



PROVIDING EDUCATION FOR ACTIVE AND MASSIVE PARTICIPATION  
IN POLITICS IN NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

People participation in politics introduces changes for their upliftment and development in addition to peacefully liberating them as they consciously determine for themselves their lines of action. Regrettably this aura of autonomy suffers because people show a sense of apathy to politics and participation in politics. Admittedly active participation in politics is dependent on a people's intellectual consciousness which education brings about. This paper in addition to x-raying the relationship between politics and education, provides signposts on how education, which is an article of faith for solving mankind's problems, can enhance mankind's massive and active participation in politics. The paper reveals that consciously planned educational provision whether formal, informal, adult and non-formal education can enhance the exploration of the positive correlation between literacy, democracy and political participation to bring about tremendous improvement that can radically sensitize people to embrace and participate in politics. The paper upholds that focusing educational provisions on equalizing opportunities or targeting the female population which constitutes a reasonable percentage of world population as well as developing instructional materials in ways that can enable learners to think critically and discuss political issues and their implications locally and internationally, can be steps in the right direction.

*Keywords:* Politics, Political Participation, Democracy, Education, Nigeria.

1. INTRODUCTION

An attitude which every one expects majority of people particularly Nigerians to demonstrate towards politics is one of warm embrace and total commitment. The reason for this is that politics shapes and influences the day to day life of man and his institutions. Through participation in politics, a people introduce changes into the polity for their upliftment and the general development of their state. Influencing policies of the state for the upliftment of a people comes to fruition when the people fully participate in the politics of their state and participation of a people in politics occurs through democracy. Democracy is a representative form of government in which people periodically choose their rulers in a free and fair election, where a candidate that has the highest number of votes wins. Democratic politics recognizes the dignity and worth of the individual in addition to guaranteeing and safeguarding the rights of the individual from encroachment either from the state or from his fellow citizens, has mechanism for self correction and modification and above all prioritizes the welfare and wellbeing of

citizens of the state. These account for why it has been acclaimed globally that the worst democratic politics is better than the best dictatorial and autocratic rule anywhere, suggesting that there are values inherent in democracy which mankind can explore if he participates in politics.

Ironically majority of the people do not show interest in politics such that in some states, only people with questionable value systems hijack and participate in politics when politics in its real sense should not be so. One can however assert that lack of knowledge concerning the instrumentality of politics in the survival of individuals and their state is at the root of the problems of participation in politics among Nigerians. Correspondingly overcoming this problem can also be routed through education. This paper therefore provides signposts and roadmaps through which education can be relied upon for sensitizing humanity in general and Nigerians in particular to participate in politics.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Participation in politics has become a focal issue among politicians, democrats, political scientists, policy makers and concerned citizens who are desirous to effect changes in the polity for the advancement of humanity. The importance of participation in politics is so phenomenal that any serious politician must devote adequate time to mobilize his supporters to demonstrate their support by participating in the actual game of politics. A simple reason for this according to Nwaokugha (2006) is that through participating in politics, citizens can influence policies of the government in their favour without much stress.

In any case, a good number of factors can influence people to actively participate or not to participate in politics. To this end, scholars have devoted their precious time to investigate and understand reasons for and against active participation and apathy to politics. (Conway 1991, Verpa, Nie and Kim 1978). Recent developments point to a worldwide apathy and general disenchantment to political participation (Klingeman and Fuchs 1995) even among countries with long established histories of politics and democracy (Magstadt 2003). However Liu (2001) writes that three famous schools of thought namely the social structure schools, the political culture school and the institutional school can provide frameworks for understanding political participation. What Liu (2001) establishes is that socio-economic background, political culture and institutional affiliation are core and fundamental determinants of political participation by citizens. These are self evident facts. Socio-economic background which manifests in higher income, better living conditions and to a large extent better education motivate and predispose citizens to demonstrate favourable attitudes to politics and participation in politics. Earlier studies by Nie, Powell and Prewitt (1969) attest to this. In the same manner a state where its political class upholds high moral and political values by respecting the sacred trust a people has for its political class has positive implications for political participation in the state (Almond and Verba 1963, Brady Verba and Schlozman 1995). The fact in the issue is the position of many scholars that favourable attitudes to politics by politicians and the political class have favourable implications for citizens' participation in politics (Bratton 1999, Duch 1993, Mishler and Rose 1995).

In their own contribution, Klingeman and Fuchs (1995) write that dissatisfaction with a particular government and the democratic process are great motivations for political participation. What this suggests is that bad government and abuse of the tenets of democracy and the democratic process can serve as a direct invitation for citizens to participate in politics so as to sanitize the system.

Researches on mass participation especially in the United States lean heavily on socio-economic status as a determinant motivator for participation in politics (Leigley and Nagler 1992a, 1992b, Wolfinger and Rosenstone 1980). Again any one so conversant with the history

of the United States can acknowledge the fact that the enthusiasm demonstrated in politics by Blacks in the United States especially during the candidacy of Jesse Jackson originated from the sense of belonging which blacks in the United States received during this period. (Tate 1993, Bobo and Gilham (1990) Cohen and Dawson 1993). Other scholars have made substantial contributions on determinant issues that positively or negatively influence political participation by identifying what they call participation theories. According to Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) there are five participation theories which influence minority participation in politics. They are socio economic status, psychological resources, social connectedness, group identity or consciousness and group conflicts.

The basic idea put forward by scholars on minority participation in politics as it concerns socio-economic status is that people who attain higher levels of education and maintain occupational statuses and income are prone or most likely to exercise their political rights by participating in politics (Kenny 1992, Leighley 1990, Leighley and Nagler 1992 (a). However in socio-political contexts where poverty has become an institutionalized norm, all theoretical formulations and models targeted at promoting political participation become disastrously irrelevant. The inability of theories to serve as guide for action results in what Kothari (2007) calls intellectual and moral vacuum whose absence promotes populist rhetorics as well as corruption and repression. Populist rhetorics according to Kothari (2007) takes the place of theory while corruption and repression take the place of politics and logically what prevails is deceit and in the air of insurmountable deceit, the ruling class claims that the various mechanisms and apparatuses for the smooth functioning of the state are in perfect conditions.

As logically sound as the above can be, there is paradoxically some disconnect that social economic status enhances political participation. What has correspondingly become obvious is that as people's socio-economic status increases and improves through attainment of higher education with attendant improvement in income, the more the level of their participation in politics decreases (Brody 1978). Because of this limitation, some scholars subscribe to psychological resources as a determinant of political participation. Psychological resources as a theory of political participation upholds that an individual's value system, philosophical and psychological orientations, political interests, love of fatherland and degree of receptivity to civic responsibilities, previous political experiences etc (Abramson and Aldrich 1982, Aldrich 1993), rather than socio-economic status are determinants of political participation.

On a different level, the pattern of relationship (social connection) which exists between individuals and the larger society speaks volume and has implications for participation of citizens in politics. An argument which scholars sustain under social connectedness as a theory of participation in politics is that estranged and alienated individuals are less likely to participate in the politics of their state. The Ogonis of Nigeria demonstrated this by refusing to participate in the 1983 general election in Nigeria (Saro-Wiwa 1995) during their face off with the Nigerian state. Scholars such as Putnam (1995), Uslaner (1995) have documented that apathy demonstrated in politics in the United States is partly rooted to social connections of citizens. What this theory of participation tends to emphasize is that people who are affiliated to one organization or the other can be influenced by the philosophy advocated by their social group either to participate or not to participate in politics (Harris 1994).

Another theory of participation as listed by Leighley and Vedlitz (1999) which can be very serious and sensitive in mobilizing a group to participate in politics is group identity or group consciousness. It is on record that the higher participation of Blacks in the United States than whites in politics has been attributed to group identity or group consciousness (Hardy – Fanta 1993).

On a serious note, group conflict can be a serious motivation for participation in politics. A group can be motivated to participate in politics because of perceived competition for scarce resources of the state between it and any other group within the state, in which it could be

disadvantaged if it misses to participate in politics. Through participation in politics such groups appropriate resources to themselves. This is a serious issue in Nigeria where the big three ethnic nationalities – Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba consistently strive to remain relevant in Nigerian politics so as to maintain their individual interests. The awareness that the interests of these three ethnic nationalities have been sustained through their domination of politics in Nigeria have sensitized politically inactive minority ethnic groups (Alagoa 2001, Aminigo and Nwaokugha 2010) to show unusual interest in politics in Nigeria.

Conservatively, motivation to participate in politics can be located or rooted in one's (individual's) idiosyncratic value systems or value preferences or the general behavioural dispositions demonstrated towards politics by citizens of a state. In recognition of these, scholars acknowledge that economic modernization (Lipset 1959), generational replacement (Dalton 1994, Inglehart 1990) and the experiences of citizens where there are responsible opposition as well as norms which recognize rotation of power can contribute to posing new challenges and new chapters to the political process. Societies which are favourably disposed to maintaining the status-quo can be slow in responding to quick efforts to respond or participate in politics (Hess and Torney 1967, Sear 1975) or to take active part in politics, which is essential for the survival of democracy.

In recent times, Rose and Mishler (1994) Mishler and Rose (1997) Dalton (1994), Brehm and Rahn (1997) have all documented that citizens perceptions of the actions of a government to political, economic and environmental issues, governments maturity or approaches to handling the complex art of state craft as well as government's relationship with her citizens have a lot of implications for the political participation of citizens in politics. In the same manner, it has been observed that extending a warm hand of fellowship to persons perceived as political opponents can result in giving them a sense of political belonging which can manifest in their participation in the political process of the state (Gibson 1998).

Getting the best out of a situation where one can be socialized to ignore his old value systems especially those that are related to politics and political participation can be pointing to the direction of education. The introduction of Civic Education as a compulsory subject at both the primary and secondary school levels is a step in the right direction to help create awareness and sensitize the masses on the need for new attitude towards democratic politics which political participation can bring about. True, civic education can create favourable opportunities upon which a people can be mobilized in readiness for political behaviours, especially the need for their active participation in politics. We can recall that mobilization and subsequent participation that comes with it can develop in citizens, the skills of analysis, group participation skills, critical reasoning capable of making ordinary citizens to question their rulers on certain fundamental issues as well as the ability to organize themselves for actions (Nwaokugha 2006, Aminigo and Nwaokugha 2010). In this way, civic education is unique for political participation. The plethora of experiences which civic education brings about involve secondary groups such as labour, trade unions, religious organizations and non-governmental organizations which focus on advocacy (Carother 1999). The involvement of these secondary organizations can target developing strategies for strengthening democracy through raising responsible groups from among citizens who can present issues to the state on behalf of the citizens. What this institutionalizes among the rank and file of the ordinary citizens is the curiosity and enthusiasm to enquire more about democratic values and norms as well as what constitutes the rights and duties of citizens in a democracy and those of their government.

### 3. DISCUSSIONS

#### *3.1 The Conceptual Relevance Of Politics And Education*

The survival of individuals and institutions in any state are made possible by a combination of factors and any individual who thinks he is in-charge of the actions and activities which shape his existence can be living in a world of self-made fallacy. Our individual participation in businesses within and outside our territory, issues of safety, security, interpersonal relations, decision about children, youths and elders (Magstadt 2002, Brenner 1975) and other general decisions upon which the survival of a state depends are reached at public deliberations. Scholars of many disciplines univocally call these arts of shaping the conditions of citizens and their institutions through public deliberation politics. It is therefore correct to assert that knowingly or unknowingly, activities or actions of individuals are influenced and determined by politics.

Characteristically, politics is omnipresent in all human transactions. Because politics is omnipresent in all human transactions, scholars give different interpretations to politics but at the heart of each scholar who defines politics, is the recognition that politics is a universal game played by every individual in the state with different manifestations and manipulative abilities which can reject some answers that can be accepted in a particular given context. This means politics as played in one particular context can be different from the way it is played in another context. The determining factors for this variance can be the interests of the key players in the game called politics. However politics opens itself up so much that everyone sees it at work whenever it is played.

Within the frame of politics are normative and descriptive concepts which in themselves caused disagreements among stakeholders on ways of achieving or realizing them for the benefit and welfare of citizens of a state. Because of this, politics survives through institutions and ideas which preoccupy themselves with making citizens understand the fundamental values associated with politics. Everywhere responsible politics is played, the stakeholders preoccupy themselves with ensuring the sustenance of such concepts as order, power and justice (Madstadt 2003). Order in politics denotes laid down procedures or structures through which a people realize a political system of their choice. A close examination of what has been said above points to two things. One reveals that order in a political system points to the establishment of well defined processes for the smooth conduct of politics while the second focuses in the promotion of sustainable society and its stability for the demonstration of practical and theoretical issues in a political system.

In every political system, groups of persons are always enthusiastic to influence the behaviour of others in line with achieving the predetermined objectives of the state. These groups crave for power. The plethora of responsibilities a government and a political system performs cannot be achieved without the government and its functionaries having power. One popular way through which individuals achieve power in a political system is by obtaining the mandate of the people in elections (Madstadt 2003), which on its own must derive from the constitution of the state. In political systems and in politics, power and authority are most often used interchangeably but the truth remains that both terms refer to different things in the political processes.

Power more often denotes the possibility of imposing or applying brutal force on another person so much that he does something which ordinarily he would not want to do (Okoh 2003). This exemplifies what is commonly associated with power as flowing from the barrel of the gun. If power connotes evil, why is it essential in the political process? The state as an institution possesses coercive instruments such as the military, police and other security apparatuses for its upkeep. It is people who are entrusted with administering a state that command and invoke the coercive instrument of the state at the appropriate times.

People entrusted with this sacred responsibility of administering a state have authority. Authority as a political concept usually derives from norms recognized and accepted by the

generality of citizens of a state and is rooted in the constitution of a given people. An aura which authority invokes is legitimacy. Legitimacy simply is the act of exercising power through well laid out procedures believed by a people to be right and proper. This is why the involvement of the military in governance without the consent of the people or appeal to laid down rules is always said to be illegitimate. In a political system, one claims or asserts authority but uses power as a means to enforce his authority which constitutionally derives from the norms of the state.

Paradoxes exist in politics and political systems. One of such paradoxes is that rulers are always outnumbered by those they rule, but a condition which makes this political contradiction acceptable is the extent in which rulers focus on matters of public interests and the extent in which the actions of rulers pass normative tests of morality and justice. The point we are making is that politics and political systems focus on many issues for the upkeep of a state and its people. Consequently, politics matters, because it is through public deliberation of issues considered to be of common national interests that acceptable and amicable resolutions are reached, the sharing formula, the quantity and quality each person gets are determined. Decisions reached in these acts of public deliberations stand as authoritative guides for formulating and implementing state policies and are compulsorily bounding on all. What each individual in politics tries to influence is the desire to project his interests, those of his group in the distribution of the limited resources of the state and from the pool of common interests of individual politicians and those of their groups, common decisions emerge for the governance of the state (Shively 2005).

Interestingly, a point which must be borne in mind about politics is that politics is an aspect of statecraft which preoccupies itself with how people consciously rule and are ruled (Magstadt 2003) as well as actions and activities which legitimately derive from norms which are willingly and acceptably established by a people for the control of public decisions in a specified territory (Almond, Powell (Jr), Strom and Dalton 2006). Politics is instrumental for the development of the individual and for it to be achieved, citizens of a given state must participate in it. It is politics which determines the social, economic, scientific, technological and moral tones of a society and directly impacts on the quality of lives of individuals, institutions and communities in a state. Politics is instrumental in developing institutions as well as the development of the necessary material and human resources for the upkeep of the state. Above all, politics provides citizens shared beliefs upon which its citizens can nationalistically, democratically or otherwise develop behavioural responses for the building of the state as well as create the enabling environment through which citizens can influence and shape policies of the state.

These potentials of politics are possible only if citizens participate in politics. In states where democracy is the norm, there are conventional and unconventional ways through which participation in politics are possible (Magstadt 2003). According to Magstadt (2003) conventionally people can participate in politics by forming political associations or parties, joining political parties, voting on days scheduled for elections, form interest groups which discuss politics and political issues and unconventionally participation in politics can take the form of protests, economic boycott or the use of violence to attract attention to national issues that need to be addressed.

In all honesty, participation in politics serves as litmus for determining other higher order values, namely: the extent to which citizens of a state participate in politics determines their seriousness and commitment towards building the ideal state of their choice and through such efforts stamp out what they may perceive to be obnoxious policies or regimes. This logic is simple. Citizens' participation in politics can be the surest and quickest means of influencing general decisions in their favour without the barrel of the gun or any physical force (Nwaokugha 2006). This is especially the case when a people mobilizes and are determined to cast their votes

for candidates and political parties whose political manifestoes identify with their economic, political and environmental wishes and aspirations both locally and internationally.

Because all these are possible through participation in politics, politicians and other class of elites compete and contest for legitimate political control of their states with many aims in mind. Most politicians participate in politics with the objectives of introducing new political values, sustaining aspects of the political values upon which a people are known for, fine-tuning or injecting radical and revolutionary trends or dismantling conservative practices in the polity which have stagnated progress and development in the state. Consequently, politicians preoccupy themselves with visions of their ideal state as well as the type of institutions and appropriate relationship that may likely exist between such institution and citizens and between citizens and the state which had not come into existence but which is the wish and desire of such politicians for their people when the mantle of authority is legitimately given to them.

There are known intrigues in politics and one thing which these intrigues of the politician can remind citizens is that politics is heavily embroiled in destructive and constructive criticism but there is hardly anyone who is desirous of making a particular thing happen for the common good of the masses or vice versa that does so effectively without participating in politics, which affords him opportunities of controlling and influencing others. Successful politicians have focused their strategies on promises of better social transformation especially for the poor (McLaren 1997). An appropriate response to this development in politics is adequate knowledge and awareness of such intrigues by the ordinary citizens of the state who should take up each politician on those promises earlier made upon which the mandate of the citizens was given to him to rule.

Because politicians exploit the ignorance of the citizen on politics, an unfortunate and current development in politics globally is one of apathy from citizens who for their own sake and the sake of their state ought to be active in politics. True, apathy to politics and apathy to political participation is real and can be observed in states like America (Magstadt 2003) despite its many years of democracy and political consciousness. The reason proffered by some people for their apathy to politics stems from their conviction that politics, in addition to stimulating crisis; setting individual against one another revolves around sharp practices which are unhealthy for the growth and development of a state (Almond et al 2005). Those who develop no feelings for politics do so because of their past experiences in politics and in the hand of politicians especially in developing and underdeveloped countries where politicians are excessively corrupt and politics leaves the majority who longed for the dividends of participation in politics with dashed or unrealized hopes or perhaps politics and the way it is played do not incorporate values which occupy space in their scale of preference.

Equally, it is important we acknowledge that there are people whose reactions to politics are one of total and fascinating commitment, whose positive aura and dispositions derive from their conviction that politics treats fundamental issues and compulsorily determines and illuminates on people's quality of lives locally, nationally and internationally.

Whichever camp any one belongs, politics determines a people's chance of survival and the substance of politics derives first and foremost from the interests of individuals and groups through legitimately recognized public deliberations before emerging as common decisions for every body. The stability of politics and the viability of political institutions in a state determine to a great extent, the ranking and respect of states on development and human development indexes. The importance of politics in the survival of individuals and groups accounts for why some analysts claim and maintain that politics is so fundamental that leaving it in the hands of a few individuals can be detrimental to the moral health and prosperity of a state and its citizens. The implication of this is that every citizen of a state should make it a point of duty to participate in politics so as to be a stakeholder in shaping and influencing state policies and decisions. The awareness that politics determines fortunes has long been recognized in Nigeria especially by

the three dominant ethnic nationalities of Ibo, Hausa and Yoruba. True, these three major ethnic groups in Nigeria hijack political power and participate actively in politics in Nigeria, but there is something special about the active participation in politics by the citizens of the Northern region of Nigeria. According to Shively (2005) there is fear among the northerners in the Nigerian federation because almost all the resources for the economic survival of Nigeria come from the southern region, a development which makes the north uncomfortable and a condition which motivates the north to participate in politics actively so as to have majority control of the Nigerian state and determine the chances of survival of the other groups.

From Shively's (2005) incisive remarks, it can be right to say that the Northerners in Nigeria, more than the other regions, recognize the centrality and critical role of politics in determining the fortunes and chances of survival of individuals and groups, hence their practical resolve to go extra miles to participate in politics and to retain political power. Events in Nigeria's political landscape can attest to this. The 1993 presidential election which was acclaimed the fairest in the history of elections in Nigeria was annulled by the military whose top hierarchy was dominated by the North simply because a Southerner, from all indications was emerging as the president. Again analysts link the present politically motivated security challenges in Nigeria to the fact that a man who is not of the Northern extraction is the president of Nigeria. A revelation which the above exposes is that a people can through their active participation in politics determine and structure developments in a state to their taste as well as gain unmerited influence from other members of the state. This happens when those who participate in politics appropriate the wealth and economic resources of the state to themselves.

Universally it is acknowledged that there is a link between economic wealth, political power and political participation (Farley 2010). This trend finds expressions in the political systems in Nigeria where the rich capitalize on their wealth to protect and advance their interests through their participation in politics. These occur in ways in which political processes and mechanisms focus on sustaining policies which are advantageous to the rich and detrimental to the poor. However, the poor still believe in the power of politics for solving most problems of the Nigerian society and remain convinced that this dream can only come to fruition through their participation in politics while others strongly believe that real political power resides with the wealthy elites. That there is link between economic wealth and political participation suggests that influence can play fundamental roles in persuading people to participate in politics. In most developing countries and in Nigeria in particular, the rich have had an unusual influence in all issues and had through this way, gained adequate support and control of the political system as well as dictated the patterns of political participation of citizens.

Interestingly, wealth and influence notwithstanding, a people can make themselves politically relevant in a political system through their pattern of voting and political representation. It has been acknowledged that blacks in the United States of America have made themselves relevant through their patterns of voting as a bloc which has been judged to be instrumental in giving victories to United States presidential candidates in recent times when it mattered most (Farley 2010). What this tends to reveal is that minorities or poor people in any given geographical society can be a powerful political force whose political influence and interest cannot be ignored very easily (Moore and Pachon 1976).

A political means through which people generally, and minorities in particular, can assert themselves in a political process is democracy. Democracy as a political concept invokes a plethora of interpretations. The reason why this is so is that different people view and understand democracy from different philosophical and ideological points of view and the different points of view from where people view democracy include political, cultural, economic and social dimensions. Because democracy can be understood from the above points of view, Boye (1998) writes that any discussion that focuses on democracy requires prior classification of the concept.



Specially, democracy within a political context is a system of government in which people freely participate in organizing themselves into political associations or parties for the sole purpose of choosing their rulers or representatives through periodic free and fair elections. Fundamentally, democracy has become a universal ideal and despite being a universal ideal, democracy is also relative to culture. The idea of cultural relativity of democracy hinges on the thesis that it cannot be imported from one culture into another. It must derive and be deep rooted in the cultural fabrics of a people from where it develops as well as maintain a bottom up process of development that allows for popular participation and accountability capable of emancipating and transforming such people into becoming positive social force for the development of the individuals and their state.

The universal acceptance of democracy rests on moral principles namely democracy as a political system prioritizes the wellbeing of the individual in his authentic natural self as a member of the human race who has dignity and unalienable worth that is equal and comparable to that of any other person. Democracy also has internal mechanisms through which its operators can correct and modify its numerous limitations. Deriving from the dignity and worth of the individual person in a democracy, the sole responsibility of the state in a democracy is the welfare and wellbeing of all the citizens of the state. Because the state exists for the welfare and wellbeing of the citizens, democracy survives through majority rule or popular control of the masses over policies and actions of the state. Reliance on the majority derives impetus from the fact that all things being equal, the majority is considered to possess both moral authority and superior wisdom than that of a single person. It is also evident that in a democracy the interests of the majority are to be given priority rather than those of the individual. An idea guiding this is that since no one consciously works against himself, citizens in a democracy can envisage and bargain better deals for themselves.

In addition to majority rule, democracy grows and stabilizes where the rights and privileges of citizens are protected from encroachment by the state. This is not to say that individuals in a democracy should infringe or encroach on the rights of their fellow citizens. In other words, as the state is prohibited from encroaching on the rights of citizens, individual citizens are by the same injunction, expected to respect and not to infringe on the rights of their fellow citizens. We had earlier stated that democracy is a representative government and that this works out in the form of transfer of a people's mandate to a few individuals who represent their interests, suggesting that democracy in a way is practised indirectly. Functionally direct democracy is only possible in the smallest political units or societies and the complexity of modern societies makes direct democracy impossible.

Democracy also works out through compromise, so much that when it is not allowed, democracy and the democratic process break down. In modern democracies, the three arms of government namely the executive, the legislative and the judiciary are always engaged in working out acceptable compromise for the political, economic and moral health of the state. Compromise can be reached after weighing and balancing conflicting interests such that the resulting public policy becomes one that is taken in the best interests of the state and its people.

Among other features that radiate and illuminate the beauty of democracy is that democracy has in-built mechanisms that ensure that the democratic process protects and restores the dignity of man. In a democracy, certain actions and safeguards are taken to guard against the tyranny and excesses of the majority. In a democracy, this is done by limiting the authorities of government or not concentration power of government in one arm only. This is the basis of the principle of separation of power.

Despite all these, democracy accommodates, tolerates and institutionalizes certain regrettable and unfortunate features. According to Kothari (2007) in a reasonable percentage of states where democracy is practised, democracy has become a playground for corruption, criminalization and repression of the masses of the people. This is in addition to democracy

being a theoretical ideal or aspiration which people long for than a practical and concrete ideal condition that has already been achieved. To this end all the hues and cries about “democracy is more of a dream residing in the minds of philosophers and visionaries, not so much practised by those in charge of the affairs of the society” (Kothari 2007).

To compound issues, people are sensitized to believe that democracy safeguards and guarantees development, human progress improvement in people’s quality of life and harmonious relation among human beings and nature, human rights, equality, freedom, impartiality, minimalization of strife and violence freedom of speech, religion etc but a closer examination of democratic regimes especially in developing and underdeveloping states reveals that violence and insecurity, human rights abuses, inequality, corruption and many other symptoms of misery and underdevelopment have become seals and trademarks of democracy. More than any other system of government, democracy promotes strife between majority and minority groups on one hand and among already marginalized people, especially in multi-ethnic and multi-religious societies which instead of improving their lots makes life more unbearable and miserable.

However if one wholeheartedly accepts the promises of democracy without scrutiny or serious rational reflections, such promises can raise expectations of a people for they far exceed what democracy can offer a people both in developed, developing and underdeveloped states. Correspondingly, as expectations delayed make the heart sick (Proverbs 13:12), democracy produces disappointment and frustration and according to Kothari (2007), it is perhaps most difficult system to establish and operate as it is extremely fragile, often unstable and open to unpredictable fluctuations, whose promises of justice and egalitarianism, in addition to melting and evaporating easily becomes impotent by the side by side existence of inequality, poverty in the midst of plenty and abundance. The key discrediting paradox of it all is that democracy both in the past and in the present incubates unprecedented rise in the marginalization and maltreatment of the minorities and the poor who ought to be beneficiaries of the practice and dividends of the practice of democracy. In other words, in contemporary democracies as they are practised globally, the rich compound the predicaments of the minorities and the poor by craftily tricking them despite their majority into accepting a pattern of democratic politics configured by the rich, which in addition to impoverishing the minorities and the poor is a negation of the ideals and principles of democratic politics. Consequently the minorities and the poor need education and emancipation to explore possibilities in democratic politics so as to challenge the political and democratic hegemony of the rich.

### *3.2 The Relationship Between Education And Politics*

Education and politics are intricately related so much that one depends on the other for sustainable existence. Education is instrumental for the mobilization of the masses, which on its own is the lifewire of any political process. The educational system is like a laboratory or a field where political experiments for the smooth running of the state are tested. The political system on the other hand, enriches education with concepts and ideas for socializing the citizens in readiness to participate in politics, developing new political values, reviewing, modifying and sustaining existing ones. The sustainability of any political system is dependant on the availability of competent and curious persons who are willing and ready to occupy political positions and the development of modern political structures first of all find expressions in the educational system of state. On the other hand, the desire to participate in politics and the fundamental requirements that come with it can cause unprecedented increase in enrolment of citizens in the educational institutions of the state. Because the field of education bristles with thorny issues (Akinpelu 1985) which are themselves political issues of the state, the education sector records astronomical expansion as necessary condition for the resolution and settlement

of such issues which are deeply rooted in the politics of the state. That this is the focus results in the emergence of new academic programmes and policies in educational institutions to address issues which are deeply rooted in politics.

It is undisputable that the more educated people a society have the better for its political system. The relationship between education and politics can best be appreciated when one realizes that an educated citizenry is a strong base for the evolution of a respectable political system just as a good political system is a bridge and a fertile ground for the emergence of good education, at least for the survival and sustenance of the political system, implying that the involvement of educated people in the politics of any state provides both the needed expertise and a sense of direction to that political system. Most states can retrospectively or presently recall the dominance of a particular set of educated people in their political life in which credit must be given to them for their roles in laying the foundations for the political development of their states. The United States of America cannot easily forget the role of lawyers in its political history and Nigeria cannot forget the pioneering role of teachers in the development of politics in the country. In the case of Nigeria, where a reasonable percentage of its early politicians were teachers, one can logically say that teacher education first provided the seedbed that nurtured further political development of Nigeria. Whatever roles these people played in influencing and shaping politics in their various states can be said to be as a result of the education they had.

The relationship between education and politics can further be acknowledged through examining events of the past especially in countries which experienced colonialism. Colonized states were quick to realize that a condition for their understanding the politics of their colonizers was education. In the same line of thinking, education was identified as a prerequisite for a free and democratic society as well as the only platform for independence and possible development. Consequently a corresponding educational provision for the attainment of these objectives was dreamed of and this dream of using education to achieve whatever political objectives of any state has gained ground globally so much that national political objectives and educational objectives of states are contemporarily endorsed and rooted together. It is plausible to admit that the basic belief in endorsing and rooting the national political objectives of states together with those of education is to openly acknowledge the truth that lack of knowledge about government policies and programmes (politics) can make effective and good governance impossible. It is on this ground that every responsible political system integrates education as a vital instrument for success and as a powerful means for realizing its constitutional and statutory function which the political system demonstrates by bringing schools and educational institutions close to the people.

It is on record that the establishment of three regional universities in Nigeria namely the University of Nigeria Nsukka which was opened just seven days after Nigeria's independence by the regional government of National Council of Nigeria and Cameroons in the Eastern region of Nigeria, the University of Ife now Obafemi Awolowo University in 1962 by the Action Group in the Western region of Nigeria and the Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 1962 by the Northern Peoples Congress (Uchendu 1995) attest to the recognition by Nigeria's leaders of the link between politics and education, which is a further demonstration of their belief that the wishes and desires of any responsible government to lay a strong foundation where hot political issues like freedom, human rights, fair play, equity, national unity and integration as well as justice in resource distribution shall largely depend on the level and quality of education the state makes available to its people.

It is worthy of note that the extent to which a people identifies with education has profound implications for politics and political participation of its citizens. A people who are unreceptive to education may likely lag behind in politics and the dividends that come with participation in politics especially in states where it is a norm for those who participate in politics to influence government establishments to their ethnic homelands or states. It is also

true that such people will have limited power in influencing general government policies and programmes of their state. The consequence of this in Nigeria is what Uchendu (1995) highlights when he says that the different attitudes towards education between the North and the South and far North and Middle Belt is responsible for Nigeria's political problems; and this is a self evident truth that any one who is conversant with the political situation in Nigeria will not dispute.

This means that the art and science of statecraft (politics) must be interlaced or be related symbiotically (Uchendu 1995) with the educational system of a state. Many countries have demonstrated this by adopting and endorsing the national objectives of such states which are deeply rooted in politics as the aims and objectives of educational provision for their citizens. In other words national objectives of some states and aims of education are one and the same thing. For instance Nigeria's five main national goals of: A free and democratic society; a just and egalitarian society; a great and dynamic economy, and a land full of bright opportunities for all citizens (Federal Republic of Nigeria 2004:6) are also endorsed as "the necessary foundation for Nigeria's national policy on education". A plausible reason for this development is to ensure that education serves Nigeria's national political interest. What this translates into is that there is always a link between the national political ideologies of states and the education system of states. That this is the case implies that there is a relationship between education and politics.

Nigeria is not alone among states of the world that aspire to use education to achieve their political interests. According to Uchendu (1995) the tenets of democracy are deeply rooted in the educational system of the people of America. Outside the use of education to propagate the tenets of democracy, America relies heavily on education as an instrument for the continuous re-invention of the American society (Baptiste and Camp 2008) as well as preparing Americans in all ramifications for all round national and global economic competition (Berliner and Biddle 1995, Guthrie and Springer 2004, Wong and Nicotera 2004).

In support of all the above, Morris and Pai (1976) acknowledge that America as a country has a long history which relates her politics to her educational system so much that America admits her determination to use education into translating her core values which are reflections of her political systems. To this end any success or failure in achieving the political goals of the American society is blamed on the American system of education. A revelation which emerges from the above is that any state which wants to be relevant in the global scene must continuously reposition her education system in readiness for whatever political decisions the state takes.

It is important we highlight why there is this union between education and politics. Education basically is an investment in human beings and those who have received the right type of education are expected to patriotically translate such education into achieving the national political objectives of the state irrespective of challenges that may arise from the differing interests of citizens of the state. More importantly, human beings as products of education are the carriers of the genes of development (Eboh 1998) which every state targets to achieve for its citizens and the various processes involved in the process of achieving these developments meant for the welfare and the survival of the people are purely political and falls within the framework of politics.

This leads us to another self evident truth on the union between education and politics. It is true that education develops in people those core values which every state strives that its citizen should uphold for the survival and sustenance of the state. These core values which education inculcates in citizens derive from politics, the political system and the political class. Politics in a way determines, prescribes and directs education on the necessary values, principles and logical as well as pedagogical processes upon which a people can be educated or education can be practice in a state. States which have incorporated quota system and other

compensatory educational policies derive legitimacy for their practices from the political institutions of the state and such remain a state policy till such political documents that gave rise to their recognition are vacated.

What is implicated here is that education and politics travels on the same road and the extent in which each records successes or failures are dependent on the viability of the other. Coleman (1965) had earlier insinuated that what exists in the state is what exists in the school and the education system and that which any one expects the state to put in place must first of all be put in place in the school and the educational system. This is where one can be bold to assert that the extent in which education achieves what it ought to achieve for any particular society hinges heavily on the viability of the political system in existence in that state. This is the position of Uchendu (1995) when he writes that good political order is a necessary condition for good education. It is also instructive to note that success in politics and good governance largely depends on the quality of education politicians and the political class received and the extent they were prepared for the delicate art and science of statecraft.

What these suggest are that good education and a well thought out educational system are fundamental requirements for the actualization of the political dreams of any society. The development of citizens who are ready to uphold the core values of the society lies with education and the evolution of a conducive environment where the best can be explored and exploited from the citizens lies with politics, meaning that both education and politics strive to create better human society where every citizen can actualize his potentials with less stress.

### *3.3 Education As A Facilitator Of Politics And Political Participation*

At any point in time and at any level, investments in education have potentials which show promises of greater participation of a people in politics and political activities of a state and any state whose citizens show favourable dispositions to politics and demonstrate same by participating in politics and whose favourable dispositions to politics and political activities is sustained can be consciously and unconsciously institutionalizing the promotion of bottom-up and top-down (Drackner and Subrahmanyam 2010) democratic processes and institutions among the citizenry. This is so because quality investments in education both at the primary, post primary and post secondary levels can be significant for democracy and political institutions of a state. The ability of a people at the grass roots to benefit from education can result in more citizens gaining some level of political awareness and education for a people at higher levels can result in quality improvement in the moral health of the political and democratic processes and institutions of a state. This suggests that mass education, rising literacy rates and democratic political systems (Drackner and Subrahmanyam 2010), processes whose evolution hinge on education, is fundamental elements in the political development of states. Again, any theorizing that targets socializing citizens in readiness for political participation or modification of existing political process, introducing behaviours which are conducive and favourable to democratic principles and institutions as well as fashioning theories for understanding political and democratic behaviours must find expressions in the educational practices and systems of a state. It is on account of all these that modernization theory strongly upholds that investment in education is a necessary step for political and democratic development of any state (Hannum and Buchman 2003).

In addition, it is pertinent we note that investments in education especially, at the higher level can improve the quality of the political system by involving disciplined and cultured elites into the political process, and the involvement of the elites into political process serves as a wake-up call to other segments of the society whose attitudes have been unreceptive to politics and participation in politics. This is because societies globally still have appreciable measure of respect for elites as a class of people every one looks up to as role models whose active

participation in politics and other civic responsibilities is assumed to be practical demonstration of theories learnt in school as well as confirmation of qualities of educatedness of the educated class and as such a litmus test for assessing the quality and strength of our higher educational institutions. In other words, the status and credentials of elites as the top most and the purest in terms of intelligence and sophistication and their commitment in politics through their participation can in addition to reconfiguring the political landscape provide moral boost or alternatives for strengthening the democratic and political institutions of states. It is on the strength of this that (Lipset 1959, 1960) writes that higher education correlates positively with democratic politics. This position is real considering the fact that the greater the number of educated people a state has, the stronger and better the political system, political institutions and the greater enthusiasm the people demonstrate to defend democracy and stabilize democratic institutions of the state.

At a related but different level about the link between educations and politic is the promotion of a sense of activism especially on politics and political issues which education prepares students for. Globally aims and goals of education are expressed in highly charged political languages with emphasis on using education to produce civic minded students who in addition to upholding democracy and democratic principles can demonstrate absolute loyalty to the state. What results out of this state sanctioned indoctrination through education is the production of robust army of citizens who are sensitive to issues of politics, political participation and the sustenance of robust democratic environment.

### *3.4 Innovations In Education For Enhancing Active And Massive Participation In Politics In Nigeria*

Politics influences fortunes and opportunities and knowledge of politics and participation in politics provides a people platforms to explore shared beliefs and values upon which to move a people forward, meaning that politics has an overriding influence in the lives of individuals and groups. Paradoxically behaviours of people undermine politics so much that apathy and show of general disenchantments to politics by the majority of the people especially in Nigeria are becoming normal behaviour, without considering the consequences of this on the moral health of the Nigerian state. The simple fact that politics determines man and his survival and the recognition that education on one hand is an article of faith for solving all mankind's problems (Aminigo and Nwaokugha 2009) and on the other hand promotes politics and political participation (Glaeser, Ponzetto and Shleifer 2007) provides sound justifications for evolving innovations in education for enhancing active and massive participation in politics.

Consciously planned educational provision both at the level of management, curriculum and pedagogy can radically bring about both bottom-up and top-down improvements which can result in massive and active participation of a people in politics. This is possible through introducing educational policies where the focus can be on investments in both formal and non-formal systems of education. Here, special focus can be placed on increasing enrolment at the primary education level so as to increase the number of people who can exploit the positive correlation between literacy, democracy and political participation. What can be the target here is achieving Universal Basic education. Stakeholders must however, prioritize equalizing opportunities between the sexes if the dream of achieving active and massive participation in politics is to be real. The implied message here is that focusing educational provision on the female population that constitutes a reasonable percentage of our population and recognizing that they are highly sensitive to issues of politics, can challenge and conscientize women to be active in politics and through their active participation bring about feminine innovations in politics that can make the difference by repositioning the politics of the state.

Greater and wider access to educational opportunities through adult and non-formal education can be intensified. This is because the greater and wider the access a people has to education, the better for the political democratization and development of the political institutions of that state. We can appreciate the truth in the above when we recall that other experiences outside teaching and learning in the formal educational setting greatly determine learners' learning experiences (Kelchtermans 1996). This implies that any innovation which equips learners with the capacity to effectively turn every opportunity in their lives into gaining one form of consciousness or the other can provide dividends in the political landscape of states. There is no doubt about this because according to Strongiust (2005) as citizens gain some level of literacy through education, they become more politically aware of private and public issues in their environment as well as learn to develop appropriate intervention and response mechanism to maximally exploit the situation. The sustenance of this in the form of a politically sensitive population can help influence and fast-track decisions in key areas which have always generated sharp disagreements among people and between a people and their state.

Deriving from the above, instructional materials can be developed to enable learners think critically in ways that can enable them discuss political issues freely with their parents, peer groups and politicians. The print and the electronic media can package sensitive political programmes which can create political awareness by mobilizing citizens through advertisements and jingles with emphasis on the powers of the individual through the ballot paper to decide one's fate and influence national issues, such that individuals can be provoked to reflect on such critical issues as: the consequences of people participating or not participating in politics, political parties and their manifestoes, political parties whose manifestos are achievable, candidates for elections who merit or who do not merit re-election and why? Political actions persons can take individually and collectively if they want to influence changes in the polity and candidates who can be sources of hope or inspiration through whom the people can realize the dividends of their participation in politics.

Providing these opportunities for reflections on the above through education can develop conducive attitudes which can enhance permanent participation in politics by a people. The wide scope covered by the print and the electronic media can reinforce the efforts of the school by providing opportunities for those who did not benefit from the efforts of the school to share in the political happenings in their society and create opportunities for resource persons to highlight the political trends in particular environments and their implications for the collective survival of humanity.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

Politics generally invokes a feeling of disenchantment in some people and a feeling of excitement in others. Those who react negatively to politics derive their reasons from the multiplicity of roles and too many issues which politics focuses on while those who react positively to politics believe politics locally and globally treats issues which generally are of common good and of common interests to humanity. To this group, politics influences, shapes and determines the day to day affairs of man, meaning that politics has an overriding influence in the lives of individuals and groups. Paradoxically, across cultures behaviours of people undermine the centrality of politics in their lives so much that there is general apathy and a sense of disillusionment to politics and participation in politics.

We have in this paper, made a case that education as an article of faith for solving mankind's general problems can be relied upon for enhancing and sensitizing people for active and massive participation in politics. On the strength of which we make the following recommendations and suggestions:

Innovation in education for enhancing active and massive participation in politics in Nigeria can focus on enriching the structure, content and delivery patterns of education so much that it produces visible results in both its highest and lowest recipients that can be conducive for discussing, theorizing and comparing political development across countries/periods and the roles of individuals in sustaining the system since man is the carrier of the genes of development in all its ramifications and since the potentials for development are attained through education, there should be greater and wider access to education.

Education can be reconstructed to develop in people, abilities to translate every opportunity into gaining one kind of political awareness or the other. As every state aims at conditioning their citizens into becoming good citizens, stakeholders in education can collaborate with other agencies of the state to develop curricular and instructional materials whose exploration can encourage education for political participation by the people. This derives from the self evident truth that ability to participate in politics is litmus for testing who has the interest of his state at heart. Based on this, education at least for political participation can be made compulsory across all levels of education.

Education can develop innovations where other agencies of socialization namely the family, peer group and the mass media can be used to create opportunities that can radically sensitize and revolutionize the general public to develop positive attitudes towards politics. The focus of these efforts can be on playing the game according to rules which govern it.

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