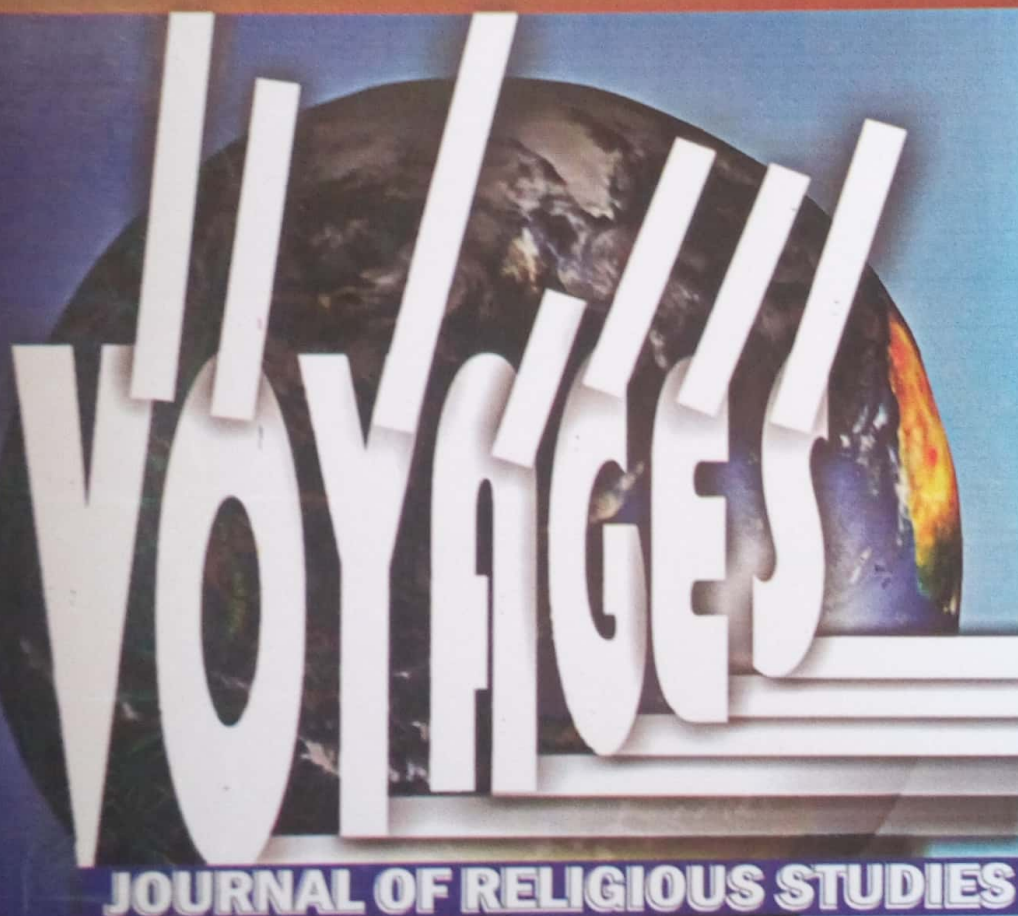


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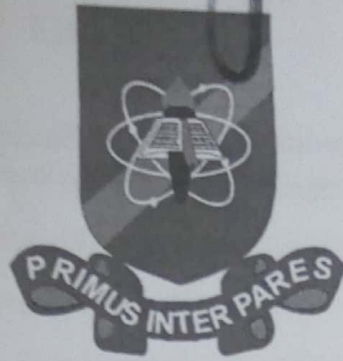
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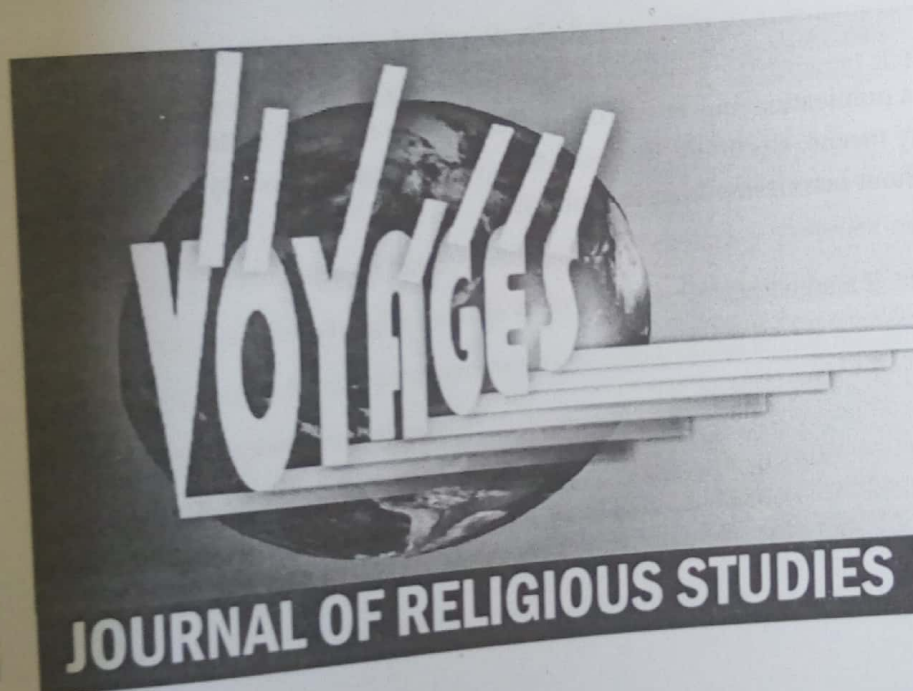


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EDITORIAL

The aim of founding any university is to encourage studies and research in all academic spheres of life with the hope of impacting on the immediate and global community as a whole. This is being realised with the publication of the maiden edition of Voyages Journal of Religious Studies, which is a publication of the Department of Religious Studies, Gombe State University. One of the main objectives of this journal is to serve the budding purpose of emerging scholars within and outside the university system.

My gratitude goes to the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ibrahim Musa Umar for allowing an enabling environment for visiting and sabbatical staff to contribute their wealth of experiences and knowledge to the growth of Gombe State University. As part of the benefits to this gesture, I wish to acknowledge the efforts of the chairman of the Journal Committee in person of Dr. Samson Elias Mijah, a sabbatical staff from Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, for making this Journal a reality. I equally appreciate the contributions and sacrifice of the Journal Committee and the entire members of staff of the Department for their moral and financial support for this edition.

This edition is composed of papers related to religion from various contributors. Different methods of documentation and referencing are allowed to give room for wider spectrum of contributions. Publication of the Journal is presently annual. It is my hope that the momentum which this maiden edition has garnered will be sustained. Finally, I thank our esteem contributors, peer reviewers and consultants.

Professor Dahiru Umaru
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Department of Religious Studies, Gombe State University, Gombe, Nigeria.

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Dr. M. Amogh Kumar

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PEACE AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES EDUCATION FOR SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION: A CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS

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Abstract

Various crises have left negative imprint on many societies even at the global level. Such crises have caused loss of lives, loss of properties and disruption of the socio-economic life of the people. In most parts of the world, crises have left their enduring legacies of tension, insecurity, mutual suspicion, arms build-up and negative inter-religious relations. Since the incidence of September 11, 2001, when terrorist attack was launched on the United States of America, peace education and religious studies have become major issues in understanding inter-human relationships. This is because they have the social function of regulating the relationship among human beings in a society. Peace education is essential in building a culture of peace through generating peaceful attitudes, dispositions, values, behaviours, action orientation, and social structures. Peace education and Religious studies must be positive, integrative, restorative, generative and transformative. Their goals are to eliminate violence, crises, and promote voice-free communication, conflict resolution and socio-economic development. This paper examines the Concepts of Peace, Peace Education, Religious Studies Education as well as the Significance of Religious Studies Education. It tries to show how peace education and religious studies education can bring social transformation in the 3rd world countries.

Key words: *Peace Education, Religious Studies Education, Social Transformation and Security.*

Introduction

History has shown that human progress towards higher levels of material and cultural achievements has four basic requirements which are; technological development, socio-cultural transformation, the accumulation of knowledge, and human struggle for freedom. All of which would never be accomplished without education and social awareness.

Education is the chief method or process through which societies transmit knowledge from one generation to another. It is through education that we learn how to develop and

accumulate knowledge, preserving certain values and transforming others introducing social and cultural change in the form of new, introducing non-conventional ideas, values and attitudes and non-traditional ways of thinking.

It is also through education that people learn how to become more socially and politically conscious, and how to increase their ability to acquire and use knowledge to improve the quality of their lives which makes them useful for themselves and the society at large. This is evident in the submission of Jekayinfa and Kolawole (2010) when they stated that, the

singular purpose of education is to produce a useful citizen. A useful citizen is both useful to himself and the society in which he lives and generally, to the world community.

Therefore, for programmes of education, like Peace and Religious Studies Education to instigate the desired socio-cultural transformation in the society and produce the know-how that is needed to achieve material and cultural progress, they have to be packaged with certain things and the principal among them are the right knowledge and the right attitude. It must however be noted that, education that fails to instill in students the right attitude and equip them with the proper training and expose them to right scientific facts and information creates an obstacle to change rather than facilitate socio-cultural transformation.

Definition of Terms

Religion has been identified as a term difficult to define based on the existence of deferent religions but in all its definitions, the belief in God/gods and the existence of the supernatural Deity (God) are inevitable. The term "religion" is a derivation of the Latin word "religio". The Latin word religio translated religion in English originally only connote reverence for God or gods, careful pondering of divine things.

The typical dictionary defines religion as to belief in, or the worship of, a God or gods or the service and worship of God or the supernatural. Although, religious scholars submit that the definition of religion goes beyond belief in gods. The definition is insufficient because it doesn't capture the diversity of religious experience. This affirms the statement of Suleiman and Ojo (2012) that, religion, unlike other disciplines like music, geography, history, mathematics, chemistry and a host of others, has no universally acceptable and satisfactory definition. Therefore, there is no single universally accepted definition of religion as a concept. Religion is looked at from different perspectives based on the angle from which one understands it.

Thesaurus dictionary refers to religion as a set of beliefs concerning the cause, nature and purpose of the universe especially when considered as the creation of a superhuman agency or agencies, usually involving devotional and ritual observances and often containing a moral code governing the conduct of human affairs.

Webster defines religion thus:

i. It is a belief in a divine or a superhuman power or powers to be obeyed and worshiped as the creator and ruler of the universe.

ii. It is an expression of this belief in conduct and ritual.

iii. It is any specific system of belief, worship, conduct, etc, often involving a code of ethics and a philosophy as the Christian religion, the Buddhist religion etc.

iv. It is any system of beliefs, practices, ethical values, etc resembling, suggestive of, or likened to such a system; as humanism is his religion.

v. It is a state of mind or way of life expressing love for and trust in God, and ones will and effort to act according to the will of God, especially within a monastic order or community; as, he achieved religion.

vi. It as any object of conscientious regard and pursuit; as, cleanliness was religion to him.

vii. It is the practice of religious observances or rites.

viii. It is a religious order or state; a monastery.

However, it can be rightly stated that religion is an organized collection of beliefs, cultural system and world views that relate humanity to the order of supernatural existence (God).

Peace Education

Peace is a state of tranquility, quiet and harmony. It is a state of being free from disturbance, oppression, unpleasant thought emotions and war in particular between different countries. Peace education is defined as a process of acquiring the value, knowledge and developing the attitudes, skills and behaviours to live in harmony with oneself, with others and with the natural environment. According to Harris (2009) peace education is the process of teaching people about the threats of violence and strategies for peace. Peace education activities attempts to end violence and hostilities informally within institutional places of learning, such as schools or college.

Due to the importance of peace education, there are numerous United Nations declarations on it. For instance, Ban Ki Moon, the UN Secretary General, dedicated the International day of Peace in 2013 to peace Education in an effort to refocus minds and financing on the preeminence of peace education in order to bring about a culture of peace. Koichiro Matsuura, the past Director of UNESCO, wrote of peace education as being the "fundamental importance to the mission UNESCO and United Nations. (UNESCO, 2013).

James (2009) in his submission suggests that peace education should be taught TOWARDS "encouraging a commitment to peace as a settled disposition and enhancing the confidence of the individual as an agent of peace; as informing the individual on the consequence of war and social injustice; as informing the individual on the value of peaceful, just social structures and working to uphold or develop such social structures; encouraging an individual to love the world and imagine a peaceful future, caring for the individual and encouraging them to care for others.

Role of Peace and Religious Studies Education on Social Transformation.

Social transformation, in other words is social change which is described as the process by which an individual attains social status for themselves and thereby influence or cause social change in their social system.

Social transformation being an interpersonal negotiation, it requires that individuals have their social positions validated by others for transformation. It is a relationship in which people have to embrace and correctly identify with the cultural expectations of the particular classes of their membership.

Social transformation is a shift in the collective consciousness of a society, local, state, national or global entity so that reality is defined by consensus. Peace education is defined as the process of acquiring the value, knowledge and developing the attitude, skills and behaviour to

live peacefully or in harmony with oneself, with others, and with the natural environment.

Peace education as a flourishing academic discipline is described by the renown *Journal of peace education* as an active global social movement "that can collectively unify, fuel and inspire dialogue among scholars, researchers, activists, educators, government leaders, and the myriad of public peacemakers committed to creating cultures of peace throughout the world" (Lum 2013, 121). The role of peace education is essential in social transformation because it serves as a tool box for social change. Peace Education plays a substantial role of continuous decrease in violence and a simultaneous increase in justice. Galtung (1996) stated that peace functions as reduction of violence of all kind; it is nonviolent and creative conflict transformation in nature. Barash (2006) believes that, peace is in action when all living beings feel as being at home. UN secretary General Kofi Annan (2002) submits that, peace is constant work on creativity and that it means a lot more than the absence of war. According to him, peace means release from hunger, justice, and possessing human rights, education and good governance. He further elucidates that peace gives people an opportunity to live a decent life.

Since the early decades of the 20th century, peace education programmes around the world have presented a spectrum of focal themes, such as anti-nuclearism, international understanding, environmental responsibility, communication skills, nonviolence, conflict resolution techniques, democracy, human right awareness, tolerance of diversity, peaceful co-existence and gender equality among others. It has also addressed the spiritual dimensions of inner harmony, and synthesized a number of the foregoing issues into programmes on world citizenship, while academic discourse on the subject has increasingly recognized the need for a broader, more holistic approach to peace education. A review of field based projects reveals that three variations of peace education are most common: conflicts resolution training, democracy education and human rights education, (Wikipedia, 2013).

There is no limitation to the role of peace education in encouraging changes within a society, within ourselves and in moving us towards actualizing this social change. It is a therapy for all anti-social changes in every part of the world.

Role of Religious Studies Education.

Religion has been described as being a tool and source of development in most of the societies of the world. It has even come to occupy a central place in both our consciousness and our academic discourse. The importance of religion to human existence cannot be over emphasized since it is a way of life. Religion is of great significance in understanding inter human relationships even at the global level. Religion has a particular social function of regulating the relationships that exist among human beings in a given society. Further it must be noted that it determines our attitudes to fellow human beings and all things in general, particularly when we hold the position of power or authority in a family, community and even in the nation.

Evidence of the significant role of religion in human society is shown in the establishment of religious institutions like the Church and mosque, which are places of refuge for the less privileged. These were among the first institutions that provided a place of refuge for accused criminals in establishing places like prisons and penitentiaries. These were birthed by religion in order to allow the accused persons obtain isolation from others (Imaekhai, 2010). In the coast of West Africa, missionaries were the first to create what can be referred to as formal education, health centers, counseling for inmates and other development programs that are of meaningful and great value to human existence.

Religious system has its values which regulate and harmonize human life. It is religious ethics that shows us what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is evil, what is just and what is unjust, what is virtue and what is vice. Religion taught us value of life such as hospitality, generosity, honesty, human tolerance, love, peace and peaceful co-

existence and lots more, which play vital role in determining social transformation in any given society. These values enrich morality, the welfare of individuals and of the society at large. They also build relationships between people and between societies around the world.

Conclusion.

In conclusion, no society can experience social transformation in the absence of Peace and Religious Studies Education based on their natures of regulating and harmonizing human life. Social transformation being the process of large scale change for an environment where a shift occur in the consciousness in attitude and value of a community or society can occur as a result of peaceful co-existence and moral standard exhibited by the society which Peace and Religious Studies Education enhanced.

As far as social transformation is concerned, peace and religious studies education remain the core tools for non violent society and sustainable social development. Peace and religious education bring stability and constitute the pivot of social transformation in any nation because they advocate/teach about human right, social justice and social responsibility. Durkheim (1964) opines that religion like any other social institutions acts in the same way as one of the vital body organs in that it keeps society alive. In other words, it has a number of functional and dysfunctional functions that serve the purpose of maintaining social stability and harmony. For instance, through the act of collective worship in the form of religious practices, religion helps bond and unite individuals together. It acts as social glue that promotes value consensus and social solidarity. Peace and Religious Education play essential role of generating peace, security, sustainable moral standards, and social transformation in any society in the world. When peace and religion education are rightly harnessed, solution to the incessant violence, confrontation, conflicts and all social problems is inevitable. Therefore, what is important is an understanding of when and how to gingerly exploit peace and religion education as unequal tools to serve as ingredients and vessels of galvanizing social transformation in the society.

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