

Causes and Consequences of Electoral Criminality in Nigeria's Democracy: A Study of South East States

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Abstract

This paper focused on establishing the causes and consequences of electoral criminality in Nigeria's democracy, with the south East states as study areas. The study adopted content analytical method as source of information gathering while the study was anchored on group theory and Frustration-Aggression Theory as a theoretical framework of analysis. The findings revealed that what gave rise to electoral criminality in Nigeria's democracy results from the over zealousness to rule by the politicians; that the eminent Nigerians that are suppose to speak up against the ills of our leaders decided to keep silent; and the fraudulent attitude of the electoral commission (INEC) that sit down in a room lavishly furnished with public fund to declare those who will rule us whether we vote for them or not. Recommendation includes the reviving of the electoral system; that the perception and attitude of the politicians should change, such that leadership and governance should not be seen as a do or die affair.

Keywords: Democracy, Election, Electoral Fraud, Nigeria.

I. Introduction

The legacy of electoral fraud, criminality and godfatherism syndrome has become the bane of politics, not only in south east states, but across the Nigerian political system at large. When evil goes unchallenged for a long time, it becomes a norm, culture and tradition. The above maxim, that Obasi (2009) argue that if the horrible, unethical, immoral, criminal, and the manipulative electoral process in Nigeria goes unchallenged, it will soon become a tradition and culture where people seek election to public offices through faulty, manipulative and dubious process only to justify it by deceptive, skeletal and sporadic achievements and or through political settlements. This type of norm, culture and tradition would institutionalize injustice and create the mentality of the end justifies the means "the result of which, would be a total collapse of anything civil, legal ethical and just. It would create an impression of people without values, morality and civility politically.

This criminality, brazenness, desperation and lust for power by all means, have seriously brought Nigeria into disrepute within the comity of nations and could also permanently tarnish the country's national image. Obasi (2009) maintained that too many evil and debasing electoral malpractices have for too long been tolerated, such that they have remained unchecked, threatened national unity, peace and stability.

Though, this democratic fraud is a national problem, however, there are no geo-political zones in this country which this problem is more insidious or more rooted than it is in the South East States, with Anambra State as the most affected. Since the beginning of the fourth republic, Anambra state, and sometimes Abia, Enugu, Ebonyi and Imo State have been a rolling ball that have been whimsically kicked about by the putative characters that were thrown up at the federal level by this compromised democracy. All types of experimentation have bent red on south east states, and no pranks' on Anambra State (Obasi, 2009, Ibeogu, 2018).

South East States, with Anambra State having the highest, parade eminent political, intellectual and economic personalities, dead and alive, such as Michael Okpara, Aguiyi Ironsi; Orji Uzo Kalu, Nnamdi Azikiwe, Alex Ekwueme, Chinua Achebe, Emeka Anyaoku, Chukwuma Soludo, Akanu Ibiam, Ogbannaya Onu, Sam Egwu, Martin Elechi, Jim Nwobodo, Tim Menakaya, C.C. Onoh, Okwesileze Nwodo, Evan Enwerem, Sam Mbakwe, Arthur Nzeribe etc, these but to mention a few. However, these eminent men and women watch helplessly and hopelessly as thugs and renegades unleash mayhem in states of south east through electoral fraud and criminality in connivance with the federal government and the ruling party (PDP or APC). It was Emeka Offer/Chinweoke Mbardinuju, Chris Ubah/Chris Ngige (Anambra State) Orji Uzor Kalu/ Theodor Orji/ Victor Okezie Ikpeazu (Abia State) Jim Nwobodo/ Chimaroke Nnamani/Okwesileze Nwodo/Sullivan Chime and others (Enugu State), Evan Enwerem/Osita Izunaso/Arthur Nzeribe/Achieke Udenwa/Ikedi Ohakim/Rochas Okorocha and others (Imo State) and Anyim Pius Anyim/Sam Egwu/Martin Elechi/David Umahi (Ebonyi State) charade, that the south east state are yet to recover from the negative effects of all the political turmoil. The successive elections in south east states in 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 was not anything different, as it not only became a one man show, but was decorated to a point where those who did not contest previous party elections were declared winners (Celestine Omehia) of River State, those who failed elections were declared winners (Chris Ngige) of Anambra State, these atrocities were perpetrated under the watch of Prof. Maurice Iwu as INEC Chairman and Chief Olusegun Obasanjo, President and Commander-In-Chief of the Armed Forces of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.

The level of the electoral criminality in south east became so devastating that Anambra State became a laughing stock in the Nigeria political arena (Obasi, 2009). Considering the abundant natural and human resources, the states of South East and Anambra State endowed with, sound and broad mind thinking people will have no option than to ask, "Is south east people and Anambra state in particular cursed or the cause? The above question prompted, President Umaru Musa Yar'Adua in 2008, to state that "he will ensure to the Nigeria electoral reform since he was aware that the process under which he emerged as president was defective, and the process of his ascension to the office of the Nigeria President was characterized by irregularities (Ibeogu and Abah, 2017).

Suffice to say that in every situation, no matter how ugly, there are people who benefit from it. Sometimes the people who benefit from an ugly situation tend to over look the ugliness of the situation and even in some cases champion the cause of that ugly situation and possible try to institutionalize it, for short term benefits. On the other hand, there are selfless people who whether they benefit from it or not, would want to uproot the ugliness of the situation. There are also people who just fold their hands and do nothing about the ugly situation. In the aftermath of the massive rigging, unjust and imprudent manipulation of the 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015 and 2019 elections in south east states, that saw the electoral victories snatched away from the winners and given to the losers, and even in some cases, to people who never even contested the election. The Supreme Court that installed Senator Hope Uzodinma in 2020 (Imo State), Senator Duoye Diri in 2020 (Bayelsa State) and Alhaji Bello Matawalle in 2019 (Zamfara State) are litmus proof (Ibeogu, 2020).

It is therefore, the position of this paper that the Nigerian electorates, the politicians and the electoral body (INEC) should not turn the Nigeria politics into a sham, spurious and battle field, but that whoever emerges as leaders of this country should be a true reflection of the peoples will and the ballot.

Statement of the Problem

There is nothing wrong with the Nigerian land, climate, bureaucracy, political ideology, public policy or anything else. The problem is 'Nigeria factor' which ranges from corruption, poor policy implementation and politics of unbalanced federalism, ethnicity, unwillingness or inability of the leaders to rise to the responsibility of their callings and most embarrassing the compromise of the electoral institution (INEC) in the conduct of elections (Chukwuemeka, 2008, Ibeogu, 2018). The problems are too numerous to mention, but the most challenging one that requires attention is that of godfatherism and the up-turning of the electoral will of the people by the electoral commission (INEC). Godfatherism has distorted political power transfer and effective running of bureaucracy especially with recruitment in South East States.

So many governors, elected representatives and political office holders were instituted by their godfathers; these godsons use different administrative and political concepts, such as triangular equilibrium, quota system, senior technical assistants and personal assistants to over blot the civil service and political system which majority of them (appointees) are illiterates, but are used to perpetrate electoral fraud (Ugwu, 2011, Ibeogu, 2019).

The idea of instituting godsons as political leaders and the appointment of mediocres to man the civil service has created lopsidedness in the management of public affairs; breed mediocrity, poor performance and poor service delivery at all levels of governance (Chukwuemeka, 2012, Ibeogu, 2019).

Conceptual Clarifications

In every research, worthwhile efforts are expended to clarify some core concepts that form the corner stone of the study for purposes of engendering better appreciation in the context of the study. In this study, we are going to explain such concepts as democracy, election and electoral fraud.

Democracy

The concept of democracy in its modern understanding is the government of the people, by the people and for the people. It is tilted towards socio-economic and political circumstances of nations striving for international identity and development posture, as well as liberality and good governance (Iwasu, 2013). It is described as the government of the people in which the law is supreme, rulers and subjects alike being subject to it. This implies that democracy if well understood, is a theory that sets some basic principles according to which a good government must run, such principles include; justice, equity, freedom, liberty, accountability, openness, public participation and transparency (Oluwole, 2003). While Huntington (1991) posits that democracy exists where the principal leaders of a political system are selected by a competitive election in which the bulk of the population has the opportunity to participate.

Election

This refers to the process and means through which the electorates choose their representatives into government positions (Nwankwo, 2012). Osumah and Aghemelo (2010), they see election as process through which the people chose their leaders, indicate their policies and programme preference, and consequently invest in a government with authority to rule. They see election as one of the means by which a society may organize itself and make specified formal decisions, adding that where voting is free, it acts simultaneously as a system for making certain decisions regarding the power relations in a society and a method for seeking political obedience with a minimum sacrifice of the individual's freedom. Eya (2003) sees election as the selection of a person or persons for office by ballot and making choice as between alternatives, while Ozor (2010) succinctly gives a more encompassing and comprehensive definition of election when he noted that the term connotes the procedure through which qualified voters elect their politically preferred representatives to parliament or any other public positions of a country for the purpose of framing and running the government of the country.

Electoral Fraud

Elections in Nigeria's democratic system may best be described as precarious; these situations culminate into electoral criminality, hence many Nigerians shun polling booths on many electoral occasions, especially with the present Nigeria's Fourth Republic (Oni, 2014, Ibeogu, 2018).

Party disagreements had resulted in election motivated crisis employed to alter, change or influence by force or coercion, the electoral behavior of the electorates or the voting patterns or possibly reverse the electoral decision in favour of a particular group or political party. This results in the determination of a political party to capture power by all means. This power capture by political parties through any available means has been the single most important factor that hinders free and fair elections (Ogundiya, in Olarungbemi (2014). However, Adagbabiri (2015) attributed electoral criminality as the major challenge of the electoral body (INEC's) inability to conduct free and fair elections such that Nigeria's election has witnessed a lot of irregularities and malpractices.

Electoral fraud or criminality therefore, refers to situation where elections fell far short of basic international and regional standards for democratic elections. They are usually marred by poor organization, lack of essential transparency, widespread procedural irregularities, substantial evidence of fraud, widespread voter disenfranchisement at all different stages of the process, lack of equal conditions for political parties and other numerous conditions and incidents of violence (EU, EOM, 2007).

To aptly understand what entails electoral fraud and criminality, that a report was credited to Chief Fani Kayode (one time Deputy Premier of Western Region of Nigeria) when he boasted, "whether you vote for us or not we will remain in power (Dudly 1973: 42). Yoroms Gani (2007: 107-110) provides a useful answer when he argues that electoral criminality and rigging is a sophisticated weapon in the hands of politicians into which various aspects of anti-democratic activities have been concretely built, including;

- i. Providing counterfeit ballot box, ballot papers and voting cards.
- ii. Vote buying: giving money to voters to vote for particular party and or candidate;
- iii. Buying off of the electoral officers and party agents to manipulate the results for a particular political party;
- iv. Changing of the figures of result counted at polls or collation centre in favour of political parties or candidates;
- v. Replacing genuine ballot boxes with fake ballot boxes containing illegal ballot papers/voter cards used in perpetrating the crime;

- vi. Stealing or mutilation of electoral materials to avoid the conduct of the election;
- vii. Inciting or causing violence at the polling unit and or in the course of the election so as to threaten voters from voting or for the election or the result of the election to be cancelled;
- viii. Attempts by the electoral officers to share votes cast in election among political parties;
- ix. Giving of wrong information to the voters on the dates of the election or voting procedures, so as to misguide them to vote for a party which is not of their choice;
- x. Creating fear, intimidation and threatening the voting atmosphere.

II. Methodology

The methodology adopted for the study is content analytical techniques. In the content analytical techniques, relevant literature were reviewed from available sources, namely, journals, internet materials, quarterly magazines, and other relevant documents associated with the administration of election matters.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on two theories; the game theory and the frustration aggression theory.

The game theory explains public policy as the outcome of interest group. It assumes that public policy process is the result of a struggle among the expecting organized interest groups in the society. Anderson et al (1975:417) argues that individuals are important only when they act as a part, or on behalf of group interest. The policy makers in this circumstances act as referees, arranging a compromise among competing interests and enacting policies in favour of the most influential group. According to Letham (1965:36):

What may be called public policy is the equilibrium reached in this struggle (between groups) at any given moment and it represents a balance which the contending factors or groups constantly strive to weigh in their favour.

It is these policies enacted in favour of the most influential groups to the detriment of the less important members of the society that aggravates electoral criminality by those seeking to occupy political and elective positions in Nigeria.

However, the theory of frustration aggression as adopted by this study is used to explain violent behavior. The central thesis of frustration aggression theory is that aggression is always the result of frustration given the requisite condition of an individual whose basic desires are thwarted, and who consequently experience profound sense of dissatisfaction and anger is likely to react to his condition by directing aggressive behavior at what is perceived as being responsible for thwarting those desires.

Furthermore, this theory of frustration aggression examines the relationship between democracy, sustenance of democracy and violent behavior expressed through electoral violence and criminality. This entails the understanding of the society through analysis of the societal economic infrastructure and superstructure; this is explained through the primacy of material conditions of the society. The violent behavior expressed through electoral violence and criminality is undertaken by the people who are disadvantaged economically, wanting to change the existing economic inequality in the society. This is made manifest sometimes during the period of political recruitment, when the structure of the economic relations does not favour the poor and enthrone inequality in the society: violent behavior will continue. This is because, the fundamental concern of human beings is survival and security and so anything short of these, are to their dissatisfaction.

Empirical Review

A study by Onwe and Ibeogu (2018) titled *Electoral Fraud in Nigeria's Political System: The Implications to Public Governance*. The study sought to examine the causes of electoral fraud in Nigeria's political system, and the consequence to the development and institution of good governance by the public authority. The study adopted group theory as the theoretical foundation. The findings of the study revealed that what instigates electoral fraud in Nigeria's political system is the desperate ambition to rule, especially from those who cannot offer anything; the zealousness of those in power to perpetuate selves; and the inability of the political stakeholders and eminent Nigerians to tell those in control of government machinery that they have no right to turn Nigeria into a land of misery by frustrating the political system through electoral misconducts. Recommendations were that for a healthy democratic system and public governance; the electoral system must be devoid of electoral malpractices; the appointment of personalities with sound moral values to handle election matters. Though, the study by Onwe et al is apt, it was however, criticized for not adopting any methodology in discussing the paper.

In another study by Oni, Chidozie and Agbude (2013) titled, "Electoral Politics in the Fourth Republic of Nigeria's Democratic Governance". They sought to establish the cause of social disequilibrium in the Nigeria's Fourth Republic. It maintained that intellectual discourse focused essentially on the mutually reinforcing questions of political violence and electoral fraud, less attention is given to the role of security agencies in achieving credible election.

However, findings revealed that it is how the Nigerian police perform their roles of electoral security that needs attention and not the issue of whether the roles are executed. It concluded that any electoral reform in Nigeria that excludes reformation of the security agencies is an incomplete exercise. The study by Oni et al (2013) was strongly criticized by this study for lacking methodology, theoretical foundation, implication of the study and recommendations.

In another study carried out by Korikye (2011) titled "Political Godfatherism, Violence and Sustainable Democracy in Nigeria". The focus of the study was to examine the phenomenon of Political Godfatherism and its role in the politics of Nigeria. The findings of the study indicated that: the character of the state and nature of politics in Nigeria has impacted on the society negative values that now threaten the fabrics of the country's nascent democracy; that competition amongst godfathers to control state powers through their favoured godsons has denied the electorates the right to elect their preferred candidates, thereby rendering elections ineffective. Besides, the fierce struggle for state power has also resulted in some of the worst electoral violence in the country, before, during and after elections. It concluded that political godfatherism as practiced in Nigeria is a potential threat to the sustenance of democracy. The study recommended for attitudinal change and positive perception of politics by the politicians.

The study by Korikye (2011) is highly commendable, especially with the findings made, though not without criticisms, as it was faulted for not choosing any methodology in discussing the paper, no theoretical framework adopted, and lastly, there was no implications suggested for the study.

Finally, a study by Chukwuemeka (2012) titled, "the Politics of Godfatherism as a Foundation Source of Instability in Nigeria". The study had as its objective, as the evaluation of the extent godfather politics has contributed to instability in Nigeria with a view to proffer solution to the problems identified. Survey research method was adopted. Data collected through questionnaire were analyzed using Z-test. The findings revealed that the current political instability in Nigeria is a function of the politics of godfatherism; it also revealed that godfatherism is the mother of corruption in Nigeria. The politics of godfatherism has also introduced mediocrity in the public bureaucracy, and the entire political system resulting from faulty, lopsided and wrong recruitment/anointing of candidates for elective and appointive positions. The recommendations of the study included: that the National Orientation Agency should intensify efforts in the re-orientation of the political actors and employers of labour in the public service to enable them know the shortcomings of godfather politics; that the lawmakers should enact a law to prohibit godfather politics in Nigeria and offenders should be barred from participating in political activities; that the same law should guide recruitment, posting, training, and nominating of candidates for the bureaucracy and political system.

However, the only defect pointed out by these authors on the above study is that, it lacked theoretical under-pinning, and no implications of godfatherism to the sustenance of Nigeria's electoral and political system.

So far, having exhaustively reviewed this paper, the researchers expends effort in discussing electoral criminality in southeast states, causes and challenges to the democratic stability of Nigeria.

Elections have been seen as the major feature of democracy to the extent that not only it is impossible to imagine a democratic regime without elections (Nnadozie, 2007), but also there is now a real risk of confusing the holding of regular reasonably competitive and transparent elections with democracy (Honkpe and Gueye, 2010). Indeed, in direct democracy of ancient Greece, elections were used to take decisions in various fields. For example, elections were used to nominate people to the most important positions and for which a minimum level of competence is considered vital. The indispensability of election to democracy appears obvious in contemporary democracy described as representative democracy. The contemporary representative democracy defined as a system in which people are governed through their representatives. It therefore lies that elections remains the most appropriate widespread mechanism for selecting their representatives who will be responsible for governing on behalf and for the people (Honkpe and Gueye, 2010). Today (2021) therefore, a political system which does not select it's leaders through competitive, free and fair elections can hardly be considered as a democracy.

Therefore, since elections are indispensable in a democratic government, elections in Nigeria's fourth Republic, especially in South East States (Anambra, Abia, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo States) may be described as precarious, a situation that has left many Nigerians dead in the polling booths on many electoral occasions, especially in the 2019 general election. The six general elections that have been conducted during this Fourth republic (1999, 2003, 2007, 2011, 2015, 2019) have been conducted under unfertile atmosphere because of the absence of enabling condition for democratic participation which of course is the greatest obstacle to democracy (Ake, 1996, Ibeogu, 2019). Joseph (1991) opined that the prebendal and predating nature of Nigeria politics (south east states) have turned electoral competitions into welfare among political elites which can no longer be regulated by the constitutive rules of the game. The soft, weak nature and character of the Nigerian state (south east states) have reduced electoral contests to the battle of the strongest and the potentialities of who holds the instruments of the state. The states (south east) became a tool in the hands of political elites to achieve sectional and particularist interests; the experiences in Anambra State between Chief Chris Ubah (godfather) and Dr.

Chris Ngige (godson) between 2003-2006, and in Imo state, between Owelle Rochas Okorocha (governor and father-in-law) and Mr. Uche Nwosu (son-in-law and godson) in 2019 general election (Ibeogu, 2019). The politicians have tagged elections a “do or die affair” going by the words of former President Olusegun Obasanjo of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) in 2007; all sorts of dastardly acts were perpetrated by Nigerian Politicians in order to win elections at all cost, especially here in south east states. Ashiru Dele (2009:101) aptly summarized the electoral process in Nigeria’s Fourth Republic thus:

Apart from the violent nature of our electoral competition, the contestants for state power also tries to undo or outdo one another using all shades of electoral malpractices such as recruiting juvenile to vote, detaching ballot booklets, duplicating ballot papers, vandalizing voters materials, stuffing of ballot boxes, and outright intimidation of opponents as well as falsification of electoral results.

It is instructive to state that these anti-democratic behaviours exhibited by politicians before, during and after elections in south east states and Nigeria in general vitiates the sanctity of the elections and also blemish the democratization process. The electoral behavior manifested in most parts of Nigeria (South East, South-South, South West, North East, North West and North Central) in this Fourth Republic calls to question the legitimacy of all the regimes that have been enthroned in the republic, 1999-2023. Electoral practices that are antithetical to democracy are often promoted in south east and the entire country (Nigeria), calling to question the basic tenets of democracy including free, fair, and credible elections in Nigeria. Elections, we should note are free when they are not characterized by violence and disruption of any kind and when there is peaceful and orderly environment conducive for all participants in the process. Elections are also free when electorates are independently allowed to choose candidates of their choice without any fear of intimidation or harassment. Elections are regarded as fair only when the umpire, the electoral body (INEC, SIEC-State Independent Electoral Commission) treats everybody and all contestants with equality and also provide a level playing ground for all to compete.

However, experience in South East States and Nigeria at large has shown that election credibility has no correlation with legitimacy. For instance, a onetime Deputy Premier of the Western Region of Nigeria, Chief Fani Kayode, once stated, that; “whether you vote for us or not, we will remain in power” (Dudley, 1973:42), in Ebonyi State prior to the 2019 general elections, the governor of Ebonyi State, and the PDP governorship candidate for the election, Engr. Dave Nweze Umahi, severally told civil and public servants, traders at Abakpa main market, traders at building materials market, rice millers associations, artisans at the mechanic village, and the academic and non academic staff of Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki on Monday 4th March, 2019 at the Faculty of Law Auditorium, Ebonyi State University during an interactive session with staff, that whether the electorates of Ebonyi State votes for him and his party or not, they will emerge victorious. After the governorship and house of assembly election held on Saturday 9th March, 2019, they all emerged victorious (Ibeogu, 2019). This cruelty depicts the extent to which elections can be personalized in Nigeria. Critical minds may wonder that since politicians are not military that would secure power by force through the use of guns, how would they capture power to remain in government as boasted?

Yoroms Gani (2007:107-110) and Ibeogu (2019) provides a useful answer when they argued that electoral rigging and criminality are sophisticated weapon in the hands of politicians into which various aspects of anti-democratic activities have been concretely perpetrated to include but not limited to these:

1. Bribing of INEC officials, the police and security agents with irresistible amounts of money to perpetrate election rigging;
2. Recognition of non existing polling units by INEC and allocation of voting materials to same;
3. The use of partisan party supporters by INEC as electoral officers to oversee polling booths during elections;
4. Diversion of electoral materials to private offices, residences and places of traditional rulers for manipulation and falsification;
5. Concealing and release of voters register filled with false names which is usually made available to political party and candidate of their interest in secret;
6. Voters register used at polling booths not numbered, thus permeating arbitrary addition of names in the register;
7. Unannounced and sudden change of location of polling station and collation centres;
8. Pre-stuffing of ballot boxes with fake ballot papers before the day of the election;
9. Stuffing of illegal ballot boxes with illegal ballot paper.
10. Sale of pre-stuffed ballot boxes to contestants and party members/political parties;
11. Replacement or exchange of official ballot boxes with unofficial ballot boxes containing unofficial thumb-printed ballot papers;
12. Throwing ballot boxes into the river and replacing it with freshly stuffed ballot boxes from unidentified areas, the 2019 Imo State governorship election experience.
13. Addition of unofficial ballot boxes to official boxes containing already thumb-printed ballot papers;

14. Falsification of results and forgery of figures both at the pooling units and collation centres; the experience with House of Assembly Election in Akwa Ibom State involving Prof Ogban of UNICAL in 2019 House of Assembly Election;
15. Multiple voting to which INEC officials and the police or other security agents are indifferent; the experience in North in 2015 presidential election;
16. The use of under-aged children as voters to which INEC officials and the security agents are indifferent;
17. The use of Vaseline on the finger nails before the so called indelible ink is applied by polling officers in order to enable easy cleaning and facilitate multiple voting;
18. Thumb printing of ballot papers by INEC officials;
19. Thumb printing of ballot papers by security agents;
20. The use of ethylated spirit to clean of the indelible ink of finger nails to facilitate multiple voting;
21. Thumb printing of ballot papers by some domestic monitors or observers;
22. Accumulation and use of illegally acquired voting cards to vote on election days; this was rampant in 2015 and 2019 general election across Nigeria;
23. The use of party agents as surveyors of voters cards to facilitate impersonation and multiple voting;
24. Dressing up party agents in police and other security agents uniform to intimidate political opponents at polling booths and collation centres;
25. The use of armed thugs to harass and intimidate political opponents and rival party agents;
26. The use of police and security operatives to terrorize opponents and rival party agents;
27. The use of thugs, police and security operatives to intimidate party agents of rival parties to depart from polling centre;
28. Party members of the ruling party bearing INEC tags on polling days to facilitate moving from polling stations to polling stations and from one collation centre to another with a view to rigging elections;
29. Printing and use of fake election results sheet with the same numbers as authentic result sheet;
30. Forcing some party agents at gun point to sign forged election results;
31. Canvassing for votes at polling booths with high level impunity (sharing of money) etc;
32. Members of the ruling parties claiming falsely to be party agents for rival political parties so as to give cover to the rigging of election results;
33. Intimidating and compelling voters, in some instances at gun point to vote for a particular party.

III. Conclusion

Elections where it is conducted under free, fair and transparent manner by the electoral body (INEC) will guarantee the people's hope of enthroning a credible leader, but whereby it is characterized by electoral criminality, such as rigging, harassment, intimidation, killings, stuffing of ballot boxes with thumb printed ballot papers, hence the emergence of incredible or fraudster as a leader, then the future of the people and the state is bleak.

IV. Recommendations

Based on the above premise, the following recommendations are suggested:

1. Promotion of a strong electoral body (INEC) and other institutions that complements the conduct of elections like NOA, security agencies and judiciary which should be devoid of government control;
2. Ensuring transparency in the conduct of party primaries by political parties;
3. Anyone who violates the electoral guidelines or law should be made to face the full weight of the law;
4. Stakeholders should rise against ills perpetrated by political office holders;
5. Genuine reform of our electoral institutions as advocated by Justice Mohammed Uwais led Panel should be implemented; and
6. Appointment of personalities with sound moral values to handle election matters.

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