Mainstreaming Peace Education in Secondary School Curricula in Nigeria

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Abstract: The growing culture of violence in the secondary school system in Nigeria has continued to negatively affect the environment of teaching and learning. The common effects of this trend include poor academic performance, low staff productivity, tensions, broken social relationships, high incidents of students and staff turn-over among other factors. Addressing the problem of conflict and violence in the school system simply requires a non-violent approach. This study therefore examined the compelling need for the mainstreaming of peace education in secondary school curricula in Nigeria. This is because peace education possesses the methodical capacity to systematically eliminate the culture of violence in the secondary school system. A set of educational objectives are to be met by this curriculum in terms of constructing a culture of peace in the actors in the secondary school system in Nigeria. These objectives include equipping learners with knowledge and understanding of issues of conflict and peace, attitudes and values conducive to peaceful living, skills and abilities for resolving conflict. In sum, the adoption of the curriculum would assist in the building of peace capabilities of students, teachers and administrators in the secondary school system, which will assist them to resolve conflict with non-violent techniques.

Key Words: Peace Education, Conflict, Violence and Curriculum for Secondary School

INTRODUCTION

Education remains the most viable tool for the transformation of human behaviours and development of the society. It is also the vehicle for engineering the behaviours, attitudes and skills of individuals towards empowering them to positively contribute not only to their personal growth but also to the development of the society. This is the reason why Akusoba (2002) refers to education as "the most reliable instrument of social mobility and cohesion, one of the essential determinants of the destiny of a nation in terms of social, political and economic development." Consequently, no nation can develop without education, but education can only achieve its desired goals in an atmosphere that is conducive. It is a truism that conflict remains one of the greatest threats to sustainable growth and development of the educational system especially at

the secondary school level, which this paper focuses on. Conflict has been *a clog in the wheel* of the progress of the secondary school system the world over. Consequently, Basky (2003) has confirmed that "the process of teaching and learning (in school) is fraught with conflict." Conflict is inherent in the activities that take place in the secondary school system whether in the classroom between or among students, or between students and teachers or between one teacher and another teacher or sometimes between school administrators and teachers or students and at other times between parents and teachers.

However, the ubiquity of conflict within the secondary school system should not be viewed as a misnomer but rather as an integral part of the school system which arises as a consequence of the convergence of different actors who pursue different and sometimes incompatible interests and goals. It is a fact that where ever there are interests and goals to be achieved, there exists conflict. In this regard, DiPaola and Hoy (2001) have noted that "conflict is indeed on the daily menu of school administration." It is also widely acknowledged that violence against teachers, other students, and destruction of property both in the learning institution and surrounding communities has greatly increased in the past years (Onsarigo, 2007). Conflict is part and parcel of the school and the school cannot shy away from it, because it is experienced daily in the teaching and learning process (Beggy, 2003).

Conflict as a phenomenon in schools is thus embedded in the web of school activities and by extension in the school culture and this reality makes conflict inevitable in the school system. Therefore, any attempt that is made to resolve or manage conflicts in the school system that is not focused on tackling the culture of violence in the system is doomed to failure and can never achieve or create the needed atmosphere for effective teaching and learning. This is why most writers in the field of conflict management recognise that workplace conflict is inevitable, and if unresolved, has negative impacts that reach far beyond the principal parties (Wilmot & Hocker, 1998). In actual fact, school conflict can be counter-productive to the efficient running of the school system. This is the reason why research findings have revealed that unresolved and poorly managed conflict is the major blockage to school development (Canavan and Monahan, 2001). It is therefore imperative that conflict in the school system should be managed through non-violent techniques with a view to increasing the level of productivity in the system. More importantly, the increasing cases of conflicts and youth violence in secondary schools across the country have necessitated the urgent need to address this escalating problem through a proactive and effective nonviolent strategy.

Based on the above background, this paper examines the imperative of mainstreaming peace education in secondary school curricula as a strategy for dealing with the culture of violent conflict in the system. This is occasioned by the fact that peace education deals with the adoption of non-violent techniques for tackling violence in societies or institutions where an over-dose of violent conflicts exist and would effectively annihilate those conflicts that threatens the efficient running of the school system.

Literature Review

Conceptual Elucidation on Peace Education

Peace education has recently gained attention all around the world (Yilmaz, 2003). This is because of the increasing recourse to the use of violence in responding to conflict or disagreement between individuals, groups, communities and countries. The concept of peace education has attracted numerous definitions and has been seen from different point of view. For example, Gumut (2006) perceives peace education as the deliberate attempt to educate children, youths and adults in the dynamics of conflict prevention and promotion of peace making skills in homes, schools, and communities throughout the world, using all the channels and instruments of socialization. To Fisk (2000), peace education is described as a process wherein people learn ideologies, values, attitudes, more standards, sensitivities to others and new perceptions such that they are moved to take different actions from which they did in the past. On the other hand, Oshita (2006) believes that the aim of peace education becomes not just educating for peace but educating for a 'peace capacity'. Peace education is essentially a peace empowerment strategy which mainly equips individuals with the knowledge and skills to prevent and manage conflict at intra/inter-personal or intra/inter-group levels. Thus Salomon (2002) has pointed out the main activities of peace education:

- As a matter of changing mindsets;
- As a matter of cultivating a set of skills;
- As a matter of promoting human rights (particularly in the Third World Countries); and
- As a matter of environmentalism, disarmament, and the promotion of a culture of peace.

Fundamentally, peace education aims at building the peace capacity of people so that they do not only learn to resolve their conflicts through peaceful dialogue but to also live in peace. Similarly, Momodu (2009) posit that peace education is a behavioural and attitudinal change mechanism which aims at: pre-empting conflict (build-up); preventing conflict outbreaks; resolving conflict and promoting a culture of peace. Basically, peace education aims at systematically inculcating the culture of peace in the minds of individuals with a view to de-constructing the culture of violence from their minds by equipping them with the knowledge, skills and abilities, which would assist individuals to interact peacefully and to collaborate to achieve collective as well as personal goals.

Based on the above, it is clear that peace education can be used to positively used to eliminate behaviours and attitudes that engenders conflict and violence in any social system including the secondary school system. This is because it has the potential to modify unwanted human behaviours that are inimical to peaceful co-existence by fostering the holistic social,

psychological and intellectual development of human beings, with a view to helping them to achieve their goals and aspirations in life.

Channels for Propagating Peace Education

Basically, peace education can be taught or advocated through formal and non-formal channels of education (Momodu, 2011). Thus:

- **Formal channels of peace education**: These involves the various educational channels for teaching and learning which are usually employed in the teaching of basic knowledge and skills of conflict resolution, peace-building and peace promotion. Peace education is usually designed or factored into the school curriculum for onward teaching. Formal channels or media of peace education are structured in nature. These formal educational channels are educational institutions or schools like primary and secondary schools (both public and private) and tertiary institutions like colleges of education, polytechnics and universities. Also included as part of these media are conferences, workshops and symposia which can also be employed for teaching peace education.

- **Non-formal channels of peace education:** These involve the various non-formal educational channels and traditional methods of learning which can be employed for people to learn about peace and peace promotion. Such channels are plays, dramas, jingles, prose, posters, handbills, folklores, and stories, Television and Radio programmes, dancing and other cultural methods of learning. Non-formal channels of peace education are usually not organized and controlled in nature but can be very effective for learning about peace and peace promotion.

In sum, King and Miller (2006) argue that:

> Peace education heavily utilises culture and the arts, with its most potent tools found in music, dance, drama, painting, and sculpture…As the broadest sub-field of peace studies, peace education incorporates a wide range of practices aimed at transforming values and norms and informing styles of leadership to bring about or consolidate peace in communities, within a country, in inter-state relations, or at the global level. Because the peaceful resolution of differences requires education at all levels of societies, a broad range of institutions need to address acute conflicts, work toward reconciliation, and strengthen societies to stand against prejudice, oppression, and violence, including mass organised violence.

A combination of both formal and non-formal channels of education for the teaching of peace education can be very adequate and effective for the building of peace capacities of individuals and groups (Momodu, 2011). Therefore, the importance of peace education at the school level is unequivocal for the cultivation of a safe and prospering future for the world. Peace education in classrooms aims at equipping students with necessary knowledge and attitudes through

respectful, tolerant, participatory, and cooperative techniques and methods (Deveci, Yilmaz, Kardag, 2008).

Definition of Conflict

Wright (1990) stated that the word conflict is derived from the Latin word configure meaning to strike together. The term conflict is viewed in a variety of ways because of its confusion with those conditions which lead to situations of different conflict. Thomas (1976) defines conflict as "the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his". Conflict actually occurs when there is "real or perceived difference which may affect actions or outcomes that we believe are important" (Johnston, 1991). Robbins (1998) sees conflict as "a process that begins when one party perceives that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affects something that the first party cares about." Conflict is basically about struggle or competition for scarce resources in which each of the party perceives its goal or interest is been contested for by the opposing party. Within the school system as a complex organisation, conflict manifest in various forms. Hence the reason why De Janasz, et al (2001) stressed that conflict is a fact of life in organizations.

Similarly, Dahrendorf (1959) believes that conflict in the organisation creates tension within the organizational system. One may observe such tension by paying attention to possible incompatibilities among departments, staff members or employees, to complexities of the communication network, and even the organizational structure itself. Conflict may be constructive/functional or destructive/dysfunctional. Constructive/functional conflict is most preferable as it brings about beneficial outcomes in the system whereas destructive/dysfunctional conflict brings about dysfunctional consequences in the system. Tschannen-Moran (2001) notes the dysfunctional consequences of conflict to include:

> a) Hampering productivity b) Lowering morale c) Causing more d) continued conflicts (e) Causing inappropriate behaviors.

Other glaring negative consequences of conflicts in the school system can be identified and they include poor academic performance, low staff productivity, tensions, broken social relationships, high incidents of student and staff turn-over, injuries, disruption of academic session among other factors. By and large, dysfunctional conflicts in the secondary school system can potentially impede the goals of education, which include:

- Preparing children for citizenship
- Cultivating a skilled workforce
- Teaching cultural literacy
- Helping students become critical thinkers
- Helping students compete in a global marketplace.

Generally, conflict in the school system if not promptly and carefully handled through non-violent techniques, can impede productivity in the system or even ground the system. Several types of conflicts can be identified in the schools according to Abubakar (2005) these are student-staff conflict, student-student conflict, student-principal conflict and community- school conflict. In details, there are several types of conflict within the secondary school setting, which include teacher-teacher conflict; teacher-principal conflict; student-staff conflict; student-student conflict; student-principal conflict; community-school conflict; teacher-parent conflict; parent-principal conflict and teachers' union-government conflict.

Causes of Conflict in Schools

There are several factors that can engender conflict or break down of peace in the secondary school system. Gray and Strake (1984) identify such factors as: limited resources; interdependent work activities; differentiation of activities; communication problems; differences in perceptions; the environment of the organization. They also noted that conflict can also arise from a number of other sources, such as: individual differences (some people enjoy conflict while others don't); unclear authority structures (people don't know how far their authority extends); differences in attitudes; task symmetries (one group is more powerful than another and the weaker group tries to change the situation; difference in time horizons. Specifically, there are factors that engenders conflict in the secondary schools in Nigeria, which include the leadership style of school administrators; lack of tolerance on the part of teachers towards the students; inadequate school facilities; harsh rules and regulations; indiscipline among students, influence of drug addiction; gangsterism; injustice; favouritism; corrupt practices among teachers and administrators; teachers' absence from work; poor salary; among other factors. These factors have the potential of having devastating effects capable of impeding productivity or in extreme cases lead to grounding the school system

Content of Peace Education Programmes

The success of any peace education programme is dependent on the experiences of the society where the programme would be carried out. Whether the society is experiencing conflict or has experienced conflict or whether it is a peaceful society is of pertinence. Harris (2004) has identified five types of peace education to be: conflict resolution education; human rights education; environmental education; international education and development education. One essential aspect of peace education programme and which was left out in Harris (2004) categorization of peace education programmes, which is very crucial is cultural education. It is important, because culture describes the totality of the way of life of a people. Cultural education brings to fore the shared beliefs and values of a group, community or society, which is essential for the survival of communities and societies as each generation come and go. As such, culture which is the root of cultural education prescribes the values that a society subscribes to. In this regard, cultural education deals with the exposition of certain beliefs, customs, norms and values

and behaviours which are necessary for the positive growth and development of individuals in their cultural environment as well as outside their cultural environment.

Culture is not individualistic but it is conformist as it deals with groups of individuals. Therefore the inclusion of culture in peace education programmes is important in order to foster cultural integration, tolerance between or among different cultures and the promotion of unity and understanding amongst people in society. Salomon (2002) re-echoes that "peace education is unique because it deals with relations between groups, not individuals". By and large, peace is a culture and a peoples' way of life, which can be promoted or propagated through education as a tool. Therefore, the whole essence of peace education is to promote the culture of non-violence as against the culture of violence in responding to conflict between or among individuals and groups.

Justification for Mainstreaming Peace Education in Secondary School Curricula in Nigeria

The secondary school system in Nigeria is a microcosm of the Nigerian society which is replete with conflicts of various degrees and intensity. Conflict remains one of the greatest challenges confronting the success of the teaching and learning process in secondary schools in Nigeria. The need for the development of a robust and comprehensive peace education curriculum, which will address concrete issues with regards to conflict and its resolution through peaceful means, cannot be overemphasised. This is because a comprehensive approach to peace education in schools will proactively address the issue of dysfunctional conflicts in the school system, which impedes progress and development in the system. Thus, a comprehensive peace education curriculum must focus on tolerance, peer mediation, cooperative teaching and learning in the classroom between teachers and students and between or among students, and training for teachers and administrators, and parents.

Clearly, a holistic peace education curriculum is indispensable in any effort geared towards propagating the culture of peace and eliminating the prevalent growing culture of violence within the secondary school system in Nigeria. The need for a holistic and encompassing peace education curriculum has been reinforced by Bodine & Crawford (1998) who warned that those selecting peace education and conflict resolution curricula should be aware that not all that are labeled as such represent authentic programmes. Nelson, Van Slyck, and Cardella (1999) assert that peace education curricula should be designed to influence knowledge and understanding of peace and conflict, competencies necessary for peacemaking, peacebuilding, and peacekeeping, peaceful attitudes and values, and efficacy and outcome expectancies.

Scholars have also underscored the effectiveness of peace education programmes in tackling conflict and violence in the school system. In this regard, Levy (1989) and Maxwell (1989) have argued that "peace education and conflict resolution curriculum-based programmes are designed to teach students about conflict and alternatives to violence via preventive means such as social skills training, empathy training, anger management, investigating attitudes about

conflict, and increasing bias awareness. Page (2002) also suggests that peace education should be thought of as "encouraging a commitment 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 consequences of war and social injustice; 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 peaceful future; and as caring for the student and encouraging the student to care for others." Similarly, King and Miller (2006) have pointed out the importance of the adoption of peace education as follow:

> Because the peaceful resolution of differences requires education at all levels of societies, a broad range of institutions need to address acute conflicts, work toward reconciliation, and strengthen societies to stand against prejudice, oppression, and violence, including mass organized violence. Churches, mosques, and schools can further peace education, as can village primary and secondary schools and universities and polytechnics.

This paper therefore proposes the mainstreaming of peace education as an independent subject to be enshrined in secondary school curricula to tackle the issues of conflicts and violence in secondary school. This is with a view to creating the harmonious teaching and learning environment that will assist in the realization of the fundamental objectives of secondary school education in Nigeria. Clearly, any peace education programme that will be adequate enough to address conflict in the secondary school system in Nigeria must take into account the historical development of the country, its cultural diversity, changes in the economic environment, its democratic experiences and its current numerous security challenges (terrorism, communal, intra and inter ethnic conflicts, resource based conflicts, religious conflicts) among other issues. Peace education programmes conceived in the above manner would definitely assist in achieving the short and long term goals of peace education which is both preemptive and proactive towards addressing conflict situations. Haris (2002) has articulated the short and long term goals of peace education by noting that:

> Peace education has both short and long terms goals. On the short term, it addresses the sources of immediate conflicts and gives their students knowledge about strategies they can use to stop the violence. In the long term, they hope to build in the students' minds a commitment to non-violence and provide knowledge about nonviolent alternatives, so that when faced with conflicts they will choose to behave peacefully.

The need for mainstreaming peace education in the secondary school curricula is important because the school needs to continue to embark on curricular reform culture so as to enable the various actors in the school system and the society at large to face the challenges of the

increasing recourse to the use of violence as an option for responding to conflict issues. This study therefore suggests the following peace education curriculum to be mainstreamed in the curricula of secondary schools in Nigeria with a view to re-inventing the culture of peace in the minds of students' right from the secondary school level where it is believed that students acquire and manifest violent behaviours. The UNESCO Seville Statement on violence affirms that "war is not a fatality determined by genes, violent brains, human nature or instincts, but is rather a social invention. Therefore, the same species that invented war is capable of inventing peace." By and large, the mainstreaming of peace education in the curricula of secondary schools will assist in the construction of peace in the minds of the students and the teachers and the administrators which will create the enabling environment conducive for learning in the system.

Curriculum for Peace Education in Secondary School (CPESS)

Course	Content	Methodology	Objective
Civic education	Citizenship, duties, rights and obligations of citizens, functions and processes of government, voting and elections, leadership and followership.	Formal and non-formal channels of education.	Preparing students for responsible citizenship and leadership, and understanding of the efficient functioning of the society.
Culture and diversity education	Meaning of culture and diversity learning to appreciate cultural differences, social integration, interdependence and mutual cooperation between individuals and societies	Formal and non-formal channels of education	Students should appreciate cultural differences and skills to communicate in different cultures leading to acceptance of plurality in our oneness.
Moral and value education	Learning about morality, norms and values, moral standards, rightness and wrongness of conducts and value systems such as tolerance, love, hard work, justice, respect for human life among others.	Formal and non-formal channels of education	Empowering students with sound knowledge of morality and appreciation of the right value system
Human rights education	Learning about legal issues, citizen's rights and freedoms and their obligations, international human rights instruments in promoting, protecting and defending human rights. Political, economic and social justice.	Formal and non-formal channels of education	Empowering students with the knowledge of their rights and their obligations.
Conflict resolution	Learning about the causes and effects of	Formal and non-formal	Empowering students with

education	conflicts, early warning signs of conflict, conflict prevention and management.	channels of education	non-violent skills of resolving conflict.
Disarmament education	Learning about the danger of arms proliferation, reduction of arms, control and elimination of the usage of arms.	Formal and non-formal channels of education	Students becomes aware of the knowledge of arms regulation and the deadly consequences of arms proliferation.
Non-violence education	Learning about the use of nonviolent alternatives to resolve conflicts e.g. dialogue, peaceful protests and rallies, hunger strike.	Formal and non-formal channels of education	Empowering students with non-violent skills and alternative techniques to responding to violent conflict.
Development education	Developing human capital potentials of students for economic growth.	Formal and non-formal channels of education	Impartation of vocational skills and human capital development in students.
Environmental education	Environmental pollution and conservation, global warming, environmental resource cultivation and distribution.	Formal and non-formal channels of education	Students should appreciate the benefits of nature and protection of the environment.

Source: Field, 2013.

The table above articulates a comprehensive peace education curriculum for dealing with violence and conflict in secondary schools in Nigeria. Generally, the introduction of this curriculum seeks to engineer positive attitudes, increase tolerance and acceptance of others, while seeking to eliminate prejudices and stereotypes, encourage positive perception of "self" and of "others" and enhance conflict resolution and problem solving skills among students, teachers and administrators in the secondary school system.

Conclusion

The increasing cases of violent conflicts in secondary schools in Nigeria is indicative of the fact that the quality of peace education programmes that are in existence in the secondary school curricula is largely inadequate. This is attributable to the practice whereby peace education is taught as an appendage of some other full-fledged subjects. It is imperative therefore, to posit that this practice erodes the effectiveness of peace education and water down its benefits. Therefore, this study has clearly articulated the compelling need for the mainstreaming of peace education as an independent subject in the secondary school curricula with a view to systematically phasing out the current culture of violent conflict which threatens the process of teaching and learning in the system. This is further reinforced by the argument that

"peace education and conflict resolution education programmes can help schools promote the individual behavioural change required for responsible citizenship, and the systematic change necessary for a safe learning environment" (Bodine & Crawford, 1998). Thus, the adoption and implementation of the proposed peace education curriculum in secondary school curricula will serve as a panacea for tackling the growing culture of conflict and violence in secondary schools in Nigeria.

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