

Research Paper

Curricular and Pedagogical Strategies for Promoting Politics and Political Participation in Nigeria

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ABSTRACT

Politics and participation in it shapes, influences and determines the quality of lives of citizens and the directions that development of institutions in the State take. Citizens and regions of a state that play active part in politics influence developments in their favour in ways that others in the same state cannot achieve, no matter the pedigree of physical force and violence they mount on the state. Active participation in politics is also litmus for determining true citizenship or index for demonstrating nationalism, that is, love one has for his father land as well as identity for admitting states into comity of civilized states. Paradoxically, there is a global apathy to politics and participation in politics. Using the philosophical approach, this paper makes a case on how innovations in education via curriculum and pedagogy can become strong platforms for promoting politics and participation in it especially in Nigeria. The paper recommends that repackaging some subjects eg political education, social studies, moral education etc in the curriculum and existentially teaching them in ways that stimulate critical thinking in learners especially their show of interest in politics and participation in it in a way that learners see their exploration as instruments through which they can politically solve their individual and general problems can be right directions through which education can be reinvented for solving problems of states.

Key Words: Education, curriculum, pedagogy politics, participation, learner Nigeria.

INTRODUCTION

Many years of human existence and a corresponding desire to existentially get the best out of such existence have extraordinarily been the driving force upon which man continuously strives to rationally develop institutions and progressively build and develop such institutions in ways that they become foundation cornerstones for actualizing his individual and collective dreams. Of the many consciously developed and rationally thought out institutions through which man actually actualizes his individual and collective dreams, education and politics stand out.

Educational institutions are next to none in mobilizing, radicalizing, revolutionizing and sensitizing a people for those behaviours that are conducive for

progress and harmonious living and consequently guaranteeing positive changes including challenging a people to learn from events in the past so as to redress their present and the future and through that way advance their society to the next enviable level. Educational institutions bring their humanizing, moralizing and modernizing values to fruition through developing curricular and pedagogical paradigms that make the development of the learner's creative thought processes and the development of his society and institutions top most priorities. The reason why education makes the development of the learner's creative thought processes and the development of his society and institutions topmost priorities is that education especially formal education kick starts the

processes of revolutionary and creative rational thinking in man that seriously challenges him to reposition and strengthen himself, his society and institutions with the aim of maximizing all opportunities that come with the process of education to his advantage.

No doubt education develops in people the ability to think critically but the ability to function maximally and benefit maximally from opportunities that the state provides the individuals through education comes to fruition when the individual embraces politics and participates in it. In fact, there is a relationship between improvement in a people's quality of life which education brings about and politics and political participation or participation in politics by a people. In a way improvement in the quality of life of a people that education strives to promote may not see the light of the day or come to fruition if members of a society do not participate in politics or alternatively members of any society that are desirous to maximally exploit and harness opportunities that come with education must strive to participate in politics. What this suggests is that education, politics and participation in politics are good bed fellow or both travel on the same road so much so that all the efforts of education to add value and improve the quality of lives of a people may not be sustainably successful if the people do not embrace politics and participate in it.

Paradoxically, despite the influence of politics in determining and shaping the day to day lives and activities of man and his institutions, people globally are not positively predisposed to politics and participation in it so much so that apathy to politics or lack of interests in participating in politics has grown and increased to become a global challenge in both developed, developing and underdeveloped states. Not showing interests in politics or not participating in politics spells doom for achieving issues that are of common interests to humanity because politics and participation in it affords citizens platforms

and opportunities to initiate, discuss and introduce desirable changes that can fashion out ways of addressing the numerous ever present moral, social, economic, scientific and technological issues that are fundamental for the continuous sustainable flourishing of man and his institutions.

Consequence upon recognizing the dangers that are inherent in man's show of lack of interest in politics and participation in it, there has been global calls for solutions to this problem of political apathy or lack of interests in participation in politics. This paper on curricular and pedagogical strategies for promoting politics and political participation in Nigeria is a response to this global call. Methodologically, the paper employs the philosophical methods and a scholarly discourse is said to be philosophical when it uses speculation, analysis and prescription. Speculation as a philosophical research methodology according to Nwaokugha and Danladi (2016:421) "is deep rooted in the science of logic or the various orderly sequences that lead to a conclusion". Its rootedness in the science of logic suggests that this philosophical research methodology is robustly hinged on language and the validity of a proposition or claim depends on its soundness or reasonableness and it may be on account of this that Aminigo (1999:4) defines this method of philosophical research "as attempts to find logical coherence in an entire realm of thought". In other words, this methodology according to Nwaokugha and Ezeugwn (2017:3) "builds up ideas and establishes the extent in which one idea is directly linked or related to the other".

Analysis generally involves critical examination of claims, words, proposition and concepts with the aim of making explicit all the possible meanings that may be associated with such claims, words, propositions and concepts and as a method of philosophical research, Nwaokugha and Danladi (2016:421) write that it:

Involves careful and critical clarification of the make ups or

constituents of a subject matter with the aim of unfolding the meanings associated with the subject matter . . . interestingly any researcher who employs this method starts by breaking down his subject matter into smaller forms that constitute it and at the same time show how all are related in attaining a specific objective.

Prescription as a method of philosophical research establishes criteria for evaluating, appraising and judging values. In other words it is concerned with making prescriptive or normative value judgment on persons, issues, events or institutions. It is important one point out that the use of the philosophical research method develops in researchers the capacity to initiate or carry out researches in diversified problems areas across disciplines and this has inherent and immense potentials to expand and break new frontiers of knowledge which on the whole can add value and quality to man and his institutions. As a tradition in this type of research is to begin with the clarification of some basic concepts, we hereby turn to that.

Concept of Education

There is an aura of definitional confusion that surrounds the concept of education and this definitional confusion about education is traceable to the etymological root words which scholars of education claim education is derived from. The etymological root words are “educere” and “educare”. Because scholars of education maintain these two positions - educere and educare about the etymological root of education, what actually qualifies as the meaning of education becomes a matter of which of the two root words a particular scholar subscribes to. What can be expected following this development in the etymological roots of education can be constant epistemological shift in the operational definitions of education and scholars tend to highlight this when they

write that “the concept of education is very fluid” (Unyanga and Nwaokugha (2014:104) and this fluidity in the meaning of education has polarized scholars of education into camps when it comes to defining education.

The camp that subscribes to “educere” strongly upholds the position that education corresponds to “mode” or “make” and underlying this interpretation is the meaning that the learner as a product of the education process needs to be assisted so that he can be formed from something and this assistance is to be stimulated and sustained through robust and vibrant interactions with things or objects the learner finds in his environment. On the other hand, scholars of education who ardently subscribe to ‘educare’ as the right etymological root word from which education is derived strongly hold that education translates as to “lead out” or to “uphold” capabilities that are innate in a person or that the individual person is born with. What is coded in this interpretation of education is that every individual at birth is loaded or prepackaged with potentials in which it is the responsibility of education to assist such individuals to realize or actualize such potentials. Scholars of education link or associate the above etymological root words from where they claim education is derived to two renowned Greek philosophers, Plato-concept of innate ideas and his school of thought idealism and Aristotle, the concept of tabula rasa – the centrality of the environment influencing learning and his school of thought, realism

Anyone with the least training in critical analysis can observe that the unfolding directions in the meanings of education as revealed by the two etymological root words that scholars of education claim education is derived- “educere” and “educare” are wide apart and scholars have continued to explore the space by providing a multiplicity of definitions for education. Indeed, the multiplicity of meanings and interpretations which scholars in contemporary times give to education

may be a search to adequately explore this gap, for in present times scholars with roots in the analytic tradition recognize education as a concept with a multiplicity of meanings, in which anyone with a desire to adequately highlight what education does or how education can be a platform or spring board for achieving the dreams of man and his society must not fail to recognize. However, a thing of interest that is worth noting is that no scholar of education no matter his etymological leaning in the definition of education disagrees with the other when the focus is on the use of education in addressing or solving the ever present problems of man.

On the basis of the multiplicity of meanings of education, Okoh (2003) provides four broad based perspectives from which education can be comprehensively and inclusive defined as stipulative, normative, socio-anthropological and the programmatic bases. According to him such definitions of education as provided by scholars where the scholars specify what they want to prescribe or refer to as education or what constitutes education from the conception of a particular scholar are good examples of stipulative definitions of education and such stipulative definitions of education include:

- i. Education is power
- ii. Education is what happens to an individual from the day the individual was born to the day the individual dies.
- iii. Education is preparation for life.

The normative definition of education focuses on formal education where education translates as the conscious use of educational institutions-schools, colleges and universities to transmit the culture of a people from one generation to another. Definition of education with focus on socializing the younger generation into internalizing the axiological and religious beliefs of the society one is born into according to him qualifies as socio-anthropological definitions of education

while programmatic definitions of education associate education with specific worthwhile goals which an activity or process must fulfill before it can be said to be education.

Notwithstanding its multiplicity of interpretations and meaning, scholars according to Unyanga and Nwaokugha (2014:104) are in total agreement concerning the instrumentality of education in addressing the general problems of mankind. This is why scholars lavish complementary remarks on education which Shively (2005:84) recognizes as “the most basic service that most responsible government are expected to offer to their people”. It is one concept which Nwaokugha and Kalu (2014:141) write “ranks high in acting as an article of faith in addressing social, moral, scientific, technological, economic, political and ecological problems of man”. What this reveals is that changes in behaviours that bring about qualitative transformation that add value to the lives of individuals and their state must be routed through education. In fact there is hardly any aspect of the growth and development of man that education cannot be used to achieve and this is why education globally is instrumental in conscientizing and sensitizing people on issues that are fundamental for the continuous existence and flourishing of a people as it can be used to form, reform and transform man from one level of existence to another or examine and reexamine practices that try to undermine the full actualization of the potentials of man and his state with the intention of awakening man and his state to their responsibilities.

Instrumentally all that education achieves for man depends on the pedagogy the teacher who doubles as the implementer of the curriculum and other school policies and programmes, counselor, administrator, parent and the driver of the education system uses in delivering his lesson. Paradoxically pedagogy is a contested term in the sense that it is encompassing and revolves around the ingenuity and

receptivity of a teacher in manipulating resources at his disposal so as to ensure that a learner or group of learners under his care learn or learning takes place in one who has voluntarily and consciously committed himself or herself to the process of learning. Because pedagogy is encompassing, educators focus on it and what this focus has resulted in is a multiplicity of definitions of the term. Interestingly at the heart of all such endeavours are the teacher and all his actions, intrigues, manipulations, tricks and activities to ensure that learners learn. In fact the effectiveness of what the teacher does in his attempts to promote learning in the learners is dependent on his mastery of or show of expertise in pedagogy. In a way quality mastery of pedagogy is a necessary condition for effective performance of any teacher. In fact knowledge of pedagogy or the extent in which a teacher is abreast with the skills of helping the learners to learn can be noticed through procedurally and systematically sketching out to the learners what they are to learn and stating very categorically what they are to learn and how they are to learn them and expected behaviours or feedback responses from the learners.

The show and demonstration of expertise concerning a teacher's mastery of pedagogy can also be visible in the degree of proficiency and competence of a teacher to stimulate learners under his care. This can be noticed in the teacher's ability to manipulate the teaching learning process in a way that meets the individual learner's need so much that the individual learner remains focused on what he or she is taught.

The Concept of Politics and Political Participation

There is this saying that words and concepts that are used most often are the most difficult to define in precise and concise terms. Politics is one of such concept and people most often use politics and participation in it in their daily transaction so much that their meaning make them words and concepts that are in

daily use but whose meanings are becoming difficult to grasp. Because politics and political participation are used most often and their seal and impressions noticed across almost all actions and activities of man, to say what precisely and concisely politics and political participation mean is almost becoming a herculean and uphill task. What seems to account for this according to Harrison and Boyd (2003) is that politics and political participation are fast becoming enterprises and activities that have become elusive in addition to being superfluous and enigmatic. What seems to account for the elusive, superfluous and enigmatic nature of politics and political participation is that politics and political participation yield themselves to a number of interpretations so much that the sense in which one scholar uses the terms on one context can be different from the way any other scholar can use the same terms. For comprehensive and in-depth handling of the two terms, it is appropriate to first of all handle the two terms, politics and political participation separately and later marry the two terms together.

Politics:

Politics enjoys a robust scholarly attention from scholars and what stands as a testimony to this is the numerous definitions of the concept and the attitudes of people in both developed, developing and under developed states towards it. Writing on politics Magstadt, (2003) posits that it is an aspect of statecraft which fundamentally focuses on how people rule and is ruled. In their own position Almond, Powell (Jr) Strom and Dalton (2006) write that politics is any action or activities which fundamentally and essentially derive from norms which a people voluntarily, willingly and acceptably fashion out for themselves for the meaningful control of public decision in their territory or state. From a different perspective, Asamoah, Yeboah, Assiamah and Osei-Kofo (2014) write that politics connotes an idea which revolves around power to make authoritative decision. Politics according to Safaraz,

Almed, Khalid and Ajmal (2012:1) is the “process whereby groups of individuals make collective decision for the effective control and governance of their people and state”. It is important one points out that conflict in the affairs of man is inevitable as no interaction or transaction can freely go on without conflicts. Be this as it may, some scholars supply subscribe to all the dynamics and processes of resolving conflicts by peaceful means between state and state, institution and institution and individuals and individuals as politics.

Whichever way any one understands it, one thing that is glaringly clear about politics is the point highlighted by Nwaokugha and Kalu (2014:131) when they write that politics is a universal game played by every individual in the state with different manifestations and manipulative skills and abilities which can reject some answers that can be accepted in a particular context. In practical terms, reaching authoritative decisions in politics for the development of the state and its people follows from the initiation of discussions, debates, deliberations, reconciliation, compromise and consensus among those involved in the game called politics. Again these acts and actions, singularly or in combination focus on shaping and improving the quality of lives of citizens and their institutions. In all of these, argument is a fundamental necessity where any politician that is skills in the game builds up support for his position while undermining the positions of anyone who is seen to oppose his position. What all these seem to suggest about politics is that it is a civil, dynamic, law regulated and rationality driven process undertaken by a people in a community, region and state for formulating or establishing rules or norms for guiding and controlling the behaviours, actions, and activities of citizens in a community, institutions, region or state. Because providing guides that cover the above are the natural constituency of politics, scholars contend politics is omnipresent in all human transactions. (Nwaokugha and Kalu,

2014:131). The truth of this position has to be acknowledged when one realizes that it is politics that determines the formula upon which goods are shared in a states in addition to determining foreign policies, social, economic, defence, scientific, technological and moral tones of the state. In fact Wilson and Dulilio (Jr) (2008) say it all when they write that failures of whatever magnitude or superlative successes in any state must be traced to politics, pattern of politics and the maturity or sense of nationalism or patriotism of the players of the game called politics. Harrison and Boyd (2003) said the mind of many persons when they write that politics is the determinant force that prescribes how a people in a state are taxed, regulated, recruited into the civil service or armed forces including the quality and quantity of social justice or social welfare issues that are made available to a people.

The foregoing discussions on politics are revealing and part of what it reveals about politics is that politics is a multidimensional and many sided concept which can mean any or all of the following: a conscious and objective study of the state with fundamental and underlying intention to determine what influences the policies of the state and the sharing of the resources of the state, a study of the national institutions of a state, a study of how individuals or groups in a state exercise influence, power and authority, a study of how conflicts that arise at the level of policy formulation and implementation, resource exploration and distribution in a state is resolved and politics can mean the study of relationships between and among individuals and groups in and outside a state. What these suggest about politics is that it is inclusive, comprehensive and omnipresent so much that every aspect of life of a people is shaped and determined by politics but not too many persons know about this.

Political Participation:

From antiquity, one focal issue that has been of great concern to politicians, policy makers, political theorists, democrats

and other classes of people whose prayers are to introduce quality improvement in the lives of citizens and correspondingly initiate actions that can support the sustainable development of their state is political participation. Political participation is so central and instrumental for the survival of politics and democracy so much that politicians regularly want their supporters to practically show their support by actually participating in politics. A simple reason for this high value that is placed on political participation can be deduced from the remark by Nwaokugha (2006) that through participation in politics, a people can influence government or state policies in their favour without stress. A simple translation of that can mean that through participation in politics, citizens can vote out a bad government, reject and resist any imposition of candidate but can through their participation in politics vote into power the candidates that the masses project. Politics makes sense through participation and political participation or participation in politics in any regime is a show and demonstration of creativity, seriousness, enthusiasm and willingness of a people individually and collectively to support, maintain and promote politics and political activities and all these actions target one thing namely influencing the election of persons who rule or govern the state. A people participate in politics and through this may get what they desire from their state just by showing interests and commitment to politics. Outside enabling a people get what they want from their state, political participation as a behaviour is advantageous in a number of ways: the more a people participate in politics, the better for the political system, the better for the state and the better the quality of lives of the people improve. Above all, a people who participate in politics can achieve from the state social and economic services that are the statutory responsibilities of the state to provide without the use of any physical force or any excruciating stress what others in the same state cannot achieve, no matter

the amount of physical force they mount on the state. Where these obtain, democracy can be said to be at work and the respect that democracy enjoys globally can translate to nothing if a people do not participate in politics.

Every right thinking person can support a practice that upholds democracy, which literarily is a representative system of government where the power to make rules and enact laws resides not in the hands of a selected few but in the hands of the majority of the citizens. Democracy is also associated with other remarks such as a synonym for civilized polity (Eboh, 2001), a universally recognized practice (Massub, 1998) an autonomous value and an important component of several ideologies (Kubiak, 1998) and the most popular form of government today in the world which projects states as being good and admissible into comity of nations (Oyekan, 2009). In a way Nwaokugha and Kalu (2014:94) summarizes the high hopes people have for democracy when they write that:

It (democracy) affords the majority and the minority opportunities to assert themselves, it is relative to culture, it prioritizes the wellbeing of every individual, has internal mechanisms and dynamics for self correction, preserves and respects the rights, freedom and privileges of individual, upholds accountability, makes case for justice and egalitarianism as well as works out through compromise.

As high sounding as political participation can be both as a platform and mechanism for empowering a people and as a process through which democracy sustainably survives, the term political participation is enigmatic so much that lawful and unlawful behaviours, all qualify as political participation, thereby making what it means in precise and concise term not so easy to understand. Put slightly different, actions which political theorists

categorize as political participation constitute behaviours that are conventionally lawful and acceptable as well as behaviour that is unconventionally unlawful and unacceptable. It is in respect of this that Lam (2000) defines political participation as any lawful and unlawful activities in the forms of supports, making demands, protests, demonstrations, debates or other forms of expression either verbally or in print that targets the masses and or public private institutions of the state.

What the above seems to suggest is that there are a plethora of way through which political participation can take place (Edward III, Wattenberg and Lineberry, 2012) and notable among them include conventional and unconventional political participation. Convectional political participation according Edward III et al (2012) is a combination of action and activities that range from voting, trying to convince other people on political matters and development, ringing door bell for a petition, and running for elective office. On his own Magstadt (2003) writes that people conventionally participate in politics when they form political associations or parties, join political parties, vote during elections, form interest groups whose priorities are on politics and political issues. It is important one adds that conventional political participation also involves discussing political matters and pasting stickers of political parties on one's car, doors, office, or any other visible areas where the emblems of a party can be advertised. On unconventional political participation, Edward III et al (2012) categorize it as a combination of activities and actions ranging from protest, demonstration, civil disobedience and the use of violence while Magstadt (2003) lists protests, economic boycott or the use of violence to attract attention to national issues that need to be brought to the attention of the general public as examples of unconventional political participation. Whichever form any one subscribes to, conventional or unconventional participation in politics is

litmus for determining a true citizen or a citizen that is committed to the advancement of his state. This is unambiguously stated by Magstadt (2003:280) when he writes that "true citizenship involves meaningful participation in politics".

Despite the plethora of avenues through which political participation can take place and its centrally in determining whom a good citizens is, there is in recent times a drastic reduction in the participation of people in politics so pronounced that voting, which is the most common form of conventional political participation that majority of the people engage in has also started to witness steady decline in recent years.

The next section of this paper focuses on curricular and pedagogical strategies for promoting politics and political participation in Nigeria.

Curricular and Pedagogical Strategies for Promoting Politics and Political Participation in Nigeria

Education is both instrumental and fundamental to the development of man and his society. The whole idea of human capital and economic growth will translate to nothing without education. Education is also instrumental for social change and economic production. Any society that makes the acquisition of basic education a national priority can in a short period of time transform the quality of lives of its citizens in the form of repositioning them to live decent lives that can add value to the quality of life of the individual citizens which will automatically leave quality impressions on the developmental aspirations of the state. Improvements that come with basic education can catapult citizens out of environmental poverty traps, reduce liability and alternatively help to diversify assets for the emancipation and empowerment of the people.

The uniqueness of education as the centre of development can be attested to in its focus on the total development and emancipation of man, who through

education and in a multiplicity of forms converts and transforms resources into various forms for the satisfaction of members of the society. Education has both intrinsic and extrinsic values, that is, can be valued for its own sake in the sense of the fulfillment which it gives to the individual that has it and can also be valued as a means of survival for the individual due to the numerous emancipatory and uplifting opportunities that come the way of the person that has it and a combination of the intrinsic and extrinsic values of education gives the educated person sufficient freedom in the forms of robustly and vibrantly enjoying his social, political, religious and cultural lives to the fullest including contributing adequately to the sustainable growth and development of man and his society. In fact, education provides those who are committed to it certain basic skills, for instance reading and writing, professional competencies in the forms of a acquisition of abstract, technical and applied skills as well as the ability to acquire manipulative and complex skills that man adapts or applies in solving his numerous ever present complex problems.

Interestingly, greater opportunities can be afforded to citizens and their states for exploring all the above potentials of education to their fullest when education targets promoting politics and political participations. This is so because knowledge of politics and participation in it opens up in a people ways and skills through which they can tap and explore hidden treasures that are available in the state by their own civic efforts and there are many ways consciously designed educational provision that targets politics and improving political participation can assist citizens to assess such hidden treasures in the state.

Conscious efforts towards promoting politics and political participation in Nigeria can start by giving adequate attention to political education in the curriculum. Through prioritizing political education Nigerians can be sensitized that participation in politics can be a platform

upon which they can influence the day to day activities of government and consequently achieve the dreams of their lives both individually and collectively. It is no overstatement that politics is ever present in local, national and international dealings and in dealings involving individuals and individuals and individuals and their states. This is evident as the seal and impressions of politics are seen in decisions that lead to the exploitations of resources, formula for the sharing of the resources of the state, decisions that govern educational and financial institutions, relationship between one group and another in a state, police, army, navy, foreign relations etc. The above is a pointer that there is no aspect of the lives of citizens of a state that is not shaped or influenced by politics and this in all honesty makes a case or provides justifications why good education should afford citizen sufficient opportunities to understand the rudiments that shape and influence their conditions and quality of lives.

It is important one points that any priority in educational provision to Nigerians that makes political education a priority will quickly turn out to be great assets in the ways citizens can quickly and progressively master strategies for peace building, conflict resolution, reaching compromise and negotiating their ways for purposes of maximally becoming relevant to themselves, their communities, their region and Nigeria at large. Any curriculum that targets achieving the above can be said to have prioritized the conscientization of the people especially on how their embrace of politics and participation in it can be a platform for achieving the dreams of their minds at the economic, moral, social, environmental, scientific and technological fronts. Again what can serve as a moral boost for promoting politics and political participation in Nigeria is that there is hardly any discipline ranging from the humanities, social sciences, management sciences etc that does not prioritize political issues. In fact Nwaokugha (2006:125) says

it all when he remarked that a good political education

Can enhance a people's political participation and by extension influence general decisions that can impact positively on the lives of the people by mobilizing them for political actions during elections through their votes. A good turn out and massive support for candidates whose political manifestoes guarantee environmental justice, human rights, basic human freedom and empowerment of the people can change policies in favour of the people without the barrel of the gun or any physical force.

Where people understand that peaceful change can be a norm through their participation in politics, a culture for the sustainable development of the Nigerian state may have been consciously established and the sustenance of this culture can in the words of Aminigo and Nwaokugha (2009:3) “be a ready-made social control mechanism or weapon for building and sustaining strong social institutions in the social environment” and one major benefit the society stands to gain is that through making political education and political participation major priorities in educational provisions, citizens can acquire skills that can empower the majority to appreciate that they have the potentials to constantly and progressively deflate, neutralize and render useless those manipulative tendencies of the influential minority.

Related to political education in the quest for using curricular and pedagogical innovations in creating the right awareness for mobilizing and sensitizing Nigerians to be more involved and active in politics and participating in politics is the study of social studies. For any group to measure up in politics and participate in it, such group must master the principles and strategies for organizing and mobilizing (Aminigo and Nwaokugha, 2009) in addition to putting in

practice skills of critical thinking and analytic mindedness which are core values that the study of social studies develops in the learner. Combining the skills of mobilization and organization and the practical skills of analytic mindedness and critical thinking that come with the study of social studies can provide learners new frontiers or platforms that can adequately and existentially sensitize them on how a people can get to any level they want for improvements in their lives through politics and participation in it. Achieving all these are possible because social studies by its nature is focused on events and issues in the society and its interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches create rooms for any good teacher and good learner to explore for illustrating, demonstrating and emphasizing any happenings or issues of his interests in the society.

It is possible curricular and pedagogical innovations and strategies for promoting political participation in Nigeria can make durable and lasting impact when it is approached from the angles of morality and moral education especially when the focus is on better human relations in particular and relationships between a state and her citizens generally. Anyone who is conversant with the ways politics and participation in it in Nigeria is played or takes place can be well convinced that it is played without any iota, trace or symptom of morality. The politicians in Nigeria are there for themselves, their wives, relations, sons and daughters or those who are close to them so much so that politics and participation in it in Nigeria is for amassing wealth and not to initiate or engineer policy measures for uplifting the citizens, which directly or indirectly can translate into the sustainable development of the Nigerian state. To be expected, one unfortunate development that has resulted out of the foregoing is that the attitude of the politicians in Nigeria has brought about suffocating poverty in the midst of plenty with the suffering majority resorting to anti-social practices across all dealings including

politics and participation in it, all in a bid to survive. That corruption is a norm in Nigeria and Nigerians are fantastically corrupt according to one time British Prime Minister David Cameron is issues that are traceable to immoral attitudes of the Nigerian politician in particular and Nigerians in general. The resulting general misery and biting poverty despite the promises of democracy and participation in democratic politics can be a focus of moral education as the amassing of the wealth of the Nigerian state by those entrusted to oversee the fair sharing of such wealth corresponds to executive robbery and stealing, just as subjecting Nigerians to miserable life and death by installment by the Nigerian state is state sanctioned genocide. Consequently the teaching of moral education can be redesigned to stimulate or raise moral questions on the rightness, suitability or otherwise of wealth acquisition that turns out to threaten the possessors of such wealth on one hand and cause monumental hardship and misery to the generality of the people.

Redirecting moral education to this direction can be in line with its traditional and age long tradition of developing in learners the ability to think autonomously which is concomitant to generating ideas for solving moral problems. Morally, creating awareness on these and sensitizing Nigerians that their present predicaments can change through their participation in politics can promote political participation, and this change that is brought about by knowledge of morality and moral education is capable of positively changing the outlook of Nigerian about politics and participation in it.

Curricular innovations aside, there are pedagogical innovation and strategies that when made norms and focal points in the education system in Nigeria can go a long way in promoting politics and political participation. Any pedagogical innovation and strategy that makes thinking and critical thinking its focus can be sure bet and a step in the right direction for sensitizing and

conscientizing Nigerians for active political participation. The centrality of thinking and critical thinking across all academic disciplines and the appeal to thinking and critical thinking in solving all the problems of man is a critical resource that provides justification for the above claim.

True, every human being can be credited with the ability to think, however, the type of thinking that qualifies as critical thinking according to Nwaokugha and Abiakwu (2017: 108) is that “that incorporates the ability to systematically subject ideas and proposition to systematic analysis, evaluation, build up and organize ideas including logically demonstrating how such ideas can be used in solving problems”. Relatedly, Ennis (1992) writes that critical thinking revolves around reasonable reflective thinking that is focused on deciding what to believe or do. Basic characteristic features associated with critical thinking are the ability of he or she who is involved in critical thinking to rely on it in solving all his problem and the inclination of he or she who indulges in critical thinking to see reasons for his actions or inactions and only be guided by reason in his or her actions or inactions. What these points hand to or suggests is that critical thinking can be directed or exercised on another thing or things eg educational provision.

Generally educational provision that focuses on the development of critical thinking skills can be of immense benefits to Nigeria but Nigerians stand to gain more if critical thinking skills are specifically focused on politics and participation in politics in Nigeria. Justifications for this claim are that through critical thinking one may understand the various reasons for the various political decisions that guide actions and why one’s own region may be the way it is. This awareness may challenge one for further actions depending on the side one is.

The reason for this conclusion is that politics globally and participation in it are key in achieving other values that are fundamental in the sustainable development

of a people and their state including determining true citizenship and since politics and participation in it is ever present in determining what a state and its people becomes, focusing critical thinking skills on it can existentially be like presenting a people in a state with a choice or choices on possible roadmaps for their survival and well being. As no right and rational thinking human beings can choose evil or wrong options when there are right options, awareness on the potentials of politics and political participation through critical thinking based educational provision can create the much needed awareness that can kick start active participation in politics or alternatively provide platforms for proffering solutions for resolving the many not-too-good behaviours that surround politics, political participation and democracy in Nigeria.

It is also possible pedagogical strategies and innovations for promoting politics and political participation in Nigeria can focus on effective communication and language education. This derives impetus from the fact that poor communication and poor use of language can work against politicians who honestly and ordinarily may have something to offer that can add value to the quality of lives of Nigerians and effective use of language and communication can improve and enhance the chances of politicians who may not have anything to offer in terms of enhancing the quality of lives of Nigerians. In fact, one observation that has been recognized globally as making people dislike politics and participation in it especially in Nigeria is the fact that politics and participation in it involves a lot of linguistic manipulations that the politicians can exploit to get votes from the masses and at the same time deny when they are called upon or reminded of such statements. What proves this position right is the fact that most policy documents that originate from politicians in Nigeria are absolutely ambiguous so much so that they are laced with layers of interpretations that make their implementations impossible and this is

further compounded by the fact that a reasonable percentage of the masses in Nigeria are not literate in the language used by the politicians.

True, politics incorporates within its frame elements of cunning, tricks, cleverness and shrewdness and politicians demonstrate all these through their skilful manipulation of language which most of the electorate or electors do not have equal competence. That politicians flout electorate or electors through language and this consequently causes apathy to politics and participation in politics by the masses of Nigeria is a cause for concern so serious that any genuine effort to promote politics and participation in it in Nigeria can start with providing the masses of Nigeria robust linguistic and communication competence with which they can decode or decipher what the politicians present before them. This is because language is tied to culture and the plurality of cultures and languages across Nigeria should challenge stakeholders in education in Nigeria to refocus attention on communication and language education for purposes of easy and smooth participation in politics.

Any effort that is targeted at promoting politics and political participation in Nigeria using pedagogical means can inculcate in the masses of Nigeria skills for solving many political problems that paint the political landscape in Nigeria as a theatre of war and an exercise that can be undertaken without appeal to moral rationality. It is an open secret that political parties and politicians in Nigeria sponsor militia groups and equip them with guns and other dangerous weapons with which they unleash mayhem on innocent Nigerians whom the Nigeria state expect to participate in politics for Nigeria's sustainable democratic growth and development. This contradiction deserves to be the focus of education especially by using education to create the necessary awareness in the form of sensitizing the relevant state institutions on possible roadmaps for containing and checkmating such aberrations or

abnormalities. Educational institutions can do this through seminars, workshops, symposia and by doing these, the masses of Nigeria can believe and consequently have a save landing space that the education industry in Nigeria can still meet up its traditional roles by not keeping blind eyes to social ills and evils that have characterized the political scene in Nigeria.

In such efforts, the education industry in Nigeria can intensify efforts at building bridges where collaboration and negotiation among political parties, politicians and electors can become norms for the sustainable development of Nigeria. The present dispensation and regime where Nigeria is fast becoming a theatre of war especially for political parties and politicians with the Nigerian masses losing the dividends of democracy is regrettable and should consequently be a source of challenge to the education industry, philosophers of education and political theorists. In fact promoting politics and participation in it in Nigeria to the level that is appropriately suitable for the giant and colossal status of Nigeria in comity of states demands change of gear where educational endeavours across disciplines can use a multidisciplinary approach to incorporate the teaching and promotion of politics and political participation in Nigeria. After all politics determines and shapes what becomes of all including the various disciplines. Consequently any one or any institution to be effected by the influence of a system or process should participate in determining what that system or that process should be.

CONCLUSION

Globally, people hold education in high esteem and what accounts for this is the centrality of education in man's desire for survival and quest for knowledge. The desire of man for survival and quest for knowledge can be well boosted through a robust and vibrant social environment. Man can consciously promote or bring about a vibrant and robust social environment

through politics and participation in it. However, apathy to this society shaping practice and institution is fast becoming a global norm and this development makes a case or challenges education to come to the rescue. Education is capable of this task through innovations in curriculum and pedagogy. Giving priority to school subjects like political education, social studies, critical thinking, moral education etc and in them emphasize the kick starting of positive attitudes towards politics and participation in it can produce the necessary turn around in learners that can give the expected dividends just as teaching learners to existentially see their destiny in their own hands and shaping it to their own taste through participation in politics can awaken interest in politics and participation in it.

Any skillful teacher can professionally combine curriculum and pedagogy to achieve this objective. This is possible when stakeholders reposition education to the point of using it to practically solve the problems of the society especially those problems like politics and participation in it that are central for achieving other higher values that promote the sustainable growth and development of man and his society. This should be the new direction that teachers and stakeholders in education should put education into.

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