

Need for Political Education and the Role of Civic Education in Reducing Electoral Malpractice in Nigeria

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Abstract: The idea of civic education and its impact on Nigeria's political growth, particularly in a democratic context, were examined in this study. It investigated how much civic education could be used to reduce election fraud in underdeveloped nations. The report suggested creating a comprehensive civic education curriculum. Political instability, primarily caused by crises in Nigeria's electoral process, and specifically by electoral malpractices, has plagued the country for far too long. Nigeria's political and electoral processes have been marked at various levels of political participation by incidents of political thuggery, chaos, militarization, violence, vote manipulation, endless lawsuits, and a crisis of legitimacy over the course of the country's decades-long existence as a sovereign state. This paper's content shows how civil education can be used to introduce citizens to the fundamental institutions, norms, and values of a democratic political system at an early age in order to reduce or eliminating election fraud from the democratic system in Nigeria. The following suggestions were offered in this regard: that educational stakeholders should create a comprehensive civic education curriculum that incorporates the issues mentioned above; that all levels of government should launch vigorous, regular campaigns on policies and initiatives that will increase the majority of citizens' involvement in the democratic process by promoting civic education; that in order to better actualize true democracy and advance national development, civil societies and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should support government efforts to encourage citizens to acquire civic awareness; Prior to the nation's elections, the National Orientation Agency ought to start implementing civic education initiatives; The government ought to set up a capable Criminal prosecution of electoral criminals, the electoral crimes tribunal, and, finally, the need for stakeholders to reorient our society's ideals are all ongoing tasks.

Keywords: Nigerian political system, election, electoral malpractice, civic education, sustainable development, apathy.



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I. Overview

Conducting acceptable, credible, free, and fair elections is one of the key and noticeable characteristics of every significant democracy that is recognized globally. The reason for this is that free and fair elections determine both the electoral system that calls for the maintenance of democracy and tangible and stable political progress. Elections are not only the only valid method, but they are also one of the key components of the electoral process that must be carried out in a free and fair environment method electing officials in every democracy. However, the outcomes of elections must represent the will of the electorate. Since gaining its independence, Nigeria's experience in this area has defied the aforementioned prediction. Win at all costs, of course, becomes the standard. The polity is subjected to a wide range of unlawful and violent acts intended to subdue political opponents. Sulaiman (2023).

One essential component of democratic governance is election. Here, democracy is defined as a social system of nation-state administration in which citizens have the legal authority to select the people who will govern the state for a specific amount of time and where political parties and independent candidates vie for elective positions in a free and fair election environment. Wikipedia (2019) states that these elections are expected to be free, fair, and competitive in both substance and procedure; and where the rule of law governs the elected representatives' ability to exercise decision-making authority, which is typically restrained by a constitution that prioritizes the protection of individual liberties and rights and imposes restrictions on the leaders and the degree to which the majority's will can be used against the rights of minorities. There is typically a competition between those who hope to gain power and those who are most likely to lose it, regardless of the legal structure that governs the democratic process. Because some politicians prefer to use shortcuts, the contest typically involves violence. A brief overview of the democratic history of Nigeria exposes political violence during elections, which might occasionally jeopardize the nation's stability. This trend has made it impossible for Nigeria to be referred to as a democratic state, despite operators' strong claims to the title, and has also made democratic consolidation rather challenging.

It must be acknowledged that violence has always been a significant aspect of political activity worldwide. The only thing that differs throughout political systems is the degree, patterns, and scope of violence associated to politics. In actuality, comparative political scientists concur that violence has always existed in human cultures worldwide, and that it is particularly prevalent in the modern world. Abalaka (2023). After years of a horrific military dictatorship, Nigerians want a transparent electoral system that facilitates a smooth political transition, even though there are a number of theories that could account for the phenomenon of electoral violence in the country's political landscape. In actuality, democratic governance—as defined by successfully held elections that satisfy international norms established by democracy-inclined citizens and multilateral organizations has been highly valued worldwide (Ajiteru, 2023).

Nigeria's democratic transition has been plagued by election violence, which necessitated the establishment of a mechanism to stop the threat. How can Nigeria address all the issues with the electoral process, including electoral violence? In what way can Does Nigeria minimize the fissiparous elements that oppose it and strengthen democratic rule? Political education is one of the main ways to overcome this ailment. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to respond to these and other inquiries. Abalaka (2023).

The primary focus of this discussion is one of the responses to this significant query. Therefore, the purpose of this research is to investigate civic education as a means of accelerating the acquisition of the crucial process of political socialization. Therefore, civic education's primary focus is on the following:

- To familiarize citizens with the fundamental laws, structural characteristics, values, and customs of democratic political systems
- To communicate a certain set of principles, such respect for the law, political tolerance, and faith in the democratic process of the law and compromise; and to promote ethical and knowledgeable political engagement

This paper's concentration is on all of these. In order to establish a sustainable democratic system in Nigeria, the study examines civic education, approaches to civic education, aspects of election malpractices from the Nigerian perspective, the significance of civic education for sustainable democracy, and some recommendations.

2. Clarifications of concepts Election

Elections are a crucial component of a democratic process because they allow the people to freely and fairly choose their representatives at all levels of government to make decisions that affect their socioeconomic and political future on a regular basis. If they are unable to meet these decisions, they can still recall them or vote them out in the following election. For this reason, Abalaka (2018) appropriately described Accordingly, elections are a key tool for selecting political leaders in democracies, the route to democratic participation, and a means of granting consent to the government (Dye, 2021). They also give the governed the opportunity to select and evaluate those in office who are supposed to represent them (Sulaiman, 2023).

3. Violence in politics

All forms of violence connected to the political process are collectively referred to as political violence. It might originate domestically or abroad and take many different forms. According to a summary of the various definitions found in the literature, political violence is defined as when an individual or group of individuals inside a political system uses or threatens to use physical force or significantly destructive force. against another person or group of people and/or property, with the intention of causing harm or death to people and/or property damage, and whose goal, victim selection, implementation, and surrounding circumstances have political significance, that is, to change other people's behavior within the current power structure; or directed to a change in politics, systems, and the territory of government, which in turn is directed to changes in people's lives within societies (Sulaiman, 2023).

4. Violence during elections

The term "electoral violence" has no universally accepted definition. This is due to the controversial theory that Frantz Fanon formulated during the anti-colonial era: "violence begets violence." The foundation of the Fanonian argument is the idea that "violence incites violence." Therefore, people who respond violently to political opponents' initial acts do not necessarily agree that they are engaging in violence. All they say is that they are fighting against violence. An operational definition can be obtained from the variety of definitions that are accessible. Abalaka (2018). From an operational standpoint, electoral violence encompasses all types of violence (physical, psychological, administrative, legal, and structural) committed during various phases of the electoral process by participants, their supporters, and sympathizers, including personnel from security and election management bodies (Balogun, 2018). These types of violence can occur within or between parties, and they occur before to, during, and after elections.

5. Anatomy of Nigeria's electoral violence causes

Let's just say that depending on the crippling impact of electoral violence on the country's political scene, a plethora of inquiries and conjectures concerning the reasons behind electoral violence had been put up. A quick review of the literature points to several possible explanations. The variety of reasons of electoral violence that have been noted in the literature holds the key to the solution. According to some academics, the causes include the political economy of oil, alienation, marginalization, and exclusion; abuse of political power; electoral abuses and election fraud; and greed (Sulaiman, 2018). However, other academics suggest that the following factors contribute to the phenomenon: poverty and unemployment (Maslow, 2014); ineffectual security forces and a culture of impunity; a lackluster legal system; corruption and poor governance (Galtung, 2019); and the spread of weapons and ammunition. Similarly, other The partisanship of traditional rulers who were supposed to be the guardians of our cultural heritage, the lack of security, the abuse of office by elected officials, zero-sum politics or the winner-take-it-all mentality, the lucrative nature of political office, the poor handling of election petitions, loss of faith in the judiciary, and the partisan disposition of the police and other security agencies assigned to monitor the election and secure lives and property are all cited by pundits as the causes. Politicians' conflicts of interest, greed, and self-interest combined with intellectual bankruptcy, as well as dishonest INEC employees and ad hoc officials who collude with them Abalaka (2023).

The conversation in sociology argues that the following ideas underlie violent disputes and violent political behavior that manifest in election violence: systemic hypotheses, frustration-aggression, growing expectations, relative deprivation, and group conflict theories (Okanya, 2021). Although all of them can be used to describe Nigerian electoral violence, the systemic explanation better explains the problem as a whole. It highlights the factors that frequently support the upkeep of a political order or disorder, including instances of political alienation, the disintegration of consensus norms, the unity and legitimacy of a ruling group, and the ensuing impact on the political process and social structure. Abalaka (2023).

Election season, the post-election phase, and pre-election campaigning are typically violent, with armed conflicts between supporters of opposing political factions, bombings, and political killings plagued by campaigning in many locations. Sulaiman (2023). Even while this widespread violence is a part of a larger pattern of abuse and violence that is part of Nigeria's mostly unaccountable political system, the fact that offenders are frequently never held accountable distorts our democratic process. Nigeria's political system has, in violation of the law, aggressively rewarded corruption and violence with power over governorships, parliamentary seats, and other positions of public trust. There are many examples of this that are too close for comfort. Abalaka (2023).

6. A historical analysis of Nigerian electoral violence

There are numerous examples of election violence throughout the country's political history. We are unable to talk about like this, in a single document. Some of them would be covered here in order to achieve this. Violence has been a part of election history ever since Nigeria gained its independence on October 1, 1960, with great fanfare. In its 2017 report on post-independence events, Human Rights Watch characterizes the country's post-independence history as being dominated by the atrocities committed by a string of abusive, corrupt, and unaccountable rulers. This statement is appropriate given six of the seven general elections held since Nigeria gained its independence in 1960 have been violent, including 1964/1965, 1979, 1983, 1999, 2003, and 2007 (Malu, 2019). This suggests that Nigerians have developed a culture of electoral violence. For instance, after gaining independence, the nation implemented a parliamentary form of governance similar to The British kind. Widespread allegations of fraud, violence, and intimidation marked the first post-independence elections held by that government, which was led by Prime Minister Tafawa Balewa and President Nnamdi Azikiwe, in 1964 and 1965 (Osaghae, 2018). More than

200 people were killed in intercommunal rioting and widespread violence following the regional elections, which in some places turned into a violent exercise in competitive rigging (Anifowose, 1982; HRW, 2017). Later, in January 1966, the military launched an attack, and the nascent Nigerian democracy was overthrown by its own practitioners, Ajiteru (2023).

The military ruled from 1966 to 1979, when it was replaced by a new civilian administration led by National Party of Nigeria (NPN) member Alhaji Shehu Shagari. In coordination with the Federal Election Commission (FEDECO), the election management body, and security forces, the Shagari-led government conducted a civilian-to-civilian transition election. However, similar to its First Republic counterparts, it repeated history and rigged the 1983 general elections through extremely violent means. That once more prepared the ground for the December 31, 1983, second wave of military interference in the country's politics. The military then held in power until May 29, 1999, despite multiple attempts at democratization. Let's just say that Nigeria only had two elected governments between 1960, when it gained independence, and 1999, when civilian authority was reinstated. Both of these governments were ousted in military coups before they could serve out a second term. Overall, Nigeria was governed by the military for around 30. Throughout its initial 40 years of independence, discounting the brief Interim National Government (ING) that lasted for three months (HRW, 2021).

According to HRW's interviews with voters and observers on the April 2007 elections, these incidents prepared the ground for the 2007 elections, which both domestic and foreign observers characterized as the worst in Nigeria's history and among the worst held recently worldwide. In its post-election statement, for example, the US-based National Democratic Institute (NDI) claimed that the election process "failed the Nigerian people" (NDI, 2019). According to Human Rights Watch's (2020) assessment on the election, Nigeria's unsuccessful April 2007 elections exposed trends of violence, corruption, and open criminality that have come to light to describe Nigeria's political system and the degree to which institutions and individuals at all governmental levels condone, support, and engage in these abuses (HRW, 2019). Nigerians are terrified of upcoming elections, particularly the 2011 elections, which are just around the corner, because the 2007 general elections have passed and some issues are still pending in the courts (Ajiteru, 2016).

7. Political education: a tactic to reduce violence during Nigerian elections

Nigeria might employ a wide range of strategies to improve democratic governance and reduce electoral violence. These include changes to the constitution, electoral reform, agenda-setting by civil society organizations, a shift in the elite's character, political education, and more. The most crucial one, which serves as the center of this essay, is: political instruction. Everything else depends on how well it works.

The importance and usefulness of political education cannot be overstated, according to a number of fora. This is because, in a sense, political education serves as the conduit via which societal behavioral patterns and political cultural ideals are internalized and absorbed. In any event, religious texts highlight the importance of knowledge acquisition as a tool for directing and fortifying against the cunning of the enemy in all societies, including Nigeria, because Nigerians are generally quite religious. Nigerians must thus possess a more thorough understanding of the sources, manifestations, dimensions, effects, and strategies for reducing the situation.

Given that education has been recognized as the starting point for the various educational agents in Nigeria, including the family, peer groups, primary, secondary, and tertiary schools, religious institutions, civil society organizations, and the fourth estate of the realm (the mass media), political education is a daunting undertaking in the context of a nation-state's development agenda.

The Independent National Electoral Commission, or INEC, is the country's election administration authority, and its operations, as well as the supporting legal framework, must be understood and

appreciated by the populace. This framework describes how the 2010 Electoral Law (Act), the 1999 Constitution, and other relevant laws and regulations would be amended to improve the sufficiency, relevance, and integrity of INEC's institutional reform. This comprehension has to include citizenship education, which includes a solid grasp of the laws governing elections and a highly helpful model with three stages of operation:

- (a.) creating regulations;
- (b.) implementation of the regulation, and
- (c.) rule adjudication.

According to this legal foundation, electoral offenders, regardless of their position, must receive the punishment specified. The establishment of an Election Malpractice Tribunal, as suggested by the Electoral Reform Committee of Justice Muhammadu Lawal Uwais, is both legally and constitutionally required Sulaiman (2023). The Tribunal would facilitate the prompt resolution of cases. This development will aid in eradicating the culture of impunity so that those who commit electoral offenses can face legal action and accountability if the required political will is shown. Since a culture and environment of impunity would undermine the best laws or regulations, there must be proof that violators are being prosecuted (Sulaiman, 2018). It is founded on According to the National Assembly Ajiteru (2023), experts have suggested that the government should make sure that the Justice Mohammed Uwais Electoral Reform Recommendations are completely implemented through legislation.

Leaders who emerge from violent elections are unlikely to be chosen by the people and are unlikely to take into account their opinions on matters that impact their everyday lives, both politically and in terms of development. Such leaders may spend their entire term in office attempting to gain legitimacy through results, even though they lack legitimacy by procedure. This could result in the need for people-oriented policies because disgruntled citizens who have been the victims of mandate theft may withdraw into their own world and from the state arena. Regarding this, a state that has A nation's development strategy and aspirations for sustained national growth should inform its populace of the risks associated with permitting a deeply ingrained culture of political and electoral violence to persist as a characteristic of the political system. If this is not accomplished, Nigeria's electoral violence issue will continue to be a political hot potato for some time.

8. A. Election

Elections are without a doubt the cornerstone of any democratic political system, no matter how strong or weak. Simply put, it is the most important and obvious way for all residents to elect or remove their leaders in a peaceful manner. Elections in 2020, according to Powel, are the main tool that forces or motivates decision-makers to take voters' concerns seriously.

Elections are thought of as the process of choosing A nation's development strategy and aspirations for sustained national growth should inform its populace of the risks associated with permitting a deeply ingrained culture of political and electoral violence to persist as a characteristic of the political system. If this is not accomplished, the issue of electing someone or anything by a vote; the process of making a conscious decision Abalaka (2023). According to Sulaiman (2018), those elections serve as a springboard for achieving positions of leadership in democratic administration. According to Nnoli (2023), an election is the process by which a group of people decides to hold one or more positions of power out of many. In any democracy, elections are the sole valid means of selecting representatives, hence winning at any costs becomes the standard. Every kind of violent art to the polity is exposed to outwit political rivals. As a key component of the electoral process, elections must be held in a free and fair

environment, and the outcomes must unequivocally reflect the political interests of the electorate. Nigeria's experiences in this area since gaining independence have deviated from this prediction.

Election malpractices include human issues including vote buying, bribery, impersonation, and undue influence of others, as well as insufficient election materials, early polling station closures, and thuggery. Ajiteru (2016). All of these factors defined Nigeria's political and electoral processes during the time it was an independent state and unmistakably defined electoral misconduct.

8.B. Nigerian electoral malpractice

In any impartial political system worldwide, elections is acknowledged as the only reliable indicator to ascertain the power equation through the voting boxes. However, the issue of electing leaders at various levels of government through free and fair elections is one that Nigeria and Nigerians must deal with today. According to Abalaka (2023), there must always be some degree of malpractice or fraud in any election that is contested, whether it is in a developed democracy, a third-world country, etc., with one, two, or more parties. Nonetheless, the extent and diversity of these malpractices vary depending on the democratic context.

The election held on June 12, 1993, was a pledge to banish the political, religious, and ethnic intolerance that had long plagued Nigerian politics. The deemed most liberated The Social Democratic Party's (SDP) candidate, M.K.O. Abiola, was proclaimed the winner of Nigeria's most equitable election, which was deemed inconclusive. With three political parties—the Alliance for Democracy (AD), the All-People's Party (APP), and the People Democratic Party (PDP) the 1999 general elections marked a more significant shift from military rule to civilian governance. The PDP's victory in 21 states nationwide showed that it had a wider national reach.

However, the international community characterized the general elections in 2003 and 2007 as having the highest record of electoral malpractices, which sparked new concerns and launched a new chapter in Nigeria's electoral malpractice history (Sulaiman, 2018). There was increasing concern about winning the 2003 elections. financial incentive, which is referred to as "Ghana must-go" politics nationwide (Aroge, 2019).

Numerous irregularities also marred the 2007 elections. While new elections were called in other states, several of the election results were contested in court and ultimately overturned. Both the 2011 and 2015 elections were marked by the same type of electoral malfeasance, making them identical to the 2007 elections. The elections brought Buhari, Goodluck Jonathan, and the late Yar'Adua into power, respectively.

The most recent elections, which took place in February and May of 2019, were likewise characterized by widespread threats and intimidation of political opponents at polling places, the unrestricted use of money to sway voters' choices of candidates, and ballot interception. boxes and election results on their way to the polling places, etc. One way to characterize the current Nigerian elections is as a battle between those who are already part of the circle and those who want to enter it by using political parties as a tool. During this conflict, both sides used a variety of tactics, including violence, ballot snatching, and Godfatherism, among others, which led to tension and plenty of opportunity for electoral fraud. The wheel of good governance has been slowed down by electoral malpractices. It lies at the heart of many sociopolitical issues that many states, including Nigeria, are confronting, and if left unchecked, will undermine the foundation of Nigeria's already precarious democracy.

8.C. The Counteragent: Civic Education

- Because of its democratic values and political structure, any democratic environment Therefore, the populace needs to be capable and eager to engage in both local and national

politics. They must also have the values, abilities, and knowledge seen to be essential to a stable and successful democracy.

So how can citizens learn these values, skills, and knowledge?

Civic education is the solution. It is a method to accelerate the acquisition of the crucial political socialization process (Aroge, 2017). Citizens can learn about their rights and responsibilities, including how to participate in the installation of government, through civic education. Therefore, civic education's primary focus is on the following.

- To familiarize citizens with the fundamental laws, structural characteristics, tenets, and customs of a democratic political system.
- To spread a certain set of principles, like political to promote responsible and knowledgeable political engagement, tolerance, respect for the rule of law, faith in the democratic process, and compromise.

Civic education is still a crucial tool for educating the populace about their rights as well as the obligations and responsibilities of the governed and their leaders. It is anticipated that the inclusion of civic education as a subject in Nigerian primary and secondary education will strengthen the country's democratic culture and promote the general public's active engagement in the political process. Political consciousness is produced through civic education. Through trade or professional sodalities, or public interest or reform groups, it aims to politically mobilize people (Finkel, 2022; Crittenden and Levine, 2018). According to Peterson (2017), civic education is first and foremost a formative endeavor. teaches the citizens the knowledge, abilities, or attitudes needed for citizenship.

Citizens who possess the necessary information, abilities, and attitudes are the ones who maintain and/or preserve democracies. Since civic education addresses current issues in governance and liberal democratic values, it should be a top priority for any democratic society that involves all of its residents. Ajiteru (2023).

8. D. Civic Education's Purpose and Elements

Current concerns about governance and the advancement of liberal democracy are included in the scope of civic education. It addresses the problems that afflict society and cause people to suffer and be uncomfortable. Furthermore, it addresses topics including poverty, abduction, environmental difficulties (such as erosion, desertification, and flooding), drug misuse, cultism, people trafficking, drug trafficking, natural catastrophes, and other anti-democratic procedures. Democracy and the advancement of just and civil governance are major concerns of civic education. Therefore, civic education is concerned with citizens' political and popular participation in state issues. With an emphasis on elections and the selection of leaders, civic education's main goal is to instill in students the civic knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for leadership and good governance. It also advocates for free, fair, and impartial elections as a means of promoting social stability and improving governance. As a result, civic education generally adheres to the principles of good governance and its byproducts, which include accountability, due process, and openness. But Alexander (2019) noted that the values required for the development of the country are not adequately taught to kids. Although civic education is a crucial instrument for nation-building, national consciousness, national integration, and national unity, it is generally acknowledged that the scope of civic education in Nigeria is still a script that has not yet been implemented due to the decline in political will, leadership, and selfless commitment.

8. E. Civic Education's Significance

The importance of civic education cannot be overstated in a young democracy like Nigeria, where the government cannot implement policies aimed at attaining sustainable development without a sufficient civic education program in place to instruct the populace. Because civic education helps people become disciplined and responsible citizens of their communities. In the end, this encourages sound governance and national progress. Therefore, the following are some reasons civic education is important:

1. Political Knowledge: People who receive civic education will learn about politics and governance, become responsible and receptive members of society, and understand why they should. Therefore, civic education is essential to achieving national development in all of its manifestations.

2. Political involvement: The antithesis of political involvement is political indifference. Voting, according to some, is a waste of time and money because leaders are always chosen through manipulation and undue influence.

3. Democracy and collective engagement shouldn't be viewed as a nasty game that is only played by a select few self-serving people. Therefore, civic education will increase public participation in governance and assist eradicate or lessen all forms of political indifference through suitable orientation.

4. Political Efficacy: The Wordweb dictionary (2019) defines efficacy as the ability or strength to achieve a desired outcome. Politics and political involvement would be effective in people's lives if civic education were well-structured.

5. Democratic Values: There is no denying that a democratic system of governance is unique, with its own set of rules and principles. Among other things, civic education, a component of adult education, could instill principles such as the rule of law, fundamental human rights, and fair opportunity, which are essential to the establishment and maintenance of democracy.

9. The Sources of Civic Education

An essential part of adult education is civic education, which gives citizens the information, abilities, and mindset they need to engage in public life a democracy, to be aware of their rights and fulfill their obligations by responding to governmental actions. The broader task of educating citizens to assume responsibility for their duties within a democratic state and to exercise their rights as free human beings is referred to as civic education. The goal of civic education is to empower individuals and provide them with the skills necessary to fully engage in and establish a democratic society (Branson, 2018).

Some academics contend that education helps people better comprehend the political system, their personal interests, and ways they may support the government (Niemi and Junn 1998), as well as the rights and responsibilities of citizens (Sulaiman 2023). Another aspect of civic education is "exposing students to central and political customs of the country" and imparting "moral feelings" to them Abalaka (2023). According to Ruita (2017), civic education should not be limited to the classroom but should instead be directed towards all individuals who are considered adults in the community. This is because understanding one's rights is considered a more personal form of civic knowledge and is a prerequisite for participation.

The majority of people in Nigeria and other rural developing nations have not had the formal education necessary for exposure, nor have they been exposed to organized after-school programs. Civic education, according to Finkel (2015), encompasses school-based civics and programs that teach women's political rights and society, as well as voter education and neighborhood problem-solving initiatives through conversations in groups that connect people with local government

representatives in order to encourage group efforts to improve neighborhoods. In contrast to the more abstract knowledge taught in schools, "Mode 2" knowledge application-oriented civic knowledge—is shared and learned in these environments. "Mode 2" investigates that:

Knowledge, according to Field (2022), 4, is "a form of knowledge that is created by and through groups rather than by isolated individuals; its origin lies in collective attempts to solve problems, and its meaning is only realized through application in an organizational setting." This is an excellent explanation of how civic education and learning might be implemented most frequently in developing nations. The printed and electronic media are additional resources for civic education which encourage the spread of information, Civic education can also come from government, donor programs, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

According to Lewis (2018), civic education is the development of the values, information, abilities, and experience required for both the maintenance of democracy and political engagement in a democratic society. Neither the mental habits nor the "habits of the heart," which are the dispositions that shape democratic cultures, are inherited. As noted by Alexis de Sulaiman (2023):

Every new generation is made up of individuals who need to master the skills, acquire the information, and cultivate the personal and public character characteristics that form the foundation of a constitutional democracy. Words, studies, and the power of example must all be used to cultivate and nourish those tendencies. Instead of being a "machine that would go of itself," democracy needs to be deliberately perpetuated, year after generation.

Therefore, civic education is or ought to be a top priority in any democracy, including every member of the populace. The creation of knowledgeable, capable, and accountable citizens is the most crucial duty. Citizens who possess the necessary information, abilities, and attitudes are the ones who maintain and/or preserve democracies. Therefore, in order to promote understanding of democratic ideals and increase the necessary citizen participation, educators, policymakers, and members of civil society must argue for and request support for civic education from all facets of society and from the broadest range of government institutions (Branson, 1998). This would greatly aid in resolving the issue of indifference Ajiteru (2023).

9. Methods for Teaching Civics

There are seven different approaches to civic education, according to the National Alliance of Civic Education (NACE, 2017). They are:

- i. The history-curricular approach emphasizes the value of understanding and honoring the social and political history of one's country, including foundational texts like the Declaration of Independence, the transition of power, the Constitutions, and the ideals of freedom upon which a society has been built.
- ii. The Government-Curricular Approach: Advocates of this approach suggest that all elementary school students enroll in a minimum of one semester of civics instruction, which aims to teach them about public policy, current affairs, campaigns, elections, the legislative process, and the structure of government. Students will get a better understanding of government and politics and so eliminate the barrier that could cause young people to become disengaged from culture, norms, and the necessary involvement that is typically caused by ignorance of these topics.
- iii. The Pedagogical Approach of Critical-Thinking: This emphasizes the capacity and willingness to engage in critical thinking, collaborate with others, question authority when needed, and contribute to the implementation of just governance practices in order to improve society. Giving students meaningful involvement in curriculum development is essential to fostering a more participative learning environment where facilitators and students view one another as partners in progress. Civil education offers this chance.

iv. The Community Service Approach: According to this perspective, "responsible citizens" are those who voluntarily and directly assist others in need. Members of this group feel that re-engaging young In order to deter segregation, it is the responsibility of residents to mandate or encourage extracurricular community work on the weekends and in the nights.

v. The service-learning model is comparable to community service in many ways, but it views community service as an extension of the curriculum and a part of regular coursework instead of as an extracurricular activity. Students participate in purposefully planned community service-learning projects that are integrated into the grading system and directly relate to and enhance classroom instruction.

vi. Involving kids in service-oriented programs that are planned and created by adults is insufficient, according to the Public Achievement Approach. Instead, it is necessary to teach kids how to collaborate in small groups in order to recognize genuine public concerns that directly interest and impact them, and then learn how to engage within the political and social structures that are currently in place to address pertinent issues.

vii. With education and training focused on the actual voting process and election-related concerns, the Voter Training and Mentoring Approach highlights the need of making voting the center of efforts in a democratic society. According to this method, the main barriers to voting are ignorance of the procedure, a lack of social and familial guidance, and a lack of knowledge on election-related topics, particularly civic education.

10. Indications of electoral fraud

Some aspects of electoral misconduct have been discovered by academics like White (2016) and Kenya (2017), particularly in underdeveloped nations. While Kenya (2017) highlighted the actions electoral bodies can take to cause electoral malpractice, such as providing insufficient election materials, closing polling stations ahead of schedule, and officials conspiring with politicians to permit irregularities, White (1996) demonstrated human factors like undue influence or people, impersonation, and bribery.

11 Civic Education's Significance for a Sustainable Democracy

The international community has determined that a democratic style of government is the most effective way to attain sustainable development. According to UNESCO (2017), sustainable development is a conscious effort to address society's current demands while guaranteeing that future generations can do the same given the environmental resources at their disposal. The government's policies, objectives, and programs cannot continue to attaining sustainable development in the absence of sufficient civic education initiatives to direct the public. It is impossible to overstate the value and applicability of civic education in a democracy like Nigeria. These consist of:

i. Political Knowledge: People who receive civic education will learn about politics and governance, become responsible and receptive members of society, and understand why they should. Therefore, civic education is essential to achieving national development in all of its manifestations.

ii. Political involvement: The antithesis of political involvement is political indifference. Voting, according to some, is a waste of time and money because leaders are always chosen through manipulation and undue influence. Therefore, democratic engagement and collective action shouldn't be viewed as a filthy game and left in the hand of a few self-centered people. Therefore, through the right orientation, civic education will improve citizenry engagement in governance and assist eradicate or lessen all forms of political apathy.

iii. Political Efficacy: The ability to achieve a desired outcome is what the Wordweb dictionary (2007) defines as efficacy. Politics and political involvement would be effective in people's lives if civic education were well-structured.

Iv Democratic Values: There is no denying that a democratic system of governance is unique, with its own set of standards and ideals. Among other things, civic education, a component of adult education, could instill principles such as the rule of law, fundamental human rights, and fair opportunity, which are essential to the establishment and maintenance of democracy.

12. Recommendations

In light of the stance taken in this paper, the following suggestions are put forth: Government at all levels should launch rigorous periodic campaigns on policies and activities that will increase the majority of citizens' participation in the democratic process by promoting civic education; Civil societies and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) should supplement government efforts to promote civic knowledge acquisition among the populace for better actualization of genuine democracy and overall national development; the National Orientation Agency should launch civic education programs prior to national elections; and the government should set up a capable electoral offenses tribunal, the duty of prosecuting electoral offenders in criminal court, and, finally, the continued need for stakeholders to refocus our society's ideals.

There is a wealth of empirical data showing how electoral violence impacts the legitimacy of the democratic system, the electoral process, and the rule of law. Given that security services and INEC officials are involved in the macabre dance of violence that accompanies the country's electoral history, this unsightly tendency calls into question the Nigerian government's ability to prevent electoral violence and fraud. In actuality, the country's efforts to achieve a peaceful democratic transition are seriously threatened by the type, scope, and intensity of election-related violence and tampering. As the achievement of solidified democracy, the long-term objective (Malu, 2019). It is now crucial for Nigerians to understand the threat to bolstering and deepening the country's democracy, which has a direct impact on national development, since the issue has destroyed and penetrated every aspect of our political system.

All types of electoral and political violence should be avoided by politicians, their followers, and the electorate in order for the country to do this, build democratic institutions, and develop democracy. Following this ongoing political education process and approach, those found guilty of electoral violence and bitterness politics should be penalized in accordance with the law as it stands. The only way to win the battle is to employ this plan.

Therefore, the following suggestions are offered in light of this paper's position:

- i. The educational stakeholders should create a comprehensive civic education curriculum to address the issues mentioned above.
- ii. That all levels of government should launch vigorous, regular campaigns on policies and initiatives that will increase the majority of citizens' involvement in the democratic process by promoting civic education.
- iii. That in order to better actualize true democracy and advance national development overall, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) should support government initiatives to encourage citizens to acquire civic awareness.

Prior to the nation's elections, the National Orientation Agency ought to start implementing civic education initiatives. -It is still necessary for all parties involved to engage in conscientization for awareness. Hey Ajiteru, (2023).

13. Final Comment

Nigerians undoubtedly prefer democracy to all forms of dictatorship, but a number of sociopolitical variables, including electoral malpractice, have skewed their understanding of democracy and even how it functions. Therefore, it is necessary to look for remedies at both the political institution and individual citizen levels to address election fraud as a problem in Nigeria's democratic system. Political office holders should be held personally responsible to the people they represent; frequent forums for communication between the public and their representatives at all levels should be established. More political education and awareness are required at the mass level to turn people into democratic citizens who can defend their rights against the government, such as calling for responsibility. Thus, in light of the aforementioned, it is imperative that they adopt civic education and awareness programs that could instill in them the knowledge, abilities, concepts, proper attitude, and values that would enable participatory governance to achieve the intended socio-political and economic advancement. This section has been reiterated as the cornerstone of the country's democratic well-being in the political system and as a means of directing the populace away from abuses of power in the art of administration. Civic education remains an essential program in the nation's national life in order to accomplish this crucial goal.

So far, it has been studied how civic education might result in the illumination of socio-political knowledge and the liberty of individuals in a democratic environment, particularly from the viewpoint Nigeria is an example of a developing democracy. Programs that may instill in them the knowledge, abilities, concepts, proper attitude, and values that would enable participatory governance to bring about the intended socio-political and economic advancement have been identified as essential. This section has been reiterated as the cornerstone of the country's democratic well-being in the political system and as a means of directing the populace away from abuses of power in the art of administration. Civic education remains an essential program in the nation's national life in order to accomplish this crucial goal.

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