

## **An Examination of the Impact of Peace Studies on Nigerian Students in Entrenching a Philosophy of Peace: A Case Study of the University of Uyo**

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### **Abstract**

*This study examined the impact of “Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution” course on Nigerian students using the University of Uyo as a case study. The course is a compulsory constituent in the general studies curriculum of Nigerian Universities as instituted by the National Universities Commission (NUC), aimed at exposing students to peace as a medium of unity and development in Nigeria. Basically, the study aimed at gaining insight into the reality of the effectiveness of “Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution” in Nigerian tertiary institutions using the University of Uyo as a case study and to explore its possible improvement with regard to realising peace in Nigeria for national unity and development. The study adopted case study and qualitative method including focus group discussion, interview and textual analysis. The study, in light of its findings, concluded that “Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution” has not had the desired impact on the students owing majorly to some prevailing factors such as insufficient lecturers, poor remuneration of lecturers, poor learning conditions, family upbringing, culture, politics, religion, and poor funding of tertiary institutions. Nonetheless, the rate of violence, conflict and cultism in Nigerian tertiary institutions has greatly reduced as the study found. Many students have imbibed peaceful demeanor and the use of dialogue in overcoming conflicts. This shows that the course has really reasonably impacted on the students and also has the capacity to achieve the desired impact if the noted problems confronting the teaching of the course are adequately dealt with.*

**Keywords:** Peace, Philosophy of Peace, Peace Studies, Conflict Resolution, University of Uyo,

## Introduction

Peace is a virtue that humans need and yearn for. Throughout the world, wars, violence, conflicts and oppressions witnessed regularly hamper the realisation of peace. Accordingly, thinkers argue that education holds the potential for fostering peace in both conflict and post-conflict environments. This belief is in line with Socrates' view that 'virtue is knowledge'. Thus, when people are equipped with the necessary knowledge regarding their actions, they will certainly strive for virtuous acts which would be beneficial to them and the society at large. Education for peace is held to be a possible medium of transforming a 'Philosophy of Violence' into a 'Philosophy of Peace' by developing people's peaceful attitudes and abilities and by kindling a change in their perception.<sup>1</sup> Research shows that violence is basically a learned behavior rather than inherent in human nature.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, peaceful manners can be acquired and advanced through education. This view is captured in the proposition of UNESCO's constitution – “Since wars begin in the mind of men, it is the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed”.<sup>3</sup>

Armed with this conviction, the National Universities Commission (NUC) introduced the course, *Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution* as a compulsory constituent in the General Studies curriculum of Nigerian universities in order to expose students to peace “as a vehicle of unity and development”.<sup>4</sup> The course, among other things, is meant to equip students with the necessary tools to deal with political, ethnic, religious and economic conflicts and tensions.

Research shows that there's a lack of systematic assessment of the effectiveness of peace education programmes. The cause of this may be the lack of

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1. I. Harris and M. L. Morrison, *Peace Education*, 2nd edition, (London: McFarland, 2003), 178.
  2. D. Adams, *UNESCO and a Culture of Peace*. (Paris: UNESCO, 1995), 30.
  3. H. E. Wilson, *Education and UNESCO*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1964), 14.
  4. NUC, *Benchmark Minimum Academic Standards for Undergraduate Programmes in Nigerian Universities*, (Abuja: NUC, 2007), 18.

adequate awareness regarding the significance and usefulness of that assessment stage; a lack of proficiency (expertise) in assessment methodology; budgetary considerations; and evasion strategies.<sup>5</sup> As a result, it is imperative that much attention be paid to the assessment of the effectiveness and impact of peace programmes. In this light, the research explores possible slants to the assessment of peace education in Nigeria.

Today, the Nigerian society is faced with numerous challenges which have threatened her peaceful co-existence ranging from the menace of militant groups, Boko Haram insurgency, Fulani Herdsmen, to hate speeches born out of tribalism, ethnicism, nepotism, political and religious affiliations. The nation seems to be more polarised than ever.

Tertiary institutions are not immune to this odious quandary. There are students' unrests, fightings and killings. Cultism seems to be on the rise. Hate speeches abound, especially, in the social media. Yet, 'Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution' course is offered by these students who are the hope of our country, Nigeria. Undoubtedly, they will, after graduation, get into the larger society to work, serve and lead. They are the presidents, governors, ministers, senators, House of Representatives members, party leaders and parents of tomorrow. Their influence, therefore, cannot be underestimated.

In the light of the dispiriting unpeaceful attitudes seen in our students, one, therefore, is compelled to wonder whether the course – “Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution” has really impacted positively on the lives of the Nigerian students. It is against this backdrop that this research sought to examine the impact of “Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution” in our tertiary institutions using the University of Uyo as a case study. The study basically aimed at gaining insight into the reality of

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5. B. Nevo and I. Brem, “Peace Education Programs and the Evaluation of their Effectiveness”, G. Salomon and B. Nevo, (eds.). *Peace Education: The Concept, Principles and Practices around the World*, (New Jersey: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates. 2002), 275.

the effectiveness of the course – 'Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution' in Nigerian tertiary institutions as a compulsory constituent in the General Studies curriculum of Nigerian universities and to explore its possible improvement with regard to realising peace in Nigerian tertiary institutions and the country at large for national unity and development.

Practically, this study will serve as a useful tool in promoting peace education in Nigerian tertiary institutions and the country at large. Theoretically, it will contribute to establishing frameworks for peace education in Nigerian tertiary institutions and Nigeria at large.

### **Research Questions**

The following were the research questions of the study:

1. Has the course, “Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution”, positively influenced the lives of Nigerian tertiary students in the direction of peace?
2. Are the methods adopted in teaching the course adequate and effective?
3. What materials are used in teaching the course?
4. Is the course content adequate?
5. Do students attend lectures on the course, adequately?
6. What are the problems associated with the teaching of the course?
7. What in your opinion, are the reasons for the continued restiveness, violence, and hate speeches among students in spite of the teaching of the course?

### **Methodology**

The study adopted case study and qualitative method including focus group discussion, interview and textual analysis. A case study approach is considered appropriate when investigating “a contemporary phenomenon within a real-life context.”<sup>6</sup> In this connection, the researcher, among other things, explored the

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6. R. K. Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition, (London: Sage, 2003), 2.

relationship between students' behavior and “Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution” course introduced as a compulsory General Studies course for Nigerian universities students by the National Universities Commission (NUC).

The University of Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, situated in the Niger Delta Region of Nigeria where there is militancy and where the researchers are based was adopted as a case study. This ensured an in-depth consideration of the subject, yet, very significant in offering enormous insight into the reality of the effectiveness of the course in Nigerian tertiary institutions and Nigeria at large. The mixed methods design adopted for the research ensured triangulation of data and strengthened validity. The mixed methods adopted for the study involved case study, focus group discussions, interviews and textual analysis. This ensures adequate data collection and proper analysis of the subject-matter.

The major instrument used for data collection was interview guide designed with questions to address the study objectives. This instrument was applied during in-depth interviews and focus group discussion sessions. The research conducted interviews and focus group discussions with fifty students and thirteen lecturers involved in the “Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution” course in order to examine their experiences, opinions and values concerning peace education. Interviews constituted a significant data gathering method, generating information on how Peace and Conflict Resolution course has impacted on the lives of the students. Gray was correct when he argued that interviews are most useful for an explanatory purpose of inquiry and are more suitable than questionnaires when questions are open-ended or complex.<sup>7</sup> They ensure an understanding of how people grasp their social world and act accordingly, offering “rich insights into people's biographies, experiences, opinions, values, aspirations, attitudes and feelings”.<sup>8</sup>

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7. D. E. Gray, *Doing Research in a Real World* (London: Sage, 2004), 214.

8. T. May, *Social Research: Issues, Methods and Process*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition (Buckingham: Open University Press, 2001), 120.

The research also employed video and tape recordings covering the interviews and focus group discussions. The focus group and interview conversations recorded, were transcribed, thus, ensuring accurate documentation of information. Textual analysis employed, involved the views of various thinkers regarding the subject matter.

## **Results**

Below are the results of the study:

**Research Question 1:** Has the course, “Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution” positively influenced the lives of Nigerian tertiary students in the direction of peace? Some respondents believed that the course has positively influenced students while others thought otherwise. The coordinator of the course (“Citizenship and Peace Studies” – GST 123 as it is designated in the University of Uyo), had no doubt that the course has had huge positive influence on the students. He contended that cultism, for instance, has drastically reduced in our tertiary institutions owing to the teaching of the course. He also noted that the students who are determined to learn and implement what they were taught are positively impacted while those who are not serious with the course are not. In his words: “We have two categories of students: those who are here to study and know and implement what they actually came to learn and those that are just there to pass exams and have their degree and go. For that reason, the first category of students will make a positive impact while the second category will not”. He noted that there is no society with absolute peace. So, it is not strange or uncommon to see some unpeaceful behaviours in the society. He further observed that cultists in our institutions are remarkably different from those outside the university. The ones in the university are literate and educated and so, not as barbaric as the street and village cultists who have no business with the four walls of a tertiary institution. He believed that the influence of “Peace Studies” made it possible.

In line with the view of the course coordinator, the course lecturers unanimously affirmed that the positive impact of the course on students is clear. They remarked that reports of violence, theft, rape and other vices common in our institutions have drastically reduced. They further affirmed that the course has contributed to the development of a sense of national unity and identity among the students. This is in view of the fact that the course goes beyond talking about peace among students. It incorporates citizenship studies, health matters, and family life, among others. In the words of one of the course lecturers: “ I believe that for a society to be at peace, there must be an understanding of the place of national identity, so students can know their identity through engaging in citizenship studies. The students have started to know their identity, as in, who we are as a nation”.

The course lecturers were convinced that the course has immensely contributed to the enhancement of national unity and identity among students. On the part of the students, opinions vary. Some denied any real impact of the course on them while others affirmed that they have been positively impacted. Some of those who believed that they have been positively impacted averred that they learnt the importance of dialogue in achieving peace. According to one of the them, “I learnt that conflict can be resolved through dialogue”. The students remarked that through dialogue, some of the security challenges facing our nation, such as Boko Haram insurgency, Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) agitation, Niger Delta militancy, etc., will be resolved. The students corroborated the view of the course lecturers that cultism has drastically reduced in our tertiary institutions. One of them remarked: “before I got into the University, cultism was high, now there is reduction in the school due to the influence of the course”.

Those who expressed pessimism on the positive impact of the course argued that most students were more interested in passing the course than living the teachings. Some of them noted that the prejudices students already had, pose a great challenge to the course. Here, their argument hinges on the view that students came

from diverse ethnic groups and backgrounds with biases against other tribes and Nigeria as a country, and so, have much difficulty assimilating what they are taught. Moreover, the unconducive learning environment makes it almost impossible for students to hear clearly and understand what the lecturers teach.

Result of the question on the positive impact of the course shows that whereas all the course lecturers affirmed that the course has positively impacted on the students, not all the students agreed that the course has positively impacted on them.

**Research Question 2:** Are the methods adopted in teaching the course adequate and effective?

According to the course coordinator, the methods adopted for the teaching of the course are adequate. Among them is the method of rotation. This method entails all the course lecturers taking turns to teach all the students as grouped. In other words, if a lecturer teaches a particular department, faculty or group of departments/faculties in the designated day of the week, he or she will move to the next group the following week of lecture. Thus, no lecturer has a particular group assigned to him or her alone to teach all the topics. He or she teaches the same topic to all the students. This, according to the coordinator, ensures good delivery as the lecturers are specialists in their respective fields and so, would be thorough in teaching the students in turns. The coordinator further informed that the lecturers embark on thorough teaching with good demonstrations against mere reading of notes.

The above views of the coordinator were corroborated by other course lecturers. Some noted that they introduce true life stories to get the attention of the students. They also emphasize unity and strength of the nation in the midst of diversity – ethnic, religious, political, geographical etc. One of the course lecturers remarked that he usually notes the affinity between health and peace. In his words: “I teach about health using HIV and other diseases because it helps the students to understand what health is all about and what disease is all about, which helps the

students to have understanding and knowledge of how to achieve peace within themselves from the point of good health”.Peace in oneself, the course lecturers argued, will ultimately lead to peace in the society.

**Research Question 3:** What materials are used in teaching the course?

As acknowledged by both the lecturers and students, the basic material used in teaching the course, is the text, *Citizenship and Peace Studies* written by the course lecturers and published in 2013 by CHF Prints, Uyo, AkwaIbom State. The text, according to the course coordinator, “cuts across communication, through health-related subject matters, to topics on conflict management and resolution” as well as politics and religion.<sup>9</sup> The text has twelve chapters covering “The Nigerian Constitution: “The Citizen and the State”, “Ethnic Pluralism and National Identity in Nigeria”, “Nigeria as a Social System”, “Marriage, Family Life and Relationship in Nigeria”, “The Concepts of Health and Diseases”, “Genetics and Health”, “Rational Use of Drugs”, “Basic Concepts in Peace and Conflict Studies”, “The Media in Peace and Reconciliation Process: Functional and Dysfunctional Perspectives”, “The Role of Woman and Youths in Conflict Resolution and Peace Building in Nigeria”, “Nigeria and Qualitative Citizenship Development”, and “Youth and HIV/AIDS Prevention”.

The text covers numerous facets of life considered germane for the realisation of peace among students in Nigerian tertiary institutions. Other materials – relevant text books, lecturer notes, internet materials, among others, are also used in teaching the course.

**Research Question 4:** Are the course contents adequate?

Many respondents especially, the lecturers believed that the course contents are adequate given that they cover numerous subjects – citizenship, patriotism, family, marriage, drug abuse, communication, health, religion, genetics, conflict resolution,

9. N.S. Nkana, Felicia Ekpu, and Robert Dode, *Citizenship and Peace Studies*, (Uyo: CHF Prints, 2013)

peace, etc. They are believed to be interwoven for the realisation of peace and unity in the country. Good health for instance, is believed to ensure peace in oneself which will ensure peace with others. One who lacks peace within himself/herself can hardly be at peace with others. Also, genetics tends to show that we ultimately originate from same source and so, are one. This understanding will foster peace and unity. Good upbringing, peaceful home, religious tolerance and good communication, among others, greatly contribute to the realisation of peace and unity in the country.

Some respondents, however, were of the view that the course contents are inadequate. Those who held this view were mainly students. A few course lecturers also held this view. They all averred that more topics need to be included in the course content in order to achieve more results. Topics such as culture, peer pressure, justice and militancy were identified as crucial in realising peace in Nigeria and so, need to be included in the course content. Also, considered significant are the philosophies of great minds such as Mahatma Ghandi and Martin Luther King (Jr.) who were ardent advocates of peace and whose ideas have impacted hugely on our world.

**Research Question 5:** Do students attend lectures on the course adequately?

All respondents affirmed that students do not attend lectures on the course adequately. The reason for the apathy majorly hinges on poor learning conditions. Most of the classrooms are small compared to the number of students undertaking the course. Seats provided are not adequate and are poorly maintained; public address systems are few, provided mainly by individual lecturers. Many students, owing to lack of space, end up standing outside the classrooms which dampens their zeal to attend lectures. Lecture venues are also limited and some of them are very far from the offices and departments of the course lecturers and students. Students who may not have transport fare or energy to trek to the venue end up not attending the

lectures.

**Research Question 6:** What are the problems associated with the teaching of the course?

Numerous problems are associated with teaching of the course as revealed by both the course lecturers and students. As a result, the desired impact has not been realised. First, there is a problem of limited lecturers. About thirteen (13) lecturers teach the course - Citizenship and Peace Studies (GST 123) undertaken by over seven thousand students in the University of Uyo. Another problem is that of venue. Lecture venues, as reported, are limited and small, compared to the large number of students offering the course. Inadequate seats, is another problem identified. Just as the lecture venues are small, so is the number of seats at the venues. Many of the seats are in poor condition, thus, making it difficult for use by students. Most students are, therefore, compelled to stand. This somewhat discourages them from attending lectures.

There is also the problem of public address system. The course lecturers lack public address systems with which to teach. They, therefore, struggle to project with mere voices. The ones who lack high projection capacity end up not achieving much in the lecture. Limited lecture time for the course is also identified. The lecture holds once a week for only two hours which all the respondents believed is insufficient to achieve the desired impact.

Finally, remuneration of lecturers is another problem noted. The course lecturers are poorly remunerated at the end of the semester after much labour and spending of resources on research materials, transport and health. The highest-ranking lecturer – a Professor is paid about N20,000 (Twenty Thousand Naira) and others are paid less. This affects their output as some of them just teach to meet their responsibility without the purposeful zeal to impact.

**Research Question 7:** What in your opinion, are the reasons for the continued restiveness, violence and hate speeches among students in spite of the teaching of

the course?

All respondents agreed that we still experience restiveness, violence, and hate speeches among students in spite of the teaching of the course. However, most were convinced that these odious behaviours have significantly reduced when compared to the time the course was not taught. They noted also that conflict is not abnormal in human life; in fact, it is part of human nature. According to one of the course lecturers: “Conflict is inevitable among humans. Teaching of the course cannot stop it. The course can only moderate it. In fact, it could have been worse but for the course. 'Peace and Conflict Studies' has created much awareness and people are no more eager to go into conflict”.

Family behaviour and upbringing is another factor observed to be responsible for the continued restiveness, conflict, violence and hate speeches among students. A child from an abusive or violent home, as noted by the respondents, will likely develop such abusive or violent demeanor. Similarly, a child from a violent environment may imbibe such trait. So, family and environmental influences significantly contribute to a student's violent or abusive disposition in spite of the teaching of the course.

Tribalism and religion are other factors noted. Nigeria is observed to exist in tribal and religious lines. As a result, once one's tribe or religion tills towards conflict, violence, or hate speech, there's a corresponding influence on the person.

Another identified factor is peer pressure. Some students and youths are involved in violence, hate speeches and other unaccepted conducts due to pressure from their peers. As a member of a peer group, it is difficult for the student or youth to exempt himself/herself when others are involved.

It is also observed that some of the conflicts witnessed in the country are politically motivated. They are sponsored by politicians who are desperate for power, money and relevance. They are also sponsored by community leaders for monetary gains

and influence. As a result, it becomes difficult to have the desired peace and decorum.

Unemployment is another crucial factor. “The idle mind”, it is said, “is the devil's workshop”. When people are unemployed, they become vulnerable and easy tools of conflict and violence. This is common among the unemployed youths.

Finally, injustice was identified by some respondents as another major reason for the continued conflict, violence and hate speeches among the students and youths in the country. These odious attitudes largely have ethnic, regional and religious inclination. When a group feels unjustly treated it, sometimes resorts to violence. This is usually done in a bid to be heard. Injustice is believed by many respondents to be the reason for the establishment of such groups as Niger Delta Volunteer Force, The Avengers, and Independent People of Biafra (IPOB), among others.

## **Discussion**

This study examined the impact of “Peace and Conflict Resolution” course on Nigerian students using the University of Uyo as a case study. The course is a compulsory constituent in the general studies curriculum of Nigerian Universities as instituted by the National Universities Commission (NUC). It is aimed at exposing students to peace “as a vehicle of unity and development”.<sup>10</sup>

Undoubtedly, Peace is an invaluable good that humans need in order to be fulfilled in life. Generally, it is considered the absence of war. It is a calm condition, free from commotion; a serene state devoid of anxiety. Undoubtedly, where there is peaceful relationship among people, development is inevitable. Curle views peace as a state of humans living together, whether the scale be large or small, characterised by conditions that make for the realisation of human potential.<sup>11</sup> He considered

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10. NUC, *BMAS*, 18.

11. A. Curle, *Making Peace*, (London: Tavistock, 1971), 8.

peaceful relationship from two perspectives – personal level and larger scale. On a personal level, peaceful relationship entails friendship and understanding of individual differences while on a larger scale, it entails “active association, planned cooperation, and an intelligent effort to forestall or resolve potential conflicts”.<sup>12</sup> Contrary to Curle's conception of peace as “a state”, Fisher views peace as “a process: a many-sided, never-ending struggle to transform violence while the absence of war is seen as a first step towards a fuller ideal of peace which can be defined as “an interweaving of relationships between individuals, groups and institutions that value diversity and foster the full development of human potential”.<sup>13</sup> In spite of the differences in Curle and Fisher's conceptions, they both consider cooperation and integration as vital components of peace along with non-violence which can ultimately ensure the accomplishment of human potential.

The study clearly shows that peace, whether as a “state”, “process”, or “absence of war”, is indispensable for the unity and development of Nigeria. It further shows that much still needs to be done in order to achieve the desired impact of peace education in Nigeria. The study shows that the course has some good impact which accounts for why cultism has drastically reduced in the tertiary institutions. Cases of violence, rape, and armed robbery have also decreased. Both the students and lecturers attested to this fact. Students, particularly, the females affirmed that they now, can walk to the lecture halls alone at night for reading, unlike what obtained before wherein female students must be accompanied by male students for night classes.

However, there are still cases of violence, conflicts and hate speeches among students. For instance, one lecturer reported that he was once slapped by a student in class. There are also cases of students insulting lecturers and students refusing to leave the lecture venues for lecturers from other departments. There are cases of

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12. A. Curle, *Making Peace*, 15.

13. Fisher S. Fisher, *Working with Conflict* (London: Zed Books, 2011), 11

fighting among students, verbal abuses and hate speeches. In 2013, riot in the University of Uyo led to the destruction of school properties and left many students injured. The school as a result, was temporarily closed. The study shows that there is a need for all students in the University of Uyo and tertiary institutions in general to be adequately exposed to peace education. Many students do not attend the lectures owing to lack of conducive learning environment. Those who attend scramble for seats and space. The study shows that students do not attend lectures on the course adequately.

There is also the problem of inadequate lecturers. The few that teach, struggle to teach in overcrowded halls, resulting into many students unable to hear or comprehend what is being taught. Many students, therefore, stay away. In order to have the desired impact, adequate teaching staff must be employed; adequate lecture halls and seats must be provided. The learning environment must be conducive. Teaching aids like public address system, electronic boards, and steady electric power need to be provided.

On the part of the course lecturers, there is a serious need for adequate incentives. Their incentives range between Twelve and Twenty Thousand Naira for the entire semester which is very poor. As a result, there is low motivation. The remuneration is far below their expenses for the course. They spend money on research, transport, books, etc., far above what they receive as incentive at the end of the semester. When the course lecturers are adequately remunerated, their motivation will undoubtedly soar which will in turn, lead to positive impact on the students.

Family upbringing is identified by the study as among the factors that induce continued hate speeches, violence and other odious behaviours among students in spite of the teaching of the course. It is unfortunate that some students are products of abusive and violent homes; homes full of hate against certain ethnic groups. This, impacts negatively on them, forming a part of their life style. Parents “control, direct

and guide the upbringing of their children”<sup>14</sup>; thus, a child's attitude or character is largely a product of his family upbringing. In this regard, peace education needs to be extended to families through the media, churches, mosques, markets, business places and offices. This may be achieved through seminars, conferences, talk-shows, distribution of leaflets, books and periodicals relating to peace.

More work need to be done on religion. Peace education needs to be regularly taught in religious denominations. It is undoubtedly true that Nigeria is a hyper religious society. The influence of religion on the lives of Nigerian citizens is very huge. Religious beliefs have led to numerous conflicts, violence and deaths. No wonder Karl Marx considers it the opium of the people. He sees religion as serving “a functional purpose as it is adopted by the ruling class to prevent the suffering masses from revolting against them, thereby preserving the existing social relations of production.”<sup>15</sup> Our “religious differences should not set us against one another. There's need for toleration given that there's reasonableness in our different ... religious views”.<sup>16</sup>

The desire to have lasting peace realised, as the study found, is further hampered by injustice. Justice is an invaluable natural good that humans yearn for and sometimes ready to die for. It is a product of nature beyond “the laws or customs of any particular culture or government”.<sup>17</sup> Embedded in justice are the ideas of freedom and equality, without which peace becomes elusive. Kant recognised this fact when he argued that realising peace demands the freedom and equality of members of society and common laws consented to by the people.<sup>18</sup> Kant is

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14. Dennis E. Igwe, “Philosophy and the Family” in *Philosophy and Society*, ed. Udo Etuk, (Lagos: Omega Publishers, 2018).
  15. D. E. Igwe, *Karl Marx: Ideas, Life, and Lessons*, (Abuja: Estonia Media, 2022), 225.
  16. Dennis E. Igwe, “Toleration from Reasonable Pluralism: Copping with Political and Religious Differences”, *The Leajon: An Academic Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies* 7, no. 1 (2015): 88.
  17. Dennis E. Igwe, “Natural Rights as 'Nonsense Upon Stilts': Assessing Bentham”, *International Journal of Arts and Sciences* 8, no.3 (2015): 380.
  18. I. Kant, *Perpetual Peace* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1917), 117.

convinced that freedom and justice are indispensable in instituting peace through consensus among members of society. This view ultimately rests on Kant's moral principle of treating humans as ends in themselves and not as means to an end. Kant's postulate is corroborated by Rawls who held that to ensure peace in the society, fairness, equality, reciprocity and liberty must be upheld.<sup>19</sup> Rawls was basically concerned with social justice and was convinced that his theory of justice which he called "Justice as fairness" guarantees "the citizens' rights as free and equal persons in the state".<sup>20</sup>

Study shows that people who feel unjustly treated as an ethnic group or people from a certain region have difficulty imbibing the philosophy of peace as propagated. This includes students who usually engage in verbal wars on the social media space. Coming from their respective ethnic backgrounds, they are already embittered against the state of Nigeria. Virtually all ethnic groups feel unfairly treated in one way or another. Solution to this ugly trend is fair treatment of people without prejudice to their ethnicities, otherwise, peace education propagation remains a mirage. When people are treated equally and freely engage in their civic responsibilities and businesses, realisation of peace becomes a sweatless endeavour. Job creation is a veritable endeavour that will greatly aid the realisation of peace. Students of jobless parents or guardians sometimes engage in unpeaceful activities owing to poverty. Students are also negatively influenced by jobless youths who live in their various vicinities. When there is an increase in job creation there is a corresponding decrease in unpeaceful activities.

The study further reveals that numerous conflicts, protests, hate speeches and other unpeaceful activities are politically motivated. In order to secure their ways to power, some politicians employ falsehood, ethnic and religious sentiments. And

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19. John Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971), 60.

20. Iks J. Nwankwor and Dennis E. Igwe, *Introductory Discourse on Socio-political Philosophy*, (Anambra: Excel Prints, 2024), 108.

owing to the ignorance of the poor masses, they tend to succeed. It is, therefore, imperative that politicians be exposed to peace education. Peace education should be taught regularly at the National Assembly, State Houses of Assembly, Ministries and Local Government Area Councils. Conferences and seminars should also be regularly organised for politicians. Efforts for the education of the masses should be intensified. Armed with the appropriate knowledge, the masses' vulnerability will considerably reduce.

### **Conclusion**

In the light of the study findings, it is concluded that “Peace Studies and Conflict Resolution” has not had the desired impact on the students owing majorly to some prevailing factors beyond the determination of the course lecturers, students and the University, ranging from insufficient lecturers, poor remuneration of lecturers, poor learning conditions, family upbringing, culture, politics and religion to poor funding of tertiary institutions, among others. Nonetheless, the rate of violence, conflict and cultism has greatly reduced as acknowledged by both the lecturers and the students. This shows that the course has some reasonable impact on the students. In this regard, it is imperative that all the noted problems confronting the teaching of the course be adequately dealt with in order to intensify its impact on students and members of the society. The ability to positively transform the youths portend great benefits to Nigeria given that “in Africa and elsewhere in the world, the youths have the potential to stimulate economic growth, social progress and overall national development”.<sup>21</sup>

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21. Dennis E. Igwe and Nsidibe, A. Usoro, “Youth, Leadership and Sustainable Development in Nigeria”, *Sapientia: Journal of Philosophy* 14, (June 2021): 243.

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