

Religious Education A Key to Peace, Security and Sustainable Development in Africa in the 21st Century.

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Abstract

The African continent has witnessed various crises raging from civil war, political unrest, regional conflict and other security challenges over the years and this has adversely affected the continent in various ways such as loss of lives/property, human displacement, humanitarian crises, insecurity, breakdown of law and order, breach of peace, suspiciousness and so on. This in turn has slow down the pace of development and economic growth in the continent. International organizations like ECOWAS, African Union, United Nation and other NGOs have intervened in bringing peace to the continent but the desired result is yet to be achieved. It is obvious that every continent crave for peace and security, as it is true that without peace there cannot be meaningful development. In the light of the above, this paper examines the role of religious education in achieving peace, security and sustainable development in Africa in the 21st century. Education is a means through which the individuals are formed and reformed through qualitative training and retraining of the human capacity capital, who are agents of development in the continent. The paper identifies factors affecting sustainable development in the continent as insecurity/conflicts and opines that there can be no meaningful development in the pace of insecurity, and posits that education is a determinant factor for development of any continent or region. Again, the paper discovers that the right value is integrated in the educational system through religious teaching. It reveals that the right change of persons is through religious education or moral value which is the prerequisite for developing in any region; as there is no nation that can rise above the quality of her education. And concludes that Africans can be mobilized and inspired through religious education that drives sustainable development in the continent.

Keywords: Religious Education, Peace, Security, Sustainable Development.

Introduction

Religious Education has played a significant role in sustainable development of the African continent. This includes; Education, Economy and Social political Life, apart from its moral gain. Hence, the question of sustainable peace is an answer to the craving of the African nation for all-round or holistic development. Successive leaders in the continent have tried in the past to foster developments in different areas such as peace initiative in the sub-region building of schools, hospitals and others as it were, but were confronted with various challenges. Uche (2011) observes that many development projects in the region failed grossly because of insincerity, lack of commitment, corruption and bad implementation (Mordi, 2015). In the same vein, lament the negative effect of insecurity on economic development of the region. Ona and Agwu (2008) argue that these developmental strategies failed to cure Africa of her economic woe for the same reason. Achebe (1983) and Uche (2010) single out corruption as the main cause of the failure of the developmental strategies in the African continent. Mordi (2015) and Omoregbe (1993), describes the region thus in spite of all these robust programme in the continent the region is still faced with economic crisis and insecurity in different countries. In most countries of the continent, one hears stories of violent involving individuals or groups, that is why, over the years Africa has been tagged “security risk nation” to which many international communities have warned their nationals not to reside or visit. Taking curious look at the happenings in and around African, one may be tempted to agree with these international communities bars their nation to be utilized. This is because Africa has been experiencing a number of crises, social-vices and lack of cordial relationship among her citizens in the continents. There have been constant hostilities among the inhabitants of one village, town and the other one community and another or inhabitants of the same town or the same state based on tribal, religions or ideological differences. Also, violent conflict has developed a pervasive phenomenon in most African communities. The various political crises that finally led to the 1967- 1970 civil war in Nigeria have had devastating, effects on unity and peaceful co-existence and humanitarian’s crises of Nigerians. Furthermore, the intensity frequency and rapid spread of crises in recent times in the region is an issue of international public concern. In most countries of the continent, for instance Mozambic war of 1977, Sierra-leon of 1991, Guinea Bissau war of 1988, the Ife-Modakeke crisis in Osun State, Jukun-Tiv war in Taraba-State, Odi Massacre in Bayelsa State, Urhobo, Itsekiri, Ijaw crisis in Warri. Rigasa up-rising in Kaduna State in 1980, Muslim-Christian clash in Jos 2001, 2005, 2010, (Achebe, C. C. (1983), Boko Haram uprising in Borno 2010, 2011, Yola, Katsina (Ahdttil Raflu, 2001, Adeniji and Nmeniben, 2009), the 1980’s Maitasine uprising in Kano, the Kaduna upheavals of 2000, 2001, others include Shagamu Hausa/ Yoruba crisis (2000), the Ogoni/Elepolo crisis 2003, the current Boko Haram mayhem in North Eastern part of Nigeria, among many others, the Liberian war that lasted many years led to lots of lives, property, Sudan War, Rebels, Congo war, Somalia, etc.

Worst still is everyday armed robbery infliction on both individuals and financial institutions, kidnapping, rituals, and cultism in some countries. In these conflicts, people were displaced, properties were destroyed and lives were lost. For instance, the Ivorian war of 1955, Ethiopian war, the Boko Haran disturbance in Northern Nigeria had claimed over 600 persons with over 3,000 residents already displaced (Nwachukwu, 2008), In Delta State, the Gbaramatu Kingdom Genocide witnessed several losses of innocent and helpless children, women and the aged were lost, property belonging to individuals and group worth billions of Naira were destroyed by the joint task force. The law enforcement agent has done much in the region but the situation has not been solved. Thus, resources that could have been used to develop the economy, is now used on peace keeping force, humanitarian services building of infrastructure for displaced victim. This has been the scenario in the region over the years – African continent can be best

described as a continent that is managing crisis with its resources. Consequently many investors that should have contributed to economic growth in Africa are scared to invest.

This situation has large scale physical displacement and has forced relocation of individuals, families and others in these regions (Uche, 2011). Therefore, communities in Africa are in a crisis situation devoid of peace and insecurity, as such, there is need for quick solution before it degenerates further.

Other negative impact of violent conflict on sustainable development in the continent is the destruction of lives, properties and critical infrastructure. For instance, the Nigerian civil war left Igbo land devastated, with vital infrastructure lacking and people eroded. The situation is the same in most of these African countries. It is in the light of the above situation that peace building initiatives and religious Education have to be integrated into the process of sustainable development in Africa. The challenge before Africa is to develop the needed institutional capacity that will sustain development, transformation and reconciliation through social enlightenment, peace and Religious Education.

Definition of Terms

Religious Education

The role of education has historically often been opposite to coexistence. Scholars argued that only in the second half of the twentieth century the role of education began to shift from securing the position of social elites to an acknowledgement of cultural diversity and contribution to the process of social cohesion. In the light of these historical facts, the ‘two faced’ relationship of education and conflict becomes clearer especially in post-conflict settings, where social cohesion is a critical condition for sustainable peace, education can play an essential role. Although the World Bank’s Reshaping presumes that education cannot cause or end war. It concludes that education does contribute to the factors that lie at the root of the conflict and has the potential to play an important role in building peace and reconstruction. Whether this claim is correct remains to be seen, but regardless of whether education contributed to conflict, the World Bank states legitimately that education systems and schools are always weakened by conflict. This twin mandate of education systems in post conflict societies - ‘rebuilding’ themselves and society at the same time offers both opportunities and challenges for education in the aftermath of violent conflict. The existence of these opportunities and challenges are slowly being acknowledged by the international community. At the 50th session of the General Assembly (GA) of the United Nations (UN) a report by politician Graca Maehel drew global attention to the devastating impact of armed conflict on children. Maehel states that educational activity should be established as a priority component of all humanitarian assistance. Furthermore, the UN Secretary-General’s 2009 report on peace building identified a number of recurring priorities in conflict-affected situations: establishing security, building confidence in a political process, delivering initial peace dividends and expanding core national capacity. These priorities include ‘the provision of basic services, such as ‘water and sanitation, health and primary education. Although these UN statements seem to demonstrate an increased understanding of education’s role in and after violent conflict, Smith thinks that education’s role is still underestimated. He argues that in conflict-affected situations education is about more than service delivery. Education is a means of socialization and identity development through the transmission of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes across generations. Smith argues that education may therefore be a driver of conflict fuelling grievances, stereotypes, xenophobia and situations. Independent education consultant Martha Hewison stresses that attitudes to education need to change. She points out that there is a global interest and a commitment by the world’s governments in reaching the goals of Education for All (EFA), but that conflicts remain a major obstacle. Hewison argues that to achieve the targets of EFA (‘to provide quality basic education for all children, youth and adults’) the essential

place that education should take in conflict response must be recognized. To maximize the beneficial role of education in the peace building process and to manage the challenges and limitations for education in post-conflict settings, there is a need for strategic frameworks that can serve as guidelines for practitioners and policy makers in the process of post-conflict educational re-creation. Even though educational response to conflict is increasingly understood as an essential and immediate need, education in conflict and post-conflict settings is considered a research field 'in its infancy'. Kathryn Tomlinson and Pauline Benefield state in their work *Education and Conflict: Research and Research Possibilities* that there exists a research-practice gap. Three important studies illustrate this statement very well. The two academic studies by educationalists Lynn Davies (*Education and conflict: complexity and chaos*) and Professor Tony Gallagher (*Education in divided societies*) are a contrast to the more practical World Bank publication (*Reshaping the future: education and post-conflict reconstruction*). There seems to be a disconnection between the academic literature and the practical reports and only few theoretical recommendations are elaborated into frameworks or programs that could serve as guidelines for policy makers and practitioners in the process of post-conflict educational recreation and peace building. Whilst a report on Education for Reconstruction by David Phillips, Professor of Comparative Education, for example distinguishes between physical' reconstruction of school buildings, 'ideological' reconstruction (democratization of the education system and retraining of teachers), and psychological' reconstruction (responding to issues of demoralization, loss of confidence and health-related issues of stress and depression), the World Bank completely ignores this study and suggests that the reconstruction of physical infrastructure is the only and main priority for post-conflict reconstruction. Research often seems to be inaccessible to those who might make use of it in practice. Tomlinson and Benfield state that policy makers and practitioners in governments, local and international non-governmental organizations and UN agencies (particularly UNESCO, UNHCR and UNICEF), seem more likely to be aware of research and reflective reports written by those within their own field of operation, than of work undertaken by university faculties. They find this unsurprising because the academic work is all too often inaccessible outside universities. In order for academic research to make an impact on educational interventions, the gap between research and practice needs better bridges. Thus, to be useful for practitioners in the field of post-conflict educational re-creation, academic research needs to build stronger bridges between theory and reality by for example including case-studies, best practices and recommendations. Besides the research-practice gap, there exists another lacuna in the field of education in conflict and post-conflict settings. It seems that only very few studies focus on a specific type of conflict. The bulk of papers on education in conflict and post-conflict settings, treat conflict as a general.

Factors Affecting Sustainable Economic Development in Africa.

African has adopted numerous plans with the aim of developing the economy in emerge a self reliance, have been faced with many challenges. It has been that African economic problem is not based on lack of human and natural but on other factor. Despite the huge mineral resources deposit in the country, still wallowing in poverty and corruption. While quoting Ezea Isiorhovoja raised the question as to why has African continent not attain development? He aware corruption as responsible for the nation's economic problem. The present leaders and the region and even the past had introduced measures to eliminate corruption but this has not achieved its desire result. The aspiration of all African to achieved reliance is there but the element of development is not in region. Isiorhovoja view development in Africa continent as opposite of under development. And this has remain the same in the continent for so long, it is obvious that Africa need development (Ezea 2010); opined that as a region, Africa need development. All these policies were injected into the region with the aim of solving the social

vices in the continent but without a desired result, though the objectives of these plan are ideal but are not the right solution to sustainable development in the continent.

Education is an important instrument for sustainable development. The institutions in the region are faced with moral decadence, such as cultism, exam malpractices cyber crime and others. All form of social vices are linked to moral decadence hence cases of corruption, ethic crises has a negative impact in the economy. Many who would have invested in the region economy are threatened as a result of insecurity. Insecurity is another problem facing the region's economic growth. At the moment, many people are living in fear of being attacked by robbers, kidnapers, terrorists or, the dreaded Islamic group Boko Haram or other security challenges, this does not only portray Africa's negative image to the world but will equally drive away investors from the region. Furthermore, it would block the chances of Africa of been elected into any important assignment in the community of nation of the world. Every year the region spend huge resources on security which could have been used to improve the economy as a result of moral insecurity in the region. The region needs a decent society to have a sustainable economic growth. The high inflation in the region, piracy and all forms of fraud, step out of greed, selfishness and is an indices of moral laxity in our society and consequently it has a set- back on our economic-sustainable growth when citizens are developed the nation is develop. Moral and illiteracy of the citizens is the greatest of the poverty that any nation or continent can suffer, it is therefore true that the main objective of religious education is individuals and developing them, a whole. From the above, the fight of the region is to ensure that the necessary means of instruction for her citizens is made clear. Therefore, the region should see to it that its citizens receive a civic education like education in patriotism. Consequently greed and selfishness in the mind of Africa is another reason why the economy is not growing. This is why the challenges facing the nation economy today is moral laxity, obedience, social justice and also education for peace, dialogue, tolerance and other social, political civic virtues for the common good of the continent.

Moral education deals with the development of the person to self-aware relationships with God and others, and the understanding of different beliefs, values practices. As such, it makes an important contribution to the development of persot preparation of adult life, exploring questions concerning the meaning of life. We see that the moral element is the process whereby a person develops responsible attitudes towards others, and skill of moral judgment about what is considered right wrong. It also helps the person to possess rational judgment about controversial

Finally, morality deals with the conduct of human affairs and relations persons.

Religious education contributes significantly in the development of a nation.

precisely most African countries have gained greatly by the effort of religious and education in those early days; when there were no armed robbers, when one travel in the night without fear of molestation, when villages were safe even they had no ubiquitous police stations which are now in every nook and cranny for peace to reigned and ruled, when the village customary courts were the court of law as it were. Today, many people are afraid that we stand the risk of destroying those excellent values and descending to the abyss of moral decadence. As we have seen earlier, religious education provides believes a guideline about life and the life-after and as provides much-needed incentives for indulging in productive activities during the time. Thus, it is seen as a promoter of growth and a promoter of development. It eves economic growth and development by promoting a positive attitude towards, discipline and hard work, thereby influencing people to have a sincere attitude to their dealings and interactions. Its teaching promotes hard work and most goons have it as a norm that work is a duty to God and one should put diligent effort ms work. The scripture says: not to let anyone have any food if he refused to do any. We order and call on people to go on quietly working and earning the food that eat. And according to Habibuliab Khan, work not only helps believers to stay away

from sensual, immoral life but also is the best means for glorifying God. Thus, one avoid idle conversation, unproductive recreation, or oversleep in order to have rum time for work. Religious education also influences productivity through certain such as thrift and openness to foreigners which motivate effective savings, investment and therefore economic growth that leads to nation building. Religious education develops people's social skills, qualities, attitudes and characteristics such as tolerance, forbearance and a willingness to get involved with these fulfilling part in the community and society. It also helps to solve some of the 's pressing social problems of moral decadence such as youth delinquency, drug, cultism, terrorism, insecurity, robbery, political examination, malpractices, cyber crimes and corruption and other evils that hinders the growth of a nation. It uplifts people's spiritual life which is the integral part of man's purpose in life. It's an inward search, and promotes good human relationships. Religion provides the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, and the way in which they impact on as it were. Today, many people are afraid that we stand the risk of destroying those excellent values and descending to the abyss of moral decadence. As we have seen earlier, religious education provides believes a guideline about life and the life-after and as provides much-needed incentives for indulging in productive activities during the time. Thus, it is seen as a promoter of growth and a promoter of development. It helps economic growth and development by promoting a positive attitude towards discipline and hard work, thereby influencing people to have a sincere attitude to their dealings and interactions. Its teaching promotes hard work and most religions have it as a norm that work is a duty to God and one should put diligent effort ms work. The scripture says: not to let anyone have any food if he refused to do any. We order and call on people to go on quietly working and earning the food that eat. And according to Habibuliab Khan, work not only helps believers to stay away a sensual, immoral life but also is the best means for glorifying God. Thus, one avoid idle conversation, unproductive recreation, or oversleep in order to have rum time for work. Religious education also influences productivity through certain such as thrift and openness to foreigners which motivate effective savings, investments and therefore economic growth that leads to nation building. Moral Xion develops people's social skills, qualities, attitudes and characteristics such as tolerance, forbearance and a willingness to get involved. With these aeristics, people are enabled to relate themselves successfully through understanding that they are one family, one nation. Surely this helps people to play a and fulfilling part in the community and society. It also helps to solve some of the 's pressing social problems of moral decadence such as youth delinquency, drug on, cultism, terrorism, insecurity, robbery, political examination, malpractices, cyber crimes and corruption and other evils that hinders the growth of a nation. It uplifts people's spiritual life which is the integral part of man's purpose in life through an inward search, and promotes good human relationships. Religion provides the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, and the way in which they impact on people's lives. It also offers opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they impact on people and who have an understanding of them can be helpful; moral education help in developing a climate or ethos within which all people can grow and flourish, enabling mutual respect, and appreciation of each other in his differences and short comings, insight, compassion, love, trustworthiness, generosity, humility, and willingness to sacrifice for the common good in order to face all the sufferings, challenges and opportunities of human life. All these qualities in one way or the other have constituted the invisible yet essential foundation of progressive community living, laying effective and base for sustainable development and growth.

Religious education helps people to take an increasingly thoughtful view of what is right and wrong, to recognize the needs and interests of others as well as themselves. It assists people to develop characteristics such as truthfulness, kindness, unselfish, attitudes and commitments to virtues. All these encourage people to reflect on the value of living in ways that respect the

well-being and rights of each person. Religious education encourages open minded attitudes to cultural and religious diversity. It encourages man to value and participate creatively in his own culture and the cultures of others by developing his appreciation of the arts, sports, music, language and other aspects culture. Hence, cultural development makes man to participate in diverse varieties cultural life for the enrichment of the man and his community. Consequently civil development enables man to develop understanding, qualities which lead appreciation or participation in the community and society. Another value of education , to promotes patriotism; love for one's nation which advocates for one and unity of purpose, and peace. Moral practice benefits individuals, communities, and thus the nation as a whole. The practice of it improves academic achievement, and economic well-being. On his part government should introduced a reform that will be from the heart by given priority to religious education at all level of education in the region. Introduction of business education, its importance to technological and national development has been recognised worldwide and moreover, at the tertiary level of education in the continent it has come to stay as a programme of study. Today there is a general awareness of the programme and its contribution to the continent is immeasurable and has great role to play in attaining self reliance and sustainable economic growth in the 21st century.

Peace

According to Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary, peace is a situation or a period of time in which there is no war or violence in a country or an area, state of being calm, of quietude and living in friendship with somebody. This is why religious education played a leading role in peace initiative and sustainable development.

Security

The word security can be viewed from various angles depending on the situation with reference to specific cases. The reason being that by nature the concept is imprecise. For instance, Hornby (1994) defines it as "safety from danger or anxiety in another word, security refers to something valuable which Ambi, (2005) defined as the quality or condition of being freed from exposure to danger, protection, feeling or assurance of safety, freedom from anxiety or doubt. Security is invulnerability and defensive capacity. The issue of security could result from injustice, where people result to violence because they feel they do not get justice. According to Chambers Dictionary (1993), security is the state or feeling of being secured, protected from espionages, theft, attacks etc. The New Encyclopedia Britannica described security as the protection of persons and property against a range of hazards, including crime, fire and attendant risks, such as explosion, accidents, disasters, sabotage, subversion, civil disturbances, bombings (both actual and threatened) and in some systems, attacks by external enemies. Fruits the various definitions of security stated above, one can conclude that security is not just military protection or repulsion of external aggression and internal upheaval or any act that could threaten the peace and security of a nation. It also includes environmental stability, economic well-being, demographic issues, good governance etc. This paper sees this definition as related useful to this work. Development can only take place in a region which is void of rancor, acrimony and violence which can only be achieved through religious education. African society is faced with many security challenges as such the definition of security given above is not found in the region yet, the continent crave for peace.

Sustainable Development

The concept of Sustainable Development is related to the need for the institutionalization of best business practices by companies, corporations and sundry business concerns as well as governments in the processes of production, distribution and consumption, vis-as-vis their

economic, socio-political and environmental spheres of activity. According to World Development Report (2003), Sustainability is an evolving framework. Societies will continue to transform over time and since significant social stress and crisis is likely to lead to a breakdown in the development and preservation of all assets, inter-generational well-being is bound to be jeopardized. Sustainable Development means improving the living condition of the people by integrating social Development, economic development and environmental conservation and protection. Essentially, it is about the welfare of all. Hence, sustainable Development is also defined as a development that meets the need of the present without compromising the ability of the future generations to meet their needs. It also means capacity to continue into the future (Mordi, 2015). It is to be noted that, this concept applies not only to environmental issues, but also incorporated into economic and social issues.

Concept of Sustainable Economic Growth

Economic growth is increase in the amount of the goods and services produced by an economy over time. It is conventionally measured as the percentage rate of increase in real gross domestic product or real GDP. Growth is usually calculated in real terms; i.e. inflation-adjusted terms, in order to net out the effect of inflation on the price of the goods and services produced. Economic growth is generally distinguished from economic development. The former is primarily the study of how countries can advance their economies. The latter is the study of the economic aspect of the development process in low income countries. Economic growth and human development is a two-way relationship. Moreover, the first chain consists of economic growth benefiting human development with GNP. Specifically, GNP increases human development by expenditure from families, government and organisations such as NGOs. With the rise in economic growth families and individuals will likely increase expenditures with heightened incomes, which in turn leads to growth in human development. Further, with the increased consumption, health and education grow, also contributing to economic growth. In addition to increasing private incomes, economic growth also generates additional resources that can be used to improve social services, (such as health care, safe drinking water, etc). By generating additional resources for social services, unequal income distribution will be mitigated as such, social services are distributed equally across each community, thereby benefitting each individual, thus increasing living standards for the public. In a nut shell, economic growth is an increase in the number of amount of goods and services produced over and above of what the country has been producing- and is thought of not only as an increase in productive capacity but also an improvement in the quality of life to the people of that economy. (<http://wiki.answers.com>).

Sustainable Economic Growth-is a pattern of growth in which resource use aims to meet human needs while preserving the environment so that these needs can be met not only in the present, but also for generations to come. That is, growth that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is all about people's fundamental needs and quality of life: its goal is to enable all people throughout the world to satisfy their basic needs and enjoy a better quality of life, without compromising the quality of life of future generations. There is a native of American proverb that states, 'we did not inherit the earth from our ancestors we borrowed it from our children.' The statement implies that we must pass the Earth on to our children in the end. But the question must be asked; what state will the earth be in when we give it to them? If we must enjoy things for the long run then sustainable growth is important. It refers to the ability to create something and see that it evolves to last the test of time. Without sustainable growth the things we create will soon crumble causing others problems as they do and reducing the ability to create new things. We need, more than ever, to think about balancing environmental, social and economic needs. Long term economic growth is only possible if we protect and enhance the environmental resources

that underpin it. We also have to use resources more efficiently and reduce waste to ensure sustainable growth. The needs and wellbeing of people now and in the future are clearly of great importance.

No religion preaches violence and conflict or militancy. Every religion advocates and preaches peace and peaceful co-existence of all citizens. In Christianity Jesus Christ is known and referred to as the prince of peace. He taught, commanded and demonstrated the significance of peace and “his name will be called wonderful, counselor, mighty God, everlasting father, prince of peace” (Isaiah 9: 6-7). “Salt is good; but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you season it? Have salt in yourselves and be at peace with one another (Mark 9: 50) Furthermore, the Bible says: “Let us then pursue what makes for peace and for mutual up building”. (Romans 14:19) Throughout Jesus’ earthly ministry, he demonstrated his love and maintained peace with all men. Despite stiff opposition from the Pharisees and religious leaders, he never said any rude or insulting word to them. Even when he was arrested and Peter had to draw his sword to cut off the ear of the slave of the High Priest, Jesus cautioned Peter and replaced the ear. He was led to be crucified like a lamb that is dumb, for he said no word, to show the level to which he pursued peace. In view of the above, if African continent can imbibe the philosophy there will be a sustainable development in the continent.

Islam also calls for the quest for peace, tolerance and kindness which is a state of physical, mental, spiritual and social harmony. Other virtues of Islam are that Muslims were urged to imbibe the spirit of kindness and forgiveness. (Q3: 124) and further enjoined to live in harmony mid peace with fellow human beings, Repel evil with that which is better and show perseverance with patience (Q 3: 200).

These values and virtues were practically demonstrated by the Holy Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W). He used non-violent methods to resist those who persecuted him. He never resorted to violence or force unless as defensive mechanism, Peacemaking, negotiation and dialogue is considered more effective than aggression and violent confrontations. For instance, the virtue of tolerance and forgiveness as demonstrated by the Prophet Muhammad (S.A.W) can be seen vividly when there was famine in Mecca and he helped them despite the fact that they had driven him out of his home. Similarly, after the conquest of Mecca, the people of Mecca expected Prophet Muhammad (SAW) either executes to them in retaliation, take them as slaves or at least confiscate their properties and belongings. They were extremely worried and wondered what declaration he was going to make at his historic occasion. However, he began his day by saying address by saying to the pagans of Mecca. “Today there will be no blame on you for anything and no one will harm you in anyway. Such example of rear nobility and humanness is rear in human history. These are the type of behaviour expected Ham Muslims as exemplified by the Prophet of Islam. In fact there are several examples of this nature in the life of the Holy prophet.

Having examined the major religions, it could be seen that peace is of paramount importance to any meaningful development and religious teachings can provide the needed peaceful atmosphere if used in the right perspective. Religious education is considered as fundamental to development of a sound nation. Grier (1995), opined that, religious education has positive effect on economic development of a nation. In his work on effect of religion of economic in development in Spanish, discovered that religious education is a factor to economic growth. Iwenofu (2010) observed that moral education play a great role in national development. This implies that moral education is not for academic alone but for civic and spiritual development as well. This is why the author advocate that moral education will in stilled in the citizenry way of life (principle) that will help in building a sustainable economic development in the continent.

Religious Education

Iwenofu (2010) argued that the goal of religious and moral education is for national developments he observed that the teaching of religious education influences lives in every time and every place. To her religious education prepare men for life a perfect man, a finished man in character. He also explain that religious education create in man the sense of sacred in man and his purpose on earth and where he will end his life. Religious education helps the individual to understand himself as well as their tradition and appreciates the faith and traditions of others. It builds in men spirit of contentment and faith to a discerning encounter with the surrounding culture and seeks.

Lawal (2003) see religious education as a process through which a person learns something which his society believed is related to God. He assert that religious education can be described as those processes designed to induct each new generation into the attitudes, beliefs as well as the practices of a religions or faith in order to promote the religion and at the same time provide for the individual a center for his life. The World Dictionary of English Language, Religion relbrs is man's expression of his acknowledgement of the divine or a system of belief and practices relating to the sacred and uniting its adherents in communities. This shows that religion focuses on what is ultimate or absolute and taught of worship. Therefore, relationships between the transcendent and men demands total submission and an absolute obedience. According to James (2007) an important dimension to the definition of religion, which is essential for this peace, is the often forgotten fact that religious relationship is in fact two dimensional. It is not only vertical but also horizontal; it does not only refer to the relationship between man and God but also the relationship between man and the society thus religion education is a key to development.

Conclusion

Religious education is a powerful force in Africa with identifiable social functions. These functions could be weakened by the dysfunctional roles of some religious fanatics. However, the functional role of religious education in Africa is so much overwhelming that the negative tendencies of some misguided religious practitioners could be overlooked. As a force to reckon with, religious education performs the role of social control, offers social services and teaches social coexistence, moral values and integration. Since all these are ingredients for development, religious education therefore, by implication fosters sustainable development in Africa.

Recommendations

- a. Religious education teaches social coexistence by preaching the brotherhood of all human beings, love and respect for human persons. It fosters peace and unity among people. This peace, unity and love are very essential ingredients for sustainable development in any society. For this reason it should be encouraged.
- b. Religious education should be encouraged since it is a panacea to the problem of sustainable development in Africa. This is because it brings growth to the society through the media of schools, hospitals, health care services and other humanitarian services.
- c. Man by nature wants to know, and the act of knowing ends only when one dies. Religious education teaches man what he ought to know and this is done as long as man is alive. For this reason, religious education should be allowed to thrive.
- d. Religious leaders should review the content of their religious education to reflect the present needs of the African nations.

- e. Since no religion preaches and encourages evil or immorality, religious education in Africa should condemn vehemently the immoral dispositions of Africans that are evident today.
- f. The dysfunctional aspect of religion should not be used to discredit the functional relevance of religious education in Africa. This is because no religion teaches violence and disorder, though some misguided and unscrupulous religious fanatics may encourage such in their confused understanding. The actions and activities of these religious fanatics should not be used to discredit the relevance of religious education and religion itself.
- g. We should create an environment that will discourage corruption at all levels of life in Africa.
- h. Religious value should be the guiding principles of the lives of all Africans, meet all levels as the life which will facilitate all round development of the people.

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