Proposal for the Inclusion of Peace Education in the Universal Basic Education Programme in Nigeria

D.A. Falade, Ph. D.
Department of Social Studies,
Adeyemi College of Education, ONDO,
ONDO State, Nigeria.

Abstract: This paper develops a proposal for the inclusion of peace education in the Universal Basic Education (UBE) programme in Nigeria. The unity and progress of Nigeria are under threat as a result of aggressive and violent behaviours in form of socio-political, religious, communal and civil unrests which have ravaged the nation. This paper acknowledges the need for good governance as a means of promoting peace and security in Nigeria. The paper however emphasizes the essential role of peace education in developing the culture of peace in the Nigerian citizens. Some of the skills and values of peace that learners can acquire through peace education include: tolerance, cooperation, justice, fair play, respect, empathy, honesty, trust, discipline and obedience. The paper posits that peace education contents should be disarticulated from allied disciplines so that it can become a separate school subject in the UBE curriculum. The paper proposes the objectives, instructional contents and methodologies for teaching peace education in the UBE programme in Nigeria. The paper recommends that the teaching of peace education as a separate school subject requires effective teacher-training programme. There is therefore an urgent need for the introduction of peace education in the teacher education programme in Nigeria.

Key words: Proposal, peace education, Universal Basic Education, aggressive and violent behaviour, culture of peace

I. Introduction

Many nations across the globe are faced with related problems of violence, terrorism, suicide bombing, social and political crises. According to Afolabi (2008) most African countries are now governed by civilian leaders with democracy as the order of the day. It is however sad to note that in spite of this development, Africa is still a weak and volatile continent in the globalizing world system as pervasive and persistent violence has confounded efforts to improve economic performance in the region.

In Nigeria, there is no enduring harmony and peaceful relationship among the citizens. Many Nigerians now live in fear with no guarantee for security of lives and properties. Aggressive and violent acts like kidnapping, suicide bombing, assassination, socio-political, ethnic, religious and civil crises have become usual occurrence in Nigeria. This has impeded national integration, peace, stability and unity in nation.

The needs to build the culture of peace and sustain harmony among the citizens have become parts of the major goals of the government in Nigeria and other parts of the world. The importance and urgent need for building the culture of peace led to the United Nation’s declaration that the period 2001-2010 should be the international decade for a culture of peace and non-violence for the children of the world (Falade, Adeyemi and Olowo, 2011).

In view of this, nations of the world have adopted various means of inculcating the skills and values of peace in their citizens. This is aimed at peace building and development of the culture of peace in the society. The Nigeria government for instance, has made use of education, mass media, value orientation, dialogue etc. to promote peace in the nation. However, the Nigeria nation is still facing serious challenges of violence, kidnapping, bomb attack, killing, burning, youth restiveness and crises.

Education is an effective means of inculcating national values, norms, attitudes and traits of peace in the citizens. Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) emphasized that education is the most important instrument of change. Any fundamental change in the intellectual and social outlook of any society has to be preceded by an educational revolution. This is the reason why this paper develops a proposal for the teaching of peace education as a separate school subject in the UBE programme.

II. Theoretical Background

Social psychologists identified two major factors responsible for aggressive and violent behaviours. The two factors are biological and environmental forces. The psychoanalytic theory propounded by Freud focus on
instinct as the main cause of aggression and violence. According to Freud, human beings are born with the instinct that underlines all acts of violence and destruction. The aggressive energy in man can be discharged through undesirable activities like insulting others, fighting or destroying properties (Shaffer, 2005).

The environmentalists see aggressive and violent behaviours as products of environmental factors. They believe that children learn to be aggressive, retaliating and violent through social interaction in the environment. For example, Bandura, in his social learning theory treats aggression as a class of social behaviour that is acquired through learning (Shaffer, 2005). This means that young children acquire aggressive habits through observational learning. They learn to be violent and aggressive by observing the aggressive and violent actions of other people around them.

Frustration is also an environmental factor that may be responsible for crises and violent acts. At times citizens are frustrated due to the inability of the government to provide conducive social and economic environment. Social and economic problems like poverty, unemployment and corruption often provoke citizens to undertake aggressive and violent behaviours which disrupt the peace of the society. According to Doma (2013), there can be no peace without justice. Relationship between individuals or groups of people cannot be said to be in harmony when one of the parties is held in perpetual bondage or subjected to extreme exploitation and deprivation. In such a situation a person would and should fight for his rights and peace is thereby threatened.

Corroborating the above position, Piaget found out the effect of frustration on aggressive behaviour. He frustrated his 7-month-old child by placing his hand in front of an interesting object that the child was trying to reach. Without even looking at his father, the child smacked Piaget’s hand, as if it merely represented an object that must be removed (Shaffer, 2005).

Another environmental factor that can develop violent, aggressive and other disorderly habit in a child is perceived negative intentions and behaviours of other people. When a child observe or perceive that someone has the intention to deliberately harm or hurt him, the child will retaliate in a hostile manner. Shaffer (2005) pointed out that hostile aggression increase with age because peers informally sanction retaliatory aggression as a normal reaction to harm doing. Retaliatory aggression is not only sanctioned by peers, the society often expects that one retaliate, in an aggressive and violent way, to any harmful act that is perceived to be deliberate.

In Nigeria and some other parts of the world, retaliatory aggression is a major cause of inter and intra-ethnic crises; inter and intra-religious crises as well as crises within and between political parties. When overt and covert actions are perceived as deliberate attempts to harm members of a particular social, religious, ethnic and political group, the possible reaction is retaliatory aggressive and violent behaviour. In Nigeria, ethnic and religious bias and prejudices often result into conflicts. Shaffer and Kipp (2007) pointed out that the deep-seated ethnic and religious animosity demonstrated by adults is easily imbibed by children and adolescents. This has the tendency of generating inter-ethnic and inter-religious crises.

Learning therefore plays significant role in the development of aggressive and violent behaviours. Most aggressive responses like fighting, retaliating, abusing are learnt habits. This is the reason why Schultz and Schultz (2005) argued that all the social and environmental forces that shape personality do so by the techniques of learning. Even inherited facets of personality can be modified, disrupted, prevented or allowed to flourish by the process of learning.

III. The Place of Education in Developing the Values and Traits of Peace

According to Schultz and Schultz (2005) evidence is overwhelming that learning plays a major role in influencing virtually every aspect of behaviour. In Nigeria, education has been adjudged the only viable option needed to achieve the broad national objectives of building a self-reliant, egalitarian, democratic and progressive nation.

The overall philosophy of Nigeria as cited by the Federal Republic of Nigeria (2004) are (i) To live in unity and harmony as one indivisible, indissoluble, democratic and sovereign nation founded on the principles of freedom, equality and justice; (ii) To promote inter-African solidarity and world peace through understanding. The national educational goals which are derived from the philosophy are:

- The inculcation of national consciousness and national unity;
- The inculcation of the type of values and attitudes for the survival of the individual and the Nigerian society;
- The training of the mind in the understanding of the world around;
- The acquisition of appropriate skills and development of mental, physical and social abilities and competencies as equipment for the individual to live in and contribute to the development of the society.

Education plays significant roles in achieving these philosophy and goals. For the Nigeria’s philosophy of education to be in harmony with Nigeria’s national goals, education has to be geared towards self realization, better human relationship, individual and national efficiency, effective citizenship, national consciousness and unity (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).
The Nigeria education system has therefore been re-structured to develop in the citizens those values, attitudes, skills and traits that can make them to be effective citizens, live in harmony and thereby promote the attainment of national goals and objective.

IV. Peace Education in Nigeria

Peace has been described as living in harmony, mutual understanding and resolving interpersonal or communal conflicts without degenerating into disharmony and violence (Falade, Adeyemi and Olowo, 2011). Peace does not connote absence of misunderstanding, but rather it means the ability to resolve and settle misunderstandings amicably.

Peace education refers to all teaching and learning activities aimed at helping people to develop the habits of cordial relationship in the family, among peers, in other social groups and in the society at large. Wikipedia Encyclopedia (2009) described peace education as the process of acquiring the values, the knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviour to live in harmony with one self, with others and with the environment.

Peace education is not a recent development in Nigeria. Traditional education in Nigeria adopted informational means to teach the virtues of peace and thereby build the culture of peace in the community. Falade and Adejubee (2011) pointed out that in the traditional setting, the Yoruba adopted proverbs to teach the virtues of forgiveness, harmony and peaceful co-existence.

In line with the United Nation’s declaration that the period 2001-2010 should be international decade for a culture of peace, the Nigerian government in 2006 restructured the primary and secondary school programme to reflect this directive. The NERDC produced a 9-year Basic Education Curriculum in 2006. Although the new curriculum incorporated peace concepts into the UBE programme, however, peace concepts are not taught as separate school subject. Peace concepts are integrated into related subjects like social studies, civic education, Christian and Islamic religious knowledge.

The teaching of peace education concepts through allied subjects is faced with a number of problems. Among these are: Lack of proper emphasis on peace values and skills, inadequate text books on peace education, non-availability of instructional materials on peace education and incompetent teachers. Realizing the central role of peace education in national integration, there is the need to disarticulate peace concepts from the allied subjects so that peace education can be taught as a separate subject.

V. Relational for Teaching Peace Education as a Separate Subject

Although good governance is an important factor in promoting peace in Nigeria, however, the need for the teaching of peace education as a separate school subjects can not be overemphasized. The spate of violence, conflicts and crises in Nigeria calls for the development of the norms, values and culture of peace in the citizens. Also the high rate of youths’ involvement in aggressive and violent activities shows that urgent steps should be taken to inculcate in the Nigerian youths the skills, attitude, norms and values of peace. The rational for making proposal for the inclusion of peace education, as a separate subject, in the UBE programme are:

i. Peace is central to socio-political and economic stability, human survival and meaningful progress in the nation. Peace education should therefore be the central purpose of the educational system.

ii. The teaching of peace concepts through social studies, civic education, Christian and Islamic religious knowledge does not provide adequate opportunity for effective learning and acquisition of relevant peace attitudes and skills.

iii. Some UBE teachers are not specialists in the subjects they teach in the school. For instance, in some schools social studies and civic education are not taught by specialists. In some cases, science, commercial and language teachers are used in teaching social studies and civic education. This may account for the reason why Falade and Falade (2013) discovered that primary school civic education teachers in southwest Nigeria did not possess adequate knowledge and attitudes to teach the subject. The goals of peace education can not be achieved if the teaching of peace concept is merely left for these categories of teachers.

iv. Building the culture of peace require special methodology. Participatory and informal approaches are required for developing the values and skills of peace. Hence peace educators need special teacher-training schemes to be competent in inculcating the norms of peace in the learner.

v. The teaching of peace education as a separate subject will give room for the production of teaching and learning materials on the subject. Researchers and authors will be motivated to produce learning materials on peace education if the subject is disarticulated from other subjects.

VI. Proposed Peace Education Programme for the Upper Basic Education in Nigeria

The development of peace education programme for the UBE programme should be handled by professionals and experts. Experts on child development, early childhood and care education, peace and political education will be essential for the task. The three basic aspects of a useful Upper Basic Peace Education Programme are: Objectives, content and methodology.
VII. Objectives of Upper Basic Peace Education Programme

The following objectives are proposed for the Upper Basic Peace Education programme in Nigeria:

i. To inculcate the values, attitude and norms of peace in the learner

ii. To develop the spirit of cooperation, love and togetherness in the child

iii. To create an awareness and understanding of the social and physical environment.

iv. To acquaint the child with the political history of the nation.

v. To develop the child’s sense of respect, justice and tolerance

vi. To develop in the child the attitude and skill for dialogue and peaceful resolution of conflicts

vii. To develop in the child core national values like obedience, honesty, loyalty and patriotism

viii. To develop in the child the spirit of diligence and hardwork

ix. To equip the child with relevant skills for professional accomplishment and self-reliance.

VIII. Instructional Contents for Upper Basic Peace Education Programme

The instructional content for peace education at the Upper Basic Education level should be sequential in arrangement. At the same time, the organization of the instructional content should be thematic in approach. That is, peace education curriculum content should focus on societal peace related problems and issues. Proposed peace education curriculum content for Upper Basic Education is shown on Table 1

<p>| Table 1: Proposed Peace Education Curriculum Contents for Upper Basic Education |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Content</th>
<th>Performance objectives</th>
<th>Evaluation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JSS 1</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Meaning and purpose of social groups</td>
<td>Students should be able to: explain the meaning and purpose of social groups</td>
<td>State the meaning and purpose of social groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Primary social groups</td>
<td>describe the meaning and types of primary social groups</td>
<td>Explain the meaning and types of primary social groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Secondary social groups</td>
<td>describe the meaning and types of secondary social groups</td>
<td>Explain the meaning and types of secondary social groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Roles of individuals in primary and secondary groups</td>
<td>explain the roles of individuals in primary and secondary groups</td>
<td>State the roles of individuals in primary and secondary groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Conflicts and conflict resolution within social groups</td>
<td>explain the causes of conflict within social groups and suggest solution to these conflicts</td>
<td>State the causes of conflicts in social groups and how these conflicts can be resolved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Meaning of national unity and integration i.e. living together peacefully</td>
<td>explain the meaning of national unity and integration</td>
<td>Explain the meaning of national unity and integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Need for national unity, progress and development of national integration</td>
<td>discuss the need for national unity and integration in Nigeria</td>
<td>Describe the need for national unity and integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Importance of national unity and integration to nation building</td>
<td>analyze the importance of national unity and integration to nation building</td>
<td>Enumerate the values of national unity and integration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSS 2</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Advantages of living together in the family and in the community</td>
<td>Students should be able to: state the advantages of living together in the family and in the community</td>
<td>Mention the advantages of living together in the family and in the community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Meaning and importance of group roles</td>
<td>discuss the meaning and importance of group roles</td>
<td>Explain the meaning and importance of group roles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Types of group or collective behavior</td>
<td>identify types of collective behavior</td>
<td>Describe types of collective behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Characteristics of different types of group behaviour (destructive and constructive)</td>
<td>distinguish between the difference types of group behaviour</td>
<td>State the characteristics of difference types of group behaviours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Benefits of group behaviour</td>
<td>mention benefits of group behaviour</td>
<td>Enumerate the benefits of group behaviour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Conformity in social groups</td>
<td>explain the meaning and forms of conformity in social groups</td>
<td>State the forms of conformity in social groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Leadership and followership roles</td>
<td>explain the types and roles of leadership and followership</td>
<td>Explain the types and roles of leaders and followers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JSS 3</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Meaning and types of peace</td>
<td>Student should be able to: explain the meaning and types of peace various</td>
<td>Explain the meaning and types of peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Importance of peace</td>
<td>explain the importance of living in peace with one another</td>
<td>State the importance of peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ways of promoting peace (tolerance, social justice, human rights etc.)</td>
<td>describe the ways of promoting peace</td>
<td>Describe those things that can promote peace</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Meaning and types of conflict</td>
<td>explain the meaning and types of conflict</td>
<td>Discuss the meaning and types of conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Causes and examples of conflict</td>
<td>describe the causes and examples of conflict</td>
<td>Identify the causes and examples conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>Consequences of conflict</td>
<td>explain the consequences of conflict</td>
<td>State the consequences of conflict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Conflict management and resolution e.g. dialogue, compromise, etc.</td>
<td>Suggest non-violent methods of resolving conflicts</td>
<td>Describe non-violent methods of resolving conflicts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
IX. Teaching Methods for Upper Basic Peace Education Programme

The attainment of the goals and objectives of peace education depend, to a large extent, on the instructional methods that are adopted by teachers. The skill and values of peace can not be acquired through the rote learning method that is often used in our schools. Falade, Adeyemi and Olowo (2011) argued that the conventional teaching method that is common in our secondary schools has been found ineffective for the development of the values and skills required for building the culture of peace. According to Orungbemi and Olusegun (2011), it is not effective to discuss abstract concepts of peace with small children. Rather, games, songs and puppet plays could be used to get the message across.

To accomplish the task of peace building, the teaching and learning process must be the type that allows learners to manifest the inherent peace values and skills among themselves. Doma (2013) emphasized that successful peace building activities create an environment supportive of self-sustaining, durable peace, reconcile opponents, prevent conflict from restarting, integrate civil society; create rule of law mechanism, and address underlying structural and societal issues.

Peace building requires certain norms, values and skills which can only be developed through informal and learner-centred methods. Learning methods like collaborative, role play, simulation and participatory mode are proposed for teaching peace concepts. Nobel peace Prize Laureates (2000) developed a manifesto for a Peace Non-violence Society and proposed that extra-curricular activities involving young pioneers or youth union, open forum and role plays should be adopted.

In Nigeria, the skills and values of peace can be developed in the learners by establishing Peace Club or Harmony Club in the school. Such informal endeavor will help the young ones to manage their own affairs, resolve conflicts, and abide by rules and regulations. Through this, they will not only learn, but at the same time demonstrate the traits of tolerance, cooperation, justice, fair play, respect, empathy, honesty, trust, discipline and obedience. This corroborates the view of Shaw, Gilliom, Ingoldsby and Naging (2003) that physical aggression and other forms of overt antisocial conducts, like fighting and disobedience, continue to decline as children become increasingly proficient and settling disputes more amicably.

X. Conclusion

This paper pointed out that aggressive and violent behaviours are acquired through biological and environmental forces. However, environmental factors play more significant roles the development of violent and antisocial acts like cursing, fighting, killing and disobedience. These acts are directly or indirectly learnt by the young ones. The paper emphasized the need for the development on the culture of peace in Nigeria. Education play important role in acquiring the skills and values of peace. In view of this, Peace education should be given better position in the UBE school curriculum.

XI. Recommendation

1. Peace concepts should be disarticulated from other subjects in the UBE programme. Peace education should therefore be taught as a separate subject.

2. The peace education objectives, contents and methodologies proposed in this paper should be considered for adoption for the UBE programme in Nigeria.

3. The teaching of peace education as a separate school subject requires effective teacher-training programme. There is therefore an urgent need for the introduction of peace education in the teacher education programme in Nigeria.

References


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