POLITICAL BEHAVIOR AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA: ANALYSIS OF THE 2011 AND 2015 GENERAL ELECTIONS

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KEYWORDS

Political Behavior, Democracy, Election, Electoral Violence, Governance

ABSTRACT

A prosperous democracy is only possible when a free and fair election is achieved. If resources and potentials of the nation will be properly maximized, it will begin with an election without intimidation or harassment. The voters should be allowed to freely vote for the candidate and political parties of their choice. Searching through history, it has been discovered that there has been no general election in Nigeria since independence in 1960 that has not been characterized by election violence, which has also led to a serious crisis, violence, disputations, and even bloodshed despite the law governing the electoral process in Nigeria. It is therefore pertinent to investigate the reasons why it has been impossible for Nigeria as a nation to achieve a credible election since inception. Therefore, this paper outlines the common challenges of election and why the political actors prefer electoral violence instead of a free and fair election. Using both primary and secondary data, that is, the historical analysis of data, from different scholarly works, this paper found out that it is germane to analyze the reasons why elections in Nigeria can never be credible and possible solutions, with specific focus on the 2011 and 2015 general elections from the comparative analysis perspectives. The credibility of election has always been on paper, but obviously the actions of the people involved is the direct opposite of what the law says. No doubt, there is need for government to place priority on non-inference in electoral matters, the role of judiciary and re-orientation of politicians, also systems and institutions should work in Nigeria like other advanced countries.

Introduction

One of the prerequisites of a healthy democracy is a free and fair election. But it is a reality and nothing but the truth that in established democracies, election and violence can go hand in hand causing threat to the credibility of the process of election. Electoral violence is not a new concept in many countries around the world, Nigeria inclusive and different forms of electoral violence are common in practice, along with loss of life and properties before, during and after the elections. Kean (2004) asserts that violence is the greatest enemy of democracy, and of course this assertion resonates with what this study stands for, when the greatest enemy of democracy is

actually what the politicians prefer, then there is a problem with the entire structure. also. Itodo (2019) opines that many have lost confidence in the genuineness and integrity of elections because the entire process has not been able to engender confidence in the electorates as well as contestants, this assertion is relatively genuine. so many people have lost interest in anything called election because the process doesn't regard the citizens, if not for the fact that the citizens are not regarded and considered. a true and credible system would have been put in place. Anyways, most of these works didn't truthfully point out reasons why elections can never be achieved in Nigeria, except these reasons can be put into consideration, then, we are all still joking as a nation. and obviously, we are not ready for a true democracy. In any nation where election violence continues for several days or weeks. this can literarily affect nation-building effort and possibly the ongoing peace-building. In 1999, when the military finally left the politics scene by handing-over the reins of political power to civilians after 37years of authoritarian rule, since then almost all the general elections conducted in Nigeria have been characterized with election violence.

Elections are courtesy for any democracy. Election entails a set of pursuits/activities leading to a careful choosing of one more person out of many to serve in positions of authority in a society. In any sincere political categorization all over the world, election through the ballot is strongly acknowledged as the dependable barometer of the power balance. Abraham Lincoln said that "The ballot is strong than the bullet" The biggest of the opposition facing Nigeria today is how to select leaders at the different levels of government via a free and fair elections. The peremptory of free and fair elections is better encapsulate by the former President of Nigeria Yar'Adua when he opines that "Electoral reform is predicated on the belief that elections are the very bedrock of democracy hence they must not only be fair but they must be seen to be so by our people and the rest of the world.'' Free and fair election must be characterized by the presence of a wide range of fundamental human rights and the absence of intimidation, such as the rights to free expression, association, information, assembly, opinion, and the production from violence and all forms of discrimination. Free and fair elections are the keystone of any democracy, it is also efficient for peaceful transfer of power. Apparently, there are electoral laws guiding the true process of democracy, actions and decisions other than this is an abuse of what the law indicates, if a credible election can't be actualized in Nigeria then the whole structure will be labeled faulty, therefore what goes on in such structure can never be credible, the major reason for the coldness from electorates/citizen towards the electoral process, the statement now is it is their affairs, let the run it, and as they run it to achieve their selfish desires the masses are terribly affected, therefore, democracy is not again the government of the people, by the people and for the people according Abraham Lincoln, the father of democracy but rather government of the selfish set of people, by them and for these selfish set of people that are supposed to be selfless and compassionate, this is because they can go any length to manipulated the whole process to achievement of their personal desires, since most times we get the political candidates we didn't order for, but imposed on us, regrettably, the citizens suffer for the irregularities and malpractices.

Conceptual Framework

Political Behavior

The subset of human behavior that involves politics and power which is political behavior is very germane to understand the concept of electoral violence in Nigeria. Political behavior is the study of the way people act, feel and think regarding politics.The term refers to any form of involvement in the political process, or any activity which has political aftermaths in conjunction to government and policy. It includes the subset of human behavior that involves power and politics. Karl Deutsch and Theodor Adorno are the theorists who have had impact on the concept of Political behavior. This broad definition symbolizes both legitimate forms of political participation (such as voting in elections, activism in interest groups, or social movements) and illegitimate political activities. While formal involvement connotes at containing social disagreement within the extant political system, so that the political order remains stable, objection which cannot be channeled through existing political structures is likely, not only to pursue changes in policy, but also to dare the political order itself. The study of political behavior also embraces the study of inactivity and apathy, as well as the interpretation of political ideologies, values, and attitudes as the basis of involvement and non-involvement in the political sphere.

Political behavior in a democracy has both problems and prospects that differs from those of private and voluntary activity. Political action can force all citizens to act in accordance with decisions made by their chosen representatives. Because these political decisions are supposed to be for the good of all, the support of all is commanded. But because no single citizen's ballot is decisive, electorates are not very productive at monitoring the intent and the efficient of political action. Voter turnout is often not encouraging and even very intelligent electorates are badly uninformed on policy issues.

Election

An election is a formal and a well organized choice of voting for a person for a political position or a process by which a population select an individual or multiple individuals to occupy public office. It is a formal process of accepting or rejecting a political proposition by exercising franchise. Most countries hold elections in a formal sense, but in many countries of course elections are not competitive. Election can occupy positions in the legislation, but, sometimes in the judiciary and executive and the local and regional government. It is the process of electing or being elected. Albert (2007) opines that election plays an important role in the life of a nation. It is an important way by which citizens choose their leaders, and by so doing, contribute meaningfully to the identification of the kind of development they would like to see. Election in the parlance of Oxford Advance Learner's dictionary (2010) sees it as the process of selecting a person or a group of people for a position, especially a political office, by exercising the franchise. It is clear that voting is an important element of election as explain that the democratic system is the extent to which the most powerful collective decision makers are selected through fair, honest, and periodic elections in which candidates freely compete for votes, and in which virtually all the adult population is eligible to vote. Similarly, Akzin (1960) notifies us that elections have technical and social significance. In the technical sense, they are the process through which an office or post is assigned to a person by an act of volition that requires the simultaneous expression of many people's opinions.

Election is the line of action that allows members of an organization to select representatives who will hold positions of authority within it. Election is the process of elite selection by the mass of the population in any given system. Hence, elections determine the proper way of ensuring that responsible leaders to take over the mantle of the people concerning who govern at these levels serves as an avenue for the public to make choices about the policies, programs, and future directions of government action. Election is a key instrument for the recruitment of political leadership in democratic societies; the core to participation in democracy; and the way of giving consent to government; and allowing the governed to select and pass judgment on office holders who theoretically represent the governed.

Electoral Violence

Election violence connotes the use of power and force to attain political aims. This can apparently include violence which can be used by state against other states and it can be in form of war, a violence which is used by State against non-state actors or civilians. As Elections are very strong tool for national change can also not be effective if violence is involved or if there is an interference in the process of election. No single definition or a generally acceptable definition on the electoral violence, it may symbolize intimidation, threats of coercion and physical harm instigated to interfere in an electoral process or that emerge from electoral competition. No doubt, violence prevents people's involvement in the electoral process, and of course there will be imposition of candidates, rules which in turn hinders or retards the development of such a state. Some scholars perceive violence in the light of the use of coercion or force against people and objects. (Hook, 1934) defines violence as an illegal employment of method of physical coercion for personal or group ends. Corsini (1999) defines violence as the manifestation of hostility and rage through physical force directed against persons or property. Wolff (1969) asserts "that violence is the illegitimate or unauthorized use of force to effect decisions against the will or desire of others".

Electoral violence is instigated by political leaders to intentionally influence the process and aftermath of elections, and it involves coercive acts against people, resources, and infrastructure. This usually occur in all the process of the electoral activities, which include, the notification of elections, the conduct of party primaries, and voter registration, and this act can

be encouraged by both state and non-state actors Violence is the physical or emotional force and energy. It is caused by physical force that is intended to hurt or kill somebody, electoral violence is seen as all forms of violence (physical, psychological, administrative, legal and structural) at different stages engaged in by participants, their supporters and sympathizer (including security and election management body staff) in the electoral process.

Why do Elections become violent?

Elections are battleground for resource control, which raises the stakes and likelihood of clashed. According to World Health Organization (2022), election violence is a deliberate use of power and force to achieve political goals, therefore, for political actors to achieve their political goals, election must be violent. Indeed, It is a violence which is perpetrated in order to achieve political goals. The use of electoral violence is usually to fulfil a revolutionary objective, and in times of civil strife it is used to challenge the status quo. Another possible reason why elections become violent is the fact that at the basic level, electoral is employed to either coercively maintain or achieve power, including to enforce patriarchal control of democratic institutions. Violence against women is also an important issue to be considered, this is often motivated by the desire to punish women for their participation in the electoral process, as their involvement threatens the dominance of male power structure, this issue should require a special attention, as it is expected that there should be an equal participation of men and women in politics and electoral process.

Violence as a response to initial violent is also a likely reason why so elections become violent, even the most righteous protests may involve violent episodes as the victims of violence also respond with violence. Others include: Prevention of election manipulations, seeking electoral advantages and finally, disrupting elections. Electoral violence as a strategy deployed by the political actors, this strategic perspective dominates existing literature on electoral violence, with scholars seeking to uncover the incentives and strategic settings that make violence an attractive tactic for political leaders.

Evolution of Electoral Violence in Nigeria

The different Electoral violence Nigeria witnessed had its various impact, vividly electoral violence was not new during or introduced in Nigeria during the 2011 and 2015 general elections, of course this concept can be traced back to 1922 when the Clifford constitution was introduced. Of course the Clifford constitution came with the opinion of electoral principle which created the avenue for voting in Lagos and Calabar and also paving way for politicking in the Nigerian polity. According to Nwolise (2007) he was of the opinion that from the 1959 general elections that ushered in the independence of 1960, the state began to experience a high level of electoral violence varying from all spheres including physical, structural, and psychological violence. Also, Ugoh (2004), most of the political parties at that time lacked an ideological base and thus party membership, affiliations, and formations were all based on ethnic or regional sentiments. Electoral violence during the 1959 elections was on a low scale and this was a result of the presence of the colonial masters who were as at that time present to monitor the electoral event. (US) In 1964, another round of general elections was first conducted by the elite of the Nigerian state after the independence. Before the elections, the contested results of the national census and intense political campaigns by the political parties had increased the tempo of the political stake and this affected the outcome of the elections which was severely marred by unethical practices. There was a high level of violence such as maiming, kidnapping, arson, and murder. The electoral violence reached a climax by 1965-1966 during the Western Regional Elections which emanated from the tense electoral battle between the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) and the Nigerian National Democratic Party (NNDP) for the control of the government of the Western Region. There was a very high level of rigging and physical violence associated with that election and this was what made the Eastern part of the state boycott the elections. On the 11th of October, 1965, the Western House of Assembly ended in chaos, extreme violence, and disorder due to widespread and high levels of rigging.

The 2011 elections were described as a do-or-die affair. Violence erupted in the northern states of Nigeria such as Kano, Kaduna, Katsina, Bauchi, etc. there was a high degree of rigging in the north because to win the presidential polls in Nigeria the 19 northern states and the states of

the southwest must be captured. This led to the imposition of a dusk-to-dawn curfew in most northern states. At the 2015 general elections, violence was recorded though it was mostly exhibited in the South-South geopolitical zone of Nigeria in states like Rivers and Akwa Ibom. The ruling party the PDP and its agents were accused of deploying all means necessary including barbaric methods to clinch victory at the polls. In Akwa Ibom state before the elections, candidates were even murdered by unknown gunmen and in some cases maimed. There has been a barrage of accusations and counter-accusations by the All Progressives Congress claiming that the People's Democratic Party (PDP) used its hoodlums, security agencies, and its thugs to truncate the elections in their favor. The opposition parties in the state claimed that there was no election held in that state and that the PDP rigged the elections.

Causes of Electoral Violence

The fact that political actors or politicians do not accept defeat makes them selfish and this will in turn affect their behavior towards electoral process (political behavior) lack of love for the nation, godfatherism, lack of stiff punishment for offenders before doing and after election are all causes of electoral malpractice by so doing, interference in the electoral process will be inevitable. Other causes of electoral violence include, bribery and corruption, influence of party in power, late arrival of materials at voting centers, crave for power, poverty and lack of political education. Election should not be a do or die or kill affairs, it should be void of violence or malpractice at all cost.

Analysis of the 2011 and 2015 General Elections

Democratic governance is a desire for many as it is proclaimed globally to be the form of governance that encourages freedom. Past elections in Nigeria, with the exception of 2015 based on local and international observer reports, have not been credible due to series of electoral rigging and manipulations, ballot box stuffing and snatching, violence and so on. The exception, that is 2015 elections, according to credible local and international observers, was said to have experienced moderately small violence or voter fraud as against the previous elections that have been conducted. Nigeria's 2011 elections were the most violent yet claiming 800 lives in three days. Breaking the cycle of violence includes ending impunity for political violence, cultivating local peace building initiatives, and strengthening local democratic institutions. The exception, that is 2015 elections, according to credible local and international observers, was said to have experienced moderately small violence or voter fraud as against the previous elections that have been conducted. Also, 2015 election was an exercise that demonstrated that elections must not and does not have to be a do-or-die issue between and among individuals and political parties. The 2019 election, on the other hand, was filled with high rate of tension, intense campaign, violence, threats and it demonstrated that elections must be a do-or-die issue as there was the desire to win at all cost. Since the establishment of the Commission, six (6), the 2015 elections were an exercise that demonstrated that elections must not and does not have to be a do-or-die issue. It was said to have showed the dominance of the significance of the people above a section in the country. Furthermore, regardless of the intensity of contest between the two main political parties in 2015 (PDP and APC), there was a spirit of collaboration that existed in their activities before and after the election.

2011 Nigerian General Elections

Nigeria's 2011 elections were the most violent yet claiming 800 lives in three days. Breaking the cycle of violence includes ending impunity for political violence, cultivating local peace building initiatives, and strengthening local democratic institutions. The deadly election-related and communal violence in northern Nigeria following the April 2011 presidential voting left more than 800 people dead, Human Rights Watch said today. The victims were killed in three days of rioting in 12 northern states. The violence began with widespread protests by supporters of the main opposition candidate, Muhammadu Buhari, a northern Muslim from the Congress for Progressive Change, following the re-election of incumbent Goodluck Jonathan, a Christian from the Niger Delta in the south, who was the candidate for the ruling People's Democratic Party. The protests degenerated into violent riots or sectarian killings in the northern states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto and Zamfara. Relief officials estimate that more than 65,000 people were been displaced.

"The April elections were heralded as among the fairest in Nigeria's history, but they also were among the bloodiest," said Corinne Dufka, senior West Africa researcher at Human Rights Watch. The presidential election divided the country along ethnic and religious lines. As election results trickled in on April 17, and it became clear that Buhari had lost, his supporters took to the streets of northern towns and cities to protest what they alleged to be the rigging of the results.

The protesters started burning tires, and the protests soon turned into riots. The rioting quickly degenerated into sectarian and ethnic bloodletting across the northern states. Muslim rioters targeted and killed Christians and members of ethnic groups from southern Nigeria, who were perceived to have supported the ruling party, burning their churches, shops, and homes. The rioters also attacked police stations and ruling party and electoral commission offices. In predominately Christian communities in Kaduna State, mobs of Christians retaliated by killing Muslims and burning their mosques and properties.

In the predominately Christian towns and villages of southern Kaduna State, including Zonkwa, Matsirga, and Kafanchan, sectarian clashes left more than 500 dead, according to Muslim and Christian leaders interviewed by Human Rights Watch. The vast majority of the victims in these areas were Muslim. Human Rights Watch estimates that in northern Kaduna State, at least 180 people, and possibly more, were killed in the cities of Kaduna and Zaria and their surrounding suburbs. According to media reports and journalists interviewed by Human Rights Watch, dozens of people were also killed during riots in the other northern states. Also, a lecturer at a college on the outskirts of Zaria also described an attack experienced on the college. Following the violence, a Human Rights Watch researcher drove through smoldering towns in the southern part of Katsina State, interviewed witnesses in the cities of Kaduna and Zaria in northern Kaduna State, and visited burned-out villages in southern Kaduna State, including Zonkwa, Matsirga, and Kafanchan, that resembled war zones with entire neighborhoods razed to the ground.

In many of the northern towns and cities, Christians found refuge in police stations and military barracks. In southern Kaduna State, Muslim women and children flocked to police stations for safety. The police successfully protected people in many cases, but they were largely ineffective at controlling the rioting and violence in other places, Human Rights Watch found. In several cases, witnesses told Human Rights Watch that it was often not until soldiers were deployed to affected areas that the violence was halted.

Human Rights Watch received credible reports that the police and soldiers in Kaduna, Gombe, and Bauchi states systematically beat people rounded up during or after the riots. Many of the detainees charged at the Chief Magistrate's Court in Kaduna city had fresh scars on their backs, journalists who attended the hearing told Human Rights Watch. In the town of Azare, in northern Bauchi State, witnesses told Human Rights Watch that detainees were severely beaten by soldiers and police. One of the detainees' hands was reportedly broken, while another detainee was hospitalized as a result of the beatings.

Because of the effect of the riot, Dufka was of the opinion that "The Nigerian authorities should promptly investigate these credible reports of unlawful killings and other abuses by members of the security forces," "The use of violence by rioters, mobs, and state actors alike needs to be stopped." On May 11, President Jonathan appointed a new 22-member panel to investigate the causes and extent of the election violence. The police spokesperson in Kaduna State told Human Rights Watch that more than 500 people have been arrested and charged following the recent post-election violence. But police and state prosecutors in the past have rarely followed through with criminal investigations and effective prosecutions.

In the town of Kafanchan, one of the Christian leaders lamented to Human Rights Watch that past commissions of inquiry have failed to bring the culprits to book.

2015 Nigerian General Election

General elections were held in Nigeria on 28 and 29 March 2015, the fifth quadrennial election to be held since the end of military rule in 1999. Voters elected the President of Nigeria and members to the House of Representatives and the Senate. The incumbent president Goodluck Jonathan sought his second and final term. The elections were first scheduled to be held on 14 February 2015. Thus, the electoral commission postponed it by six weeks to 28 March, mainly due to the poor distribution of Permanent Voter Cards, and also

to curb ongoing Boko Haram insurgency in certain north-eastern states. The government closed its land and sea borders from midnight on 25 March until the end of the polling date. The election was extended to 29 March due to delays and technical problems with the biometric card readers.

It was the most expensive election ever to be held on the African continent. Nigeria is the continent's most populous country, has the largest economy and is its leading oil producer. Opposition candidate Muhammadu Buhari won the presidential election by more than 2.5 million votes. Incumbent President Goodluck Jonathan conceded defeat on 31 March, before the results from all 36 states had been announced. The election marked the first time an incumbent president had lost re-election in Nigeria. The President-elect was sworn-in on 29 May 2015, marking the first time since Nigeria gained independence in 1960 that a sitting government peacefully transferred power to an elected member of the opposition. Buhari flipped many states that had voted PDP in the previous election.

Reason why elections in Nigeria can never be credible

1. No systems and institutions in place in Nigeria
2. The interest of the political class
3. Personality behavior
4. The fact that some leaders do not accept defeat
5. Dimension of poverty
6. Education/ Illiteracy
7. Insecurity

Elections in Nigerian can never be credible because of the points highlighted above, firstly, the fact that there are no working systems and institutions to regulate the electoral process in Nigeria, elections in Nigeria can never be credible, if systems and institutions can be efficient in other countries all over the world, therefore, Nigeria should not be an exception. Until systems and institutions are installed in Nigeria, there can't be a credible election in Nigeria. Secondly, the interest of the political class in Nigeria is another major reason why elections can never be free and fair, a very good example of this political class and how they control the political affairs of the state, for example, in Lagos State, the PDP candidate during the last two elections before the recent one was coming out every four years to contest with the ruling party in Lagos State, his coming was a political agenda not to allow another strong party to emerge to snatch power from the ruling party APC. In theory he was coming every four years but the PDP candidate was working for the ruling party in Lagos in disguise, he gets more contracts from the Lagos State Government than any other contractor, before he stopped coming, he was coming out every four years to deceive his followers, he was coming out as an opposing party against the ruling party in Lagos State. Recently and towards the last election, they also brought another PDP candidate which was not also a credible candidate for PDP, he too was working for the ruling party, as matter of fact he was a commissioner under Fashola's administration, he was never a credible candidate to wrestle power from the ruling class in Lagos State. Finally on this point is the Soludo's assessment of Peter Obi, the Governor of Anambra State, his diatribe against Peter Obi, the Anambra Governor who appeared to sympathize for PDP's candidate, Mr Atiku, he is apparently hoped that the PDP could reward the region's support with an "Igbo ticket" in subsequent election, he raised a dust in the political space by when he issued a lengthy statement in response to verbal attacks by supporters of the Labour Party (LP) candidate. Peter Obi. This was a political class thing.

Personality Behavior is another major reason why elections in Nigeria can never be credible, some political leaders have the tendency to initiate violent acts, a typical example was the 2011 elections, before the election during the primaries, when they were still counting the votes Buhari made this statement and he stood by it with different violent acts from his supporters, he said and I quote "I will make the country ungovernable if I didn't emerge the winner" of course that was a threat to the nation, this is one of the issues of personality behavior. Jonathan didn't loose the election to Buhari but because he knew what happened in 2011, Jonathan said while Orubebe was trying to make drama with Jega that they rigged the election, if not, why did they delay the votes in Kastina, Kano and Port Harcourt. Then Jonathan said and I quote, " the position doesn't worth the blood of Nigerians" this was because he had the

information about how the Nigerian Copers were killed as caused by Buhari, Jonathan wasn't afraid but he considered the Nigerians as a patriotic leader.

In addition, the fact that some leaders do not accept defeat, they are not ready to accept defeat, a very good example is the political leaders in Nigeria, to them politics to the is a do-or -die affair. Also, the dimension of poverty is another impediment to credible election, this is because some electorates or voters usually see election season as a money making season for them. Some of the ad-hoc staff, apart from the money they paid them for their services, some of them still have perpetual ad-hoc agenda by paying voters five thousand to vote for the candidates they are supporting, also, in the northern part of Nigeria where five thousand is given free for people to vote, of course people who couldn't afford good food will fall for the offer to get money to survive.

Education is another reason why elections can never be credible in Nigeria, John F. Kennedy said "The ignorance of one voter in a democracy impairs the security of all". Therefore. As long as we have people who cannot interrogate the manifestoes or agenda of political parties so there can never be a credible election in Nigeria.

On a final note, insecurity is another reason why elections can't be credible in Nigeria, people are afraid of intimidation so also the researcher, for example if people get to the polling unit to vote, you will see the supporters of political candidates telling electorates to vote for their candidates with proof, it is either by snapping or by other means with the show of cutlass by their side, of course that act will guarantee their security in that environment. Of course, the above reasons why elections in Nigeria cannot be credible discussed above can be put into consideration by the right authorities in order to prevent future occurrence.

Consequences of Electoral Violence in Nigeria

Basically, election violence or malpractice cannot in anyway help any country because of its negative impact. Malpractice in the electoral process will allow wrong people to be in government, apparently bad leadership is the point emphasizing here, these people may be inexperienced, corrupt and visionless. Electoral violence paints the country bad internationally, such nation is seen as a corrupt nation. Loss of lives and properties, during this act, people lost their lives, building, cars and even parts of their body to protests and riots over the outcome of the election. In addition, where election results are always being manipulated, voters may develop apathy towards voting in subsequent elections. The researcher is a very good example of someone who had developed apathy towards voting in Nigeria, except if things can be done accordingly and in order, then the researcher's interest can be revived. Political participation is very germane, the concept of political participation, which includes electoral participation, this also consist of "legal activities by private and citizens that are more or less directly aimed at influencing the selection of government personnel and the decisions they take" (Verba et al., 1978, p. 46) In Nigeria, we can actually do better and hold value in high esteem, valueless acts should be discouraged and not celebrated, if not, we are all doing more harm to ourselves and to Nigeria as a nation. Electoral violence can lead to riots, fighting, burning of houses and destruction of properties, Nigeria has experienced all these in almost all elections conducted so far, including the general elections conducted recently in Nigeria. Another point is military intervention, a situation where electoral violence becomes the order of the day or when a country start to experience civil unrest, bad leadership and political challenges, the military may see the need to come back on the scene of Nigerian politics. Apparently, this will bring serious setback to the growth of democracy in Nigeria. It is pertinent to note that, Nigeria, under military will connote that all democratic institutions will be scrapped and military will rule by decree and not by the wish of the people.

Recommendations

Electoral violence is indeed an enemy of true democracy, any society that allows political violence to eat up the progress of it nation has done nothing but an harm to the entire development of that society, apparently, this act has the potential to paralyze the development of such society. This might be slow but the paralysis will be inform of economical, political, psychological and social manifestations. The following are the recommended to the government and all the legit bodies involved in the electoral process.

The role of the judiciary, judiciary should be independent to play the role of defender of democracy before, during and after elections. Electoral violence cases shouldn't be swept under the carpet also, people with financial power or resources should not negatively influence the process, offenders should be brought to book. Cases should be treated with urgency, impartiality and seriousness. Sacred cow shouldn't exist when judgement is to be passed.

Re-orientation of the politicians in Nigeria is very paramount, this is because politicians attitudes need to be transformed. The love for the nation should be pertinent in their hearts rather than their selfish desires for positions they could use loot the treasury. If the Nigerian politicians can exhibit a good attitude, election will not be a do-or-die affair and interference in the electoral process would be reduced.

There is also the need for proper planning, the body in charge of election (Electoral Commission) should do a proper planning of the election so that there will not be loopholes for politicians or their agents to hijack the election.

The government must ensure that the various security agents of the country are properly oriented, and they should be properly equipped and strategically positioned.

Educating the youths is very germane, courses or subjects to build in our youths positive attitude towards elections as future party leaders, electorates and candidates should be introduced.

Conclusion

Men are not inexperienced when it comes to political violence but rather an effect of his tendency of falling, his actions and decisions against the grains of his nature. Electoral violence is an enemy to a true democracy.This paper has significantly discussed evolution and reasons why election can never be credible in Nigeria, except if the points discussed above can be put into consideration, which is seen in the light of the fact that some leaders do not accept defeat, personality behavior, interest of the political class and lastly, no efficient systems and institutions in place in Nigeria. The effect electoral violence can be traced from the bad leadership, bad image internationally, loss of lives and properties and development of apathy. Electoral violence is contagious virus whose genetic transcription is difficult to comprehend. The standpoint taken in this work shows the unavoidable of violence during the 2011 and 2015 general elections in Nigeria. Electoral violence should not be a political option because of the destruction the nation tend to experience.

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