

*Review*

# Peace and security education: A critical factor for sustainable peace and national development

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Accepted 11 May, 2021

Peace and security of life and property has been recognized by scholars and citizens as the primary condition for progress and development of any society. Meanwhile, there is a clear linkage between poor governance on one hand and insecurity and violent conflict on the other. But there are many dimensions of peace including negative peace (absence of direct violence) and positive peace (absence of predisposing factors to violence) as well as philosophical, sociological and political dimensions. Similarly, security is conceptualized to combine elements of national security, economic development and basic human rights. In every society, there are certain critical factors for sustainable peace and they include justice, just and accountable governance, protection of human rights, equitable distribution of resources and peace and security education. Using Nigeria as a case study, the paper argued that the three key problems capable of compromising the peace and security of Nigeria are ethno-religious conflicts, Niger delta crisis and electoral violence. The paper concluded that peace and security education is a critical factor in producing sustainable peace in any society.

**Key words:** Peace, security, conflict, development, human rights, sustainable peace, peace and security education.

## INTRODUCTION

It is well recognised all over the world that peace and security of life and property are the primary conditions for progress and development of any society (Arase and Iwuofor, 2007). There is a consensus among scholars that there is a clear linkage between failures in governance, democratization and sustainable development on the one hand and insecurity and violent conflict on the other hand (Adebayo, 2004). Unfortunately, Nigeria is located in a region that is bedeviled with conflict and insecurity. It has been documented that: West Africa is among the world's most unstable regions. In the last decade, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Cote d' Ivoire, Guinea-Bissau, and Senegal have been embroiled in an interconnected web of conflicts that have seen refugees, rebels, and arms spill across porous borders. Nigeria, Mali, and Niger have been plagued by internal conflicts that have weakened their capacity to provide security to their citizens. Democratization efforts have suffered setbacks in Burkina Faso, Gambia, Guinea and Togo.

The fifteen states that make up the ECOWAS today- Benin, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Cote d'Ivoire, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Liberia, Niger, Nigeria, Mali, Senegal, Sierra Leone and Togo- are among the poorest countries in the world. West Africa is also the most coup prone sub-region in Africa: more than half of successful military coup d'etat in Africa since independence (forty one out of about seventy five) have occurred in West Africa, a sub region comprising less than a third of the continent's states. In the last decade, Liberia and Sierra Leone have been embroiled in protracted civil wars; Guinea-Bissau experienced a brief interceine conflict from 1998 to 1999, Casamance separatists have continued to battle the Senegalese government, as they have done for two decades; the Tuareg conflict has simmered in Mali and Niger; Liberia and Guinea have launched cross border raids against each other's territories; and Cote d'Ivoire, previously one of West Africa's most stable States became embroiled in civil conflict in September, 2002. This situation described

six years ago has remained unchanged. West Africa remains the poorest sub region in the world. Democratic reversals have continued. In Nigeria, the largest country in the sub-region, the crisis in the Niger Delta degenerated until 2009 that Presidential amnesty was granted to the militants in the Niger Delta.

In this paper, we argue that peace and security education is a critical factor for sustainable peace and national development especially in a country like Nigeria that is located in a region prone to conflict and insecurity. We argue that there is a clear absence of peace in Nigeria manifesting in various forms of violence-physical, emotional, psychological, structural and cultural violence. We posit that peace and security education should challenge the dominant paradigm on peace and security; create a movement of peace activists that are sufficiently angry and conscious to transform the violent situation in Nigeria to a culture of peace characterised by respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between men and women. But first, we explicate the concepts of peace, security, conflict and development.

## CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

### Peace

Like most concepts in social discourse, there is no universal definition of peace. However, peace has been generally defined as the absence of war, fear, conflict, anxiety, suffering and violence (David, 2006). But this conception has been criticized by many scholars for being inadequate for understanding the meaning and nature of peace (Ibeanu, 2006). The Norwegian peace theorist, Johan Galtung distinguishes three types of violence that can help to understand the concept of peace namely:

- i) Direct violence manifested by physical, emotional and psychological violence.
- ii) Structural violence which comes in the form of deliberate policies and structures that cause human suffering, death and harm, and
- iii) Cultural violence which involves cultural norms and practices that creates discrimination, injustice and human suffering (David, 2006).

In addition Galtung outlines two dimension of peace. The first is negative peace which is the absence of direct violence, war, fear and conflict at individual, national, regional and international levels; and positive peace which describes the absence of unjust structures, unequal relationships, justice and inner peace at individual level. A more useful conceptualisation of peace must therefore see beyond the narrow conception of absence of war, fear, anxiety, suffering and violence. This is why Prof. Okey Ibeanu defines peace as a process

involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community (Ibeanu, 2006). He points out that there are philosophical, sociological and political definitions of peace. Many philosophers see peace as a natural, original, God-given state of human existence. Sociologically, peace refers to a condition of social harmony in which there are no social antagonisms.

Politically, peace entails political order that is institutionalization of political structures in a way that makes justice possible. As Ibeanu has argued, it would be wrong to classify a country experiencing pervasive structural violence as peaceful. In other words, although war may not be going on in a country where there is pervasive poverty, oppression of the poor by the rich, police brutality, intimidation of ordinary people by those in power, oppression of women, or monopolization of resources and power by some sections of the society, it will still be wrong to say that there is peace in such a country.

## SECURITY

Like peace, the concept of security has undergone fundamental changes in the last two decades. Security has been defined as the condition or feeling of safety from harm or danger, the defence, protection and preservation of core values and the absence of threats to acquire values (David, 2006). But since the end of the cold war, there is the desirability to shift from a state and elite focused view of security to one that places the individual at the centre of the security equation thereby bringing in the concept of human security which combines elements of national security, economic development and basic human rights (Nicole and Fayemi, 2004).

## CONFLICT

The concept of conflict has been addressed by different scholars from varying perspectives. Generally speaking, one can view conflict from social and political perspectives. Social conflict can be viewed as an expressed struggle between two or more independent parties who perceive scarce resources, incompatible goals and interference. From the political perspective, conflict can be viewed as an escalated competition at any system level between groups whose aim is to gain advantage in the area of power, resources, interests and needs and at least one of the group believes that this dimension of the relationship is mutually incompatible (Lane). Similarly, conflict from the political perspective is present when two or more parties perceive that their

interests are incompatible, express hostile attitudes, or pursue their interests through actions that damage the other parties. These parties may be individuals, small or large groups and countries (Lund, 1997).

Scholars have propounded different theories to explain what gives rise to conflict. We shall discuss four of them: human needs theory, relational theory, political theory and transformative theory. The human needs theory is based on the premise that needs are physical, psychological, social and spiritual without which existence is impossible. These needs are not transmitted by a particular culture or implanted or taught by local institutions. They are universally expressed and irrefragable demanding satisfaction no matter how a society's regime may seek to suppress or manipulate them. The nature and character of the society's regime cannot obliterate human needs. The human needs theory argues that deprivation of individuals and community's access to the means of satisfying their basic human needs is behind all violent conflicts.

Relational Theory posits that conflict is a result of interaction between different men and women and/ or groups with differing cultural orientations, values and interests. Meanwhile, conflict is perceived to be innate in the nature of men and women and therefore characterises the way they behave while interacting with others. Conflict is therefore seen as a consequence of poor communication or miscommunication and misperception. The political theory of conflict locates the role of the state in conflict. The State is the sole context where various groups or individuals are competing to take advantage of others. They often believe that they will only gain access to the state when others are eliminated or disabled. Power, which is perceived to be a critical currency for the gratification of dignity, recognition, freedom etc is often contested for by groups. Conflict is therefore a consequence of failed or weak state, the absence of regime legitimacy or poor governance.

The transformative theory argues that conflict is caused by systematic and structural injustice and inequality expressed by competing social, cultural, economic, religious and political frameworks. Structural factors also encompass tangible or symbolic resources like traditional institutions, beliefs, practices, government institutions and laws. Conflict is a consequence of the way that societies are structured. For instance, in many cases, economic and political systems tend to favour one group over the other and some culture tend to be exclusive and unwelcoming to others and new ideas. Meanwhile, changes are always taking place: endogenous (within) or exogenous (outside) the society in question. Transformative conflict is exacerbated by the tension between the demand for change and resistance of the structures and institutions opposed to change.

However, we know that the world is changing very rapidly and the nature, pattern and course of conflict is

also changing. We are witnessing increasing usage of military power in international and national relations. The rights of citizens are violated everyday and everywhere at times of peace, conflict or war. Natural disasters are occurring at monumental proportions.

Market fundamentalism is increasing the gap between rich and poor countries on the one hand and rich and poor citizens on the other hand. Governance is failing at all levels: international, national and local levels. In the midst of all these patriarchy, culture and religion ensures that women are worse off particularly during conflict and emergencies. The Action aid International Strategy Rights to End Poverty aptly captured the conflict situation in the world when it stated: Every year about 300million people are affected by conflict or natural disasters. Those who are most vulnerable and least powerful suffer greatest impact. Weak or authoritarian states, competition for natural resources and a proliferation of small arms mean that more and more people live in daily fear of violent conflict. Climate change and environmental degradation subject millions more to the threat of natural disasters (Action Aid International, 2005).

In the past decade, several organizations and networks have sprung up to work on conflict and emergencies. However, most of the interventions are mere palliatives in that they fail to deal with the root causes of conflict: exclusion from power and resources and identity issues. Furthermore, conflict entrepreneurs have emerged to manage conflicts without empowerment and participation of people who experience and live with conflict.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

We have argued elsewhere that the definitions and interpretations of development are influenced by history, discipline, ideological orientation and training (Igbuzor, 2005). Although different scholars have different perspectives on development, most students and practitioners of development accept that it must mean progress of some kind (Kambhampati, 2004). It is seen as a multi-dimensional process, one that changes the economy, polity and society of the countries in which it occurs. Amartya Sen sees development as a process of expanding the real freedoms that people enjoy. According to her, development requires the removal of major sources of unfreedom: poverty as well as tyranny, poor economic opportunities as well as systematic social deprivation, neglect of public facilities as well as intolerance or over activity of repressive states (Sen, 2008).

In this conceptualization, freedom is central to the process of development and the achievement of development is dependent on the free agency of the people. For the people to be agents of their own development require advancement in five distinct types of

freedom namely political freedoms; economic facilities; social opportunities; transparency guarantees and protective security. In a similar vein, the Human Development report 2007/2008 stated that: Human development is about people. It is about expanding people's real choices and the substantive freedoms-the capabilities- that enable them to lead lives that they value. Choice and freedom in human development mean something more than the absence of constraints. People whose lives are blighted by poverty, ill health or illiteracy are not in any meaningful sense free to lead the lives that they value. Neither are people who are denied the civil and political rights they need to influence decisions that affect their lives (UNDP, 2007).

According to Pat Utomi, development simply put is discipline. It is about how discipline drives the human spirit to triumph over odds of poverty trap, physical geography, fiscal trap, governance, cultural barriers, geopolitics, lack of innovation and demographic trap (Utomi, 2006). Kambhampati argues that development requires growth and structural change, some measure of distributive equity, modernization in social and cultural attitudes, a degree of political transformation and stability, an improvement in health and education so that population growth stabilizes, and an increase in urban living and employment (Kambhampati, 2004). From the above, it is clear to us that even though there are different perspectives to development, there is a general consensus that development will lead to good change manifested in increased capacity of people to have control over material assets, intellectual resources and ideology; and obtain physical necessities of life (food, clothing and shelter), employment, equality, participation in government, political and economic independence, adequate education, gender equality, sustainable development and peace (Igbuzor, 2005). However, the reality of the world today is that many countries are very poor and cannot meet their development needs. It has been documented that more than 1.2 billion people, one in every five on earth survive on less than US \$1 per day (UNDP, 2003). Wealth is concentrated in the hand of a few people while the majority wallows in abject poverty.

The UNDP in its 1998 report documented that the three richest people in the world have assets that exceed the combined Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the 48 least developed countries. Similarly, the 1000 richest people in the world have personal wealth greater than 500 million people in the least developed countries (Shetty, 2005). Every minute of every day, somewhere in the developing world, a woman dies needlessly in childbirth or pregnancy, and 20 children are killed by avoidable diseases such as diarrhea or malaria (Green, 2008). Robert Chambers aptly captured it when he wrote: I am so angry at what has been done, and continues to be done, in our world. It is hard to believe that the nightmare is real. We seem trapped in grotesquely unjust systems,

more and more dominated by power, greed, delusion, denial, ignorance and stupidity, fuelled by symmetries of terrorism and fundamentalisms (Chambers, 2005).

In a similar vein, Amartya Sen pointed out that: We live in a world of unprecedented opulence, of a kind that would have been hard even to imagine a century or two ago...And yet we also live in a world with remarkable deprivation, destitution and oppression. There are many new problems as well as old ones, including persistence of poverty and unfulfilled elementary needs, occurrence of famines and widespread hunger, violation of elementary political freedoms as well as of basic liberties, extensive neglect of the interests and agency of women, and worsening threats to our environment and to the sustainability of our economic and social lives (Sen, 2008). There is no doubt that the challenges of development are enormous. But in the last two decades, there has been a lot of discourse on what needs to be done to deal with the challenges. The UNDP has consistently argued that the Millennium Development Goals can be met if there is political will combined with good policy ideas which are then translated into nationally owned, nationally driven development strategies guided by good science, good economics and transparent accountable governance (UNDP, 2003).

In our view, poverty which is the major challenge of development can be eradicated through three means. The first is to raise income through employment and support to citizens to engage in small scale business. Income poverty is probably the most crucial because it has impact on other forms of poverty. The second approach is to enhance the economic, social and political opportunities available to people to make them come out of poverty. This will involve knowledge improvement, entrepreneurial development, organisation of co-operatives and associations and movements of the poor and excluded. Finally is the conceptualisation and implementation of pro-poor policies and mitigation of effects of policy on the poor. Part of this will involve priority to education, health, infrastructure and provision of social services, subsidies to the poor and excluded and implementation of comprehensive social protection measures.

## **FACTORS FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE**

As noted above, for development to take place in any society requires sustainable peace. Scholars are in agreement that for there to be sustainable peace, society must evolve ways of addressing the root causes of conflicts by helping to foster participatory democracy, just and accountable governance, the rule of law, respect for human rights, and a balance and equitable distribution of resources, among a host of others- all issues the neglect of which often results in instability within states

(Chambers, 2004). The critical factors for sustainable peace in any society are:

- a) Justice
- b) Just and accountable governance
- c) Protection of human rights
- d) Equitable distribution of resources
- e) Peace and security education/culture of peace

The absence of any or all of the above factors will lead to violence and absence of sustainable peace. In Nigeria, we can say that there is clear absence of sustainable peace. Violence is manifested in various dimensions. There is physical violence manifested in the brutality of the security agencies on citizens (the military, police, civil defence and vigilante). There is physical violence by armed bandits and armed robbers. There is physical and psychological violence by kidnappers. There is physical, sexual and psychological violence by rapists. There is structural violence in a lot of policies that give privilege to the rich. The political system, nomination of candidates, nomination fees and electoral expenses is structural violence against the poor. Privatisation policies that sell public wealth to few individuals is structural violence to those citizens who have no money to buy. The deliberate policy of promoting private primary, secondary and tertiary schools to the detriment of public schools is structural violence to the poor who cannot afford the exorbitant fees of private schools. Harmful traditional practices of female genital mutilation, Gishiri cutting, widowhood practices etc is cultural violence. Allocation of oil block to people in position of authority is economic violence. Looting of public treasury is economic violence. Re-writing history of past regimes noted for institutionalizing corruption in a bid to rule again is psychological and emotional violence to the people.

At the moment, there are three key problems that are capable of compromising the peace and security of Nigeria. These are:

i) Ethno-religious conflicts: The ethnic and religious composition of Nigeria and its manipulation by the political elite has posed a lot of challenges to governance and security in Nigeria. This has been aggravated by the failure of the State to perform its core duties of maintaining law and order, justice and providing social services to the people. For instance, the failure of the State has led to the emergence of ethnic militias in several parts of the country such as the Odua Peoples' Congress (OPC) and Baakasi Boys. Meanwhile, it has been documented that the nature of violent conflict in the world is changing in recent times particularly in terms of the causes of the conflict and the form of its expression (Blomfield and Reilly, 1998). According to Harris and Reilly, one of the most dramatic changes has been the trend away from traditional inter-State conflict (that is, a war between sovereign States) and towards intra-State conflict (that is one which takes place between factions

within an existing State) (Harris and Reilly, 1998). They argued that conflicts originating largely within states combines two powerful elements: potent identity based factors, based on differences in race, religion, culture, language and so on with perceived imbalance in the distribution of economic, political and social resources(Harris and Reilly, 1998).

Various Scholars have written on the politicization and manipulation of ethnic and religious identities in Nigeria (Otite, 1990; Nnoli, 1978). In the past twenty years, there is a resurgence of ethnic and religious violence in Nigeria. It is instructive to note that this resurgence coincided with economic crisis experienced in Nigeria and the introduction of Structural Adjustment Programme (SAP) (Ihonvbere, 1993; Osaghae, 1995; Egwu, 1998). Shawalu has argued that the sources of conflict in Nigeria include militarism, absence and distortions of democracy, economic problem, collapse of the educational sector, the growing army of almajirai<sup>1</sup>, security inadequacy, intensification of micronationalism, absence of justice and equity and weakness of Civil Society groups (Shawulu, 2000). One common thread that runs through the writings of scholars is the argument that most ethnic clashes in Nigeria often have religious dimensions (Okafor, 1997; Alemika, 2000; Okoye, 2000).

ii) Niger Delta crisis: We have argued elsewhere that the Niger Delta has slipped into crisis as a result of the political economy of oil characterized by destruction of the environment, crisis of governance, unjust revenue allocation formula, infrastructural decay, poor regulation of the oil and gas sector with its attendant vulnerability and human suffering (Igbuzor, 2008). This led to the amnesty programme announced by the Federal Government on 25th June, 2009 to all militants in the Niger Delta to surrender their arms and unconditionally renounce militancy. The amnesty period lasted for 60 days from 6th August to 4th October, 2009 at the end of which 20,178 militants registered and 2,760 weapons, 18 gun boats and 287,445 rounds of ammunition were collected. The success of the amnesty programme has been commended by all. The demobilization and transformational training (which is part of peace education) is going on in Obubra in Cross River State. The achievement of sustainable peace however will depend on effective re-integration.

iii) Electoral violence: Electoral violence is any act of violence perpetuated in the course of political activities, including pre, during and post election periods, and may include any of the following acts: thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes.

<sup>1</sup> Children that are given to experienced Islamic Clerics for the purposes of Koranic lessons. In most cases, they are left to fend for themselves through begging.

Electoral violence can be physical violence manifesting in physical attack resulting into assault, grievous bodily harm, disruption of meetings/campaigns and death or psychological violence in the form of tearing of posters, intimidation, use of media, reckless driving by those in procession to campaign rallies.

Meanwhile, it is recognized all over the world that the electoral process is an alternative to violence as a means of achieving governance. When conflict or violence occurs, it is not a result of an electoral process. It is the breakdown of an electoral process. Lack of credible, free and fair elections lead to electoral violence which can occur at any stage of the electoral process: registration, campaigns, voting on election day, announcement of result and post election violence. Electoral violence is usually a reaction to electoral abuses, rigging of election and falsification of results. Elections in Nigeria have been marked with violence from the general election of 1959 and 1964 which led to massive violence in Western Nigeria leading to the coinage of Wild wild west to the destruction in Ondo state that followed the announcement of Akin Omoboriowo of the NPN as the winner of the election in Ondo State in 1983 to the pockets of violence that followed the direct capture of the peoples' mandate in 2007.

There is no doubt that the way these three challenges are managed will determine the enthronement of sustainable peace in Nigeria. Peace and security education can contribute immensely to addressing these challenges.

## **PEACE AND SECURITY EDUCATION AS A CRITICAL FACTOR**

Peace and security education is a critical factor in producing sustainable peace. Peace and security education is a multi-disciplinary enterprise involving political science, sociology, philosophy, psychology, law, history, economics, international relations and development studies. It is ironic that the African continent have been faced with different forms of conflict, yet peace and security education and research have languished behind, irrespective of the progress recorded in other parts of the world (Best, No date). Peace and security education should challenge the dominant paradigm where decisions on peace and security are monopolized by the state and its institutions such as the arms industry, security agencies and politicians. It should create a movement of peace activists that will help to create a culture of peace based on the universal values of respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between men and women ([www-culture-of-peace.info](http://www-culture-of-peace.info)).

The peace activists so created must be people with values of peace. The values of peace include among

other things respect for life, sharing with others, rejection of violence, sense of justice, listening ability and solidarity. The peace activists must be sufficiently angry against injustice and be prepared to take action within organizational context. Anger is very important in fighting for peace. As Nelson Mandela noted: *"I had no epiphany, no singular revelation, no moment of truth, but a steady accumulation of a thousand slights, a thousand indignities and a thousand unremembered moments produced in me an anger, a rebelliousness, a desire to fight the system that imprisoned my people. There was no particular day on which I said, Henceforth I will devote myself to the liberation of my people; instead, I simply found myself doing so, and could not do otherwise."* According to Martin Luther King, Jr (1968), the harnessing of anger is the greatest of tasks: *"The supreme task is to organize and unite people so that their anger becomes a transforming force."*

Gandhi (1929) also talks about the harnessing of anger as a powerful force for justice: *"I have learned through bitter experience the one supreme lesson to conserve my anger, and as heat conserved is transmuted into energy, even so, our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power which can move the world."* There is no doubt that many people are angry about the situation of conflict, insecurity and underdevelopment of Africa. But the level of consciousness has not been developed to the level of taking action. Peace and security education should help to build that level of consciousness.

It is important to point out that while anger is necessary for peace activists, security officials need to be trained to ignore their emotions, especially fear and act rationally ([www.culture-of-peace.info](http://www.culture-of-peace.info)).

It must also be recognized that peace and security education although a critical factor must be combined with training on equality of women, human rights, tolerance and solidarity, freedom of information and sustainable development.

## **CONCLUSION**

In concluding, the point must be made that the culture of violence and war is not sustainable. The collapse of the cold war and the recent financial crisis occasioned by the economic violence unleashed by unbridled neo-liberalism amply illustrates this fact. After every conflict and war, people must go to the negotiating table to sort things out. Conflict is an inevitable part of human existence but violent conflict can be avoided. Peace and security education can make a lot of contribution not just to avoiding violent conflict but in producing a culture of peace characterized by respect for the dignity of the human person, respect for life, liberty, justice, solidarity, tolerance, human rights and equality between women and men. It is therefore incontrovertible that peace and

security education is a critical factor for sustainable peace and national development.

Peace and security education can help to create the enabling environment, the people, the organization and the action needed to bring about sustainable peace and development. Everyone interested in sustainable peace and development must therefore consider peace and security education as an integral part of their programme and action. Let me end this paper with the clarion call of an African patriot, Thomas Sankara who was murdered by Blaise Campore: Our Struggle will in no way be a limited struggle characterized by narrow nationalism. Our struggle is that of all peoples arising to peace and freedom. That is why we must never lose sight of the qualities and the just aspiration toward peace- a just peace, dignity, and genuine independence-of the peoples that surround us. Of course, they must carry out their historic duty. They must rid themselves of all the serpents that infest their territory, of all the monsters who rob them of their happiness. We have shouldered our responsibilities, other people must do the same-their youth, their patriotic and democratic forces, their civilian and military personnel, their men and women alike (Thomas Sankara, Head of State of Burkina Faso, 1983 to 1987.

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