



Unity in diversity through education: a theoretical framework for promoting national integration in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Nigeria's multi-ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity has continued to present both opportunities and challenges to national unity and social cohesion. This paper examined education as a theoretical framework for promoting unity in diversity and sustainable national integration in Nigeria. The study discussed the concepts of unity in diversity, education, and national integration, while highlighting the relevance of education in fostering civic responsibility, peacebuilding, cultural tolerance, and intercultural understanding among citizens. The paper further explored Functionalist Theory, Multicultural Education Theory, and Social Learning Theory as foundational perspectives explaining how education can promote shared values, social stability, tolerance, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence in a plural society. In addition, the study identified major challenges affecting national integration through education, including ethnic and religious divisions, inequality in educational access, weak policy implementation, poor value orientation, insecurity, inadequate funding, and corruption. The paper concluded that education remains a strategic instrument for strengthening national consciousness and peaceful coexistence in Nigeria. It therefore recommended inclusive educational policies, peace-oriented curriculum reforms, teacher training, equal educational opportunities, and intercultural programmes as measures for enhancing national integration and sustainable nation-building in Nigeria.

1. Introduction

Nigeria is one of the most culturally diverse nations in Africa, consisting of over 250 ethnic groups with different languages, religions, traditions, and socio-cultural identities. The major ethnic groups include the Hausa/Fulani, Yoruba, and Igbo, alongside several minority groups spread across the six geopolitical zones. This diversity has remained both a source of strength and a challenge to national unity since independence. Scholars have observed that ethnic rivalry, religious intolerance, political marginalisation, and regional sentiments have continued to threaten peaceful coexistence and national integration in the country (Johnson, 2024). Edewor et al (2014) argued that Nigeria's diversity has often generated conflicts because differences are not adequately managed within the national framework. More so, Johnson (2024) emphasised that ethnicity has continued to shape political and social interactions in Nigeria, thereby weakening the spirit of nationalism and collective identity. In another perspective, Kanu and Olua asserted that sustainable nation-building in Nigeria requires inclusive mechanisms capable of managing ethnic and cultural differences effectively.

The concept of unity in diversity refers to the peaceful coexistence of people with different cultural, ethnic, linguistic, and religious backgrounds within a common national identity. It promotes tolerance, mutual respect, social harmony, and collective national consciousness despite existing differences. In the Nigerian context, unity in diversity implies recognising cultural plurality while working towards shared national goals and development. According to

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Edewor et al. (2014), national integration in Nigeria should not seek to eliminate cultural differences but rather accommodate and harmonise them for peaceful coexistence. Gobo and Bolaji (2023) also maintained that national unity can only thrive where citizens appreciate diversity as a foundation for cooperation rather than conflict. Thus, unity in diversity remains an important principle for strengthening patriotism, social stability, and democratic development in Nigeria.

Education has widely been recognised as an important instrument for promoting national integration and nation-building. Through formal and informal learning processes, education instils values such as tolerance, cooperation, discipline, civic responsibility, and respect for human diversity. Ishaq and Aminu (2013) emphasised that education provides opportunities for interaction among learners from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, thereby encouraging social integration and peaceful coexistence. In Nigeria, programmes such as Unity Schools, Civic Education, and the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) were introduced to foster national consciousness and inter-ethnic understanding. Ogeh and Alfred (2023) argued that Unity Schools were specifically established to promote unity and integration among Nigerian youths after the civil war. Furthermore, Ogeh (2023) asserted that the teaching of history and civic values can help Nigerians understand their shared heritage and strengthen national identity. Education therefore serves as a strategic means of reducing prejudice, promoting tolerance, and encouraging citizens to embrace national unity above sectional interests.

The purpose of this paper is to examine how education can serve as a theoretical framework for promoting unity in diversity and national integration in Nigeria. The paper seeks to explore the relationship between education and national cohesion by highlighting the role of educational institutions, policies, and values in fostering peaceful coexistence among diverse groups. It also intends to provide theoretical explanations on how education can be used to promote tolerance, inclusiveness, patriotism, and collective national identity in a multi-ethnic society such as Nigeria.

Unity in Diversity

Unity in diversity refers to the peaceful coexistence and harmonious interaction of people from different ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious backgrounds within a common social and political system. The concept emphasises mutual respect, tolerance, inclusion, and collective identity despite existing differences among citizens. In Nigeria, unity in diversity is particularly relevant because the country is characterised by extensive pluralism, with over 250 ethnic groups and multiple religious affiliations. Scholars have argued that the sustainability of Nigeria as a nation largely depends on its ability to manage diversity constructively (Nnoli, 2018). Edewor et al. (2014) asserted that diversity becomes beneficial when properly harnessed for national development rather than ethnic competition and division. Johnson (2024) emphasised that unity in diversity promotes social stability, patriotism, and peaceful coexistence in multi-ethnic societies such as Nigeria. Gobo and Bolaji (2023) further argued that the principle of unity in diversity encourages citizens to prioritise national interest above ethnic or regional loyalties. In another perspective, Nnoli (2018) maintained that the absence of unity in diversity often results in distrust, social fragmentation, and recurring communal conflicts. Therefore, the relevance of unity in diversity in Nigeria lies in its ability to strengthen national cohesion, democratic stability, and collective progress among diverse groups.

Education

Education refers to the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and experiences that shape human behaviour and societal development. It may occur through formal, informal, and non-formal means and serves as an important instrument for individual and national transformation. Beyond literacy and vocational competence, education plays a critical role in value orientation and social cohesion by instilling moral discipline, tolerance,

cooperation, and civic responsibility among citizens (Yusuf & Adigun, 2022). Durkheim, as cited in Haralambos and Holborn (2019), viewed education as a means through which societies transmit shared norms and values necessary for social order and stability. In Nigeria, education has continued to serve as a strategic tool for promoting national consciousness and peaceful coexistence among diverse groups. Ishaq and Aminu (2013) argued that education fosters interaction among individuals from different ethnic and religious backgrounds, thereby encouraging mutual understanding and integration. Likewise, Ogeh (2023) asserted that civic and history education can help learners develop patriotism, tolerance, and appreciation of Nigeria's shared heritage. Yusuf and Adigun (2022) also emphasised that schools contribute to social cohesion by teaching democratic values, respect for human rights, and conflict resolution skills. Through curriculum content, school activities, and intercultural interactions, education therefore remains a powerful instrument for shaping responsible citizens and promoting social harmony in Nigeria.

National Integration

National integration refers to the process of uniting people from diverse ethnic, cultural, religious, and social backgrounds into a single national identity with shared values, goals, and aspirations. It involves fostering loyalty to the nation above sectional interests and promoting cooperation, solidarity, and peaceful coexistence among citizens. National integration is highly important to nation-building because it strengthens political stability, social harmony, economic development, and national security. Nnoli (2018) explained that national integration creates a sense of belonging and collective consciousness necessary for sustainable development in plural societies. In the same vein, Ezeibe (2021) argued that national integration promotes unity, trust, and cooperation among citizens, thereby reducing ethnic suspicion and social conflicts. Ogeh and Alfred (2023) maintained that educational institutions such as Unity Schools and programmes like the National Youth Service Corps were established in Nigeria to encourage inter-ethnic interaction and strengthen national unity after the civil war. More so, Gboyega (2019) emphasised that nation-building cannot be achieved in an atmosphere of division, discrimination, and intolerance. National integration therefore remains essential for creating a stable and progressive society where citizens work collectively towards national development irrespective of their ethnic or religious differences.

Theoretical Framework

Functionalist Theory

Functionalist Theory explains society as a structured system in which different institutions perform essential functions necessary for social order, stability, and continuity. Within this perspective, education is regarded as an important institution responsible for transmitting societal values, norms, attitudes, and behaviours that sustain unity and social harmony. Robert K. Merton argued that social institutions contribute to the maintenance of societal equilibrium by performing manifest and latent functions that promote collective survival. In the same vein, Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore maintained that education prepares individuals for responsible participation in society through value transmission and role allocation. Ballantine and Hammack (2021) further emphasised that schools help to socialise learners into shared cultural values and national expectations, thereby strengthening social cohesion. Relating this theory to the study, education in Nigeria can serve as a mechanism for promoting shared national values such as patriotism, tolerance, discipline, and peaceful coexistence among diverse ethnic and religious groups. Adeyemi (2022) argued that educational institutions in Nigeria have the capacity to reduce social divisions when learners are exposed to civic responsibilities and inclusive national ideals. Likewise, Ibrahim and Oloyede (2023) asserted that schools contribute to national integration by encouraging collective identity and cooperation among students from different backgrounds. Functionalist Theory is therefore

relevant to this study because it explains how education can promote unity in diversity and enhance social stability in Nigeria.

Multicultural Education Theory

Multicultural Education Theory advocates for an inclusive educational system that recognises and respects cultural diversity while promoting equality and social justice among learners. The theory emphasises the need for curricula, teaching methods, and school environments that reflect the experiences, histories, and values of different cultural groups. Geneva Gay asserted that culturally responsive education enables learners to appreciate diversity and develop positive attitudes towards other cultural groups. Similarly, Sonia Nieto argued that multicultural education promotes inclusiveness, democratic participation, and respect for human differences within plural societies. Nieto (2017) further maintained that schools should create learning environments where cultural diversity is seen as a strength rather than a source of division. In relation to Nigeria, multicultural education is important because of the country's multi-ethnic and multi-religious nature. Okeke and Eze (2021) emphasised that culturally inclusive education can help address ethnic prejudice and strengthen mutual understanding among Nigerian youths. In another study, Bello (2023) argued that integrating multicultural principles into school curricula promotes national unity by encouraging learners to respect cultural differences and embrace collective national identity. Relating this theory to the study, Multicultural Education Theory provides a framework for promoting unity in diversity through inclusive learning practices, intercultural dialogue, and respect for cultural plurality. The theory therefore supports the idea that education can be used as a strategic instrument for strengthening national integration in Nigeria.

Social Learning Theory

Social Learning Theory explains that individuals acquire behaviours, attitudes, and social values through observation, imitation, and interaction within their social environment. The theory highlights the influence of modelling, reinforcement, and interpersonal relationships in shaping human behaviour. Julian Rotter argued that social behaviour develops through interaction between personal experiences and environmental influences. Likewise, Lev Vygotsky emphasised that learning occurs through social interaction and collaborative engagement with others. Woolfolk (2020) explained that learners develop social attitudes such as cooperation, empathy, and tolerance when they interact positively with peers and authority figures within educational settings. In the Nigerian context, schools provide opportunities for students from different ethnic, religious, and cultural backgrounds to interact and learn values necessary for peaceful coexistence. Akinwale (2022) asserted that social interaction within schools can reduce stereotypes and ethnic discrimination among learners. Similarly, Nwachukwu and Salami (2024) argued that collaborative learning and intercultural activities in schools promote understanding, cooperation, and social harmony among Nigerian youths. Relating this theory to the study, Social Learning Theory demonstrates how education can encourage tolerance, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence through interaction among diverse groups. The theory is therefore relevant because it supports the use of educational environments as platforms for promoting unity in diversity and national integration in Nigeria.

Education and National Integration in Nigeria

Education has continued to serve as one of the most effective instruments for promoting national integration in Nigeria because it shapes the attitudes, values, and behaviours of citizens towards peaceful coexistence and collective national development. In a country characterised by ethnic, religious, and cultural diversity, education provides the platform through which citizens learn the principles of tolerance, patriotism, unity, and democratic participation. Civic education and citizenship values are particularly important in this regard because they expose learners to their civic responsibilities, national obligations, and constitutional rights as members

of society. Civic education encourages citizens to place national interest above ethnic or sectional loyalties while promoting active participation in governance and community development. Eze and Onyeausi (2023) argued that civic education strengthens democratic culture and national consciousness by teaching learners respect for the rule of law, social responsibility, and patriotism. In the same vein, Abdullahi and Musa (2024) asserted that citizenship education promotes responsible behaviour and discourages ethnic intolerance, political violence, and social discrimination among youths. Through subjects such as Civic Education, Social Studies, and Government, schools help learners understand the importance of unity, justice, equality, and collective national identity. Citizenship values such as honesty, accountability, respect for diversity, and loyalty to the nation are therefore essential for promoting national integration and sustainable development in Nigeria.

Peace education and conflict resolution also constitute important aspects of education for national integration in Nigeria. Given the recurring challenges of ethnic conflicts, religious extremism, political violence, and communal clashes across different parts of the country, there is a growing need for educational programmes that promote peaceful coexistence and non-violent conflict management. Peace education equips learners with the skills and attitudes necessary for resolving disputes through dialogue, negotiation, tolerance, and understanding rather than aggression and violence. Afolabi and Adekunle (2022) emphasised that peace education develops learners' abilities to manage conflicts constructively while fostering harmony and cooperation within society. Similarly, Chukwuemeka and Nwafor (2023) maintained that conflict resolution education is essential for reducing social tension and promoting long-term peace and stability in multicultural societies such as Nigeria. Educational institutions therefore play a strategic role in teaching learners how to accommodate differences and address disagreements peacefully. Through classroom discussions, counselling programmes, peer mediation activities, and moral instruction, students are exposed to principles of empathy, dialogue, forgiveness, and mutual respect. These values are necessary for reducing hostility and strengthening social harmony among Nigeria's diverse populations. Peace education therefore contributes significantly to nation-building because peaceful societies are more likely to experience political stability, economic growth, and social progress.

Furthermore, cultural tolerance and intercultural understanding are important dimensions of education and national integration in Nigeria. Since Nigeria is made up of numerous ethnic groups with different languages, customs, traditions, and belief systems, there is a need for educational practices that encourage learners to appreciate cultural diversity rather than view it as a source of division. Cultural tolerance involves recognising and respecting the beliefs, traditions, and lifestyles of other groups despite existing differences. Educational institutions help promote intercultural understanding by creating opportunities for students from different backgrounds to interact, cooperate, and learn together in an atmosphere of equality and inclusion (Ndukwe & Ekwueme, 2023). Salihu and Danjuma (2024) argued that intercultural education reduces stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination while promoting social interaction and national cohesion among learners. Likewise, Ndukwe and Ekwueme (2023) asserted that inclusive educational environments encourage learners to appreciate diversity and develop positive relationships across ethnic and religious boundaries. In Nigeria, programmes such as federal unity schools and inter-school cultural activities have helped students from different regions interact and build friendships beyond tribal affiliations. Such experiences help learners to develop broader national perspectives and reduce sentiments of ethnic superiority or exclusion. Cultural tolerance and intercultural understanding are therefore necessary for strengthening peaceful coexistence and fostering a united Nigerian society.

The role of schools in promoting unity cannot be overemphasised because schools serve as major centres of socialisation where children and young people acquire societal values and behavioural patterns. Beyond academic instruction, schools contribute to nation-building by teaching learners the importance of cooperation, discipline, tolerance, and national loyalty. Schools provide structured environments where learners from different social, cultural, and

religious backgrounds interact regularly through classroom activities, sports, debates, cultural events, and group projects (Yusuf& Balogun, 2024). Such interactions encourage friendship, teamwork, and understanding among students irrespective of their differences. Oloruntoba and Adewale (2022) emphasised that schools are important institutions for promoting national integration because they socialise learners into shared national values and collective identity. In another perspective, Yusuf and Balogun (2024) argued that schools help in reducing ethnic prejudice and promoting social cohesion when inclusive educational policies and programmes are effectively implemented. Teachers also contribute significantly to promoting unity by serving as role models who demonstrate fairness, tolerance, and respect for diversity within the learning environment. Through inclusive teaching practices and value-based education, schools help to shape citizens who are committed to peaceful coexistence and national development. In relation to this study, education remains a vital instrument for promoting civic responsibility, peacebuilding, cultural tolerance, and social cohesion necessary for achieving unity in diversity and sustainable national integration in Nigeria.

Challenges to National Integration through Education

Notwithstanding the important role of education in promoting national integration in Nigeria, several challenges continue to hinder its effectiveness in fostering unity, peaceful coexistence, and collective national identity among citizens. These challenges weaken the ability of educational institutions to serve as instruments for social cohesion and nation-building.

i. Ethnic and Religious Divisions

One major challenge to national integration through education is the persistent problem of ethnic and religious divisions in Nigeria. Ethnic loyalty and religious sentiments often influence social relationships, political activities, and educational interactions, thereby creating mistrust and discrimination among groups. Ibrahim and Ekanem (2023) argued that ethno-religious conflicts continue to weaken national unity by promoting intolerance and social fragmentation across the country. In many cases, students develop prejudices and negative attitudes inherited from their families and communities, which affect their relationships with peers from other ethnic or religious backgrounds. Such divisions make it difficult for schools to effectively promote tolerance, patriotism, and peaceful coexistence among learners.

ii. Inequality in Educational Access

Another challenge is inequality in access to quality education across different regions and social groups in Nigeria. Factors such as poverty, insecurity, geographical location, and inadequate infrastructure have created disparities in educational opportunities between urban and rural areas as well as among different regions of the country. Ahmed and Bature (2024) emphasised that unequal educational access contributes to social exclusion and feelings of marginalisation among disadvantaged populations. Similarly, Okafor and Ubah (2023) asserted that regional disparities in educational development often intensify ethnic grievances and weaken national cohesion. When citizens perceive inequality in educational opportunities, it may generate resentment and reduce their sense of belonging within the nation.

iii. Weak Implementation of Educational Policies

Weak implementation of educational policies also constitutes a serious challenge to national integration through education. Although the Nigerian government has introduced policies such as civic education, unity schools, and peace education programmes to promote national unity, many of these initiatives are poorly implemented. Adesina and Olutayo (2022) maintained that ineffective policy implementation reduces the ability of the education sector to achieve social cohesion and national development goals. Problems such as corruption, poor monitoring, inadequate funding, and political interference often prevent educational policies from producing meaningful results. Consequently, educational programmes designed to promote national integration fail to achieve their intended objectives.

iv. Poor Value Orientation among Youths

Poor value orientation among many Nigerian youths is another challenge affecting national integration through education. Increasing involvement in corruption, violence, cultism, intolerance, and other social vices reflects a decline in moral and civic values among young people. Ojo and Akinpelu (2024) argued that moral decadence among youths contributes significantly to social unrest and indiscipline within society. Educational institutions are therefore faced with the challenge of instilling positive values such as honesty, tolerance, responsibility, and patriotism among learners. Without proper moral and civic orientation, education may not effectively produce responsible citizens committed to national unity and peaceful coexistence.

v. Insecurity and Violent Conflicts

Insecurity and violent conflicts also pose major challenges to national integration through education in Nigeria. Terrorism, banditry, kidnapping, communal clashes, and attacks on schools have disrupted educational activities in several parts of the country. Yusuf and Ibrahim (2023) asserted that insecurity weakens educational development and limits opportunities for interaction among learners from diverse backgrounds. In conflict-affected areas, schools are sometimes forced to close for long periods, thereby reducing access to education and social interaction necessary for promoting unity. Persistent insecurity therefore undermines the role of schools as centres for peacebuilding and national integration.

vi. Inadequate Funding of Education

Inadequate funding of the education sector remains another serious challenge to national integration in Nigeria. Poor funding has resulted in dilapidated school infrastructure, shortage of qualified teachers, overcrowded classrooms, and insufficient learning materials. According to Adekunle and Nwosu (2022), inadequate funding negatively affects the quality of education and limits the implementation of programmes aimed at promoting national cohesion. Schools often lack the resources required for organising civic education activities, intercultural programmes, and peacebuilding initiatives that could strengthen unity among students. Poor funding therefore weakens the effectiveness of education as an instrument for national integration.

vii. Political Interference and Corruption

Political interference and corruption within the education sector also hinder national integration through education. Educational appointments, admissions, and resource allocation are sometimes influenced by ethnic, political, or personal interests rather than merit and fairness. Egbule and Onyekachi (2024) argued that corruption in the education sector promotes inequality, injustice, and public distrust in national institutions. Political interference may also encourage favouritism and sectionalism, thereby weakening the spirit of national unity and inclusiveness. As a result, the educational system may struggle to effectively promote social cohesion, equal opportunity, and collective national identity among citizens.

Framework for Strengthening National Integration through Education in Nigeria

However, despite the numerous challenges confronting national integration in Nigeria, education remains a strategic instrument capable of fostering unity, peaceful coexistence, and sustainable nation-building. For education to effectively perform this role, deliberate and practical measures must be implemented by government, educational institutions, communities, and other stakeholders. The following measures represent important ways forward for strengthening national integration through education in Nigeria.

a. Deliberate Use of Education to Promote National Unity

Education should be consciously and deliberately utilised as a tool for promoting national unity and social cohesion in Nigeria. Educational policies, school programmes, and classroom activities should be designed to encourage patriotism, tolerance, and loyalty to the nation above ethnic or sectional interests. Adebayo and Lawal (2023) argued that the education system should focus on producing citizens who value peaceful coexistence and collective national

identity. Schools should therefore promote activities that encourage collaboration and understanding among learners from different backgrounds. When education is intentionally directed towards nation-building objectives, it can help reduce social divisions and strengthen national integration.

b. Emphasis on Peace, Tolerance, and National Values in the Curriculum

The school curriculum should place greater emphasis on peace education, tolerance, moral instruction, and national values at all levels of education. Subjects such as Civic Education, Social Studies, and History should be strengthened to teach learners the importance of unity, dialogue, empathy, and conflict resolution. According to Suleiman and Adeyewo (2024), value-based education helps students develop positive attitudes towards peaceful coexistence and responsible citizenship. Curriculum contents should also reflect Nigeria's cultural diversity while promoting shared national aspirations and democratic principles. This will help learners appreciate diversity and cultivate behaviours that support national integration.

c. Strengthening Inclusive Educational Policies

Government and educational stakeholders should strengthen policies that promote inclusiveness, equality, and fairness within the education sector. Educational opportunities should be accessible to all citizens irrespective of ethnicity, religion, gender, or geographical location. Nwankwo and Bello (2023) maintained that inclusive educational policies are essential for reducing marginalisation and promoting social justice in multicultural societies. Policies relating to admission, school funding, teacher recruitment, and distribution of educational resources should be implemented fairly to ensure equal opportunities for all learners. Inclusive education will help citizens develop a stronger sense of belonging and trust in national institutions.

d. Promotion of Intercultural Interaction in Schools

Schools should encourage intercultural interaction and mutual respect among students from different ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds. Educational institutions can achieve this through cultural exchange programmes, group projects, debates, sporting activities, and national unity clubs that promote cooperation among learners. Okoli and Garba (2022) asserted that regular interaction among students from diverse backgrounds helps reduce prejudice and fosters social harmony. Federal unity schools and similar integration programmes should also be strengthened to encourage national consciousness and intercultural understanding among Nigerian youths. Such interactions can help students appreciate diversity and develop friendships beyond tribal and religious boundaries.

e. Teacher Training on Peacebuilding and Value Education

Teachers should receive continuous professional training on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, multicultural education, and value orientation. Since teachers play important roles in shaping learners' attitudes and behaviour, they must possess the skills and knowledge necessary for promoting tolerance, inclusiveness, and peaceful coexistence within the classroom. Ibrahim and Thomas (2024) emphasised that trained teachers are more effective in handling cultural diversity and promoting positive social relationships among students. Teachers should also serve as role models by demonstrating fairness, discipline, respect, and impartiality in their interactions with learners. Effective teacher preparation is therefore necessary for achieving the goals of national integration through education.

f. Increased Funding and Improvement of Educational Facilities

Adequate funding of the education sector is necessary for improving the quality of education and supporting programmes that promote national integration. Government should invest more in school infrastructure, teaching materials, teacher welfare, and educational development across all regions of the country. Adeola and Chima (2023) argued that quality educational facilities and learning environments contribute significantly to social inclusion and national development. Well-funded schools will be better positioned to organise intercultural activities, peace education programmes, and civic engagement initiatives capable of fostering unity

among learners. Improved educational facilities will also reduce inequalities in access to quality education across different regions.

g. Strengthening Collaboration among Government, Schools, and Communities

Effective national integration through education requires strong collaboration among government, schools, parents, religious organisations, and community leaders. Community participation in educational development can help reinforce the values of tolerance, peace, and national unity outside the classroom environment. Ezeani and Mohammed (2024) asserted that community involvement in education strengthens social responsibility and promotes collective efforts towards nation-building. Religious and traditional leaders should also support educational initiatives that encourage peaceful coexistence and discourage hate speech, extremism, and discrimination. When all stakeholders work together, education can become a more effective instrument for promoting unity in diversity and sustainable national integration in Nigeria.

Conclusion

Education remains a major instrument for promoting unity in diversity and sustainable national integration in Nigeria. Through civic education, peacebuilding, cultural tolerance, and inclusive learning, education helps to foster mutual understanding and peaceful coexistence among citizens. Despite the existing challenges, effective educational policies and value-based teaching can strengthen national consciousness and social cohesion. Therefore, sustained commitment by government, schools, and other stakeholders is necessary for using education to build a more united, peaceful, and progressive Nigeria.

Recommendations

In view of the discussion of this paper, the following are hereby recommended:

1. The government and educational authorities should strengthen the teaching of civic and peace education in schools at all levels in order to promote patriotism, tolerance, peaceful coexistence, and responsible citizenship among learners. This will help students develop positive attitudes towards national unity and social harmony.
2. Curriculum planners should promote inclusive and multicultural curriculum contents that reflect the diverse cultures, languages, and traditions in Nigeria. Such curriculum should encourage learners to appreciate cultural diversity, respect differences, and embrace collective national identity.
3. Government should ensure equal access to quality education across all regions of the country by providing adequate schools, qualified teachers, learning facilities, and educational resources, especially in rural and disadvantaged communities. This will reduce inequality and promote social inclusion among citizens.
4. Educational institutions should encourage programmes and activities that foster national unity and intercultural understanding among students. Activities such as cultural festivals, exchange programmes, debates, and unity clubs can help learners interact positively with people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds.
5. Teachers should be regularly trained on peacebuilding, conflict resolution, multicultural education, and value-based teaching methods so that they can effectively promote tolerance, discipline, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence within the school environment and the wider society.

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