



## Analytical studies of peaceful coexistence among students of colleges of education and their educational progress in north-western, Nigeria

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### Abstract

Nigerian tertiary educational institutions such as Colleges of Education are established with the aim of giving any student who enrolls a very sound and qualitative education, to be able to function effectively in any environment in which he/she may find him/herself; so as to become more productive, self-fulfilling and attain self-actualization. Peaceful co-existence among students is an essential aspect of academic success and social harmony. The paper attempts to discuss the factors responsible for students' crises in Colleges of Education and student's crisis management strategy that will help to achieve peace in tertiary institutions and, thus, contribute to the achievement of the goals of tertiary education as specified in the National Policy on Education. Finally, the paper suggested among others a proactive and democratic styles of crises management should be adopted by the individuals and groups involved in tertiary institution system.

**Keywords:** Peaceful co-existence, self actualization, national policy, social harmony

### Introduction

Tertiary institutions more particular Colleges of Education are among the places, levels, areas and most importantly a for a that build respectable and responsible people with visions to bring about progress more particularly in education sector that lead to peaceful coexistence not only among students of higher learning but even in the whole north-west zone of Nigeria.

Positive relationships are at the core of a strong community. There are many ways and factors that contribute greatly among students that lead to awareness and solidify people of all categories toward peaceful coexistence. So, the essence of the differences among mankind is to build mutual understanding, respect and co-operation, not intending to create misunderstanding or disregard other people. Most divine spiritual leaders have explicitly demonstrated by actions and wordings how people should stay in multifaceted community that promotes peace, guarantees freedom of worship/leaning and provides security to possessions, sanctity and safety of life to all people regardless of their status and belief. Encouraging students to connect with one another is an important step in building community. Icebreaker activities and team-building exercises can help students break down barriers and form meaningful connections. Providing opportunities for mentorship and peer support is also valuable in fostering positive relationships.

In Nigeria, however, section eight of the National Policy on Education (FRN 2004) refers to tertiary education as the education given after secondary education in Universities, Colleges of Education, Polytechnic and others. In such institutions particularly Colleges of Education, effective management will go a long way in ensuring that peace is maintained which will invariably foster progress in the country since graduates from such institutions are actively involved in the society affairs.

The North-West, Nigeria on which this analytical study of peaceful coexistence among students of Colleges of Education was conducted comprises of seven states namely:

Sokoto, Kebbi, Zamfara, Katsina, Kaduna, Kano and Jigawa States as stated by James (1984)<sup>[3]</sup>

The zone occupies a land mass of about 214,395 km<sup>2</sup> lies between longitude 12° 10' North and latitude 6° 15' East. Based on the 2006 National Census, North-West Nigeria is the most populated geopolitical zone.

This paper attempts to highlight on peace and seeks students to be able to live and co-exist together in respect of the role of education in promoting progress in Colleges of Education of the north-west, Nigeria.

### 1. Concept of Peace

Peace has been variously described as freedom from or cessation of war or hostilities, freedom from civil commotion and disorders, public order and security, freedom from disturbance and perturbation, that is to say a condition of being quit, tranquility, undisturbed state, freedom from quarrels, a state of friendliness, concord, amity, freedom from mental or spiritual disturbance or conflict arising from passion, sense of guilt, absence of noise, movement or activity, stillness, just to mention but few (Oxford English Dictionary 1961). Ikenga-Metuh (1992)<sup>[2]</sup> defined peace as:

The beneficent adjustment or harmony between the individual and his creator on the one hand and his fellow men on the other.

This shows that there cannot be peace among individuals when one of the parties is held in perpetual bondage or subjected to extreme exploitation and deprivation. On the other hand, he asserted that under development breeds deprivation, poverty, hunger and disease which in turn leads to lack of peace.

The implication of this to students for peace to be attained, there must be justice, human right respect of students, affordable education and other social amenities in their campuses.

Students who experience peaceful coexistence in college are more likely to take these values into their professional and personal lives. As future educators, they play a key role in shaping society by Promoting peace and unity in the communities they serve.

## 2. Culture

Culture is one of the attributes that distinguish human beings from animals. It is the complex whole, which includes knowledge, belief, morals, customs and other capabilities acquired by man as a member of a society. Culture varies and changes from one society to the other. Culture is derived from various orientations: cognitive orientation, that is how people see and understand their environment, Affective orientation is how people's feelings about their environment, be it positive or negative. This can also be relevance in our campuses of tertiary institution, thus Colleges of Education. Toluhi (2002:192) <sup>[6]</sup> has this to say, culture embraces all the materials and non-materials expression of a person as well as the processes with which the expressions are communicated. It has to do with all the knowledge, beliefs, customs, values, ideas and skills available in a society and by which the society can be compared to or differentiated from others.

Colleges of education can train students to appreciate and respect cultural, religious, and ethnic diversity. Students can learn how to create inclusive classrooms where everyone feels valued, regardless of their background. Students can organize or participate in interfaith and intercultural dialogues to foster understanding between different religious or ethnic groups. These dialogues can break down stereotypes and build empathy and trust.

## 3. Causes of Non-Peaceful Coexistence in Colleges of Education in North-West, Nigeria

In the recent past, Colleges of Education in North-West, Nigeria experienced several unrest situations that have threatened the fabric that holds them together. There have been reported cases of arson attacks and other forms of violence that resulted into tough measures meted out on the students who are found to be involved in such acts, not much has been achieved.

The perpetrators of violence are selfish in their pursuit of gratification, leadership and acquisition of resources within their socio-economic and political environments, hence of peaceful coexistence in Colleges of Education.

### 3.1 Rumour Mongering

Rumour mongering is one of the factors responsible for most of the conflicts especially in our campuses of tertiary institution, Colleges of Education in particular. Many blatant lies are fabricated to incite one group against the other. The most unfortunate issue is that the students at this higher-level education do not have time to find out the reality and sources of the information heard, they swamp into negative actions on which would lead to regret and set back on their academic pursuit and their socio-political and economic programmes.

### 3.2 Disobeying Laws and Order

Peaceful coexistence can never be realistic in any organization including Colleges of Education when laws and order are kept aside while whims and selfish interest are executed. This can be so if both the College authority and the students exercise what each consider suitable and practicable on its part to act in the campus.

### 3.3 Cultism

This refers to "a small group of people who have extreme religious belief and who are not part of any established

religion. In every campus of Colleges of Education in the North-West, Nigeria, there's existence of this cult group among students whose actions are always far apart with peaceful coexistence due to its negative nature of human sacrifice and other unacceptable activities as far as academic and social wellbeing is concerned. They are always attackers and exterminators of any person or group of people that are not in support of or against their ritual activities. Cultism is causing sorrow and embarrassment to concerned Nigerians. Previous lives have been lost to cultism. Sophisticated and crude weapons are used openly by students. They can attack any time and any time and any where while other people take to their heels to avoid cross-fire

## 4. Non-Cordial Relations with other Students Group

One of the causes of frequent conflicts between the various tribal, religious, rich and poor students' group is lack of interaction between them. Most at time at lecture theatre, game, cafeteria, hostel and other places of gatherings or discussions, each group will only incline self to its very relevant group, that also ignate violence and instability as happened in Shehu Shagari College of Education, Sokoto and Kaduna State College of Education, Gidan Waya in some years back.

## 5. Partiality and Favoritism by College Management

In most cases it is the fault of the Colleges of Education Management that ignite and fuel the breakage of peaceful coexistence among students in their places. On many occasions especially during various categories of student's unions election, leaders on authority use to play vital roles in order to favour their candidates' success just because of religious, tribal or sectional inclination and whether qualified or not. Also, in some cases it is a directive from ministry of education, government house or any higher ruling body of the state that play such role in favour of their interest no matter the consequences.

## 6. Indiscipline in the Society/Moral Decadence

lack of discipline in the society and particularly among the youths had to a large extent contributed to the breakdown of law and order and this fuelled many crises in which among them is the post-election crisis. Many parents no longer exercise control over their children, they leave them to fend for themselves.

## 7. Cordial Relationships with other Religious Groups

one of the causes of frequent conflicts between the various religions is lack of cordial relationship between them. There is no forum for the various religious groups to discuss matters affecting them individually and collectively. They do not organize seminar, workshop, symposia and public lectures

## Strategies for Promoting and Managing Peace Culture in Colleges of Education

As government attaches much importance to knowledge and abhor ignorance. It encourages people to seek for knowledge in order to free themselves from ignorance. Even at tertiary level, government should make provision for the teaching of each religion to all students irrespective of course study so as to promote mutual understanding, respect and tolerance among the students in our campuses.

However, the problems of students in Colleges of Education are from different background in which its ineffective management results into a state of conflict. A total absence of conflict would be unbelievable, student unrest is a factor that is bedeviling effective teaching and learning which often results into closure of campus for a given period of time. There are cases of confrontations between students and college staff/management in which security personnel often come to aid so that peace and tranquility can return to campus. This paper therefore, examined the management of tertiary education for peaceful coexistence, unity and progress in some Colleges of Education in North-West, Nigeria.

Considering the dangers posed by Violence to students, management has a great role to play in promoting and stabilizing peace in Colleges of Education. Students can be trained in nonviolent communication, negotiation, and conflict resolution techniques. They can apply these skills in schools and communities, helping to mediate disputes and prevent violent outbreaks.

### **1. The Role of Management could be Played from Different Perspective**

Peace is one of the major factors that increase the rate of sustainability of any institution of higher learning. Lack of peace culture in Colleges would trigger acrimony, tension, mistrust, mutual suspicion, instability of the system and dissatisfaction of staff. All these would hinder academic productivity within the system. Existence of a peaceful institutional climate indicated by love for one another when all departmental members are closely united together as one family, caring for each other, openness, trust, compassion, justice and fairness, would facilitate cross fertilization of ideas and enhance knowledge creation and academic productivity, efficiency and effective management of the institution for the attainment of academic excellence in colleges.

The school authorities facilitate avoidance of Colleges violence by way of embracing non-violent ways of solving controversial issues and maintaining mutual respect for one another. It presupposes an obligation to refrain from any form of violence but instead ensures there exists, harmony and cooperation among learners from diverse environment, socio-cultural and political backgrounds. Each one of them may hold different opinions and perceptions toward certain issues like distribution of resources, political orientation and leadership inclinations with the disadvantaged blaming their status to that of their tormentors or the advantaged while the latter ensures the sustenance of the status quo. The inability to reconcile these various views may give rise to school violence such as physical confrontations, religious, ethnic and gender discrimination and verbal abuse. Harber (2009) opined that:

The violence tendencies can be controlled when the authority in the person of teachers, school administration, and the government take charge through the school curriculum and leadership and governance guidance

The school authorities should check the continuous and indiscriminate the proliferation of religious domination on campus. Only duly registered and recognize religious group should be allowed to operate on campuses. Only student with transparent honesty, proven integrity and sound leadership qualities should be saddled with the responsibilities on leading these groups. Student should

avoid criticizing each other's religion unnecessarily. They should leave others to worship in their own ways. There is nothing wrong in having some healthy inter-religious discussion or debates but such should be mostly for the purpose of enhancing understanding, mockery and condemnation of each other's tenet of worship should be avoided

Teachers and lecturers as surrogate parent promote peaceful coexistence among student by resolving conflict justly in the class. Mutual respect, tolerance and observance of child's right help to creat love, happiness and conducive atmosphere for teaching and learning. Student or children learn peace culture through discipline, avoiding aggressive tendencies and developing team spirit through academic activities in schools (Rivera 2004)

In this paper there is the need to suggest alternative measure and the measure suggested is that of democratic style of crisis management. And this entails the use of dialogue with students by tertiary institutions authorities, involvement of student in decision making, bridging of communication gap between students and institutions authorities as well as setting up of welfare committee to seek out student problems or challenges. It is believing that this measure if properly used will help to avert student crises in the Nigerian tertiary educational institutions.

### **2. How Students can Ensure that Peace is Promoted in Colleges of Education**

Student can ensure peace is promoted and strengthened in order to maintain a non-violent atmosphere in Colleges of Education. They include the following:

Students have to be capable of overcoming enemy images with understanding, tolerance and solidarity among people and cultures, and learn from their differences through dialogue. Commitment to non-violence should be their goals along with sympathy for the weak. To an extent, this represents the basic propensity of a culture of peace.

Participatory communication and free flow of information: this reflects in ensuring freedom of information and communication, the sharing of knowledge and unfettered access to information among all classes of student. Students have to acquire pro-social communications competence which is being aware of other's need, knowing what kind of help to offer, being aware of a limited or lacking resource, willingness to share or donate that resource and an understanding of such action (Oyebanyi 2001) <sup>[4]</sup>

Emphasis on increasing efforts in negotiating peaceful settlements among all classes of students. This includes peer mediation as an aspect of peace culture indication. This involve selecting and a number of students on conflict resolution strategies vests them with the responsibility of resolving conflict peacefully among student and promoting peaceful coexistence among their peers.

### **Significance of Peaceful Coexistence in Colleges of Education**

**1. Academic Success:** A peaceful and harmonious environment promotes better focus on studies. Students are able to engage more effectively in academic activities without the distractions or stress that may arise from conflicts or tensions.

2. **Personal Development:** Living and working in a peaceful environment allows students to develop essential interpersonal skills such as communication, empathy, and conflict resolution. These skills are critical for future educators who will need to manage diverse classrooms.
3. **Societal Impact:** Colleges of education are training grounds for future teachers. Promoting peaceful coexistence ensures that these future educators will carry the principles of peace, tolerance, and cooperation into their professional practice, impacting the broader society.
4. **Reduction of Violence and Social Unrest:** Peaceful coexistence minimizes the chances of student unrest, violence, and other negative behaviors that can disrupt the educational process and hinder institutional progress.

### Conclusion

This paper reviewed students' crisis generally and identified the factors responsible for its occurrence and the management style adopted by the individuals and groups involved in the administration of tertiary institutions system. Factors such as Rumour mongering, Disobeying laws and order, social cult activities, poor communication between institutions authorities and students etc, more identified as the services of the student's crises. However, management and students have a great role to play in addressing, promoting and stabilizing peace in Colleges of Education

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