



KADUNA STATE INDEPENDENT ELECTORAL  
COMMISSION (KAD-SIECOM)

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PUBLIC  
EDUCATION AND THE  
ELECTORAL  
PROCESS**

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## Foreword

The 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria has made provision for the system of Local Government Administration by democratically elected Local Government Councils for which purpose State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs) have been established by the States of Nigeria and the Federal Capital Territory (FCT), Abuja. The Kaduna State Independent Electoral Commission (KAD-SIECOM) was therefore established by KD.S.Law No 10 of 2012 with the functions, among others, to conduct voter and civic education and to promote knowledge of sound democratic electoral process.

A review of the activities of the Commission has shown that, with Eight Editions of the Voter Education Pamphlet, focus had been on voter education in preparation for conduct of each election. Activities had therefore been on the 'election process' even when reference was being made to 'electoral process'. The aspect of promoting knowledge of sound democratic electoral process through public education was not being addressed. The Kaduna State Independent Electoral Commission (KAD-SIECOM) in its concern to close this gap by paying appropriate attention to public education has produced three publications, which are all First Editions;

Handbook for Public Education on Electoral Process,

Executive Summary: Public Education and the Electoral Process, and  
Prompting Questions for Public and Voter Education Drive.

The contents of these publications have emanated from a paper, which was well received, presented at an International Conference (March, 2016) which reviewed the 2015 National elections. The Kaduna State Independent Electoral Commission (KAD-SIECOM) is determined to fully and effectively implement the electoral process for entrenching and deepening democracy such that the Commission is seen to be conducting, free, fair and credible elections and those voted into office be seen to be working for the people they represent. The Commission is therefore soliciting for cooperation from

all stakeholders towards effectively implementing the electoral process for the development of Kaduna State.

**Dr. (Mrs.) Saratu Binta Dikko-Audu**

**CHAIRMAN KAD-SIECOM**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: PUBLIC EDUCATION AND THE ELECTORAL PROCESS**

### **Introduction**

This publication, Executive Summary: Public Education and the Electoral Process, is a summary of the Handbook for Public Education on Electoral Process and has covered the same issues. The Summary in covering the same basic issues has however, used a bullet-point presentation approach to enable the reader much easier grasp of each of the issues and has thereby included more details. The issues covered to bring awareness include;

- Fundamental issues
- Governance in a democracy,
- Stakeholders in a democracy,
- The Ward as a basic electoral unit
- The massmedia in public education

The major addition in the Executive Summary is that it has shown what is involved in deepening democracy in terms of what is required of government and of citizens. Much more than entrenching democracy by continuously conducting free, fair and credible elections, deepening democracy requires that elected representatives of the people work to serve their interests.

The Executive Summary is intended for those who do not have time for reading long narrative but are interested in getting the essential information. However, details can be obtained from the Handbook for Public Education on Electoral Process. The sub-titles are intended to assist the reader to find information quickly based on issues of interest or of questions asked. The Executive Summary should also help to encourage greater interest and participation in the democratic process by all stakeholders, especially by the persons elected into office.

The Kaduna State Independent Electoral Commission (KAD-SIECOM) believes that this publication will be of immense benefit to all those who interact with it and encourages that those who come into contact with it do share its contents with others.

**Prof. Andrew A. Nkom**

**Commissioner Public Affairs and Information**

**KAD-SIECOM**

## Preamble

This publication is intended for all those who do not have time for reading long narrative but want the essential content. However, the Hand Book for Public Education on Electoral Process can be used for obtaining more explanation.

## The Different Areas of Coverage in Public Education

### 1. Fundamental Issues

There are fundamental issues in the Nigerian context that require clarification, which are basic to the effective implementation of the electoral process in relation to democracy; they are hinged on the differences in meaning between the concepts 'electoral process' and 'election process'.

- Election process refers to a combination of election activities involved in an election
- The activities are undertaken periodically for conduct of actual elections that are free, fair, non-violent and credible covering;
  - Pre-election,
  - Election Day and
  - Post-election activities, towards.
- Voter and civic education is directed at all those involved in election activities towards ensuring that elections are indeed free, fair, non-violent and credible.
- Electoral process refers to all issues and activities related to elections, including;
  - understanding the importance of elections in a democracy;
  - ability to identify and articulate needs by groups and communities
  - preparation for decision-making on who to vote for before each election
  - preparation for and actual participation in any election for those qualified to vote or to be voted for
  - monitoring performance of elected representatives including governments

- ✓ forming preparation for the next round of elections
- ✓ identifying those that have served creditably
- ✓ identifying those that have failed to properly represent their constituencies,
- ✓ identifying those to be voted for regardless of political party

- Public education refers to information provided to citizens covering electoral process
  - to different interest groups as stakeholders, including those below the voting age of 18 years
  - those qualified to register and to vote or to be voted for covering those as citizens of Nigeria who all have a stake in a democracy
- 2. Challenges in Elections
  - The challenges in elections in Nigeria are to do with its diversity and high level of illiteracy
    - the potentials for manipulation
    - use of political parties as diversionary tools and tendency for violence through;
      - ✓ use of sectional, ethnic, religious and other divisions,
      - ✓ elections having become a profitable venture
      - ✓ the attitude of winning by all means
  - In such a situation the major tool required towards addressing these challenges and growing democracy is information;
    - suitably prepared for easy consumption by stakeholders
    - made available to the citizens to fully prepare them encouraging full participation in the electoral process reducing ability of manipulation
    - entrenching and especially, deepening democracy in Nigeria
  - Ultimately providing awareness of the value of the vote in addressing challenges

These represent those challenges that must be addressed in public education for Nigerians.

3. Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs) have been established by Law for the purpose of managing the entire electoral process. They include;
  - Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), and
  - State Independent Electoral Commissions (SIECs)

Election management bodies (embs) are specific to each election towards making sure that it is free, fair and credible;

- All groups/organizations involved in actual conduct of those elections, including;
  - )> Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs)
  - )> Political parties
  - )> Candidates
  - )> Voters
  - )> Security agencies
  - )> Election observers/ monitors
  - )> Other government organizations and NGOs
- They all play roles to ensure the successful conduct of free, fair and credible elections.

#### 4. Public Education on Electoral Process and Democracy

Nigerian citizens need to be educated to appreciate that;

- The electoral process is the bedrock of democracy because through that process
  - )> representatives can be produced
  - )> governments formed and thereby
  - )> become the means for providing for the needs of Nigerian citizens
- However, to be able to play that role,
  - )> elections have to be free, fair and credible
  - )> produce those that are truly representatives of the people
- The information template on public education would cover the

phases of the electoral process involving;

- Teaching all citizens about the entire electoral process in a democracy;
    - )> the nature of democracy
    - )> how the electoral process is the bedrock of democracy
    - )> the state of the Nigerian society in relation to elections
    - )> how as individuals and groups or communities as citizens can identify and articulate their needs
    - )> how to use the vote to elect those to help them meet those needs
    - )> how they can assist towards the conduct of free, fair, credible and non-violent elections
    - )> how they can monitor their representatives towards ensuring that their needs are met
    - )> how they can hold their representatives accountable, which could translate to
      - ../ use of recall procedure or
      - ../ the rejection of those of them who do not perform well, at the next round of elections
  - Citizens can use the vote and assist in conduct of free, fair and credible elections as covered in Voter Education within Public Education
  - Ultimately citizens should know that it is in their interest to resist being manipulated
- #### 5. Form of Government in Nigeria
- Democracy is the form of government upon which the Nigerian Constitution is based
  - The Constitution provides guidance on democratic governance covering
    - )> rights of Nigerians or what government should do for them
    - )> their obligations or what they in turn are expected to do
    - )> how to manage Nigeria's diversity
  - Nigerian government as a democracy is to operate based on three major objectives;

- }]> Government will be administered on the principles of democracy and social justice
  - }]> Power belongs to the people from whom Government derives all its authority
  - }]> It is the duty of Government to ensure the security and welfare of the people
- Governing or administering the country will therefore be guided by;
  - }]> principles of democracy
  - }]> equity in social services
  - }]> equality before the law
  - }]> government deriving its authority or power from the people through their votes
  - }]> government existing to serve the people
  - }]> government responsibility to the citizens to ensure their security and welfare
- The affairs of all agencies of Government must be carried out so as to recognize the diversity of the Nigerian people.
- It is a right that Nigerian citizens monitor the implementation of these major objectives by those they vote into government.

#### 6. Features of a democratic government

To be recognized as being democratic, a government is required to have and exhibit the following features;

- Periodic elections; conducting elections at fixed periods of time
- More than one political party; having more than one party for choice by electorate
- Free and fair elections; conducting elections that give political parties equal chances
- Freedom to vote and be voted for; allowing all persons qualified, to vote or be voted for
- Fundamental human rights; observing individual rights as enshrined in documents
- Rule of law; ensuring that all persons are seen and treated equally in implementing laws
- Freedom of the press; allowing the press access to source and disseminate information

Laws enacted in a democracy for these features relating to the electoral process include;

- }]> periodic elections
  - }]> registration of political parties
  - }]> registration of voters and
  - }]> conducting elections by the Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs),
- That four out of the above seven items are the responsibility of EMBs indicates the critical role of elections as forming the bedrock of democracy;
  - ✓ fixing periods for elections
  - ✓ registering political parties
  - ✓ registering voters, and
  - ✓ conducting free and fair elections and providing conditions for allowing Nigerians the freedom to vote and to be voted for
- For governments to confirm or exhibit their democratic credentials, they must give prominence to Electoral Management Bodies to enable them carry out these functions in the electoral process

#### 7. Activities of Democratic Government

- There are specific activities that are identifiable and associated with governance in a democracy, especially in the Nigerian state of development, including
  - }]> Formulation of policies; providing guidance on activities of government
  - }]> Protection of the Nigerian territory; maintaining national integrity from invasions
  - }]> Law making; making laws for the good of and protection of citizens
  - }]> Maintenance of law and order; applying laws to protect the individual from molestation
  - }]> Provision of social amenities; food, water, health, education, housing
- Nigerian citizens therefore have the right to monitor:



- ↳ policies that have been formulated for carrying out government activities
- ↳ protection that government provides on a national, state and local government level;
- ↳ the laws that are being made for their welfare and protection;
- ↳ the individual security they have for life and property and social amenities being provided;
  - ✓ food
  - ✓ water
  - ✓ health
  - ✓ education
  - ✓ housing

- Governments at state and local government levels are also required to strive to;
  - ↳ formulate policies to guide their activities,
  - ↳ protect their boundaries,
  - ↳ make bye-laws for the good and protection of their people, and
  - ↳ provide social amenities
- These are the activities that, through monitoring, indicate how well governments at all levels are working to effectively represent the citizens by providing these needs.
- This provides indication of deepening of democracy beyond conduct of elections

#### 8. Aims of Government and Elections

The democratic system of government has three aims, which serve to provide checks and balances in running government.

- Executive arm; government formed at federal, state and local government levels to execute programmes for the well-being of the citizens
- Legislative arm; to make laws for carrying out the affairs of government
- The Judiciary; to interpret and apply the laws

Elections are carried out to elect;

- ↳ those to form government or the executive arm, and
- ↳ those to constitute the legislature, to make laws for good governance, but
- ↳ positions in the judiciary are by appointment
- In being appointed and funded through the instruments of the executive arms
  - ↳ The judiciary has some level of control by the executive arm of government
- The executive arm is made up of President of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, State governors and their appointees and Local Government chairmen
- The legislature is made up of federal and state houses of assembly
- The judiciary are at different levels from the lower courts up to the Supreme Court

#### 9. The Ward as a Basic Electoral Unit

The Ward is the basic electoral unit

- It is used in demarcating electoral constituencies for both federal and state elections and Registers of Voters are derived from the Wards
  - Those elected into any electoral position at Federal, State and Local Government levels become their representatives
- As representatives, they are accountable to the Wards which form their constituencies
- Representatives of all Wards from electoral offices based on levels of governance include;
  - ↳ President and Head of State
  - ↳ Governor of a state
  - ↳ Chairman of a local government council
  - ↳ For the other positions, Wards are constituted to form federal and state and local government constituencies to elect;
    - ✓ Distinguished Senator
    - ✓ Member Federal House of Assembly



- ✓ Member State House of Assembly.
- ✓ Councilor of a local government area

- All elected persons represent their Wards regardless of political party through whose platform they stood election
  - All elected persons are expected to work in the interest of the Wards in which votes were cast leading to their election
- Nigerian citizens in the different Wards have a right to monitor all these representatives

#### 10. Groups of Stakeholders

- The broad groups of stakeholders who have different needs within constituencies, are the ones to whom public education is to be directed and include;

Political Parties: Manifestoes; Primaries; Nomination of Candidates; Campaigns; Infringements; Penalties; Security; the Vote; Rights and Responsibilities

Traditional Leaders: Father Role; Security; Information Chain to Subjects; the Vote

Religious Leaders: Father Role; Security; Information Chain to Congregations; the Vote

Development Associations: Role in Communities; Community Needs; Security; Relevant Information Chain to Communities; the Vote; Rights and Responsibilities

Workers Unions: Place in Society; Needs Security; Relevant Information Chain to Members; the Vote; Rights and Responsibilities

Women Groups: Place in Society; Needs Security Relevant Information Chain to Members; the Vote; Rights and Responsibilities

The Nigerian Child: Place as future of Society; Needs; Security; Relevant Information across ages the Vote; Rights and Responsibilities

Youth Groups: Place in Society; Needs; Security; Relevant Information Chain to Members; the Vote; Rights and Responsibilities

Special Groups: Inclusiveness; Challenges; Needs; Relevant Information to challenges and members; the Vote

Elected Representatives; the people they represent, representative role, interaction in reporting and consultation

- The list of groups of stakeholders gives indication of the various interests that are required to be met through a democracy
- The grouping covers not only groups of persons who can vote but especially those of children or those below the age of 18 years who all have interests in a democracy
- The groups give indication of expectations from the electoral process
- Voter education is directed only at those in the groups, of persons of voting age
- Those who serve their constituencies well are better placed to be re-elected or to get elected into higher office
- Those who do not serve their constituencies well can face the possibility of recall
- Those who do not serve their constituencies well are in subsequent elections less likely to be re-elected

#### 11. Mass Media in Public Education

- The Nigerian society of nearly 180 million people requires the use of the mass media for Public Education.
- The use of the mass mobilization strategy was demonstrated in Nigeria through the work of the defunct Directorate of Mass Mobilization for Social and Economic Recovery (MAMSER)
- MAMSER prepared Nigerians through face-face interactions towards and for the successful conduct of the 1993 elections

Those elections were adjudged the best in Nigeria until the 2015 elections which had the advantage of the use of electronic support 22 years later; but also generated unprecedented court cases of Election Petitions.

The use of the Mass Media by Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs), in the

production of print materials and in developing and airing of variety of radio and television programmes for Public Education, requires substantial financial support.

The mass media include;

The Print Medium; Newspapers are a principal means of support through the publication of reports, articles and advertisements and production of manuals, pamphlets for the literate and posters, handbills, flyers, seasonal greeting cards and promotional materials; clocks, calendars, key holders, caps and t-shirts

The Radio Medium: This has served as a popular medium, especially when used with local languages, for the lower income and itinerant persons in providing access to information cheaply anywhere and anytime through news items, interviews, reports and discussions, jingles, drama and has the advantage of radio receivers being affordable. The Television Medium: The television medium serves similar purposes as the radio medium. It has the advantage in its visual properties for real life situations and teaching of skills where these can be practically demonstrated for viewers. Its visual properties make it most suited to the use of drama as a teaching tool for instance in situation comedies but requiring script writing and actors.

The Interpersonal Face-Face Medium: The medium is not usually recognized as being a mass communication medium, but MAMSER had proved that this constitutes the best mass medium in stakeholders' interactions to;

Cover issues on the entire electoral process

Teach specific issues of democracy and governance

Teach needs identification and monitoring

Enable stakeholders' to learn from shared views and experiences

Ultimately enable stakeholders to be active participants in democracy

## 12. Electoral Process for Deepening Democracy

- Deepening democracy, after all is said and done, depends on those as government;
  - seeing themselves as representatives of the people accepting and applying the tenets of democracy being committed to working for their constituencies
- EMBs being indeed seen to be neutral umpires

## 13. Monitoring the Electoral Process

- Democracy does empower citizens to monitor the democratic process
- Nigerian citizens have the power and are allowed to monitor:
  - The activities of government ' Arms of government; Executive, Legislature and Judiciary Electoral Management Bodies (EMBs); to ensure their neutrality
  - The election process
  - Political party manifestoes; what they propose for groups of stakeholders
  - Nomination process; protest where candidates provide false information
  - Election results; petition where there are grounds or grievances
  - The quality of representation with the power of recall or of denying votes
- Public education in assisting Nigerian citizens to play these monitoring roles would assist the elected as their representatives to discharge their responsibilities.

## 14. Conclusion

- Deepening democracy demands much more than the rather mechanical actions involved in conducting elections.
- The operation of the electoral process is in three phases including:
  - preparations long before the actual election process;
  - the actual conduct of elections and

the monitoring of elected representatives as government after elections are concluded

The process has been demonstrated in Nigeria

- Long before the 1993 elections, Nigerians; had been prepared through public education in mobilization activities had been educated about democracy and the vote had been educated about then newly created political parties National Republican Convention (NRC) and Social Democratic Party (SDP) were provided Voter Education on the process towards conduct of free, fair, non-violent and credible elections
- Since the return to democratic governance with the 1999 elections, Nigerians had continued to monitor successive governments
- This largely led to the outcome of the 2015 elections
- Nigerians as citizens have a right to the benefits of democratic governance
- They should be assisted to strive towards attaining this through the electoral process.

The proper use of the mass media is vital to effective Public Education and given the Nigerian environment, the use of face-face communication in stakeholders' interactions plays a much more effective role; stakeholders' sensitization interactions are to be encouraged.

The Paper: Nkom, A. A.: Towards Deepening Democracy in Nigeria Through the Electoral Process: Addressing Fundamental Issues: Presented at an International Conference on the theme: Deepening Democracy Through Elections in Nigeria: An Assessment; at Department of Political Science and International Studies, Faculty of Social Sciences, Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria, 7<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup> March, 2016.