



ELECTORAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA: CAUSES, EFFECTS AND WAY FORWARD

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Abstract: Electoral violence is one of the major challenges facing Nigerian electoral processes since independent. It has been observed that elections in Nigeria are always faced with different forms of violence. It is the aim of this paper to discuss the causes, forms and impact of electoral violence in Nigeria. This paper among other variables discussed the concept of electoral violence, causes of electoral violence in Nigeria and impacts to the socio-economic and political development of the country and suggested some measures to tackle electoral violence in Nigeria. The paper used both secondary and primary data to support some points raised in the paper. The secondary data were sourced from both print and online resources that has relationship with the topic at hand.

Keywords: Government, Electoral violence, Implications; Development, System, Thugs, Politician.

Introduction

Nigeria is a democratic nation with over 200 million population. Nigeria got her independence in 1960 and has the largest economy in Africa. Nigeria electoral processes since independent till have been characterized with violence. Olakunle et al., (2019) and Okanya (2001) observed that electoral violence in Nigeria is traceable to the first republic especially during the 1964/65 elections. During the 1964/65 elections, politicians were involved in wide scale murder, kidnapping and arson. Also, there were gross irregularities in the conduct of the elections that precipitated the military to stage a coup that ended Nigeria's first democratic experiment.

Electoral violence reared its ugly head again during the highly controversial 1983 general elections. The elections were massively rigged for instance, in the then Oyo and Ondo states, the two Unity Party of Nigeria (UPN) controlled states were declared for the ruling National Party of Nigeria (NPN). The announcement led to the outbreak of violence (Babarinsa, 2002). The scandalous 1983 elections caused general apathy among Nigerians. It was not surprising when the military intervened by ousting President Shehu Shagari on December 31, 1983 (Olakunle et al., 2019; Opadokun 2009).

The June 12, 1993 election organized by then Military President, General Ibrahim Babangida was expected to break the jinx of Nigeria's chequered political history. The campaign strategies; government's support, the enthusiasm of registered voters and the generality of Nigerians towards June 12, 1993 are yet to be surpassed. The hopes of many Nigerians were dashed when the military government annulled the presidential election. Shortly afterwards, nationwide protests, industrial strike action and civil disobedience engulfed the country (Olakunle et al., 2019).

Olakunle et al., (2019), observed that Nigeria's fourth republic also has witnessed the conduct of general elections in 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2015 respectively. These elections have been deeply

enmeshed in series of violence before, during and after the elections. The 1999 elections had minimal record of violence largely because the military supervised the electoral process that birthed the fourth republic (Human Rights Watch 2007a).

The 2003 election, Moses, (2021) submitted that the 2003 elections were the litmus test for Nigeria's democracy. The 1999 elections had been conducted by the military, whereas the 2003 election was the first to be held by a civilian government. The 2003 polls led to the first successful inter-civilian transfer of power in Nigeria since a botched attempt at civilian-civilian power transition in 1983 amidst a military coup. However, the 2003 election, like its predecessors, was bedevilled by similar electoral ills to those that had previously occurred in Nigeria. The visible malpractices during the 2003 elections included massive use of money for vote buying, stuffing of ballot boxes, ballot-box snatching, falsifying election results to favour or disfavour particular candidates, and fraudulently announcing that candidates who had in fact lost, had won (Ojo 2008). According to Elaigwu (2006) opined that the degree of electoral corruption displayed in the 2003 polls gave the impression that there was a deliberate attempt by the ruling PDP to retain power at all costs and by any means.,

Also, 2011 election was characterized with pre, election, election and post-election violence. Moses, (2021) observed that on 18 April 2011, following the announcement of the presidential election results in favour of the ruling PDP candidate President Goodluck Jonathan, there were reported cases of rioting in some cities in Northern Nigeria – including Kano, Katsina and Yola. The riot spread to 14 states in the region but was most severe in Adamawa, Bauchi, Kaduna, Kano, Nasarawa and some parts of Niger. The protesters attacked residences of PDP stalwarts as well as businesses, churches, and in some cases mosques in reprisal attacks.

In 2015, Nigerians went to the poll to elect another set of leaders. The 2015 general elections in Nigeria, conducted on 28 March and 11 April 2015, have been described as the best in Nigeria's electoral history (Gabriel 2015). This election according to Moses, (2021) was rated highly by both domestic and international observers because of the comprehensive preparations made and the relatively peaceful and proper conduct of the polls by INEC. Indeed, the characterisation of the 2015 polls as credible was the result of innovations and the introduction of technology in the electoral process by INEC. For instance, prior to the election itself there was the use of biometric voters' registration. During the actual polls, INEC introduced the Smart Card Reader. Also, sensitive electoral materials such as the result sheets and ballot papers were customised and possessed high security features and codes. However, despite these great improvements in the electoral process, evidence indicates that the 2015 elections were not totally flawless.

Also, in 2019, there was election in Nigeria, the Nigeria Election Violence Reported that 18 persons were killed in the South-East during the 2019 general elections. The Report said that 530 persons also suffered varying degrees of injury during the elections. The report which was presented by one of the non-governmental organizations that monitored the election, Women's Aid Collative, in partnership with the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES), gave the breakdown of the figures as follows: one person was killed in Enugu State; six killed in Imo State; two killed in Anambra State while nine persons were killed in Ebonyi State (Ogbu 2020; Ogbonna, 2019). In the same vein, elections in all the 36 States of the Federation witnessed violence, killings, and destruction of property as reported by (Ogbu 2020). It is imperative to discuss the causes, forms, impact of electoral violence in Nigeria.

Concept of Electoral Violence

There are many definitions of electoral violence. For Eldridge, Mimmi, Nyström & Utas (2012), defined electoral violence is the coercive and deliberate strategy used by some political actors to advance their interests or achieve specific political goals concerning an electoral contest. It may take place in all parts of the electoral cycle: in the run-up to elections, on the day of elections, and in the immediate post-election period. Election-related violence is not limited to physical violence but includes other coercive means, such as the threat of violence, intimidation, and harassment. Albert (2007), viewed electoral violence as involving all forms of organized acts of threats aimed at

intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder or opponent before, during and after an election with an intention to determine, delay or influence a political process. Electoral violence connotes all forms of violence (physical, psychological, administrative, legal and structural) at different stages engaged in by participants, their supporters, and sympathizers (including security and election management body staff) in the electoral process (Balogun, 2003). Electoral violence according to Ogundiya and Baba (2005), is all sorts of riots, demonstrations, party clashes, political assassinations, looting, arson, thuggery, kidnapping spontaneous or not, which occur before, during and after elections. Fischer (2002) defines electoral violence (conflict) as any random or organized act that seeks to determine, delay, or otherwise influence an electoral process through threat, verbal intimidation, hate speech, disinformation, physical assault, forced “protection”, blackmail, destruction of property, or assassination. Atuobi (2011) saw that electoral violence or election-related violence is understood as violent action against people, property, or the electoral process, intended to influence the electoral process before, during, or after elections. Otoghile (2009) described electoral violence as the radioactive by-product of some structural and attitudinal dislocations in the society which affects the level of political participation of the citizenry. Also, Igbuzor (2010), observed that electoral violence is: Any act of violence perpetuated in the course of political activities including, pre, during and post election periods, and may include any of the following acts: thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes. From the above, electoral violence is the all forms of violence, intimidation and act of threat planned by some people or intended to influence, destruct the electoral process before, during, or post elections to favour their interest.

Causes Electoral Violence in Nigeria

The causes of electoral violence in Nigeria in this paper include religion factor, lack of adequate security, poor management of election processes, politician utterances, high rate of unemployment and poverty, ethnicity and sectional in politics, in-depth ignorance, and political impunity, lack of internal democracy, negative perception and inflammatory campaign.

Religion-Factor

Electoral violence also occur in Nigeria because religion-inspired electoral violence which occurs when religious sentiments, religious cleavages, and religious sympathies are the major reasons for pre-and-post-electoral violence, as was the case in Nigeria’s general election of 2011 and even previous elections. Politicians here hide under a religious cover to drum support and to mobilize restive crowds against their opponents who are usually of another religious persuasion (Ogbu, 2020). The politicians neglect the fact that their electoral fortunes depend on how well they can brand, rebrand, and market themselves. This is because perceptions and receptions of political candidates amongst voters are closely tied to their political brand image (Jain, Pich, Ganesh & Armannsdottir, 2017; Ogbu, 2020)

Lack of Security

The lack of adequate security personnel to provide security during and after election is another major problem in Nigeria. Musa, (2020) submitted that weak security apparatus in Nigeria also contributing to the electoral violence facing the country. Zubairu, (2020) stressed that Nigeria's security system is seen as very poor in both personnel and equipment. Security officers are poorly and poorly trained and poorly remunerated. As a result, the requisite expertise is not available to meet modern security challenges. The contribution of the security personnel to the Nigerian project of ensuring general safety is equally of serious concern (Zubairu, 2020). This weak security system can be due to a number of factors including corruption, insufficient police, and other security agencies funding, lack of modern equipment, poor safety personnel health, and inadequate staff. Nigeria is largely under police jurisdiction and this partially explains the Nigerian Police Force's failure to effectively tackle the country's crimes, corruption, and insecurity. Olorisakin (2018) concluded that the police population ratio in Nigeria is 1:450 which falls below the United Nations’ standard. This implies that as a

country, Nigeria is grossly under-policed and this perhaps explains the police's inability to effectively tackle crimes and electoral violence.

Poor Management of Election processes

Poor management of electoral processes by the various agencies of the government saddled with the responsibility of conducting elections in the Country is another cause of the electoral violence. When the institutions such as INEC that are supposed to be objective in conducting the elections are not, it causes political crisis in the country. Ogbu, (2020) observed that electoral violence accrues from poor election organization and management problems, weakness in the electoral system, and the lack of independence and capacity of election management bodies to deliver on their constitutional mandate. Aniekwe and Kushie (2011), submitted that electoral violence can be prompted by voters' frustration arising from the fear of unwarranted defeat because of a corrupt electioneering process or injustice in electoral dispute adjudication by the judiciary

Politician Utterances

Politician utterance before, during and after election can also cause electoral violence. Harry & Kalagbor, (2021) observed that some political leaders in the country encourage electoral violence both in their conducts and utterances. For instance, leaders give instructions to their followers to deliver their polling units or wards by capturing electoral materials, through vote buying, and compromising electoral officials, etc. Such acts encourage electoral violence (Harry & Kalagbor, 2021). Also, the President, Muhammadu Buhari, was alleged to have said in 2011 that if he did not win the presidential election "the monkeys and the baboons will swim in their blood". This led to widespread carnage in some northern states after he lost the 2011 presidential election. Many electoral officials, including National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) members on election duties were killed in cold blood in a post-election violence. Also, former President Olusegun Obasanjo had once described the 2003 election as one of "do-or-die". This so called politics of "do or die" is a recipe for disaster as every candidate makes it a must to win, thereby making election a war-like situation across the country (Harry & Kalagbor, 2021).

High Rate of Unemployment/ Poverty

Unemployment and Poverty have been identified by Musa (2021); Baba, (2020) and Ibietan & Abass (2016) as a major cause of electoral violence in Nigeria. They noted that unemployment causes poverty and extreme poverty leads to a crime that gives rise to electoral violence. Aliyu (2018) defined poverty as a situation in which people live below a defined standard of living income so that individuals and nations are classified and identified as poor. While unemployment is defined as when people are not engaged in meaningful work and are lacking the basic needs of life. Every year, tertiary institutions graduated many students who have been unfortunately thrown into the labor market with no hope for job opportunities in sight. Many become frustrated in an effort to keep mind and body together and engage in political violent and criminal acts such as kidnapping political opponent, militancy, and armed robbery. Others have been terrorists' victims and are quickly radicalized. Nwagbosa (2012) believes that past governments have failed to put in place actions that will reduce unemployment and poverty rates, which have been the major causes of pre-election and post-election violence in Nigeria.

In addition, Timothy & Omolegbe (2019) listed the following as causes of post-election violence:

Ethnicity and Sectional in Politics

Candidates in elections in Nigeria as seen as representative of a certain ethnic group, section, religion or region of the country, this is equally applicable to how the people perceived political parties hence voting pattern tend to follow this particular configuration (Orji & Uzodi, 2012). Nigerian political class employs communal, sectional, ethnic and religious sentiment when they are faced with stiff political competition for power (Orji & Uzodi, 2012). No doubt the 2019 general elections in Nigeria witnessed stiff competition for power amongst the political class. The political class then turned to

their ethnic and sectional inclination to gain a political advantage before and during elections. The electoral violence witnessed in some parts of Nigeria during the 2019 general elections was as a result of the uncontrolled ethnic and sectional sentiment exhibited before, during and after the elections. While the ethnic and sectional politics works for some politicians, it did not work for the others thus resulting in the use of violence to show their unhappiness. Candidate of major political parties during the electioneering process resulted in the ethnic and sectional campaign instead of campaigning on important issues that have a direct impact on the citizens. Campaigns along ethnic lines during electioneering encourage violence especially when other ethnic groups feel voting otherwise during elections. The electoral violence is commonly triggered by the political class or political party whose means of identification does not go beyond sectional or regional, religion and ethnic inclination and thus relies heavily on this means of wooing voters. The use of ethnicity in Nigerian electioneering is such the political aspirant with a great amount of ethnic influence having lost an election tend to encourage his or her supporter directly or indirectly to cause a disturbance which invariably most cases leads to violence in the community (Agbalajobi, & Agunbiade, 2016).

In-depth Ignorance

The growing level of ignorance as a result of increasing poverty, unemployment, and lack of basic education and important near absence of orientation contributed in no small measure to the 2019 electoral violence in Nigeria. The use of political thugs to cause violence during Nigeria's 2019 elections was made easy due to ignorance of the political thugs as a result of the high level of poverty, unemployment, and lack of basic education. Studies have shown that most electoral violence in Nigeria are carried by gangs or political thugs recruited, armed, financed by political party officials, politician, and government officials through selected representative due to increasing level of illiteracy, poverty and high rate of employment in the country (Orji & Uzodi, 2012; Aniekwe and Kushie 2011). The electoral violence commonly witness in the country are often perpetuated by sets of illiterate, something educated illiterate who are unemployed, financially weak and poor youths who depend on the political elites for their survival thus they easily turn political thugs for their political masters (Meadow, 2009).

Political Impunity

Impunity which the political elites and their political loyalty enjoy in Nigeria encourages of electoral violence. The culture of impunity was the law enforcement agencies fail to arrest and prosecute electoral offenders left no one in doubt that the absence of prosecution invariably lead to more offenses (Orji & Uzodi, 2012). Arrest and prosecution of promoters of electoral violence and electoral offenders would ordinarily serve as a deterrent to others. But in Nigeria, as reflected in 2019 election which that the possibilities of getting away of electoral violence and other forms of electoral fraud drawing from the experiences of previous electoral violence prompted violent acts witnessed in some part of the country. The political class and their political loyalties relied on the use of violence to achieve political gain because the tendency of the state through the instrument of law enforcement agencies to prosecute electoral offenders is absent (Orji & Uzodi, 2012). Harry & Kalagbor, (2021) Observed that there is the culture of impunity that pervades our body politics such that those who perpetuate electoral violence, because most often, it is executed in favour of the government or ruling party, are never brought to justice. Since there is no punishment for such bad behaviour, there is no deterrent. Rather such individuals who maim, kill and destroy properties during elections are rewarded with appointments, contracts, etc, thereby encouraging younger ones to jump on the bandwagon.

Lack of Internal democracy

The lack of internal democracy especially amongst the leading political parties in Nigeria contributed in no small measure to the violence across the country. It is imperative to note that 809 pre-election cases aroused from the 2019 general election in Nigeria as a result of lack of transparent and credit primaries by the political parties especially the two leading parties in the country.

Negative Perception

The perception the citizen of the country has about the electoral umpire, in this case, the Independent National Electoral Commission about conducting free, fair and credible election remains low thus perceived irregularity could easily instigate electoral violence in Nigeria. The perception that election could be rigged by the electoral umpire and the distrust the people about these electoral officers' instigated the 2019 electoral violence witness in the section of Nigeria. Doubt over the integrity of the electoral umpire and negative perception of the electoral process among the stakeholder could lead to violence election (Orji & Uzodi, 2012).

Inflammatory Campaign

Nigeria's 2019 general election witness heavy inflammatory campaign across political diverse and among political elites, top political appointees, political thugs, and political loyalties. The level of the inflammatory campaign carried before the general election led to the number of violence in some section of the country. The political loyalties acted on a few inflammatory statements of their 'political godfather' in carrying out some actions which invariably led to electoral violence witnesses during the 2019 general elections. According to Ehinmore and Ehiabhi (2013) election campaign in the country is often characterized by show of thuggery, insults of political opponents, confrontations of all kinds, and unrealistic promises and intimidation of perceived enemy which often run to violence during and after the election. These case in point was witnessed heavy across the across in Nigeria during the 2019 general election. Inflammatory election campaign which polarized the constituency or the nation remains a vital reason for post-election violence (Angerbrandt, 2018).

Effects of Electoral Violence in Nigeria

There are many impacts of electoral violence in Nigeria. In this paper, disfranchisement of citizens, reduction on foreign investment, destruction of lives and properties, bad international image, promotion electoral malpractices, displacement of people, disorganization of electoral processes, disrupt economic development and school administration were identified as effects/impacts of electoral violence on the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria.

Disfranchisement of Citizens

Electoral violence creates fear on the electorates and prevented them from coming out to cast their vote in the elections' day. Alao, (2021) observed that election violence prevents the attainment of the principle of "one man one vote" which promotes political equality where each member of the community will be given an equal opportunity to participate in the nation's political decision-making process. In Nigeria, where elections are characterised by violence, people cannot freely stand for election. There are cases of thugs employed by the politicians scaring voters in order for them to easily manipulate the results of the elections. Furthermore, the principle of majority rule which requires mass participation of the citizens in government and the protection of minority interest are denied of the people through violence. Musa (2018) opined that electoral violence can undermined civil and political rights and human suffering. In the situation whereby people are disfranchised through deprivation of citizens' or groups' rights to vote and compete, to the psychological, physical and sexual violence that specific groups—particularly women— may suffer, with short and long-term consequences for the victims and for their families and communities. Harry & Kalagbor, (2021) revealed that electoral violence discourages the electorate from participating in the electoral processes and this lead to apathy and low voters' turnout. No doubt, Nigeria has witnessed steady decline in voters turn out in successive elections. Below are data for Presidential elections voters' turnout from 1999 to 2019.

Reduction on Foreign Investment

Electoral violence in Nigeria as the capacity to reduce the rate of investment in Nigeria because investors will be afraid of their investment in future. Guardian (2019) reported that political intrigues ahead of the 2019 general elections have made stock market investors lose N729 billion in three months of decline. This is contrary to general expectations of positive earnings in 2018, as the once-troubled economy emerged from a recession at the end of 2017. The months of decline occurred between February and April, after a January rise triggered strong anticipations amid improving macro-

economic indicators in domestic and global economies. For persons conversant with the workings of the market, this gives credence to the fact that investors are concerned about the political risk associated with the coming 2019 general elections, which is linked to the decision by investors and traders (mostly foreign) to sit on the fence. Also, there are signs that the political situation is worsening. Ward congresses of the ruling party held across the country last week were marred by conflict, resulting in cancellation and rescheduling of polls in some states including Ekiti. Ekiti and Osun are also expected to hold gubernatorial polls this year in an atmosphere of tension. Omodion, (2019) observed that investors are currently walking in fear of political risks, believing that violence in the country could trigger panic and massive dumping of shares. He said the development has caused indifference and low investor confidence. Consequently, foreign investors that play a dominant role have resorted to massive sell-off of shares.

Bad International Image

Electoral violence inflicts unquantifiable damages to a nation's international image. The international community view such countries and their people as uncivilized, unruly, unorganized, and people who have no respect for human life (ERN, 2007; CDD, 2007).

Promotes Electoral Malpractices

Electoral violence in Nigeria has is promoting electoral malpractices and rigging. Alao, (2021) confirmed this when he submitted that the attitude of Nigerian politicians to appropriate more of the nation's wealth, and their desperation to retain power is not entirely altruistic; in fact, the quest for political power is driven in most cases, by the morbid desire for material gains are motivating factors to use all avenues most especially violence to manipulate the electoral systems. Thugs hired to scare voters and electoral officials in connivance of security agents to perfect riggings, and the snatching and stuffing of ballot boxes. This is a strong motivating factor why succession into political offices is not a smooth but rather a very problematic process. The incumbent pre-occupied their mind for all avenues to defend their atrocities or plan not to leave the office if possible. For instance, during the governorship polls in 2015, heavy gun shots were reported in Ozuoba and Rumuolumeni in Obio Akpor Local Government Area of the State. Soldiers moved into Buguma in Asari Toru Local Council where two persons were feared dead amid shooting by political thugs. Unknown arsonists also razed a police patrol vehicle, the house of the State Commissioner for Women Affairs, and the state's INEC polling centre in Kalabari National College. INEC had been accused of colluding with security operatives to compromise the integrity of the electoral process in virtually all the 23 local governments of the State. In addition, electoral officers in almost all the LGAs were reported to have withheld the unit, ward and local government result sheets and handed over ballot papers to the PDP thugs allegedly guarded by armed soldiers, police and Department of State Service operatives (Ibrahim, 2015, p.15).

Displacement of People

Electoral violence in Nigeria have been linked to displacement of people in many states in Nigeria leading to IDPs. Musa (2018) observed that many Nigeria have been refugee in their own country due to electoral violence. (Eldridge et. al., 2012) submitted that electoral violence can also go beyond the societies where it occurs and affect neighboring states by displacing large border populations, introducing a humanitarian crisis, and increasing the circulation of arms as well as armed violence, which may contribute to instability in already volatile regions. Ogbu, (2020) argued that electoral violence may also create a humanitarian crisis and halt or reverse socioeconomic development programs. In extreme situations, it may increase the risk of armed conflict or civil war.

Disorganisation of Electoral Processes

Another implication of electoral violence according to Alao, (2021) is the disorganisation of electoral process. Violence in pre-election period usually occurs during the party primary elections and campaign, which are an essential part of the electoral process. Many campaigns in Nigeria's fourth republic democratic dispensation have been disorganised by thugs from the opposition party. For instance, in 2007, the campaign team of Bukola Saraki was attached and dispersed in Offa, leading to

the death of some people and others wounded. Furthermore, the convoy of Senator Baba Tela, the gubernatorial candidate of the Action Congress of Nigeria, ACN, was attacked by thugs sponsored by PDP stalwarts. Seven people were injured Albin-Lackey (2007). Additionally, Crisis Group African Report (2014) reported that in many local government constituencies, preparation for the 2015 elections, led to the candidates' struggles for nomination, degenerated into attacks on individuals and factional violence around the party's primaries. Ogbu, (2020) submitted that in the long run, it may harm the prospects for democratic consolidation and perceptions of democracy among the population in a political system. Diminished trust in democratic processes and institutions – Electoral violence reproduces repressive and non-democratic power structures including patriarchal repression in the institutional space. It doesn't only diminish trust in democratic processes, it undermines the quality of democracy both directly (repressing/killing voters, candidates, etc) and indirectly (limited inclusive participation) as well as through public perceptions of legitimacy.. In some contexts, elections have already become synonymous with trouble and danger. Such associations have devastating effects on trust in democratic processes and institutions.

Disrupt Economic Activities

Economic development activities in Nigeria are always disrupted whenever there is electoral violence leading to curfew. Many economic activities are held down during the curfew. This affects the growth and development of the economy. Elections are the largest administrative undertakings in democratic societies, and consequently the costs associated with elections may represent a major financial burden. In some cases, governments are unable to finance elections and depend on international electoral assistance. In addition, electoral competition and election monitoring involve significant expenditures for political parties, and domestic and international monitoring groups. Election-related violence will not only squander those resources but will further cause destruction of local communities and infrastructure with numerous negative economic and developmental consequences, both direct and indirect (<https://aceproject.org/ace-en/topics/ev/Electoral%20>). For example, the Association of Manufacturers association of Nigeria observed that Nigerian economy suffered great loss because of outbreak of election-related violence in 2011 (Unknow).

Disrupt School administration

Electoral violence in Nigeria have been linked to disruption of school administration in some states in Nigeria. Schools operates with academic calendar which dictate their programme such as time to start writing continuous assessment, examinations, inter-house sport, mid-term break and close for the term or session. The school academic calendar which guide the school administration is often disrupted whenever the government announces curfew as a result of election violence or post-election violence. Ogunode & Audu (2022) did a study with the objectives finding out the perception of academic staff on the effects of electoral violence on universities administration in FCT. Result obtained showed there was significant relationship between electoral violent and disruption of university administration. The result also revealed that inflammatory political rhetoric, opposition parties' allegation of intimidation, partisanship by security forces, fake news, partiality of the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC), results rigging and used of illegal voting center could raise the post-electoral violence in FCT and Nigeria. The result also indicated that electoral violence could lead to disrupt university administration, teaching, research and community services programme of the universities in Nigeria and can also lead to death of academic staff, non-academic staff and students.

Way Forward

Based on identified causes, forms and impact of electoral violence in Nigeria, this paper hereby recommended the following:

1. There is need for political education in Nigeria to tackle this problem of electoral violence. Many researchers have made suggestions and recommendations on how to curb electoral violence in Nigeria. For example, Ogbu, (2020) recommended that proactive nationwide voter education campaign should be initiated to enlighten the Nigerian populace on the dangers of electoral violence before every

election season in the country. Since the majority of Nigerian youths are hooked on social media, relevant social media networks should be employed to assuage them to refrain from electoral violence. The mass media which is much more accessible to the Nigerian politicians should be used to convince them to desist from sponsoring electoral violence in the country. Word-of-mouth communication should also be used to reach out to parents, town unions, associations, community leaders, students' union's leaders, professional bodies, religious leaders, and many more, to educate their members to shun violence at all cost.

2. The government should ensure electoral offender in every elections are brought to book. Olakunle et al., (2019), submitted that the government at all levels should ensure that electoral offenders before, during and after the elections are arrested and made to face the court of law. This will serve as deterrence to the financiers and foot soldiers that use violence to promote their political objectives. Nigerian government must improve on its existing security apparatuses in order to combat the dynamic and sophisticated 21st century security challenges. Recruitment of security personnel ought to be based on merit. Government should ensure that the funds made available to the security agencies are judiciously utilized for the acquisition of skills and the procurement of up to date equipment. Ogbu, (2020) opined that the electoral laws on electoral violence could be strengthened and made stiffer, to serve as a deterrent to all forms of electoral violence covering pre-election, during or post-election periods.

3. The government should reform the electoral law. Harry & Kalagbor, (2021) recommended that; there should be broad-based electoral reforms that would make the card-reader the only means of accreditation of voters during elections all over the federation. The election management body (INEC) should deploy technology to reduce congregation of people or voters at a voting point. This will reduce drastically the possibility of hijack of electoral materials, both sensitive and non-sensitive materials, that often leads to violence. Also, manual computation and transmission of election results should be discouraged and in its place electronic transmission of election results be approved by law to be the only means of transmission of results from the polling units to the INEC data bank (server). This would minimize human involvement, human error and manipulation at the different collation centers before the final announcement of results. He conclude by saying where elections are characterized by violence results should not be accepted and announced.

4. The Nigerian politician should conduct themselves well and base their campaign on issues based and not promoting violence. Alao, (2021) gave the following recommendation politicians should conduct their campaign on the basis of issues rather than attack on personalities or mobilising of religious, ethnic and regional sentiments. Campaign should focus on the implementation of the critical national economic, political, social cultural, educational and health objectives. The parties and politicians should articulate their programmes in these areas that add value to the lives of the electorates. Electorates are not interested in the 'dance of shame' being staged across the country by some of the parties in the name of political campaign. Ethnic and religious leaders as well as politicians, including government officials should not make provocative and irresponsible statements that may evoke religious, ethnic and regional prejudices against other candidates and thereby incite electoral violence. Political parties should evolve as instrument of democratic governance rather than servicing an organised criminal enterprise used for seeking, gaining and retaining power in order to rob the public treasury and Nigerian law enforcement agents, most especially the police, should be proactive in curbing electoral violence. The Nigerian government should adequately equip the law enforcement and them to perform their duties efficiently. Erring parties should be punished appropriately.

Conclusion

Electoral processes is key to political development. Electoral processes is one of the democratic processes. It helps to determines democratic development. Electoral processes must be planned and organize well. It must be backed up by laws. Electoral processes can mar the socio-economic development of the community, society and country when it is characterized wit violence. In Nigeria,

electoral violence have been identified as part of the electoral processes which is not good for the country. This paper identified the causes of electoral violence in Nigeria to include religion factor, lack of adequate security, poor management of election processes, politician utterances, high rate of unemployment and poverty, ethnicity and sectional in politics, in-depth ignorance, and political impunity, lack of internal democracy, negative perception and inflammatory campaign. This paper also identified disfranchisement of citizens, reduction on foreign investment, destruction of lives and properties, bad international image, promotion electoral malpractices, displacement of people, disorganization of electoral processes, disrupt economic development and school administration were identified as effects/impacts of electoral violence on the socio-economic and political development of Nigeria. The government should ensure embark on proactive nationwide voter education campaign should be initiated to enlighten the Nigerian populace on the dangers of electoral violence before every election season in the country, ensure every electoral offender in every elections are brought to book, there should be broad-based electoral reforms that will guarantee free, fair election and the Nigerian politician should conduct themselves well and base their campaign on issues based and not promoting violence.

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