

Promoting Peace and Culture in Nigerian Through the use of Music Education

James Richard*

Assistant Professor, Department of Social Science, Hawassa University, Awasa, Ethiopia.

Abstract

Tracing the history of education in Nigerian higher Institutions presents series of student's unrest, riots, cultism, and violence, vandalisation of school's properties in reaction to inadequacies and neglect of certain vital elements needed for the smooth running of educational programmes. Music as an art that attracts students of all ages and levels is a cultural ingredient that can be used to create a calm and quiet state that is free from conflict and violence. This paper examined the concept of peace culture and music education. It also highlighted the roles that music education can play in promoting peace culture in the higher education institutions in Nigeria. The significance of this paper is to justify the efficacy of music in reducing violence in higher institutions in Nigeria and to enlighten the populace on the humanistic and aesthetic quality of music education. This will educate and sensitize curriculum planners towards inclusion of music learning education in all levels of education. This paper also exposes students to the benefit of skill acquisition and other values that are inherent in music which could equip them for future purpose. This work will be of benefit to music educators in alerting them on the significance and importance of their work to the humanity.

Keywords: Violence, Conflict, Peace, Peace education, Music

INTRODUCTION

Through the ages human beings are known to react against oppression and denial through violence and force. This attitude has always brought further conflict most of the times. Globally, the world has witnessed human conflicts, widespread violence, proliferation of weapons which has sustained the culture of war and violence. This situation has hampered peace and retarded national development. Nigeria, has witnessed series of outbreaks of ethnic violence, religious extremism, dehumanization and school violence. The purpose of this paper is therefore to project music education as an asset to curb violence in higher institutions of Nigeria. It also examines the role music education can play in schools to promote peace. Violence is defined as violent behaviour that is intended to hurt or kill. School violence which is rampant in the higher institution involves all types of violent and deviant behaviors among students. These include rioting, secret cult activities, vandalism, sexual abuse, alcoholism, drug abuse, etc. The issue of these deviant attitudes has reached an alarming proportion to the extent that organizations (government

and private) intervene to prevent or minimize it. Deviant behaviour is a social problem in Nigerian higher institutions which most of the time leads to violence. According to Ajayi, it is common knowledge that most deviant behaviors are at best viewed as a form of rebellion against society's acceptable standard. It suffices however, to note that such deviant behaviors could be in form of struggle and even rebellion against injustice and dehumanizing conditions of our educational system. In the search for solutions to these problems, education was considered as a useful tool to combat these problems. But it is unfortunate that crisis and violence also lie at the doorpost of this agency of solution. Consequent upon this, there is a need for urgent approaches to promoting a culture of peace and eradicating social unrest and violence in our institutions of learning. This is the thrust of this paper.

Concept of Peace

Peace is a term commonly used to describe a state of being calm and quiet; a state of tranquility, free from argument, conflict, violence and disturbances. It is an avenue permeated with attitudes that allow people of all ages

and all levels to co-habit in harmony. It is also considered as the development of behaviour that can prevent the occurrence of conflict. Peace is a quality describing a society or a relationship that is operating harmoniously. This is commonly understood as the absence of hostility, or the existence of healthy or newly-healed, safety in matters of social or economic welfare, the acknowledgment of equality and fairness in political relationships and, in world matters, it is a state of being absent of any war or conflict. Reflection on the nature of peace is also bound up with considerations of the causes for its absence or loss, a reflection of nonviolent lifestyle, which also describes a relationship between any people characterized by an absence of disturbance or agitation. Peace can make the world feel like a home. Peace is a state in human relations that implies a sense of community, support of each other and enables freedom of expression of thought. Peace needs functioning channels for communication among people, which can express all emotions and also aggression by not using violence. This would lead to far less division of humanity.

Culture of Peace

In 1992, a document of declaration on the culture of peace was proposed by UNESCO as a contribution to the peace building activities of the United Nation System. It was described as comprehensive efforts to identify and support structures which tend to consolidate peace and advance a sense of confidence and well-being among people. Since then the concept has been used for prevention of violent conflict in situations where such a potential exists. Quoting from Article I of the UNESCO declaration, which was adopted in September 1999, a culture of peace is described as "a set of values, attitudes, traditions and modes of behaviour and ways of life based on ideas like respect for life, ending of violence and promotion and practice of non-

violence through education, dialogue and cooperation and adherence to the principles of freedom, justice, democracy, tolerance, solidarity, cooperation, pluralism, cultural diversity, dialogue and understanding at all levels of society and among nations." The UNESCO organization continues to work in accordance with the principles adopted in its 1974 recommendation on education for international understanding, cooperation and peace. These principles include among others, understanding and respect for all people, their cultures, civilization, values and ways of life, including domestic ethnic cultures and cultures of other nations. All of the fields of competence of UNESCO, that is, education, science, culture and communication have been engaged in the organizations transdisciplinary approach to the culture of peace.

To achieve this culture of peace, Weis recommends peace education which is a participatory process that develops critical capacities for solutions to the challenge of war, terrorism, economic and racial violence, gender exploitation, environmental damage to be integral to all schools" curricular. Peace education involves activities that promote knowledge, skills and social conditions that are conducive to peace. According to Mazer, peace education is still a fairly controversial term because some feel that education in general should automatically imply „Peace Education". However, whatever the focus taken, peace education is needed to educate the populace to embrace a culture of peace, such that the youthful energy can be redirected to improve the condition of the human society using peaceful initiatives. According to Olugbuyi, "Peace loving human beings haunt for peace and are generally inclined to living in peace." The UNESCO document of declaration on a culture of peace says, "Since wars begin in the minds of men; it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed".