

Peace and Justice as Necessary Conjuncts for Effective Social and Political Relations in Human Society

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Abstract

The history of human society is one of unending quest for peace and justice as means to ensuring meaningful social relations. Thus, the discourses concerning religious beliefs, human security, individual and societal development which are core to human existence could hardly be made without recourse to either or both of, peace and justice. However, in practical terms both concepts are hardly seen as inseparable conjuncts in the quest for harmonious social relations because local and global peace, just and humane society are constantly threatened by religious extremism, ethnicity, unbridled partisanship, bad leadership, abbreviations of rights and freedom, nepotism, lopsided development and marginalization among other instances of man's inhumanity to humanity are prevalent. These, in praxis therefore, underscore the view that, even contemporary human society has not adequately countenance the necessity of a complement of peace with justice in order to ensure a just, well ordered and peaceful society. In addition, the pervasiveness of these *contretemps* in the society attest to the reality that, most cultures of the world profess the desire for peace without a concomitant quest for justice thus, consciously undermining harmonious relations. This paper argues that, for a constructive, productive and harmonious social relations to be in place in human society, practical demonstration of the conjunction of a culture of peace and sense of social justice by individuals, institutions and governments at every level of human social existence is instructive. In this wise, this involves the redirection of the human minds to a moral world view that gives credence to mutual respect to the dignity of the human person, tolerance, promotion and protection of the freedom and rights of others, through the formulation and execution of sociopolitical, economic and educational programme that place greater value on human dignity. The paper consequently made a recourse to the traditional Yorùbá culture because of her unflinching preference for peace and the principles of social justice which have defined the people's interpersonal relations and their relations with other ethnic nationalities in Nigeria. It is argued that this

culture has inherent values that can be appropriated as rudiments for the development of enduring social and political relations in modern society. The paper, consequently adopts the analytic and prescriptive approaches of the qualitative method of research.

Keywords: Peace, justice, rights, social relations, conjunction.

Introduction

One of the numerous challenges that has constantly steered humans at the face since the inception of human society has been the attainment of enduring peace and how justice could be appropriately enhanced, so as to achieve meaningful and productive social coexistence among the different individuals and groups in the society. Some of the efforts aim at addressing these challenges practically focused and treat each of peace and, justice in isolation of one another.

In contemporary age, conflicts and violent-conflicts of different dimensions and magnitude, abbreviations of rights, miscarriage of justice in the guise of legal technicalities characterized the pronouncements of western imposed legal institutions especially court thus, frustrating court redress of aggrieved parties. Accused persons take advantages of the *lacuna* in the letters of the law to escape justice, justice is sometimes compromised for political expediencies, so as to allow "peace" to reign and, oftentimes relative peace is enforced with the instrumentality of power even when justice is trampled upon. All these called to question the conception of peace sought in contemporary society.

Worried by the non-complementary role accorded peace and justice in contemporary age, Peter Tosh, a famous Jamaican reggae musician lamented that, "Everyone is crying out for peace ... none is crying out for justice"¹. In the same vein, Martin Luther King Jnr.² while agitating for servant-leaders as panacea to dearth of political leadership remarked that, the world lacks leaders in love with justice and humanity. These lamentations do not only underscore the importance attached to peace and the inadequate attention given to justice in human society but it also called to question the prevailing sociopolitical situation that was assumed to be peaceful. Unfortunately, this dichotomy often made between peace and justice continued unabated in human society. Inasmuch as people concealed or bottled their disenchantments and go about their daily routines devoid of protest, violence or when, the manifestations of violence are successfully curtailed by authorities, peace is assumed to have been attained. This is largely the conception of peace in place in contemporary human society, particularly in Africa where rights are abused on daily basis, and the resort to violence as means of redress are in great proportion.

Theoretically, attempts are made to consider peace and justice as Siamese twin that cannot be separated in the productive venture of actualizing harmonious relations. Perhaps, the very first attempt to articulate a necessary connection between peace and justice was made by Plato in his analysis of justice in the society as a derivative of justice in the individual person. In this analysis, the attainment of justice in both the individual and society is closely knitted with individual and social peace respectively.³ Joseph Montville also remarked that, "Justice is the most fundamental element of peace."⁴ To attain a peaceful society, therefore, Montville argued for the vital roles of justice. But, how to achieve both peace and justice in human society was not addressed by him. Ekanola Adebola⁵ opined that justice is a prerequisite for peace. This suggests that peace can only be attain if a just society is already in place. In other words, peace can only thrive if and only if, the principles of social justice are already in place. Ekanola's viewpoint limits the quest for peace and justice to only human interpersonal /group relations. It

neglected the relation that humans have with the non-human elements of the environment that can impede the attainment of peace.

In practical terms, however, most human societies erroneously conceived both peace and justice as independent conjuncts. They assumed the existence of “peace” in a sociopolitical arrangement that is sustained by haphazardly emplaced principles of social justice. In other words, true peace that edifies humanity is lacking and, for there to be this conception of peace, it has to be anchored on the principles of social justice because justice and peace go hand in hand, you cannot have one without the other for harmonious relations. Peace and justice are necessary conjuncts: peace devoid of social justice is no true peace and justice that abbreviates right is no justice. Peace is justice and justice is peace. They are necessary conjuncts, it is the presence of both conjuncts that can result into harmonious living. The presence of peace devoid of justice cannot birth harmonious relations because such peace cannot be dignifying to the human person. The presence of both peace and justice are necessary for sustainable and enduring social relations. A recourse to a sociopolitical arrangement that pays a commensurate attention to peace and justice is instructive in actualizing productive social and political relations. The traditional Yorùbá culture of peace and sense of social justice provides a veritable example in this regard. This can be appropriated and domesticated by other cultures of the world.

The article is therefore sub-divided into five sections. The first section x-rays the quest for peace in human society. Section two explores the vision that human society has for peace. In the third section, the worldview of the Yorùbá is explained so as to provide adequate understanding for the Yoruba conception and approaches to peace and justice in the fourth section. The last section is the conclusion.

The Quest for Peace in Human Society

Peace is a universally desired value in human society, it is cherished not only as an end in itself but also as a means to other ends. As a means to other ends, peace is capable of facilitating personal progress and societal development. Its presence could aid growth as well as individual and societal happiness. As an end in itself, it is expected to engender harmonious living among humans.

In conceptions, the term varies in signification with things and time: It could connote a description of a particular state of affairs in expression such as, “the environment is peaceful” it can command a normative connotation in expression such as “it is good to be peaceful with all men”, it may also designate a specific social relations in expression such as, “the peace treaty aimed at ensuring violence-free electioneering between the political parties was violated”. In another sense, the concept may not only relate to the state of mind of an individual (individual peace) in such expressions as, “I am troubled hence not at peace with myself”, but also to what is in operation in the society generally (social peace). In other words, the concept oscillates between being normative, abstract, descriptive or empirical.

Furthermore, some scholars such as Albert Einstein have also argued that the proper and adequate conception of peace must be devoid of the presence of war or violence, hence, for a sociopolitical situation to be properly described as peaceful it must not contain any trace of war or dissension⁶ This suggests that war or violence could impede or destroy the attainment of peace. In this wise, the American Military History⁷ conceives the word ‘peace’ to imply the absence of war. Ironically, some just war theorists conceive war and violence as a means of achieving peace. On the other hand, peaceful situation, it is argued, consists of the presence of

some social and political conditions which include prosperity, cooperation, justice and integration, (the positions of Martin Luther King, Jr.⁸, and Albert Einstein⁹ typified this).

Be that as it may, these variations did not diminish the value attached to, and the desirability of peace as an important condition for the continuous existence of man as well as the society. More importantly, the interrogations of the phenomena called peace, reveal its complexity, evasive nature, scope and conceptions. These perhaps informed the position of Olawale Isaac Albert¹⁰ that more than anything else, energies should rather be dissipated on how to ensure the enthronement of peace in human society. Doing this is majorly the concern of this work.

Peace scholars, sociopolitical thinkers, religious and social institutions have consistently interrogate the state of affairs, as well as the well-being of people with a view to determining the extent in which peace is attained. The contractarian philosophers especially, Thomas Hobbes¹¹, John Locke¹² and Jean Jacques Rousseau argued that the emergence of the civil society was the radical departure from the state of nature that was averse to peace. The upshots of Immanuel Kant's¹³ preliminary and definitive articles as contained in *Perpetual Peace* is an emphasis on the need to accord respect to the dignity of the human person as a drive towards how peace can be permanently established in human society. All the aforementioned do not countenance the roles of non-human elements of the environment in the quest for peace. However, Peter Singer¹⁴ the animal rights advocate, and notable environmentalists argue for sustainable relations between humans and the ecosystem for enduring peace.

Unfortunately, the attainment of enduring peace has been a mirage to humans and the non-humans in the environment because of inadequate synergy between the two. In other words, violent-conflicts, insurgencies, war, terrorism, and other human actions on the one hand, and deforestation, pollution, climate change and other negative human inflictions on the non-humans on the other hand, threaten the eco-system and man's desire for peace.

Vision for a Just Social Relations

Interactions between individuals, groups and, relations between communities or nations are predicated on expectations, some of which include that they will be fairly treated by others with whom they are in relationship. In several cases, the expectations are legitimate because the natural law of interpersonal relations, the ethics of harmonious relations and the culture of most human societies approve of the right to fair and reasonable treatment as drive towards effective social and political relations. In most traditional African societies, interpersonal relations are encapsulated in a unique spirit of expectation and actualization - of - expectation format: this uniqueness strengthened the description of the African society as communalistic, the society expects her security, stability, progress and development to be through the efforts of the individuals. The individual looks up to the society for the actualization of his or her needs and aspirations. Within the traditional Yorùbá setting for instance, expectations are common in interpersonal relations. Segun Gbadegesin captures some as follows;

it is unfair to me if I help you on your farm and when the time comes you refuse to help me on mine. Also, as able-bodied adults, my wife and I assume the obligation to provide for our children's future by giving them good education. At our old age, they have the responsibility to take care of us. After all, this is why the proverbial old (Rabbit) Òkété feeds on the milk provided by her daughter.¹⁵

Expectations of the individual in modern society could include unhindered access to commonly owned goods and services, recognition of identity, respect and protection of the dignity of the human person etc. In the case of a nation, expectations would include the promotion and protection of national interest, recognition of sovereignty and territorial integrity. Consequently, justice is seen to embody the fulfilments of the expectations. Suffice it to say, when any of these expectations is truncated by one of the parties in a relation, injustice is adjudged to be meted. Ill-feelings, distrust and acrimony would characterize social relations.

Unfortunately, individuals and states most times flounder on obligations they have to others. States relinquish their responsibilities to citizens: provision of basic social and existential needs are abandoned, security of lives and properties which are the primary responsibilities of any government are left in the hands of private individuals, development whose source of fund is the commonwealth are lopsidedly sited. In essence, a just and well-ordered society becomes a mirage to human society. The traditional Yorùbá society devised means by which justice could be dispensed and peaceful co-existence enhanced. The understanding of how Yoruba culture conceived and approached peace and justice in ordering her society is better appreciated when acquainted with the worldview of the people.

The worldview of any group of people is a function of their belief system and their perception of reality which ultimately constitutes their norms and values often referred to as culture. Suffice it to say, no one culture is superior to another but, part of what the dynamism of culture entails is that there could be a modification of existing one on the basis of new experiences of life. In other words, what enhances peace and harmonious relations in a particular culture can serve as useful tool if incorporated into another culture ravaged by disorderliness and injustice. It is on the basis of this that the worldview of the Yorùbá is espoused to provide an appropriate synergy between it and other cultures of the world, particularly other African cultures that it has close affinities.

The Cosmological Worldview of the Yorùbá

The Yorùbá have a dualistic conception of reality namely; the physical and the spiritual. The physical or the material consists of animals, plants, humans, rocks, rivers and other non-living things in the environment. The mental or the spiritual consists of the living dead, (ancestors), witches, divinities and deities. The occupants of the two dimensions of reality relates with one another physically and metaphysically. This accounts for why inexplicable causes of some events in the physical realm readily find explanations from the spiritual perspective as attested to by Godwin Sogolo that, "observable events in African society are attributed to the activities of spiritual entities such as witches, ghosts, gods, and ancestors"¹⁶

The supernatural realm, like the physical, is hierarchically stratified with, *Olódùmarè* (God) alongside *Obatala* (*Orisa-nla*), *Ifá* (*Òdrúnmilà*), and *Èsòù*, occupies the first level. The second level is occupied by other *Orisa* (*deities*), the *Ajogun* (warriors against humanity and the good forces of nature), and the *Aje/Eleye* (bird people, owner of birds). while the *Egun/Egungun*, or *Ara Orun/Oku Orun* (ancestors/denizens of the spirit world) inhabit another level.¹⁷ The physical realm is stratified with humans at the apex, followed by plants, animals, rocks, rivers etc. The prevalence of peace and justice among the Yorùbá is believed to be a function of the cohesive operations of the physical and the spiritual elements of the cosmos because "...There are possibility of disagreement or disaffection between human beings and the supernatural"¹⁸ and, between humans and the non-human elements of the cosmos. We will return to this shortly.

The Yorùbá society also has a dualistic conception of justice and a triadic conception of peace. For justice, its dispensation could be temporal or transcendental. It is temporal when it is earthly based. This is typified by judgement and pronouncement made by the Head of family, Council of Elders, Palace courts or other human elements. It is transcendental, when judicial pronouncements emanate from Olodumare(God) or any of his subordinates such as the Ògún, the Yorùbá god of justice or any other divinities, who could impose sanction on offender here on earth or after death. For instance, as part of the myth of reincarnation, which the Yorùbá believed in, Olodumare could cause the soul of a wicked person to enter the body of a snake, a tree or a goat as reprimand for moral infractions on earth while, the soul of the oppressed person or a slave may be caused to enter into the body of a king or a queen. In essence, justice dispensation according to the Yoruba belief could be from the spiritual to the physical elements, it could be between the human elements and, between the human and non-human elements.

Most literature, perhaps, for academic convenience collapsed the triadic conception of peace in Yorùbá society to dualistic conception individual and social peace. It is, however, obvious that the Yorùbá belief concerning peace spans across the individual, group/association or community and the peace of the non-human elements of the environment, all of which are believed to impact on peaceful social existence of human beings. Disagreements or conflicts that could threaten peace and harmonious relation are often the products of reactions to unfair treatment by either or both of the parties in social relations. In the case of disaffection between humans and the supernatural or, non-human elements in the environment such could be caused by the desecration of the sacred or violation of traditions or cultural norms of the community by individual or group. When this happens, sanctions in the form of sacrifice for atonement, infliction of the community with natural calamities (such as drought, famine, pestilence, poor harvest) embargo, fine or banishment from community could be imposed for the infraction. The fulfilment of the sanction is expected to restore peaceful coexistence. Peace and justice, therefore is a function of respect and reciprocal relation.

In the same vein, when unfair treatment is meted out by an individual to another individual, or by a group or community to an individual, such unjust act is believed to be capable of threatening peaceful coexistence and, the consolidation of a just and well-ordered society hence, appropriate and well-thought out sanctions would be imposed on offenders. Fundamentally, justice administration in these situations will focus mainly on peace without compromising truth, integration, peacemaking and harmonious living of the disputing parties. Consequently, the judge (s) would temper justice with mercy, refrain from imposing full wrath of the law on offender and also, give the benefit of the doubt to the accused to guard against miscarriage of justice because, as the saying goes ;

Ti aba niki a da ina bi ejo se gun to ao da ina sun ile.

(If sanction were to be commensurate with offence, irreparable damage would be inflicted).

Oríyeyeni Mògún, aláì? ?Ì lóp? ninuw?n

(Many of the victims of capital punishment carried out at Mògún are innocent of the crimes of which they were found guilty.)

The cumulative goal of the efforts at dispensing justice in Yoruba society as rightly posited by Moses Oke, is not victory for any of the parties in dispute but, for socially beneficial, peaceful resolution of dispute that could otherwise constitute a threat to the purity, well-being and prosperity of the entire community.¹⁹

The Yorùbá Conception and Approaches to Peace and Justice

The commonest word for peace among the Yorùbá is *Alaafia*. There are other words such as *tooro*, *tun ba-tun se orifokanbale* (calmness) which upon literal or figurative analysis are synonyms for peace or *Alaafia*. Contextualizing *Alaafia* within the Yorùbá worldview, three interrelated levels of peace are discernable. These include: the peace that concerns the state of mind and the wellbeing of an individual (individual peace), the one that is concerned with state of affairs in relation to a group either as association, community or society (societal or social peace) and, finally is that which concerns the wellbeing of the non-human elements in the ecosystem (Eco peace). Suffice it to say that the last two is often fused together and referred to as social peace.

The sub-division of the conception of the Yorùbá understanding of peace notwithstanding, the people have a holistic and closely knitted notion of the phenomenon which relates the individual with the group as well as the non-human elements of the environment, so much so that, one of the three sub-divisions of peace can negatively affect the others: if the society is in chaos, it would have effect on the individual and vice versa. In the same vein, the state of affairs of the non-human elements of the ecosystem could threaten the peace or survival of the human elements. Aside the benefits of social relation among humans, humans would be better positioned to be more comfortable and prosperous if they relate harmoniously with nature. According to Segun Ogungbemi, humans must seek to co-exist peacefully with nature and treat it with some reasonable concern for its worth, survival and sustainability. In other words, an unjust treatment of nature has its consequences on the peace of the society. *The Yorùbá word for peace, therefore, describes an all-encompassing phenomenon occasioned by a functional synergy of the well-being of the humans, non-humans, physical and spiritual elements of both the physical and spiritual worlds.*

Alaafia or peace to the Yorùbá, therefore, refers to state of tranquility, harmony and health of the individual, group of individuals and the non-human elements in the ecosystem. In this sense, when a Yoruba inquire that, *Se alaafianiewa? Is all well?* Reference is to the physical, mental and the social conditions of the respondent.

In most African cultures, to be healthy involves being in harmonious relation with all the physical and spiritual forces that can affect a man's well-being. These include forces that could engender strained human relationships, hunger, unemployment, poverty, infertility, domestic problems, etc. since the factors impair his productive abilities and, therefore, his overall capacity to fulfil his aspirations in life²⁰

To be in harmonious relation with these forces, Ekanola Adebola²¹ identifies *wàrere*, (good character) *is?Ìkan* (unity) and *ir?ip?Ì* (harmony) as essentials for peace. Good character entails the manifestations of all the virtues of honesty, trust, respect, devotion to duty, loyalty, care for self and others as embodied in the more encompassing moral concept of *Omoluabi*, which literally means a person of personal integrity who undergoes and demonstrates domestic, communal or societal moral training and further equipped self morally, beyond that which has been taught. The major characteristics of an *Omoluabi* is the unflinching moral rectitude that promotes peaceful, orderly and just society.

The English word 'justice' translates to *Iseeto* (acting right) or '*Ododo*' (truth). The conception of justice in the Yorùbá worldview, therefore, suggests acting right and being truthful. In other words, rightness and truthfulness are indispensable pillars in justice administration. The perversion of justice is therefore an act that takes a departure from truth and a flight from what is right. The normative concepts of, right and truth therefore, are relevant virtues for living a good and harmonious life between individuals and groups in the society. What is considered

moral and legal in the Yorùbá society are valid to the extent in which they are unconnected with favouritism, nepotism or partiality but revolve around, as well as promote, that which is fair and just to the different individuals and, the totality of what is obtainable in the environment.

The constituents of the cosmos in Yoruba thought system consist of equal and unequal elements. The human elements of the cosmos are unequal to the extent that they are physically hierarchically stratified by the conferment of tradition or other considerations which may include personal efforts. But in real terms, the Yoruba believes they are equal because humans have the same worth and dignity hence, the saying,

Aparokan ko gajuokan lo, afieyiti o ba gun oriebe.

(Equality of height defines the Partridge family except when any climbs a ridge.)

Consequently, this higher status could be levelled or withdrawn if the holder of such status violates tradition, treat others unfairly or exhibits defective behavior classified as *Aseju*, (being prone to the extreme of thoughts and actions) or *A?et?* (being inclined to doing things that violate public moral code to a point of embarrassment). In other words, the common thread that permeates the approach to peace and just social order is a desire for relations of mutual respect devoid of unfair treatment from the smallest unit of social existence, which is the family, through human relations with the non-human elements, as well as to the living-dead (Ancestors) and deities.

The conceptions of peace and approach to justice in Yorùbá worldview rightly anticipate tension among the different elements of the cosmos specifically: "... between man and self (personal conflict), man and man, man and nature /environment, man and society, man and supernatural forces or powers... and between a community and another,"²² hence, the conscious and deliberate development of systems that ensure harmonious living begins from the family.

The lowest level of social arrangement in human society is the family. The Yorùbá approach to peace and justice in this unit of social existence is that the Head of the family, usually the husband is expected to be tolerant of the wife (or wives as the case may be), and be fair in his dealings with the children. There are lots of men in Yoruba society who have been forced to eat the humble pie because of unfair treatment of their wives. Very recently, the Deji of Akure in Ondo State, Nigeria was deposed for assaulting his wife.²³

In other words, the family is expected to institute mechanism for good character formation for the entire household as they relate with one another and, in their relation with the larger society. Defaults in this respect would impact negatively on peaceful and harmonious relations in the family as well as the larger society hence the adage that;

Omoti a koo toniyi o gbeiletiako ta

(The untrained child would be prodigious)

By the same token, the female gender who fails to imbibe the necessary moral training that will equip her for peaceful and harmonious living when she marries would pay dearly for it, such is not likely to enjoy marital bliss hence, the saying that;

Obirin so iwa nu oniohun ko niorioko

(A woman is devoid of a good character, but complains of not predestined to have a husband)

Essentially, the main feature of this formative unit of social existence is the commencement of training for the young to respect elders, tradition, eschew violence and demonstrate moral virtues of fairness, honesty, trust, in interpersonal relation. As a matter of fact, this is the embryonic stage of the *Omoluabi* syndrome. The principle of fairness requires the Head of the family not only to teach but to demonstrate the moral virtues. The success or otherwise of the

training of the child at this stage has a symbiotic relationship with peaceful coexistence in the family and the larger society. In this regard, the society plays vital role in character formation of any child hence, the sayings that;

Ojumerin lo n bimo, igbaojulo n wo

(Two parents give birth to a child but the responsibility of training the child is for over two hundred parents)

The belief of the Yorùbá on the impactful nature of the formative years of the child as a veritable stage for the teaching of morals is in tandem with the recent calls for the teaching of moral philosophy at the elementary stage of education of children by World Philosophy Congress and Philosophers Association of Nigeria.²⁴

Beyond the family level of social existence is the communal level of higher socialization. This level is headed by a king or Oba, whose authority is not expected to be questioned hence, the appellation *Kaabiyesi*. In spite of the high esteem in which kings are held, especially being the representatives of *Orunmila* on earth, their subjects would resist high-handedness, or abuse of tradition on the part of any king. Several instances of uprisings against kings on grounds of being unfair to their subjects or disrespectful to tradition are documented in the history of the Yorùbá. Historical records has accounts of how an individual or group of Yoruba individuals have rejected royal and colonial highhandedness at Okeho in present day Oyo State; where Kurunmi, the Aare Ona Kankanfo, (Field Marshall of Oyo Kingdom) espoused the Yorùbá philosophy of justice when he challenged the decision of the king, Alafin Atiba to have his son Adelu succeed him rather than had him dead alongside the king, as demanded by tradition.²⁵

It would be recall that, Nigeria became a colonial amalgam of portentous ethno-linguistic and cultural diversities in 1914, her independence in 1960 and the sociopolitical activities in the post independent period confirmed the nation's challenges in "formulating, articulating and implementing strategies that would be acceptable to its vast constituencies"²⁶ Hence, claims and counter-claims of unfair treatment by the different ethnic nationalities in the federation. But it is on record that the Yoruba ethnic nationality consistently deploy their culture of peace and sense justice to interrogate social arrangements in the Nigeria society. For instance, Obafemi Awolowo consistently argued for the creation of states, based on linguistic affinity, immediately after independence so as to liberate the ethnic minorities in the different regions of Nigeria, (including the western region) from the tyranny of the major ethnic groups that constituted themselves into internal colonialists in each of the regions.²⁷

The penchant for peace and principles of social justice displayed at interpersonal and intergroup relations by the Yoruba differentiates the people from others. This is erroneously seen as an albatross to the people because many thought, albeit wrongly that it affects the cohesiveness or unity of the race. The reality, however is that, irrespective of whose ox is gored, the Yoruba culture of peace and sense of justice is a respecter of nobody. It seems to have striking similarities with John Rawls' theory of justice as fairness. To Rawls²⁸ a just society is attainable when rational individuals in a hypothetical original position reach agreement on how benefits and burdens of society are to be distributed based on the principles of fairness.

The Yorùbá were at the forefront of opposition against non-democratic elements, which characteristically inflicted unfair treatment on the people. Consequently, she was more vocal on the enthronement and consolidation of democratic rule because democratic principles have semblance with the Yoruba indigenous sense of justice. The "irresponsible and unjust" annulment of the 1993 elections drew a flak from many Nigerians and the international

community. It is widely considered unjust to thwart the will of the people as expressed through the ballot but this unfair treatment of the citizens by some cabals were only openly challenged through protests by an ethnic group who sees injustice as a threat to peaceful coexistence.

Finally, the ethnic group has not only initiated and heightened the agitations for true federalism through restructuring, she has not relented in organizing debates, conferences and workshops to enlighten others on the rationality of her position. In essence, what the Yoruba perceives as injustice oscillates around violation of rights, denials of deserts, lack of provision of needs and unequal treatment of people. These defined the situation in most African countries, especially Nigeria where sociopolitical arrangement is unfair in terms of resource allocation, appointments, development, access to commonly owned goods and services. However, it is pertinent to say that the encounter the Yorùbá ethnic nationality had with the western culture and other ethnic nationalities in the political configuration called Nigeria have whittle down and consequently compromised the indigenous Yorùbá sense of justice but some of the enduring elements can be re-invented through education and enlightenment on good character formation, beginning from the formative years of the younger ones, with a view of redirecting the mind to a culture of peace and sense of justice needed for harmonious living.

Conclusion

In this paper, one has seen that the quest for true peace and social justice in human society has been a mirage because of the inherent defaults in the culture of peace and sense of justice. The struggle for peace and justice are: what most societies, institutions and governments strive at. However, relative peace and selective implementations of the principles of social justice constitute a sad community in contemporary politicking. Consequently, vices that threaten free and harmonious living are emplaced in the society. Thus, this paper argued for a fundamental reconstruction of the prevailing culture of peace and sense of justice using the traditional Yorùbá society as point of departure. In this regard, what peace entails embraces a synergy of the wellbeing of the different elements in the society including the non-human elements, its complements with the sense of justice, which revolves around the non-violation of rights, non-denial of deserts, provision of basic social and existential needs and, equal treatment of people irrespective of religion, gender, place of birth or political affiliations. The enduring elements that propel the rigour and consistency in the promotion of peace and protection of the principles of social justice in the traditional ways of life can be re-invented through education and enlightenment. Consequently, good character formation, beginning from the formative years of the younger ones, with a view to redirecting the mind to a culture of peace and sense of justice would enhance harmonious living.

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