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LAGOS EDUCATION REVIEW

EDITORIAL

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Challenges of Peace Education Model for Effective Industrial Relations and Workplace Harmony

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Abstract

Despite the statutory mechanisms set up to settle industrial conflicts, the persistent reoccurrence calls for an alternative approach to solving them. It is against this background that this paper is proposing the use of Peace Education as an alternative approach to promoting industrial harmony at the workplace. The paper looked at the different notions of peace, causes of industrial conflict and the concept of peace education. It further posited that Peace Education consists of acquisition of certain knowledge, attitudes and skills to be used to scan the national and international environment in which the workplace is cited in order to prevent the internal and external sources of conflict. Two models on peace education were discussed. The system model so developed for the implementation of Peace Education at industrial level shows that work organizational environment and goals are no longer seen as a multitude of separate objectives but as one indivisible, dynamic whole, whose parts are all inextricably interrelated. Furthermore, when the model is operationalised ,both labour and management will no longer be at logger head but mutual partners working towards the survival of both parties.

Introduction

In an attempt to develop a model of peace education so as to stem the reoccurrence of industrial conflict and perpetrate industrial harmony at work place, there is the need to have a general overview of different meanings of the concept 'peace'. When people try to define peace what is usually found is the negation of peace: war and other forms of violence. Thus many people still conceive of peace as equivalent to the absence of manifest violence. Different perspectives of peace is highly essential to have a grip or understanding of peace education.

The Notion of Peace

From the religious point of view, Smoker and Groff (1996: 105) noted that in Eastern religions, there is a strong emphasis on links between a spiritual life and action for social justice. Jeong (2000:7) in this sense referred to the Buddhist traditions that emphasize justice, equity nonviolence, concern for the wellbeing of others and compassion among living beings as constituting peace. Buddhist traditions further believe that tranquility in the inner state of mind and harmonious interpersonal relationships contribute to universal peace. Philosophically, Nussbaum (1997:32) confirmed the Greek notion of a peaceful world in terms of lack of civil disturbances. So also, Chatfield and Ilukhina (1994:5) opined that a peaceful world is world without war.

The socialist movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries stipulated that peace could be obtained in a classless society. Socialists believe that the primary causes of human misery are economic inequality and a regressive political system associated with social injustices (Jeong, 2000:9). All injustices cause societal disorder and absence of peace. Ajala(2003: 101) insists that peace cannot consist solely of the absence of armed conflict but implies principally a process of progress, justices and mutual respect among the people designed to secure the building of an international society in which everyone can find a true place and enjoy a great share of the world's intellectual and material resources.

Galtung (1968:487) defines peace in two dimensions of negative and positive peace. Negative peace to imply the absence of organised violence between such major groups like nations, race and ethnic groups. The positive peace dimension refers to patterns of cooperation and integration between major human groups. The idea of structural violence initiated by Galtung is used by many peace researchers to refer to the type of injustice not strictly covered by negative peace. This idea seems to have influenced the thinking of Alger (1989: 118-119) when he incorporated the idea of structural violence into the definition of negative and positive peace. He perceives peace as not just the absence of war, but as the prevention of all structural and social inequalities.

The aforementioned meanings of peace shall be used later in this paper to develop a model for the intervention in industrial conflict at work environment.

Preview of Industrial Conflict

The relations and interactions between employees and employers in work environment, no matter how cordial and friendly, sometimes produce grievances, disputes and misunderstandings all of which can be termed industrial conflict. Industrial conflict can result from incompatible interests of workers and employers in the workplace, disagreements arising from the terms and conditions of employment, clashes resulting from opposing views held by organizational participants about workplace relations regarding the mode of production of goods and services as well as distribution of proceeds from the work (Onyeonoru, 2005:51).

Major sources of conflict in the industry are numerous, some of which are peculiar to respective organisations or industries and some others are located outside the enterprise. In other words, there are both internal and external sources of conflict. The internal source of conflict include style of management; nature of physical environment of the workplace; the consciousness and orientation of workers; conditions of employment; the effectiveness or otherwise of the motivational system and the effectiveness of grievance and dispute procedures. External sources of conflict include government interferences; economic and industrial policy; behaviour of the political and economic elites; nature of labour legislation and general distribution of wealth and power in the society (Otobo 2000:201). The implications of Otobo's view are that workers lack any direct control over the future of their job, that their desire to establish right to their job is always a potential source of conflict. Secondly, the actual exercise of managerial control can generate resistance even from workers who do not ordinarily question its legitimacy (Otobo, 2000).

Durkheim and Smelger (in Omole 1989) claim that industrial conflict is part of the general protests generated by rapid social change, particularly rapid rate of industrialisation which act as source of societal strain on individuals. In effect, there may arise a hastened breakdown of societal groupings. This situation, Durkheim and Smelger argued, constantly leads to disputes and protest which generate industrial unrest.

Mullins (2002:815-817) listed the following sources of organizational conflicts:

Differences in Perception: . Differences in perception result in different people attaching different meanings to the same stimuli. As perceptions become a person's reality, value judgments can be a potential major source of conflict.

Scarcity of Resources: Most organisational resources are limited, and individuals and groups have to fight for their share. The greater the limitation of resources, the greater the potential for conflict.

Departmentalization and Specialization: Most work organizations follow structural divisions in forms of separate departments, and specialized functions. Departmental managers tend to turn inward and concentrate on the achievement of their own particular goals, when departments need to co-operate with each other then a source of conflict arose. Also, differing goals and internal environments of departments are source of conflict.

The Nature of Work Activities: Where the task of one person is dependent upon the work of others there is potential for conflict. For example, if reward and punishment systems are perceived to be based on keeping up with performance levels, then the potentials for conflict is even greater because the negative action of the complementary department will affect the other. Also, if the work of a department is dependent upon the output of another department especially if the situation is coupled with limited resource, conflict may arise.

Role Conflict: A role is the expected pattern of behaviours associated with a member occupying a particular position within the structure of the organisation. The manner in which people actually behave may not be consistent with their expected pattern of behaviour. Problems of role incompatibility and role ambiguity arise from inadequate or inappropriate role definition and can be a significant source of conflict.

Inequitable Treatment: A person's perception of unjust treatment, such as in the operation of personnel policies and practices, or in reward and punishment system, can lead to tension and conflict. The feeling of inequality causes tension. From the equity theory of motivation, the perception of inequality will motivate a person to take action to restore equity even if through acting on other (conflict).

Violation of Territory: People tend to become attached to their own 'territory' within work organizations. Ownership of territory may be conferred formally, it may be established through procedures yet jealousy may arise over other people's territory. If a person's territory is violated this can lead to the possibility of retaliation and conflict. (Woodward 1980: 113) in the study of management organisation of firms comment on the relationship between the accountant and other managers as often being hostile. One reason for this hostility was the fear of territory violation as related to financial functions.

Environmental Changes: Changes in an organisation's external environment, such as shift in demand, increased competition, government intervention, new technology or changing social values, can cause major areas of conflict. For example, a fall in demand for, or government financial restrictions can result in conflict for the allocation of resources.

Many other potential sources of organisational conflict as summarized by Bryans and Cronin (1983: 103) include differences between corporate and individual goals; conflicts between different departments or groups within the organization; conflict between the formal and informal organization; conflict between manager and managed; conflict between the individual and the job; conflict between or among individual workers.

Whatever meaning and interpretation one may give to industrial conflict goes to portray it as a major labour problem in any society because of its disruptive effects and unpredictable consequences. This may be the reason for a defined and agreed upon machinery that should be established for conflict location, management and total resolution so as to attain and maintain industrial peace and harmony. This paper therefore takes its framework from the conception that with Peace Education characterized by combining Woodward (1980) and Bryans and Cronin (1983), an effective model will emerge.

The Concept of Peace Education

Peace education has many divergent meanings for individuals in different places. Ravis, Oppenheimer & Bar-Tal (1999) conceive peace education as mainly a matter of changing mindsets with the general purpose as to

promote understanding, respect and tolerance for yesterday's enemies. Another conception, (Ajala, 2003) is that Peace Education is inculcating a sense of social responsibility and solidarity with less privileged groups leading to the observance of the principle of equality in everyday conduct. Therefore, Peace Education should make violence, war, cooperation and peace its concern so that its basic task will be shaping human behaviour towards non-violence in relation with other human persons.
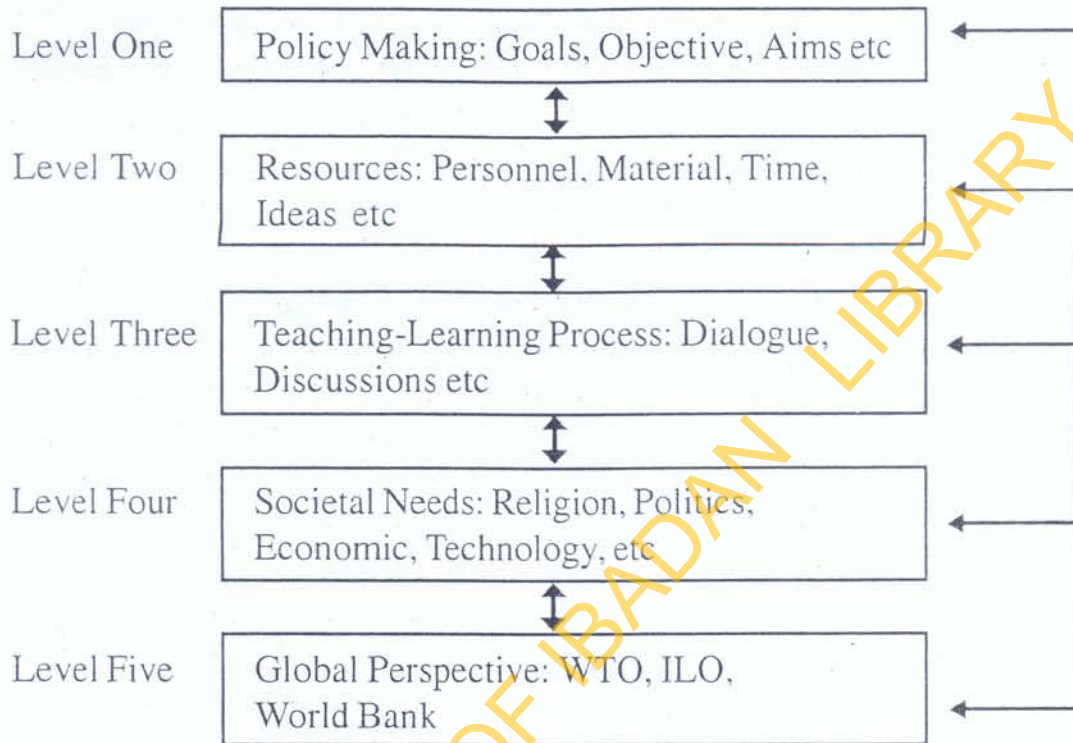
Fasokun (2004) noted that Peace Education is expected to yield four kinds of highly interrelated dispositional outcomes; accepting as legitimate the "other's" narrative and specific implications; a willingness to critically examine one's own group's actions towards the other group; a willingness to experience and show empathy and trust towards the other's and a disposition to engage in non-violent activities.

Briefly put, Peace Education has the goal to create an individual, either learner or management with skills of critical thinking, empathy, assertiveness, cooperation; knowledge about issues on power, conflict, concept of peace, gender, justice; and attitudes like self respect, respect for others, open mindedness, commitment to justice, respect for national environment, and visions.

With these concepts of Peace Education, that is, acquisition of appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes by both labour and management of any work organization, a Peace Education model should guarantee industrial harmony at workplaces and foster proper welfare scheme for employees and management.

Peace Education Models for Industrial Harmony

Fig 1: Model of Curricular Scheme for Peace Education in Industries

Level One	Policy Making: Goals, Objective, Aims etc
Level Two	Resources: Personnel, Material, Time, Ideas etc
Level Three	Teaching-Learning Process: Dialogue, Discussions etc
Level Four	Societal Needs: Religion, Politics, Economic, Technology, etc
Level Five	Global Perspective: WTO, ILO, World Bank

Source: Miel, A. (1974). "Action Plan and Follow Ups Synthesis of action Plan" in Education for Peace: Reflection and Actions. Haavelsrud (ed). UK: IPC Science and Technology Press.

Using the adapted Miel's (1974) model, this paper projects the curricular scheme for Peace Education in industries. The development of curricular scheme is to make both labour and management to be committed to peace culture. The education thus given in this curriculum will educate the conscience to bring about the development away from the self-preoccupied private conscience to a world shaping cultural conscience (Jegede 20003:217). Thus, it will develop a mind that enlightens the individual and enables him/her to seek the truth and thus develop ethics and morals (Bahr, 1996).

Explanation of Model One

At the level one or, Policy Making stage, there should be critical development of goals, objectives, aims, philosophical stance of the work place. This

involves the recognition of input by both management and labour into policy-making. Once the objectives of the establishment have been specified, level two comes into existence with emphasis on resources.

This encourages consideration of ideas, personnel, materials, institutions, time, and concepts as potential aids for the strengthening or support of whatever is needed to carry out the implementation process. Both management and labour must be conversant with these variables in order to prepare the ground for level three.

Teaching-Learning Level (level three): This presupposes that the dialogue between labour and management will provide the style and the content necessary for implementation of the Peace Education programme. What is said and not said as well as what is done and not done are as important as those issues clearly articulated in levels one and two. At this level, the articulation of content of Peace Education is emphasized. The content jointly developed by both labour and management should revolve round themes as: communication and peace; competition and cooperation; language of peace; interpersonal relations; economic and social justice; human right versus human duties, etc (Ajala, 2003:115-116).

Societal Needs (level 4): This emphasizes examination of the societal structure i.e. national and working environment: religion, politics, economic, demography, ideology, and social stratification. Peace educators i.e. both management and workers at individual level must be constantly aware of societal levels since they substantially determine the system under which levels one and two could be implemented, judging the content at level three.

Global Perspective (level five): This focuses on the ultimate design encompassing a transnational programme with world bodies like World Trade Organisation (WTO); the International Labour Organisation(ILO); World Bank and others. These bodies should device means of exposing industrial actors to Peace Education content which should be sufficiently strong and beneficial to attract people at intellectual and emotional levels. From this attraction, people will become committed through personal and collective involvement. Therefore, this understanding will make both management and labour to operate in harmony at their work environment.

This model one attempts to receive its source of power from the felt needs of the milieu in which it is tested. It also shows the involvement of all industrial actors from level one to five. In other words, if the model is to succeed, it must flow from the grass-root level, which is, from labour to management and of course the state.

In order for Peace Education model one to be of universal application, certain adjustments and adaptations must be made. Within a given work environment there may be forces, which support, inhibit or are neutral to what the organisation is attempting to accomplish which is industrial peace. It is therefore imperative that both labour and management must be prepared to act according to these environmental conditions. This leads us to the use of system model of Peace Education (See figure two).

Fig 2: The System Model of Peace Education for Industrial Harmony
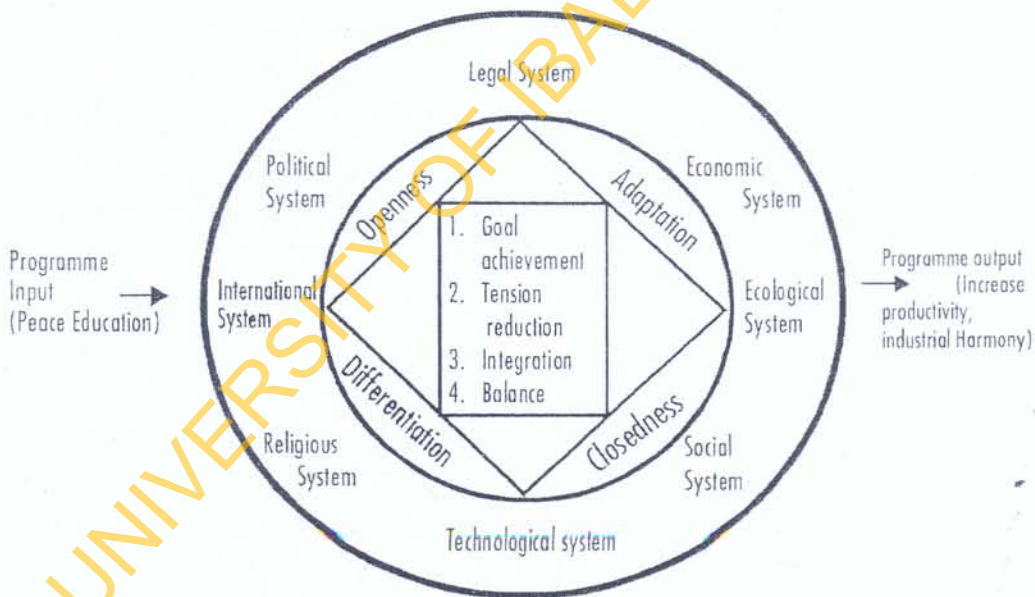
Source: Adapted from Miel, A. (1974). "Action Plan and Follow Ups Synthesis of action Plan" in Education for Peace: Reflection and Actions. Haavelsrud (ed). UK: IPC Science and Technology Press.

Explanation of Model Two

For effective industrial harmony in the work place, four basic functions are usually considered: goal setting, record of achievement, tension reduction, mutual integration, and check and balances (these are the same with levels

one and two in model one). These functions are used in making decisions about the structure of a given system, that is, whether it will be open, adaptive, differentiating, or closed. These will determine the resources within the organization and the method of bringing them together (similar to levels two and three in model one). Three dimensions namely: environment, functions, and structure of administering and implementing Peace Education are found in their inter-twin. To be more explicit, they are the eight systems: legal, economic, ecological, social, technological, religious, political, and international that are akin to levels four and five of model one.

Implications of Using Model Two

The important input of Peace Education (acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitude) is to educate both management and labour from the onset to recognize both structural and behavioural violence as discussed under the notion of "peace". Peace Education should make violence, unrest, cooperation and peace its main concern. Therefore, the substantive subject matter of Peace Education at industrial level is to remove both internal and external sources of conflict through the acquisition of skills, knowledge and attitudes that will guarantee industrial peace. Some of the highly priced skills for the integration to organisational objectives into the work environment are self-empowerment, impulse control, critical thinking, empathy, cooperation, goal setting and understanding violence.

The system integrative approach in model two shows the input of Peace Education through skill and knowledge of content of Peace Education will help both labour and management to develop awareness of the processes and skills that are necessary for achieving understanding, tolerance so as to value diversity, human dignity on all levels of interaction in the workplace. Furthermore, the acquisition of skills, attitudes and knowledge by both labour and management will be used to scan the national and international environmental elements (Social, Economic, Technological, Ecological, Political, Legal, Religious and Industrial Relations), so as to get ready for conflicts that might arise thereof. The identification of such channels of conflict will prepare both parties for harmonious settlement and further integration of all such sub-systems into achieving the basic functions and goals of an organization.

Within the system approach, it is clearly seen that changes in one sub-system affect changes in other parts of the total system. From the model, industrial harmony and cooperation can be better maintained through economic equity and well-being, acquired knowledge, skills and attitudes. It should be noted that the resultant output of the implementation of Peace Education models are goals attainment, tension reduction, improved management and labour relations, improved productivity and survival of the organization. The implementation of model two shows that harmonious industrial environment is created where both management and labour are no longer be at opposing sides, but mutual partners aiming at achieving the set organizational goals. The attainment of organisational goals is characterized by the survival of both management and labour; the provision and protection of welfare of welfare of workers through less stress; improved morale, improved skill and better payment.

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