Imperatives of Peace Education in Nigeria: A Critical Perspective

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Abstract

There is a growing concern in Nigeria about the increasing cases of violent conflicts that have permeated the entire national fabric making development and achievement of other basic needs a difficult journey. Such cases include terrorism, herders-farmers clash, kidnapping, banditry, religious violence, family/domestic violence, communal clash, political violence, among others. These have become the bane of Nigeria's existence thus hampering development with security of lives and property receiving insignificant attention. In view of these, with their attendant consequences duly considered, this paper presents peace education as an imperative tool to Nigeria's path to peace and development. To further buttress the consequentiality of peace education in Nigeria, the paper makes a brief review of the state of the nation from the prism of violent conflicts which have slowed down the pace of national progress and convincingly outlines its imperatives to include that: it serves as a tool of de-radicalization; and, imparts to Nigerians the culture of peace, among others. Relying on secondary sources of data such as review of newspaper articles, journals, and other documentaries, the paper concludes that Nigeria can still embrace peace and development if her citizens learn and imbibe the culture of peace. On a final note, the paper recommends among others, that peace education should be integrated into the national educational system (ranging from pre-nursery school curriculum to tertiary education) in order to empower the future generations with the knowledge of conflicts and the necessary skills to handle them for peaceful co-existence and true development.

Keywords: imperatives, peace, peace education, violent conflicts.

Introduction

Education, generally, has been widely acknowledged for its ability to build the inner self of the individuals and prepare them for "responsible" citizenship of societies. This is premised on the assumption that no individual is born a good citizen (Kofi Anan, former UN secretary- general); rather, it is a process that takes places over a lifetime, through education in its various forms – formal and informal. Among the many kinds of education that moulds individuals' character for good is peace education. Specifically, the attention of peace education is on problem-solving and non-violence for peaceful co-existence and development. It grooms individuals to embrace peace, be law-abiding, respect fundamental human rights, value security of lives and property, and observe equity, equality, fairness, and justice among others. With this frame of mind, significant stakeholders such as the academia, civil society groups, human rights groups, etc have drummed up their support, calling for the adoption peace education across societies because of its potential contribution to peace and development.

Peace education is conceived in different ways by different scholars from, perhaps, different backgrounds. That notwithstanding, in the opinion of this paper, it can best be described as a specific kind of education designed to impart to the people, especially the younger ones, the skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes to prevent, manage, resolve, and transform conflicts non-violently in order to live peacefully and engender an enabling society where fulfilment of human and ecological development needs is guaranteed. Emphasis on the younger ones is to groom them to save succeeding generations from threats of violence and actual violence capable of plunging them into a semblance or rather, worse horrific experience that is presently the case. This is necessary to capture them early and occupy their mind with non-violent thinking or else, as Coleman McCarthy puts it "Unless we teach children peace, someone else will teach them violence" (Akinyaode, 2011). The adults on the other hand are trained or/are re-socialized and re-oriented along the path of peace, according to Omeje (2022), to, among others, change the mentality of those chanting the songs of war and violence.

Despite the universal acceptance accorded to peace education, and its early teaching by preceding generations through their cultures, radicalism, conflicts and violence are still on the increase. For instance, in Nigeria, it is no more surprising the sheer magnitude of horrible news being heard and recorded on a daily basis across the regions. These underscore the underutilization of the education technique in changing the attitude of the people from violence to non-violence. This is largely due to the inability to distinguish and recognise peace education as the imperative tool to the path of peace at the formal and informal settings in the country; high level of radicalism that has already heated the

country's polity, and among others, bad governance, which has ceded the basic needs and rights of the citizens to the gratification of the personal greed of the ruling class, thus fuelling all manner of crimes, violence, and antagonisms against humanity.

In view of the above, it is the intention of this paper to make explicit the imperative of peace education in Nigeria in order to guide the citizens from different settings in their teaching of peace and re-awake their consciousness on the need to imbibe the culture of peace as the panacea to the prevailing and devastating situations that have posed a threat to mankind. Added to this is the paper's intent to contribute to discussion on peace education in Nigeria and the call for its integration into the curriculum of the country's educational systems, ranging from nursery to tertiary education. This, essentially, is based on peace education's transformative potentials if it is effectively utilized.

Conceptual Clarification

Understanding the concept of peace

Defining peace has remained a contested issue among the academia as there is no consensus to its generally accepted meaning. Earlier in 1962, Hugo Grotius gave what scholars termed a negative formation of peace as merely "the absence of war or direct violence" (Dobrosielski, 1987 cited in Navarro-Castro & Mario-Galace, 2010). This definition was faulted for lacking sufficient understanding of the nature of peace. It failed to take into account, first, that countries that are not at war could still experience situations that could cause death and torture. Second, peace, Ibeanu (2015) stated, can also exist in the face of war where countries in active war engage in peaceful interactions, citing Palestinian – Israeli peaceful agreement to use water resources while the war between them raged. Hugo's focus on peace as the absence of death and destruction arising from war and physical/direct violence was described by Thee (1982) as the initial point of departure in peace research (Navarro-Castro & Mario-Galace, 2010). In a similar vein, Raymond Aron's, conception of peace as a condition of "more or less lasting suspension of violent modes of rivalry between political units" (Barash, 1999 cited in Navarro-Castro & Mario-Galace, 2010), attracted similar criticism especially as it reduced conflict to the realm of politic as if other organisational conflicts outside of politics do not matter, or that mere suspension of conflicts in the political arena brings the desired peace.

Based on these shortcomings, a paradigm shift to incorporate the structural/indirect view of peace became imperative. Thus, the understanding that not only war and direct violence but also indirect or structural violence could cause death and suffering began to gain prominence beginning from the late 1960s. While direct violence includes personal assault, rape, brutality, terrorism (state and non-state sponsored), murder, ethnic cleansing,

institutional war, industrial destruction of plants and animals (Dupuy, 2011), indirect or structural violence describes the ways in which people suffer from violence built into a society via its social, political, and economic system and includes such severe conditions such as extreme poverty, starvation, avoidable diseases, discrimination of minority groups, human rights deprivation, sexism, racism, and lack of educational and health facilities, among others that could cause death and suffering. A society marked by these conditions is devoid of peace and human security – it breeds anger and generates tension leading to armed conflict and war (Navarro-Castro & Mario-Galace, 2010).

This criticism, Cheng and Kurtz (1998) stated, led peace workers to declare that peace is not simply a lack of war or direct violence but the eradication of all facets of injustice (Navarro-Castro & Mario-Galace, 2010). Thus, Johan Galtung, a renowned peace theorist and researcher explained that peace is the absence of violence, not only direct but also structural or indirect violence. In other words, he conceives of peace as the "absence of violence" and "presence of social justice." The former he thought of as a negatively defined condition and named "negative peace" while the later he thought of as a positively defined condition (characterized by the egalitarian distribution of wealth and power) and named "positive peace" (Galtung, 1995).

With the above explanation, peace is conveniently calibrated into two: negative peace and positive peace. Negative peace refers to the absence of war, fear, direct violence and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels (Schilling, 2012). To Madu, (2015:18) "absence of war could merely mean that there is a negative peace, a situation that potentially harbours violence that could erupt at any time, or when people undergo injustice knowingly or unknowingly." In negative peace, emphasis is not on addressing the causes of violence or conflict; but, on the manifestation of factors that lead to violence. Positive peace, on the other hand, refers to the presence of just and non-exploitative relationships, as well as human ecological well-being, such that the roots of conflict are diminished (Navarro-Castro & Mario-Galace, 2010). The non-exploitative relationship extends to those of humans and nature as nature is considered the foundation for positive peace. Barnaby (1989) hinted that the earth is the ultimate source of our survival, physical sustenance, health and wealth, and human behaviour is intimately related to the availability of basic resources. Therefore, if nature's capacity to renew itself is impaired leading to shortage of resources, lifestyle and life itself will be threatened, and rivalry for resources can lead to aggression and violent conflict.

So positive peace encompasses all aspects of a good society that one might envisage including universal rights, economic well-being, ecological balance and other core value

where justice and fairness reign, and quality of life is improved and promoted. This therefore becomes the concept that most peace and conflict researchers adopt to describe peace. (Schilling, 2012).

Given this clarity, every definition of peace tends to take care of the observed shortcomings. For instance, Ibeanu (2015) collated various definitions of peace from different backgrounds that transcend the absence-of-war mantra. Starting with the philosophical perspective, peace is seen as a tranquil state; a natural, God-given state of human existence. Though this was believed to be a pre-corruption state of man in society as God established it and it was contrasted by Thomas Hobbes who argued that in that original state, life was solitary, poor, nasty, brutish and short which prompted men to create a social contract in which each gave up their right to self defence to a leviathan, a powerful force above all and to which all were subject, thus creating a more peaceful and orderly life. Sociologically, he furthered, peace means a condition of social harmony in which there are no social antagonisms; that is, a condition in which there is no social conflict and individuals and groups are able to meet there needs and expectations. Whereas politically, it is seen as a political condition that makes peace possible through the institutionalisation of political structures; as a process, it involves activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community (p.5-10).

Conceptualising peace education

Peace education, in its entirety, is not a new phenomenon in Nigeria and elsewhere in an effort to deal with conflict and establish a peaceful society. From record, it paralleled human history, as cultures throughout the world have learned - and transmitted to the next generation - how to coexist peacefully. Included in this are diverse religious, philosophical, and community traditions which have played influential roles in that regard (Akinyaode, 2011). To be sure, religious leaders such as Buddha, Jesus Christ, Baha'u'llah, Mohammed, and Lao Tse, have pioneered peace education through their teachings of doctrines of love and compassion, and communities through their shared values on peaceful coexistence (Harris, 2008). Equally, philosophical thinkers like Immanuel Kant helped to develop a wider and deeper field of treatises on peace.

As a specific discipline, peace education in its modern form has its root in academia with the introduction of the first academic peace studies programme at the college level in 1948 at Manchester College, in North Manchester, Indiana, in the United States and did not gain momentum until the 20th century (Harris, 2008). Harris furthered that this began as a movement in the 19th century Europe after the Napoleonic wars and spread to the United

States and elsewhere before World War I, where scholars began to study war and educate the public about its dangers prompting more and more people to persuade each other and their governments to use mediation instead of war to solve international conflicts. Thus, John Dewey's progressive idea in this regard influenced many teachers across the United States to use progressive education to teach their students about [our] common humanity in order to promote peaceful social progress.

With this growing influence across the globe, peace education began to receive contributions from other scholars like Maria Montessori and Paulo Freire who, besides Dewey, are considered to be three major thinkers in the field. They believed in the power of education to empower students to fulfil their potentials and create peace. Johan Galtung, a Norwegian academic (known for his contributions to peace education research and his framework of negative and positive peace); Elise Boulding (who emphasized peace education as a combination of thinking globally and acting locally); and Birgit Brock-Utne (who impacted peace education by bringing a feminist perspective to the field) equally contributed significantly to the development of peace education. Other notable peace education thinkers include Ian Harris, Herbert Read, Betty Reardon, and Jane Addams. The work of many of these key peace education thinkers is the most relevant to the philosophical underpinnings of peace education (Akinyaode, 2011).

Against this backdrop, it therefore becomes pertinent to define the concept of peace education.

John Dewey (1923), literally referred to it as a curriculum
'… which will make it more difficult for the flames of hatred and suspicion to sweep over [this] country in the future, which indeed will make this impossible, because when children's minds are in the formative period we shall have fixed in them through the medium of the schools, feelings of respect and friendliness for the other nations and peoples of the world.' Dewey's emphasis, developed in the midst of two World Wars, was on a sense of world patriotism and peaceful internationalism that would eliminate the horrific wars of his time, and his definition reflects that globalist theory (Akinyaode, 2011).

Fountain (1999) on her own, sees peace education in UNICEF as the process of promoting the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values needed to bring about behaviour changes 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 to peace, whether at an intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, national or international level. UNICEF's position is that peace education has a place in all societies – not only in countries

undergoing armed conflict or emergencies. Because lasting behaviour change in children and adults only occurs over time, effective peace education is necessarily a long-term process, not a short-term intervention. While often based in schools and other learning environments, peace education should ideally involve the entire community.

According to Abebe et. al. (2006), Peace Education is the process of developing knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviours and values that enable learners to: identify and understand sources of local and global issues and acquire positive and appropriate sensitivities to these problems; resolve conflicts and to attain justice in a non-violent way; and, live by universal standards of human rights and equity by appreciating cultural diversity, respect for the earth and for each other.

Peace Education means to learn about and to learn for peace. Learning about peace means obtaining knowledge and understanding of what contributes to peace, what damages it, what leads to war, what does 'peace' mean on each level, ... and how are the different levels connected? Learning for peace means learning the skills, attitudes and values that one needs in order to contribute to peace and help maintain it. This means learning to deal with conflicts without recourse to violence, learning to think creatively, learning to apply the methods of active non-violence or learning to deal with cultural differences in a constructive way (Space for Peace, 2010).

Peace education can as well be defined as: the transmission of knowledge about requirements of, the obstacles to, and possibilities for achieving and maintaining peace; training in skills for interpreting the knowledge; and the development of reflective and participatory capacities for applying the knowledge to overcome problems and achieve possibilities (Reardon, 2000).

According to Freire (1973) “Peace education is a mechanism for the transformation from a culture of violence to a culture of peace through a process of “conscientization”

Laing (1978) sees it is an attempt to respond to problems of conflict and violence of scale ranging from the global and national to the local and personal. It is about exploring ways of creating more just and sustainable futures (Mondal & Ghanta, 2018).

From all indications, a basic commonality amongst all the definitions is that peace education preaches non-violence as an approach to resolving conflicts and attaining peace and development without which a progressive society remains an illusion. Peace education can therefore be formal or informal. It is formal when it takes place in schools

and can be taught using subjects like religion, geography, history, science, social sciences (like social work, sociology, political science, etc), literature, among others, and emphasizes knowledge, values, attitudes, and skills that promote peace. It is informal when it takes place in informal settings outside the school like family and community settings, usually through socialization and initiation. Processes like workshops, or the use of folk language to identify all proverbs, old poems, and anecdotes that promote peace, can be used as informal channels of peace education (Gumut, 2015)

Being multidimensional and holistic in its content and process, peace education covers such areas as disarmament education, human rights education, global education, conflict resolution education, multi-cultural education, and education for international understanding, inter-faith education, gender-fair/non-sexist education, development education, and environmental education (Navarro-Castro & Mario-Galace, 2010).

State of the nation from the prism of violence

"Opinions on Nigeria tend to imply that Nigeria is just standing on a brink of collapse, with the citizens having lost hope on the survival of the country, as well as their own survival in the country" (Okoli, Agwu, & Okoye, 2017:225). This statement sounds scary and pessimistic, but it is a reflection of the reality of the Nigerian situation. For example, the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect [GCRP], 2022 reported that since 2011, violence between herding and farming communities has escalated in Central and North-West Nigeria with armed banditry that has expanded in North-West Nigeria, displacing hundreds of thousands of people. Armed bandit groups, it stated, has killed more than 2,600 civilians in 2021, an increase of over 250 percent compared with 2020. Between January and March 2022, it continued, at least 360 people were killed by bandits in Kaduna State alone, while on 10 April more than 100 people were killed in attacks on several communities in the Kanam Local Government Area of Plateau State.

Armed extremist groups, namely Boko Haram and the Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) have also perpetrated violence against civilian and military targets, which has also resulted in mass atrocities in northern Nigeria. For example, between 24th May and 7th June, 2022 at least 60 civilians were killed by Boko Haram in Dikwa local government area, Borno state. ISWA equally killed at least 40 people, including children, during an attack on a church on 5th June, in Owo, Ondo state. More than 35,000 people have been killed in Northern Nigeria since 2009 when Boko Haram launched its insurgency aimed at overthrowing Nigeria's secular government and establishing an Islamic State. There are at least 1.8 million internally displaced persons in Adamawa, Borno and Yobe states while health services and

education have been severely disrupted (Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect [GCRP], 2022).

In another report by Vanguard (2022), there is a growing atmosphere of terrorism in Southeast Nigeria with Orlu, Orsu, Njaba and Oru local government areas of Imo state as the main flashpoints. Imo and Anambra states are the core theatres of violence in the South-East while Abia, Enugu and Ebonyi are relatively safe and stable except for the sporadic terrorist activities of armed herdsmen which the police, military and other security agencies seem unwilling to tackle.

Vanguard (2022) has also reported that since October 2020, groups of "unknown" gunmen have been targeting and killing people, especially military and security personnel and other federal agents, including burning down police stations, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) facilities, local government secretariats and murdering of prominent citizens.

Punch (2022), in a similar vein, reported that no fewer than 53,418 Nigerians lost their lives to non-state actors between May 29, 2015 and October 15, 2022. The deaths occurred mostly from farmers/herders' conflict, clashes by religious groups, and attacks by terrorists and bandits. A breakdown of the killings by geo-political zones showed that the South-West region recorded no fewer than 2,170 deaths in the period under review with Ekiti having 109; Ondo, 340; Osun, 198; Ogun, 507; Oyo, 310; and Lagos, 706. A total of 3,688 deaths were recorded in the South-South region with Akwa Ibom state having 373; Bayelsa, 350; Cross River, 685; Delta, 720; Edo, 463; and Rivers, 1,097. In the South-East region, Abia recorded 249 killings; Anambra, 613; Ebonyi, 562; Enugu, 273; and Imo, 574, thus making a total of 2,271. The North-Central region, including the Federal Capital Territory, recorded a total of 8,593 deaths with Benue topping with 2,771; Niger, 2,572; Plateau, 1,709; Kogi, 654; Nasarawa, 320; FCT, 317; and Kwara, 250. The North-East region, which is the epicentre of Boko Haram and ISWAP insurgency, recorded the highest number of deaths in the period under review with a total of 23,106. Borno State recorded 18,213 deaths; Adamawa 1,853; Yobe, 1,375; Taraba, 1,335; Bauchi, 169; and Gombe 161.

According to the report, a total of 9,590 persons have so far been killed in the North- West region, where 2,037 lives have been wasted in Katsina state. However, Zamfara leads with 5,616 deaths; Sokoto, 872; Kaduna, 530; Kebbi, 331; Kano, 149; and Jigawa, 55. This worsening insecurity situation prompted some state governors to instruct their citizens to bear arms to defend themselves despite the current embargo on the issuance of firearm

licences. Governors Samuel Ortom of Benue State, Bello Matawalle of Zamfara State and Aminu Massari of Katsina State have made several calls in that regard (Punch, 2022).

There are also other case of violence such as political violence, family/domestic violence, and socio-cultural violence. Others include communal violence exemplified by Jukun-Tiv in Guma, Benue state in January, 2019; Fulani hersdem-Adara militia in Kajuru, Kaduna state in February, 2019; Egba, Agbobe, Ologba-Agbaduru in Agatu, Benue state in March, 2019; and Christian-Muslim youths in Jos North, Plateau state in March, 2019, among others.

Beyond the direct or physical violence, there also cases of indirect or structural violence with the potential to metamorphose into direct violence if not addressed. They include abject poverty, oppression, discrimination, inequality, inequity, and other forms of injustices. Poverty, for instance, has to do with lacking essentials to gratify minimum standard of living (food, good clothing, shelter, and education) or living below $1 per day. This, according to Okoli, Agwu, & Okoye (2018) has contributed to the avalanche of deteriorating experiences in Nigeria such as irregular migration, human trafficking, cyber fraud, kidnapping, child abuse, wanton killings, religious fundamentalism, forgery, suicide, serial internal displacement, corrupt and slow justice system, massive brain-drain, unemployment, family disputes, bribery and extortion, among others. By these occurrences, vulnerable groups are proliferating, with tendencies of increase in inequalities, inequities, oppressions, and discrimination (p.225). With the present state of insecurity, violence, and conflicts, and most worrisomely, the "unconcerned" attitude of the government to the ugly happenings, it is feared that the relative peace in the country might not survive the next decade.

Imperatives of peace education in Nigeria

Sequel to the above narration on the state of the nation with regards to violent conflicts and their attendant consequences, it is no longer in doubt why peace education is imperative in Nigeria. It has, of course, given the present circumstance, become inevitably pertinent to educate every citizen - both the children and the adult - on the need for non-violent behaviours if we must handover to succeeding generations, a country still fit for human habitation. To succeed in this endeavour, there is indeed a need to work on the minds of the people to transform their thinking. This is in line with a basic stipulation of the 1945 UNESCO constitution that "Since war begins in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of war must be constructed." The following are therefore the imperatives of peace education in Nigeria:

It will serve as a tool of de-radicalization:
The atmosphere in Nigeria is already charged with conflicts and other forms of violence. Perhaps, Nigerians were not taught peace and others elsewhere harped on the shortcomings and taught them (Nigerians) violence thus, the high incidence of conflicts and violence in all the nooks and crannies of the country. People now see violence instead of the other way round, as the ultimate means of achieving their ends.

For those who are already radicalised, peace education will still serve as a means of de radicalization. De-radicalization according to Omeje and Otunko (2019) is an approach [social workers adopt] to prevent people from either converting to terrorists or denouncing terrorists' viewpoint to embrace a change of life. Citing Faluyi (2017), they hinted that those who had been radicalized and have become terrorists and those who had been radicalized but have not become terrorists, can undergo de-radicalization which involves a systemic process designed to change the life of suspected or would-be terrorists in a positive direction. The target of de-radicalization, they furthered, is on behavioural modification of the suspected groups in a way that conforms to the acceptable standard of life. In Nigeria, [Social workers] achieve de-radicalization through rehabilitation, re-socialization, re-orientation, dialogue, etc (Omeje & Otunko, 2019). De-radicalization is therefore designed to change the views and behaviours of the suspects from violent to non-violent and reintegrate them into a society that cherishes non-violence as a means of living and achievement of one's goal. Through this, the suspects learn the different ways to tackle issues without resorting to violence and, most importantly, the implications of violence to the people and the country in general.

It will help to make Nigerians responsible citizens:
A responsible citizen, as an individual recognized by the law of a sovereign state as a legal member of the state, is one who abides by the law and order of the country and one cannot obey law and order by being violent; it is rather by being non-violent and peaceful. Unfortunately, many Nigerian citizens do not know their rights and responsibilities. Through the teaching of peace education in both formal and informal settings, it will bring to the door step of every Nigerian citizen, behaviours and actions required to make them law abiding, responsible, and be able to contribute positively to the development of the country. The teaching of peace education will thus enable Nigerians to uphold and protect the unity and integrity of the country; to promote harmony and spirit of oneness without religious, tribal, and ethnic sentiments; to renounce derogatory remarks and abjure violence; and, among others, to value and preserve the diverse rich cultural heritage of the country. This last remark will impart to Nigerians the knowledge of intercultural

understanding where the citizens will recognize the commonalities and differences in the different cultures in the country and consequently, respect them.

It will impart to Nigerians the knowledge and skills of handling conflicts and violence: In retrospect, peace education as offered by this paper is a specific kind of education designed for the purpose of peaceful co-existence and development. In this connection, one of its specificities is the teaching of skills and knowledge in handling conflicts. Therefore, peace education will impart to Nigerians (children and adults) such knowledge and skills as knowledge of conflicts, their causes, effects and solutions; and skills of conflict prevention, management, resolution, and transformation. Skills of handling conflicts peculiar to peace education include conflict avoidance strategies, collaboration, good governance, effective communication, and third party interventions strategies like facilitation, negotiation, conciliation, mediation, and arbitration, among others. Through these techniques, peace education equips the people with appropriate methodologies to address conflicts arising from different contexts.

More importantly, mastery of the skills of conflict prevention is worth few explanations. In most cases, violence and war do not just happen. They usually start as conflicts in the form of inter-personal, intra-group, or inter-group conflicts, and metamorphose into violence and finally into war when they are not effectively handled. Knowledge of skills of conflict avoidance is crucial in this regard. It plays key roles in preventing conflicts from occurring. Some conflicts announce themselves in the form of "early warning" and commensurate application of "preventive diplomacy" measures becomes an answer to such early warnings. The inability of parties or states to respond appropriately to early warnings by deploying appropriate preventive techniques leads to escalation of conflicts. In Nigeria for example, most agitating groups such as the IPOB in the Southeast and Militancy in the Niger Delta area of Southern Nigeria, among others did not start with violence until it became obvious that the government was not ready to show palpable concern for their demands. As Akpuru-Aja (2007:26) puts it, "it is often presumptuousness or apathy, or indifference to conflict warning signals, (and the paper adds, ignorance of peace education) that most often create room for conflict itself, which in turn may lead to escalation level by war." In this circumstance, it is therefore within the framework of peace education that issues related to this can be addressed in Nigerians for peaceful living.

It will promote tolerance and cooperation among Nigerians:
Central to the teaching of peace education is tolerance and cooperation as principles of non-violence. While tolerance refers to the ability to endure and respect others people's opinion, differences and values, cooperation, on its own refers to the ability to work

together with other people to achieve a common goal, in this context, peace and development. Peace itself is rooted in tolerance and cooperation. Hence, peace education will teach Nigerians tolerance which is one of the conflict avoidance strategies. Tolerance will make Nigerians to detest hatred and jealousy and deal with a wide range of issue non-violently in order to coexist peacefully.

Tolerance does not stop at respecting others opinions and differences, but also extends to working together with one another to achieve a common goal, particularly in resolving conflicts and coming up with innovative ideas for human and national development. Through working together, conflict can be avoided, opinions will be shared, and cooperative skills will be learnt. Therefore, Nigeria will be a better country when the citizens tolerate one another and work together to achieve peace and development.

It will inculcate in Nigerians the culture of peace:

"Peace does not come with our DNA, to reach peace, we need to teach peace." This phrase by Prof. Betty Reardon evokes an understanding that peace is a process that must be achieved only when it is taught and imbibed by the people. Therefore, to attain a culture of peace requires that the spirit of peace, contained in its knowledge, skills, attitudes, and values must be imbibed; it cannot be imposed. A culture of peace therefore consists of a "set of values, attitudes, modes of behaviours, and ways of life that reject violence and prevent conflict by tackling their root causes to solve problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups, and nations" (UNESCO, 2010) and this can only be achieved through peace education. This approach by UNESCO is no doubt, the most universally accepted definition given that it incorporates all aspects of a culture of peace.

When the culture of peace is accepted or imbibed as a way of life, radicalism, banditry, terrorism, racism, discrimination, and other violent behaviours will decrease while love and understanding, security of lives and property, and development will increase. Embracing a culture of peace not only changes people, it also changes societies. It helps introduce non-violent approaches to peace in the political structure that the state authoritatively uses with impunity to checkmate individual activities. In this way, a friendly society that is enabling for individual's development will be entrenched.

In Nigeria today, so many individuals that have been radicalized into terrorism and have become victims and were not aware of the implications of what they were doing. Many of them grew up in an unfriendly, hostile, and violent environment and imbibed the culture of violence which drives their action. Many of them are children or youths who often are not conscious of the implications of such activities on the development of the nation and

its people. They have a very poor understanding of the notion of peace; hence, violence to them is the means of achieving their goals. By this submission, such people have seen radicalism as their culture. This negative situation therefore needs to be countered using peace education to inculcate a culture of peace in the people in order to change their radical view of peace. A culture of peace represents the image of a caring society where justice, equity, and fundamental human rights prevail, and it grows out of the belief systems, customs and moral principles of the people themselves; not imposed from outside. Therefore a culture of peace will be achieved when citizens of the world understand global problems, have the skills to resolve them and struggle for justice non-violently, live by international standards of human rights and equity, appreciate cultural diversity, and respect the Earth and each other (Schilling, 2012).

Conclusion and recommendations

It is always a difficult task overcoming, constructively, conflict of large-scale as is the case in Nigeria today. Virtually every strata of the country is affected by one form of violence or the other with no obvious plans on ground to nip the problem in the bud. This, of course, has made development, security of lives and property, respect to fundamental human rights, and observance to the rule of law, among others, a myth rather than a reality. Nevertheless, hopes comes in the way of education about peace and non-violence, hence this paper. The paper focuses on the imperatives of peace education in Nigeria. It discussed the concepts of peace, peace education, and skilfully articulated and outlined the imperatives of peace education in the country in view of the current violent situation. It therefore believes that if peace education is effectively utilized, that Nigeria will be a better place to be. With this sense of optimism, the paper therefore makes the following recommendations:

Government should integrate peace education into the national education system to empower the future generations and entire Nigerians with the skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes necessary for handling conflicts and maintain non-violent behaviours.

Government and the non-governmental actors should support and encourage peace education in non-school/informal settings such as the family, community, organisations, etc in order to capture every Nigerian irrespective of the background for the purpose of maintaining peace.

Government should engender good governance that promotes development and respects the rights of the citizens, to enable Nigerians see reasons to be responsible and law-abiding. In the absence of good governance, citizens resort to violence to achieve their goals.

Traditional rulers and other community leaders should complement religious leaders in constantly orientating and re-orientating their community members on the need for non-violent behaviours since most of the violent activities are carried out within the community, and mostly in connivance with community members.

With the above recommendations, if properly observed, Nigeria will be on the right path to peace and development.

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