

## **Enhancing Peace Education in the Family and Schools: Implication for Poverty Alleviation**

**Odonye, Rebecca Onyaweyo**

Department of Home and Rural Economics,

College of Agriculture,

Lafia, PMB 33, Nasarawa State

Nigeria

[rebeccaodonye@gmail.com](mailto:rebeccaodonye@gmail.com)

---

### **Abstract**

*This paper examined peace, peace education and poverty alleviation through wealth creation. Peace education should start from the family under the pioneer teacher (mother) of the child to the formal educational sectors. Peace education creates an awareness of the qualities and importance of peace. Peace in the family enhances wealth creation towards poverty alleviation. It was recommended that women, the pioneer peace teachers of the child, should cultivate peace, plant peace in other to harvest peace for the nation's consumption.*

---

### **Introduction**

Prior to the advent and introduction of formal education in Nigeria, cultural identity was passed from one generation to another through indigenous education. Values, skills, morals, honesty, respect for elders and obedience to authority were part of informal curriculum.(Kayode, 2005) Values were held in high regards in the society and family values made for peaceful and harmonious living. At that time, the need for peaceful education was not much as family peace was important to all and nurtured. There was less violence; less breakdown of law and order, more tolerance and friendliness and people were their brother's keepers. (Kayode, 2005)

Values are changing for the worse, and there is increased emphasis on materialism which has promoted a culture of greed. Greed is an enemy of peace. (Kireet, 2000) Modern education has helped to water down values in the society as families relegate some of their duties to the educational system. Some societal vices like inter-tribal; communal clashes and religious conflicts in Nigeria usually claim lives and properties (Nwankwo, 2002). For the nation to survive economically and be functional, certain values should be maintained. Values such as tolerance, respect for elders, cooperation, obedience has a resultant stabilizing effect on the family and the nation at large. It is on this premise that these paper looked at the concept of peace, peace education and poverty. It discussed the family as an agent of peace, the role of family peace in wealth creation, peace and wealth, and poverty alleviation.

### **Conceptual analysis of peace, peace education and poverty**

**Peace:** Peace can be explained in different ways. It stands for absence of anxiety, violence, war or disturbances of any kind. It means tranquility, freedom from war or any civil disorder. Peace goes hand in hand with harmony, paving the way for growth and development. Thus development and civilization thrives in an atmosphere of peace (Ololobu, 2000).

Peace can be likened to the condition of harmony among individuals and within various spheres of society paving the way for growth, progress and development. It is a situation of calmness, harmony and freedom from anxiety, (Ololobu, 2000). Peace is further described as a condition of mutual harmony which is maintained by the inherent preference of all parties to preserve a non-violent status quo (Sherman, 1998).

In such situations, differences are settled in non-violent fashion without the use force. Based on the definitions of peace, family peace refers to family state of calmness or quietude (inner joy) and harmony.

**Peace Education:** peace education has been described as a character development in which knowledge acquired serves a purpose (Muhammad, 2002). The purpose according to him is practical manifestation of peace and peaceful co-existence. The United Nations (UN) and its agencies have recognized peace as an essential human construct and the International Schools Association Global Issues Network (ISAGIN) views education as a principal vehicle which will develop and inculcate in children the habit of peace. Peace education can be the basics through which schools can pass values and enduring attitudes to children in school.

Peace education should aim at producing individuals who are aware of the interdependence of human beings and who are prone to promoting peace, human rights and democracy. Muhammad (2000) views peace education as one that would produce educated individuals who would be able to co-exist peacefully with others. Actually, peace education should aim at peaceful relationship at all levels of human endeavour which include personal, family, community, inter-cultural and global systems. It involves the acquisition of skills and knowledge which will affect individual's behavior for good.

Peace education should focus on the cultivation of peace values like non-violence, justice, human rights, and peace peaceful attitudes such as being democratic, positive criticism, peace skills which involve conflict resolution and peace knowledge (Ololobu, 2000). Other values which should be the focus of peace education are peace-lovingness, tolerance and patience. The family should be an agent of peace education is the home.

Peace education is that education that creates an awareness of the principles and value of peace in all its ramifications. It will help individuals shun violence, intolerance and greed hence embracing forgiveness, tolerance, honesty and love for one another. Peace education makes one a better citizen who can co-exist with others.

**Poverty:** poverty is a state of having insufficient money thereby not meeting the needed necessities of life. When these necessities are not met, happiness, harmony and peace are at stake. Poverty is seen as a “state of living with less than the smallest income necessary to provide the minimum necessities life” (Adesanya, 1998:87). It is the inability of one to attain a minimum

standard of living. Poverty alleviation, on the other hand, is the removal or minimizing of the factors which contribute to poverty.

According to National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS, 2004), seven out of every ten Nigerians live on less than \$1 a day. It further stated that poverty is dynamic. People can move in and out of poverty according to circumstances. This could be as a result of health problem, death, natural disaster or non-natural problems like crisis, conflict and war. Poverty and poverty alleviation are common phenomena in every household and the society at large (Sell, 2001). Widespread poverty is an enduring problem and poverty alleviation a key component in development strategy.

### **The Family and Peace**

Peace is invaluable in human life and its absence results in crisis, fracas, unrest and chaos. “Charity starts from the home” (Ocheze, 2000). Peace education should start from the family. The family is the primary environment the child comes into at birth. Thus the family serves an important socialization agent and has the power to shape the attitude of the child towards decent human relations (Orjaku, Ngobili, 2005)

The experiences of a child in early life are contributing factors on his attitude to violence or peace (Lawal, 2005). This important influence of the family on the child places the family in a unique position to help promote peace. Parents are the child’s first teachers and parent’s behavior, attitude to peace and believe in peace go a long way in influencing the child.

If parents have the right attitude to peace and believe in peace, they should not quarrel or fight at best in the presence of their children. Home experiences and training greatly influences what a person does later in life and the kind of person he is likely to be (Bello, 2003) thus women be up and doing in moral development of their children, instilling discipline and rejecting unwanted behaviours.

In the past, one used to hear mothers say to their children “this is unbecoming of our family or our family members do not behave like this” this was commendable if families can proudly say “conflict is not part of their family, fighting, violent actions are not in our family line”, then the nation as a whole will be peaceful. If homes are peaceful, peace will extend to the society. (Nnaka, 2000)

**Inculcating peace Values:** family and societal values are learnt from the home. A child’s first school is the home with the mother as the first teacher. Thus the components of peace, the importance of peace and what peace stands for, should be introduced to the child at home. Simple virtues like taking turns, sharing, cooperating, which are established and shown as examples in the first few years of life can lead to good relationship and peace throughout a person’s life. (Orjaku & Ngobili, 2005). The home teacher herself should know the principles of peace, and be able to develop some self control, humility, honesty and discipline.

Ololobu, (2000) was of the view that the child should be molded to have a spirit of peace before any meaningful training on peace education will be possible. According to him, peace is a virtue that must be instilled in an individual from birth. This is the role of the family and especially the woman- who has to ensure a violent-free atmosphere in the presence of children.

### **Peace Education and the School System**

Learners at all levels should be equipped with such values that will make for peace and help them seek peace in all their life's endeavour. In the views, of Bello,(2003), functional education at all levels should not be geared towards the production of mass (university) graduates only but also towards producing reasonable, responsible and peace-loving individuals. An educated person thinks critically about issues and actions and tends to consider consequences of his attitudes and behaviors on others. Such a demeanor is a product of peace education. Such education will have implications for the school, learners and teachers and will affect not only the school but the society at large

**The school:** School curricula at all levels and in various subjects should be reviewed in favor of peace education. Peace education can be incorporated into school curricula in different way-by introducing a course in peace education into the programme if the curriculum can accommodate it, also by integrating peace themes into existing courses, or areas where peace themes or elements of peace education are found and emphasized.

The values that guide peace should be taught and students encouraged examining the context and implications of their own values and those of others and, relating them to peace and peaceful co-existence. Values and attitudes in peace education may include but not limited to justice, human right, freedom of expression, love for others, and love of peace and harmony, and democracy, cooperation, tolerance, open mindedness and true reconciliation.

Various methods of teaching can be used to portray peace, for example discussion, research projects, role playing, drama etc. in and out of the classroom, peace should be emphasized for example during morning assembly. There could be completion classes and houses as to the most peaceful, and awards given at the end of the school year.

**The Teacher:** The teacher should be the starting point for peace education. He should have the right knowledge of peace, be peace-loving, an advocate of peace and a peace model. He should imbibe the precepts of peace, believe in peace and act peace. He should be able to impact peace to others. Children should be corrected with love and peace. Each teacher should make his, a 'peace classroom'. The teacher therefore being a role model is compulsorily a key player in the expression of peace education in his 'peace classroom'. The development of staff through workshops, seminars and conferences is an integral part of education for peace. This will make for increased effectiveness.

The knowledge acquired in peace education will groom individual to be peace-loving and imbibe principles and techniques of keeping and maintaining peace in the family. When there is calm and love, there will be respect for one another, for the laws of the land and property. Destruction of life and property is counter-peace productive and benefits nobody as waste and destruction are enemies of progress and development. When there is peace, families can easily build up their wealth. 'Rome' they say 'was not built in a day'. Abundant wealth is not acquired in a day but gradually.

### **Family Peace and Wealth**

Wealth means having money and possessions in excess. (Onwa, 1999). These excess possessions enable the family to achieve its goals and live happily. It is an important resource to the family and a factor that leads to family peace. The protection of valuable assets of the family against misfortune of destruction is a plan towards wealth creation. If existing assets of the family are destroyed as a result of jealousy, lack of love, impatience, intolerance, and lack of cooperation that can bring down the family to the level of poverty. According to the National Economic Empowerment and Development Strategy (NEEDS, 2004) a family can move in and out of poverty because of different factors.

Wealth creation is the method by which a family builds up their money and properties. Wealth creation starts from protecting a family's valuable assets against sudden destruction. According to Finance management commentary, assets protection can provide family members with peace of mind. Similarly fair distribution of material wealth is a critical factor in achieving peace in the family and even in the society. When wealth is unanimously created by family members, it brings joys and happiness and satisfaction. It enhances the peace of the family, since the needs of family members will be easily and probably fully met.

It is only peace and its components that will help individuals protect their family assets from destruction, equip them with proper management and distribution of their wealth for further peace in the family. Any wealth acquired, protected and well managed is a factor in poverty alleviation.

There is also a negative relationship between wealth and family peace. These days most families in the quest for wealth have placed the pursuit of material things on the top of their priority list. They have overlooked important family values and goals that stress the perfect peace and unity of the family, this affects good family relationship. Mismanagement of wealth can ruin family peace. This fact was emphasized by (Nwankwo, 2000) that when money is mismanaged, conflict can occur in the family. When one person exercises authority over money and other properties, the other members of the family may not be happy and this will infringe on the peace of the family. Thus the pursuit of wealth may deprive families of the inner calm and joy associated with peace.

### **Peace Education and Poverty Reduction**

Peace is one of the essential requirements for effective and meaningful development to take place (Dombin, Dyel and Paul, 2005). Peace is in the opposite camp of violence, destruction and conflict. Destruction is a 'minus sign' which subtracts and does not add to peace. Peace on the other hand, is a 'positive sign' in building and retaining wealth towards poverty reduction. Peace makes people think, plan work together. Such a relationship makes them help each other in times of need without counting the cost.

Where there is peace or people have acquired the knowledge of the principles of peace, people will be out to help the less privileged in their family circle or community through finding a job or establishing an entrepreneurship. This will eliminate jealousy which is an enemy of peace. People become more constructive and creative where there is peace (Dombin et al, 2005). Constructiveness and creativity are positive factors in poverty reduction. These two factors come

to play in Home Economics income generating enterprises like making flower holders, headrest, crochet work, table covers and napkins, snacks making, poultry farming to mention but a few. Such income generating activities help in poverty reduction.

Peace education should be an essential part of the school curriculum either as a distinct subject or integrated into all school subjects. There is need to create awareness on the importance to oneself, the family and for the general wellbeing of everybody.

### **Recommendations**

- This topic can be further studied empirically to find out what strategies could be used to promote peace in the family.
- Women, the pioneer teachers of the child, should cultivate peace, plant peace in order to harvest peace for the society's consumption.
- There should be enlightenment programs in the mass media on the importance of peace education.
- Schools and institutions should have a 'peace cup tie' to be competed for by all the houses in the school or hostels in case of tertiary institutions.
- There should be state and grassroots conferences on peace.
- Peace Education units should be established in the Federal and State Ministries of Education.

### **Conclusion**

This paper reviewed peace, peace education, family peace and poverty reduction. Peace education should start from the home under the tutelage of the mother. Formal education for peace should start from the primary school, through the different levels of education. Family peace is a product of peace education and also a positive factor in wealth creation, protection and management, and in poverty alleviation.

### **References**

- Adesanya, F. R (1998) Rural Women and Poverty: Which way out by the year 2010. A *Journal of Women in Colleges of Education II* : 87-93
- Bello, H.M. (2003) Functional Women Education: A tool for character moulding of the Nigerian child. *Isa Kaita Multidisciplinary Journal of Education I:1:79-85*
- Dombin, V; Dyel, B.D and Paul, D.D (2005). Inculcating Peace Education in Our Educational Sectors: A veritable tool for scientific and technological development *Journal of Women In Colleges of Education. 9: 389-396*
- Kayode, M.A (2005) Education: An instrument for promoting peace culture in Nigeria. *Journal of Women in Colleges of Education 9::320-396*
- Kireet, J (2000). An Outline Programme of value-oriented education and relevant Pedagogical Suggestions. In report of the working group to review Teachers Training programme in light of the need for value-orientation. New Delhi: Government of India, Ministry of Education and Culture.

- Lawal, J(2005). The Role of the family in Promoting peace Culture in Nigeria. *Journal of Women in Colleges of Education. 9: 136-139*
- Muhammad, R.J. (2000) achieving functional peace education through the NCE Minimum Standard in Education. *Journal of Women in Colleges of Education4: 30-45*
- National Economic Empowerment and development Strategy (NEEDS) 2004, Abuja: National planning Commission
- Nnaka, C.V (2000). New Challenges for women Educators in Nigeria, in the next century. *Journal of Women in Colleges of Education4: 1-5*
- Nwankwo, J.N. (2003) *A Practical Guide to Family Financial Management*. Ughelli: Eddy Joe publishers.
- Nwankwo, J.N. (2000). Valuable education with peace as a focus; Home Economics as an implementing vehicle. *Journal of pedagogy and development 8: 9 (I & II): 19-24*
- Ocheze, C.G (2000) Peace Education: The Panacea for National Unity. *Journal of Women in Colleges of Education 4:209-213*
- Ololobu, C.O. (2000). Developing the ‘self’ as a basis for peace education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. *Journal of Women in Colleges of Education 4:72-75*
- Onwa, S.O (1999) *Wealth Creation and Developing Nations*. Lagos: Ojo Press
- Orjaku, C & Ngobili, C (2005). Education as a vehicle for peace culture in Nigeria. *Journal of Women in Colleges of Education 9: 284-287*
- Sell, M. (1998) summary of workshop on poverty alleviation and sustainable development: Exploring the links. *Sustainable development 46:1:1-2*
- Sherman, M (1998) What brings peace, wealth or democracy? *The Middle East Quaterly V:3:1*