PEACE BUILDING THROUGH NON-FORMAL EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

This paper examined peace building as a sine qua non for the achievement of sustainable community development in Nigeria. It also identified illiteracy, human rights abuses, weak and irresponsible leadership, and poverty as major challenges to achieving peace in Nigeria which in turn hinders community development. The paper also discussed peace literacy, human right education, leadership training and creative education as non-formal education programmmes that are suitable for building peace for sustainable community development. The writer suggested among others that peace literacy should be organized for community members to acquire the skills of peace building and that leadership training should be made compulsory for leaders at all levels to empower them with skills for responsible and responsive leadership.

Keywords: Peace, Peace Building, Non-formal Education and Sustainable Community Development.

I. INTRODUCTION

The need for building peace to achieve sustainable community development in Nigeria should be a concern to individuals, communities, development agencies, government and all stakeholders. This is because peace is a foundational factor and a key component of sustainable development as development can only thrive in a peaceful society. Nigeria has been embroiled in violent conflicts in the last few decades. Studies like (Ijeoma, 2014; Iyoboyi; Odozi, 2019 and Ugwu, 2019) have shown the interrelatedness of conflicts and socio-economic development in Nigeria and ague that,

no meaningful development takes place in a conflict prone area. Ugwu, (2013) as cited in Ugwu (2019:112) posits that, "during conflicts, there is inadequate cooperation among community members, absence of outside support, inadequate participation of community members in community development process and lack of fund among others". In the same vein, development is affected because interaction and cooperation which are veritable ingredients in community development are lacking. Furthermore, business is also affected because investors lack the courage to invest in such conflict prone areas.

Conflicts resulting from Boko Haram insurgency, herdsmen's clashes with farmers, kidnapping and killing of people by bandits, cult-related activities, boundary disputes among communities and clashes over power and other resources have devastating effects on the people and economy of Nigeria. This situation has resulted in loss of lives and properties and displacement of millions of vulnerable Nigerians. The situation has also diverted the attention of the government and development agencies from pressing development issues (Ugwu, 2019). For instance, the resources and man-hour that are put into security is enormous and would have been channeled into solving other development needs.

The former United Nations Secretary General and a renowned Noble Peace Prize recipient, late Mr. Kofi Annan in one of his notable quotes posits that "there can be no development without long term peace and stability and there can be no peace and stability without the rule of law and respect for human rights (United Nations, 2018). The quote lends credence to the fact that sustainable development is threatened by insecurity and

violence. It also supports the assertion in Ikejiani-Clark and Ani (2009); Njoku (2009) and Ugwu (2013) which noted that states that are always in conflicts are weak, repressive, undemocratic and economically vulnerable. All these variables promote veritable ground for underdevelopment.

Development is a process that brings change that may not be favourable to the citizens. This is because, peoples' reaction to the change may trigger conflicts which have to be managed well for the change process to yield fruit and be sustainable. Managing conflict is seeking for atmosphere or environment for peaceful coexistence among citizens which will facilitate sustainable development. This does not mean that absence of war and conflict guarantees peace; however, peaceful environment is a fertile ground for growing sustainable development. Towing this line of thought, The Institute for Economic and Peace (ICP) identified some of the factors that lead to positive peace which results in sustainable development. These factors include functioning government, sound business environment, equitable distribution of resources, good relations with neighbours, free flow of information, high level of human capital and low level of corruption (https://info.esg.adec.innovations.com). It then follows that these factors are sine qua non for peace building in the society.

Building peace in a country with so many ethnic and multi-cultural nationalities with mirage of societal issues can be challenging. It is also believed that despite the differences in culture, language, traditional and religious beliefs, there are other political and socio-economic challenges to peaceful co-existence among the people (Obisesan, Osariemen & Otoide (2014); Sian & Husaini (2018) and Ugwu, (2019). Some of these political and socio-economic triggers of conflicts include: poverty, illiteracy, bad governance, human rights abuses, exclusion and injustices among others. Peace and security are essential for human life as they are critical to every society's aspects of economic and social development especially in developing countries like Nigeria. From the foregoing, peace building efforts through non-formal education should be tailored towards addressing political, socio-economic and other issues in Nigerian society for sustainable development to thrive.

Many peace building efforts have focused on the children and youths in the formal school system to the neglect of out of school children, youths and adults who did not have opportunity to attend the formal school system. These categories of people in the society are mostly caught up in the web of violent conflicts in Nigeria and they need education to address the issues of conflicts and promote peace. Non-formal education will fill this gap by combining the elements of formal education and other skills and knowledge to make education functional and enable recipients live a fulfilled life. This makes non-formal education more directly integrated to development programmes. This paper therefore advocates for the use of non-formal education to build peace for sustainable community development in Nigeria which will also pave way for national development for the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals especially goal 16 which seeks to build peace, justice and strong institutions to achieve sustainable development by 2030.

II. UNDERSTANDING PEACE

Peace means or implies different things to different people depending on what one needs to achieve through peace. For instance, to someone who has nothing to eat and is hungry, peace may mean to have food and satisfy one's hunger. To some other people who were chased out of their homes by bandits and Boko haram, having peace would mean to go back to their homes and live their normal lives. Authors in different disciplines have defined peace from their different perspectives. For instance, a political scientist sees peace as a political condition that makes justice possible while from a sociological point of view, peace refers to a condition of social harmony in which there are no social antagonism.

Ronald Reagan, the 40th president of the United States of America stated that peace is not absence

of conflict but the ability to handle conflict by peaceful means (Schleckser, 2018)). It then follows that not being in war or violent situation does not guarantee peace or the understanding of the nature of peace (Ajala (2008), Njoku (2008) and Ibeanu (2006). They argue that mere absence of war does not guarantee peace as there can be tension even when there are no violent conflicts. Furthermore, Ajala, (2008) explained that peace can be obtained by changing social structures that are responsible for deaths, poverty and malnutrition. This definition implies that deaths, poverty and malnutrition constitute conditions that can threaten peoples' peace. It means that when people have the basic amenities and live healthy life, they will be more peaceful.

Njoku, (2009) conceives peace as orderliness and notes that the orderly arrangement of something is its peace. Using the relationship that exist between authority and citizens, Njoku further states that peace is an ordered harmony of authority and obedience among citizens. In the same vein, Ikejiani-Clark & Ani (2009) viewed peace from a psychological perspective and assert that peace has to do with citizens' mindset and perception of how they see active measures by the government in securing life, liberty and property. In a more general perspective, the Free Dictionary (2009) cited in (Ugwu, 2017:71), peace is viewed as the "absence of war or other hostilities; an agreement or a treaty to end hostilities; freedom from quarrels and disagreement; harmonious relation; public security and other and inner contentment and serenity".

From a sociological point of view, Ikejiani-Clark and Ani (2009) posit that peace is a value that emanates from just human relationships which enhances social harmony, creativity and productivity and prevention of war. This assertion could mean that peace is an innate value that humans should possess to facilitate peaceful co-existence among people.

Peaceful environment means environment where there is no war or violence, freedom from disputes, mental stress or anxiety between individuals, groups, communities, states or nations. It is an environment where people walk free and go about their normal businesses without fear of being harassed or intimidated or held against their wish and an environment where the citizens have the basic necessities of life at their disposal. Such environment attracts investments which improves the social, economic, political and other aspects of human life and facilitates condition for sustainable community development to thrive.

III. PEACE BUILDING

The former UN Secretary General Boutros-Brutros-Ghali, in his 1992 report, "An Agenda for Peace" introduced the concept of peace building to the UN "as action to identify and support structures, which will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict" (Adekola & Ezechinnah (2019:152). Peace building aims at developing trust, safety and social cohesion within and between communities to strengthen social and cultural capacities, to resolve disputes and conflict and to promote inter-ethnic and inter group interaction and dialogue. Peace building according to Osisioma (2016), seeks to develop constructive relationships across ethnic and national boundaries to resolve injustice and transform the structural conditions that generate deadly conflict (https://researchgate.net). In the same line of thought, Moulton (ND) asserts that peace building is a process intended to resolve current conflicts and prevent future conflicts by addressing the causes of the problem and building a comprehensive strategy to encourage lasting peace (https://study.com).

Furthermore, peace building teaches different parties in conflict how to address their problems rationally, how to find solutions cooperatively and how to identify new problems early enough to address them before future problems arise. This is

what conflict mediators call early warning signs in conflicts studies.

Building peace is a form of conflict management. Since conflict is part of life, building peace will assist to put in place measures that will enhance people's relationship and avoid violent conflicts that can be hinderances to sustainable development. This supports the assertion that not only does successful peace building stops or prevents violent conflict, but also changes the way disagreement is handled in a society or between nations, it also focuses on the desire to maintain peace while acknowledging problems and disagreements as a normal part of human interaction (https://study.com).

The need for peace building to achieve sustainable community development in Nigeria cannot be overstated. This is more so as (UNDP, 2020) states that peace building is a key component of all global development targets including the sustainable development goals (SDGs). Goal 16 of the SDGs promotes peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels (UNDP, 2020).

Peace building programmes should include need to respect human rights and promote culture of peace, leadership training and improving institutional capacity, security awareness and how to detect conflict early warning signs, empowerment programmes and many other issues geared towards promotion of peace.

IV PEACE BUILDING AND SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable development is a system of values by which people reason and choose to live. It is a process that uses common sense and initiation as a baseline (Flint, 2013). From the forgoing, sustainability should be viewed as a philosophy, or ethnic affording people the awareness of the consequences of actions and encouraging them to think broadly across issues, disciplines and boundaries (Flint, 2013).

The point here is that the life we live or the actions we take today have consequences to future life. Our actions are either positive or negative, when they are negative, the gains we make today will not outlive our generation but if it is positive, the future generation will enjoy the gains made by present generation. This line of reasoning lends support to the popular definition of sustainable development by World Commission on Environment and Development (1987) as cited in Ugwu and Mbalisi (2016:106) as the development that meets the need of present generation without compromising the ability of the future generation to meet its own needs. It is development efforts that stand the test of time and outlive the present generation.

As noted earlier in this work, development efforts made presently have been seriously threatened by insecurity and violent conflicts and if not checked would render the gains unsustainable.

Community development which is grassroot development cannot thrive in a hostile environment. This is because interaction and participation are among the key ingredients in community development practice. It is difficult if not impossible to mobilise community members who are quarrelling or fighting to come together and discuss about their welfare or development. For community development to thrive and be sustainable, community members must be united, speak with one voice and participate in the development process. Supporting the relationship between peace and sustainable development, The Institute for Economic and Peace (IEP) identified some factors that lead to positive peace which results in sustainable development thus:

- well-functioning government
- sound business environment
- equitable distribution of resources
- good relations with neighbours
- free flow of information
- high levels of human capital
- low level of corruption (McLaughlin, 2017).

Other factors that promote peace in the society are respect for human rights, good governance, religious tolerance, social inclusion and other conditions that promote general well-being of the citizens. If peace building programmes are organised to address these issues, sustainable community development will be achieved which will translate to sustainable national development in Nigeria. It then means that individuals, groups, communities, government and private sectors all have roles to play to promote peace in the society for development to be sustainable.

V. NON FORMAL EDUCATION

Non formal education is aimed at meeting the specific needs of specific target groups which may include the women, nomads, the disabled, youths and children who due to some circumstances are not in school or adults who did not have opportunity to acquire formal education (Ugwu & Mbalisi, 2016:6). According to Coombs and Ahmed (1976) as cited in Okukpon and Oronsaye (2016:210) non-formal education is any organized systematic educational activity carried on outside the framework of the formal school system to provide selected types of learning to a particular sub-group in the population, adults as well as children. It is a life-long learning which can be organized in streets, youth clubs, forests, museums and any other place (Stankevich, 2019).

There is a thin line between formal and nonformal education as the later complements the former. In support of this assertion, UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) 2011), posits that the defining characteristic of non-formal education is that it is an addition, alternative and/or a complement to formal education within the lifelong learning of individuals (www.uis.unesco.org). Furthermore, in comparison with formal education, non-formal education is generally less structured, more task and skill-oriented, more flexible in timing and teaching methods and more specific in application.

It is also goal oriented, targets particular audience or learners, and learner centered (Majero-Majesty, 2015 & Stankevich, 2019). These characteristics make non-formal education more relevant in educating individuals, communities and states (especially adult population) to achieve peace for sustainable development.   In the same vein, Majero-Majesty (2015), succinctly captures non-formal education as:

> a programme aimed at skills and knowledge development for satisfying immediate and foreseen future social needs; for transformation of the communities' negative relations into a more positive state; and for the stabilization of peace and improved coorperation among groups in these communities (p.318).

This shows that some scholars define non-formal education depending on what they want to achieve. The definition targets the improvement of positive relationship among community members and groups, thereby, building peace among them. It then follows that non-formal education has different programmes for achieving different objectives. For instance, people trained in the principles of non-formal education or in the arts and science of helping adults to learn (andragogy) (like adult educators) can take it to farm settlement, nomadic education centres, Internally Displaced Persons' (IDPs) camps and any place where people can be reached for learning.

The nomads, farmers and fisher folks, boko haram insurgents, herdsmen and bandits in the Northern and other parts of the country are known for having small radio which they use to keep themselves abreast with the happenings in the society. Programmes on peace building can be organized in local languages and aired in the radio to capture the attention of these categories of the population. Non-formal education programmes can also be delivered through workshop, seminar and town hall meetings.

A few of these programmes for building peace to foster sustainable community development are discussed in this paper.

VI.   PEACE LITERACY

The traditional definition of literacy as the ability to read, write and calculate will not suffice in this paper as literacy goes beyond mere reading, writing and calculation. UNESCO (2006) definition cited in Ugwu and Adekola (2012:118) gives a wider view of the meaning of literacy. It defines literacy by saying that,

> a person is functionally literate when he can engage in all those activities in which literacy is required for effective functioning of his group and community and also for enabling him to continue to use reading, writing and calculation for his own and community development.

This shows that literacy is the foundation of education and needed for acquiring other forms of education. Literacy is functional when the skills of reading, writing and calculation are applied in addressing the day-to-day challenges facing individuals, groups and communities. Functional literacy is a process of continually equipping the individuals, groups and communities with the skills they need to adjust to the eve-changing demands of society. There are as many literacies as there are challenges in the society. One of such literacies is peace literacy. In this sub-heading, peace literacy and peace education are used interchangeably to mean the same thing.

Peace literacy is relatively new in peace literature. It is an idea created and popularized by Paul Chappell (Director of Nuclear Age Peace Foundation). Peace literacy is defined as the acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding needed to heal the root causes of problems, rather than merely addressing surface symptoms (Chappell, 2018). He further noted that peace literacy offers a framework for living well and waging peace, and it is based on a deep and thorough understanding of what it means to be human. In addition, it gives people the tools to bring more peace into their families, friendships, relationship, workplaces and communities (www.wagingpeace.org).

Something remarkable about Chappell's notion of peace literacy is his emphasis on understanding meaning and purpose as a means of building peace. He stressed that beyond providing basic needs for humans as prerequisite for building peace, there is need for people to understand the meaning and purpose for their lives. This he says will give people reasons to strive to live and respect other people's right to live. In the same line of thought, Desmond Tutu, a South African Anglican Church Archbishop Emeritus, noted that peace literacy has the capacity to repair our broken parts and create a non-violent world anchored in dignity, meaning, purpose and compassion for all…(www.peaceliteracy.org). It then follows that the content of peace literacy or education should include information on how to identify the purpose and meaning for life. Other contents of peace education as identified by Tyke and Berry (1999) cited in Majaro-Majesty (2015) include: human right development, environmental

education, human security and disarmament issues such as reduction and prevention of arms proliferation, reconciliation, conflict prevention and resolution training programmes. More contents of peace education can include critical media awareness, gender studies, non-violence and international relation.

Peace literacy in communities should involve children, youths and adults and centered on the moral values in the society, need to accommodate, tolerate and respect other people's values and principles. Though, some aspects of peace education are taught in primary and secondary school as social studies, those who are not in schools are left out. Peace education can be delivered in adult education centres in communities, during town hall meetings, age grade meetings, women meetings and other gatherings among community members.

Some major conflicts in Nigeria are between farmers and herders and between people of different ethnic groups struggling over ownership of farmland and other resources. Peace literacy and education, therefore, should be organised for the nomads, herders, fisher folks and farmers in their settlements so they can learn to accommodate others, respect human lives, values and principles, and the need to address conflicts cooperatively for peaceful coexistence.

Human Rights Education

One of the major challenges to peace in Nigeria as pointed out earlier in this paper; is human rights abuses. Human rights education or awareness for all segments of the society including leaders and security agencies is very necessary for peace to be achieved (Flowers, 2015). Human right education in this context is the ability to develop in the learners, the knowledge, skill, attitudes and values of issues concerning human rights to be able to respect other's rights and assert one's rights in a non-confrontational manner. In the same vent, The Advocates for Human Rights, USA (ND) states that human rights education will move students / learners from understanding human rights concepts to examining their experiences

from a human rights perspective and incorporating these concepts into their personal values and decision-making processes (https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org).

Some of human rights of the notable human rights abuse experienced in Nigeria include unlawful detention of civilians against court orders, like in the cases of El Zakzaky (Leader of Shia Islamic Movement) and wife, Omowele Sowore (Convener of Revolution Now) and some other journalists, Niger Delta and Biafran agitators, and many others (Onwuzombe, 2017; UNOCHA, 2019 and Yagboyaju, 2005). Education deprivation owing to poverty, culture or inaccessibility is also glaring in Nigeria as about 16 million children who are supposed to be in primary and secondary school were out of school as at February 2019 (Adamu, 2019). Right to life is seriously abused in Nigeria as people are killed in hundreds in the last decade by Boko Haram insurgents, Herdsmen, bandits, kidnappers and robbers (Omenma, J.T, Onyishi, I.E. & Okolie, A.M. 2020; Tih, 2020; & Wilson, M. 2018). There have been cases of extra-judicial killings by security agents (Agbakwuru, 2020; National Human Rights Commission 2020 and Ogunde, 2019).

The Advocates for Human Rights outlines the contents of human rights education which are relevant in addressing the human rights issues in Nigeria under three major units as knowledge, skills and values. They include among others:

1. The knowledge to promote awareness and understanding of human rights listed in the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) so that people recognize violations of human rights. This can be achieved through the following objectives:

2. Develop the skills and abilities necessary for the defense of human rights. The contents here include: active listening and communication, critical thinking, ability to

work cooperatively and address conflict positively; participate in an organized social groups and promote and safeguard human rights and

3. Develop attitudes of respect for human rights, so people do not violate the rights of   others (https://www.theadvocatesforhumanrights.org).

Human right education may not involve teaching and learning only, advocacy or groups' efforts to address hunger in communities through outreach and legislation, feeding the poor, providing shelter to the homeless or victims of domestic violence and promoting respect, fairness and dignity are all ways of instilling human right values (Ugwu, 2019). Unfortunately, the institutions that carry out these advocacy programmes are not many and most often they are underfunded.

Leadership Training

The inability and unwillingness of Nigerian leaders to rise to their responsibility coupled with unemployment, hunger and poverty all over the land has built up tension among the citizens. All these myriads of challenges have given rise to incessant conflicts that threaten the peace of communities, states and the nation. In view of the foregoing, there is need for leadership training for community leaders at all levels to equip them with the skills of good and responsible leadership and governance. To be included in the contents of the leadership training programme are:

- Involving community based and informal organisations in peace building
- People management and institutional development
- Conflict management including how to detect early warning signs of conflict
- Team building and working as a team including all the skills that can enhance responsible and responsive leadership and governance.

Leadership training can be organized through community education programmes, seminar, workshops and in other community gatherings.

Creative Education

Creative education is the process of empowering people through imaginative thinking to solve problems. It is the use of ideas to create alternative ways of doing thing to solve life problems. Gibson, (2010) described creative education as when learners are able to use imaginative and critical thinking to create new and meaningful ideas where they can take risks, be independent and flexible.

Creative education will enhance people's creativity to learn more skills that will make them self-reliant and independent. There are a lot of local raw materials and resources available to people in their communities that can be used to produce things at very low costs. For instance, palm leaves can be used to produce many things like broom, baskets and mats. It needs initiatives and creativity to discover these local resources that are lying waste in the communities to use them and attract income. Fortunately, people are realizing the efficacy of local resources as food and herbs unlike the crave for orthodox medicine and refined food people are used to in the past. This can be a very good source of income for community members that can also keep them busy and out of problem. When community members are happy and peaceful, they participate more in community development process.

VII. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

This paper established the interrelatedness between conflict and underdevelopment. It also emphasized that efforts in peace building process will facilitate the achievement of sustainable development goals especially goal 16.

The paper therefore, advocates for non-formal education programmes especially for youths and adults who are mostly cut in the web of conflicts and involved in community development process.

The paper therefore, suggests as follows:

1. Peace literacy should be provided for all categories of community members, for them to understand the meaning and purpose of life and make efforts to live peacefully among themselves in their families, work and business places and communities.
2. Government at all levels, community leaders, development agencies to organize human right education programmes in communities, farm and other settlements to empower people on their rights and the need to respect other people's rights.
3. Leadership training programmes to be made compulsory for all leaders at all levels to empower them on peace building skills and other leadership skills for them to be more responsible and responsive.

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