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**Institutionalising Peace Education for Social Inclusiveness in  
Nigeria**

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**Abstract**

*The need for peace education has grown exponentially as the incidence of conflicts has become more dramatic and prevalent in all its various dimensions in Nigeria. Impunity, illiteracy, violation of human rights and religious intolerance are some of the challenges facing peace education in Nigeria. Against this background, the complexities of the cultural and contextual requirements for peace education require further review and elaboration for proper elucidation of its attendant skills, channels, and instruments. The effectiveness of the act of studying and practicing peace depends on the recognition and understanding of the specific cultural context of application. The analysis of local approaches, especially African peace practices, is a prerequisite for a successful peace education in Nigeria. This paper traces elements of continuity and change in four key institutions that have survived years of usage from the past to the present, in formal and non-formal terrains, among youth and adults, namely, the family, religion, education, and tradition.*

**Keywords:** Institution, peace education, social inclusiveness, Nigeria

**Introduction**

Peace education has been defined (Ikechuckwu, 2014) as the process of acquiring values and knowledge that aid in developing the attitudes and skills needed by human beings to live in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment. As has been observed (Gamut 2003), peace education is a deliberate attempt to educate children and adults in the dynamics of conflict and the promotion of peace making skills in homes, school and communities throughout the world, using all the channels and instruments of socialization. This helps to prevent conflicts and, in case of any, resolve them in a peaceful manner. Peace education, therefore initiates social conditions for peace (Matsuura, 2008; Reardon, 1997; Albert, 2008). In the same light, the importance of peace education has been emphasised in relevant literature (Albert, 2017; Carter, 2010; Lederach, 1997). However, there is greater need to

pay more attention to the elements of continuity and change in traditional institutions in Africa in general and Nigeria in particular in this regard and how they can be better used as vehicles to convey peace education beyond the classroom.

Peace Education in the African context is aimed to achieve a set of goals among which are emotional intelligence, peaceful and non-violent co-existence, conflict resolution mechanisms, human rights, gender equity and equality, human security, environmental safety, effective communication practices, tolerance of diversity and healthy national and international relationships (Enaigbe and Igbinochene, 2016). Furthermore, it promotes values such as freedom, trust, respect for fundamental human rights, communalism and justice. It is also aimed at transforming the long-held culture of war and armed conflict into an alternative long-term behavioural change toward peace.

Typically, peace education entails education programmes which are multidisciplinary as well as interdisciplinary in nature. They are usually focused on schools, civil society organisations, traditional leaders, religious bodies and the media. However, considering the importance of peace education, especially at this time when there are numerous armed conflicts in the form of terrorism, insurgencies, banditry and kidnapping troubling Nigeria, it would suffice to say that initiatives to address all these should be determined primarily by culture and context. In addition, due to the ineffectiveness of many of the tactics employed by the Nigerian government to tackle armed conflicts, it might be expedient at this time, to provide an insight into the matter by providing some of the workable ways to douse the tension of conflicts that has overwhelmed the nation.

At this stage, it is important to note that peace education has two key concepts. First is education and the second is peace. Education has been defined as the transmission of knowledge and skills, as well as of basic values and norms that are accepted in a certain society (Nakpodia, 2010). Education enhances the good qualities in humans and encourages individuals to be at their best. Education also seeks to develop the innate inner capacities of human beings (Saeed, 2019). The concept of peace, on the other hand, is less clearly defined. Galtung (1996) makes an important distinction between positive and negative peace. While negative peace is defined as the absence of large-scale physical violence and condition of war, positive peace involves the development of a society without direct, structural and social violence. The difference between the concept of peace education and conflict management lies in the retroactive nature of conflict management and the proactive approach of peace education. In other words, conflict management is about resolving a conflict after it has occurred and peace education prevents a conflict in advance and further educates individuals or groups on the essence of tolerance, respect and justice (Dungan and Carey, 1996).

There had been lack of a consensus as to what constitutes peace to individuals and groups in Nigeria. The reason for these discrepancies is not far-

fetches from the diversities inherent in Nigeria's plural societies, marked by the different ethnic and religious groups as well as political parties, among others, that shape Nigeria as a nation. Individuals are more concerned with self-emotional and moral, self-esteem, satisfaction and equilibrium. While these desires about positive self-image are the foundation for sympathy for others and building trust, they tend to clash often or occasionally (depending on the context) with group bias whereby people conform to unity within their own groups while allowing prejudice and stereotypes against others simply because they do not belong to the same group (Allport, 1979).

Noteworthy is the fact that peace education is not alien to the Nigerian populace, but whenever there is a success in changing the belligerent attitude of one combating group towards the other, there is always the gap of applying the recently established social behaviours to the other members of the society. The major challenge of peace education, therefore, is not the interpersonal or intergroup conflict management but the question of achieving connectedness between individuals, ethnic groups, political groups, states and the nation at large. Before now, the means of achieving this social cohesiveness was to focus on schools, training workshops and conferences. In fact, in some cases, two conflicting parties are solely focused on how to facilitate reconciliation. As much as these are pivotal areas of peace education, there is still a pressing need for a large number of nationals who share common beliefs about peace culture and a society that accepts the culture. It is only at this point, that positive peace can be achieved and spread for sustainable development. Peace education can only thrive in a society where there is justice, safety, equity, harmony and unity, hence peace education should strengthen the capacity of individuals and groups for critical thinking as against bigotry and discrimination (Staub, 1999). There is an urgent need, therefore, to develop a more realistic understanding drawn from the experience and reflective accounts of Nigerian social, religious and political contexts. In addition, there is an urgent need for innovative and methodological approaches to the study of peace education in Nigeria.

This paper is focused on four germane and influential institutions that can be saddled with the responsibilities of disseminating peace education in Nigeria. These are age-long institutions in the society, capable of and suitable for achieving peace as an end in the present circumstance. The four institutions of focus are the family, religion, education and social institutions. An intense transformation of these institutions may be a pathway to peace in Nigeria. This is not to say that Nigeria is totally homogeneous when these four institutions come to play but the area of homogeneity can be strengthened and further reinforced through legal harmonization in order to achieve sustainable peace and development. This paper thus elucidates the intrinsic linkage between peace education and these institutions in Nigeria. This article synthesises extant literature on peace education while identifying and bridging gaps in empirical knowledge. It draws on a number of qualitative interdisciplinary researches with the aim to provide succinct analysis on the role of education in peacemaking by the four interconnected institutions. Thus, inferences are

drawn from different socio-cultural, religious and political backgrounds to serve as evidence that although geographical locations may differ, the attendant agony and the negative consequences of conflicts are similar.

### **Literature Review**

Sustainable peace is undoubtedly a guarantee for an equitable social order, and, the need for positive peace is imperative in the elimination of unjust structures, inequitable relationships (Otiye and Albert, 2004) at all levels (interpersonal, group, national, regional and international). More importantly, is the close parallel that researchers have drawn between peace education and citizenship education. It has been argued that while citizenship education empowers individuals through civic training on their legal and social responsibilities, peace education, on the other hand, promotes non-violent approaches to achieving fundamental human rights, justice and equity (Hicks, 2004; cited in Cook, 2008).

Specifically, Page (2004) mentions the growing moral-theological approaches to peace education from a religious angle. He argues that peaceful and aggressive behaviours are inherent in all humans, hence, peace education should encourage the good natural tendencies of human beings while deemphasising the negative impulses that could distort the equilibrium of the society. In similar vein, it has been argued (Bar-Tal and Halperin, 2011) that psychological foundations could exacerbate the gravity and persistence of a conflict. This implies there is a mental dimension to conflicts and that conflicts cannot be resolved through peaceful measures and mechanisms only. Such resolution also entails strategic development of psychological and social skills inherent in culture, beliefs, speech, attitudes, manners and emotions that not only describes the interest of a particular group of people but also reflects the nature and dynamics of conflicts. This is what is described as the need to revisit and also bridge the gap between contemporary peace education research and practice in order to investigate the extent of scholarship on reconciling theory and practice (Gross, 2017). Insights for peace education in Africa include (Gross 2017: 7) “linking peace education with local conceptions of peace, ... developing content that focuses on peaceful practices, and fostering sharing, communication, and role cohesion while also encouraging a critical reflection on their limits”.

The epistemological content of peace curricula is criticised by Omeje (2015) who notes current effort to teach peace education, especially in tertiary institutions, in Africa. However, he brings to the limelight issues bordering on authenticity as persistent challenge to contemporary peace education due to the dominance of western ideologies (Omeje, 2015). This may be creating a wide gap between theory and practice in peace education in Africa, Nigeria inclusive. Education curricula on peace should be informed by domestic experience and not by mere import of ideas and foreign knowledge (Francis, 2009). The challenge of peace education in Nigeria is thus about deconstructing the prevalent culture of violence and, in its place, reconstructing a culture of

harmony. This can only be achieved through studying the religious, academic and cultural terrains peculiar to Nigerians and thereby using them to develop a practicable form of sustainable peace education (Alimba, 2013; Omeje, 2015).

Social inclusion, according to the World Bank (2020), is the process of improving the opportunity of the disadvantaged and marginalised individuals and groups to take part in the society. Discriminations that are based on gender, age, ethnicity, religion, and class among several other forms of identity, have the potentials of robbing individuals of peace, dignity and security. The concept of peace education for social inclusiveness has been described as an innovative approach to education (Uchem, Ngwa and Uche, 2014). This is because it provides equal opportunities for people to regardless of gender, class, race, intellectual and physical ability and disability. Promoting social inclusiveness through peace education, therefore, is a means of attaining long lasting peace and sustainable development in Nigeria. This notion is strengthened by scholars' (Fasekun, 2004; Francis, 2004) description of peace education as an attempt to change individual's perception of the other's collective narrative as seen from the latter's point of view and consequently about one's own social self, as well as come to practically relate less hatefully and more trustingly towards that collective 'other'. Going by the position of Uchem *et al.* (2014) that socio-economic and political exclusion and marginalization are major sources of conflict and instability in Africa, it would suffice to assume that social inclusiveness is a prospective means of achieving sustainable development in Nigeria and peace education is the optimum instrument of attaining stability.

Scholars (Crocker and Aall, 2017) have linked the accomplishment of sustainable peace and development to the involvement of social institutions (among which are academic, religious, traditional and family institutions) which hitherto, are rarely considered in formal peace activities. Nweke (2012) states the significant roles of traditional institutions in conflict management, especially during pre-colonial periods. Similarly, Wig (2016) mentions that even though the institutions of the nation-state are useful in building peace, they often ignore how the older institutions can contribute to peacebuilding processes. He further argues that strong pre-colonial institutions can serve as tools for peaceful bargaining and thus conflict reduction in Africa. Peace is undoubtedly an important factor achieving sustainable development in Nigeria (Sen, 2006; Gumut, 2004). Conscious and strategic efforts, therefore, are required to inculcate the attitude of peace and peaceful coexistence through social institutions and educational media in order to expand the opportunity for progress in the Nigerian nation.

Despite the fact that scholars have carried out appraisals of social inclusion, peace education and sustainable development as concepts, there is a wide gap in theory and practice on how the three components depend on each other to thrive. In addition, as much as there have been several multi-level dialogues, conventions and policies, aimed at institutionalising peace education in Nigeria, resolutions at such meetings are often terminated at implementation

levels. The reason for this may not be far-fetched, from imbuelements stemming from colonisation, foreign socio-religious practices and ideologies and loss of social values, all of which have led to the abandonment of some of the virtues in forms of having the right attitude and living peacefully. This paper thus argues for the need to institutionalise peace education within the context of the existing social institutions that have stood the test of time and should be revived for the sustainability of Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Framework**

This paper adopts Elise Boulding's Peace Education Theory as its framework. This is because the theory exemplifies what is known as 'peace *praxis*'; bridging the gap between theory and practice in peace studies. This is an art of doing peace rather than studying peace. It is the coordination of both mental and physical actions (Stephenson, 2012). Thus, it is acknowledged that peace education occurs at all levels, across cultures, time, boundaries and academic disciplines and it targets class, age, race and gender (Boulding, 2000; Danesh, 2006). According to Jenkins (2013), peace education theory aims at pedagogical methods and strategies for personal and social transformation as critical realms of knowledge and action in peace scholar and activist communities. The importance of this theory to social reconstruction is stated by Harris (2004) who notes that peace education is increasingly been used by peace educators and professionals to give early warnings about impending dangers and acquaint people to the maintenance of peace and equilibrium.

Boulding's (2000) ideas on peace education is used in this paper because of its emphasis on networking, relationship and listening. These are components of social inclusiveness. Peace education theory also eschews dichotomy by integrating human needs into autonomy and interconnectedness. The theory places much emphasis on doing peace through education and activism carried out with simplicity and integrity. This paper reviews the ways in which peace education has become domesticated and institutionalised within the theoretical assumptions and conventional notion of peace education. The ubiquity of the identified institutions that can be channelled toward achieving peace in Nigeria is thus articulated. It does this by drawing from the existing body of literature on peace education and social experiences in Nigeria to underscore the pressing need to begin to systematically introduce and re-introduce age-long principles and practices of peace into the curriculum of schools and operations of the institutions identified above.

### ***Discussion: Institutionalising Peace Education in Nigeria***

Permeating established institutions with peace education in Nigeria, remains a viable strategy for achieving sustainable peace. The institutions of focus in this paper are the family, religious, traditional and educational. Going by the sixteenth tenet of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which focuses on peace, justice and strong institutions, it is sufficient to say that if existing social institutions are strengthened and saddled with the responsibilities of

projecting peace, genuine peace (Odoemene, 2012) will be achievable in Nigeria. It is against this background that this paper considers the identified institutions in Nigeria listed above that have the capacity to influence the psyche of both young and old as well as tune their minds and attitude toward peace as a necessity in the society.

### ***Family Institution***

In present times, there are differences as to what constitutes a family. The differences are determined by national identity, culture and contexts. Due to this fact, there are many definitions without much consensus on what family actually means. Scholars (Murdock, 1949; cited in Steel et al., 2012) have described family as a social arrangement based on marriage including recognition of rights and duties of parenthood, common residence for husband, wife and children. The family is thus characterised by cohabiting couple, common residency, sexual relationship, reproduction (children owned or adopted), generational connection and also, entails a sense of shared economic responsibilities. In other words (Day, 2014: 14),

Family members provide close intimate contact usually characterized by deeply held commitment, trust, respect, and a sense of longer term obligation.

The above are few out of many definitions and categorisations of family in the society. Despite the differences as well as similarities in defining family, a constant factor in all is the fact that it involves people who are in relationships and thus can influence each other. In Nigeria, the family is considered the smallest unit of the society and also, it is believed to have the potential of wielding considerable influence on the entire community (Ajayi, 1992). In addition, seniority is highly respected and hence the seniors have control power over the junior members of the family. Family structure in Nigeria is predominantly patriarchal in nature with more respect attributed to male members of the family, be it the father, son, brother and uncle than their female counterparts (Oyewumi, 1997). Male dominance is still thriving in Nigeria despite arrays of gender campaigns and multi-dimensional feminist crusades. However, the roles of women in the family especially in caregiving, nurturing and training of the entire family, cannot be over-emphasised.

There are also significant bonds between living members of a family and their ancestors. Ancestor-ship is conferred on deceased members of the family who, during their existence on earth, were considered to be upright and responsible (Kopytoff, 2006; Olaoba, 2002) which in turn, earned them a supernatural form of status, whereby they can be part of whatever the living family members are doing. In other words, such individuals are believed to still have dominion on their family members despite the fact that they are not physically present with them. In essence, family as an institution can be both physical and spiritual in manifestations. It is a well-respected institution among

the diverse ethnic groups in Nigeria and has the capacity of wielding considerable influence on its members. This influence, if used appropriately will create a generation of peace-loving populace in the society.

The family is the first contact of a child and it is from that stead that a child learns the basic knowledge about life. A child who grows in an aggressive and less-affectionate environment is likely to be violent compared to a child that was nurtured in a peaceful family environment. Considering the importance of peace as paramount in any given society, therefore, parents should be the main actors with respect to peace. It is the responsibility of the elders in a family to ensure that their younger ones are getting on well together. Dignity must be maintained by seniors to preserve moral authority. Traditionally, storytelling, proverbs, maxims, and songs are part of family activities employed in transmitting essential values to young people, in order to preserve culture and social harmony. This is because the concept of peace education is far from being an innate quality because it is meant to be established through a process, with the sole aim of shaping the behaviour and personality of the young ones. This is in line with some of the postulates of peace education theory which emphasise teaching peace as alternatives to violence (Ahearn, 1994; Harris, 2004). In addition, basic human needs such as decent food, clothes, education, health and the general well-being of people start from the family. There is a strong link between family inadequacies and societal unrest. This is because the ability to live with oneself and immediate companions, results in voluntary willingness to pursue peace with all and at all times (Negiobi and Opara, 2007). The Nigeria family, therefore, must provide refuge alongside firm discipline systems in order for peace to be institutionalised. Keeping this system of education enables the members of each family to supplement the role played by teachers, trainers, the media and policy makers in peace education.

### ***Religious Institutions***

In Nigeria, there are many religious practices among which are Christianity, Islam and a broad group that can be classified (for ease of understanding) as African Traditional Religion. On the latter, scholars have drawn linkages between ritual representations and the revitalisation of power while the teleology of rituals has been described as symbolic renewal and affirmation of kingship, mediated through medium of authority (Apter, 1991). Undoubtedly, religious crisis is a regular phenomenon in Nigeria. Violent conflicts stemming from religious contradictions have claimed thousands of lives in recent times. In addition, the use of religious books to justify incessant killings, hate-speech, unhealthy rivalry and instigation is a common occurrence in Nigeria (Pearson, 2018). As unpleasant as this might be, the legal basis for tackling religious bigotry in Nigeria is still weak, hence perpetrators tend to live at large after committing atrocities. The true meaning of religious killings and maiming has largely been muted for political reasons.

It is to be noted that scholars have focused more on how religion has contributed to conflicts in the world with less attention paid to how religion can



foster peace especially through inter-religious harmony (Barter and Zatzkin-Osburn, 2016; Basedau, Pfeiffer and Vüllers, 2016). Davis (2011) analyses the value of religious epistemologies in civic education and peace by highlighting two issues: a religious-centred approach to education, which often contradicts secular values, and a secular approach to education, which ignores the role of religion and culture. Gross (2017) emphasises the interdependence of the two approaches in such a way that one cannot yield positive result without the other. Given the fact that religious beliefs and ideologies have contributed immensely to violent conflicts in Nigeria, religious leaders and institutions are saddled with the responsibilities of promoting peace through positive orientation and indoctrination. This translates to relearning and unlearning some of the polarising, anti-harmonious beliefs and rigid extremisms that have disunited the people for decades. In fact, relevant peace education theory postulates that there should be credibility, trust-building, morality and respected set of values that are people-centred rather than divisive theologies and messages that further aggravate divisions and conflicts (Salomon, 2002). In essence, if religious institutions can focus on empathy and compassion in their content, beliefs, practices, organizations and experiences, peace will be central and common to all religions and peace and sustainable development can then be enhanced.

### ***Educational Institutions***

Given the Sustainable Development Goal Four which states that ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education is necessary for promoting lifelong learning, it is important to consider education in all its forms in Nigeria as a platform for institutionalising peace in the society. This translates into not only incorporating peace into the curriculum, but also, making it compulsory at every level, be it primary, secondary or tertiary.

The first academic peace studies programme was established at Manchester College in Indiana, United States, in 1948 (Johnson and Johnson, 2005). Currently, there are public and private Nigerian institutions that offer Peace Education and related courses, especially at postgraduate levels. These include the University of Ibadan, University of Jos and University of Ilorin. In addition, peace as general studies subject has been introduced in some primary, secondary and tertiary educational institutions across Nigeria where it is either described as peace education or immersed in social studies, general knowledge, civic education and government both at the elementary and secondary school levels. Programmes differ in terms of philosophy, objectives, curricula, methods, contents, and practices. Despite all these, the culture of aggression and violence is still prevalent among the youths that generally constitute the population of students. The reason may not be far-fetched, given the scanty nature of sustainable, people-oriented forms of peace education in Nigeria's education system.

Considering the fact that the country has been facing violent conflicts for long, and the fact that the society is already sensitive to issues bordering on

insecurity in terms of armed conflicts, banditry and kidnappings, it will be sufficient to say that peace education should go beyond a matter of choice in the Nigerian education system and be compulsory as well as considered worthy of not only of attracting post-graduate but also, undergraduate degree certificates. In addition to this, institutionalising peace in Nigeria's education system requires fundamental shift from content-based to competency-based forms of teaching and from more summative assessments to less formative assessments. By so doing, there will be considerable interaction and bridging of gaps between theory and practice in peace scholarship.

One of the required key interventions in peace education is for the government agencies concerned to develop peace-oriented education policies and plans. Exponents of peace education posit that teaching about peace entails developing non-violent skills and promoting peaceful attitudes (Boulding, 2000; Cortes, 2000). This entails conducting peace analysis on education systems to identify the main actors of conflicts in Nigeria based on age, class, ethnicity, race and gender. Moreover, there is also a need to understudy similar cases and dynamics in other African nations where progress has been recorded such as Liberia and Rwanda. This is a step that will inevitably lead to sustainable development of concrete, people-oriented and realistic interventions that can influence the capacity for peace through education.

### ***Traditional Institutions***

In Nigeria, the roles of traditional stakeholders in inculcating and institutionalising peace for communal stability cannot be over-emphasised. This is because they are the custodians of power when it comes to addressing some of the deeply rooted structural causes of conflicts. Despite colonisation and consequent westernisation of Nigeria, which successfully eroded some of the powers wielded by the traditional leaders, such leaders are still considered the closest arm of governance to their community. This is because many Nigerians still believe in their indigenous culture as a form of identity. Nigerians place great value on their cultural beliefs and practices, and this is evident in virtually everything they do from eating, talking to manners of dressing.

Through oral traditions, some occupants of traditional stools and chieftaincy status such as the kings, chiefs, and leaders of communities can provide insights into conflicts arising from historical inequity, discrimination, marginalization and corruption. Perhaps, the escalation witnessed in violent conflict in Nigeria since the 1990s has been partly, due to the non-inclusive approach whereby, advantaged attentions are given to formal mechanisms of managing conflicts over the traditional methods. During pre-colonial times, the various traditional societies that comprise what is known as present day Nigeria, were all headed by respected men and women who co-ordinated the affairs of the people. This is not to say that there were no conflicts at this period but to reflect the fact that these respectable women and men had the mechanisms to manage the conflicts at that time.

Nevertheless, evidence persists of marginalisation, politicisation, discrimination and nepotism in the many forms of unrest that have plagued Nigeria. Some of these vices have been traced back to the history of the affected populace. As noted earlier, some traditional stakeholders have the wherewithal of managing information that could either trigger or dowse tension through the use of their oratory, charismatic and authoritative powers. This goes a long way in determining the level of peace in the society. Community leaders are conversant with their people and their ways of life. Moreover, they understand the power of traditional signs and symbols as far as issues of conflict and peace are concerned. They can control heads of quarters and compounds as well as have control over outlying areas. As a matter of necessity, therefore, peace education in, by, for and with traditional institutions/spheres should not be treated in isolation but as a tenet of other established institutions that can serve as peace platforms in Nigeria. In essence, peace education can be entrenched in the numerous traditional practices and cultures in Nigeria in order to achieve sustainable development.

At this point, it must be emphasised that the role of traditional institutions as agents of peace or conflict has to be problematized and properly contextualised. In this regard, one key lesson has emerged from some of the most notable and intractable community conflicts in Nigeria in the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the Ife-Modakeke conflict in the west, the Aguleri-Umuleri conflict in the east, and the Zango-Kataf conflict in the north (on these, cf. Akanle, 2009; Elugbajy, 2018; Obiakor, 2016; Onwuzuruigbo, 2011; Suberu, 1996; Olayoku, 2017; and Uroko, 2018, among others). The lesson is that traditional authorities and elite, alongside the modern elite in Nigerian communities, are not only central to bringing conflict to an end and nurturing post-conflict pace, but also to the issues and processes that bring about conflict within, between and among these local communities in the first instance. It is, therefore, imperative that the contexts for peace and conflict be properly worked out from case to case in order to engage traditional institutions appropriately to bring conflict to an end and initiate steps toward peace-building. Lessons in this regard have to be noted and incorporated into formal and informal contents, actions, structures and processes for peace education.

### ***The Challenges of Peace Education in Nigeria***

There are challenges that confront peace education in Nigeria. The first is the lack of, and/or insufficient knowledge of peace education and its objectives by the populace and policy makers (Enaigbe and Igbino ghene, 2016). In other words, the success of peace education depends largely on the skills and levels of knowledge about peace and conflict resolution by government and the general public (Alabeke, 2010). Another major challenge, especially for educational institutions in Nigeria, is incomprehensive peace curriculum and insufficient funding (Asamonye, Osuagwu and Kalu, 2014). The two are interwoven to the extent that achieving peace education objectives, provision of new curricula and training instructors all depend on adequate funding of

educational institutions. Moreover, the use of indigenous languages to teach in schools is no longer the practice, whereas the use of local languages in schools used to be a compulsory avenue through which instructors passed down concrete knowledge to their students (Amponsah, 2010).

Furthermore, a lot of the Nigerian cultural heritage which in the past, were passed down as batons by progenitors to descendants are fast becoming extinctive. The reason for this extinction is not far-fetched in the fact that the supposedly custodians of tradition are abandoning their roles and responsibilities for selfish economic purposes. Of importance to this narrative is the fact that the peace tradition housed within some of the Nigerian cultural heritage used to be the basis for a sense of being and belonging in the society. It used to be the essence of tranquillity and harmonious living because it was a weapon used to fight any form of oppression. However, the contemporary Nigerian society is facing a yoke of oppression devoid of any hope of overcoming it with cultural heritage through social institutions. Modernisation and westernisation are in many ways, pushing tradition and the value therefrom (Wahab, Odunsi and Ajiboye, 2012). Traditional and religious stakeholders have transformed from being active participants in pre-colonial peace processes to being passive observers in recent times.

In addition, the concept of communalism has giving way to individualism (Arowolo, 2010). This has undermined the whole meaning of peace in the contemporary Nigeria society. Individuals now vie for themselves instead of the whole family and the communities. The traditional communal ways of living have become elusive. The grassroots and community representatives have been largely omitted in the contemporary peace discourse and activities. Some of the popular peace techniques are based on western knowledge, which requires proper scrutiny and domestication before it can yield positive outcomes in Nigeria. In other words, the prevailing concepts of peace lacks the required psychology, political, social and spiritual components essential for the conciliation of human relationships (Agbaje, 2017) by neglecting elements of peace education, which is largely preventive in nature and is essential for lasting peace.

Furthermore, there has been a breakdown of African family values which hitherto possessed the potentials for social values and security through which peace education was imbibed (Kasongo, 2010). This development has led to neglect of parents' primary roles as caregivers, educators and role models. Consequently, parents are laying poor foundations for their children and, as a result, negatively affecting the peace and development of the society at large. As a matter of fact, these changes have led to a decline in the teaching of social ethics in Nigeria. The culture of using virtually everything in life (food, songs, proverbs, maxims, praise songs and tattoo) to impact the young minds is fast becoming less significant.

Present-day Nigeria is facing a disenfranchising social and political violence due to structural changes that have resulted in the erosion of values propagated by social systems such as the family, cultural and religious

institutions. The introduction of conventional peace models reduced the power of kings, regents, chiefs, priestesses and other traditional stakeholders (Westbury, 2014). The processes of traditional peacemaking, peacebuilding, cross-examination and reconciliation have been abandoned for western ones. The traditional concept of peace education used to be a recourse to fairness as opposed to the contemporary frequent recourse to violence. In essence, the overt adoption of foreign peace practices over indigenous traditional peace practices is a hindrance to successful peace education in Nigeria (Olaoba, 2002; Oguntomisin, 2004).

### **Conclusion and Recommendations**

The focus of Peace Education is to enlighten individuals about peace irrespective of age, sex, background or philosophy. This requires adequate utilisation of age-long institutions that have stood the test of time and, despite all changes and continuities, remain relevant among the Nigerian populace. Adopting the four institutions highlighted in this paper as starting points for peace education in Nigeria will enhance the full immersion of citizens in a systematic and sustained process and practice of peace. This, in turn, will result in a more peaceful society devoid of incessant hostility and violence in forms of destruction of lives and properties. The existing reverence still given to religion, social values, traditional authorities and family hierarchies could be useful tools of transmitting peaceful virtues from one generation to the other. This is both a short-term and long-term mechanism that possesses significant potentials of transforming the people's mental, physical and spiritual state of mind to a peace-oriented one. While recognising the importance of resuscitating the values essential for peace education in Nigeria as crucial, it is, however, no easy task to determine the starting point and the way forward due to the deterioration of the traditional values. Thus, there is an urgent need to rehabilitate and restore the positive cultural values and prestigious traditional peace education so that they contribute today, as they did in the past, to a balanced and cohesive society. Even though the idea of total restoration of traditional kinship and community might be impossible, blending the two (traditional and western) in order to better promote peace and tranquillity among the Nigerian peoples and communities.

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