

**FAMILY AND PEACE CULTURE IN NIGERIA
A PAPER PRESENTED**

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Abstract

The place of the *promotion of peace in any society can never be underestimated. Whatever a society will be whatever it reflects has much to do with what operates in the families that makes up the entire society. Hence, apart from defining the key concepts used in this paper, attempts have been made to expose some of the peace repellers emanating from homes by looking into the Husband-wife-relationship and parent-child relationship. The aftermath of the peace repellers (anti-peace posture) exhibited in homes were also discussed. The paper also brought out the positive roles expected to be played at the family circle for the promotion of peace culture in Nigerian society.*

Introduction

Since the beginning of history, peace has been regarded as a blessing from God while chaotic and violent situations are perpetually seen as a scourge. Individuals and societies hates problematic and anxiety prone situations. But up till today peace in all ramification is yet being clamored for world-wide. The pertinent question being raised by people is "where can at least a modicum of peace and order be found? How and where can the effective and solid foundation for peace be laid? These pertinent questions were raised by Erasmus in the 16th century and a host of other philosophers like Emmanuel Kant and Jean Jacques Rousseau in the 18th century.

Uptill today, the world and of course Nigerian society are still making frantic efforts for peace to reign in every segment of the society. Our nation is presently be-devilled by high occurrences of cultism, prostitution, bribery, juvenile delinquency, armed robbery divorce, drug addiction, corruption, abortion and several other severe social vices. The whole picture is indeed a demonstration of wickedness of the highest order.

Undoubtedly, the family, which has ever been regarded as the corner stone of any society and the earliest agent of socialization that a child is exposed to is being looked up to for a lasting solution to the problems of lack of peace in the society. The family and no other group is seen as the surest means by which the nation can be salvaged from the chaotic and turbulent situations prevailing in our society. The foundation for the much desired peace culture can be fully entrenched in the home. When this is done, our families and nation will become chaotic and conflict free. No doubt peaceful home begat peaceful society.

Before we consider the present situation of most families in relation to peace culture, due consideration will be given to some concepts that have been used in the body of this paper. Such concept are: (i) The Family (ii) Peace (iii) Culture

The Family

Murdock (2000) defined family as a social group characterized by common residence, economic co-operation and reproduction. The family he expressed, include adults of both sexes at least two of whom maintain a socially approved sexual relationship and one or more children own or adopted of the sexually cohabiting adults.

The smallest family unit is the nuclear family while the extended family is an extension of the basic nuclear unit. For example the addition of the third generation such as the spouses' parents, the husband or wife's brothers and sisters etc.

The family is responsible for preparing the child for his or her social roles. As a social institution, the family provides the child with all that it takes to fit in culturally into the society. It is at the family level that the child is taught how to get along with others at home and beyond. As he/she interacts with his parents, he masters the culture. His behavior is also tailored in the direction desired and dictated by the parents and the society. Specifically the child through his interaction with the parents and others surrounding him he is able to learn how to respect elder, how to tolerate others and how to live peacefully with others in his environment. He is also exposed to all the norms and values that are upheld in the society.

Peace Defined

According to Longman Dictionary of contemporary English (1995). Peace refers to a feeling of calmness and lack of worry, violence and all forms of peace eroding problems.

Peace is a situation in which there is no quarreling between people who live or work together. Peace refers to a situation where fighting, anxiety, troubles, conflicts and all forms of pain and instability agents are absent.

Culture Defined

Culture, according to many to many sociologists, refers to ideals, beliefs and costumes that are shared and accepted by people in a society (ottaway 1980). For instance our culture in Nigeria teaches us to live in harmony with others, to be our brothers keeper to respect and preserve other people's lives. Nigerian culture is anti-robbery and frowns against incessant termination of other people's lives. Our culture places high value on moral decency, dignity of labour, patriotism, loyalty to the nation and peaceful co-existence etc.

Culture amounts to the total way of life of a group of people living together in the same environment. When a person is said to be well-customs we are saying in essence that the individual exhibits behaviours that are in harmony with the beliefs, values, norms and ethics of the society where he lives.

Shipman (1973) also saw culture as the "totality of material objects, values, knowledge and techniques which persists where waves of individuals pass through" He further said that to each individuals the culture present a set of meaning's to be learnt. And once this is done they will feel "at home", able to understand and respond in an appropriate way.

Culture is a social heritage passed on by social group. This group include the home, the school, the religious groups, the mass media etc. the personality of a child is partly determined by the cultural pattern that the child is exposed to. Hence, for a

child to love peace, engage in peace promoting activities he/she ought to have been exposed to the ways of peace taught at the home front and through other agents of socialization. A child that is raised in a quarrel-dominated environment is likely to be quarrelsome. When peace culture prevails in a family that is a quarrel-free environment, children raised in such environment are likely to be peace-loving not only when they are still living under the roof of their parents but when they become adults.

If there is anywhere where the foundation for peace culture is to be laid it is at the family level. Sometimes however, the family as well as the society causes maximum conflict because of the varying standards of conduct and the confusing number of choices of behaviour put up before the younger ones. These conflicts or negative conducts which can simply be referred to as peace repellers displaced in the family does not urge well for the development of peace culture in the family and outside it. Some of these peace repellers are discussed below. **Peace Repellers in Homes**

Although the family has been recognized as the best socializing agent and also create the avenue for the child to receive the needed to function acceptably in the society values entrenched in the culture of the society are not enhanced as a result of several anti-social behaviors and lapses in child-upbringing exhibited in the family. These anti-social behaviours can simply be referred to as peace repellers in homes. These repellers negate the universal family moral principles that guide the establishment of peaceful co-existence at home and the society. Some of these anti-peace culture or peace repellers are discussed below.

Peace Repellers Emanating from Husband -Wife Relationship in the Family

Marriage according to Amaga (2002) is a legal union of a man and a woman who have individually entered into a covenant relationship for the purpose of companionship and procreation. The family being formed is supposed to be a centre of hilarity and a place of great happiness and peace. Unfortunately, many see marriage as a necessary evil and a world of frustration. Peace has eluded many families. Some couple lives together like cat and rat. Many are living together in hostility and children are left to struggle on their own within the unfavourable environment. All these are experienced in homes as a result of the following peace repellers.

1 Lack of Submission to the man's leadership

Crisis occur in the family when the wife resist the husband's authority. In such a situation the husband can withdraw money or even desert the home, womanize or become alcoholic. The problem can sometimes lead to divorce and its unlimited consequences.

2 Absence of Love

Marriage that is solemnized in the absence of love will not be devoid of problems. Such marriages are full of frustrations. When the family is not built on the foundation of love, peace cannot be truly witnessed. In such homes, pretences, harshness,

bitterness and avoidance of each other are heavily displayed. Moreover, intimacy will also be eroded, records of wrongs are kept and bitter words are exchanged.

Also when love is not demonstrated especially by the husband, for instance in the area of sharing what is suppose to be for all, lack of trust and suspicion will manifest.

3 Lack of Appreciation

Peace is swept under the carpet in the family when nothing good things done by either of the party is not appreciated. Where criticisms and complaints about almost all steps taken by the man or woman abound there will be problems. In such homes, failures are only seen while successes and progressive efforts are never recognized. When good steps are taken for granted it demoralizes and breeds depression, withdrawal and intermittent outburst of anger. Love will also depart while hatred prevails.

Poor Leadership from the Husband

When the man of the house lacks the quality leadership needed to carry the entire family along crises can be experienced. Porous handing of family affairs by the man can lead to resistance from the woman or the keeping of friends who are morally bankrupt. The woman of the house can decide to move in and out of the house at will. Definitely little or no respect will be accorded a man who does not have a firm grip on his family. Lack of Protection

A family where the husband fails to protect his wife from the invasion of the in-law will be devoid of peace Chaotic and when the husband takes side with his people, hostility and dislike will be expressed by the in-laws to the wife. Hence, as long as external invaders are allowed to interfere in the affairs of a family there will be no iota of peace in that family. Abandonment/Communication gap

Both husband and wife are expected to create time to attend to each other. Whenever the needed attention and room for meaningful communication are not given as a result of business schedule or other commitments there will be problems. A wife or husband that is neglected can get lonely, frustrated, devastated, or get bottled-up with problems seeking a good outlet in his partner but when the attention is not given such can degenerate into sickness or anxiety-related problems. When the man or the woman is left to live as if he is a widower or widow while the partner is yet living peace cannot be experienced in such homes.

Lack of Mutual Respect and Honour

Heavy problems are witnessed in homes where the husband rebuke or assault his wife publicly in the presence of outsiders, the children or the helps. Women love to be honoured but when they are treated as nothing but a common property resentment and negative reaction will follow.

Intolerance /Lack of Perseverance

Husband -wife relationship demands for great tolerance and patience. Hot-tempered men find it difficult to tolerate their spouses. What is commonly expressed by such men is "I cannot tolerate such non sense". When anger cannot be easily tamed crises are bound to come and peace will not be witnessed.

Lack of Trust

When there is lack of trust in the family couples are likely to be afraid of each other. In such families the other party's salary or business income may not be known. In some cases, the man or woman may find it difficult to confide in his/her partner because he/she is a busybody always leaking the family secret to friends, neighbours or colleagues. Such attitude repels peaceful co-existence and the development of peace-culture in the family

Lack of Unity in the Family

Another peace repeller in the family is lack of unity among the family members especially the man and the woman. In some families the man or the woman may decide to keep independence record of his/her property or bank account as a result of insecurity. Wherever there is hide and seek game played by any of the spouses suspicion and the fear of future disappointment will abound.

Lack of Provision for the Family needs

The husband is the head and the main bread-inner for the family. But when a man put up care-free attitude towards meeting the needs of his family peace will be eroded. Some men have enough to cater for the comfortability of their families but for some personal obnoxious reasons such responsibilities are ignored. They prefer to subject their family to untold suffering, lack, want and leave them to wallow in abject poverty. Such situation does not promote peace in the family.

Display of Laziness

Peace is repelled in a family where one of the two parties folds his arms and expects every kobo to come from the other party. Many will complain of lack of job and choose to live comfortably with poverty as a companion. Such a person will sit, watch and wait for manna to rain down to him/her from heaven. No doubt the one who is running around to make ends meet will one day react negatively.

Peace is also prevented from thriving in homes where the woman is lazy and leaves the preparation of food exclusively to housemaids. When the food is badly prepared men can be infuriated.

Dirty Environment

Unclealiness can erode the existence of peace in the family. Most men want and desire clean environment. However, some women prefer to sit comfortably in dirty environment, prepare food in dirty kitchen and leave the entire house unkept. Such an environment can drive the man out of the house. Definitely when a man does not see a neat environment for a rest he looks for it outside

Unmaintained Physical Appearance

Some men can be driven out of the house to more gorgeously dressed ladies when their wives are fond of dressing shabbily or put on worn-out clothes or have their shapes unattended to. Not taking proper care and watching over ones appearance can make a woman loose her husband to ladies outside the family. This can eventually lead to polygamy.

Sexual Denial

Sex gives emotional as well as physical satisfaction to the individuals involved. It is meant to cement the bond of love between couples. But lack of peace and resentment are witnessed in the family as a result of sexual denial. Some women

shun the request as a result of tiredness, and will want their husband to always understand. Some also use it as retaliatory weapon. When the man is denied sexual enjoyment they seek for alternative 'ground' for it outside. Many problems in the family are traceable to the abuse of this weapon of unity between husband and wife.

Impotency

Husband's inability to prove his manhood can cause lack of peace in the family. The tolerance of the woman in this regard can turn to dislike after a long period. It can lead to negative reactions, separation and extramarital relationship

Lack of Hospitality

Peace-culture is not promoted in a family where the woman demonstrate luke-warm attitude to visitors. This can lead to negative reactions from the husband. The way some visitors are received makes them uncomfortably. A family where such hostile attitudes are displaced may not experience the desired peace.

Peace Repellers emanating from parent-child relationship

Several peace-repellers can be identified from the way children are raised in the family. Children are expected to be brought up in accordance with the values upheld in the society. Promotion of peaceful co-existence, peaceful environment and the development of peace-loving individuals are the target of Nigerian society.

Children learn through observation and imitation and also act and behave based on what they have observed and imitated. These observed behaviours can be negative in nature such as violence, assault, lack of submission, aggressiveness, hatred etc. the culture of the family has dominant influence on the child's personality. Presently, Nigerian youths have turned themselves into social menace and a great embarrassment to the family and the nation. They turned themselves into murderers, prostitutes, armed robbers and what can be summed up as devil incarnate, the carry-over of the home influence on some of our youths is very obvious. Where then has the family gone wrong in the up-bringing of our future leaders? Some of the very common family lapses or peace propellers are discussed below.

- (a) Lack of Proper Discipline: Moral decadence in our society today is traceable to in-discipline. When discipline is not enforced early enough children are likely to end up becoming rebellious. Also when parents are in disagreement just because one of the parent discipline the child for disobedience or when the rod is outrightly spared and sometimes when children are disciplined in the presence of their friends. The desired peace and conformity will eventually become a mirage. When children are also discipline in anger without exercising self control they are made to become rebels.
- (b) Lack of warm acceptance and affection for the children. This can make a child to seek for such affection outside the family.
- (C) Failure to meet the needs of the children. Odediran (1999) identified the basic needs of the child as recognition, security, independence, affection etc. when the needs are not met children can be maladjusted, frustrated and be in conflict with the home or display inferiority complex.

Large family size

This can erode peace in the family. It can lead to restricted contact with adults, prevent opportunities to acquire adult habits. Ladokun (1989) pointed out that the attention received by the child from his parents is drastically reduced. Children will not be properly monitored, counseled or disciplined.

A family can be large as a result of polygamy. Polygamy according to Dada (1999) is a form of marriage whereby a man marries more than one wife. Studies have shown that such homes are characterized by:

- Quarreling
 - Disparity in the way children are treated especially in the sharing of family income.
 - Rivalries, Jealousy, competition, suspicion and conflicts Quari (1960), Larin (1967).
 - Aggressive and intolerant behaviours. Dada (1999) from his study of polygamy and the effects on children confirmed that children from such homes are usually very aggressive. Out of 100 respondents used 87% strongly agreed that such children are intolerant.
- (e) Not appreciating children's efforts and contributions. This can lead to withdrawal and frustration.
- (f) Too much play and not enough attention to responsibilities according to Packer (1995) can produce irresponsible self-centered children. Also too much work and stress and inadequate opportunity to relax on the other hand can produce a child who is prone to depression and burnout as an adult.
- (g) Critical or provoking parents. When children are exasperated (provoked) it simply gives a picture of someone riding a horse and kicking it with his knees to get it move. This leads to bitterness, anger and resentment.
- (h) Insensitivity to the sensitive moments when children are hurt. According to Benny (1995) this will leave a mark of rejection in the life of a child.
- (i) Divorce /Broken Home and manifold related problems. These do affect the promotion of peace culture at family level. Manifold as explained by Murdock (2000) refers to the type of family where children are raised by single adult. Usually such homes are headed by women. Children raised in such homes according to Finch (2000) findings are usually involved in youth crimes. She added that such children do have psychological and social problems such as engaging in drug abuse. They are equally affected by the stigma attached to coming from a single-parent family. Such children as Finch said are likely to become lone parents in the future.

For Divorce or broken home problem, children are equally adversely affected. Such situations does not promote peace culture, rather, it repels it. Divorce/broken home breeds, shock hurt, bewilderment, anger, rejection and isolation. Loss of self worth, resentment, insecurity, emotional depression, bitterness, and the development of several abnormalities. Children are sometimes neglected, denied or deprived of their basic needs of life.

Children can eventually become armed robbers, pick-pocketers, alcoholic and drug addicts etc. Children from broken homes are said to be maladjustment Orosiji (2001) in her studies confirmed this. 71 out of 100 teachers that responded to her question on this issue strongly agreed that such children are maladjusted,

- (j) Discord in homes can also serve as peace repeller. Persistent conflict in homes can cause a child that is brought up in such environment to reach cross roads as to who to emulate with the inadequacies displayed by the parents. Such children are often confused and are likely to become rebels at home and delinquent outside.
- (k) Insensitivity to the spiritually development of the child. Man according to Pastalozzi a Swizz philosopher is made up of what he referred to as the three Hs. The Head, the Hand and the heart .the three aspects must be given attention for proper development to take place. The need stands for the intellectual development of the child, the Hand for the physical while the heart stands for the spiritual/moral development of the child.

A family that is metaphysically disposed to the existence of God will want to bend the hearts of their children towards the recognition of the place of God in the life of man and what He expects from His creature. Whenever the fear of God is not planted early enough in the life of a child he/she will turn out to is vagabond or a devil incarnate inhibiting the peace of the family and the society.

The role of the family in the promotion of peace culture in Nigeria.

We have earlier discussed some of the negative behaviours exhibited in homes which in one way or the other repels the full establishment of peace culture in the family. Undoubtedly peace culture can be promoted when the positive environment is created for it at the family circle.

To build a crisis-free family and society is quite demanding. It calls for sacrifice, absolute devotion and the totality of our being. However, no sacrifice is too much for the sustainability of peace in our homes. Steps that the family can take for the promotion of peace culture in our society are discussed below.

Husband-wife Relationship

For peace to reign and be sustained in the family

- (i) The man should display quality leadership by leading by example
- (ii) Both husband and wife should lay down good example for the children to emulate especially in the area of tolerance, love, patience, self-control, understanding, forgiveness, mutual relationship etc.
- (iii) The woman should live a life of prefect submission to the husband's authority. Nagging and stubbornness outburst of anger should be avoided
- (iv) Divorce or broken home should be prevented through genuine forgiveness. Room should be created for dialogue and true forgiveness should be demonstrated without delay.
- (v) Love should permeate the family relationship. Love covers many sins and helps to over look faults. Love should not be expressed verbally only but also physically. Mistakes made should also be corrected privately and not in the presence of outsiders.

- (vi) The husband should protect his wife from 'rats' and 'cockroaches'. Husband should know that a garden that is well dressed but not fenced round with a wall will be exposed to invasion of diverse kinds especially invasions from the in-laws.
- (vii) Transparency should be allowed in the way the spouses relate together. There should be no keeping of separate bank accounts or hidden agenda of any type. When this is allowed suspicion will be the order of the day.
- (viii) The man should provide adequately for his family as the main bread winner. When this is not done there will be exchange of abusive words instead of praise.
- (ix) Both the man and the wife should learn to appreciate good efforts or contributions made by the other partner. Delicious food, made by the wife and items bought by the man whether good or not should be appreciated instead of responding through complaints and criticisms. Appreciation brings joy encouragement and excitement.
- (xx) The time and attention needed by the wife should be given. When a partner is neglected he/she is frustrated. No matter how tight the schedules are quality time and attention should be given to the man or the woman. This will allow for a free flow of communication and a free expression of one's feelings. Trustworthiness should also be displayed in the home Flippancy on the part of the woman should be guided against. Laziness especially from the woman should be guided against. The woman should work with her hand to contribute to the comfortability of her family. She should be innovative and creative in food preparation. This will attract the man and get him close to his family.

In the area of cleanliness, the aesthetic value of the woman should be easily noticed by the man and visitors that come to the house. An unkept environment will nauseate and draw the man away from the house. The woman should be hospitable. Hostile attitudes that draw visitors away should not be displayed.

The woman should always look good. She should always make herself attractive and neat to avoid losing her husband to the ready hands outside.

In the area of sexual relationship, starving of the other partner should be prevented. Sex is an instrument for cementing the marriage union. It should not be used as a weapon of punishment. Many quarrels and troubles are traceable to sexual denial in the family. Sex is a great weapon of peace is should be used appropriately.

Promoting peace culture in the family-parents-child relationship

Children who are the future successors of the parents and the future leaders of the society are to be intimated with everything needed to propel peace in and outside the family. Peace-promoting steps mastered by the child will aid the proper development of the child's personality and allow for the development of peaceful co-existence in the society. If children will not develop thwartedly, and become torn in the flesh of the family and society then, the following peace-propellers must be taken care of by parents.

- (i) Parents should meet the basic needs of their children. When this is not done they will feel insecure and go to wrong hands to meet the needs.
- (ii) Divorce to be averted. This leads to emotional depression and other abnormalities for children.
- (iii) Children should be given due attention. Parent should stop running after transient things and devote more time to listening to their children.
- (iv) They should lay down good examples for the children to copy by teaching from percept to percept.
- (v) Children should be disciplined
 - Early enough to prevent rebellion
 - In love not out of hatred
 - Privately especially the adolescents. When done in the presence of friends resentment will be the result.

Discipline should be with the absolute support of the two parents. None of the parents should be emotionally carried away and prevent the child from being disciplined.

- (vi) Parents should watch the company being kept by their children and bad ones should be disbanded.
- (vii) Commend the children when they behave well. This will equally prevent rebellion
- (viii) Give sex education parents should speak to their children about the goodness of virginity, morality, waiting, until marriage before sex is tasted, Pornography films should also disallowed by parents.
- (ix) Parents should make every effort not to provoke their children. Benny (1995) identified five fathers who provoke their children. They are:
 - The silent Father- He does not interact with the children but hides his face behind the newspaper.
 - Explosive Father- He shouts, screams and threatens and curses and loses control when things go wrong.
 - Critical Father- He has nothing good to say but constantly telling the children that they are not good enough.
 - Inconsistent Father- He does not keep his promises. Such fathers are not trusted by the children.
 - Egoistic Father - He is never wrong, he is never ready to apologize.
- (x) The spiritual development of the children should be the priority of the family. They should be taught the ways of the Lord and when they grow up they will not depart from that way. The problem of cultism, abortion, armed robbery etc. will be reduced to the barest minimum level if parents can take the pain to vehemently promote the spiritual lives of their children. Finally to promote peace culture in the family one should always remember the word RELATE meaning:
 - R- Relationship: the need to get involved in the relationship
 - E- Encouragement: this will go a long way in helping the other partner to cope with the struggles of life

- L- Listening: True interaction and meaningful relationship take place only if there is both an initiator and a responder. An effective listener will clarify what he has heard, seek to understand the speaker
- A- Acceptance: The family is the best place to practice and learn acceptance.
- T- Time: Time must be given to each other to cement family relationship
- E - Enjoyment: Relationship are not just for serious matters. It has to do with enjoyment. Unstructured time of relaxation should be spent together in and outside the home.

Recommendations

Since the family is a major peace propelling centre in the society, initiating and sustaining peace culture at the family level will be made possible and pretty easy if all that have been discussed above under the role of the family for peace promotion are considered and implemented in the family.

Conclusion

The family is indeed occupying a key position in the promotion of the much desired peace in the society. The paper has tried to consider some of the factors that hinder the development of peace-culture in the family by making reference to the negative relationship that exist between parents in some homes and the wrong ways by which children are raised together with several obnoxious environments that surrounds the child which makes children to turn problematic in the society.

The various ways by which the family and the society can be sanitized from violence and moral decadence which are all anti-peace culture be devilling our society have been considered. It is behaved that the points raised under the role of the family in the promotion of peace culture in Nigeria when put into use by parents will help in painting the image of the nation better than what it is presently.

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