



YOUTH AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE: AN EMPIRICAL REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

Elections in Nigeria have become the most accepted means of changing a government through electoral processes. But the selection process usually causes friction within the party, and sometime leads to factions within the party or between parties. Loyalist of powerful individuals tends to humiliate, intimidate their political opponents. It has been

Introduction

In the contemporary world, democratic reforms have opened political space in which citizens can more easily speak their minds, express their concerns, and choose their leaders. Lewis (2006) posited that the new freedoms and institutions that accompany democracy provide important opportunities for holding leaders to account and promoting the transparency of government. Thus, the emerging issues in Nigerian democracy today, are understood not only as an end to military rule but also as the establishment of responsive, responsible, and credible political institutions which will promote a government that is accountable, transparent, responsible, prevent corruption, respect human rights and rule of law and ensure popular sovereignty (Jega, 2007).

Elections have become the most accepted means of changing a government through electoral processes. Electoral process is a total process that includes registration of voters, identifying the



political parties to be voted for, voting, counting of votes, and declaration of election results. An election is the means through which leaders are voted into power to represent their electorates. It is usually arranged from time to time depending on the law prevailing in a particular place or country. The outcomes of many elections have been so fiercely contested that the survival of the country and democracy has been jeopardized. No human collectively can experience any meaningful level of progress if it fails to deliberately engage and harness the energy of the youth (Idike, 2014). However, the situation in most developing

observed generally that youths are the main protagonists of electoral violence and youths are invariably involved in electoral violence sponsored mostly by the political elites. Based on this, the study assessed the issues of Youths in Electoral Related Violence in Nigeria. Three research objectives were developed to guide the study, and the sample size of 146 questionnaires was administered to the youths in Jimeta metropolis of Adamawa State. Data was collected through a questionnaire entitled "Youth Electoral Violence Questionnaire" (YEVQ) and analysed through mean and standard deviation. The major findings of the study revealed that the most youths that get involved in electoral violence are unemployed and poverty is another factor that encourages youth's involvement. Also, youths are made to be body guards to corrupt politicians during elections, they carry guns and other dangerous weapons during elections, youths are made to hijack ballot boxes during elections, and youths are made to manipulate figures during elections. The study recommends that Youths should be economically empowered through sincere, participatory and youth oriented skill acquisition and employment generation scheme. And they could be empowered politically through meaningful political socialization and constructive participation in politics.

Keywords: Youth, Violence, Elections, Electoral Violence, Democracy



countries including Nigeria is that, the youths are often neglected and are not productively engaged. Consequently, the bulging youth population, is a demographic feature that is linked with the emergence of political violence and civil conflicts (Idike, 2014). Electoral violence presents one of the graves threats to many democratizing societies. And there are several manifestations of electoral violence. These include murder, arson, abduction, assault, violent, seizure and destruction of electoral material, overwhelming presence of the gun and other weapon-brandishing soldiers, security operatives and youths.

The above argument shows that, there is a direct correlation between youth bulges or youth unemployment and violence. The existence of large pool of unemployed youths in Adamawa state, north eastern zone of Nigeria coupled with the huge poverty prevailing in the state is no doubt one of the greatest challenges Adamawa state has to cope with. It is unquestionable that an election that is free from any violence and flaws is what breeds legitimate leaders into power. However, the role assigned to youths by the political elites during electoral processes demonstrates otherwise of this situation. In view of the foregoing, discussion, this study would attempt to examine the role of youths in electoral related violence in Adamawa state, using the presidential election of 2015 as a case study.

Problem Analysis

The Youth are often engaged in electoral violence. According to Badejo and Stevens (2012) the increased involvement of Nigerian youths in electoral violence should be of concern to all. According to Abutu and Abdullahi (2012) Elections in Nigeria since 1999 have been relatively peaceful but the General Elections of the April 2011 recorded high level of electoral violence when compared with the elections in 1999, 2003 and 2007 respectively. The violence swept through twelve (12) Northern states of Adamawa, Bauchi, Borno, Gombe, Jigawa, Kaduna, Kano, Katsina, Niger, Sokoto, Yobe and Zamfara States respectively where there are loss of lives and properties worth millions of Naira. This indicates presence of violence in all elections held in Nigeria since 1999 to date but with more cases recorded in 2015



general election. And most of these electoral violence were carried out by the youths. Why youths are always tools for electoral violence? What are the motivations for electoral related violence? How can these violence be mitigated to ensure violence free election processes in Nigeria? It is in the light of the above that this study, intends to look at the role youths play in electoral related violence in Adamawa state.

Purpose of the Study

The aim of this study is to investigate the role of youths in electoral related violence in Adamawa state within the reference period of 1999 to 2015. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. find out the factors motivating youth involvement in electoral related violence in Adamawa state.
- ii. examine the roles played by youths in the period of elections in Adamawa state.
- iii. determine the consequences of electoral violence in Adamawa state.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is Johan Galtung's theory of violence. The theory was propounded by Johan Galtung, a Norwegian sociologist. He identified three types of violence namely; direct (brawls, international wars), structural (or indirect violence) and cultural violence. Johan Galtung (1969), made a clear distinction between Structural Violence, Cultural Violence and Direct Violence. These ideas are connected to his distinction depending on how it operates between three inter-related forms of violence (Structural-Cultural-Direct) where Structural Violence is at the left end and Cultural Violence is at the right end of the base of a Triangle invisibly while Direct violence is on the vertex visibly.

This theory could be used to explain the rising number of youths engaging in electoral related violence in Adamawa state having been involved in structural violence which manifests in a widespread unemployment among other things. Direct forms of violence like, Physical assault on individuals during campaign, elections and when



election results are released, assassination of political opponents or people perceived as a threat to one's political ambition, etc are obtained as forms of violence in elections.

Who is a Youth?

A youth is a person especially a young man or boy. The term youth is also seen as the freshness and vitality characteristic of a young person (word web dictionary, 2010). Youth has also been defined as the period in an individual's life which runs between the end of childhood and entry into the world of work (Onuekwusi and Effiong, 2002). Alimba, Momodu, Abba and Bello (2010) defined youth as a person who is aged between 17 and 30 years. The youthful age is a promising age in which a young man has energy, will, encourage and strength to be actively involved in adventures. Alimba *et al.* (2010) posited that in Nigeria, youths are seen as the leaders of tomorrow. The youths are the trustee of any nation.

From the forgoing, a glaring fact that cannot be ignored is that in the business of developing the country, as well as instrument of destruction, the youths is a major stakeholder. Their composition when compared with other groups in the country is a pointer to this fact. Agbese (2007) asserted that youth is the phase of life when men and women gather the bricks with which they build the mansions of life later. Youth invariably, is a delicate phase in human development. It is the time when future choices are made. It represents the most volatile, complex, unpredictable, dynamic as well as the most vulnerable segment of the population, socio-economically, emotional and otherwise. Youths as our link with the future are the pillars of human continuity.

The concept of youth has been subjected to diverse interpretations and flexible usage. At one level the youth are conceptualized in terms of their futuristic role as leaders of society. However, in his interrogation of the youth as a category Obi (2006), aptly notes that: the categorization of the youth as future leaders assumes the non-interrogation of the existing power relations in society and is a recipe for preparing the youths to perpetuate a particular mode of power relations that suggest a permanence of structures of dominance and interests, but with the entry and exit of occupants' overtime. Obi continues: This conceptualization



also suggests the sub-ordination of youths to the power structure controlled by elders in order to facilitate system stability, cohesion and continuity. Political time then becomes a conveyor belt that takes the loyal and disciplined youth into future power, when the elders pass into myth and history (Obi, 2006).

Conceptual Understanding of Violence and Electoral Violence

Violence is a universal phenomenon which manifests in various forms and in different places. There are many types of violence - domestic violence, criminal Violence, interpersonal violence, proactive violence (violence or the threat of violence to affect outcomes and decisions), reactive violence (post-event protesting against unfavourable outcomes) etc, (Meadow, 2009). According to Williams (2005), violence is a harm perpetrated on persons or property ranging, in the case of persons, from restraining their freedom of movement to torture and death and in the case of property, from simple damage, to complete expropriation or total destruction. According to Galtung (1996), violence refers to any form of social injustice whether inflicted by individuals or by institutions or by workings of the society at large and whether or not it involves the deliberate infliction of personal injury by episodes of physical or psychological force. More so, Albert (2007) defined electoral violence as all forms of organised acts or threats physical, psychological, and structural, aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder before, during and after an election with a view to determining, delaying, or otherwise influencing an electoral process.

Electoral violence is described as a pre- meditated act that intends to influence the electoral process using foul language, verbal intimidation, blackmail, dangerous weapons, arson and assassination (Bamfo, 2008). Again, Ogundiya (2003) defined electoral violence as: all sorts of riots, demonstrations, party clashes, political assassinations, looting, arson, thuggery, kidnapping, etc., spontaneous or not, which occur before, during and after elections. It could be regarded as elections motivated crisis employed to alter, change or influence by force or coercion, the electoral behaviour of Voters or voting patterns or possibly reverse



electoral decision in favour of particular individual, groups or political party.

Deadly election-related and communal violence in northern Nigeria following the April 2011 Presidential voting left more than 800 people dead (Human Rights Watch (2011).

According to the United Nations Development Program (2009), Election-related violence refers to:-

“acts or threats of coercion, intimidation, or physical harm perpetrated to affect an electoral process or that arise in the context of electoral competition. When perpetrated to affect an electoral process, violence may be employed to influence the process of elections—such as efforts to delay, disrupt, or derail a poll—and to influence the outcomes: the determining of winners in competitive races for political office or to secure approval or disapproval of referendum questions.”

Electoral violence is defined thus: any spontaneous or organized act by candidates, party supporters, election authorities, voters, or any other actor that occurs during an electoral process, from the date of voter registration to the date of inauguration of a new government, that uses physical harm, intimidation, blackmail, verbal abuse, violent demonstrations, psychological manipulation, or other coercive tactics aimed at exploiting, disrupting, determining, hastening, delaying, reversing, or otherwise influencing an electoral process and its outcome.

Table 1: The Three Dimensions of Electoral Violence

Dimension	Components
Physical	Physical assault on individuals during campaign, elections and when election results are released. Assassination of political opponents or people perceived as a threat to one's political ambition. Burning down of public or opponents' houses or cars. Shooting, shoot-outs. Killing of individuals.



- Partisan harassment by security agents, arrests, forceful dispersal of rallies, or Shooting, wounding or killing of people.
Kidnappings and hostage-taking.
Bombing of infrastructure.
Forceful disruption by thugs of political and campaign rallies.
Destruction of ballot boxes and ballot papers by thugs or partisan security agents.
Armed raids on voting and collation centres, and snatching of ballot boxes and papers from polling agents.
Free-for-all fights.
- Psychological Threats against and harassment by security agents of opponents of the ruling regime or party, which create political apathy.
Shoot-on-sight orders that breed fear in voters.
Publication or broadcast of abusive, insulting, or intimidating material or advertorials.
Threats to life through phone calls, text messages, etc.
- Structural Coercion of citizens by government to register or vote.
Exclusionary acts and policies.
Unequal opportunities for political parties and candidates.
Deliberate changes in dates, venues, or times of events to the disadvantage of others.
Partisan delimitation of electoral constituencies and location of polling booths.
Excessive fees for collecting party nomination forms
unfree campaign
Reliance on money and brute force instead of moral integrity and competence.
Restraints imposed on voters.
Use of the incumbency factor to give undue advantage to some candidates.
Announcement of false or fraudulent results.
Lengthy delays in announcing election results.
Absence of (adequate) voting materials and election result forms.
Delays in voting.
Absence of electoral officers from pooling booths.
Partisan behaviour of police and other security agents.
Discriminatory acts and policies.

Source: Nwolise (2007)



Causes of Electoral Violence

Elections in Nigeria no doubt just as with the rest of African countries is alien. Since the rebirth of Nigeria's democracy in 1999, violence of varying levels have been witnessed in Nigerian elections. Past election cycles in Nigeria have featured political assassinations, voter intimidation, intra- and interparty clashes, and communal unrest among others. Election violence is regarded as a sub-category of political violence that is primarily distinguished by its timing and motive. It is a coercive and deliberate strategy used by political actors – incumbents as well as opposition parties – to advance their interests or achieve specific political goals in relation to 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. Many reasons had been attributed to electoral violence by different scholars. In their classical submissions on the 'Current Incentives to Electoral Violence in Nigeria' Inokoba and Maliki (2011) aptly summarise, thus: state institutions promote violence, there is a culture of impunity in Nigerian society, political leaders at all levels perpetrate electoral violence with impunity, the absence of institutional and legal solutions against electoral violence, inadequate documented and public knowledge of electoral system and violence, prebendal politics as a basis for electoral violence.

However, the following factors are considered to cause electoral violence: bad leadership, unemployment and poverty, religious and ethnic divisions, weak governance and corruption, cultures of violence and impunity, electoral rules and regulations (Inokoba and Maliki, 2011). Abutu and Abdullahi (2012) attributed electoral violence to bad leadership as they assert that: The political leaders don't care about the plight and welfare of the people they lead and represented, rather they apparently and transparently demonstrate their ill-gotten wealth before the people therefore; the frustrated masses always cause destruction to frustrate the government. This scenario explains clearly the situations obtainable in most parts of Nigeria, where unemployment and poverty



contribute to violent acts which include electoral violence. Bad leadership creates a ripple effect on the entire polity. If a government is bad, there seem to be widespread unemployment among others, which invariably leads to aggression and violence.

Unemployment is a global trend, but it occurs mostly in developing countries of the world, with attendant social, economic, political, and psychological consequences. Thus, massive youth unemployment in any country is an indication of far more complex problems (Okafor, 2011). Youth unemployment has been on the increase in Nigeria in recent years. The Federal government recently acknowledged that about 80 percent of Nigeria's youth are unemployed while 10 percent are underemployed (Daily Trust, 2008). Since the colonial era, ethnic, regional and religious divisions constitute the main form of expression of social cleavage in Nigeria (Orji and Uzodi, 2012). In Nigeria, political parties and candidates are seen as representatives of a particular ethnic, regional or religious group and voters most times support parties and candidates in these terms. As a result, the voting pattern in Nigerian elections has mostly followed the configuration of ethnic, regional and religious divisions. Tensions arising from communal identity have had a major influence on electoral contest and the political process. Therefore, political differences caused by ethnic and religious divisions invariably lead to electoral violence.

Corruption is another thing that has eaten deep into the fabrics of this country. According to (Ayobolu, 2006), in Nigeria, it is one of the many unresolved problems that have critically hobbled and skewed development. Resources meant for improving the welfare and standard of living of Nigerians are diverted to private pockets for selfish gains by corrupt politicians. The adverse effect of this on the society is frustration, decay of infrastructure and abject poverty of the masses. Consequently, people react violently on any little situation to register their ungratefulness to the elites. Dudley (1961) asserts that; the Shortest cut to affluence and influence is through politics. In Nigeria, politics has being eroded of its primary function of gaining power to improve the lives of the electorates to a more vehement act of misappropriating state fund by the political elites for their own selfish interests. Furthermore,



there is an unequal opportunity for Nigerians to acquire wealth in order to improve their health and education standards among other things owing to the wide gap that exists between the rich and the poor. Abutu and Abdullahi (2012) found that, uneven distribution of wealth is one of the major problems of Nigeria and all her attendant challenges including electoral and post-electoral violence in Nigeria.

Youth and Electoral Violence

Youth all over the World are called leaders of tomorrow. This is simply because of the fact that they are characterized with energy and mental alertness. This energy is either used positively or negatively depending on the individual orientation. All over the world, youths are considered as that part of the people who have the potentials of carrying there societies to greater heights. However, the role assigned to such youths by their societies or their governments in particular, will determine to a large extent whether that society is advancing or heading towards disaster.

In Nigeria today, the youths have become puppets for the political elites especially during electoral related events, to create violence of different dimension so as to enable them achieve their political objectives. The violent roles played by youths in electoral related events are numerous and they include; physical assault on individuals during election, and when results are released, burning down of opponent's or public properties like cars and buildings, destruction of ballot boxes and ballot papers among others. This view was corroborated by Nweke (2005) and Bazza (2008), as they assert that, youths have been repeatedly used as instruments of violence: they have participated actively in destructive anti-social behaviours such as violent demonstrations, intra and inter political party fighting and other politically motivated violence, ritual killings, kidnapping and hostage taking, arson and cult related violence.

Methodology

Descriptive research design was used for this study. The choice for this design was informed as a result of the fact that the study was interested in gathering data to determine the role of youth in electoral related



violence in Adamawa state. The sample size of 146 questionnaires was administered from the youths in Jimeta metropolis. The sample was selected based on the two Yamane formula for calculating sample size (infinite and finite population formula), with a representative sample size of 95% confidence and precision level of 0.07. Purposeful sampling technique was used for the study; hence, only informed members of the public was selected for the study. The method of Data collection for this study was the questionnaire titled “Youth Electoral violence Questionnaire” (YEVQ) and other books and online materials were also consulted. The statistical analytical tools adopted for data analysis in the study included simple percentage, mean and standard deviation. Key Informant Interview (KII) was also used to elicit information from the respondents.

Results

The explanations that underlie the tables represent the results and interpretations.

Research Question 1: *What are the factors motivating youth involvement in electoral related violence in Adamawa state?*

Table 1: Factors Motivating Youth Involvement in Electoral Related Violence In Adamawa State

S/No	Factors motivating youth involvement in electoral related violence in Adamawa State	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
1	Most youths that get involved in electoral violence are unemployed.	4.8	0.37	Agreed
2	Most youths that are perpetrators of electoral malpractices are uneducated.	4.0	1.07	Agreed
3	The non-existence of private sector economy is a major contributor to youth unemployment	4.2	0.75	Agreed
4	Most youths that are perpetrators of electoral malpractices are unskilled	3.6	1.37	Agreed
5	Most youths that get involved in electoral violence are children of poor parents	4.4	0.48	Agreed



6	Poverty is another factor that encourages youths involvement	4.3	0.93	Agreed
7	Poor Skill Acquisition Policy to tackle youth problems of unemployment in the state	3.9	0.97	Agreed
Grand mean $\bar{x}G$		4.1		

Table 1 clearly shows the factors motivating youth involvement in electoral related violence in Adamawa state. The respondents agreed on all the item list in Table 1, which include: Most youths that get involved in electoral violence are unemployed, most youths that are perpetrators of electoral malpractices are uneducated, the non existence of private sector economy is a major contributor to youth unemployment, most youths that are perpetrators of electoral malpractices are unskilled, most youths that get involved in electoral violence are children of poor parents, poverty is another factor that encourages youth involvement in electoral violence, poor Skill acquisition Policy to tackle youth problem of unemployment in the state, with a strong grand mean of above 3.5. Research Questions 2: *What roles do youths play in electoral related violence in Adamawa state?*

Table 2: The Roles Youths Play In Electoral Violence In Adamawa State

S/No	The roles youths play in electoral violence in Adamawa State	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
1	Youths are made to be body guards to politicians during elections	4.8	0.30	Agreed
2	Youths are made to carry guns and other dangerous weapons during elections	4.1	0.84	Agreed
3	Youths are made to hijack ballot boxes during elections	4.3	0.69	Agreed
4	Youths are made to manipulate figures during elections	4.8	0.46	Agreed
5	Youths are made to disrupt election rallies of opposing parties	4.5	0.65	Agreed



6	Youths are made to threaten people from voting for candidates of their choice	4.8	0.37	Agreed
7	Youths are made to stop people from voting for candidates of their choice	4.1	0.58	Agreed
Grand mean $\bar{x}G$		4.4		

Table 2 clearly revealed the roles of youths play in electoral violence in Adamawa state. The respondents agreed on the entire items list in Table 2, which include: Youths are made to be body guards to politicians during elections, Youths are made to carry guns and other dangerous weapons during elections, Youths are made to hijack ballot boxes during elections, Youths are made to manipulate figures during elections, Youths are made to disrupt election rallies of opposing parties, Youths are made to threaten people from voting for candidates of their choice, Youths are made to stop people from voting for candidates of their choice. The responds have a strong grand mean of above 3.5.

Research Question 3

What are the consequences of electoral violence in Adamawa state?

Table 3: The Consequences of Electoral Violence In Adamawa State

S/No	The consequences of electoral violence In Adamawa State	\bar{x}	SD	Remark
1	Electoral violence leads to destruction of properties	3.1	0.27	Agreed
2	Electoral violence leads to lost of lives	4.6	0.58	Agreed
3	Electoral violence increases voter apathy	4.3	0.82	Agreed
4	it creates a conducive atmosphere for unscrupulous individuals to hijack the instrument of the state	4.8	0.37	Agreed
5	Electoral violence can be used to manipulate electoral figure	3.4	1.18	Agreed
6	It deprives the people voice in governance	4.5	0.58	Agreed
7	Electoral violence reduces the image of the nation	4.7	0.42	Agreed
Grand mean $\bar{x}G$		4.2		



Table 3 clearly shows the consequences of electoral violence in Adamawa state. The respondents agreed on the entire items list in Table 3, which include: Electoral violence leads to destruction of properties, electoral violence leads to loss of lives, electoral violence increases voter apathy, illegitimate politicians gain power through Electoral violence, electoral violence can be used to manipulate electoral figures, electoral violence threaten people from voting candidates of their choice, electoral violence reduces the image of the nation.

Findings

the study revealed in Table 1 the factors motivating youth involvement in electoral related violence in Adamawa state to include: most youths that get involved in electoral violence are unemployed, most youths that are perpetrators of electoral malpractices are uneducated, the non existence of private sector economy is a major contributor to youths unemployment, most youths that are perpetrators of electoral malpractices are unskilled, most youths that get involved in electoral violence are children of poor parents, poverty is another factor that encourages youths involvement, poor Skill Acquisition Policy is not effective in to tackle youths problems of unemployment in the state., the study found the roles youths perform in electoral violence in Adamawa state to include: are made to be body guards to corrupt politicians during elections, they carry guns and other dangerous weapons during elections, youths are made to hijack ballot boxes during elections, youths are made to manipulate figures during elections, the consequences of electoral violence in Adamawa state include: electoral violence leads to destruction of properties, leads to loss of valuable lives, increases voter apathy, it creates a conducive atmosphere for unscrupulous individuals to hijack the instrument of the state, electoral violence can be used to manipulate electoral figure, it deprives the people voice in governance, electoral violence reduces the image of the nation and it make the state chaotic.

Discussion

This is in line with the views of Inokoba and Maliki (2011) that did a study on “Youths, Electoral Violence and Democratic Consolidation in Nigeria”. The study found out that the youths are the major perpetrators of



electoral violence and other malpractices. A key informant interview, a trader in Jimeta modern market noted that:

“most youth carry dangerous weapons during elections, that youths are made to hijack electoral materials by politicians in Adamawa state and are involved in manipulation of figures respectively during elections. Furthermore, to buttress his assumption that youths play violent roles during election, he stated that, in his presence in one of the wards in Jimeta, that the youths physically assault political opponents; maim and kill candidates of opposing parties and destroy proper-ties of their opponents respectively during elections”.

Another A key informant interview, a politician in Jimeta stated that:

The youths form bulk of the perpetrators of election related violence in Adamawa state and thatyouths have been repeatedly used as instruments of violence: they have participated actively in destructive anti-social behaviours such as violent demonstrations, intra and inter political party fighting and other politically motivated violence, ritual killings, kidnapping and hostage taking, arson and cult related violence.

Azeez (2005) also provided answers to the reason why youths are ever available and vulnerable instruments in the hands of unscrupulous politicians to perpetrate electoral violence. A closer look at the analysis of the responses of the respondents reveals that bulk of the youths who are perpetrators of election related violence are unskilled, uneducated or ill-educated, unemployed and children of parents of poor socio-economic status. A key informant interview, a secondary school teacher opined that the factors that are responsible for youth-led electoral violence include the following:

“a good number of youths who participate in acts of electoral violence come from embattled and economically poor homesteads; they are either uneducated or school drop-outs.



High rate of unemployment and underemployment especially among graduates of tertiary institutions is yet another factor that accounts for the high incidence of youths participation in electoral violence; moral decadence in youths and as well as the political manipulation of the psycho-cultural dispositions of youths towards elections by political elites has equally generated violent competition at elections”.

This position is confirmed by Akinboye (1987) who observed that most youths especially those who are desperately needy have problems in making and taking decisions. This largely explains why some politicians could capitalize on the weakness of youths about decision-making and taking and involving them in destructive anti-social behaviours the youths could not have loved to engage themselves in.

The consequences of electoral violence in Adamawa state include: electoral violence leads to destruction of properties, leads to loss of valuable lives, increases voter apathy, it creates a conducive atmosphere for unscrupulous individuals to hijack the instrument of the state, electoral violence can be used to manipulate electoral figure, it deprives the people voice in governance, electoral violence reduces the image of the nation and it make the state chaotic. Ajayi (2007) who asserted that electoral violence is the bane of democratic consolidation in Nigeria. that the lack of a clear adherence and respect for the rules guiding the democratic process is an obstacle to democratic consolidation and sustenance. A key informant interview, a church leader in Jimeta Metropolis stated that:

“it deprives the people voice in governance; it stalls communication between the politicians (government) and citizens; it has encouraged political apathy and indifference of the citizenry; it makes government unrepresentative, unaccountable, unresponsive and irresponsible; it creates a conducive atmosphere for unscrupulous individuals to hijack the instrument of the state; and more importantly, it puts a big question mark on the legitimacy of the government”.



Conclusion and Recommendations

The history of elections in Nigeria has shown that Nigerians cannot rely on the nation's electoral system as a veritable means of installing the kind of leaders they want and by implication in changing the material conditions of their existence. This is because; elections in Nigeria have been marred by the ugly incidents of electoral malpractice (Ezeani, 2004). It is pertinent to note that youth engagement in electoral violence is almost inevitable if the current trend of poverty, youth unemployment and poor economic empowerment of the youth are not adequately tackled. The task of ensuring good and participatory governance which is a necessary ingredient for democratic sustainability is on every Nigerian. Perhaps, the kind of role Nigerians can play differs. However, youths being leaders of tomorrow have greater role to play either individually or as groups with vested interest. These roles cannot be effectively carried out until when the youths, collectively and individually rise above the aforementioned challenges. Finally, the study also revealed that there is a strong relationship between election violence especially youth's involvement in it and the crisis of democratic sustenance and consolidation in Nigeria.

The following recommendations were drawn from the proceeding of the study: the study recommends that Youths should be economically empowered through sincere, participatory and youth oriented skill acquisition and employment generation scheme. Socially, the youths could be empowered through civil orientation and educations to enable them understand their roles (rights and duties) in the society. And they could be empowered politically through meaningful political socialization and constructive participation in politics.

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