YOUTH PARTICIPATION AND ELECTORAL DEMOCRACY IN KOGI STATE; ISSUES AND PROSPECTS

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ABSTRACT
The paper clarifies how youth political engagement in electoral democracy is understood and the activities that constitute challenges for successful democratic process in Kogi State. The paper further explains youth participation in electoral democracy and they desire for equal representation and good governance. These desire were punctuated by money politics, electoral financing and electoral violence. The electoral series held between 2015 and 2023, revealed political violence and outrageous elections expense at all tiers of electoral contest, which infiltrate to produce declared winner without integrity. It is proof that cost of registration and administration of campaigning hinder youth participation in politic. Sadly, previous empirical studies failed to indicate the derogatory implication of money politics and how has electoral expenditures overtaken the place of merit. This situation further introduces youth as instrument of destruction that crept Nigeria political event. The paper explained how this perception affects electoral integrity in Kogi State. This paper examines youth participation in electoral democracy, and how electoral expenditure has hindered youth participation in electoral democracy, a signals to poor political culture. The paper adopted descriptive methods. This approach relies on both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources rely on copies of questionnaire. Secondary sources rely on textbook, journal, conference proceeding and Nigeria daily. The study adopted Marxist theory of Democracy. The finding indicates huge electoral expenditures, political inequality and compromised political space overtaken the place merit, which restrict youths from electoral contest. The paper recommends youth sensitization on political culture, with the view to exposing the risk associated with money politics and electoral violence in Nigeria.

Introduction

Youth participation in electoral democracy in Kogi State did not reflect the basic elective principles of democracy, which connotes political equality devoid of coercion, hostility and threats (Godwin, 2024), whose outcome must reflect model of democracy. Michael, (2018) argues youths have been negatively assembled by ruling class to perform role of thugs. The elite took advantage of their economic situation to exploit and drives they selfish motive. We have in mind the experience of 2019 governorship election in Kogi State where politicians hire the service of youths they recruit as thugs, arm them with weapons, and reward them for terrorizing the political opponent; to also thwart a successful democratic process in the State. Youth participation is exigent (Godwin, 2024). This is because young people are left out the way to assemble as political thugs for politicians who seeking political power. Gauba, (2007) revealed that young people have marred by inability to defend and return accurate polling results, though, political elite failed to provide youth the platform to compete in Nigeria; especially with the podium to expressing their views and exerts influence, regarding political, economic and social decisions (Kolawole, 2005). Youth were denied opportunity to influence governmental decisions in a representational manner; where they could mobilize support in their large number to secure political gains (Afolayan, 2015). The negative role of youth in politics, affected the electoral integrity in Kogi State. Nigerian youths must be encouraged to participate positively and actively in political processes.

Godwin, (2024) revealed that youths partake in most compromised electoral process, which produce declared winner without integrity in the State. For instances, the electoral series held between 2015 and 2023 in Kogi State, further prove how youth were used as instrument of violence during elections (Tenuche and Egwemi, 2020). Most enlighten youth were recruited as 'data boys', whose activities revolves propaganda and negative criticism to run-down opposition parties (Jibrin and Michael, 2020). It was alleged that youth considered this a means of survival as participation. Youth were involving in series of actions related to activism, these actions cover organizing demonstrations and wearing campaign logos to getting contact with politicians. Confronted with these extensive varieties of possible activities, several significant recommendations have been made by researchers to change their nature of political engagement (Hoskins, 2013). Still, in present times, protest, demonstrations, picketing, and boycotts were organized by politicians to hinder youth from positive engagement in politics (Vite, 2018; Hern, 2016), these factors cannot provide for country that are search for transparency and enthronement of trust in the electoral process.

Given were the basic changes in the approach why youth were unable to engage properly with political issues in Kogi State; maybe possibly because they are poor and money politics adopted by ruling classes to secured victory at the polls, Forestiere, (2015) in his writing forbid perception of money politics as he argues that money politics will render the voting power of electorate useless.

Tenuche and Egwemi, (2020) observes that cost of funding political activities, registration, administration of campaigning logistics during elections; most likely to hinder youth participation in politics. Sadly, money played critical role in Nigeria politics it has taken center stage in political process. The strategy of votes buying adopted by ruling classes target at preventing youth positive participation in politics. Though youth placed much regards to negative participatory democracy, because of its financial rewards (Kingsley, 2013). The paper argues that this perception creates unbalance political arrangement between youth and governing class. Thus, youths are often the least age group in to be saddle with responsibility in Nigeria. The issues about perfect way to motivate and improve youth's political engagement as profess by Tonge & Mycock, (2009), are insignificant to the circumstance of the newer democratic setting.

Elections are the baseline for all democracies (Godwin, 2014). It is a precious activity in a democratic set up. It is an important tenet of democracy which allows the people to have a government of their choice (Godwin, 2024). Note that election is not only meant to ensure the legitimacy of political office holder through regular consent of the people, but also to provide a plain ground for democracy to thrive. Without which, the people are bound to be helpless and democracy losses all its meaning. But in the case of Nigerian, Afolayan, (2015) argues money is central in politics. On this note the paper agree that all parties involved in electoral democracies need money to play an active role which relates to expenditure of the candidates or parties during elections, Kogi State

is not an exception. Nonetheless, money politics repudiates youth participation in electoral democracy; for lacking require capital to fund and financed all the processes leading victory.

The paper is set to re-establish youth political ambitions, as it recommends positive participatory democracy. As it suggests political equality among citizens as approved by law, within where repudiates could be provide electives position of governance. No sooner than later, money bags in Nigeria politics who dictate the selecting process will have retired from politics. It is against this background that the paper set out to examine the implication of money politics and how has it constitute issues to youth participation in electoral democracies in Kogi State, with the view to exposing the associated risk, therefore, attempt contribution in form of recommendations to end unequal representation arising participatory democracy in Kogi State.

Statement of Research Problems

This paper discusses what add up to challenges for youth participation in electoral democracy in Kogi State. Elections are basic tenets of democracy. Unfortunately, over the years, electoral democracy has been dogged with disagreement arising from youth negatives engagement and inability to defend polling results (Godwin, 2024). The paper has in mind, where ruling class had failed to provide platform for positive competition; especially with the podium, youth can be expressing their views and exerts influence in politics. It is disheartening to note that youth participation in electoral democracy have been obstructed due to nefarious activities and strategies of political actors.

Youth play vital parts to ensuring they bring change to the society. This they do by political participation through formulation of political parties, vying for political position (Michael, 2018). But the perception of overbearing influence of 'godfathers' resulted to engaging political thugs, to oppress and intimidate opponents, thus, provide them means of livelihood. This attempt often changes the perception of average Nigerian on political realities and the integrity of electoral democracy.

The involvement of money bags (political godfathers) in Nigeria politics dictate the selecting process of whom emerge as candidate, this it says, makes the disgruntled groups to find other less constructive channel for the expression of their discontent. The paper set out to examine how youth participation, constitute challenges for electoral democracy in Kogi State.

Objectives of the study

The objectives of this study includes, to:

1. Examine youth participation in electoral democracy between 2015 and 2023 in Kogi State,
2. Analyze challenges prohibiting youth participation in electoral democracies in Kogi State
3. Identify and recommend measure to enhances positive engagement of young people in electoral democracy

Research Questions

1. How has youth participated in electoral democracy between 2015 and 2023 in Kogi State?
2. What constitute challenges for youth participation in electoral democracies in Kogi State?
3. Is there any measure to end negative engagement of young people in electoral democracy?

Marxist Theory of Democracy

Marxist theory of democracy adopts to evaluate this paper with reference to class character. Marxist criticizes common form of liberal democracy arrangement in a capitalist society, where majority workers were deprived of benefits. For Marxist, liberal democracy exclusively serves the interest of the capitalist class.

In spite of its vast representative institutions, liberal democracy hardly serves the interest of the people on whose behalf power is exercise. According to Marx and Engel, the executive of the modem state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie" {Communist Manifesto; 1848). Here he refers modem state as established model of liberal democracy. John (1978), has

enumerated the following outstanding reasons advanced by Marxists; he write that there are great inequalities of wealth, power and influence; which is associated with the wealthy, because them alone can afford to provide their children with the expensive schooling needed to fix them positions of power and influence; it gather large organizations of people and create social inequalities to deprived less privilege access to power, influence and followership and Power and influence depend greatly on information, while the wealthy placed the poor in a position of gathering information, to control the distribution of it. No doubt, most liberal democracy involve in larger economic inequalities.

The application of this theory is derives from the argument of Marxist over political inequality create by liberal democracy. In their view liberal democracy exclusively divided the states into the 'haves' and 'have-nots', the haves represent the wealthy (ruling class) and the have-nots represent the youth (voters) whose interests are diametrically opposed to each other. Political power is only a handmaid of economic power. It is therefore, quite natural that the political institutions are bound to serve the interests of the wealthy depriving (youth) the voters equal opportunities. The political institutions in a capitalist society, pays lip-service to 'sovereignty of the people' in order to derive political right. It operates in a situation where all sections of society accept the legality of governing class in relations to roles impose on youth (voters) to continue serving they common interests.

In this situation, the state create government, pretends to chose representatives of proletariat and bourgeoisie. By implication youth who representing the strength of working class have no right to vote on parity, this was draw from the belief that both do not have equal share in governance. As it create an impression that the State has taking care of youth (workers) interests.

But, these were position of liberal democracy, to simply provide legitimacy to the ruling class that is not neutral. John (1978) has elucidated that "so long as the capitalist mode of production prevails, society remains divided into two antagonistic classes' capitalists and workers, who represent the ruling class and ruled classes respectively''. The state, being the agent of ruling class is mandate to serves at expense of the ruled class. The paper writes that youth who represent the ruled class was denied equal opportunity, the situation that breeds injustice, but this was widely accepted as a standard.

Under this ideology, the youth are made to believe that they are being ruled with their consent. But blindly follow bourgeois against their consent. Thus liberal democracy, in Marxist view, State is capable of preventing youth participation in electoral democracy so long as the nominees remain in power to serve the purpose, dictated by the State. And if, these economic and social inequalities are not removed, the liberal democracy will continue to serve as true democracy. But this position would not be acceptable to Marxist advocates.

Concept Democracy and Electoral Process

There is no universally accepted connotation of democracy. Various intellectuals have diverse view and explanations on the conceptualization of democracy. Democracy is the rule of the people (Falade, 2014). In this classic meaning of democracy, is a system of government under which the people exercise the governing power either directly or through representatives periodically elected by them (Appadorai, 2004). It require a common man with certain level of ability and character, rational conduct, active participation in the government and the understanding of public affairs; independent judgment, tolerance and unselfish devotion to public interest, to participate.

The paper write that democracy is the ultimate authority of governance, should though rest with the people themselves. when this idea is sought to be implemented through the mechanism of representative democracy, it is possible that the people may become inactive after choosing their representatives till the next general elections. (Gauba, (2007) avers that the small section of the citizens participates in the discussion that is beneficial to them who are loyal to their representatives. Such affairs confined citizens to votes the politicians, the political party and the programmes of their choice. Provided the activities capture their private interest. This implies that citizen participation is not a necessary cconditions of democracy, but it confined voters to vote for the politicians and political parties of their choice during the periodic elections. In other words, modem democracy is primarily the rule of politicians in which youths play a very limited role, at regular intervals.

Dahl (1991) writes that democracy is a competition between two or more elite groups for the power to govern the whole society, requiring only a low level of youth participation. Democracy believes in the principles of mutual discussion and persuasion. Mohammed and Garba (2019) believe that democracy as a system of government entails healthy competition between parties for an all effective positions of governance, devoid of violence for all encompassing levels of political participation in the selection of leaders through the conduct of periodically free and fair elections, and the observation of fundamental human rights.

The paper sees that the foregoing definitions and conceptualizations imply that democracy is essentially a people-centered form of government. In other words, when the citizens themselves play an active role m the process of formulation and implementation of public decisions, their activity is called political participation. The conventional mode of political participation includes voting, standing for officee, campaigning for a political party or contributing to the management of a community project, like public safety, cleanliness drive, or the maintenance of a public protest.

The place of elections, particularly in their transition process, in Kogi State had failed to strengthen democratic consolidation; especially the probity of electoral processes, in an emerging democracy, where administrative processes are weak and distrust across political actors in the State. Usually, electoral process is expected to add to democratic consolidation through free and fair election where the electorates are provided with the ample opportunity to vote for the candidates and parties that will represent their varying interests (Olakunle, Bamidele, Ake, Oluwaseun and Afolayan 2019). But in Kogi State, the electoral process brought about unnecessary political instability; as youths were recruited to play the game against the rule. It implies that the state proved unable to organize credible elections acceptable to all democratic players, particularly the opposition parties.

Youth Participation in Electoral Democracy

We have it in mind that democracy is the form of government connoting collective participation and anti-thesis to tyranny. This conception suggesting is that electoral democracy is a process leading to a form of government that emphasizes sovereignty or autonomy of the people (Omotola, 2006: 28). On electoral democracy and participation, Dahl (2000:34-40) elucidate the following criteria, which includes, participation of voters in elective representatives, freedom of expression, and judicial independence in electoral justice. At one extreme position of Dahl, we re-write that the concept popular participation has two key aspects such as participation and accountability. If the people are sovereign, they have right to participate in politics themselves. They also possess the right to hold those who govern them accountable for their action.

But at times, democracy built only on popular participation and political will of the people, sometimes failed to serve and protect the interest of people. So agree that, popular participation will mean little unless the country has democracy that is accountable, also where such opportunity is not restricted to those with adequate financial resource to participate. On this note, Todaro, (2008: 178) suggested that for successful electoral democracy, participation and accountability must be guaranteed by the laws of the land. And the principle of inclusion, equality and equity, require that everyone share equally or at least fairly in these key aspects of popular sovereignty. To fulfill this task of ensuring youth participation and accountability effectively, the electoral procedures must meet the following basic criteria. For instance, the elections must be meaningful, competitive, free, secret, fair, frequent, inclusive, and equal voting right.

The paper is concerned about applying these criteria to secure fair participation of youth in electoral democracy and justice. But if such is infringing upon therefore democracy is trading on illegal, unethical acts or deceitful conduct that will strike a harsh blow against democracy. Perhaps, the paper consented that these criteria reflects a vital requirement for democratic societies to obtain fairly participation of youth in electoral process. On this note Chukwu (2007:75) argued that all modern democracies hold elections but not all elections have youth participation in forming representative government. The reason is simple, not all modern democracies that hold elections adhere to the rules. The paper argues that others restrict and confined the youth to the role of manipulate the election results continue to remain in power. This sets of public officers considered politics as do or die affairs, and it is peculiar with the

developing nations in general and Kogi state in particular.

In Kogi State, youth in participatory democracy had little opportunity to participation in the decision-making process. Thus, under the prevailing system youth have little knowledge and understanding of political problems; voters are so indifferent to voting; political representatives are unwilling to public accountability and abuse of power are rampant in the whole administration. Hence citizen participation is not only a necessary condition of good society, but it is an essential part of good society.

Issues of Money Politics in Election

Money Politics is basically how parties fund their political activities at various stage of electoral process (Tenuche and Egwemi, 2020). In Kogi State, money politics is critical, but continue to constitute a great threat to democratic development. It is the hub of political process, which appears to be so dominant in the entire culture of electoral process. The disparaging implication of this paper is about use of money to hinder youth from exercising their political right. Though, Ojo, (2008) argues that money politics bothers around the entire electoral cycle including processes and procedures of political party operations and linked costs with electioneering. It is imperative to note that every political process requires funding in order to effectively operate; therefore, money is a necessary requirement for the success of any democratic system.

However, Tenuche and Egwemi, (2020) avers that the specific purpose the money serves in electoral activity are important issues for questioning. The paper argues that issues of money politics arises only when it set limits and restricting others contending candidate from participation for lacking adequate funds had violated the political right of other relevant actors. In a situation where it is over subscribed the institutions governing the processes of elections become compromised.

Money politics in Kogi State has continued to constitute a great threat to youth participation and country's nascent democracy. On this note, Onuoha and Ojo, (2018) revealed that money politics does not guarantee free, fair and credible electoral process. But the paper submits that the idea of money politics is to undermine credibility of youth seeking elective positions, under the watch of money bag. The paper also has in mind the general elections and primariess held in 2015 and 2023 in that regard were victim of the circumstances. Thus, youth can't have participatory democracy amidst money politics, these practice has infused Kogi democratic experience.

Democracy has been the most accepted system of government adopted by most countries in the world. Democracy is anchor on collective participation of both the ruler and the ruled in decision making process. The level of population growth and complexity of society in modern time renders the ancient Greek direct participation impossible with a possible adoption of more expedient representative democracy which is a situation where people are elected in a manner that the interest of the people are duly projected in decision making process (Jibrin and Michael, 2020). The paper sees popular participation and accountability, as opportunity to freely choose their representative, hold them accountable for their actions. Ogundiya and Baba, (2007) write that election in contemporary society, the youth remains an essential part of a democratic process, to enables them decide and form a government at regular interval.

The paper argues that the cases of 20015, 2019 and 2023 general election in Kogi State expresses how nasty to hold successful elections in the study area. Where, for example, youth were recruited as thugs to truncate the entire electoral process. Against this background Tenuche and Egwemi, (2020:203) explicitly submit that the core attribute of democracy lies in the ability of the electorate to choose their representative in government through free and fair election. Not on the trend of votes buying and monetization of electoral process that undermines the outcome of the process, especially for lacking fund to seek political power. This is a threat to electoral democracy in Nigeria.

Research Methodology

The survey research method was adopted for this study. This method was used because it is appropriate for obtaining responses relating to the objectives of the paper. The paper adopted questionnaire as an instrument of data collection. The areas of study were Dekina, Lokoja and Okene LGA respectively. The populations of this study includes: political parties member, electorate and youth

appointees from the selected Local Government Area, Kogi State. National Population Census (2006), 23,112 is the official figure for those within the ages of 18 to 35 years (National Population Commission, 2006).

i Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sampling technique was used to select the respondents. This was purposive sampling procedure. The researchers purposively chose the population of study because, it allows for the deliberate selection of the elements that made up the sample (Dekina, Lokoja and Okene youths) the purposive sampling was used to pick 180 respondents. Twenty respondents (20) were drawn from among political party, electorate and youth appointees from the selected LGA. The secondary source relies on library.

Data were analyzed using Mean Score Analysi**s (**five point Likert type of scale). **Decision Rule:** the mean of these weights is 3 [(5+4+3 + 2 + 1) ÷ 5 = 3]. A mean score of 3 or more implied that the respondents agreed to that particular research statement, while a mean score less than 3 implied that most of the respondents disagreed with the item associated with that mean score.

ii Data Presentation and Result Analysis

This section presents the analysis of data collected from political party, electorate and youth appointees in the selected LGA. Out of one hundred and eight (180) copies of questionnaire distributed, one hundred and seventy-eight copies (178) were retrieved and analysed. The results of respondents are presented below:

Table 1 Youth participation in electoral democracy in Nigeria

s/n	**Statement of Research Variables**	**(5) SA**	**(4) A**	**(3) U**	**(2) D**	**(1) SD**	$\overline{\times}$	**Decision**
1	Youth is confined to votes for politicians, parties and programmes of choice	78	69	9	19	3	4.10	Agreed
2	Youth restricted from power to govern their society	76	65	15	20	2	4.08	Agreed
3	Very small section of youth participate in any discussion in Nigeria	92	49	14	21	2	4.16	Agreed
4	Participatory democracy don't denote the actives involvement of youth in policy formulation and implementation process in Kogi State	90	51	24	10	3	4.20	Disagreed
5	Youth modes of political participation includes voting, public protest and political thugs as means of survival	85	50	15	16	12	4.01	Agreed

Source: Field Survey, 2024

Table 1 shows the extent to which youth participate in electoral democracy in Kogi state. The mean of frequency table in each of the statement of research variables shows that 740(4.1) of the total respondents agreed that youth is confined to votes for politicians, parties and programmes of choice. The findings also shows that 727(4.08) of the total respondents agreed that youth restricted from power to govern their society. Equally the findings reveal that 742(4.16) of the total respondents agreed that Very small section of youth participate in any discussion affecting their lives in Kogi State. Furthermore, the finding show that 749(4.20) of the total respondents agreed that Participatory democracy don't denote the actives involvement of youth in policy formulation and implementation process in Kogi State. The finding of indicate that 714 (4.01) of the respondents agreed that Youth modes of political participation includes voting, public protest and political thugs as means of survival.

Interpretations from the table reveal that the calculated mean of the table is greater than weights of the means, as such; it implied that the respondents agreed youth participation in electoral democracy is mere means of survival and did not play the role to reflect the basic principle of democracy, whose outcome denotes the active involvement of individuals and groups in the governmental processes to affect their lives.

Table 2 Money politics, gimmicks and youth participatory strength

s/n	**Statement of Research Variables**	**(5) SA**	**(4) A**	**(3) U**	**(2) D**	**(1) SD**	$\bar{x}$	**Decision**
1	The role of money in election is a threat to democracy	69	78	3	19	9	4.00	Agreed
2	Money politics and vote buying debased the power of electorate in Kogi State	76	65	2	15	20	3.91	Agreed
3	Political finance trends, relating to registration, campaign and party funding restrict youth participation	49	92	14	2	21	3.82	Agreed
4	The strategy of money politics induce voters during election, has overtake the place of merit in Kogi State	85	60	20	7	6	4.18	Disagree d
5	Vote buying exchanging political rights of voters for material rights	55	86	10	13	14	3.84	Agreed

Source: *Field Survey, 2024.*

Table 2 shows how money politics and gimmicks have reduced their participatory strength in electoral democracy in Kogi State. The mean of frequency table in each of the statement of research variables shows that 713(4.00) of the total respondents agreed that the role of money in election is a threat to democracy. The findings also show that 696 (3.91) of the total respondents agreed that Money politics and vote buying debased the power of electorate in Kogi State. Equally the findings reveal that 680(3.82) of the total respondents agreed that Political finance trends, relating to registration, campaign and party funding restrict youth participation. Furthermore, the finding show that 745(4.18) of the total respondents agreed the strategy of money politics induce voters during election, has overtaken the place of merit in Kogi State. The finding of indicate that 685 (3.84) of the respondents agreed that Vote buying exchanging political rights of voters for material rights.

Table 3 Measure to enhance youth participation in electoral democracy

s/n	**Statement of Research Variables**	**(5) SA**	**(4) A**	**(3) U**	**(2) D**	**(1) SD**	$\bar{x}$	**Decision**
1	Free sales of nomination and interest forms	84	57	11	21	5	4.08	Agreed
2	Outright control of monetization of entire electoral process	76	65	15	20	2	4.08	Agreed
3	Ensuring equal representation	69	72	13	4	20	3.93	Agreed
4	Sensitization of electorate over the danger of illicit act of money politics	90	51	24	10	3	4.20	Disagree d
5	Credible and transparent of electoral management body	63	78	8	19	10	3.92	Agreed

Source: *Field Survey, 2024*

Table 3 shows Measure to enhance youth participation strength in electoral democracy in Nigeria. The mean of frequency table in each of the statement of research variables shows 728(4.08), 727 (4.08), 700(3.93), 749(4.20) and 699 (3.92) respectively of the total respondents agreed; that the role of money in election is a threat to democracy. The findings also show that 727 (4.08) of the total respondents agreed that free sales of nomination and interest forms, outright control of monetization of entire electoral process, ensuring equal representation, sensitization of electorate over the danger of illicit act of money politics and credible and transparent of electoral management body. This implied that the respondents agreed the above statement of research variables are measure to enhances youth participation in electoral democracy in Kogi State.

Discussion of findings

The table reveal the calculated mean of the table, which is greater than weights of the means, as such; it implied that the respondents agreed that there many cases where youth participation in electoral democracy is mere means of survival and did not play the role to reflect the basic principle of democracy, whose outcome denotes the active involvement of individuals and groups in the governmental processes to affect their lives.

In the second table the respondents agreed there many cases where money politics has taken center stage in its political process to tricky and punctuate youth participatory in electoral democracy in Kogi State. These were explicitly demonstrated in between 2015 and 2023 elections, while youths were confined to perform the role of thugs during and after the elections. Most braved and enlighten youth were recruited as political thugs and 'data boys', whose participation revolves intimidation, electoral fraud, propaganda and violence considered as means of survival (Jibrin and Michael, 2020). The implication of money politics and scheming adopted by ruling and governing classes target at recruiting the youths as thugs to secured victory at the poll. Similarly, Tenuche and Egwemi, (2020) submit that the few with financial and political ambition used their wealth to hijack the parties of their choice. Ezekwesili in Tenuche and Egwemi, describe Nigeria electoral politics as cash and carry democracy. It is a danger and grave one at that to Nigeria democracy.

Conclusion and Recommendation

The paper discussed challenges associated with youth participation in electoral democracy in Kogi State. It provides explanations on how has money politics hinder youth participation in electoral democracy in Kogi State. In attempt to investigate this challenge; the study establishes strong inadequacies on the existing studies and to recommend the following

The electoral management should set limit to electoral finance to accommodate all participant of electoral process.

In political space during election where equality is replaced by political inequality cannot produce electoral integrity. Thus, such should not be allowed to declared winners without integrity.

The paper recommends sensitization of youth and electorate on the danger of illict act of money politics and vote buying that abounds today Again to re-strategies political finance trends-relating to registration, campaign and party funding; on the danger of illicit act of money politics that restrict youth participation. Finally, the electoral management body should be transparent in the discharge of their duties, while setting out guidelines for the funding of electoral democracy in Kogi State and beyond.

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