

An assessment of Political Education on participation and Good Governance in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-2016)

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Abstract

This research paper sought to explain the enduring link between political education and the political behaviour of participation of Nigerians in attaining good governance within the democratic space. Relying on secondary sources of information, the paper argues that the end point of political education in Nigeria over the years is the emergence of politically conscious individuals who have effectively participated as individuals or as members of groups in the political life of the nation, and that can rise up to change what they think should be changed even in the face of the elite trying to dominate the public policy space and foist the

statusquo on the citizens. The paper also contends that political education is very crucial if democracy is to mature in Nigeria and contribute towards achieving democracy and credible free and fair electoral process and other key indicators of good governance that would change Nigerian politics for the common good. It suggests that the establishment of various channels of ventilating political views through town hall meetings, consultations and other forms of collaborative efforts by government will bring those in authority closer to the people.

Introduction

The Nigerian political system has evolved over time with varying degrees of experiences, ranging from colonial domination to independence and post-independent democratic experimentation before the long hold of the military to power for about 29 years in the nation's 57 years of existence as an independent nation. In particular, when the British colonialists conquered the various ethnic nationalities and imposed an alien political system on them, the journey for creating a political culture and terrain to be accepted by the people required quite a lot. From the 1914 Lugardian amalgamation, various nationalist agitations arose aimed at giving impetus for constitutional developments and further space for political engagements and participation. The attainment of independence on

1st October 1960 was therefore a partial victory as it was not itself an end, but a means to greater political developments and future.

However, when the military took over on 15th January, 1966, the entire progress hitherto achieved appeared to be set in retrogression. The military's justification for a takeover seemed cogent as the post-colonial political class of the First Republic remained incapable of offering a clear socio-political direction to improve the fortunes of the citizens. But the intervention itself proved that the military was also caught up in the colonial hangover of ethnic struggles, corruption and unbridled quest for power that pushed Nigeria to the brink of disintegration in the 1967 to 1970 Civil War. Even when the military relinquished power to a Presidential civilian government in 1979 (the Second Republic), the political class still did not learn its lessons and again, the military took hold of and remained in power until it was forced out in 1993 and the subsequent political events that followed saw a new wave of conscious civil society that prevailed on the military to leave the corridors of power.

By 1999 when Nigeria returned to Presidential-type democratic practice, the citizens had a battered

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memory of despotic regimes that arrested political developments. Over such trying moments of the nation's history, the commitment of the struggle for freedom was championed and sustained, resulting in an increased political literacy of the citizens demonstrated by their participation towards good governance of the society. Individuals, groups, governmental agencies and civil society organizations have been relentless in the quest for improved political participation through political education. According to Nwanko (2012), the individual and the group are the two key pillars of democracy and the moment they are built, democracy is built. He notes that it is these two key levels that constitute the frame for looking at efforts, and perhaps rethinking the mission and re-planning strategies of political education.

In most empirical analyses, education is in fact the strongest predictor of political participation even when other socioeconomic factors are considered. Empirical political behaviour research has consistently identified a robust and positive relationship between education and political engagement, but has failed to adequately explain why education is so important. Thus, the notion that formal educational attainment is the primary mechanism behind many citizenship characteristics is largely uncontested. Education has consistently been found to increase political participation, electoral turnout, civic engagement, political knowledge, and democratic attitudes and opinions (Hillygus, 2005). According to Bar & Lenz (2011), one of the most consistently documented relationships in the field of political behaviour is the close association between political education attainment and political participation. He notes that for more than half a century, researchers have found that more politically educated citizens are more likely to vote in elections and participate in campaigns or other forms of participation in politics. This makes Baoduo (2013) to come to the conclusion that African governments cannot leave political education to chance because such action will be detrimental to the successful survival of generations to come in terms of political education and maturity for the enhancement of democracy and good governance. But at the heart of such political participation are individuals. Accordingly, Nwankwo (2012) has opined that however well

contrived a political system may be, it is as good as nothing without the individual human beings who are capable and willing to make it function arguing that the individual occupies such a central position in state and society that his reform and education is intrinsically linked to the emergence of a just and good state or good governance.

Therefore, the recognition of the role of education in supporting the development of active citizens for a democratic society is not new; however, it is clear that there has been an increased focus on this role of education nationally and internationally due to a number of different factors. Some of these are increased globalisation in cultural, economic and political life, increasingly diverse populations that give rise to a questioning of previously dominant notions of what constituted 'national identity' e.t.c that are pertinent in a country like Nigeria.

The questions however are: why is political education such a powerful explanatory variable in citizens' democratic behaviour of participation in a democracy such as Nigeria's? How does political knowledge affect political participation in Nigeria? Can such engagement produce the expected outcome of good governance? In providing answers to these questions, this paper explores the impact of political education on Nigerian citizens' participation for democratic growth and good governance.

Conceptual Framework

The Concept of Political Education

In order to attempt to measure popular political knowledge that produces and reinforces participatory citizenship for good democratic governance we must first define the term. According to Nwanko (2012: 394), political education is:

a process of preparing especially the young ones for the socio-political world in which they grow into so that they will be able to be useful to themselves and contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the Nigerian state. If we translate this into practical terms, the agenda are that of getting the people to take

part in their government, to assume their responsibilities of contributing to the development of the society, to make them aware of their rights, to provide them with the encouragement to defend their rights without fear and thus struggle against the impositions and domination of a few privileged; to harness and tap the latent forces in the people; to make them see politics as an essential aspect of the entire social fabric; to make them less vulnerable to undue influences in the political process, etc. These are issues immediately communicable in the idea of political education in the context of Nigeria. They are more than, and cannot be achieved by mere political propaganda of occasional jingles, media broadcast, caravan shows, lessons and verbal arguments, etc.

Political education leads to the internalisation of a new set of values affecting the individual as well as the social groups and such knowledge is factual, covering information about events, personalities or institutions. Political education can also be viewed as background knowledge, covering political concepts as well as the procedures by which political institutions operate. Background knowledge provides the skills to interpret political affairs, as well as to think in ideological terms. This as well could entail education for democratic citizenship or civic education.

Adelabu and Akinolu (2009) define political education as the process in which political attitudes and behaviours are germinated and formed. According to them, this view is supported by Almond and Verba in their five nations study where they concluded that among all the variables they considered, education is regarded as the greatest variable of political reform in any country.

Drawing from Professor Pai Obanya's analysis, Baoduo (2013:205) sees political education as hinged on five processes, namely politics, policy, programme, process and product which are represented in a diagram as shown below:

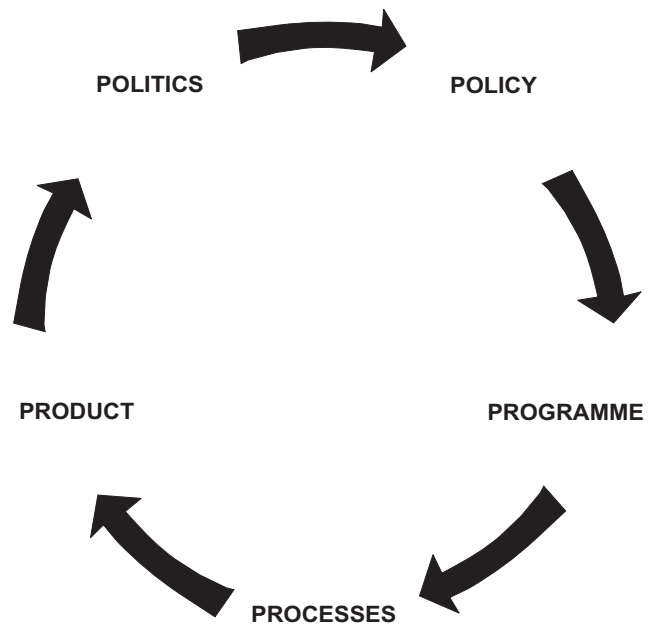


Figure 1: Professor Pai Obanya's diagram showing the circular relationship between the 5 Ps Source: (Baoduo, 2013:205)

Interpreting this further, Baoduo (2013) notes:

Politics: In this sense, reference is made to higher institutions of learning known to be where political ideologies are formed and developed and also serve as instruments of motivating students to engage and involve themselves in the main stream political game. He notes that “tertiary education institutions in particular are fundamental to the construction of knowledge and skills which become a vital factor for political education. In some countries worldwide, students are politically active and have, in no small measure, influenced in the formulation of policies within their universities and in the nation as a whole” such as the role of student activists who are currently influencing the political landscape in their respective countries. They developed their political ideologies and activism while in their institutions of learning as student activists.

Programme: This implies that the programmes for political education, especially for teacher trainees should be systematically planned and implemented with care to incorporate democratic political ideology for understanding

and spread of democracy in African countries.

Process: The process should be specific taking into account local, provincial and national political development needs first before the introduction to international political systems. Once the basic foundation is laid, issues can be advanced to include international politics.

Product: This should be considered in terms of the production of politically informed students who have been equipped with both the required basic and advanced political knowledge and skills for getting involved in main stream politics in the future after their graduation.

Central in all these definitions is the notion that political education reflects political literacy of an individual or group within a political space that creates understanding of issues such as human rights, democracy and political institutions e.t.c. Significantly too, political education is a crucial agent of socialization with influences from labour movements, the youth association movement and others that champion certain basic tangible or intangible outcomes.

Participation

Campbell (2006) notes that the operational definition of political participation is borrowed directly from Verba and Nie. According to them “Political participation refers to those activities by private citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of governmental personnel and/or the actions they take”. The key to the definition is the *end* to which the activity is directed – actions taken or policies enacted by public officials. Similarly, then, *civic participation* is also defined by its end: “Civic participation refers to non-remunerative, publicly spirited collective action that is not motivated by the desire to affect public policy” such as belonging to voluntary associations, volunteering in the community e.t.c.

Niemelä has considered methods to foster civic participation and has identified three broad areas:

- access to information and public debate as prerequisites where he sees the importance of

the media and access to information as a foundation of democracy. Learning here is in an informal setting e.g. “modern net-based study circles.”

- representative democracy i.e. familiarity with the basic elements of the political system such as party activity connected with ideological-political goals, election arrangements and voting (encouraging people to vote) and politics and decision-making.
- direct participation such as consulting citizens (events and use of digital networks), public participation and influence (initiatives, panel discussions for citizens and referenda) [Pantzar, 2008: 46].

It is obvious that the purpose of political education is to educate politically critical, societally active citizens, who have a high disposition and skill (cognitive and practical) for information-seeking and processing, and therefore produce politically independent and *societally* fearless people (Pantzar, 2008). McAllister (2010) relates participation as a political behaviour to political knowledge. Political participation can involve a range of activities which may influence politics, starting with such activities as discussing politics with others, which requires little skill or initiative, to more demanding activities, such as joining a political party. He notes that relating political knowledge to competence and participation shows that knowledge has a modest impact on both net of socio-economic factors. Thus, a knowledgeable citizen is a better democratic citizen.

In the Nigerian context, education for political participation in a democracy is seen as education for democracy (Nwankwo, 2012) as a basic problem confronting the Nigerian today is the effective participation of the people in matters affecting them. Many a times, citizens' political participation in Nigeria is narrowed to merely electing individuals that the people hardly demand accountability from. Political parties which ordinarily should actively enlighten the citizens for participation are not only bereft of any ideological bearings, but largely encourage participation along dividing lines of ethnicity, religion or other parochially defined parameters. The politicians are

culpable in this as well. Generally however, participation is a factor of multiple variables that implicates involvement in decision-making process, implementation of made decisions, sharing in the benefits of made and implemented decisions, monitoring the entire process.

Concept of Good Governance

The reference to the idea of governance implies that the term “good governance” has become a catchy shorthand way to describe a variety of political and economic institutions and outcomes. Accordingly, the working uses of the term “good governance” include a variety of generally “good” things (United Nations University, cited in Dakye, 2015) that are carefully intended to improve the standards of living of a society and its people.

According to the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, UNESCAP (2014) “governance” is “the process of decision-making and the process by which decisions are implemented (or not implemented). According to the UNDP,

Governance is the system of values, policies and institutions by which a society manages its economic, political and social affairs through interactions within and among the state, civil society and private sector. It is the way a society organizes itself to make and implement decisions—achieving mutual understanding, agreement and action. It comprises the mechanisms and processes for citizens and groups to articulate their interests, mediate their differences and exercise their legal rights and obligations. It is the rules, institutions and practices that set limits and provide incentives for individuals, organizations and firms. Governance, including its social, political and economic dimensions, operates at every level of human enterprise, be it the household, village, municipality, nation, region or globe. (UNDP Strategy Note on Governance for Human Development, cited in Dakye, 2015).

This definition indicates that governance can be seen as the exercise of economic, political and administrative authority to manage a country's affairs at all levels; where economic governance includes the decision-making processes that affect a country's economic activities and its relationships with other economies while political governance is the process of decision making to formulate policy and administrative governance is the system of policy implementation. This requires great political education.

According to Dakye (2015), the World Bank Worldwide Governance Indicators (WGI) project reports aggregate and individual governance indicators for 215 economies over the period 1996–2012, for six dimensions of governance, viz:

- Voice and Accountability
- Political Stability and absence of Violence
- Government effectiveness
- Regulatory quality
- Rule of law
- Control of corruption.

These dimensions are consistent with the characteristics of good governance that are most likely to be attainable with good political education in a society. For Nigeria, the extent to which political education has created an impact of participation on the citizens in those dimensions for the attainment of good governance is the thesis this paper has explored. This also raises the salient question on what specifically constitutes good governance in Nigeria. El-Rufai (2014) believes good governance now includes other issues beyond national borders and adopted yardsticks to understand it such as: “universal protection of human rights; non-discriminatory laws, efficient, impartial and rapid judicial process; transparent public agencies; accountability for decisions by public officials, devolution of resources and decision making to local levels from the capital; and meaningful participation by citizens in debating public policies and choices.” A succinct perspective is provided by Dakye (2015) to explain the idea of good governance within the Nigeria context thus:

... in multi-ethnic communities such as Nigeria, an indicator of good governance

requires that the government fosters an inclusive strategy to give all groups a sense of belonging. Special interests of the minority and vulnerable groups should be protected by granting them access to make inputs in decision making and the elaboration of the policies affecting them. These can only be achieved if there is transparency built on rule of law, and free, fair and credible elections enabling periodic regime changes. The existence of these not only organically links public leaders and the citizenry but enhances extensive consultations within the political landscape and the nation at large.

Thus, to many Nigerian citizens, it should entail the capacity of government to provide the much often touted 'dividends of democracy' such as better roads, improved electricity, good medical care, better infrastructure, access to justice as guaranteed by the rule of law and tackling corruption that is seen as the bane of development. Good governance essentially here should ensure judicial independence, accountability of public officials, fights against corruption in government and public offices, prosecution of the abuse of office, transparency, national security, political participation, the conduct of free and fair elections, human rights protection etc (Dakye, 2015).

Political Education in Nigeria's Fourth Republic (1999-2016)

Nwanko (2012) has noted that political education is not some recent invention, tracing its origin to the Athens of the 4th century BC. Making reference to Plato among others who recommended that education be employed as the chief method of reforming both the individual character and the State. He said such philosophy of education propounded an educational theory that represented his view about facts of human nature and society on which are based recommendations about curriculum, the methods and the administration of education as a means to the ultimate goal of just and good citizens living in a just and good society. Nwanko further notes that for Bacon as well as John Locke, the production and maintenance of a good

society is the chief objective of education. He contends that Rousseau also assigned to education a social ideal quite as secular and political as Locke's but that the object of education is to assure that the citizens are early accustomed to regard their individuality only in relation to the body of the state and to be aware, so to speak, of their own existence merely as a part of that state. The goal of political education is therefore conceived as the inculcation of behavioural patterns considered as ideal in a particular political community. It implicates capability which is intellect-based and willingness which is emotive in nature.

This goal is not too distant from that of Nigeria. In Nigeria, the efforts at confronting colonialism led to the young elites creating intense pressure on the colonialists and political education among the masses of the people to challenge colonial rule. This led to so many constitutional evolutions and developments with great inputs and participation of the people. The ultimate benefit of such enlightenment and struggle was the gaining of political independence by Nigeria on October 1st 1960.

Similarly, the teaching of Social Studies, Government, Citizenship Education, Political Science, Nationalism etc in schools have been able to evolve the idea of political education over time too. The struggle for the realization of democratic participation also deepened both political literacy and participation in its various manifestations in Nigeria. As Nwanko (2012) observes, a politically educated citizen should have the ability and willingness to participate in, and shape politics, tolerate differences and the rest of the outcomes for the survival of any democracy. Though this may be far from the reality in Nigeria, there is no doubt that the majority of the ordinary are most enthusiastic, hopeful and committed to a better society through good governance.

An important reference point too in Nigeria was the establishment of the National Technical Committee on Civic Education which is an inter-agency collaborative framework to respond to the challenges of democratic governance in Nigeria. The Committee initiated a Civic Education Project in 2004 to emphasize the system of value education to empower the citizens with the relevant skills,

knowledge and attitude important for them to be active participants in a democratic society (*National Technical Committee on Civic Education, 2007*). This has been done through various agencies and departments such as the Ministry of Education and civil society organizations and translates to meaningful implementation by the agencies and other organizations.

The increased interest and role of the mass media in political education in Nigeria is obvious and pervasive. As opined by Oladejo and Oni (2017), government agencies like the National Orientation Agency (NOA), Civil Societies and electoral management body, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), in Nigeria exploit the mass media as a tool for mass education and mobilization. They note that these bodies among others have involved the mass media over the years in enlightening citizens about the political system. Through such as process, the citizens become more informed about aspirants and candidates for various elective positions as well as the manifestoes of political parties. Though such channels are hardly used to make those in authority accountable to the electorate after the conduct of the electoral process, political education at that level is often widely achieved.

However, the civil society organizations (CSOs) in particular have played a very significant role in the search for a stable polity in Nigeria. This struggle, which started during the pre-colonial era continued even at a higher tempo in the military era, and has continued to grow in momentum, intensity and scope. Solomon O. Akinboye S.O. and Olorunfoba S.O (2007) rightly note that it cannot be otherwise because the insistence by the CSOs on popular participation in the national development process is hinged on the premise that development wisdom does not reside in one place alone. The civil society organizations have done this through the depth of their knowledge as well as the objectivity with which they assess issues of national concerns. They further observe that the intellectual freedom that civil societies possess is brought to bear in the performance of their advocacy roles as the civil society incarnates a desire to recover from society powers- economic, social and expressive believed to have been illegitimately usurped by the

state. In fact, coming under the umbrella of Domestic Election Observation Groups in 2007 for instance, they participated in mobilizing the citizens to actively participate in the voter registration exercise that preceded the elections. They also deployed approximately 50,000-trained election monitors throughout the country. These reduced a lot of irregularities and malpractices during the electoral process.

Similarly, in a post-election survey, IFES (2015) discovered an increased voter education on the awareness and confidence in the INEC improved dramatically, indicating positive public perceptions regarding the conduct of the 2015 election and increased trust in the Nigerian election management body. The result showed spontaneous awareness of the INEC increased from 71 percent in December 2014 to 87 percent in July 2015, marking a substantial increase by 16 percentage points across Nigeria's six geopolitical zones and Lagos too. During the same time frame, confidence in the INEC also registered a sharp increase by 16% points, moving from 68 percent in pre-election levels to an overwhelming 85 percent after the elections. Public satisfaction with the INEC's performance extended across a number of performance criteria and attributes, including its professionalism in organizing the 2015 elections (90%); being transparent and informing the public about its activities (84%); being competent in managing the voter registration process and managing the electronic card readers (81%); and performing its duties with honesty and integrity (78%). It is noteworthy that the INEC was assessed slightly lower (76%) in terms of its efficiency of distributing PVCs and its independence from political influence (72%). These are clearly indicative of the high civic perception, political education and active participation of the citizenry which is continually on the increase.

Over the years too, there have been an explosion of youth engagement of those in authority through the social media. Such active engagements have been by creating conversations, driving new ideas, mobilizing and serving as a platform for challenging the status quo. Since the internet has provided an important arena for information flow, the non-restriction of the access to and flow of

information in the public space has been largely enhanced via the social media. The last 2015 general elections in Nigeria saw the tremendous use of this 'alternative' media by the political parties and candidates for campaigns and mobilization. It was also a platform for monitoring the entire electoral process from the beginning to its end and actually helped in averting the often widespread cases of rigging and manipulation of electoral outcomes.

An assessment of Political Education on Participation and Good Governance

Oakeshott has written that, it is important to propose to ask what information we should equip ourselves with before we begin to be politically active. He notes that our thoughts on political education, then, should spring from our understanding of political activity and the kind of knowledge it involves. Without it, our young people are forced to operate in the social and political world without the skills and insights that they need to be in control of their own destiny and that of our national life.

Similarly, Nwanko (2012) has made the point that various past programmes of the various regimes like ethical revolution, War Against Indiscipline (WAI), Mass Mobilisation for Social and Economic Reform (MAMSER), are at least honest recognition of the role of political education in driving participation and good governance. All dealt in one way or the other with the question of moral reorientation, of "training" Nigerians in proper conduct and elevating the moral tide of political education.

Besides, the reason for the relationship between political education and participation is obvious: education gives citizens the skills and resources needed to participate in politics. Education not only directly increases levels of participation, but also allows citizens to acquire the civic skills necessary to effectively communicate their concerns to politicians, the skills people need to understand the abstract subject of politics, to follow political issues, and to research and evaluate the issues and candidates during elections. These shape their political decisions and participation. For instance, the electoral turn out and participation of voters in the Presidential elections in Nigeria since 1979

shows tremendous improvements in voters' turnout and these are clearly connected with increasing political and civic education that are both from formal or informal processes.

Indeed, the Fourth Republic which is under review as indicated in table 1 below reveals that in 1999 when there was a return to democratic rule after many years of military interregnum, it recorded 52.26% voter turnout and this greatly improved and was at its peak in 2003 with 69.08% turnout. The peak in that year for the whole study period certainly shows that the experiences of the first tenure of the then President Olusegun Obasanjo's government ignited greater interest for participation by the electorates and though there was a drop in 2007 to 57.49%, such was not actually very significant and did not totally signify apathy but perhaps the outcome of the failed bid to manipulate the legislature for constitutional amendment that would have resulted in the President's continuity in office. Aside the seeming loss of confidence by the people over the preceding events, the resistance against that attempt itself was significantly indicative of an active and vibrant citizenry and their representatives who stood against impunity and preferred to stand on the side of constitutional democracy and good governance. The unfamiliarity with the newly introduced card readers in 2011 affected its use and citizens' acceptance of it too. Some of the card readers failed to function and affected the turnout rate to 53.68%. The election was also marred by unprecedented post-election violence and created fear among voters even in 2015 when the least of 43.65% turnout since 1999 was experienced. The country also faced grave security challenges of increased Boko Haram attacks at the same time and presented an electoral issue area for both the major contestant (former President Goodluck E. Jonathan and the President Buhari). Interestingly, the same period marked the historic voting out of the sitting President, which was considered revolutionary in the country's political history. Taking over government in 2015, President Muhammadu Buhari's commitment to fighting corruption has earned him the support he has received in spite of the economic recession challenges on the people. Introducing the whistle blowing policy has also

given confidence to the citizens in reporting some landmark corruption cases, among other frontal fights against the menace in Nigeria by the government. These turn of events in general show greater citizens' awareness and civic responsibility

to not only participate in the electoral process but ensure their voices count in making meaningful contributions to the issues of governance. This is a significant hallmark of democratic participation for good governance in the Nigerian society.

TABLE 1: VOTER TURNOUT AND PARTICIPATION IN THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS IN NIGERIA FROM 1979-2015

S/No.	Year	Voter Turn Out	Total Votes (Includes Valid & Invalid Votes)	Registration (the Number of Registered Voters)	VAP (Voting Age Population) Turnout (The Voter Turnout)	Voting Age Population (All Citizens above the Legal Voting Age)	Population (The Total Population)	Invalid Votes	Compulsory Voting
1.	2015	43.65%	29,432,083	67,422,005	32.11%	91,669,312	181,562,056	2.87%	No
2.	2011	53.68%	39,469,484	73,528,040	48.32%	81,691,751	155,215,573	3.19%	No
3.	2007	57.49%	35,397,517	61,567,036	49.85%	71,004,507	131,859,731	-	No
4.	2003	69.08%	42,018,735	60,823,022	65.33%	64,319,246	129,934,911	6%	No
5.	1999	52.26%	30,280,052	57,938,945	57.36%	52,792,781	108,258,359	1.40%	No
6.	1993	-	14,039,486	-	27.79%	50,526,720	105,264,000	-	No
7.	1979	35.25%	17,098,267	48,499,091	44.83%	38,142,090	77,841,000	2%	No

Source: International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance (International IDEA), 2015 with modifications by the authors

On the other hand political education plays a key role in informing people as to how social and political institutions operate and of the importance of political institutions in shaping our society. Such an education plays a role in developing the skills of critical analysis that enable people to make an informed, considered and effective contribution to their society.

Since political education is not simply the function of curricula and classrooms, it is embedded in the work of a range of bodies in civil and political society such as education and youth groups, non- governmental organisations, business groups e.t.c. These bodies often have a focus on corporate social responsibility, and trade unions, political parties e.t.c. They can elicit political participation that can promote good governance in the society. For instance several international aid agencies involved in election monitoring in Nigeria have been providing a lot of political education to the citizens on their rights to democratic participation for good governance and accountability.

Converse (*cited in Campbell, 2006:326*) also phrased his description of the tight link between political education and engagement thus:

Whether one is dealing with cognitive matters such as level of factual information about politics or conceptual sophistication in its assessment; or such motivational matters as degree of attention paid to politics and emotional involvement in political affairs; or questions of actual behavior, such as engagement in any of a variety of political activities from party work to vote turnout itself: education is everywhere the universal solvent, and the relationship is always in the same direction. The higher the education, the greater the 'good' values of the variable. The educated citizen is attentive, knowledgeable, and participatory and the uneducated citizen is not.

Furthermore, in the present information society we are living in, the role of institutions and organizations of formal education has diminished relatively and the significance of other learning environments (such as informal learning settings) and information sources has grown. Pantzar (2008) argues for instance, that both conventional (electronic and printed mass media) and novel

media (internet etc.) give today's citizens excellent opportunities to seek up-to-date information and knowledge, and also to ask questions about politics, society and other topics relevant to them. Obviously, an information-rich society offers powerful new means to exercise the right to political participation. The social media have been keenly employed by Nigerians to question corrupt officials in government several times and this has been instrumental to ensuring good participation and good governance. Many Nigerians find the social media as an avenue for the expression of their voice especially during the April 2015 general elections and even with prevailing socio-political events in the country.

Adelabu and Akinsolu (2009) have also argued that schooling itself has been known to function as an ideological vehicle for political socialization but the more extensive an individual's education is, the more likely he is to have more political information to possess a wide range of opinions on political matters and to engage in political discussion with a wide range of people and to feel a greater ability to influence political affairs. They note that individual political behaviour and thoughts are consequences of the environmental influences i.e. those influences directly relating to political ideas and issues.

Thus, it is argued that evidence of students' political education is influenced by the persistent increase in Nigerian students' activism. Students' activism persists because students feel that majority of the citizens or their own parents are being oppressed perhaps because of poverty or lack of access to governance and in most cases those parents who speak out are not heard. The students therefore see themselves as crusaders and reformers. The public in turn regards students as leaders of tomorrow and conscience of the nation. Baodou (2013) buttresses this in positing that higher institutions worldwide are known to be where political ideologies are formed and implanted in the minds of students prior to their graduation. They also serve as instruments of motivating students to get involved in active politics even before their graduation. The National Association of Nigerian Students and similar student bodies have been veritable in the pursuit of such goals for a better

Nigerian society.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following measures are recommended:

1. It is important to create the awareness to citizens that participation is a fundamental democratic right. It should be an end in and of itself to remove existing barriers to political participation. Government should create channels of ventilating political views through town hall meetings, be consultative and create other forms of collaborative efforts that can bring those in authority closer to the people.
2. Support should be given to young people's inclusion in political processes, democratic practices and decision making at all levels of development focusing on governance processes to generate contribution to the identification and implementation of sustainable solutions to the problems of the society. Gender should be mainstreamed in this direction too.
3. Citizens should leverage on the implementation of the Freedom of Information Act in Nigeria to provide a basis for holding those in government service accountable to the people. This is the hallmark of participation and good governance.
4. It is recommended that there is a need in familiarizing students and teachers with the forms of representative democracy and governance generally to expose them to the realities of the issues early in life. If we are going to have a truly politically literate community in the end (one that supports participatory representative democracy), children must be taught, through 'doing', what it means to choose a representative for a particular role—and to allow them at a very early stage to see the consequence of their choices.
5. The development of the necessary type of infrastructure that enables people's participation in decision-making using the technological means and methods now available in an information society should be promoted in all schools and the public domain for greater participation such as the positive and effective use of the social media.

6. All categories of teachers at all levels of institutions in Nigeria should be provided with both fundamental and advanced political education during their studies in higher institutions of learning to be able to propagate the values of political education to advance and make democracy successfully implemented in Nigeria. Politics should be compulsorily taught in institutions of higher learning, especially those engaged in the training of teachers.

Conclusion

The survival of democracy in any nation including Nigeria lies in the people actively participating in the governance of their society. Political education is a veritable means of achieving that. This entails learning theoretically and practically the values that promote accountability, rule of law, control of corruption and active participation that can produce good governance. A great deal lies in the constant action of the people who accept a joint responsibility for what is being done and who show commitment to the values, which are indispensable to a free state. These must first be learnt before they can be lived. This challenging task requires the school, religious institutions the family, among others, that have specific contributions to make. The goal is the emergence of politically conscious individual who can then effectively participate as individuals or as members of a group in the political life of the nation. Properly politically educated, the people will be able to rise up to change what they think should be changed. Regular, widespread and far reaching political education requires commitment from above and below i.e. the state and its agencies on the one hand and from below, the families and the groups such as NGOs which broadly defined embrace all organisations operating within the political space. Through such processes and actions, greater citizens' participation will not only engender democracy but good governance for a prosperous society.

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