



THE ROLE OF POLITICAL EDUCATION IN PROMOTING ATTITUDINAL CHANGE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA

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| Received | 17 March 2016 | | Accepted | 29 March 2016 | | Published | 24 April 2016 |

ABSTRACT

Background: It is widely acknowledged that democracy in Nigeria which should be essentially value-based and value-driven is presently a paradox of what it should be. This is because the structures and processes that underpin an effective democratic system in Nigeria are not driven and powered by a particular mindset or ideology. **Objectives:** To examine the cause(s) of the attitudinal deficiencies in the current practice of democracy in Nigeria, and to explore the extent to which political education could revitalize the identified attitudinal deficiencies for peaceful democratic system. **Methods:** To achieve the objectives of this work, direct observation and secondary data were adopted. **Results:** It was discovered that the present ideological deficiencies in Nigeria's democracy can be traced and attributed to the long period of military rule in the country. Besides the long years of military rule, the decline in societal values, poor and dysfunctional educational cum socialization processes, perceived compromise on the part of the different agents of political socialization, are other factors. Consequently, many political leaders in Nigeria are obsessed with power—a seductive drive that breeds political instability, ethnic violence, religious riots, moral corruption, economic distortions, megalomania, perversion and desecration of all that is good in the country. **Conclusion:** If Nigeria is to maintain a strong and responsible democracy and a prosperous and sustainable economic growth into the next century, it must be prepared to address and respond to political attitudinal deficiencies especially among young Nigerians at home and in the diaspora.

Keywords: Political Illiteracy, Attitudinal and Ideological Deficiencies, Democratic Deficit, Peaceful Democratic System.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, democracy or democratic governance appears to have become a very attractive bride admired by the country. The spirit of democracy and the hope of democratic dividends have remained very weak and less attractive as a result of tribal killing, religious intolerance, ethnic violence, political unrest, etc. This hope has not brought a semblance of ethnic unity, religious tolerance, political transparency, accountability, good governance and political stability. Nigeria is a nation born in hope and optimism but has lived in anxiety for most of its years due to the country's failure to produce a nationally acceptable leadership that transcends ethnic, regional and religious boundaries, and that can unite its diverse peoples. This may have spurred Anam-Ndu (1998:15) to conclude that "leadership is the commonest diagnosis of the Nigerian ailment and that the affliction seems to have developed indignant resistance for too long" [1].

In the light of these, it is valid to support the argument that the main problem with the Nigerian democratic system is the failure of governance. All other factors of disunity, instability, ethnic violence, religious intolerance and under-development are nurtured and given momentum by failure of leadership. A major challenge to good governance relates to elections, which provide the mechanism for establishing or reestablishing the legitimacy and authority of government. Elections must not only be free and fair but must be seen to be transparent and accountable. In a democracy, elections are the legitimate method of ascension to power or transfer of power at all levels; however it remains a source of political instability and violence in Nigeria. While periodic elections are meant to provide choices for leadership among citizens, they are also to build, nurture and consolidate good governance and political stability. According to Omodia, (2011), "...every modern definition of representative democracy includes participatory and contested elections perceived as the legitimate procedure for translation of rule by the people..." [2]. Participation is a major dimension of good governance and it requires not only regular, free and fair elections, but also continuous consultation in the formulation, monitoring and implementation of public policies. Political participation cannot be achieved without sufficient level of political education. Elections should not be an end in itself, but a means to an end [3]. As Ajayi (2007) mentioned, the people:

...must be mobilized for direct involvement, beyond elections, in political administration and governance. The role of the people must go beyond coming out...to elect the so-called government of the people and then return to the abyss until another round of 'democratic' elections [4].

From this foregoing, the question that readily comes to mind is why political education?

Karl Deutsch (1974: 3) provides an answer to this question when he explicated that:

Our societies have become webs of politics, so much so that: the water we drink, the air we breathe, the safety of our streets, the dignity of our poor, the health of our old, the education of our young, and the hope of our minority group – all are bound up with the political decisions made at the city hall, or the state capital [5].

Hence, it is important that every society handles the political education of its citizens with utmost importance, because, a politically-educated populace would in no doubt contribute actively to the political processes and development of a polity; and shun all acts that could undermine them.

Besides, the people enjoying political stability can be mobilized fully in such a way that ensures that in-between elections, the government is by the people and for the people. The link between good governance and political education is not in doubt as it is clearly stated in Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights that:

Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and his family, including education, food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services... [6].

Further, Article 26 further states that "Everyone has the right to education and education shall be free, at least in the elementary and foundation stages" [6]. Political education should thus be compulsory...

Political education and the rule of law are inextricably linked. The rule of law encompasses representative government; an independent judiciary; laws that are consistent with political standards; and proper system of accountability, which are crucial to the safeguarding of political education, to ensuring that individuals are treated equally before the law, and also to prevent those in power from acting in an unfettered or arbitrary manner. Similarly, Idowu (1996) linked political education to good governance in the sense that good governance cannot be achieved without political education, and neither can political education be enforced and observed without good governance [7].

Neither good governance nor political stability can be achieved without political education. James S. Coleman (1968:6) beautifully argues that right from the time of Plato and Aristotle, that political philosophers affirmed that quality of the school goes a long way to determine the quality of the state [8]. In other words, "What you want to see in the state you must endeavour to put it in the school". Indeed, historical evidences show that education in the Ancient Greek city-state emphasized both mental and physical fitness of beneficiaries [9]. The Romans laid emphasis on oratory and military training; to the French, scholarship was the hallmark of education, while the Germans emphasized patriotism [9]. The underlying objective for this is for the citizens to play active roles in the socio-political spheres of the state.

Scholars have a prominent role in the articulation of different views: in the monitoring and evaluation of government policies and programmes, in the mobilization of local resources, expertise to meet local and community-based needs. Contributions of political education experts in schools will include advocacy and awareness programmes, social mobilization, and community empowerment. Political education experts contribute to community development by undertaking to deliver essential political and mobilization services. The media, being part of the political education programme, is expected to play the role of the "watchdog" in order to monitor the activities of government and public institutions.

Political education is therefore one of the fundamental building blocks of a peaceful democratic system, and the gateway for the realization of human rights in democratic settings. Tied to compulsory teaching of political education in schools is the promotion of freedom of expression, freedom of association, and other rights. Also as fundamental building block of a stable democracy, it creates space for healthy debate, competition and innovation in governance; supports transparency and discourages violence as a means of protest; exposes human rights violations; and assures that people can exchange ideas and make peaceful democratic decisions through consensus building. If Nigeria is to maintain a strong and responsible democracy and a prosperous and growing economy, its democratic institutions including political parties, INEC and SIECs, the National Orientation Agency, the Ministry of Information, the media and CSOs, the formal schools system and other agents of socialization (family, peer group, religious organizations) must be prepared to respond to major challenges and address gaps through political education for the citizens. Beyond this, veritable media (normadic education, adult literacy programmes, public enlightenment/campaigns, etc) should be developed to reach informal sector. Also, wider citizen engagement and participation in political debates, periodic elections, oversight and other matters of governance is the key to unlock the dividends of democracy for Nigeria.

This paper therefore argues that for peaceful and stable democratic system of government to be attained and sustained in Nigeria, the need to prioritize civic education of the citizens at the federal, state and local government levels in the communities and schools cannot be overstressed. This will help to instill the attitude of objectivity, rational thinking and critical self-assertion [10]. Thus, when the inhabitants of a geographical unit are educated as to their civic and political rights, they cultivate the attitude of self-reliance and responsibility and realize the need to participate meaningfully in

democratic system of government [11]. It is necessary at this juncture to explicate the concept of political education to enable us understand the meaning so as to be certain of its implications to peaceful democratic system in Nigeria.

1.1 Conceptualizing political education: Political education has become a key lens through which educators and scholars observe the institutional and social dynamics in democratic societies. Defining political education is complicated by the fact that as a social concept, its content changes across different social and cultural contexts. Political education also is a concept which definition is far from settled: some scholars hold that it is about informing and educating citizens on system of government, political processes, electoral process, party system, constitutional development, public administration, policy making, consensus building, current affairs, issues of governance and accountability etc (Ake, 1996), while others are of the view that it is about critical analytical skills and basic knowledge about policy making, consensus building, current affairs, issues of governance and accountability, system of government, political processes, electoral process, party system, constitutional development and public administration [12]. According to Bentley (2005:15):

It is said to have 'the potential to politically empower citizens but also the potential to constrain them to orthodoxies—radical as well as conservative as witnessed in Nazi Germany and Communist Soviet Union. The habits of the mind, as well as 'habits of the heart', the dispositions that inform the democratic ethos are inherited [13].

As Alexis de Toqueville (1969:32) pointed out, each generation is a new people that must acquire political knowledge, learn the political skills and develop the political dispositions or traits of private and public character that undergird a constitutional democracy [14]. Political education, therefore, is or should be a prime concern in turning the negative attitude of some Nigerians towards the democratic structures and system into positive.

To further understand the concept of political education, it is important to consider the danger of political illiteracy as enunciated by Bertolt Brecht. According to him, a political illiterate is the worst of all illiterate. He stressed that: He (a political illiterate) doesn't hear, doesn't speak, nor participates in the political events. He doesn't know the cost of life, the price of the bean, of the fish, of the flour, of the rent, of the shoes and of the medicine, all depends on political decisions. The political illiterate is so stupid that he is proud and swells his chest saying that he hates politics. The imbecile doesn't know that, from his political ignorance is born the prostitute, the abandoned child, and the worst thieves of all, the bad politician, corrupted and flunky of the national and multinational companies [15].

Regarding political education, "concept" has been used and is in fact frequently used in writings. There is, however, some disquiet as to the appropriateness of that word, in part because of the newness of political education as a field of study in Nigeria but principally because there is still much groping as to what educational activities it applies to; until sufficient measure of agreement as to some adequate and necessary defining contents is reached, it might be safe and correct to talk of "conceptions (rather than the concept) of political education" [16]. Indeed, this exploration of the nature of political education can be regarded as an example of that groping, and evidence of agreed criteria of its usage. The contention of this paper, however, is that it is still a matter of controversy if the essential components of political education are firm enough to be called contents, and whether they are necessary and important enough to clearly mark out political education from other similar activities [17].

One example of the essential components of political education is political knowledge. Political knowledge is concerned with the content or what citizens ought to know; the subject matter, if you will. The knowledge component is embodied in the form of five significant and enduring questions. These are question that have continued to engage not only political educators; they do, or should, engage every thoughtful citizens [18]. The five key questions are:

- what are politics and government?
- what are the foundations of the Nigerian political system?
- how does the constitution embody the purposes, values and principles of Nigerian democracy?
- what is the relationship of Nigeria to other nations and to world politics?
- what are the roles of citizens in Nigerian democracy or politics?

The use of questions instead of statements as a means of organizing the political knowledge component was deliberate. Political education is an essential education that deals with dialogue, discussion and deliberate process in which citizens engage. The use of questions is intended to indicate that the process is never-ending, is an on-going marketplace of ideas, a search for new and better ways to realize attitudinal ideals. Dewey (1922:88) noted that:

While all thinking results in political knowledge, ultimately the value of political knowledge is subordinate to its use in thinking. For we live not in a settled and finished world, but in one which is going on, and where our main task is

prospective, and where retrospect and all knowledge as distinct from thought of value in the solidity, security and fertility it affords our dealings with the future [19].

The second essential component of political education is political skills. If citizens are to exercise their political rights and discharge their political responsibilities as members of self-governing communities, they not only need to acquire a body of political knowledge such as that embodied, system of government, political processes, electoral process, party system, constitutional development, public administration, policy making, consensus building, current affairs, issues of governance and accountability etc, they also need to acquire relevant intellectual and participatory political skills [20]. The ability to identify emotional language and symbols is of particular importance for citizens. They need to be able to discern the true purposes for which emotive language and symbols are being employed. Another intellectual skill which good political education fosters is that of describing. The ability to describe functions and processes such as legislative checks and balances or judicial review is indicative of understanding.

The third essential component of political education, which is political disposition, refers to the traits of private and public character essential to the maintenance and improvement of democratic society. Traits of private character such as moral responsibility, self discipline and respect for the worth and human dignity of every individual are imperative. Traits of public character are now less consequential. Such traits as public spiritedness, civility, respect for the rule of law, critical mindedness and willingness to listen. Thus, the three essential components are as clear-cut as to distinguish political education from other similar forms of activity.

Perhaps, more enduring but difficult to closely define is the degree of freedom and flexibility that characterize educational activities labeled "Political Education" [19]. There is to political education, diversity of objectives, curricula designs, programmes, clientele and so on; flexibility in organizational and administrative arrangements; and some degree of freedom among political educators or scholars. It is this degree of freedom and flexibility which, if not abused, makes political education programmes situational-relevant and responsive to individual, group and national needs. One key issue in any policy formulation on political education therefore is how to ensure responsible use of the political freedom either by the political educators or by the recipients, or both. Related component and processes in the teaching and learning of political knowledge are political skills and political dispositions. Political dispositions and skills, both intellectual and participatory, are inseparable from a body of political knowledge. In order to think critically and act effectively and responsibly in response to democratic issues, Nigerian citizens must understand the terms of the issue of governance, its origins, the alternative responses to it, and the likely consequence of these responses [21]. Such understanding must be based upon the political knowledge of Nigerian citizens. The application of political knowledge to explain, evaluate and resolve a democratic issue depends upon the cognitive skills of citizens. Political knowledge, disposition and skills must be taught and learned in tandem to fulfill the mission of political education, which is to develop individuals who can establish, maintain and improve democratic governance and citizenship in Nigeria.

So far, this paper has tried to define political education by looking at its meanings and connotations. It has isolated a few components such as: political knowledge; political skills (intellectual and participatory); and community political dispositions (the traits of private and public character).

At this juncture, an attempt shall be made to supplement this with an exploration of the relationship between political education and similar or sister concepts, especially with democracy whose boundaries of usage grossly overlap. It is not uncommon to see political education and democracy linked together, giving rise to the question of how the one is related to the other. A number of interpretations of the linkage of political education with democracy are possible: the addition of political education to democracy may well connote that these are two distinct entities under one umbrella.

Another possible interpretation may be that the addition of political education is for emphasis only, rather than a pointer to the existence of a distinct unit of political education under the aegis of democratic political institutions. All these add up to the agreement that characterizes the inter-relationship between political education and democracy, at least in the mind of Nigerian scholars [22]. Scholarly convenience or institutional efficiency may very well justify (or rationalize) the linkage of both in an educational institutional set up, but it would seem that, conceptually, the one is an element or component of the other. Political education in a democracy is education for self government while democracy, after all, means self government. Self government means that citizens are actively involved in their own governance; they do not just passively accept the dictums of others or the demands of others. Political education in a democratic society most assuredly is concerned with promoting understanding of the ideals of democracy and a reasoned commitment to the values and principles of democracy.

1.2 Components of Political Education and Justification for Democracy

After a fairly extensive survey of the conceptions and essential components of Political education, it was arrived at what is considered a fairly synthetic list of essential components which is better summarized than paraphrased. These include;

political knowledge which is the first essential component of political education and it concerns with what Nigerian citizens ought to know, the subject matter, if you will. The political knowledge component is embodied in the form of five significant and enduring questions. These are questions that have continued to engage not only political philosophers and scholars, they are questions that do or-should-engage every thoughtful citizens. The choice of question format as a means of organizing the political knowledge component was deliberate. Democracy is a dialogue, a discussion, a deliberate process in which Nigerian citizens engage. The use of questions is intended to indicate that the process is never-ending, is an on-going marketplace of ideas, a search for new and better ways to realize democracy's ideals.

It is important to consider in-depth the essential questions about governance and politics that continue to challenge thoughtful Nigerian citizens. Addressing the first key question, "What are politics and government?" will help Nigerian citizens to better appreciate the nature of politics and government; why politics and government are necessary; the purpose of government; the essential characteristics of limited and unlimited government; the nature and purposes of constitutions and alternative ways of organizing constitutional governments.

The second key question "What are the foundations of the Nigerian political system?" will enable an understanding of the historical, philosophical and democratic foundations of the Nigerian society and political culture; and the values and principles basic to Nigerian constitutional democracy, such as individual political rights and responsibilities, concern for the good, the rule of law, justice, equality, diversity, truth, patriotism, federalism and the separation of powers. Political knowledge of the ideals, values and principles set forth in the nation's core documents (i.e. Chapter II of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria "Fundamental Objectives and Directive Principles") serves an additional and useful purpose [23]. Those ideals, values and principles are criteria which Nigerian citizens can use to judge the means and ends of government, as well as the means and ends of the myriad groups that are part of society.

The next key question "How does the government established by the constitution embody the purposes, values and principles of Nigerian democracy?" will help Nigerian citizens to understand and evaluate the limited government they have established and the vertical (Federal, State and Local Government) and horizontal (Executive, Legislature and Judiciary) sharing of powers it entails. Citizens who understand the justification for this system of limited, dispersed and shared power and its design are better able to hold their governments—local, state and national-accountable and to ensure that the political rights of Nigerian citizens are protected. They also will develop a considered appreciation of the place of law in the Nigerian democratic system, as well as of the unparalleled opportunities for choice and citizen participation that the system makes possible.

The penultimate key question of "What is the relationship of Nigeria to other States and to world affairs?" is important because Nigeria does not exist in isolation; it is part of an increasingly interconnected world. To make judgments about the role of Nigeria in the contemporary world today and about what course Nigerian foreign policy should take, citizens need to understand the major elements of international relations and how world affairs affect their own lives and the security and well being of their communities, states, and nation. Nigerian citizens also need to develop a better understanding of the roles of major intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations given the increasingly significant role that they are playing in the foreign affairs and security realms.

The last key question, "What are the roles of citizens in Nigerian democracy?" is of particular importance. Citizenship in a constitutional democracy means that each citizen is a full and equal member of a self-governing community and is endowed with fundamental rights and entrusted with responsibilities. Nigerian citizens should understand that, through their involvement in democratic life and in civil society, they can help to improve the quality of life in their neighborhoods, communities and nation. If they want their voices to be heard, they must become active participants in the political process. Although elections, campaigns and voting are central to democratic institutions, citizens should learn that beyond electoral politics, many participatory opportunities are open to them. They should come to understand that the attainment of individual goals and public goals tend to go hand in hand with participation in political life and civil society.

The second essential component of political education in a democratic society is political skills. If citizens in Nigeria are to maximally exercise their political rights and discharge their political responsibilities as members of self-governing communities, they not only need to acquire a body of political knowledge such as that embodied in the five organizing questions just described; they also need to acquire relevant intellectual and participatory political skills. Intellectual skills in democracy are inseparable from content. To be able to think critically about democratic issues in Nigeria, for example, one must have an understanding of the issue, its history, its contemporary relevance, as well as command of a set of intellectual tools or considerations useful in dealing with such an issue. The intellectual skills essential for effective and responsible citizenship sometimes are called critical thinking skills. One may also categorize these skills as:

- Identifying and describing;
- Explaining and analyzing; and
- Evaluating, taking and defending positions on democratic issues.

Political education will enable Nigerians to identify or interpret the meaning or significance of symbols that are tangible such as the national flag, national monuments, and community and democratic events. It will similarly enable Nigerians to interpret the significance of intangibles such as ideas or concepts including patriotism, majority rule, minority rights, civil society and constitutionalism.

In a self-governing society, citizens are decision makers. They need, therefore, to develop and continue to improve their political skills of evaluating, taking and defending positions. These political skills are essential if Nigerian citizens are to assess issues on the democratic agenda to make quality judgments about issues and to discuss their assessment with others in public or private. In addition, those skills can be categorized as interacting, monitoring and influencing. Interacting pertains to the skills Nigerian citizens need to communicate and to work cooperatively with others. To interact is to be responsible to one's fellow citizens. To interact is to question, to answer, and to deliberate with civility, as well as to build coalitions and to manage political or democratic instability in a fair, peaceful manner. Monitoring refers to the political skills citizens need to track the handling of issues by the political process and by democratic government. Monitoring also means the exercising of oversight or "watchdog" functions on the part of citizens. The political participatory skill of influencing refers to the capacity to affect the processes of politics and governance, both the formal and the informal processes of governance in the community. If Nigerian citizens are to better influence the course of political life and democratic policies, they need to expand their repertoire of political participatory skills through political education [24].

The third essential component of political education, political disposition, refers to the traits of private and public character essential to the maintenance and improvement of constitutional democracy in Nigeria. Political disposition, like community skills, develop slowly over time and as a result of what one learns and experiences in the home, at school, community and organization of civil society. Those experiences should engender understanding that democracy in Nigeria requires the responsible self-governance of each individual; one cannot exist without the other. Traits of private character such as moral responsibility, self discipline and respect for the worth and dignity of every individual are imperative. Traits of public character are no less consequential. Such traits as democratic spiritedness, civility, and respect for the rule of law, critical mindedness and willingness to listen, negotiate and compromise are indispensable to democracy's success. Political dispositions that contribute to democratic efficacy, the healthy functioning of the democratic system, a sense of dignity and worth and the common good were identified in the *Africa Charter* [25].

In the interest of brevity, those political dispositions or traits of private and public character may be described as participating in community and democratic affairs in a thoughtful and effective manner. Such political disposition entails becoming informed prior to voting or participating in democratic debate, engaging in reflective discourse, and assuming leadership when appropriate. It also entails evaluating whether and when one's obligations as a citizen require that personal desires and interests be subordinated to the public good; evaluating whether and when one's obligations or constitutional requirements demand one to reject certain societal expectations; and promoting the healthy functioning of constitutional democracy in Nigeria. Political disposition encompasses being informed and attentive to democratic affairs, learning about and deliberating on constitutional values and principles, monitoring the adherence of political leaders and public agencies to those values and principles and taking appropriate action if adherence is lacking. Political disposition also engenders working through peaceful, legal means to change laws that are thought to be unjust. The importance of political disposition, or the "habits of the heart," as Alexis de Toqueville called them, can scarcely be overemphasized [14]. The traits of public and private character that undergird democracy are, in the long run, probably of more consequence than the political knowledge or political skills a citizen may command.

2. METHODS

To generate data for this study, literatures; textbooks, journal articles, opinion articles, and other materials including the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria (1999) and the United Nations Human Right Declaration document were carefully read and critically reviewed. Besides, objective and unbiased observations were made on the Nigerian political arena, both under military regimes, and democratic dispensations, particularly the Fourth Republic.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1 Political Education for Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria

It has been discovered that politics and good governance thrive on a foundation of respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms, and the rule of law; compliance with accepted standards and norms; transparent, accountable and participatory leadership; an independent judiciary and institutionalized checks and balances; and free and fair elections for building

legitimacy and authority of government. These are all embedded in Political Education curriculum. It is through politics and good governance that widespread poverty is reduced to minimum level; jobs and sustainable livelihoods are created; the environment is protected; advancement of women is promoted; education, healthcare, food and shelter are bettered; human capital is developed; and economic growth is assured. Of course, success in good governance and politics would engender national security and a state in which “freedom from fear” and “freedom from want” as fundamental rights of all persons are guaranteed.

Thus, the future of democratic system of government in Nigeria depends much on the development of political education in our societal and educational curriculum. Nigerians should realize that political education is essential to development of our constitutional democracy and also to attain the lofty objectives of the National Philosophy of Education that aims at achieving:

The development of the individual into a sound and effective citizen; the full integration of the individual into the community; and the provision of equal access to educational opportunities for all citizens of the country at the primary, secondary and tertiary levels both inside and outside the formal school system [26].

The habits of the mind as well as habits of the heart,” the political dispositions that inform the democratic ethos, are not inherited. As Alexis de Tocqueville pointed out, each new generation is a new people that must acquire the political knowledge, learn the political skills and develop the political dispositions or traits of private and public character that undergird a constitutional democracy [14]. Those political dispositions must be fostered and nurtured by word and study and by the power of example. Democracy is not a “machine that word go of itself”, but must be consciously reproduced, one generation after another. The scant, superficial community knowledge of young Nigerians is related to their generally low levels of political participation and community engagement, deficiencies in democratic attitudes or dispositions and underdeveloped democratic citizenship skills. Political educators have found strong relationships between knowledge of democratic principles, processes, and institutions and

- propensity to vote or otherwise participate in political life;
- orientation to political tolerance and political interest; and
- competence in cognitive and participatory skills of democratic citizenship, such as the capacities to analyze public issues and to cooperate with others in a group project.

The linkage between political education and attitudinal change is quite apparent. No doubt, political education plays a crucial role in the transformation of any society. It is indeed the pilot and the driver of change. Without effective and purposeful well educated citizens, a society can never experience any appreciable progress. But as abundantly reflected in the various conceptualizations, political education can hardly be discussed in isolation of political knowledge, dispositions and skills. Participation in governance is a measure of good political education that is rooted in political knowledge, political disposition and political skill, but some types of citizen participation in issues of governance actually contribute to political development. Political education seeks to give citizens the understanding and the habit of engaging in political contest to participate constructively in politics and, more broadly, political life and service to the society. Such education, then, can help stabilize Nigerian societies politically and should be seen as an important positive feature of attitudinal change landscape. Political education therefore aims to inculcate functional political knowledge; its emphasis is not just the content of such political knowledge, but the use to which it is put. It maintains that the end of such political knowledge, political skills and political disposition should be their effective utilization for the revitalization and sustenance of a vigorous, efficient and progressive democratic order. Political disposition and political skills—both intellectual and participatory—are inseparable from a body of community or societal knowledge or content. In order to think critically and act effectively in the issues of governance, the alternative responses, this understanding is depends upon the political knowledge to explain, evaluate and resolve a public issue depends upon the cognitive and process skills of citizens. Academic content and process-community knowledge, dispositions, and skills must be taught and learned in tandem to fulfill the mission of political education, which is to develop Nigerians who can establish, maintain and improve democratic governance and citizenship in their country and throughout the world [27].

4. CONCLUSION

This paper has touched on how the real (practical) value of societal or school curriculum should lie in addressing how the stakeholders and other channels (governments executive, legislature, judiciary, MDAs such as National Orientation Agency, Ministry of Information, political parties, schools, the private sector, CSOs, CBOs, the media and civil society etc.) should effectively conduct political education at all levels to improve governance as an integral aspect of promoting good governance and an enviable Nigerian identity. Improving community political knowledge, skills and disposition will result in young and old Nigerians participating in democratic process and structure in a more informed and enlightened way. Political education facilitates Nigerian community ownership of our own political and legal structures. Engaging Nigerian

citizens in robust debates over new ways to re-imagine our democracy, including addressing issue such as a reconciliation and forgiveness, is an essential step forward in building effective and efficient democratic system of governments based on political education.

If Nigeria is to maintain a strong and responsible democracy and a prosperous and sustainable economic growth into the next century, it must be prepared to address and respond to political attitudinal deficiencies especially among young Nigerians at home and in the diaspora. A peaceful, educated population is the key to our future; Nigerians must be prepared to participate knowledgeably in our democracy to enable our democratic institutions function effectively in increasingly diverse Nigerian communities and states and in a rapidly shrinking six geographical regions. Today in Nigeria, a new standard of a peaceful and appropriate political attitude is required of the citizenry, one suitable for the next century. Such attitude must demonstrate an understanding and acceptance of the responsibilities and obligations of citizenship. In this wise, all the agents of education and political socialization should be conscientize on the need to rejuvenate their commitment towards the attainment of a virile, conscious and politically-educated society.

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Cite this article: Taiwo Oladeji Adefisoye and Bamidele Oluwaseun. THE ROLE OF POLITICAL EDUCATION IN PROMOTING ATTITUDINAL CHANGE FOR SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACY IN NIGERIA. American Journal of Innovative Research and Applied Sciences. 2016; 2(4):147-154.

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