscience of our people over years. We are now poised to fight indiscipline and it is a cold war that must be fought side by side if we must survive as a nation.

### **Education as a Vehicle for National Development**

Adamu (2002) stated that:

*Anyone familiar with the social and political problems of Nigeria will agree that the goals set for education touch the very heart beat of Nigeria's complex problems and if education could be used as a tool to achieve any or all the tasks assigned to it, Nigeria would have been put well on the way to greatness politically and socially (p.45).*

Nigeria inherited and has indeed continued to perpetuate an educational system that is elitist, individualistic in inclination and it needs to be appreciated from the onset that it is not easy to overcome these inclinations that have been deeply entrenched to the extent of hoping that the values of self-sacrifice and service will be readily accepted as substitutes. (Adamu, 2002).

### **Religious Managers as Instrument of Peace in Nigeria**

When we talk of Religious Managers it includes both Christians and Muslims who are in charge of their denominations. Parents too are not left out in this struggle. That is because the home is the fundamental base upon which our youths can receive moral principles as contained in both Islamic religious teaching as well as Christian practices. The conduct of Nigerian youths should be morally acceptable if we really need to establish a disciplined society. This is because peace and unity which are believed to be the main ingredients of progress in any given country must be firmly rooted before sustainable development takes place.

**Education as an agent of peace:** Christians all over the world, are working relentlessly to ensure that peace is being maintained in the world, though it has not been easy. In Nigeria for instance, a creditable association has long been formed known as Christian Association of Nigeria (CAN). The main objective of this Christian Association is to come together and work as a team so as to bring peace to the nation. In realization of this noble objective, here in Katsina-Ala, for example, I commend the efforts of His Lordship, Most Rev. William A. Avenya, Auxiliary Bishop, Catholic Diocese of Makurdi in calling all the Christian Denominations in Katsina-Ala Local Government Area and its environs to set aside all doctrinal differences which tend to bedevil into the Christian fold. He advised that Christ is one and not divided. He enjoined them to be good ambassadors of Christ so that peace will reign in Nigeria.

The late President Musa Yar'Adua before his death initiated the seven-point agenda which as a laudable proposal. However, we are yet to see its success or failure. The challenges now are first we shall all join hands together and support the present administration so that it will succeed. The late President had started very well but death cut him on the way. He did a lot to maintain peace and stability in the Delta Region by calling all the militants to surrender their arms and work for peaceful co-existence. Development cannot take place if there is no peace in the society. Since our discussion is mainly on peace and sustainable development, we cannot brush aside the issue of Environmental Hazards.

### **Environmental Hazards as it Affects Peace and Security**

What is Hazard? According to Akiode (2007) hazards are potentially damaging physical event, phenomenon or human activity that may cause the loss of life or injury, to property damage, social and economic disruptions or environmental degradation.

Akiode further stated that environmental degradation may represent future threats and have different origins: natural, geological, and biological hazards can be single, sequential or combined in their origin and effects. Geological hazard could be regarded as natural earth processes that may cause the loss of life or injury or damage to

property. For example, Hurricane Cathrina that occurred in New ORLEAN and Haiti USA about three years ago claimed many lives and property. This incidence actually threatened the world peace.

In Nigeria, the most common Environmental Hazards are the flood disasters and erosion. It occurred in Ibadan in 1980 which was known as Ogunpa flood disaster in which some property damaged, though loss of life was not much. As noted by Akiode (2007), environmental degradation is the reduction of the capacity of the environment to meet social and ecological objectives and needs. Potential effects are varied and contribute to an increase in vulnerability frequency and intensity of natural hazards. Some example of environmental degradation are land, fire, loss of biodiversity, deforestation, land water, air pollution, climatic change etc.

### **Politics in Nigeria**

Ake in Akapiki (2001) defined politics as a form of struggle or competition in order to control the commanding height of the state where the main decisions about public polices are made and enforced. While Marx Weber sees politics as striving to share power or striving to influence the distribution of power either among states or groups within the state.

All over the world, politics tend to denominate all human associations. It is common characteristic of human beings to desire to control, allocate, direct and preside over the affairs of others. Politics is all about power sharing, allocation and control of people and resources.

The perspective of Nigerian politics have exercised the minds of curious scholars. Ake in Akapiti (2001) identified four fundamental problems confronting politics and political activities in Nigeria. These include:

*Political competition in which people seek political power by all means. The prevalence of sectional loyalty and lack of national political ideology. Acquiring power through rigging of elections, coupled with violence which may result to loss of lives and property. Refusing to leave the seat of power when the time is due or holding on power endlessly.*

In other parts of the world, politics is an instrument for social and economic development but here in Nigeria, the reverse is the case. Ake in Akapiki (2001) noted that election in Nigeria is a matter of do or die affair. The common practice is that those who win state power can have all the wealth as much as they could. Now that the election for local government chairmen and councillors is fast approaching, the politicians have already started worming up for the exercise. It is going to be keen competition. It is believed that various methods would be used in order to get more

## ***Impact of Education on Peace and Sustainable Development***

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votes. To be candid, politics in Nigeria can never be free and fair because of mass rigging which is usually the characteristic features of our elections. This is a very sad moment and we call on God to help us.

### **Conclusion**

Education is the best legacy any parent would ever leave for his child or children. Quality education is the most valuable possession a person can have and it is a very vital ingredients for changing a person's life. Education is the basis for promotion and improvement of social status of people in the society.

There cannot be any meaningful development unless there is peace in a country. Crises upon crises only make people to run away to a safe place. For instance the Nigerian civil war which made the schools including higher institutions to close down in the Eastern part of Nigeria in 1967 – 1969. People ran away for dear life, it was a horrible story, it haunts my memory whenever I remember the Nigerian civil war.

Finally, qualitative education is the bedrock to enhancing sustainable peace and development. All the religious leaders should work relentlessly so as to achieve their noble divine roles so that peace and development will continue to co-exist.

### **Recommendations**

The paper after examining some issues that brought impediments to peace and national development, the paper makes the following recommendations:

1. The quality and standard of state secondary schools should be enhanced to the level of Federal Government Colleges and command secondary schools or unity schools.
2. The inspection of schools should be taken up very seriously. The target should be to ensure the maintenance of equal standard across the board. Inspectors should be given new orientation that will be relevant and conform with the new dispensation of the educational system.
3. The participation of the local government in education process will continue, the quality of teaching staff should improve and they should be well groomed in the educational management techniques.
4. Environmental Hazards Management should at all time issue early warning information through identified institutions that allows individuals to expose any threat of hazard that has been discovered.
5. The warning system include a chain of concerns namely: understanding and mapping the hazards monitoring and forecasting impending events, processing and disseminating necessary information to the public.
6. Environmental degradation should be checked so that reduction of the capacity of environment is met.

7. To identify and monitor environmental change, there is an urgent need for an earth observation network which is a type of early warning system for planetary change.

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