
Political Education: A Panacea for Peace in Nigeria

By

IWUZOR PEDRO OBIALOR

*Department of General Studies
Federal College of Education (Technical),
Asaba, Delta State.*

Abstract

Politics is a veritable means used in accessing the government that controls the governance of the people and her society. The rancor and bickering associated with wrong politicking has become a source of worry to every concerned individual or group. Effort is made in this write-up to define the various terms associated with the discourse; know the true meaning of politics, reasons to show how breach of peace is caused by wrong politics. Discuss how political education can help to achieve peace through reduction of political violence. The recommendation of this write-up if well implemented will go a long way to improve good political behaviour in the country and enthrone peace.

State analysts agreed that the major aim of creating an organized state is to achieve peace to enable greater economic emancipation and for a greater development of nations. Today, the threat of global existence is caused by breach of peace through wrong politicking. If politics is played the way it should be, the fear of this threat will be greatly eliminated, or reduced. The greatest world concern after “commodity” apart from various economic quests for development is the desire for peace. For any nation to develop, the importance of peace becomes paramount. That no meaningful development can take place in absence of peace is obvious.

The wrong way of playing politics in the world today and in Nigeria in particular have lead to serious crises. The first and second world war was the aftermath of wrong politics. The Nigeria political crises, ranges from various incessant “ethno-religious” crises; the “post election” crises, “IPOB” (indigenous People of Biafra), Niger Delta Militancy and the recent religious extremist “Boko Haram” insurgency. Consequently

Nigeria today has people referred to as IDPS (Internally Displace Persons) who are kept in various camps.

In this democratic dispensation, Nigeria citizens should be educated politically in order to guide them properly in their activities in respect of their contribution to the national security peace and development.

Through political education, people would be afforded the opportunity to know political behavior that can cause insecurity, and lead to breach of peace such as ethnic politics, nepotism, tribalism, political witch hunting, sabotage of economic progress to undermined the effort of government in power, withholding of voters cards against the opposition areas, political gang ups etc. If political education is well articulated and propagated, there will be a reduction in crises and peace will be achieved for individuals and for national growth.

Definition of the Subject Terms

The discourse for clarity is presented under the following major subheading: clarification of concepts, purpose of political education, means and method of political education in Nigeria, conclusion and recommendations.

Concept of Politics

The struggle of individuals among different competing group in the same environment pave way to an organize state and politics put in place to be use to access the government. Any politics that is not within the frame of good governance of people in an organized state cannot be regarded as true politics.

In the words of Appadorai (1975) “when a body of people is clearly organized as a unit for purpose of government, then it is said to be politically organized ...” That means people who come as a unit for the purpose of overseeing the affairs of governance in politics. In his clarification, the reasons for this body of persons are to be incharge of government that will regulate people activities in the society so that a relationship of individual members of society with one another does not clash.

Ultanurcoilda (2014) listed different definition by different people as follows: Johan Kaspar Bluntchli in the theory of the state; (1875) noted “politics is the science of watching the affairs of state, to fight for and understanding of the state and circumstances, the properties essentially, in various forms or manifestations of development”. (That is the science that encompasses to what will lead to the development of the state) Royer F. Soltau in his book introduction to politics: (1935) “Political Science studying the country, state goals and institutions that will carry out that purpose; the relationship between the state and its citizens as well as with other countries. (In the definition, political science is the study of state, its aims and purposes, the institution that will help to realize it, its relations with its individual members, and other sovereign states). J. Barents in his book science politika; (2014) “Political science is the study of country life ... which is part of people’s lives, political science study

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states that is carrying out his duties”. Joyce Mitchell in his book *Political Analysis and Public Policy*; (1998) “Politics is the collective decision-making or policy making common to the whole society. “ (Politics) is a collective decision making or the making or the making of public policies for an entire society. Also it is the collective effort geared towards decision/policy making in shaping a state for better which is common to all the state, Harold D. Lass well and A. Kaplan in the book *power society*; (1950) political science to study the formation and power sharing” and in the book *who gets what, when and how*, lasswell asserted that “politics is the issue of who gets what, when and how”. W.A Robson in the *University Teaching of Social Sciences*; (2005) “Political science study of power in society, ... that is the essential nature, the basis, the processes, the scope and results. The focus of attention A political scientist focused on the struggle to achieve or maintain power, exercise the powers or influence over others, or oppose the implementation of the rule”. (Politics is concern with the study of power and exercising it and influencing over others in the society).

Karl W. Duetch in the book *Politics and Government: How People Decide Their Fate*; (1970) “Politics is a decision-making through public facilities”. (Politics is the making of a decision through public means).

David Easton in the *Political System*; (1965) “Political science is the study of the formation of public policy”. David Easton also said political lives include a variety of activities that affect the policy of the authorities is accepted by a society and influence how to implement that policy. We participate in political life is the activities we do with the making and implementation of policies for a society”. (Political life concerns all those varieties of activity that influence the kind of authoritative significantly - adopted policy for a society and the way it is put into practice. We are said to be participating in the political life when our activity relates in some way the making and execution of policy for a society.

Aristotle according to Onyeocha (1994) is the first person to see politics as science by referring to the root word “Politike” which is the science of the city state or the polis, and its members. In the present context, neither city-state is involved. What is the concern is the sovereign state of Nigeria. Aristotle according to Onyeocha maintain by emphasizing that character of politics lies in its characteristics of determining which sciences ought to exist in state, what kind of sciences each group of citizens must learn, and to what degree of proficiency each must attain. Thus, it’s a normative science which treats of the organization of social goods. Aristotle further noted.

Thus it follows that the end of politics is the good for man. For even if the good is the same for the individual and the state, the good of the state clearly is the greater and more perfect thing to attain and to safeguard. The attainment of the good for one man alone is to be sure a source of satisfaction; yet to secure it for a nation and for state is nobler and more divine. (Onyeocha, 1994).

In line with Aristotle earlier view, Asobie (2008) asserted that “politics is primarily and ultimately about human welfare. It is about the improvement of the

material conditions of life, it is also about the maintenance of the psychological and emotional stability of man: and about his spiritual growth as well”.

The views of Aristotle and Asobie in their political definitions, discovers that the utmost aim of politics is carrying out the will of the state which is doing good to her people. These days, selfish political players hinge their definition on the orthodox definition when the globe was battling with colonialism and hagemong acquisition (country against country). Such orthodoxy definition like that of Eastons in Asobie (2008) sees politics as “authoritative allocation of values”. The simple interpretation of his view is that politics involves the use of state power to determine who get what, when and how in the society and no longer used for the good of the society. Asobie noted that all of this of Easton is grossly misleading. Politics is not just about sharing or allocation: rather it means more than that. It is much more important about creating a general environment that is conducive for organizing production, increasing productivity, thereby maximizing human social welfare through enhancement of the quantum of the social production. This can only be achieved in a peaceful environment which politics ought to create rather than the societal strife experienced in Nigeria.

Concept of Education

Despite the difficulty in defining the concept of education, various definitions have been propounded. In a broader concept, education can be viewed as a systematic training and instruction designed to transmit knowledge and skills in individuals. Education can also be viewed as a process of changing behavioural patterns of individuals in the desired direction which include mode of thinking, feeling and other overt actions. Ughamadu; (2006) opined that education is the means by which individual is developed so that he will be able to live effectively and efficiently in the present society and contribute to its advancement and upliftment. Education can be propagated from more knowledgeable person to the less knowledgeable individual. To be able to cope politically and otherwise in the society, education becomes imperative as it ensures societal stability, social order and cohesion, acquisition of usable and socially accepted vocational skills that enable people learn how to meet changing situation. To this end, Whawo, (2009) see education as “an instrument used to socialize people to be able to cope with life challenges by providing them with skills that will make them productive. Understanding the true position of this definition suggest that an unproductive society is a dead society and people can only survive in productive society.

From the above two definition, one can agree that most of the vices that endanger peace in Nigeria today are caused by selfish ethnicity cum regional political manipulation of one ethnic and other region because of lack of sound political education. The ill that leads to insecurity and breach of peace can be curtailed if proper political education is given to both the players and the people.

Concept of Peace

When a country is not at war people are likely to view it as there is peace in that country. That is the absence of war signifies peace in a country. Peace is much more than absence of war. Defining peace as absence of war does not guarantee peace as there are other forms of social ills that bridge peace. So defining peace as absence of war have only recognize one form of violence that bridge peace which is physical, open and direct. In Nigeria today there is no peace yet Nigerian people are not at war with each other. Forms of violence which are linked with social conditions like poverty, exclusion, intimidation of common man, want, fear and many other psychological pressure, police cum army brutality, oppression of the poor by the rich, oppression of women, accumulation of our common resources by one section of the society etc. where all this persist there is no peace in that country. With the above assertion, absence of war does not determine peace alone.

The concept of peace should be understood with the primary concern of creation and the maintenance of a just order in the society. Peace can be seen as a state of balance and understanding in yourself and between others, where respect is gained by the acceptance of difference, tolerance persists, conflicts are resolved through dialogue, people's right are respected and their voices are heard, and everyone is at their highest point of serenity without social tension (Omoyibo in Iyamu, Salami 2011). After studying different opinion on peace, Ibeanu in Best (2006) see peace not as a condition, rather as a process. Peace for him is a dynamic socio-economic process. Ibeanu define peace "as a process involving activities that are directly or indirectly linked to increasing development and reducing conflict, both within specific societies and in the wider international community.

What we can deduce from the above meaning of peace is that without peace that enable conducive environment, no meaningful development can take place in Nigeria. The bridge of peace is cause by political tension as no proper political Education is given to the society. If we are to synchronize the view of Aristotle, in defining role of politics as that science that determine the science each group of citizens must learn, and to what degree of proficiency each must attain, you start appreciating the important of political education to peace. Thus if this normative structure is not put in place peace will be a mirage in Nigeria.

Definition of Political Education

Political Education may not have readymade definition, but it should be examined from the practice that does not create tension. Political education can be seen as a collective process of study, research and analysis that we need to engage in together, in order to do the work that will enhance harmony in Nigerian society devoid of tension and rancour.

Political Education can be liken to the Educating the people on how the politics is played within the constitutional frame work of the country in accordance with the

electoral law provision in order to shun those practices that is not of politics and can endanger and undermine stipulated rules of engagement and aggravate societal tension.

The Need for Political Education

Almost if not all the bridge of peace in Nigeria has been attributed to politics. Untrained politician has created a gap in what politics is all about, which has emphasis on people's welfare. For this reason, it is important that people be educated politically for them to know what to do in politics (both the political player and the participants), in so doing, the state will win back her intent and glory for which it was created and politics allowed to be used to shape the government.

The need for political education becomes necessary because politics has been accused of the problem in Nigeria. Presidency accused some politicians in the country of having hands in farmers/herdsmen clash and said that they have evidence for that (Punch Newspaper July 9, 2018). Also it was believed that the then Ali Modu Sheriff helped in escalation of Boko-haram threat in Nigeria as it was allege that in 2012 He (Ali Modu Sheriff) co-opted the Boko-haram leader Mohammed Yusuf for support of his large youth movement in exchange for full implementation of Sharia and promises of senior state government position for his followers in the event of an electoral victory. When he won Sheriff could not implement his promises rather he denied them. (Curbing violence, 2019). Before the general election of 2019, the coalition of Niger Delta agitation accused some politicians in the country of stockpiling arms and ammunition in the oil producing region ahead of the 2019 general election (Akasike 2019). The evidence on allege report manifested on the concluded governorship election in River State were the incumbent Governor Nysom Wike accused the minister of transport Chief Rotomi Chibuike Amaechi of using Nigeria soldiers against the voters.

Recently, ex-militant leaders are struggling on how to get the Nigerian State, multinational oil companies and their subsidiaries exploiting oil and gas resources of the Niger delta, to appropriately give back to the people, regrettably, wrong politics and politicians have torn the militants apart. If this kind of politics is not handled well, it may return the region to dark old days. (Vanguard, June 5th, 2019) Economic and Financial Crime Commission chairman (EFCC) Magu have also accused the governors of federal republic of Nigeria as having hand in Nigeria insecurity because of fat security vote given to them unaccounted for (Magu, 2019) other political problems that exist and have caused bridge of peace in Nigeria; include corruption, most of our political leaders are been investigated by EFCC today, Nigeria have been regarded as one of the most notorious corrupt country in the world. There is kidnapping, God-fatherism, Nigeria youth and their political inactivity, Nigeria citizens, Nigeria media because of brown envelop syndrome. Political gang ups. Recently, the Borno State governor His Excellency Shettima Kashum regrettably express how the northern governors gang up against the then President; Dr. Goodluck Ebele Jonathan in a bid to

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stop him from 2015 Presidential Election (Shettima 2019). This shows how wrong politics can destroy the fabric of one's nation if proper political education is not put in place.

In view of all this problem linked to Nigeria politics, there is every need to educate Nigerians on how politics should be played. Political Education will help in the mode of thinking, feelings for one another, help to differentiate between political wrongs and right and all other overt actions in Nigerian individuals.

Means of Political Education in Nigeria

1. **Family:** The family is the foremost traditional method of inculcating in a child good habit and ethics. It is through the family that people learn the cherished values. Family as a basic social group is united through bounds of kinship or marriage and is present in all societies. If the values of political education is transmitted through the families in early year of a child development, that child shall grow up with it and will be able to impact positive political behaviour that stand the test of time in Nigeria Society. Although some families wrong orientation impose a serious threat to political education because habit learnt from families is often very difficult to change.

2. **Schools:** Young youths and sometimes adult engage in political tugs without really knowing why they are doing so, because they were not properly educated politically. Schools at different levels provide an all important opportunity for educating our young ones. The curriculum shall be designed in such ways to capture the method and ethics of playing politics in such manner where peace will be restored.

Political education in our schools should be regarded as a deliberate attempt to educate our children and adult on the dynamics and important of good politics for peace of our nation. The students should be taught on the ethics of politics and the rules of engagement. They should equally be made to understand that there is punishment for defaulters. They shall be taught on the importance of participating in the political life of the country.

3. **Religion:** Religion can be used as a veritable tool for propagating political education in Nigeria. Hardly do you see anybody who does not belong to a particular religious sect, be it Christianity, Moslem or ATR (African Traditional Religion). Through this means, people can be educated on how politics should be played for the peace of the nation. Most of world religious Holy Book lay emphasis on being your brother's keeper which is also the original intent of politics (welfare to the people). Through religion, they shall be taught on the importance of shunning violence and embracing peace for the good of the country.

4. **Media:** Media is an important means of teaching political education to people, whether print or electronics. It is not everybody that is in school enrollment, but

whether you are in school or not, you always have opportunity of reading newspaper, listening to radio or watching television no matter how remote your area appears. Any political education that passes through this means will get to the people. Through the media, people will be re-oriented on the importance of political ethics, principles and the rules governing its play, the importance of voting and participating fully in government. The media shall also enlighten the masses on the danger of wrong politicking as it affects our unity and national peace.

5. **Town Hall Meeting:** Town hall meeting will go a long way in helping to disseminate information on Political Education. Through our community leaders during their town hall meeting can use the medium to educate their people politically especially on those things that does not profit the nation and leads them to crisis. The political tugs are from communities, if they are well informed through their community town hall meeting on the danger of what they are doing, they may have change of attitude. Then, the town hall meeting must have helped to curtail the political hooliganism.
6. **Traditional Rulers:** The traditional rules should act as a hub in political education as the custodian of culture and values. They are close to people and also political players come from the community. They are in position to tell their people the best way to play politics for peace of everyone.
7. **IDP Camps (Internally Displaced Persons):** Political Education should be taught in IDPs, because most of the displaced persons were as a result of political vices. In most cases, some people who were part of the political problem are also found in the IDPs when their wrong political activities left their community in ruins. Political education through this means will make them not to go back to political violence that brought them to the IDP camps.

Conclusion

The primary function of government enable by politics is creating and maintaining a just order in society which guarantees peace. Asobie (2007) maintain that politics shape all, structure all, develops and under-develops all other aspects of national life. It even contours the basic framework for the realization of human destiny. For the above reason, politics should be of service to the people and the nation and not for personal gains/selfish wealth accumulation. It is only when the politicians start seeing politics as service rather than what is there for them that there will be reduction on those wrong attribute associated with it that peace shall fully return on our nation, Nigeria.

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Recommendation

The government must have that political will in which all powers were given to her to deal decisively with anybody no matter how highly placed according to law of the land.

All people shall be provided with political level playing ground to ensure equity and enable peace.

All principles/rules governing Nigeria politics should strictly be adhere to. Obedience to the law shall be sacrosanct. Political appointment that is lopsided or has ethnic undertone should be avoided for peace to reign.

Government shall go back to derivation formula that was in use in our first republic to reduce militancy in various regions. (The recent law were everything is appropriated by the centre has negative political undertone).

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