



Refocusing public Universities for peace and national security

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Abstract

This position paper looked at refocusing public universities for peace and national security. It will amount to great insensitivity to ignore current social, political and economic maladies that constitute huge threats to peace and national security in Nigeria as of today. Prevalence of peace and security are imperative for peaceful coexistence and sustainable development of a pluralistic society like Nigeria. Challenges whether natural or man-made, exist in every organised human society. Refocusing public universities is pivotal in addressing some contemporary issues threatening the coexistence of all the major and minor tribes constituting Nigeria. The concepts of Peace and Peaceful Society, Security; Civic Education; Entrepreneurial Education were highlighted. This article also discussed Factors that Threaten Peace and National Security; Absence of Peace and National Security Implications; Resources required to enable Public Universities Promote Peace; Justification of University Education for Peace and National Security. This write-up also concluded that since it is incumbent on any legitimate government to provide basic infrastructures, security of lives and property for peaceful co-existence among others through her established agencies, bodies, organs and institutions, she should in similar vein use any one of these establishments to analyse any identified challenging issue begging for solutions. The position of this paper is that public university institutions in Nigeria should be saddled with the responsibility of proffering solutions to the threats of peace and national security. This paper therefore recommends that these universities should make Entrepreneurship Education for skills acquisition and Civic Education for value orientation compulsory, for all undergraduate students enrolled and all profiled restive youths in our communities that will benefit from this proposed project through university community service mounted programmes.

Keywords: refocusing, public Universities, peace and national security

Introduction

Absence of peace and security in any society connotes presence of all forms of agitations; conflicts; social, political and religious discriminations; injustices; hostilities, etc. Nigeria as of today, cannot extricate herself from all the above listed indicators of peace and security challenges. Judging from the listed social vices, it will be wrong to classify Nigeria at the present as a peaceful society. Until concrete steps and efforts are put in place to resolve plaguing social challenges, peace and security will continue to elude us as a nation. Peace and security in any human organization imply a healthy organizational climate and engenders sustainable development in that organization, as members are afforded the opportunity to function at their full potentials unhindered. Watchers of regional and global events will attest that from the least of human organizations, communities, ethnic nationalities, cities, nations and human societies are frosted with conflicts. Onyene and Nwajiaku (2017) ^[20] reported that:

In the 2016 Global Peace Index (GPI), it was reported that the world became less peaceful in 2015, reinforcing the underlying trend of declining peace over the last ten years. In the same 2016 GPI, Nigeria is listed as one of the nine countries with the most internal conflict deaths which stand a little below 20,000 deaths in the last decade. The Boko Haram Insurgency; Niger Delta resource control agitations; partisan politics of bitterness; the Jos killing fields; the Shiite Muslim's activities; the Biafra struggle for

self-determination and of recent, the Cattle Herdsmen violence have all combined to put Nigeria in this inglorious list (p. 2).

The aftermath of the military coup in 1966 which culminated to Nigerian civil war in 1967, sowed the seed of political, religious and tribal estrangement among the major tribes in Nigeria, (Onyene & Nwajiaku, 2017) ^[20]. According to them, added to the state of negative peace in Nigeria are the issues of resource control and true federalism. In tandem with the view of Onyene and Nwajiaku on Nigeria, the three major socio-political organizations in the South-geo-political zone of Nigeria (Afenifere, Oha-neze and Pandeff), are demanding and insisting for political restructuring of Nigeria.

A nation could be adjudged to be having peace and security when there is absence of violence; is free from civil disturbance and her condition is not being threatened, either physically, psychologically and emotionally. Where the contrary exists, they have far reaching negative implications to every fabric of that state. Social, economic and political development and progress will be retarded. The economic sector will be shot down, hunger and poverty will worsen the health conditions of the citizens. Rise in death rate will increase due to prevalence of diseases and sickness. In this line of thought; Onyene and Nwajiaku (2017) ^[20] alluded that:

While there are heavy tolls on human lives and untold hardships unleashed on the affected communities; the resources of the

government at all levels are stretched thin to accommodate the conflict management efforts thereby diverting funds from other sectors of the nation among which is education (p. 3).

Suffice it to say that if the conflict and insecurity is internal (i.e within the country), the situation will worsen due to entrenchment of mistrust, distrust, hatred, betrayal, suspicious, tribalism, nepotism, etc among the component units making up the state. Such ugly situation is bound to halt nation building in its entirety.

Universities all over the world are established. to satisfy specific or general educational needs of individual nations through teaching of students, conduct of research and dissemination of knowledge together with other community service activities. Investment in education is conceived as a tool for achieving national development; economic expansion and social emancipation of the individuals. The 1990 Longe Commission on the Review of Higher Education in Nigeria, also identified education as “the most powerful instrument for social reform”, Nwafor (1998:16)^[13]. The teaching and research functions of higher education institutions have vital role to play in human capital resource development which in turn will play an important role in national development as envisaged by the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2014). The NPE also indicates that: Nigeria aspires to gear its higher education towards national development through high level manpower training; inculcation of survival values; development of intellectual capacity; acquisition of self-reliance skills; as well as promotion of scholarship and community service (p.39).

In view of the NPE enunciation, Babalola (2007)^[4] posited that Nigeria expects all higher education institutions to pursue these goals using a variety of modes (such as full-time, part-time, block-release, day-release, sandwich, etc) through teaching, research, generation and dissemination of knowledge, virile staff development, access to training funds, students industrial work experience, maintenance of minimum educational standards, inter-institutional cooperation, dedicated community services through extracurricular and extension services.

The goals of tertiary education as highlighted above, make them the most vital places to accumulate human capital in the form of relevant manpower training, abilities, attitudes, skills and knowledge. In view of the expectations from our tertiary education institutions, university is ranked first and as such, should be in the forefront proffering immediate solutions to threats to peace and national security. The importance of university existence and functions, can never be over emphasized, especially in one of her core mandate, which is social reformation. It must be reiterated at this point that Nigeria is currently bedevilled with myriads of security challenges capable of dismembering her. Unemployment rate as of 2019 stood at 23.1, a leading factor in driving our teeming youths into all forms of restiveness, agitations and other criminal activities. Book Haram, Armed Bandits, Cattle Rustling, Fulani Herdsmen Palaver, Militancy, Kidnapping, Cultism, Regional agitations, etc. exists and operate in all geo-political zones of Nigeria; with no exception.

Refocusing public universities education in Nigeria for peace and national security implies that in addition to teaching and research, her community service, one of her

core mandates, should be reinvented, revived, revisited, reappraised as a launch pad to surmount current state of insecurity threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria. Refocusing in this context means a wake-up call on the managers of our universities to reconstruct and reorganise the system, using their intellectual prowess/capacities and all other financial and material resources towards enhancing their community and extension services delivery. Refocusing also means adjusting her programmes to make the society better which is a form of peace building to address some of the causes of violence that constitutes threat to peace and security.

The ultimate objective of peace building according to Dambach in Bennett, Karki and Nepal (2012)^[5], is to reduce and eliminate the frequency and severity of violent conflict. According of Boutros-Ghali in Onyene and Nwajiaku (2017)^[20] peace building is “action to identify and support structures that will tend to strengthen and solidify peace in order to avoid a relapse into conflict” (p. 11). To Brinkmann (2006)^[6], he said:

Peace building is a two-sided process, one is the prevention, reduction or transformation of violent conflict ... and the other is the construction and improvement of existing peaceful structures and activities. Activities for peace building concern not only conflict behaviour: they also address. They also address underlying content and attitudes (p. 25).

From the foregoing, the task of refocusing public universities for peace and national security alludes to peace building. Is a call to look inward, deploying her intellectual capacities to ameliorate some threatening national conflicts through well-articulated designed programmes capable of re-engaging, re-orientating and re-educating our vulnerable and idol youths, with prerequisite social norms, societal values and entrepreneurial skills, for self-employment, survival and achievement of sustainable peace and national security.

The required planned programmes by the universities to reorientate our youths so as to take off all abhorable social vices from their minds, include the teaching of “Civic Education and Entrepreneurial Education” courses. The main philosophy behind mounting these programmes for Nigerian youths who are undergraduates and, those who could not make to the university level, but are unemployed and roaming our cities and communities, is for mass acquisition of right attitudes, technical and entrepreneurial skills, for self-employment and survival of our youths and the nation at large. With our public universities refocused in this direction, threats to peace and national security would be ameliorated to a reasonable level in Nigeria.

Concept of peace and peaceful society

Peace denotes a state of tranquillity, quiet, and harmony. It also means absence of war and violence, free from civil disturbance, oppressive and unpleasant thoughts and emotions. A society is referred to as peaceful when there is absence of war, strife or turmoil. It means a state inclined to peace, tranquillity and the absence of disturbance. In a peaceful society, the citizens co-habit with shared consciousness of brotherhood, cherished values, love,

tolerance and national unity. Amadi (2016) ^[3] observed that some of the characteristics of a peaceful society include the presence of unity amongst her citizens and indivisibility of the nation, justice and equality. A society described as peaceful does not necessarily imply total absence of social differences, conflicts and misunderstanding amongst the constituents, but it is viewed as a society that has the participation of citizens toward the use of dialogue and other legal institutions and opportunities to amicably resolve conflicts (Ake, 1992) ^[1]. Amadi (2016:2) ^[3] noted that: "Every society has some degree of diversity in ethnic, religious, political and cultural diversities". Such diversities could foster the emergence of conflict". From the foregoing, it implies that, even if in the face of possible and visible disagreements amongst individuals, social class, political groups, ethnic groups, religious groups and others, there is no breakdown of law and order, threat to lives, public and private properties as well as collective survival. Maintenance of a peaceful society is a shared responsibility of the government, religious leaders, civil society groups, the judiciary, government orientation agencies and all citizens. Kornblum in Amadi (2016) ^[3] posited that for peaceful society to be achieved, members are expected to respect and abide by the rules and regulations or constitution which protects every member of the society from exploitation. The author further stated that a peaceful society stimulates growth in economic activities and development. That it is characterised by cooperation and collaboration, rather than struggles and conflicts. Citizens in this setting co-operate and collaborate because of a nationhood, brotherhood, patriotism and popular participation in issues of governance and finding solutions to emerging social ills, rather than a high level of political apathy.

Concept of Security

A state is a sovereign geo-political entity governed by law where people live, interact and carry out their economic activities. Members of that society are expected to live in harmony in order to ensure that the society is safe for living and carrying out economic activities. Absence of peace and security in any state would have grave consequences on lives and property, as well as level of economic growth and development. Security means the condition of not being threatened, either physically, psychologically, emotionally or financially. It also means freedom from apprehension and intimidation. Peace and security are fundamental for existence, survival and development of any nation in the world. They are prerequisite for economic growth, as both local and foreign investors consider as one major conditions before venturing into any form of investment.

Economic development generally in any society is a function of state of peace and security, among other pertinent factors. Political, social, technological and economic advancements are hinged on how peace and secured a society is. A society that is bedevilled with numerous social vices such as war, armed robbery, religious extremism, kidnapping, insurgencies, anarchy, agitations, militancy, etc, will be regarded as insecure and, will be far from any form of human development.

Civic education for peace and national security

Civic Education is one of the core subjects introduced into Nigerian secondary school curriculum. It is the education

designed to inculcate into students shared values that will enable them to contribute meaningfully toward the achievement of a peaceful and progressive society (Amadi, 2016) ^[3]. A perusal of the course contents shows basically the rights and responsibilities of citizens toward building a just, democratic and egalitarian society and at the same time, curbing the various menace and vice that threatens national peace, security and development. Ukegbu and Anyaoha (2010) ^[23] observed that:

The main aim of Civic Education is the ability to develop and change young people into effective, responsible, good and informed people (those who know what happens within and outside the government), who are useful to their country... The curriculum of Civic Education is designed to promote and produce a balanced education that will lead to the all-round development of the individual, thereby ensuring academic competence, political and social awareness, strength, character and healthy living. To achieve this, the planners included the study of our values, citizenship, national awareness and identify, human rights and the rule of law, representative democracy, duties and rights of citizens, Nigerian constitution, social issues, peace and conflict, and national economic life (p. 10).

On the importance of Civic Education, Ukegbu and Anyaoha (2010) ^[23] observed that: "is the production of good and responsible citizens, who will become nation builders and leaders, etc" (p. 11). According to them, it is one of the important ways of rebranding (positive changing) of Nigeria and enhancing a great nation with good people living in it. Refocusing public universities through the teaching of Civic Education and Entrepreneurial skills, to surmount potential threats to peace and national security, constitutes the centre-piece of this academic exercise.

Teaching of Civic Education as a compulsory course to be domiciled in the General Education Studies (GES) Unit for all undergraduates and, other youths in our communities via community services and extension programmes that will be mounted in our cities and communities by public universities, will have an enduring positive influence. Equipping them with prerequisite social and economic skills, will serve as restraining factors from engaging in crimes and criminality with their obvious consequences.

A critical evaluation of the objectives of Civic Education will leave no one in doubt among others that, it will inculcate into the youths the right kind of values and teaches how to help in promoting and respecting the values of our society, that are good for nation building. On this premise, our position here is that it is justifiable to include Civic Education in the university curriculum, to build citizens who will be serious minded when it comes to carrying out responsibilities that will make our society orderly, peaceful and stable.

Entrepreneurial education for peace and national security

The main thrust of this write-up, "Refocusing University Education for Peace and National Security", is quite in tandem with government plans to develop entrepreneurial

education toward young graduates and youths employment. Eseugbor and Nwachukwu (2009) ^[10] alluded that government entrepreneurial policies and programmes, aim at empowering people and improving their social service delivery as well as reducing unemployment rate, thereby, fostering economic growth in the country. In similar vein, Amadi (2017) ^[2] observed that:

...in the early 2000s, records have if that entrepreneurial education programme were introduced into the Nigerian educational system especially in higher institutions as a mandatory course. The Centre for Entrepreneurship Development (CED) popularly known as the Institute for Entrepreneurial Development Studies (IEDS) which has the objective of teaching and encouraging students in higher institutions to acquire entrepreneurship / business development, entrepreneurial education, financial education, business support services and opportunity hub; all summed into entrepreneurial, innovative and management skills, was established (p.5).

On the disciplines of study in entrepreneurial education programmes in public universities, Okozor (2001) noted that they ranged from:

accounting; computer science, mechanical; chemical and electrical engineering; information and communication technology (ICT); sociology; statistics; arts; agriculture and some vocational programmes such as fashion designing, fish production, catering, event decoration, piggery, snail production and clay pots designing (p. 8).

Entrepreneurial education offered at university seeks to provide students with the managerial knowledge, skills and motivation needed to encourage entrepreneur success in a variety of settings. Solomon (2007) ^[21] explained that entrepreneurship is the, “attitude, skill and actions an individual possesses in starting a new business for self-growth and development” (p. 23). The uniqueness of this type of education is that its focus is on the realization of opportunity, by developing and training growth in the society.

On the importance and appropriateness of entrepreneurial education as an economic mechanism to redirect and re-orientate some of our youths that have constituted themselves to threat to peace and national security, Sulaiman (2010) maintained that the main objective and distinctiveness of entrepreneurial education which is economic empowerment, can only be achieved through proper implementation.

Concerning required period to accomplish the training and certification of participants, Ekpoh and Edet (2011:174) ^[9] maintained that “the duration of entrepreneurial education courses in universities and entrepreneurial centres is dependent on the curriculum of such programme which is further dependent on the category of the programme offered”. However, in the opinion of Okah and Odelola (2009:111) ^[16], “the maximum period of learning in an entrepreneurial centre is three months.

The appropriateness of refocusing university education for peace and national security is in tandem with the stance of National Universities Commission (NUC) as captured by Nwikina (2016) ^[14] who posited that since NUC’s directive to universities to provide entrepreneurship education to their students, many universities have begun to establish policies, programme and to mount structures for entrepreneurship education. In addition, Ezeugbor and Nwachukwu (2009) ^[10] noted that government entrepreneurial policies and programmes aim at empowering people and improving their social service delivery as well as reducing unemployment rate. Thereby fostering economic growth in the country. The justification and appropriateness of involving our public universities as intervention mechanism to address current issues (i.e religious extremism, unemployment and youths restiveness) threatening the corporate existence of Nigeria, through entrepreneurial education among others, cannot be over stressed.

Factors that threaten peace and national security

Every sovereign nation state is characterised by one form of diversity or the other. It could be in form of culture, ethnicity, demography, religion, etc. One of the main features of diversity in any size of human society is that it has the tendency of causing conflict (Wehrich, Cannice & Kontz, 2010) ^[24]. It must be stressed that some crisis have destroyed the peaceful coexistence of some African nations, Nigeria inclusive. Her civil war experience between 1967-1970, is traceable to failure to properly manage and harness the advantages of diversities that exist within.

Some major factors threatening the peaceful coexistence among various groups in Nigerian include:

Ethnicity

It is derived from the multi-farious and diverse nature of the Nigerian territory which consists of people of different ethnic backgrounds, ancestry and tradition (Olisa, Okoli & Nwabufu, 1990) ^[19]. These scholars posited that ethnicity as a force in Nigerian politics originated from the colonial policies of the British, who through their “divide and rule policy” encouraged the use of different applications of colonial policies on the traditional institutions and structures of the various ethnic groups in Nigeria. They further maintained that the importance of the ethnic question, and the need by each ethnic group to promote and protect its economic and political interest at the expense of other groups, became reflected in the geo-political group/regional basis of political activity in Nigeria. Consequently, it led to rivalry, distrust and lack of co-operation then and, still threaten the present day Nigeria.

Recruitment into the federal and state civil services The misunderstanding among the various geo-political groups in Nigeria for the promotion and advancement of ethnic interests at the expense of those of the nations has manifested itself in the recruitment of candidates into the federal and state civil services, based on one’s state of origin (Olisa, Okoli & Nwabuto, 1990) ^[19]. They observed that since independence, the perceived threat by some of the ethnic groups, especially those in the North, of the domination of the Yorubas from the west and Ibos from the east, in the federal civil service, has led to the full inclusion of the principles of quota system and federal character in our post-independence constitutions.

Inter-ethnic competition and conflict over allocation of resources

Ethnicity as a social factor characteristics by the promotion of the interests of each zone above that of the entire country has become a dominant factor in the Nigerian political and economic scene (Olisa, Okoli & Nwabuto, 1990) ^[19]. Exposure to western education by the various geo-political groups equipped these groups in participating not only in political activities, but also in economic activities according to the trio scholars. The struggle for control of scarce resources manifested in the heated debate among the then regions and, till date as to what should be the proper criteria for sharing the national cake. The contending issues are whether it should be based on derivation principle or greater emphasis should be laid on population and need. The observation of these scholars cited above is that lack of consensus on the basis for revenue allocation in Nigeria has brought a great deal of distrust and suspicion between the various states and between the states and the federal government. Commenting further, that ethnicity as a factor in Nigerian politics, in terms of a general overview, has hindered the achievement of national unity and integration because the citizens have continued, even till date to own their primary loyalties and allegiance to their ethnic groups rather than to the nation.

Electoral crisis

Elections in most democratic nations provide an avenue by which the popular will of the electorate is expressed and realised. It ought to be an avenue for orderly and smooth political transition. However, in Nigeria, this is not the case. People's hope for a peaceful and effective exercise of political choice has been shattered because of the electoral malpractices, fraud and rigging that have characterised the country's electioneering systems (Olisa, Okoli & Nwabuto, 1990) ^[19].

Typical of electoral crisis thus far witnessed that has seriously threatened the peaceful co-existence in Nigeria, commenced with the 1954 Federal elections when Nigeria became a federation, the 1959 federal elections, the general election of 1964 and the Western Regional Election of 1965. Others include the 1979 and 1983 general election crisis. These crisis at one point or the other, have created opportunity for military interventions thereby shattering the nations nascent democratic experience. Military interventions from 1966 to 1979, 1979 to 1983, have therefore, been the logical consequence of the failure of our electoral systems to peacefully elect those that would pilot affairs of the nation.

Absence of peace and national security implications

Absence of peace and national security and cohesion, have far reaching social, economic and political implications. From political angle, law abiding and qualified citizens cannot cast their vote in an election for fear of being maimed or killed in an electoral process bedevilled with violence. One of the implications for disenfranchising sizable number of the electorate indirectly is that, mediocres and leaders without political astute will emerge and take up leadership responsibilities. Without fear of contradiction, mediocres lack prerequisites knowledge, experience, exposure and skills to exert positive influence on the followership. Political leadership entails ability to prudently manage state resources toward providing basic amenities to

the citizens, mitigating problems identified for enhancement of peace, progress and development of the entire country. Emergence of ethnic politics cannot be ruled out when peace and national security are threatened. Ethnicity will become a tool in the hands of some politicians and some regionally based political parties in an attempt to achieve the interest of one geo-political zone against the interest of another. Political instability plagued Nigeria political landscape before and after independence. From economic dimension, Kornblum in Amadi (2016) ^[3] observed that absence of peace in any society would have grave consequences on lives and property as well as level of economic growth and development. In similar vein, Amadi (2016:22) ^[3] noted that:

When there is no peace in a society, death rate tends to rise and this leads to manpower shortage; wastage ratio also rises as properties worth values of Naira are vandalised by warring or conflicting parties; there is high drop-out ratio from schools and this also implies another form of educational investment wastage; citizens dissent the society in search of safety; foreigners and investors find the society unfavourable for living and investment activities; at the end the society is highly impoverished.

Resources required to enable public universities promote peace and national security

Planning for any educational or non-educational programme to achieve the desired goal is to make a rational and systematic identification and estimation of resources that are required to accomplish such goal. Refocusing public universities for peace and national security might be a mirage and halted if resources required are inadequate or not available. According to Maduagwu and Wogu (2006) ^[12], educational resources that are required for execution of educational programmes include: human, financial, material and time resources.

The human resource in university include lecturers, administrative and technical staff. In adopting public universities to surmount contemporary peace and security challenges in Nigeria, National Universities Commission and managers of public universities must plan and estimate the number of staff required. in the identified course areas to teach entrepreneurial skills and Civic Education. The need to estimate the required number of staff to execute this project cannot be overemphasised. Edem (2006) ^[8] alluded that teachers determine the success or failure of the implementation of educational programmes.

Adequate funding of an initiated educational programme is paramount for its execution and success. According to Ebong (2004) ^[7], finance is the life-wire of education that is required for the procurement and maintenance of all other forms of educational resources. To enable public universities refocused to promote peace and national security, money is required to procure instructional materials, write and produce textbooks on Entrepreneurial and Civic Education courses, remuneration of staff in form of allowances, training and retraining of personnel, building of additional classrooms and equipping them, laboratories, workshops, building or renovation of existing community

town halls, craft centres in our localities, etc. Budgetary provisions must be made by the three – tiers of government and other stakeholders to actualise this noble project.

Material resources include all forms of hardware and software required to ensure effective participation of the targeted unemployed youths and university students. The resources must be estimated and budgeted for the programme. According to Obasi and Asodike (2007) ^[15], educational material resources include instructional materials and other classroom facilities, office facilities, enabling school environment, textbooks, computers, etc. These facilities will enhance instructors – youths/students participation in programme implementation.

Justification of university education for peace and national security

University education is among the tertiary level created by law and conferred with the power and mandate to grant degrees, diplomas and certificates. It is generally regarded as the apex educational institution among others provided in any country. The Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (2014) pointed out the objectives of tertiary education to include the following:

1. To contribute to national development through high level relevant manpower training.
2. To develop and inculcate proper values for the survival of the individual and the society.
3. To develop the intellectual capability of individuals to understand and appreciate their local and external environment.
4. To acquire both physical and intellectual skills which will enable individuals to be self-reliant and useful members of the society.
5. To promote and encourage scholarship and community service.
6. To forge and cement national unity and,
7. To promote.

The society expects university education to develop methods, contents and forms to respond positively to her needs and challenges. This could be executed through her research and innovation, including the development of new, educational methods, teaching, extension and community services. Issues that pose threat to peace and national security and cohesion are better diagnosed, analysed and remedies proffered to mitigate such threats. Mounting entrepreneurial programmes and imparting knowledge on generally accepted societal norms and values through civic education such that will assist our youths acquire pertinent skills for economic ventures, should be executed by our public universities. If extension and community services constitute aspects of university core mandate, there is no better time than now to articulate, design and execute these programmes that have the capacity to ameliorate threats to peace and national security.

A university is a conglomeration of various facilities and disciplines of human endeavours contributing to human and societal development and advancement. It is one of the well-established organization in the world with the highest concentration of the most and best brilliant brains in any given society. The academic staff are highly trained, knowledgeable, talented and skilled. They nurture and inoculate specialised skills and knowledge to their clients who on graduation, enter the labour market and contribute

to economic growth and development of the nation.

The university as an organised academic institution could be referred to as brain-field, where hitherto hidden skills and talents of her clients are processed, nurtured and developed at an advanced level, compared with the first two levels of education. The development of human resources into human capital is the hallmark and core mandate of every university. This is achievable through teaching, research and community service.

University professors and other lecturers have the capacity to upgrade course contents in any discipline to upgrade the course contents in response to new knowledge or response to changes in the knowledge environment. Knowledge explosion constitutes a major force that propels a university to go into linkages, partnership, inter-institutional co-operation, etc, to remain relevant to her core mandate and goals of establishment. In this context, it becomes pertinent for our public universities to rise up by way of designing and mounting new programmes that will tackle current insecurity challenges propagated by some of our idol and unemployed youths. When these programmes are fully implemented by our universities, peace and national security will be seen to be guaranteed.

Refocusing university education for peace and national security

Refocus is all about conscious effort made to do something else, to change one’s priorities, to adjust, to cause to be directed at something else, to change emphasis or direction without necessarily losing its score purpose or task. Education as it were, is an instrument of modernization and development especially in its role in the empowerment of people with appropriate knowledge and skills. On the importance of education, especially at the tertiary level, Olali (2016) ^[18] posited that tertiary stage which embeds university education is the major source of providing the required knowledge that will help generate and accelerate knowledge flow for modern-based economies. It is indispensable and key to socio-economic transformation and overall development of the society. The import of university education to any society is that, it is pivotal in addressing some issues of national importance such as proffering solutions to unemployment, youth restiveness and all forms of agitation plaguing the society.

In Nigeria today, every state can boast of one or two public universities. These universities have a common goal to empower their clients with the required knowledge and skills to make them self-reliant. Refocusing university education in this context, is using her advantageous position as a citadel of learning and research activities, to address some criminal actions of our youths that pose serious threats to national peace and security. This is achievable using a variety of modes at their disposal through teaching, research generation and dissemination of knowledge, inter-institutional co-operation, dedicated community services through extracurricular and extension services. If one of Nigeria’s aspirations is using university education to inculcate survival values and acquisition of self-reliance skills among others to her citizenry, there can never be any better time than now, that our nation has serious threat to national peace and security emanating from dissident and unemployed youths.

As a dynamic institutions, public universities among others should devote some aspects of her resources in conducting

research to unravel factors responsible for driving our dissident and recalcitrant youths into all manners of vices (i.e consumption of hard drugs, kidnapping, cultism, armed robbery, cattle rushing, restiveness, religious fanaticism and extremism such as emergence of Boko Haram in the North, regional agitations and youth restiveness metamorphosing into militant groups in Southern Nigeria, etc). Research findings should be harnessed to develop and inculcate right societal values, intellectual and entrepreneurial skills for self-reliance and preservation of one united Nigeria.

Teaching of Civic Education and Entrepreneurial skills should be the focal point in refocusing university education for peace and national security. Implementation of the programme should be in phases. Participating candidates and public universities in the first phase should cover states with highest number of restive youths, unemployment and criminal activities. Programme implementation should be carried out using facilities in the university and targeted communities. Community town halls/civic centres, recreational facilities, craft centres/ entrepreneurial centres, etc, should be made available as counter-part contribution from the state and benefiting localities. University management may plan the programme implementation at evening times and week-ends, depending on the types of skills to be taught and the participants benefiting from the project.

In the spirit of refocusing public universities to ameliorate emerging threats to peace and national security, each university senate should approve inclusion of "Civic Education and Entrepreneurial Studies" in their curriculum, and added to existing courses in General Education Studies (GES), which all undergraduate students must compulsorily undertake and pass them before they are awarded degree certificate. The philosophy in including Civic Education in university curriculum although learnt at secondary school level, is to re-emphasize the main objectives captured in the course but not thoroughly grasped as teenagers then. The course will be properly captured and assimilated that will produce responsible youths adequately groomed to be the leaders of tomorrow. Whereas Civic Education was designed at secondary school level to bring about the production of civil, patriotic and democratic citizens that will contribute towards development of a strong, united, just and peaceful society (Amadi, 2016)^[3]. Teaching this course at the university will help cement and complement those societal values taught at secondary school level. Entrepreneurship programme for undergraduate students serve as back-up to the main course trained for which a degree certificate will be awarded, having met all the prerequisite requirements. It is an aspect of education that trains the mind to think outside the box. It engenders creativity among students in their respective areas of interest in skills nature can offer. Entrepreneurial education helps to direct students to their areas of natural talents and interest. Where their degree certificates cannot offer them immediate employment, entrepreneurship skills will help them make a living and contribute to economic development of the nation.

Nigerian universities should expand existing entrepreneurship programmes and facilities to reach out to vulnerable youths who hadn't opportunity to acquire university education. This programme could be executed as an aspect of their extension and community service

mandate. Training our unemployed youths with relevant skills for self-employment could also be carried out in our cities and communities where our youths reside.

Refocusing public universities to achieve and maintain peace and national security as discussed here, should be vigorously pursued using a variety of modes at their disposal through teaching, research generation and dissemination of knowledge, inter-institutional co-operation, dedicated community services through extra-curricular and extension services. If one of Nigeria aspirations is using university education to inculcate survival values and acquisition of self-reliance skills among others, to her citizenry, there can never be any better time than now that our nation has serious threat to national peace and security.

Conclusion and recommendations

The write up focused on Refocusing Public University Education for Peace and National Security in Nigeria. It is on record that indicators of threats to peace and national security abound very much in our society. It is commonly said that every problem in any human society has a solution. Some basic functions of a government in any state is to provide security, create peaceful environment for cohabitation of the citizens, provide basic infrastructures, conducive economic climate, shelter, make laws, rules and regulations to guide and direct human conducts. Government also through her agencies, execute her policies, programmes and proffer solutions to societal challenges. A perusal on the goals of tertiary education in Nigeria confer on them the most vital places to accumulate human capital in the form of relevant manpower training, abilities, attitudes, skills and knowledge. In view of the above stated goals, university education institutions should be saddled with the responsibility of proffering solutions to the threats of peace and national security. Unemployment among the teeming youths is often pointed out in the public discuss among others, as one major factor driving them into all forms of agitation and restiveness leading to crime and criminal activities. The philosophy of refocusing public universities to solve our problem (threat to peace and national security), is quite in tandem with Federal Government plans to develop entrepreneurial education toward young graduates and youth employment.

Entrepreneurial policies and programmes, aim at empowering people and improving their social service delivery as well as reducing unemployment rate, thereby, fostering economic growth in the country (Ezeugbor & Nwachukwu, 2009)^[10]. On this note, we recommend that all public universities should adhere strictly to the National Universities Commission directive to provide entrepreneurship education to their students as well as profiled potential restive youths from our communities, who are not undergraduate students but will benefit from same skills through community service mounted programme. Also recommended is the teaching of Civic Education course made compulsory and included in the university wide courses under General Education Studies. Participating youths in entrepreneurial skills acquisition centres in our communities, should also be taught Civic Education subject to boost their level of social awareness and other societal values and norms that will dissuade them from conducts that threaten national peace and security.

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