

Essence Of Inculcating Political Literacy Education In Nigerian Citizens

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ABSTRACT

This study advocated the development and institutionalization of political literacy education in Nigeria through the auspices of Nigerian universities and colleges of education, as basic institutions for implementing innovative curriculum instruction devices and quality development of competent teachers to drive the political development of

Nigeria. Principally, the essence of political literacy education was articulated as fortifying development of democratic governance, inculcating values for neutralizing political violence, expansion of the scope of politics, promotion of international political education, including institutionalization of credible electoral system, interconnectivity of politics to national, global peace and development. Strategies for effective dissemination of political literacy education were delineated as: development of courses in political literacy education, professional development of political science educators use of information communication technologies, extensive use of indigenous languages, others are active media sensitization, political support, organization of workshops, conferences and seminars. Impediments such as limited political support and funding, ineffective use of indigenous languages for effective political mobilization and sensitization of the Nigerian populace among others were harzaded. Recommendations and conclusion were drawn based on the issues raised in the study.

Key Words: Essence, inculcating, political literacy education and Nigeria citizens.

Introduction

Political literacy education is the deepening of the study of politics and information about political progressin nation states. It encompasses understanding of cultural, psychological, educational and philosophical backgrounds influencing operational politics. Furthermore, it entails active involvement in understanding governmental processes, political dynamics, policies and programmes. Political literacy education is a continuous process of creating knowledge, values, skills and attitudes about politics and political participation in nation states. Memuna and Ahmed (2012) conceptualized political literacy as a dimension of citizenship education with focus on Pakistan. In the context of this study, political literacy education is more elaborate and encompassing, it is the study and development about politics in and outside the structure of formal institutions for teaching politics. Political literacy education is directed for the consumption of citizens in nation states, in order to enthrone sustainable democracies. Political literacy education is a higher continuous interest in the study of politics relevant to nation states and the globe at large.

Anifowose and Enemuo in Ekemam (2017:1) supported political literacy education when they emphasized that political science "... attempts to understand the political behaviour of individuals, groups and societies, the factors and conditions that influence political actors, political events and institutions". Akude (2001) observed that citizens level of education inspire their interest and awareness on political issues. It is therefore fundamental to propagate and enlarge the scope of political literacy education through formal and informal strategies, in order to make a large segment of Nigerian public politically sensitive and elaborately educated on key contemporary political events, issues and development within the Nigerian political landscape and the international societies.

(Political) literacy improves citizens (political rational decisions (Yayar & Karaca, 2017). Man's political society is dominated by varying conflicts, interests and aspirations which requires political literacy education to regulate, in order to contain social disorder, political chaos, indecent political behaviour, political ignorance and to checkmate general insecurity prevalent in contemporary Nigeria, as a result of political marginalization, imbalance, corruption and leadership inefficiency to manage national resources and the dividends of democracy, for comprehensive sustainable alleviation of poverty.

For Emeka (2014), the study of the political state of Nigeria and its governance is of paramount importance than personal interests and desires. To give illuminating insights into this discourse, essence of political literacy education in Nigeria, strategies for effective dissemination of political literacy education and impediments would be addressed.

Essence of Political Literacy Education in Nigeria

The essence of political literacy education in the political landscape of Nigeria, would be addressed as follows:

1. **Fortifying democratic governance:** Democratic governance is expected to thrive better in a political socialized environment, with quality respect and recognition for human rights. In Nigeria, there is flagrant political abuse of power, human rights and repression of legitimate opposition to political misrule by various governments purported to uphold democracy. Against this background, Achebe (1983) alarmed that ineffective political leadership is the bane of Nigeria's politics and political system. Ideally, a truly democratic government is not imposed or forced on the people, government attract more loyalty and obedience when elected through popular election (Mezieobi, 2015). It is the place of political literacy education to expose, sensitise and inculcate democratic principles and values as a measure of actively restoring good democratic governance in Nigeria body politic.
2. **Inculcating values for neutralizing political violence:** Nigeria is a multi-ethnic diverse and disunited country because of the influences of poor governance, fake news, social discrimination, lopsided leadership, ingrained ethnicity, general insecurity which affects patriotism, incites political violence and conflicts at will among the youths particularly. Ike (nd) acclaimed that African nations are politically democratized to a high extent but show case pronounced weakness in management of human rights and poverty alleviation. The focus of political literacy education ought to be, to inculcate values for human rights education, respect for dignity of labour, spirit of inter ethnic tolerance and accommodation of all citizens of Nigeria irrespective of diversities, promotion of national interest and patriotism should be elevated to the top. Furthermore, the content of political literacy education should be focused, to forge a modern Nigeria where integrative nationalism will reign supreme and national allegiance override primordial ties and ethnic nationality (Mezieobi, 2017).

3. **Expansion of the scope of politics:** The major focus of political literacy education is to keep national and global political development afresh to all Nigerian citizens through the media, publications and grassroots contacts. New developments in the political circle are circulated to the immediate consumption of the citizenry, this would help to build peace, social intercourse and peaceful relations among Nigerians and understanding the world around. Onuoha and Nwaigwe (2017) upheld that sporadic varying changes in societal behaviours and perceptions can be illuminated through political literacy education.
4. **Promotion of international political education:** Political literacy education gives credence for citizens to be acquainted with political issues and events across national borders and countries, including studying of internal political relations, exposure to comparative governance to both academics and non academics. This is a process of broadening information about politics and international political education, in order to fortify Nigeria's democratic experience, for the realization of stable nation building. Arokoyu (2012) argued that globalization and exposure of citizens to global political issues and problems is strategic phenomenon in international governance. The globe is interdependent and interrelated; citizens of nations need to be acquainted with values, skills and attitudes to be responsive to global challenges. Political literacy education is expected to provide knowledge towards realizing global citizenship. There would be better international understanding, entrenchment of culture of peace and political stability through diversified international political literacy education. (Political) cultural education and sensitization is germane for understanding of other (nations political) cultures (Mezieobi, 2014).
5. **Electoral process as a precursor to political participation:** Voting is the most common form of political participation (Tanahill, 2012:131); politics cannot be feasible without persuasive, active, enlightened and involved electorates to consummate the process of elections and political leadership choices selection.

Insanity in the political process in Nigeria filled with rigging of elections, thuggery, political intimidation, insecurity, kidnapping, snatching of ballot boxes has prompted Ushie and Ekanem (2008) to label the political process in Nigeria as election without electorates, put simply, a political system that perpetuates selection of political contestants, devoid of credible certified transparent election results. Furthermore, Eminue (2001) describes an effective electoral system as one that has latitude of freedom to choose credible political leaders without coercion, intimidation, including suppression, inducement by voter buying, imposition of candidates, unfair declaration of results, declaration of illegitimate conjured fake results and so on. The epileptic electoral system in Nigeria can be rejuvenated through political socialization garnered through political literacy education. In clearer terms, it is cogent to be informed that the effectiveness of the electoral process to a high extent determines the functionality of a stable democratic state

(Osakwe, 2009). Therefore, education, enlightenment and sustained campaigns on the maintenance and management of effective dependable electoral system in Nigeria is key in all efforts directed at political literacy education.

6. Interconnectivity of politics to national, global peace and development:

Political literacy education is an intellectual development process, which exposes the interconnectivity of democratic politics to achieving. Stable national and global peace, sustainable economy, development of infrastructures and security.

Ukpong (2014) observed that the essence of political interaction across the globe is for peace building and avoidance of conflicts. National and global economy would be better managed for humanity with limited wars, general insecurity, political tensions, political leadership corruption and flagrant abuse of democratic norms. Ikwumelu (2009) pinpointed that world mindedness attitude formation is to enhance international cultural understanding and politics by extension, in corroboration, Arokoyu (2012) supports political interaction as a process of developing values skills and knowledge for peace building. In essence, political enlightenment creates democratic space for accelerated development of national and global economies, peace and citizens for cohesive social living and meaningful participation in politics in line with due democratic process.

Strategies for effective dissemination of political literacy education

Political literacy education can be enlarged through the following approaches:

- 1. Development of political literacy education courses in political science education programmes:** Social science education Department in Nigerian universities houses political science education course programme. Political literacy education courses ought to be specifically designed, structured and disseminated by the political science education unit for the consumption of students in universities and colleges of education. The Federal Republic of Nigeria national policy on Education (2014) applauds innovation in teacher quality and curriculum content development, Nwalado (2007) and Osakwe (2012) affirmed that quality school programme should be responsive to dynamic desirable changes. This will help to make education functional for societal political stability.
- 2. Professional development of political science educators:** Political science educators in universities and colleges of education requires continuous professional development in political literacy education. This is to make them effective in classroom teaching, job performance, efficient, effective and skilled in the dispensation of political literacy education instruction (Offorma, 2014 & Mezieobi, 2016).
- 3. Use of information communication technologies:** Ogbeba, Iwuchukwu and Nnadiukwu (2012) in a study in Benue state recommended that teachers (of political literacy education) should utilize various instructional resources especially the ICT and resource person to achieve the objectives of political (literacy) education. Resource persons can utilize community associations, festivals, village

- meetings, political parties rallies, communication to political leaders among others to extend political literacy education.
4. **Extensive use of indigenous languages:** Literatures reveal that good percentage of Nigerians are not literate, including political literacy. Against this background Isaac (2008) suggests "... that the use of indigenous languages will enable a greater percentage of Nigerians to participate effectively in the functioning of modern (political) society". in other words, translating political events in local indigenous languages will facilitate the advancement of political literacy education. It will further expose the Nigerian populace to understanding of national, international political activities and events in wider scope and perspectives. Essien (2006) remarked that developed nations used mother tongues to further their enterprise and political development, while black nations of Africa were slack to use mother tongue to promote economic and political development.
 5. **Active media sensitizations:** Closely related to the use of mother tongue, is that the media should be actively used to power the spread of political literacy education at the grassroots through the instrumentality of local indigenous languages. Imogie in Ogbeba, Iwuchukwu and Nnadikwu (2012) identified (political literacy) education as a potent instrument for the socio-economic and political transformation of nations. By implication, political literacy education is configured to illuminate insights into understanding the operations of politics, political operational effects on the economy and general stability of nations security. In other words, political issues when strategically disseminated and managed-enthroned sustainable democracy, peace and social order in a polity.
 6. **Political support:** Political literacy education requires political support in terms of funding of research, training of personnel and provision of instructional materials. Akpochofo (2014) condemns the attitude of Nigerian government who visualize educational innovations as edifying but do little in financing. Private and corporate organizations support is welcome to boost political literacy education in Nigeria.
 7. **Organization of workshops, conferences and seminars:** Political literacy education can be facilitated by organization of practical workshops, conferences and seminars for deeper intellectual development, harvests and insights in the field of study. In addition, quality books, journals and media information are expected to be derived from the aforesaid approaches.

Impediments

The following limiting factors are itemized:

- Inadequate political will, private individuals and organizations funding of research is a great limitation to the development of political literacy education in Nigeria. In clearer terms, politicians and appointed bureaucrats or

administrators relationship (in funding and supporting the growth of political literacy education) is critical to national development (Rahman, 2015).

- The development of political literacy education courses by political science education units of Department of Social Science Education, in Nigerian universities will take some time to be realized because of paucity of highly qualified lecturers in the area, however future prospects is not bleak with the aggressive enrolment of students for postgraduate programmes.
- Akude (2001) agree that political (literacy) education is a pertinent avenue to socialize the Nigerian citizens to the prevailing political culture of the country. This will increase political participation, sense of judgment, rational political decisions and inducement for rightful voting of credible candidates. However, the poverty level in Nigeria and general insecurity affects to a large extent actualization of transparent politics.
- Ogbeba, Iwuchukwu and Nnadiukwu (2012) stressed that efforts made in Nigeria to reform and create political reawakening and reintegration among Nigerians through war. Against Indiscipline (WAI), Manmser, National orientation. Agency, Economic and Financial crime commission (EFCC), independent corrupt practices and other Related offences commission (ICPC), Oputa panel, National Confab have not yielded expected results. This scenario calls for continuous extension of political literacy education to the populace through diverse channels and local media.
- The electoral system in Nigeria is ineffective and marred by corruption, conflicts and political leadership non transparency in delivering governance. This scenario waters down the potency of political literacy education and its practical significance. (Omotor & Efayena, 2008, Bozimo, 2011).
- High rate illiteracy level in Nigeria is likely to affect political sensitization and participation. Illiteracy obstructs clear understanding of the link and essence of globalization in politics. Clark (1997) conceives globalization as a process of achieving international integration, universalisation, homogeneity, interdependence, interpenetration among others.
- Illiteracy may stimulate political Myopia or resistance on the relevance of learning about world politics. Mezieiobi (2008) rightly pinpointed that Africans are irrevocably committed to learning their own ethnic cultures and political development by extension.
- Otiji (2013) averred that pronounced political leadership corruption has grossly slowed down economic and political development in Nigeria, she reiterated that the state of Nigeria can only be salvaged with selfless political leadership, credible and transparent crop of leadership imbued with determined aim of achieving selfless governance for sustainable socio-political advancement of the nation.

This study is anchored on Bandura (1977) theory of social learning. Political behaviour can be learned through repeated sensitization, education and mobilization. Political literacy education deserves practical application in Nigeria's electoral system, in order to be adopted for realizing sustainable democratic system with enlightened electorates. Enlightened electorates would provide dependable election results for stabilizing democratic process in Nigeria and developing nations by extension. The focus of political literacy education is to ensure quality electoral participation.

Conclusion

Political literacy education is expected to enlarge the scope of politics and deepen the understanding of the dynamics of politics and political participation at the national and global levels. Political educators would be groomed to facilitate the spread of politics, political practices, scope of democratic dividends and values of collective security in achieving sustainable national development and global peace. Universities in Nigeria should play significant role in designing the curricula while the implementation would be done by the universities and colleges of education as basic institutions for teacher training.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were made based on limitations of the study.

1. Political support and funding of research in political science education would help the spread of political literacy education, which would help to enhance political mobilization and sensitization at the grassroots in Nigeria.
2. Academic staff development in political science education is key to producing highly qualified intellectuals for the realization of the envisaged goals and objectives of political literacy education
3. Poverty alleviation and entronement of sustainable national security would help in producing a transparent democratic electoral system for political stability in Nigeria.
4. The media, meet the people interaction at the grassroots, churches, mosques, cultural festivals and school instruction should be collaboratively used to actualize the implementation of political literacy education.
5. Political leaders and politicians are admonished to be transparent, corrupt controlled in order to deliver good governance. This scenario if effected, will prompt interest in political literacy education by the Nigerian populace.
6. The level of illiteracy in Nigeria should be greatly watered down for effective political mobilization, sensitization and development of citizens. In addition, mother tongues should be actively utilized in the democratic process for meaningful

political participation of large segments of the country, cognition and interpenetration of political dynamics even at global level.

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