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The Challenges of Political Education in Contemporary Nigeria: Re-thinking Mission and Re-planning Strategies

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Abstract

In the light of the current challenges facing Nigeria on her tortuous march from statehood to Nationhood, especially the challenges of corruption and terrorism, this paper focuses on the need for political education. It ex-rays its relevance in dealing with these challenges, the various forms it can take, as well as praxis oriented strategies to make it address the needs. Relying on secondary sources of information, it argues that the end point is the emergence of politically conscious individuals who can then effectively participate as individuals or as members of groups in the political life of the nation, and that can rise up to change what they think should be changed, even with force of revolution as in the Maghreb the Arab worlds of today.

Key words: Political education, participation, transformation, democracy, Boko Haram.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria’s aspiration after the great lessons of history is towards a new nation characterised by unity, peace and prosperity; a nation in which no one may be oppressed; a nation with sound leadership and followership; a nation freed from the multi-dimensional socio-political ills ranging from minor indiscipline to surviving like savages. But this goal will surely be stunted if she fails to recognise the vital importance not just of structural changes which has dominated all constitutional reforms in Nigeria, but more of the development of man: a complex process of human orientation and education socially, politically, economically, etc. (Nnolim, 1979). Indeed, the history of man is a history of advancement from barbarism to culture. The very recognised instrument for this transformation is education for in man’s long history, education has been closely connected with his development as a civilised being. Man’s thinking about life in general has often been related to education in particular and education has often been viewed as a way of bringing a better life into existence (Ozmon/ Craver, 1976). Build the man build the community

Chinua Achebe blamed the leadership for the problems of Nigeria. This may not be contested but can be broadened, namely that the problems of Nigeria are Nigerians. This incorporates both the leaders and the followers – the constituent human persons either as individuals or as groups. However well contrived a political system may be, it is as good as nothing without the individual human beings who are capable and willing to make it function. The individual occupies such a central position in state and society that his reform and education is intrinsically linked to the emergence of a just and good state. The various past programmes of the various regimes like ethical revolution, War against Indiscipline (WAI), Mass mobilisation for social and economic reform (MAMSER), are at least honest recognition of this all important fact. All dealt in one way or the other with the question of moral reorientation, of “training” Nigerians in proper conduct and elevating the moral tide, of political education.

How far so far, may be a matter of opinion, but for this paper, the situation has remained a tense and fighting one, deficient and indeed precarious. The current menace of Boko haram sect dominated by mostly people
who have never as children had the benefit of education is an eye opener. Not even the so called nomadic education project that should have targeted them was used to educate them. Abandoned and exploited socially and politically, they are today taking their revenge on the society and the entire nation is the worse off for it. This paper focuses on political education x-raying its relevance, the various forms it can take, the challenges in contemporary Nigeria as well as modest strategies.

The Concept, the Content and the Goal of Political Education

Political education is only an aspect and a specialised form of education. Like education in general, it is viewed as a way of bringing about a better polity into existence (Ozmon/ Craver, 1976). The historically negative experience with political education particularly as related to political indoctrination – especially in the totalitarian states, has made even its mere mention in a democratic setting a suspect. Some of us had the privilege of passing through the old school system that had in its curriculum a subject called “Civics”. We recall that it talked about citizenship or knowledge and engagement as a citizen. It is the same idea and more that is embodied in political education. In other words, whether we call it political education or civic education they do not involve contradictions in themselves. Indeed, in the German education system the two are written together: Political/Civic Education. Yet the concept of political education is very apt and more encompassing. Apart from stating explicitly that a preparation of the young ones for life in the society must deal in content with both discipline can be given political flavour, political content. More often than not, we think of involvement from very narrow perspective like involvement in campaigns and elections, in voting and being voted for. This form of involvement that focuses on the vertical relationship between the government and the citizen though very important is too narrow in conceptualising political involvement. To be sure, politics is not just about a vertical relationship between the people and the state, but also about a horizontal relationship among the people and groups. It is an ensemble of relationships embracing every aspect of human life both public and private and political education, and as Pazelt (2001) puts it, has the indispensable and fundamental function of ensuring that people and groups in a given polity live together in peace by safeguarding and regulating the generation and implementation of general political duties. In other words, how people and groups in society can learn to establish and regulate their co-existence is a key question and challenge of political education. This is most especially so in a heterogeneous and antagonistic groupings as in Nigeria.

The point of emphasis among the pallet of issues in political education varies from context to context. In the Nigerian context, involvement, both vertical and horizontal is problematic. Involvement connotes “responsibility”. Responsibility, especially in a democratic setting, describes the ideal citizen: an active personality, who freely and based on reason participates in the social, economic and political life of the polity; who knows and is in a position to avail himself of not only his duties but also his rights; who is able, willing and indeed eager to participate in, and shape politics; who has the ability to deal with multiple controversial understandings of the world, who is able to tolerate differences, i.e., who is able to perceive right and wrong, equality and inequality, etc. These qualities are not inborn. They are learned through political education.

Brief Historical Background

Political education is not some recent invention. It has its deep root in Athens of the 4th century BC. Plato among others recommended that education be employed as the chief method of reforming both the individual character and the State. Thus Plato’s philosophy of education propounded an educational theory that represents his view about facts of human nature and society on which are based recommendations about curriculum, the methods and the administration of education as a means to the ultimate goal of just and good citizens living in a just and good society (Edwards, 1967, 232). For Bacon as well as John Locke, the production and maintenance of a good society is the chief objective of education (Hollins, 1976). Rousseau also assigned to education a social ideal quite as secular and political as Locke’s. To him the object of education is to assure that the citizens are early accustomed to regard their individuality only in relation to the body of the state and to be aware, so to speak of their own existence merely as a part of that state (Peters, 1966).

One can sum the goals up by saying that its goal is the inculcation of behavioural pattern considered in a particular political community. It implicates capability which is intellect based and willingness which is emotive in nature. This goal is not too distant from that of Nigeria. A politically educated citizen should have the ability and willingness to participate in, and shape politics, tolerate differences and the rest of the outcomes mentioned above and which are vital for the survival of any democracy, nay Nigeria’s. According to Fischer (1986), politics and democracy must be learnt if they are to be lived. Political education is a process: the process of preparing especially the young ones for the socio-political...
world in which they grow into and schools of today, families, religious and other institutions of socialisation must take the concerns that necessitated it in other political communities of the past very seriously.

Agenda Setting in the Nigerian Context

Political education in a democracy like ours is education for democracy. A basic problem confronting the Nigerian Nation today is the effective participation of the people in matters affecting them. Participation is a factor of multiple variables that implicates involvement in decision-making process, implementation of made decisions, sharing in the benefits of made and implemented decisions, monitoring the entire process (Nwankwo, 2003). Compared with the past, particularly the immediate post-independent Nigeria, there appear today to be a sullen withdrawal from political life. This can be very controversial but the fact remains that today, more than in the past, apathy, selfishness and above all powerlessness are key factors that can best be used to describe citizens' political life in Nigeria. Indeed it is the apathy of the people that stood in the way of massive citizens’ revolt over the last two decades while selfishness stands in the way of political commitment. As to the later, there is today a culture of every man to himself, which pervades even those who occupy public positions. The last elections in Nigeria sufficiently explain powerlessness. Everyone felt a loss of power, and feels a loss of power about government activities with the saying “people like me don’t have much to say about what government does”. Yet government is said to be that of the people and by the people”. These factors have had multiple negative ramifications: the breakdown of trust in, indifference and even hostility to, government and its activities. Others include high level corruption, basing of political activity on childish greed, selfishness and domination instead of on grown up awareness of the inherent requirement of peace and mutual coexistence, lawlessness, jungle justice, etc. All these, which spell disaster for the Nigerian society while in the interim serving the best interest of the ruling minority, are challenges to political education.

As noted earlier, political education is a process of preparing especially the young ones for the socio-political world in which they grow into so that they will be able to be useful to themselves and contribute meaningfully to the growth and development of the Nigerian state. If we translate this into practical terms, the agenda are that of getting the people to take part in their government, to assume their responsibilities of contributing to the development of the society, to make them aware of their rights, to provide them with the encouragement to defend their rights without fear and thus struggle against the impositions and domination of a few privileged; to harness and tap the latent forces in the people; to make them see politics as an essential aspect of the entire social fabric; to make them less vulnerable to undue influences in the political process, etc. These are issues immediately communicable in the idea of political education in the context of Nigeria. They are more than, and cannot be achieved by mere political propaganda of occasional jingles, media broadcast, caravan shows, lessons and verbal arguments, etc. Though important in any polity, political propaganda must not be made to replace real political education, which in addition to lessons and verbal arguments must also be action and model-based.

Nor can they be achieved by a sudden jump. On the contrary, it is a slow, systematic and continuous process of orientation and re-orientation in premise and goal. It progresses to whole hearted acceptance and internalisation of a new set of values affecting the individuals as well as the social groups, day in day out and in practically every sphere of activity. Here the family, the school, Churches/Mosques and other relevant institutions have roles to play. We shall later look at the challenges of political education in these mentioned institutions. In the meantime, the individual and the group are the two key pillars of democratic. Build them and democracy is built. It is these two key levels that constitute for us the frame for looking at the nations efforts, and perhaps rethinking the mission and re-planning strategies of political education.

Individual Level

Every social system, organisation or institution, is ultimately going to be judged by the good or harm it does to the individual. It is the individual who must be educated and the various institutions and levels of formal education here play critical role. In the schools, for instance, the designing and implementation of curriculum are critical and the entire educational system has not been able utilise this opportunity to integrate political education into courses. But even then, effectiveness depends on design and those who implement the curriculum, those who teach. But those who teach can only teach what they know and the educational institutions are here deficient. Most scholars of education agree that three elements operate in the learning process: the teacher, the curriculum and the learner. As a means of attaining predetermined educational objective, a systematic and planned attempt made by the school to change the behaviour of members of the society in which it situates, (Onwuka, 1981:5) the curriculum is very central and in fact incorporates the other two. The goal of political education can be impacted by a well designed curriculum. Political education may not require separate discipline.

Very recently, the National Universities Commission introduced the study of Peace and Conflict in Nigerian universities making it a compulsory GS course. Let me guess the reason for the introduction: the endemic
conflict that has characterised Africa in general and Nigeria in particular and education is seen as a powerful instrument for social change. But the laudable goal for the introduction of the course cannot be achieved with the way it is designed and taught by non-professionals, who teach it like they are teaching a political science course: a lot of verbal acrobatism with little, if any practical consequences for the students, in form of attitudinal or behavioural focus. On their part, the students learn it as such for purposes of passing it. Believe it or not, if Civics is today re-introduced in schools as clamoured by many today, it will follow the same pattern, except the issue of emotional intelligence is mainstreamed in its design and implementation.

Mainstreaming emotional intelligence in form of attitudinal focus is much more than an academic exercise. For this to be successful, it must take place within the context of an enabling environment. Indeed, Onwuka (1981: xiv) stretched his definition of curriculum to include “the total environment in which education takes place” embracing the pupil, the teacher, the method of teaching and evaluating as well as the physical and psychological environment. A person brought up in an animal farm, even if s/he is equipped with the best training in one or the other field of human endeavour will never cease behaving like an animal.

Much has been written about this level of analysis. It suffices for us to reiterate that it is sheer pretence to think that we can politically educate a morbid, hungry looking, and therefore, angry looking citizens into responsible citizens. The Marxist-Leninist analysis, which is here appealing, gives primacy to the material condition of man. It argues that men are born to find food, cover their bodies and build shelters before they can engage in politics, which constitute the superstructure. Political education starts with the recognition of essentially human needs that will enable the individual not just to survive, but to survive on a very tolerable level and thus have a feeling of being a member of a community. Contrast this with the reality on ground where materially most Nigerians are miserable, plagued by endemic diseases, insecurity and chronic wants, under or poorly fed, wallow in blissful ignorance, etc. No amount of political education will make them into responsible citizens. They will be inclined to compete with animals in selfishness, in grabbing and surviving on the physical elimination of one another as in the Hobbesian state of nature.

The fact is that far reaching political education requires the recognition of the essentially human ends of political life and of its deepest spring of law and justice. It requires a ceaseless effort to make the living and moving structures and organs of the body politic serve the common good, the dignity of the human person. Put differently, if the nation’s political education must yield good fruits, if the individual must learn to participate in government, if he must assume the power that in a democracy really belongs to him, then he must be protected against the paralysing influences of uncontrolled government powers, against arbitrary arrests, seizures and tortures, detention without trials while at the same time promoting and fostering the free and responsible activities of thinking and choosing which the individual alone can perform and which have essential value for the democratic community. In addition, the common good of the polity must be procured in such a manner that each concrete person not only in the privileged class but throughout the whole mass may truly reach that measure of independence which is proper to civilised life. In simple parlance, social justice must be guaranteed. The purpose of it all is to ensure a meaningful life for the individual, and then and only then opportunities for him/her to contribute significantly to the enterprise of the state. Let us say that the present regime at the national level, despite its deficiency in input legitimacy, is making positive and encouraging efforts that are leading to a gradual and silent political awakening among Nigerians.

**Group Level**

In re-thinking and re-planning political education at the group level, we are drawn to the thesis that apathy and attitudes of disengagement from involvement, is a reflex of powerlessness before the big organisation that is the state and the government. The people are powerless for various reasons. Some say that majority do not understand the rules of the game of democracy or have dim and confused understanding of the processes of government and governance. If this is the reason, then political education in form of civic lessons and verbal arguments, radio jingles and adverts are seriously challenged— Nigeria is not bad in doing these. Every government accepts that the people must be educated to assume the power which under the constitution belongs to them. Their participation in government as fully provided for in the constitution like the choice of leaders in periodical elections, as well as variety of other ways that have bearing on democratic performance. By virtue of their being the legal repose of power, they are made to realise that democratic success or failure is linked intrinsically to them. The fact that sovereignty under the constitution belongs to them makes it possible, for them to resist the tyranny of any ruler, and thus ensure that their welfare is the guiding principle of state policies. This is their government; this is their responsibility and opportunity.

The above are mere theories and have little or nothing to do with our experience, the level of praxis. Thus the people remain powerless and voiceless. Think for a second of the import of the bastardisation of the electoral system – a key instrument of controlling the government. Even when their welfare for which they setup the government is submerged to personal gains, the people
have always found it hard to break the yoke of tyranny. In the past they have always welcomed Military administration because of their condition of powerlessness. Unfortunately all Military administration rendered the people even more powerless and voiceless. Indeed throughout the history of Nigeria, reconciling the sovereignty of the people with the tyranny of the ruling minority – be they “elected” or self-imposed, has remained a recurrent illusion. Apart from the fact that this ruling minority soon lose contact with the people soon after seizing office and begin issuing orders from comfortably barricaded mansions, the people themselves are varied in their perception of the import of their sovereignty. This variation arises from the imaginary demarcation in the public life between politics and the other areas of their national life. This leads to the limited involvement of the greater majority in decision making and implementation (including payment of taxes) process. While some do not participate at all, the majority do in a limited way like participation in the electoral process. However, because of the bastardisation of the electoral process by the ruling elite, one may not realistically include it among realistic ways of people’s involvement in politics. In the final analysis, only a few engage in a broad range of political activities. This all important few are further reduced to “very few” by the ruling minority through the systematic use or rather abuse important few are further reduced to “very few” by the involved in politics. In the final analysis, only a few engage in a broad range of political activities. This all important few are further reduced to “very few” by the ruling minority through the systematic use or rather abuse of state power. I shall soon return to this. The end effect is that only relatively very few are active participants, who are able and willing to assume the people’s power. This relatively “very few” are no other than the ruling minority.

The point of our emphasis is that verbal propaganda and constitutional provisions has not succeeded and cannot succeed in making the people active participants in the political process. Of greater import is the fact that apathy and attitudes of disengagement from the political process is a reflex of powerlessness before the monster that is the government of the people’s creation. The influence which this primary fact exercises on the whole course of the society is prodigious: corruption, blind drift of power, lawlessness, and other social malaise. These are only effects not cause and political education should address itself to the cause: powerlessness. If the ruling minority is serious with political education, the people must be empowered and placed in a position as even to challenge the government of their creation in a systematic manner.

It was Alexis de Tocqueville who once observed that groups and associations are veritable means through which individuals realise their instinctively human potentialities for social action, for altering situations and even for creating new social phenomena. They contribute significantly towards the realisation of the people’s power: people’s sovereignty and the preservation of the individual liberty. Bertrand Russell puts it similarly when he opined that encouraging the formation of groups, professional and interest groups are a veritable instrument in resisting “the organised forces of government successfully when their cause is such as many men think just”. Public demonstrations, boycotts, strikes, work to rule, etc. are all techniques of political engagement by which they call attention to their grievances in order to be seriously discussed. These are authentic expressions of democratic freedom, which the government through various legislation and machinations is stifling. Yet we are talking about political education or is it indoctrination we are talking about. To be successful we must encourage suitable organisations and respect their autonomy.

Organised groups constitute, apart from military, the most powerful challenger of government. Individually or collectively they ensure a free and open society and contribute to order and stability in the body politic, contrary to the views in some government circles. Thus because their membership cut across all strata and segments of the society — sex, tribe, religious beliefs, etc., they constitute veritable foundation for unity through developing tolerance for differences. They are effective instrument for citizens’ political awareness and above all involvement. Each group can become not only an instrument for the political education of its members either by themselves or through external (government) agents, but also for others. Because of their criss-crossing nature they can be used to undercut the dangerous activities of Boko Haram sect that is currently undermining the unity of Nigeria. They must, therefore, not only be encouraged, but also protected against denigrating efforts that hinder their vibrant energy.

Of course the possibility of perverting this vibrant energy is always there. Fact is that in all situations where this is the case, it is usually not unconnected with an active minority that runs the affairs of the group with the vast majority of members exercising relatively little over their activities. Over the time the minority develops policies in which they have vested interest (positive or negative) and prosecute same in the name of the group. There must, of course be some risk of disorder in such a society, but this risk is as nothing compared to the danger of stagnation, which is inseparable from the kind of actions of the government, especially the that of the former president Obasanjo towards organised groups. Certainly, active involvement of the masses even in their respective groups is part of the agenda of political. They must be able and ready to accept real share for the decision of their leaderships by ensuring that they keep in touch with the membership and public in the development of policies and courses of action. It is doubtful if any political education that ignores group-based education can achieve much.

Our concept of group-based political education extends to the local groups of communities, towns and villages. Here the objectives cannot be achieved by isolated visits of officials, for instance, officials of the National Orientation Agency nor by brief bursts of activities. Indeed, it need not and should not be the task of government alone. Community heads and leaders, and even religious leaders must be taken into confidence.
without necessarily trumpeting it. The important phrase is involvement of these people without trumpeting it, as we are accustomed to do. In this way the leaders will ginger action as of their own initiative. The outcome will be more permeating than a situation where these leaders are merely seen as parroting the government and its agencies. This a veritable means of developing and consolidating a new and practical democratic government in which the people will be educated and motivated to contribute, by feeling in word and indeed that they are citizens of a democracy.

Such local groups abound throughout the federation. They envisage a face to face assembly in which the people make decisions on how to meet their problems and squarely facing them. Such communities throughout the federation should not only be encouraged but in fact stimulated to take initiatives and decisions at such basic levels of face to face assembly. Directions and directives from the top should be drastically reduced. In this way vital energy would arise from the people instead of the ruling minority. The people begin to learn to assume public responsibility beginning with the familiar public: the public of kinsmen for instance. The background philosophy is expressed in the thought of Yves Simon (as cited by Maritain, 1951, 68n): “Every function which can be assured by the inferior must be exercised by the later under pain of damage to the entire whole. For there is more perfection in a whole all of whose parts are full of life than a whole whose parts are but instruments conveying the initiatives of the superior organs of the community” .Maritain calls it organic edification. This means that at the very bottom, at a level far deeper than that of political parties, the interest and initiative of the people in civic matters should begin with awakening of common consciousness in the smallest local communities and remain constantly at work there. According to Maritain this is an indirect but efficacious means of supervising and controlling the democratic state not only because they have normal repercussion on the behaviour of government and political parties, but more because they create and maintain in the body politic currents of high power and mighty propensities which the state cannot ignore (Maritain, 1951:68).

The Challenges: Schools, Religious Institutions and Families

The sum of the strategies discussed above is a combination of theoretical and experiential framework in political education. It is within this framework that we now look at the challenges in schools, churches/Mosques and families. How can the school prepare young people for the social world in which they grow into? In which ways should issues of living together in society, the political order, industry and law be the subject of school education? According to Sander (2004), the school in all modern societies has not only been confronted now with this problem. Even if there has not always been a separate subject to confront this problem and in many countries including Nigeria, there is still not even today – it has still always been expected of the school that it should make contributions to the political socialisation of children and young people. This demand on school as one of the agents of socialisation is often taken for granted. It is assumed that it should contribute to the forming of national identity. Indeed, the school occupies a central position in political education such that in the 20th century most totalitarian systems took undue advantage of this to develop in the minds of young ones stereotypes and communicate their ideologies.

As noted earlier, this totalitarian experience arouses scepticism in many countries when political education of young people is demanded in schools. However, democracies, including Nigeria cannot ultimately avoid the question as to how they want to prepare young people to avail of their democratic rights of freedom, to formulate well founded judgements on political controversies, to take responsible decisions as voters and possibly to get involved in politics and in society (Sander 2004). In the context of Nigeria, this is a big challenge. How do we through the instrumentality of the school achieve these laudable objectives? Let us begin with the re-introduction of civics or applied social studies in the school system. Even this has its challenges ranging from determining what is to be taught and learnt, why and for what purpose, the design of the learning environment, appropriate method and media, etc. I had earlier spoken of the teaching of Peace and Conflict Studies that has certainly ignored all these key issues. The challenges are that of developing veritable programme with praxis orientation for political education, designed for the study of civic values and citizen involvement. It requires developing a cluster of courses from primary to tertiary level of the nation’s educational system and which are recognised nationally as constituting a curriculum for political education.

Such sequence or cluster of courses has to respond to critical needs implicit in modern political actions. These include the need of setting goals which addresses the question as to the basis of our working together. As Wilson McWilliam once noted, we need to rethink the foundations of our common life as a nation. This is a prerequisite to understanding any specific programme for improvement. Other critical needs that follow the first include:

- The need to work cooperatively
- The need to translate issues into public policies
- The need to influence government and private institutions
- The need to implement and evaluate public programmes
- The need for commitment to the rules of the game involving adherence to peaceful techniques of
political action.

For political education to be responsive, schools must respect the process of learning. The student must be taught to ask questions about life and seek solutions to the vexing problem of injustice, dishonesty, oppression, etc. But conveying knowledge about these issues and the functioning of the polity are insufficient. That is to say, that political education in schools should move beyond mere passing on of facts to changing observers into active participants in the system. The ability to mobilise and to organise to confront unresponsive institution by the students is the hallmark of an effective political education. To the school authorities, this could be problematic. Indeed contemporary examples indicate that any student so developed would have a bleak future in the labour market. The nation must decide what it wants through a philosophy of political education: a docile citizenry or active participants. As Tocqueville (as in Scott, 1959.) Puts it, "no one will ever believe that a liberal wise and energetic government can spring from the suffrages of a subservient people". Above all these, the learning environment must be such as to have positive impact on the psyche of the students. The sorry state of educational institutions challenges the empirical orientation of education in Nigeria. As earlier noted, a human breed from an animal farm will get into the society with the same animal mentality. If the student, at least in school experiences the ideal world, or call it the right world, s/he would be motivated in the future to try to recreate that world. The challenges can be summed in terms of adequacy in cognitive, affective, evaluative and empirical orientation frameworks with the goal of evolving a participatory political culture in Nigeria.

On their part, religious organisations are counted among the principal agents of socialisation. The two main organised religions in Nigeria, Christianity and Islam wield prodigious influence on their adherents. It is from this angle that the Churches and Mosques play important roles in shaping the socio-political orientations of their members. If they disparage politics, then political education is bound to suffer. If they get too involved the danger will be that peaceful coexistence becomes problematic and no amount of political education can redress it. That is why totalitarian state also controls them. Striking the balance is the key to their successful role in political education. They must learn how to relate their religious missions to the social and political concerns of the state. They can direct their members to those things that unite rather than divide through, for instance campaign for human development and other social engagements, preaching against social vices, like selfishness, greed, etc. What is really important is not merely that they respond, for instance, to the problem of individual selfishness and greed and such other moral vices that have negative implications for the polity. This is what they are primarily supposed to do. They need to go beyond this level to initiating a range of programmes, even courses in moral and citizen education as a vehicle to bring these concerns from the pulpit back into the community where people are raising them. They can conduct voter registration drive from the pulpit, lobby and campaign for legislation that impact their members, educate members about impending legislation, and such others that are non-partisan. In such ways they will be contributing in educating the people. Religious organisations in Nigeria are officially not wanting in these. Unofficially however, we are aware of backdoor sectarian intrigues that do not do this nation any good. If they, as is known engage in such clandestine activities, they lose their moral and even spiritual right to educate others into the right path.

The family is the first port of call for every individual. The individual’s first socio-political orientation is offered him/her there. It is here that the preparation for the kind of life he/she lives in the society begins and this must be taken seriously. According to Himmelmann (2000), the parents and family elders are the first to offer children models that can be emulated while growing. Parents can serve in their actions as models for roles of citizen. This is learning from and by reference to examples. A model-based learning offers the child the opportunity to align himself to model type, objects, facts, and relationship. If the model/s are suspect or wanting in their political responsibility, damage is being done to the society. The question then is, what is the image of citizenship that emanate from the families? How many pay their taxes? What is their attitude towards public properties? To what extent are political involvement, commitment, public spiritedness, etc., worthwhile elements in the family? The key role of the family is teaching by example! This is mobilisation from below.

Conclusion

The survival of democracy in any nation including Nigeria lies in the people rising and seizing their power. This cannot alone be achieved by voting procedure of isolated individuals, which as we know has even become bastardised in Nigeria. A great deal lies in the constant action of the people who accept a joint responsibility for what is being done and who show commitment to the values, which are indispensable to a free state. These must first be learnt before it can be lived. It is in the learning theoretically and practically, that political education is called into being. It is a challenging task in which the school, religious institutions the family, among others, have specific contributions to make. The goal is the emergence of politically conscious individual who can then effectively participate as individuals or as members of a groups in the in the political life of the nation. Properly politically educated, the people will be able to rise up to change what they think should be changed, even with force as was the case with the removal of
President Marcos of Philippine by the people, Tunisia, Egypt and the rest ongoing in the Arab world.

Regular, widespread and far reaching political education requires commitment from above and below. From above come the state and its agencies. From below, the families and the groups, i.e., NGOs which broadly defined embraces all organisation operating within the political space between the state and the family, come into play. If the government neglects or attempts to undermine such organisations, the goal of political education will remain elusive. There is no end which the human will despairs of attaining through the combined powers of individuals united in groups.

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