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Challenges of Managing and Planning Peace Education and Peace Culture in Nigeria

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Abstract

This paper examined the challenges of managing and planning peace education and peace culture in Nigeria's educational system. Its presents contemporary definitions of peace education and peace culture as well as highlighted the importance of peace education and peace culture in achieving the national goals and objectives of education. These, among others include improved security conditions, quality of life and inner peace, dignity of labour, higher life expectancy, improved working conditions, better decision making, employment opportunities. Some of the strategies perceived for

managing and planning peace education were highlighted to include improved educational curriculum at all levels of education, interaction between schools and community, improved judicial system, formation of reasonable policies and sustenance of security of life and property in school environment. The paper identified inadequate knowledge of the concept of peace education, lack of acceptability of peace education by government, lack of political will, inadequate funds among others are some of the challenges of peace education and culture in Nigeria. Consequently, appropriate recommendations were made to achieve the goal of introducing peace education and peace culture in Nigerian school system.

Key words: Peace, Peace Education, Peace Culture, Government Policy, Legislative Strategy, Tolerance

Introduction

It is universally asserted that education is a major catalyst for individual and national development because it is the process of transmitting knowledge, skills and attitude of value that engender positive transformation. Education is also regarded as the most important instrument for preparing individuals for life as well as reforming the society for relevance, adequacy and competition in the world. Ikechukwu (2014), citing the federal government of Nigeria (2007) stated that education is the prerequisite for a successfully engineered national system and is the answer to ignorance and servitude; the gateway to the future and the key national development. In view of the above, the broad national objectives of the country are aimed at achieving the following national goals: A free and democratic society; A just and egalitarian society; A united, strong and self-reliant nation; A great and dynamic economy; A land of bright and full opportunities for all citizens.

However, these national objectives are geared towards inculcating a set of values such as: Respect for the worth and dignity of the individual; Faith in man's ability to make rational decisions; moral and spiritual values in interpersonal and human relations; shared responsibility of the common good of the society; respect for the dignity of labour; promotion of the emotional and psychological health of all children.

The National Policy on Education seeks to achieve the above values by means of enriched curricular at the various levels of schooling. These curricula contents have undergone a lot of restructuring in response to national and global needs and challenges. Effective school system which guarantees sound education cannot be feasible without peace in the polity because no meaningful progress can take place in an atmosphere of unrest or violence and the prevalence of the culture of peace.

According to Ikechukwu (2014), peace is an occurrence of harmony characterized by lack of violence, conflicting behaviours and freedom from fear or

violence. It is seen freedom from war or violence especially when people live and work together happily. It could also be said to mean calm and quiet, lack of interruption or annoyance from worry, problems, noise or unwanted action. He further noted that peace means the following: A state of quite or tranquility; freedom from disturbance or agitation; general order or tranquility; freedom from violence or riot; a state of reconciliation after strife or enmity.

Kaitholil (2009) identified peace as one of the deepest desires of every person and basic yearning of the human race. Peace is not merely the absence of war, but the presence of love. Peace can mean tranquility, the state of being undisturbed, well-being of daily existence, and harmony with oneself, one's brother/sisters, one's world and one's God. From the foregoing, it could be adduced that a peaceful socio-political milieu is a sine-quanon for sound educational process characterized by effective and efficient teaching and learning activities engineered by the culture of peace.

Concept of Peace Education

Scholars have attempted some classifications on the concepts. Ikechukwu (2014) identified peace education as a process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behavioural changes that would enable children, youth and adults to prevent conflict and violence, both overt and structural to resolve conflict peacefully and to create the conditions conducive for peace. Asamonye, et al (2014), citing Gamut (2004) also defined peace education as a deliberate attempt to educate chidlren and adults in the dynamics of conflict and the promotion of peace making skills in homes, school and communities throughout the world, using all the channels and instrument of socialization. She further opined that peace education is about the creation, sustenance and management of positive attitudes to peace among and between different levels and segments of the society. Peace is the expression of love, cooperation, unity and harmonious co-existence. It is the absence of war, injustice, violence, greed and bad governance. Peace education will enable students to adopt a positive attitude regarding the different issues they face in life and help develop skills necessary for peaceful resolution of conflicts. Peace education is important for cultivating the culture of peace. Peace education can be taught formally or informally through media, workshops, conference, adult literacy programmes and family education.

Concept of Peace Culture

Peace culture is a deliberate living in peace or formation of peaceful habit; and an honest attempt to live in peace with others. Peace culture in schools entails positive behaviour management by students, striving to live a friendly, caring and sharing life with others while avoiding offensive behaviour. This implies that bad attitudes like

fighting, noise making and quarreling ought to be avoided while neatness, politeness, cheerfulness and consideration for others are necessary. Mohammed (2014, p. 223) citing educational programme by Hague Appeal of Peace (2005, p.1) suggested that a culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems, have the skills to resolve conflict constructively and observe human rights, gender and racial equality, appreciate cultural diversity, and respect the integrity of the earth. Such learning could be achieved through intentional sustained and systematic education for peace, and fundamental freedoms. Peace culture in schools would enable students to develop friendship and cooperation which promote academic knowledge and skills. Peace education and peace culture encourage unity in diversity of various societies in Nigeria through the study of activities during festivals such as dances, masquerades, proverbs and folklore.

Importance of Peace Education and Peace Culture in Schools

Peace education and peace culture are essential in school because Nigerian society is sometimes infested with treats of violence. Teachers as surrogate parent promote peaceful coexistence among students by resolving conflicts justly in the class. Mutual respect, tolerance and observance of child's rights help to create love, happiness and conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Children learn peace culture through discipline, avoiding aggressive tendencies and developing team spirit through academic activities in schools. Peace education help to create democratic leadership in the class, order, gender equality and healthy interactions. Peace education and peace culture are global targets capable of achieving quality economic output, good technological and social development. Therefore, imbibing peace culture in students is the root of quality human resources, civilization and peaceful coexistence.

Dimkpa (2014, p. 217) in affirmation of the above view listed some benefits of peace education as follows:

- Improved security conditions

- Improved quality of life inner peace

- Dignity of labour

- Higher life expectancy

- Improved working conditions

- Increased employment opportunities

- Higher savings

- Better decision making

The relevance of peace education to an individual, the family, the society and the world usually manifests itself in the total eradication or reduction in the rate of crime such as inner-tribal/religious disunity within the country, militancy, occultism in schools, theft, political crisis, rape and killings. Others include hatred, prejudice, pride and murder to what peace education is capable of replacing with love, patience, tolerance, dialogue and understanding. These foster the peace and unity.

Strategies for Managing and Planning Peace Education

For Nigeria to move forward there is need to plan and manage peace education well in Nigeria. According to Asamonye (2014), the following can help to promote peace education in Nigeria:

Education Strategy: The educational curriculum of all categories of education should be revised to include peace ethics-from nursery to primary to secondary to tertiary education. The revised curriculum must include qualitative values, attitudes, and behaviour of cultures. All these should be included in the curriculum, things like respect for elders, loving and caring for one another, greeting of elders, peaceful slogans must be taught and included in the curriculum. Teachers at all levels must teach and emphasize these values. The educational approach should also be geared towards promoting sustainable, economic and social development. Peace clubs, peace, societies must be encouraged and developed in schools.

Political/Social Integration Strategy: There should be strategy interaction between the school and the community. There should be support for participatory communication and free information among students themselves, between students and management and between school and community. Peace education should be centred on democratic and conflict resolution principles. The society must be taught not to resolve conflict through violence and war but rather through dialogue. A democratic society needs the commitment of citizens who accept the inevitability of conflicts as well as necessary for tolerance. This kind of peace education should attempt to foster a positive conflict orientation in the community by training students and community members to view conflict as a platform for creativity and growth. Peace education programme of this kind should include training the participants in skills of critical thinking, debate, coalition building, promoting the values of freedom of speech, individuality, tolerance of diversity, compromise and conscientious objective. The aim is to produce responsible citizens that could hold government accountable to the standard of peace. Activities should be structured to have students assume the citizens that should make decisions and respect the opinion of others. Freedom of interaction and sharing of information, democratic principles decrease likelihood of violence and wars and are indispensable for couture of peace.

Legislature Strategy: the legal/judicial system should be made more responsive to issues of violence and disruption of peace in the country. New laws should be enacted and existing laws reviewed to ensure that justice is quick and punishment meted out to the culprits is commensurate with severity of the offense.

Government Policy Strategy: Government should make more responsible policies to the issue of peace disruption. They should be firm and fearless when handling the culprits. Favoritism or issues of political party alliance must be deemphasized.

Security Strategy: Campus security/policy and protection services vary widely around the world. Nigerian schools must establish security policy services. Then aim should include the following:

- Provision of security in the school

- Assure safety of students, employees and guests

- Interact with local and external security agencies

- Provide education programmes on safety for students

- Patrol the school regularly

- Investigate any crisis trying to erupt in the school '

- Provide safety programmes to students and teachers.

Challenges of Planning and Managing Peace Education in Nigeria

The most noticeable challenges in planning and managing peace education in Nigeria secondary schools include:

- 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. In other words, there is limited expertise and capacity for peace education available in most parts of the country. Baldo and Fumiss (1998) support this. In their words, peace education is most effective when the skills and knowledge of peace and conflict resolution are learned and known by the planners as well as the implementers. This implies that the planners give a clear picture how the programme will be conducted and how it will be modeled by the school in which students are taught. Of course, school managers and teachers are the key actors in the implementation of these and so, they cannot give what they do not have.

- Lack of acceptability of the peace education concept by government in West Africa, Nigeria inclusive. Adeleke (2010) opined that if Nigeria government

will accept peace education as it is being talked of, the rate of insecurity would have been reduced to its barest minimum and that legal or pragmatic efforts would have been in place to enforce it.

- Lack of political will to adopt it as part of the education policy despite the increasing appreciation of its positive impact on the psycho social behaviour of chidlren who have already benefited from the programme.

- Inadequate funds especially funding dedicated to peace education is a major problem. Yepwi (2007) posited that: money is an absolute crucial input of any educational system. It provides the essential purchasing power with which education acquires it human and materials inputs. With too little money, education can be helpless. With an ample supply, its problems become more manageable even though they do not vanish.

- Another challenge is lack of appropriate and comprehensive peace education curriculum that can be used to suit the need of the country. A number of countries have developed peace education curriculum for schools, usually consisting of activities such as communication, cooperation, and problem solving, etc without which the objectives of peace education would not be achieved. Bar-Tal and Rosen, (2009) stated that in order to achieve the objectives of peace education, a school system has to be prepared for drastic changes including setting new educational objectives, preparing new curricula. (re) writing school textbooks, developing instructional materials, and training teachers to create a school climate that is conducive to peace education.

- Furthermore, parents and guardians are often reluctant to support their chidlren and wards to actively participate in peace education programme and activities. Socialization begins at home and nurtured by the school. Deutsch (1993) argued that besides the school the family is another most important institution that influences children's concepts of hate and love. He argued that a cooperative learning environment, conflict management initiative, the constructive use of controversy, and establishment of resolution dispute centers in the family and schools will enhance a constructive relationship which will ultimate help prepare children to live in a peaceful world.

- The methodologies currently used in formal learning in schools contrast with the peace education approach and tools which place more emphasis on learning, critical inquiry and discovery method than competition learning approach. Abida, (2013) opined that it is the responsibility of every teacher to introduce experience-based learning, group work, and discussion methods in classroom lessons. Teachers should not dominate the teaching-learning

situation, but rather promote an open atmosphere for discussion in which students feel free to participate. Student should learn to take up independent viewpoints and to make a contribution towards solving problems and resolving conflicts situations. Teachers thus take the role of facilitator of learning, rather than the transmitter of knowledge. These methods, if carefully followed, will foster peace education at the secondary school level.

- The basic and primary needs of man in the society for survival today are food, water and shelter. It is said that a hungry man is an angry man. When these needs are not met peace education would suffer defeat. Salomon (2002) opined that to be able to live in a peaceful and non-violent life, an individual must first have his basic survival needs met. This implies that peace education is possible if the poverty level of Nigerian is alleviated. According to him, it is one of the first step to creating a culture of peace and non-violence. For this to be possible, collaborative effort of everyone is paramount to contribute a small amount of their time and resources to the cause of alleviating the poverty of others so that there would be a drastic change in the number of impoverished people in our society.

Conclusion

Peace education and peace culture are probably two major global phenomena that are of great interest to world leaders and educators due to war, violence, and insecurity in many countries. Managing peace education and peace culture at basic level in Nigeria means fundamental training to impart peace culture in people using policies, planned school curriculum, methods and facilities that will positively manage the behaviour of students, inculcate good morals, enrich capacity building and encourage cooperation and peaceful co-existence. The importance of peace education cannot be over-emphasized as source of happiness and development. Guidance and counselling services including monitoring of students' behaviour by school management are necessary for conducive academic environment, objectives attainment and inter-personal relationship.

Recommendations

Based on the deliberations, the paper recommended the following:

- Peace education should be mandatory for all the school in Nigeria.
- Peace culture should be adopted in schools impersonal and inter-personal relationship.
- Fighting, cultism, smoking, quarrelling etc. are vices that should be stopped in schools.

- Students should be discouraged from watching war and pornographic films, reading or involving in conflict raising issues.

- All internet and multimedia activities should be supervised by parents at home.

- Peace education and culture should be properly integrated into the school curriculum.

- School managers should endeavour to promote peace education and culture in schools for peaceful coexistence and maximum security.

- Policy makers should not only plan for peace education and peace culture in schools but provide adequate supervision for implementation.

- Human rights law should be enforced to curb barbaric actions.

- Team work, cooperative studies, birthday celebrations, sports activities, good social clubs, picnics and activities that encourage friendliness should be established in schools.

- Teacher education programme needs to be incorporated with courses in peace education to enable teachers to be conversant with peace culture.

- Guidance and counselling should be practiced in schools to prevent excesses of students.

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