Full Length Research

The role of peace education in conflict management

Onukwu James Nwabianke[1]* and Ekpo Jude U[2].

[1]Arts Education Department, Faculty of Education, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.
[2]Public Relations Unit, Federal University Otuoke, Bayelsa State, Nigeria.

*Corresponding author. E-mail: onukwujames@yahoo.com,+2348039120458

This paper discusses the role of peace education in conflict management. It adopted secondary source of data and a review of other scholars views on related issues. It highlighted the concept of peace, education, causes of conflict in modern societies and in communities. The elements of peace education were discussed as: Love; Tolerance and Kindness. The paper pointed out that Peace education provides in the mind of individuals a dynamic vision to encounter peace and avoid the violent images that dominate cultures; give citizen of all countries the needed information about how best to achieve security; provide citizens with the knowledge of how to manage interpersonal, intergroup and inter-ethnic differences that will prevent war; promotes respect for different cultures and help students, learners and citizens appreciate the diversity of human existence; teach skills needed to move the world out of violence; enable young people to learn about the problem of human rights and justice etc. The recommendation among others is that societies and organizations should appreciate the importance of peace education and set out modalities for the training and production of peace educators , crusaders' and all lovers of peace within the societies' and organizations in order to make the world a better place. The paper then concluded that peace education will facilitate conflict prevention and management. Countries of the world should therefore support education system that encourages constructive responses to conflicts, and to build in the society, the techniques and institutions that can resolve social conflict non-violently.

Key words: Peace, education and conflict management.

INTRODUCTION

The future of every society is determined by its political, economic, and the educational provisions. These conditions can only be attained through peaceful co-existence. There is a global practice by developing nations of the world to use peace education as their own means of modernization and development. It is also a fact that education is a tool for social reconstruction (John Dewey). Education should do more than preserve the heritage of the people and play the role of reshaping the future through changing of the character, behavior and moral aspects of the human existence. According to Okobiah (2017), the purpose of education is always to respond and adapt positively to the challenges posed by the vicissitude of social, political and economic manifestations to the quality of life for citizens in time and place. Education inculcates in man the right type of value including ensuring peace, avoiding conflicts and being able to manage conflicts in the society.

CONFLICT AND THE CAUSES OF CONFLICTS

Conflict is the word used to describe misunderstanding. It conjures up associations of tension, disruption, and violence with the expectation of anything from uncomfortable to life-threatening situations. It is a situation in which two or more individuals or groups perceive that they possess mutually incompatible goals. Conflict sometimes leads to crisis if not properly managed. Michailof et al. (2002) outlined the following as the causes of conflict in any society:

1. Historical: The history of every society as it concerns struggle for independence, control and freedom sometimes underlies general threats of dissatisfaction between individuals and members of that society. There are also religious, economic, cultural and geographical fault lines that run across the societies, countries, communities and immediate locality

breeding unsafe environments for peace.

2. Demographic changes: When there are changes in population of the society and when not properly constituted will lead to conflict. The general population growth with young people adding to instability and unprecedented pressure on land and natural resources is another issue. Increasing migration also leads to increase in the population in the host societies and countries. Increase in population could set appropriate grounds for extreme violence. According to Schneider (2000), for example, the instability caused by the magnitude and nature of refugee populations in the Great Lakes region played a major role in regional interventions, which precipitated first the overthrow of the Mobutu Sese Seko's regime and eventually the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo..

3. Poverty, Illiteracy, and Unemployment: These pose a threat to peace in every society. Large scale unemployment and rapid demographic growth leave young people idle with few prospects in life. It is a mind worth noting that illiterate poor groups are easy targets for violent and can easily develop the tendency of being violent. There is a popular saying that the idle mind is the devils 'workshop. In addition, when people are not properly equipped in terms of information on issues that concern them may lead to violence and disruption of peace in the society.

4. Public policies that influence suppression, oppression, exploitation, and discrimination may become deliberate actions to cause conflicts. This happens when majority of the people are excluded from political and economic life on regional, ethnic, or social grounds.

5. The mismanagement of public funds, coupled with poor governance, corruption and widespread poverty result in profound inequalities that influence resentment and political instability.

6. Poor governance, endemic corruption and economic failure can weaken the state causing a loss of some national territory. The absence of public authority and the presence of insecurity in an area can easily degenerate into conflict.

7. There is also the risk of sub regional instability whereby conflict in a particular country eventually degenerates and affects the neighbouring countries. This will put pressure on local natural resources, heighten social tensions and create instability in the host and close communities.

8. Conflict may also occur as a result of accessibility to small arms which may ignite likely usage within communities.

9. Finally, education as a violence reduction agent can be misused through the processes of indoctrination and propaganda rather than teaching. Like wrong religious education can leads to negative indoctrination like the Boko Haram in Northern Nigeria can eventually result to conflict among individual who may not believe in the negative doctrine. (Micahailof et al., 2002).

Conflicts have become more complex with time especially with terrorism threats increasing rampantly, lives are increasingly been lost, properties destroyed, many people rendered homeless, forcing others to flee as refugees and this gives less hope for development and prosperity for the young generation.

It is for these reasons that there is a dire need for peace. One way to realize this need is through education focused on the importance of peace and peaceful coexistence among communities and with each other as well as how to respond in situations that would lead to peace.

THE CONCEPT OF PEACE

According to the Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary, peace is a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area, state of being calm, of quietude and living in friendship with somebody. Also, the Concise Oxford. Dictionary of Current English (1998) defined peace in three perspectives mainly quiet/ tranquility, mental calmness serenity and freedom from or the cessation of war. The World Book Encyclopedia (1996) defined peace as the state of being calm, quiet and freedom from disturbance. Peace has also been defined as the "state of freedom from war or freedom from civil disorder (Ogunyemi and Raheem, 2013). Peace is also security because when there is peace, one is also free and have no fear, when there is peace, people will than have freedom to develop their social and economic lives. It is the breach of peace that causes civil disorder, rioting and other forms of disharmony or instability (Usman, 2013). Any society that is not living in peace must live in war or conflict, whereas peace connotes calmness, rest of mind and freedom without arguing. Peace is not just the absence of war; it is the practice of love.

In a peaceful society people would work together to resolve conflicts, develop morally, treat each other with justice, satisfy basic needs, and respect each other. In essence, they would live in unity.

THE CONCEPT OF EDUCATION

Education is considered to be the process whereby individual's behavior attitude and general perception of life is changed through the process of learning. Ofuegbu (2017) asserted that education enables the human being to understand and evaluate the totality of his environment, the earth and universe. In the same vain, Okobiah (2017) opines that education is a dynamic instrument of change, an instrument per excellence for effecting national development. Emunemu (2017) is of the opinion that education is indispensable in the life of individuals and nations, as the benefits are indeed pervasive. Education can be through guided instruction by a teacher in a process of teaching and learning or through experience, which could impact positively on individuals. Education is a continuous learning process through which members of a society acquire requisite knowledge, value, skills, attitude and the desired behavior to facilitate peaceful environment and development of the society. Education is the only way to teach citizens the necessary pro-social skills and preventive practice that will equip individuals to cope in the face of fear, uncertainty and danger and be able to prevent violence.

THE MEANING OF PEACE EDUCATION

According to UNICEF (1999), Peace Education is the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour change that will 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, at an intrapersonal, intergroup, national or international level. Hudson (1992) opines in Adefisan (2014) that peace education is the type of education that actualizes human potentialities in helping to learn how to make peace with self and with others, to live in harmony and unity with self, humankind and with nature. It is a process of acquiring the value, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviour to live in harmony with oneself, others and with natural environment (Wikipedia Encyclopedia, 2009). In the view of Harris and Synott (2002), Peace Education is a series of teaching encounters that draws from people, the desire for peace, non-violence alternative for managing conflict; and skills for critical analysis of structural arrangement that produce and legitimate justice and equality. Peace Education concerns itself with human and socio dimensions of peace (Hadiza, 2008). Following definitions by many scholars, one could assert that peace education is that training and orientation required by every human being to enable him contribute towards overcoming violence in the world. It is an attempt to transform the society by creating a peaceful consciousness that condemns violent behaviour.

ELEMENTS OF PEACE EDUCATION

The following are the basic element through which peace education can be transmitted:

1) Tolerance. Tolerating one another in all issues of life even in conflict is a good trend to ensure peace at all time. This element as a component of peace is very crucial and of great concern to individuals and the society. Individuals should learn how to react in a way to tolerate others when they are hurt. The way to react to somebody who hurts you and determine the tempo of the situation created will also reduce the violence that would arise from your unexpected behavior. This demands understanding of individual differences. One person's understanding of a particular situation may not be the same with another person. Your views about life differ significantly from other people around you, hence the need to tolerate.
2) Kindness. When people are kind to another, there will be peace. An individual that is kind will find favor within the neighborhood. Kindness is "a universal language. A person that is kind will also share in the problems of others. He or she will be ready to reasonably hurt himself or herself in order to satisfy the immediate needs of others. This condition stimulates peace.
3) Love: This is the act of showing emotions to others through feelings, assistance, discussions and helping each other. Love transcends and manifest itself in sharing, caring and patience even understanding. This element will ensure peace in the

society at all time. This is because when people love one another, they tend to show it by not reacting to issues in a violent way. Hence, conflict will be prevented.

THE ROLE OF PEACE EDUCATION IN CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Peace Education is the initial training process that is aimed at the actualization of giving skills to learners to become active peace makers in the society. It plays a very important role in the development of every society and the individuals through nourishment of the mind to embrace peace at all time, equip individuals with the skills needed to ensure peace, prevent violence and increase intergroup cooperation. It helps people to develop general life skills like decision making, negotiation skills, promoting self-esteem, empathy, coping with emotions and stress.

The achievement of Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) in Nigeria and subsequently in the world would be melt if peace exists among different nations of the world, communities, ethnic groups and religious organizations. Peace education being a process of acquiring the right type of value, knowledge, attitudes, skills , behaviour and morals in order to live in good terms with oneself, with others and within the natural environment (Alenxious, 2015). It is also a way of inculcating in man, the desire for peace, non-violent alternatives for understanding, relating and ensure justices, equity and harmony in the society at all time. It is therefore pertinent to note that Peace Education is given to nurture the behavior, attitude, emotions and perceptions of people to embrace peace in all circumstance and plays important role in the life of individuals and the society at large. These role are enumerated as follows:

a) Peace Education provides in the mind of individuals a dynamic vision of peace to encounter violent images that dominate cultures**:** Peace education is the only instrument that will stimulate human imagination to love and embrace peace through generations. Every human religion values peace. Peace education will therefore teach about past, present and future efforts made to achieve peace.
b) Peace Education give citizen of all countries the needed information about how best to achieve security: One of the role peace education plays is to inform people about the causes, nature and consequences of violent. This will enlighten the citizens to make choice about the best ways of resolving conflicts. It is important to note that peace education discusses the modern ramification of peace through strength and encourage learners to draw their own conclusion about the best way to prevent violent and provide security for all.
c) Peace Education will provide the citizens with the knowledge of how to manage interpersonal, intergroup and inter-ethnic differences that will prevent war: It will equip people with the knowledge that there are no cultures that wholly eliminate the possibilities of interpersonal, intergroup and inter-ethnic violence. To note that aggression is part of

every human which usually play some roles in promoting war and violent in the society with destructive outcome. Peace education will provide people with the understanding of how different individuals, cultures and political system frustrate human needs and make efforts to prevent it in a nonviolent way.

d) Peace Education promotes respect for different cultures and help students, learners and citizens appreciate the diversity of human existence: War occurs between different human beings and groups as a result of lack of respect and non-recognition of others culture. Intercultural understanding is an important aspect of peace education. In order to understand the perilousness of human existence, people learn about interrelatedness of human beings on planet earth through peace education and to also understand that survival depends on cooperation with others.

e) Peace education provides the learners, students and individuals with a future orientation that will strive to recreate society as it should be: It is an attempt to provide young people with the positive image of the future and give them reasons to have hope. Peace education should include courses that provide different possibilities for life on this planet earth to stimulate young people to think about less violent ways of managing human behavior.

f) Peace education teaches the skills needed to move the world out of violence: People can have that skills and potentials to create peace in our individual lives. Peace education focuses on the strategies to achieve both individual and societal change. Peace making is a process that must be taught if human beings are to change from their violent behavior. Peace education enables citizens to examine how their actions and beliefs contribute to the perpetration of injustice and the development of the war. Young people will then learn strategies to deal with aggressive behaviors and concrete skills that will help them become effective peace makers.

g) Peace education enables young people to learn about the problem of human rights and justice: The struggle for peace embraces justices and learners should understand that the absence of war does just bring peace or harmony. Peace studies programme do not focus only on national security issues but also covers the studies of social justice, human rights, development, feminism, racism, nonviolence and strategies for social change. It helps people to become aware of the problem brought about by oppression and use the knowledge to empower others to struggle against institutions that are dominant and coercive.

h) Peace education teaches respect for all forms of life**:** Peace education enables young people to develop positive self-image, a sense of responsibility for self and others, a capacity to trust others and a caring for the well-being of the natural world. A sense of dignity and self-worth, a confidence to question values, communication skills, ethical awareness and empathy for others will be inculcated through peace education. Peace education teaches caring and empathy to human existence and to the planet with an appreciation of the ecological balance that support life. Student must experience the sound of the earth crying, the pain of people who suffer in war and the agony

of others. This is possible through peace education.

i) Peace education teaches how to resolve conflicts in a non-violent ways but through negotiations and mediations: One of the ultimate role peace education plays is to enable individuals manage conflict nonviolently. The world is being threaten by violent behaviors, street crime, war, domestic quarrels, ethnic conflicts and poverty which make millions of people to live in a violent condition where they have little or no security and struggling to survive.

j) Peace education will enable individuals respond appropriately to discriminatory practices to individuals, the environment and the society at large to reduce conflict and even manage conflict when it is inevitable.

k) Peace education will enable people communicate feelings and perspectives and transform anger including managing emotional intelligence and be able to reduce conflict from extending beyond immediate control.

l) Peace Education will help individuals to understand the roles and effectiveness of local, national and international organizations that promote peace and help solve conflicts.

m) Peace Education plays the role of promoting nationhood and good citizenship among young people.

TYPES OF PEACE EDUCATION

According to Harris (1999), the following are the types of Peace Education:

1. Global Peace Education: This includes international studies, nuclear education etc.

2. Conflict Resolution Programs: This includes mediation, negotiation and conflict skills.

3. Violence Prevention Programs: This includes emphasis on domestic violence, drug abuse, anger management and teaching violence preventive procedures.

4. Development Education: This also includes teaching human rights, environmental studies, power, and democratic process and resource equalities.

5. Non-Violence Education: This is based on ideas of individuals who have preached peace over the years in different societies and known as peace makers.

CONCLUSION

Wars and conflicts threaten peace and security to all. Their urgent nature calls for the need to reduce violence through education. Times have changed, and this requires a more proactive outlook. Education covers economic, political, social, cultural, moral and ethical issues, and is vital in transforming people's attitudes towards dealing with conflicts and ensuring peace.

To ensure that conflict prevention and management is successful, it is necessary to support education system that encourage constructive responses to conflicts, and to build in the society the techniques and institutions that can resolve

social conflict non-violently and deter or mitigate large-scale aggression. Effective prevention and peacemaking should be holistic and should involve the entire society, the mobilization of local populations, community structures, civil societies, the private sector, media as well as the governments at all levels, regional bodies and international institutions. Education planners and managers thus have a key role to play in developing education system that will smoothen the prevention of conflict and promote peace.

RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the discussions on this paper so far, the following recommendations are hereby given:

1. Government at all levels should establish institutions that will give peace education to all citizens irrespective of tribe, religion, sex colour, political affiliation and ethnicity.
2. Schools should as a matter of urgency ensure the inculcation of peace education curriculum in their various programmes for the younger generation.
3. Societies and organizations should appreciate the importance of peace education and set out modalities for the training and production of peace education teachers, crusaders' and all lovers of peace within the societies' and organizations in order to make the world a better place.

Conflict of interest

The authors have none to declare

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