



RESEARCH ARTICLE

POLITICAL EDUCATION AND HUMAN RIGHTS PRACTICES IN NIGERIA: A DISCOURSE

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ABSTRACT

The Nigerian electoral system and processes have been fraught with impunity and high level of malpractices that makes achieving democracy, credible, free and fair election through human rights practices a mirage for dream. The worst of it all is that the electoral officials, including the electoral umpire now compromise their integrity and engage in a very inimical pattern of conducting elections. This unethical phenomenon of the electoral umpire has dashed the hope of citizens in achieving democracy in such a way that their fundamental human rights to vote and make their rightful choice of candidates are often defeated. This paper advocates ways to strengthen human rights practices for democratic consolidation. The paper adopted both primary and secondary sources of data collection. It also made use of content analysis and quantitative data gathering, as well as mean statistics for data analysis as research methodology. The findings of the study showed amongst others that political education helped to inform the citizen about their political rights and privileges and make them to engage actively in the political participation for the selection of a right candidate among electorate. Based on this, the paper recommended amongst others that Political education of the electorate should be a continuous activity on radio, television, Facebook and other related social media channels and not only during election period.

Keywords: Political education, human rights and democratic consolidation

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1.0. INTRODUCTION

Political education has to do with sensitization of the people (electorate) about the dos and don'ts in the political system. This education has to do with making their preferences for one candidate or party, as against the others. In most elections that have taken place in African countries, Nigeria inclusive, lack of adequate political education of the electorate has contributed almost 30% of the major problems that hinder the success of the election. This goes to establish the fact that educating the electorates during elections can determine electoral processes, voting pattern and election outcome in every democratic system (Nnabugo and Amadi 2018).

Political education as explained by Nnoli (2016) is concerned with that aspect of citizenship education that cultivates citizens to participate in the public life of a government and democracy, to use their rights and to discharge their responsibilities with the necessary knowledge and skills. To further buttress more on this meaning, Alexander (2013) explained that it is concerned with voter education, voter information and other related concepts and political activities in practice. Additionally, political education is a planned enlightenment programme that is carried out in the state which particularly borders on the state politics and governance, elections and voting, which aims to bequeath in the citizens a prudent knowledge on how to make a wise choice in selection of representatives (candidates), especially during voting process in election period, (Akudike, 2017). This goes further to establish that political education and voting behavior has significant relationship and linkage as educating the citizens about politics and election of the state affects their selection of candidates which invariably influences their voting behavior in politics. Political education helps to promote positive voting behavior among electorate as it serves as a viable instrument of change which is used to address the situation of irregularity and malpractices that places difficulties on the achievement of free and fair elections in the state.

In order to give a viable solution towards addressing the theatrical electoral behavior of electorate during elections, several organically linked explanations by scholars like; Ade and Adesina (2015) have made emphasis that poor level of political education among citizens contributes to the maladroitness phenomenon. They stressed that the importance of political education in shaping the peoples character, attitudes and behavior during election cannot be overemphasized. First, political education helps to build development of political discipline and enhancement of mass political participation among electorate. Through political education, good citizenship is built and maintained. This is because political education when properly channeled



helps the citizens to learn and internalize the accepted political values, spirit of patriotism, nationalism, good attitudes, norms and beliefs that promote political practices as well as jettison those values and voting behaviors that antithetical to national growth and development. It also helps to promote the participation of the people in the political process of state, hence, reducing parochialism and non-participation or political apathy among citizens.

Again, the significant role of political education as a sub-set of education is that; political education is to the political system what education is generally to humanity. Through political education, the citizens are inculcated with the need to shun political violence, social vices and certain other obnoxious behaviors that militate against political stability in a state. It also helps the electorate to desist from actions/activities that could lead to political chaos, rancor and acrimony. By these roles of political education on the electorate, positive maximum voting behavior and human right activists will be achieved in the political system because, political education will help to shape the attitude and voting pattern and beliefs of the electorate by guiding and instilling discipline in their voting behavior during election. Although this can be attested to be true, the veracity of this claim has not been ascertained in the area of this present study. This reason informed the decision on this research study which intends to examine the role of political education on human right practices in Owerri municipal area of Imo State.

2.0. CONCEPTUAL REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. Conceptual Review

- **Political Education**

The concept of political education has been variously expounded by scholars and political analysts alike, linking the concept with political socialization and establishing the point that political education is seen as a process of inducting the people of a political community into the accepted political norms, practices, beliefs, traditions and values of the state. Therefore, political education is one of the instruments of political socialization. According to Asogwa (2014), political education is the “process” whereby individuals acquire political knowledge, attitude and beliefs”. He further maintained that it is a learning process which starts from cradle to grave. The acquisition of political knowledge takes place both formally and informally that is, the individual can be politically socialized either formally through the formal education processes or informally, outside the classroom. For instance, one can be socialized politically by watching his



parents and siblings going to the poll to vote, discussing things that go on in politics and government of the state, attending to party meetings and rallies, etc.

In a related fashion, Austin (2016) defines political education as a process by which individuals in a given social system learn and internalize the values, norms, concepts and attitudes about both politics and the individual's relationship to the political system. Owubuiro (2017) further asserts that political education is a process by which a society perpetuates its political culture. This process as said above is a continuous life-long process which is part of each individual's conditioning and education as a member of the culture in which he is born. Echebiri (2008) defines political education as political socialization. He asserts that political education is a process of learning about, and internalizing political ideas, political systems and how it operates through imbibing the social roles as citizens of a polity.

For Owunwa (2014), political education is a "continuing" latent process by which people's values, beliefs and attitudes with regard to a political system are established, internalized and practiced. He stated that it is latent because, unlike political indoctrination, the effort to influence the acquisition of the political values, beliefs, and attitudes is not manifest. The importance of "political education" to the state and its citizenry cannot be emphasized. Political education/socialization is to the political system what education generally is to humanity. According to Unanka (2014), political education is a continuous learning process of induction into the political culture of a nation which involves both emotional learning and manifest political indoctrination. It is the process by which members of a society develop the requisite value, beliefs and attitudes for effective political organization and development. The importance of this is that the citizens of a state have to learn and internalize their political culture. It is only when they know their contents of their political system-ideology, customs, constitution, mode of election, party system, power sharing and distribution, structure or instruction of government, mode of resource allocation, degree of power configuration etc., that they will be amply armed to know how to organize and develop the state. This content of their political culture will serve as a spring board for shaping the political behavior of the people.

To this end therefore, one can see the following as some of the important roles of political education as pointed out by Echebiri (2008) which includes:

- 1) **Building of good citizenship:** Through political education, good citizenship is built and maintained. This is true because, it is through political education that the citizenry learn and internalize the accepted political values of the society, as well as jettison those values that are antithetical to national growth and development. It therefore inculcates in



the people the spirit of patriotism, nationalism, good attitudes, norms and beliefs which makes for national development (Echebiri, 2008).

- 2) **Enhancement of Mass Political Participation:** Political education enhances the participation of majority of the people in the political process and hence reduces parochialism and non-participation or apathy. It is when someone knows whom he is following, why and where he is taking him to, that he will be confident enough to follow. As a matter of fact, when the citizenry is politically aware, by knowing their leaders and how they are leading them, they often feel obliged to participate actively in the political process. A society that is meaningfully socialized politically enjoys the participation of the masses either as party members, voters, critics, opposition, opinions, decision-makers and so on. In such a society the people exhibit a greater influence in the decision-making process by contributing or making their own input as well as sharing in the output.
- 3) **Political Socialization:** Political socialization is a process by which the people of a state acquire political education. As a matter of fact, it creates political awareness in the citizenry and makes them to know their dos and don'ts in the political system, know their rights and how to protect them, know their obligations and duties to the state, as well as their expectations from the state.
- 4) **Development of political discipline:** Political education creates political discipline in the citizens of a state. This it does by inculcating or infusing in the people, the accepted basic political attitudes and behaviors, and discouraging those attitudes and behaviors that work against societal progress and development. For instance, it reduces and discourages delinquent acts and other social vices that are inimical to national development and political stability.

- **Human Rights**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is a milestone document in the history of human rights. Drafted by representatives with different legal and cultural backgrounds from all regions of the world, the Declaration was proclaimed by the United Nations General Assembly in Paris on 10 December 1948 (General Assembly resolution 217 A) as a common standard of achievements for all peoples and all nations. It sets out, for the first time, fundamental human rights to be universally protected and it has been translated into over 500 languages. The UDHR is widely recognized as having inspired, and paved the way for the adoption of more than seventy human rights treaties, applied today on a permanent basis at global and regional levels (all containing references to it in their preambles). The Article 1 of the UDHR states that "All



human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights; they are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood”.

On Article 2 of the same declaration, it states that “Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty”. It is in the true image of the practice of human rights that Babatunde (2023) established that;

Human rights are like armour: they protect you; they are like rules, because they tell you how you can behave; and they are like judges, because you can appeal to them. They are abstract – like emotions; and like emotions, they belong to everyone and they exist no matter what happens. They are like nature because they can be violated; and like the spirit because they cannot be destroyed. Like time, they treat us all in the same way – rich and poor, old and young, white and black, tall and short. They offer us respect, and they charge us to treat others with respect. Like goodness, truth and justice, we may sometimes disagree about their definition, but we recognize them when we see them.

A right is a claim that is justified in making, for instance, citizens have a right to elect a president, if the constitution of their country guarantees it, and a child has a right to be taken to the zoo, if her parents have promised that they will take her. These are all things that people can be entitled to expect, given the promises or guarantees that have been undertaken by another party. Human rights, however, are super claims with a difference. They are not dependent on promises or guarantees by another party. Someone's right to life is not dependent on someone else promising not to kill him or her: their life may be, but their right to life is not. Their right to life is dependent on only one thing: that they are human.

An acceptance of human rights means accepting that everyone is entitled to make these claims: “I have these rights, no matter what you say or do, because I am a human being, just like you”. Human rights are inherent to all human beings as a birthright. A human rights claim is ultimately a moral claim, and rests on moral values. For instance, what one's right to life really means is that no one ought to take his life away from him because it would be wrong to do so. Put like that, the claim doesn't need backing up. Every reader can probably be in agreement with it because everyone all recognize, in our own cases, that there are



certain aspects of our life, our being, that ought to be inviolable and that no one else ought to be able to infringe, because they are essential to our being. Who we are and what we are; they are essential to our humanity and our human dignity. What the expression above tries to explain is that without human rights in practices, one cannot achieve his/ her full potential. Human rights simply extend this understanding on an individual level to every human being on the planet. If one can make these claims, then so can everyone else as well.

Two of the key values that lie at the core of the idea of human rights are human dignity and equality. Human rights can be understood as defining those basic standards which are necessary for a life of dignity; and their universality is derived from the fact that in this respect, at least, all humans are equal. We should not, and cannot, discriminate between them. These two beliefs, or values, are really all that is required to subscribe to the idea of human rights, and these beliefs are hardly controversial. That is why human rights receive support from every culture in the world, every civilized government and every major religion. It is recognized almost universally that state power cannot be unlimited or arbitrary; it needs to be limited at least to the extent that all individuals within its jurisdiction can live with certain minimum requirements for human dignity. Many other values can be derived from these two fundamental ones and can help to define more precisely how in practice people and societies should co-exist. For example:

Freedom: because the human will is an important part of human dignity. To be forced to do something against our will demeans the human spirit.

Respect for others: because a lack of respect for someone fails to appreciate their individuality and essential dignity.

Non-discrimination: because equality in human dignity means we should not judge people's rights and opportunities on the basis of their characteristics.

Tolerance: because intolerance indicates a lack of respect for difference; and equality does not signify uniformity.

Justice: because people are equal in their humanity and therefore should deserve fair treatment.

Responsibility: because respecting the rights of others entails responsibility for one's actions and exerting effort for the realization of the rights of one and all.



- **Characteristics of human rights**

Just as pain is not agreeable to one, it is so with others. Knowing this principle of equality helps to treat others with respect and compassion. Many Philosophers have continued to argue about the nature of human rights, but the international community started its astonishing commitment to human rights through the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948. Since then, the international community has established the UDHR's powerful concepts in numerous international, regional and domestic legal instruments. The UDHR was not intended to be legally binding, but the establishment of its norms in numerous subsequent binding treaties (otherwise known as 'conventions' or 'covenants') makes the legal standing of its norms unquestionable today. According to these principles:

Human rights are inalienable. This means that you cannot lose them, because they are linked to the very fact of human existence, they are inherent to all human beings. In a particular circumstance, some, though not all – may be suspended or restricted. For example, if someone is found guilty of a crime, his or her liberty can be taken away; or in times of national emergency, a government may declare this publicly and then derogate from some rights, for example in imposing a curfew restricting freedom of movement.

Human rights are indivisible, interdependent and interrelated. This means that different human rights are intrinsically connected and cannot be viewed in isolation from each other. The enjoyment of one right depends on the enjoyment of many other rights and no one right is more important than the rest.

Human rights are universal, which means that they apply equally to all people everywhere in the world, and with no time limit. Every individual is entitled to enjoy his or her human rights without distinction of "race" or ethnic background, colour, sex, sexual orientation, disability, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, birth or other status. "State sovereignty implies responsibility, and the primary responsibility for the protection of its people lies with the state itself." Report of the International Commission on Interventions and State Sovereignty, (2001).

It is worthy to note that the universality of human rights does not in any way threaten the rich diversity of individuals or of different cultures. Universality is not synonymous with uniformity. Diversity requires a world where everyone is equal, and equally deserving of respect. Human rights serve as minimum standards applying to all human beings; each state and society is free to



define and apply higher and more specific standards. For example, in the field of economic, social and cultural rights, obligations to undertake steps to achieve progressively the full realization of these rights are established, but there is no stipulated position on raising taxes to facilitate this. Therefore, it is up to each country and society to adopt such policies in the light of their own circumstances.

2.2. Theoretical Framework

This study adopts the Transfer of learning theory as the framework of analysis. The transfer of learning theory in psychology originated from the seminar work of Wool Folk, Freud, Thorndike and Chuan (1990). It is concerned with the application of knowledge that is acquired from one learning situation to another for problem solving.

In simple terms, transfer of learning theory explains that what an individual learns in one situation can influence his behavior to the extent that such learning will affect the behavior of the individual negatively or positively in carrying out activities on some things. On the behavior that are transferable, Iroegbu (2003) stated that attitudes such as likeness, hate, respectfulness, disrespectfulness, hostility, and hospitality, and such skills as, performance or proficiency, inability to accomplish a task or solve a problem are transferable.

Buchler (1992) contributed to the theory when he stressed that knowledge which are not properly transferred are soon forgotten but knowledge which are skillfully transferred remains permanent. Such knowledge is; acting a play, killing, fighting, bullying and kidnapping and even political practices.

The transfer of learning theory tries to explain that should an individual be exposed to knowledge about his political society, government, constitution, electoral process and politics, his behavior in the practice will be properly guided.



Psycho-Social theory of human personality by Max Wertheimer (1987).

The psycho-social theory of human personality could also be used to support and further explain this study. The theory was propounded by Max Wertheimer (1987).

In simple terms, the theory explains that the development of any human behavior in politics depends on the society in which the person was born, pointing at culture as one of the greatest influencer of a man. The theorist used the society to explain how individuals behave in politics of the state. Culture as the theorist pointed out is a generic term, which include among other things, the education of people. Thus, the culture of a people is transmitted through education. This brings light to the idea that political education can influence the behavior of electorate in politics and electoral process of the state. Contributing to this theory, Watson (1990) Summarized his position when he stressed that; give me a dozen of healthy infants that are well formed and in my own specified way to bring them up and I will guarantee to take any one at random and train them to become any type of specialist i might desire; Doctor, lawyer, artisan, merchant-chief, and even thief, regardless of talent, vocation and race of ancestors. This means that through political education, electorate could be influenced to exhibit any kind of voting behavior that he desires to achieve, be it his personal or group interest in politics. Therefore, an electorate could behave as a thug, arsonist, assassin, or even ballot snatcher in politics, but with the help of political education, the right value and attitude could be achieved.

The relevance of these theories to this present study is that they try to disclose that in situations where there are anomalies in the political system, political education serves as a viable instrument which could be used to educate the people about their political activities, rights, as well as to address the current situation so as to maintain a positive attitude among the people and consolidate human right practices.

3.0. Methodology

This study employs the qualitative research design. Data were generated through secondary sources such as textbooks, journals, newspapers, online materials among others. These materials immensely helped to elicit useful information for the study. Analysis was made from the inferences drawn for extant literature as the mode of analytical presentation appears in themes, while the design sets to address the issues in the study.

4.0. DISCOURSES

4.1. An Overview of Development Of Human Right Practices From The Ancient History.



The idea that people have inherent rights has its roots in many cultures, and traditions. It is worthy to see from numerous examples of revered leaders and influential codes of practice that the values embodied in human rights are neither a "Western creation" nor a 20th-century invention. They are a response to universal human needs and for the search for justice. All human societies have had ideals and systems of ensuring justice, whether in their oral or written traditions, although not all of these traditions have survived. For instance, the Code of Hammurabi in Babylonia (Iraq, c. 2000 BCE) was the first written legal code, established by the king of Babylon. It vowed to "make justice reign in the kingdom, to destroy the wicked and violence; to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak, to enlighten the country and promote the good of the people".

A Pharaoh of Ancient Egypt (c. 2000 BCE) reportedly gave instructions to subordinates that "When a petitioner arrives from Upper or Lower Egypt, ... make sure that all is done according to the law, that custom is observed and the right of each man respected." Additionally, the Charter of Cyrus (Iran, c. 539 BCE) was drawn up by the king of Persia for the people of his kingdom, and recognized rights to liberty, security, religious tolerance, freedom of movement, freedom from slavery, and some social and economic rights. More so, the teachings of Confucius (c. 500 BCE) contain the concept of compassion and loving others as a central theme. Confucius said, "What you do not wish for yourself, do not do to others". Peng-chun Chang, the Chinese expert on Confucianism, who played an active role in drafting the UDHR believed that Confucianism laid the groundwork for human rights ideas.

Imam Ali Ibn Al Hussein who wrote the Epistle on Rights in the early 8th century CE stressed a very salient point when he said "To our knowledge, this letter is the first document to set out the main rights as perceived in that age and the first attempt that does not approach the concept of rights in its negative dimension". The Epistle listed 50 of these rights methodologically. They are, in spirit, anchored to the early Islamic precepts. The Charte du Mandé or Charte de, also upholds principles such as decentralization, environmental conservation, human rights, and cultural diversity. Kurukan Fuga (1236 CE), which is based on the codification of oral traditions from West Africa.

The African worldview 'ubuntu' captures the essence of what it means to be human. Ubuntu emphasizes respect for all members of the community, hospitality and generosity. The Ubuntu notion is summed up in this: "A person is a person through other people". This notion has profound implications for human rights. If we are human through others, then dehumanizing



another also dehumanizes us – hence the need to promote the rights of others, to give and receive forgiveness and to respect the human rights of others.

The evolution of the idea of universal human rights drew from the foundations of notions of dignity and respect in civilizations around the world over centuries. However, the idea that this respect should be enshrined in law took many more generations to develop. This was what attracted the resolve for legalizing the notion of rights from certain historical experiences. These are certainly not exhaustive but as our knowledge of the history of other cultures grows, no doubt one will discover the historical impetus for legislating rights in other cultures too. This expression is rooted in a quote that was cited by Adenuga (2017) which says that:

"At every stage of history, voices of protest against oppression have been heard; in every age, visions of human liberation have also been eclipsed. As we moved toward modern times, these voices and visions have been translated into programs of social action, and at times incorporated into the constitutions of states."

In 1215, English nobles and members of the clergy made the King of England agree to abide by the law by drawing up a Great Charter of liberties (Magna Carta). The Magna Carta protected mainly the rights of the privileged (nobles) and is not, therefore, about human rights as such. It became a widely cited document in defense of liberties because it represented a limitation of the king's power and recognition of other people's liberties and rights.

In 1689, the English parliament passed a bill declaring that it would no longer tolerate royal interference in its affairs. This bill, known as the Bill of Rights, forbade the monarch to suspend the law without Parliament's consent, specified free elections for members of Parliament and declared that freedom of speech in Parliament was not to be questioned, in the courts or elsewhere. Huig de Groot (1583–1645) is widely regarded as having invented international law. His book *On the laws of war and peace* proposes a system of general principles based on 'natural law', which he believed should bind all nations, regardless of local laws or custom. During the 17th and 18th centuries in Europe, a number of philosophers developed further the concept of 'natural rights'.

John Locke (1689) developed the theory that every human being has certain rights that derive from their own nature and not from their government or its laws. The legitimacy of government, in fact, rested on the respect that it afforded these natural rights. The idea that these natural rights



should entitle people to certain legal protections became more widely accepted and began to be reflected in the constitutions of some countries. Human rights reformulated this idea and also asserted the same for the relationship between governments and citizens. In 1776, most of the British colonies in North America proclaimed their independence from the British Empire in the United States Declaration of Independence. This was largely based on the "natural right" theories of Locke and Montesquieu. Based on a belief that containing government power and protecting liberty was of the essence, the Declaration served to advance notions such as the following: unalienable rights; the protection of individual rights; freedom of speech, press, petition and assembly; privacy; due process of law; equality before the law and freedom of religion. In 1789, the French people overthrew their monarchy and established the first French Republic. The French Declaration on the Rights of Man and of the Citizen came out of the revolution and was written by representatives of the clergy, nobility and commoners, who wrote it to embody the thoughts of Enlightenment figures such as Voltaire, Montesquieu, the Encyclopedists and Rousseau. The Declaration attacked the political and legal system of the monarchy and defined the natural rights of man as "liberty, property, security and the right to resist oppression". It replaced the system of aristocratic privileges that had existed under the monarchy with the principle of equality before the law. Its egalitarian terms and theoretical concept of equal rights, however, took time to be translated into reality. Society was deeply unequal and implementation would take generations.

4.2. Early International Agreements on Human Rights Practices Against Slavery and Work

Beginning from the 19th and 20th centuries, a number of human rights issues came to the fore and began to be addressed at the international level, beginning with such issues as slavery, serfdom, brutal working conditions and child labour. It was around this time that the first international treaties concerning human rights were adopted. Though offering useful protections, the basis of such agreements was mutual commitments between states. This is in sharp contrast with modern human rights agreements, where obligations are owed directly to individual rights holders. In this regard, agreement was held in the following manner;

- Slavery became illegal in England and France in the nineteenth century. At the Brussels Conference of 1890, an anti-slavery Act was signed, which was later ratified by eighteen states. This declared the intention to put an end to the traffic of African slaves.
- This did not, however, address forced labour and ongoing and brutal working conditions. Even the 1926 International Slavery Convention, intended to abolish slavery in all its



forms, did not have an impact on the common practice of forced labour until well into the 1940s.

- The creation of the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1919 reflected a belief that universal and lasting peace can be accomplished only if based on social justice. The ILO has developed a system of international labour standards upholding decent and productive work, freedom, equity, security and dignity.
- One of the areas of work for the ILO has been its action to combat child labour, particularly in its worst forms. It pursues numerous lines of action in this area to this day, including its promotion of international treaties on child labour, such as ILO Convention No. 182 on the Worst Forms of Child Labour and ILO Convention no. 138 on the Minimum Age for Employment.
- Between 1899 and 1977 a number of major treaties in the area of international humanitarian law were adopted, marking another field of early co-operation among nations. International humanitarian law regulates the conduct of armed conflict. Human rights may of course be applicable alongside international humanitarian law in many areas, for example in relation to the treatment of prisoners. However, international humanitarian law is more specialized and detailed regarding many other concerns in times of conflict, for example in relation to the permissible use of weapons and military tactics.

The idea of protecting the rights of human beings in law against the abuse of governmental authority had begun to receive ever wider acceptance in the 20th century, especially with the coming into being of the League of Nations and International Labour Organization and their work on the rights of minorities, on labour and other matters. The importance of codifying these rights in written form had already been recognized by states and, in this way, the documents described above became the early precursors to many of today's human rights treaties. However, it was the events of World War II that really propelled human rights onto the international stage. The terrible atrocities committed in this war – including the holocaust and massive war crimes - sparked the emergence of a further body of international law and, above all, the creation of human rights as we know them today. The Charter of the United Nations, signed on 26 June 1945, states that the fundamental objective of the United Nations is "to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war" and "to reaffirm faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women". The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) was drawn up by the UN Commission on



Human Rights, one of the organs of the United Nations, and was adopted by the General Assembly on the 10 December 1948. The UDHR is undoubtedly ground breaking and continues to serve as the most important global human rights instrument. Although not setting out to be legally binding, the UDHR has served as the inspiration behind numerous commitments to human rights, whether at the national, regional or international level. Since then, a series of key instruments to safeguard its principles have also been drawn up and agreed by the international community. More information on some of these international treaties can be found further down in this chapter.

4.3. Overview of Human Rights Practices around the World

Following the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, several regions of the world have established their own systems for protecting human rights, which exist alongside that of the UN. To date, there are regional human rights institutions in Europe, the Americas and Africa. Some steps are also underway in the Arab world and the ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) towards institutionalizing regional human rights standards. However, most countries in this part of the world have also ratified the major UN treaties and conventions - thereby signifying their agreement with the general principles, and voluntarily becoming bound by international human rights law.

In Europe, various human rights standards and mechanisms are upheld by the Council of Europe, the continent's human rights watchdog. Its role, notably through the European Convention and the European Court of Human Rights, will be further elaborated below. Alongside the Council of Europe, the European Union and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) also play important roles. The European Union's commitment to human rights protection received a boost with the adoption of the Lisbon Treaty, which entered into force on 1 December 2009, giving full legal effect to the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union. Containing civil, political, social and economic rights, the Charter requires that both member states and the European Union itself uphold these rights. The Court of Justice of the European Union will strike down EU legislation that contravenes the Charter and will review compliance with EU law of member states, although the day-to-day enforcement will be decided by domestic courts. The Charter outlines rights under the six 'titles' or headings: dignity, liberty, equality, solidarity, citizens' rights and justice. The title 'dignity' guarantees the right to life and prohibits torture, slavery and the death penalty; 'liberty' includes rights to privacy, marriage, thought, expression, assembly, education, work, property and asylum; 'equality' covers the rights of children and the elderly; 'solidarity' protects social and workers' rights, the right to fair working



conditions, protection against unjustified dismissal, and access to health care; 'citizens' rights' includes the right to vote and free movement, and 'justice' covers rights such as the right to an effective remedy, fair trial and the presumption of innocence. The Fundamental Rights Agency (FRA) is an expert body which collects evidence about the situation of fundamental rights across the European Union and provides advice and information about how to improve the situation. It does not play a monitoring role but co-operates with relevant institutions in advising on improved enjoyment of fundamental rights.

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) brings together 57 states from Europe, Central Asia and North America. Although not specifically dedicated to the protection of human rights, its comprehensive approach to security allows it to address a wide range of issues, including human rights, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism and economic and environmental activities. The OSCE action in the field of human rights is carried through the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Based in Warsaw, the ODIHR is active throughout the OSCE area in the fields of election observation, democratic development, human rights, tolerance and non-discrimination, and rule of law. Its activities targeted to young people include human rights education, fighting anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.

In the Inter-American region, human rights standards and mechanisms stem from the 1948 American Declaration of the Rights and Duties of Man and the 1969 American Convention on Human Rights. Specific instruments have also been adopted relating to refugees, the prevention and punishment of torture, the abolition of the death penalty, disappearances, violence against women, the environment and other matters.

The African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights came into force in October 1986 and by 2007 it had been ratified by 54 states. The Charter is interesting for a number of differences in emphasis between the treaties that have been adopted in other parts of the world:

- Unlike the European or American Conventions, the African Charter covers social, economic and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights within the same treaty.
- The African Charter goes beyond individual rights, and also provides for collective rights of peoples.
- The Charter also recognizes that individuals have duties as well as rights, and lists specific duties that the individual has towards his or her family, society, the State and the international community.



4.4. Political education and its significant role in a political system

Udejimba and Arisiukwu (2018) stressed that; Political education is a view that there is no polity without a belief system inherent in the people. Udejimba et al stressed that the rising and falling of a polity is a product of a kind of political orientation, dispositions and beliefs that run in the psyche of the people and their leaders. On the basis of the above, they conclude that; the greatness of any nation is a product of the political education that is prevalent in it.

For Adesina (2017), political education is identified as a shared goals and commonly accepted rules. It is that part of the general culture which include a set of political beliefs, held by individual and those beliefs only constitute part of the entirety of the beliefs which control the behavior of electorate during election. Even though political education has been promoted in the Nigeria community through various ways, the obnoxious trends that still control the Nigerian political settings still gain dominance and by a way, have great influence on the citizen behavior of non-patriotism and statesmanship in elections of the state.

In a related research study, on “content Analysis: Problems of non-formal political education in Nigeria”, Babatunde (2023) pointed out that; in Nigeria, numerous channels have been used to promote education for democracy. Civic education is a core discipline in the primary and secondary schools. Tertiary institutions also promote education for democracy through the teaching and learning of political science and other social science disciplines. Again, democratic institutions like Centre for Democratic Studies (CDs), National Orientation Agency (NOA), Civil Society Organization, Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) and National Institute for Legislative studies etc. play critical roles in promoting education for democracy in Nigerian. He stressed that the above initiatives indicate that education for democratic citizenship can be pursued, and that it is a necessary component of the process of strengthening local, organizational and national democracies. Based on this, it is obvious that political education in Nigeria is designed to facilitate the transformation of Nigeria’s environment and culture from a largely negative one to where people are enlightened to be politically conscious and organized into popular formation for the defense of democracy and social justice. Thus, the cardinal goal of political education in Nigerian is to raise people with political consciousness, with a view to widening the scope of participatory democracy in the whole federation. Despite the teaching and learning of political education, through channels like, educational institutions, institute for democratic studies, National Institute for Legislative Studies, National Orientation Agency (NOA) and so on, democracy and the process of democratic experiment in Nigeria has been faced with enormous challenges that have affected political behavior, particularly during voting



process in the 2015, 2019 and the immediate past 2023 general elections. The fate of democracy, as pointed out by Babatunde (2023), especially in the Nigeria experience is one bedeviled with ethnicity, massive corruption, mismanagement of public funds, electoral fraud and malpractices, Boko-Haram terrorism and insurgencies, Fulani herdsmen killings, flagrant disregard for rule of law, constitutionalism and abuse of fundamental human rights are being perpetuated by political office holders and politicians which are still prevalent in this current democratic era (1999-date) are clear examples of a pseudo-democracy. Continuing, he stressed that the apparent ignorance in political education among Nigerians has affected people's attitudes towards government policies and programs. It has also influenced wrong attitude and perception that has generally compelled political ignorance on people from different-parts of the country towards knowing the "dos" and "don'ts" in the political system. This wrong perception as stressed by Babatunde, has been formed by people and this has not augured well for the much desired unity and political stability in the country.

The voting behavior of electorate has become a war-like event due to lack of adequate political education. Interestingly, events in the Fourth Republic have indicated that 63 years after the independence of Nigeria, the legacies of political bitterness and violence are still haunting the country. Furthermore, political conflicts, ethnicity and religious clashes have been a reoccurring decimal on the nation's political landscape since the re-birth of democracy on May, 29, 1999, of major concerns are; election rigging, malpractices, manipulation of election figures, kidnapping and assassination of persons that causes biasness in the voting patterns of electorate during elections in the country. On the other hand, Femi (2016) stressed that education plays a significant role on electorate if positive voting behavior and human rights activities are to be seen and achieved during election in any political system. He stressed the point that the degree of literacy among the citizens affects their degree of political enlightenment and awareness, and hence, influences their voting behavior. In civilized and highly literate societies, voters turn-out is usually very high vis-à-vis, less civilized and highly illiterate societies. An educated citizen or electorate view election outcomes far beyond economic takes because the voter is more politically informed and more sophisticated in his approach to elections and by implication, he shows greater interest and participates more actively in elections through voting. This level of education and political enlightenment therefore influences his voting behavior in a positive way that will be devoid of violence, ballot snatching and rigging of elections for personal gain.

For Ihekwe and Ahametula (2013), one serious contending factor that affects voting behavior of electorate in a political system is political culture of the society. Political culture affects voting behavior in a variety of ways, given the various orientations of the voters towards their political



system. Voter turnout is usually very low in parochial and subject political cultures where alienation and insensitivity are the stock of political leadership. But a political system where the voter is properly educated on his political rights and duties in politics, voter turn-out is usually very high. Therefore, where the electorate have been acculturated on political do's and don'ts through political education on the norms, beliefs, values and the desired rudiments in political practices and election processes, their voting behavior during election will have a nationalist and patriotic inclinations.

Udejimba and Mefo (2017) pointed out that the role which is played by ethnicity and religion in democratization process in Nigeria is harmful to the system. They argued that the tremendous effects of ethnic and religious crisis faced by Nigeria in the current phase of democratization are the outcome of the elite manipulation of ethnic and religious identity. This has been associated with the problems of historical configuration of the country, the nature of political class and the manner in which they struggle. This has however led to an exclusive nature of the politics of ethnic and religious identity among different groups in the country. The phenomenon by implication has affected the voting behavior and rights of the electorate to align themselves with ethnic and religious political parties. Invariably, it turns out to affect voting pattern during any election that is held in the country, be it presidential or gubernatorial elections. General elections are generally portrayed with dominance of ethno-religious sentiments as determinants of voting behavior and political participation among the electorate across the country. From the presidential, through gubernatorial, national and state assembly elections, aspirants were largely chosen on the basis of ethnic-regional identities just because of lack of proper political education in the country.

In a related development, Onwuasanya (2017) pointed out that political education has significant influence in determining voting behavior of electorate during election. He contended that the reason the electorate behave the way they do in politics is as a result of the level of political orientation and exposure which they have experienced. The actions and inactions of electorate which the people have been exposed to, has been the case in the Nigeria context. Here, he pointed out that the level of political education in the country seems to be relatively low, whereas, electorates are being trained by politicians and mobilize them to act as thugs, hoodlums, assassins, ballot snatchers and dispose violence and coercive attributes during elections for their selfish gain. This as he said is the situation of the country where political education is not embraced to serve as a positive instrument of political change and where the requisite norms, values, culture and political orientation are to be taught to the electorate so as to achieve a better voting behavior and credibility of elections. Political education should be



embraced, tolerated and promoted, he argued, because Nigeria seems to be a state where political instability and high level of corrupt practices, very gross and obnoxious political behavior have taken dominance with impunity, particularly, during election periods.

5.0. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Conclusion

This paper concludes that political education helps to inform the citizen about their political rights and privileges to awareness and active political participation and encouraged enlightenment for selection of a right candidate among electorate. However, sometimes there are a challenge that hinders the sustenance of political education, and this could be ascribed to the violent attitude of politicians to get a good number of votes from the electorate and to win elections by all means, poor funding of political education programme in some areas and poor communication and transportation system.

5.2. Recommendations

Consequently, the paper recommends that the court should reconsolidate the laws guiding against electoral malpractice and should uphold and interpret the constitution to its dictates without fear or favour when election issues arises. Political education of the electorate should be a continuous activity on radio, television, Facebook and other related social media channels and not only during election period. Issue of the moment, and public opinion especially on politics, election and governance of the state should be encouraged on radio every weekend and people should be allowed to appraise the performance of the government so as to promote good governance, democracy and human right practice through free speech and expression of wishes.

Competing Interest

The author had declared that no conflicting interest existed regarding this paper.

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