

**VOTER RIGHTS AND CREDIBLE ELECTION IN NIGERIA: THE IMPERATIVE OF
RETHINKING THE CONTENT OF CITIZENSHIP EDUCATION**

BASSEY JAMES EJUE, Ph.D
Associate Professor and Dean
SCHOOL OF EDUCATION,
CROSS RIVER STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
AKAMKPA. M.B 1171, CALABAR
NIGERIA

SAMUEL ASUQUO EKANEM, Ph.D
Lecturer
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION
CROSS RIVER UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY CALABAR
NIGERIA

Abstract

Nigeria has had twelve years of continuous democratic governance in this fourth republic which began in 1999, but this has not yet nurtured any acceptable democratic culture. This can be seen in the high level of voters' apathy between 2003 and 2007 general elections, which many agreed were flawed. It is this apathy that provided a leeway for politicians to manipulate the process of voters' registration during the last two general elections in the country. With the recent voters' registration exercise, and the ripples from the just concluded general elections in Nigeria, it is evident that there is no democratic culture that can guarantee credible elections by best international practices. This is largely due to the fact that voters do not know their rights and such rights are not protected. It is as a result of this that politicians easily buy votes from the electorates with cheap commodities. A critical look at the political problems in the country reveals lack of political education and a high level of illiteracy. It is on the basis of this that this paper advocates the enrichment of the content of citizenship education in our schools. The paper proposes that citizenship education should be anchored on a philosophy of essencism and creation of social entrepreneurs

Introduction

The electoral process is one of the bulwarks of democracy with voters as major stakeholders in the process. This is because, if the people lose confidence in the process, democracy as a system of populace participation in government will become a sham. The aim of an electoral process should be free and fair election where the candidate with the highest votes wins. However, the voters that vote during any election must know their rights and roles in making the electoral process credible. It is when the voter rights are protected during the electoral process that credible elections can be conducted, and credible and popular candidates, emerge as winners. Elections are the technical means of ensuring popular participation in government. It is a means of building support and choosing leaders and policies. Indeed, elections are the specific fundamental method of realizing government of, by and for the people. This helps to make government to be both responsible and responsive, to the needs of the people since a bad government can be voted out of power during elections. This remains the only way to establish majority rule and legitimacy of government.

Again, elections are part of a process that brings to light the strength and weakness of a political institution in society as a whole. It also shows the level of political consciousness and participation of the citizenry. It is on the basis of this that voter rights and credible elections become a critical political and social discourse in Nigeria. Voting is the legal, political and social mechanism through which the citizens are able to express their participation in elections, exercise their interests and needs to their leaders. It is the only singular act through which people would ever participate in the political process. Nigerians had the chance for elections and voting since 1922 but it is clearly doubtful if Nigeria has developed any viable and enviable electoral culture. Elections determine the methods and manner through which changes in the socio-political order occur. Where this method fails, individuals and groups may be left to choose their own means including assassination, coup d'états, revolutions, insurgency and guerrilla warfare to press their claim to power. This fact, more than anything else, makes a discourse on the subject of voter rights and credible elections in Nigeria so crucial today. As can be seen in documents, it was the controversial election of 1965 that led to the coup d'états of January 1966.

Also, the flawed electoral process of 1983 was employed as a means of rationalization for the military coup of December 1983. Again, Babangida's flawed elections of 1993 produced the Abacha palace coup of that year and pave the way to his devastating dictatorship. The failed and flawed elections of 2003 and 2007 have raised serious questions about the future of democracy in Nigeria and the country's future as a whole. Today, these issues assume especially ominous character in the light of the dangerous signals emerging from different parts of the country about the attitude of the members of the political class towards the 2011 elections. This paper therefore examines voter rights and credible elections in the light of the content of citizenship education. It submits that there is the need to rethink the content of citizenship education and enrich this with a philosophy of essencism aimed at creating social entrepreneurs.

Voter rights and credible elections

For us to be able to establish the relationship between voters right and credible elections, it is pertinent that we know what voters rights are because without this we may not be able to discover the correlation. Voting is a vital mechanism of election and is the fundamental civic right and this right is granted through the principle of Universal Adult Suffrage. It also falls under "Human Rights" which provides the "Right to Democracy", which is contained in "Article 21" of the United Nations' Charter on human rights:

- Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representations
- Everyone has the right to equal access to public service in his country.
- The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

In Nigeria the constitutional right to vote for every Nigerian citizens who has attained the age of eighteen (18) years are contained in sections and subsections of 77 (2); 117 (2), 132 (5) and 178 (5). This right exists as embodied in the universal declaration of human right and the entire body of international human rights law. These rights are recognized at least in principle by most countries and form the heart of several national constitutions. One of the most critical means through which individuals can influence governmental decision-making is through voting. Voting is a kind of formal expression of preference for a candidate for a particular office or for a proposed resolution of an issue that concerns one state or country. Voting generally takes place in the center of a large scale national or state election, but, local and small-scale community elections can be just as critical to individual participation in government. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was unanimously adopted by the United Nation general assembly in 1948, gives recognition to the integral role that transparent and open elections play in ensuring the fundamental right to participatory government (University of Minnesota Human Rights center, 2003).

The role that periodic, free and credible elections play in ensuring respect for political Rights is enshrined in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights, the Charter of the Organization of American states, the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and several other international human rights documents. The right to vote is widely recognized as a fundamental human right, but this right is not fully enforced for millions of people around the world. Basically and consistently disenfranchised groups include non-citizens, minors (0-17 years old), minorities, criminals, the homeless, disable persons and several others that lack access to vote for different reasons that include poverty, illiteracy, intimidation, violence, unfair electoral processes, which are common in Nigeria.

Article 25 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) is the basic and fundamental international guarantee of voting rights and free elections, but the provision of this article is closely related to other articles especially Article 2, paragraph one which states, "Each state party to the present Covenant undertakes to respect and to ensure to all individuals within the territory and subject to its jurisdiction the right recognized in the covenant, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status", and Article 25 states that:

Every citizen shall have the right and opportunity, without any of the distinctions mentioned in Article 2 and without unreasonable restrictions;

- (a) To take part in the conduct of public affairs, directly or through freely chosen representatives;
- (b) To vote and to be elected at genuine periodic election which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret ballot, guaranteeing the free expression of the will of the elections;
- (c) To have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in the country (ICCPR).

A cursory look at the above shows that these provisions are in tandem with the provision of Article 21 of the United Nations, which Nigeria is a member and a signatory. These provisions as enshrined in Article 2 of the ICCPR specifying that voting and participation in elections is a universal right that should not be denied on the basis of "status". Certain individuals in Nigeria and around the world are systematically and inadvertently disenfranchised because of deeply flawed electoral processes. For instance, in Nigeria, there have not been any credible national elections since 1993 due to several electoral mal-practices, which denied several individuals the right to vote for a candidate of their choice. This denial of voter rights can be seen in Carson's (2011) words in describing the 2007 Nigerian general elections, which he argues were "deeply flawed" and accompanied by vote rigging, the theft of ballot boxes and violence. The process "in no way reflected the ability and capacity of the Nigerian people to organize and run successful elections". Indeed, the 2007 vote represented "a major setback for democracy not only in Nigeria but across Africa".

Voter rights from the above analysis is a key ingredient in ensuring credible elections. This is because where these rights are denied it can lead to severe consequences. These consequences could have effect on other nations of the world, hence Carson, a United States of America diplomat warns that the American government "will not turn a blind eye to a repeat of the political violence and wholesale electoral theft that took place in 2007". This confirms that flawed electoral processes are a systematic way or means through which voters are denied their rights. This also could lead to general apathy by the people during elections, when the individuals realise that their voting rights cannot be protected or guaranteed. It is on the basis of this that Carson warns that "if Nigeria's current elections are not a significant improvement over the 2007 elections and if the current elections do not meet the expectations of a majority of Nigeria's people, Nigeria, and Nigeria's citizens will lose confidence in their leaders, their democratic institutions and the capacity of the country to sustain a democratic trajectory in the future" (*The Nation*, 2011).

It is clear from our analysis that voter rights is necessary for any credible elections, hence, in the United States all mentally competent adults have the right to vote with only one exception, which is that convicted criminals cannot vote. Also, it is on the basis of this that the slogans "one man, one vote" and "votes must count" become an integral part of the sensitization of the electorates. This sensitization process that characterized the 2011 election in Nigeria clearly shows that there is indeed something fundamental missing in the Nigerian voters. The identifiable gap between voter rights and credible election is civic education of the citizens. And this situation is worsened by the high illiteracy rate of the Nigerian voters. It is this lack of sound citizenship education on the Nigerian voters that inspired this paper.

Citizenship education for democracy and credible elections.

Before we proceed to discuss the importance of Citizenship Education in relation to democracy and credible elections, it is imperative that we understand the concept of citizenship education. As contained in Wikipedia (2011), there are two different types of citizenship education. The first is meant to prepare noncitizens to become "legally and socially accepted as citizens. The second type of citizenship education is the one taught in school as an academic subject just like sociology or history. Citizen education in the second sense is the type we are concerned about in this paper. This type of citizenship education is statutorily a subject in England, which was introduced in 2002 in the English national curriculum based on the recommendation of the Crick report of 1998. This is also the case in the United States, and Netherlands but with some modifications and earlier history. However, the aim is to ensure that individuals acquire certain fundamental and basic knowledge to qualify as a citizen. In Nigeria, Citizenship Education is a recent development and is taught in all tertiary institutions with a variety of names as Nigerian People and Culture (NPC) among others. The content of citizenship education is some what very narrow as it does not contain issues of democratic norms and culture. The content of Citizenship Education as taught in Nigerian tertiary institutions is:

- . **Introduction**, which contains;
 - (a) Concept of citizenship education

- (b) The role of citizenship education
- (c) Concept of citizenship
- (d) Types of citizenship
- (e) Nigerian citizenship
- . **Constitution**, that dwells on;
 - (a) Concept of federation
 - (b) Structure of the Nigerian federal system
 - (c) Relationship of various units of the federal system
 - (d) Federal, state, local and federal capital territory
 - (e) Other federations (comparative study)
- . **Government**, which includes;
 - (a) Concept of government
 - (b) System of government
 - (c) Electoral process in Nigeria (electoral commissions and political parties)
 - (d) Forms of government
- . **Arms of government**, such as;
 - (a) The executive
 - (b) The legislative
 - (c) The judiciary
- . **Rights and obligations**, which border on;
 - (a) Concept of rights and obligations
 - (b) Fundamental rights
 - (c) Responsibilities and duties of Nigerian government
 - (d) Responsibilities of constituted authority.
- . **National ethics and discipline in Nigerian life**, that teaches;
 - (a) Concept and aspects of national ethics
 - (b) Concept and importance of discipline in society
 - (c) Public control of discipline
- . **National identity**, that involves;
 - (a) Concept of national identity
 - (b) Symbols of national identity (NCCE Minimum Standards for Colleges of Education, 2009).

From the above, it is very clear that the content of citizenship education is very shallow. It does not contain the necessary issues that will make or educate the people about their rights as voters. Citizenship in a democracy is a source of all authority, the basis of all power. It represents the popular sovereignty of the citizens through which the government derives the consent of the governed. A citizen is a full and equal member of a polity in any democratic nation state (Mouffe, 1995). Citizenship is indeed, the social and legal link between individuals and their democratic political community. The status of citizenship involves important responsibilities and duties that have to be fulfilled, and where these are not fulfilled, democracy becomes disabled. Citizenship is a key to the comprehension of what democracy is and how it operates. So, students involved in education for democracy need to know what citizenship is, how it is acquired or lost in various political systems, what rights, responsibilities, and duties are entailed by it, and institutions of particular nation-states. (Klusmeyer, 1996).

However, students need to go beyond conceptual understanding to learning and acquiring experiences that develop participatory skills and civic dispositions for exercising rights and carrying out the responsibilities and duties of a citizen in a democracy. There are three basic types of participatory skills and these are interacting, monitoring, and influencing. Interacting has to do with skills of communication and cooperation in political and civic life. Monitoring deals with skills needed to track the work of political leaders and constitutions of government. Influencing on the other hand, is about the skills employed to affect outcomes in political and civic life, such as the resolution of public issues. These are the ingredients for social entrepreneurship. Civic dispositions involves such traits of character as civility, sociability, honesty, self-restraint, tolerance, trust, compassion, a sense of duty, a sense of political efficacy, capacity for cooperation, loyalty, courage, respect for the work and dignity of each person, and concern for common good (Center for Civic Education 1994;NAEP Civic Consensus Project, 1996).

From this it is clear that education for democratic citizenship implies training, dissemination, information, practices and activities that aim at equipping learners with knowledge, skills and understanding and moulding their attitudes and behavior, to empower them to exercise and defend their democratic rights and responsibilities in society, to value diversity and to play an active part in democratic life, with a view to protect democracy and the rule of law. Education for democratic citizenship focuses mainly on democratic rights and responsibilities and active participation, in relation to the civic, political, social, economic, legal and cultural spheres of society. It is established from the above that citizenship education is about enabling people to make their own decisions and to take responsibility for their own lives and their communities. The students should be able to learn in the school system with a deeper understanding of the political, legal and economic functions of adult society, and with the social and moral awareness to thrive in it. So, it is not just an effort to fit everyone into the same mould, nor is it all about creating “model” or “good” citizens.

The importance of citizenship education as it relates to credible elections can be seen in the fact that democracies require active, informed and responsible citizens, that is, citizens who are willing and able to take responsibility for themselves and their communities and contribute to the political process. Democracies depend upon citizens who, among other things, are:

- * Aware of their rights and responsibilities as citizens;
- * Informed about the social and political world;
- * Concerned about the welfare of others;
- * Articulate in their opinions and arguments;
- * Capable of having influence on the world;
- * Active in their communities;
- * Responsible in how they act as citizens.

A voter should be equipped with these capacities, and these cannot be developed unaided. These have to be learnt as they can help in the process of credible elections. This is because the voter knows his/ her right as voter and how to use this right in making choice of candidate he/she is to vote for during elections. This is anchored on the premise that elections are a fundamental aspect of democratic rule and part of the essential framework for developing democratic peaceful societies. They lay the foundation towards democracy, human rights, peace and good governance. It is on the basis of this that European Union encourages voter education programme as one of its foreign policy objectives European Union training for voter education includes:

- Providing organizations and adults working in the field of civic education with the opportunity to gain more in depth knowledge about electoral education, to discover ways of involving adults in the electoral process as active citizens;
- Offer quality and accessible lifelong learning opportunities in the field of civic education, encompassing electoral and voter education;
- Preparing the participants for observation and assistance tasks in election observation missions, understanding and promoting the respect for human rights, democracy and peace;
- Contributing to the development of participatory democracy by informing and motivating the participants to get involved as volunteers for election observation;

The importance and the need for an effective citizenship education in Nigeria can be seen in the high rate of illiteracy. Most Nigerian voters lack the requisite knowledge to freely and independently vote for a credible leaders. Most Nigerians vote on the basis of party and ethnicity. Some do not know what constitute electoral offence. For instance, they were cases of under age voters in northern part of Nigeria. And it has been argued that most people do not know why they vote. It is this problem that made Roberts (2011) to declare that:

There is also a general misconception that the Nigerian electorate, or indeed any electorate, for that matter, if given the opportunity for a free and fair election have the requisite education, knowledge, insight and adequate information to elect good leaders. The painful truth is that most voters in most countries are illiterate, uneducated uninformed and often coerced or brainwashed, into voting for candidates “imposed” on them by community leaders and local champions. Democracy may presently be the only workable system of resolving issues of power, governance, and succession in most countries, but it can very often produce unintended consequences and bad leaders (1-2).

This is a graphic expression of the Nigerian situation as can be seen in the elections so far conducted in Nigeria. This scenario really inspires in most Nigerians the desire to see that the 2011 elections is credible and their votes are counted for the candidate of their choice. It is only when this happens, that the Nigerian democratic process would have started. There is the need for the people to decide who governs and not just a few godfathers who have hijacked the process in the past through rigging. There is therefore the need to evolve or design a system of citizenship education that will equip the masses and voters with the requisite knowledge that will enable them to be able to identify candidates that possess the right quality necessary and needed for elective offices. The Nigerian citizenship education should emphasis the candidacy process and the electoral process. Indeed, our schools or school system should be able to produce social entrepreneurs that will be able to come together to invest their energies, knowledge and resources in the sensitization process that will bring about a national political consciousness that will emphasis competence, vision, merit and knowledge when it comes to elections, and not base on primordial issues such as zoning, ethnicity and federal character. These social entrepreneurs can come in the form of civil society groups. To be able to achieve this, our citizenship education should be erected on the solid foundation of a philosophy that will seek to promote a national culture. This philosophy is essencism.

Essencism, democracy, voter rights and credible elections.

As a philosophy, essencism according to Ekanem (2005) is a coinage from the word “essence” which according to the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English* means “that which makes a thing what it is” (392). As a philosophy, essencism seeks to emphasis the essence of man on earth. This philosophy becomes valuable here because most philosophy tend to diminish the importance of the essence of man as the controller of the habitable earth. Most of these philosophies try to disconnect man from his creation and nature. So, essencism is a philosophy that sees man as the centrality of all the happenings on earth. Man according to Ekanem, “is a determinant and designer of the world that he lives and controls. This is because from the biblical era, man was given divine authority to inherit the earth and dominate it”. This can be seen in the book of Genesis as God created man in his own image to have both physical and spiritual dominion over all things. As the last thing that God created before his rest, man, represent the divine authority of God. Man, therefore, is God’s ambassador and as an ambassador, he is divinely immured from being harmed by anything on earth.

Following the creation story, it is clear that man is imbued with divine intelligence and knowledge to fulfill god’s purpose on earth. The implication of this is that man’s education must seek to establish the essence of man on earth, that is, those important qualities that make man who he is by God. These qualities of man can be seen in the dual nature of man as both physical and spiritual being. This duality is what constitutes the essence of man. Man, it must be stated was created for a divine purpose. Man was created for the purpose of dominating his environment as established by God. Man’s stay in the Garden of Eden was to provide him with a period of divine education to enable him cope and dominate his environment outside the garden.

This historically revealed that man’s education has divine origin. This can be seen in man’s divine ability to give names to all things created by God without any duplication. From this, it can be correctly argued that man’s education is divinely inspired. Based on this inspirational dimension, education seeks to satisfy the spiritual essence of man while the applied science technology actualized the physical manifestation of man’s spiritual development. The meaning of this is that any educational philosophy that seeks to promote democratic advancement must first and foremost; lay or establish a spiritual development that can lead to inspirational advancement of knowledge which democratic and electoral applicability can effortlessly lead to credible elections, peace, good governance and sustainable development. This is because essencism will accordingly;

... Seeks to evolve and design a national focus, which is reflective of the real nature of man as a dual being.

... essencism as a philosophy of education seeks to justify the divine importance of education. This is because; the dualistic nature of man is nobly catered for through the spiritual and physical dimensions. This philosophy attempts to place and project man as the central object of education, science and technology... it seeks to create the much- desired harmony in man, which hitherto has been elusive. This was because there was a collapse of the cherished channel that links man and his creator. This will help to re-open the spiritual link for man to tap the abundant potential of this aspect for his full manifestation as an effective and functional member of the society (Ekanem, 2005).

This tallies with the integrative philosophy of Ozumba (2010) when he says;

Having seen that every philosophical theory lacks the capacity for comprehensive application to philosophical problems, it becomes only philosophically needful and expedient to think out a method and a way by which the benefits of different theories can be harnessed and deployed for the explication of philosophic tangles and the expansion of our cognitive landscape with a view to attaining comprehensive or better knowledge on issues that affect man and his world.

The credible elections have been an illusive desire and need of Nigerian for several reasons. However, essencism can adequately cater for this need as it will make all Nigerians to value the sanctity of human life, make honesty a national character and wage an inner and moral war against corruption and election rigging in Nigeria. It will make Nigerians not only to be keen about the material gains of wining election through what ever means. It will make it possible for the physical and spiritual aspects of man to be wholly captured and analyzed by Nigerians.

The objective of integrative humanism as outlined by Ozumba tallies with the aim of essencism and this can be seen in his words when he writes, "the undergirding objective of integrative humanism is the need to place man's physical and spiritual well being at the center of every intellectual Endeavour. Man's intellect seems to be skewed towards the development of material resources rather than human resources. There is the receding interest in catering to the real interests of human being (2010).

It is this misdirected human intellectual interest on material development and acquisition that inspired the philosophy of "essencism". This is because essencism will highlights to Nigeria the ethical value of what is good and bad. Ekanem (2005) puts it thus:

This knowledge which essencism will provide will lay bare to all Nigerian citizens and makes it possible as a socio-cultural practice that honesty pays. It will also help to wipe off the culture and practice of looting the nation's treasury through public office. The attainment of these socio cultural reforms through essencism is because the dual aspect of every citizen will be developed through this educational philosophy.... (220).

The spiritual development of man through essencism will reestablish a direct link with God. And when God is involved in every affairs of man, we can be sure that harmony will be established and development is bound to occur with much ease. With essencism fully rooted in Nigeria, such cases of political assassinations, political thuggery, kidnapping, ritual killing for the purpose of wining elections, black mailing of opponents, rigging and political violence will be removed from our democratic process. This is because philosophy of essencism seeks to develop a complete human personality. Man is totally developed as a physical and as a spiritual being through essencism. It is when the human personality is completely developed that one can begin to talk of other aspects of development. This is because; the development of any nation is dependent upon the development of the human person. Omoregbe agrees with this assertion when he opines that:

The most important aspect of the development of any country is indisputably the development of human personality. It is, in other words, the moral development of the citizens that constitute the country. To be sure, there are other aspects of development, for a country is a living organism with many parts, each of which needs to be developed (143).

This indeed is a fact that cannot be denied or countered. The development of a state is entirely dependent on the level of development of the people that make up such a state. This is because as Plato puts it, the state is "man-writ-large". Again, if any part of the human person remains undeveloped, there is bound to be a problem with the developmental process of such a country.

Nigeria as a nation has not developed because the vital aspect of man's essence has not been developed. This is the spiritual aspect. This has led to a complete moral decadence in every facet of our nation life, social, political, economic and even our educational system. It is the absence of spiritual inputs into our democratic and electoral processes that has led to the decay, apathy, rigging, assassination, the "do or die" mentality of our politicians, and electoral fraud that has characterized our elections. Ben Nwabueze captured these more graphically when he states:

The travesty was so monumental in its completeness that words, even the word rigging, are inadequate to describe it. It would simply be an abuse of language to use any of the epithets 'free', 'fair' or 'credible' in connection with the charade that took place in the 14th and 21st of April 2007.

It is an established fact that Nigeria needs an urgent change to bring about credible elections and credible candidate processes. This can only be achieved through essencism as truth will be made manifest in our democratic and electoral processes. Ozumba (2010) puts it thus;

...that is pays to be on the side of truth because we can do nothing against the truth but for the truth.
 ...our political education curriculum should take note of the selfishness of man, man's proneness to the attitude of 'state of nature', tendency to domination... the true application of integrative humanism is to always bear in mind that at times man may need to be forced to embrace what is best for him. This is only possible if man through "ratio-spirito-centric" perception come to understand what his true happiness consists in...(133).

The moral dislocation prevalent in our democratic and electoral systems is due to lack of spiritual contents of our educational system that include citizenship education. The essence of political or citizenship education in nation-building is very vital. The Greeks of the 6th century BC know the importance of this hence, Socrates and the sophists taught and prepared the Athenian youths for a vibrant political life. It is on the basis of this historical antecedent that we strongly advocate for essencistic curriculum for our citizenship education. This will help to promote a democratic culture that will bring about credible election and credible candidate processes. This will also make it possible for the voters to know their rights and utilize these rights in a manner that will bring about peace and development in our political life.

Also, for the citizens to be genuinely involved in public life and affairs a more explicit approach to citizenship education should be adopted. This approach based on the tenets essencism should be;

- **Inclusive:** It must be an entitlement for all young persons regardless of the ability or background.
- **Pervasive:** It must not be restricted or limited to schools alone but should be an integral part of all education for our young ones and people.
- **Lifelong:** It must be continuous throughout life.
- This should at the end produce social entrepreneurs who will now form Non-Governmental Organizations/NGOs to drive this process more effectively and nationally starting from the rural communities to the urban centres of the country.

Conclusion

One of the main reasons why our educational and electoral systems have been fraught with problem is due largely to moral ineptitude of our political class. It is on the basis of this that godfatherism exists and thrives in our political parties. There is also the lack of quality members in our political parties as credible and qualified people are discouraged from joining the political parties. This lack of qualified people have created problem as these godfathers used all illegal methods to impose their political sons and daughters on the people.

Again, the citizens have not been adequately educated to know their rights as voters, hence the electoral problems that has been witnessed in Nigeria. So, there is need to embark and design a virile Citizenship Education Curriculum. This Citizenship Education must be anchored on philosophy of Essencism that will instill basic spiritual values and qualities on the citizens. This will therefore, help to develop self-confidence in the voters and citizens and they will be able to successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges such as bullying, discrimination and political frauds. This will give the citizens a voice and enable them to make positive contributions to the society in general.

The citizenship education we are advocating here will contains some essential elements such as:

- **Knowledge and Understanding:** The voters and citizens know about such topics as laws and rules, the democratic process, the media, human rights, diversity, money and the economy, sustainable development and the world as a global community; and about concepts like democracy, justice, equality, freedom, authority and the rule of law.
- **Skills and aptitude:** Critical way of thinking, analyzing issues, expressing objective opinions taking effective part in discourse and debate; negotiating, conflict resolution and participating in political and social action.
- **Values and dispositions:** Respect for justice, democracy and rule of law, openness, tolerance, courage to defend one's vote and choice and willingness to listen, work with and stand for others.

Finally, with essencism citizenship education will become active, interactive, relevant, critical, collaborative and participative, thereby bring out the best in every citizen as a moral agent of transformation imbued with spiritual qualities to fulfill man's purpose on earth as it concerns democracy, politics and elections.

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