

PROBLEMS OF THUGGERY IN NIGERIAN DEMOCRATIC CULTURE AND WAY FORWARD

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Abstract

This paper focuses on the problem of thuggery in Nigerian democratic culture and suggests a way forward. Nigerian politics today has often been described as a “do or die affair”. The work is aimed at examining and providing a critical assessment of events that led to the issue of politicians trying to acquire position by all means. This was the predominant setting in which 1999, 2003, 2007 and 2015 and 2018 political campaigns and elections were conducted. The elections were carried out in almost every state of the federation amidst violence as political parties loyalists clashed with one another in what could best be described as armed political campaigns where hundreds of lives were lost. The paper, basically divided into five topics and captures the general introduction which discuss the phenomenon of thuggery in the body politics of Nigeria. It consider and examines the reasons for the prevalent incidences of political thuggery particularly during and often re-run elections in the country. Many reasons, such as poverty and unemployment are advanced. The majority of youths in this Nation are jobless, with no means of livelihood. This makes them a willing tool for thuggery in the hands of desperate politicians. Other reasons are the phenomenon of the ruling parties, lack of political ideology and principles and the absence of internal democracy in contemporary Nigerian political parties. These factors have largely encouraged dictatorship and arbitrariness among political leaders at different levels. It demonstrates the negative impact of thuggery in Nigerian democratic community, with particular reference to the administration of Olusegun Obasanjo ranging form 1999 – 2007 exemplified the role of thuggery in Nigerian democracy. Some effects of thuggery on the Nigerian democratic culture are also discussed and measures to curb the practice of thuggery in Nigerian democratic culture are suggested.

Keywords: *Political Thurggery, Democratic culture, Unemployment, Poverty*

Introduction

Democracy is by nature government of the people by the people and for the people (Gboyega, 2004). Government should exclude violence and thuggery. This is not the case with Nigeria. In Nigeria, politicians see thuggery and violence as part of their trade. Nigerian democracy can hardly be isolated from the phenomenon of thuggery and violence. Desperate politicians in search of power are unscrupulous about the means they employ to acquire and keep it. As such, recruitment of thugs on a massive scale has become part of the norm in Nigeria's politics.

Thuggery has inflicted so much damage on the Nigeria democratic system. Its practice introduces the exchange of innocent human blood for the sake of political power. The human and materials cost of thuggery is staggering and unacceptable.

Since its independence, Nigeria's politics had been characterized by thuggery and violence. It is this background that politics is conceived by many Nigerians as a dirty game. The excessive use of thugs and hooligans in Nigerian politics manifest itself in acrimony, assault, assassination, intimidation, harassment, maiming and killing. Since independence from colonial rule in 1960 various administrative governments and policies ranging from military to civilian regimes proved to be failure. The way in which they assume the mantle of leadership is questionable, therefore, they find it very difficult to carry out their administrative functions and be accountable, but rather continue to fight their political rivals.

In contemporary Nigeria, to acquire power means to make good use of thuggery, bribery, blood shedding and other related illegitimate means. This is properly explained considering the nature by which elections are being conducted during the post independent era.

Generally speaking, the impact of this ugly act of thuggery in Nigeria Democracy is devastating, it ranges from extra judicial killings to politics of violence, thus the need to examine the impact of thuggery on our democracy becomes imperative as the nation approaches 2023 general elections. It is for this reason that this paper undertakes an examination of the impact of thuggery on the Nigerian democracy. The paper is divided into the following topics. Introduction, conceptual definitions of terms, causes of political thuggery in Nigeria, effects of thuggery on Nigerian democracy, ways of curbing the menace of political thuggery in Nigerian politics and summary, conclusion and recommendations were made.

Definition of terms

Thuggery: according to the Oxford Dictionary of current English simply means violent act of behavior by ruffians. From the foregoing, thuggery is synonymous with violence" Howell (2004) defined political thugs as "the tireless repetition of misleading facts designed to depict an opponent as personally despicable and in regard to governance as dangerous to physical and spiritual life of a nation" Thuggery is an act characterized by rudeness, hooliganism, touting, intimidation and harassment. It is a behaviour that contradicts peace, harmony and co-existence, it is an illegitimate and violent means of seeking political power with a view to subverting a national opinion for parochial ends through self impactation.

Karl Schmit (1968) posit that thuggery and political violence usually pressure a disturbance to the political equilibrium system. According to Gurr (197) thuggery refers to all collective attacks within a political community against the political regime, its actors including competing political groups as well as incumbents or its policies. There is a relationship between thuggery and violence. As a matter of fact, they are complementary. The end product of thuggery is violence. Violence is the means through which thugs achieve their aims.

Not only is Nigerian politics characterized by thuggery. Events across the country show that Nigerian politics has been hi-jacked by political thugs. Gboyega (2004) said that most thugs are recruited and trained for various political purposes such as intimidation, harassment violence, assassination and ballot box snatching. Some of them are placed on regular salaries with allowances accompanying their remunerations. Some of them are employed as special adviser, special assistants and personal assistants, while others are made contractors to government. Still some are paid off immediately after the usual agreement.

Democracy: the term is derived from the Greek, democratic which was coined from demo (people) and kratos (rule) in the middle of 5th Century BC to denote the political system then existing in Greek city-states,

notably Athens (Karl, 1968). The most widely quoted definition of democracy today is the one given by Abraham Lincoln which is “the government of the people by the people and for the people”.

Nature of Political Thuggery in Nigeria

Ranging from 1999, 2003, 2007, 2011 and 2018 undoubtedly, activities of thugs have taken a center stage thereby breeding a feeling of resenting among members of the public. These activities of thugs are not noticeable in only one part of the country. All political parties in trying to wrestle power from the other, engaged in this condemnable act. Thuggery is not known or experienced in only one part of the country, it is everywhere in the country. Indeed, hardly will one pick up a national daily in a week without finding a headline about thuggery. Within the nation, different groups that are formed and maintained by politicians before, during and after election with the aim to intimidate, harass, distort and to perpetrate whatever activities that would give political advantage to a party candidate over their opponents exist. Some good examples include the rivalry between the incumbent Governor of Kano State and his predecessor and the incumbent Governor of Rivers State with his predecessor as well as governor of Edo State and his predecessor.

Thugs have different sects but a single mission (to destroy). In the northern part of Nigeria “Karare” is a Hausa word referring to a group of people mostly from 8-35 age bracket. These youths are used by politicians during campaign and election in some sections of northern Nigeria to intimidate voters and political opponents into accepting the positions of their sponsor. They are violent, unemployed and mostly drug addicts. Similar groups exist in Kano known as “Ecomog”. In Bauchi they are known as “Sara-suka” in Lagos they are known as “area boys” (Diamond, 1999).

Historically, “Yan-akusa” also known as “Yan data” or “banga” in Kano were used in the first republic by the Northern People’s Congress (NPC) to check the winning streak of NEPU (Diamond, 1999). Today, the same phenomenon resurfaces itself as most of the groups are found as “soldiers” in the fight and struggle for political power.

Without doubt, Nigerian politics has since independence been characterized by thuggery and violence. Little wonder that politics is conceived as a dirty game and exclusive with thugs and hooligans in Nigeria. Consequently, Nigerian politics results in acrimony, assault, assassination, intimidation, harassment, maiming and killing. This trend is not a phenomenon of decency, but thuggery, brutality and violence for the past decades (<http://www.burainspt.com/opinion>).

Since restoration of democracy in 1999, thuggery activities are increasing more and more. In the 2007 general elections held in April, the national Human Rights Commission monitored the conduct of security personnel in each of the six (6) geopolitical zones involving eighteen states of the federation and the federal capital territory. In the main report there is every indication that number of states security personnel were overpowered by thugs who snatched ballot boxes at some polling stations. While in some states, some security personnel were indifferent to various electoral offences like multiple voting, under age voting, impersonation and snatching of ballot boxes (NHRC).

Detailed part of the report relevant to this work for present purpose shows that in the north-central zone comprising Plateau, Benue and Niger, it was observed that there was disruption of voting by militant armed youths at Unity Gate Polling Station/Gindiri V ward in Plateau State. In Benue State, thugs overpowered security agents and electoral officials at Government House Polling Station and snatched the ballot boxes away (emphasis mine). As a result, violence resulted and a free-for-all fight ensued, which made voters run away (National Human Rights Report, 58).

In the north West Zone covering Kano, Katsina and Sokoto, cases of ballot box snatching amongst other offences were noticed in the monitory (Power, 2000) south-south zone that was monitored covered Edo, Bayelsa and Rivers states. Some of the electoral offences noticed involved snatching of ballot boxes in Rivers state and Okada in Ovia North East Local Government Area of Edo State, thumb printing of ballot papers by electoral officers and party thugs in Rivers state as well as intimidation of voters by stern looking party thugs in Rivers State.

South-west was not an isolated case. In Lagos, Ogun and Oyo States, cases of snatching of ballot boxes at gun point were noticed as well as ballot box stuffing and intimidation of voters (National Human Rights Report, 63-64). Indeed in Ibadan, Oyo State, men and women of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) were

reported to have conspired with party agents and electoral officers to rig election and intimidate voters. In the south east zone where Anambra, Enugu and Abia state belong, it was observed that cases of snatching of ballot boxes and alteration of election result abound (National Human Right Report). It is reported that in one of the polling stations in Anambra state. One Festus Eze of the Nigerian Police Force (NPF) was seen thumb printing ballot papers in favour of one of the political parties.

Thus the phenomenon of political thuggery has finally succeeded to have a common place and has become a prominent feature of Nigerian political system. While Nigerians various cried and should foul play in the 1999 general elections because of acts thuggery, little did anyone knew that 2003 was going to be worse. As it is the worry and concern of Nigerians craving for good governance, that the electoral system should be improved upon in the 2007 general election to secure the votes of Nigeria and give credibility to the electoral processes, what happened in 2007 election turned out to be worst boob, a sham and a total mess. The situation progressively kept getting worse. So bad that the precedence of security men at the polling station can hardly to taken to be for the protection of the votes of the masses. Indeed, It is safe to say men of the forces were drafted in , not to provide security but to coordinate and perfect the rigging process. The activities of thugs under such atmosphere was anchored in struggle to outsmart the other in the rigging process, which in most times resulted into bloodshed, loss of lives and property, breach of peace etc.

Causes of Political Thuggery in Nigeria

Incidence of political thuggery in Nigeria is made possible by a number of factors ranging from failure of government to widespread poverty and unemployment in the country. This section examines some of these factors or causes of politics thuggery in Nigeria.

Unemployment

Unemployment has been identified as major social, economics and political problem in Nigeria. According to the National Bureau of Statistics, unemployment in Nigeria increased to 35.9 percent in 2020 and it seems it will continue till the end of the decade. It described this situation as potentially dangerous. Unemployed Nigerians are said to be between the ages of 15 -44 and (Akintola, 2007). Thus youth unemployment is said to near the 50 percent mark. The existence of this huge army of idle hands was perhaps the reason why President Janothan Predicted the possibility of a revolution in Nigeria. Unemployment exposes many youths to certain criminal activities, for example, political thuggery, kidnapping, robbery and hired assassinations etc. The president of the south citizens in Oyo State Micheal Obasahon observed that as a result of not fighting unemployment in the country Nigeria is sitting on a KEG of gun powder. He advised the government to embark on “massive job creations” so as to stem the tide of passive social insecurity in the country (Adeniyi, 2011). Unemployment and its social economic deprivation and helplessness push many youths into political thuggery which is not only a criminal act but a dangerous misadventures.

Poverty

Majority of youth in the nation are jobless with no means of livelihood, they are impoverished and so mercenary politics becomes the way out. Politicians capitalize on this and recruit the youths who do not only constitute the pillar of society but also the most vulnerable, to self inflicted poverty as their thugs and touts to perpetrate violence.

Poverty makes youths vulnerable to social vices and criminal acts like thuggery not in the interest of these youths but to enable them achieve their selfish ends. It is hoped that if youths are empowered with good jobs and useful skills, they will not give in easily to those attempting to use thugs we can see these fact that, youths from well to do families are not found in this act because there are not desperate to be used as thugs in perpetrating political violence.

Desperation among politicians

Desperation among Nigeria politicians to win elections occupy political officers by al means is a major cause of the prevalence of political thuggery and violence in the body political of the country. The desperate politicians became more worried since the return to civil rule in 1990. Fabowale (2011) accurately observed

that, in Nigeria politics is not a game, it is war, the blood stained pages of nations political annals its do or die character exemplified by thuggery, violence, blackmail.

Politicians of the country are largely responsible for series of politically motivated assassination across the nation many of which could not be successfully investigated and resolved. There is a need to change the mentality of desperate politicians of do or die. This entails preventing any group of people from having too much power which at time, is abused.

Absence of good governance and low political culture

The consequences of unaccountable governance in Nigeria have been severe. As document by Human Rights Watch (HRW), human rights abuse remain evasive in Nigeria. Injustice have become the permanent feature of the Nigeria's political system. Aristototics said that "No government can stand which is not founded upon justice". That would seem to imply that justice I the surest foundation on which to build a good and successful government (Edike, 2008).

Another evidence and consequence of failure of governance in Nigeria is political and bureaucratic corruption. Corruption is an aspect of poor governance and is defined as the abuse of public office for private gain. In Nigeria, corruption has assumed e-center and ludicrous proportions, what Gunnar Myrdal calls "Folklore of corruption" (Awolatu.. 1987). To date total of about \$380 billion has been reported stolen by former military and political leaders. This amount is equivalent to all the Western Aid given to Africa in almost four decades and also equivalent to 300 years of British aid for the continent. It is also said to be six times the American help to post-war Europe under the Marshall Plan (Blair, 2). Between 1970 and 200, the number of Nigerians subsisting on less than one dollar a day grew from 36% more than 70%, that is, from 19million to a staggering 90million people (Watts, 7). Nigeria is a nation where corruption thrives. From 1999 to date. Nigeria is consistently ranked as one of the most corrupt countries in the world (Saliu, 2004).

Sit-Tight Syndrome

This is a situation in which an individuals tries to hold on to power for personal gains. In an attempt to hang on to power, leaders often create a regime of violent repression and bloodshed. This has become a phenomenon in Nigerian politics. They organize political thugs, hooligans and scavengers to sing their praises, intimidate opponents and kill them if they become intransigent (Odunuga, 2003). The unnecessary and uncoordinated urge to control, dominate and amass wealth for their progeny in the infinite future are all acts of the politician of the "sit-tight" phenomenon.

Prebendal Politics

In Nigeria, politics is conceived as an investment. Politicians having invested on campaigns and other political activities coupled with the existing system of "winners take all would want to win at all cost and the need to employ the use of thugs and touts to destabilize and win elections become inevitable especially when such politicians are not popular candidates.

Ellis (2008) summaries the cause of political thuggery and violence as follows:domination and marginalization of sectors and group and persons in the acquisitions and sharing of political positions, rigging of election, manipulation of political process in favour or against certain groups, sections and persons failing apart of sponsors over contracts, appointments or other methods of management state among others.

Impact of urban violence and gangsterism

The existing urban culture has raised the crescendo of political thuggery in the country. As a result opportunity, it has been easy for desperate politician to engage the services of thugs. Some notable gangs include secret cults, groups in tertiary institutions, touts that abound in most motor parks, Area Boys, Yankalare, Yandaba (February 6, 2011) and some militant groups in Niger Delta region, etc. The Nigeria as Compass lamented that Nigerian politicisn are still relying on crude methods in their quest for political power. The paper specifically referred to Bayelsa State where it started that desperate politicians allegedly engaged in an unhealthy competition for thugs who would help them to actualized their ambitions for 2011 election andwere spending fortunes for that purpose. The same is applicable for 2023 elections. The paper observed that the scramble for thugs have given impression that politicians were preparing for war and not

election. Thugs availability of various groups of idle men and gangsters in many urban cities in the country provides opportunity for the recruitment of thugs. Besides, desperate politicians easily seek their services in order to achieve their inordinate political ambitions.

Negative impact of money politics on Nigeria democracy

Enthronement of money politics in Nigeria's political arena is the major cause of political thuggery in the country. As a politician spends a lot of money to secure a political office, he employs the services of thugs to ensure the realization of his political ambitions either by fair or foul means. A veteran political and member of the people democratic party, Chief Ebenezer Babatope observed that "what is bad within the political system that we operate today is criminal use of money" He lamented that unlike in the past, people are paid for coming to a party convention. This according to him is a sad development (Oguejifor, 1995). Similarly, Cardinal Olubunmi Okogie stated that politics in Nigeria does not mean what it is in either Britain or America. Politics in Nigeria according to him means living up to one's pocket with the people's money. This is the reason why it is a 'do or die affair'.

In the same perspective, the former INEC Chairman, Professor Maurice Iwu, has faulted the character of Nigeria politics which he stated that it lacks ideology and principle. He also states that the perception of political offices as easy access to wealth is the prevailing expression of the character of democracy and election in the country.

Effects of Political Thuggery on Nigerian Democracy

Consequences of thuggery in Nigeria are certainly inexhaustive. They are straight and may need no further elaboration. However, emphasis must be placed on some political thuggeries that pose a serious impact on or treat to democratic consideration in Nigeria in the following ways.

Political thuggery leads to militarization of the political environment

Political thuggery leads to militarization of the political environment. This scares away credible and patriotic individuals from active participation in the democratic process. This hinders the effort towards consolidation of democracy in the country.

Political thuggery and elections in Nigeria and the Law

The magnitude of a particular breakdown of security, law and order sometimes, it has degenerated into civil war in some states. A ground for military intervention into civil rule in the past in Nigeria for instance, these can be the impact while political thuggery in Nigerian democratic culture may also lead to or degenerate into breakdown of law and order and insecurity ensues. The emergence of the main group in 1980 and Boko Haram in 2006 are the results of Political thuggery in Nigeria.

Furthermore, insecurity looms in the society as a result of the activities of resultant criminality arising from the wide circulation of arms and ammunition in the hands of criminals who were used for thuggery during elections. It becomes difficult to retrieve these arms from the hands of the thugs. Whether they are eventually settled or not, the thugs find another lucrative use of the arms by indulging in criminality-armed robbery and it is the society that pays for it.

Thuggery is a tool for perpetration of political violence and subversion of democratic order.

Thuggery is a tool for perpetration of political violence and subversion of democratic order. Some political leaders employ the service of thugs to intimidate majority of party members in order to impose some candidates during party primaries and to ensure that such candidates win the general elections. Oburota (2003) observed that it is as a result of the desperation of some politicians and their high handedness that "there is virtually a total lack of democratic process in our political parties". He noted that the consequence has been that instead of a process producing a genuine candidate that is genuinely interested in working for the people, Nigeria has rigged the process that produced favoured and invariably incompetent candidates" This situation discourages the consolidation of democracy on the country.

It also Discourages the Electorate or Voters from Exercising their Franchise

It also discourages the electorate or voters from exercising their franchise and thereby creating unacceptable situation of low turnout during general elections. In the governorship elections conducted recently in five states namely Kogi, Rivers, Adamawa, Bayelsa and Sokoto State, there were reports of low turnout of voters in most case for example, in Rivers Governorship elections, there were 1,242,916 registered voters. The cast were 51,117 votes representing less than 50 percent of the total registered voters. This was party as a result of fear of the menace of thugs. This necessitated the deployment of large number of security personnel to safeguard the lives of vote's as well guaranteed the peaceful conduct of the elections. In Bayelsa State, for instance 15,000 security agents and 575 observes were deployed for the governorship election while 24,464 security personnel and 800 observes monitored that of Kogi State (Anucha, 2011). The palpable fear of the thugs as well as the heavy presence if security personned during the election represent a perversion of the true culture of democracy.

Proliferation of Arms and ammunition in the country among thugs.

Thuggery contribute immensely to the proliferation of arms and ammunition in the country which in many cases, are employed for rigging elections, harassment and intimidation of political opponents by the sponsors of the thugs.

These thugs even after elections are over, are still in possession of arms which they use in robbery and communa or religious crises. The easiest way that these arms and ammunitions get into the hands of thugs is through politicians who sponsored them in order to achieve their selfish political ends without consideration for the peace of the country.

Thuggery serves as determining factor for electoral mechanization

The number of thugs a politician can keep serves as a determining factoras for his electoral mechanization and outcome of the election during the election and after by elections. Thugs snatch ballot box or tomb printed electoral materials. Because they intimidate the opponent and electoral officials, with arms thus manipulating the outcomes of elections. Also, due to the near anarchical nature of Nigerian polity and Nigerian state has witnessed the struggle for power amongst the various contending groups in the polity. Civil disturbances rise from ethnic military and politically motivated killing of opponents which are pointers to increasing or simmering militarism of the Nigerian State, this is because of the roles the thugs play in Nigeria democrat ic culture.

Thurgery and violence among youths

Young men commit much of the political violence throughout the world and Nigeria in particular. Male are at the centre of political tussles. The killings and destructions reported from the different political dispensations result from politicians ambition to acquire power or quest for power (Adeniyi,2011). Politicians formulate and finance political crises consequently; the attainment of political power in Nigeria is through thugs and violent struggle, which cannot be undertaken by a person with light heart for example the practical experience to illuminate this point was during the gubernatorial; election in the year 2007 (INEC). An electoral body in charge of general election delayed the announcement of result of the governorship elections. People mobilized themselves to INEC office to ensure that the results were not manipulated. Able men and women were there to stage a protect. At a point thugs came into the scene and started shooting sporadically into the air, the next thing was that people were scared and the electoral body and INEC Officials did whatever they wanted with the result. This the way thuggery and violence affect politics in Nigeria.

Thuggery serves as athreat to democratic consolidation in Nigeria

Political thuggery ranges from constituting a major threat to national security causing low turnout by eligible voters. If thuggery casts doubt on the credibility of the purported elected leaders before the eyes of the local and international community, similarly it could affect respect from the governed and this could further affect the general acceptability of the popularity of the government, amount to stealing of genuine mandate from the voters diminishes good governance and makes the people hope and expectation dashed and finally hinders or does away with public accountability by the so called electoral officers. These

consequence are straight forward and may need no further elaboration. However emphasis must be place on some these act.

How to curb the menace of political thuggery in Nigerian politics

There are many actions that could be take to curb the menace of political thuggery in Nigerian Democracy; some of these measures are suggested below:

Promotion of discipline

This section determines what role religion plays in curbing or fighting thuggery in the society. What factors may undermine such role and how religion can be used to mitigate bad governance? The broad perception among respondents is that religion has huge role to play in promoting good governance in the society as evident from the quotes. Yes religions have impact on the available sanctions against corrupt acts. In the Holy Qur'am there are penalties to every offence committed e.g. if you steal up to a certain amount you will be given a sanction of cutting off your hand, if you commit adultery you will be stoned to death, if you commit fornication you will be given 10 lashes etc (Bello Imam, 2004).

Promotion of Peace and Unity

Peace and unity are basic features of every religion ; there is no religion that does not preach peace and unity. This shows that, religion has an important role to play in building peace and unity in the country. For good governance to exist, there must be peace and unity. Peace building and unity involves to love one another. We can see that, in spite of our cultural differences, religion often brings people together and makes them to be united and to live in peace and harmony with one another.

Promotion of social justice.

Our biblical basis in the word of God serves us a great deal in giving wings to the ethics of love and justice in the state. In the old Testament particularly in the messages of the prophets, there is a more explicit reckoning with social problems thanit is reflected in the new Testament Israel, unlike the early Christian community, was a political state, and during mush of it history, it is leaders had civil as well as religions authority. This dual relationship, gavea particular turn to the significance of the covenant, the law and the prophets. It is both asset and barriers as we try to apply the moral insights of the prophets to our own times.

Moral development

Democratic values cannot be realized with out moral development of the individuals according to Akintola (2007), "Nigerian Needs moral values to make her democracy an ideal one" This points to the role of religion as a moral agent in preparing an atmosphere for a democratic culture through moral education. Prath (1947) asserts that religion possesses moral author and ethical sensitively which complements the roleof good governance for effective national development. Religion enables citizens to exercise stability and conserving functions which make them to resist change both in their doctrines, policies and secular affairs, having relevance in development of moral standard approved by the society (Ikenga-metuh, 1985).

Promotion of good leadership

There is no doubt that leadership has an extraordinary powerto challenge, in spiral encourage and influence people. In fact, it has been noted that leadership "can make the difference between success and failure in anything you do for yourself (or any group you belong to".) in the light of the above assertion, religions leadership becomes crucial in every society : 14 way of shaping and moulding lives of people within such a society.Speaking of religious leadersh ah (2007) Notes that a religious leader has "confidence in God, seeks to find God's will, follows God's methods, delights to obey God, motivate by love for god and man'.

This is because religion and democratic leadership have to be established before one can talk of the contributions religion can make in sustaining democracy and good governance in Nigeria. Religion is a phenomenon that resides wherever people are found (Ushe, 2010). It is a phenomenon that is vital for social maintenance and regulations of life-style of members in the Nigerian society. Osaghae (1994) posits that the

tendency of religion has opened many fields of study that correlate to the human behaviours with the value system of the society. This correlation is dependent on shared system of governance that reinforces, reaffirms and maintains moral development of any nation. Religion performs major functions in sustainable democracy and good leadership in Africa. These functions include:

- (1) To provide support for social norm In the society,(2)To enhance social integration in the society; (3)To provide stability in the society and; (4)To provide motivation and interpretation of important life cycle in the society.

Religious model of leadership

Nigeria needs responsible and exemplary leadership that is built on the fear of God and for the service of man. This kind of leadership must be built on the idea of leadership as servanthood and stewardship and the study recommends the “shepherd model”. An ideal biblical form of leadership as a solution to Nigeria’s governance and perennial leadership crisis.

Kukah (2007), deals with issues of practical Christianity, he stressed the importance of scripture and following the biblical pattern of leadership or authority. Others like him have also written extensively on these patterns, drawing examples from Moses, Nehemiah, Hosea, Joseph, David, Daniel, Esther and Jesus. These biblical patterns have now become popular with students of Business Management. Who hope to learn how to lead from these spiritual models.

Promotion of the rule of law

The idea of rule of law is a way of life concern it self with how power is acquired and lost, exercised and shared. It ensure social, political and economics equality, periodic elections, freedom of the press, participation of people in social and political activities. Enjoyment of fundamental human rights, rule of law, respect for government opposition and free judiciary which are basic features of true democracy. Jasocn in Orhungur defines democracy as “the rules of the people, by the people, for the people”. Any government that has no respect for the rule of law cannot be said to be democratic.

Conclusion

This study has discuss the impact of thuggery and violence in Nigeria’s democratic culture. Since independence in 1960, political thuggery and violence has constituted recurring problems in Nigeria’s attempt to organize or conduct free, fair and credible elections. Although the 2018 general elections were described as a giant stride in terms of evolving a credible electoral process, nevertheless acts of thuggery manifested prominently during the elections. Some desperate politicians often employ the services of thugs to harass and intimidate political opponents and to manipulate the electoral process in their favour. The pervasive acts of thuggery in the body politics of Nigeria constitute a servous impediment in he effort of the government to achieve democratic consolidation in the country. (Human Right Watch, 2018).

There is need to develop a political culture that is devoid of violence. Youths should be employed to stop them from been used by self-seeking politicians. Government should also improve the welfare of the citizens to enable them live responsible lives free of acts of thuggery. And moral education should be revived to make youths cultivate virtues like peace, justice and love as a way of building a violent free society and evolving an ideal democratic culture.

Recommendations

After considering the issues that are involved in the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Politicians that are found to have used thugs should be banned from politics.
- ii. Government should create job opportunities for youths to discourage them from being used by politicians as thugs.
- iii. There should be a campaign against violence in the country. Youths should be encouraged to imbibe the culture of peace.

- iv. Political education should be given to people to enable them cultivate a health political culture.
- v. Attention should be given into the issue of poverty which causes people to indulge in criminal acts like thuggery as a way of overcoming economic challenges.

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