

Review

Lifelong education as a way of launching a culture of peace in Nigeria in the Twenty-first century

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The factors that went into the making of Nigeria are not the types that could naturally promote peace. Despite this initial daunting obstacle in the way of peace, successive governments have tried various strategies aimed at fostering peace in Nigeria. For example, many political restructurings of the country have been undertaken since 1960; many political settlements have equally been reached between governments and warring parties on the one hand and among feuding communities themselves on the other hand; yet, peace continues to elude the country. This unfortunate situation persists mainly because lifelong education is yet to be employed as a strategy for establishing a culture of peace in the country. Lifelong education which is education which begins at birth and continues throughout life is unfortunately not yet being promoted by Nigeria. It is here recommended, that lifelong education should henceforth be treated as national educational need through the establishment of viable lifelong education infrastructures, through the promotion of culture fairs across the country and through the promotion of tours that seek to bring greater knowledge of Nigeria to the largest number of Nigerians.

Keywords: Culture of peace; lifelong education; nationhood; lifelong education strategies.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria came to be in 1914 after the British colonial administration decided to bring the Northern and Southern protectorates and the Lagos colony under a single administration and after the girlfriend (and later wife) of Lord Lugard had suggested the name "Nigeria" for the new country. From this period on, Nigeria has traversed many social crises and numerous traumatic upheavals. For example, it had had to fight a civil war that lasted 30 months from 1967 to 1970; it had had to manage a myriad of inter and intra-ethnic clashes and had suffered severe economic down turns.

Although, these crises are numerous, they however can be grouped into two categories. The first major source of social crises in Nigeria is the struggle for the control of power at the federal level of governance. Believing that control of the Federal Government is synonymous with control over the national natural and financial resources, each ethnic group has, since 1960 the year of independence, engaged other ethnic groups in fierce battles with the aim of producing the President or Head of Government at the Federal level. The second source of

social upheavals in the country is the desire and attempt of ethnic groups at monopolizing certain economic interests which they may believe came under their own direct control by virtue of the location of the said economic interest.

Over the years, no genuine attempts have been made to address these social issues through education. Neither concerted educational approach nor visible educational structure exists as evidence that the government of Nigeria has any faith in education as a viable strategy for resolving social crises and for eventually establishing a culture of peace in the country. Rather than adopting education, Nigeria has usually had recourse to military intervention into the realm of governance. At every minor or major social crisis since 1960, military juntas had usually quickly organized themselves with the view to overthrowing either a civilian or another military regime.

After about forty years of military adventurism in power in Nigeria, it became clear to most Nigerians that military rule cannot bring peace to the country as all the military governments have usually been identified with only one

of the many ethnic groups in the country, thereby exacerbating the ethnic factor as source of national social crises.

Whence then, do we go from here? It is the candid view of the present presenter that lifelong education should now be accepted as a strategy for establishing not only peace but a wholesome culture of peace in Nigeria. In order to prove the usefulness and efficacy of lifelong education as reliable harbinger of peace in Nigeria, a highlight must be made first of social crises in Nigeria and the factors that make them intractable.

The Making of Nigeria

The process of creating the country referred to today as Nigeria went through two major stages. First, all the clans and ethnic groups living in the geographical zones known today as Northern Nigeria and Southern Nigeria were brought together by the middle of the 19th century to make up two British protectorates. Secondly, these protectorates, which had grown over the years into two different geo-political entities, were brought together in 1914 to form the present day country known as Nigeria. Consequently, the Northern and Southern British protectorates that were brought together to create Nigeria had earlier on stayed apart for many decades during which time they distinctly grew towards different socio-political axes. At the time of the fusion of the two protectorates, the Northern protectorate had grown used to a theocratic system of government which was heavily coloured and manipulated by Lord Lugard's ingenious system of indirect rule, while the Southern Protectorate was more eager to imitate the democratic and liberal societies of Western Europe and America.

Indeed, the man, Sir Fredrick Lugard who dominated the colonial administration of the protectorates and who today still looms large and bold in the consciousness of Nigerians, had never wished to establish a united Nigeria. consequently, throughout the colonial era, he worked for the growth of the two protectorates along two distinctly different axes, and when he was called upon to unify these protectorates in 1914, "he [provided] the mould in which this jelly of upheaval was set" (Crowther, 1980:196). Some of the elements of this jelly were that, Though, the two territories were to be amalgamated, Lugard chose to maintain the distinction between North and South against the better judgment of men who knew Nigeria well (Crowther, 1980:196)

For example, Morel Temple suggested at the time that the new country be broken down into four and seven provinces respectively: but neither of these plans was adopted by Lugard, who preferred the existing division, partly because he really did not want too great an administrative burden thrown on himself (Crowther, 1980:197).

Additionally, in order to maintain and perhaps deepen the North-South dichotomy during the era that laid beyond the unification period, with the exception of a few services, all the state apparatuses were left to be run at the level of each of the former protectorates; consequently,

The North was almost entirely insulated against the revolutionary effects of economic advancement and modern education by Lugard's promise that missionaries would not be allowed in any Muslim emirate without the Emir's consent (Crowther, 1980:195)

Thus, from the time of the unification of the two protectorates to the moment of independence in 1960, Nigeria was virtually a state made up of two nations. Beyond the independence year, the situation has not changed much because most of the social and political upheavals that have so far afflicted the country (and they are many indeed) have their source in the phenomenon of dual nationhood.

Although, successive Nigerian governments since 1967 have tried to make a nation out of Nigeria by breaking up the country into states, with the hope that the inhabitants of each state will direct all their efforts and energy towards building up their state and would recognize only Nigeria as the next and final greater whole to which they are to hold allegiance, the status of Nigeria as a dual nation remains unresolved and intractable to this day.

Indeed, the problem became so worrying that on Tuesday, August 27, 1991 the Nigerian Federal Military Government:

1. Further broke up the country into 30 states;
2. Took over all institutions of learning jointly owned and run by some states belonging to the same region, and
3. Ordered that all business ventures and, indeed, all ventures requiring meetings that portrayed regional affinity and affiliation should either be disbanded or placed under the care of experts.

Additionally, by October 1999, the civilian Federal Government had to caution some states in the Northern part of Nigeria against some of their actions which tended to challenge the secular status of the country.

All these efforts at unifying Nigeria and at making a nation out of it have yielded only minimal positive result perhaps because they have been in the main, military and political. A need has therefore arisen for the trial of another strategy.

LIFELONG EDUCATION

The concept "lifelong education" which simply implies education from cradle to the grave, was born in the 1970s when the world woke up to the realization that unless each individual begins to accept the notion of lifelong learning, the speed and effects of technological inventions

would overwhelm him/her and would eventually hurt him/her. Lifelong education was therefore conceived of out of necessity for man to learn about technology and to continuously learn to harmlessly use technological inventions which were appearing on the market at a dizzy speed.

From this time on, many thinkers began researching into the potentials of lifelong learning and education; their efforts so far have now come to prove to us that although the advent of lifelong education was justified by the necessity to use technology and its by-products safely, the promotion of lifelong education can indeed be justified on biological, economic and social grounds.

All human beings are born babies and all grow over time to become children, adolescents, young adults, middle-aged adults, older adults and aged persons. Each of these stages of human growth and each intervening period between each of the states of growth brings with it, its peculiar developmental issues, physical changes and feelings. For example, a girl growing into adolescence may wake up one day to discover that blood was flowing from her private part; a young boy growing into adolescence may discover that a semen he has never seen before began one day to drop from his reproductive organ; a middle-aged adult may suddenly discover that the acuity of his or her sight has substantially reduced; an aging adult person may come to discover to her surprise that aches which she has not been accustomed to have now taken possession of her body and would begin wondering how to manage these new phenomena which in the first place she has difficulties in understanding.

All these examples highlight the changes that occur within the human being as he/she grows on; each of these changes is capable of causing emotional stresses and psychological disorder in a number of people, if they are not able to understand the phenomena that have taken possession of their body and when they are not able to manage the new changes to the extent that they may gain back a large amount of the comfort they were used to with their own body. In order to relieve all human beings of the emotional stresses that sudden changes within their body may bring and in order to equip all persons with prior knowledge and skills to manage these developmental changes, lifelong education is recommended.

Since the dawn of civilization, human beings put forth diverse economic arrangements for the world. Each of these economic arrangements is said to be devised for the purpose of improving human beings' welfare. One thing however, which the introduction of each new economic order fails to emphasize is the effect of the change of order on the people of the world. Most people must have got so used to the older economic order that they may spend years to adjust to the new order. Indeed, some persons may have positioned their finances in such a way that the new economic order may only have come to make them lose money and financial opportunities;

under such a condition, the new economic order has actually brought pain and suffering to these individuals upon whom many other individuals would have been depending.

In order to minimize pain and suffering caused by the introduction of new economic orders among people of the world and particularly in order to equip in advance citizens with skills and approaches to manage economic emergencies situations, lifelong education is recommended. This type of education would not only enlighten the individual on the tenets of current and other economic orders, it would also dispense proactive education in the area of personal and corporate economic management.

All societies being dynamic, no society is static. While many social changes are desirable as they tend to move society forward in many areas of human endeavour, others are not so pleasant. In any case, whether we are talking of desirable or undesirable social changes, the process involved in changing a society from one stage to another brings along its pains. Consequently all social changes come with some pains. The pains of social change may be encapsulated within the factors that promote this change or they may be sought in the manner the people decide to react to the change.

A social change may originate from the behavior of a large number of citizens who had been in contact with some foreign cultures which, on returning home, they decide to infuse in the home culture. A social change may also result from the constant beaming through television, satellite apparatus, radio or other means of mass communication into a society, of values and behavioural dispositions which eventually influence the psyche of the citizenry to the point that these values get adopted. A social change may equally be brought in through the angle of war; so that no society ever remains the same after a war has visited it; cherished values are often topdoed and new ways of doing things are often adopted as a result of the forced training which the period of war brings on all citizens.

It is the view of lifelong education proponents that through education whole societies may be made to prepare for changes and to adopt steps capable of enabling them to adjust very quickly to the changes when they eventually come.

PEACE

The concept known as "Peace" is as old as the human species. Indeed, it is as old as the first human being, because that first human being had "peace" as foundation upon which he did rest. Although that original "peace" seems to be lost to men today, it can be regained through knowledge.

Throughout human history, efforts have been made to comprehend "peace" and to eventually regain its original

understanding and tenets. The Oriental, Greek and Roman civilizations bear indications to these human efforts at comprehending “peace” and Shalom, Irene and Pax are each of the three concepts promoted in each of these civilizations which bear witness to the efforts made at comprehending and at promoting peace by human beings through the millennia (Rohrs, 1995).

Shalom is a concept of peace made popular by the Oriental world. It emphasizes physical and mental well-being of a whole community. It suggests that as long as majority of community members experience a considerable amount of well-being, peace may be said to exist. The type of peace described by Shalom is a form of peace that is laboured for by the individuals making up the community. In other words, individuals and the community as a whole make deliberate effort to attain the state of Shalom.

Irene is the concept of peace developed by the Greeks; the history of this concept dates back to 371 B.C.E. the year a peaceful settlement was reached between warring factions within the community. That year, a statue of the goddess of peace cast in bronze was erected in the market place in Athens; the goddess carried a horn-shaped container filled with fruits and flowers which, symbolized prosperity and divine blessing. Irene therefore means “a time of blessing and unhindered fulfillment of life” (Rorhs, 1995:3); as in the case of Shalom, the type of blessing and fulfillment of life advocated by Irene, is to be brought about through a process of active creation. The main components of this process are that 1) The community is to seek, whenever the need arises, from the goddess, the means through which peace can be maintained and furthered and 2) Once the goddess’s instructions were received, everybody was to be made to abide by them.

Pax describes a form of peace which is promoted by the Roman conception of political order; Pax Romana, as the Roman conception of peace was fully known, enunciates a principle of political order as instrument for achieving social peace; Pax Romana advocates a two phase action which would lead to the attainment of social peace; namely, the waging of war and the establishment of the Roman form of political order which usually checks social unrest. Although the concept of peace as embodied in Pax held sway in the Roman empire for a considerable length of time, it was eventually replaced by “*HUMANITAS ROMANA*”, which was a concept of peace incorporating not only the idea of humanity and liberty but more importantly the idea of inner peace. The change in concept was brought about by the discovery that Pax Romana was not humane enough.

Strategies for Promoting Peace Education

By strategies here, it is meant the avenues by which peace education may be promoted. Rohrs (1995) and

Biao and Biao (2000) had suggested the following strategies.

Through All School Subjects

Peace education can be channeled through the teaching of all school subjects. This way, the propagation of peace education is made cost-effective, as no separate materials need be produced. Additionally pupils and students would, through this method, imbibe what peace education has to offer without the feeling of the burden of an additional school subject for which they have to provide additional materials and additional energy. For example English Language classes should be provided with comprehension passages, essay writing exercises and oral drills that are centered around peace and peace education. Mathematics classes should provide geometric figures which would make it possible to discuss stability, equilibrium and peace as interchangeable concepts. Social studies and history classes should offer opportunity to pupils and students to learn how peace may be established and advance in human societies. Science and technology classes should lay emphasis on the constructive nature of learning of science and technology. In addition, all school learning and instructional materials should be written in such a way as to emphasize the positive aspects of life and the positive sides of humanly unavoidable situations.

Through Adult and Non-formal Education

Since all the education that there is, does not take place within the formal school system, peace education should equally be extended to the non-formal sector of education. Here too, peace education should be made to permeate the educational activities carried out within this education subsystem. For example literacy education meetings should consider texts on peace education or should organize short talks on peace issues. Basic education programmes should provide for discussions on peace within each of their educational activities. Business and Engineering Skills Trainings should emphasize practices to promote peaceful coexistence. Women education programmes should afford opportunity to examine with women their roles in the promotion of peace in the homes and in society. Here too, all learning and instructional materials should employ such positive concept and registers that aim at promoting the idea of peace.

Through Teacher Training Programmes

The responsibility of propagating peace education would heavily rest on the shoulders of teachers and facilitators

of educational activities. It is therefore imperative that teachers and facilitators be instructed in the principles and method of peace education during their training period. For example, the teachers-to-be would need to know the meaning of peace; they would need to know the appropriate methods (the communication styles and means of communication) to employ during peace education classes and how to select materials to use in case there are no specifically and separately designed education instructional and learning materials.

Through The Development of Peace Education as a Distinct Subject of Academic Discipline

To establish peace education as a discipline, curricula would need to be built up as a guide for teaching peace education at all levels of education (primary, secondary, tertiary and non-formal). These curricula would need to be built by persons who show keen interest in peace issues and by persons who have been writing on peace issues. After curricula have been built, learning and instructional materials would need to be developed along the curricula.

Through Festivals

Festivals, ceremonies and dramas are excellent learning centers that could be employed to promote peace and peace education. For this strategy to effectively serve peace education more than half of the festivals, ceremonies and dramas in all societies should begin to portray peace. In time, all festivals and ceremonies are expected to be pro-peace education.

Through The Establishment of Peace Schools

The ideal of peace could also be promoted through the establishment of peace schools. In addition to regular school curricula contents, peace schools are expected to develop courses and stage public activities designed to promote, peace and peace education in society. In addition, members of those schools would be expected to be exemplary in their display of peace traits and peaceful tendencies.

LIFELONG EDUCATION AND PEACE IN NIGERIA

We must begin by stating that, although "lifelong education" is mentioned in the Nigerian National Policy On Education, no structure or framework or clear policy currently exists in the country, on how to operationalise lifelong education. This situation is perhaps not peculiar

to Nigeria; most developing countries are yet to view lifelong education as a need. While developing countries are yet to view lifelong education as important, this form of education "is being actively embraced by the countries of the Northern hemisphere,...."; (Torres, 2002:19).

"Lifelong education remains an uneasy topic for national governments in the South and for international cooperation agencies which continue to prescribe narrow basic education ceilings for poor countries". (Torres 2002:20).

Yet, lifelong education has great potentials for these poor countries. It can bring the citizens of these countries to appreciate their own strength and their own worth and it can lead them to create an environment of peace through leading them to understand the sheer wealth which their multiple ethnicities represents and through enlightening citizens to a point where suspicion and mistrust are drastically reduced or completely eliminated.

In Nigeria, there exist more than 250 ethnic groups. Of these, three are largest and most dominant; they are the Yoruba, Igbo and Hausa speaking groups. The Yoruba are found in the Western part of the country, the Igbo in the East and the Hausa in the North. As a result of the age-old struggle against what is perceived among Nigerian ethnic groups as "ethnic domination" and "ethnic exploitation" the country was in the mid 1990s broken down into 6 geo-political zones; this arrangement was believed would ease ethnic tension as ethnic minorities in the country would now be able to identify with a few geo-political spatial zones which they can call their own and which would increase their sense of belonging.

Yet, ethnic tension persists; suspicion among ethnic groups is rife and misunderstanding and misrepresentation still exist; the seizing and commandeering of economic interests viewed as being strategic to ethnic groups still go on unabated. All these happenings only point to the fact that in addition to political settlements, other strategies need to be employed for the purpose of establishing a culture of peace in Nigeria; the most dependable and enduring strategy is education and more specifically lifelong education. Understandably, the structure of lifelong education that would bring peace in Nigeria needs to be tailored around the peculiar problems of Nigeria.

Lifelong Education Strategies for Peace in Nigeria

First and foremost, the Federal Government should begin by acknowledging lifelong education as a national need by altering the present national educational system in a way as to provide for lifelong education.

Secondly, an educational plan should be urgently developed to enable Nigerians to continually have opportunity to learn about one another. It is really because Nigerians do not know themselves that they

suspect and misunderstand one another so very much. It is not uncommon to see Nigerians who get born within their political and ethnic community, grow and die within that community without ever having the opportunity to visit a locality or community within the country that is different from theirs. This “know-ourselves educational plan” should touch on all existing school curricula with the view to introducing to young Nigerians all the people, languages and cultures existing in Nigeria during their school days; it should also include youth excursions and adult excursions which would enable Nigerians visit communities different from theirs many times in their lifetime.

Thirdly, states in Nigeria should be motivated to organize on an annual basis, “Culture Fairs” aimed at attracting Nigerians who would learn much through these fairs about their country in the long run.

Fourthly, even the first-time visitor in Nigeria would acquiesce to the fact that Nigerians are hospitable people; as such no Nigerians would normally seize economic interests with the view to preventing other Nigerians from benefiting from them; however, military rulers, in their almost 40-year rule showed palpable corruption and selfishness in the management of national resources to such an extent that they succeeded in revolting an otherwise peaceful and hospitable people. A process of re-education of the people is now needed to restore the confidence of the new managers of national resources. An educational plan which seeks to democratise the minds of Nigerians and which seeks to sell democratic rule as a solution to past wrong deeds of the military in management of national resources should be mounted.

CONCLUSION

There is no price too great to pay for the restoration of peace because peace is a sine qua non for all forms of development. All that it would take to bring peace in Nigeria is to promote lifelong education in addition to all earlier attempts at establishing a culture of peace. One is not naïve to the point of suggesting that, with the begin-

ning of the promotion of lifelong education, miraculous results are to be expected instantaneously; yet, adoption and promotion of lifelong education would have signaled a right beginning of the journey towards establishing a culture of peace in this most populated black country on earth, the process of establishment of culture of peace itself, requiring a minimum amount of patience.

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