

THE ROLE OF WOMEN EDUCATION IN PROMOTING PEACE AND PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE IN NIGERIA

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Abstract

By the time all members of a society have opportunity to benefit from formal education without barrier, there is possibilities that education received will help in shaping the orientation and attitudes of individuals towards attainment of goals and life pursuits. But when there are impediments and the citizens are prevented (for diverse factors though) from making best of opportunity from education, then, there is bound to be tension, terrorism, kidnapping, communal clashes, hatred, and hate speech among others. Similarly, education is widely regarded as tools for enlightenments, development and engagement; lack of it is definitely the achievement of the tension, disruption of peace and lack of peaceful co-existence, crimes and so on. Again, the form of education required must be the one that will curb the problems from the root. One of such problems is women education or education of the Girl child. This study attempts an operational searchlight into women education as a tool for peace and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. It recommends among others that women education should be made mandatory for all families, cultures and tribes in Nigeria and deterrents and hindrances should be removed. The work adopts analysis and logical criticism.

Key words: women education, peace, education, peaceful co-existence

Introduction

The current spate of sectarian killings and terrorism in Nigeria has almost defiled the understanding of the leaders. Or can we simply say the leadership of this country has no solution for the monstrous killings? Nigeria as a plural society requires appropriate skill and relevant tools for solving the current carnage. Military intervention is involved, Police force is on course and local fighters are combined yet no serious achievement. The crime is still ranging and new methods are being adopted by the killers and perpetrators. Meanwhile, people cannot continue to live in perpetual fear. There is need for permanent solution.

The monsters (terrorism, kidnapping, sectarian clashes and so on) must be eradicated and appropriate method must be adopted. This paper looks at the method that is not popular but seemingly appropriate and has lasting effect. Generally, education is commonly defined as a process through which one acquires knowledge to evolve change in behaviour, change from level of ignorance and stupor to a prevalent level of knowledge ability (Lawal & Ojo, 2006:335). Education whether formal, informal or non-formal, remains a force to reckon with when effort is being made to redirect or abate a particular problem. Hence, in a common

parlance, education is averting or correcting much orchestrated societal menace. Ojo (2014:167) asserted that the form of education should be a relevant one; education for change, education for peace, education for child training, education for poverty alleviation and education for equality among others. In fact, at discussion and brainstorming arena like conferences, seminars, round-table talks and so on, education is assumed to occupy a primary place in solving social issues and challenges. On the other hand, illiteracy is commonly regarded as the mainframe for inequality. Added to this is the fact that education, of varying forms, has become a globally acceptable compelling force for the improvement of human living condition, economic advancement and peaceful co-existence. Commenting on the significance of education, Okediran (2006) submitted that “Education is generally regarded as the inalienable right of every human being. It is seen as the key to the emancipation and freedom of man from subjugation, fear and want”.

The above quotation suggests the purpose that education is meant to serve. Ojo, (2013) opined that “education, the world over, whether formal, adult or non-formal is regarded as the potent tool at liberating man from complexities arising from low self-esteem brought about by illiteracy”. This interpretation lends credence to the fact that there is global consensus that access to education is the major prerequisite for socio-economic and political development. With the Jomtien Declaration and framework of action on the 1990’s Education For All (EFA), the accessibility of children and adult to basic education becomes clear. The EFA goals simply translate to some well framed goals of education as follows:

not simply a package but more of a process, not a question of number of years of schooling, but more of a question of consolidating literacy and numeracy, the acquisition of socially appropriate life skills...and not simply a question of how much has been prepared for life-long learning, but how much has been integrated into the life of the learner (Ojo, 2008:12).

This interpretation does not end there, it goes to say that formal education gives the beneficiaries ability to solve problem that may have been impossible in human interpersonal relationship. It is a common fact that the number of years spent in schooling had given the educated individual the ability to live in peace, tolerance and good human relation. Although there are odd cases, the number of people that live in peace together and solve problem based on endowed and acquired knowledge has increased tremendously since the end of Second World War (McGay, 2006:56). Living together may be pretty difficult if one has failed to acquire formal education. This is not far from the fact that when education is given to women, the world becomes more a place of peace. A woman given education is like given the whole nation enlightenment. McGay (2006) further asserted that “only women can change the world for better; she influences her home and influences places around her”. It then becomes necessary that any instrument that will adapt in the woman’s ability to do better for herself and her society should be encouraged. To make the society better, women education should be given all necessary attention it requires. The monster in war could be easily averted. Peace could be created and living together will be heaven.

Conceptual Clarification

Certain concepts need to be clarified in this paper. They are; women education, peace,

peaceful co-existence, education, Girl-child and adult education among others.

Women Education

To talk about women education is like talking about equality of education and/or removing barriers from education of the girl-child. So many factors are impeding the smooth attendance of girl-child in formal schooling; factor of virtue, factor of marriage institution, factor of religious teaching, role allocation, role selection, individual differences and so on. The effects of these factors are barrier to quality of life, successful living, little influence on children, and large number of psychologically traumatised children. At this juncture it suffices to consider the causes of few number of Girl-Child in educational institutions.

Causes of Few Number of Girl-Child in Educational Institutions

Education of women like their men counterparts starts from childhood. When many girl-children are registered at the primary school, it means better future for women education and empowerment. However, so many of these girls who register in primary school find it difficult to complete the period of six years. Some

dropped out because of the mobility in the job of their parents. Bakare (2014:89) explained that children of the migrant fishermen of the river-rine areas are mostly neglected in the provision of education...having no chance to education because of the nature of job of their parents. Again, the children of the migrant farmers, especially the minority tribes, who moved from their base as a result of communal clashes and killings, have to stop schooling when their parents could not afford keeping them in schools despite the fact that the primary level education in Nigeria is free. The major victims are female children as some of the male children are kept with families who are secured while female are taken along to help in the farm or giving out to start child labour as house girls, house maids or at best sent to learn trades or vocation. The current spate of kidnapping of school girls from schools in the Northern part of the country has worsened the opportunity of female children. In Chibok, many female students are gradually been withdrawn from school and this has implications for female education in the Northern part of Nigeria (Garba,2017:21).

Causes and Effects of Few number of Girl-child in schools

<u>Causes of Absence of Female from School</u>	<u>Resultant effects</u>
1. Girl-child out of school 2. Gendered career path and work 3. Double Binds 4. Parental job mobility 5. Terrorism and kidnapping 6. Communal killings and insecurity 7. Cumbersome Domestic Duties 8. Family Dependence 9. Restriction to Family Business 10. Religious Predicament 11. Cultural Role Selection	1. Paucity of role model 2. Paucity of Educated Female Child 3. Scarcity of Women in formal Organisations 4. Dearth of Women in Leadership Positions 5. No contribution of women in the development of their children 6. Badly trained children 7. Non Involvement of Women in Decision Making: 8. Women lack of access to network and sponsors 9. Lack of Access to the Control of Property 10. Lack of Access to and Control over Income 11. Insecure society

Culled from Lawal & Ojo (2006). 'Politics of Gender Equality in Nigeria', In Ojo E. O. (ed.), *Challenges of Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria* Ibadan, John Arshers Publishers, p335 This is a true representation of the current women education problem in Nigeria. The future is very bleak.

Peace

According to Boston Indicator's Project (BIP) cited by Ojo (2013:143) 'peace is based exclusively upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind'. This explanation purports to set solid base for the United Nations General Assembly (1999) definition of culture of peace. According to UN, culture of peace is premised on the environment of peace in member states. It, therefore, adopted a definition of culture of peace as 'a final decision', that the culture of peace is a set of values, attitudes, tradition and modes of behaviour and ways of life (UNN, 2000). The body later directed all member states to ensure that there would never again be another world war and sustain internal peace and international understanding.

Security/Peace Education

The United Nations (UN) was established in 1945 to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war, to reaffirm faith in the dignity and worth of humanity, to create an equal platform for men and women and to establish condition under which justice and respect for the obligations of international law can be maintained and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom (UN: 2000). In the opinion of Bearce (2008:42), peace education has been very germane to the success of UN efforts at creating security among member states. In fact, peace education has diverse interpretations for different individuals in

different places. This is what Torres (1999:147) referred to as taking the form of public enlightenment or a form of a field study. Nigerian Universities are currently subscribing to having peace education as a major field of study. Fashokun, (2003:142) declared that University of Ibadan has taken the blaze in this direction with a full fledged Department of Peace and Conflict Studies where conflict prevention, management, resolution and transformation techniques are taught. According to Torres (1999:147), peace education is purposely set for changing the mindset and to promote understanding, respect and tolerance for yesteryear's enemies. This submission indicates that peace education is required for good interpersonal relationship and to possibly changing the mindsets of persons among others. Again, when one is referring to the education needed to tame the mindsets of people, before any other instruments of abating war could be used, Torres believed that proper understanding of the true essence of people's inner nature must first be attempted and peace education also takes care of this.

According to Fasokun (2003), peace education is targeted at the 'development of skills, attitudes and knowledge with co-operative and participatory learning methods and an environment of tolerance, care and respect'. The submission meant that peace education gives opportunity to promote the total welfare of the people, advocate for the just and equitable treatment of people, and promote individual and social responsibility for both educators and learners. Abu and Fakunle (2003) submitted that peace education is people-oriented and it values persons.

The interpretations can simply be summarized as peace education is much

more than weapon of control, conflict resolution, environmental awareness, discipline and cultural exchange. It involves the training of the mindsets for interpersonal relationship, which culminates in the culture of peace.

Conditions for Peace

According to DeRivera (2011:56), the culture of peace and peaceful co-existence cannot exist in isolation; they are drawn out of certain elements of peace. He borrowed UN report in the area of culture of peace as suggested by Chowdhury report to the UN of 2000. According to the paper, eight programme areas remain pivot upon which peace could reign and war averted. They are as follows:

- a culture of peace through education,
- sustainable economic and social development,
- respect for all human rights,
- equality between women and men,
- democratic participation, understanding, tolerance and solidarity,
- participatory communication,
- the free flow of information and knowledge and
- international peace and security (with priority on disarmament) (UN 2010).

These conditions are all encompassing. They are the prerequisite for peace and its attendance amelioration of insecurity. Adult education is broad and it is a ready tool for problem-solving, its usefulness is not futurist, it solves problems now and later. This is education that Chowdhury recommended. Although children education is long-term and it is problem-solving too, adult fundamental education coupled with the other seven elements recommended by Chowdhury has advantages for solving current problems of Nigerian insecurity saga.

Monster

According to Horby (2001), a monster is an element of lucid picture which creates fear in the heart of people. It may also be an object of fear. Ordinarily, people tend to run away from fearful object, especially, when it appears in physical realm. However, object of fear can also appear in dreams, when they do, although not in the physical realm, the appearance of such object seems torturing the minds of people and lingers on for long. Such picture will not be a pleasant one and will not be a thing that one longs to have and desire to cherish. Most times, the object of fear may create enduring impact on people's memories that the picture may not be easily forgotten. Therefore, war and terrorism are relevant to the interpretation of monsters because they create fear in the heart of people and create long lasting impact in the psychic of people that are victims. Hearing about war or lack of peace is not new at the present throughout the world. It has totally destroyed the psychic of so many people and has caused trauma and social vices. Therefore, war is a monster and so is lack of peace, the aftermath of it.

Education

There is need for solution to solve monstrous lack of peace and war in the world at the present. So many people have recommended several tools for curbing the monster. This work also contributed to the search for solution. The solution is fundamental to peaceful co-existence and to the dismantling monstrous bid for war in looking for peace. It is a common adage that when you are looking for peace, you prepare for war. Education (without discrimination of the type) readily comes to mind when thinking of using non-violent method to solve societal problems, especially, lack of peace. In the opinion of Babarinde (2004:223), education as a concept cannot be easily

explained, as it indicates the process of acculturation. It also implies formal schooling, an activity and a product of several years of learning among others. Again, there are basically three types of education, namely, formal, informal and non-formal education. Therefore, education encompasses different categories of learning process. Formal education refers to the school education on a full or part time basis that usually begins from early childhood from the kindergarten classes, to the tertiary institutions. It takes place within the four wall classroom and it is certificate oriented, (Okafor, 2007:38). Informal type of education is summarily referred to as home training by the The Encyclopedia Americana (2003). According to Wilfred (2010:17), informal education includes all informal learning; 'like home training, domesticated education, casual learning and all forms of learning. Non-formal education has in many cases been used interchangeably with adult education. It refers to all forms of education that are carried out, not formally and of course, not informally based. According to Ojo (2010), non-formal education refers to the motley assortment of organized and semi-organized educational activities operating outside the regular structure and routines of formal system. Non-formal education is spelt out in the National Policy on Education (FGN: 2004) as that form of education 'that encompasses all forms of functional education given to youths and adults outside the formal school system'. It is usually given to those people who are matured to take up a skill for self-fulfillment, self-actualization, personal development, proper integration in the society, for the development of the society and for curbing insecurity and bringing about peaceful co-existence in the society at large.

Adult Education

Adult Education has become common in many countries. It takes on diverse forms ranging from formal class based on learning and e-learning. Its definition also depends on base, times and places. Ojo (2010:6) summarily defined it as 'that type of education given to the categories of people that are being referred to as adults in their country. Akinpelu (2006:34) asserted that it is the education of those categories of people who are referred to as adult based on certain value criteria. He laid bare the criteria as follows: social and economic responsibilities, psychological balanced, chronologically of certain age like 18 years and above. Akinpelu (ibid.) also defined adult education as 'a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and full-time basis (or persons who had no opportunity to attend school) undertake sequential and organized activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, understanding or skill ...or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems'. In the opinion of Rogers (1999:458), adult education is a broad-based education form. He defined adult education as follows:

'all planned purposeful learning opportunities offered to those who are recognized and who recognize themselves as adults in their own society and who have left formal initial system (or who have passed beyond the possible stage of initial education if they were never in it), whether such learning opportunities are inside or outside the formal system, as long as such learning opportunities treat the learners as adults in decision making, use appropriate adult learning methodologies and styles and purposes and to meet their own needs.

Omolewa (2001) quoted UNESCO (1991) as saying that adult education is defined as:

the entire body of organized processes whatever the content, level or method, whether formal or otherwise, whether they prolong or replace initial education in schools, in colleges and universities as well as apprenticeship, whereby persons regarded as adults by the society to which they belong develop their abilities, enrich their knowledge, improve their technical and professional qualifications and bring about changes in their attitudes and behaviour in the two fold perspectives of full development and participation in balanced and independent social, economic and cultural development.

This interpretation purports to say that adult education is that type of education that is given to those categories of people who in Akinpelu's (2006:34) opinion are 'matured physically, mentally and psychologically... a socially responsible person... has self respect and dignity...'

With these entire interpretations, one may be confused at making a choice among the myriads of meanings. To forestall this confusion, Ojo (2013) simply put adult education as the education of the category of people that cannot be referred to as children and that such education includes formal, informal and non-formal education.

Relevance of Women Education to sustainable peace in Nigeria

According to Bako (2009:78), "to say that something is relevant is to say that there is logical connection between that thing and something else". He further stressed that relevance is a strong intrinsic intellectual concept which has strong social implication. Thus, when one is talking about the state of the society, especially issues of insecurity, it is obvious that there is need to examine other

issues that are relevant to it, which helps in combating the insecurity menace. Education, generally, readily comes to mind and in this paper, the import of Women education has been identified as rather relevant to curbing insecurity and creating peaceful co-existence. Many authors have suggested diverse forms of education for women relevant to the eradication of insecurity in Nigeria. Some of them are Literacy Education, Girl-child Education and equal education opportunity devoid of setback for women. Abu and Fakunle (2003) advocated peace education as correlate of effective Police Performance in conflict management. Abiogu (2009) suggested the Education for Leadership as a recipe for national stability in Nigeria. Meanwhile, if advocate is being raised about peace and security and apparatus is being set but the prevention of war, lack of peace, insecurity and killings among other social crimes are not being adequately paid attention to, the whole efforts become worthless. It is against this backdrop that Suleman's (2016:19) assertion comes to mind that not until when there are apparatus in place to forestall social vices, nothing tangible will be achieved in terms of peace and peaceful co-existence in Nigeria. Women Education is not far removed from the import of crime control. Charity begins at home. A study conducted by Abubakar (2015:57) revealed that so many of the perpetrators of crimes in Northern Nigeria are the children of the illiterate mothers. Although, Allen (2005:54) declared that so many club boys found in a study in Uganda were mostly children of the elites who gave their children too much freedom, the common occurrence of the street children in Nigeria are the children of the illiterate women, children from broken homes, children of single mothers and those of poor parents. Abiogu (2009) averred that not until

when the education of women is made compulsory and girl-child is not prevented from attending school as a matter of fundamental right, it may be difficult to have peace in any nation.

It is pertinent to know that education is a veritable tool in resolving conflict and violence and in bringing about peace within and outside a nation. Education programmes are diverse and numerous yet they are all working towards the same goals. According to Hirst and Peters (1981), the main goal of education is toward something worthwhile. Further, Peters (1982) submitted that the target of education should be towards achievement of something worthwhile through a worthwhile method. Therefore, education is a worthwhile venture to bring about the desirable goals in human lives, including peace. In terms of individual peace, education helps in bringing about individual satisfaction and development. Again, formal education at the present in global world is the all mark of success and of course the insignia of social recognition and relationship. Serious attention needs to be giving to the education of the most influential people in the life of children. The most painful thing is the fact that women are the most hit in the situation of war and crimes and at the same time, they are the worse neglected when it comes to benefitting from formal education. Women education becomes paramount; girl-child education, adult women education, globalised adult education, autodidactic learning and competency literacy are all relevant to the education of the worse hit. The popular method of solving problem, especially, war is gradually becoming unfashionable. This is a method that emanated from a slogan, “if you want peace, prepare for war”. Coroner cited by Amore (2012:12) asserted that “peace has always been largely unattainable

because in the process of wanting peace, there had always been war and counter war”. In her opinion, there is little or nothing that war and counter-wars can bring, they will only lead to more wars and violence. However, people’s interest are becoming waning as they are getting wiser with the aftermath of wars; famine, squalor, sickness, homelessness, wretchedness, death, maiming and so on. According to Fashokun (2003), there is a need to look for better alternative to resolving conflicts, to resolving war and bringing about peace. The old method too, that is, war, as instrument of peace cannot be easily discarded. Okoli (2008:21) suggested that there is a need to juxtapose both methods. Therefore, war as a painless instrument is recommended, war of tongue, war of pen, brainstorming, dialogue and women education (Burner, 2012:3).

Amore (2012) listed the manner in which the education of women goes a long way to tame the monstrous war. She averred that women are mothers, wives and lovers. They have great influence in the lives of men. Therefore, their education is, generally, becoming increasingly significant worldwide. Burner (2012) asserted that the most recent call for education in European countries represents the spread of mass schooling which has implanted the ‘fundamental concepts that everyone has a right to be educated formally, regardless of his/her cultural background and gender differences. He further stressed that mass schooling includes the moral awakening through mass mobilization and public enlightenments. It also includes the Education for All (EFA) agenda of the Millennium Developmental Goals (MDGs) and the achievement of the current Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), especially, goal 5, gender equality which directly target women and goal 8 which

retorts to provision of decent work and economic growth for all citizens including women (UN, 2017).

Conclusion and Recommendations

The problem of insecurity in Nigeria cannot only be saddled with terrorism or solely with bad leadership. The country's education policy is faulty as it lacks clear-cut philosophy as formal education programme has failed Nigerians. Many children are roaming the street though they are enrolled in school; many school-going children are not in school, not enrolled at all. The old policy of the colonial master is still being used with slight amendment. There is a need to re-orientate and reorganised the education policy to accommodate the future of children currently out of school, including Girl-child.

Again, women education, education for special need and education for all should not stop in papers, in writing or in discussions. It should be given all what it requires in implementing in Nigeria, as the level of insecurity in the country is alarming. Women Education has also come to be relevant with the mass schooling as it avails the Girl-child to be retained in school, no matter what. The import of education for all categories of matured persons including, women cannot be over-emphasised as it is germane for the development of the society and ability to live peacefully together. Nigerian Government should pay required attention to this.

Furthermore, this work recommends as follows: that there is need for formal proclamation that prevention of girl-child from school as a criminal acts. Girl-child education needs to be given required attention even when those girls are attending schools on regular basis. Government at different levels in Nigeria needs to give adequate priority to education as no nation can rise above the quality of its education. Again, there is a need to restructure the

education in Nigeria to suit present predicament. Part of the burdens of Nigeria as a country is problem of quality leadership. Similarly, women themselves should know that they are part of the development agents that the country needs, therefore, they should rise up for their own education and the education of their Girl-children. The era of dependency of women on men should be over; it is ludicrous to see women who still do not know that the improvement in their lives determines the improvement in the lives of their children. Stakeholders in education should rise up to the challenge and support the education of women. Having done that, all hands must be on deck to curb the present predicament of terrorism brought about by sheer lack of knowledge, religious bigotry and the predicament of bad leadership.

Adult Education should be encouraged so that those women who were unable to catch up with education or were deprived from schooling will be able to benefit and therefore, be agent of control in their families.

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