HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION AND
DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

Etim E. Okon PhD
Senior Lecturer
Department of Religious and Cultural Studies
University of Calabar
C/O G.P.O.Box 2897, Calabar
Cross River State, Nigeria
dretimokon55@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

This paper examines the relevance of human rights education as a strategy, and platform for the making and consolidation of democratic citizenship. Democracy cannot thrive in collective ignorance. If citizens are to participate in the democratic process, then there must be a political will and commitment by the government to carry out public education on the tenets of democracy. Public education is indispensable, hence a vital requirement in the consolidation of democratic values. The culture of democratic citizenship should be promoted far, and above the trivialities of propaganda. Governments who use cheap political propaganda to misinform, and mislead their people are absolutely in error. This paper is a content analysis of relevant and contemporary literatures in the fields of human rights education, democracy and rule of law. It is an advocacy for good governance through democratic citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

Human rights education is an aspect of public education. The first step in achieving human rights education is the inclusion of topics like peace, democracy, development, rule of law and social justice in the curriculum. When this is done, it is possible to inculcate in
students the virtues of freedom and egalitarianism. The second step is the use of public media to disseminate human rights related information. Here, it is recommended that the State should invest in community radio and television to provide access to the rural people in vernacular. The use of mother tongue in disseminating human rights related information will enhance effectiveness in community human rights education.

Success in reaching the rural dwellers with human rights education is determined by the level of literacy. If literacy level is low, it may frustrate communication. Even when the mother tongue is adopted as the language of communication, illiteracy is still a major problem. The State should pursue aggressively adult basic education as a preparation and readiness for an integrative human rights education.

Human rights education should aim at eradicating all forms of social inequality like racism, ethnicity, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and religious intolerance. Government alone may not succeed to educate the citizens on the exigency of human rights. Non-governmental organizations have a duty to partner with the State to achieve success in human rights education. The Commission on Global Governance (CGG) in 1995, identified poverty and gross economic inequalities as a major threat to the new democratic culture:

Societies in which there are deep and expanding social or economic disparities face enormous obstacles whether in creating or maintaining democracy. Citizens who must struggle daily to meet basic needs and who see no possibility of improving their circumstances are unlikely to have either the interest, or the ability, to work on behalf of democratization. To be sustainable, democracy must include the contributing to the prosperity and well-being of citizens (Commission on Global Governance, 1995:20-23).

EDUCATED AND DEMOCRATIC CITIZENSHIP

The fundamental tenet of political democracy, or “free society”, is government by consent, which requires the participation of citizens in the process of governance, the upholding of civil and political rights, or liberties and the recognition of human worth. Henry Wriston posited that “the acid test of successful democratic government is the degree of effective liberty it makes available to the individual” (Commission on National Goals, 1960: 48).

Citizenship according to Helen Carpenter is “the means of denoting the legal status of an individual and hence signifies membership in a political society. It implies the reciprocal obligations of allegiance owed by the individual and of protection assumed by
the government” (Carpenter, 1960:8). The meaning of citizenship depends on the shifting judicial and legislative interpretations. Democracy is directly concerned with equality, participation and representation. It requires openness, transparency and accountability, which can be part of a formal curriculum.

It is through citizenship education that education and politics meet. Opportunities and platform for consultation, discussion and mutual reflection is created through citizenship educated for human rights and democracy. It broadens citizenship vision of society, social justice, creativity and personal and social fulfillment. R. Richardson identifies the qualities of a good society to include: “not just the absence of discrimination but, rather, the lively presence of many opportunities and spaces for citizens and residents to take part in the cultural, economic and political affairs of the community” (Richardson, 1979:6).

The attributes and objectives of democratic citizenship include the following:
1. The educated citizen is sensitive to the disparities of human circumstances.
2. The educated citizen acts to correct unsatisfactory conditions.
3. The educated citizen seeks to understanding social structures and social processes.
4. The educated citizen has defenses against propaganda.
5. The educated citizen respects honest differences of opinion.
6. The educated citizen has a regard for the nation’s resources.
7. The educated citizen measures scientific advance by its contribution to the general welfare.
8. The educated citizen is a cooperative member of the world community.
9. The educated citizen respects the law
10. The educated citizen is economically literate.
11. The educated citizen accepts his civic duties.
12. The educated citizen acts upon unswerving loyalty to democratic ideals (Educational Policies Commission, 1938:42)

THE RIGHT TO EDUCATION

Nwachukwuike Iwe defines education as “a process or an art which seeks to perfect the human person through the development of his physiological, psychological and moral capabilities and talents” (Iwe, 1986:258). Education seeks to develop and shape the capabilities and facilities of man for perfection and fulfillment. The platform for educational process is the cultural achievement of each community. “The right of man to education is, thus his right to his own cultural development within the context of the cultural resources of his own community (Iwe, 1986:258). Iwe has stressed
emphatically that man’s personal right to cultural development is a natural right bestowed on him by the Creator and that it is derived from the exigencies of man’s nature. Human nature is endowed with physical, intellectual and moral capabilities, which is to be cultivated and perfected. Iwe writes:

As a man has a natural right to the use of the material things of this world for the preservation and perfection of his life, so also he has a natural right to those cultural heritages and facilities of his nation for the development and fulfillment of his natural capabilities and facilities. Moreover, the common good of the communities, requires that the member be entitled to realize their talents and potentialities in order to be better able to contribute to the welfare of their neighbor and the community as a whole (Iwe, 1986:258).

The right to education has witnessed documentary affirmation in many continental and international human rights documents. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights in article 26 states as follows:

1. Everyone has the right to education...
2. Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups... (Reoch, 1994: 266).

The right to education was affirmed in the European convention in article 2 (1):

No person shall be denied the right to education. In the exercise of any functions which it assumes in relation to education and to teaching, the State shall respect the right of parents to ensure such education and teaching is in conformity with their own religious and philosophical convictions. (Brownlie, 1971:338).

The implication of this article according to Osler and Starkey is that “Education is the right to be protected and the State has a duty to ensure that that public provision is inclusive in that it is accessible to all and delivered in such a way as not to offend the consciences of those who entrust their children to the education system” (Osler and Starkey, 1996: 36,37).
Pope John XXIII in his Pacem in Terris of April 1963 stated in paragraph 13 that “man has the natural right to share in the benefits of culture, and hence to receive a good general education, and a technical or professional training consistent with the degree of educational development in his own country” (John XXIII, 1963: 260). As the promoter of the common good of the community, the State is a major and fundamental agent in the actualization of the right to education. Iwe posits thus:

The state, motivated by the common welfare of persons and families should, far from absorbing the cultural rights and duties of the latter, provide all the facilities, such as schools, technical institutes, universities and evolve a socio-economic system capable of enabling families and the church to discharge their rights and duties in the field of education (Iwe, 1986: 268).

Apart from providing the infrastructure and manpower needs for the education of its citizens, the State should ensure that the school system is completely free of “conditioning” and “indoctrination”. Conditioning is associated with animal learning, which robs the learner of dignity. It is a compulsive impartation of knowledge to the learner without any element of freedom or choice, D. Gomein writes:

The State in fulfilling the functions assumed by it in regard to education and teaching must take care that information and knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. The State is forbidden to pursue an aim of indoctrination that might be considered as not respecting parent’s religious and philosophical convictions (Gomein, 1991: 101).

PRECONDITIONS AND COMPONENTS OF DEMOCRACY

DEMOCRACY DEFINED

There is no ambiguity in the definition of democracy. It is wrong for anybody to assume that democracy does not have a definite and universally accepted definition. Epiphany Azinge writes: “Classical democratic theory posits the existence of a highly conscious, rational, politically knowledgeable and participant citizenry who seeks to realize a generally recognized common good through the collective initiation, discussion and decision of policy questions concerning public affairs” (Azinge, 1991: 2).
The Athenians of ancient Greeks are regarded as the founders of the democratic tradition. The word “democracy” is derived from two Greek words demos (the people) and kratus (rule). Athenian democracy was participatory and not representative. The ruling authority in the Athenian city state, or polis resided in a large assembly of all male citizens, which met regularly in the central Public Square called agora.

In ancient Greeks, which were the springboard of democratic culture, democracy meant popular participation in the governance of society. Athenians met regularly in town halls to discuss the affairs of their community and arrive at a collective decision. Since it is not possible for all citizens to participate in collective decision making process, democracy according to Joseph Schumpeter has become a political method that is an institutional arrangement by which individuals acquire the mandate to represent other people through a competitive struggle for the vote (Schumpeter, 1943:242). In the views of E.E Schattschneider, “democracy is a competitive political system in which competing leaders and organizations define the alternatives of public policy in such a way that the public can participate in the decision making process”. (Schattschneider, 1960:6). In a liberal democratic system, periodic and competitive elections determine the legitimacy of political authority and power. (Ball, 1971:121)

The democratic spirit requires that there must be obedience to law and constituted authority. The culture of obedience to law includes compliance to lawful orders from the courts and respect for democratic conventions. There must be free debate of public issues. At Athens, there was a consensus that the activities of the city state can only be successfully carried on with the voluntary consent and cooperation of the citizens. Chukwudifu Oputa JSC writes; “the Athenians believed in discussions; they had implicit faith in the fact that wise measures and good institutions could bear the examination of many minds” (Oputa, 1991: 34). Justice Branders of the United States Supreme Court in Whitney v California posits thus:

...that in government deliberative forces should prevail over the arbitrary; that freedom to think as you will and to speak as you think are means indispensable to the discovery and spread of political truth, that without free speech and assembly, discussion would be futile...that the greatest menace to freedom is an inert people...that it is hazardous to discourage thoughts, hope and imagination...(274 U.S. 357, 1927).
The democratic culture requires accountability and transparency. Elected and appointed officials must be accountable to the people. Government policies and actions must reflect the collective will and wishes of the people. Transparency means that the people should be informed on what is happening. Manjot Kaur writes: “A transparent government holds public meetings and allows citizens to attend. In a democracy, the press and the people are able to get information about what decision are being made by whom and why” (Kaur, 2005:34).

Another important characteristic of the democratic society is the principle that all the people are equal. Democratic equality connotes equality before the law, equal opportunity, and absence of discrimination on the bases of sex, religion or race. In a democratic society, the ruling class should learn to tolerate the views of the opposition and minorities. Kaur argues further that democratic societies are expected to be politically tolerant. That while the majority wields political power in a democracy, the rights of the minority must be protected:

People who are not in power must be allowed to speak out. Minorities are sometimes referred to as the ‘opposition’ because they may have ideas that are different from that of the majority. The individual citizens must also learn to be tolerant of each other. A democratic society is composed of people from different cultures, religions, racial and ethnic groups... A democratic society is enriched by diversity. If the majority deny rights to, and destroy the opposition then they may also destroy democracy (Kaur, 2005: 33-34).

Alexis de Tocqueville in his magnum opus Democracy in America criticized the unlimited power, and the tyranny of the majority in the United States:

The omnipotence of the majority and the rapid as well as absolute manner in which its decisions are executed in the United States, has not only the effect of rendering the law unstable, but it exercises the same influence upon the execution of the law and the conduct of the public administration. (Tocqueville, 2004:299)

Robert Dahl has proffered a strategy to resolve potential conflict between the sovereignty of the majority and the protection of the rights of the minority.

“What I, am going to call the ‘Madisonian’ theory of democracy is an effort to bring off a compromise between the power of majorities and the power of minorities, between the political equality of all adult citizen
on the one side and the desire to limit their sovereignty on the other”
(Dahl, 1956: 4)

James Ceaser in his Liberal Democracy and Political Science identified the negative interpretation and consequences of defining democracy as government by the majority:

“Democracy means rule by the people (the majority). But if the people are corrupt, democracy is nothing more than a majority using the instrument of law to take unjustly what it wants. “(Ceaser, 1990:10)

Joseph Schumpeter has faulted popular and representative democracy that views the system as a mandate to carry out the wishes of the people. “our chief problems about the classical(democratic) theory centered in the proposition that ‘the people’ hold a definite and rational opinion about every individual question and that they give effect to this opinion – in a democracy – by choosing representative who will see to it that opinion is carried out” (Schumpeter, 1950:269).

Representative democracy does not mean that the representatives should operate as robots for their constituencies. It is not even possible for the people to hold definite opinions on issues, “It means that the people as a body must be able to control the general direction of government policy.” (Roskin et al, 1991:68). It is in the thorny issue of mandate, and actual representation that many political scientists including E.E. Schattschneider have faulted the common definition of democracy as government of the people by the people and for the people:

“The beginning of wisdom in democratic theory is to distinguish between the things that the people can do and the things the people cannot do. The worst possible disservice that can be done to the democratic cause is to attribute to the people a mystical, magical omnipotence which takes no cognizance of what very large number of people cannot do by the sheer weight of numbers”. (Schattschneider, 1960:139)

The democratic society must recognize and enforce human rights. Human rights and democracy are interrelated. The aims of human rights are to promote human dignity and the value of every human being. The democratic government ensures freedom of expression, freedom of assembly, freedom of association, religious freedom, and other rights. Democracy cherishes a multiparty system. Democracy cannot operate in a one party system. A multi-party system promotes competition and gives the voters adequate range of choice. All over the world, it is a democratic tradition that those who contest election
should accept the result of the election. There must be winners and losers; there must be ruling party and opposition party.

**DEMOCRACY, RULE OF LAW AND CONSTITUTIONALISM**

Democracy cannot thrive without the rule of law and constitutionalism. Rule of law means that everything must be done according to law and all persons and governments are subject to law. Rule of law implies that government activities must be conducted within the framework of existing laws, rules and principles. Rule of law requires that discretionary and arbitrary use of power must be curtailed and that disputes as to the legality of government actions should be decided by the courts.

Constitutionalism on the other hand is a limitation on government. It forbids arbitrary rule. The constitution is supreme over all considerations. A government that endorses constitutionalism must conduct regular free and fair election; it must tolerate the views of the opposition and endorse the observance of fundamental human rights. Ben Nwabueze has this to say:

There is no doubt that the core and substantive element of constitutionalism is the limitation of government by a constitution guarantee of individual civil liberties enforceable by an independent tribunal... It must also be admitted that the democratization of constitutionalism is today, together with civil liberties, its mainstay. The democratic control mechanism of popular representation and the responsibility of the government to the governed unquestionably increase the efficacy of any system of restraint upon government (Nwabueze, 1973: 10-11).

**PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY**

The starting point for a new social contract is the pragmatic acknowledgement of the fact that sovereignty lies with the people. Participatory democracy cannot thrive without the molding of political citizenship. The people should be made to know that they are inevitably the architect of their destinies. If there are obstacles to social development, the people should be empowered to form a vanguard for solution.

The basis of citizenship lies in a sense of identity, the feeling of belonging. We speak not only of belonging to the same nation or using the same language, but also of the historical events binding
people together, along with the concerns they share about the future. When people belong, they care. When they care, they act contributing to the well-being of society (ICPQL, 1996: 259).

The preconditions and components of political and tutelary democracy includes the stability, coherence and effectiveness of the ruling elite; the practice and acceptance of opposition, and adequate machinery of authority and free flow of public opinion (E. Shils, 1970: 295-311). If democracy is to be successful at any level there must be consultation and participation. The leadership should see it as obligatory to consult with the people and induce their participation in the political process.

Just as lack of participation induces a feeling of impotence, insecurity and alienation, so participation brings a sense of being able to control what was previously thought to be beyond our influence... Participation means that people take an active part in the decisions closely affecting life at home, at work and in the community. Strong local participation means that the people conceive, design, execute, manage and evaluate local programmes. In the case of ongoing public services, the population helps set goals and their priorities and assesses the quality of the services delivered (ICPQL, 1996: 260).

Participatory democracy requires the principle of inclusiveness in all aspects of the polity. The implication of inclusiveness is that it is even possible to appease and integrate the opposition. Democracy is not a celebration of victory for the winning party or candidate. It is a tradition that cherishes unity, compromise and the common good. This was affirmed by the report of the Conference on Democratic Transition and Consolidation.

Strengthening pluralism and public participation is an indispensable part of building democracy. In democratic transitions, popular mobilization and protest movements play a critical role in spurring regime change. Their active presence raises the cost of political repression, strengthens the hand of reformist elites, and creates alternative activists and political leaders. In new democracies, active citizen participation imparts habits of civil engagement, builds trust, facilitates the rule of law, as well as enhances society's monitoring capacity, elite accountability and controls corruption (CDTTC, 2002: 111).
The Conference on Democratic Transition and Consolidation also reached a consensus on the view that one of the major dilemmas that faces democratizing elites is how to enhance public participation in governance. The Conference proffered the following strategies.

Political participation can be enhanced by institutions that maximize political liberties, grant inclusive and equal citizenship to all citizens, protect autonomy of individuals and organizations, and expand influence of citizens on leadership selection and the decision making process. Participation requires not only opportunities but also resources (CDTC, 2002: 112).

Operators of democratic machinery should be conscious of the fact that democracy does not connote conquest, or subjugation of society. Democracy must function in the overall interest of society. It must have a human face and the goal should be social and economic development in inclusive capacity. To that extent, democracy is different from plutocracy- government by the rich and wealthy members of the society; it is different from oligarchy- government by a small group of people; it is different from meritocracy- government by the elites, or intellectuals. Democracy is neither for the rich, nor for the poor. It is for all members of society. It is a cynosure for social cohesion.

There is a solid consensus among our experts that active participation of citizens through a variety of organizational and institutional channels is a fundamental condition for the completion of democratic transition, consolidation of democracy, and improvement of its subsequent performance. Historical experience shows that even high levels of protests and mobilization can be absorbed by new democracies with relative ease (CDTC, 2002: 111).

DEMOCRACY AND CIVIL SOCIETY

Civil society is a network of organizations and citizens who are working to advance the cause of community. The goal of civil society is to forge community bonds. In the words of Peter Berger and Richard Neuhaus, civil society represent ‘mediating structures’ that is organization and associations that mediates between the individual in his private life and the large institutions of public life. The mediating structures are churches, families, neighborhood and voluntary associations (qtd. in Dionne, 1998: 4).
Okon Uya has defined civil societies as “formal and informal organizations, including social movements, which occupy the non-state sphere of the public realm” (Uya, 2000: 8). According to Uya, civil society organizations include, “non-governmental public sector organizations such as voluntary activity-based professional, students, self-help, labour, cultural and women associations; local level community based organizations; credit societies; the mass media, and civil liberty and pro-democracy associations; but exclude religious, cultural, regional and kinship based associations” (Uya, 2000: 8). Exclusion of religious organizations from the category of civil society is not borne by history because even in the United States, the key leaders of civil liberty organizations were, and are religious leaders. From Martin Luther King Jr. to Jesse Jackson, Christianity has always been at the vanguard of social renewal and reconstruction.

V.C. Uchendu has described civil society as “a concept used to describe a dynamic process of constructing and reconstructing “political space” normatively, in order to accommodate new patterns of political participation outside the formal state structures and institutions. Political space suggests that polity is just one of the many spheres of society and that society itself is a bundle of capacities” (Uchendu, 2000: 36). Uchendu writes: “It is not just sufficient to have a plurality of actors, it is equally important that each actor possesses a self-sufficient capacity for action and is able to participate in the political process that is linked to its legitimate sphere of interest” (Uchendu, 2000: 36). Civil society is an aspect of social movement with a multiple of interest and causes related to societal structure. It addresses the social question and creates motivation for social reconstruction. This was clearly stated in the report of the Independent Commission on Population and Quality of Life:

Civil society groups vary in the causes they stand for, in their goals. Some are structured, capable of action with a sense of continuity; others are of more ‘prophetic’ nature, likely to act intensively in a more episodic way. Still others endure changes from outside or within, intervening with forms of action that are permanent or else change during the entity’s lifetime (ICPQL, 1996: 263).

Participants in the Conference on Democratic Transition and Consolidation after a breathtaking and brainstorming sessions agreed that a vibrant civil society and well-structured political parties are fundamental underpinnings of democracy (CDTC, 2002: 109). It is only reasonable to commence the rebuilding of civil society simultaneously with the strengthening of political parties. The fact must be put straight that there is no working
democracy without a viable and strong party organization and there is no successful pluralism without a robust civil society organizations. What we are advocating here is a simultaneous development of these two domains for mutual enrichment and flowering of political engineering. The Conference on Democratic Transition and Consolidation asserts thus:

An active, tolerant and law abiding civil society is an indispensable condition for the consolidation and persistence of democracy. All self organized, intermediary groups representing collective interests and identities of citizens should be equal partners in a pluralist's civil society. Building a civil society that is not merely strong or densely organized but destroys violence and upholds the democratic rule of law should be a top priority. Moreover, democratic civil society must be based on universal democratic norms, which transcend cultural and geographic boundaries (CDTC, 2002: 114).

**EMPOWERMENT AND ADVOCACY**

Politically and economically, empowerment means helping the masses to gain power of decision and action over their own affairs by reducing overdependence and parasitic attachment to government. Empowerment connotes capacity building and increasing of self-confidence to use power, and transfer same from the block to the people. Advocacy on the hand seeks to present the critical interest of the powerless masses before powerful individuals and institutions.

The management view of empowerment according to Aileen Stewart involves motivating people and granting of partial independence from managerial control (Stewart, 1994:20-22). Political empowerment places responsibility on individuals to provide for their needs, with the aim of reducing state services. It involves granting of financial support for people to develop their potentials and actualize their dreams.

The basic objective of empowerment is social justice, security and mutual support as a way to move the society forward. Empowerment of the elderly people, HIV/AIDS victims and related social class is capable of reducing experiences of stigmatization and also eliminate social isolation. Empowerment in a participatory democracy is valuable and socially efficacious because it is an opportunity to challenge oppression and to make people to take charge of issues that affect them.

Through empowerment people are given the opportunity to define their own needs and then have a say in decision making and planning. When people are equipped with
resources, there will be a positive impact on the development of self-confidence, self-esteem, self-assertiveness and expectation of a prosperous future. Admittedly, the purpose of political power in a democratic dispensation is to achieve human progress and the common good.

**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DIMENSIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS**

The founders of classical theory, Adam Smith (1723-90), David Ricardo (1772-1823), and Milton Friedman (1912-), and others translated the Renaissance idea of human freedom into economic terms. They were of the opinion that if social and economic forces are allowed to operate without any form of censorship, it will produce a perfect harmony (Dengerink, 1988: 594). Here, we are focusing on the social and economic dimensions of human rights.

The laissez-faire social system that arose in eighteen century France insisted that government does not have any reason whatsoever to interfere in the economic affairs of individuals and society. That was the beginning of classical economics and the emphasis on free trade and unregulated individual activity. John Bell avers that “The belief stems from an optimistic view of the nature of man and the universe and a natural order or system of economic harmonies that will assure mankind the greatest advantage if permitted to work unhampered” (Bell, 1969: 605).

The doctrine of laissez-faire had a religio-philosophical heritage. The liberal and individualistic concept of the state had the direct influence of deism. If God who created the universe can withdraw from the world, then no government should attempt to impose any form of restriction on civil liberty. Philosophically, the doctrine of laissez-faire adopted hedonism. Individuals have the right to pursue goals that produce happiness and pleasure, devoid of pain.

To that extent, the state cannot put up any obstacle to personal freedom and happiness. Thus hedonism and utilitarianism constitutes the philosophical foundation of laissez-faire. This doctrine which attracted important theorists like Jeremy Bentham, Herbert Spencer, and William Sumner, impacted nineteenth century political thought to the extent that many laws were enacted to accommodate and give expression to social and economic freedom. Voting rights were extended, religious inequality were abolished. Bell writes:

> The pervading theory of this period was that the individual, pursuing his own desired ends would thereby achieve the best results for the society of which he was a part. The function of
the State was to maintain order and security, and to avoid interference with the initiative of the individual in pursuit of his own desired goals (Bell, 1969:605-606).

Without jeopardizing the freedom of the individual, and the collective freedom of society, G.W.F Hegel extended his philosophical tentacle to the objective actualization of freedom in socio-political structures. Hegel posited that based on the glaring failure of Stoicism and Skepticism to produce happiness, it is a fact of history that the self cannot possess freedom and truth independent of the conditions of the world. The social world cannot function for a long period as a “neutral”, involuntary substratum of communion; otherwise its neutrality may be subverted by institutionalized alienation. Hegelian theory of freedom is still relevant in the 21st century. Hegel thought that freedom is actualized by “generating a world as our own creation”, which is different from “finding a world presupposed before us” (Hegel, 1892: 386).

Hegel avers that a truly human world must be created under the principles of freedom rather than the requirements of nature. That is the only world that will incorporate culture and politics, and provide an enabling environment for the nurture of human spirit and transformation. The “kingdom of freedom”, must be created to function in pari passu with the “kingdom of nature”. For Hegel, the system of right is the actualization of the kingdom of freedom. (Hegel, 1952:4). The Hegelian “Kingdom of Freedom” is analogous to the “Kingdom of God” which Jesus proclaimed and a secularized translation will show similarity with Aristotle’s conception of the polis as the “community of the free” (Koinonia ton eleutheron).

From every indication, Hegelian “objective spirit”, or “kingdom of freedom”, may not mean a super-person, or super-subject that is identified with nations, races, or peoples. It is not also a collection of individuals, or of intersubjective intentionalities (Hodgson, 1976: 149). Peter Hodgson suggests that it is the substantial human spirit that is freedom in the structures of the socio-political world (Hodgson, 1976: 149). Hegel in an utopian mind-set avers that personal individuality, and universal aspiration of society may co-exist and dovetail:

The state is the actuality of concrete freedom. But concrete freedom consists in this, that personal individuality and its particular interests not only achieve their complete development and gain explicit recognition for their right…but, for one thing, they also pass over of their own accord into the interest of the universal, and, for another thing, they know and will the universal; they even recognize it as
their own substantive mind; they take it as their end and aim and are active in its pursuit…(Hegel, 1952:33).

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF HUMAN RIGHT

The Christian view of human right is a biblical viewpoint. Human rights are not traced to the fundamental freedom of humanity, but in the revealed truth that human beings were created in the image of God (Imago Dei), and are by creation the bearers of God’s image with a worth and dignity bestowed on them by the creator (Gen. 9:6; Jas.3:9). Man, (in the generic sense) has the mandate to be the steward of God’s creation (Gen.1:28; 9:1-2; Ps. 8:6-9). Human beings are to exercise God given responsibility towards themselves and others in the name of God. This involve resistance to a coercive State (Acts 4:19;5:29; 1King 21:3; Acts.16:37). J. G. Herder has said that “man is the first liberating being in creation” (Herder, 1964:164). What distinguishes human beings from all other living beings is not reason and intelligence, but, language and freedom. Hodgson posits thus:

The higher animals are endowed with greater or lesser degrees of intelligence, but they lack the ability to speak and not free in relation to the natural environment, even though certain prototypes of human language and freedom are discernible in their sign-like communication and their playfulness (Hodgson, 1976:123).

Hodgson argues that humankind is not only Homo sapiens, but also Homo liber. In Gen.1:26,27, we are told that God said “Let us make humankind (‘adham) in our image after our likeness … So God created humankind in his own image, “in the image of God he created him; male (Zakar) and female (nqebhah) he created them”. God is absolutely free and man was created in the image of God, therefore man is to live on earth not only as a free moral agent, but as a defender of freedom.

THE DEMOCRATIC MISCARRIAGE IN AFRICA

Democracy is a foreign idea in Africa. The fact is that governments in pre-colonial Africa were dominantly monarchical. Africans have kings and rulers and do not have leaders. Political space in Africa is a king's dominion (kingdom). Kings in Africa have divine
right, politics was merged with religion. The king in Africa is God’s agent. Carlton Rodee et al comment on the divine right of kings:

The notion that the ruler was God’s (or the gods) appointed agent on earth legitimated the king’s power and made it both unquestionable and unassailable. To challenge the king was to challenge divine authority. As later kings could claim descent from the first kings, divinely appointed, the entire dynasty could be given the imprint “made in heaven”...It enabled the most petty and oppressive tyrants to disguise their actions as an expression of God’s will (Rodee et al, 1983:22-23).

James I, the English King writes:

“The State of monarchy is the supremest thing upon the earth: for kings are not only God’s lieutenant upon earth and sit upon God’s throne, but even by God himself, they are called God’s...”(qtd. In Beer, 1965:5)

In most part of Africa, it is an abomination to challenge a king. The king cannot be corrected by the opposition. It is not even wise to oppose a king in Africa. That is the background to the failure of democracy in Africa. Africa is a monarchical society. There is no genuine democracy in Africa. So long as monarchical spirit and mentality prevails democracy cannot thrive in Africa. Politicians and political parties in Africa should be educated on what is expected of them.

It is the irony of history that people who have good intention to help and salvage the society from shame and reproach are not always given the opportunity to perform. Good people suffer betrayal and conspiracy in African politics. We cannot continue with such retrogressive spirit and expect progress and development. There is no gainsaying the fact that it is not well with Nigeria. Nigeria is passing through a debilitating political trauma and convulsion. At the 15th Convocation Lecture of the University of Uyo, Okon Edet Uya adumbrated on the crises in Nigeria:

Crisis abounds in virtually all sectors of our national life...massive unemployment; insecurity of life and property; collapsing health, educational and infrastructural services; stark poverty of the many in the midst of the opulence of the few, pollution of values evidenced in massive corruption, indiscipline and moral decadence; the Niger Delta conundrum, the resurgence of dangerous ethnicity manifesting
in the formation of ethnic militias; the near collapse of the vision of a united country as shown by conflicts between indigenes and settlers or non indigenes; (Uya, 2000:7).

We cannot gloss over the fact that the problem of Africa has to do with leadership vacuum. Many people who are in government do not have any idea of what is expected of them. Those who have no orientation or intellectual preparation to be in government are the people who are presiding over many government agencies. This is the moment of truth. This is the time for critical rethinking and ratiocination instead of selfish emotional propaganda and thoughtless rhetoric.

Everybody cannot be a political office holder, compensating political supporters with appointments without any consideration for merit, qualification and ability to perform is counterproductive. Sharing political offices exclusively to party members and ignoring the opposition is fatal to democratic tradition and global best practice. Democracy is not our system; it was borrowed from the West. In Africa, democracy has been reduced to a monarchical system, where state power is directly controlled by the king and is inner circle loyalists. Our political values promote mediocrity and downgrade excellence and merit. Nation building cannot succeed in an atmosphere of hypocrisy and dishonesty.

CONCLUSION:

To a greater extent, human rights education should incorporate topics on democratic citizenship, educating for democracy and tolerance in a multicultural society. Human rights education curriculum should be structured to combat, that is, in a fighting spirit, all ideologies, policies, and practices that constitute direct, or indirect incitement to racial hatred, hate speech, violence and discrimination. (Council of Europe, 1993:13-15).

The greatest positive consequences of human right public education are the anticipated impact on interpersonal relationship. Ethnic tensions pose a major threat to social and political stability. Reports of “ethnic cleansing” and “genocide” are common
knowledge in the twenty first century. Clan warfare and other dimensions of community armed conflict are often exacerbated by ethnic and sectarian conflict. Ethnic minorities like indigenous people and migrant workers are often vulnerable to structural and institutional discrimination. In many European countries, Muslim girls are denied access to school because they choose to wear the hijab or headscarf which is deemed inappropriate in a secular schools (Osler and Starkey, 1996: 55-58).

In this study, we have established a correlation between human rights education and the right to education. Public education on any subject is only possible when there is a reasonable level of literacy. Illiterates do not have known intellectual capabilities to articulate political options and decisions. The first step in human rights education is the implementation of a robust and virile national policy on education that covers adult literacy and continuing education. Democracy can only thrive through consensus building and social integration. The Vienna Declaration in article 78, stipulates thus:

The World Conference on Human Rights considers human rights education, training and public information essential for the promotion and achievement of stable and harmonious relations among communities and for fostering mutual understanding, tolerance and peace. (Reoch, 1993:225).

In article 79, The World Conference urged states to strive to eradicate illiteracy and that the goals of education should be the full development of human personality and the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. To achieve this, the World Conference recommended the inclusion of human rights, humanitarian law, peace education, social justice, democracy and rule of law in the curricula for all formal and non-formal education. In Article 82, The World Conference recommended, “The proclamation of
a United Nations decade for human rights education in order to promote, encourage and 
focus these educational activities…” (Reoch, 1994:225).

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