

## Relevance of Education in the Promotion of Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria

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### **Abstract**

*This issue of peace seems to be on the decline in the contemporary Nigerian society. Therefore, the place of civil education in fostering peace and unity in the mind of the Nigeria citizen is paramount. This paper addressed why the Nigerian citizen should be exposed to democratic knowledge, the values and standards that make for a civil society devoid of chaos/war. The pluralistic nature of Nigeria fosters the need to work together with the different groups in order to have a functional economy and social institutions. What education is it's types, characteristics, advantages and disadvantages as well as the relevance of education in the peaceful coexistence in Nigeria were fully discussed. It was recommended that modeling and show casing of acceptable civil behaviors by the media and social networks should be emphasized to help the Nigeria citizen learn and coexist peacefully within the church, school and society, thereby ensuring a sustainable development in Nigeria.*

**Keywords:** Education, Peace, Sustainable Development, Coexistence, Promotion.

### **Introduction**

Education is a gradual process which brings positive changes in human life and behavior. It is the process of acquiring knowledge through study or imparting the knowledge by way of instructions or some other practical procedure. According to Pazhayampallil (1161), the troubled situation of religious and ethnic conflicts in Nigeria could to a large extent be attributed to lack of proper education. Religious fundamentalism and ethnic syndrome have been sources of religious tension in Nigeria, even though there are still other problems that cause tension especially in economic and political spheres. Religion (from the latin word religio, and from the verb ligare- to bind) means bond. It is that which binds people together.

Durkheim, a sociologist observed that religion is glue that holds society together. Without religion, society would be chaotic. For Aquinas, Religion is a virtue by which we give due worship and reverence to God. It is a special virtue, distinct from other virtues because it disposes us to give God special honour that is due or befits Him.

Ignatius (23) opines that Education will train the mindset of the adherents of different religions to understand that religion binds people rather than divide them. Religion is a way through which human beings outwardly express their belief in God. Hence, it cannot be a means of creating hostility or a breeding ground for extremists.

Nigeria is a country blessed with people of different ethnic groups and cultures. Ethnicity is a gift from God. Ethnic identity belongs to the goodness of creation and the richness of God's gift. Nobody chooses his/her parents, family, town or ethnic group where he/she comes from. The parochial and pessimistic vision of ethnicity reduces its significance to conflicts, discrimination or divisiveness.

Jooji (19) observed that ethnic factor in itself does not generate violent conflict, but it becomes explosive only when it is used as a political instrument for the capture of power or other benefit. Education will help in the proper understanding that ethnicity refers to that which pertains to an ethnic group. It means seeing oneself and seen by others as part of a group based on presumed ancestry and sharing a common destiny with others. However, this paper will treat the types of education, their examples, characteristics, advantages and disadvantages, and as well outline the relevance of education in the promotion of peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. Education helps one to think critically, creatively, analytically and at the same time broadens the mind to distinguish what is good from the bad.

### **The Meaning of Education**

Education is the process or art of imparting knowledge, skill and judgment. Education brings a natural and lasting change in an individual's reasoning and ability to achieve the targeted goal. It facilitates us to investigate our own considerations and thoughts and make it ready to express it in various shapes. Kanuba (3) opines that education is the main thing that encourages us to distinguish between right and wrong because in the absence of education, we can't do what we need or we can't achieve our goal.

Straight forwardly, we can say, "education is the passage to progress". It is additionally the way to our fate as achievements can only be accomplished when individuals have information, aptitudes, and frame of mind. In this way, education resembles a medium through which we can associate with various individuals and offer our thoughts. To tackle issues and do inventiveness we first need to gain proficiency with some essential abilities. We require learning and abilities to wind up increasingly imaginative. So education is fundamentally learning of abilities and ideas that can make us increasingly innovative and issue solver. Education is to pick up the capacity to develop and take care of issues in order to achieve their lawful motives. Through education, the knowledge of society, country, and of the world is passed on from generation to generation. More specific, education helps and guide individuals to transform from one class to another. Empowered individuals, societies countries by education are taking an edge over individuals stand on the bottom pyramid of growth (Black, 16).

### **Types of Education**

Education goes beyond what takes places within the four walls of the classroom. A child gets the education from his experiences outside the school as well as from those within on the basis of these factors. These are three main types of education, namely; formal, informal and non-formal. Each of these is discussed below.

### **Formal Education**

This type of education otherwise called formal learning usually takes place in the premises of the school, where a person may learn basic, academic, or trade skills. Small children often attend a nursery or kindergarten but often formal education begins in elementary school and continues with secondary school. Post-secondary education (or higher education) is usually at a college or university which may grant an academic degree. It is associated with a specific or stage and is provided under a certain set of rules and regulations. The formal education is given by specially qualified teachers they are supposed to be efficient in the art of instruction. It also observes strict discipline. The student and the teacher both are aware of the facts and engage themselves in the process of education.

### **Examples of Formal Education**

1. Classroom learning
2. School grading/certification, college, and university degrees
3. Planned education of different subjects having a proper syllabus acquired by attending the institution.

### **Characteristics of Formal Education**

1. It's planned and deliberate
2. It has a chronological grading system
3. Scheduled fees are paid regularly
4. It is structured hierarchically.
5. It has a syllabus and subject-oriented. The syllabus has to be covered within a specific time period.
6. The child is taught by the teachers

### **Concept of Formal Education**

1. Students acquire knowledge from trained and professional teachers.
2. Leads to a formally recognized certificate
3. Easy access to jobs.
4. Institutions are managerially and physically organized.
5. Structured and systematic learning process.
6. An organized educational model and up to date course contents.
7. Intermediate and final assessments are ensured to advance students to the next learning phase.

### **Limitation of Formal Education**

1. Choice of bad habits adoption may be alarming due to the presence of both good and bad students in the classroom.

2. Some unprofessional and non-standard education system may cause the wastage of time and money of the students which leads to disappointment from formal education and urge them to go for non-formal education.
3. Costly and rigid education as compare to other forms of learning.
4. Sometimes, brilliant students are bored due to the long wait for the expiry of the academic session to promote to the next stage.

### **Concept of Informal Education**

Thomas (185) opines that this is the type of education which a times a parent may be teaching a child how to prepare a meal or ride a bicycle. People can also get an informal education by reading many books form a library or educational websites. It is when you are not studying in a school and do not use any particular learning method. In this type of education conscious efforts are not involved. It is neither preplanned nor deliberate. It may be learned at some market place, hotel or at home. Unlike formal education, informal education is not imparted by an institution such as school or college. Informal education is not given according to any fixed time table. There is no set curriculum required. Informal education consists of experience and actually living in the family or community.

### **Examples of Informal Education**

- i. Teaching the child some basics such as numeric characters.
- ii. Someone learning his/her mother tongue
- iii. A spontaneous type of learning, “if a person standing in a bank learns about opening and maintaining the account at the bank from someone”.

### **Characteristics of Informal Education**

- a. It has no definite syllabus.
- b. The certificate (degrees are not involved and one has no stress for learning the new things.
- c. No fees are required as we get informal education through daily experience and by learning new things.
- d. It is a lifelong process in a natural way.
- e. It is not pre-planned and has no time table.
- f. It s independent of boundary walls.
- g. You can get from any source such as media, life experience, friends, family etc.

### **Informal Education in a Learning Situation**

- a. More naturally learning process as you can learn at anywhere and at any time from your daily experience.
- b. Utilizes a variety of techniques
- c. No specific time span
- d. No need to hire experts as most of the professionals may be willing to share their precious knowledge with students/public through social media and the internet.

- e. Learners can pick up the requisite information from books, TV, radio or conversations with their friends/family members.

### **Limitation in Informal Education**

1. Absence of discipline, attitude and good habits.
2. Lack of confidence in the learner
3. Utilized techniques may not be appropriate.
4. No proper schedule/time span
5. Unpredictable results which simply depicts wastage of time.
6. Information acquired from the internet, social media, Tv, radio or conversations with friends/family members may lead to disinformation.

### **Concept of Non-Formal Education**

This form of education includes adult basic education, adult literacy education or school equivalency preparation. In non-formal education, someone (who is not in school) can learn literacy, other basic skills or job skills. Home education, individualized instruction (such as programmed learning, distance learning computer-assisted instruction are other possibilities.

Dewey (15), opines that non-formal education is imparted consciously and deliberately and systematically implemented. It should be organized for a homogenous group. Non-formal education should be programmed to serve the needs of the identified group. This will necessitate flexibility in the design of the curriculum and the scheme of evaluation.

### **Examples of Non-Formal Education**

- a. Free courses for adult education developed by some organization.
- b. Fitness programs
- c. Community-based adult education courses.
- d. Boy scouts and girls guides develop some sports program such as swimming comes under non formal education.

### **Characteristics of Non-Formal Education**

1. It is planned and takes place apart from the school system.
2. The timetable and syllabus can be adjustable.
3. Unlike theoretical formal education, it is practical and vocational education.
4. Non formal education has no age limit.
5. Fees or certificates may or may not be necessary
6. It may be full time or part-time learning and one can learn and learn together.
7. It involves learning professional skills

### **Benefits of Non-Formal Education**

1. Flexibility in age, curriculum and time
2. Naturally growing minds that do not wait for the system to amend.
3. Practiced and vocational training
4. No need to conduct regular exams

5. Diploma, certificates, and award are not essential to be awarded.
6. Literacy with skillfulness growth in which self-learning is appreciated.
7. Open-ended educational system in which both the public and private sector are involved in the process.

### **Inconveniencies in Non-Formal**

1. Attendance of participants is unsteady
2. Sometimes, its just wastage of time as there is no need to conduct the exam on regular basis and no degree or diploma is awarded at the end of the training session.
3. Basic reading and writing skills are crucial to learn.
4. No professional and trained teachers.
5. Students may not enjoy full confidence as the regular students enjoy.
6. Some institutes provide fake certificate though online courses just for the sake of earning.

### **Relevance of Education in the Promotion of Peaceful Coexistence in Nigeria.**

Education is an ongoing process, a progressive process of human formation. Through this process one learns and acquires new knowledge. Kunuba (117) opines that education could be seen as the inculcation of skills and knowledge needed for growth. It moulds behavior and instills positive change of behavior in the individual. Peace education helps in the integral formation of the individual, instill in him/her the right attitude, habits, skills, and knowledge needed for co-existence and development of the Nigerian society.

Onwubiko (157) notes that education has noticeable or major effect in the promotion of peaceful coexistence, such as the following:

- i. **Education Address Fear:** It is in the nature of warmongers to incite fear among people to generate support for their genocide. Dismantling this deeply ingrained fear is one of the goals of education. Peace educators are prepared to allay the fears their students have about both major world conflict and war, as well as their own interpersonal conflicts within their cultural communities. Ignorance brings fear; perhaps education gives boldness and drives away fear.
- ii. **Education Provides Information about Security:** Education helps in bringing to our knowledge and understanding the way national security systems work so they can begin to conceptualize alternatives to war that will keep the nation safer in the future. It teaches about the implications of the arms race and international policy, the nature of the military, the militarization of the police, and the prison industrial complex. Education brings enlightenment on security issues to help keep us safe.
- iii. **Education Provides Understanding of war Behavior:** Another objective of peace education is to understand the behavior of war and the conditions under which a group will seek organized violence as an answer to conflict. Citizens enlighten by peace education gain exposure to several peaceful societies as well as the role of individuals

- like Hitler and Napoleon in historical conflicts. They could sense war and conflicts and arise on time toward offering peace to enhance a continuous coexistence.
- iv. **Education Develops Intercultural Understanding:** War is often a direct result of otherness, so developing a deep understanding and respect of other cultures is critical to promoting peace. War profiteers who make money from perpetuating destructions have billions of dollars invested in keeping up with the selfishness mentality, which prevents people from demanding peace and encourages them to support war. Education exposes us to the knowledge of beauty in diversity.
- v. **Explore the Long Range View:** It is noticeable that education helps us see the potential for a future without violence. War draws a nation backward in development. It is always realized that crisis which results at war causes death, stagnation, backwardness, underdevelopment, economic uneasiness and discourages investor from outside the country to come and invest. Education helps promoting a hopeful optimism by showing citizens that it is possible to affect the future based on what we do today.
- vi. **Education Fosters Unity among Religions:** Conflict is an express struggle between at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving personal goals. It is also caused by clash of interest. Conflict is a part of life, people's nature, which is neither good nor bad and comes in the mind of people due to hatred or greed. Conflict is not the same as violence, conflict is inevitable in human nature but violence is not. Fear of violence can be as damaging as violence itself. Violence is embedded in the society such as Nigeria. Thalif (16) opines that violence are perpetrated for a religious, political, ideological goals and deliberately target or disregard the safety of non-combatants (civilians). Peace education is necessary in creating peaceful coexistence among people of divers religion. Education will strengthen the capacity of peace in enhancing sustainable development in Nigeria.
- vii. **Education Helps in Information Management:** The role of education and the way people manage information in ensuring sustainable development in any nation cannot be underestimated. How people manage and react to information could determine the level of peace in society. Information is power and peace is also necessary. It is good to note that a viable education can help in information management in ensuring a peaceful and liveable society.

Kunuba (120), puts it that education for democracy applied andragogy and its method of communication. Andragogy involves the use of dialogue in teaching and learning. It exposes the citizen to a community of inquiry where every member is in search of knowledge. Education creates room for citizens of different religious and ethnic groups to live in harmony, and learn from one another.

### Conclusion

Nigeria is a country blessed with people of different ethnic group, cultures and religion. This divergent nature of Nigerian existence is the consequences of situation of violence, hatred,

and conflict. This troubled situation in Nigeria could to a large extent be attributed to lack of proper education. Education when fully understood, and its relevance accepted will help in creating opportunities for overcoming deep rooted religious and ethnic prejudice through an authentic dialogue and participative learning. Peace education is an education across borders. It is an education with-others, and an education for democracy which aims at peaceful coexistence irrespective of differences. Our global village needs quality peace education, an education that helps further the principle of democracy, dialogues, unity, and humanization as against dehumanization.

### Suggestions

After conducting a careful research on the relevance of education in the promotion of peaceful coexistence in Nigeria, the following recommendations were made:

- i. Peace education be made compulsory at all levels and forms of education.
- ii. Education should be made accessible to every Nigeria Citizens.
- iii. All forms of education should be applied in the educating of the Nigerian Citizenry towards the promotion of peaceful co-existence.
- iv. All forms of religious organization should educate her members on the need of oneness and unity in actualizing a peaceful Nigeria society, irrespective of our diversity in religion.
- v. The essentiality of peace should be acknowledge across boards.
- vi. Modelling and showcasing of acceptable civil behaviors through quality education.

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