EDUCATION FOR PEACE-BUILDING IN NIGERIA

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Abstract
This paper discussed education for peace building in Nigeria. It attempted to see how education can facilitate peace building in Nigeria for national development. Definitions of education and its impact on the life of the students after schooling were considered. This was to be a factor that will enable the individual to maintain peace, which is a way of being in agreement with one's environment at all levels. The paper revealed that living in accord with one another will foster growth and development. Signs of lack of peace in Nigeria were identified as cultism in schools, kidnapping, Boko Haram insurgency and human trafficking among others. Agencies of education like home/family, schools, club/societies, the church/mosque, peer group, government, social media and the community were encouraged to be up and doing in propagating values that will build mutual co-existence in Nigeria. It was later recommended that government should pay more attention to job creation, on-going formation or more awareness programs and careful selection of leaders to ascertain peace building, while at the individual level; the focus should be on togetherness for progress. Phenomenological method of research was used for the purpose of this study.

Key Words: Education, Peace-Building, Nigeria, Kidnapping, Cultism, ritual killings, Social Media and Government.

Introduction

The issue of education for peace-building is the intention of this paper. It is an attempt to see the influence of education on individual which will later translate to peaceful co-existence and nation building in Nigeria. Education is the process that supports learning; encourages acquisition of knowledge and boost understanding of values. Education especially formal education must possess the ability of leading one from ignorance to better understanding of views. It moves one from emptiness to fullness or ability to reach the height. It leads one into the capacity to realize his inbuilt potentials and become useful and reliable after schooling. Education refines and delivers individual that value it from being narrow-minded, which gives room for competency to accommodate others and

their views. The anxiety in Nigeria especially in relation to lack of peace is not a new thing and this is increasingly becoming an accepted culture and practice. Attention need to be paid to how individual are raised up in the informal training or education received according to backgrounds. The view of Olowu (2016) is applicable here as he opines that "Nigeria is a multicultural and multiethnic nation where people are raised differently according to the beliefs and customs of their ethic group. Consequently, by observing one's behaviors it is possible to discover one's origins" (p.1)

Education must take place under the direction of educators for proper assessment and attention, because it carries with it a particular curriculum to be strictly followed. It has methodology for transmitting the required knowledge. This can come inform of teaching, discussion and learning. Education is time consuming because it occurs in stages and after each stage, there must be some noticeable improvement since, education brings about an intrinsic and lasting change in a person's thinking and capability to do things. Education is not about having access to information on a particular issue, it is more of acquiring or inserting information into one's brain and this can only be possible through repeated practice. This will later translate or transform into proper assimilation that will change the attitude of the receiver for good. In other words, changing to be able to differentiate what is good from what is bad. This by implication is the ability to apply what education has given, to one's day to day life and activities.

Smith (2015) has carefully defines education "as the wise, hopeful and respectful cultivation of learning undertaken in the belief that all should have the chance to share in life."(p.2). He further explains that it is a process of inviting truth and possibility, of encouraging and giving time to discovery. In the opinion of smith, education must not be confused with schooling because the responsibility of school teachers is to bring out or develop individual potentials. In other words, it is a process of helping individuals to realize what he is good at and be productive in life. In the mind of the researcher however, schooling will still help to arrive at this discovery stage. When one is exposed to school curriculum step by step, the tendency of clinging to a particular area of interest is possible. Hence a good teacher or educator can then tailor his student towards this aspect for improvement. This can certainly lead to career counselling.

Fafunwa (2003) defines education "as the engine of economic, social and political growth and development of any nation" Also, "Education is the Alpha and Omega for development". "Education is the aggregates of all processes by means of which a person develops ability, aptitude and other

forms of behavior of positive value in the society in which he lives"(p.2), he says further while citing Edmund Burke that "Education is the cheap defense of nations"(p.2). While supporting Smith in differentiating School from Education, he arrives at this definition- "what you are left with after schooling" (p.2). Accordingly, schooling will still promote education. This is not to say that informal education will not play any part as many within the society of learned or literates might not have opportunity of attending formal education. Therefore, education can be formal informal and non-formal. However, all the types of education are very important to shape the life of individual for the betterment of the society. Although a well behaved or mannered person might be considered educated but to what extent can that go in this time and age?

Types of Education

Education in this regard can be classified into informal, formal and non-formal.

Informal Education is the oldest form of education belonging to African society, and Fafunwa (2003) has willingly calls it- 'Traditional African Education.'(p.3). It can be regarded as home training. It is not done in an organized manner but by regular information from elderly people in the home and learning what others are doing through repeated process. It is transmitted through interactions with others by the use of proverbs, folk tales, folklores, songs, ceremonies and art. Methodology here is oral tradition. Informal education is simply the business of the environment, which is what a given setting is able to inculcate into the mind of individual as long as one is part of it. The definition of Akinlua (2002) is also pertinent here. To him, "informal education is as opposed to the formal one in that it is not organized, not thought of but is accidentally acquired through what is called experimental learning" (p.21). Informal education is learning by imitating what others are doing. That is, values are passed down through learning by doing method.

Little wonder Smith (2015), criticizes this type of education that "the problem often comes when education drifts or moves into entertainment or containment. Involvement in the immediate activity is the central concern and insignificant attention is given to expanding horizons, nor to reflection, commitment and creating change."(p.15). It is simply given and nothing is being contributed on the part of the receiver. He added that "people are treated as objects to be worked on or 'molded' rather than as participants and creators i.e. where education slips into 'schooling'. (p. 15).This type of education last for a very long time or for eternity because

it is a product of a particular culture on individual. The content of the learning in informal education is what Adeyemi (2004) calls "acquisition of simple habits and norms of the society as well as the societal values" (p.4). Which is gradually fading away through interaction with civilization as Fafunwa (2003) opines "We lost many aspects of our moral and cultural heritage after our contact with the colonizers" (p.4). In informal education, there were no dropouts and no unemployment as well. The question is can this type of education be useful for development? It will not definitely but it is the basis for formal education.

Formal Education is an organized type of education. It is done in a structured environment, with trained or qualified teachers or educators in a classroom setting, with an approved class size. It has stages and structured curriculum for each stage. Assessment is done after completing each stage to ascertain progress to the next stage and there are procedures for this. The stages in this case are preschool or kindergarten, primary school, secondary school, college and universities and vocational training school. This is well controlled by the government and it attracts certification after completion. This type of education according to Fafunwa (2003) "is linked with economic development, culture, social and political activities" (p.3). If this is experienced by any society, there will be progress and peaceful co-existence.

This type of education has lots of influences on students because it exposes them to many areas and peer group influences have much impact as well. Smith (2015), while looking at the problems of formal education opines that "the choice is not between what is 'good' and what is 'bad' – but rather what is appropriate for people in this situation or that. There are times to use transmission and direct teaching as methods, and moments for exploration, experience and action. (p.15), to him, methodology must be applied to a given situation and therefore, various methods of teaching need to be adopted for proper transmission of knowledge.

Nigeria has gained a lot from the missionaries who brought formal education to them around "September 1842" according to Akinlua (2002), (p.16) and through this, many schools have emerged and still emerging till today, at all levels because formal education has become celebrated as it has grown over the years.

Non-Formal Education is being described by Adeyemi (2004) as attention given to people who just want to learn some skills without necessarily going to school. Example of this are: adult literacy classes, cooperative societies, young farmers' club and recreational clubs. On the view of

Opakunle (2002), non-formal education pays more attention to those in vocational carrier, where it has no fixed time of completion, no time table and no curriculum. It is meant for acquisition of a particular trade like learning in the workshop of a road side mechanic, a fashion designer, carpenters and cobblers. These views have been agreed upon by Akinlua (2002). To him, "non-formal education is intentional but not organized in a school fashion." (p.21).The summary of these views is that non formal education therefore is education that occurs outside a prearranged condition like formal setting but they are organized and planned for because education must not be left to chance.

Agencies of Education

Agencies of education are those who are responsible for the transmission of education from one generation to the next, either formally, informally and non-formally. The following are recognized in this regard as Opakunle (2002) explains.

    a. **The family or the home:** being the very first of contact with life, a child is brought up in a home, where basic knowledge of what is expected in the society is taught. Opakunle explains that toiletry habits, table manner, respect for mother tongue and the second language are being imparted in the home, starting from a tender age. In as much as the researcher agrees with Opakunle, the content of informal education of Adeyemi (2004) as "acquisition of simple habits and norms of the society as well as the societal values" (p.4) is a better summary of what family or home inculcate in the life of a child as education. This is more than toiletry habit and others as Opakunle feels.

    b. **School:** once a child grows up to age two these days, he has contact with the school. Now, a child is being introduced into formal education. What a child acquires here is more than home training. The first is the act of reading and writing with knowledge of arithmetic that makes him literate. Along with moral values. As he grows in a school environment, he is exposed to many subjects that eventually broaden his horizon with the efforts of teachers and peer group influences.

    c. **Church/Mosque:** each family belongs to a particular place of worship. As a result of this, regular attendance at these places of prayer and contact with the creator will have influence on children through sermons, Sunday school programs and socialization with other children .

    d. **The peer group:** the impact of small group of friends on children cannot be over emphasized. This may be around the home or in the

church or school. They influence each other easily. Therefore, much attention should be paid to children in their choice of friends as they grow up. Whatever they learn from each other form part of their education.

e. **The community:** this is a representation of the larger society. The society corrects every individual and builds the schools. Whatever a child gathers from the society will be returned to the same society.

f. **Social Media:** the impact of the social media on the life of every single person cannot be over emphasized. These days, social media is even faster than schools in spreading information. Apart from this, much information about issues or school subjects are readily available in the internet for the purpose of interested researchers. It is therefore important to note that social media is a very fast and important part of education in Nigeria today.

g. **Clubs and Societies:** schools have clubs and societies as part of their extracurricular activities. Children join anyone they like and from here, a lot are being taught and learnt by individuals like leadership skills, ability to face the crowd and spirit of collegiality and togetherness. They are equally exposed to the act of supporting one another when they are asked to make financial contributions for good purposes.

h. **Government:** all that have been discussed above cannot be achieved without the efforts of the government, who pays attention to various educational policies and finances the educational industry. It is through the government's efforts that we have enabling environments where schools can function better.

Whatever children acquire through these means form their values in life. They grow with them to become responsible citizens. Therefore these vehicles or transmitters of education need to be responsible to bring about the best that will eventually develop and improve the society.

How Education Can Improve Peoples' Lives

In as much as education is more than acquiring a certificate or certificates, it gives opportunity to be exposed to many ideas beyond ones imagination. Education is life and its main purpose is to improve lives for a better society. It gives a chance for one to gain a lot and be properly enlightened and cultured to differentiate evil from good and desire to live with others peacefully and to investigate issues before concluding. Through this, others will be improved and the society will as well be

enhanced. Hence, Andry (2018) is of the opinion that the following are some of the ways with which education can improve the life of individuals: **1**. education increases the chance of getting a job more easily, **2.** it increases mental health lowers the risks of dementia and Alzheimer, **3.** Opportunity to make friends as University is a place to build friendships, **4.** It gives a chance to building business relationship in the sense of meeting professionals along because of educational exposures.

Also, number **5** is the fact that education enables one to gain confidence by taking actions and accomplishing goals. **6.** Education improves communication skills through meeting people from different backgrounds and characters and various approaches to deal with them. **7.** It facilitates continuous opportunity to learn new skills and broadens ones horizon. **8.** Education helps one to be independent since qualified personnel gets paid job easily. **9.** The last one on this list and the most important one to this paper is the fact that education helps individual to develop and create a good community. Good people would make a good community. If everyone studies hard, they will reach their personal goals; as a result, there will be a society full of knowledgeable people who can work and live on their own, and help each other, too. They will be people of the same orientation and single-mindedness. This will foster working together and developing the society.

 If education has the purpose of improving people's lives, it must facilitate peaceful co-existence resulting in societal development. Education is for enlightenment, clearing of doubts and it supports ability to welcome new ideas. Thus, if these are what education especially formal education does to individuals, it is then important to examine how these acquired values through education would influence peace-building and societal development in Nigeria.

Education for Peace-Building in Nigeria

Education, most importantly formal education is an instrument that shapes peoples' minds to become more welcoming and encourage peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. Dupuy (2008) while referring to Brock-Utne defines the concept of education for peace as "education or socialization that results in more peace in the world or that at least has as a result the greater likelihood that peace will be the existing condition than the case would have been without that education" (p.2). Buttressing this view, Kester (2008) stresses the significance of peace education in this assertion. "It is of very high importance, as it will enable people to adopt a

positive attitude regarding the different issues they can face through their life and to develop the necessary skills to peaceful resolve conflicts. This, in turn will impact positively on the society." (p.27), these views denote that within educational curriculum, skills to resolve conflicts amicably could be acquired.

In the mind of Olowo (2016), "Peace education is the process of equipping learners with tools for developing knowledge's, skills, values and attitudes needed for resolving differences and conflicts in non-violent ways and in living peacefully with oneself, others and the environment. It is concerned with resolving conflict of intrapersonal, interpersonal and intergroup levels without violence."(p.10)

Olowu was of the opinion that peace education should be inculcated into educational curriculum. During the course of his research, he came to the realization that peace education and social studies are the same, and social studies have been part of educational syllabus for a long time. By now, the country should be reaping the fruits of this gained knowledge in the majority of the citizens, if truly the education is comprehensive enough. Little wonder Olowu suggested that social studies curriculum should be reviewed to have the nucleus with which it was introduced into the curriculum, especially in relation to peace-building in Nigeria. Training and retraining of teachers will be an added value in realizing this goal.

Signs of lack of peace in Nigeria can be identified among others as cultism in schools, human trafficking, kidnapping, Boko Haram insurgency, Ritual killings and violence between Fulani herdsmen and farmers. The effects of these problems on families translating into society cannot be over emphasized. The question is, in all these, what will education do? Formative effect on the way one thinks, feels, or acts may be considered educational. Education helps approach to life and proposes ways with which issues can be settled without conflict promptly and at the right time. It builds respect for time and time management as against the Africans mentality that "wait for time or in the process of 'producing' time" as Mbiti (1969) asserts (p. 19), when they are not doing anything at all but just waiting for the right time to function. They forget that time waits for nobody and it is only in the consciousness of time that one can make more progress and headway, principally in solving pressing issues.

Above all, education is the major channel through which confidence can be gained to make major improvement in the society, through acquisition of values that will be common to all against ethnic values that individual gained in the home training. From these educational communal values,

majority can think alike and share the same views from their broad orientation. Thinking with Kester (2008) that education will facilitate "positive attitude regarding the different issues they can face through their life and to develop the necessary skills to peaceful resolve conflicts." (p.27)

Education and Development in Nigeria

Education and that is, formal education is a way of developing human resources that will in turn develop the society. Development is a product of westernization and civilization generating from proper education. Imagine the typical African setting especially before colonization, where what we refer to as villages today were our best. Today we have cities and majority of our youths prefer city life to village life for good reasons. The main motive is job opportunities as against regular farming, weaving and petty trading in the villages. With good job, there will be enough money to live more productively. Another value is documentation. This is a pure product of civilization as against oral tradition that nearly killed African culture. Today, many Africans can put the values of each culture in black and white for posterity.

What Nigeria is having and experiencing today in terms of development can be traced back to influence of formal education. In as much as informal education is very vital, the researcher will like to echo the relevance of formal education to development. Apart from its contributions to individual knowledge that has effect on the society, its impact on well learned persons to start up and be noticed is to be admired. Mathur (2012) has identified the following as ways with which education can develop the society which can easily be applied to Nigeria situation.

1. Preservation and transmission of social, moral and cultural values. All the values gained in informal education will be built upon in schools. Systematic education will encourage procuring more ethics from the school curriculum and teachers, including school and societal influences considering the agents of education discussed above and regular exposures from the school executions. Individuals will have reasons to live, transmit and preserve these values since it has become part and parcel of them.

2. **Awakening of Social feelings.** Through education individuals become aware about the importance of unity, love, fraternity and other values. Education makes all people get awakened of being part of the society and how they can contribute to the world as society. Through their knowledge

of values and skills, they have concerns for the society and become aware of the environment and how to improve it.

3. **Political development of society.** Education makes all aware about rights and duties of all, so that they can develop their civic sense. Through different lesson of political leaders and stories, education develops ideal leadership quality so that in future citizens can lead the state as a society.

4. **Economic development of society.** Education develops skills in individual and makes him a productive citizen. Through education everyone learns how to earn money and as per their qualification he gets job or labor and on the whole, taxes is generated to develop the economy. Education enable people to migrate to another place and from their gross profit, economic development can take place.

5. **Social changes and reforms.** Education makes individuals perfects and aware about the rights. It also helps to make all aware about how to live peacefully and how to face difficulties and live peacefully. Doubts, superstitions and misconceptions about issues are cleared through education. Education produces better citizens for the development of the society.

Recommendations

Based on the above discussions, the following recommendations are formulated:

1. Agencies of education should propagate values that will foster growth and development particularly in the school settings where children spend most of their formative years before they grow into adulthood.
2. There is need to review the related courses on peace-building in school curriculum; like social science to pay more attention to peace-building and development in a thematic form. Teaching methodology must also emphasize the relevance of each topic to peace-building. Instead of leaving students do the application of the topics on their own
3. Emphasis should be on training and retraining of teachers to continuously stress the importance of peace-building to their students specifically in today's Nigeria.
4. On the part of government, the following must be done:
    a. Finances must be readily available to achieve teaching peace-building in education through seminal and workshops for both teachers and students.

b. Job creation for youths and young school leavers to engage them in more productive activities that will distract them from involving in conflict should be a priority.

c. There should be awareness program on importance of good leadership that will encourage peace and development all the time.

d. More emphasis should be on the relevance of togetherness and collegiality as against self-centeredness.

Conclusion

This paper discussed education for peace building in Nigeria. All types of education discussed above are pertinent to peace-building and development. It is only that the informal education is narrowed to individual culture and backgrounds. Formal education is general and broader; it goes beyond any ethnic understanding. Therefore, formal education that is the most celebrated will be very useful for peace-building and development in a country like Nigeria.

Education is an instrument of peace-building and societal development. People with higher attainment of education are able to work with open and clear minds with folks of other cultures, to achieve greater levels in different dimensions of peace building and development. Therefore, people of this caliber must be considered for leadership. Education must improve peoples' lives! Learning is forever, learning is for life and learning is continuous. Learning is all encompassing and this should be encouraged for everybody to improve living together peacefully for societal development.

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