

MAKING EDUCATION A FORCE FOR SUSTAINABLE PEACE, GOOD GOVERNANCE AND DEVELOPMENT IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT: The society in recent time is plagued with a lot of social issues and vices that has affected various strata's of human endeavour including the political, community, church, civil and civic activities. More especially the breakdown of peace and social welfare needs of the citizenry, as a result of agitations on good governance, followership, community engagement as a reflection on social contract bestowed on the leadership at all levels. Therefore, the reason for this paper discourse is to see how 'Education' can be used and made a force for fighting challenges of ignorance, illiteracy, poverty, hunger and environmental degradation before man. This paper focuses on the premise that national growth and development are driven by education, with values serving as key indicators. It argues that such development is achieved through liberation fostered by attitudinal change, as well as the acquisition of relevant knowledge and skills.

Keywords: Education, Peace, Sustainable Peace, Good Governance and Development.

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INTRODUCTION

In every human society there are communities, settlements, clans, etc. these strata's have leaders who oversee the affairs of others in terms of cultural, values, norms, social, economic and political wellbeing, especially in Nigeria, where we have diverse background in affiliations and behaviours. This also means that the improvement on the living conditions and standards of the people which is organized and shaped are influenced by the conduct of those who control the affairs of such community. It is also a yardstick for the followers to pass valid judgement on the actions and interactions of the leaders, either good or bad based on their rules and regulations, policies and decisions laid down for governance.

Dode and Ijeomah (2025) added that good governance is of primary concern of people. However, good governance does not just happen, as people's greedy nature makes them act selfishly when not checked. That is the reason why man's greedy nature must be kept checked, especially when they realized that there is no mechanism to check them when they deviate from the norms.

Leadership is a process by which a person influences others to accomplish an objective or goals and directs the organization in a way that makes it more cohesive and coherent to achieve the course of action (Sharma & Jain, 2013 in Ibe & Tiger, 2024).

This definition means that leadership plays a major role in establishing good governance on the level of economic development of any society, which is paramount to sustainable livelihood. There are types of leadership. But for this discourse interest is on Transformational and Innovative Leadership. Leaders are people who promote a culture of creativity, experimentation and continuous improvement within their community. Such leaders encourage their followers to generate new ideas, take risk and develop innovative solutions to complex problems, by embracing 'change' as an opportunity for the growth and improvement of the followers. Summarily, Burn (1978) in Ibe and Tiger (2024) agreed that these types of leadership focuses on inspiring communicating such vision in a compelling way.

Nweke (2025) referred to leadership as individuals and groups who hold positions of power and authority within the governmental and political framework of Nigeria. This definition details or dwells more on political leadership characterized by the activities of elected officials, their responsibilities and leadership styles as the president, governors, legislators and local government leaders even political party men. These group responsibilities include policy-making, governance, representation and ensuring that the welfare of the populace, who are followers benefit from the entire process with the practice of leadership styles that can be devoid of autocratic but democratic, transformational and transactional leadership within the context of their duties.

Outside the political sphere, leadership that leads to good governance can also start from the family, church and community households (Town Council, CDC and Community Based Organizations) etc. But either on the political sphere or community cycle followership is a pointer to the sustainable peace, good governance and development. Followership encompasses the behaviours, attitudes and actions of the citizens and constituents who support, elect and are governed by political leaders, chiefs, elders, etc. They are characterized by civic, civil, community engagement, responsiveness and expectations. Ordinarily, civic engagement has to do with participation in elections, public discourse and community activities. But community engagement involves people's voluntary participation in activities that concerns them, which will show their responsiveness, that is reactions towards government, NGO's, leaders' policies and leadership styles involved.

These are also based on their expectations. Aspirations and demands from leadership anticipated. This is because, it encompasses the interaction between leadership and followership within the framework of social contract ie expectations to govern in line with community guideline or constitutional provisions, especially in upholding their citizens' rights security and welfare needs. The reason being that often times, leaders fails to protect property rights forgetting that these indications are the pillars or cornerstone of all forms of development arising from individual freedom, which are undermined in certain quarters of group marginalization and results to eroding of public trust in governance. This situation easily leads to conflict and anarchy, cycled with disrespect, gangstarism, wickedness, poverty, corruption etc.

In other hand, the failure of the followership must also be recognized because most at times they fails to hold their leaders accountable especially when misinformation due economic hardship and illiteracy comes to play significant roles in their life, they fought their values. Schwart (1992) in Akikibofori (2025) mentioned that in any society, value represent the foundational principle that guide human behavior, social interaction, institutional processes and

state craft. Meaning that they are socially constructed and transmitted across generations, shaping how individuals and collectives define what is good, just, desirable and appropriate. In leadership and governance, values take on a strategic dimension, referred to as governance values which guide how power is excised, public resources and services are distributed and delivered. But with the presence of weak institutions in both sides of the leaders and followership there are presence of a debased social system and environment riddled with impunity and decay.

Agbaje and Robberts in Akikibofori (2025) agreed that a collapse of governance values such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, justice, responsiveness and service delivery leads to poor governance that erode peaceful atmosphere of the people. He maintained that good governance encompasses participation of the community people, equity, effectiveness and accountability. This also means that good governance must come from a ‘transformational leadership’ or ‘effective leaders’ who are embodiment of moral values that inspire ethical followership. What we need now for the development of our communities is the ‘transformational leaders’ with the following qualities of skills:

- Trusting your team
- Set goals to be shared in terms of success and failure
- Make thoughtful decisions hence keeping your team informed and involved
- Try to welcome the ideas of others, especially in taking decisions
- Speak with the team with clarity by being honest, use of simple words
- Honest feedback to the team that will lead to growth of the team
- Try to lead with purpose as to connect daily work activities to a bigger vision meaningful to the team
- Manage and maintain good emotions as to face challenges of the time
- Show genuine care with empathy and respect
- Allow others to grow, coach and celebrate hard work and good results
- Be innovative and disruptive thinker as to know when the team needs a change that will lead to new experience
- Be pragmatic, show practical ideas and moderations.

It is also concerned with follower’s emotions, values, ethics, standards and long term goals that satisfies the people’s needs and treating them as rational human beings. The question is “As a leader can you lead by example, take risk, empower, open communication, allocate resources appropriately, reward and recognize hard work, be accountable, consistent and responsive, provide and obey rule of law, be transparent, allow for citizen participations in decision making without creating conflict and anarchy state? However, if you have these qualities, you are a ‘good leader’. “Use your tongue and count your teeth”.

Education involves all the learning processes acquired through formal and informal settings. It is a sure way of transmitting the dynamics of culture, tradition and modern socialization practices. It is a vital tool for effective national development that brings about improved living conditions of the citizenry in our communities, and society at large (Ajoku & Oji, 2020). Education has no boundary it is for all ages, personalities, linkages and all-embracing in nature. The concept varies according to perception of scholars. It also shows that education is the greatest investment a community, clan, tribe or family can be involved for quick development of its economic, social, political, cultural and human resources. In developing a society or community of people at all levels, educational investment is not a waste because it is a

weapon to get rid of illiteracy, poverty, hunger, diseases, ignorance, etc. plaguing the universe. It is also a process of change especially for those that lost out of the formal education setting (here the principles of andragogy comes in through Adult education learning).

Generally, education helps in training of the mind to gain knowledge, acquire skills, attitudes and values for the development of man and the nation. The types are:

- Formal: This has definite programmes certificated with planned curriculum, duration, rules and regulations governing the set up.
- Non-formal: Apprenticeship in nature i.e. skill oriented, that focuses on the needs of the individuals.
- Informal: This is purely accidental, imitation, intuitive in nature and embraces more of traditional or indigenous learning patterns.

It is in this regard that Albert (2012) saw education as a process that has to do with dissemination of knowledge; which means that education is a force for sustainable peace and development in our communities and society. Most civilized and industrialized nations of the world have used it as a veritable tool for the development of the society, by giving admirable attention and interest in such investment for their populace, with the intention that such societies will at the end, produce educated men and women that will pass this knowledge of truth from one generation to another, thereby enhancing the total cooperate governance, sustainable peace and leadership of a given society.

Peace and Peace Building

The concept or origin of peace is traced back to Anglo-French term ‘pes’ and ‘pais’, meaning peace, reconciliation, silence, agreement. Gilbert (2018) in Oji (2021) defined 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 societies. This definition shows that peace cannot be found as “an absolute, once-for-all condition” in any society, because it exists in all societies in different gradations. It also means that there will be no peace in the presence of lawlessness, tyranny, oppression, poverty and injustice, rather in the presence of fair play, justice and equity. Rotarians take note that peace is distinguished into positive and negative forms. This is the reason why, Nwobueze (2018) added that the culture of peace is highly crucial in every society that intends to develop because the actualization of sustainable development is hinged on stability of peace if only we begin part of it by learning the ‘process’. Also, it is proper that the country heads, leaders, elites, youths, etc. learn how to map out identified areas that require early response through corrective or possible preventive interventions that will assist in restoring sustainable peace in such affected areas.

Sustainable Peace and Development

Sustainable peace and development works in synergy with the process of peace building indicators to eliminate extreme poverty and hunger, environmental exploitation of human and non-natural resources, inequality, bad governance etc. So, regaining or salvaging the situation takes the process of peace building, to put in place and reduce the physical and psychological plight of the persons who may survive the war of gangsterism by providing them with material

welfare services that will guarantee them good shelter, food, water, medications, free from fear of bad conditions and socio-economic tensions. Therefore, sustainable peace is about meeting the present needs of man without compromising future generations by integrating environmental, social aspects into economic development, of a country or nation through cooperation, partnership, continuous dialogue, engagement, active participation of groups and critical stakeholders in the business of sustainable livelihood and harmony in Nigeria.

CONCLUSION

It is obvious that there is a positive relationship among the variables of education, peace and peace building, sustainable peace, good governance and sustainable community development. Undoubtedly, peace drives good leadership development through attitudinal change born out of the stratas of education believing that an educated society is saved from illiteracy, ignorance, diseases and environmental degradation. Therefore, it is the concern of this paper that if education is made a ‘force’ to drive all aspects of human endeavours, we shall build a peaceful environment that will be sustainable.

Recommendations

- More investment to education through her annual budget, especially to Adult and non-formal education sector bearing in mind that UNESCO has recommended at least 26% of Annual Budget to education.
- Effective implementation of peace education into the school curriculum at all levels.
- Embracing Adult education as a pillar that will drive andragogical practice and teaching towards attitudinal and positive social mantra.

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