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THE INFLUENCE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN PROMOTING VIOLENCE AMONG CITIZENS; A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF NIGERIA AND INDIA

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ABSTRACT

Political violence is considered the utilization of power and force to accomplish different types of political goals. On the other hand, political violence relies on two different things such as physical and psychological acts. These are responsible for aiming at intimidating populations or citizens. In terms of political parties, they are mostly renowned as essential institutions of democracy. Similarly, competing with different election parties defines a choice of governance for the citizens. In terms of opposition, they are responsible for holding others accountable for the government. Whenever people join in parties, they are providing their time and also donate their money along with the vote. Participation of citizens within political parties can help to get different types of benefits and opportunities. In some cases of Nigeria and India political parties influence or rather promote violence among citizens in their quest to win elections. Using both primary and secondary source of data this paper investigate how this violence occurred and suggest workable solutions on how to stop such violence among citizens especially youth in the name of winning elections.

Keywords: Political Party, Violence, Election Violence, Election, Democracy

INTRODUCTION

Political violence is mostly renowned as a type of outcome that is derived due to mental health, depression, and many more reasons. In terms of the people's social contexts or political contexts, it mainly highlights the impact of political violence. Usually, political parties do not believe in citizens' rights and are nonaccountable to voters. The parties are mainly responsible for influencing, protesting variable movements, and labor organizing. However, these parties are mostly renowned as an actor in the electoral contest and responsible for tying elites to voters. Eventually, political parties are playing an integral role in the electoral

competition and parties are responsible for booming literature in terms of electoral violence. Whether the political organizations are weak violence may be derived in terms of party operations that are grassroots level. Talking about the parties usually, these are low predictable and formalized by variable rules in terms of career advancements or nominations. Additionally, an extreme level of intense competition may result in political violence (Fjelde, 2020). This type of violence usually diminishes an individual's trust in the moral organization of society. The lessons regarding this violence show the willingness of individuals is engaging in variable political activities along with the process of community organizing (Sousa, 2013)

In terms of the civilian government's return in May 1999, the hope was quite high regarding the new democratic order. It is also responsible to manage the different types of incidents which relate to political violence and also responsible for providing economic and different types of social progress. It can be considered a sad commentary and returned by civil rule, and these types of violence are reached an extremely dangerous ratio. In terms of the Nigerian state and its fledgling democracy, it defines that it has been selected through phenomenal violence and different types of atrocities. The atrocities are ranging from different aspects such as variable religious crises, ethno-religious conflicts, and many more (Ibok et al, 2018).

Apart from that, India's political landscape highlights different types of conflicts, that mainly aim at different incidents regarding violence. In terms of West Bengal, the population of 101 million people is faced several political violence issues which persisted many times. This state shows some evidence of governments led by variable parties since the time of independence. The Indian National Congress ruled for approximately more than two decades and the communist party of India lead for approximately three decades. In addition, the All-India Trinamool Congress also considered the incumbent government. The culture regarding violence is observed among the workers of different political parties, mostly in rural areas. The phenomenon of political violence is evident within West Bengal and the public policy theme of India as well (Ghosh et al, 2022). This paper attempts to study the influence of political parties in promoting violence among citizens in Nigeria and India. The paper analytically examines how political parties in both countries orchestrate electoral violence in order to ensure that political powers does not elude their party for fear of being maltreated by those whom they lost to.

POLITICAL PARTIES, VIOLENCE AND ELECTORAL VIOLENCE: CONCEPTUAL CLARIFICATIONS

A political party basically, is a group of people that come together to contest elections in order to hold power in the government. It is a way to mobilize voters to support common sets of interests, concerns, and goals. The primary role of a political party is to fix the political agenda and policies and control the government. So, each party tries to persuade people by claiming their policies are better than those of other parties. Many scholars have amply defined political parties from their own perspective and understanding of the importance of political parties in the society (Ajeli, 2020). According Nwankwo (1990), political party as an organized group of individual seeking to seize the power of government in order to enjoy the benefits to be derived from such control. This definition in essence implies that political parties are organized for the purpose

of benefiting from such organization by the organizers especially in the corridor of power. It is also described as a group with common views on certain political means. This definition means that that the day-today concern of politics is fundamentally with means and not ends. To Orji (1997), political parties are those organizations under whose ambit, people aspire to, and acquire political power in a system. From the above definitions, it could be said that a political party is a forum or platform under which political actors take decision on how to control the machinery of government to their advantage. This implies that political parties serve the interest of their members whose interest determines the success and otherwise of the forum.

Violence is conceptualized by Amaka (2005) in terms of influence (to mean harm). She explains the relations between the influencer, the influenced and a mode of influencing; categorized in terms of a subject, an object and action. She accepted though within the limited assumption, that the end state of violence is its somatic incapacitation or deprivation of health of the individual by means of killing which is an extreme form of violence in the hands of actors who intend it to be the consequence of their action. Thus, violence is present when human beings are being influenced (harmed) so that their actual somatic (body) and mental realizations are below their potential realization. On the account of this, she went further beyond the limited assumption to theoretically, conceptualize and empirically clarify that violence is “defined as the cause of the difference between the potential and actual, between what could have been and what is. To her Violence is that which impedes the decrease of the distance. Thus, if a person died from tuberculosis in the eighteenth century it would be hard to conceive of this as violence since it might have been quite unavoidable, but if he dies from it today, despite all the medical resources in the world, then violence is present according to this definition.

The concept of electoral violence comprised two different concepts in one, which include electoral and violence. Here, the two concepts are defined. The word electoral in the view of Bamgbose (2011) is the process involved in the conduct of elections either at the public or private level. He further stated that electoral process at the public level is the process of planning and conducting elections to choose representatives of the people in public offices of governance such as the executive, legislative and judicial arms of government at state and national levels. Electoral process at the private level includes all the processes involved in the successful conduct of elections into other types of groups other than those of government such as associations and clubs. Thus, he concluded that electoral violence depicts acts of aggression, thuggery and other similar acts that are displayed in the course of the electoral process. Ladan-Baki (2016) states that electoral violence during general elections include the snatching of ballot boxes to rig and manipulate election results, causing pandemonium in polling stations to hinder voters from voting, beating up of electoral officers and sometimes killing same in the process when weapons such as guns and cutlasses are used during the elections. To Balogun (2003), electoral violence is any form of violence that arise at any stage (pre, during and post election) from differences in opinions, feelings and engagements of electoral processes.

According to Igbuzor (2007), electoral violence is any act of violence perpetrated in the course of political activities, including pre, during and post-election periods, and may include any of the following acts: thuggery, use of force to disrupt political meetings or voting at polling stations, or the use of

dangerous weapons to intimidate voters and other electoral process or to cause bodily harm or injury to any person connected with electoral processes. Electoral violence is one major problem that has affected less developed countries' democracy sustainability and achievement of good governance such as Nigeria's democratic.

UNDERSTANDING POLITICAL PARTIES AND POLITICAL VIOLENCE

In terms of the different political parties, they play a significant role in making a relationship between two individuals which are government and society. This relationship is responsible for providing essential support to the parties along with the government. Among the various functions of political parties, it helps to organize test attitudes and public opinion along with the government. The parties are usually recognized by the socio-political framework and need a constitutional framework in terms of functioning or generating power (Udofia, 1981). Moreover, political violence is derived from citizenship meanings. On the other hand, some examples of political violence are derived due to the unacceptance of entire citizenship, reduction rate of political representation, inappropriate imprisonment, and many more. The shortage of proportionate political representation mainly defines political violence, and these may be considered economic violence due to political status (Schneider et al, 2019). In terms of modern society, political violence is mostly renowned as the result of social tensions and can be developed for variable reasons. Usually, this type of violence is not supported by the state and the main reason is the chief justice along with repression. In terms of it, it can be clearly stated that the variable sections of society are usually trying to resolve this issue.

They are following violent methods because the state has failed to secure regular obedience from the people. Due to the failure of regular obedience people are following these types of violence. In terms of violence, it is mostly renowned as purposeful political action which helps to register protests regarding several wrong policies. In recent times, revolution is mostly renowned as a form of political violence that is responsible for the transformational change of the government. This type of violence usually affects political activity and has variable ethical implications, and this concept has determined by Aristotle. In terms of these issues, it can be observed that honor allows the political assassin, and political violence is justified by different types of moral grounds. Eventually, they made an argument that this type of violence is a cause to fight against the government. Hence, it can be clearly stated that one country's terrorist is a freedom fighter in terms of other countries' political violence. The two most common thing is determined in human histories such as aggression and violence. Aggression is mostly responsible for securing things. Usually, this type of violence is considered a non-supported aspect of the state, and this type of violence possibly starts with the mass process of demonstrations. In terms of Aristotle, he is renowned as the first political scientist who is determined the disorder between two different things such as nature and the reason for political disorder. Eventually, He also highlights the balance of social force within a specific state in terms of political violence. However, Nigeria resorted to force and the managing response of the people regarding the election by utilizing a tool. As a result, different types of conflicts were derived. On the other hand, several parties were engaged systemically in terms of political violence, and they are not showing dependency on different states also. In terms of the 2015

election, it is not an exception to political violence and this type of violence in Nigeria is not a specific feature of civilians. The first assassinations have done in 1966 and the execution of Prime Minister Balewa, and other incidents as well. The military was brought by the different groups of politicians, and they were called by the nickname 'Kaduna Mafia'. Since the return to a civilian regime in 1999, the term 'godfatherism' represents the criminalization of politics and also explains the variable abilities of some kingmakers to select and impose which may affect their supporters. Historically, political violence had not affected Nigeria's decolonization.

CAUSES OF ELECTORAL VIOLENCE

Election related violence denotes a particular form or sub-type of political violence which takes place within the milieu of democratic consolidation. This societal malady though prevalent in developing democracies, occurs within systems that are termed consolidated. Khadiagala (2009) and Baregu (2009) as cited in Igiebor (2012) identified three main causal factors related to election violence which are: social and economic divisions, resulting from poor governance; regimes inimical to political change; and weak institutions such as political parties and institutional rules guiding the electoral process. Observers have opined that electoral conflict and violence may take place at any of the three stages of the electoral cycle – preventing, voting and post-election. The character, intensity and resultant outcome of election related violence vary from time to time. The factors that drive such violence are multifaceted, ranging from inconsistent or unsuccessful elections to structural concerns such as poor governance and exclusionary political practices, amongst others. In many cases elections have either precipitated political differences of opinion or have heightened suppressed tension to an outburst of conflict. Experience shows that violence tends to erupt over allegations of fraud or discontent with results after the conclusion of elections. Aniekwe and Kushie (2011) identified challenges to the conduct of peaceful and fair democratic elections include the following;

Absence of a tolerant political culture

The conduct of democratic and peaceful elections requires a tolerant political culture. In most illiberal democracies, political bigotry and domination are rife especially, when such government exhibits dictatorial posture. In such milieu, the deliberate intention and consequences of acts of violence are premeditated in a number ways either to vitiate the elections on the whole, or to manipulate voting behaviour through coercion.

Low level of internal party democracy

The incapacity of several political parties to function in a democratic manner introduces tension and hostility in the electoral process. In Nigeria, political elites termed godfathers control the parties at the local and national levels. They engage in the selection of delegates who elect party leaders and candidates at primaries. Through their control of these delegates, the godfathers decide who gets the party's nomination and leadership positions. The activities of political godfathers create so much discontent in the political process since they discount the formal procedures for party elections and nomination of candidates.

Protection of incumbency

Elections character wise portends uncertainty and competitive processes. In less developed countries specifically Nigeria and India, elections are frequently linked with tension and the upsurge of social aggression

over who controls the state apparatus. Violence arises in circumstances where there exists a strong likelihood of changing existing power configurations with the incumbents unwilling to concede power. This can be attributed to the dominance of one party and an intolerant political culture relating to the opposition.

The nature of the electoral and the party system

These are key factors that can exacerbate or moderate conflict in the electoral process as they have direct bearing on character and ideology. The level to which these systems are viewed as fair and inclusive, and democratic may determine the likelihood of eruption of violent conflict.

The management and administration of elections

The roles of election management bodies (EMBs) are vital during the electoral cycle. If the EMB is suspected of partiality, the credibility of the electoral process is reduced which may result in conflict when results are announced.

Lack of public confidence in the electoral machinery and government institutions

These may lead to lack of confidence and abstention from political participation by the citizenry. Though regulatory and legal provision exists at local and national levels, they are not always enforced.

POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN NIGERIA

In terms of Nigeria's national development, this type of violence is one of the major things. Eventually, it is also observed that the expectations were quite high in May 1999 due to the new democratic dispensation and people believed that it can resolve the threats of political violence within Nigeria. On the other hand, Nigeria faces different types of political violence that reduce the development process of the nation. Based on this aspect, it can be clearly stated that this entire paper is responsible to complete the determination of different incidents regarding the political violence in Nigeria. In addition, through the critical evaluation of this entire paper, the consequences of national development due to political violence can be determined. Talking about the politics of Nigeria is mostly surrounded by different violent conflicts and the colonial period was renowned as certainty (Ibok et al, 2018). The Nigerian Politics can be describe through several examples which are characterized by variable violent conflicts even in the colonial period where state repression was a certainty. Several incidents happened rapidly such as the women's riots in 1929, the Egbo uprising in 1931, and many more cases that are clear evidence of their political violence-related incidents (Anifowose, 1982). This type of violence led to the collapse of the first Republic. In terms of the political assassinations it is responsible for the creation of pogrom against easterners within North and the civil war (cited in John Kennedy et al, 2015). In terms of these type of political violence, it is evident that approximately more than 2 million Nigerians have lost their lives due to the depression of the political elite for power and the extent they could go to maintain it (John Kennedy et al, 2015).

POLITICAL VIOLENCE IN INDIA

In terms of the developed and non-developed countries, the casualties are derived due to the political violence during the time of the election. However, the entire situation in India is different and the reason is the conflicts are derived from intra-state, interstate, or any kind of caste conflicts. The variable number of victims of political violence in the Gram Panchayat elections and the General Elections or any kind of domestic conflicts like intra-State, inter-State or communal and sectorial and caste conflicts is defining quite higher number of deaths due to the terrorist attacks. It is an unanticipated phenomenon because such situation had never existed before, at least not on such a larger scale. It is mostly renowned as an unanticipated phenomenon due to these types of violent situations and that is increasing gradually. Eventually, there were several exceptions present that are clearly considered political violence (Kharat,2021). The second is in India's Northeast, the site of numerous revolts since the 1950s. The third is a sprawling belt in central and eastern India where various Maoist insurgent groups (known as Naxalites) have been operating for decades. In all of these cases, anti-state violence is now below its twenty-first-century peak. Existing violence data is not adequate to make fine-grained claims: it is likely that official records undercount civilian deaths, and both media and government reports can be highly unreliable in their distinctions between civilians and militants. Furthermore, there is little systematic data on nonfatal human rights violations, such as torture and sexual violence. (Staniland,2020)

REASONS BEHIND THE ORGANIZATION OF ELECTION VIOLENCE BY POLITICAL PARTIES IN NIGERIA AND INDIA

Politics, political parties and election seem to mean something different to Nigeria and Indian politicians. It is viewed as the fastest and easiest way of becoming wealthy as far as these two countries are concerned. From their independence to date, politicians in both countries politicians have construed election, politics and political parties as all that matters in life as it guarantees money, power and security. What is more, politics makes you command respect in the Nigerian and Indian contest. That is why their slogan is always, till death do us part from politics. They see politics and election as a do or die affair and that if one is left behind in any political space, he is gone politically and will never rise again, hence the continued struggle to remain relevant in politics until death come knocking (D'Ambrogio, 2020 and Ajeli, 2020). Since the notion of every politician in the countries is that winner takes it all, it behooves them to be the winner that will eventually take it all. Every politician wants to be a leader while none wants to be led. Thus every opportunity of leadership that comes on any ones way, it is hoped will never slip from him until death. This explains the reasons why politicians and political parties indulge in violence in order to maintain status quo to the detriment of the led. The notion of democracy is that power belongs to the people. In Nigeria and India power belongs to politicians and once elected, they are above the law, the electorate and the state. They bend the constitution at will and frustrate any genuine effort to make the state work.

The first republic political parties initiated political cum election violence in a bid to control the state. Anyaele (2003) opines that in readiness for the 1964 election, all the political parties in the country polarized

into two gigantic alliances. This alliances was to ensure that they win the election and control the state. Thus the National Council for Nigeria and Cameroon (NCNC) and what was left of the already battered Action Group (AG) and the Northern Progressive Front (NPF), made up the Northern Elements Progressive Union (NEPU) and the United Middle Belt Congress (UMBC) joined together and formed the United Progressive Grand Alliance (UPGA) and led by Dr. M.I Okpara while the Northern People's Congress NPC, NNDP, the Mid-Western Democratic Front (MDF), the Niger Delta Congress (NDC) and the Dynamic Party (DP) formed the Nigerian National Alliance (NNA) and led by Sir Ahmadu Bello. This quest to control the government made them to, during the electioneering, employ all sorts of crude and obnoxious methods as campaign strategies. There were also cases of irregular nomination of candidates for the election and other vices such as intimidation, thurgery and kidnapping in the northern and western regions (Amaka, 2005).

Supporting the above assertions in the case of Nigeria politicians, Professor Billy Dudley observed that in Nigeria, the shortest cut to affluence and influence is through politics. Politics means money and money means politics ... to be a member of the Government party means open avenue to Government patronage, contract deals and the like". The implications of this are as follows: prebendal politics, in which political office is sought primarily for the aggrandizement of self, family members, associates and cronies, tend to become a preoccupation of the vast majority of the politicians and electorates; patron-client relationship becomes entrenched in the polity and economy; the logic and desire to belong to government party undermine the sustainability of viable opposition in the political system; instrumental use of violence by both ruling and opposition parties as instrument of retaining or capturing power at elections independently or in contempt of electoral choices of the citizens at the poll (Ajeli, 2020).

EFFECTS OF POLITICAL VIOLENCE ON CITIZENS IN NIGERIA AND INDIA

In broad terms, the consequences of election-related violence as indicated by Wani (2016) may include the following:

Economic implications

The costs associated with the management of elections are usually huge which may represent a major financial burden. Election related violence would not only waste resources, but would also bring about destruction of communities and infrastructure with various negative economic and developmental consequences.

Lack of confidence in democratic processes and institutions

As a result of the endemic nature of election related conflicts and lack of perceived fairness in electoral engagements, trust in democratic processes and institutions by the citizenry has been adversely affected.

Human rights violations

The pervasive character of violence in Nigerian and Indian politics has demoralizing human rights impact on the electorates in the countries. These may include disfranchisement through deprivation of citizens' right to vote and engagement in electoral competition. Thousands of Nigerians have been subjected to physical attack or even killed. Human Rights Watch estimates that a minimum of 300 Nigerians were killed (Igiebor, 2012) in

occurrence of violence during the April 2007 elections. Prior to the elections, political assassinations, bombings, and deadly clashes were recorded between rival gangs – organized by politicians and parties – that claimed at least one hundred lives. Voter turnout during the 2007 elections was very low across the country as fear of violence discouraged many Nigerians and Indians from coming out to vote. Human Rights Watch interviewed quite a number of eligible voters who indicated their intention not to vote.

WAYS OF PREVENTING VIOLENCE AMONG CITIZENS OF NIGERIA AND INDIA

1. Learning the signs of abuse/violence and how you can help.
2. Starting a conversation
3. Understanding the data around violence and why it is
4. Getting involved in your neighborhood and creating belonging
5. Utilization of personal leadership and it's influencing aspects
6. Determination of the different local supports and recommended ways for getting benefits.
7. Working with schools along with different local councils in terms of establishing safety networks and protocols.
8. Determination of multicultural along with First Nation services that are mainly decorated in terms of the cultural diversifying experience of violence.
9. Utilization of two crucial aspects such as kindness and decency.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Political violence relies on individuals' engagement ability which has a drastic impact on political and social life. On the other hand, it is also responsible for removing isolation along with the different ways of withdrawal. In terms of the Deteriorating individuals', it helps to build trust in others, and also responsible for providing justice, and the entire government entities and democracy itself which eventually lessening individuals' abilities or any kind of willingness to engage in political activities. Three different things are considered as consequence of political violence namely; distrust, isolation, and withdrawal. It is based on this that the study makes the following recommendations;

- i. That both governments of Nigeria and India should come up with both formal and informal systems of education through which their respective citizens will get to know their civic right going out and vote persons of their choice without allowing themselves to be used by power lust politicians.
- ii. Both countries should initiate orientation agencies at all levels to ensure that their respective citizens are taught to become fully aware of the fact that election violence which they are drawn into by wicked politicians is only of benefit to the politicians at the expense of the common citizens.
- iii. There is a need for provisions of employment opportunities as most people who are usually involved in electoral violence of all nature are unemployed/underemployed youths who the corrupt politicians see as the best for their bid. This is because unemployment makes a person hopeless, veritable and available tool for political machinations

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