# Peace Education and Human Rights Argument

**Fasuyi, A.**
*School of Education, College of Education,*
*Ikere-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria*

**Isanbor, P. O.**
*Department of Philosophy,*
*Ekiti State University, Ado-Ekiti, Ekiti State, Nigeria*

## ABSTRACT

*The paper examines the proper placing of peace education as it relates to the advocacy of human rights, with respect to human life, and as a way of reducing the abuses on human rights and dignity. The current situation of humanity demands the holistic embrace of peace and the consideration of the value of the social justice agenda to the rescue. The paper also calls for proper peace education for the masses as individuals, group and community since it can help the society in establishing healthy environment and ethical living, and it also envisages the inclusion of it in the schools curricula, as the individual and the whole human society are in great need of peace and justice.*

## INTRODUCTION

Despite the constitutionality and universality of human rights, it has been seen that human rights issues are facing a lot of humanistic arguments. Also, the authenticity of the authority which back up the respects they acquire as qualities is questioned. In connection with the realization and maintenance of earthly peace as right, the issues of this authentication will be linked with the condition of man on earth. The rapid growth of civilization is determined on how men wish to be governed and earn their living, together with the management of human problems arising from rapid scientific and technological developments which call for continuous re-examination by societal man in the natural law to new situations of human problems (Binde, 2004). We should note that, since the principle of fairness may establish a bond to existing just arrangements, the obligations covered by it can support a tie already present that derives from the natural duty of justice (Rawls, 1971).

For this possibility, the situation calls for the legal collaboration between the state and the societal man. The only condition put forward by the State which the citizens have to undergo is to be obedience to the positive laws of the State, for smooth administration of everything therein. The issue of peace education is an ongoing polemic discussion on human rights amongst scholars and philosophers. The above topic of this issue is wide enough to be subject of many academic dissertations; hence it is beyond this paper. But, the discussion must continue. One of these considerations is that the dignity of the human person involves the right to take an active part in public affairs and to contribute one's part to the common good of the citizen (John XXIII, 1963, no. 26). But, to Douglas Roche, the value of man should be placed before the laws, because the laws belong to him.

> *Many still live within the confines of their own 'world', but many more now extend their thinking about the world to places far beyond their neighbourhood. The questions posed by this larger view, held by growing members of the public, are a sign of the change in attitudes that is occurring* (Roche, 2006: 210).

One will obviously believe that any argument of rights which does not consider the human's condition in assertion should be considered as a mere humanistic thought pattern. This is because every man's activity centres around man himself, by nature, he lives to improve his supremacy, always for his own benefit, especially when he is not checked. The instruments of peace have been the following ticks of interest: active solidarity and subsidiarity, the culture for disarmament and stoppage of arm race, political and economic stability, the promotion of social justice theory, respect for human life, rights and duties, the demands for religious freedom & tolerance, religious and cultural morality, the value of human family, the desire for global ethics, the concern of human labour, and the respect for the rule of law. Human rights is defined as entitlements that pertain to human beings, and which constitute their essential nature. These rights are said to be inalienable, imprescriptible, or inherent (Abasili, 2004). Shivji on his part defined human rights "as demands or claims which individuals or groups make on society, some of which are protected by law, while others remain aspirations to be attained in the future" (Shivji cited in Abasili, *2004*).

As a human person he is entitled to the legal protection of his rights, and such protection must be effective, unbiased, and strictly just (John XXIII, 1963). The aspirated ones may need to be protected by the law in the present, but laid in the future to be achieved or demanded as the natural law will define them for the individual. The ultimate source of human rights is not found in the mere will of human beings, in the reality of the State, in public powers, but in man himself and in God his Creator. These rights are "universal, inviolable, and inalienable". *Universal* because they are present in all human beings, without exception of time, place or subject. *Inviolable* in so far as "they are inherent in the human person and in human dignity" and because "it would be vain to proclaim rights, if at the same time everything were not done to ensure the duty of respecting them by all people, everywhere, and for all people". *Inalienable* insofar as "no one can legitimately deprive another person, whoever they may be, of these rights, since this would do violence to their nature (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 2004, No. 153).

Considering these different approaches in the definition of the status of rights, they appear in forms of legal, theological, natural, humanistic and socio-political arguments. All of these consider man first in their assertion before definition. Despite these arguments, the development of nuclear weapons and militarism has forced the re-examination of the meaning of human security and rights in recent times, and determine the strength of any State's legislation on the protection of the human life and its society. These arguments show the relationship between man, nature, the State and even God is hindered. Hence, they maintain the connection of man and his rights, and try to legalize this union.

> *The significance of human rights as causation element in the transformation of the society cannot be gainsaid. Legal as well as political institutions can be altered on the basis of human and many a*

*revolution has been executed on this account* (Ndubuisi and Nathaniel, 2002: 237).

The above assertion shows the importance of human life in the development of the society. This needs the proper management of human affairs which will guarantee his/her well-being and rights. These elements propel the qualities of his/her meaningfulness and enhance the corresponding duties which are associated with the existence of his/her rights. Duties thereby reinforce rights and call for their defense and promotion as a task to be undertaken in the service of the common good (Benedict, 2009).

The arguments of human rights are evaluated on the principle of common good and justice. The common good requires that civil authorities maintain a careful balance between co-ordinating and protecting the rights of the citizens. On the other hand, justice imposes obligation on the individuals, communities, associations, nations and international bodies to respect the rights, subjects every entity to the dictates of law, and preaches the doctrines of peace which ensure the happy end of humanity. They show fairness on the administration of human affairs. It should not happen that certain individuals or social groups derive special advantage from the fact that their rights have not received preferential protection, nor should it happen that governments in seeking to protect these rights, become obstacles to their full expression and free use (John XXIII, *19*68). These are considered greatly, especially, in the proposition and executed of wars in the name of necessity, which are examined exclusively by the Security Council, under the United Nation Organization. Hence, John Paul II expresses man's condition as follows:

> *Man is rightly fears falling victim to an oppression that will deprive him of his interior freedom, of the possibility of expressing the truth of which he is convinced of the faith that he professes, of the ability to obey the voice of conscience that tells him the right path to follow. The technical means at the disposal of modern society conceal within themselves not only the possibility of self-destruction through military conflict, but also the possibility of peaceful subjugation of individuals, of environments, of entire societies and of nature, that for one reason or another might prove inconvenient for those who to possess the necessary means and are ready to use them without scruple* (John Paul II 1991, no.11).

With careful consideration of these qualities of man, he should be fully understood as a being with natural rights and fullness of beingness. He needs peace as a right to be fully developed as a communal being. Peace as right makes all individuals of identical worth simply because they are human. This estimation is not based on the natural history of the human race. It is the explicit and conscious work of rational penetration and transformation of reality by ethical consciousness built into the concept of right.

## The Hinged Corner

After all arguments about the status and nature of rights, whether they exist or not, or whether man also has inalienable rights or not, there is need to understand that the nature of man presupposes that he has rights and also duties to do in this world. Now, one of the

duties of man is the establishment of peace and justice, on which his/her rights, will be adequately recognized and administered without any thought of violation. Man is seen in many levels of earthly participation, as an individual, national and international figure of importance to work for peaceful coexistence and positive symbiosis. He exists because of this communal participation. He is not an isolated being. So, he needs peace to co-exist with others. The importance of the principles of solidarity and subsidiarity for communal participation should not be used to put vulnerable into subjugation and servitude. So, man should naturally help others to have peace as their right, not with strings attached. The strings are often times in forms of hatred and selfishness. Such hatred exploits the brutalities of the poverty, oppression, power, and greed of modern society. With these and others, the already condition of Human Rights Education as advocate mostly by Amnesty International, propels the condition for peace education. The Human Rights Education has elements such as it:

· Recognises the universality and indivisibility of human rights
· Increases knowledge and understanding of human rights
· Empowers people to claim their rights
· Assists people to use the legal instrument designed to protect human rights
· Uses interactive and participatory methodology to develop attitudes of respect for human rights
· Develops the skills needed to defend human rights
· Integrates the principles of human rights into everyday life
· Creates a space for dialogue and change, and,
· Encourages respect and tolerance (Idowu, 2007).

Obviously, communicating, national or international peace is realisable, because the condition of the world depends solely on what man makes out of it. But, man has been lacking this needed quality of development. That is why there have been advocates of peace. It should not be seen as an abstract reality or phenomenon. Peace requires that man should stop or avoid many things that are detrimental to his life and that of the society. He respects his right to life and dignity of his being. Like war itself, sustainable peace does not just happen. It requires the continued cultivation of social, human and economic developments. It does not occur to political leaders that the fight against hunger, scarcity, environmental pollution, and poverty, can also convert hapless soldiers of violence into productive members of the global community (Roche 1999). These detrimental factors are seen especially in the aberrations in science and technology, militarism, political instability and the like. Hence, Mihailo Mardovic opines that,

> *If we are serious about human rights we have to fight against these reversals and fight for peace. This presents madness of wasting trillions of dollars on weapons which will never be used-or if used would amount to the collective suicide of humankind-must be stopped or else all our highbrow deliberation about human rights will mean nothing* (Mardovic in Rouner 1988).

There is need to avoid this colossal waste in human existence, because the absence of peace in the society will cause much more harm to humanity. Just as Pope Paul VI observed before now that "the World Fund proposed could bring an end to waste, which is scandalous. Countries squander cash to boost their pride while millions starve. The money spent on arms is scandalous, while schools, and homes, and hospitals remain un-built. Let those responsible for such grave scandals hear what we say before it is too late" (Paul VI, 1967). Now, there is a call for holistic participation and involvement in peace building and development, to make man remain in cooperative and comfortable existence with his rights and dignity intact. In attempt to obtain a humane world, Douglas Roche asserts that; today, the major problems of human security, development, disarmament, environment, and human rights- are interlocked. No one problem can be solved alone. And no single State can solve problems by itself. An integrated agenda for human security demands cooperation by all nations (Roche, 2006). This call should be carried out by the States, especially their quest to acquire nuclear weapons and recourse to disarmament and peaceful negotiation in resolving disputes. The avoidance of war, particularly nuclear war, is thus a common responsibility. The security –even the existence- of the nations of the world is interdependent. For both East and West, the avoidance of nuclear catastrophe depends on mutual recognition of the need for peaceful relations, national restraint, and amelioration of the armaments competition (Common Security: *A Programme For Disarmament*, 1982).

The above assertion calls for global participation for the attainment of peace, justice and security. But, one needs to understand that all these agitated qualities/necessities centred on how man's freedom is managed and tailored to aid the development of the individual who possesses it and the society in which he has responsibilities to develop. The realization of culture of peace is faction on tailored freedom. "Freedom means responsibility-responsibility for oneself, for one's own good, for the good for others, including those who come after us. Claiming human rights and living without responsibility would lead us into a state of chaos. Only creative and responsible freedom can give hope to the future of mankind" (Kusumalayam, 2008). The role of the international organizations, especially, the United Nations Organization with her committees on security and nuclear weapons regulatory matters and the individual States, is to ensure that the management of any form of freedom, especially, professional freedom, is that of a channel towards the attainment of peace and justice, and should localize humanity into welcome entity. This role will constitutionally limit, if not eliminate all forms of violation of rights and dignity of the human personhood (Igwilo, 2009). One believes that when humankind is sensitized on the dangers of violations of human rights and dignity, and learns to avoid them, there will be global peace, and this will usher it into a holistic development of the individual and society at large (Soras, 1963).

**The Consideration of Peace Education**
The society is the product of the people, and they determine the nature of which the societal affairs should go according to use of their power of freedom ad intellect. The

human society is met to enjoy adequate peace and justice in fine-tuning its affairs toward development and progress. Of course, the past few decades have seen positive gains for humanity. The world economy has soared. Science has blossomed. Medical advances are stunning. Knowledge can be instantly transmitted by electronic means. However, the persons who enjoy these gains, for the most part, are already well off, and the gap between them and the dispossessed continues to grow. Despite all the advances in science and technology, injustice prevails (Roche, 2006). The value for peaceful living is highly diminishing, just because man refuses to understand the proper trend on developments have to be championed. The problems of development are widespread and demand speedy responses to alleviate humanity from extinction. Never has the human race enjoyed such an abundance of wealth, resources and economic power, and yet a huge proportion of the world's citizens are still tormented by hunger and poverty, while countless numbers suffer from total illiteracy. Never before has man had so keen on understanding of freedom, yet at the same time new forms of social and psychological slavery make their appearance.

Although the world of today has a very vivid awareness of its unity and of how one man depends on another in needful solidarity, it is most grievously torn into opposing camps by conflicting forces (Van Loon, 2002). For political, social, economic, racial and ideological disputes still continue bitterly, and with them the peril of a war which would reduce everything to ashes. True, there is a growing exchange of ideas, but the very words by which key concepts are expressed take on quite different meanings in diverse ideological systems. Finally, man painstakingly searches for a better world, without a corresponding spiritual advancement (Vatican II Council, *Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, Paul VI, 1976).

If there is no peace, there is no development. The development we see around us now without peace and justice is a shadow of hopelessness and it is physical rubric that cannot be relied upon. Human beings have limit of adaptation of interest, and without peace and social justice they live shorter than expected. Peace and justice necessarily promote social and environmental longevity of the individuals and the society they belong. It comes to play that development which is mostly hinged on the advancement of science and technology has little or nothing to be desired with the culture of peace. Peace is worked out by man himself, not by what he produces. It is from his conscious desire for happiness that is leaven on truth and charity.

Now, the society seeks developmental peace on the ground that the gaps of dispossession of her wealth and potentials have to be closed, in order to usher the advancement that she desires. Kofi Annan, as the former UN Secretary-General warns that "the century just ended was disfigured, time and again, by ruthless conflict. Grinding poverty and striking inequality persist within and among countries even amidst unprecedented wealth. Diseases, old and new, threaten to undo painstaking progress. Nature's life-sustaining services, on which our species depends for is survival, are being seriously disrupted and degraded by our own everyday activities (Roche 2006, John Paul, 1989). All conditions that negate the establishment of peace and justice necessitate the calls for the societal agitations making for progressive change of attitudes in community legislations, and national and international politicking. "But this sense of responsibility does not come unless

circumstances such as to allow man to be conscious of his dignity and to rise to his destiny in the service of God and of men" (*Gaudium et Spes*, 1965, Paul VI, 1976). The societal demand for developmental peace requires the collective responsibility in compacting the circumstance that may not encourage the advancement needed in any human society. The aim of any established societal group and nation is the realization of common good is universal and objective. It has a pragmatic consideration because of its effectiveness if generally adopted. "The common good of society is not an end in itself; it has value only in reference to attaining the ultimate ends of the person and the universal common good of the whole of creation" (Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace, 1995).

**Education and Morality of Rights for the Culture of Peace**
Curiosity is all about education of man. Man should be curious about what will promote his/her life intellectually and culturally. The achievement of the culture of peace is based on the education of the rights which the society will be able to give to the people and the ones man can lay claim to, the sense of morality which he has places on the value of his life and his activities of the living. Widespread illiteracy and other forms of educational limitation need to be eradicated. Hence, Roche encouraged that; although formal education is crucial, people learn at every stage of life. This is why I suggest we should take advantage of every opportunity to transmit knowledge about the key peace education themes of corporation, conflict resolution, non-violence, human rights, social justice, world resources global environment, and multicultural understanding (Roche, 2006). Aside the protection of the human values, the education of the human personhood will be highly regarded as total meaninglessness. For the formation of the whole of the human person, education for peace and social justice should be highly considered. For this formation to be complete, it must involve physical development, moral formation and intellectual formation that lead a person to develop a well-rounded personality.

The employment of peace-building and conflict resolution will bring the sense of moral value to human lives which are wasted in war and other inhumanised acts. This is because they debased the morality of life which the natural order and law have been maintaining, even as, "man is endowed with an extremely high level of adaptability to many different forms of stress, an attribute that enable him to survive, function and multiply under a very wide range of conditions" (Dubos in Glass, 1968). Even with these adaptabilities as qualities, every individual should be taught the value of peace-building and conflict resolution. Humanity should treat peace education not only as a subject in its own right, which it certainly is, but also as a perspective. It helps us to examine critically the major issues affecting humanity and to participate actively in society around us. There should be commitment to justice, concern for equality, tolerance of uncertainty and management of human changes and creativity in the education and moral development of the society.

The educational curriculum of the human and societal personalities should be met to adequately evaluate professional activities of man, and studies should be done on them, especially those that pose dangers on human life and society. The instruction on the detail of the elements or instruments of peace should be considered for the rescue of humanity

from extinction. But, natural order and morality demand that man should adequately develop in peaceful environment and with high value of his dignity. "Man has the fundamental right to freedom, equality and adequate conditions of life, in an environment of quality that permits a life of dignity and wellbeing, and he bears a solemn responsibility to protect and improve the environment for present and future generations" (*1972 Stockholn Declaration on the Human Environment's statement* in Kusumalayam, 2006). These are possibly achieved when the human mind is remade or re-oriented towards positive humanistic and cultural living. With recent happenings in human society, the consciousness of the value of peace should be inculcated in the early childhood of every developing individual who desires to be human in consideration of purpose.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The thrust of the paper calls collective responsibility towards the respect of human right and dignity. The social and political environments, most especially, are clouded with myopic vision that is known for its selfish acclamation, and are so demanding. So, the situation calls for a proactive humanity with positive religious, moral and cultural mindset for the rescue, which is imperfect in itself but without it humanity is totally incomplete. It demands on every individual to educate his/her next door neighbor in the value of peace and at a large extent he/she must practice what he/she is persuading the other to embrace. This actually has the ability to unite the physical and metaphysical natures of humanity into its wholeness and rescues it from the selfish nature or condition which it has found itself. Therefore, there should be adequate standard of living which will guarantee the material good, environmental capitalisation, aesthetic enjoyment of the natural resources by the people that will change their mentality toward life positively. This calls for "cultural conscience" in the management of human affairs by the State. The relation between rights and duties should be well defined. And to have adequate sensitisation of these elements of human existence by respecting cultural differences while celebrating their common humanity. In this case, there should be the establishment of University of Peace in each State of the world by the UNO, as we already have in Costa Rica. There be should be the need to strengthen the quest for peace by UNO. Also, in schools, the State should use this medium to teach the values of peace, justice and unity to the youth of the society, in attempt to have courteous humanity toward development and progress. These factors of healthy humanity should be grafted into schools curricula for proper internalisation. There should be seminars, symposia and conferences, organised by governmental and non-governmental agencies, especially for the youths on the needs for cultural, religious and ideological integration on common and cultural humanity.

# REFERENCES

**Abasili, C.** (2004). *Citizen and State Relation: A Political Approach.* Lagos: Concept.

**Benedict XVI,** (2009). *Caritas in Veritate.* Vatican City: L.E.V.

**Binde, J.** (ed) 2004. *The Future of Values: 21ˢᵗ Century Talks*, Paris: UNESCO Pub.

**Dubos, R.** (1968). Environmental Determinants of Human Life. In D. Glass (ed); *Environmental Influences.* NY: The Rockfeller Univ. Press & Russel Sage.

**Idowu, A.** (2007). Need for Human Rights Education. *Igbinedion University Law Journal*, Vol. 5. pp.120-30

**Igwilo, M.** (2009). Environmental Ethics: Human Condition and the Search for Sustainable Development in Africa. *Enwisdomisation Journal*, Vol. 4.

**John XXIII** (1963). *Pacem in Terri s (Peace on Earth)*, Vatican City: L.E.V.

**John Paul II** (1991). *Centisimus Annus*, Vatican City: L.E.V.

**John Paul II** (1989). *Redemptor Hominis*, Vatican City: L.E.V.

**Kusumalayam, J.** (2008). *Human Rights.* Mumbai: St Paul Press.

**Menanparampil, T.** (2010). Mission Areopaguses in Asia. *Omnis Terra*, PMU, June.

**Ndubuisi, F. N.** and **Nathaniel, O. C.** (2002). *Issues In Jurisprudence and Principles of Human Rights*, Lagos: Foresight Press.

**Paul VI** (1976). *Message for the World Day of Peace.* Vatican City: L.E.V.

**Paul VI** (1967). *Populorum Progressio.* Vatican City: L.E.V.

**Pontifical Council for Justice and Peace** (2004). *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church.* Kenya: Paulines Pub. Africa.

**Roche, D.** (2006). *The Human Right To Peace.* Mumbai: Better Yourself Books.

**Roche, D.** (1999). *Breads not Bomb: A Political Agenda for Social Justice.* U.S.A: Univ. of Alberta Press, 1999

**Soras, A.** (1963). *International Morality.* NY: Hawthorn Books.

**Rawls, J.** (1971). *A Theory of Justice.* Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press.

**Rouner, L.** (ed. 1988). *Human Rights and The World's Religion.* Indiana: Univ. of Notre Dame.

**Van Loon, J.** (2002). *Risks and Technological Culture.* London: Routledge.

**Vatican II Council** (1965). *Gaudiumet Spes.* Vatican City: L.E.V.