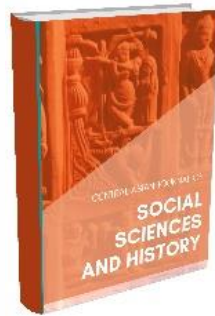




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Roles of Tertiary Institutions in Post-Election Violence Prevention in Nigeria

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Abstract:

This paper explores the roles of tertiary institutions in the prevention of post-election violence in Nigeria. Using secondary data which were collected from both the print and online publications, the paper establishes that the tertiary institutions have a lot of roles to play in curtaining post-election violence in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper identifies the teaching of peaceful election, voter and civic education via GST programmes, researches on election matters to come out with measures and suggestions to address post-election violence, provision of community services which are election awareness inclined, provision of technical support and establishment of centre for the studies of pre-election, election and post-election issues and establishment of professional programmes for the development of more professionals with specialization on electoral issues. The paper based on these discoveries, recommended that tertiary

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institutions should be fully involved in the electioneering processes in Nigeria since there are a lot of contributions from the institutions which can help address the factors responsible for the post-election violence in the country.

INTRODUCTION

Nigeria is a democratic state that holds election every four years. The Nigerian electoral system is characterized with a lot of problems significant among them is electoral violence and post-election violence. Electoral violence is conceptualized by Eldridge et. al., (2012) as go beyond the societies where it occurs and affect neighboring states by displacing large border populations, introducing a humanitarian crisis, and increasing the circulation of arms as well as armed violence, which may contribute to instability in already volatile regions. Atuobi (2011) concluded that electoral violence or election-related violence is understood as violent action against people, property, or the electoral process, intended to influence the electoral process before, during, or after elections. The costs associated with electoral violence are high. Even in situations in which the human death toll remains low, electoral violence may have a critical impact on the electoral process, the outcome of the elections, and their perceived legitimacy. In the long run, it may harm the prospects for democratic consolidation and perceptions of democracy among the population in a political system.

Eldridge, Mimmi, Nyström & Utas (2012), maintained that electoral violence is a coercive and deliberate strategy used by some political actors to advance their interests or achieve specific political goals concerning an electoral contest. It may take place in all parts of the electoral cycle: in the run-up to elections, on the day of elections, and in the immediate post-election period. Election-related violence is not limited to physical violence but includes other coercive means, such as the threat of violence, intimidation, and harassment. Electoral violence may also create a humanitarian crisis and halt or reverse socioeconomic development programs. In extreme situations, it may increase the risk of armed conflict or civil war.

According to Atuobi, (2012: 13), the nature or manifestations of electoral violence in Nigeria violence include: murder/killings; looting, destruction, and damage of property; assault and death threats; bombings; forceful dispersion of political rallies; fighting among political parties; violent street protests and hooliganism; arbitrary detentions and arrests without warrant; abduction and economic repression or sabotage; and killing.

Post-election violence on the other hand is defined by Peter (2012) and Bashir; Obatta & Nweke, (2020) as any organized actions or act meant to create verbal intimidation, hate speech,

disinformation, protests, physical assault, blackmail, destruction of property, forced “protection” or killing after election result have been declared. (Adoke, 2011) concluded that action of post-election violence could include shooting, killings, arson, wanton destruction of property, usually perpetrated by officials and/or supporters of different political parties. Therefore, what distinguishes post-election violence from other forms of electoral violence is the fact that it occurs just after polling, usually during or after collation and announcement of election results. For instance, According to INEC, there were 66 reports of violent incidence all across the country. The violence were recorded in Rivers State (16 incidents); Ondo (8); Cross Rivers (6); Ebonyi (6); Akwa Ibom (5); Bayelsa (4); Lagos and Kaduna (3 each); Jigawa, Enugu, Ekiti (2 each); Katsina, Kogi, Plateau, Abia, Imo, Kano and Ogun (one each) (Vanguard, April 12, 2015).

The European Union Election Observation Mission reported that about 30 people were killed on April 11, 2015 Election Day as a result of inter-party clashes and attacks on election sites (EU EOM, 2015 ;Olakunle, Bamidele, Ake Modupe, Oluwaseun, & Magdalene 2019). Post-election violence in Nigeria has led to destruction of lives and properties. It has reduced international and national investment. It has cause more harm to the socio-economic development of the country. It is based on this that this paper aims to discuss the roles of tertiary institutions in Nigeria to prevent post-election violence.

Theoretical framework

To navigate the discourse properly, this paper relies on the premise of Karl Marx’s dialectical materialism which actually sees the man’s struggle to attain power and utilize it for mutual benefit as coherent in him. In a country like Nigeria where power is seen as a tool to amass wealth and control economic means, man tends towards searching for it with all vigours. However, Abass (2010), observed that man’s interest in assuming positions of power so as to have absolute control of the socio-economic advantage makes him in all ramifications violent and sometimes resistant when such power is been relieved of him.

The relevance of the theory makes it very imperative for the government to tailor the curriculum of tertiary education in Nigeria towards self-dependence as against the reliance on the inordinate gain from the political positions which is the main drive and push to attaining the powerful seats in the country.

In Claude Ake’s assertion (1964), the reason behind political struggle is mainly to sustain and retain the means of economic strength with the winner-takes-all syndrome while the loser loses all. This sole intent makes seeking and maintaining political positions very intense and deadly in some other cases.

The theory however failed to ascertain which level of reasoning in man where there could be a turning point and redress. It must be ascertained that the struggle may not last long as man has other things which could debar him from attaining it.

Concept of Tertiary Institutions

Tertiary education is the third tiers of education that is designed for the production of skilled and professionals for the socio-economic and technology advancement. Tertiary institutions are micro section of the larger society. Tertiary institutions is an organized fraction of the whole society curved out for teaching programme, research and provision of community service. Tertiary institution can also be seen as a subset of the general society that is made of collection of different people, different culture, different life style and different value (Ogunode & Odo 2023). Ogunode, Edinoh and Okolie (2023) defined tertiary education as a planned and organized educational system designed for the total development of man/woman and for the total transformation of the society through the utilization of teaching, research and provision of community service. Tertiary education can also be viewed as post basic and secondary school education that embraces advanced teaching, research and community service.

Tertiary education is viewed by National policy on Education (2013) as the education given after Post Basic Education in institutions such as Universities and Inter-University Centres such as the Nigeria French Language Village, Nigeria Arabic Language Village, National Institute of Nigerian Languages, institutions such as Innovation Enterprise Institutions (IEIs), and Colleges of Education, Monotechnics, Polytechnics, and other specialized institutions such as Colleges of Agriculture, Schools of Health and Technology and the National Teachers' Institutes (NTI). Tertiary education is an advanced educational system meant for human capital development through teaching, research and provision of community service (Ogunode, Iyabode, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, 2022).

Tertiary education or Higher education covers a wider range of higher learning institutions including the university. These higher learning institutions could be organized in different ways, commonly within a university and in a separate institution as university and other tertiary learning institutions (Alemu 2018). Tertiary education is an instrument for national development and manpower development. Tertiary education can be described as an organized education saddled with production and reproduction of knowledge for the betterment of the whole country. Tertiary education is a social agent of development for self and national-realization and for manpower production. Tertiary education in particular, are fundamental to the construction of a knowledge economy and society in all nations ((NOUN 2012). Tertiary institutions are established to help the communities, societies and states find solution to the socio-economic and political problems facing them. Tertiary institutions are designed and programme to be problem solver in any country. Social and political problems like electoral violence and post-election violence are some of the issues tertiary institutions can help state solve.

Concept of Post-election Violence

Post-election violence is a specific form of electoral violence. The post-election phase usually starts from the collation and announcement of election results to litigation and settlement of election disputes. Violence at this phase is usually triggered by issues emanating from the pre-election and

election phases. Post-election violence manifests in several ways including attacks on rival candidates, party officials and supporters; as well as violent street protests (UNDP, 2009).

Post-electoral violence are crises that occur after the election have been conducted. It is violence demonstration that follows the election processes or declaration of result. (Baba, 2005), viewed Post-election violence as all sorts of riots, demonstrations, party clashes, political assassinations, looting, arson, thuggery, kidnapping spontaneous or not, which occur after elections. (Albert, 2007), viewed post-electoral violence as all forms of organized acts of threats aimed at intimidating, harming, blackmailing a political stakeholder or opponent after an election with an intention to determine, delay or influence a political process.

Roles of Tertiary Institutions in Post-Election Violence Prevention in Nigeria

The tertiary institutions in Nigeria has a lot of roles to play to ensure a peaceful election and reduce post-election violent in Nigeria. Some of the roles includes; teaching on peaceful election, research on election matters, provision of community services that are election awareness inclined, provision of technical support and establishment of centre for the studies for pre-election, election and post-election issues and establishment of professional programme with specialization on different electoral issues.

Teaching on peaceful election

Teaching is the process of imparting knowledge and skills on individual that make himself or herself available. Teaching is a programme in tertiary institutions. Teaching programme of tertiary institutions can be used to achieve a lot in the society. The teaching programme of tertiary institutions can be liken to be an agent of socialization. It can be used to transform the society positively. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria are host to more than half of voting population in Nigeria (Ogunode & Ndayebom, 2022). There are millions of youth spread across Nigerian tertiary institutions and majorities of them are the once that are been used to cause post-election violence across the country. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria has a lot of roles to play by teaching the youths on the importance of peaceful elections and various options to explore in case of electoral fraud. Tertiary institutions in Nigeria can include Voter education and Civic Education in their GST programme to inculcate on the youths and students the spirit and culture of peace making during election and post-election activities. Polyas (2017), says that voter education means providing citizens of a democratic state with basic information about participating in elections. Voter education is often provided by the state institutions charged with public enlightenment and national orientation matters. United Nations (2018) points out that voter education involves providing information on who is eligible to vote; where and how to register; how electors can check the voter lists to ensure they have been duly included; what type of elections are being held; where, when and how to vote; who the candidates are; and how to file complaints. The goal of voter education is to adequately create awareness and make information available and accessible to all citizens and participants in the democratic process. Every good voter education campaign must seek to achieve universal coverage of the electorates, by reaching out to disadvantaged groups as well as mainstream

voters. The teaching of vote education and post-election management will help to curtail violence in Nigeria after elections are held.

Research on election matters

Research can be defined as an organized activities meant to find solution to pressing society challenges. Research is therefore an intensive and extensive search for solutions to societal problems, and it is oriented towards discovering the relationships that exist among the varying phenomena that exist in the world (Osuala, 2001). Tertiary institutions are known for carrying out researches. Research is the second cardinal programme of the tertiary institutions. The stakeholders in the tertiary institutions are mandated to carry out researches. The academic staff, students and researchers are all involved in the carrying out research (Charles, Ijeoma and John 2009; Chikwe, Ogidi, and Nwachukwu 2015; Ogunode, Jegede, Adah, Audu, and Ajape, 2021)..

Tertiary institutions has a role to play in the areas of carrying out researches in problematic areas in the Nigerian electoral system. There are many issues that are calling for investigations on electoral system in Nigeria. Academic staff whose duties also include carrying out researches can embark on such electoral problems. PhD students and master students can be given research topic in the areas calling for urgent solutions such as impact of post-election crisis on Nigeria economy; measure to curtail post-election violence in Nigeria (Ogunode & Ade,2023). Tertiary institutions researches can focus on researches on how the media can be used to curtail electoral violence in Nigeria, research on how different religious institutions can be included to sustain peace after elections, researches on the root causes of election violence in Nigeria, researches are also needed in the area of how security can be trained to handled post-election crises, how the court can be strengthened to be more effective in deciding electoral matters. Tertiary institutions roles in carrying out researches on election and post-election violence will help to curtail the high rate of post-election violence in Nigeria.

Provision of community services that are election awareness inclined

Ogunode, Aude, & Olatunde-Aiyedun, (2022) asserted that community service programme is the third cardinal programme of the tertiary institutions. Community service programme is an organized and planned service programme of higher institutions for the benefit and betterment of their host community. Community service programme of higher institutions are community inclined services initiated by the institutions to develop the communities. Community service of higher institution are services provided by institutions to benefits the community people. Community service of tertiary institutions involve all organized services provide by the institutions to the host communities with the aim of improving their communities positively. Tertiary institutions through their academic staff are saddled with the responsibilities of providing communities services. Communities services of tertiary institutions include all actions and programme meant to help the communities solve their pressing problems. Community's services can take civil education, sensitization programme, social work or services (Ogunode, Edinoh & Okolie, 2023).

The community service of tertiary institutions must also try to accommodate differences in illiteracy rates, differences in languages, religion, cultures, and ethnic backgrounds in a country, even if there is only one official language, like English in Nigeria. Minority groups, internally displaced persons and other marginalized segments of society should be specially accommodated. Voters must be taught how to register and cast their ballots. Voter education should also include mass mobilization of the people for full participation in the whole electoral process especially encouraging them to vote and to shun violence (United Nations, 2018).

Tertiary institutions has a critical roles in educating the Nigerian people on the need for peaceful elections through effective community service of civil education and sensitization. IFES (2018), reports that civic education deals with broader concepts underpinning a democratic society such as the respective roles and responsibilities of citizens, government, the electoral body, and democratic institutions. It is a process aimed at conveying knowledge of a country's political system and context, encompassing information on the system of government; the nature and powers of the offices to be filled in an election; the principal economic, social and political issues facing the nation; the value of democracy; the equal rights of women and men; and the importance of peace and national reconciliation. In every election, voter and civic education are necessary to ensure that all constituents—men and women alike— understand their rights, their political system, the contests they are being asked to decide, and how and where to vote. For an election to be successful and democratic, voters must understand their rights and responsibilities, and must be sufficiently knowledgeable and well informed to cast ballots that are legally valid and to participate meaningfully in the voting process. Voter and civic education are even more critical in post-conflict countries, where political situations may be volatile and where elections may have an unprecedented impact on the countries' future (United Nations, 2018). UNICEF (2020) noted that tertiary institutions should engage in advocacy programme in the host communities on issues related to gender equality, gender equity, women empowerment and discourage gender based violence. In addition, host community should learn about how to support policies and actions and collaborate with international institutions to eradicate post-election violence in Nigeria.

Provision of technical support

Tertiary institutions are homes to intellectuals, experience lecturers in matters of election, researchers and professionals. These category of professionals with expertise in election matters can provide vest technical support in election execution in Nigeria. Tertiary institutions can raise their team of experts in election matters to help the various government agencies plan, implement and manage electoral system effectively. Tertiary institutions from the research findings can also suggests and recommend to the Independent election commission in Nigeria measures and ways to ensure effective election management in Nigeria that will be satisfactory to all parts in Nigeria. The

tertiary institutions can also assist in the conduct of the election and ensure all activities are fair and free.

Establishment of centre for the studies for pre-election, election and post-election issues

Tertiary institutions are created to provide solution to the various problems confronting the societies. The main functions of the tertiary institutions apart from the teaching programme, the other two programme of research and community services are problem solving inclined. Tertiary institutions are structured and programme to be able to establish special centre to tackle a particular projects or issue considering as an important and that needs special studies. In the case Nigerian tertiary institutions can establish a centre purposely for the studies of pre-election, election and post-election matters and the electoral laws. These centre will be saddled with the responsibilities of coordinating studies, conferences and seminars on electoral issues in Nigeria. Ogunode, Tseveda & Atim (2024) noted that tertiary institutions have the power to create departments, faculties and establish centres to focus on particular studies. Since the tertiary institutions are places to look upon for solution to pressing societal problems. It is expected for tertiary institutions to establish centres that focus on carrying out research on post-election violence.

Establishment of Professional Programme with specialization on different electoral issues such as pre-election, election and post-election issues

Tertiary institutions have a role to play in the production of professional experts in the field of election. A lot of professional are needed in the various international, non-governmental and government agencies to help assist in the reduction the problems of post-election violence in Nigeria. There strategies, measures and skills needed to be able to make right policies and take actions that will help to curtain electoral violence in Nigeria. Ogunode and Idris (2023) and Otonko, (2012) maintained that universities globally are established to produce manpower that will work in every sector of the economy. The universities are saddled with the responsibility of advancing the development of the country through the training and production of the right personnel to fill in the economy. The universities are to help in the rapid industrialization of the economy. This is done by providing manpower with adequate professional, technical, managerial and soft skills in the society. The university system is burdened with producing sound and effective citizens in society and developing higher self-awareness and self-realization of individuals at various tasks, enhancing better human relationships, national consciousness and effective citizenship (Otonko, 2012). Universities are known for introducing new programmes to meet up with the demand of the modern economy. The traditional roles of the universities are namely; teaching; research; dissemination of existing and new information; pursuit of service to the community; and being a storehouse of knowledge.

Conclusion and Recommendations

This paper explores roles of tertiary institutions in the prevention of post-election violence in Nigeria. Using secondary data that were collected from both print and online publications the paper established that the tertiary institutions have a lot of roles to play in curtaining post-election violence in Nigeria. Specifically, the paper identified teaching of peaceful election, vote education and civil

education via GST programmes, researches on election matters to comes out with measures and suggestions to address post-election violence, provision of community services that are election awareness inclined, provision of technical support and establishment of centre for the studies of pre-election, election and post-election issues and establishment of professional programme with specialization on different electoral issues.

The paper based on these discoveries, recommended that tertiary institutions should be fully involved in the election engineering in Nigeria since there are a lot of contributions from the institutions that can helped address the factors responsible for the post-election violence in Nigeria.

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